




Midpeninsula Regional  
Open Space District

# Memorandum

DATE: October 11, 2017

MEMO TO: MROSD Board of Directors

THROUGH: Stephen E. Abbors, General Manager 

FROM: Carmen Lau, Public Affairs Specialist I

SUBJECT: Youth Engagement Strategy in Fiscal Year 2017-18

---

This memorandum provides a summary of the proposed components of the Youth Engagement Strategy in FY2017-18 and beyond.

## **History**

The District's Board of Directors set a goal for the District to connect people to open space and a regional conservation vision by expanding education programs to include a cross-section of populations in the Midpen service area. In addition, their goal is to reach current, new, and underserved populations in the Peninsula, South Bay, and the Coast.

Public Affairs developed a strategic youth outreach model that aims to target youth at all age levels. Youth under age 18 are comprised of 23.5% of the District's constituency. Research shows that adults are more likely to engage in outdoors activities if they are exposed to positive outdoor experiences in their childhood. Thus, providing consistent outreach to the next generation leads to safeguarding future support for environmental preservation and stewardship.

## **Diversity Ad Hoc Committee Feedback**

Based on feedback from the Diversity Committee, The Youth Engagement Strategy will begin in East Palo Alto and North Fair Oaks schools because both communities are underserved and under resourced. According to 2016 census data, 18.5% of the population in East Palo Alto live below the poverty line. Furthermore, 22.4% of the population in North Fair Oaks live below the poverty line. Both areas have higher poverty rates compared to the US median poverty line of 12.7%.

On July 10, 2017, staff presented a summary of the Youth Engagement Strategy to the Diversity Ad Hoc Committee. The committee provided valuable feedback and suggestions for the next stages of planning and implementation. Committee members noted that a potential challenge might be connecting with teachers and principals, as they often have a busy calendar. The committee suggested reaching out to existing environmental agencies that work with youth, including Environmental Volunteers, physical education programs, Walden West Program from

Santa Clara County Office of Education, Santa Clara County Youth Task Force, and local Conservation Corps.

**Youth Outreach Goals**

The purpose is to engage youth within District boundaries and foster knowledge and appreciation for the environment. The three main goals include:

- Develop an appreciation of nature and open space in youth
- Educate and promote conservation and stewardship among youth
- Inspire the next generation of environmental leaders

**Key Objectives**

- Establish key partnerships with schools
- Develop effective youth outreach materials
- Provide age-appropriate presentations and workshops
- Collaborate with internal and external partners
- Develop a long-term, sustainable youth outreach model

**Benefits to Youth**

- Positive first experiences with open space lands
- Local environmental knowledge
- Introduction to different activities at the preserves (hiking, biking, geocaching, dog-walking, bird watching, photography)
- Topical presentations from biologists, nature experts, and rangers
- Introduction to careers in the environmental field
- Field trip opportunities
- Volunteer opportunities
- Volunteer service hours

**Outreach Implementation Actions and Timeline**

<p><u>Phase 1</u> 2017 to 2018</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with internal departments on curriculum development</li> <li>• Put together resource materials packet</li> </ul>
<p><u>Phase 2</u> 2017 to 2018</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make contact with schools</li> <li>• Determine outreach schedule</li> </ul>
<p><u>Phase 3</u> 2019 to 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver school presentations</li> <li>• Provide talks from Midpen experts</li> <li>• Offer partnership hikes and field trips</li> <li>• Provide relevant resources and materials</li> </ul>
<p><u>Phase 4</u> 2019 to 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen ongoing youth program</li> <li>• Mentorship opportunities</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job shadowing</li> <li>• Youth internships</li> <li>• Consider Midpen Youth Advisory Committee</li> </ul>
--	--

**Target Locations**

Initial contact with schools and youth programs will focus on East Palo Alto and North Fair Oaks communities. We aim to reach 3 elementary schools, 3 middle schools, 3 high schools, one community college, and 7 community centers. The schools are listed below.

Elementary Schools

- Willow Oaks School – East Palo Alto
- Bell Haven School – North Fair Oaks
- EPA Charter School – East Palo Alto

Middle Schools

- Ronald McNair Middle School – East Palo Alto
- Hillview Middle School – North Fair Oaks
- La Entrada Middle School – North Fair Oaks

High Schools

- East Palo Alto Phoenix Academy – East Palo Alto
- East Palo Alto Academy – East Palo Alto
- Mid-Peninsula High School – North Fair Oaks

Community College

- Canada College – Redwood City

Community Centers

- YUCA
- East Palo Alto Library
- East Palo Alto Boys and Girls Club
- Siena Youth Center
- North Fair Oaks Library
- Redwood City YMCA
- East Palo Alto YMCA

**Partnership with Latino Outdoors**

The Hispanic and Latino community comprises of 20% of the District’s constituency, but the population is underrepresented in preserve usage. Both East Palo Alto and North Fair Oaks comprise of largely Hispanic and Latino communities. According to 2010 Census, the East Palo Alto community comprises of 61.1% Hispanic or Latino. In the North Fair Oaks community, 73.1% of the community are Hispanic or Latino.

To bridge the gap to reach Hispanic and Latino communities, we plan to collaborate with our partner, Latino Outdoors. Latino Outdoors is a nationally recognized non-profit aimed at connecting communities with the outdoors. Jose Gonzales, founder of Latino Outdoors, has successfully conducted program development and staff training in the past. Latino Outdoors' experience with youth engagement and facilitation will be a valuable asset to the Youth Engagement Strategy.

## **Potential Activities & Presentation Topics by Age Group**

### Elementary School

- Water cycle bracelet activity
- Photo sticker activity
- What to expect when you go for a hike
- Field trips to Daniels Nature Center

### Middle School & High School

- Introduction to Midpen presentation
- Trail work volunteer opportunities
- Field trips to a local preserve
- Presentation based on their science curriculum

### Community College

- Careers in land conservation

### Community Centers

- Story time at the library
- Art activity and slide show at library
- Highlight native plants or wildlife species
- Health and wellness in the outdoors

## **Materials Provided at Each School Visit**

- PowerPoint presentation
- Nature games and activities
- Midpen coloring book
- Intro to Midpen brochure
- Geocaching brochure
- Kid-friendly giveaway
- Midpen and wildlife stickers
- Foxy the grey fox display