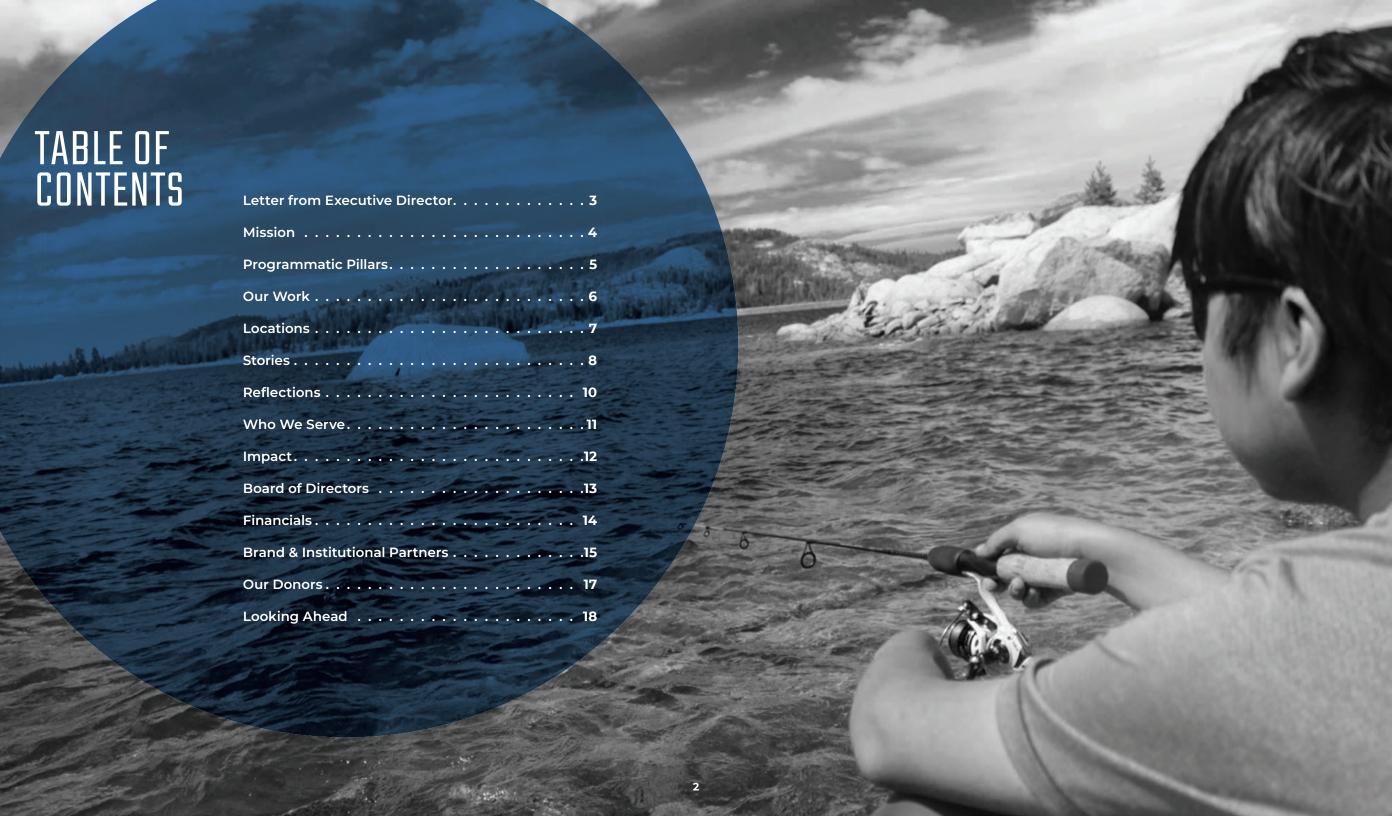


ANNUAL REPORT









A YEAR OF GROWTH

As we reflect on 2024, I am filled with pride and gratitude for the strides BCM has made. 2024 marked a significant chapter in our journey, characterized by growth, impact, and no small amount of organizational transformation.

