



Finn making a bowl using hot embers

REKINDLING HIS FIRE

By Christine Larsen, Mother of Finn (age 12)

I am so grateful for the opportunity my son, Finn, has had to spend Fridays in Duvall with the Jackals, learning from his environment and from the strong community of teens and mentors Kim Shelton and her team have fostered.

Last October, shortly after Finn started at a new school that wasn't a good fit for him, his little fire burned down to its embers. I knew his spirit was alive in him somewhere, but

“My husband and I are happy to contribute funds that allow other children to share the same kind of joyful and redemptive experience Finn has found in Nature.”

there were no flames left. It is not an exaggeration to say that each school day became harder and harder for him to face. He was so underwhelmed and frustrated, and he was becoming increasingly angry. Thank goodness he was able to join the Jackals in early November. I am pleased

to report that at this writing, Finn now looks forward to starting a different school next September. However, this past year, Fridays with the Jackals gave him such enormous inspiration he has been able to face the frustrations of Monday – Thursday. Each Friday he has a chance to experience JOY!

“Wilderness Awareness School programs meet kids where they live and open kids’ hearts to the healing powers of the natural environment.”

On a recent parent visit day at Linne Doran, I was so impressed by what I witnessed. We started the morning playing a few group games. During one game, we tried to capture a flag and run back to the starting line without being seen. All but two boys participated in that game. Instead, they chose to sit atop a tree stump and dip into their snacks. I can't explain how the instructors were doing it, but I can tell you that those students were allowed to pass on playing, but at the same time, they were still a part of the group activity. Their choice to sit apart was honored without their presence being any less attended to.

During another game, one of the teens became upset. With care and “compassionate nonchalance” the instructors guided that young woman back into the fold, and facilitated positive interactions between her and her peers. That morning, from across the circle of parents, kids and instructors, I watched Finn heartily engage and even giggle. What a gift!

Our family enjoys a circle of friends who come from diverse economic backgrounds. I love the fact that I can recommend Wilderness Awareness School programming to each and every one of them, because I know there are scholarships available. My husband and I are happy to contribute funds that allow other children to share the same kind of joyful and redemptive experience Finn has found in Nature.

It isn't enough to tell our kids “turn off the TV” or “put down your cell phone” or “close the laptop” or “just deal with it” – it is much better to offer the alternative. WAS

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Luanne holding an Eastern Willet after attaching a geolocator tag

ALUMNI IN ACTION

By Luanne Johnson, Wildlife Biologist

Richard Louv has enlightened mainstream Americans about the importance of nature in children’s development, but I often wonder how many parents make time in nature a priority for themselves. Spending time in nature is good for children, but it is important to remember that it is good for adults too. We adults can easily fill a day with working to

“Daily doses of quality time in nature are the key to my success and my longevity as a conservation biologist working to recover endangered species.”

earn a living, cleaning house, grocery shopping, cooking, and exercising to keep fit. These are all important parts of life, but where in that busy day can you fit quality time in nature, and why is it important for you?

While my 20-plus year career as a wildlife biologist has allowed me to essentially have ‘sit spot’ time at work, it was my time in Wilderness Awareness School’s Wolf Tracks program (the precursor to Anake Outdoor School) and at Art of Mentoring workshops where I learned how all of that time in nature was influencing other aspects of my life in profound ways. Daily doses of quality time

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in nature are the key to my success and my longevity as a conservation biologist working to recover endangered species, because the threats facing our planet and its wildlife are overwhelming and the work can be depressing. Time spent sitting still outdoors and settling into the natural



Piping Plover chick on the beach at Martha’s Vineyard

baseline around me restores me and renews my spirit. It cleanses my grief by bringing my awareness to the circle of life around me each day, each season, and each year.

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Founded in 1983, Wilderness Awareness School is dedicated to caring for the earth and our children by fostering understanding and appreciation of nature, community and self.



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Please direct article, poetry, art and photo submission ideas to: WarrenM@WildernessAwareness.org

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SPRING CAMPAIGN SUCCESS!!!!

We did it! With your help along with the generous stretch match from first our Board President and then our entire Executive Committee of the Board, we were able to overcome the GiveBig technological glitches and exceed our goal – raising \$40,339 for our Spring Get Outside Campaign!

Your donations to the Ingwe Memorial Scholarship Fund will go right to work to provide scholarships for students who would not otherwise be able to attend our transformative programs – helping more kids of all ages build healthy relationships with nature, community and self.

Thank you, thank you, thank you!

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Alumni in Action

WAS programs and the Eight Shields Mentoring model gave me a framework for maintaining a hopeful outlook for self-reflection and personal growth, mentoring young adults and citizen scientists, and leadership within the non-profit I direct. While my childhood brain developed amidst many hours running free and exploring in nature, it is incredibly important for my adult brain to reconnect with that experience daily in order to live fully.

