

Impact Stories

Westcave Outdoor Discovery Center Education Programs

WESTCAVE PRESERVE PROGRAMS



“Just wanted to again say thank you for having us! This has by far been the best field trip! I love that the students were actively involved, outdoors, hiking, listening, observing, enjoying nature! Not once did anyone ask for their device! What you talked about today went right along with our first grade TEKS!!!! Thanks again. Look forward to bringing next year class!” *Teacher, Dripping Springs Elementary*

“Today we went on a beautiful, joyful hike. The tour was full of excitement, love and passion. I saw a water moccasin, butterflies, cardinals, dragonflies, and the beautiful cave. Made plenty of cave kiss wishes hoping those years of luck will come true. I hope to come back and experience the magic once more.” -- *Preserve Visitor, 6/29/19*

Westcave Poem

By 5th grade student, Deer Creek Elementary

A bee buzzing by
No one dare asking why
Pretty birds everywhere
None in our hair
Splish go the cave kisses
Followed by the strange hisses

Chirping birds in the sky
No one dare asking why
Wind flustering trees
With a nice view for all to see
Waves splash on shore
Eroding sand more and more
Eggs going crack crack crack
While no predators launch an attack

Everything gets eaten
Much like battles are defeaten
Life dies so new life can come
And death's a total bum
But here in Westcave
Nothing has a grave
Humans let things be
For that's the way it supposed to be

El Ranchito – *El Ranchito is a program of the Shield Ranch Foundation offered in collaboration with Westcave Outdoor Discovery Center and El Buen Samaritano Episcopal Mission.*



“In the city, nature rarely crosses my mind, but out here, being surrounded by it, that’s all I can think of. Going on the trail, seeing ground and sky, putting it all in perspective...I am inspired to work hard and enjoy it. I hope to return one day and see the other generations obtain as much as I did out here.” *(Conservation Corps Camper, High School Student)*

“When you read about nature in a book, you haven’t thought about what’s happening. But when you actually like it, like you see it with your own eyes, you touch it, you actually get to feel it, it’s amazing...it’s just amazing.” *El Ranchito Camper, Age 13*

“There are no words to describe how much I thank you for letting me have some of my best summer memories at El Ranchito. Every year I go in as just a normal teen girl, but come out as the happiest girl that ever lived. I hope to return next year and grow with the beauty of the ranch. In a way I feel as the ranch/nature grows I grow with it”. – *NDC Camper, Age 14*

Girls Outside



“All of the Girls Outside students have shown an increased interest in nature and science. It is reflected both in their academic work: more detail in science observation drawings, more open ended analytic questions about environmental systems, and more nature-based play in their free time. These students are very engaged in science at the classroom level. Many have shifted from thinking, “Bugs are gross!” to “Look at this insect! What does it eat? I want to observe it.” – *Elementary School Teacher, Metz Elementary*

“I liked that we saw frogs and went fishing. I like that plants grow. I liked to be with my buddy. I like to play somewhere with trees all over and waiting to climb on. I like that we go learn things in nature. We have fun times with our "Bigs" (Austin High School) girls and the other girls from Mathews Elementary. I like that I got to go experience fishing and most of all be in nature.” – *3rd grade Girls Outside student, Mathews Elementary*

“This has been the most rewarding and enriching experience as I witnessed first-hand the power of nature and the excitement of our girls. The "bigs" and the "littles" (mentor pairs) united each trip to learn, observe and explore nature!” – *Elementary School Teacher, Mathews Elementary*

ROADRUNNER OUTDOOR ADVENTURE BUS



“Getting there is part of the adventure! As schools set out on their field trips to connect with Nature, we want them to have a positive experience from the get go. When the colorful Roadrunner bus pulls up to a campus, the students know they are in for a special experience. The adventure begins as soon as they walk onto the bus and are greeted by the cheerful driver. We love the ease of both booking the bus through the great team at Westcave, and we are thankful to have an affordable means to transport the children participating in our programs to their nature based field trips. For many of the schools we work with, the Roadrunner is the children’s ticket to nature.”

- *Marya Fowler, Senior Education Outreach Manager, National Wildlife Federation*

“It has been great having the Roadrunner available for our field trips. Our kids loved riding the bus and look forward to ride it again this summer! As an organization, using this wonderful service, has made it possible for us to save money and provide our kids with supplies and workshops that have helped them to succeed in their academic endeavors. I firmly believe that this service has been instrumental in fostering positive attitudes in kids towards nature and the opportunity for them to become immerse in the great outdoors. The Roadrunner bus reflects the staffs’ (at Westcave) commitment to serve our kids, their admirable vision for kids to be connected to the outdoors and their ongoing dedication to provide every child in Austin the opportunity to become advocates to protect our natural parks and preserves. Without a doubt, the Roadrunner is a program that is essential for our kids to be able to be connected to the outdoors! I have been very lucky and touched to see how the Roadrunner has brought enjoyment to my kids and how this program has made it possible for them to view nature in a positive way!”

- *Ricardo Lardizabal, Family Literacy Coordinator, El Buen Samaritano*