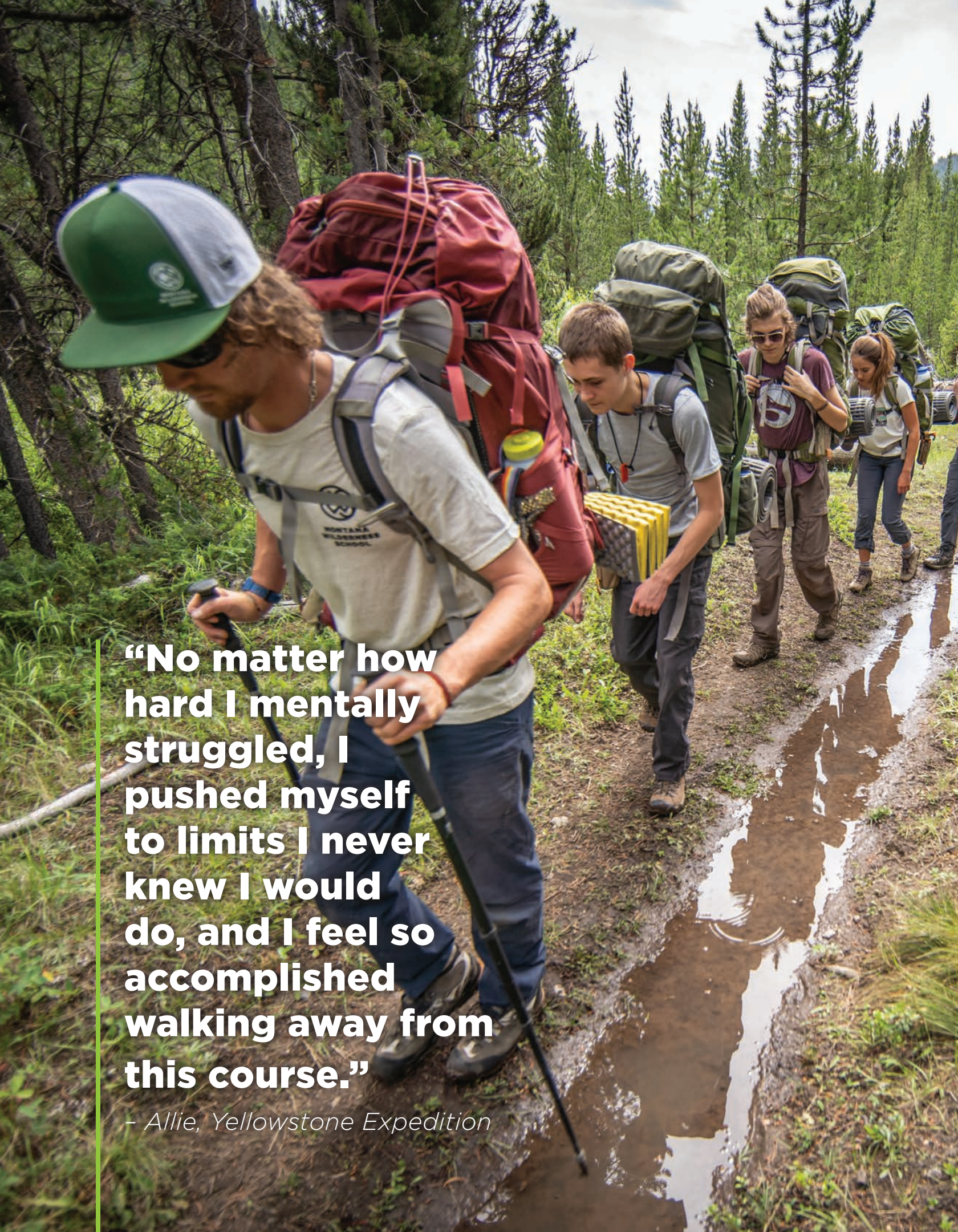


# MONTANA WILDERNESS SCHOOL

IMPACT REPORT 2019





A group of hikers is seen from a high angle, walking along a muddy trail in a forest. The hiker in the foreground is wearing a green and white baseball cap, sunglasses, a white t-shirt with a logo, and blue pants. They are carrying a large red backpack and using trekking poles. Other hikers with large green and red backpacks are visible behind them. The trail is muddy and has a large puddle reflecting the sky. The forest is dense with tall evergreen trees.

