





LETTER FROM THE BOARD

Our Fiscal Year 2016 Annual Report highlights our accomplishments from July 2015 to June 2016 and reflects our plans and vision for the future.

As we head into our 8th year, we are well positioned to look at what we have accomplished and what we hear from our kids and others about what they need. This is why we still feel so committed - the relationships we have developed feel like an extended family and seem to show the direction we want to go when it comes to building community, which has so often been disrupted in our society. And this is why we need funding to expand to acquire a house to serve as a learning center, along with adequate staff and transportation for young people to take advantage of it year round.

We believe that if we can mend the broken hearts and spirits of our incarcerated and other youth, anything is possible. We can break the spell and end the cycle of violence, abuse, trauma and lifetime incarceration. And from this end, a new cycle – of love and respect for ourselves, our communities, and all life – will emerge, inspiring us to re-evaluate how we educate all our youth by extending the path of formal education to include education nature's way.

We are grateful for the support of the Clif Bar Family Foundation, Community Foundation of Merced County, United Way of Merced County, The North Face, Patagonia, REI, and Yosemite Conservancy, as well as many individual donors. They provide us the opportunity to share the healing experience of nature with the young people we serve, as well as with the larger community. We appreciate our friends and supporters who share our values and commitment to our young people and their future.

Thank you.
Sacred Rok Board of Directors

OVERVIEW OF SACRED ROK

It appears to me that simply by being born, we inherit the knowledge and wisdom within us. Education is about the nurturing of this and the appreciation of what it means to read and follow the laws of nature.

—Ron Kauk

At Sacred Rok, we believe the path to healing lies in nature and in the intimate and sacred relationships we build with our youth. Our mission is simple we seek to help youth learn to respect nature and, through that, to respect themselves. We lead day trips and camping trips with young people, as well as tell our story through books and videos, photographs, educational presentations, and online. We partner with youth-serving organizations in the Central Valley and Northern California. Simply through the observation of the natural world, one can begin to clear the senses, opening up to the harmony and getting back to the basics that each breath represents. Sacred Rok is committed to education nature's way, supporting the authentic self - as authentic as the uniqueness that is found in every blade of grass, every tree. Through this realization, we evoke the human spirit into being human.

World-renowned rock climber Ron Kauk established Sacred Rok in 2009 with the mission to support youth in nature, helping them to learn to respect nature and through that to respect themselves. Our motto is "Education Nature's Way," because we believe that nature is the greatest teacher. Nature's curriculum is the wind, the rocks, the trees, the water.

We accomplish our mission through leading young people on trips to **Yosemite National Park and other** parks and natural spaces, as well as telling our story through books, videos, social media and presentations, giving testament to the power and impact of the Sacred Rok approach. Trips are led by Ron Kauk, who has lived and climbed in Yosemite for more than 40 years. Ron has led more than 200 day long and overnight Sacred Rok trips over the past seven years, providing transformational experiences to young people and their adult companions. All of our trips are at no cost to the youth. We are 100% funded by donations (monetary and in-kind), grants, and contracts.

Our model is to work with small groups of young people with their adult staff and mentors, and to lead multiple trips over the months and seasons, building trusting and respectful relationships. Day trips in Yosemite Valley include visits to Fern Spring, hikes up to Inspiration Point,

and working with the National Park
Service and Yosemite Conservancy to
remove decaying asphalt from the old
trails around Yosemite Valley. Camping
trips in Tuolumne Meadows include
hiking, swimming, and campfires. Rock
climber and Chief Operating Officer
Katie Lambert, who just received her
Masters in Nutrition from Hawthorn
University, is responsible for procuring
and preparing healthy, local, organic,
life-supporting food for the trips.

We work closely with Merced County's juvenile hall through Merced County Probation Department's Bear Creek Academy (BCA), and twice a month Ron takes an organic lunch to the incarcerated youth to share reflections and stories about their Yosemite experience. This year we published our second book, Voices From the Inside Out, in partnership with BCA. Voices From the Inside Out tells the stories of 22 young men and women from juvenile hall who have come to Yosemite with Sacred Rok, and what it has meant to them.

We expanded to partner with the San Benito County juvenile hall, leading incarcerated youth on trips to Pinnacles National Park.

