June 2023 NEWSLETTER Vol 1 Issue 2

VENTURE FREE

WELCOME!

to the newest edition of our quarterly update! We're glad to have you with us as we explore the activities of the second quarter - April, May, and June. Quarters two and three, the heart of our calendar year, are filled with excitement, hosting most of our favorite overnight trips that display our love for adventure.

The past quarter, marked by a mix of anticipation and nostalgia, has stirred a myriad of emotions. As schools break for summer, we bid farewell to our school year campers, yet we also welcome our most cherished season - SUMMER! Venture Free comes alive in the summer, with endless days of exploration throughout the beautiful Bay Area. It's a thrilling blend of swimming holes and waterfalls, discovering caves, surfing waves, and sleeping under the starry skies. Above all, it's about making unforgettable memories with our campers outdoors, with days and weeks packed full of exhilarating experiences.

Now, with the sun consistently shining, drying trails ready for hiking, full reservoirs, and the remaining wildflowers adding color to our landscape, it's the perfect setting for an unforgettable summer season. We invite you to join us in enjoying the wonders of this special season!



Happy Adventures,

Emily P-Dellinger
Executive Director

Upcoming Events

Summer Camps

KMES Pic Nic

Art Fair Craft Days

Outdoor Education

Stargazing Fundraiser



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PROGRAM UPDATES

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CHILDREN'S CENTER

Another great school year full of fun experiences has come to an end. But not without a few new creations (ice cube painting and crayon transferred t-shirts), intense basketball games requiring “hype-up” music playlists, pop-up dance parties that may or may not have intentionally been to distract the ball players, lightsaber (pool noodle) duels, and of course much appreciated water days! We, the counselors, honed our skills at courageously defending ourselves as the kids banded together against us in those water wars. With each splash and each shared laugh, we wove countless memories. The end of this school year leaves us with a heart full of joy and anticipation for the adventures the next one holds! -Julie (VFCR)







ADVENTURE CAMP

The last two months of Adventure Camp flew by as we did our best to fit in every last activity we could with our Fernando Rivera campers! We camped in Henry Cowell Redwoods, we hiked to the super bloom, we explored tide pools and learned about ocean creatures, created nature crafts, and completed the year with a couple of the groups favorite activities; outdoor cooking and boogie boarding!

We will undoubtedly miss this exceptional group of campers. However, we are stoked as some of them are poised to reunite with us this summer for more extensive overnight adventures. The prospect of crafting more memories with this spirited troupe fills us with immeasurable excitement!

-Alyssa (VFAC)













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PROGRAM UPDATES

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SUMMER CAMP





As if orchestrated by the rhythm of nature, the end of the school year seamlessly coincided with the start of summer camps! We kicked off the season in high gear - June hosted Summer Day camps spanning two exciting weeks, as we journeyed far and wide across the Peninsula. Under the enthusiastic guidance of Ms. Alyssa, we sought the thrill of outdoor adventure at every turn. Concurrently, we ventured out for two weeks of immersive away trips; certifying and preparing our teens to assist with camps, and searching for waterfalls!

Adding to this bustling montage, we hosted a week of our beloved Little Mountain camp. Catering to our youngest campers, this K/1 prep camp is a much-adored highlight of our summer offerings. Under the nurturing watch of Ms. Julie, this camp offered a gentle introduction to the joys of outdoor exploration.

As we reflect on the lively commencement of our summer season, we're filled with anticipation for the magical moments yet to unfold!







UPCOMING EVENTS

Sierra Backpacking
July, 2023

Surfin' Safari
August, 2023

Summer Camps Continue
July, 2023

KMES Pic Nic
August 15th, 2023

Art Fair Craft Days
August 13th: 10am - 2 pm
August 20th: 10am - 2pm

Outdoor ED
September, 2023

Stargazing Fundraiser
October 14th, 2023
6:30 pm

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TRIP REPORTS

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SIERRA SCOUTING







Who: VF Adventure Guide staff
Where: Desolation Wilderness and Tahoe Basin

In preparation for summer, VF adventure staff made multiple trips to the sierras to scout the conditions. What we found felt like we stepped into the twilight zone as areas we know well were packed in with snow and ice. We found incredible snow fields, quiet trails that are normally busy, and babbling brooks that melted into gushing creeks! These scouting trips are an important part of our business model, as experience is instrumental in preparation for leading kids successfully!





OUTDOOR EDUCATION

Who: CSB 4th grade students
Where: Pinnacles National Park



Our springtime outdoor education excursion went flawlessly, complemented by ideal weather conditions. We kicked off our adventure with a focus on developing practical skills, where the children dove into belaying and climbing techniques, along with learning about fire safety and building skills. The kids played an active role in cooking all meals and enthusiastically participated in an axe chopping workshop, finding a particular enjoyment in splitting wood for campfires and leisure!
We guided the group on a hike to the high peaks, to climb the carousel, and to explore the talus caves. A truly exhilarating highlight of our trip was the multiple sightings of condors! We're eagerly anticipating our reunion with this class in the fall when they return as 5th graders!









