

## Natural Connections Academy, Inc.

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Worley, ID 83876

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We are on the Web!

[www.naturalconnectionsacademy.net](http://www.naturalconnectionsacademy.net)



Natural Connections Academy, Inc. (NCA) is a private, non-profit outdoor school. We provide a nature-based educational experience for students in 3rd through 5th grades in Kootenai, Benewah, and Spokane Counties.

In order to learn about their world, students are immersed in the natural environment through their own inquiries and wonder. Students solve real-world problems through hands-on learning opportunities. The goal is to reconnect students with nature so that they can be good stewards of their local environment.

Natural Connections Academy, Inc. (NCA) mission is to connect children's learning to the environment. Building connections between nature and academics, we want students to learn responsibility, accountability, and ownership of their education. Through these connections, they will solidify their role in their local communities and become environmentally focused leaders.

## Volunteer Opportunities

As our school grows, we will be looking for volunteers to assist us in various areas.

If you are interested in helping, please call 208-428-6224

- Trail Preparation
- Sign Creation
- Grant Writing
- Curriculum Creation
- Office Manager (July)
- Social Media Manager
- Marketing Associate

## Other ways to help:

We are searching for:

- **large rounds of wood** to create desks in our outdoor learning area. Rounds need to be 2' high with a diameter of 20".
- **Bird bath, bird feeders**
- **Square patio stones** (100)
- **Fold up tables** (2)
- **Chairs**



August 2022

Volume 1, Issue 5

Our Educational Partners:

- Birds of Prey Northwest
- Stimson Lumber
- Idaho Forest Products Commission
- Project Learning Tree Idaho
- Idaho Rangeland Resource Commission
- Kootenai Shoshone Soil & Water Conservation District
- Coeur D'Alene Tribe Dept. of Education
- Project WET
- IDAH<sub>2</sub>O
- Kootenai County Noxious Weed Dept.

Current fundraising total:



Amount needed to provide the education to students as envisioned:



Natural Connections Academy, Inc.



### Updates and News:

It seems that July came and went faster than a speeding bullet! August is here and with it the start of our first Academic Year! We are so excited and are looking forward to getting students outside! Please spread the word that we have only a small number of openings for the 2022-2023 school year, and we don't want any students to miss out! Encourage families to reach out and get more information.

Our July was hot and furious. The work on the pavilion continues and it is coming along great. The roof is up, and the metal roofing has been attached. The wall that will hold the whiteboard has been constructed and awaits the plywood, the posts are being covered, and next will be railing around the elevated side. Still to come is an area for washing hands, cubbies for outdoor gear, a counter for students to sit at when doing individual work, canvas sides, the heater, and a storage area.

We continue to work to try to secure log segments to use as desks, but we have found some pieces to use

for chairs. These will be placed in an outdoor area in the learning location for use when students need to have a place to sit and complete written work, but we don't want to use the pavilion.

We continue to look at grants and apply for those that are applicable to our mission. Fingers crossed that we are able to procure funds to purchase some of the science equipment required to complete some of the learning tasks within our curriculum.

We have been working very hard on outreach. We have digital marketing with KHQ through multiple avenues, Facebook and Google Ads, attendance at Farmers Markets, Concert Series, and local organization meetings.

Even with all of this, it seems as if we are struggling to find the perfect combination for reaching the largest audience. But, we continue to try to get the word out to gain donors, procure additional educational partners, and increase our enrollment numbers.

Our excitement and anticipation for our starting date of August 15th has all of us buzzing!

We are looking for guest writers for our newsletter. If you are interested in sharing stories about your outdoor experiences or your thoughts on educating outdoors, we would be happy to have you share them! Contact us [info@naturalconnectionsacademy.net](mailto:info@naturalconnectionsacademy.net).

**Enrollment is OPEN!**

**ONLY LIMITED SPOTS AVAILABLE.**

**School scheduled to begin on August 15th!**



*Educational  
Partner  
Spotlight*



Established in 1984, Project WET is water education for Pre-K-12 teachers, informal educators and community members. The mission of Project WET is to advance water education to understand global challenges and inspire local solutions.

**CORE BELIEFS**

**Our publications, training workshops, global network and community events are grounded in the following core beliefs:**

- WATER CONNECTS US ALL
- WATER IS FOR ALL WATER USERS
- WATER MUST BE MANAGED SUSTAINABLY
- WATER DEPENDS ON PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND ACTION

**OUR MISSION**

**Advancing water education to understand global challenges and inspire local solutions**

We achieve our mission by:

- Publishing water resource education materials that are appropriate for many different age groups and cultures and offer comprehensive coverage of the broad topic of water.
- Providing training workshops to educators at all levels, formal and non-formal, on diverse water topics so that those educators can reach children with objective, experiential, science-based water education .
- Implementing customized projects with corporations, government organizations, and local watershed managers.
- Building a worldwide network of educators, water resource professionals, NGOs, water scientists, and other experts to advocate for the role of water education in solving complex water issues.

