

SIERRA CLUB'S INNER CITY OUTINGS (ICO) PROGRAM

Organization: The Sierra Club Foundation
Project: Sierra Club's Inner City Outings Program
Grant Period: January 1, 2009 – December 31, 2009
Reporting Period: January 1, 2009 – September 30, 2009

“The ICO has drastically improved our youths’ lives, by providing safe, fun, and adventurous activities for them to be a part of. Most of these children have never been out of San Diego, and now they have gone camping to the desert, camped at Sequoia, and played in the snow. Our children’s grades have improved, because they want to be included on the future trips. The ICO has provided nutritious meals for our children who normally are malnourished. The ICO volunteers have created a special bond with the kids and gained their trust when most of the adults in their lives have abandoned them or let them down. We feel that the ICO volunteers have been the most valuable resource we have obtained over the years of our program. We are truly grateful.”—Katie Price, staff, Alpha Omega Creative Arts Project, San Diego, California

“I have to say that this trip was one of the hardest, dehydrating, exhausting, scariest and greatest things I have ever done in my life. If given the opportunity, I’d do it all over again.”—Meng Yang, Minnesota ICO participant, describing his ten-day Sierra Club service trip in the Marble Mountains Wilderness

I. INTRODUCTION

The Sierra Club’s Inner City Outings (ICO) Program has 50 volunteer-led groups spread throughout the United States, teaching participants who’ve had no access to outdoor recreation how to enjoy the outdoors safely and responsibly. ICO promotes interpersonal skills and self-esteem by involving participants in teamwork, teaching them self-reliance outside an urban setting, and encouraging them to take an active role in protecting the environment. By helping its participants discover the beauty of wild lands, ICO also helps the Club build support for environmental protection in urban communities across the country, proving the truth of John Muir’s assertion that people who experience wilderness firsthand are much more likely to preserve it for future generations.

In 2009 ICO continued to provide safe, educational, and fun outings for urban youth across the country. At the same time, we also provided important leadership training and resources for the volunteer leaders who keep the program alive. During this grant reporting period, the ICO program:

- Led outings for 6,499 youth participants;
- Recorded 7,697 youth participant days—9,464 including adults—in the wilderness, ranging from day hikes to weekend backpacking trips;
- Conducted 21 local service projects, including seed plantings, river cleanups, and the removal of invasive non-native plants;
- Provided youth scholarships and ten-year Sierra Club memberships to nine ICO youth from four groups who participated in two national Club ten-day service trips in California;
- Conducted one training for 12 new ICO chairs in conjunction with local Sierra Club Outings leaders;

- Trained 13 ICO leaders from the Sacramento, San Francisco Bay, and our new Eastern Sierra ICO group to lead remote overnight trips;
- Conducted Action Plan workshops for six ICO groups, with two more scheduled this year;
- Raised approximately \$120,000 and distributed it to ICO groups, ensuring fun and inspirational outdoor experiences led by volunteers that were well-equipped;
- Raised the profile of ICO within the Sierra Club and in the field via a variety of communications tools; and
- Improved resources for volunteers including the development of best practices toolkits, a recruitment guide, and recognition service pins.

These accomplishments are described in greater detail below.

II. ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

A. Group Highlights

Fifty ICO groups work with local schools and community agencies, such as youth groups, clubs, and rehabilitation centers, to recruit participants and to organize and lead outings. Outings include day hikes, car camping, backpacking, bicycling, canoeing, horseback riding, kayaking, rafting, skiing, snowshoeing, sledding, and service projects. (Please see the Attachments section for a complete list of outings and ICO groups.)

Eastern Sierra ICO became our newest addition in June, founded by Maurica Anderson, a former leader from our San Francisco Bay ICO. Maurica started this new group because she realized that even though the small town of Bridgeport has the Sierras in its backyard, the kids in this community never get out and explore them. As a substitute teacher at Bridgeport Elementary School, Maurica connected with the school principal, who is committed to setting up day hike outings with each class throughout the school year. On August 25th, ten kids took their first day hike on one of the numerous trails within miles of the school. Maurica has also developed a relationship with a juvenile probation officer at the Mono County Probation Department, who plans to set up outings for the kids under his jurisdiction. Two volunteers completed an Outings Leader Training 201 workshop to lead remote overnight trips, and Maurica hopes to recruit more people to help her make this program thrive.