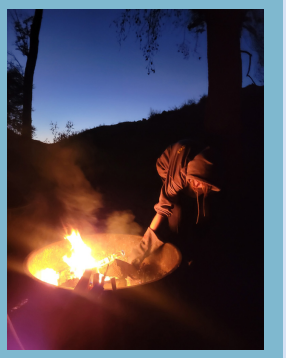




TERRA TEEN SUMMER TRIP

Who: VF Terra Teens
Where: Ventura County and Santa Lucia Mountains











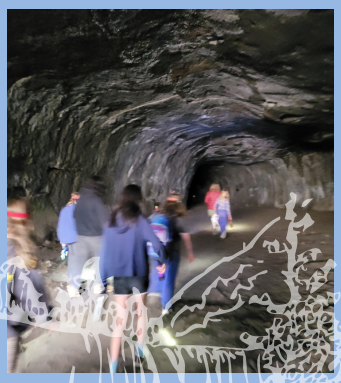
Despite the Terra Teen summer trip not aligning with our original vision, or even the contingency plan, we harnessed the situation as a gateway to broader horizons and greater learning opportunities for our teens. We pivoted our focus towards amplifying the skills and preparedness of our young explorers, bestowing upon them the vital knowledge of Wilderness First Aid certifications.

Our journey led us to Ventura County, where Matt, from the esteemed SOLO wilderness school, steered our teens through a comprehensive two-day Wilderness First Aid course. Although the rigor of a traditional classroom environment isn't typically Venture Free's preferred mode of learning, our group of teens embraced the challenge wholeheartedly. They excelled throughout the program, emerging with an invigorated sense of confidence and readiness for their outdoor endeavors.

Post-certification, we couldn't resist the allure of the great outdoors and headed for the majestic Santa Lucia Mountains. Our next few days were brimming with exploration and camaraderie, as we set up camp and embarked on a quest for secluded, enchanting swimming holes. The combination of practical education and immersive adventure marked a remarkable chapter in our summer journey!













WATERFALLS!

Who: VF Summer Campers (age 8 - 12)
Where: Whiskeytown Recreation Area, including Burney and Lassen areas

Our traditional summertime expedition to search for waterfalls proved extremely rewarding this year! Despite the mercury often crossing the 100* mark, it was a welcome respite from the chilly, damp climate we had escaped. We set up camp at Oak Bottom campground, nestled within the Whiskeytown Recreation Area, and were in close proximity to some truly stunning waterfalls and inviting swimming spots. Our campsites by the lake provided the perfect refuge from the heat. Memorable moments from our trip included visits to Burney Falls, Hatchet Creek, and Crystal Creek. We also had a blast participating in a talent show, enjoying French toast breakfasts, exploring Lava tubes, and engaging in playful paddle board skirmishes. Not to mention, our nocturnal hike added an exciting twist to the adventure.

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CAMPER HIGHLIGHTS

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WHAT WAS YOUR FAVORITE THING ABOUT VENTURE FREE THIS YEAR?

This is what our campers had to say!

"Boogie boarding because I laugh a lot! I like that everyone gets a fair chance at doing everything!"
- Celena



"I like camping and cooking! I like that we go to new places and learn new things every week."
- Logan







"We loved the collective party point party (Ice cream/Star Wars party!), it was awesome!! And making forts and water fights, and all the snacks but especially the spring rolls we made for Ryu and Tatsu's moving to Japan party!"
-Cormac and Quentin

"Boogie boarding! It was a new experience and it was awesome! I like going to different places, the snacks! and doing fun activities!
-Megan



COUNSELOR HIGHLIGHT



MEET ALYSSA!

Alyssa and VF:
Alyssa joined the Venture Free team in June 2019 as a business assistant and quickly proved herself invaluable, stepping up as a VF counselor that summer and was a lead counselor by Fall 2019!

Position:
VF Lead Counselor (VFCR, VFAC, VFSC)

Why Alyssa is awesome!:
Alyssa is an outdoor counselor with a deep-seated passion for geology. Fondly referred to as a "geologist at heart", she takes immense pleasure in her rock collection and derives great joy from encouraging her campers to cultivate their own. But her love for geology is matched by her devotion to her family. She values the time she spends with them, frequently making trips to visit and particularly cherishing moments spent with her beloved niece. Alyssa's enthusiasm for both the natural world and her loved ones make her a uniquely inspiring and dedicated counselor.

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WHAT WE'RE WORKING ON

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Art Fair Booth -

We are ramping up the production of our Nature Art and will be calling on VF Families and community members to join us in August for community craft days!

Terra Teen Summer Take Over -

This summer is more than our usual outdoor FUN and adventure - were focusing on training the Terra Teens to plan and lead the children's summer trips, from start to finish!

HOW YOU CAN HELP



And of course
donations are always welcome
and appreciated!!

DONATE ON OUR WEBSITE!

About the VFF Newsletter:
The VFF Newsletter is published quarterly. It is emailed to school staff and parents, newsletter subscribers, and posted online at www.venturefreefoundation.org. The deadline for submitting articles is 2 weeks preceding the publication. Send submissions or comments to the publisher Emily Dellinger Emily88.VFF@gmail.com. Many thanks to the content contributors for this issue: **Alyssa Raisis** and **Julie Pedersen**; and content editors: **Maria King** and **Fiammy Dizon**