



BIG CITY MOUNTAINEERS

2023 ANNUAL REPORT





Letter from Executive Director David Taus

If 2022 was the year to re-establish BCM's strong foundation, 2023 was the year to edify a direction and invest resources towards smart, responsible, and intentional growth.

And grow BCM did. 2023 saw a 27% increase in the number of youth served nationwide from the prior year, which added up to over 28,000 trail hours delivered to individuals who might not otherwise have had such an opportunity to experience the outdoors. Moreover, we accomplished this with around the same number of trips that went out — a sign that our trips are going out more fully enrolled and that we are moving ever farther away from the constraints and challenges of COVID-19.

2023 was the first year of BCM's current strategic plan. Central to our strategy is to scale with fidelity in each of our existing regions of operation. In year one, our primary task was to iron out as many systemic wrinkles as we could. We dedicated ourselves to optimizing things that — at their best — are invisible: registration forms, survey collection processes, volunteer screening and training, youth agency partnership and instructor contracts. This took everyone on the team pitching in: program staff,

non-program staff, and Board members all contributed meaningfully. We also are very grateful to youth agency partners and youth feedback who help direct our thinking and work. These are not things that make a splash on social media, but this decidedly unglamorous work is crucial to get right. Coming out of the 2023 season I can confidently say that we have taken steps to strengthen these structural elements that undergird all of BCM's programming.

continued...



We've taken our first steps towards smart, responsible, and intentional growth, and I'm very excited to see where the work in 2023 will lead us in 2024 and beyond.

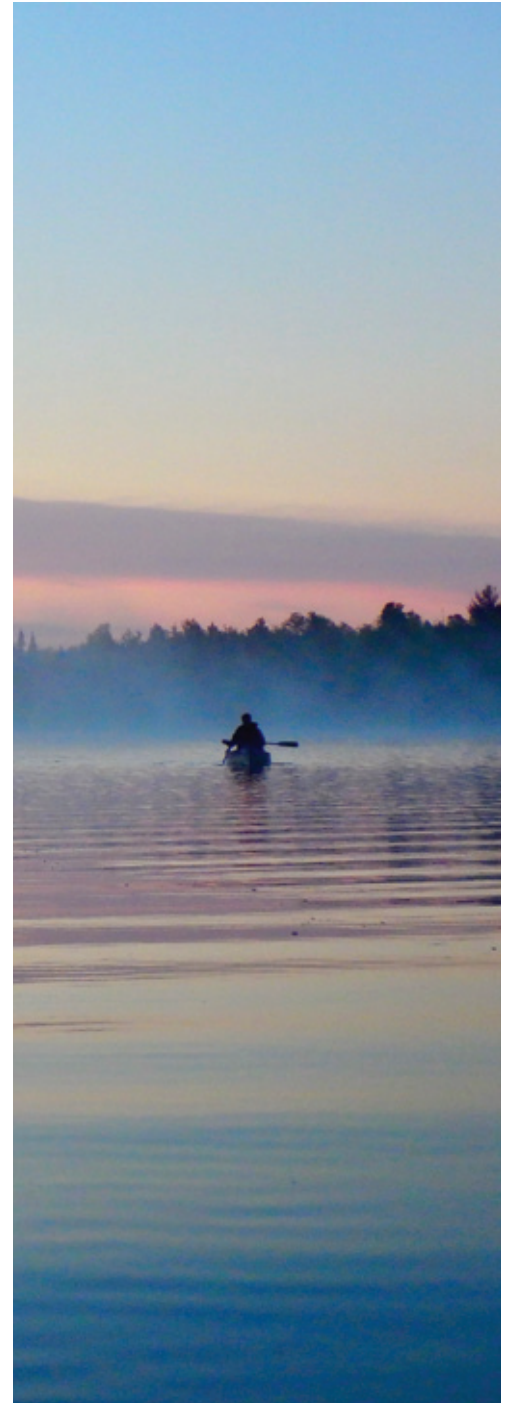
This was the work we planned for. None of our plans or strategy described opening up a new program region, and yet as 2023 drew to a close BCM made the decision to extend our presence to Birmingham, Alabama. Sometimes things just fall into place in the right way and at the right time, and our exploration of Birmingham was exactly this. The Magic City has certainly lived up to its name: the cohort of committed outdoor and youth advocates, the flourishing community of youth serving agencies, and ready access to beautiful natural spots to run trips made our eventual decision very clear. I'm particularly proud to be moving into an area of the country that is often overlooked by many larger outdoor access and youth development initiatives — there is demonstrated appetite for what BCM does in Birmingham, and we are thrilled to see our programming grow in this unexpected way.

