



## **STUDENT EXPEDITION PROGRAM**

### **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION for Students and Parents/Legal Guardians**

Dear Students & Parents/Legal Guardians:

In this letter I want to outline the activities of STEP. **Students**, if you decide you would like to apply to STEP, you must agree to commit to the full range of activities of the program as outlined in this letter. **Parents and legal guardians**, this information should give you a basic understanding of the program. Before your child joins STEP, we must have your permission for him/her to participate in all of the program activities. The following program description is addressed to student candidates.

#### **Student Qualifications:**

- 1) Sophomore, Junior, or Senior in High School
- 2) Low income (qualify or slightly above qualifying for free/reduced lunch)
- 3) Grade point average of 3.2 or higher
- 4) Planning to obtain a 4-year college degree
- 5) Neither parent has a 4-year college degree
- 6) US citizen or permanent resident

**PLEASE NOTE:** Due to the remote wilderness conditions and inaccessibility of medical facilities, STEP cannot accept students with chronic medical conditions on its field experiences. These conditions include, but are not limited to, asthma, seizure disorders, diabetes, or a history of anaphylactic reactions to food or insect bites. Additionally, because of the size of the kayaks, you must have a waist and hip measurement of 48 inches or less. All applicants will be required to undergo a medical clearance and physical exam performed by a physician prior to final acceptance into the Student Expedition Program.

#### Goal:

STEP's mission is to provide leadership training for academically promising high school students such as yourself in order to better prepare you for the challenges ahead in college. We do so via a 3-week outdoor leadership expedition and pre- and post-expedition activities. Upon acceptance into the program, you will receive a scholarship to participate.

#### Pre-Expedition:

Over the current school year, you will be required to participate in 2-3 orientations/trainings. We will try to schedule these so that there is no more than 1 in any given month. You can expect 1-2 of the trainings to last approximately 3 hours. We arrange a team-building ropes course for one of the trainings and this will take a full day including transportation to the site. Additional possible topics for orientations/trainings include introduction to the expedition, gear familiarization, and a slide show on Alaska.

#### The Expedition:

The expedition will take place in the summer of 2011 in Alaska. We will be sea kayaking in Prince William Sound, Alaska for approximately 23 days. You will be accompanied by three instructors. Your expedition group will be 12 students.

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## Post-Expedition:

In order to join STEP, you must commit to 3 activities upon your return from the expedition; the fourth is optional. These activities allow you to share your experience and give back to your local community.

The first is to speak to 1-2 groups approved in advance by STEP (youth, school, or philanthropic organizations) about your expedition experience. We'll provide you with guidance on public speaking and preparing your talks. Expect that you will spend several hours in preparation for your talks, as well as giving them.

The second requirement is to provide STEP with an e-mail update twice a year. The update requests information on your contact info, educational status, and recent news. Updates are required through college graduation or 5 years from the completion of the program. After that, we encourage and look forward to annual updates.

The third requirement expected of you is to help with orientations of new students and parents. You will be the experts and our new students and parents will want to hear about your experience with the program.

The fourth, and optional activity, is to assist in a fundraising activity, created and guided by STEP students, to help provide funding for students in the next program year.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions about the program or the application process. I can be reached at 520-825-5650 or [tbaynes@stepexpedition.org](mailto:tbaynes@stepexpedition.org). I look forward to receiving your application!

Tracy Baynes  
President  
STEP: Student Expedition Program

## *Student Testimonials*

We got to do and see things that most people may never get to in their whole lifetime.

I can honestly say this experience will be engraved in my heart forever.

Because of STEP, I am more self-confident, independent, and willing to take risks.

I learned that I shouldn't say "I can't" ... because "I can!"

Never in my life would I have imagined witnessing a fight between two bald eagles, a piece of glacier fall, or a majestic waterfall flow down a glorious mountain.

This trip has led me to develop self-confidence, better problem-solving skills, and leadership skills.

I've seen bald eagles, harbor seals, glaciers, and waterfalls ... I've learned how to read a chart, sea kayak, cook outdoors, fish with hand-lines, and pitch a tent and tarp. But most importantly, I've learned the makings of a great leader and how to become one myself, the art of good communication, good judgment and decision-making, and owning up to the decisions I've made.

Before STEP, I didn't realize what the larger world had to offer.

This experience has built my confidence and expanded my horizon far beyond what I see at home.

The leadership skills we learned will stay with us the rest of our lives.

I learned that I could do more than I thought I could.

I realize what I once thought was the middle of nowhere (Alaska) is pushing me and taking me everywhere.