

# Sierra Nevada Journeys celebrates new permanent home for STEM education



Lisa Blauth

By Lisa Blauth

Kids from diverse backgrounds have been creating life-long memories through overnight summer camps at Grizzly Creek Ranch. While traditional camp activities like kayaking, archery or scaling heights on the high-ropes course are camp favorites, they also have had opportunities to explore the natural world around them in a safe and fun setting.

The beautiful, 515-acre Grizzly Creek Ranch is located 50 minutes north of Reno in Portola, California, and now the permanent home for Sierra Nevada Journeys. Sierra Nevada Journeys recently celebrated the completion of a capital campaign and purchased Grizzly Creek Ranch – where they have been hosting camps and outdoor school for more than a decade – raising \$5.57 million with the support of 56 dedicated donors.

“Students are taught less than three hours a week of science on average at the elementary school level,” says CEO of Sierra Nevada Journeys Eaton Dunkelberger. “They’re also spending 15 times more on screens, phones, computers, tablets, than the time spent in the



(Photo: L. Blauth)

**Reno fifth graders become engineers and work together to build a geodesic dome at Overnight Outdoor Learning with Sierra Nevada Journeys in Portola, CA.**

outdoors. And that figure only increased this past year due to distance learning.”

For the past 13 years, Sierra Nevada Journeys, an outdoor, science education nonprofit, has helped more than 200,000 youth immerse themselves in nature through science to fuel their own unique connections and discoveries. Most importantly, many of the students who participate in Sierra Nevada Journeys’ programs come from underrepresented communities across

Northern Nevada and California. Two-thirds of the children who participate in our programs are from low-income households, 63 percent are students of color, and 14 percent are individuals living with a disability.

“Programs like ours where fifth and sixth grade students attend overnight outdoor learning during three-to-five days at Grizzly Creek Ranch, give them an edge not only academically, but also on building their confidence, creating collaboration among peers, and developing leadership skills,” he says.

“Being away at camp and from distractions, a higher level of learning can be achieved. The students work their way through our social-emotional learning program on the challenge course along with our science curriculum, which is based on Next Generation Science Standards. Grizzly Creek Ranch has a unique ecosystem creating the ideal setting for using the outdoors as the classroom,” Dunkelberger says.

*Lisa Blauth is the marketing director with Sierra Nevada Journeys and professional juggler of life. When she’s not helping organizations share their stories, you’ll find her walking the dog on the ditch trail, hitching up the trailer to go camping, remodeling her beloved money pit in the Old Southwest, or parenting a teenager. To learn more about Sierra Nevada Journeys or its programs, visit [sierranevadajourneys.org](http://sierranevadajourneys.org).*

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