We also have heard from volunteers who want to start three additional programs. Maryvonne Devensky, an active Sierra Club volunteer from the Suwannee-St. John Group and an inner-city elementary school teacher, is working through all the steps to establish an ICO group in Gainesville, Florida. Maryvonne plans to start small, taking students at her own school on day hikes. She has scheduled an information/recruitment meeting in October and identified several locations for nearby hikes, and she is now researching transportation options in hopes of getting things ready to go by year's end.

A former leader from our Tucson ICO, William Drabkin, moved to Corvallis, Oregon, where he hopes to start up an ICO program. William and his wife, Mallory Marquet, have garnered support from the local Sierra Club. They also conducted leader training in July for eight teachers from three middle schools in nearby Albany who want to get their students engaged in the outdoors.

And most recently, Dorothy Littlejohn, an energetic Sierra Club volunteer from the Los Padres Chapter in Southern California (Santa Barbara/Ventura) is working on establishing an ICO group in

that area. Dorothy currently volunteers on outings with local high school youth in conjunction with the Forest Service. She hopes to formalize this outing relationship via an ICO program, eventually reaching out to the families of the participating students and getting them all more involved in the Club's educational activities. As much as Santa Barbara has a reputation for affluence and opportunity, it also has its share of poverty, gangs, and youth who do not have the opportunity to enjoy and explore the natural beauty around them.

The following are highlights from a sampling of ICO groups across the country.

Baltimore ICO

“The river sojourns offer an opportunity to get in a canoe or kayak and paddle down the Patuxent River to experience the beauty in your own backyard and learn some of the challenges facing this amazing natural resource. Our trips are like adventures for us that without Baltimore ICO we would never be able to experience.”—Nicole Veltre, ICO leader and science teacher at Digital Harbor High School, Baltimore

For the fifth year, Baltimore ICO's Digital Harbor High School students finished their semester with a five-day kayaking sojourn down the local Patuxent River. With help from the Chesapeake Bay Trust, these ICO youth paddled the river, camped out, participated in wetlands restoration (setting up deer enclosures, removing invasive species, constructing a nature play area), learned local historical information, observed owls, and truly experienced the local Chesapeake Bay watershed. “The sojourn has been the perfect way to use everything we have learned about being out in the bay and watershed from our science and environmental education classes in a culminating end-of-the-year experiential event,” report the students. Adult leaders and student participants alike described the experience of paddling down the river as one that cleared their minds of daily troubles and gave them a personal connection to the river that stayed with them over time.

Birmingham ICO

“Perhaps shark teeth smoothed some of the rough spots in this youth's life.”—Margo Rebar, Birmingham ICO chair

A highlight for the Birmingham ICO group included a trip with youth from the Interfaith Hospitality House, a temporary housing facility for homeless families, to Shark Tooth Creek Park, a privately held natural area with an abandoned commercial catfish pond. This group first gathered under the pavilion for a brief talk by the owner about the geological history of this part of Alabama, which was a sand bar in a tropical ocean millions of years ago that became a favorite feeding ground for 16 different species of sharks. Then, the group moved on to a small sandy creek and was told they could collect as many shark teeth as they liked, and that each person would be allowed to take home 15 teeth! Within minutes, each participant had found several teeth, and soon the aim became to find the largest, most perfect tooth, not just any old tooth. Both adults and youth alike were amazed at what they found in their search for a tooth of each kind.

Even though they later went swimming in the pond and cavorted on a trampoline raft, the participants said that finding and comparing the shark teeth was the best part of the outing. Two weeks later, Margo, the trip leader, heard that teeth left in one of the kids' pockets “chewed up” a washing machine in the Hospitality House. The shark teeth, of course, were unaffected! Margo comments, “Of greater significance was the social interaction of the youth in our group. Prior to the outing, the social services director had forewarned me that one of the participants was reluctant to join us since he was experiencing difficulties in relationships with others in the shelter. However, as the outing

progressed, I observed that all of the youths were sharing, talking, and helping each other. The once isolated teenager had, at least for the duration of this outing, become an accepted part of the group.”