Luanne Johnson is the founder and Director of BiodiversityWorks, a Martha's Vineyard non-profit focusing on wildlife research and monitoring while providing opportunities for citizens to engage in hands-on learning. www.biodiversityworksmv.org

School Year Program Testimonials

Your support truly makes a difference in the lives of our students. Below are a couple of my favorite testimonials from our recently completed school-year programs that demonstrate this positive impact:

The culture of Wilderness Awareness School is the perfect antidote for our plugged in society. They truly believe in what they are sharing with our kids about the importance of nature in becoming a thoughtful, engaged, empathetic human being.

Liza, mother of 7 year old
– Monthly Program student

After a year in the Foxes program, my 7 year old son Noah bloomed. I am so impressed with his keen knowledge, understanding and love for nature. He has learned so much and we are so thankful this program exists.

Briana McFarland, mother of Noah (age7)
– Youth School (Foxes) Student

My daughter's experience at Wilderness Awareness has been life changing. It was not only learning about being comfortable in nature but learning about getting to know herself.

Julie, Mother of Lucy (age 16)
– Wild Within Student

Honoring Transitions

We acknowledge and appreciate **Linda Bittle** for her 9 years of dedicated service as our Bookkeeper. She has been an amazing steward of our finances over her tenure, showing great integrity, dedication and attention to detail. She will be missed as she starts a new life in Council, Idaho.

We are excited to welcome **Heather Durham** as our new Receptionist and Office Assistant. Heather is a graduate of our Anake Outdoor School and after several years in the field as an instructor and volunteer coordinator, she decided that behind the scenes service is the best use of her considerable talents.

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Rekindling his Fire



Finn with his cat Padfoot

staff teaches that Nature surrounds us whether we live in the heart of Seattle or the forests of Duvall. Wilderness Awareness School programs meet kids where they live and open kids' hearts to the healing powers of the natural environment. I am grateful for the opportunity to share in the gifts that make WAS possible for any child because I know the difference the WAS experience has made for my own.

Tremendous thanks to you and the staff for dedicating your energies, creativity and passion toward making Fridays (and so many other days for so many kids) possible and for helping Finn rekindle his fire.

NOTES FROM THE EAGLE'S NEST

by Warren Moon, Executive Director



Anake Outdoor School graduates of 2006 with Warren Moon and Elder Jenn Wolfe on the bench

“Nothing you do can stop time’s unfolding”

This is one of my favorite lines from one of my favorite poems by William Stafford. While we can't stop time's unfolding, we can pause to celebrate important events and milestones. At the end of each school year, we gather to celebrate the year and honor those who are graduating. In particular, we give extra love and attention to our Anake Outdoor School graduates. This year was especially potent for me, as the Anake Class of 2006 gathered for their 10 year reunion the weekend of our graduation celebration – the first class ever to host a 10 year reunion. We really hope to see each Anake class continue this tradition of coming back to Duvall and acknowledging their decade after Anake.

As part of their reunion, I had the honor of gathering with them in Malalo and hearing the highlights of their past ten years. I was amazed by their stories of success, struggles and growth. I was touched by how each still drew strength from their experience with Wilderness Awareness School and how each in their own way embodies the spirit of Anake – an initiated adult who is using their gifts and talents to make the world a better place.

They also gave us an amazing gift. Here is the writing on the certificate that went along with their gift:

“Anake Outdoor School class of 2006 is grateful for all we have learned from your school. We are thankful for the care given to every aspect of our learning experience. We have

all grown in ways unimaginable prior to our year at your school.

It is with deep gratitude that the Class of 2006 presents the Gratitude Bench to Wilderness Awareness School which has been installed by the Ancestors Circle on Linne Doran. We hope the addition of the bench will support past graduates and future generations in using this space to connect to those who have come before us and have passed on into spirit, to humble ourselves to the gifts which our ancestors have left behind, and to ask for their support in our unique contributions toward healing our world, each other, and ourselves.”

With over 400 graduates worldwide, it feeds those of us back here keeping the home fires burning, not just to hear how Anake has impacted them, but how they are then going out and making impacts in their own communities across the planet. Our graduates will always be part of our tribe and family and I deeply hope that the 10-year reunion becomes a new tradition each year.

And as we come full circle, I want to give my deepest thanks to all of you, our compassionate donors. None of this would be possible without your continued support. Your generosity is making the world a better place, one child and one Anake Outdoor School graduate at a time.



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IN MEMORY OF OUR ELDER WALT HOESEL

It is with great sadness that we share that our beloved Elder Walt Hoesel recently passed. Walt became involved with the school shortly after it moved to Washington in 1995, and has been a pillar for our community ever since. Walt provided wise council to many of our staff and students over the years and has positively impacted numerous lives. Walt was an incredible role model and a great man who was deeply passionate about the mission and vision of Wilderness Awareness School. He has left an indelible mark on all of our hearts and will be greatly missed.

