Reducing Barriers:
Through Outdoor Trainings and Gear Libraries

Presented by: Krista Dooley & Brian Arnoldt
Addressing The Need:

How to get more young people engaged in outdoor activities and connected to nature

One Solution:
Provide training and gear to empower community leaders to engage the youth they serve in outdoor activities
Forest Preserves of Cook County

Over 100 years old

70,000 acres of managed land

5 new campgrounds opened in 2015

40 managed bodies of water

6 nature centers

Golf courses, pools, picnic groves, etc.

MISSION

“to acquire, restore and manage lands for the purpose of protecting and preserving public open space with its natural wonders, significant prairies, forests, wetlands, rivers, streams, and other landscapes with all of its associated wildlife, in a natural state for the education, pleasure and recreation of the public now and in the future.”
Washington Trails Association

WTA takes a multi-programmatic approach to inspire people to explore their public lands and become champions for them.
Two Different Approaches to the Program Model

**Washington Trails Association**  
Outdoor Leadership Training - launched 2013
- Utilize all public lands to facilitate hiking, camping, snowshoeing, and backpacking trainings
- Gear orientation at gear library (a storefront space in Seattle)
- Trained leaders have access to gear year round
- Reimbursable mini-grants up to $250 are available for trip assistance

**Forest Preserves of Cook County**  
Camping Leadership Immersion Course - launched 2014  
New Campgrounds/Site Based
- How to introduce camping to communities who “don’t camp”
- Stigmas
- Break down barriers to camping
- Create lasting experiences for underserved communities
- Community buy-in
- Systems creation for long term growth
Key Elements of Programming

Training
Gear Library
Building Community Leaders
Transportation/Trip Assistance
Experiential Trainings

Reduce barriers: experiential activities and personal growth

**Gain Experience**
- Leadership skills (safety, trip planning, risk management, etc.)
- Group activities (working with peers, learning from one another)
- Hands on training with equipment

**Address Stigmas**
- Fear of wildlife, night time, safety

**Bait them with the transaction**
- Participate in a training and get use of free gear

**Hook them with the transformational experience**
Gear Libraries
Reduce barriers: cost, maintenance and management

FPCC
WTA
Building Community Leaders

Reduces Barriers: Build confidence and increase support

**Trained Leaders**
Gain confidence both personally and professionally

**Institutional Support**
School/organization administrators view additional support and resources as a benefit

**Opportunities for Youth**
Mentor youth to overcome challenges and fear
Transportation/Trip Assistance

Reduce Barriers: Logistics can hinder the success of an outing

FPCC provides free one-way bus for CLIC trips (drop-off from institution to campground).

Cost = $200-$400

WTA offers reimbursable mini-grants up to $250 for trip assistance
FPCC Successes with campground “Site” model

Where leaders are trained they come back with their youth.

Total control of gear, does not leave site

Able to set own rules in terms of use, reservations, and transportation

Consistency of training
FPCC “Site” Challenges

Cook County is densely populated
Wisconsin and Michigan
Storage and maintenance
Institutional support
Allowed time for growth
Cost
WTA Successes

Engage new communities with the organization

Multiplier effect

Filling a need in the community

Leaders are utilizing public lands in all regions of the state

One leader's outings over two years
WTA Challenges

Staffing
Outreach to target audience
Planning for growth
Outdoors Empowered Network

- Six Member Organizations
- 12,500 youth in 2016
- National Summit
- Support with Gear
- Technology
- Shared Metrics
- Consulting for start-up regions

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Questions?

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