



2020-2021 Annual Report

Report to the National Park Service
Youth Programs Division



**Groundwork
USA**

22 Main Street
Yonkers, NY 10701

www.groundworkusa.org

Moving Purposefully Forward

Groundwork's Corps Principals.



01.
Treat Youth as
Colleagues
02.
Build Relationships
03.
Teach Real World Skills
04.
Engage Youth in
Important Work, Not
Busy Work.
05.
Work with Youth Over
Multiple Years
06.
Build Career
Opportunities

Annual
Report
2020-21



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Acknowledgements

Groundwork USA's youth programs and projects require huge amounts of work, research, and dedication. We could not implement them without the support of individuals such as George McDonald, National Youth Programs Manager for the National Park Service, and Ernestine M. White, National Youth Employment Programs Coordinator. In addition, thanks to the following individuals.

Tuskegee National Historic Sites

Special thanks to Joy Kinard, Superintendent, and Andrew Callens, Chief of Maintenance.

Historic Preservation Training Center

Appreciation for Moss Rudley – Superintendent
Amanda Stein – Integrated Resources Program Manager

Glacier National Park

Appreciation for Tracy L. Ammerman - Chief of Interpretation and Education
Sonja Hartmann - Volunteer Program Coordinator, as well as Emma Hilliard and Carolyn Clark.

Paterson Great Falls National Historic Park

Thanks to Superintendent Darren Boch, Interim Superintendent Floyd Myers, and Ilyse Goldman, Division Chief - Interpretation, Education and Volunteers

Yellowstone National Park

In gratitude to Bob Fuhrmann, Branch Chief for Youth Programs and Mike Coonan, Youth Work Program coordinator.

Gateway National Recreation Area

Thanks to Jennifer Nersesian, Superintendent and Pete McCarthy, Unit Manager, Sandy Hook National Seashore

Special Thanks to the **National Park Foundation** for their ongoing support. To Will Shafroth and Katherine Chesson for helping to keep projects moving during the pandemic, and to Lisa McLure for working hard on budget modifications.

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Groundwork USA would also like to thank **Tuskegee University**, especially its **Architecture Department**; Dean Dr. Carla Jackson Bell and Department Chair Dr. Kwesi Daniels for their support in encouraging students to volunteer for our restoration projects in Tuskegee, Alabama.

About Groundwork USA

Linking Communities in the Pursuit of Equity and Sustainability

The mission of the Groundwork USA network is to bring about the sustained regeneration, improvement, and management of the physical environment by developing community-based partnerships that empower people, businesses, and organizations to promote environmental, economic, and social wellbeing.

Changing Lives

Cultivating the next generation of conservation leaders is central to the work of Groundwork USA and its network – all our local affiliates have Green Team programs that meet youth aged 15-18 “where they are” and combine hands-on conservation work, environmental education, leadership development and paid employment. Projects improve both neighborhoods and nearby

National Parks, National Wildlife Refuges, and other public lands. Many Groundwork Trusts also have GroundCorps programs employing people age 18-35 in urban conservation work. The local Green Team and GroundCorps programs serve as portals to Groundwork USA’s National Youth Programs, which combine natural and cultural resource restoration, skill development, environmental education and leadership development in National Parks farther afield.

Our Youth

Unlike many corps, most of our work takes place in urban communities. It is here that we find one of our greatest resources for community revitalization: our youth. As we hire locally, our workforce is filled with individuals with keen insights into the conditions in which they work. They are deeply connected to the rhythm of their neighborhoods, and often painfully aware of its limitations – but also of its strength.

Stephen Burrington
Executive Director



Meeting Joint Needs

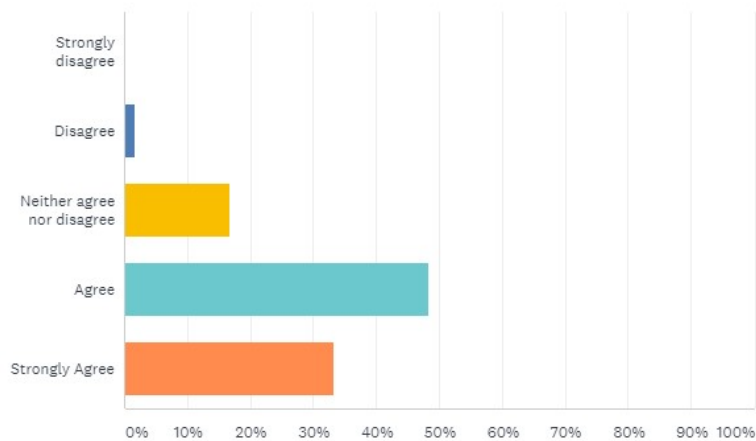


Many of the priorities of the Department of Interior align directly with the goals of Groundwork USA; to increase access to public lands and prepare the next generation to play a central role in the revitalization of our nation.