The last significant way BCM grew in 2023 was our pilot of an alumni Leaders program. This idea is not new, in fact, BCM has received requests for a "what's next?" program from youth participants for years, and had previously attempted a similar idea several times but never did get things off the ground. This year, with the help of a grant from the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) and Earth Team (one of our youth agency partners), BCM launched a pilot Leaders program in both the SF Bay Area and Denver. This selective program provides accepted alumni with a financial

and gear scholarship, advanced skills training (including a Wilderness First Aid certification), the opportunity to apprentice on BCM trips, and opportunities to explore future careers in the outdoor industry. Selfishly, we are intending and hoping to cultivate our future field instructors and staff, and unselfishly, we are hoping to develop a model program that addresses calls for increased diversity in the outdoor recreation economy and that can provide viable pathways to meaningful careers for local youth. Pilots never go perfectly, but by the end of our 2023 season we'd not only demonstrated proof of concept but also identified the pinch points in our model and secured the support of state and private foundations to continue our work.

I am very guilty of too often focusing on the things that aren't working. It's part of my job to think about that, it's probably also my natural tendency. But given a chance to take a step back and reflect on how things turned out over the course of a year, there's a lot to be proud of in 2023. We didn't get it 100% right the first time out, there are certainly things that require further attention and work, but in total, BCM accomplished a lot. We've taken our first steps towards smart, responsible, and intentional growth, and I'm very excited to see where the work in 2023 will lead us in 2024 and beyond.

David Tan



Mission, Vision, Values

OUR MISSION

Big City Mountaineers provides transformative experiences through connections to nature that strengthen life skills and build community for youth from disinvested communities.

OUR VISION

Inspiring youth nationwide to embrace their self potential.

OUR VALUES

Respect

We operate from a place of deep admiration and care for the people, partners and the natural world we work with, seeking to cultivate relationships built on care and reciprocity.

Inclusivity

We seek to foster a sense of belonging among those who experience barriers to accessing a full and dignified life based on their identities.

Collaboration

We invite in wide ranging thoughts, opinions and experiences.

Self-Discovery

We believe in making the time and space for exploring personal development.

Staff, Board, & National Council Members

BCM BOARD

John Andriola	Independent Attorney at Law
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Mena Ayazi	Communications & Events Manager
Bailey Denmark	Director of Development
Maggie Lacwasan	Boston Regional Program Manager
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Megan Parkinson	Minneapolis / St. Paul Regional Program Manager
Salvador Prado	Denver Regional Program Manager
Fred Sproat	National Program Director
Chloe Schaub	National Operations Coordinator
David Taus	Executive Director
Khadijah Tividad	Pacific Northwest Regional Program Manager



