



CHRISTODORA
NATURE, LEARNING, LEADERSHIP

ANNUAL REPORT 2021



Mission

Christodora's mission is to **encourage the positive academic and developmental growth of New York City's youth through stimulating educational and challenging outdoor programs.** Christodora exists to challenge the idea that a city kid could grow up having never camped, hiked, visited a park, or seen the stars that hide behind city lights: we know that our city's youth, given the chance, can grow into leaders and stewardship-minded trailblazers ready to change the world.



A Year to Thrive

We explored our city. We laughed. We hiked mountains. We canoed rivers. We worked together. We overcame challenges. We heard birdsong. We found joy. We picked up trash. We studied science. We swam in the pond. We made the world better. We made each other better. **We grew together.**





Winter Ecology Program (WEP)

New Youth Conservationist (NYC)

ECO Club

What is a Christodora student?

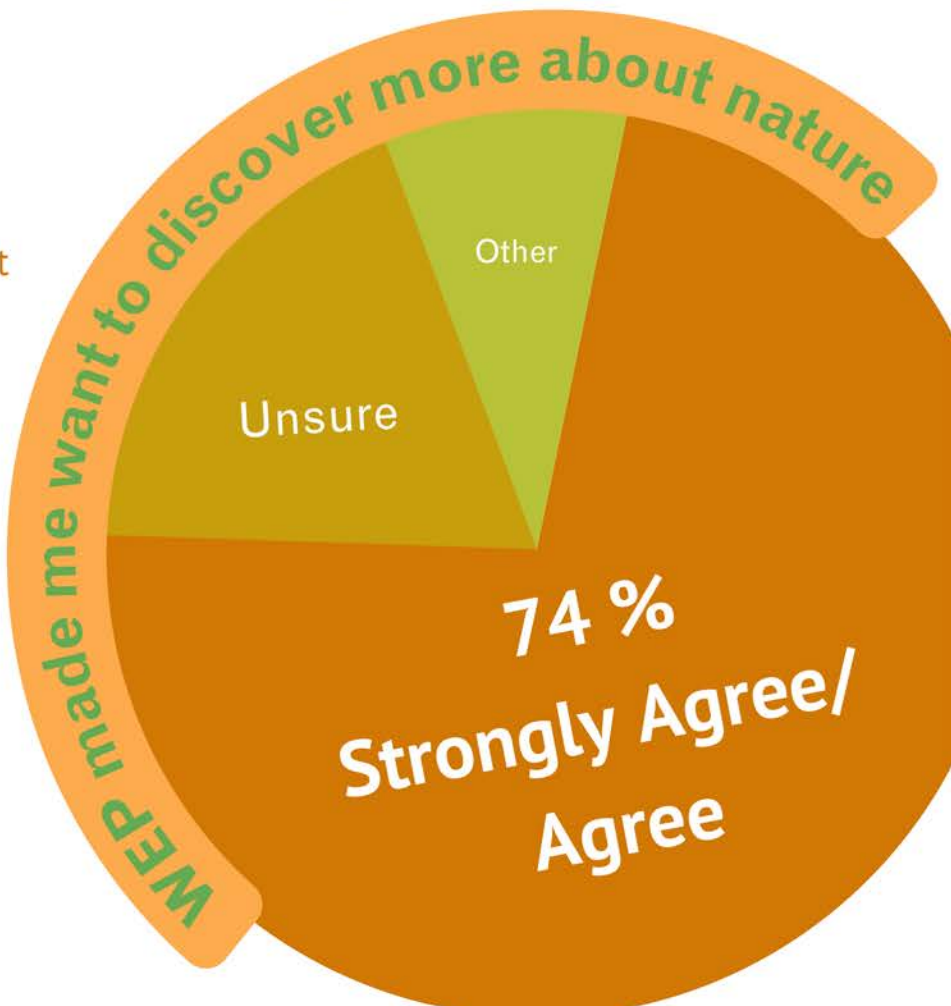


225 students had an amazing summer at MEC

850 public middle school students learned about ecology in WEP

50 environmental stewards kept our city and beautiful!

