

Big Sky Youth Empowerment

Parent Program Guide



Hello! This guidebook is designed to answer a few questions you may have about Big Sky Youth Empowerment. We're here to make this experience positive and enjoyable for participants and their families, so please let us know if you have any questions, comments, or concerns.

Our Mission

Big Sky Youth Empowerment (BYEP) provides opportunities for vulnerable teenagers to experience success with the goal of becoming contributing members of our community through group mentoring and outdoor adventures.

Participation in BYEP is voluntary. It is an opportunity awarded to extraordinary youth throughout the Gallatin Valley who want to make positive changes in their lives. We provide a program where youth are grouped with peers, volunteer mentors, and BYEP Program Managers and exposed to weekend adventures and weeknight workshops. Adventures build confidence as participants are challenged in various outdoor settings around Gallatin County. We also meet one week night for workshops focusing on curriculum that includes topics such as building healthy relationships, independent decision making, and interpersonal skills. Our goal is to equip the youth with the skills to make educated decisions towards an empowered and independent future.

History

Founder and former Executive Director, Pete MacFadyen founded the Bridger Youth Empowerment Project (BYEP) in 2001 after becoming frustrated with the limitations of counseling adolescents one-on-one. Pete believed youth could grow and develop more by getting outside and interacting positively with their peers and adults than sitting inside with a counselor. In its first winter, Pete recruited five youth from the Bridger Alternative School and taught them how to snowboard. The result was astonishing. Kids with depression and little drive to succeed gained confidence in learning new skills like snowboarding and effective communication. This simple success continues to guide our programmatic development. Now, Big Sky Youth Empowerment (still BYEP) offers a six year program serving nearly 200 youth in grades 7 - 6 months post high school from Bozeman, Belgrade and the surrounding area.

Who We Are

Program Managers come from diverse educational backgrounds whose role is to provide advocacy, guidance, social-emotional learning, and coordination of services to participants. Program Managers are overseen by Program Director, Kayla Bradley, Marriage and Family therapist, who provides professional development, psychoeducation, and constructive tools for program management to be most effective in their roles. Program Managers wear many hats and serve as facilitators, educators, outdoor leaders, resource coordinators, or logistics managers on any given week!

A Multi-Tiered Program

BYEP is a six year program that engages kids in prosocial programming for approximately 36 weeks a year. Within a year there are three sessions: winter, summer, and fall totaling 18 sessions over the span of the program. Youth participate in a progression that starts with Traverse in 7th & 8th Grade, Approach in 9th & 10th Grade, and Crux in 11th & 12th grade. Each participant is part of a group that meets twice a week with their peers, volunteer mentors, and a BYEP Program Manager. Workshops are run at BYEP Headquarters (225 East Mendenhall Street Bozeman) from 4:00 - 7:00 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday evening. Experiential adventures are held on Sundays and depending on the season, can last five to ten hours.

We offer additional programming Monday through Thursday where participants have the opportunity to attend a weekly elective offering (for example: woodworking, martial arts, and game night) on Thursdays and/or tutoring on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Participants can sign up via the teen portal on our website (byep.org).

Who We Serve

BYEP accepts participants beginning in winter of 7th grade and continues admission through the fall of 12th grade. They may or may not be enrolled in school. Selected participants come from diverse backgrounds and have often experienced, chosen, or are faced with extraordinarily challenging circumstances.

Attendance Policy

Due to generous support from our community, we are able to provide 100% scholarships to all of the youth in our program. A six year scholarship to BYEP is a \$60,000 award. Each season, we receive more applications than we have scholarships available. Therefore, your child's acceptance is a commitment: BYEP to your child and your child to BYEP. Attendance is a crucial part of the BYEP experience. Because so much of what we do is based around group dynamics, the BYEP experience is most effective when all participants are present and participating.

The expected attendance rate for BYEP participants is 75% to all workshops and 65% to adventures. That equates to no more than 4 unexcused adventures and 3 unexcused workshops. If a participant meets the 75/65% attendance rate, they earn their scholarship for the next season. While 100% attendance is definitely achievable, we understand that things come up. If a participant is not going to make it to a workshop or adventure, the responsibility is on the participant to let the Program Manager know. A call or a text message to the Program Manager is expected. Excused absences include major medical circumstances such as hospitalization or injury, moved out of the area for work, parenting plan requirements, or drivers education classes. In the summer we understand that family vacations often arise, and take that into consideration as well.

