

A close-up portrait of a young person with dark, curly hair, looking slightly off-camera with a gentle smile. The lighting is bright and natural, highlighting their features. They are wearing a blue and brown shirt.

SELF- WORTH

THE ULTIMATE REWARD FOR OUR EFFORTS





NATIONAL RECREATION FOUNDATION



INTRODUCTION

The National Recreation Foundation is a nonprofit charitable foundation administered by a Board of Trustees. The Foundation supports the development of recreation programs and facilities that promote and advance the Foundation's mission by providing guidance and resources critical for changing outcomes, whether related to reducing anti-social behavior and developing a strong citizenship, or increasing activity levels and promoting proper nutrition in youth and young adults.

MISSION

The National Recreation Foundation is dedicated to enhancing the role of recreation as a positive force in improving the quality of life of youth. We do this by investing in recreation programs directed at those who are economically, physically or mentally disadvantaged.

This annual report provides a brief summary of our work. Please visit nationalrecreationfoundation.org for more detailed information.



RELATIONSHIPS



WELCOME MESSAGE

This year allows us to write on the pages of a new chapter for the National Recreation Foundation. The Foundation celebrated its 50th year of service in 2015, and 2016 started our movement toward another 50. We can take pride in our support of organizations that have changed and are continuing to change the lives of youth through recreation. NRF, our Foundation, has awarded over 500 grants and distributed in excess of half a billion dollars to over 200 organizations across the United States. These grants created tens of thousands of positive experiences for youth and have transformed the lives of many. While this is significant, the Foundation can and must do more in the most efficient and impactful manner.

We are proud of the important work the National Recreation Foundation accomplished over its first 50 years, particularly the projects we've supported in many of America's most challenged and underserved communities. Today, as we start our second 50 years of service, challenges facing underserved communities are increasing while accessible, affordable, quality youth programs are more resource-stressed than ever. The Foundation is proud of our history supporting recreation in these communities. In the face of today's record dropout rates, significant removal of physical education from schools, and ongoing lack of youth exposure to the wonders of the outdoors and childhood obesity, we look forward to redoubling our efforts to address these issues. The grants we provide develop the exposures, interests, imaginations, skills and bodies of young people most in need, while also uplifting the child, the family, and the community at large. The Foundation started combatting these issues 50 years ago, and there is still much work to be done.

The Foundation is using this 50 year milestone to refocus our attention on how best to serve the needs of our country's at-risk youth. With renewed vigor, increased insight and deep dedication, we will work to maximize our impact in bringing about positive change.

One recent innovation is our new grantee conference. In addition to making grants, the Foundation now supports the vital work of our grantees by hosting an annual conference dedicated to building core competencies of the organizations doing excellent work in the field of recreation. Additionally, the Foundation has refined its target audience to youth ages 6-24, developed an infrastructure to better record and track our and our grantees' impact, and adopted a new tagline which more accurately reflects the purpose behind our grant-making: *creating opportunities for at-risk youth*.

Although the challenges feel daunting, our National Recreation Foundation is energized and excited to build on our past successes to create brighter futures for American children.

Sincerely,



ROBERT A. STUART, JR
President



SOPHIA B. TWICHELL
Executive Director

HISTORY

The Foundation's roots go back to 1919 when the War Camp Community Services, Inc. (WCCS) was established. WCCS was created in response to a need for recreation and other services on the homefront during World War I. By war's end, the WCCS fund contained nearly \$1.5 million. These funds were subsequently invested in an endowment portfolio that has grown to over \$40 million supporting the organization now known as the National Recreation Foundation (NRF). Today, the NRF operates as a private foundation dedicated to working with organizations that use recreation as a tool for improving mental, physical, social and spiritual health.

The NRF Board of Trustees represents diverse geographic areas of the U.S. in order to represent the diverse population of America. Members of the Board have always shared three common bonds: a love of recreation, a deep respect for its value in all our lives, and the belief that high quality recreation programs are vital to fostering social stability and healthy lifestyles in our communities.

