

# 2021 ANNUAL REPORT















## Letter from Executive Director David Taus

It's hard to bounce back from moments of adversity. BCM certainly experienced adversity in 2020, when we made the tough decision to cancel our in-person programming because of COVID-19. Staff was confronted with a very peculiar challenge: how do we spend our time when the thing we are here to do isn't happening? Staff filled this gift of time and space with deep reflection and careful analysis of our program model, our organizational functioning, and how we are (and sometimes aren't) enacting our values.

This, I'm told, was hard. My first official day with BCM was June 1, 2021. And when I arrived, I was able to enter into a set of complex and thoughtful discussions and plans as to how BCM would emerge from COVID with purpose, direction, and integrity. This resulted in a strong return to programming in 2021, a year in which BCM piloted a trip series that includes day trips and frontcountry overnights that ramp up to our signature weeklong expedition experience. Though we didn't return to pre-COVID quantities of

youth participants in 2021, we are very proud to have run a full summer of programs in all our regions, and even more proud to not have had a single reported case of COVID. I really commend our program team for this admirable feat.

In addition to the return of outdoor programming, 2021 was the year in which BCM took many of its learnings from 2020 and put them into action, with a new Executive Director. Unlike many of BCM's current and former staff and Board, my career did not originate in the outdoor industry. When I started, I didn't fully appreciate how my background in public education, youth development, and nonprofit leadership would inform the lens through which I see BCM's work. As 2021 unfolded it became more clear how my own experiences working with young people who come from disinvested communities and who hold traditionally marginalized identities cause me to think about what we do in a slightly different — and hopefully beneficial — way.

I came to understand that BCM has typically been considered to be part of the outdoor industry. This is true by all measures and estimations: not only does the on-the-ground work take place in natural places outside, but BCM also has held a prominent and significant presence in outdoor industry circles for many years. Much of this was refreshing—in outdoor circles, there is no explanation needed as to why getting outside is good.

## BCM programs support a connection to self, community, nature, and joy.

And yet, I still felt compelled to explain the Why, and to demonstrate that BCM's How is one of the most effective and efficient means to achieve the ultimate ends of youth development work: supporting individuals to self-actualize, realize their full potential, and gain access to the resources, skills, and assets that enable them to lead a life of their own choosing.

When prompted with the challenge of explaining our Why, BCM's program team gave a lot of mindshare to this line of thinking at the end of 2021, and came up with a succinct and elegant way to describe our intended outcomes: BCM programs support a connection to self, community, nature, and joy.

There are many paths to the top of this mountain. Formal education and academics certainly are intended to be one, as are many other extracurricular activities that



# We are specifically focusing on four dimensions: self-esteem, self-efficacy, empathy, and sense of social belonging.

young people may take interest in. We fully acknowledge that BCM participants will also likely have access to these sorts of experiences. From my perspective, though, there is no more effective nor efficient way to achieve these important ends than thoughtfully curated, immersive experiences outdoors. I have seen time and time again that a week on the trail can do more for a young person than a year in the classroom. And this isn't a knock on the many other ways young people find and develop themselves - the drama club, the sports team, the debate society, the church youth group, or the part time job all have great potential for impact. But hour for hour and dollar for dollar, immersive trips in nature, such as the ones BCM provides, are often the fastest and most enduring ways to achieve impact.

To those who know this through their own experiences in nature, little more needs to be said. The BCM community is filled with folks like this; I am one of them. The corner I believe that BCM needs to turn is convincing those who haven't been lucky enough to have such an experience themselves that BCM's work is vital. And the way I believe we do that is by demonstrating that the trail, backpack, tent, and canoe are means to a much larger end. Moreover, and perhaps just as importantly, the means we employ to these ends are the most effective, efficient, and enduring ways to engage in this work.

What does this mean in practical terms? It means that based on our planning in 2021, BCM will start to measure our impact in new ways. We are specifically focusing on four dimensions: self-esteem, self-efficacy, empathy, and sense of social belonging. We've chosen these dimensions because a) we believe that BCM programs directly

affect positive change in all cases, b) these are things that correlate strongly with larger success outcomes in school, work and life for young people, and c) they are widely and commonly measured in the demographic we work with, so we have large data sets to which we can compare our results.

Again: these dimensions are not exclusive to immersive outdoor experiences, but it just so happens that intentionally designed, immersive outdoor experiences such as the ones BCM provides are the most effective way to promote their growth. This orientation towards BCM's work opens a new opportunity: access to new types of institutional and financial support. As we've continued to manage COVID as a society, we've seen a refocusing on programs and resources that support young people's physical and mental health and support their social-emotional capacities. Positioning BCM's programming as a strong and effective model to do these things potentially means increased funding opportunities, which will enable us to better resource our programs even more and reach more youth every year.