We also helped adults tune in to nature, leading a night-time hike for members of the Stanford University Graduate School of Education.

Hiking up the granite trails under the gaze of the full moon allowed us to truly experience the power and magic of nature.

Kenji Hakuta,
 Professor of Education,
 Stanford University

Sacred Rok is governed by an experienced and dedicated volunteer Board of Directors from a variety of ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and professional backgrounds - white, black, and Asian; educators, human services professionals, law enforcement, and community members and leaders. We also partner with local Indian tribes, youth serving agencies, probation departments and foster care agencies, as well as supporters and advisors who share our vision to help young people return to their roots, learn to be human, and to thrive.





The goals adopted by the Board of Directors reflect Sacred Rok's priorities and guide our efforts:

- Programming and activities such as day trips and camping, focusing on building and maintaining relationships with other youth-serving agencies;
- Telling the story of Sacred Rok through books, newsletters, the website, social media and educational presentations;
- Organizational capacity building and continuous improvement including grant writing, website maintenance and bookkeeping; and
 - Long term goals expansion and sustainability funding.

In support of our vision and our long-term goals, in 2017 we are seeking \$95,000 in dedicated funding to begin to strengthen and expand our capacity through a Sacred House, staff support and transportation.

WE WANT TO RAISE \$15,000 (ONGOING) FOR RENTAL OF A SACRED HOUSE

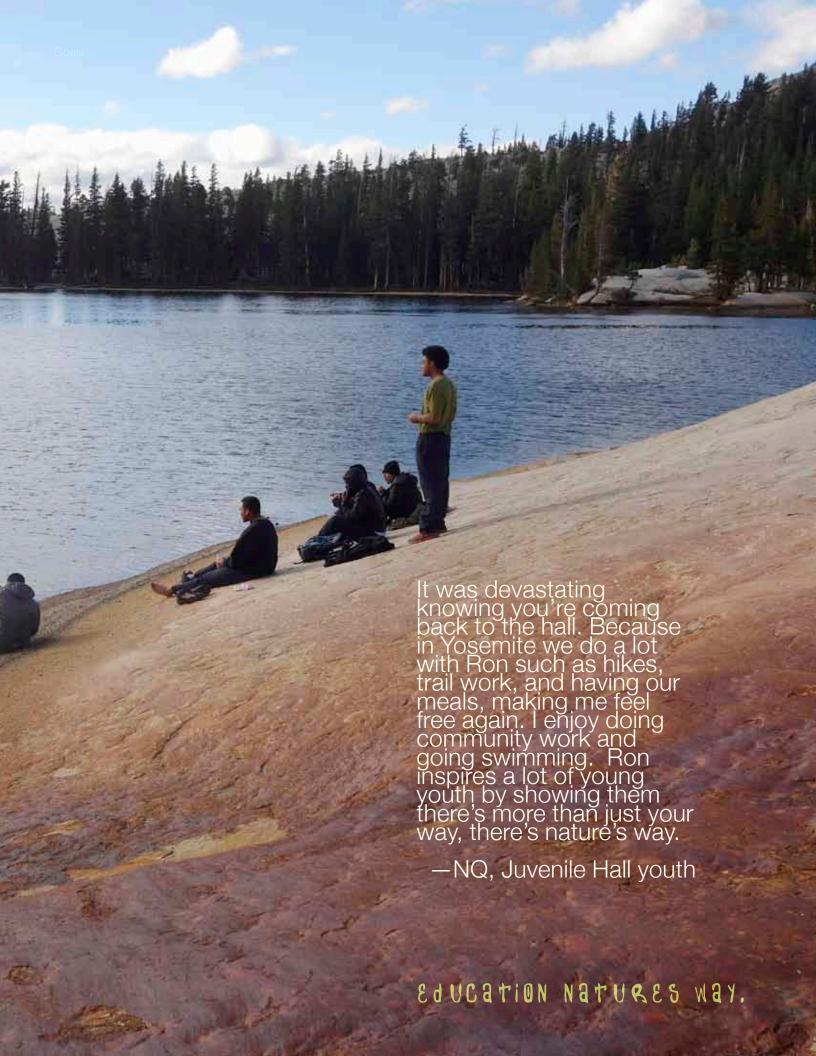
We want to ensure that the youth have access to Yosemite throughout the year and that they have a place they can call their sacred home. We have identified a location in the Yosemite area for a 2 bedroom, 1 bathroom Sacred House, with bunk beds to accommodate at least 6 people, a kitchen and dining area for cooking and sharing family meals, a living room with a flat-screen TV for showing educational documentaries and films. book shelves filled with books, a record player, musical instruments and painting materials to encourage and nurture artistic expression. There will also be a garden and a greenhouse in which the youth will be able to grow and harvest their own vegetables. The garden will be small and simple, but it will be a beginning to understanding the connections between nature and life.

