



# TrailsforYouth.Org

## Annual Report 2010

Teaching kids to overcome obstacles on the trail and in life!

# Dear Friends



Another year, lots more smiles and TrailsforYouth.Org (TYO) keeps on rolling!

What did we do this year? Simply put, we provided opportunities. Opportunities for children to experience nature, exercise and adventure. Opportunities for some quiet time with friends and to ask questions of caring adults. Opportunities to escape the boarding house they live in with many other families or to eat a nutritious meal.

We also changed our name to recognize our broader programmatic reach. As we continue to provide the Trips for Kids Programs in VA, DC and MD, we will showcase our other programs – classes, camps, festivals, safe routes to school events, youth mountain bike racing series — all geared towards giving kids the opportunity to be active and choose a healthy trail in life!

In 2010, TYO:

- Held 150 outdoor and nature-based events for local youth, a majority of which were geared towards low income or minority at-risk youths;
- Provided over 4000 mentoring opportunities;
- Helped thousands of children experience the fun of exercising through Walk to School Days at ten schools in Northern VA;
- Introduced children and their families to the joy of nature through Take A Kid Mountain Biking Day;
- Implemented the Northern Virginia Youth Mountain Bike Series, with increased participation in the girls and under-ten age categories;
- Brought the Safe Routes to School Programs to more local elementary schools;
- Offered incredible family-friendly educational events through our relationship with the National Park Service;
- Produced an dual simultaneous language video for adults entitled “Listen, Learn and Lead: Bicycling and Pedestrian Advice for Adults”
- Increased our annual nature camping experience to a two-day event hosting close to 60 people;
- Held an amazing Verizon Children’s Health Festival with over 1,200 attendees celebrating the great outdoors; and
- **Saved at least one life.**

As you can see, this past year was very successful. It was a bit of a struggle with the downturn in the economy — we witnessed an increase in demand for our services, while funding sources decreased. Yet, we moved forward and found ways to increase the number of kids outdoors and active in nature, increase our outreach activities and, most importantly, increase the average amount of time spent with each child.

*I am certain that with the right ingredients – nature, positive energy, biking, walking, exploring the outdoors, dedicated mentors and partnerships – we have created a program that ripples in our communities and spreads its lasting positive effects. Join us on this journey.*

As we move ahead and further our expertise in the myriad of programs that we provide, I am reminded of the many smiles I saw on the variety of trails this past year – whether dirt, single-track, sidewalk or personal trails – the positive effects that TYO has had on the thousands of kids we have worked with remains with me.

Happy Trails,  
Julie Childers, Executive Director



# About Us



TYO is a non-profit 501(c)(3) award- winning children's health organization in the Washington DC area that provides opportunities for children to get outside, be active and enjoy nature while receiving important education and mentoring. Our program is simple in design -- provide positive reinforcement, safe exercise, healthy nutrition and fun in the outdoors.

We strive to provide high quality experiences and opportunities for the underserved youth of our community. Through TYO, those at-risk youth are given some well needed physical exercise, better understanding of their surrounding environment, greater appreciation of the nature parks in their own communities and a chance to push their own barriers and overcome obstacles. At the end of the event, they are tired and stand prouder for their accomplishments.

As we've grown, we've embraced a holistic approach to encouraging youth to be active outdoors by starting a youth mountain bike race series, becoming involved with the Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) program and providing classes, camps, festivals, and leading family-friendly bike rides.

Whether they are on the trail to school, nature trail or trail of life we provide the opportunity for children to be healthier and more confident in their abilities.

"When do we ride again?"

— Oscar, Age 11

Smiling faces from a bicycle safety rodeo at an elementary school — both girls received free helmets from TYO.



