

adventure risk challenge

developing youth leadership and literacy



YOSEMITE



TAHOE



SEQUOIA

2021 summer course writing

In this year's ARC memory book, there are three poems and three essays. You will be inspired by our participants' strength, moved by their stories, and amazed by their resilience. In their work, determination and adaptability are a common thread. Yuli comes to see herself as una guerrera (a fighter), being over a thousand miles from her parents and learning a new language. Isaac, comparing his life experiences to a tree overrun by fire, writes "I became resilient/ my bark scarred but strong/ Empowered by the support of my forest/ I reach for the sky."

Resilience has been a theme for ARC's students, staff, and programs this year. After cancelling two of our three summer courses in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we ran a full slate of three month-long courses (Yosemite, Sequoia, and Tahoe). Collectively, this summer, ARC students backpacked over 200 miles; they hiked over 30,000 feet in elevation; they performed their poetry at our Voices of Youth events to over 250 audience members; and engaged in over 11,000 student-hours of leadership, literacy, and outdoor instruction. For many of our participants, the ARC summer course was a re-entry into a social and academic life. For all of them, it was an incredible accomplishment after a year of uncertainty, isolation, and endless hours on Zoom.

The students whose work you read in this book are invited to participate in ARC's Community Leadership Program as "Community Leaders." They come back together in September and plan a fall backpacking trip, solidifying the outdoor skills that they learned during their courses. They plan their routes, outline their menu and shopping list, and discuss logistics. Other Community Leaders activities throughout the year include Mental Health First Aid certification, Story-Corps-style interviews with family members, and a culminating community-based project. If participants complete the whole year's program, they receive a \$1,000 scholarship upon high school graduation.

An introductory "Rising Community Leaders" curriculum is offered to students who have not yet participated in the summer course at our school sites. In 2020-21, with a combination of Zoom and in-person meetings, ARC staff offered over 85 leadership workshops to our Rising Community Leaders, including 9 one-day outdoor adventures (skiing, hiking, kayaking, a ropes course excursion, and more). All of this was accomplished thanks to our staff and students' ability to adapt to changing COVID-19 restrictions.

When Dani writes in her essay, "In ARC, I found an astonishingly supportive community," please know that you are a major part of that community. As an ARC supporter, you helped us, not only to weather the storm of the COVID-19 pandemic, but to become a stronger organization which engages more students today for more hours than we did prior to the pandemic. I know you will read this book from cover-to-cover and end with the same feeling that I have: we have overcome a lot this year!



Sarah Ottley
Executive Director
sarah@adventureriskchallenge.org



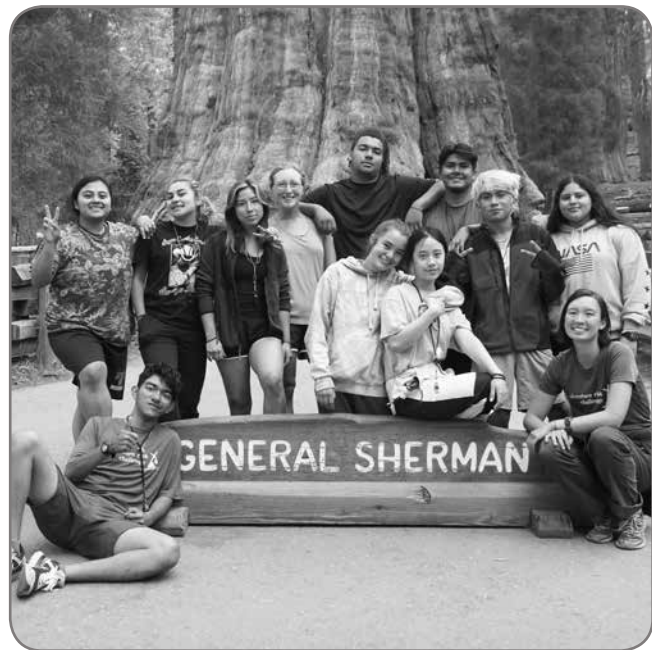
PARTICIPANTS GROW IN 7 IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS, INCLUDING POSITIVE IDENTITY, SOCIAL COMPETENCIES, AND COMMITMENT TO LEARNING.



ARC OFFERS OVER 15,000 STUDENT-HOURS OF LEADERSHIP, LITERACY, AND OUTDOOR INSTRUCTION EVERY YEAR.



GRADUATES OF THE ARC COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP PROGRAM RECEIVE \$1,000 SCHOLARSHIPS.



Share your story. Find your best self. Write your future.





