



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LandPaths announces expanded and significant partnership with Roseland Public Schools, which gets hundreds of Roseland middle-schoolers outside in Sonoma County's beautiful open spaces for environmental education, leadership, and self-development.

SANTA ROSA, CA. — "This is gorgeous!" declares an 8th grader from Roseland Accelerated Middle School, looking across waves of native grasslands billowing towards stands of redwood, oak, madrone, Douglas fir, and bay trees at LandPaths' Bohemia Ecological Preserve in west Sonoma County. The student was one of dozens of middle schoolers that got out into nature at the preserve in fall 2021.

An ambitious new partnership between LandPaths and Roseland Public Schools in Sonoma County means that **all** 480 middle-school students from Roseland Accelerated Middle School and Roseland Collegiate Prep will have the opportunity to go on a total of four all-day field trips to beautiful, semi-wild open spaces in Sonoma County this school year with LandPaths experienced team of bilingual (Spanish/English) education field specialists.

Roseland Public Schools pays for transportation to the preserves and helps to subsidize other parts of the program, which is also supported by funding from the City of Santa Rosa's Measure O and Sonoma County Ag + Open Space.

Removing barriers to funding and transportation is key to ensuring that all students have access to quality environmental education

This type of broad partnership that reaches all middle-school students in a district is a first for [Inspired Forward](#), which was developed by LandPaths in 2012 to connect teens and young adults with nature and each other as a response to the tragic Sandy Hook shooting.

"This program has offered our students an opportunity to get outside and learn in a vastly different environment than the classroom, where they can think and process their thoughts in a quiet and peaceful space," says Haley Piazza, Principal at Roseland Accelerated Middle School. "After over a year of distance learning and being on screens, isolated from each other, and often, the outside world, it's beautiful to see students connecting with nature, building community, and gaining appreciation for our planet. I am very grateful for LandPaths' Inspired Forward."

Research bears this out. The American Academy of Pediatrics has said that [getting children and teens outside](#) has become even more crucial since the Covid-19 pandemic aggravated mental health struggles and feelings of isolation. What's more, teens that spend more time in nature had less anger and stress, and improvements in impulse control.

Still, inequitable access to nature continues to be a huge problem. Teens from affluent families in the U.S. generally experience nature more, especially when it comes to the ability to enjoy and explore local open spaces.

In the past, individual teachers who want access to environmental education for their students would need to seek out LandPaths. "That's what makes this partnership with Roseland Public Schools unprecedented," says Jamie Nakama, LandPaths' Youth Education Programs Manager. After months of planning to develop and fine tune the partnership, the district approved the contract, enabling the program to roll out this fall.

The goals for each field trip, aside from simply connecting with nature and each other, are three-fold:

1. To grow **leadership, team-building, and self-development skills** through solo walks, sit spots, icebreakers, and teamwork activities such as "Meet a Tree."
2. To grow **ecological literacy**. This means learning about ecosystems and how humans are not separate from these systems.
3. To grow **stewardship** by taking care of the land and learning how to live in a more balanced way with nature.

To schedule interviews or join Inspired Forward for a field trip with Roseland Public Schools in Sonoma County and to learn more about the program, please contact Leilani Clark, LandPaths Communications Lead at leilani@landpaths.org or (707) 332-4736.

About [LandPaths](#)

Celebrating 25 years in 2021, LandPaths is a nonprofit organization with the mission of fostering a love of the land in Sonoma County. Diverse by design, LandPaths achieves our mission through three initiatives: rooting youth in nature, branching out conservation for everyone, and growing community with nature. We inspire people to experience the beauty of Sonoma County, understand the value of local open spaces, and participate in stewarding the land. www.landpaths.org.

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