

Since 1984



Summer 2012

Inspiring Journeys in the **American Southwest & Costa Rica**

Wilderness Adventure | Community Service | Native Cultures & Arts



UTAH COLORADO

GRAY CANYON
DESOLATION CANYON

GRAND JUNCTION

COLORADO RIVER

LA SAL MOUNTAINS

UNCOMPAHGRE PLATEAU

BLUE MESA RESERVOIR

HENRY MOUNTAINS

CANYONLANDS

MOAB

ABAJO MOUNTAINS

TELLURIDE

CEDAR MESA

SAN JUAN MOUNTAINS

NAVAJO MT.

MONUMENT VALLEY

UTE MT. UTE

MESA VERDE

DEER HILL

DURANGO

SOUTHERN UTE

SAN JUAN RIVER

NAVAJO LAKE

BLACK MESA

NAVAJO NATION

CHUSKA MOUNTAINS

FARMINGTON

JICARILLA APACHE

HOPÍ MESAS

CANYON DE CHELLEY

CHACO CANYON



ARIZONA NEW MEXICO

A. LOWRIE 34



“Deer Hill is the most amazing place in the world. The canyons, mountains, and the vast lands of the Navajo are permanently etched in my mind. I will never forget the lessons I learned here, or the connections I made with others in my group.”

— Rachel, Pound Ridge, NY

This is a place where forward-thinking people create **innovative, authentic experiences in nature** based on a tradition of quality. Come to Deer Hill, and experience the power of the Earth, the **true spirit of service**, and **the warmth of family**.

Deer Hill is...

...A **Journey** Like No Other

Deer Hill is not a camp, or a tour; it's a journey. We combine awe-inspiring, challenging wilderness adventures with unique opportunities to work and connect with native people.

...Your ticket to **our Amazing Backyard**

Our 130-acre Basecamp is tucked in a valley between the majestic Rocky Mountains and the otherworldly canyons and mesas of Utah and Arizona. This proximity to one of the most geographically and culturally diverse regions in the world means more program and less driving. In Costa Rica, we work with a local company to recreate our distinct blend of off-the-beaten-path adventure and rich service.

...A **Pioneer** in Cross-cultural Service

For 25 years, our groups have worked alongside Hopi, Navajo, Zuni, and Ute families, completing projects that are important to their traditional ways of life. Come to Deer Hill if you are looking for a service experience that is interactive and impactful.

...A **Sustainable** Community

For us, sustainability means: conservation projects and Leave-no-Trace education in our wild lands; a 100% solar powered Basecamp; growing our own produce in our organic garden; printing this catalog on recycled paper with environmentally friendly inks.

...Committed to **Quality**

This is a real small group experience shared by 12 participants and 3 leaders. We train our own staff in the field, use our own high-quality equipment, and do not outsource activities to subcontracted outfitters. This is extremely rare in the world of teen adventure programs. Nine full-time staff oversee program delivery and ensure excellent communication from the moment you sign up, until you return home. Accreditation with the Association for Experiential Education reassures you that we meet the most exacting standards in risk management, staff training, and education.

...A **Caring Family**

We are a family company, still run by founders, Doug and Beverly Capelin, who are intimately involved in all aspects of our programs. Our family includes service hosts in Native communities, and our skilled guides, many of whom have been with us for 5-10 years. Beginning and ending your program at our Basecamp infuses your experience with a sense of place unlike any other program.

Each summer, just 100 young people learn that we are deeply invested in the growth and success of each person who joins us. To be a part of Deer Hill in 2012, visit our website or call us on 1-800-533-7221.

“This Deer Hill program will definitely stand out in my memory as the **wildest, most physically challenging, beautiful and mind-blowing experience of my life**. I will cherish every second I’ve spent out here. Thank you for this opportunity to learn and grow.”

- Zoe, Boston, MA



wild
Connections



human Connections



NORTHAMPTON
BLUE DEVILS
TRACK & FIELD

I am...
...decreasing my risk of heart disease.
...lowering my blood pressure.
...controlling my weight.
...reducing my stress.

“The service project was amazing. Our host **Milton shared with us his vast knowledge of leadership, as well as his deeply rooted belief system and passion for life.**

It was an awakening for me to re-explore my beliefs and my life.

Deer Hill’s service projects set it apart from every other program.”

— Josh, Freeport, ME





message from the founders

“Sustainability” —

it’s a buzzword, but what does it mean for a program like ours?

Our industry as a whole is far from environmentally friendly; travel and adventure programs are, by nature, energy-intensive. For us, sustainability means that we strive for balance between our energy needs and green practices, as we pass on to the next generation a passion for conservation.