YOSEMITE

PARTICIPANTS

Angel Escoto

Angela Escoto

Selena Lopez-Ortiz

Karla Malaca

Allen Mendoza

Cienna Mendoza

Ivan Meza

Virginia Nava

Karla Otero

Yuli Yadira Pantoja

Emily Zaragosa

Roberto Josue Zelaya Serrano

INSTRUCTORS

Jesus Alejandro

Cristina Cruz Navarro

Rachel Liu

Sam Rapoport



TEAM NAME
Royal Guillemos

LOCATION
UC Merced Yosemite Field Station & Wawona Elementary School

COURSE LENGTH
33 Days

Yuli Yadira Pantoja

Taking Off

I am alone in the United States
Confronting life
It is difficult
Learning to fly alone

I am a small eagle
Fragile, scared, tiny, full of insecurities
Still needing my parents
To teach me to fly
But they are not here
They can't fly the distance between us
Each country
Mexico and the United States
Its own cage

I am alone in the nest
In a tree with broken branches
I look below and
I am scared
Afraid of spreading my wings and falling
Without my mom and dad

I hide in the corner of my nest
I feel an emptiness
It is as large as the ocean
Like the 2800 kilometers that separate us

I have to take off and find myself
And leave my past behind

It is time to leave my nest
And look for stability
Without my family

I breathe deeply
I tell myself you can do this
You can study
You can work triple
To make your family proud

I begin to extend my wings
I start to fly peacefully
And majestically
I cannot believe that I'm doing it
I am following my dreams

As I fly over a lake
I see my reflection
I see una guerrera
A fighter
With strength and bravery
Who is a product of the self-sacrifice
Of her parents

I continue to fly
Higher and higher
Until my parents see me
As a golden eagle
I am a golden eagle



I'm going to dedicate this poem to other young immigrants like me.

A todos esos jóvenes inmigrantes que tienen el valor de dejar su casa, su familia, su vida, sé que no es fácil enfrentar el mundo solo, pero cuando sientas que ya no puedes y quieres dejarlo todo, por favor, aliméntate de las agallas que tomaste para venir a los Estados Unidos, y sigue volando porque recuerda que viniste en busca de tus sueños, eres fuerte, eres admirable, tu crees en ti, yo creo en ti, lograremos todo.

Selena Lopez-Ortiz

My ARC Experience

Martin Luther King once said, “The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands in times of challenge and controversy.” And that’s exactly what happened in the program Adventure Risk Challenge (ARC). In ARC, we experience growth in the outdoors, backpacking, rock climbing, and learning a science and English curriculum. During challenging experiences, I created a new foundation with myself by changing my relationship with time, allowing myself to be vulnerable, and self-reflecting on my actions.

There’s only twenty-four hours in a day, every second counts. I spend most of my time rushed in order to accomplish every command given. This has resulted in not being able to enjoy my surroundings. When I hiked my head hung low and I stared at the feet of the person ahead of me, until the instructors told us to look around and enjoy the view. That’s when I knew I was oblivious to the beautiful flowers and mountains that circled me. The view was so breathtaking; I took in the view, closed my eyes and took a deep breath. It’s such an opportunity to be able to backpack in Yosemite, and I wasn’t taking advantage of it the first days of our first backpacking expedition. I was too busy trying to hike faster and arrive at camp. Then when I got to camp, I was too busy trying to set up our tents and doing our “chores.” I felt like there wasn’t any time for myself. Until the day of solos. Imagine this: spending twenty-four hours alone in the woods. I thought I would be bored to death; there wouldn’t be anything to do while being isolated from others. As I lay down on my sleeping bag admiring the stars, I feel at calm for once. My body relaxes knowing I don’t have anything to worry about. I don’t feel like I’m running on a clock when I’m in Yosemite compared to when I am back home. In the morning I get up, stretch, and look around. I draw the view. In fact, every time I am in charge of writing a summary of the day (journalist) I draw my surroundings. I encourage others to isolate themselves for a day. It’s a new experience that will make you understand yourself.

As a Mexican, “machismo” is prevalent in my household. This means I never saw my dad or my mom cry even when their parents died. Throughout the years, I realized my family doesn’t express their emotions. Instead, they held their head high and disregarded any vulnerability. For 16 years I had learned that crying is a sign of weakness, being vulnerable is weak, if I cry I’m weak. So when we did evening meetings in ARC, I thought they were sappy. I wondered how everyone can express their emotions and cry in front of others. “I’ve seen so many of my peers and even instructors cry, why shouldn’t I?” I asked myself while sitting criss-cross. When it was my time to share, I responded confidently. But suddenly, tears rolled down my cheek. However, my tone didn’t change and the night sky concealed my tears. That was the first time I cried in front of a group without feeling weak. Instead, I felt the true meaning of being vulnerable with others. In the next evening meeting, another question was asked that sparked vulnerability. This time when others cried, I cried with them. I felt their immense suffering. At that moment, I looked around, took a deep breath, and realized what