The park infrastructure projects started under Teddy Roosevelt and expanded to the development of the Civilian Conservation Corps under Franklin Roosevelt had two goals; building access for generations of Americans to enjoy our national treasures, and providing people with meaningful work and useful skills. Groundwork USA is proud to be at the forefront of the refocusing of corps activities in America by bringing back infrastructure work and facilities maintenance as a main focus of a corps. The extended benefit of working with the National Park Service units is to contextualize the work the youth are doing and to help them see that their work is part of broader conservation efforts while simultaneously accomplishing infrastructure goals. These are skills the youth bring back home to benefit their communities as well.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: After participating in this Groundwork USA program I have a better idea of career possibilities.

Answered: 60 Skipped: 0



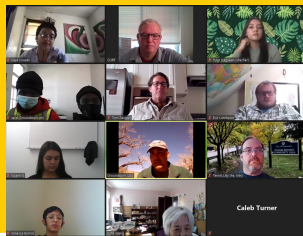
Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland Visiting a Groundwork Worksite at Yellowstone National Park August 2021



How COVID Impacted our Work and How We Responded



COVID -19 AND SAFETY How Groundwork Responded to the Pandemic



COVID-19 Mitigation Strategies

Working with its park partners, Groundwork USA was able to develop COVID-19 Mitigation strategies and an action plan that was accepted by the park units, and which allowed GWUSA to operate corps programs in the parks. As most youth who participate in Groundwork USA's corps programs are already members of Groundwork Trusts (rather than recent hires), most of our affiliates were able to provide vaccination records and a form of in-house contract tracing. During the spring and summer of 2021 it is estimated that 79% of youth had been vaccinated prior to participating in the corps experience. This, coupled with our mitigation strategies, resulted in no known infections during the summer program.

OSHA Safety Training

Both the National Youth Program Director and the Youth Program Manager are OSHA authorized safety trainers. The information garnered through the ISSA training was incorporated into the 10 Hour Outreach Safety Training which was offered to 15 youth leaders across the network. Following OSHA's Hierarchy of Controls, Groundwork youth program staff implemented administrative policies, engineering controls, and purchased additional PPE equipment for our youth. Coupled with daily safety circles, this added an additional layer of care for our youth and staff.

What Else is in the Air? Public Health Initiative

Groundwork's Youth Program Director was one of 20 scientist and science communicators nationwide selected to create an outreach campaign to diverse audiences as part of a program of Sigma Xi, the National Scientific Research Society. Groundwork collaborated with a number of scientists including an epidemiologist, a biomedical researcher, and a virologist to provide online training for GroundworkYouth. Because of this training, youth from Groundwork Elizabeth put together a commercial which was broadcast in New Jersey.



GROUNDWORK BY THE NUMBERS

Groundwork USA is the Most Diverse Urban Corps in the Nation
In 2020-2021, and despite the pandemic, the Groundwork USA network engaged 6,904 youth in conservation-related programs, delivered 85,713 hours of environmental education, and provided jobs for 3,902 youth in 20 states. Our GWUSA corps bulds on this success.



**+13
Years of
Experience**

The Groundwork USA Corps is now in its 13th year, and continues to grow annually

Despite COVID cancelling many activities, GWUSA was still able to employ **131** youth between 10/1/20 and 9/30/21

96% BIPOC Corps

43% Black/Afro-Caribbean
39% Hispanic/Latinx
03% Asian/Indian
06% Mixed/Multi-Racial
09% Non-Hispanic White

Time is spent each and every day in environmental education and STEM enrichment!

