Eagle Eye Institute is a nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering urban people from underserved communities, especially youth of color, to be active caretakers of our environment.
Letter From The Foundation Team

Nearly 30 years and several thousands of youth later, Eagle Eye Institute is beginning a new chapter, even as the number of people, organizations, institutions, and companies committing to anti-racism grows. We have been engaged in equity and inclusion work since the beginning, but even we need to examine and change our language and practices when they inadvertently support the norm of dominant white culture versus allowing for alternatives. Eagle Eye’s commitment to positive change must be exemplified in its organizational structure and practices, and language is one of the ways in which we can and are beginning to build a more inclusive community.

We are also in a stronger position than ever to go well beyond connecting Holyoke youth with nature. For the first time in a decade or more, and with the support of our larger community, we have cultivated relationships with partners that will enable us to develop our full suite of learning, stewardship, and advocacy programs. Together with Kestrel Land Trust, the City of Holyoke, University of Massachusetts Amherst, Holyoke Boys & Girls Club, Holyoke High School, and other organizations including The Nature Conservancy, young people, especially those from historically marginalized backgrounds, will have an opportunity to elevate their learning to impact nature’s care in their community and region. These new programmatic opportunities will all be possible through strategic partnerships.

Developing and maintaining these partner relationships in any other organization would be the function of an executive director. We have had a dedicated Program Director building these relationships and growing our work in Holyoke since 2016, while the four of us have served an advisory role. During this pandemic, we have redirected our executive leadership role towards developing and adopting a five-year strategic plan, expanding the board, and reestablishing the advisory committee. Within two years, we plan to hire an executive director that can help us grow and thrive into the future, so that we can ramp up the services we provide and center the leadership of young people in developing the overall resiliency of Holyoke and other communities.

We need your help to bring Eagle Eye’s work powerfully into the future. Many of you have been on the journey with us since the beginning, and we are truly grateful for the love and support you have shared with us. We are committed to this mission for the long haul and we invite you to consider joining us in a special way. If you have not already, please consider an investment in Eagle Eye for the future through a Planned Legacy Gift (see the back page for more information).

With deep appreciation,
The Foundation Team
Anthony Sanchez, MaJa Kietzke, Chris Cato, and Bill Labich

Volunteer Spotlight

My name is Mariela Garcia Arredondo, and I am the daughter of Mexican immigrants. I have been volunteering with Eagle Eye since 2018, talking with students about soils and reflecting on our relationship with the land and food. I have worked with students and Eagle Eye staff to dig soil pits, explore the Boys & Girls Club urban garden soils, and talk about applying to college as a first-generation student from a low-income background. I value this work because providing young people the opportunity to take a break and tune into nature is so important for healing, connection, and inspiration - especially for youth of color.
Program Highlights

In January-March, we coordinated the third year of the Eagle Club after-school program at Holyoke High School Dean Campus in partnership with Kestrel Land Trust. The program offered students hands-on learning about environmental topics and career talks with local professionals. We also led Winter Exploration on Snowshoes programs with three school groups.

In June, we led a virtual Instructor Orientation for 20 new instructors on Zoom. Participants had the opportunity to reflect on their relationship with nature, connect with others in their field, learn about the Eagle Eye program model, and develop tools for effectively engaging youth in hands-on outdoor learning.

In July, we led the fourth year of our Residential Summer Internship program at our site in the Berkshires by implementing COVID safety protocols. We had four interns representing UMass Amherst, Williams College, Holyoke Community College, and Smith College (see page 5 for details).

In August, we led a three-week Nature & The City program with middle-school students at the Holyoke Boys & Girls Club. Youth learned about urban trees and wildlife, birding, the watershed, and pollution through hands-on activities at local parks.

This fall, we are leading a 10-week pilot Eagle Club with middle-school students at the Holyoke Boys & Girls Club and developing teacher trainings and a nature-based support group for students at Dean Campus in response to needs during the pandemic.

Youth Voices

“MY FAVORITE PART ABOUT TODAY WAS MEETING NEW PEOPLE.”
Damian, age 15, Winter Exploration on Snowshoes

“ONE IDEA I HAD TODAY WAS THAT OUR SCHOOL BUILDING COULD USE SOLAR PANELS ON THE ROOF.”
Dereck, age 16, Eagle Club

“I LEARNED A LOT ABOUT POLLUTION AND WATER FROM PARK RANGER TASHA.”
-Warner, age 13, Nature & The City
Introducing TerraCorps Member Ellie

My name is Ellie Viggiani, and I am the TerraCorps (AmeriCorps) service member with Eagle Eye Institute for the 2020-21 service year. I was raised in Medford, MA, but have been living in western Massachusetts for the past four years while attending Mount Holyoke College. At Mount Holyoke, I majored in Environmental Studies with a focus in restoration ecology and environmental education.