Green Catalog

This “downsized” catalog, printed on recycled paper, saves 33 fully grown trees and 3,298 pounds of greenhouse gases over a conventional brochure. We know that many families new to Deer Hill still want something on paper to sit down with, and hope that this is sufficient supplement to our website, which is an extensive multi-media resource.

Solar-powered Basecamp

Another investment we are making in the future is visible at Basecamp in the form of two large solar arrays. Every month we generate around 2000 kwh of electricity and save two tons of CO₂ emissions. Our buildings are passive solar and/or straw-bale construction, to minimize fossil-fuel energy use for heating and cooling. We recycle and compost, maintaining a very low-waste facility.

Organic Garden

The past two years have seen a huge expansion in our organic garden at Basecamp. Owners, admin staff, interns and participants all pitched in to sow, weed, harvest, and enjoy a delicious crop of vegetables and salad greens. This has significantly reduced our reliance on shipped produce.

Education

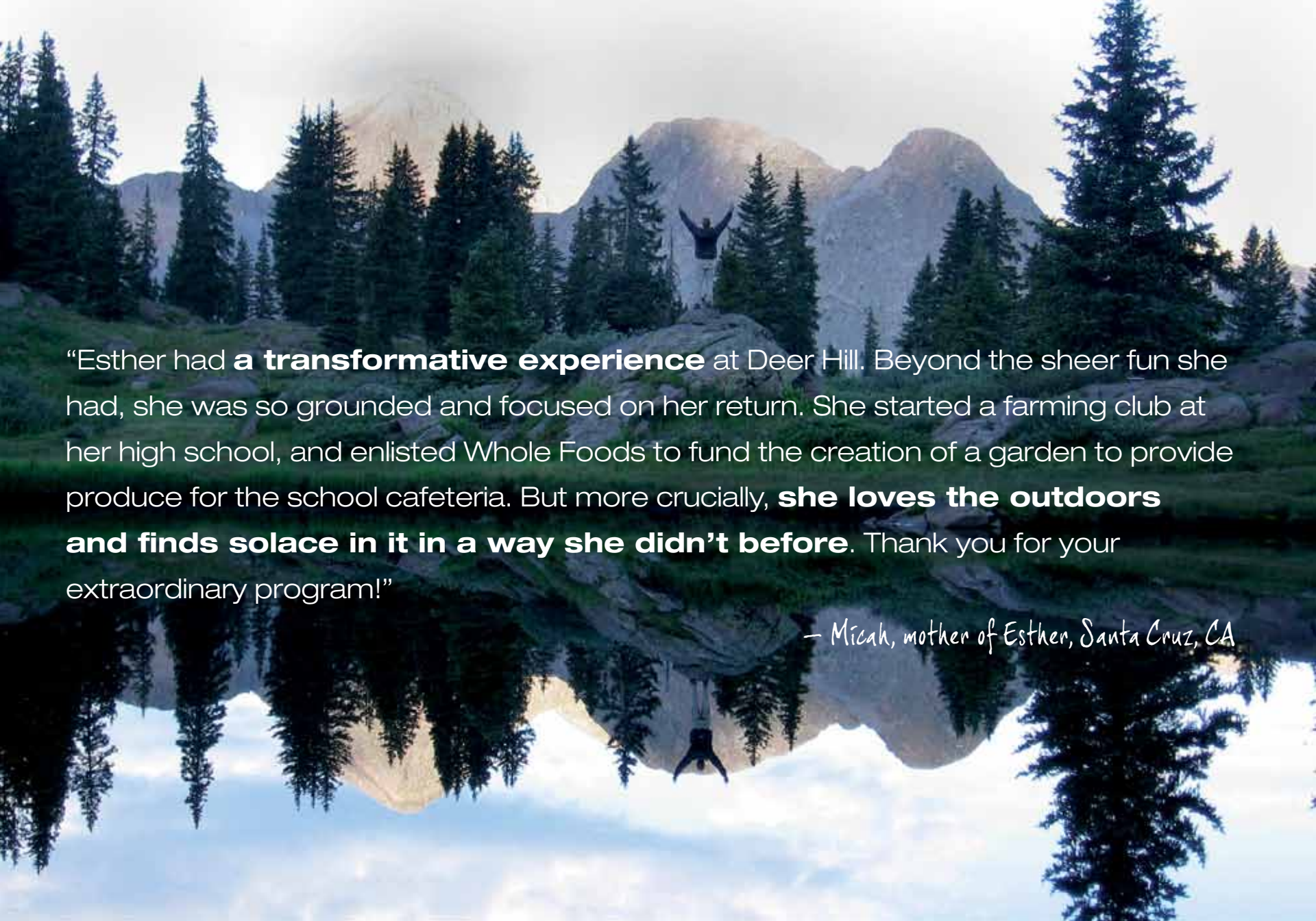
Through in-depth encounters with wilderness and native cultures, our participants consider current environmental issues in context. They grasp the reality of water conflict in the West while canoeing on the Colorado River; discuss land-use priorities while camped in a wildflower meadow at 11,000-feet; or explore the impacts of coal-fired power plants on reservation lands with their service hosts.