community was. We had all been taken out of our homes, yet we created our new home with each other. I thought it would be impossible to share my personal life with strangers, but I had done it. Then I did it again during Voices of Youth, ARC’s annual poetry reading where we presented our poems. I nervously stood on stage while tears poured out of my eyes. My vision was becoming blurry from all the water in my eyes, but when I looked up at the audience, I noticed I wasn’t the only one crying. I saw other people I had never met wiping off their tears. This made my emotions validated. After the poetry reading, I learned that showing emotion is such a powerful statement. People came up to me and thanked me for telling my story and a young girl revealed that she went through a similar experience. I recognized that all of the human race has something in common: emotions. However, the difference is whether we use them for empowerment or keep them bottled inside.

Mistakes turn into lessons learned, so why do I try so hard to be perfect? Many think it’s because I’m a Virgo, but honestly it’s because I’m terrified of failure. I feel like I have not only disappointed myself, but everyone else. So I told myself, “Don’t forget to ask for a countdown, keep track of time, be loud, be assertive, be the best...”. I tried to be the best leader, especially because I was the first leader of the group. I felt pressure to leave a positive example of what a leader should look like. Throughout the trail, we encountered difficulties, needing to stop every other mile. I felt frustrated that things weren’t flowing smoothly, it was nothing like I expected. Each mistake I made was getting me closer to failure. The more mistakes, the less I felt. However, when it was time for leader feedback, most of it was positive. “Was it because I was the first leader meaning they are being lenient or did they genuinely like my leadership?” I asked myself while gazing up at the stars. Thirty days after the first day of expedition, I still remember the feedback I received: “don’t be too harsh on yourself.” My mind was running in circles asking myself a lot of questions of doubt. I was disappointed at myself for making so many mistakes, but I shouldn’t be so harsh on myself. I didn’t know what to do. Feedback does mean something you can improve for next time, therefore I took it into consideration. Next time I was the leader, I took any feedback and incorporated it. Yet I was still being harsh and getting irritated with the mistakes I made. It was not until the third time that I finally felt comfortable being leader of the day. When I made a mistake I knew it was okay, I didn’t beat myself over it; well, at least most of the time. Instead, I tried to integrate what I had learned from my mistake. Mistakes are just proof you’re trying; you don’t have to be perfect. You just have to try your best.

ARC is a non-profit organization that has changed my life positively overall. If I didn’t undergo the experience of a thirty-three-day program, then I wouldn’t have changed my relationship with myself. Now I can proudly claim I have grown; even if it’s the smallest change, I still changed. I have found calmness, empowerment with my weaknesses, and have improved my mindset. I can now carry on these improvements back home and feel accomplished. After all, growing is such an important action for humans.





TAHOE

PARTICIPANTS

America Ayala

Dustin Bauer

Yoselin Bohorquez

Isaac Pacheco Martinez

Bryan Rios-Medina

Daniela Ruiz

Alexandra Servin

Walker Viehmann

INSTRUCTORS

Kaela Frank

Iska Nardie-Warner

Joshua Schaub

Alana Springer



TEAM NAME
Weeping Mermaids

LOCATION
UC Berkeley Sagehen Creek Field Station

COURSE LENGTH
33 Days

Isaac Pacheco Martinez

Towards The Sunlight

My branches reach towards the sun,
Ever adapting to the changing climate.
A youthful trunk nurtured by my mother's vision
Of happiness and success
Sharing nutrients, wisdom, and strength through her roots.

But then the wind picked up and dark clouds formed overhead.
My mother stood steadfast, prepared for pain to come.
Lightning struck mother tree,
A crack to her delicate heartwood.
His voice grew louder and louder;
We wanted to protect her from his fury.

His anger only directed towards our mother,
Blaming her for all of our problems.
His electricity rippled through the soil
Leaving us smoldering.
As quickly as the storm came, it left;
Retreating into the sky, leaving my mother's bark full of scars.

One day, when I awoke, my mother was gone.
Lightning struck too many times
And she was forced to return to her roots in Mexico.
I was crushed. My roots were young and undeveloped.

Who would shield me from the storm?
The tallest tree was now my brother.
Lightning carved into his undeveloped bark,
Insult after insult, trying to knock him down.
But Arturo stood strong,
Sheltering us from screaming and hostility.

Eventually though, lighting struck us all,
Bringing out our insecurities:
Self-doubt, fear of failure, wasted potential.
His electricity ran deeply through our wood,
Singeing the soft fibers around our hearts.
I was afraid the rain that brought us into this world
Might drown us.