Financials

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
ASSETS						
Cash and Cash Equivalents	508,809	638,993	708,873	611,130	568,615	466,939
Investments and Endowments	408,601	199,279	240,968	211,7154	166,409	111,438
Contributions and Grants Receivable	314,226	388,935	72,914	54,016	61,109	190,444
Prepaid Expenses and Other	3,500	3,000	3,170	11,663	6,229	4,970
Inventory	334,661	359,032	297,178	252,766	347,876	309,281
Property and Equipment, Net	197,552	204,220	124,044	125,739	127,433	115,984
Right-of-use asset	30,784	35,736	-	-	-	-
Total Assets	\$1,798,133	\$1,829,195	\$1,447,147	\$1,267,028	\$1,277,672	\$1,199,056
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS						
LIABILITIES	70,494	75,002	36,021	183,154	45,073	66,404
NET ASSETS						
Undesignated	772,260	826,105	910,678	624,537	814,478	596,607
Board Designated for Endowment	0	29,465	35,158	32,193	-	-
Investment in Property and Equipment	197,552	204,220	124,044	125,739	127,433	115,984
Temporarily Restricted	657,827	694,403	341,246	301,405	290,688	320,061
Permanently Restricted	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000
Total Net Assets	1,727,639	\$1,754,193	\$1,411,126	\$1,083,874	\$1,232,599	\$1,132,652
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$1,798,133	\$1,829,195	\$1,447,147	\$1,267,028	\$1,277,672	\$1,199,056
SUMMARY OF REVENUE AND EXPENSES						
REVENUE						
Contributions and Grants*	1,105,891	1,260,371	1,041,325	799,657	1,091,132	1,198,472
Government Grants	-	-	-	10,000	32,334	22,142
Program Income	9,600	5,287	4,650	770	22,386	26,420
In-Kind Support	344,162	347,786	256,138	218,728	389,633	511,208
Other Income	34,068	(45,937)	23,908	15,304	25,106	(11,522)
Total Revenue	\$1,493,785	\$1,555,583	\$1,248,933	\$989,718	\$1,284,340	\$1,332,034
EXPENSES						
Program Services*	1,098,551	957,789	979,280	1,060,345	1,265,594	1,349,640
General and Administrative	109,689	100,477	68,613	42,316	58,096	79,058
Fundraising Expenses	312,099	166,210	65,688	90,596	136,954	128,624
Total Expenses	\$1,520,339	\$1,224,476	\$1,113,581	\$1,193,257	\$1,460,644	\$1,557,322
Change in Net Assets	(\$26,554)	\$343,067	\$327,252	(\$148,725)	\$99,947	\$189,398

*includes adventure fundraising

2023 Youth Programs

23 YOUTH AGENCY PARTNERS SERVED



286 TOTAL YOUTH PARTICIPANTS

VOLUNTEER HOURS

1560



65.3% OF YOUTH PARTICIPANTS HAD NEVER CAMPED IN A TENT BEFORE.



60.7% OF YOUTH PARTICIPANTS HAD NEVER BEEN ON A DAY HIKE OR PADDLE BEFORE



26,354 HOURS SPENT BY YOUTH PARTICIPANTS OUTDOORS

REGIONS WITH PROGRAMS IN 2023:

- BOSTON
- MINNEAPOLIS
- DENVER
- SEATTLE
- PORTLAND
- SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA

Corporate Givebacks

BCM simply could not make good on our mission without the generous support of many corporate and brand partners. This takes many forms over the course of a year, but perhaps the most engaging and fun way we work with brands is to co-launch cause marketing giveback campaigns. This is great for brands because it demonstrates their commitment to increasing access to nature for youth from disinvested communities; it's also great for BCM because it introduces our work to new audiences of outdoor enthusiasts.

We very much appreciate working with brand and corporate partners on giveback campaigns, and hope to expand this way of partnering in the coming months and years.



Q: Why did NEMO choose to do a giveback as a marketing tactic?

A: "Giveback campaigns have been an excellent way for us to showcase our partners and

offer support directly through sales. These campaigns have been a great way to inspire customers to purchase gear while supporting a partner with a specific mission toward bettering people, community and outdoor spaces. As a generally non-promotional brand, these campaigns are also an excellent story to rally around during traditionally high-traffic moments for retail, and help to further differentiate ourselves from our competitors."

Q: Why choose BCM as a giveback partner?

A: "A key part of our brand ethos, Adventure for Anyone, is directly in line with BCM's #AdventureforSomeone mission. We support organizations like BCM that work to inspire adventure and provide opportunities to experience the outdoors, especially for those that may face barriers to entry. Actively bringing more youth into the outdoors also supports our #AdventureForever value by cultivating young conservationists and adventurers to care and advocate for our outdoor spaces and planet."



Adventure for Someone

Adventure for Someone campaigns allow both corporations and individuals to raise funds for Big City Mountaineers as they hike, backpack, paddle, or do whatever it is they're passionate about doing in the outdoors. 100% of AFS proceeds support BCM programs and our mission of providing transformative experiences for youth from disinvested communities.

