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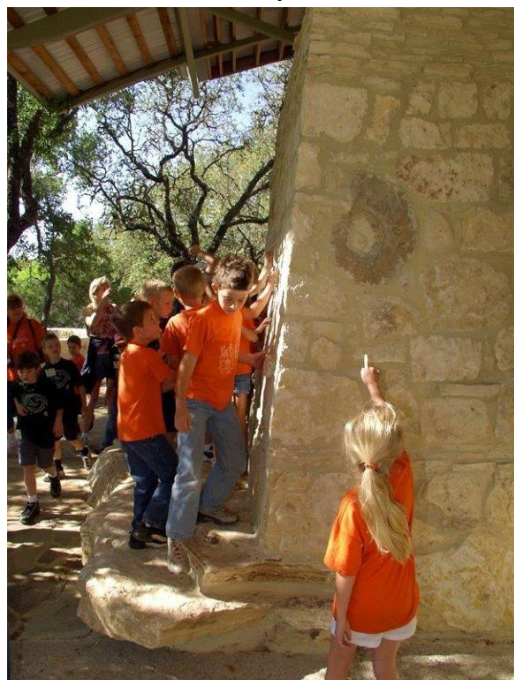
WESTCAVE
OUTDOOR DISCOVERY CENTER

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January 23, 2015

Austin Non-Profits Crowdfunding to Reconnect Children with Nature *Crowdfunding efforts will help overcome budget and transportation barriers*

Austin, Texas – Local non-profit Westcave Outdoor Discovery Center is crowdfunding \$20,000 to fund the Roadrunner Outdoor Adventure Bus, an innovative new program they hope will help schools and other organizations reconnect kids with nature. The program, a first for the Austin area, is a scalable way to overcome budget and transportation barriers faced by schools trying to



incorporate environmental education into their learning programs. Westcave is working with Austin non-profit Business & Community Lenders (BCL) of Texas to navigate a successful crowdfunding campaign. BCL of Texas offers crowdfunding coaching through their hyperlocal Keep Austin Funded program.

Westcave Preserve, a 75-acre open space notable for its collapsed grotto, is a popular destination for school field trips. However, for many schools, tight budgets and transportation costs preclude such field trips. Westcave works hard to combat this and offers discounted rates for Title 1 schools, but often the cost of transporting the children by bus is a barrier that forces the school to forego the trip in favor of supplies or other expenses.

The Roadrunner Outdoor Adventure Bus will provide discounted transportation for children on field trips and afterschool activities at local outdoor nature spaces. In addition to the ample benefits children receive from the connection with nature, the increased engagement among school-age kids today will help ensure future conservation efforts as they mature.

“Conservation starts with education and recreation,” says Ryan Spencer, CiNCA Manager for Westcave, “Field trips give children a chance to take what they learn in the classroom and see it in the real world.”

The Keep Austin Funded program was created by BCL of Texas to provide guidance to non-profits and small businesses crowdfunding their new projects.



“We’re excited to collaborate on this project – The Roadrunner Outdoor Adventure Bus is going to be great for the kids in our community,” says Lance McNeill, Director of Entrepreneurship for BCL of Texas. “The educational and environmental community outcomes from this project will far exceed its investment costs.”

The Roadrunner Adventure Bus will also be available for use by the other 54 local organizations in the Children in Nature Collaborative of Austin (CiNCA), which is dedicated to providing outdoor learning and engagement opportunities for kids. Those interested in learning more or making a donation are encouraged to visit the campaign website at <http://igg.me/at/westcave> starting January 27, 2015. As a 501c3 non-profit, all donations made to Westcave during the crowdfunding campaign are tax-deductible.

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About BCL of Texas was established in 1990 as a statewide not-for-profit Certified Development Corporation, BCL of Texas successfully promotes business and community development and provides business capital and commercial real estate loans throughout Texas. True to its mission to create jobs through business development, BCL of Texas has helped to create jobs for more than 5,255 Texans. In addition to providing businesses with counseling and technical assistance, BCL of Texas originates, underwrites, processes, closes and services business loans to healthy, growing businesses. The organization also offers homebuyer education classes, assists first-time homebuyers with the purchase of their first home and helps customers remain responsible and successful homebuyers. BCL of Texas is a member of the nationwide NeighborWorks® Network, which engages in revitalization strategies that strengthen communities and transform lives. For more information visit www.bcloftexas.org or follow us on Twitter @bcloftexas.