Grounds for Removal

Grounds for Removal from the program include, but are not limited to: drug and or alcohol use during BYEP scheduled events; violence (verbal, sexual, physical, emotional) directed towards any member of the program; breaking of any law during BYEP scheduled events; refusing to work together as a group and/or engaging in behaviors that compromise group growth.

Gear Policy

BYEP, partnered with the community, provides your child with much of the gear necessary to acquire new skiing or snowboarding skills. At the beginning of the participants' first winter season, we give them all of the necessary gear to have a great day at Big Sky Resort in any weather. All ski and snowboard equipment and gear is free for your child to use for the winter season. Any gear given to your child is their responsibility to care for and maintain. The "hard goods" (skis, snowboards, boots, bindings, poles) will be returned to BYEP at the end of the season. If your child stays in BYEP for a full year and chooses to ski and snowboard again, the equipment is theirs to keep! If the participant does not complete a full year, or is removed from the program before the full year is up, the gear is to be returned to BYEP. If a participant is in good standing, but has to move before they complete their 3rd season, they are allowed to keep their gear.

Informed Consent

BYEP is dedicated to providing your child with exceptional opportunities to have fun, learn new skills, and make positive connections with others. The nature of our program is to build trust and healthy relationships. In doing so, we will discuss and disclose personal information. Due to the nature of the group setting, we cannot guarantee confidentiality. BYEP staff are required to report to the participant's parent/legal guardian and/or the Department of Family Services and/or law enforcement:

1. In the case that we have reason to believe your child is at imminent risk for doing serious harm to himself or herself.
2. In the case that we have reason to believe that your child is at imminent risk for doing harm to others.
3. In the case that we have reason to believe that your child under the age of 18 is being/has been physically abused, sexually abused, or neglected or that there is suspected abuse of a disabled or elderly person.
4. If your child is under the age of 16 and having sex.

Adolescents often express themselves by using language such as "I am suicidal" to describe feelings of distress. We interpret this as a low potential for harm rather than a specific or intentional threat to themselves. In the event we determine the participant is at a high level of risk, we will contact their parent or guardian immediately and follow our set safety protocols for suicidal risk.

At BYEP, we see the relationship between parents and BYEP staff as critical to the success of your son or daughter. Having an open, honest and transparent line of communication is key. We would encourage you to utilize your child's BYEP Program Manager as a resource and another support to turn to with questions or concerns.

Big Sky Youth Empowerment is an adventure-based, group mentoring program whose mission is to provide your child with opportunities for success that assist them in becoming contributing members of our community. We look forward to working with you and your family!

Program Calendar

All BYEP programmatic events can be found on our website at byep.org/programcalendar

- Find the calendar that corresponds with your child's grade level
- Select the date. There will be a blue heading that populates with the adventure/workshop theme that day.
- In pink, you'll find pick up and drop off times for the adventure/workshop that day.
- Help your child be prepared to make the most out of their adventure by checking the "Please Bring" section on the calendar.
- The PM listed on the calendar event for the adventure is the person in charge that day and may not be your typical PM, please contact this person if needed.

TRAVERSE
8th and 9th Grade

prev **SEPTEMBER** next
2023

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

8th Grade Adventure: Lewis & Clark Caverns
Sun Sep 24th 8:15am - 1:15pm

Transportation:
Pick-Ups: BYEP HQ: 8:15 AM | 4X Mama Macs: 8:30 AM | Belgrade (HS): 8:45 AM

Drop-Offs: BYEP HQ: 1:45 PM | 4X Mama Macs: 1:30 PM | Belgrade (HS): 1:15 PM

Please Bring: Hiking shoes, water bottle, rain jacket

Mentor Instructions: All mentors arrive at 8:00 am

Program Managers:
Kendyl (406) 223-8419 | Casey (406) 595-8631

Contact

Traverse (7th & 8th Grade) Program Managers

Casey Clark	406-595-8631	casey@byep.org
Kendyl Pierson	406-223-8419	kendyl@byep.org

Approach (9th & 10th Grade) Program Managers

Casey Clark	406-595-8631	casey@byep.org
Matt Ford	406-613-8454	matt@byep.org

Crux (11th + 12th Grade) Program Manager

Chris Tarney	406-595-3083	chris@byep.org
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Program Director

Kayla Bradley, PLMFT	406-581-7212	kayla@byep.org
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Counselor & Care Navigator (crisis, teen mental health needs, wrap around services)

Robin Bauman, PCLC	406-624-9748	robin@byep.org
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Operations Manager (paperwork, logistics, adventures, calendars, gear, electives & tutoring)

McKenzie Selden	509-630-8915	operations@byep.org
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