



This annual report provides a brief summary of our work.  
Please visit **[nationalrecreationfoundation.org](http://nationalrecreationfoundation.org)** for more detailed information.











## WELCOME MESSAGE

The Trustees take pride that the National Recreation Foundation (NRF) creates opportunities for youth in resource-challenged communities to get active, outdoors and engaged in a wide range of recreation programs. Through support from NRF, youth this year kayaked in state parks in Texas, engaged in robotics in Georgia, jumped rope in California, grew vegetables in Arkansas, learned to play squash in Ohio, and played the violin in a youth orchestra in Pennsylvania. By cultivating healthy behaviors and important life skills, NRF seeks productive, rewarding and healthy futures for our nation's most vulnerable young people.

Because needs vary in different parts of the country, NRF awarded 42 grants in support of programs in over 20 states. Each grant was tailored to the specific needs of the community served. While the diverse mix of programs mirror the complex needs and challenges in each region, the programs share creative and entrepreneurial approaches to youth development, the hallmark of NRF's grantmaking.

In response to the devastation wrought by Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico, NRF's Board of Trustees took special action on behalf of the island's young people. NRF dedicated \$455,000 to support desperately needed health, wellness, sports and environmental education programs for youth across Puerto Rico. To learn more about our investment in Puerto Rico, visit page 6.

NRF recognizes that the backbone of every nonprofit is the team of its leadership and staff. Our research and experience show that these nonprofit professionals have few professional development opportunities to stay on the cutting edge of excellence. For this reason, NRF offers grantees two capacity-building workshops annually at no cost to its grantees. This year, we presented a workshop in Atlanta on "Purposeful Boards: Powerful Fundraising" and a second in Chicago on "Nonprofit Executive Leadership." NRF remains committed to supporting grantees by equipping their leaders with the skills and tools needed for success.

Another important focus in 2018 was our continued investment in Atlanta's long under-resourced Westside. NRF's partnership with and investment in the Laureus Sport for Good Foundation engages sports-based youth development organizations to provide recreation programs where there were none, as well as improving the technical skills, capacity and teamwork among these organizations. Our second year commitment of \$100,000 to the Laureus Sport for Good Atlanta initiative is proving to be an important and groundbreaking catalyst for community revitalization.

NRF's mission is as important today as it was at our founding in 1965. To enhance the role of recreation as a positive force for youth in challenged circumstances, NRF stimulates innovative recreation programs, advances technical abilities of grantee organizations, and increases opportunities for recreation in the communities that need it most.

Sincerely,



Robert A. Stuart, Jr.



Sophia B. Twichell

## INTRODUCTION

The National Recreation Foundation is a nonprofit charitable foundation supporting the development of recreation programs that encourage youth and young adults to get active, outdoors and creatively engaged with life. By cultivating healthy behaviors and important life skills, we seek to nurture productive, rewarding and healthy futures for our nation's most vulnerable young people.

## 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 to those who are economically, physically and mentally disadvantaged.

## 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 \$45 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.

NRF's 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, 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 and Trustee Grants are limited to three years. When an opportunity arises to significantly move the needle on behalf of underserved youth, the Board may provide support through an Impact Grant.

## GRANT SELECTION CRITERIA

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

1. Grants must be consistent with NRF's mission.
2. Proposed programs must serve at-risk youth between the ages of 6-24.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. Programs must have leverage potential, such as matching funds or the development of partnerships or collaborations, that will enhance a grant's effectiveness.
7. Programs should be capable of being replicated in other communities or agencies. Grants may be made to facilitate such replication.
8. Grant proposals should demonstrate how a program will be sustained at the end of the grant period when it becomes the exclusive responsibility of the grantee.
9. Evaluation measures are required. Outcome rather than output measures are preferred and are expected for larger grants.

Images in this publication of program participants have been provided by our grant recipients. We greatly appreciate their contributions.



## 2018 ROBERT W. CRAWFORD PRIZE WINNER



### *Peter Westbrook*

*The National Recreation Foundation is delighted to present the 2018 Robert W. Crawford Achievement Prize to Peter Westbrook. With this prize, the Foundation recognizes Westbrook's dedication to transforming the lives of young people in New York through his passion for fencing.*

Peter Westbrook is no stranger to struggle. Born to a Japanese mother and an African-American father, Peter and his sister were raised in poverty in Newark, New Jersey. Peter enrolled in fencing as the result of a five-dollar bribe from his mother, who, as a single parent, was desperate to keep him off the streets. Born in Japan into a long line of samurai warriors and Noh dancers, she understood that fencing, with its discipline, speed and mental challenge, had a good chance of capturing her young son's imagination. She was correct in her suspicions, and Peter soon excelled at the sport. His passion for the sport would yield a full fencing scholarship to New York University, where he received world class coaching and a B.S. in Marketing. He eventually would be acknowledged as the greatest American fencer of the 20th Century.

