Eagle Eye Institute is a nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering urban people from underserved communities, especially youth of color, to play an active role in caring for our environment.
DEVELOPING ENVIRONMENTAL AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS IN HOLYOKE

Eagle Eye received a $5,000 grant last year from Kestrel Land Trust of Amherst to help support the development of an environmental program for Dean students in the Reconnecting Youth (RY) Program, a leadership and substance abuse prevention program. Youth Education Coordinator Joe Jewett and Program Manager Cass Pastorelle developed and facilitated nature connection programs for two RY classes during the 2017-18 school year. They partnered with experts in urban agriculture, primitive skills, soil science, and environmental justice, and coordinated site visits to Holyoke Gas & Electric, Mount Tom, and Nuestras Raíces urban farm.

Eagle Eye and Dean are developing an outdoor after-school program for 2019 that builds on the success of the RY and Learn More About Forests programs. The E.A.G.L.E. program (Earth Advocates, Green Leaders for the Environment) will engage a group of 12-15 students in hands-on learning, leadership development, skill-building, and environmental advocacy. Fourth-year Hampshire student Allie Foster, a summer 2018 residential intern, will help design the place-based education program for her Hampshire Division III research project.
VOICES FROM THE COMMUNITY

I learned that our community is caring, nonjudgmental and supportive. Our bond has been strengthened through this experience.

- Mayra Rodriguez, Adjustment Counselor, HHS Dean Campus

We rely on caring and committed educators to connect us with students and provide a key layer of mentorship and supervision on our programs. The existing relationships and trust between educators and students allow students to feel safe, supported, and open to the possibility of transformation.

One positive aspect was kids from different communities coming together and growing, communicating, learning, forming relationships.

- David Mickiewicz, Math Teacher, HHS Dean Campus

“I learned that our community is caring, nonjudgmental and supportive. Our bond has been strengthened through this experience.”

- Mayra Rodriguez, Adjustment Counselor, HHS Dean Campus

John, 17, is a Culinary Arts student at Holyoke High School Dean Campus. He attended two overnight programs this year. Prior to Eagle Eye, he had not had much experience in nature. “I like the outdoors more than I thought,” he reflected. John learned how to tell different trees apart and that we have tree doctors. He was especially drawn to the campfire, where he and his friends formed a tribe, with face paint, drums, and chanting to channel the primal connection to nature that all of us have.

Kyla, 15, of Holyoke High School North, was a first-time camper with very little experience in nature. Hesitant at first, she opened up after the first night and was an enthusiastic and energetic participant on September’s overnight program. She shared positive aspects of the program as “I got to learn new things and connect with new people,” and about herself, “I learned anything is possible,” even eating vegetables!

Jorge, 16, was a summer 2018 Teen Intern and spent a week with us in July, camping and working on land projects alongside our college interns. Jorge has participated in three overnight programs with his school, Holyoke High School Dean campus, and served as a Student Leader on the September overnight program. Along with fellow Student Leader Manny, he modeled procedures, like how to set up camp, and spoke to the group about the meaning of stewardship: giving back to the community. After the program, Jorge highlighted a positive aspect as “building the cook fire and people looking at me to maintain it.” He shared, “I learned that I’m more of a leader than I thought.”

Danielle Hayes, Ethnic Studies teacher at HHS Dean Campus, said, “I heard and saw students (and staff) RELAX into the quiet and safety of being here. You likely already know, but many of our students do not feel (and are not) safe in their home communities so this is important on a really baseline, psychological level - to have a safe and free environment to play outside, joke around, stay up late whispering with their peers, etc. THANK YOU!!!!”
For the second year, we are excited to receive a $15,000 grant from the Community Impact Fund to further develop this internship program in 2019.

For the second year of our residential summer internship program, we trained three interns from Hampshire College and hired an Internship Coordinator, recent Hampshire graduate and Eagle Eye volunteer Ryan Allmendinger. The interns lived, worked, and learned outdoors at our forest site in Peru for six weeks. They were mentored by our multi-talented Site Manager, Scott Beach, and Program Manager, Cass Pastorelle. The interns developed diverse skills and accomplished an incredible number of projects this summer, including building new tent platforms; learning how to operate a sawmill; putting up siding and roofing on the cabin; building a new trail and maintaining existing trails; gardening; splitting wood; learning how to operate a tractor and other equipment; creating art; mentoring Teen Interns; facilitating group activities; and completing independent projects.

SUMMER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Mei Sava, recent graduate, chose our summer internship program to learn more about sustainable living. “The independent projects were a great idea. A way for us to be creative and leave our own mark on the site. I loved learning how to build.” Mei’s independent projects included a raised bed, trail bench, and photo/video project.

Allie Foster, rising fourth-year student, was interested in learning about environmental education and mindfulness in the outdoors. She ended up developing countless outdoor and manual skills. “I don’t think I really knew all of the skills I would gain here, and I’m grateful that this experience has completely exceeded any expectations I had.” For her independent project, Allie constructed an outdoor library for young people to use while on site.

Dana Maple Feeney, recent graduate, brought her passion and experience in sustainable living, as well as her artistic skills. She enjoyed the community, reflecting that it was “a wonderful, caring collection of people. Getting to know everyone and what brings them here might have been one of the best parts.” Dana built a temporary nest structure in the woods and worked on a solar oven.

Ryan Allmendinger, Summer 2018 Internship Coordinator, highlighted one of the most valuable aspects of the experience as the opportunity to develop leadership and management skills. “I was able to connect with myself as a leader and recognize the qualities in myself that were effective in this role.” It was a great place to spend the summer after college. “I felt that for myself, transitioning from college life to “real” life was going to be a crucial moment to set a precedent of how I wanted to lead my existence on this planet. Living off the grid, while subsisting off of a plant-based diet and daily meditation practice, seemed to be the right start.”

Ryan helped start the cabin in 2016, laying the foundation and constructing the floor. This summer, interns and staff did a lot to advance the cabin project, building roof trusses and putting up siding and roofing.

College and teen interns along with staff refurbished this bench with boards they cut using the sawmill.
**TEEN INTERNSHIP**

Jorge Jimenez and Emanuel (Manny) Salamanca of Holyoke joined us for a week-long Teen Internship in July. Jorge and Manny both attended Learn More About Forests programs with Dean Tech in the spring and wanted more time at Eagle Eye. Jorge said, “I’m here because the two times I came to Eagle Eye have been new and great experiences. I loved it here. Another reason is, I don’t do much at home, so being outside exercising is great. I also want to be more “one with nature” because nature is the foundation of life. Plus it’s beautiful. Another reason why I’m here is to meet new people. I’m here to learn more about nature. The main reason why I’m here is to have fun.”

Manny reflected, “What attracted me here was the idea of being out in nature again. Another reason is to meet new people and give my muscles and body the feeling of work they longed for. Ultimately, I wanted to continue experiencing something other than my normal things to do, learn new things, be helpful, and get along with new people, environments, etc.” We look forward to Jorge and Manny staying connected by participating in future Eagle Eye programs.

**FAMILY RETREAT**

At the annual Eagle Eye Family Retreat, July 14th-15th, we recognized Jeff Fowler, who passed away this year. Jeff contributed much to the site, with his expertise in building, as well as to youth programs.

**STONEWORK**

Marc Fortin of San Francisco, CA, a longtime Eagle Eye friend and supporter, led a stone building workshop, July 24th-28th. Summer Interns, Teen Interns, and the Eagle Eye community learned about different tools and techniques for building stone walls. With an impressive team effort, the group moved huge boulders, and constructed two stone walls, a bench and a stone floor in a project that will continue next summer.

**HIKE-A-THON 2018**

We held our 16th annual Hike-a-thon at the Middlesex Fells on October 27th, where our group completed a stewardship project removing invasive plants with DCR and Friends of the Fells. We also held a Western Mass Hike-a-thon at Mount Tom State Reservation. Park Interpreter Jim Terruso led the group on a fall hike on October 21st. Melinda Stockmann will hold the 6th annual SF Bay Area Hike-a-thon on December 2nd. Our biggest fundraiser of the year has raised $12,000 towards our $15K goal, to be matched 1:1. You can still donate through the end of the year!
We had a successful year connecting with new partners in Holyoke and the Pioneer Valley and hosting youth programs at our forest site in Peru. From experiential education students at Hampshire College to middle and high school students at alternative school LightHouse Holyoke, young people benefited from the hands-on learning experiences in nature, while we learned more about the communities we serve.

**Youth Programs**

- **Snowshoe program** for students from Paulo Freire Social Justice (PFSJ) Charter School on January 18th. Kira Jewett, former Eagle Eye staff & board member and current principal of PFSJ, led the program.
- **Learn About Forests™** program for the James Baldwin Scholars of Hampshire College as part of their orientation on August 29th. Naturalist John Green and Hampshire professor Karen Warren facilitated learning experiences.
- **Forest Stewardship Day** to students from alternative school LightHouse Holyoke on September 29th. Site Manager Scott Beach and volunteer Hampshire student Ryan Allmendinger assisted the group in completing a stewardship project.
- **Site visit** and hands-on learning experience for an experiential and environmental education class from Hampshire College on October 22nd.

**Partners**

We built new partnerships with:

- **The James Baldwin Scholars Program** of Hampshire College.
- **Hampshire College** – academic courses, residential summer internship program, and Division III research project.
- **Holyoke Schools** – PFSJ, Dean Tech High School (now HHS Dean Campus), and LightHouse Holyoke.
- **Kestrel Land Trust** – Recognizing our shared goal of engaging local communities in the outdoors, especially urban youth from underserved communities, we developed a partnership to provide expanded opportunities for Holyoke youth to get outdoors and get connected to local green spaces. Kestrel helped support the project with a $5,000 grant.

**Events**

- **Spring Open House** in Peru for current and potential partners on May 7th. We were joined by Hampshire College, Kestrel Land Trust, and supporters.
- **2nd annual Alumni Gathering** and Eagle Eye Family Retreat July 22nd-23rd.
- **15th annual Hike-a-thon** at the Middlesex Fells Reservation, co-sponsored by Friends of the Fells. With over 50 attendees, it was our biggest Hike-a-thon ever! We exceeded our fundraising goal of $15K with a total of $16,322, which was matched 1:1. Melinda Stockmann led the 5th annual San Francisco Bay Area Hike-a-thon.

**Summer Internship**

We held a six-week residential summer internship program from June 12th to July 23rd. Two college interns, Sabrina Dengler of Hampshire College and Joe Hazelton of Michigan State and Arlington, MA, lived, learned, and worked at our forest site in Peru.

For the second summer, Sabiha Miahjee of Somerville, MA, was a Youth Intern-in-Training for a week in July. She completed garden and trail projects and was mentored by the college interns and staff.
THANK YOU TO OUR 2017 DONORS!

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Community Impact Fund $15,000
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Mass Cultural Council $3,800
Acacia Fund Boston Foundation
$3,000
Living Spring Foundation $1,500

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Ken Gooch, Clare Walker
Leslie, John Green, Rebecca Sirull, and Ryan Allmendinger.

We are so grateful for your support!
Help us reach our annual fundraising goal of $60,000!

We have raised $46,000 towards our goal.

Will you help us raise the remaining $14,000 by year’s end?

Your support is critical to our work engaging urban youth 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!

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