30 adventurers discovered our amazing parks and learned more about green careers





Greetings, from Florida, MA

Manice Education Center

Throughout June, July, and August, students boarded buses in Manhattan and began their journey north – to the great wilds of the Berkshires and the **Manice Education Center** (MEC)! After a year away, our students couldn't wait to reconnect with friends make new ones. They were eager to experience the beauty of nature and learn more about science and leadership. It was a time of discovery for our new students, the start of a journey. *Students returned home more confident in themselves and committed to protecting the environment.*



DID YOU KNOW?

MEC received a new grant from GroMore Good to renovate our garden. We expanded "beyond the gates" and built a new herb garden where students could taste fresh herbs everyday.



IN SUMMER 2021...

Our MEC students hiked **131** miles throughout the Savoy State Mountain forest and paddled **15** miles in canoes along rivers of the Northeast.



Words of a Christodora student

I desperately, for 2 years now, have non-stop been thinking about my return to Christodora camp...

When I went there my first time, it gave me an entirely different experience. At first, I was wary of going. But it changed my entire intel about life itself. I would do a lot just to breathe that same sweet air that I took in during my time there.

This may sound rather exaggerated, **but Christodora taught me people skills and so much about my own feelings and identity.** It is not just the scenery, activities, skills, exercises, and scientific investigations. It is by far perhaps one of my favorite places I've ever been to. **I discovered so many things about myself that I had no idea about before.**

Christodora gave me a reason never to take for granted things I've been blessed with and have even learned on my own. Some things I already knew, like the importance of respect for yourself and others. **And, there are things that Manice helped me mentally open up to – like trust.**

I would 100% recommend this camp, and look forward to meeting familiar faces I knew from just a while back. And seeing some new ones as well...

Written in spring 2021 as part of the application to MEC

New Youth Conservationist



Discovering the City, Helping it Grow

Nothing could stop our New Youth Conservationist (NYC) students this year! When the weather was inclement, or they couldn't meet in person - they met virtually and engaged in games and activities. **Can you name the song of the eastern bluebird? Our students sure can!** Once the weather warmed up, students took to the parks and green spaces, helping to make our city more beautiful by planting trees and mulching paths. They even planted daffodils through It's My Park Day - a gift that will keep on giving for years to come. Along the way, they challenged their powers of observation and problem-solving through citizen science experiments to help us monitor the environmental health of our fair city.





ECO CLUB

In 2021 we launched our newest program - ECO Club - or, **Environmentally Conscious Outdoors Club!** This new initiative for high school students builds curiosity and confidence in students and their relationship with the environment. In ECO Club, students learn outdoor leadership skills through excursions all around the city and enable students to feel empowered through service learning and envision themselves in STEM career pathways.

"I rediscovered the city and see it with new eyes."

What's "**GORP**," you ask? Well, it's a tasty trail mix snack, but it also stands for **Get Outside and Relax / Research / Restore Parks**, our new hands-on science and discovery summer program at Crotona Park in the Bronx. This program introduces the amazing world of plants and animals in our city! By the end of their time at GORP, students saw their neighborhood park with new eyes - as a place where animals live - and an ecosystem to protect.

GORP





CHRISTODORA CAMPFIRE



The Triumphant Return of the Campfire!

Christodora held its annual **Christodora Campfire Autumn Gala at The Loeb Boathouse in Central Park on September 29, 2021**. After a year apart, it was indeed an evening of celebration and reunion. Guests mingled with our students and shared their experiences as environmental scientists, park stewards, and wilderness explorers.

Sin Senh, a Christodora alumni, now president and CEO of Roux Associates, Inc., was honored this evening with the Christodora Alumni Award. As he reflected on his experience with

Christodora as a recent immigrant living in the Bronx in the 1980s, remarked, "I would not have gained the necessary skills to be a geologist and outdoorsman without Christodora...now as a board member, I want to participate in this organization, give back, and pay it forward."

Also honored this evening with the Spirit of Christodora Awards were **M. Christine Carty** and **Chris McKenzie** for their tireless legal counsel and risk management work throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. In her speech, Ms. Carty said, "The heart of Christodora has always been building and nurturing community..."



“When you trust others, they can trust you.”
— Christodora student



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