# Saving a Life

We have so many memorable moments with the children in our program that we usually couldn't single one out over the others. However, this particular moment stands out for all of us at TYO this year. We saved a child's life. We gave him a helmet at one of our events, and it saved his life. Our Executive Director shares the story:

"As part of our Safe Routes to School program, we provide helmets to students at Lynbrook Elementary School. At a recent school function there, we stopped at the student bake sale table. One of the 6th graders pointed at my husband (who often volunteers at our bike education events) and shouted: "Mom, Mom, that's the man who gave me the helmet!" As I looked at the boy's mom, she grabbed my arm and said "thank you!" She then reached into her purse and showed us a photo of her son that was taken this past fall while he was in the hospital. She informed us that he had an accident while riding a scooter and had serious injuries to his body and face. The doctors told her that if he hadn't been wearing his helmet he would not be alive today. "

*Cassidy in the hospital, recovering from his accident, and after.*



# Nature Rides



These bicycle rides in nature are geared towards at-risk youth ages 8-18 and provide the opportunity for them to experience the thrills, joys and needed stress release that comes from being active in nature. These are more than a bicycle ride on a dirt trail; they are the very essence of personal challenge and growth. TYO brings together youth from a variety of backgrounds and culture, providing the tools each child needs to feel the freedom of bicycling.

These rides provide the opportunity for youth to drop their hardened shells and, for the moment, connect to nature and themselves as they challenge their perceptions of what they think they can accomplish.

TYO guides them to overcome their personal and immediate challenges. These nature bike rides provide a needed boost in self-esteem, physical

*These are, in base terms, a vital component in developing stronger, healthier and more aware young adults who will embrace these experiences and carry them on into adulthood.*

exercise, education and connectivity on the importance of preserving our natural world. These are in base terms, a vital component in developing stronger, healthier and more aware young adults who will embrace these experiences and carry them on into adulthood.

These simple but effective rides on trails allow each youth in turn to experience the freedom and joys of simply being a kid riding a bike in nature – taking in all the thrills of the wind on their faces and a caring adult helping to make sure they are safe. As each rider views their surroundings of the local nature areas from the seat of a mountain bike, they leave with a sense of accomplishment that they have overcome obstacles on the trail and they take these lessons and personal successes into their daily lives.

Our nature rides allow our riders to be physically active, develop friendships, build confidence and enjoy the outdoors.



# Safe Routes to School



Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a national program which encourages children to walk and/or bike to and from school. Designed as a part of the effort to combat childhood obesity, the SRTS programs are “sustained efforts by parents, schools, community leaders and local, state, and federal governments to improve the health and well-being of children by enabling and encouraging them to walk and bicycle to school.”

TYO is proud to be a national leader in the SRTS program. In 2010, we lead efforts in 10 schools in Fairfax County and Alexandria City, VA. One of the highlights was the highly successful International Walk 2 School Day with thousands of students participating. Other elements of the SRTS program include setting up Walking Wednesdays, Mileage Clubs, bicycle rodeos and pedestrian/cyclist education seminars, all of which encourage families and kids to be active in their travel to and from school.

On Walk 2 School Day 2010, thousands of students in Northern Virginia had an opportunity to exercise and be with friends.



# Youth MTB Race Series



TYO developed the Youth Mountain Bike Series as a fun effort for all children to pursue competitive mountain bike racing in a safe, controlled environment, allowing them to grow as riders in a sport that is often more tailored for adults. With this series, young riders can unleash their competitive side and challenge themselves. Also, for those children who want to compete, but don't have the opportunity or equipment necessary to participate, TYO can provide access to bikes, helmets, and scholarships, as well as mentor-led rides to develop skills, confidence and experience on a continued basis.

Since the series began in 2007, we have seen a 300% increase in the number of youth participating. Providing this level of riding creates an opportunity for the more experienced bikers to challenge themselves, and furthers our mission to provide opportunities for more kids to be active outdoors.

The generous support of our donors allows TYO to provide scholarships to children who otherwise wouldn't be able to participate

"A rider in front of me fell down. I stopped to make sure he was okay. It's fun to win, but you've got to take care of each other too."

— Alejandro, Age 9, after a mountain bike race

Our mountain bike races provide opportunities for exercise, personal growth and a chance to excel in a non-traditional sport.