After years of the same storm cycle,
I have found a way to thrive.
Drenched in a rain full of hatred and anger,
I use his water as the fuel for my growth.
I became resilient,
My bark scarred but strong.
Empowered by the support of my forest,
I reach for the sky.

I watch my siblings rocket towards the sun.
Their stature inspires me
To reach the same heights,
And although the threat of a storm is always present,
The scars in my bark are a testament
To my strength and potential.

When the storm is away others have come,
They've shown us
That we are more than "nothing,"
That I have the ability to work towards my dreams,
Be who I want to be.
I shed the negatives of my life
Like leaves falling off an aspen tree in the fall.

Stepping out of my comfort zone,
I will leave behind the storm.
I will continue spreading my roots
Towards new opportunities, new people.
Although my overstory is damaged
By the anger of my father,
My understory will flourish;
Replacing pessimism, stubbornness, and hatred
With kindness, ambition, and resilience.

I plan to attend a 4-year university
In order to pursue what I value.
I want to build a network of help and support for others.
I will search for happiness in a new forest.
I will continue to reach towards the sunlight.



Daniela Ruiz

Muchísimas Ganas

When I first signed up for ARC, I didn't know how to feel about it. My stepdad, Jaime, and older sister, Gisselle, both did ARC when they were around my age. Their experiences were positive, but I was afraid of putting my faith in others when it came to my fears, my hobbies, and my stories. Within the first week of the program, I shared a lot about myself, but that didn't mean I trusted the group. After my horrible experiences in middle school—getting bad-mouthed behind my back, getting called nasty names—I felt as if I had to share my story with my newfound peers. I felt that I needed to test them and see if they could handle having me around. They did well, a little too well. But slowly, participating in the ARC summer program helped me build trust again, one piece at a time.

On the fifth day of our first expedition, I had a very intense and unexpected panic attack in front of the group. It was a blistering hot day. My skin was sweaty and irritated. My breath was frantic, and each step made it harder and harder for me to get my emotions under control. I remember the exact moment I felt the panic attack hit. I. Was. Horrified. I felt like my chest was going to explode. My head was aching; the palms of my hands became clammy and twitchy. I remember thinking: "Please, please, Dani. Please not now, not here." I was trying my hardest to stay calm, but one of my groupmates, Licha, asked, "Dani, you okay?" and the rocks tumbled from the mountain top. The panic attack was in full swing. The group formed a circle around me with barely any space between us. They asked me questions I don't remember, but I assume their muffled and blended voices were asking, "Are you okay?" "What's wrong?" "Do you need to sit down?" "Water?" Another groupmate, Jolene, had everyone else back off. They put enough distance between us that I couldn't see them anymore, which gave me a chance to calm down. That day, the group learned to care for me by giving me physical space. My trust in the group started to build.

After having my trust broken in middle school, I became very timid, if not a bit paranoid. Even today, I'm hesitant to try new things. I was mortified when we had to do trust falls during our ropes course day. I remember thinking: "Wait, what are we doing? Heck no, I don't think so." The first trust fall didn't have my full trust in it. Instead of falling back, I tried sticking my hands and feet out to catch myself. And we had to do it again. My brain was still coming up with a plan to catch myself so no one else would have to catch me. I was still in a toxic mindset of: "No one supports me better than me." But luckily, I ignored my mind and pulled through. The

next thing I knew, I was leaning back into the arms of my instructor, Kaela, successfully trusting her to support me as I fell. It felt great, accomplishing this challenge, but something was missing. I did one more trust fall. The facilitator had us rate our nervousness. I rated a seven, which meant I was the most nervous in the group. As a result, I was chosen to be surrounded by my team and was told to fall in any direction. But here's the catch: I was also lifted into the air, placed gently down onto the floor, and lifted back up and onto my feet. And I didn't even lift a finger. That was the third and final trust fall, and the first time I genuinely trusted every person in my group to catch me. And it only took three times. That's frickin' progress.

I felt like I was growing exponentially this summer, until we went rock climbing. I was petrified. Not only was I afraid of heights (still am, by the way), I was afraid of putting my trust in my belay team. It brought back so many memories of being let down in the past. My anxiety spiked; I was afraid of falling. I started climbing and only made it halfway before I panicked. I felt horrible, I felt like all my progress came crashing down. I had been trying new things, trusting my ARC group, and then there I was, unable to make it higher than halfway up a wall. I started moping, hating myself for being a scaredy cat and not being able to trust any of the belay teams. But then I was given high fives from my groupmates, a few of them congratulating me for trying something new. I felt a lot better. Later, everyone began to rappel down a rock wall. I didn't participate because I was too freaked out. But the thing that amazed me was that my ARC group respected my decision. They never told me to "suck it up" or "just do it," they respected my boundaries. I learned that I can trust my ARC group completely.