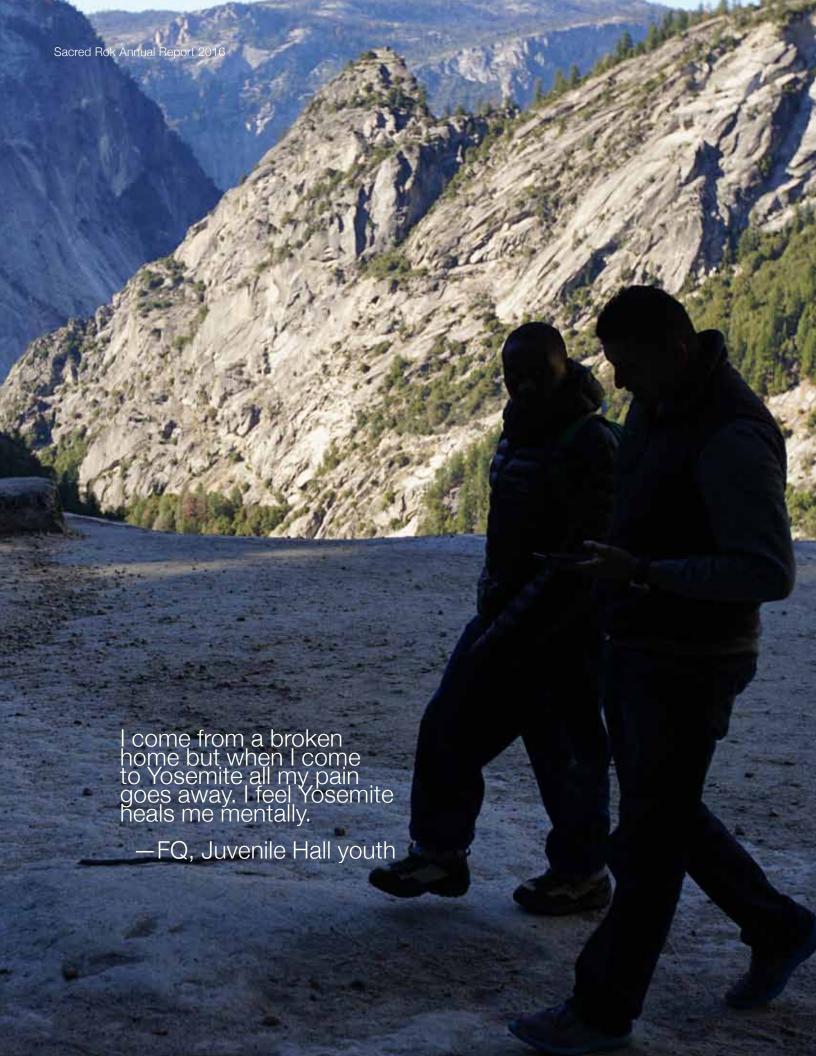
The Sacred House will also be a place for meetings, gatherings, retreats, and presentations by sacred guest speakers. The doors to the Sacred House will always be open to show there is trust. For the youth to know and understand that they are loved and trusted is critical to their growth and development as human beings.

WE WANT TO RAISE \$40,000 (ONGOING) FOR STAFF SUPPORT

The Sacred Rok model is all about building relationships. The Sacred Rok family wants to support kids even after they've left juvenile hall or the foster care system. We have identified the need for a full time staff to support Ron, to serve as a mentor to the kids, to support the sacred house including cooking, to help with transportation, and to build a connection with the kids.