In 2024, we provided transformative outdoor experiences to 403 youth nationwide—a remarkable 40.4% increase from the previous year. The total hours youth spent in the field increased by 38.4% from 2023. BCM youth participated in a scaffolded program model that began with day hikes, progressed to front-country overnight camping trips, and culminated in 5-7 day backpacking or canoeing expeditions across the Boundary Waters of Minnesota, the forests and waterways of Alabama, the mountains of Colorado, Washington, and New England, and the seashores and forests of Northern California. What is more remarkable is the increase in BCM's program participation since COVID: Since our first program season back (2021), our cost per individual youth is down 38% and cost per youth day is down 48%. Additionally, the number of individual youth participants has increased 78.3%, and the number of youth seats on trips is up 136%. Total trail hours delivered is up 125%. Total number of trips per season is up 52% and the number of expeditions is up 50%.

While these quantities and metrics on their own don't describe the depth of experience youth find on trail, they are nonetheless notable. It is an inarguably good thing to help get more youth outside! We know—not just instinctively but also from a growing body of research—that time spent in nature has innumerable benefits to a young person's physical and mental health and social-emotional wellbeing. This is an enormous part of why BCM does what it does.

"We know—not just instinctively but also from a growing body of research—that time spent in nature has innumerable benefits to a young person's physical and mental health and social-emotional wellbeing."

