

Dear Jim Ratz Memorial Scholarship donors and the WRMC Steering Committee,

Thank you so much for the scholarship that allowed me to attend the WRMC. I would never ever have been able to afford to attend the conference if it wasn't for the scholarship opportunity.

My brain is so full with the information and learning I have gained. Every workshop I attended I took something away that could be implemented into the nonprofit I work for. It is going to help us be safer and provide better experiences for our community.

I really appreciated the focus on diversity and inclusion, and that so many of the presenters were willing to be vulnerable in sharing either experiences or mistakes they made and what they learned. Their attitudes created a culture of openness and learning.

Thank you to all of you for the work you put in, to the many organizations involved for sharing their knowledge, and for this opportunity.

With so much appreciation,
Nadine

Nadine van Niekerk

she/her/hers

Executive Director | Shifting Gears

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Shifting Gears is creating welcoming recreation experiences that encourage confidence, wellness, growth and joy.

Dear Jim Ratz Memorial Scholarship donors,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to attend the Wilderness Risk Management Conference. I work for a small non-profit organization whose mission is connecting people with nature. My main tasks include coordinating hikes and outings, including short day trips, summer camps, backpacking trips, and overnight excursions in our region. As we grow and continue to guide people outdoors, risk is a frequent topic and a constant worry, as well as a necessary teaching tool.

At the 2019 WRMC, I attended over a dozen presentations, workshops, and social/networking events. The wide range of topics presented covered many challenges facing the outdoor recreation industry today and my organization will benefit from the knowledge and contacts I gained. The conference session's continuing online resources – such as sample crisis management plans, suggestions for training sessions, and PDF files of PowerPoint presentations – will help me to successfully implement what I learned at the conference.

My organization is always eager to learn more about effectively managing the risks inherent in our programs. Thanks to the action items and resources provided by the expert presenters during the WRMC, we have a lot more knowledge.

Thank you for making this valuable experience possible for me and my fellow scholarship recipients.

Beth Cortright
Adventure Programs Manager

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Dear Jim Ratz Memorial Scholarship donors and WRMC Committee,

On behalf of Logos Wilderness Therapy, I want to thank you for supporting us in attending the 2019 Wilderness Risk Management Conference. The conference was inspiring, educational, and connecting in ways that we believe will have a lasting impact on how we develop and grow as a non-profit working in this unique field. Thank you again for making this opportunity a possibility for us. We are excited to stay connected to this community.

With great appreciation and gratitude,

Jessica

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Jessica Roberts

Director of Operations
Logos Wilderness Therapy
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logoswildernesstherapy.org

Dear WRMC Steering Committee and the Jim Ratz Memorial Scholarship donors,

I am forever grateful for the opportunity to be able to attend the 2019 Wilderness Risk Management Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico. As a graduate student for California State University, Northridge Outdoor Adventures, I felt honored to represent my organization at this conference. This experience has opened my eyes in regard to all the new risks in the outdoors that have risen within the past few years. I have walked away with so much knowledge in the two days I attended the conference. I chose to attend the conference because I felt it was a great asset to my current job and future endeavors. Alongside this conference, I had taken the NOLS Risk Management Training for Administrators in April 2019. The course and the conference provided me with the proper materials to leave confidently in making my outdoor program better equipped to go through risk management training and deal with emergency situations.

Throughout the conference I gained so much knowledge in various different topics including mental health first aid, programming, inclusivity and risk management. One big take away from this conference is the discussion about mental health among participants and staff. Within my organization, there has been multiple instances where we should have been more alert and aware of our participants and staff. After attending multiple workshops, I am beginning to start a training for my staff at Outdoor Adventures to be better equipped for participants with mental health illness and our staff to better manage their stress levels. I not only gained knowledge but also colleagues and new friends due to the conference. It is hard for me to open up and make friends. Due to this conference I opened up and everyone was kind, generous and inviting.

Lastly, I would like to thank NOLS, SCA, and Outward Bound for providing a wilderness risk management conference and creating a space to share ideas and help one another grow their organization. CSUN Outdoor Adventures is tremendously excited to tackle new projects and making sure our staff follow the right procedures and are aware. I would recommend anyone who is in the outdoor industry to attend this conference because it can truly raise some questions and make your organization better.

Sincerely,

Karin Tarpinian

Graduate Assistant

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17 November 2019

To Jim Ratz Memorial Scholarship donors,

My name is Lo Hutelmyer Zemanek and I was a recipient of a Jim Ratz Memorial Scholarship this year. This scholarship enabled me to attend the Wilderness Risk Management Conference in Albuquerque, NM. I was very fortunate to be able to connect, learn from others, and be inspired.

In my role as Youth Program Manager at Venture Outdoors, I oversee 600+ youth trips in the city of Pittsburgh per year. Many of these trips help to remove the barriers of getting outside – gear, money, transportation – for kids in our city who deserve to experience the benefits of the outdoors.

I have been in this position for almost five years but have never attended the WRMC. I met many other passionate youth-focused managers and directors, who helped me think more critically about our programs. In particular, I learned from an organization called CityKids in DC. Their program model was similar to ours, with a belief in getting inner-city youth in the outdoors, but they have been running programs for 10+ more years so they had a lot to share. The presenters for CityKids taught me about “inclusion incidents” – incidents that occur that affect a marginalized population traveling in a traditionally white space (such as a racist comment made towards a group of young, African American kids traveling in Yosemite).

I am very appreciative of this scholarship opportunity as I recognize the value that the WRMC provided to me and in effect, my employees, our kids, and our community.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Lo H. Zemanek

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