

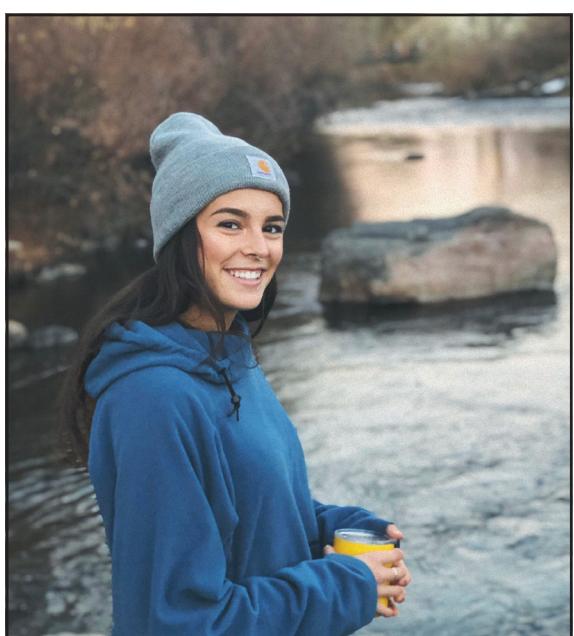


# Mountain Youth Network Offers Outdoor Opportunities!

By: Sharlynne McKown, 9th grade Homeschool Student

Mountain Youth Network (MYN) is finding creative ways to stay engaged and interactive while still staying safe. MYN has hired two Youth Programs Coordinators for design and development of TREK Outdoors, the Clear Creek County Youth Outdoor Leadership program. TREK Outdoors will help teens explore and appreciate the importance of outdoor time and all of the opportunities for outdoor adventures right here in Clear Creek County. Now, especially, the outdoor activity options are so important as a part of staying active while staying healthy!

Ben Shay and Hannah Jensen are the new team members ready to take on the challenge they have been given. Ben and Hannah attended CCHS a few years ago and today they are well qualified for their positions. Ben is a licensed river guide and has spent over 3,700 hours guiding in the outdoors, in addition worked for GOALS Youth River Expeditions before hiring on with Mountain Youth Network. "My work is important to me because it gives me an opportunity to have such a positive impact on the community I grew up in," Ben said. Hannah has varied experience in youth programming as well as marketing and management. She has a degree in Outdoor Leadership and has led multiple outdoor expeditions through the local Young Life program. It is clear that Hannah and Ben are hard workers and care about our community. Laura Roberston, MYN Coordinator, stated "I couldn't be happier with the way our team has come together! Ben and Hannah round us out so well with skills, experience, and enthusiasm for outdoor adventures with youth." Many people in the community are excited to see what new changes will come with the addition of two new team members.



These chaotic times make everything more difficult with social distancing, limited group sizes and ever-changing school schedules. There are many challenges ahead for successful youth involvement, however, when asked to shed some light on possible solutions, Ben responded, "Some of the challenges we are facing right now are the ability to keep up the momentum with existing programs and figuring out how to navigate safely outdoors, especially during the winter months." The TREK Outdoors program continues to solve these challenges and many others despite circumstances that are out of their control. They will continue to

keep planning activities and get youth unplugged and outdoors. Many activities are hard to do in the middle of the pandemic, although TREK Outdoors will build their activities to stay safe and stay healthy by adhering to all COVID-19 restrictions.

## Community Partner Spotlight

Each month, a different local business or organization will be highlighted for their collaborative spirit in the community and commitment to supporting youth.

If you would like to discuss how your organization is involved in the community, please contact us – we'd love to feature you!

Call Laura Robertson at (303) 670-7539

## Youth Learn about Open Space and Leave No Trace

By Chloe Alspaugh

Since 1919, Clear Creek County has established a county-wide open space program in hopes to preserve the natural environment, not only for wildlife but inhabitants and visitors of the local areas. We would like to thank Clear Creek County Open Space as our special community partner this month.

This fall Clear Creek County Open Space reached out to Mountain Youth Network asking for youth involvement because they had some opportunities for community service. This partnership would allow for student-adult connections and relationships along with getting an understanding of local ecosystems and how to properly care for the land. As a student who participated in a project volunteering with Open Space, I had learned about the rich and unique history of the Alvarado Open Space located near the Easter Seals Camp. Cleaning and maintaining the trails was hard work but meaningful knowing it serves the environment and my community.



Jackie Daoust, the initial contact between Mountain Youth Network and Clear Creek County Open Space request-

ed youth volunteers to become involved. We hope that with different locations and areas that the Open Space protects, youth in the community will become more involved and continue to help improve the natural habitats that we have in Clear Creek County.

As TREK Outdoors continues to expand, thanks to our two new team members of Mountain Youth Network, these spaces will play a valuable role in introducing students to the outdoors and everything it has to offer. Due to Coronavirus restrictions being outside is a perfect way to break away from constant work at home and other daily tasks that require technology. These spaces will provide the community with more room to roam, with less crowds and room to enforce social distancing. And with the changing seasons community members may ski, snowshoe, bike, walk, and run on these trails.

With more community and youth involvement Clear Creek County Open Space works to "enhance the quality of life for residents and the enjoyment of the out-of-doors for residents and visitors."



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