In ARC, I found an astonishingly supportive community. I found friends. I found a family. The ARC community taught me how to trust those around me. I learned that smiles and kind words don't always hide secret agendas. I learned that people who respect me also respect my boundaries. I learned that I have a support system and that I don't have to go through life alone. I learned that building my trust again isn't an easy fix, but it takes muchísimas ganas. I will take these lessons with me when I leave ARC and seek out a supportive, compassionate, funny, and honest community that listens to my needs. I will use my renewed boundaries to distinguish between healthy and toxic relationships. My future will be bright and joyful, surrounded by positive and supportive friends.





SEQUOIA

PARTICIPANTS

Keanna Barron

Kenya Davis

Benjamin Flores

Kayla Flores

Canita Huang

Emir Magdaleno

Issac Marin

Aubriana Medina

Marisol Partida Navarro

INSTRUCTORS

Julia Bartos

Maddie Leh

Madeleine Colvin

Melany Ricardo



LOCATION

UC Merced Sequoia Field Station & Summit Adventure

COURSE LENGTH

26 Days

Canita Huang

Sprouting from Ashes

I am a giant sequoia.
My bark is two feet thick.
It can protect me from language barriers
And cultural mistakes.

I take things seriously,
Always willing to learn
And put effort into growing.

Like a sequoia,
I live in a forest with many trees and plants
But I grow far away from them.

In the past, I was shy and spent most of my time alone.
Thinking negatively and worrying about what to do.
There was a lot of competition and crowding in China.
I worked so hard to grow as tall as I could;
I became one of the top students in my school.
But there was still not enough space or nutrition in the soil.

More trees and shrubs started to grow next to me.
People didn't know that I could only grow well
Where there were not many other trees and plants growing.
But, there were many plants around my base,
Competing to be the best.

When fire came to me,
I was frightened and very sad.
Still a young seedling, it felt so hard to give up the
Foundation I built and the future I imagined in China.
I was unsure about life in the U.S.
And whether I could find success.

However, the fire did happen.
Suddenly, unpredictably, and painfully, the fire was on me.
It burned through every part of my body.
I was shaking, yelling, and crying,
Trying my best to get rid of this disaster.

In order to get financial aid for college,
I was held back in school two grades.
That's why I am older than my peers.
It makes me feel dumb sometimes. But in fact, I am not.

Because my life is not finished yet.
"Survive" is the only word that appeared
From the bottom of my heart.
Yes, I survived.
This fire loosened the soil,
Helped my cones to dry out, open, and release my seeds.
Made them fall into a mineral-rich earth
And gather moisture that was previously drawn by other plants.

The fire unlocked my life.
Without this fire,
My seeds would still be trapped inside.
Opportunities sprouted from the ash.
Now I am able to join the mural project, mock trial,
To learn Spanish, and try rock climbing.

In the U.S., the population and my class size are smaller.
The competing bushes and smaller trees
Were destroyed by the fire.
Therefore, I receive more sunlight;
I can grow much bigger and happier.
The ash from the fire has made my soil richer.
I have more space; I can reproduce
And dream about new things now.

I want to grow into a mature sequoia.
Earn my college degree, choose a career,
And try new extreme sports.
Only a small percentage of seeds ever grow to adulthood,
And I intend to be one of them.

Growing to 250 feet tall and 30 feet wide means success to a sequoia.
I will be a full grown sequoia when I achieve my dreams.
I want to know more about myself.
I want to build my confidence and strength.
I am going to grow bigger branches,
A thicker trunk and deeper roots to keep my balance.

When the fire comes again,
I will realize that it is just a normal part of life.
I will no longer be afraid of this challenge.
I will be well prepared and have the tools that I need.
After living through the first fire,
I now have the confidence to spread out my cones for regeneration.
Although each of my seeds is only the small size of a flake of oatmeal,
They will germinate and thrive in a world of frequent fires.

Things that cannot kill me
Only make me stronger.
I am proud of myself.
I am standing steady.
I will be one of the biggest sequoia,
And live long in the giant forest.