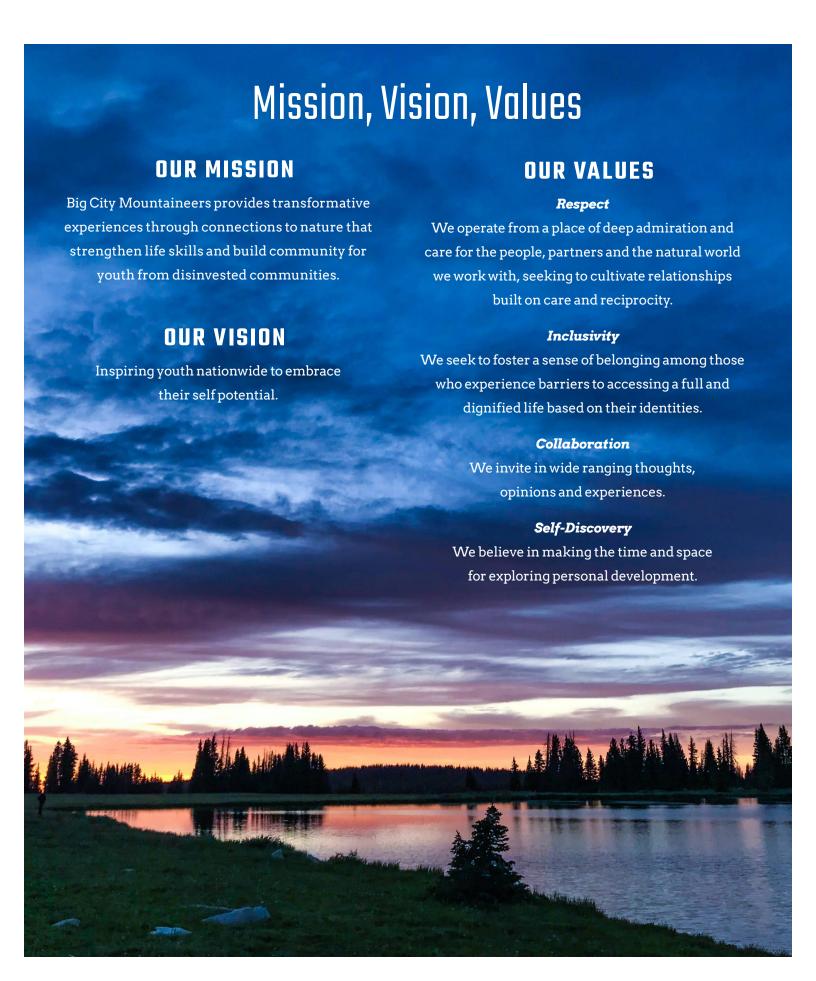
The end of 2021 showed us that we are on the right track with these strategic pivots: because of our program successes and innovations, we finished the year in a strong financial position, poised to build on our work even more meaningfully in 2022. The year ahead will see BCM serve even more individual youth more deeply through our scaffolded trip series approach, and will see us further innovate and upgrade our program model so we can more effectively engage volunteers in our programming and so we can provide opportunities for participant alumni to continue to pursue outdoor engagement and leadership and career

development. That we are looking and working forward is a clear indication that BCM did not just survive adversity in 2021; BCM emerged in a position to truly grow, improve, and thrive.

David Taus, Executive Director

David Tan





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# **Financials**

		2021	2020	2019	2018
ASSETS					
	Cash and Cash Equivalents	708,873	611,130	568,615	466,939
	Investments	240,968	211,7154	52,302	19,434
	Contributions and Grants Receivable	72,914	54,016	61,109	190,444
	Prepaid Expenses and Other	3,170	11,663	6,229	4,970
	Inventory	297,178	252,766	347,876	309,281
	Property and Equipment, Net	124,044	125,739	127,433	115,984
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	Investments - Endowment	240,968	211,714	114,108	92,004
Total Assets		\$1,447,147	\$1,267,028	\$1,277,672	\$1,199,056
LIABILITIES	AND NET ASSETS				
	LIABILITIES	36,021	183,154	45,073	66,404
	NET ASSETS				
	Undesignated	910,678	624,537	814,478	596,607
	Board Designated for Endowment	35,158	32,193	-	-
	Investment in Property and Equipment	124,044	125,739	127,433	115,984
	Temporarily Restricted	341,246	301,405	290,688	320,06
	Permanently Restricted	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000
	Total Net Assets	\$1,411,126	\$1,083,874	\$1,232,599	\$1,132,652
Total Liabilitie	es and Net Assets	\$1,447,147	\$1,267,028	\$1,277,672	\$1,199,056
SUMMARY O	IF REVENUE AND EXPENSES				
	PROGRAM				
	Contributions and Grants	849,425	744,843	871,483	956,031
	Government Grants	-	10,000	32,334	22,142
	Program Income	4,650	770	22,386	26,420
	In-Kind Support	256,138	218,728	333,031	338,963
	Other Income	23,908	15,304	25,106	(11,522)
	Total Program	\$1,248,933	\$989,718	\$1,284,340	\$1,332,034
	SUMMIT FOR SOMEONE				
	Contributions	191,900	54,814	219,649	242,44
	In-Kind Support	-	-	56,602	172,245
	Total Summit for Someone	\$191,900	\$54,814	\$276,251	\$414,686
	EXPENSES				
	Program Services	804,185	882,001	995,914	992,82
	General and Administrative	68,613	42,316	58,096	79,058
	Fundraising Expenses	65,688	90,596	136,954	128,624
	Summit for Someone	175,095	178,344	269,680	356,819
	Total Expenses	\$1,113,582	\$1,193,257	\$1,460,644	\$1,557,322

