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Earthroots continues to grow and thrive thanks to a dynamic staff and support from community members like you! So far, this year has been filled with new and wonderful changes for our classes and for Big Oak Canyon. In this mid-year snapshot, we are excited to share a glimpse of those programs with you. We will also give you a look into what we have planned for the rest of 2017 and into 2018. Come, take a walk with us through some of our adventures this year.

Mission and Vision

Earthroots is a non-profit 501(c)3 educational organization dedicated to cultivating a sense of care and connection between people and the natural world.

Earthroots vision is to create a world where people of all ages, abilities, cultures and affiliations understand how our actions influence the world around us and with this understanding are inspired to make choices that improve the health of the earth, themselves, and each other.

Since its founding in 2005, Earthroots has grown both programmatically and structurally to enable the organization to serve an ever broadening range of local residents including school children, families, universities, and businesses. This growth and organizational stability has further allowed Earthroots to purchase and conserve a beautiful 39-acre property in Orange County, known as Big Oak Canyon.



*Exploring local tide pools with Earthroots
Homeschool Field Class. Photo: Rachel Kimball*

MID YEAR 2017 AT A GLANCE

*“When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world.”
~ John Muir*

Overview of January 2017 through July 2017

In the first half of 2017, program participants have logged a total of over 15,000 hours in nature. Earthroots provides opportunities to connect with nature and reduce or eliminate the Vitamin N deficiency. Our participants include numerous local residents of Orange County. Additional participants travel from Riverside, San Diego, Los Angeles and Santa Clara counties to immerse themselves in the Earthroots experience.

	January 1 through July 31, 2017
Days of nature programming	109 days
Enrolled participants	718 people
Guests at programs	208 people
Total hours in nature	15,247 hours
Volunteers	132 people
Total volunteer hours	751 hours

Program Highlights

Eco-Literacy

Eco-Literacy on Campus is a weekly program for grades 2-8 held at a local elementary school. Now in its 9th year the program at this site has become a true demonstration of sustainable living practices, mentoring 160 students each week during the school year. Teachers, students, volunteers and administrators actively engage in growing fruit and vegetables, harvesting rainwater, composting lunch waste, recycling, minimizing single use containers and restoring native habitat. Our unique grade appropriate Eco-Literacy curriculum builds future environmental stewards for the next generation.



*2017 Quail Springs Camping Trip with 7th grader Eco-Literacy students from The Journey School
Photo by Chrisha Favors*

Homeschool

Earthroots Homeschool Field Classes meet for 5 hours once a week in nature at various locations throughout Orange County. In 2017, experiences for children ages 6-14 have included hiking to a natural hot springs, tidepooling along the coast, fishing, tracking animals, plant uses for making tools and shelters, learning about watershed health and the water cycle, rainwater harvesting, native plant identification, and growing food organically. Our homeschool participants gain confidence in nature and the emotional and social intelligence to care for our earth, which often inspires them to share their outdoor skills and nature excitement with family and friends. Twelve students each explored for 80 hours with Earthroots mentors in the first half of 2017.

Forest Kindergarten

Forest Kindergarten participants and their parent(s) meet for 5 hours one day a week exploring the natural world around them. Each student has spent up to 80 hours of outdoor program time in the first half of 2017, mentored by Earthroots instructors. This program started meeting at Big Oak Canyon in August 2017, which is a very special realized vision for our organization and our

students. These children, ages 3 - 6, along with their parents, gain confidence in nature, physical strength, camaraderie with their peers and build a true community of families connected with nature.



Forest Kindergartners enjoying the abundant water flow of Trabuco Creek.

Photo By: Forest Kindergarten Parent

Service Learning Projects

This year, a dedicated group of teens from Tesoro High School Conservation Club have been working with Earthroots Restoration Manager, Daniel Francis, to design the outdoor kitchen at Big Oak Canyon. Daniel is mentoring the teens in permaculture design, which interweaves land care and people care ethics through all aspects of the process. These environmentally minded teens will be presenting their designs later this fall. This group has also been instrumental in furthering our efforts to bring fresh drinking water from our natural spring to our event terrace area. Ten teens each dedicated 12 hours of service in the first half of 2017.