**“No matter how hard I mentally struggled, I pushed myself to limits I never knew I would do, and I feel so accomplished walking away from this course.”**

*– Allie, Yellowstone Expedition*





## LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Every year it seems more and more important that programs like the Montana Wilderness School exist. As a society we continue down a path that is not often serving our young people in terms of mental health, physical activity, and immersive connection to the natural world. We need to take a good hard look at this and not just try to fix the problems after they have been created but do our best to prevent the problems before they have even started. More connection outdoors, a break from screens, building community with diverse groups of peers, and time immersed in wild spaces away from the home environment is a healthy recipe for wellness, hope and empowerment.

The MWS Youth Wilderness Program has been created to address these challenges and positively impact as many young people as we can serve. Having just run our fifth program season this year, we have now served 232 students in our immersive, place-based, outdoor education program. In total, MWS students have logged 85,200 hours in our program with each student averaging 367 hours on their course.

I continue to be inspired by the dedication of our board of directors, advisor team, and both administrative and field staff that lead with their hearts and continue to build the most professional outdoor education program that I can imagine. Having co-founded this organization from scratch, it is impressive to see how far we have come in such a short amount of time and that is testament to having so many amazing people involved that truly care.

This year has been another incredible one, filled with passion, healthy challenges, success, and transformative experiences for both our organization as well as the young people we serve. We are extremely thankful to all the generosity and support we continue to receive from our donors, our business and grant partners, and especially to our students and their families making this all possible. We hope you continue to stay with us as the school is now ready to scale up our numbers and have a much larger impact on youth in the years ahead!

Stay Wild,

**Gar Duke**

*Co-founder and Executive Director*







# MONTANA WILDERNESS SCHOOL

## Staff

**Gar Duke**

*Co-founder and Executive Director*

**Josh Olsen**

*Co-founder & Program Director*

**Claire Kleese**

*Communications Manager*

**Erin McCleary**

*Operations Manager (Incoming)*

**Kodee Cloninger**

*Outreach & Admissions Manager (Incoming)*

**Nicki Bailey**

*Youth Contract Program & Student Outreach (Outgoing)*

**Victoria Dille**

*Student Outreach Manager (Outgoing)*

**Matt Zia**

*Mountain Program Manager*

**Andrew Morehouse**

*Paddling Program Manager*

**Ross Lesslie**

*Student Outreach*

**Hannah Karn**

*Student Outreach*

**Kristine Mazur-Ferriter**

*Student Outreach*

## Board of Directors

**Bill Stoddart**

**Deborah Love**

**Gar Duke**

**Jessie Wiese**

**Jon Christensen**

**Mike Wolfe**

## Field Instructors

**Adam Chenoweth**

**Andrew Harvison**

**Andrew Morehouse**

**Christie Conway**

**Eric Falconer**

**Hannah Karn**

**Hannah Marshall**

**Joseph Hoff**

**Matthew Zia**

**Ryan Milling**

**Ryan Peters**

**Shannon Regan**

## Advisor Team

**Andy Lichtenheld**

**Ashton Snyder**

**Damien Powledge**

**Darcy Chenoweth**

**Dave McEvoy**

**Dr. Steve Halvorson**

**Justin Short**

**Kate Burnaby Wright**

**Kestrel Neathawk**

**Mike Fiebig**

**Robert Campbell**

**Shane Doyle**

**Sheri Blackwood**

**Steve Smith**

**Vasu Sojitra**

**Whitney Milhoan**

## Field Interns

**Harrison Bly**

**Luke Elliott**

**Serena Thiel**

## THE MISSION

of the Montana Wilderness School is to provide empowering expeditionary wilderness courses to youth that foster personal growth and cultivate a conservation ethic through connecting with remote landscapes and wild places.

## OUR VISION

is to develop the highest quality expeditionary outdoor education program in the United States. We strive to serve diverse and motivated youth in communities throughout Montana. Through challenging and empowering experiences on our courses, youth will develop a deeper connection to the natural world, and will return to their communities as more skilled, confident, and compassionate leaders.