IN 2023, OUR SUCCESSES INCLUDED:

- 2 Corporate AFS
- 10 individual AFS
- 374 donors
- \$46,500 total fundraised!

Corporate AFS Highlights:



Thermacell recruited 11 employees to Adventure for Someone. Running two different 5ks and hiking up Mt. Monadnock, they raised \$23,360 for BCM programs. Additionally, Thermacell matched every dollar raised through their AFS campaign!



Smartwool participated in their inaugural Corporate AFS! Employees used their volunteer hours to hike Mt. Bierstadt and managed to raise nearly \$10,000 for BCM. (We are excited to say that are doing another AFS in 2024!)



Individual AFS Highlights:



Tom “T-Rex Miller” is a long-time BCM volunteer—he has been on 11 BCM trips! In 2023, he decided to do his first Adventure for Someone, and raised over \$5000! To summarize his trip, Tom said:

At the last minute, I decided to turn my cycling trip into an AFS campaign. I set up my page and had funds coming in all in one afternoon. It was super easy! (Cycling 550 miles across Portugal in the rain, not super easy.)

We are super grateful for you T-Rex!

Tom’s 2023 “Adventure for Someone” Page

From October 16th-21st, I’ll cycle through Portugal’s remote, mountainous spine, riding 475 miles and climbing over 53,000 feet. This region of the country is known for its rich history, rugged beauty, and minimally-trafficked roads. The highlight of the route is Torre Peak, the highest point in mainland Portugal. On the trip’s Torre day, I’ll climb 12,500 feet in 80 miles, definitely a climbby day for a super-sized, reptilian cyclist.



I’ve been involved with BCM since the mid-2000’s, volunteering on eleven expeditions and submitting Mt. Rainier for BCM’s Summit for Someone program.

Individual AFS Highlights:

Joey Li raised \$1689 for BCM youth programs in honor of his mentor and friend, Vik Waghray. We're so thankful for Joey's support, and this inspirational story he shared with us:

Vik was an incredible community builder and dedicated significant time to volunteering with Big City Mountaineers as a trip leader. I'm still looking for ways to find closure after losing him, but I hope that raising money for a cause he cared about might help a little bit.

Two years after his passing, I'm still playing catchup with Vik. I'm running my first 50 kilometer ultramarathon in Ridgecrest this December 9, inspired by Vik and the lessons he taught me in finding the beauty in the physical and mental suffering demanded by moving through the mountains.

If I could, this is what I would say to Vik now.

You introduced me to the mountains. My first experiences in the Sierra were with you leading the way. Planning trips around my parents' kitchen table in high school, I couldn't comprehend how you already knew every peak and contour on the map by heart. I'm still trying to get there. Sometimes I wish we did more normal stuff. I never got to see frat star Vik.

You were always one step ahead, and I always wanted to get to where you were. You ran your first marathon, on trails no less, while I was training for half marathons. I was climbing in the gym while you were sleeping on bigwalls. After you moved to Mammoth, I was still chasing after where you were from afar. I always hoped you were proud of what I had going on, and you always were.

I held you back a lot. We had a lot of trips that I just couldn't keep up, or got sick, or got injured. You never minded. You taught me that the goal of being in the mountains is just that, and doing it with good company is the cherry on top. No problem if we didn't make it to where we thought we would—as long as we could make it back to the car and get some food afterward.

You taught me what it means to "get out there" and "get after it" putting those phrases into action. You made it seem cool to me to know the entire Tolkein universe like the back of your hand, and not just the Fellowship trilogy but the Silmarillion too. You are why I associate long drives into the mountains with packs in the trunk, clean clothes ready to get dirty, and with "The Dark Side of the Moon."

Two years ago, you fell while soloing in the Sierra, somewhere around Thunderbolt Peak I think. I can imagine that you're just chilling somewhere else now, and we'll hang again soon. Maybe you're getting on the last bit of pristine ice in Montana, or checking out the spring conditions in the Palisades. I hope you're still climbing.

