

GREAT FUTURES START **HERE.**



June 23, 2020

Megan Dreger, Grants Administrator
Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority
33 Las Colinas Lane
San Jose, CA 95119

Dear Open Space Authority Grant Review Committee:

We would like to express our intent to partner with Saved By Nature (SBN) to allow our youth organization participants access to nature-based, environmental education programming by working in collaboration with SBN. The Boys and Girls Club of Silicon Valley has worked with Richard Tejeda and SBN for two consecutive summers where he coordinated the "Summer Science Project" for the clubs in our region, reaching 220 of our youth.

Our organization serves thousands of youth each year, and our access to nature-based learning is very limited due to transportation and limited staff experience. Working with Richard through Saved By Nature has allowed our youth participants access to quality environmental education in a setting where they feel accepted and encouraged to ask questions and explore the curiosity that the outside world brings. It is both a welcoming and healing experience for these kids who rarely have opportunities to connect with nature as many of them live in urban areas without parks or open space nearby. It is also connecting them with a future career path in outdoor stewardship and environmental education, which is also greatly needed! Without this collaboration, our participants would not have been exposed to the importance of open space by Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority, Don Edwards Wildlife Refuge, the Wildlife Education Rehabilitation Center (WERC), or water resources through Valley Water. It was due to the efforts of SBN who coordinated the outside agencies to come in and provide our students with a full week of hands-on learning experiences and quality time spent outdoors.

We are looking forward to continuing our collaboration and partnership efforts with Saved By Nature for our Summer Science Project, and also would welcome the opportunity to expand these experiences even further to include guided hikes (virtual or real-time), and/or overnight campout experiences.

In closing, SBN has filled a much-needed void in our programming and enriched the lives of our youth significantly and has done so at no cost for our organization or community. Richard is one of the most passionate environmental educators in the region and is dedicated to paying it forward to our youth. SBN is one of the most deserving groups that I can think of which would greatly benefit the community if

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given Measure Q funding. I hope you will consider supporting their incredible efforts and excellent services they provide to our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mark P Washbush". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end. It is positioned to the left of a vertical line that separates it from the typed name below.

Mark P Washbush
Chief Operating Officer
Boys & Girls Clubs of Silicon Valley