Tesoro High School Conservation Club meeting with Daniel Francis at Big Oak Canyon.

Photo by: Jodi Levine-Wright

Festival Fundraiser

Earthroots Annual Festival & Fundraiser was celebrated at Big Oak Canyon for the second year! This year we were honored to have guest presenters and musicians including Jacque Nunez and Capoeira Batuque, among others. Games, crafts, nature hikes and a kids music circle added to the fun, while guests enjoyed organic homemade chili, salads, treats, beverages and a Chocolate fountain for dessert. Almost 250 guests, volunteers, and staff enjoyed the day at Big Oak Canyon at this 11th annual event.



*Children at the festival exploring the touch table booth.
Photo by Gia Trovela.*

Summer Camps

What better season to spend outside learning in nature than summer time! Earthroots offered two summer camps this year: Primitive Skills Camp and Fairy Garden Camp. Primitive Skills Camp participants (ages 6-14) had adventures together learning about various local ecosystems and rediscovering ancient ways of living. Fairy Garden Camp explored the wonder of nature and the magic that it holds through plant and animal identification and fairy garden house building (children ages 3-7). Seventeen students spent 15 hours in nature this summer



*View from Hot Springs trail in San Juan Capistrano
Photo by Kathleen Cobb*

Eco-Literacy and Sustainable Living Training

Earthroots instructors spent 3 days this past Spring with Naturalists at Large educators offering training on Ecological Literacy and Sustainable Living, partially funded by the Nature Connection Mentoring Foundation. Thirty five Naturalists from all over the state experienced the beauty of Big Oak while being immersed in this hands-on training. Each year this group impacts thousands of students throughout California. Earthroots provided instruction on Bird Language, Habitat Restoration, Native Plants as Food & Medicine, Composting, Organic Farming and Natural Building, among many other topics. These inspiring experiences will continue to enhance their programs for years to come.



Naturalists at Large educator displaying Wild Hyacinth transplanted as part of the habitat restoration portion of the Eco-Literacy Training.

Educators In Nature

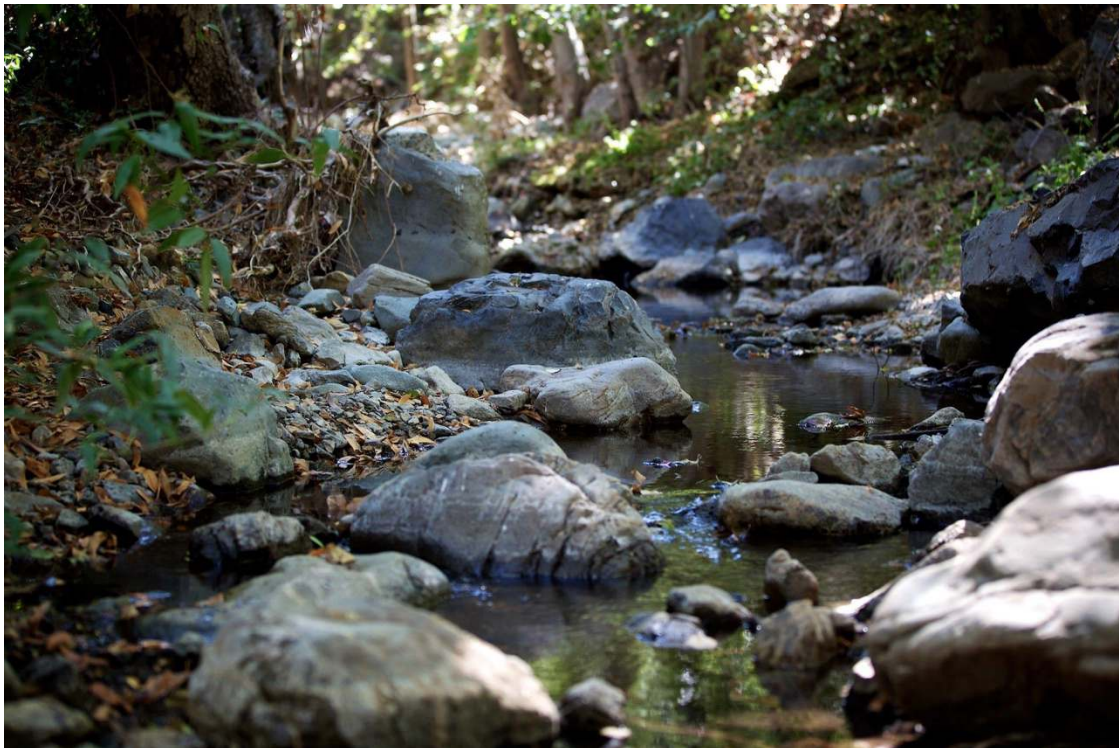
The first “Educators in Nature Training” was held at San Clemente State Beach Campground. It was designed to attract directors, instructors and volunteers of unique organizations in Orange County who work with youth outdoors. The goal of this training was to inspire nature connection practices for the adult participants to bring back to their students. The impact of this training will benefit hundreds of students each year, further enhancing Earthroots mission to connect others more deeply with nature. Nineteen educators participated in this 3 day training, representing 7 unique organizations