**I can imagine that you're just chilling
somewhere else now, and we'll hang again soon...
I hope you're still climbing.**



Youth Participant Moments

In the 2023 program season Big City Mountaineers enabled 46 youth to go on canoe expeditions into Minnesota's Boundary Waters Canoe Area (BWCA). Youth came from the Minnesota Twin Cities area, Middleton Wisconsin, and even as far as Miami, Florida to experience 5 to 7 days in the backcountry. While each group has different experiences on trail, every group gets to practice their paddling skills on different sized lakes, portaging (carrying) canoes and packs across the uneven rails between waterways, camp cooking skills, and expanding their reflex times to catch the pesky mosquitoes before they bite. Here are a couple of highlights from our season in the Minnesota Northwoods:

Community of Peace Academy, a new partnership in 2023, was the expert fishing group of the year. Almost every group member caught a fish on their trip with skill levels ranging from first-timers to experienced anglers!



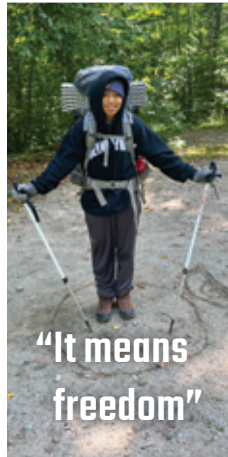
Middleton High School's girls' group woke up early and stayed up late to watch the sunrises and sunsets on the water, and were big advocates for swimming in the lake in order to cool down after long days.

Youth Participant Testimonials

What does having a connection with nature mean to you?



“It means peace, it means reconnecting with myself and all the things that get trapped in my heart or mind as the days pass in my daily life.”



“It means freedom”

“Being outside in nature makes me feel like a little kid again.”

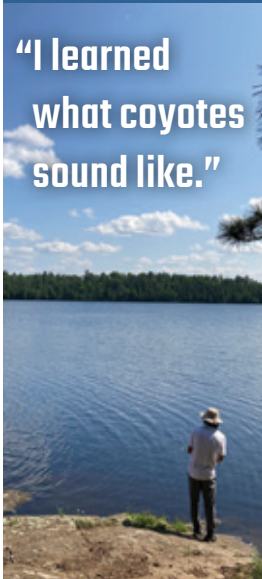


What is something you did that surprised you or made you proud?

“I learned what coyotes sound like.”

“Walking 20 miles in a span of 5 days which for some people is not a lot but for me it meant that if I wanted to I could go far.”

“I was proud of how much paddling I accomplished and of the fish I caught.”



Adult Participant Reflections

“We saw students build closer connections on this overnight than during a full year of soccer and classes together. Specifically we had a group of 3 boys who had not been close before work together to lead hikes, and teach one another!”

“I felt like the team really bonded through adversity on this trip and I was able to connect with each participant throughout the expedition whether it was teaching skills, helping with chores, assisting on difficult trail sections, providing encouragement or just having conversations about topics the participants are interested in.”



Institutional Supporters

Brand partners and philanthropic foundations 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.



\$50,000 +



\$25,000 +



\$10,000 +



continued...

\$5,000 +**Anschutz
Family Foundation****Bitewing Games
Trailblazers****Outdoor Research****iKamper****Addison Hanf
Memorial Golf Tournament****The Guardsmen****Mystery Ranch****Jack Wolfskin****Adelska****Brickyard Berridge Fund****Dr. Scholl Foundation****Salewa USA****Cupertino Electric****\$2,500 +****Hyperlite
Mountain Gear****Deuter****Terminal 4
Recreation Area****The Goddard School
Thornton****Outdoor Prolink****Brunton****Lowa Boots****Optic Nerve****The Goddard School
Arvada****Puffin Drinkwear****Mountain Hardware****GSI Outdoors****Congregacion
Leon De Juda****Rab USA****Zpacks****Adventure Bowls****Enterprise Rental Car****Nemo Equipment****Gear Aid****\$1,000 +****Petzl America****Dutch Bros Coffee****The Goddard School
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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.