Education Levels:

In High School: 64%
Vocational Training: 21%
Some College: 12%
College Graduate: 03%

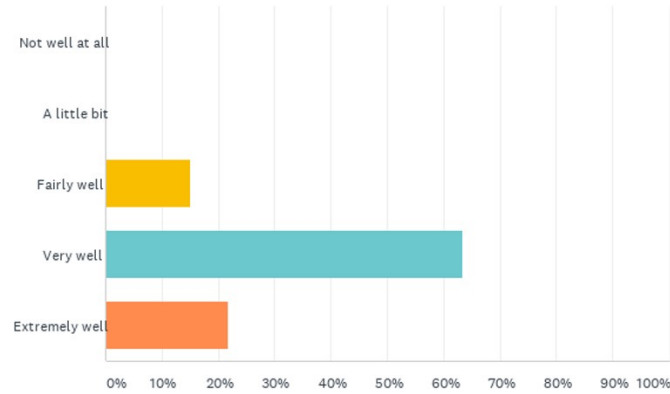
Groundwork makes a concerted effort to engage women in vocational skills training. This program year we hired 92 women and 39 men.

18-year-old female when asked on a survey how Groundwork could do better? *Tell more people about the program because it is too good to not know about it!*

What Our Youth Say About the Program



Overall, how has GWUSA met your needs?

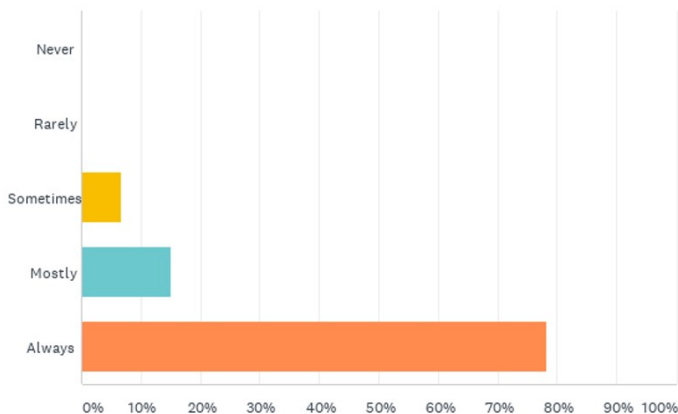


“In past programs I was always treated as if I couldn't handle myself regardless of me going into adulthood very soon. This program was nothing like that and I can truly say it makes the experience so much more memorable.”

“The whole trip was unexpected in the best way; it was a learning experience that I am extremely grateful for”

“Bringing youth together in a remote environment that allows us to bond and think critically about many things all while getting an extremely beneficial experience.”

How often do staff at GWUSA treat you with respect?



Yellowstone National Park



Work Activities

Groundwork had been asked by the park to refurbish the staircase to the Firehole River swimming area. This staircase is used by large numbers of visitors. Groundwork's crews were able to assess the condition of the stairs and to work with Yellowstone's staff to coordinate materials and supplies for its restoration. Groundwork crews removed a number of the tread boards and custom built 230' of stringers. The entire staircase, including posts, railings, tread, stretchers, and cross braces were then refurbished opening up the staircase for future visitors to use.

Recreation and Adventure

Not Everything at Yellowstone was work. Each participant was also provided two days of tours of the park's unique geothermal features and flora and fauna. Time was spent each day on workshops including learning more about the conservation efforts at Yellowstone as well as learning more about leadership. The youth also participated in one day of Community Science, collecting dragon-fly larvae and looking for pika "haystacks." A highlight for many of the youth was completing their junior ranger books and getting sworn in as junior rangers. There were also hikes, astronomy lessons, and tons of campfire programs and group games.

“This particular work is vitally important because we are taking a piece of land that is historically attached to war and destruction and we are turning it back into an environment that will bring people together with a shared love for nature and the beautiful landscape of the Gateway National Recreation Area. – Raina J.



Sandy Hook National Seashore

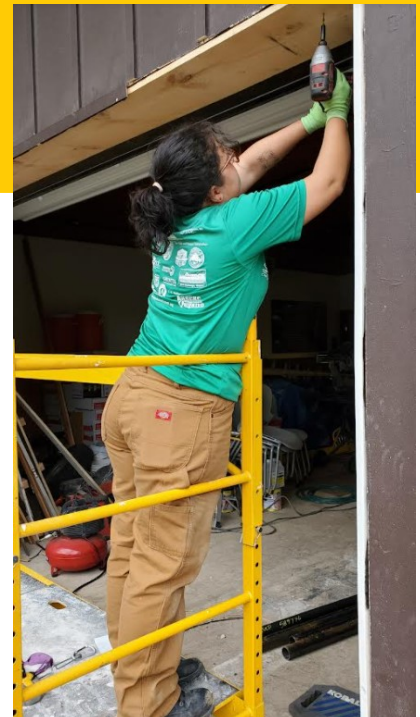
A section of the park with dilapidated buildings is being prepared to serve as a group campsite. Groundwork crews, with support of the National Park Foundation, sealed up three of the buildings to render the site safer for visitor use. The crews worked so quickly there also found the time to replace the roof on one of the bus shelters for the park.