For those that participated, we found that they made meaningful gains in their own social-emotional development. This report will provide the details in the following pages; for me it's incredibly heartening to know that the time BCM youth spend outdoors is more than a fun time. It's a highly effective way to bolster essential psychological dimensions like self-esteem, self-efficacy, and sense of social belonging. We know that this sort of growth supports a more healthy, positive, and productive life once youth get back home.

BCM welcomed two dynamic leaders to our team in 2024: Christine Fiedler as Director of Development and Stacey Halvorsen as National Program Director. Christine brings a wealth of experience in fundraising and strategic partnerships, while Stacey offers a deep understanding of program development and youth engagement. Their leadership has already begun to shape our organization's operations and culture in meaningful ways, which has many positive effects on our ability to deliver on our mission. We are excited about the vision and expertise they bring to BCM.

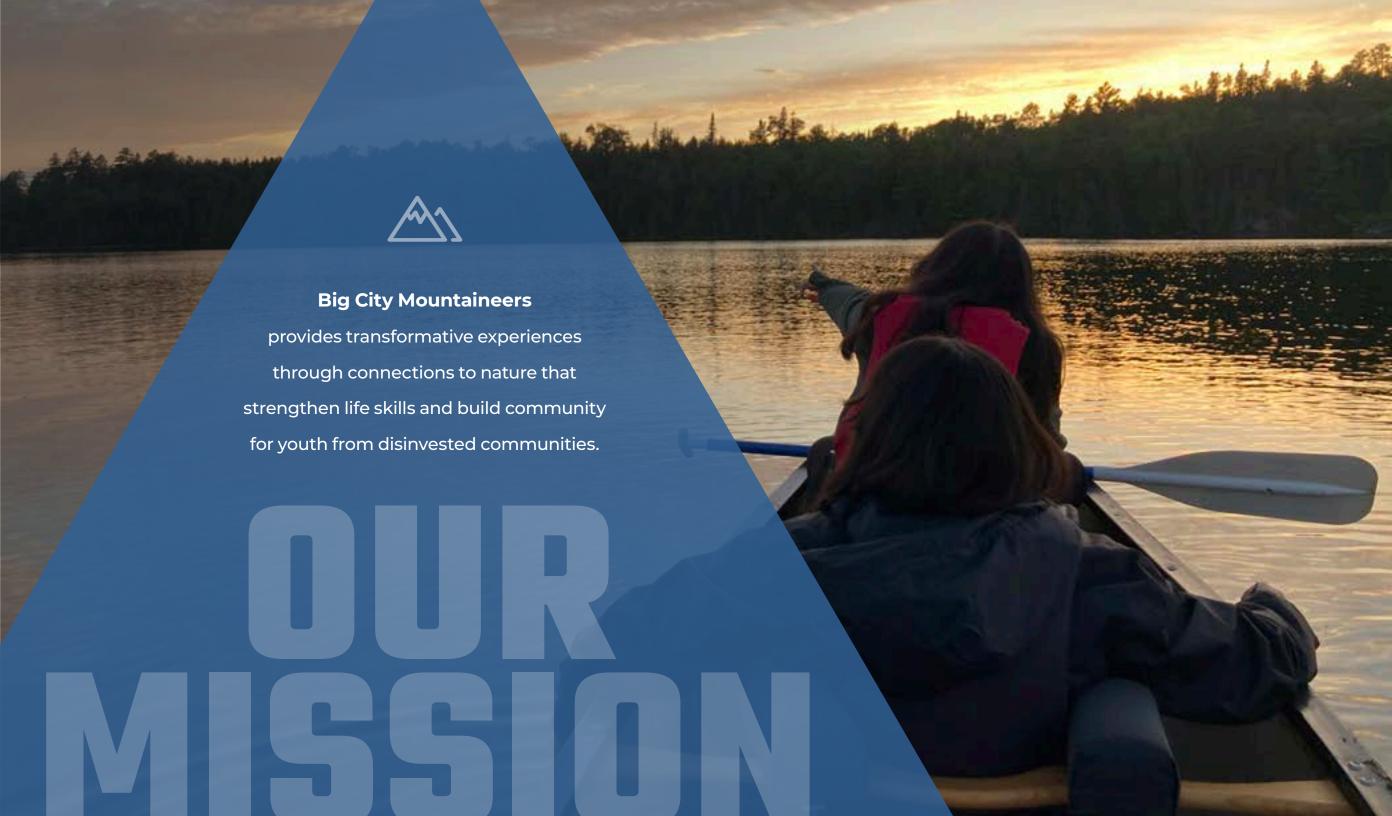
2024 also saw BCM expand on the map into the south-eastern quadrant of the United States as we kicked off our inaugural year in Birmingham, Alabama. Due to its size, history, and the comparatively smaller presence and saturation of the outdoor industry, we are learning that BHAM operates in different ways from our other metro regions. I am proud to share that we exceeded many of the goals and expectations we had for our first year in Birmingham, and much of the credit is due to our regional program manager, Margaret Cartner, who was born and raised in the Magic City and used to be a high school teacher in Birmingham City Schools.