Miami ICO

“They went with the flow and commented that they enjoyed the peace of being outdoors, the company of caring adults, and having a moment to be just being quiet and still. Their appreciation for nature’s tranquil moments was powerful.”—Meredith Beattie, Miami ICO chair

Miami ICO held a day of service and nature exploration in Biscayne Bay for a group of young men and women from Miami Edison Senior High School that participate in an after-school and summer leadership program with the Non-Violence Project, a non-profit that seeks to prevent youth violence. Miami ICO coordinated this outing with Shake-A-Leg Miami, one of the largest adaptive water sports facilities in the United States. Shake-A-Leg provides recreation (kayaks, pontoon boats, and small sailboats) and health and wellness education for children and adults facing physical, developmental, and economic challenges.

The plan was to help Shake-A-Leg staff clean the grounds, put away equipment, and prepare the space for a fundraising event, with a kayaking adventure down the shore of Miami after completing the work. Due to extremely high winds and unsafe kayaking conditions in the bay, however, the group adapted its plan and took one of the pontoon boats out to the “spoil islands” that were created by the dredging of Biscayne Bay. Participants walked the nature trail; swam in shallow water; led a partner on a “blind” trust walk across a sandbar; observed horseshoe crabs, fish, and vegetation; and just had fun in nature!

What was notable for the ICO leaders and agency staff was the positive energy and attitude maintained throughout the outing. These youth participants come from a neighborhood known for its gang activity and drug trafficking, yet when working together to clean up or frolicking in shallow bay water, the realities of urban life disappeared. At the end of the outing, each youth volunteered statements in the closing circle that spoke to the calming effects of nature. One student said, “I like being out here because at home there is never quiet—out here, no one is asking anything of me and I can really think.”

Nashville ICO

“Where’s the pipe?”—Nashville ICO participant

Volunteers from the Nashville ICO, one of our newest groups, have been taking youth on day hikes in their area. One memorable moment happened on an outing to the Discovery Center’s wetlands with seven children, ages 9 to 12, and their adult companions (“bigs”) from the Murfreesboro Big Brothers/Big Sisters organization. As the group explored the wetlands, they came upon a natural spring. One little boy stared in wonder at this water coming out of the ground, repeatedly dipping his hands in it as he asked, “Where is the pipe?” The ICO leader, in surprise, realized that these kids have no idea where water truly comes from and turned this into an educational moment. The light went on for the leader, too, as she realized how different her world is from that of the ICO kids’ and gained a new appreciation for how ICO can bring them together.

New York ICO

“...most raised money to sponsor their hike up Bear Mountain—a trek that’s challenging for these kids, but not insurmountable.”—Angela Bole, New York ICO chair

New York ICO volunteers combined forces with all five of their participating agencies for a hike/fundraiser. About 60 middle school and high school kids got donations to sponsor their hike up Bear Mountain, which is about an hour north of New York City along the Hudson River. The event raised \$2,000 for New York ICO, but more importantly it got all the ICO participants in the same place at the same time working toward a common goal. The participants really got a sense of how large the New York ICO program is and were able to feel that, through their fundraising efforts, they each had made a personal contribution to keeping that program afloat.

Orange County ICO

“OMG [Oh My God], it was just the hardest thing I ever did. I wanted to turn around, but I just couldn’t let the team down, so I kept going and, WOW, I made it. I was proud of myself. It just doesn’t get any better than this.”—Bolsa Grande High School Wilderness Adventure Club participant, Orange County ICO

Dave Fujiyama is a teacher and a sponsor of the after-school Wilderness Adventure Club (WAC) at Bolsa Grande High School in Orange County, California, as well as an ICO leader extraordinaire. WAC is a way to get students involved in environmental service and stewardship, leadership development, and outdoor activities. Students perform various environmental service projects at school and then go on day hikes and overnight camping or backpacking adventures with ICO on the weekends. Dave has been successful at grooming some of these students to be trained as ICO youth leaders, as well as Angeles Chapter outing leaders after high school graduation.