*The Shuttle...*

Natural Connections Academy will transport student from our base location at the Worley Community Center to the various learning areas where students will be engaging with the outdoors.

Within our shuttle we are able to provide instruction using a white board and show media presentations, pictures, graphs, etc. with the mounted projector.

We also will use the shuttle to pick up students from various stops located in our local communities.



*Six Ways  
Nature Helps  
Children Learn*

BY MING KUO  
JUNE 7, 2019

Continued from last month....

**Nature settings may promote social connection and creativity**

The social and physical environment in which children learn can make a difference in their academic success. Letting kids spend time in settings with natural elements or giving them structured nature experiences can make for a calmer, socially safe, and fun learning environment. And being outdoors can also enhance peer-to-peer relationships and student/teacher relationships needed for learning, even for students who otherwise feel marginalized socially.

Some argue that nature provides a rich tapestry of “loose parts”—sticks, stones, mud—that encourage pretend play and exploration, creativity and problem solving. Indeed, teachers’ and principals’ observations suggest that children’s play becomes strikingly more creative, physically active, and social in the presence of loose parts.

It’s clear to me that we need to do more to bring this important resource into our schools. Architects and city planners should keep trees and green areas in and near schoolyards. And teachers and principals should incorporate lessons outdoors and use recess not as a reward for good behavior, but as a way to rejuvenate students’ minds for the next lesson.

More next month

*From the Founder...*

As a part of a family of 10 that included his, hers, and theirs, we all had to pitch in and help with whatever needed to be done. That might include washing dishes, helping set up or clear the table, cleaning the house, gathering firewood, raking leaves... you get the idea. As a young child I learned to never use the words “I’m bored” with either of my



parents. Say those words and you were destined to end up doing a rather undesirable chore. My father’s words would be something like, “Oh, you’re bored huh? I am sure we can find something for you to do.” So, as you can imagine, I found multiple ways to keep myself busy.

Some of my favorite busy work was playing basketball, riding around on a little Yamaha 80, lip syncing with my brothers and sisters to our favorite songs. I also used to make up songs to sing through the woods pretending to be in a show where the main character is lost in the woods or whatever was on my mind at the time. You could find me using left over pieces of wood from the latest remodeling project creating some weird sculpture. I was

a creative child.

When I was raising my son, he also became accustomed to finding things to do. I remember living on a wooded five acres in northern Wisconsin and my son making an obstacle course in the back of the house, around a pond, and through the various areas of the property. He used old pieces of plywood, pallets, and oddities he found in the garage.

The idea of children being out in nature seems normal to me. Didn’t every child find solitude, peace, excitement, wonder, and sparks of creativity outside? The number of children outdoors has diminished over time as I have traveled throughout my adult life. In the past, I would see children

playing in the puddles, creating forts, organizing a game of tag or baseball or whatever, but now I only see empty streets and abandoned playgrounds.

Natural Connections Academy is a chance to get children back outside. Learning and academics go hand in hand with outdoor experiences.

“Adventurous experiences out-of-doors are perceived to kindle the enthusiasm of the young, to develop their concern for others, for their community and for the environment. Such experiences provide the means of self-discovery, self-expression and enjoyment which are at once both stimulating and fulfilling.” *Lord Hunt of Llanfair Waterdine, KC, CBE, DSO*

*Tammi Masters*

**Interested in Donating?**

Choose what of our learning topics or projects you would like to support with your donation.

- Gardening
  - Math Outdoor Lab
  - Weather Monitoring and Data Collection Materials
  - Bird and Pond Native Plant Garden
  - Environmental Study and Testing Materials
  - Silviculture Study Materials
  - Reading Books (supplemental and for independent reading)
  - General Use Donation
- Total Donation: \_\_\_\_\_

Method of Payment

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- Bill Me
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Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_ CID \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

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**Shout Out and Thank You!**

**A BIG THANKS to the local organizations that have allowed us to share our information at their meetings!**  
**Panhandle Kiwanis**

**Sunrise Rotary**

**Kootenai Shoshone Soil and Water Conservation District**

*Also to individuals who have offered us advice, resources, and their assistance—We are thankful!*

**Derek Antonelli, Calypso Chapter, Idaho Native Plant Society**

**John Floyd**

**James Elkin, University of Idaho Extension, Project Wet**

**Michelle Youngquist, Idaho Project Learning Tree—Idaho Forest Products Commission**