The Guinness Book of World Records lists Peter Westbrook as the all-time winning American record holder for 13 U.S. National Sabre championships. He is a six-time Olympian and the first African-Asian American Olympic Sabre-Fencing Champion, capturing a Bronze Medal in the 1984 Los Angeles Games.

In addition to holding three Gold Medals from the Pan-American games, Peter was honored by his fellow Olympians with the role of flag bearer for the United States during the closing ceremonies for the 1992 Olympic Games.

In 1991, Peter founded the Peter Westbrook Foundation, which uses the sport of fencing to assist young people to achieve their personal best emotionally, intellectually and physically.

Since its launch 25 years ago, Peter Westbrook Foundation athletes have represented the United States in fencing tournaments around the world. The impressive accomplishments of its young athletes include: qualifying for and medaling in Olympic Games, qualifying for and medaling in the Senior World Championships, and bringing home 37 individual and team national titles. As a result of this highly successful program and training, Peter Westbrook Foundation athletes continue to receive outstanding scholarships, excel academically, and graduate from top universities throughout the United States. The over 4,000 youth served by the Peter Westbrook Foundation unquestionably are making their mark on the world.





## 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, 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. Crawford personified those qualities of leadership and commitment that the Foundation seeks to foster, which is why this Achievement Prize is 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.

## PREVIOUS ROBERT W. CRAWFORD AWARD RECIPIENTS

Year	Name	City
2017	Susan Teegen	Philadelphia, PA
2016	Michael "Spike" Lobdell	Stonington, CT
2015	Khary Lazarre-White	New York City, NY
2014	Jacqueline Joyner-Kersee	St. Louis, MO
2013	Harrison I. Steans	Chicago, IL
2012	Lt. Gen. John B. Conaway	Bethany Beach, DE
2011	Eleanor M. Josaitis	Detroit, MI
2010	Melissa T. Harper	Boston, MA
2009	Robert Kohel	Marquette County, WI
2008	Sidney Epstein	Chicago, IL
2007	J. Kent Hutcheson, Ph.D.	Denver, CO
2006	Margaret C. Daley	Chicago, IL
2005	Ronnie Lott	Redwood City, CA
2004	Peter A. Witt, Ph.D.	College Station, TX
2003	Jane G. Pepper	Philadelphia, PA
2002	Dr. David McLone	Chicago, IL







# INVESTING IN PUERTO RICO'S YOUTH



In the wake of Hurricane Maria, with schools in Puerto Rico going through a very slow recovery process, Boys & Girls Clubs of Puerto Rico (BGCPR) is filling the void with a combination of recreation opportunities.



Para La Naturaleza helps youth understand the environmental causes and implications of the hurricanes. By participating in the restoration of important natural areas, participants are part of the rebuilding process.



The residents of Puerto Rico experienced a one-two punch in September of 2017 with two Category 5 hurricanes, Irma and Maria, hitting the island in the space of two weeks. Regarded as the worst natural disaster on record to impact the island, Hurricane Maria resulted in heavy loss of life, the complete collapse of its power grid, intense deforestation and massive school closures. Puerto Rican children were profoundly affected.

Fifty-eight percent of children in Puerto Rico live below the poverty line. This number has surely surged due to the fiscal crisis and recent natural disasters. Additionally, more than 100 schools have closed. It is well documented that children who live in poverty are at higher risk of poor health, lower school performance, delinquent behavior and prolonged economic hardship.

After witnessing the devastation in Puerto Rico, NRF's Board of Trustees committed to take action on behalf of the island's young people. One of NRF's distinctive qualities is its ability to identify innovative programs and partners. Further, its size allows NRF to be nimble and responsive to situations of great need. Modeled after a special investment in Mississippi to provide summer camp and after-school programs for youth impacted by 2005's Hurricane Katrina, NRF identified two key partners in Puerto Rico: Boys & Girls Clubs of Puerto Rico and Para La Naturaleza. In 2018, NRF committed \$455,000 in support of desperately needed health, wellness, sports and outdoor education programs for youth across Puerto Rico.



Hacienda Buena Vista prior to Hurricanes Irma and Maria, one of Para La Naturaleza's six visitor centers across the island. Image top left preceding page shows devastating effect to habitat, and complete denudation of the forest surrounding the facility.

#### **Boys & Girls Clubs of Puerto Rico - \$250,000**

*Boys & Girls Clubs of Puerto Rico Sports and Recreation Program*

NRF support allowed Boys & Girls Clubs of Puerto Rico to expand its Health & Wellness Program, Triple Play, from six to 13 Clubs, effectively doubling the number of youth served. This includes the addition of well-being activities, such as yoga and art classes, designed for participants to express their emotions as they deal with trauma from the disaster and its aftermath. Activities include sports, daily physical challenges and weekly art lessons, including visual arts, dance and theater and yoga classes.

