



Outdoor Health Initiative

The Outdoor Health Program provides funds to organizations and agencies to connect individuals to spaces within their communities through outdoor recreation and education programs. By connecting individuals to public outdoor spaces and engaging citizens in outdoor recreation, the Trust seeks to build ownership of local watersheds, increase stewardship and expand the base of citizen support necessary to advance the restoration of our natural resources.



Nurture by Nature: An Environmental Education Health Partnership

Nurture by Nature connects children diagnosed with chronic mental disorders to nature in a therapeutic way, educating them about their local watershed, promoting healthy lifestyles, and encouraging environmental stewardship.

Midshore Riverkeeper Conservancy and Channel Marker Inc. provided the Nurture by Nature program to over 60 children, ages 8-16, across Dorchester and Caroline counties. Throughout the course of the program, MRC provided: three summer adventure days at University of Maryland's Horn Point Campus; six afterschool activities during the course of the year at each Channel Marker location; a BioBlitz in partnership with Martinak State Park; and multiple stewardship projects including constructing bird nesting boxes and winter feeders.

held after school activities at local outdoor spaces including Great Marsh Park, Denton Community Garden, and Martinak State Park. After school activities focused on creating a connection between humans and the environment. Children learned about pollution and solutions through Fred the Fish activities and completed stewardship projects to improve the environment at the Channel Marker offices.

Martinak State Park was a program partner that provided after school activities such as Wildlife CSI and Scales and Tales to teach children about native species. When the group was asked why a BioBlitz is important a child from Channel Marker responded: "we need to know what lives here so we can learn how to protect it." Through the BioBlitz, participating children and volunteers discovered over 200 native species of plants, insects, mammals, birds, and fish.

During the three Horn Point Summer days in July approximately 45 children visited the Horn Point Campus. Volunteers assisted in leading activities that included trail skills and scavenger species ID walks, environmental art projects, and canoeing. Children also got to learn about and touch native species with Phillip's Wharf Fishmobile. During after school programming, MRC worked with both Channel Marker offices in Denton and Cambridge and

- 60 students participated
- 30 volunteers
- 2,000 publications produced
- 3,000 media hits
- 15 native plants planted



What is Channel Marker, Inc?

“The mission of Channel Marker, Inc. is to promote mental health by providing prevention programs, rehabilitation and community services to individuals and their families.”

Our youth program provides a variety of opportunities in which our youth can improve functioning in school, home, and the community through teaching social skills, coping skills, and independent living skills. Today’s youth are focused on technology, social media, video games, etc. Playing outside seems to be an antiquated notion for many of them. Exploring the outside through canoeing, discovering wildlife, growing vegetables, nature walks, creating birdfeeders, and so on, helped the youth to connect to the environment as well as the community in ways that technology cannot do. These activities help to teach about good environmental stewardship, enhance their social skills through team participation, and elevate self-esteem when completing a task.

For instance, many of our youth have a diagnosis of ADHD. Some of these youth struggle because of the symptoms associated with ADHD (impulsivity, hyperactivity, poor focus/concentration). There is a high frustration level in this group and at times low levels of productivity. An activity such as canoeing is a fun way to teach ways to focus on pulling and pushing the paddle through water and working with your teammates in the canoe to move around the water. Channel Marker staff and MRC would then process the activity with the youth. At the same time these children created a connection between spending time outside and feeling happy. This successful youth experience can be transferred to other areas in life. Many of our children commented that they wanted to return to the green spaces with their families.”

CBT Grant Awarded:	\$26,271
Channel Marker	\$540
Lowe’s:	\$210
Match:	\$1,681
Total:	\$28,702

Project Partners:

