



2017 STATISTICS

64

Participants completed a seven-week summer program

10

High school students employed as summer interns

9

Middle schools represented (James Lick, Rooftop, Francisco, Marina, Roosevelt, Lawton Alternative, Alice Fong Yu Alternative, Visitacion Valley, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Academic Alternative)

215

Contact hours per participant during the seven-week summer program

112

Contact hours per participant during the school-year program

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Our approach to youth development in our national parks utilizes park resources to build skills and explore social and environmental justice themes, examining past, present, and future. **Urban Trailblazers** (UTB) is a youth leadership program based in the Presidio of San Francisco designed especially for middle school-age youth. For seven weeks each summer, 66 culturally, racially, and economically diverse youth from San Francisco Bay Area public schools learn leadership through art, media, and science workshops and service through

projects both within—and beyond—the Golden Gate National Parks.

For many youth, UTB is their first internship and upon completion offers a \$250 education award. Youth continue the program during the school-year with UTB Saturday program, delving deeper into the dynamics of leadership and engagement. Exploring this park is a new experience for many of these young people. In this environment, youth deepen and expand their understanding of themselves and their communities.

Respect, Integrity, Courage, and Humility (RICH) are values and themes at the core of UTB. Each participant is expected to act professionally upon arrival at the Crissy Field Center.

Rob Hill Ignite is a multi-day overnight lesson where youth connect deeply to the park, the RICH curriculum, and each other. National parks offer opportunities to challenge youth in socially, emotionally, and physically safe spaces. Youth engage in group-based activities that build camaraderie like a high-element rope courses, camping, and hiking. They reflect on their experiences, personal growth, and connection to nature.

Project Based Learning Through Pizza! Building Integrity Through Entrepreneurship (BITE) is Project Based Learning that explores socially responsible businesses and their contribution to healthier communities. Youth conduct market research, studying the balance of profit-making activities with actions that benefit society.

For a real-world experience, groups develop socially responsible pizza businesses, rated by a panel of judges on taste, presentation, and the environmental impact of ingredients. National parks lend themselves to lessons on the environment, and societal and economic sustainability. Youth raised and donated \$1,128.65 to local charities during their pizza event.



PARTICIPANT STORY | HIGHLIGHTS

INTERN RETURNS

Vivi is a returning UTB intern who wanted to spend her summer doing something fun in the outdoors. Exposure to trees and fresh air made coming back to UTB an easy decision.

Considering herself a “city girl,” Vivi never expected to be excited about exploring nature. Even though the summer is a small part of her life, her time in nature helped break up the monotony of city living. Visits to national park sites made her realize that parks and nature contribute positively to her lifestyle and health.

After UTB, Vivi finds that she speaks up at school more often—raising her hand, participating in group work, and sharing her opinions. She realized that she now can talk to other people whom she would never have approached before, discovering she is more outgoing than she ever knew.



“You learn to respect the trees more because you get to see them every day. Leaving the program, I want to respect trees because air quality is better in parks than downtown or in my classroom. —Vivi, Intern”



TRENDS | LEARNING | FUTURE PLANS



MEETING IN THE MIDDLE

In 2017, UTB piloted an after-school program at Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Academic Alternative Middle School, with the intention of building connections with youth who would then apply to the summer UTB program. And six youth from MLK applied and participated!

UTB will continue the program for the 2017–18 school year, meeting multiple times per week with students to explore area neighborhoods and investigate the elements that contribute positively to the community. Students build their understanding of their neighborhood and themselves through team-based games and activities. Youth also have 16 Saturdays in which they can connect with the Golden Gate National Parks through recreation, education, and service.



KEY PARTNERS

