

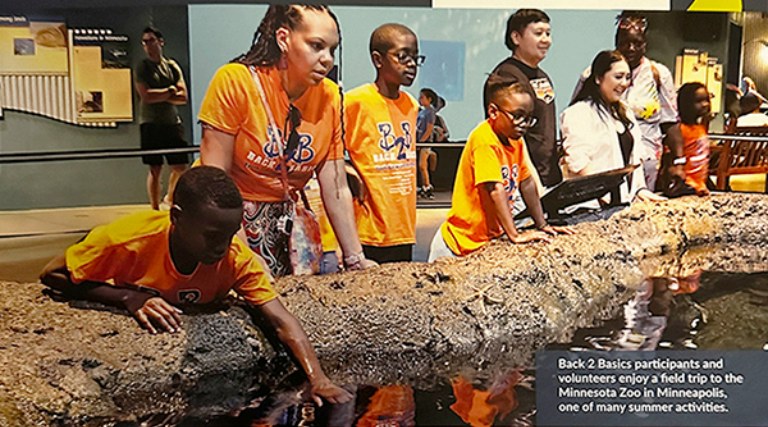


**COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION  
OF NORTHEAST IOWA**

*here for good.*

**good  
NEWS**  
REPORT

SUMMER  
2024



Back 2 Basics participants and volunteers enjoy a field trip to the Minnesota Zoo in Minneapolis, one of many summer activities.

## Waterloo Nonprofit Uses Basics to Empower Youth

Back 2 Basics embraces traditional Iowa summertime activities to help kids find a positive path.

Back 2 Basics is a Waterloo-based nonprofit making significant strides in youth empowerment through its multifaceted approach to prevention and intervention. Designed for students aged 9 to 13, the program targets those showing early signs of at-risk behavior, with the goal of steering them toward positive life choices.

"Our foundation is youth empowerment," says Mike Robinson, founder and executive director. "We've been working with students for 30 years, and we recognized a gap in services on the prevention side. While there's plenty of support once a student gets in trouble, we wanted to create a space where we can serve, teach, and instruct students before they reach that point."

The program is built around three core components: at-risk diversion, outdoor activities, and practical life skills. The at-risk diversion initiative aims to intervene before students engage in more serious negative behaviors. "We want to divert students if they're starting to go down a certain path," explains Mike. "We introduce life skills, decision-making, and anger management, among other things, to help them understand and manage their triggers."

Another critical aspect of Back 2 Basics is its outdoor activities, which are born out of Mike's personal experiences in his youth. "I'm an outdoorsman, and I wanted to share that with kids. We teach them how to grow their own food through our 'Plant a Seed' project, and they learn the entire process from planting to harvesting."

*continued inside*

OUR MISSION

To inspire people and connect resources to enrich our communities.



Visit [cfnela.org](http://cfnela.org) for more