The goal of Sacred Rok is to help youth, including incarcerated youth, to heal by learning to respect nature and through that to respect themselves. It is also about helping them become part of a caring and nurturing community that loves and trusts them. We believe building a community and breaking the cycle





THE YEAR IN REVIEW

With the support of our donors, Ron has led twenty day long trips and four camping trips this fiscal year with Merced County Probation, Boys & Girls Clubs of Merced, Modesto Uplift, Symple Equazion, and Uplift Family Services. We also expanded to lead trips to Pinnacles National Park for incarcerated youth from San Benito County. These trips provide the opportunity for these young people to experience Sacred Rok's commitment to education nature's way.

For me it's to see the potential in something and to try to bring it out.
- Ron Kauk

One of Sacred Rok's goals is to tell the story to help people understand the importance of nature, to share how we can learn to get back to the basics of being human, talking, walking and breathing.

Our big project was the book *Voices*From the Inside Out with the Merced
County Probation Department, sharing
the voices of the young people who are
incarcerated. Our book launch was in
January, when together we presented
the book to the youth and correctional
staff, the Juvenile Justice Commission,
and the judge in Merced. We shared it
at the University of California Merced,
at an event hosted by the UC Merced
Yosemite Youth Leadership Program. Ron
also shared it at two events in the San
Francisco Bay Area, as well as the KPFA
Visionary Activist fundraiser in May.

Sacred Rok was featured in National Parks Traveler in July 2015: Helping Kids Experience The Healing Ceremony Of Nature - Ron Kauk And Sacred Rok 2016;(https://tinyurl.com/j66rvtp). Ron also makes presentations at Patagonia locations and other venues in the San Francisco Bay Area, in addition to showing his movie, *Return to Balance: A Climber's Journey*, at the Yosemite Visitor Center on weekend nights during the spring and summer.

DAY TRIPS AND CAMPING TRIPS

Our programmatic activities are day trips and overnight camping trips, primarily to Yosemite National Park and also to Pinnacles National Park.

Each trip is led by Sacred Rok
Executive Director Ron Kauk, and
camping trips are supported by Katie
Lambert, our extraordinary cook and camp
manager. We limit each trip to 4-6 young
people in order to be able to focus on
the healing experience of the ceremony
of nature, the setting and the building
of trust and relationships. We take the
youth on repeat trips to help them become
more comfortable; and to build ongoing
relationships over time.

Nature provides the curriculum and the structure - wind, weather, and water are our guides. A typical day trip in Yosemite Valley might include a stop at Fern Spring to fill water bottles and appreciate the ancient water flowing from the ground, a hike from Tunnel View up to Old Inspiration Point, or a walk to the base of El Capitan. Our camping trips are typically at Tuolumne Meadows Campground. At 8,600 feet elevation, Tuolumne Meadows is only open in the summer months and is less crowded than Yosemite Valley. A camping trip might include a hike along the Tuolumne River past Pothole Dome, a walk to Parsons Lodge and Soda Springs, a dip in Tenaya Lake, or a hike up the

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back of Lembert Dome. Longer hikes include Cathedral Lakes, Elizabeth Lake, and Gaylor Lake.

In Fiscal Year 2016, Ron led twenty day long trips, as well as four camping trips to Yosemite National Park and one day trip to Pinnacles National Park. Five of the day trips included trail work in partnership with Yosemite Conservancy and the National Park Service. He also led a day trip for the Stanford Graduate School of Education. Here are some highlights:

MERCED COUNTY JUVENILE HALL

Sacred Rok led eleven day trips (including five trail crew work days) and two camping trips with Merced County Probation youth who are incarcerated in Iris Garrett Juvenile Justice facility.

For the eighth year, Sacred Rok continues to work closely with the Merced County Probation Department's juvenile hall and its Bear Creek Academy (BCA), a short-term program for incarcerated youth who have been committed by the Juvenile Court and are incarcerated for at least a year at the Iris Garrett Juvenile Justice Correctional Complex in Merced. The youth have created BCA Mission I'mpossible to share their stories about their experiences in Yosemite with Sacred Rok. Their mission: "Mission I'mpossible's members seek wisdom by learning from nature and life's experiences to find purpose in life, be more responsible, and respectful while being human beings."