### **2021 SUCCESS**

We're very excited to share some huge successes for the year, despite a Covid-mandated programming hiatus in 2020, and a 50% capacity limit on trips for 2021.

### **ADULT PARTICIPANTS: VOLUNTEERS, INSTRUCTORS, YOUTH AGENCY STAFF**



226 YOUTH ENGAGED 704 **YOUTH DAYS** 14,370 **YOUTH HOURS** 



















## **Student Moments**

Every student trip is filled with experiences and emotions that impact the lives of its participants. The stories that follow each adventure feed the heart and soul of BCM.

"This trip for me was
life-changing. I enjoyed
making closer friendships
and learning more about
camping. I feel really good
about it."

Andrea
Overnight at Calaveras Big Trees









"The trip was fun and I enjoyed the entire thing because of the good vibes.
I want to do this all the time."

Saniya Day Hike at Indian Grinding Rock



## "El viaje cue especial porque el agua me dio tranquilidad los arboles me dieron fortaleza. Me gusta convivir con mis amigos y todos y la naturaleza. Me siento genial llena de energía y amor."

"This trip is special because the water gave me peace of mind, and the trees gave me strength. I like to live with my friends and everyone and nature.

I feel great, full of energy and love."

Meliza
Day Hike at Tomales Bay State Park



# BCM INSTRUCTOR TRAINING

In May of 2021, instructor training resumed with a weekend event at Dark Day Campground in the serene setting of Lake Tahoe.

Even the dog had a great time!







# Adventure-Based Fundraising

For nearly two decades, the Summit for Someone (SFS) program has supported BCM's mission to provide transformative outdoor experiences for youth by mobilizing outdoor enthusiasts in adventure-based fundraising campaigns. During that time, the SFS model has successfully connected the dots between personal adventures and a collective commitment to improve access to and equity in outdoor spaces.

However, as peer-to-peer fundraising programs have grown in popularity, the space has become increasingly crowded and competitive. Additional pressures related to increasing guide fees and the challenges of climate change have led to a reality where the traditional SFS model is no longer as effective for BCM as it used to be, nor is it offering participants the level of accessibility or specialness we believe is possible.

Adventure for Someone (AFS) is the customizable counterpart to SFS that has been around for years but largely in the shadow of the more well-known SFS program. However, AFS was designed with inclusivity at its core. Because it is virtually unlimited in who can participate and the degree to which it scales, it is much more consistent with BCM's organizational values.

In 2021, BCM offered both AFS and SFS options to our community. Our SFS trips to Mount Hood, Mount Whitney, Grand Teton, Mount Rainier, Long's Peak, Mt. Washington, and the North Cascades were highly successful, especially considering we were not able to run trips in 2020. Our 58 SFS participants raised \$125,000 for BCM, ensuring that youth would be able to have opportunities to experience the outdoors as well.

Even though we are pivoting towards AFS, we will still offer SFS style trips to our supporters — only now, the iconic guided alpine experiences people have come to know via SFS will be the incentive for fundraising, as opposed to the vehicle for it. AFS will take center stage as the primary way outdoor adventurers and nature lovers can support BCM doing what they love to do best.



We want to highlight and celebrate some amazing AFSers, with hopes that others will turn their adventures into an Adventure for Someone:

#### Chris Ball: A Chrysalis Year

After volunteering on multiple BCM youth wilderness trips, Chris Ball fell in love with the mission and was disappointed that the weeklong youth trips were canceled due to the virus. He then realized it was the perfect opportunity to create and lead his own Adventure for Someone — he was going to complete a hike/bike combo of the Colorado Trail.