During spring break in 2009, Dave took 25 students to Joshua Tree National Park. Dave says, “Anyone who has been on an extended ICO trip will tell you about the magic that happens to kids in the back county!” The group found that magic on Ryan Mountain, where they backpacked under a starry desert sky from their drive-in base camp at Sheep Pass. The next day they climbed to the summit of Ryan Mountain, where they snuggled into a windy, but cozy, back-country camp. In the morning, they were treated to a glorious summit sunrise. One kid, who was a notorious loner, admitted that this experience made him reach out to the other kids, even one who he thought hated him. Dave reflects, “Isn’t it true that our wilderness areas are kinds of spiritual sanctuaries that promote healing and provide a platform from which to launch new beginnings?” ICO doesn’t get any better than that!

San Jose ICO

“This outing was so memorable for demonstrating the power of getting kids outside of their comfort zones. I’ll never forget it!”—Debra DiBiase, San Jose ICO chair

San Jose ICO leaders took 13 middle school boys, ages 11 to 13, from Cesar Chavez Academy, a school where 92% of the students qualify for the free and reduced lunch program, to play in the snow at Donner Pass and stay overnight at the Sierra Club’s Hutchinson Lodge. During the day, the group skied, sledged, and slid down all the trails around the lodge, with some of the boys experiencing snow for the first time. In the evening, with the moon reflecting brightly on the snow, the leaders decided to take the kids for a night hike on the same trails they had played on earlier that day. In this suddenly strange environment, the boisterous group of boys became very quiet. One boy, one of the boldest that afternoon, declined to even step outside at first, electing to stay behind with several adults instead.

As the group walked away from the lodge, he ran up to one of the leaders and asked if he could join them. One of the leaders took him as her trail “buddy.” After they had walked for a bit, he asked her if she was afraid. “Not really. Are you?” she said. “A little,” he replied. “Would you like me to hold your hand?” she asked. He replied, “Yes,” grabbing her hand, and that’s how they walked the entire hike. She noticed that several other boys were holding on to their “buddies,” too, and not one person laughed at that sight. All of the boys were clearly working very hard not to let their fear of the dark and the unknown get to them. This was one of those ICO moments that exhibits how powerful the outdoor experience is for city kids.

Washington D.C. ICO

“The trip was memorable for a number of reasons. It was a trip to a lovely park with both woods and highly tended gardens within the city limits. It [was] a short drive from [the children’s] homes, but it might as well be a million miles away.”—William Maxwell, Washington D.C. outings leader

Washington D.C. ICO volunteers try to take advantage of all the great natural and civic resources right within the city limits, showing the populations they work with all that is accessible via public transportation from their inner city neighborhoods. In June, they took 25 children from a low-income Highland Addition neighborhood housing project to the National Arboretum. Each child got a digital camera so they could photograph the flora and fauna in the Arboretum and enter their photos in a D.C.-wide student photo contest.

The kids really enjoyed the opportunity to explore the arboretum and focus their attention on photographing the brightly colored flowers. The pictures were vibrant and cheerful, and the kids were thrilled to take the photos home to brighten up their homes and share with their families. The outing brought out the best in the kids, especially the boys who often show only their rough sides. “Demonte glowed—literally glowed—when I congratulated him on a job well-done. That moment impacted me—how just a little encouragement could make a child feel so good about himself. That was really special,” says Anne Marie DiNardo, one of the leaders. For children who do not have much control over many things in their lives, this outing gave them the ability to use a camera, focus on the local natural environment around them, and preserve the experience to share with others.

