

LM: We try with every trip that we have with the participants to instill possibility of resilience, of challenge by choice, of positivity, of empowerment. We try and instill those with every trip that we take the kids on, that they are stronger than they think they are. That the community that they live in doesn't hinder them in any way of where they can go. Sometimes we're just a steppingstone for these kids to go off to college. We have a couple kids who've become park rangers from going through our program. We have a kid going to college on a full ride for policy because she was in our Outdoor Voices Program. It kind of varies on the kid but we try and stay in touch with them. A lot of our kids come through our program and they are there for the full four years of their high school career. I get invited to high school graduations, sometimes college graduations. The kids kind of go back into their community knowing that they have the power and the resilience and the ability to change their community by exposing them to nature. By eating better, by telling their families that we should recycle, small things that really have a ripple effect in their communities.

It doesn't just stop when they're done with their time with us. We have a leadership program at Outdoor Outreach where it's basically a chance to become an instructor with Outdoor Outreach. They go through a pretty intensive 11-week, 12-week program where they're trained to become instructors. They go through all the things that we go through to then eventually become an instructor. To eventually go on activities with some of the kids that they go to school with or some of the kids at the school that went to. We try and make it full circle. We try and bring the kids up as much as possible, teach them everything that we can so that they can go back into their communities and work in their communities to make it better. Instead of trying to be an outside force working on the community, we want to build the people up and have them work on themselves.