



Healthy, Rooted, Growing.

Thanks to you and this strong community of support, it's been a fantastic year of Southeast Alaskan children exploring and learning in nature. Discovery Southeast programs are engaging more children than ever in hands-on activities — fostering wellness, resilience, and community, while sparking intellectual curiosity and healthy, life-long passions.

Where We Are.

Today, our core Nature Studies classroom programs continue in every elementary school. We bring nature and science into the classrooms and students outdoors. We have extended opportunities for broader ages, including pre-K and middle school classrooms. Several after school programs ended this year, so we're actively working to fill the need for meaningful after school programs too.

Outside of schools, we offered 28 sessions of camp this summer over 8 weeks, serving more than 300 kids, preschool through middle school. Our growing nomination program connected more underserved families to camp, with the percentage of campers receiving financial assistance being the highest ever. *Thank you donors, who make this possible!* We also offer preschool programming, day camps during inservice days, and a growing presence in community centers like Gruening Park.

We are taking additional steps to increase awareness and inclusion of indigenous culture in our programs. This year, we sponsored free Lingít language lessons in partnership with Haa Tóoch Lichéesh and hosted our first Sealaska Heritage Institute intern during summer camp. We continue incorporating Lingít vocabulary and traditional ecological knowledge into lesson plans.

Where We Are Going.

This past year, we asked for input from supporters, families, teachers, naturalists, and community partners to reflect on how we provide formative outdoor experiences with the best impact possible.

- **We will continue to emphasize outstanding classroom programs** (specifically Nature Studies), providing significant contact time over many years and grades to all local children.
- **We will expand after school programming** to build long-term relationships and experiences for children most in need.
- **We will redouble our outreach to underserved families** and minimize barriers to participation in out-of-school programs, while continuing to reach all children through school-based programs.
- **We are investing in relationships to ensure our programs value and uphold traditional knowledge of this place, Lingít Aani.** We hope to build on the steps we have taken, in an effort to see indigenous language, culture, and knowledge woven intrinsically and respectfully into this work.

All of this has been a community effort, and will continue to be. For that, we are grateful.

Gunalchéesh!



A kindergarten Nature Studies field trip, gardening after school, favorite moments from summer camp, and more. Check out our website for a collection of videos, highlighting some of our programs this year. **We hope you enjoy!**



Another Day Outside for Juneau 5th Graders.

New this fall, 5th graders across town are spending a day at the Eagle Valley Center. Classroom groups enjoy half the day on the ropes course learning about teamwork and the other half exploring outdoors with Discovery Southeast naturalists. We warm up our senses on the beach, then scavenge for things no longer growing, building on our Nature Studies decomposition lesson. Having additional field experience in a different habitat allows students and naturalists alike to deepen their curiosity, knowledge, and connection. What a wonderful way to start the school year and students' final year of Nature Studies! *Thank you to the Juneau School District, the City and Borough of Juneau, and SAIL for making these experiences possible.*



Gardening: Learning and Growing Together.

Gardening has been an exciting addition to our programs this past year. It lends itself well to hands-on learning, teambuilding, and fun. Plus, the harvested veggies serve as delicious, nutritious snacks to share with students and families. There's nothing quite like tasting a fresh carrot or tomato from the garden!

We currently support school and community gardens across town and look forward to more gardening at schools and summer camp next season. Led by Discovery Southeast naturalists, a new generation of Juneau kids is learning how to grow food.



Nurturing Connection at Gruening Park.

The open meadows off the Switzer Creek Trail are incredible. Discovery Southeast naturalists are often there with kids — splashing in the meandering creeks, hiding in the tall grasses, building snow forts, sliding on ice, and noticing the seasonal shifts as green turns to brown and then disappears in a blanket of white. Like most of the Juneau trails we access, kids don't have to go far from home, and it's that proximity that so naturally deepens their connection with their place in this world.

These meadows are a short 5-minute stroll from Gruening Park, a housing community, where we have been offering weekly outings and gardening for the last three years. Each afternoon begins at the community center, where we gather for check-in, coloring, and snacks (often from the garden). After snack, we get on our gear and make sure we're prepared for the day's weather. Then, it's adventure time!



Each session is drop-in, and with the longevity and consistency of the program, kids know our staff, and vice versa. The comfort and joy in those relationships are evident in every outing.

At its core, the program embodies what we hope to facilitate on a larger scale: advancing more equitable access to nature for all Juneau kids.

It's a delight to explore together.



Renew your membership, check out programs, and learn more at:

DiscoverySoutheast.org