It is worth noting that the many successes BCM experienced in 2024 occurred in an environment where several similar organizations — some of which are older, more resourced, and larger than us — made the difficult decision to close regional operations. We watch this carefully, we are very mindful to learn from their experiences, and from this we know that a failure to adapt to the moment and

do things differently can be an existential threat. Organizationally, we commit to and value innovation—not for its own sake, but because thriving requires an agile and nimble approach to see our mission realized. The many social and emotional challenges facing teenagers in the US, and specifically teenagers who come from disinvested communities, has only increased since the COVID pandemic. BCM youth participants stand to benefit the most from time spent outdoors, and are unfortunately the least likely to actually spend time outside. BCM is here to lower the barriers to access that these youth experience, and that is why our work is as important and needed as it ever has been in our 35 year history.

As we move into 2025, this only has become more true. The current sociopolitical landscape presents new challenges and uncertainties, and through it we have sharpened our resolve. BCM was founded 35 years ago to provide transformative experiences in nature for youth who would not otherwise have such opportunities, and that mission is very much intact. We will continue to build on the successes of 2024, innovate and adapt, and in so doing ensure that the young people who we are fortunate enough to take on trail will continue to experience connections with themselves, with their community, with nature, and with a sense of joy and belonging.

Danil Tan





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. 2024 PROGRAM NUMBERS









Minneapolis, MN















STORIES FROM THE FIELD: MINNESOTA EDITION

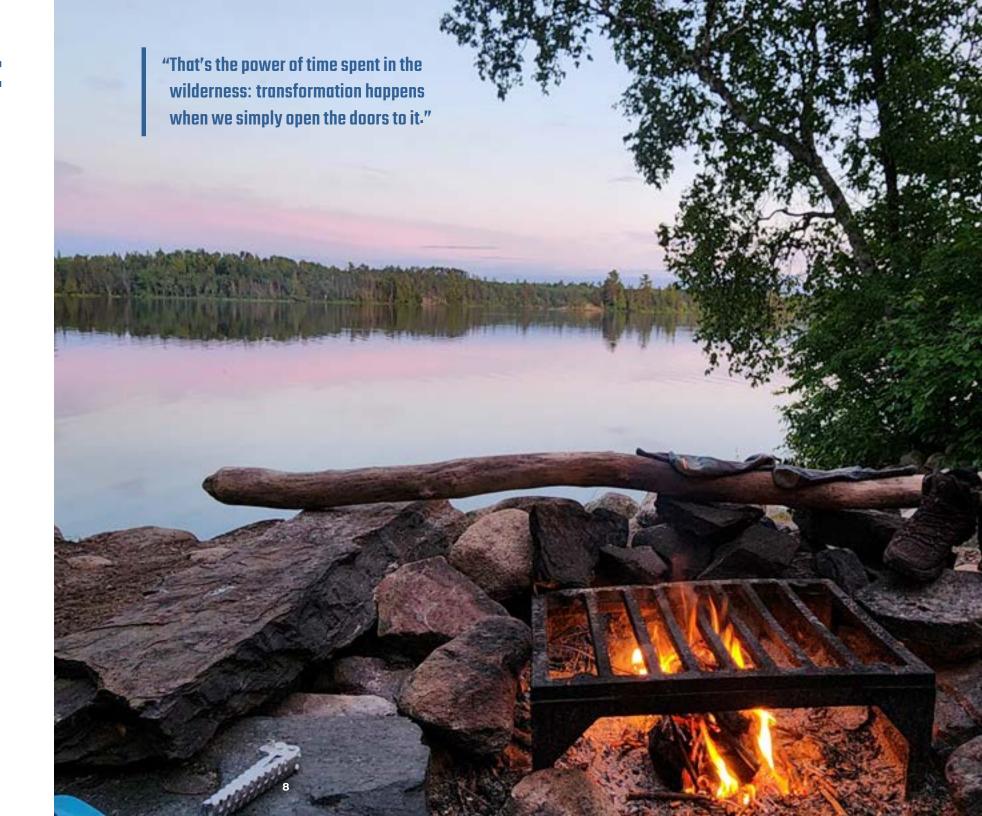
During a post-trip debrief with our Minnesota RPM, a first-time BCM instructor, Nitz, shared a powerful moment from their Boundary Waters expedition with youth from Community of Peace Academy.

Around the final night's campfire, one participant opened up, reflecting on the deep conversations he'd had with a tentmate throughout the week. He shared that he could see his tentmate learning, growing, and really discovering things about himself.

For Nitz, who described the outdoors as a transformative and even lifesaving space in their own youth, this moment struck a chord. At the start of the trip, they had put pressure on themself, wanting to recreate that kind of experience for the youth—to guide them into walking away with a meaningful experience.

But by the end, they realized the magic had unfolded naturally. The young people created space for each other to reflect, connect, and grow, with no hand-holding required.

That's the power of time spent in the wilderness: transformation happens when we simply open the doors to it.





STORIE

In June, students from Minnesota Transitions Secondary kicked off BCM's first Boundary Waters trip of the season. It was a week full of growth, connection, and a little bit of magic.

Instructors shared how the group transformed over the course of the expedition. At the start, there was a noticeable divide: some students primarily spoke Spanish, while others spoke only English. But by the end of the week, those lines had faded. The group had come together, laughing, learning, and building relationships that went beyond language.

Longtime BCM instructor Brett reflected on the experience, recalling how her intermediate Spanish came in handy, and sometimes came up hilariously short. While explaining how to use iodine tablets to purify water, she couldn't remember the word for tablets, so she went with "pastillas mágicas"—magic pills. It stuck. For the rest of the trip, "magic pills" became a running joke among the group.

Another instructor, Ro, described a moment from one of their final nights in camp: all of the youth sitting together on a rock, watching shooting stars streak

across the night sky and reflecting on life. The BWCA is an international dark sky sanctuary, and for students who grew up in Minneapolis, seeing the stars so clearly, with such an immense depth, can be a truly transformative experience.

Trips like this are a reminder of what happens when young people are given the space to connect with nature, with each other, and with themselves. Whether through shared jokes, stargazing, or simply learning to navigate the lakes and portages together, these moments build something lasting.





Why does BCM's mission matter?

REFLECTIONS FROM THE BCM BOARD

How does BCM's mission fit alongside your personal or brand's goals to serve communities?

