



HELPING KIDS DISCOVER NATURE'S PLAYGROUND

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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THE NORTH FACE EXPLORE FUND AWARDS GRANT TO THE LOWER MAINLAND PURPOSE SOCIETY

Apex Winter Adventure Program supports a national effort to increase outdoor participation among New Westminister youth

NEW WESTMINSTER, October 27, 2011 The North Face has awarded a \$2500 grant to the Lower Mainland Purpose Society to help children and families explore the outdoors. Purpose Society's mission is to deliver a continuum of social, health, educational and residential services to children youth and families in order to enhance personal well being, strengthen family functioning and increase personal responsibility, confidence and healthy decision making. Purpose Society was selected from hundreds of applications because the Apex Winter Program will expose at risk youth to new, high interest outdoor activities in order to increase social skills, problem solving skills and communication skills while offering youth something positive to do over winter break . In the first of two grant cycles in 2011, The North Face awarded \$125,000 Explore Fund grants to 52 projects helping more than 30,000 kids to connect to nature.

“The Purpose Society has long believed in the value of outdoor recreation as a positive youth engagement strategy which builds self-confidence, self-reliance and resiliency”, states Dawn Embree, Executive Director of the agency. “Over 25 years ago, the staff annually took a group of high-risk youth hiking on the West Coast Trail. We have maintained a popular summer recreation program for the last 20 years, but a few years ago staff decided that they wanted to add a winter program. We finally secured funding to run a pilot program last winter, which was very successful, and now, gratefully due to the North Face Explore Fund, we will be able to offer the winter program for a second year. We are extremely thankful to North Face for selecting us for this grant and are honoured to be included in a national movement to inspire youth to explore the outdoors and all the benefits it has to offer.”

The Apex Winter Adventure Program was established in 2010 to provide at risk youth in New Westminister with an opportunity to engage in high interest, outdoor activities during their winter break from school. Since it's founding, the program has provided 13 youth within New Westminister with an opportunity to connect with youth workers and support services within their community, explore new outdoor activities, and engage in pro-social activities over their winter break from school. In addition,

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The Lower Mainland Purpose Society has been able to advance the mission exponentially with the support of several important partner organizations:

- Ministry of Children and Family Development
- New Westminster Parks, Culture and Recreation
- New Westminster School District
- Mount Seymour
- Save-On Foods
- Safeway

“First-hand experience is essential to ignite a passion for the outdoors, and that shouldn’t be limited by gender, race or income level,” said Ann Krcik, director of outdoor participation at The North Face. “At The North Face, we’re dedicated to providing everyone with the access to our natural playgrounds and the resources they need to get outside.”

Apex Winter Adventure Program will launch on November 1, 2011 and will run from December 19 to 23, 2011. Referral information can be obtained by contacting Ki Speer at 604-526-2522. To learn more about the Lower Mainland Purpose Society and the Apex Winter Adventure Program visit www.purposesociety.org. To learn more about all of the Explore Fund grantees and to keep up on their progress visit www.planetexplore.com.

About The North Face Explore Fund

The North Face® Explore Fund™ is a grant program committed to supporting non-profit, community organizations that break down the barriers preventing children and families from experiencing the outdoors. The Explore Fund, administered by The Outdoor Foundation, finds, engages and provides funding for new partners that help further the mission of inspiring the next generation of explorers and conservationists by helping them discover nature's playground.

About PlanetExplore

PlanetExplore is an online community founded by The North Face, powered by partner organizations that share a passion for the outdoors, and designed to help individuals and families learn about and participate in outdoor activities and events in their area. PlanetExplore is a portal to the outdoors designed to inspire and enable people of all ages to become regularly active outside, and to enjoy the benefits gained through a connection to nature.

For more information, please visit our websites:

The Explore Fund www.explorefund.com

Planet Explore www.planetexplore.com