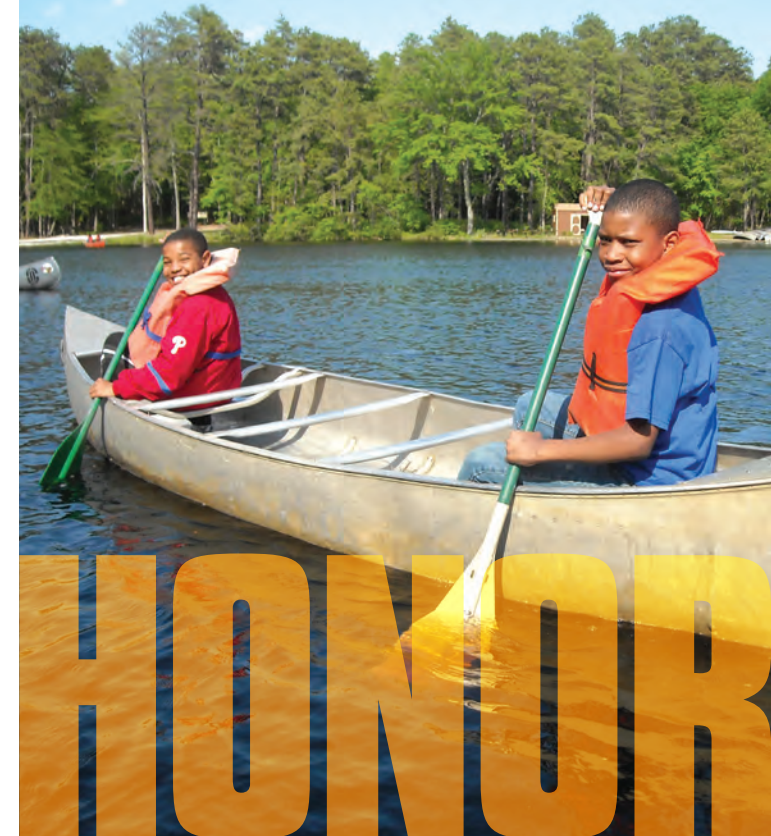
GRANT SELECTION PROCESS

Since its inception in 1965, the NRF has funded grants in two ways: as a Trustee Grant or a Special Grant. Every year, each Trustee selects a project they believe fulfills the goals of the NRF. The sponsoring Trustee must propose the project to the Board, and recommendations are made for funding the grant. Trustee Grants are limited to \$30,000. The Foundation does not accept unsolicited proposals. A special grant may be up to \$100,000, and they are subject to stricter granting criteria. Special Grants are limited to three years.

GRANT SELECTION CRITERIA

The NRF generally uses the following criteria for evaluating proposals for projects:

1. Grants must be consistent with the NRF mission statement.
2. Grants are made only to organizations that are tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or to governmental agencies. Grants are not made to individuals
3. Grants are normally not made for (1) capital expenses; (2) overhead costs beyond those needed for effective and efficient administration of the grant programs; or (3) research.
4. Programs that are supported should be innovative within the context in which the recipient organization operates, and should have the potential to contribute to life transformation for disadvantaged youth.
5. Programs must have leverage potential, such as matching funds or the development of partnerships or collaborations, that will enhance a grant's effectiveness.
6. Programs should be capable of being replicated in other communities or agencies. Grants can be made to facilitate such replication.
7. Grant proposals should show how a program will be sustained at the end of the grant period when it becomes the exclusive responsibility of the grantee.
8. Evaluation measures are required. Outcome rather than output measures are preferred and are expected for larger grants.





MICHAEL "SPIKE" LOBDELL

2016 ROBERT W. CRAWFORD PRIZE AWARD WINNER

The National Recreation Foundation is delighted to present the 2016 Robert W. Crawford Achievement Prize to Michael "Spike" Lobdell. With this prize, the Foundation recognizes Spike's dedication to transforming the lives of young people through a passion for the ocean.

For over 12 years, Lobdell has selflessly devoted his time to the development of the **New England Science & Sailing Foundation** (NESS), one of the most successful community sailing programs in the United States. The number of young people he has empowered to get out on the water, to learn to sail and, most important, to acquire the life skills that arise naturally from sailing, is inspirational. Spike's interest in sailing began through his exposure as a youth. He was encouraged by his father who was an avid sailor. Encouraging the next generation of sailors, as well as a love and understanding of the ocean, is now Lobdell's life work. He founded NESS in Stonington, Connecticut in 2004, and since 2008, he has devoted all of his time to it. He has been the President and CEO throughout this period, has no plans to retire and has never received a dollar of compensation for his efforts.

NESS is a non-profit ocean adventure and education program that creatively links science education with physical recreation. It engages students – a significant portion of whom have never been on the water and, without NESS, probably never could be – in experiential learning that builds confidence, teamwork and leadership skills through sailing, marine science and adventure sports.

Lobdell established NESS with a vision of enabling everyone to get out on the water learning and having fun regardless of financial needs. In 2004, forty children, most of them able to pay tuition, participated in the program. Today NESS is a year-round educational organization that, in 2015, served close to 5,000 students. More than half – about 56% or 2,800 children – receive scholarships or other financial aid that enables them to participate. In 2015, NESS provided more than \$430,000 in such financial assistance and more than \$1.4 million since 2008.

In the early years, NESS operated out of an abandoned lobster processing facility in the harbor in Stonington, CT. Today it operates out of seven locations in southeastern New England. NESS partners with over 100 different schools supporting the core STEM curriculum (science, technology, engineering, math) and educating students in NESS's on-the-water classrooms, classrooms without walls.



ROBERT W. CRAWFORD ACHIEVEMENT PRIZE

The purpose of the prize is to recognize a living person who has dedicated him or herself to enhancing recreation opportunities for youth, making it possible for more young Americans to live healthy, participatory lives, thus reinforcing the work of the Foundation. Each year, the prize is awarded to that person, whether professional or volunteer, who has made an extraordinary contribution in advancing recreation programs for at-risk youth.

