

TO SERVE, TO STRIVE AND NOT TO YIELD



VOYAGEUR
OUTWARD BOUND SCHOOL
2015 ANNUAL REPORT



Dear Friends,

Thanks to your continued support of Voyageur Outward Bound School (VOBS), we are able to continue to show people — from typical teenagers, to teens struggling to make positive choices, to veterans, to urban youth, to adults and families — that they are capable of doing far more than they think. On our courses, students realize they have the potential for great character and the capacity for real leadership. Then, they use that character and leadership in the service of others. It is a powerful message that has been enabling Outward Bound to change lives and communities for over 50 years.

2015 was another outstanding year for VOBS:

- We served more than **2,000 students** over 14,000 student program days.
- The Twin Cities Center **grew by over 20%**, and added many new schools and nonprofits to its list of partners.
- For the fourth consecutive year, VOBS **beat its budget** and ended the year with a surplus.
- Over the past four years, we have **grown our revenue by 40%** and our net assets by more than a third.

These stats show we're having an impact, and that impact is being validated. VOBS was recognized as a leading practitioner of social emotional learning (SEL) by the Susan Crown Exchange in a program profiled by the *New York Times* earlier this year. We continue to work with the University of Minnesota on VOBS' program evaluation, and the preliminary results are confirming what we've always known – these programs work. As you can read in this report, in addition to the good work up North at Homeplace and in the Twin Cities Center, we are excited to resume doing programs in Texas (Big Bend National Park) after a seven-year absence. These programs, an extension of Homeplace, will broaden our program offerings and provide more year-round work and training opportunities for our staff.

We're confident that in addition to serving a critically important mission — and continuing our outstanding record of safety — VOBS is also a good investment for our donors. So, thank you. Your support makes it possible. To serve, to strive and not to yield.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JL' or 'Jack Lee'.

Jack Lee, jack.lee@vobs.org

Board of Trustees

“Our thanks to the Board of Trustees for their continued support of our mission, along with their guidance and leadership. We are grateful for their commitment to our students and helping them unlock the possibilities that lie within them.”

– Jack Lee and the rest of the VOBS team

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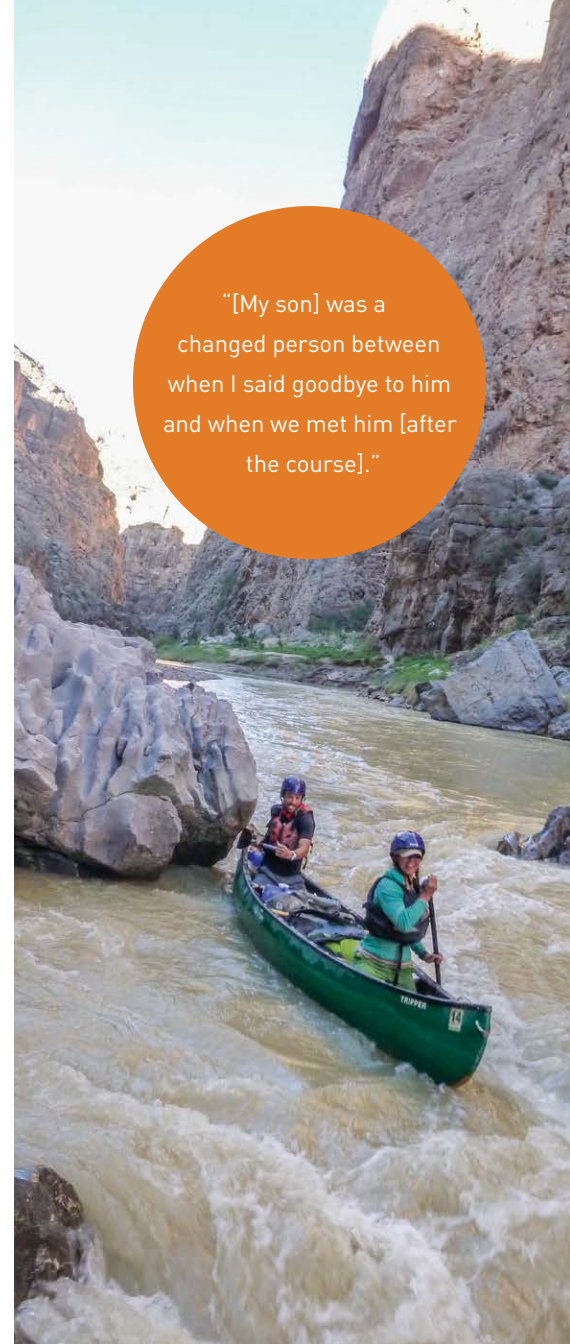
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“[My son] was a
changed person between
when I said goodbye to him
and when we met him [after
the course].”