Chris Alexander and Anna Sofranko

Dan Allen

Aspen Community Foundation

Michelle Barnes

Drew Barton

Deborah Beggan

Christine Bennett

Thomas Bliss

Peter and Teresa Bourbonais Carlson

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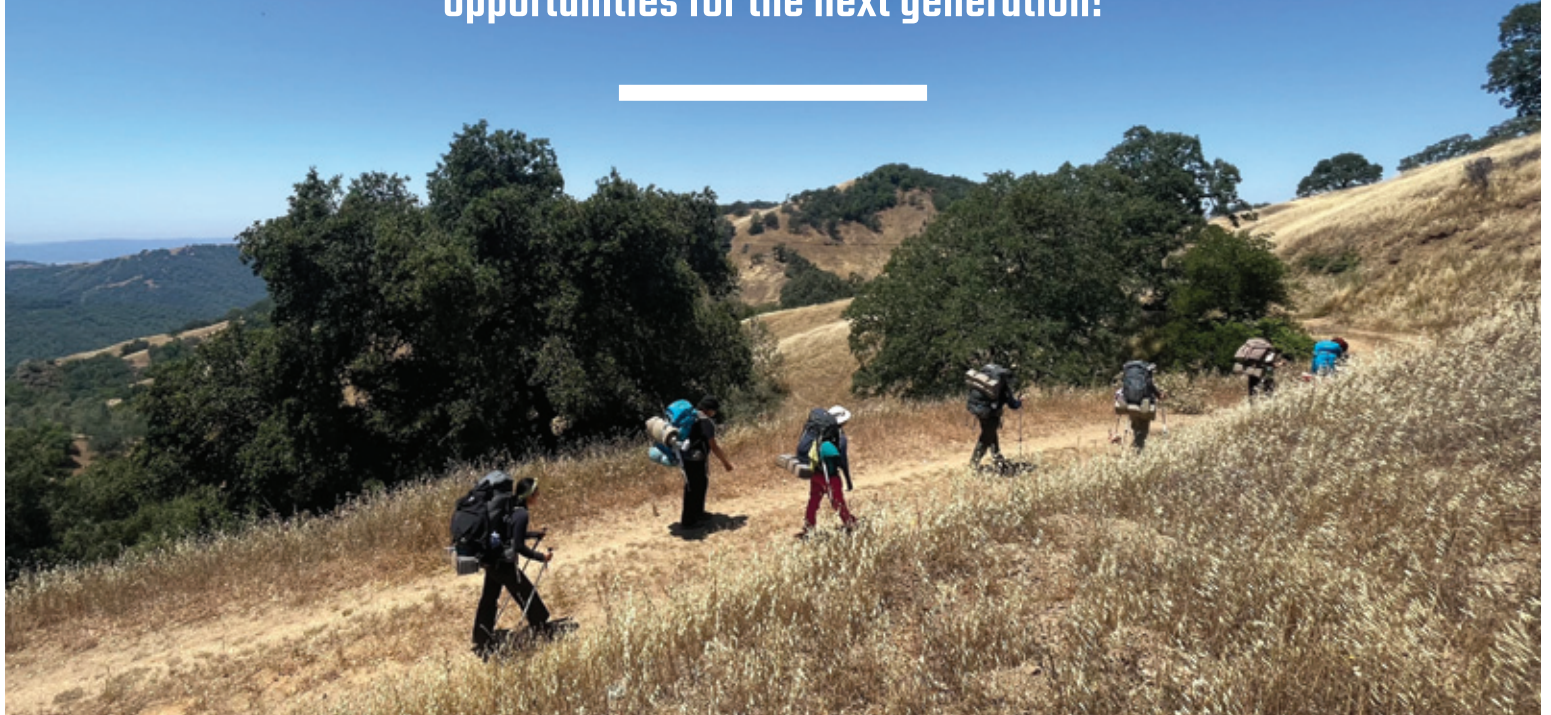
Scott Wilson

Chand Yadavalli

Radzimir Zalewski

*individuals donating \$1000+

**Thank you for choosing Big City Mountaineers
and turning your energy and passion into
opportunities for the next generation!**





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