**62** | MWS STUDENTS

**\$90,617** | AWARDED IN SCHOLARSHIPS

**737** | PROGRAM DAYS

**17,688** | PROGRAM HOURS

**952** | USFS/BLM/NPS/USFWS USER DAYS

**1,148** | MILES HIKED

**495** | RIVER MILES PADDLED

**60** | STUDENTS RECEIVED LEAVE NO TRACE (LNT) TRAINING CERTIFICATIONS

**5** | STUDENTS RECEIVED WILDERNESS FIRST AID (WFA) CERTIFICATIONS







## 2019 PROGRAM REPORT

Reflecting back on 2019, the one constant in the five years of Montana Wilderness School's operation is the resoundingly positive and transformational experience our students report having on our expeditions. This remains the driving force behind the student-centered approach at MWS and spurs us on into 2020. 2019 was a major year of evolution for the MWS, from expanding our course offerings to moving to a new operation's base north of Bozeman. MWS successfully ran eight open enrollment expeditions and one contract expedition for a New York City based youth-focused organization. Sixty-two students had fundamentally rewarding and poignant experiences in the unique wild lands within the Northern Rockies ecosystem. Students were immersed in wild places from 10-21 days and educated about wilderness self-care, camp craft, Leave No Trace, wilderness medicine, leadership, communication, mountaineering, canoeing, rock climbing and whitewater paddling. MWS piloted three new expedition types in 2019: Horse Packing, Rock Climbing Adventure, and the Mountains to Missouri Adventure.

MWS' fifth operating season provided a number of opportunities for the organization to learn and grow, from adapting to a new basecamp property to adjusting student enrollment shortfalls. The strong commitment to the program by invested staff members maintained the high caliber of MWS expeditions in a year of transition. MWS again worked with Steve Smith and Experiential Consulting to

continue to improve our program's risk management and training culture to reach our organizational goals. With 2020 in our sights, the outreach and enrollment team has retooled and recalibrated for 2020 and we are already seeing positive results for 2020 student enrollment. MWS is maintaining our commitment to making MWS expeditions more diverse, inclusive and equitable, with a goal of improving enrollment particularly in underserved urban, rural, and indigenous communities around Montana.

Due to the overwhelming success of our scholarship fundraiser, we were able to provide full or partial scholarships to 84% of our Montana students and no deserving participant was turned away from MWS for financial reasons. As the 2020 season approaches, we look forward to the second season at the Double G Ranch property and fully realizing the potential of this new space. We also look forward to improving the program's operations with a focus on acquiring regional food to increasing our students' connection with local food producers. In addition, we are offering more contract courses for partnering non-profits to meet the growing demand for this expedition format. After five seasons, we have hit our stride, with consistent growth of expedition offerings, increased staff numbers to meet our program capacity, and expanded curricular depth — all to continue providing deeply impactful expeditions to our students.

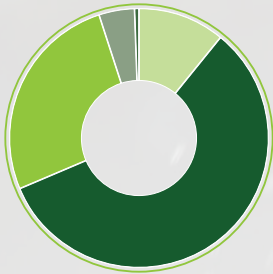
Stay Wild,

**Josh Olsen**

*Co-founder and Program Director*



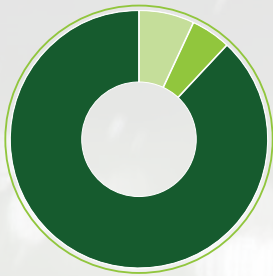
# FINANCIALS



## Income

- Grants: \$54,000
- Individual Donations: \$288,248
- Student Tuition Fees: \$131,086
- Business Donations: \$22,116
- General Fundraising: \$2,072

**Total: \$497,522**



## Expenses

- Administration: \$30,761
- Fundraising: \$21,287
- Youth Wilderness Program: \$383,316

**Total: \$436,777**

## Contract Expeditions



### **MWS + SEO Scholars, NYC + American Prairie Reserve**

SEO Scholars from New York City joined MWS for 12 days to paddle the Missouri River, learn about conservation in Montana, and spend time exploring and learning about the American Prairie Reserve.

## Industry + Organization Partners:

Aerie Backcountry Medicine  
 American Prairie Reserve  
 Bureau of Land Management  
 Casting for Recovery  
 Centennial Outfitters  
 Colorado Youth Mental Health Treatment Act  
 Earthtone Outside  
 Mountain Sky Guest Ranch  
 Nathan Norby – videography/ photography  
 SEO Scholars, NYC  
 The Traveling School  
 U.S. Forest Service  
 Wilderness River Outfitters  
 Yellowstone National Park  
 Yogesh Simpson Design

## Volunteers + In-Kind Support

Greg Smith  
 Ivy Merriot  
 Jenny Fiebig  
 Jerry Weisbach  
 Yogesh Simpson

## Grant Awards

Cinnabar Foundation - Special Projects Award  
 Moonlight Community Foundation  
 The Kendeda Fund  
 Treacy Foundation  
 Yellow Dog Community and Conservation Foundation  
 Yellowstone Club Community Foundation