# Education Rides

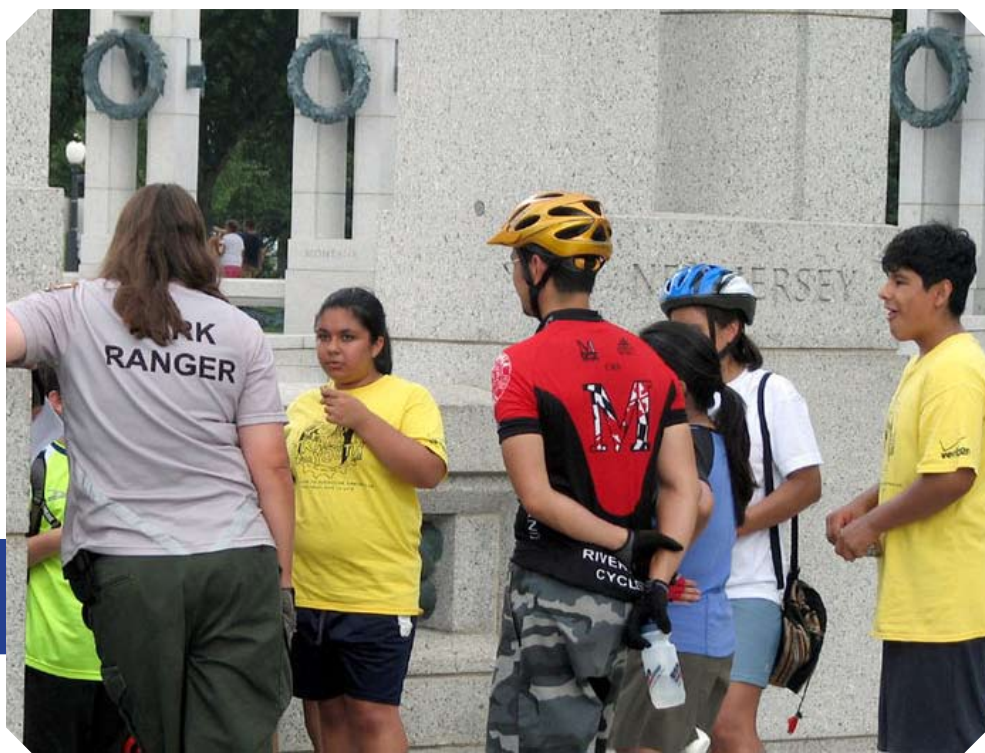


In a unique partnership with the National Park Service, TYO provides seven months of educational family-friendly rides, encouraging children and their families to get out and ride together. Starting at Gravelly Point Park in VA, TYO leads riders on the trail heading over the 14th St. Bridge and onto the Jefferson Memorial. We then meet with National Park Service Rangers and begin a guided bicycle tour of numerous monuments in Washington, DC. Park Rangers share historical information surrounding the monuments, myths and misunderstandings of the people and events they represent.

Did you know that there is a mis-spelling in the text on the Lincoln Mermorial? To find out what is, join TYO on our next family-friendly ride.

Chris Niewold, of the National Park Service National Capital Region, commented that *“through our successful partnership [with TrailsforYouth.Org], the National Park Service in the Greater Washington DC area has been able to provide healthy outdoor activities for kids who wouldn’t otherwise get the chance. ... In addition to creating opportunities for youth, this partnership also helps the National Park Service develop the next generation of park stewards who will protect these important natural and cultural resources for future generations.”*

Touring our Nation’s Capital from the seat of a bike brings a whole new perspective to history.



# Classes, Camps & Festivals



In 2010, TYO held classes, a spring break camp, bike rodeos, a camping trip and a huge health festival — all geared at promoting and educating our community and their families on the importance of being active outdoors and striving to incorporate nature in a healthy life style.

## Introduction to Mountain Bike Classes

Classes open to the general public, as well as scholarships for at-risk youth, gave instruction on the tips and tricks of riding single track, while also imparting important environmental lessons of sustaining our natural resources. These provided a wonderful base for entire families to learn a new way to explore the local parks.

## Summer Camping Trip

This annual trip to Rocky Gap, MD brings together youth and adults from all over the Metro DC area to enjoy fresh air, biking, hiking, swimming, fishing, kayaking and good old-fashioned camping. In 2010, upon repeated feedback and requests from the kids themselves, TYO added one more night to this experience. For three days these youth were able to relax and enjoy the many wonders of nature – trees, trails, birds, fish, boating, biking and hiking — a true escape from their daily stressful lives.