Once a month, the Probation van brings BCA youth to Yosemite for a day trip with Ron, accompanied by a Probation officer. Participating youth are selected by the Probation Department on the basis of good behavior. The day trips often include trail repair. Under the auspices of

the National Park Service and funded by the Yosemite Conservancy, Sacred Rok and the Bear Creek Academy youth are helping to remove old decaying asphalt on the Yosemite Valley trails near Camp 4.

And Ron goes to juvenile hall every other week for lunch. He brings healthy organic food and they share lunch and talk about their experiences in Yosemite. The juvenile hall has built Sacred Rok into its curriculum and programming for these young people.

Our joint book with BCA Mission I'mpossible, Voices From the Inside Out, shares the voices of twenty-two young men and women with BCA Mission I'mpossible, telling their story of what the Sacred Rok and Yosemite program means to them and how it has impacted their lives.

SAN BENITO COUNTY JUVENILE HALL

Sacred Rok expanded its work with incarcerated youth to include day trips to Pinnacles National Park for San Benito County Probation Department youth from juvenile hall. Sacred Rok was invited to work with incarcerated youth at juvenile hall in San Benito County.

Juvenile hall is a short drive from Pinnacles National Park, which was established in 2013 as one of the nation's newest national parks. Ron Kauk and Sacred Rok Board member Steve Shackelton, former superintendent at Pinnacles and former Chief Ranger at Yosemite National Park, led a day trip to Pinnacles National Park and are continuing this new partnership with additional trips scheduled for the future.

BOYS & GIRLS CLUB OF MERCED COUNTY

Sacred Rok led seven day trips and one camping trip with young people from the Boys & Girls Club of Merced County.

Sacred Rok has continued its sevenyear partnership with the Boys & Girls Club of Merced County, with the support of the Community Foundation of Merced County and United Way of Merced County. The mentors at the Boys & Girls Club identify the young people and accompany them on the trips. The day trips have taken place in all seasons, giving these young people the chance to experience Yosemite throughout the year. Some of our youngest participants have been from the Boys & Girls Club, and they have shared their appreciation for getting away from the gangs and gunshots in their home neighborhoods, and experiencing the peacefulness of nature.

UPLIFT FAMILY SERVICES

Sacred Rok led a camping trip with foster youth from Uplift Family Services (formerly EMQ FamiliesFirst).

This was our third summer working with Uplift Family Services (formerly known as EMQ FamiliesFirst), a foster care and adoptions agency in the San Francisco Bay Area. Uplift Family Services brought teenagers from its foster care program in Santa Clara County to camp at Tuolumne Meadows Campground. We spent time on the Tuolumne River, walked to Parsons Lodge and Soda Springs, and hiked the trails at almost 9,000 feet elevation. At night we enjoyed reflecting around the campfire and seeing the stars. Sacred Rok and Uplift Family Services are committed to continuing their partnership both in the Bay Area and in Yosemite.

MODESTO UPLIFT

Sacred Rok led two day trips with Modesto Uplift, a mentoring program for at-risk youth in Modesto.

We led two day long trips to Yosemite National Park for youth and mentors from Modesto Uplift, which is a mentoring and youth leadership program in Modesto for at-risk youth. These young men and women were more familiar with their urban neighborhoods than with the outdoors; they had not been to Yosemite before. The stunning vistas and the experience of hiking in a natural environment had a powerful impact.