TO SERVE

Twin Cities Center

VOBS' Twin Cities Center (TCC) is the base for our work with urban youth. We partner with schools, nonprofit organizations and colleges to help individuals discover that they are capable of doing so much more than they realized. Through river adventures, rock climbing, high ropes courses and urban expeditions, students apply what they learn on course to their daily lives — gaining self-confidence, compassion, leadership skills and resilience.



1,322 Urban
Students Served



2,700 Student
Program Days



67% identified as
students of color

Additional challenges faced by students included homelessness, school failure, and emotional-behavioral challenges.

VOBS' Twin Cities Center was highlighted in the **Susan Crown Exchange Foundation's best practices field guide for SEL** (social emotional learning). From an extensive pool of applicants, VOBS' TCC was one of eight out-of-school programs chosen for our "proven track record of working with one of the hardest populations to reach: vulnerable and at-risk adolescents." For more information, you can download the field guide here: <https://www.selpractices.org/about>

Homeplace

Homeplace... the place many of our alums feel at “home.” It’s the place where our students come to discover that there is more in them than they know — on life-changing expeditions for everyone from struggling teens, to adults in transition, to veterans integrating back into life outside active duty.



574 Students
Served



11,909 Student
Program Days



\$245,067
in Scholarships



127 Scholarship
Students

“I can confidently say that the most important, the most useful skills I have obtained from my 30 days here have little to do with physical strength or wilderness related technical ability. Walking away from the course, what makes me the happiest is knowing I have changed myself for the better.”

– Harrison, Intercept Participant, 2015

Program Participants

574 participants total

Adult 3%

Alumni 1%

College 10%

Families 4%

Gap Year/Semester 2%

High School 29%

Intercept for Teens 17%

Intercept for Young Adults 7%

Middle School 6%

Pathfinder 10%

Veterans 12%



TO STRIVE



Mission

Our mission is to change lives through challenge and discovery.

How We Achieve Our Mission

- We deliver our world renowned experiential learning programs to people of all ages and all walks of life that help students discover that **“there is more in them than they know.”**
- As our students discover a strength of character, ability to lead and desire to serve, it has a positive impact on their lives and the lives of those around them.
- We employ a diverse and compassionate staff of highly trained, skilled and dedicated instructors, facilitators and educators as we partner with educational institutions, businesses, civic organizations and parents to serve all who wish to participate.

Values

Compassion

Demonstrating concern and acting with a spirit of respect and generosity in service to others.

Integrity

Acting with honesty, being accountable for your decisions and actions.

Excellence

Being your best self, pursuing craftsmanship in your actions, and living a healthy and balanced life.

Inclusion and Diversity

Valuing and working to create communities representative of our society that support and respect differences.