# 2019 DONORS

## **WOLVERINE LEVEL \$10,000+**

Anonymous  
 Robert Duke  
 Nicole Friend & Gar Duke  
 Friend Family  
 Philanthropic Fund  
 Mariposa Fund  
 Robert & Michelle Friend  
 Philanthropic Fund  
 Rosenberry Charitable  
 Term Trust

## **GRIZZLY BEAR LEVEL \$1000-\$9,999**

Donald & Betty Alder  
 Anonymous  
 Jerry & Sue Campana  
 Rob & Diane Cassil  
 Jon & Elizabeth  
 Christensen  
 Douglas & Carolen Herst  
 Herst Ventures - In Honor  
 of Robert Friend  
 Brian & Caroline Lurie  
 Bernard Osher Trustee  
 Jennifer Peters  
 Deborah & David Peters  
 Philip Schlein

## **MOUNTAIN LION LEVEL \$500-\$999**

Chuck Arnold  
 Patricia Gehman  
 Caleb Kasper  
 Ross Lane  
 Deborah Love  
 Frank & Patricia  
 Morehouse  
 William & Geraldine  
 Olsen  
 Bina Peters & Josh Olsen  
 Steve Smith

## **BISON LEVEL \$250- \$499**

Suzanne & Tony Bell  
 Philip Hess  
 Whitney Milhoan  
 Linda Mornell  
 Kestrel Neathawk  
 Network for Good  
 Jennifer Olsen-Krengel  
 James Packwood  
 Carol Smith  
 Justin Stalpes & Lindsay  
 Beck  
 Stuart & Sas Weber  
 David Zinn

## **BIGHORN SHEEP LEVEL \$100 - \$249**

Scott & Ivaly Alexander  
 Bill Blackburn

Andrew Boyd  
 Laura Brin  
 Elissa Brown  
 Casting For Recovery  
 Deidre Combs  
 Conor Darby  
 Max Fancher  
 Michael & Jenny Fiebig  
 Andrew Gabor  
 Mary Gamache  
 Eric & Gisela Gosch  
 Mark & Christine  
 Hodgson  
 Hilary & Ryan LaFoley  
 Devin Loudon  
 Richard Maenpa  
 Allison & Kristofer Olsen  
 Barbara Penington  
 Damien Powledge  
 Sandra Prusiner  
 Justin Rawls  
 Meghan Sherman  
 Mark Snyder  
 Bill Stoddart  
 Justin Tassone & Gia  
 Duke  
 Ryan Todd  
 Christine Upton  
 Elliott Waldron  
 Chris Weber  
 David Weinstein  
 Andrea Williams  
 Michael Wolfe

**ANTELOPE LEVEL  
Under \$100**


Amazon Smile  
 Jeremy Barbin  
 Tara Bebbler  
 Clare Berkey  
 Blomquist Family  
 Chelsea Colwyn  
 Lillian Deford  
 Gary Hellenga  
 Paul Kundtz  
 Maggie Lesslie  
 Sarah Lord  
 Owen Lunz  
 Rebecca MacNeice  
 Ellie Martin  
 Heather Milovina  
 Mary O'Rourke  
 Barbara Ohleen  
 Rebecca Pooker  
 Yogesh Simpson  
 Matt Skoglund  
 Elise Strong  
 Jess Wickstrom  
 Tyler Wilson  
 Carlin Zia



