2026 HIGHLIGHTS

Children & Nature Network



Over the past 20 years, the Children & Nature Network has helped ***more than 100 communities*** *create everyday access to nature for children. In early 2026, we launched a ten-year strategic framework to build on that work with the goal of creating a nature-filled childhood for* ***20 million youth*** *in the U.S.*

This year, we focused on building the plan to put the framework into action across three core strategies:

- ***Partnering with communities***
- ***Equipping parents, caregivers and professionals***
- ***Advocating for policies and funding that connect kids to nature***

The highlights that follow show the progress we are making within each strategy, progress made possible by the generosity and collaboration of supporters like you.

LEADERSHIP TRANSITION

Monica López Magee named President & CEO

In September, Monica López Magee became president & CEO, succeeding Sarah Milligan-Toffler, who served for over 13 years. Selected by the Board of Directors from a competitive national search, Monica has been with the organization for over ten years, most recently as Chief of Staff and Chief Program Officer. She helped shape our ten-year strategy and is carrying it forward.

A PROVEN MODEL

What makes Nature Everywhere work

During 2026, an independent evaluation by Education Northwest identified four conditions behind lasting change in Nature Everywhere communities.

1. Community-driven vision
2. Strong local team
3. Our resources and experts
4. Time to deepen partnerships

Seed grants unlock investment

$3.6M *granted since 2014*

$45M+ *leveraged by communities*

Cities with a systems change strategy

43% *after 1 year*

71% *after 6–9 years*

2026 BY THE NUMBERS

100+
communities in our Nature Everywhere network

40,000
people reached by our Vitamin N Challenge

$3.8M
in Colorado green schoolyard grants, through a program our testimony helped establish

43
actions in the national Green Schoolyards Action Agenda we helped refresh

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PARTNERING WITH COMMUNITIES



Less screen, more green in Jacksonville, Florida

Project One Health JAX partners with our Nature Everywhere team to give Jacksonville youth nature-based alternatives to screens, from trail stewardship to school gardens to outdoor learning during the school day. In 2026, the initiative reached **more than 470 young people** across 13 locations with more than 4,300 hours of programming. Kids are spending significantly more time outdoors and less time on screens, and **92%** would recommend their program to a friend. As the three-year launch phase ends, we are supporting local partners as they build a permanent home for the work. Jacksonville will host our Nature Everywhere Conference in May 2027.

Going deeper in Waukegan, Illinois

Waukegan is receiving our most intensive level of Nature Everywhere support. A coalition of 13 local organizations is working to open the city's ravines and Lake Michigan shoreline to every family. When more than 150 young people said they wanted nature-centered jobs, the coalition began building green career pathways aligned with Illinois' Climate and Equitable Jobs Act.

EQUIPPING PARENTS, CAREGIVERS AND PROFESSIONALS





Families: The Vitamin N Challenge

Now in its fifth year, our Vitamin N Challenge helps families put more outdoor time on the calendar. The Summer 2026 email series reached **nearly 40,000 people**, and the Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley featured it in its family newsletter. We also added a five-week Winter Challenge and new early childhood resources.

Professionals: Nature as Healer

Four in ten U.S. students report persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness. Through our partnership with Casey Family Programs, social workers and family service staff are making nature part of everyday practice. One San Antonio social worker now moves sessions outdoors, where walking side by side eases hard conversations. After a roundtable we hosted, Austin, Texas launched its own strategy to support youth mental health through nature.

ADVOCATING FOR POLICY AND FUNDING



Building momentum for green schoolyards

As part of the Outdoors Alliance for Kids coalition, we played a lead role in advancing the federal Revitalizing America's Schoolyards Act, from helping congressional staff draft bill language to mobilizing our network. We also convened hundreds of leaders to refresh the national Green Schoolyards Action Agenda, a roadmap to green every U.S. schoolyard by 2050. In Colorado, our testimony helped establish a **$3.8 million** Community Schoolyards Grant Program.

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