Emir Magdaleno

Reflection Essay

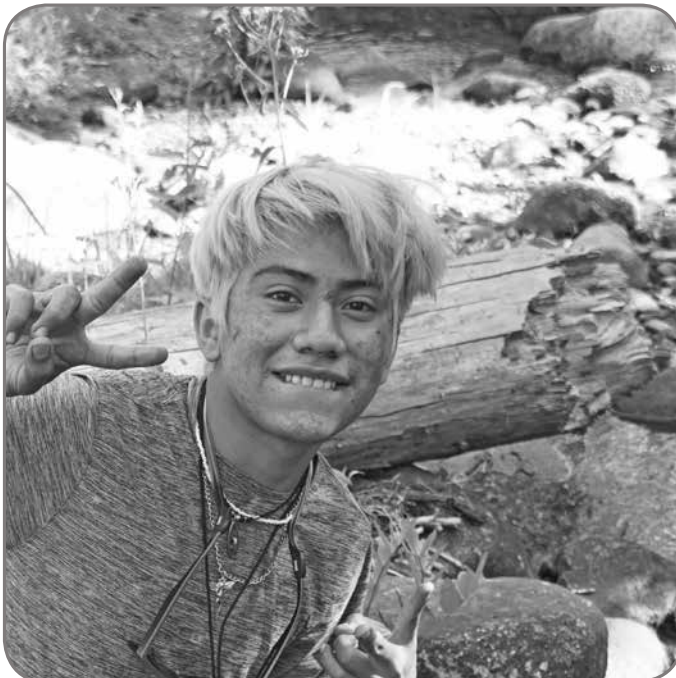
Before ARC, I was a person who had many emotional problems since I moved countries and I didn't feel secure. I felt shy to speak English and try new things. One day my school counselor recommended ARC to me. I asked her what it was and she told me that it was a program that helps students to challenge their limits, meet new people, try new things, practice English and have leadership skills. At the beginning of the course I felt shy because I didn't know anybody. I didn't feel comfortable because all the people spoke English and it was hard to make new connections. Despite the challenges, I can see how my communication has improved as I grew in my English skills and in building relationships.

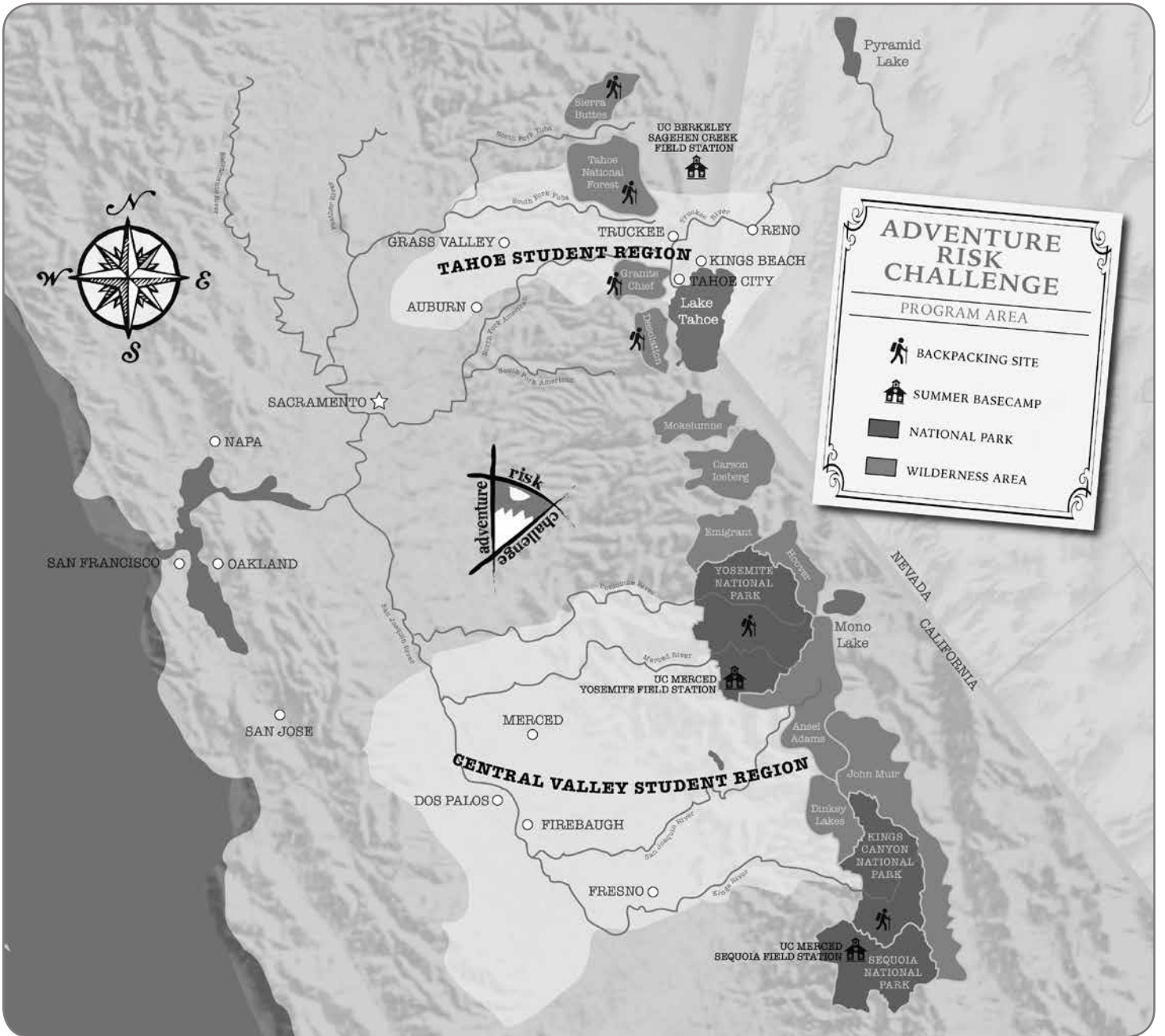
During the first days in the course, ARC gave me opportunities to practice my English. I felt nervous in the beginning because at the end of the day we had something called ABC news, where we asked questions and explained how we felt. In these moments I felt nervous because I didn't know how to answer the questions in English. I tried to be precise and didn't say much, but with time I felt more confident when I talked. I began to know everyone and they knew I was learning English, for that reason I felt more secure to talk without the fear of someone laughing at me for my pronunciation or for not being able to speak English well. Something I'm also grateful for is being able to have group readings. At that time, if there were words that I didn't understand my teammates tried to explain the words to me. That made me feel good because I learned new words and felt more comfortable.

