

East Side Takes Flight! The Minnesota Flyway as a Whole Family Experience

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East Side Neighborhood Services, Minneapolis MN

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East Side Takes Flight! The Minnesota Flyway as a Whole Family Experience was a project that bridged cultural and class-based gaps between underrepresented communities of color and the robust ornithological recreational and educational activities available across Minnesota, spanning from Minneapolis to Duluth. The goals achieved through this project were: (1) enhanced appreciation for, and knowledge about, the Minnesota flyway and the diversity of birds that live and migrate through the Mississippi River valley; (2) collaboration across southeast and northeast Minneapolis through whole-family programming that strengthened collective

understanding about bird physiology and the Minnesota flyway; and (3) the utilization of art and family engagement as a means for fostering knowledgeable and invested environmental stewardship within underrepresented communities through Minneapolis.



In September 2017, the East Side Neighborhood Services Youth Department *took flight!* Our trip was the kick-off of a 2-month series of experiential education events for students and adult caregivers alike. Our

September trip began on the cliffs of Hawkridge in northern Duluth. We were part of the crew watching and participating in the migration of hawks -- some of us even got to hold a wild hawk and release it after it had been banded! There were fascinating real-life bird wings, bones, skulls, and talons that we could touch and feel and ask questions about. We went on a perilous hike along slippery rocky slopes overlooking the Superior Hiking Trail and the grand Lake Superior.



Parents, ESNS staff, and youth alike felt the magic of being in the northern point of such a special migration, and the staff of Hawkridge welcomed us so warmly! They "banded" the youth with their current 'wingspan' widths, they shared binoculars and chairs with our senior participants, and they showed us how dragonflies grow from nymphs to winged flying creatures who also take part in their own migration!

On our way from Duluth to Camp Bovey, we stopped along the beaches of Lake Superior. The plan was to look at the water and admire its magnificence, but then... a few toes wanted to see how cold it was, and a few finger tips needed to touch the glistening pebbles, and a few ankles wanted to experience the push and pull of the incoming waves, and before we knew it, this was a full-fledged swimming session! Giggles then laughs erupted the shoreline. Yellow Bovey shirts were soaked and clinging to shivering

little bodies who reveled in the delight of wave-wacking play. For many of us, we had never even seen Lake Superior! For those of us who had, few had ever felt its power. Many of the children had never seen or experienced tides and waves!



After our Duluth adventure, from hilltops to waves, we returned to Camp Bovey. The kids who have attended Bovey taught their grown-ups what Hodaggers do come nightfall: Late into the night, we roasted s'mores, played games, and sang songs.

In the morning, before we returned to Minneapolis, families learned to throw hatchets, canoe, and explore the wilds of Boveyland! To keep our sugar levels exactly where they needed to be, we stopped for fresh ice cream on the way home!

But this was just the beginning...

In October, the Luxton Learners began a 4-week study of bird anatomy, physiology, and migration patterns.



Artist-naturalists from Silverwood Park of the Three Rivers Park District used art as a medium for engaging youth in the science of winged creatures, then the Luxton Learners even got to visit Silverwood for an all-day field trip to observe birds on the pond and play nature learning games!

As a finale, we brought our two community-based programs together (Mulberry Junction and Luxton Learners). The Luxton kids performed an interpretive migration dance wearing the masks and bird costumes

they had created. MJ kids stepped in to fill the spots of youth who couldn't make it to the event! Families from MJ and Luxton shared the celebration of learning and new experiences together with feasting, play, and music.

Populations Served by Project:

a.) *Afterschool Bird Education and Bird Appreciation Projects*

- **41 youth** from southeast, northeast, and north Minneapolis
- Ages 5-12
- 92% receiving free or reduced-price lunch
- ~65% African or African-American, ~30% Latino or Hispanic, ~5% Hmong, white, or other)

b.) *Weekend and Evening Bird Education and Appreciation Family Events*

- Families of Glendale Townhomes in southeast Minneapolis (**32 individuals**)
- 100% living at or below the poverty line
- 100% African or African-American
- Large percentage Somali immigrants

Purchase Total	Category	Summary
\$2,729	Program Supplies	Entrance fees Hawkridge; rental Camp Bovey; material necessary for afterschool programming; material necessary for Family Night; general supplies, e.g. flashlights, rain gear, insect repellent, etc.
\$1,250	Transportation	Charter bus rental for Duluth, Camp Bovey; Charter bus rental for Silverwood field trip; transportation to/from Family Night
\$988	Programming	Silverwood educational series; Field trip facilitation; Camp Bovey programming
\$248	Food	7-meals, 4-snacks during Hawkridge weekend; 1 joint family night meal for Luxton and Mulberry Junction program; ice cream roadtrip stop
\$875	Administrative costs	Staffing and agency facilities





Look for us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/campbovey/

We have a video and more pictures from our amazing weekend online at:
<https://www.facebook.com/campbovey/videos/1908568349177326/>