# CORPORATE SPONSORSHIPS

## WOLVERINE LEVEL (\$5,000+)

 seertech

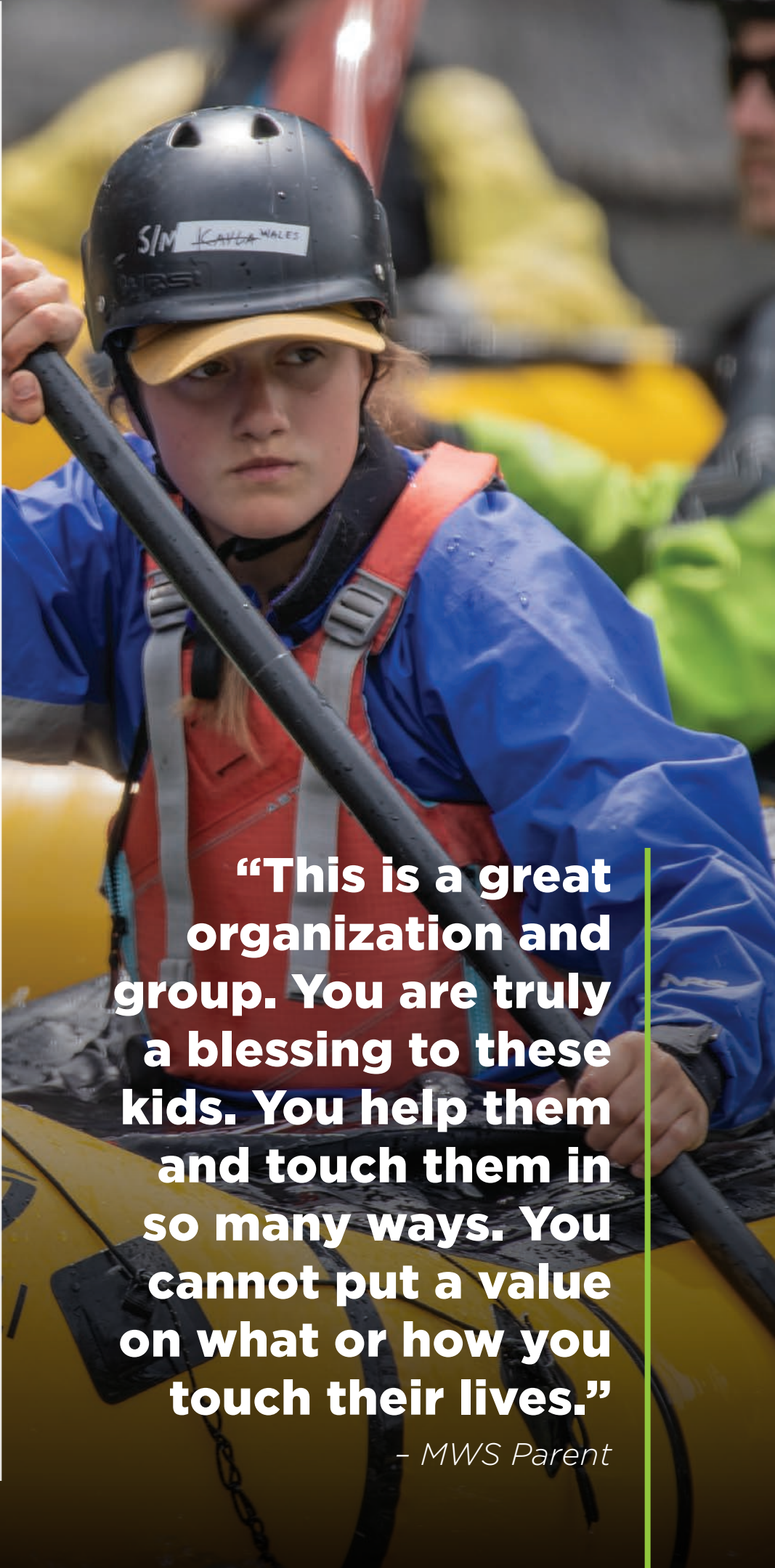
 MYSTERY RANCH

## MOUNTAIN LION LEVEL (\$1,000-\$2,499)

Montana Angler  
Sea And Adventures, Baja  
Kokopelli Raft Co.  
Tomis - Missoula  
Iguana Lodge, Costa Rica

## BISON LEVEL (Under \$1,000)

Aerie Backcountry Medicine  
The Mountain Project  
Rei Bozeman  
Arc'teryx  
Little Star Diner  
Bozeman Brewing Company  
Katabatic Brewing Company  
Blackbird Kitchen  
Glacier Raft Company  
Fins And Feathers  
Rabia Zeitner Massage  
Feast Bistro  
Emerson Grill  
Enso Natural Medicine  
Schnees Boots, Shoes And Outdoors  
Bronwen Jewelry  
Onx Maps  
Montana Fishing Outfitters  
Spire Climbing Center  
Oboz Footwear  
Studio Chenoweth  
Black Diamond Equipment  
Intrinsik Architecture  
Onsite Energy  
Montana Whitewater  
Mint Dental Studio  
Duckworth  
Ghost Town Coffee Roasters  
Uphill Pursuits  
Bridger Brewing  
Yeti



**“This is a great organization and group. You are truly a blessing to these kids. You help them and touch them in so many ways. You cannot put a value on what or how you touch their lives.”**

*– MWS Parent*





**MONTANA  
WILDERNESS  
SCHOOL**

P.O.Box 1183 | Bozeman, MT 59771  
info@montanawildernessschool.org  
406.388.4610

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



**Begin the adventure at**  
**montanawildernessschool.org**