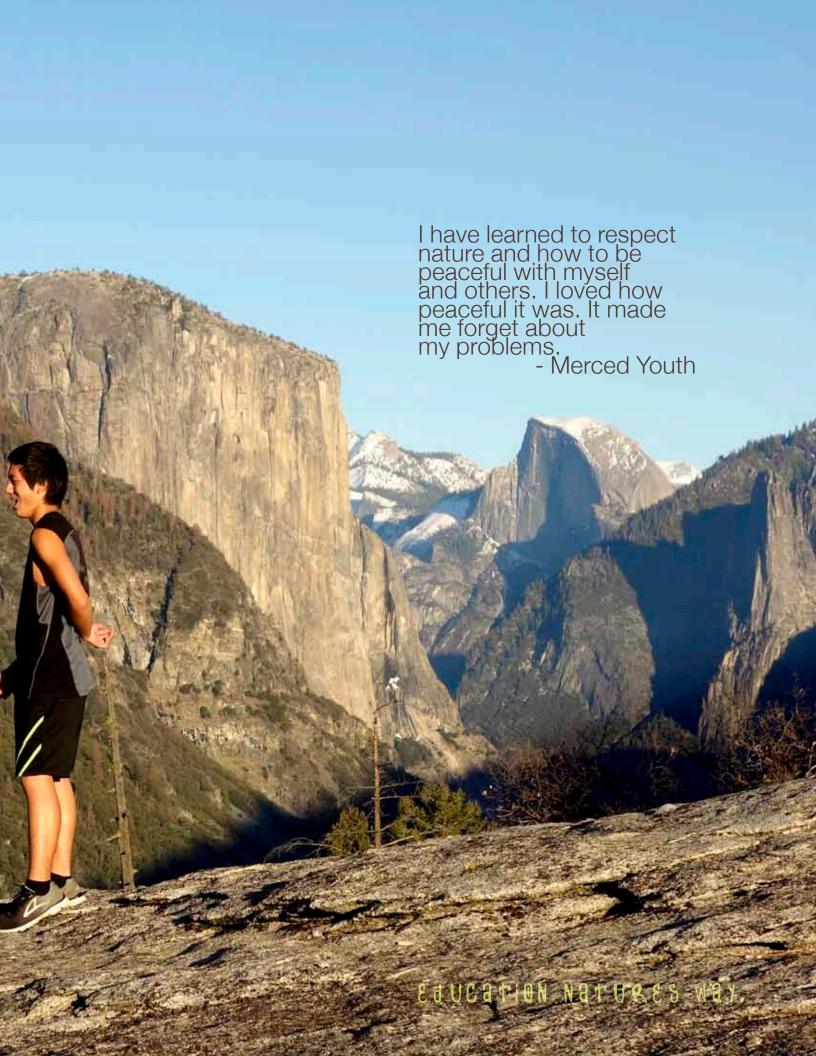
STANFORD UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Sacred Rok led a hike for adults from the Stanford Graduate School of Education.

Sacred Rok Board member Kenji
Hakuta is a Professor of Education at
the Stanford University Graduate School
of Education in Palo Alto. He and Ron
led 7 members of the Graduate School
of Education to Tuolumne Meadows at
the end of October for a nighttime hike to
Clouds Rest under the full moon, the last
full moon before the road would be closed
for the winter due to snow. It was an
opportunity to escape from the workday
world and forge a bond built on their
common experience of the natural world.







OUTCOMES

We seek positive outcomes
- defined as changes in
knowledge, attitude or behavior
- for youth participants. Here are
some of our findings.

IMMEDIATE OUTCOMES

Some outcomes are apparent immediately. These short-term outcomes include an increased self-confidence in nature and caring for the environment. Young people learn to sit at peace under a tree or by a river without needing an electronic tether to communication and social media. They are calmer and better able to manage anger, and more able to control their impulses. One way to measure these outcomes is through participant surveys.

We surveyed participants after the trips. Ninety-four percent said the trip made them feel less stressful or anxious; 3% said, "Maybe," and 3% said, "No." The Boys & Girls Club mentor gave an example of one participant who had not been self-confident prior to the trip. After the trip, during which he tried things he had never done before and succeeded, he became more self-confident, willing and able to try new things.

Fifty-nine percent said the trip would help them be more patient and think before they act; 37% said "maybe" and 4% said "no." One Boys & Girls Club participant said, "I'm more peaceful and I can relax to solve any of my problems." The Boys & Girls Club mentor identified the changes in one young teen, saying, "She used to do everything in a rush, and now she is calmer and more patient.

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

Longer term, outcomes include respect for nature and themselves, the feeling of being respected and valued by adults, more positive peer and adult relationships, and goals for the future that lead to more engagement in school or work.

Based on surveys, 75% said they had a better understanding and more confidence in nature, and 25% said "No." One participant said, "I have learned to respect nature and how to be peaceful with myself and others." Another said, "I loved how peaceful it was. It made me forget about my problems."