Staff Training

Instructor training has always been a key element of Earthroots. This year we trained 2 new instructors and 3 new long term volunteers. Thanks to a grant from the Mara Breech Foundation, instructors were able to participate in specialty trainings to enhance our breadth of offerings to the community. In the past several months, four Earthroots instructors attended 18 days of workshops and trainings in the Art of Mentoring with the 8 Shields Institute, Forest Kindergarten training with the Academy of Forest Kindergarten Teachers and Embodying Nature, also with the 8 Shields Institute. Additionally, three instructors are receiving Wilderness First Aid Training.

Big Oak Canyon

Big Oak Canyon, our 39-acre property in Silverado, CA, continues to thrive. So far this year we've hosted many new programs on this site. As mentioned above, Forest Kindergarten meets weekly on this beautiful land and we're working with the Tesoro High School Conservation Club to design an outdoor kitchen. Spring water runs year round on this very special property, and we're in process of bringing fresh pure drinking water to our future kitchen area so we can all enjoy this gift of year round water onsite. We've hosted many volunteer days in conjunction with local companies and volunteer groups in which we've continued our rehabilitation at Big Oak Canyon, and in the process have created an opportunity for many more people to commune with nature and get their hands in the dirt. Additionally, we've begun preliminary efforts to design what will become quarterly ancestral living skills gatherings, to be shared with our community.



*Silverado Creek at Big Oak Canyon
Photo by Andrew Lombardi*

GOALS FOR 2017-2018

*“Forests are the lungs of our land, purifying the air and giving fresh strength to our people.”
~ Franklin Delano Roosevelt*

As we look forward to the remainder of 2017 and into 2018, we are excited to share that this season marks Earthroots 13th year! This year we launched our nature educators training series, which will uplift outdoor education and nature connection programs growing in our area for our entire community. In the coming year we are excited to further develop this program and expand its outreach.



As we look to preserving natural space in Orange County, the restoration of Big Oak Canyon continues to be a priority. The success of our restoration at this location is fundamental to establishing a safe environment for our local animals, plants and people alike.

While continuing our current classes for children and adults of all ages, we're looking to expand our course offerings to a broader reach within the community.

It is our goal and our hope that through environmental education and practices we create a legacy where the importance of nature connection is realized. Our classes and programs plant the seeds that will create a new forest of environmental stewards in our future generations.

*Volunteer, Karis, showing her rope made of Yucca fibers.
Photo by Gia Trovela*

Thank you for being a part of Earthroots!

Jodi Levine-Wright, Executive Director