Time had passed and I felt more secure speaking English without fear. I could feel safe to make new connections that helped me forget all my problems and motivated me to do new things. One of those people I connected with is Issac who motivated me to try to learn how to swim, something that is a challenge for me. With his support and the support of everyone in the course, I felt like I was trying to learn and have a good time with everyone.

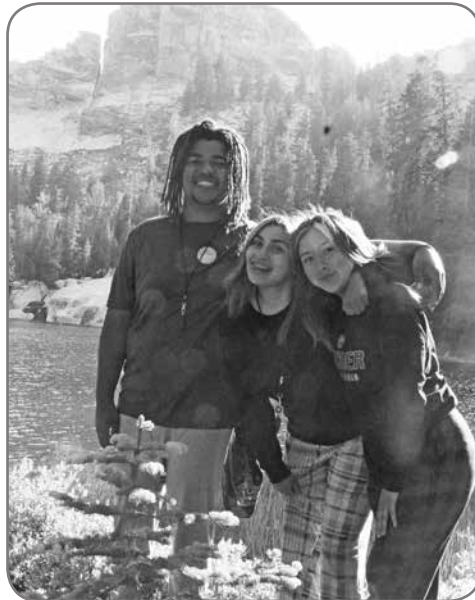
Other moments of improvement and pride for me include when we rock climbed, walked more than 6 miles with heavy backpacks in the forest, and learned to go to the bathroom behind trees. These activities were new and I had never thought that someday I could do those things. Nevertheless, I accomplished these challenges. Challenging myself and learning new things that I did not know before made me feel proud.

Doing new things and getting away from the outside world makes me feel good. I enjoyed the experience where I overcame new challenges, challenges that at the beginning of the course I never thought I could do. Now I feel more proud of myself. When I look back, I see all the ways I developed and the things I went through in ARC. I see myself in the past before the course and I see myself now. I feel proud to have taken this course and challenged myself to do new things, proud to feel more comfortable speaking English, proud to say I made good relationships in this course, proud of overcoming my own limits and being able to say I did it.

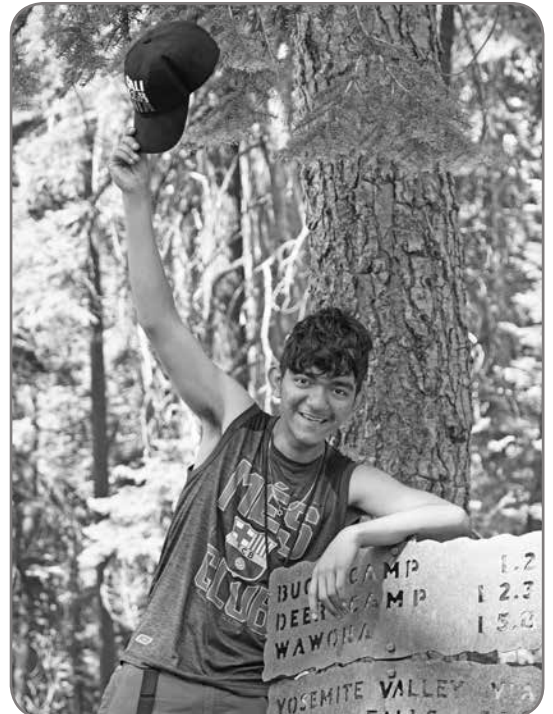




scenes from the summer



scenes from the summer



Young Professionals Board



Alexis Angulo, Vice Chair

ARC Poem Title: *The Determination of My Roots*

College: Dartmouth College (Graduated 2020)