They recognized the power of the different environment, with one fifteen year old saying, "I smelled fresh air. Here in Merced you smell weed at the corner of a street, or smoke." One teen said, "I will always remember the smell of the dirt, it is different." They often pick up trash around the Valley floor. The Boys & Girls Club mentor commented that one participant who never cared about the environment is now very eco-friendly, asking to do community cleanup or clean up the parking lot.

Based on surveys, 94% said the trips would help them get along better with other people, and 6% said "maybe."
One young teen said, "I think this trip made me more responsible because I had to clean up a lot." The Boys & Girls Club mentor said, "Sacred Rok trips have always been a great opportunity for youth to explore the nature side of life. It also gives them a chance to travel and discover that Merced is really 'The Gateway to Yosemite.'

Some youth are exposed for the very first time, something that we take for granted. Not everyone can enjoy the luxury of seeing this beautiful place. But not only providing these youth a chance to voyage to this wonderful place and discover new things, we also have been discovering something new within these youth as they go and return back home."

We surveyed participants after the trip regarding whether they thought the trip would help them to do better at home and school. Eighty-seven percent said yes, 11% said "maybe" and 2% said "no." One 15-year old girl commented, "Yosemite was a very good experience. It was a lot of laughter and jokes and brought us all closer, this trip had us all bonding in the river, campfire, tents, and our walking trips." Her Boys & Girls Club

mentor said, "She has become more relaxed and responsible at the Boys & Girls club. She has shown interest in helping the club out by cleaning and being a peer mentor in our SMART Move program, developing as a young leader. This has been her third year attending these Yosemite trips and enjoying every minute of it." About another participant, he said, "He has expressed that these trips have helped him strongly with school, because these trips can give him hands on experience when teachers are speaking about biology, nature, trees, so he has a visual that he can relate to. I feel that as these Yosemite trips continue, our youth could only grow maturely, learning how to live respectfully with one another and all living things."

SUPPORTERS

We owe special thanks to this year's supporters, without whom our efforts would not be possible. We are so grateful for the many donations that we receive from people who are touched by our story, who read our newsletter, attend our events or meet Ron when he shows his movies at the Yosemite Visitor Center.

TOP OF THE ROCK, \$15,000 AND ABOVE

Clif Bar Family Foundation
Patagonia
The North Face

SPONSORS, \$5,000- \$15,000

A.C. Israel Foundation

PARTNERS, \$500-\$5,000

Community Foundation of
Merced County
United Way of Merced County
Yosemite Conservancy
Laurel & Eric Gunderson
Heather Kirkpatrick & Rob Reich
William B Long
Jacqueline Madison
Beth Ogilvie & Susan Straghalis
Patty Payne-Zajac & Mark Zajac

SUPPORTERS, \$100-\$500

Seth Alberta Randy Baltazar Mary Bender & Charley Hoyt Linda Berg Susan & Tony Brochini Ruth & Fred Brousseau Mary Swick Cooley & Brian Cooley Michal Danek Dave & Sue Ellis Maryam Etezadi-Amoli Nancy Goodban & Kenji Hakuta Elaine Hausman Hilary Hopkins Isis Keigwin **Annette Leifer** Jean & Andrew Long Michael Maher Milbrey McLaughlin & Larry Klein Christophe Pfistner Philip Purvis Helen & Dan Quinn Family Fund Renee Shahrok Teresa Sheridan Carolyn V Sunnyshine James Valensi Dana Vidrine Elizabeth Weal & Bruce Hodge Marvina White & Arnold Rampersad Dennis Yonemura

FRIENDS, UP TO \$100

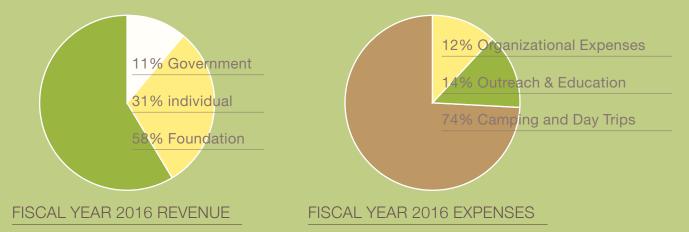
Active Family Chiropractic
Frank Aoyama
Mike Arechiga
Jean & Randy Bjerke
Alice & Doug Brown
Gail Bruce
Ronna Bucelli
John Butler
Rebecca Callahan
Phil Caterino
Pairou Chen