For 60 years, Robert W. Crawford served others through his role as Commissioner of Recreation in Philadelphia and as Executive Director of the National Recreation Foundation. As the Commissioner of Recreation, Mr. Crawford established a national model for local government's provision of recreational services for all citizens. His creativity and innovative ideas won him international recognition. He also played an important role in the development and growth of the National Recreation Foundation during his time as Executive Director. Mr. Crawford personified those qualities of leadership and commitment that the Foundation seeks to foster, which is why this Achievement Prize was named in his honor.

The prize consists of a \$50,000 cash award to support the recreation-related project of the recipient's choice. The award is presented at the annual meeting of the Board of Trustees.

Visit nationalrecreationfoundation.org for a complete list of prior Robert W. Crawford Achievement Prize recipients.



GRANTS OVERVIEW

In 2016, the National Recreation Foundation donated \$1,384,445 in support of charities providing recreational opportunities for at-risk youth. Of this amount, 29 grants totaling \$654,178 were provided in Trustee Grants, and 10 grants totaling \$730,267 were awarded as Special Grants.

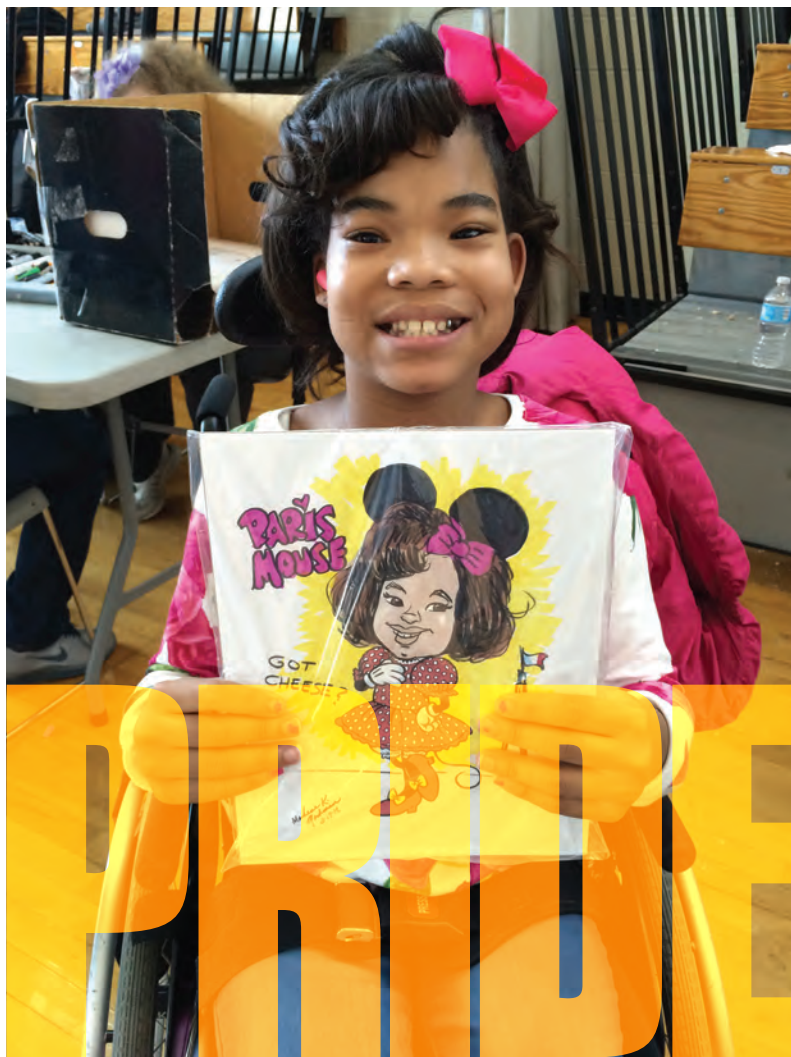
TRUSTEE GRANTS

Ocean Community YMCA
 Russell Byers Charter School
 Mercy Neighborhood Ministries of Philadelphia, Inc.
 Scribe Video Center
 Greater Newark Conservancy
 South Eastern Michigan Indians, Inc.
 Boys & Girls Clubs of Southeastern Michigan
 Images for Conservation Fund
 Chesapeake Center for Youth Development
 The Bridge Teen Center
 Schwab Rehabilitation Hospital
 B Walker Ranch
 Bloomington Parks Foundation
 Environmental Learning for Kids
 cityWILD
 Orchards Children's Services
 Jubilee Consortium
 United States Tennis Association Foundation
 Chicago Youth Centers
 Outdoors Empowered Network

NYC Outward Bound Schools
 Folger Shakespeare Library
 Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Cincinnati
 Maynard Jackson Youth Foundation
 The Salvation Army - Dick and Beverly Davis Corps
 Mama's House
 West End Neighborhood Association
 Haven for Hope of Bexar County
 LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes

SPECIAL GRANTS

Coaching Corps
 Camp Joy
 The Trust for Public Land
 Frost Valley YMCA
 Organization of Black Aerospace Professionals
 SOS Outreach
 Haven for Hope of Bexar County
 Cranbrook Educational Community/Horizons-Upward Bound
 ELEVATE Orlando
 Latino Theater Company



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joy



CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR AT-RISK YOUTH

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