## YVONNE RIVERA: GETTING MORE YOUTH OUTSIDE

In 2014, at the age of 56, Yvonne completed her first major outdoor adventure — climbing Mt. Hood with Big City Mountaineers (BCM). A trip full of firsts, like wielding an ice ax and successfully using crampons, proved to be just the spark she needed to find her strength.

"What I learned on that trip was that once you realize you can do something challenging, you recognize the limits you put on yourself and that you are capable of exceeding those limits. It made me want to do more."

Needless to say, she's been crushing it ever since. Since summiting Mt. Hood, Yvonne's enthusiasm for the outdoors and her passion for empowering youth has found a home with Adventure for Someone. She's planned multiple trips and used them as a way to raise funds to further BCM's mission and help students gain access to the outdoors.

"I waited half my life to experience what the world has to offer, and I know that if young people can get a similar experience sooner than I did, they will strive for more. They'll see the world as a place for them to go out and do great things, whether it's climbing a mountain or fighting for social justice."

Each donor who supports her adventure receives a photo-filled thank you card in the mail at the

end of each trip. A sort of meditation ritual, she creates these cards as a way to share what she saw and remind supporters of the larger goal behind the trip.

"I love Big City Mountaineers' mission – getting young people outdoors so they can experience what I waited half my life to do."



"What Big City Mountaineers does — getting youth into the wilderness — is super powerful, and I'm really passionate about it. It's been transformative to me as an individual. I see now, after 13 different wilderness trips, what it does for these youth. Knowing I couldn't participate in that this summer, I thought about what else I could do. This really lined up super well."

With his wife heading logistics, his friends volunteering to join him along the trail, and donors raising funds for BCM, he set off. Logging approximately 300 miles hiking and 200 miles biking, Cball made it his mission to spread the name of Big City Mountaineers the entire way. Although he never felt like he was going to quit, knowing that friends, family, donors and strangers were keeping up with his journey gave him an extra sense of accountability. He began documenting his trip on social media, giving updates on location, morale, weather and more. Each time he shared, he knew he was giving his donors a window into where their support was going — into creating outdoor experiences for kids all over the country.

#### Thermacell Cares

AFS experiences are not just for individuals, companies can also participate and use BCM's Adventure for Someone program to build community and give back.

Thermacell has been a longstanding corporate AFS participant. Since 2017, Thermacell employees have engaged with BCM's adventure fundraising programs. That year, a five person team engaged in a mountain climb.

In 2018, Thermacell shifted the campaign to focus on bike riding, making it more accessible to a broader group of employees.

In 2019, the campaign grew to 23 participants raising funds through Adventure for Someone. By focusing on creating an adventure with a popular and accessible activity, the Thermacell team has been able to raise between \$10,000 and \$30,000 each year. This annual event now includes a company matching program and a personal contribution from the CEO.



If you are interested in doing an Adventure for Someone, getting started is easy! Please visit www.bigcitymounatineers.org/afs to set up your campaign, access resources, and find inspiration.

## **Brand Partners**

Brand Partners are integral to the work of Big City Mountaineers. They provide both in-kind gear donations and financial support, and stay in relationship with BCM through volunteer support on programs, holding fundraising events, and raising awareness with their audiences.



\$25,000 +













\$10,000 +

























LuluMa Foundation





**G. Timothy Pate Legacy Trust** 

**Benson Family Foundation** 

Rocky & Laura Henderson Fund

**George Family Foundation** 

Chi Pham Household

The Grammie Jean **Foundation** 

The M.S. Grumbacher **Foundation** 

### \$5,000 +

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McGovern & Company Backcountry.com

Addison Hanf Memorial Golf Tournament Carolyn Campion Household

Drew & Stacey Kern Household

#### \$2,500 +

The Rifkin/Bennis Family Foundation

Cascade Designs, Inc.

**Dr. Scholl Foundation** 

**Geomar Foundation** 

Drew & Stacey Kern Household

Wild Tribute

Arc'teryx Denver

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**Jeff Hester Household** 

Benjamin Corrie Household **AVID Cider Co** 

Carolyn Campion Household

The Pittsburgh Foundation

John N. Browning Family Fund

Devon Dalzell Household Margery P. Weed Family Charitable Foundation

Melissa Mauk Household

Kenneth Rose Household

**Be Hippy LLC** 

Donald Kirkpatrick Household

## \$1,000 +

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Household

## **Individual Donors**

We are genuinely humbled and inspired by our individual donors' generosity. We are thankful to have a community of supporters who care deeply about ensuring that everyone — regardless of their circumstance — has access to experiences in nature, and the personal growth those can inspire. Thank you for choosing Big City Mountaineers and turning your energy and passion into opportunities for the next generation!

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