Financial Overview

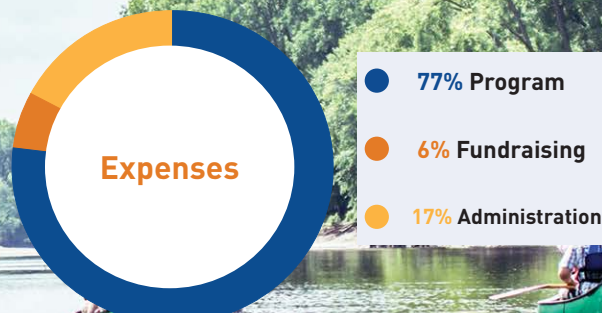
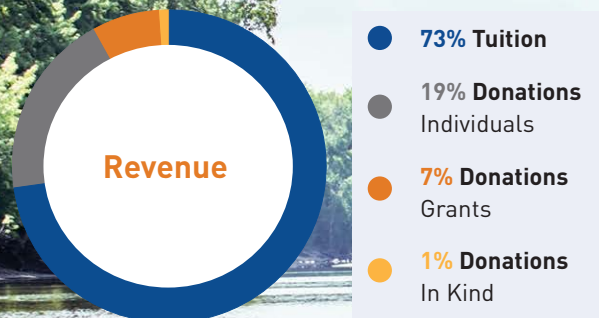
Income Statement – for year ending December 31

	2015	2014
Tuition	\$2,568,983	\$2,648,374
Donations	\$946,919	\$993,171
Total Revenue	\$3,515,902	\$3,641,545
Program	\$2,649,750	\$2,592,511
Fundraising	\$215,828	\$244,755
Administration	\$587,581	\$621,043
Total Expenses	\$3,453,159	\$3,458,309
Change in operating net assets	\$62,743	\$183,236
Change in LLC	\$15,806	\$95,167
Total Change in net assets	\$78,549	\$278,403

Balance Sheet – December 31, 2015

Operating Cash	\$856,724
Other Current Assets	\$280,834
Total Current Assets	\$1,137,558
Investments	\$162,033
Investment in LLC*	\$110,973
Net Fixed Assets	\$449,396
Total Assets	\$1,859,960
Current Liabilities	\$247,076
Unrestricted Net Assets	\$1,022,435
Temp Restricted	\$216,431
Permanently Restricted	\$374,018
Total Net Assets	\$1,612,884
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$1,859,960

*The LLC is the Outward Bound Services Group, which manages the marketing for Outward Bound schools, and in which VOBS has 1/6th ownership.



**2015
Net Assets
\$1,612,884**

NOT TO YIELD

What's Next



Here are some new and exciting changes coming our way.

Texas

Thirty-five years ago, VOBS began programming in Texas, expanding our year-round course offerings for staff and students. In 2016, after a seven-year absence, we'll begin programming once again in the Big Bend Region!

We will begin offering courses that include backpacking, whitewater canoeing and rock climbing in October 2016. The majority of our offerings will be longer courses, with Semester and Pathfinder courses making up the bulk of the schedule. We are also reviving our at-risk Intercept courses in Texas, expanding VOBS' ability to serve more families throughout the year.

The desert in Big Bend offers challenges that are perfect for great Outward Bound courses: students encounter a variety of ecosystems and landscapes as they traverse one of the least known, but most awe-inspiring, corners of the Southwest. Deep river canyons, tall mountains, open desert, and centuries-old cultures all mix together in this rugged landscape. It is an ideal place to explore unknown territory, both in the wilderness and within ourselves.



We've moved!

Voyageur Outward Bound School's Twin Cities Center has moved! We are still in St. Paul but we moved from our home at the Wellstone Center to our new home on Energy Park Drive. This new space includes a large warehouse for our expedition supplies. Keep an eye out for an invitation to join us at our Open House event to see our new office!



Anne Raetz VOBS Staff

“With the new space, VOBS has opened many new opportunities. It allows the staff the ability to collaborate more effectively and work more cohesively with the logistics teams. I am excited to work in a space that fosters a sense of cohesion.”



Elliott Floyd VOBS Staff

“I’m very excited for the sheer efficiency the new space will and has already provided. Just being able to have our gear localized is incredibly helpful and will be to our staff’s advantage this summer and the following years.”



Ben Batz VOBS Staff

“The new space has been a source of energy for the instructors. The TCC has been growing beyond its bristles, and it’s so fun to get to envision and create the launch pad for all of the growth to come here in the Twin Cities!”



OUTWARD BOUND

I contemplated how to start this letter for quite some time. At first I thought it might be necessary to just write "THANK YOU" hundreds of times but I don't think that would convey the level of gratitude and appreciation I feel.