Major: Government & Latin American Studies

Today: Serves as the Finance & Operations Assistant at the Center for New American Security (CNAS) and lives in Washington, DC

GRADUATED ARC
SUMMER COURSE
2015



Gus Garcia, Member

ARC Poem Title: *Another Layer*

College: University of the Pacific (Expected Graduation 2022)

Major: Political Science

Today: Attends the University of the Pacific and is a top member of their Speech and Debate Team

2016



Jasmine Marquez, Treasurer

ARC Poem Title: *I Am Life*

College: University of California Merced (Graduated 2014)

Major: Molecular Biology

Today: Is the General Manager at La Belle Medical Spa in Merced, responsible for HR, business development, and customer relations

2007



Vera Ram, Chair

ARC Poem Title: *I Am What I Want to Be*

College: University of California Merced (Graduated 2016)

Major: Biological Sciences

Today: Works for the federal government in the Bay Area and got married this year

2010



Yami Gutierrez, Member

ARC Poem Title: *The Real Me*

College: Sierra Nevada University (Graduated 2014)

Major: Biology

Today: Works as an Eligibility Certification Specialist with a focus on cost allocation for Washoe County

2008

The ARC Young Professionals Board (YPB) was launched in January 2020 by two ARC graduates: Yami Gutierrez and Jasmine Marquez. Yami and Jasmine wanted to provide opportunities for alumni to give back to the organization and to become leaders within ARC and their communities. Today, the group has five members, all ARC alumni, who have contributed significantly to the organization in the past year. In 2020-21, YPB members spoke at Voices of Youth events; they were part of a new ARC promotional video; they helped recruit summer participants; they served on the design team for our three-year strategic planning process; and they raised thousands of dollars.

Vera Ram, YPB's Chair, at this year's Voices of Youth event in Tahoe said, "Eleven years ago, at Voices of Youth, I took a stand to read my poem, and it was meaningful to me. Writing in the outdoors gave me the space to find myself and gave me structure in my life. Before the program, I did not have a clear vision of what path to take after high school. Reading the poem in front of an audience like you, at the time, validated that it was important for me to remain involved in the growth of our community." Today, Vera and her YPB teammates are doing just that. They volunteer their time to grow the ARC community and strengthen the organization. They are bringing in new students to the program; they are attracting new donors; and they are helping ARC define what the organization will look like in 2025 and beyond. Thank you to all of our YPB members for their time, dedication, and commitment over the last year.

S.H. COWELL
FOUNDATION



YOSEMITE
+ SEQUOIA
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Adventure Risk Challenge would like to thank the following organizations and individuals for their generous support and collaboration during our Summer Immersion Courses in Tahoe, Yosemite, and Sequoia:

Key Summer Partnerships: Yosemite-Wawona Elementary Charter School - Stacy Boydston and School Board Members; Yosemite National Park, Heidi Edgecomb, Lissie Kretsch; Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks - Christy Brigham, Jenny Kirk, Holly Gordon, Jonathan Humphrey; US Forest Service - Don Lane, Gay Eitel; UC Merced Yosemite & Sequoia Field Stations - Breezy Jackson; Sagehen Creek Field Station - Ash Zemenick, Dan Sayler; Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation - Clay River, Bill Tucker; Project Discovery; Summit Adventure; Southern Yosemite Mountain Guides; NASTC; ETC; Summer Search; Sierra Community House; KidZone Museum; Dos Palos Oro Loma Joint Unified School District and Firebaugh-Las Deltas Unified School District; and the Tahoe Truckee Unified School District.

Our Dedicated Summer Volunteers: Alma Alvarado, Trisha Baird, Belinda Braunstein, Barbara Ilfeld, Chawntay Mackinzie, Kasey McJunkin, Chloe Morfett, Cintia Quesada, Kelsey Porter, Marianne Porter, Danielle Rees, Craig Rowe, Nicole Sayegh, Sjäella Schneekloth, Kevin Tomlin, Liz Tucker, Sadie Tucker, Brian Velasco, Michaela Webb, Ayla Wild, and Katie Zanto; our Community Interview Day participants; the ARC Advisory Council; and the ARC Board of Directors.

Without all of you, this extraordinary program would not be possible!