



A P U B L I C A T I O N O F T H E N O L S D E V E L O P M E N T O F F I C E

FRIENDS

Welcome to *Friends*, a newsletter for people committed to helping NOLS provide the world's best education in wilderness skills and leadership. This publication aims to provide useful and interesting information on charitable gift planning and the people who support NOLS.

S U P P O R T I N G E X C E L L E N C E A T N O L S • J A N U A R Y 2 0 0 6

We Can Do It!

Foundation Grant Puts Forth A Challenge to NOLS

In a strong show of support for NOLS, The Kresge Foundation has awarded a \$500,000 challenge grant to the school's International Base Camp Initiative. Receiving this grant represents a hard-won opportunity for NOLS: The Kresge Foundation typically funds only one of every four applications it receives.

"This is a tough grant to receive," says David Cowles, NOLS associate director of development. "But it's one of the most beneficial because it will provide the final dollars for our capital campaign."

The Kresge grant is not simply a donation of funds. The Foundation's grants are specifically designed to inspire private, corporate and foundation giving with incentive to reach a campaign's end goal. Instead of a "matching" grant where foundation dollars are matched to donor dollars, this is a challenge grant. The grant guarantees the final \$500,000 of our \$10 million dollar campaign goal—if, and only if, the NOLS community raises the preceding \$9.5 million dollars by December 2006.

"Receiving the Kresge grant is a huge vote of confidence in our organization and in this campaign," says NOLS Executive Director John Gans. "We know The Kresge Foundation does one of the most thorough checks of an organization's integrity and stability, and we are very pleased to have the opportunity to challenge our donors with this incentive."

Based in Troy, Michigan, The Kresge Foundation was founded in 1924 and supports a

range of national and international organizations representing almost the entire breadth of the nonprofit sector. The NOLS International Base Camp Initiative, a \$10 million campaign to fund construction of NOLS' headquarters facility and the renovation of the Noble Hotel in Lander, is just the kind of project The Kresge Foundation supports. That's because their grants are "bricks and mortar" funds that go toward building program facilities. Kresge not only evaluates a building project's merits, but also looks at the organization's financial history, capital campaign structure, and demonstrated level of commitment to the campaign.

In keeping with the Foundation's requirements, the new grant will focus on the renovation of the Noble Hotel, a project well underway. (See Gifts at Work, page 4).

The Kresge grant equals the largest gift to date in the Base Camp campaign at the time of application. Kresge staff are working closely with NOLS to ensure our campaign is well designed and has reasonable benchmarks to reach the \$10 million goal.

The NOLS campaign remains on a steady course, currently standing at \$7.36 million in pledges and cash. With the Kresge grant as an incentive, everyone's contributions between now and the end of 2006 will be essential to bringing the effort to a successful close.

“Receiving the Kresge grant is a huge vote of confidence in our organization and in this campaign.”

John Gans, NOLS Executive Director



NOLS LEADERSHIP QUOTE

"NOLS' Kresge challenge grant represents a remarkable opportunity and honor. Kresge's trustees require evidence of solid planning and strong early leadership in giving. When a Kresge Grant is committed, it is designed to encourage a burst of funding to reach a final high hurdle. It is called a challenge grant, but it is just as much a signal of assurance to prospective donors of an organization's potential for reaching a final campaign goal."

Dr. Jane Margaret O'Brien, Ph.D. is the president of St. Mary's College of Maryland, a premiere public honors college. Dr. O'Brien has formerly served as the head of the faculty at Middlebury College in Vermont and as president of Hollins University in Virginia. She has lent her expertise as an educator to the NOLS Board of Trustees since 2001.

The Justis Family: Planning Ahead for NOLS

By KIRSTEN JOHNSON

“NOLS has been a powerful part of our lives,” says Rachel Justis. Rachel and her husband, Cleve, have been part of the NOLS family for most of their adult lives and know the value of a NOLS experience.

Rachel came to NOLS after college with a passion for wilderness and an eagerness for new technical skills. After NOLS courses in Wyoming’s Wind River Mountains and Alaska, she tackled an Instructor course. Cleve, who was part of the first Wilderness Medicine Institute (WMI) course, became a NOLS Instructor in 1992. The couple met at NOLS Alaska and have been adventuring together ever since.