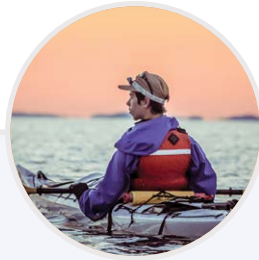
This course, and altogether opportunity, has changed my life. I realize at this moment that there will be so much reflection about this experience later on that I probably will continue learning for a long time. After everything is said and done I'll probably sit, astonished and half surprised that I ever achieved such a feat. Before this course I had a strong sense that I knew who I was and what I was about. Yet now, I realize I was just on the tip of the iceberg. I feel now, like I can achieve any goal in the "real world". And I call it the "Real world" because I feel this experience has made me feel like I've lived in some other universe for the past two months. A universe where compassion is taught just as much as technical skill, and where nature is valued more than superficial things. A universe which is as beautiful as you choose to perceive it. I can't tell you how much I appreciate simplicity at this moment. How much I value the genuine connection I feel to nature and essentially myself. Without your support I would not have been able to make it here and have this experience. Along with being able to ~~own~~ competently sail my own boat and run my own dog team; I've learned that questioning my personal truths and examining my nature has led me to a place where I have always yearned to be. A place of compassion and understanding, appreciation, kindness, and ultimately to the roots of myself. Thank you for helping me realize my own potential. I am forever humbled.



"I've learned that questioning my personal truths and examining my nature has led me to a place where I have always yearned to be: a place of compassion and understanding, appreciation, kindness, and ultimately to the roots of myself."



Skill Building



Reflection



Character



Service

Educational Approach

At Voyageur Outward Bound School, we seek innovative ways to apply our Educational Framework to the emerging social needs our students face. Since 1962, through our experiential learning programs, students have lived out what it means **to serve, to strive and not to yield** — changing their lives and the lives of those around them. One essential element of this educational approach is through a “graduated level of responsibility,” where students learn through doing — and walk away ready to take on the challenges of their own lives more fully.



Teamwork



Mastery



Leadership

Donors

Thank you! Your gift ensures that we can continue to serve, to strive and not to yield.

\$25,000+

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“We support VOBS because we have seen first-hand the results from people who say that their life was changed by their Outward Bound expedition. We have seen kids gain confidence and purpose, adults realize inner strength and Military Veterans discover how they can successfully return to civilian life from war. This has proved to us that there is no better way to invest in our community than through the support of Outward Bound.”

Donor Spotlight

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"Jud took an Outward Bound course as a teenager and it showed him that he could do far more than he thought possible. We believe that Outward Bound continues to do that with everyone who is involved. We give financially so that youth can start their young lives with a feeling of self-confidence, knowing that they, too, can do more than they ever dreamed."

Donor Spotlight

Judson and Shelley Dayton

Partner Spotlight

River's Edge Academy

VOBS has partnered with River's Edge Academy, a charter school in St. Paul, MN for several years. Parents, teachers and students all acknowledge significant growth, and more importantly, that growth is making a difference. After two years of programming, we saw:

Stabilized student
enrollment numbers

58% improvement in
student attendance

74% increase in
student GPA

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Laura and David Witte
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Garrett Bonin Memorial

VOBS Intercept Alum, Garrett's life was too short, but the journey he began 19 years ago touched the lives of so many people.

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“Having the chance to test my limits and reflect has really helped me. My crew and I have really overcome many challenges and have become stronger. This has been one of the greatest experiences of my life. Truly.” – *River’s Edge Alumni*

Voyageur Outward Bound School (VOBS) received financial or in-kind support from the listed foundations, corporations and individuals between January 1, 2015, and December 31, 2015. We take every measure to ensure that all donors are listed correctly, as they were noted at the time of donation, and regret any inaccuracies in these lists. If you discover an error, please contact us at 651-401-0632 so that we may correct it.



**VOYAGEUR
OUTWARD BOUND SCHOOL**

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Thank you to all the VOBS staff who contributed their time and talents to this report. Special thanks to Larry Mishkar and Jon Reynolds for their beautiful photos.