B. ICO Collaboration with the Sierra Club National Service Trip Program

“I’ve always wanted to get involved with the Sierra Club but never knew how, so this was an amazing opportunity. I learned so much, including how to survive in the wilderness. The trip really broadened my horizons about the world around me and the earth I live on. It was an awesome, awesome trip!”—Kia Lor, Minnesota ICO participant describing our Marble Mountains service trip

“We were all extremely proud of our accomplishments. What was built on the trail can’t be measured in steps we took, the mosquito bites we endured, or the hours we spent in the woods—it can only be measured in the memories we share, the satisfaction we feel, and the friendships we made.”
—Josh McMinn, Louisville ICO chair and chaperone for our Clair Tappaan Lodge service trip

Thanks to a \$40,000 bequest for youth trip scholarships and Sierra Club memberships, ICO sponsored two Club service trips for nine youth participants and three adult chaperones in July. On July 19, Minnesota ICO leader Jennifer Greiber accompanied three teens from Minnesota ICO—Pang Thao, Meng Yang, and Kia Lor, from the Hmong American Partnership—on a backpacking adventure to fix trails in the rugged Marble Mountain Wilderness in northern California. All three teens had been identified as upcoming young leaders in ICO and in the Hmong community of the Twin Cities. These youth not only benefited from this experience of “firsts” but contributed positively to the larger group effort of all the service trip participants.

One week later, Dave Fujiyama, Orange County ICO leader, and Josh McMinn, Louisville ICO leader, accompanied five teens on a fun service project removing brush and dead wood in the Tahoe National Forest. They also finished a task they were only expected to begin—creating the new Valencia Vista Trail named after Service Outing Leader Suzanne Valencia. The participants—Giao Tran and Lucy Lang from the Wilderness Adventure Club at Orange County’s Bolsa Grande High School; Rizik, Jakliene, and Julia Lado from the English as a Second Language Program at Louisville’s Western Middle School; and Michael Vargas from Orlando’s Apopka High School—were based out of the Sierra Club’s Clair Tappaan Lodge during their trip. Both trips involved working directly with Forest Service personnel, who trained the participants in tool use and safety and supervised the projects.

We are thrilled to launch this collaboration with the Sierra Club’s Service Trip Program and plan to offer more opportunities for ICO youth to participate throughout the country next summer. This not only brings youthful energy and diverse populations to the Club’s service outings, but it provides ICO participants with an opportunity to go on a variety of outings, hone their outdoor leadership skills, and learn how they can improve wilderness accessibility and forest preservation in a new environment. The participants say it best. Giao Tran from Orange County ICO remarked, “It was amazing how a group of kids who didn’t even know one another bonded so quickly within the first day. We were all from different parts of the county with different backgrounds, spoke different languages, hung out with different types of people, yet we managed to connect. We learned a lot from each other.”

C. Training

We held one Sierra Club Outings Chair Training workshop this year at the Marin Headlands Institute. In March, 12 ICO chairs and co-chairs—some veterans and some new—representing nine ICO groups, spent the weekend with nine local outings chairs learning how to run their programs more effectively. The goals were to identify the keys to a successful outings program, recognize the strengths and weaknesses of one’s own program, and learn best practices from other ICO chairs. Workshops included the following topics: recruiting and retaining qualified outings leaders; tracking leader data; engaging volunteers; fundraising; publicity; planning an outings program; executing administrative responsibilities; how to teach our child abuse recognition and prevention module; and program evaluation and improvement.

The Sierra Club’s Outdoor Activities Training Program team also traveled to Clair Tappaan Lodge in the Sierras and provided a hands-on Outings Leader Training 201 workshop—our standard training for Club outing leaders who intend to lead remote overnight trips—to 13 ICO volunteers from our Sacramento, San Francisco Bay, and fledgling Eastern Sierra ICO groups. Two of the trainers were also ICO leaders who brought a valuable ICO perspective to the workshops, which focus on enhancing the interpersonal skills associated with outings leadership, such as managing a group, creating a positive group dynamic, and planning and implementing safe outings.

In addition, our ICO organizer conducted six Action Plan workshops for 54 volunteers (with a New York workshop scheduled in late October and a Spokane workshop in December this year). These full-day strategic planning sessions include comprehensive needs assessment, goal setting, and action plan development activities, followed by close communication between group members and the ICO organizer so she can help them adapt their plans as needed while collecting data that we can use to improve our program. In conjunction with three of these workshops, the ICO organizer conducted Outings Leader 101 (basic) and 201 (advanced) workshops for 29 volunteers, as well as Child Abuse Recognition and Prevention (CARP) trainings for 23 volunteers.