“Groundwork is good at empowering different walks of life to get involved in their community and across America which is no easy feat. It's hard work but they work with the individual's strengths and weaknesses.”
– From Youth Survey Form 2021





Paterson Great Falls NHS Gets Needed Improvements



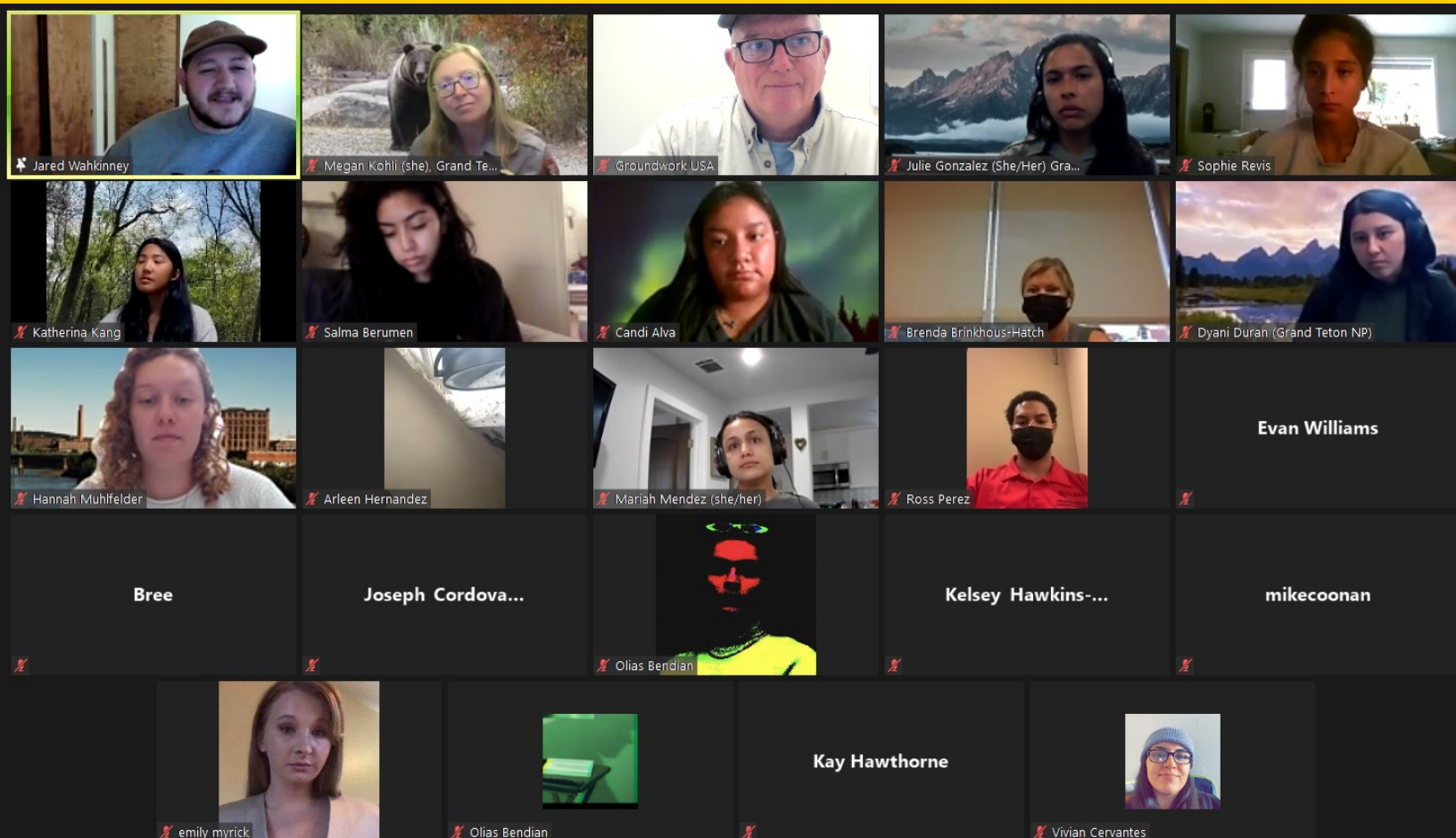
Converting the Old Visitor Center into a Maintenance Facility

To accommodate the construction of a new visitor center for the park, the old visitor center needed remodeling to not only store tools, but electric vehicles as well. The park unit worked with Groundwork on a redesign for the building. Groundwork knocked out a portion of the existing wall and put in a new roll-top door. They also provided a new curb cut, interior walls, and removed the raised flooring to make the site ready for vehicle storage. Finally, Groundwork constructed a new steel storage rack. This projects highlights the versatility of Groundwork to complete projects of varying scope.