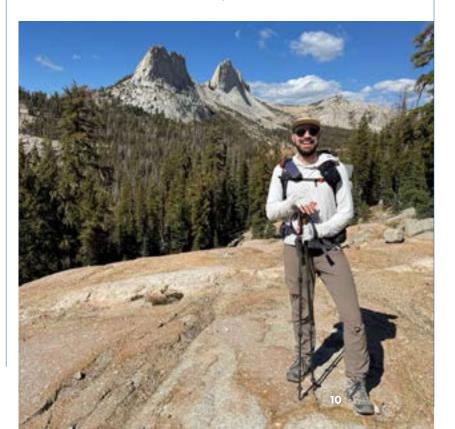
Wilder Walks is about helping people become more confident, capable, and connected in the outdoors. I help people become better backpackers, but the goal is bigger than just learning how to hike efficiently or pack lightly. It's about deepening your relationship with the natural world and with yourself. BCM's mission is perfectly aligned with that. They open the door to nature for youth who might not otherwise have the chance to walk through it. I see my work as a continuation of that mission, supporting people in building a meaningful, lasting connection with the outdoors, one step at a time.

access to it depends on privilege. Big City Mountaineers works to change that. They create opportunities for young people to feel awe, confidence, and belonging in the outdoors. They don't just offer trips. They offer a deeper connection to place, to self, and to community. I've felt that kind of transformation in my own life, and I believe everyone deserves the chance to experience it.

Because nature should be for everyone. But too often,

How have you, or someone you work with, been personally impacted by your support for BCM's programs?

Volunteering on a BCM trip in Point Reyes gave me one of the most moving outdoor experiences I've ever had. I joined a group of teens on their very first backpacking trip, and over the course of a few days, I watched them grow more confident, curious, and connected to the place and to each other. We stood in silence beneath the Milky Way, listened for elk calls in the fog, and shared stories each night at camp. The wonder and growth I witnessed in those moments stayed with me long after the trip ended. It reminded me that time in nature, especially when shared with others, can be a catalyst for real transformation.



What is one of your most impactful memories of spending time outdoors?

Some of my favorite memories are sitting around a campfire with loved ones, chatting, making ramen, wrapping veggies in foil and putting them in the fire. I also secretly enjoy going to bed super early when the sun goes down. There's nothing like that first sip of instant coffee on a cold crisp morning after waking up in a tent and listening to the chirp of morning birds.

What benefits do you feel after making time to get outside?

I feel calm, grounded, and capable! It reminds me to check in with my mind, body and heart, and to feel connected to the natural world.

Why does BCM's mission matter?

Nature is healing and transformative for all of us! BCM's commitment to ensuring that marginalized youth have access to these experiences in nature is so vital. These experiences can have a lifelong impact for personal growth, for building community, and for nurturing our connections and care for the natural world.

"These experiences can have a lifelong impact for personal growth, for building community, and for nurturing our connections and care for the natural world."







BCM uses a methodology for measuring our program's impact, focusing on key index social-emotional dimensions in youth participants: Self-Esteem, Self-Efficacy, and Sense of Social Belonging. These are the results: Youth who competed expeditions versus peers who have not participated in BCM's programming had: 6.6% HIGHER 4.2% HIGHER 3.7% SELF-EFFICACY SENSE OF SELF-ESTEEM BELONGING SCORES Participation in the expedition has even greater impact than the day hike or overnighter alone. On average, youth who participated in the expedition had: 2.04x 3.25 X 9x HIGHER HIGHER HIGHER SENSE OF SELF-ESTEEM SELF-EFFICACY BELONGING SCORES

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TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS 2,018,757

TOTAL LIABILITIES 82,571

TOTAL NET ASSETS 1,936,186

TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE 1,591,566

TOTAL EXPENSES 1,383,019

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS 1,798,133

TOTAL LIABILITIES 70,494

TOTAL NET ASSETS 1,727,639

TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE 1,493,785

TOTAL EXPENSES 1,520,339















(Institutional Partner)

\$25k+

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LOCKING ALLAND

Heading into 2025, and our 35th field season, we are striving to expand the curriculum, trainings, and orientations shared between regions while improving the BCM experience for our youth participants and volunteers. Additionally, we're focused on opportunities for growth and planting new roots.

Check out our 35th anniversary information page to learn more and get involved.