Traci M Closson Lynne & Gary Cutlip Debbie Delatour Meg Durbin & Clint Lewis Nancy Dyar & Tom Higgins Judith Fierstein Janet Goodban Nadine & Alan Goodban Laura Gutmann Virginia & Lamar Henderson Sheila Herb Kyle Howe Scott Johns Jeanne M Kelly Heidi Kloster & Diego Roman Katherine Konner Linda & Stephen Lansdowne Daniel Lauer Jim Lundeen Leslie McLean & Jack Krause Ann Mueller & Gordon Goodban Patrick Nance Kent Newbold Jonathan Osborne Donna Piedrafita **Tracey Roberts** Judy & Stephen Rock Melody J Ross Anna & Raffaele Ruberto Svlvia Sevmour Jane & Steve Shackelton Sandra Stewart Eleanore Suranne Denise Tarasuk TechSongIT Consulting Cathy Tseng Osvaldo Verduzco Sharon & Frank Viggiano Elizabeth Weal & Bruce Hodge Steven & Anke Weiss Christopher Wesselman

Camille Whitney



FINANCIAL REPORT



In the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2016, Sacred Rok received \$86,297.22 in revenue and had \$77,995.15 in expenses, for net operating income of \$8,302.07. The balance sheet showed \$56,443.63 in assets.

Our primary funding in FY 2016 was foundation funding (\$50,089.00, 58% of our revenue), followed by individual donations (\$26,016.36, 31% of our revenue), and government contracts (\$9,693.91, 11% of our revenue).

Our primary expense was camping and day trips, which accounted for \$57,567.50 or 74% of our costs. Outreach and education made up \$11,147.97 or 14% of our expenses. Organizational expenses made up the remaining \$9,279.68 or 12% of our expenses. Our largest organizational expenses are insurance, telecommunications, office supplies, and administrative support staffing for grant writing and upkeep of the web site and newsletter.

The pie charts above show our revenue sources and our costs. The Profit and Loss Statement and Balance Sheet are shown below and on the opposite page.

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Assets		
Current Assets		
Checking/Savings	\$53,881.45	
PayPal	\$40.00	
Supplies/Inventory	\$827.21	
Total Current Assets	\$54,748.66	
Fixed Assets	\$1,694.97	
Total assets	\$56,443.63	
Liabilities & equity		
Equity		
Retained Earnings	\$47,408.80	
Opening Balance Equity	\$732.76	
Net Income	\$8,302.07	
Total Equity	\$56,443.63	
Total Liabilities & Equity	\$56,443.63	

PROFIT AND LOSS

INCOME			
Restricted			
	Government Grants and Contracts	\$9.693.91	
	Foundation Grants	\$50,089.00	
Total Restricted			\$59,782.91
Unrestricted		· 	
	Individual Donations	\$26,016.36	
	Corporate Donations	\$451.91	
	Interest	\$46.04	
Total Unrestric	eted		\$26,514.31
Total Income			\$86,297.22
EXPENSE			
Camping and	Day Trip Costs		
	Program Staff	\$45,772.08	
	Travel	\$4,248,69	
	Food and Camping Supplies	\$7,546.73	
Total Camping and Day Trip Costs			\$57,567.50
Outreach and	Education Costs		
Carroadirana	Shipping and Printing	\$7,954.03	
	Design	\$2,773.95	
	Other	\$419.99	
Total Outreach	and Education Costs		\$11,147.97
Organizationa	l Costs		
	Administrative Support Staff	\$2,400.00	
	Postage and Mailing	\$239.21	
	Printing and Copying	\$253.88	
	Telephone and Telecommunications	\$1,434.40	
	Insurance	\$3,684.28	
	Office supplies, misc administrative	\$1,125,02	
	Bank and PayPal Fees	\$142.89	
Total Organizational Costs			\$9,279.68
Total Expense			\$77,995.15
Net Ordinary Income			\$8,302.07
Net Income			\$8,302.07