D. ICO Organizer

“Myla – you continue to amaze me with your energy and clear-cut yet compassionate style...love the work you do!”—Jacksonville ICO Action Plan Workshop participant

“The most beneficial part of the training was bringing people out of the ‘field’ and into responsible positions to do tasks needed to run ICO. It was a real pleasure to have Myla come and re-energize our active program.”—Bill Myers, Denver ICO chair

“You were a tremendous help and the whole effort I think is going to be very rewarding for our local group.”—Ann Clift, Austin ICO chair

In September, Myla Marks completed 18 months as our new ICO organizer, during which time she helped the ICO Program grow toward our goal of increasing the number of outings, participants, and trained leaders in the program. For the most part, Myla worked directly with our local ICOs to strengthen fledgling groups, develop existing group capacity, and establish new groups. To date, Myla has conducted seven Outings Leader Training workshops for 66 attendees and six CARP trainings for 42 attendees across the country. She also has held nine Action Plan workshops for 77 people. (Please see Appendix A for a full list of the trainings provided this year.)

Myla also developed a set of tools and resources to help ICO groups with fundraising, volunteer recruitment and retention, agency relations, publicity, and training. In addition to creating a set of best practices “idea cards” for our ICO tool kit and collecting information from the field to improve our trips, Myla worked with our National Steering Committee and other ICO staff to assemble an online recruitment guide for ICO leaders, complete with a brochure template, a PowerPoint presentation for new volunteers, publicity flyers, and a worksheet volunteers can use to walk themselves through a four-month-long recruitment process. This comprehensive guide is also filled with recruitment best practice ideas from volunteers across the country. Myla will be working with Miami ICO to pilot this recruitment guide from September through December of this year. To learn more about this project, please visit <http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/outings/ico/recruitment/> (ID: clubhouse, password: explore).

Lastly, Myla responded to our goal of improving leader recognition by coordinating a design contest to create pins honoring volunteers after their third or fifth year of service. A San Jose ICO leader won the design contest, with votes coming in from the majority of ICO chairs and National Steering Committee members. To date, more than 200 pins have been presented to ICO’s long-term leaders (69 three-year pins and 146 five-year pins.)

In late October, Myla will be attending an intensive four-day Effective Facilitator training offered by Leadership Strategies. At this training, she will focus on techniques to inspire action, promote clarity, manage group dynamics, and build consensus and commitment among ICO leaders and volunteers. She will use these new skills to review and improve current workshop resources and further develop her facilitation style.

For 2010, the ICO organizer’s primary goal will be to visit ten additional ICO groups and continue to provide needs assessments, workshops, and trainings upon request. Myla will also work on developing multi-group regional strategic planning workshops so that groups with similar challenges in the same geographic region can share ideas about how to address them. We plan to follow the recruitment guide with a similar tool kit for volunteer retention, so we can provide a set of realistic and proven resources for addressing the all-too-common issue of volunteer leader attrition. We also will be updating our online Outdoor Leader Training 101 and 201 workshop materials.

E. Funding

This has been a year of economic uncertainties, particularly for the non-profit world, and the Sierra Club has had to prioritize its activities based on reduced funding sources. National ICO did receive a bequest for \$100,000 this year, which has enabled us to maintain our basic program operations, but we did not have sufficient funds to distribute any mini-grants to local groups this year. Despite these uncertain economic times, however, our local groups continued to thrive with volunteer energy and creative fundraising activities.

Local Group Fundraising—Three ICO groups received grants for equipment and/or cash of up to \$5,000 from Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI). A number of other groups succeeded in soliciting grants ranging from \$2,000 to \$15,000 from a variety of foundations and organizations, including the Michael Lee Environmental Fund, Lockhart Vaughan Foundation, Chesapeake Bay Trust, Northrup Grumman Corporation, David Geffen Foundation, Myrtle L. Atkinson Foundation, and the Lassen Park Foundation. Seattle ICO hosted its second annual Search Party fundraiser with support from local merchants, and Boulder Valley ICO received \$1,000 from the University of Colorado Environmental Center's Microbreweries for the Environment benefit. Also, Orange County ICO signed on to the Ralphs Fund, a community program that provides this group with a percentage of what registered customers spend at Ralphs grocery stores.