## Bike Rodeos

With 30+ years of experiences, our veteran instructors help children learn bicycle safety. We bring helmets, bikes to borrow, cones, obstacles and loads of encouragement and enthusiasm to help novice riders feel more comfortable, safe and knowledgeable as they navigate their neighborhood via bicycle. We have given out over 1,000 bicycle helmets in these rodeos.

## Adventure Racing Camp - Spring Break

Through our ongoing relationship with Fairfax County Parks and Recreation, we provided a week-long experience of hiking, biking, team exercises and mentor-led activities. All of these help youth appreciate and learn about nature, trails, exercise, biking and the importance of being part of a team. At the end of the week, the teams competed to reach 5 different check-points to earn the accomplishment of finishing a challenging race. TYO provides scholarships to the camp through partnering with local schools.

## Children's Health Festival

For the 5th year, TYO hosted the Verizon Children's Health Festival in Fairfax County, attended by thousands of children and their families. This highly-anticipated event has fun outdoor activities, entertaining education booths, races, and lively exercise demonstrations — all designed to get families excited about exercise, nature, good nutrition and the great outdoors

*Our annual camping provides fun learning experience for everyone!*



# Partnerships



We believe strongly in being part of our community, realizing that the more efforts that exist to help our youth, the stronger that effort and community will be. We are proud to partner with the following organizations in this growing commitment:

- National Park Service
- Potomac Velo Club
- Fairfax County Parks and Recreation
- Arlington County Recreational Services
- City of Alexandria Public Schools
- Fairfax County Public Schools
- DC Department of Recreation
- Mid-Atlantic Off-Road Enthusiasts (MORE)
- International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA)
- Fairfax Advocates for Better Bicycling
- National Safe Routes to School Partnership
- Virginia Department of Transportation
- Virginia Department of Health
- Neighborhood Watch
- Springfield Civic Association
- Boy Scouts of America
- St. Mark's Youth Group
- Verizon Foundation
- Recreational Equipment Inc. (REI)
- The Bike Lane
- Arrow Bicycles
- CDW-G
- Community and national sponsors (please see our website for more information)

*Our staff mentors all of the children in our program; this young girl received a few words of encouragement as she tries a larger bike for the first time.*



# By the Numbers



*In 2010, TYO assisted over 5,000 children, providing much needed physical activity, mentoring, and nutrition.*

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Children served	114	304	500	1500	2051	3000	4024	8181
Number of Events	10	24	30	42	80	114	114	150
Volunteer list (members)	66	83	43	52	60	75	125	150
Average ride child to volunteer ratio*	2 /1	2/1	3/1	1/1	1/1	1/1	2/1	2/1

\*Does not include children health festival or safe routes to school work.

## 2010 Board of Directors

President: Lori Stewart, *U.S. Environmental Protection Agency*

Vice President: Scott Scudamore, *Hewlett Packard - retired*

Secretary: James P. Childers, *U.S. Environmental Protection Agency*

Georgette Phillips, *U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration*

Ken Scott, *Recreational Equipment Inc.*

Kevin Brown, *Georgetown Hospital/Research Center*

## Year-round staff

Julie Childers, Executive Director

Megan Brooks, Deputy Director

## Seasonal program coordinators/staff:

David Zuk

Randy Filz

Emily Linden Aftergood

Kathryn Hanks

*One of our staff members answers questions about bike safety during a summer camp.*



# Financial Information



## Income Statement (FYE 12/2010)

### Income

Contributed Revenue	\$82,482
Earned Revenue	\$44,560
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$127,042</b>

### Expenses

Program Expenses	\$84,356
Administrative / Overhead Expenses	\$31,901
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$116,257</b>

**Excess (or Deft) for the year**                      **\$10,182**

"I love being able to support Trails for Youth, I see how positive it is for the kids and how much they enjoy the ride even though they are sweaty and dirty, it's good for them."

— TYO donor

Campers in our summer programs experience the joy of being healthy outside in nature; many of these kids attend camp through scholarships provided by donors.





Join us on the adventure at  
[www.TrailsforYouth.Org!](http://www.TrailsforYouth.Org!)

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