Mountains to Main Street

Engaging New Audiences in Our Nation's Parks

A Program of Grand Teton National Park and Groundwork USA



Through a unique collaboration between Grand Teton National Park, and supported by the Grand Teton National Park Foundation, Groundwork was able to bring 20 youth ambassadors from across the United States to participate in this multi-week training. The purpose of the program, now in its fifth year, is to train young adults into how to design activities and outreach strategies to bring new audiences into national parks. Rather than simply focusing on the natural wonders and cultural assets of the park, the ambassadors determine the passions and needs of a particular audience in their community and then determine how to use park assets to meet those needs. The highlight of the program (which extends into the fall of 2021) is when the ambassadors complete their projects in our nation's parks.

Special thanks to Megan Kohli, GTNP Branch Chief of Youth, Community and Volunteer Engagement, and to the Grand Teton National Park Foundation for underwriting this program, which has already brought in over 1,000 new visitors to park units across the US.

Glacier National Park Summer 2021



Groundwork's partnership at Glacier NP is not only with NPS youth program staff, but in direct collaboration with the maintenance staff as well. This allows for quick coordination on facilities maintenance, delivery of materials, and allows Groundwork to supply park staff with additional hands where needed during our stay in the park. This year, Groundwork was able to remove the old roof at the Artist in Residence cabin and to replace it with new subroofing and shingles.



Key Advantages in Working with Groundwork USA

A Fully Self-Contained Corps

Groundwork is a fully self-contained corps program — park units don't have to supervise our work and can maintain minimal contact if needed. The advantage of this is that during a time like a pandemic, or government slowdowns, or even for small park units with minimal staff, Groundwork can bring trained crews with minimal assistance from the park unit. Groundwork can arrange logistics, work with maintenance departments to develop the scope of work, provide educational and recreational opportunities, and get things done the way the park needs them to be.

This ability was on full display at our park partners this summer. To protect employees, the park service shutdown campgrounds, ordered nonessential employees to work from home, limited access to buildings and instituted other policies to keep their staff safe. Despite these conditions, the park still met its maintenance goals by simply contacting with Groundwork to handle all aspects of the work.



Effective NPS/GWUSA Partnerships

Traditional Trades Apprenticeship Program

Working together to create creative career pipelines

ABOUT TTAP



Working in collaboration with the Historic Preservation Training Center, under Superintendent Moss Rudley, the National Park Service, and Groundwork USA, a 20-week apprenticeship program was created to provide youth with the unique opportunity to work with the National Park Service while also under Groundwork USA's supervision. Groundwork recruited the youth, provides ongoing support, and provides an additional workshop in how to navigate usajobs.gov.



Park Partnerships 2021

Sleeping Bear Dunes

National Lakeshore
Scott Bigley, Maintenance Mechanic Supervisor

Timucuan

Ecological and Historic Preserve
Morgan Baird, Chief of Maintenance

Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania

National Battlefield Park
John Storke, Chief of Maintenance

George Washington Birthplace

National Monument
Beverly Bruce, Facility Manager

Tuskegee Institute

National Historic Site
Andrew Callens, Chief of Maintenance



National Park Service Funding in 2021



Paterson Great Falls NHS
Completed Spring 2021

Funding : \$28,2313

Additional Support:

Groundwork USA received added support from its affiliate Groundwork Elizabeth, and the park unit purchased additional materials



Sandy Hook Nat'l Seashore
Completed Summer 2021

Funding : \$86,506

Additional Support:

The funding for this came from the National Park Foundation and its Adidas Healthier Outside grant.