The birth of their first son, Galen, gave the couple impetus to review their will. The Justis’ took that opportunity to make a planned gift to NOLS and highlight the school as one of their top giving priorities.

“[We] want to inspire other people who are committed to the school to do something similar,” says Rachel.

“NOLS is a powerful place and people love to stick around,” she continues.

Although Rachel and Cleve have moved on to new careers—she is a physical therapist and he is executive director of the Headlands Institute, an environmental education center in California—they continue to maintain a strong bond with NOLS. “Teaching and being a part of students’ experiences was inspiring for us,” concludes Rachel, “and so we want to help make NOLS part of other people’s lives.”

Rachel and Cleveland Justis are members of the NOLS Summit Team, a recognition society for donors who include the school in their estate or other long-term giving plans. If NOLS is in your will, please let us know (800.332.4280 or development@nols.edu).



Cleve, Rachel and son Galen

What You Leave Behind How Best to Benefit Them

As some of NOLS’ early grads and the original baby boomers begin to hit their sixties, they are faced with an important decision. How do they plan strategically for retirement years in a way that maximizes the gifts they want to pass on? If you fall into this category, the choices you make to benefit your heirs or favorite charities can have a wide variety of impact, negatively and positively. And much of it boils down to determining which assets you spend in retirement and which ones you bequeath.

Ordering Your Spending to Make the Most of Your Savings

Financial advisors have generated some basic formulas to assist someone who’s reviewing their assets. One suggestion is to divide your assets into three primary categories:

1. Your taxable accounts
2. Your tax-deferred accounts, such as 401(K) plans and individual retirement accounts (IRAs)
3. Your tax-free accounts, such as Roth IRAs

The next step is to determine an order in which you will spend the assets in these accounts to maximize your own money and minimize capital and estate taxes for whomever inherits what you don’t use in your lifetime.

Your individual strategy will differ depending on numerous factors, not the least of which might be how much you give to charity in a planned gift. Other factors to take into consideration are your age, health, and the balance of assets currently in these various categories. If you really want to get into the details, another important step would be to talk with your children and discuss what they might do if they were to become the recipients of certain assets. For example, maintaining a vacation home you rarely use and then passing it on might add an unnecessary burden to your children if they plan to sell it anyway.



Leave Behind: Those You Care About

What Can You Pass on With the Least Taxable Impact on Your Children or Charities?

The basic strategy calls for spending down your assets in an order that leaves the greatest resources for your heirs and favorite charities—specifically your tax-sheltered accounts. The recommendation is to spend your after-tax dollars first, then your IRA and 401(K) dollars, and finally your tax-free accounts.

As you put together a sequence that makes sense for your situation, keep in mind two important factors. One is that it might be wise for you to move some of your accounts around, for instance, making sure life insurance policies are owned by heirs or nonprofit charities to avoid estate taxes.

The other major consideration is to look at what can be gained by making a planned gift in your will to a nonprofit organization like NOLS in areas where taxation would be the harshest on your decedents, such as capital gains on appreciated stock, or income and estate taxes (federal and state) on your IRAs and 401(K) plans. Pension plans are one of the hardest hit, yet

by transferring them to a unitrust you can avoid much of the confiscatory taxation, practically quadrupling the benefit to your children or charity.

Review What Matters Most to You and Put A Plan in Place

So, back to the basic strategy: spending down your accounts in a sequence designed to maximize the positive impact of what you will pass on. Review your tax-deferred and tax-free accounts with taxes—income, capital and estate, in mind. Then review those same accounts with your heirs and favorite charities in mind. Many of these assets will be heavily taxed if passed on while still in your name. If there is value in turning some of them over to children, grandchildren or a charity before your death to make the greatest impact, that is an important consideration. With a little bit of planning, there is no reason why you can't live comfortably for the remainder of your life, avoid excessive taxation, and leave some very significant gifts to those you love and care about.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Anne Pollard: Connecting Alumni in the Big City

BY RICH BRAME



Active NOLS volunteer
Anne Pollard

“Supporting” NOLS means many things—it’s as varied as our graduates and staff. Some people support NOLS philanthropically, others open doors in local schools, many circulate catalogs and proudly display NOLS logos, and a growing number of graduates organize alumni chapters and activities in their communities.