Although I grew up minutes from the Middlesex Fells, I often felt disconnected from nature as a young person. In high school, when I started to spend more time in the Fells, I grew interested in how to share this experience with more people, especially people who have been historically excluded from outdoor spaces. In college, I had the opportunity to lead environmental education programs with elementary and high school students. I am grateful to continue to learn and grow as an educator with Eagle Eye.

I serve as the Youth Education Coordinator and much of my work this fall has been coordinating Eagle Club at the Holyoke Boys & Girls Club. Eagle Club is an after-school program connecting young people from Holyoke to nature, each other, and themselves. Since we are unable to travel due to COVID-19, our main focus is on connecting students to nature locally. We have developed lessons on urban agriculture, wildlife, and sustainability.

One of my favorite moments was our garden stewardship day. I will never forget students’ excitement to try the fresh produce and start their own gardens back home. It has been amazing to watch the students grow closer as a group and get excited about nature and the environment.

Partner Spotlight

Jeremy Spool is post-doc student at UMass Amherst and a coordinator of the Massachusetts Young Birders Club.

The Young Birders Club believes that birding is a great gateway to a meaningful connection with the natural world. The club fosters communities of youth who take leadership of club activities. After an Eagle Eye instructor orientation in June, we realized the Young Birders Club and Eagle Eye share many common goals. Since then, we have led several activities together during the summer and fall.

As partners, we complement what each of our organizations bring to the table. The Young Birders Club brings the bird knowledge, the bird passion, and the tools to tune youth into the world of birds around them. Eagle Eye brings the expertise of experiential outdoor education, a passionate staff, and a rich network of educators and nature-enthusiastic youth of all backgrounds. Because of this invaluable partnership, we have been able to expand our reach and invite more youth into birding than before!
Summer interns Alec, Argenis, Lisa, and Jenna (left to right) on the deck they built with Site Manager Scott Beach.

Intern Perspectives

Argenis Herrera is a junior at Williams College studying Political Economy. Since the internship, he has joined the Eagle Eye Advisory Board.

Smith College intern Lisa Shore and Teen Intern Charlie Mark harvest beets in the Eagle Eye gardens.

Residential Summer Internship

College students Argenis Herrera, Lisa Shore, Alexander Voisine, and recent graduate Jenna Shea completed our three-week Residential Internship in July. The interns developed hands-on skills in building, trail work, land management, gardening, and youth education. They made lasting contributions to our site, including a group project creating interpretive trails signs highlighting Eagle Eye history.

LightHouse Holyoke student Charlie Mark completed our one-week Teen Internship.

“I have been waiting since last year to come to this internship. It’s the little things, like eating together every evening, to the big things like a hemlock tree that is hundreds of years old, that made this week so perfect. Eagle Eye let me live a few stress-free days of living in nature, for which I will always be grateful.”

After three weeks of living outdoors at MountainStar Forest, I found everything I was looking for. There is truly no other place like this. First, there is the commitment to sustainability that offers a plant-based diet and food grown on-site and asks us all to be caring stewards of the forest. But Eagle Eye doesn’t end with that. There is also a needed focus on equity and inclusion that encourages and allows for heavy but necessary conversations. While there, I felt completely part of a family despite my traditionally marginalized identities. Community at Eagle Eye is not conditional; it is extensive and meaningful.

I am leaving with memories of a simple and uncomplicated happiness, with snapshots of time spent meditating in the morning sun, making dinner in the outdoor kitchen, night swims, and bonfires under the moon and stars. I am leaving with lessons on mindfulness and communication, aquatic ecology and tree ID. I am leaving a different person than when I arrived, and I am never going to forget that.
In 2019, we worked strategically with partners in the Pioneer Valley to engage students from five schools and youth organizations in our learning, stewardship, and advocacy programs. We served 100 Holyoke youth in after-school and out-of-school programs, including local hikes, camping, snowshoeing, and urban stewardship.