Yellowstone National Park
Completed Summer 2021

Funding : \$75,012

Additional Support:

Yellowstone National Park supplied \$50,048 worth of funding and the National Park Foundation supplied an additional \$24,964



Glacier National Park
Completed Summer 2021

Funding : \$22,113

Additional Support:

Groundwork was able to leverage an additional \$11,115 from the National Park Foundation. Ben Baldwin's office provided \$10,998



Mountains to Main Street
Completed Fall 2021

Funding : \$37,664

Additional Support:

This program is supported by the Grand Teton National Park Foundation.



Traditional Trades TTAP
Spring through Fall 2021

Funding : \$290,876

Additional Support:

Groundwork received additional support from the National Park Foundation in the amount of \$149,148. NPS provided \$141,728.

BUILDING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN PARK UNITS AND GROUNDWORK AFFILIATES



Morristown National Historical Park

In addition to developing park partnerships directly with Groundwork USA, we strive to create partnerships between our affiliates and local park units. Unfortunately, the pandemic deeply impacted these partnerships as both the park units and the affiliates instituted policies and protocols to keep employees and visitors safe.

Nevertheless, GWUSA was successful in developing a collaboration between Groundwork Elizabeth and Morristown National Historical Park. The park was able to provide \$42,850 in funding for a two-year Task Agreement with our Elizabeth, NJ Trust. This allowed GW Elizabeth to perform much needed invasive species management.

Some of our affiliates were also able to secure YPP funds for engaging their local park units. This includes the following:

- **Groundwork Elizabeth** at **Timucuan Ecological & Historical Preserve**, as well as **Canaveral National Seashore**
- **Groundwork Bridgeport** at **Weir Farm National Historical Park** and through the **Wild and Scenic River program** at **Farmington River**.

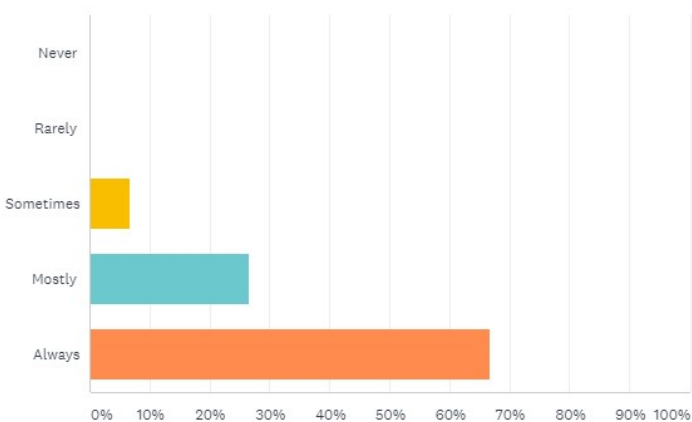
Building a Culture of Evaluation

In 2020 Groundwork USA was fortunate to receive a grant from the Listen 4 Good Foundation for Shared Insight. The aim of the collaboration was to assist GWUSA in designing and implementing a closed loop feedback system by which we can collect and act upon feedback from GWUSA’s youth program participants to improve program delivery. The grant included training in how to design better feedback questions and how to create a “culture of evaluation” to continuously improve our youth programming. This project has resulted in Groundwork developing better assessment tools, to consistently collect feedback, and to “close the feedback loop” to ensure that we are responding to the comments provided by participants. In 2021-2022, our goal is to create a means for collecting information from GWUSA program alumni.

Results from 2020-2021 surveys have been included in this brochure.

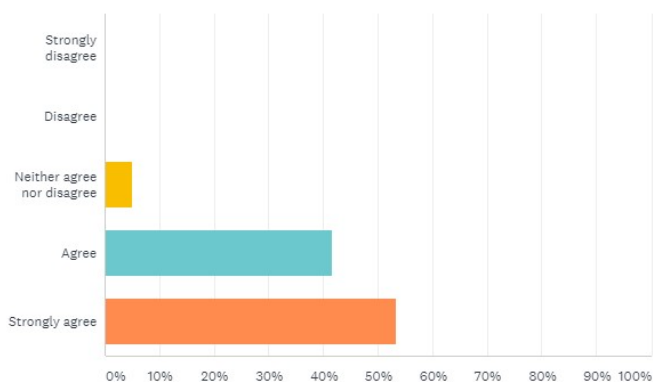
How often did you feel like someone was available to answer your questions?

Answered: 60 Skipped: 0



To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement: This program has increased my sense of belonging in nature.

Answered: 60 Skipped: 0



Why We Do What We Do: Beyond Performance Measures, the Real Indicators of Our Success?

Changing Places,
And Changing Lives



Thanks National Park Service for Making This Possible!