The ICO administrator assisted many groups with grant solicitations this year in hopes of securing funding for 2010. Six groups await responses from Mountain Hardwear, and Los Angeles ICO has proposals pending with the Weingart Foundation, Ralph M. Parsons Foundation, and the Ahmanson Foundation. Washtenaw ICO submitted grants to the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation, the Community Foundation for Southeastern Michigan, the James A. and Faith Knight Foundation, and IKEA, while Washington D.C. ICO solicited the OberlKaler Community Grants Program. Orange County ICO has approached the Possible Dream Foundation; Seattle ICO has renewed a request to the Islands Fund; and the Spokane and Boulder Valley ICO groups each recently received \$5,000 grants from the Sierra Club's Building Bridges to the Outdoors Program.

ICO Organizer Funding—Two donor-advised funds have continued their commitment to support ICO. The Silicon Valley Community Foundation has committed \$225,000 over three years, and the Seattle Foundation has committed \$150,000 over two years (ending in 2009). Please see Section D above for the accomplishments to date of our ICO organizer.

The Sierra Club's Office of Advancement is working with the ICO administrator to identify additional foundations that might support the national ICO program, and the ICO Administrator continues to assist local ICO group chairs with requesting support from community foundations. We hope to hear soon regarding the many solicitations our groups have submitted to pay for their 2010 programming.

F. Publicity

A program goal for 2010 is to improve our communication and publicity strategies. We want to make it easier for volunteers to know what is going on at the national level, how they can take advantage of existing resources and support, and how they can involve themselves in the Sierra Club's national leadership. We also want to raise awareness of ICO's activities and accomplishments both within the Club and outside it so we can attract volunteers and potential supporters and promote ICO as a national program that helps youth become active, engaged in the environment, and involved in improving their communities.

To communicate more frequently and directly with ICO volunteers, we launched *E-News* in February (<http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/outings/ico/publicity/e-news/default.aspx>). We decided a simpler, bimonthly news blitz would be a more effective way to keep our leaders informed than lengthy quarterly newsletters. The ICO National Steering Committee members plan to examine our current methods of communication to determine how best to reach volunteers, engage them in program improvements and leadership activities, share resources and ideas, and strengthen the national ICO network.

Media Hits

This year we have had a number of features in Sierra Club publications and other media outlets:

- The May 5 edition of the *Sierra Club Insider*, the Club's electronic newsletter, included a feature about Tampa Bay ICO's outing with the West Point Boys & Girls Club to Upper Tampa Bay Park to learn about the estuary ecology of their backyard (http://action.sierraclub.org/site/MessageViewer?em_id=107381.0).
- In August, Mark Walters, ICO's national vice chair and a veteran ICO leader from Miami, spoke on Sierra Club Radio about the national ICO program (http://sierraclub.typepad.com/sierra_club_radio).
- Sheila Calderon, chair of West Palm Beach ICO, participated on a local PBS radio show, *Florida Forum*, to talk about ICO's involvement in local environmental service projects.
- In September our ICO/National Service Trip story appeared in the *Grassroots Scrapbook* section of the Sierra Club's Web site and later was featured in the October 6 edition of the *Insider* (http://action.sierraclub.org/site/MessageViewer?em_id=134821.0).
- Also in September, Meng Yang wrote a wonderful piece about his experiences in the Marble Mountains for *Hmoob Teen*, the teen magazine of the Hmong-American partnership (see attachments).
- Finally, and quite by surprise, we just received a copy of the *Horizon Air* in-flight magazine for September with a phenomenal article about Seattle ICO (see attachments).

In addition, the Austin, Orlando, and Washtenaw ICO groups all had feature articles in their local Sierra Club newsletters. We continue to encourage all ICO groups to submit stories for the national Sierra Club Web site as well as to their local Chapter and Group newsletters.