**Programs**
- We led **Winter Exploration on Snowshoes** programs with three school groups.
- We coordinated the third year of the **Eagle Club** after-school program at Holyoke High School Dean Campus, in partnership with Kestrel Land Trust. The program included local outings to Ashley Reservoir, Mount Tom Reservation, and Springdale Park, and a tree-planting event on campus.
- We initiated a partnership with the **Holyoke Boys & Girls Club** and led a pilot series of **Learn About Forests** programs in July.
- We led the third year of our **Residential Summer Internship** program, with two college interns from UMass Amherst and a program coordinator from Ithaca College.

**Partnerships & Volunteers**
- We continued our partnership with Amherst-based conservation organization **Kestrel Land Trust**, working with their Community Engagement Coordinator to conduct outreach in Holyoke, recruit instructors, and coordinate the Eagle Club program at Dean.
- We engaged 10 new and existing **volunteer instructors** from environmental agencies including the Department of Conservation & Recreation and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.
- We partnered with **UMass Amherst** Natural Resource Conservation professor Lena Fletcher to engage four college student program volunteers.

**Events**
- We organized a **farm-to-table dinner** fundraiser in November that raised $8,000 for the Eagle Club program and was attended by 40 guests. The dinner was supported by donations from local farms and food was prepared by Dean Culinary Arts students.
- We hosted our **17th annual Hike-a-thon** fundraising event in Eastern Mass and 2nd annual Hike-a-thon in Western Mass in October, partnering with DCR at both locations. The event drew 40 participants at each location.
- We led our annual **Family Retreat** in July for the Eagle Eye community.
- Marc Fortin of Zen Landscaping led a **Stone Workshop** July 29th-August 2nd, with students and Keenan Phillips of Berkshire Stone Builders assisting with the project.

**Financials**
- We met our 17th annual Hike-a-thon fundraising goal, raising $16,715, which was matched by two anonymous donors.
- We received a $15,000 grant from the Community Impact Fund for the third year, allowing us to coordinate our Residential Summer Internship Program.
- We received $5,000 from the Roy A. Hunt Foundation, $3,800 from the Mass Cultural Council, $3,000 from the Acacia Fund Boston Foundation, and $5,000 from the Living Spring Foundation.
- We raised $52,656 from individual donors and secured $28,000 in grants and $10,447 in fee-for-service revenue to meet our annual budget for 2019.
THANK YOU TO OUR 2019 DONORS!

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Jill & Courtney Nottage
Maja Kietzke & Anthony Sanchez
Gail Strand
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Community Impact Fund
$15,000
Roy A. Hunt Foundation $5,000
Mass Cultural Council $3,800
Acacia Fund Boston Foundation $3,000
Living Spring Foundation $5,000

In-Kind Donors
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Thanks to our volunteers!
Eli Kantrowitz, Jen Lapis, Tasha Daniels, Sarah Greenleaf, Ken Gooch, Ann Koczela, Karen Warren, Jack Sweeney-Taylor, Allie Foster, and Denise Barstow
Help us reach our annual fundraising goal of $60,000!

We have raised $45,000 towards our goal.
Will you help us raise the remaining $15,000 by year end?

Your support is critical to continue our work engaging young people in hands-on learning in nature that builds environmental awareness, develops responsibility, and cultivates leadership through stewardship of our natural resources.

Support Eagle Eye’s Youth Programs!

Contribution Levels

☐ Visionary Eagle $10,000
☐ Soaring Eagle $5,000
☐ Bald Eagle $2,500
☐ Golden Eagle $1,000
☐ Other: ________________

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Would you like to receive future newsletters and mailings electronically? 
Yes ☐ No ☐

Please send your donation to:
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P.O. Box 440481
Somerville, MA 02144

Or go to www.eagleeye.org/donate to make an instant PayPal donation.

Planned Giving

The Eagle Eye board is currently engaged in planning for our future. We welcome and encourage you to consider a legacy gift to ensure equitable access to nature for all youth.

Some planned giving options are a bequest in your will, IRA or other qualified retirement assets, charitable IRA rollover, life insurance, or charitable gift annuity.

For further information, speak to your financial advisor or contact Eagle Eye co-founder Maja Kietzke at mkietzke@eagleeye.org.

From Our Supporters

“There is great beauty and peace in nature that should be open and accessible to all people, regardless of their origin or background.

Eagle Eye has strived for decades to create opportunities for youth from urban communities to learn about and appreciate the peace, harmony, and natural beauty of our planet.

My hope is that by exposing the next generation to nature and instilling an appreciation of their surroundings, we will stimulate a lifelong interest in both enjoyment and appropriate attention to the integrity of the environment.”

David Hamer, MD
Professor of Global Health and Medicine
Boston University

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