#### **Para La Naturaleza - \$142,000**

*After School Immersion in Nature Program*

Impacts from the hurricanes included massive deforestation, landslides and flooding. With NRF funding, Para La Naturaleza is piloting an after-school program which serves students from low income communities within five regions of Puerto Rico. Through field excursions, workshops and activities, such as hiking, kayaking, seed collecting and tree planting, Para La Naturaleza helps youth understand the environmental causes and implications of the hurricanes. By participating in the restoration of important natural areas, participants are part of the rebuilding process. The program provides students with the opportunity to play, discover and explore the outdoors. This nurtures a connection with nature, raises awareness about conservation, develops their leadership skills, and increases their confidence and resilience to overcome the cycle of poverty.

#### **Boys & Girls Clubs of Puerto Rico and Para La Naturaleza - \$63,000**

*Special Collaborative Project: Immersion in Nature Saturday Program*

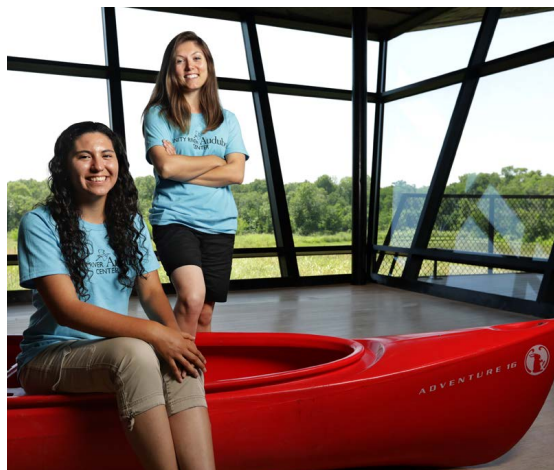
A wonderful result of NRF's engagement in Puerto Rico is a new collaboration between BGCPR and Para La Naturaleza, two organizations doing important work with island youth but which had never previously collaborated. Now BGCPR youth have the opportunity to participate in Saturday excursions to Para La Naturaleza's nature reserves, where they explore unique ecosystems, such as caves, coastal forests and reefs. They are engaged in a citizen science project, Map of Life, collecting ecological data that inform management plans. Additionally, they are distributing native seed and re-planting trees in areas that suffered damage from the hurricanes. Participants are healing themselves as they heal the island by developing an understanding of and appreciation for natural habitats, healthy living and their interdependence with nature.

## GRANTS OVERVIEW

In 2018, the National Recreation Foundation awarded over \$1,818,000 in grants to organizations providing recreational opportunities for at-risk youth. Grants were awarded in the following amounts and categories: seven grants totaling \$553,080 in Special Grants, 29 grants totaling \$690,000 in Trustee Grants, four grants totaling \$555,000 in Impact Grants and two grants totaling \$20,000 in other awards.

### TRUSTEE GRANTS

Boys & Girls Clubs of America  
Boys & Girls Clubs of Bloomington  
Bridge Teen Center  
Brooklyn Charter School  
Chesapeake Arts Center  
Chicago Parks Golf Alliance  
Cincinnati Squash Academy  
Cobscook Community Learning Center  
Colorado Youth Outdoors  
Detroit Police Athletic League, Inc.  
Elevate Phoenix  
First Baptist Church, Waukegan  
Forest Preserve Foundation  
Georgia FIRST Robotics  
Haven for Hope of Bexar County  
Heart of the City  
Jackie Joyner-Kersey Foundation  
Jubilee Consortium  
Mercy Neighborhood Ministries of Philadelphia, Inc.  
Ouray County Schools Community Resource Consortium  
Philadelphia Youth Orchestra  
River LA  
SeriousFun Children's Network  
South Eastern Michigan Indians, Inc.  
Susan L. Curtis Charitable Foundation  
The Nature Conservancy of Illinois  
West End Neighborhood Association  
Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center  
Youth Outside



### SPECIAL GRANTS

Audubon Texas  
Coaching Corps  
Elevate New England  
Latino Theater Company  
Mannie Jackson Center for the Humanities Foundation  
Rippleeffect  
The Trust for Public Land

### IMPACT GRANTS

Boys & Girls Clubs of Puerto Rico  
Laureus Sport for Good Foundation USA  
Para La Naturaleza

Detailed information about 2018 grants is can be found at [nationalrecreationfoundation.org](http://nationalrecreationfoundation.org)





*In memory of*

**JAMES R. DONNELLEY**

June 18, 1935 – September 25, 2018

With profound appreciation for Jim's 22 years of service  
as a trustee of the National Recreation Foundation and  
his dedication to creating opportunity for Chicago's most  
vulnerable young people, one child at a time.

TRANSPARENT FLY SHEET  
(SIDE A)







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CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR AT-RISK YOUTH