Other Recognition

Two ICO leaders received national awards from the Sierra Club this year: Allan Williams, a veteran ICO leader from Hartford, posthumously received the Madelyn Pyeatt Award honoring his long term commitment to getting youth outdoors (<http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/outings/ico/publicity/newsletters/2009/Summer%202009%20ICO%20newsletter.pdf>). Deborah Rudy, ICO national chair from 2007 to 2009, accepted the Communication Award for our ICO national newsletter.

In addition, West Palm Beach ICO and its youth participants received a Community Partner Award from the Lake Worth Community Center, a partner agency that provides after-school services to local Haitian and Hispanic youth, ages 6 to 17. This award acknowledges their involvement in community environmental service.

III. CONCLUSION

“There is a crisis of a diminution of interest, a generation of kids who are nature-deprived. How can we pry them—and not just them but their parents—away from their virtual devices that offer no real being or doing and substitute real experience that comes in capital-N “Nature?”—Ken Burns, documentary filmmaker

The strength of the ICO program lies in its volunteers and their abilities to provide quality outings to youth in their local communities. This year we have seen the positive impact of the work of our ICO organizer, who has provided support and concrete resources to the volunteers who keep the ICO program alive. Building on these successes, we will continue to provide needs assessments, visits, and training opportunities in 2010, as well as expand our best practices tool kits and other leader resources.

Moving forward, we also intend to raise our program’s visibility so that we can bring ICO—a pioneer with 33 years of experience at getting youth actively and positively engaged in the outdoors—into a prominent position within the recent No Child Left Indoors movement. We are excited to see that there is growing concern about children’s increasingly limited access to outdoor activities, and we hope to take advantage of this new awareness in order to reach more children and their families than ever before. Building upon the successes of this past year, we feel well-positioned to do so, and we are grateful to you for helping to make these successes possible. We thank you very much for your support.

IV. FINANCIAL REPORT

Financial Report for: Sierra Club's Inner City Outings National Program
Report to: The Sierra Club Foundation
Reporting Period: 1/1/09 - 9/30/09

	<u>Expenses</u>
Personnel	
Salaries and Benefits - ICO Administrator, ICO Assistant, ICO Organizer and Supervision	<u>\$106,434</u>
Subtotal Personnel	106,434
Program and Operations	
Consultants	320
Leader Screening Fees	5,698
Insurance	46,140
Postage	270
Printing/Copying	2,599
Supplies	1,061
Telephone/Email	389
Travel and Meetings	
Organizer & Steering Committee	6,148
Other ICO Staff	1,587
Sierra Club Training - Chair Training, Outings Leader Trainings	<u>30,000</u>
Subtotal Program and Operations	<u>94,212</u>
Subtotal Direct Costs	200,646
Overhead (15%)	<u>30,097</u>
Total	\$230,743

V. LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

With this report, please find enclosed the following attachments:

- A complete list of ICO groups and outings;
- A copy of Meng Yang's article in *Hmoob Teen Magazine*; and
- A copy of *Horizon Air's* article about Seattle ICO.

APPENDIX A
ICO Trainings from July 2008 through September 2009

GROUP/LOCATION	APW attendees	ICO OLT 101/201 & OLT 201 attendees	CARP attendees	Chair Training attendees
St. Louis ICO	8			
Wisconsin (OLT 201)		2		
Maryland (OLT 201)		19		
Raleigh ICO	8		7	
Philadelphia ICO	7	6	7	
Grand Rapids ICO	7			
Jacksonville ICO	13	13	7	
Manatee-Sarasota ICO	7	8	7	
Clair Tappaan Lodge (OLT 201)		13		
Denver ICO	11			
Austin ICO	9	8	9	
Portland ICO	7		5	
New York ICO (11/09)				
Spokane ICO (11/09)				
Baltimore, Seattle, Houston, Portland, Los Angeles, Manatee-Sarasota, Tampa, Nashville, Harrisburg ICOs, + potential Puerto Rico ICO				12
TOTALS	77	66	42	12

Note: APW = Action Plan Workshop; OLT = Outings Leader Training; CARP = Child Abuse Recognition and Prevention.