If you’ve been involved with NOLS networking in the nation’s capital, you’ve probably crossed paths with Alaska Outdoor Educator course grad Anne Pollard. Around the edges of her busy job organizing national education programs for the National Geographic Society, Anne has become one of NOLS’ most energetic alumni activists.

NOLS: It’s been a few years since your NOLS course in Alaska. As you look back now, what stands out?

Anne: The whole experience was amazing and so sensory—it changed my perspective. Alaska’s vast wilderness gives a sense of optimism and astounding opportunity—it kindled my interest in teaching adults by bridging social and environmental issues.

NOLS: What led you to NOLS?

Anne: I’d been a classroom teacher. I’m drawn to innovative education. I wanted to try new teaching ideas and techniques. A NOLS course seemed like a powerful way to explore education as a profession.

NOLS: You’ve been really involved with alumni chapter there in the big city, why?

Anne: I live in Washington, D.C. It’s a center of national and global power—some of the best, brightest and most driven people are drawn to its opportunities, action and potential.

Some of those high achievers are NOLS grads. They bring all that fervor and ability as well as wilderness passion and leadership together. The D.C. NOLS people are invigorating, smart and interested in the outdoors. It’s a great combination and a good way to meet like-minded folks—though we can’t always easily get out into the big mountains from our urban roosts, we can at least talk about it!

I’m proud to support NOLS in my community.

Erika Eschholz

GIFTS AT WORK

Noble Demolition: Virtually a Tour

BY JULIE HWANG



Brad Christensen

Lowering the old Noble Hotel sign officially kicked off the year-long renovation project. On hand for the event were NOLS staff John Gans, Pip Coe, Dave Glenn and Deborah Nunnink, chairman of NOLS' Board of Trustees Fred Kleisner, Lander Mayor Mick Wolfe, and Groathouse Construction representatives.

It is a cold and sunny December morning when we gather to tour the changes that have taken place since the Noble Hotel closed its doors two months earlier. Everyone is excited to see the beginnings of what we've been dreaming about for years. Along for the tour are long-time NOLS employees Diane Shoutis, John Gans and Don Ford, who have been working for the school long enough to remember what the old hotel used to look like.

John Stoddard, the Noble renovation project manager, looks like a proud parent. He tells us that the project is right on track and looking ahead as much as possible to avoid problems. "It looks like we'll maintain our timeline and fiscal targets, and I'm very excited about the end result," he says, leading us inside.

We step out into the dining room, where thousands of students and instructors have briefed, eaten and celebrated over the years, and can see straight between exposed wooden beams to the other side of the lobby.

Throughout the first floor, walls and partitions have been torn down from recently vacated rooms, giving way to light-filled

smooth, cold green marble block of the front desk remains to anchor the building and its memories. Symbolically, historic fixtures sit right next to wireless Internet hubs in the entry hall that has greeted so many NOLS students.

The reconstruction of the Noble seems to be working much like NOLS itself: preserving lessons and traditions from the past while looking to the future to best serve our mission.



Brad Christensen

So much space: A glimpse at the Noble renovation, a major effort to preserve the old hotel's character and upgrade the historic structure for future needs.

PHILANTHROPIC TIDBIT

Tips and Tools for Giving Wisely

BY KIRSTEN JOHNSON

There are more than a million charities in the United States, and that number continues to grow. With no shortage of worthwhile causes, how do you help ensure your dollars are donated wisely? Here are some tips to help your donations go the distance.

Know Your Priorities

Determine the causes that are most important to you. Is it education, the environment, the arts? Compare the organizations within that field to see which best match your values, philosophy and approach.

Do Your Homework

Take the time to research the history, mission and operations of the non-profit you are considering for a donation. A little bit of research can make a big difference in helping to ensure that the organization's goals fit well with your own.

Stay Involved

Consider an investment of resources beyond a financial gift. Would you help connect the nonprofit to other donors who would be able to further the mission? Are you willing to serve in a volunteer capacity? Finding ways to support the organization beyond your financial gift can help increase your satisfaction with your relationship.

Resources available to help guide your charitable giving:

- **Charity Navigator**
www.charitynavigator.org
- **American Institute of Philanthropy**
www.charitywatch.org
- **Center on Philanthropy at the University of Indiana**
www.philanthropy.iupui.edu
- **GuideStar**
www.guidestar.org
- **National Center for Family Philanthropy**
www.ncfp.org

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