This Land is our Home

Since 1984, we have created programs for teenagers in the diverse lands of the American Southwest. Ours is not a story of endlessly seeking the next must-visit destination or extreme adventure. For years, we have guided responsibly on the Colorado Plateau, given back to the land through service, and promoted leave-no-trace ethics. In return, these landscapes, and the ancient peoples who inhabit them, have inspired and sustained us. This relationship with the land has brought great joy, a feel for nature’s rhythms, and an understanding of who we are. We are rooted right here, where we planted trees, raised our three children, and invested in a place where young people could connect with the Earth, and with native life-ways, and through these connections, discover themselves.

Sincerely yours,

Doug and Beverly
Doug and Beverly Capelin

A person stands on a large rock in a mountainous landscape, with their arms raised in a gesture of triumph or joy. The scene is surrounded by tall evergreen trees and rugged mountains in the background. The sky is a soft, hazy blue, suggesting dawn or dusk. The entire scene is reflected in a calm body of water in the foreground, creating a symmetrical image.

“Esther had **a transformative experience** at Deer Hill. Beyond the sheer fun she had, she was so grounded and focused on her return. She started a farming club at her high school, and enlisted Whole Foods to fund the creation of a garden to provide produce for the school cafeteria. But more crucially, **she loves the outdoors and finds solace in it in a way she didn’t before.** Thank you for your extraordinary program!”

— Micah, mother of Esther, Santa Cruz, CA

“Service with Deer Hill was absolutely fantastic. The best thing was when we finished our project for our host, and she simply said **“Thank you,” in Hopi.** That simple phrase meant so much.”

— Cara, Durham, NC





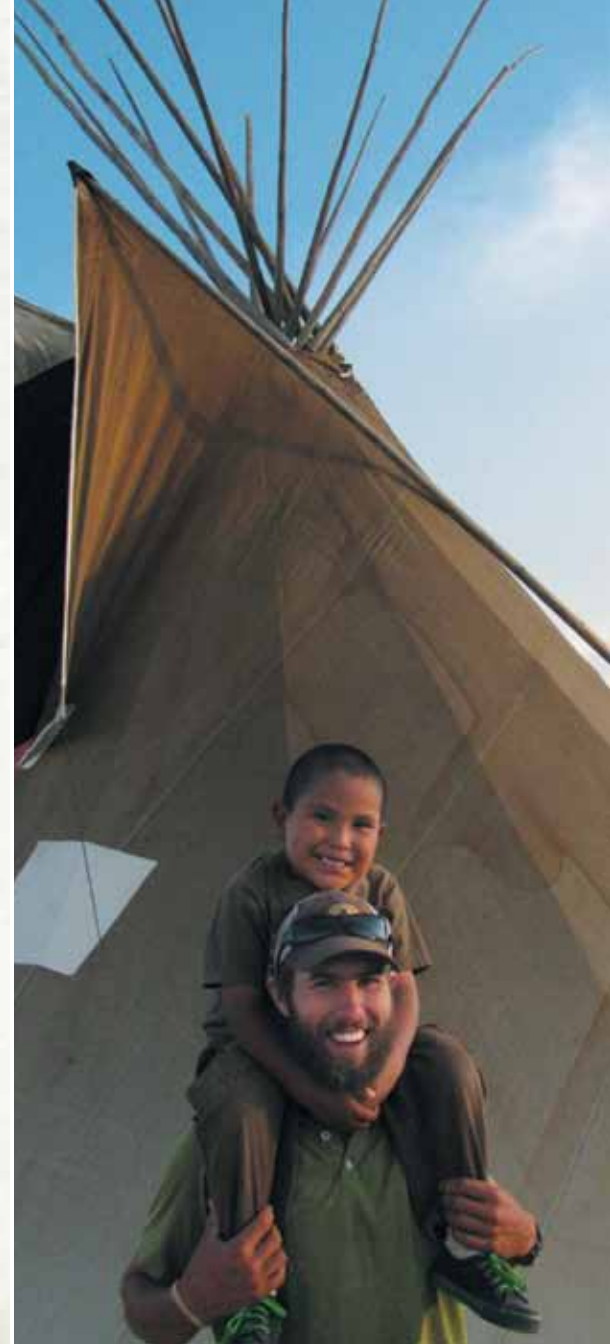
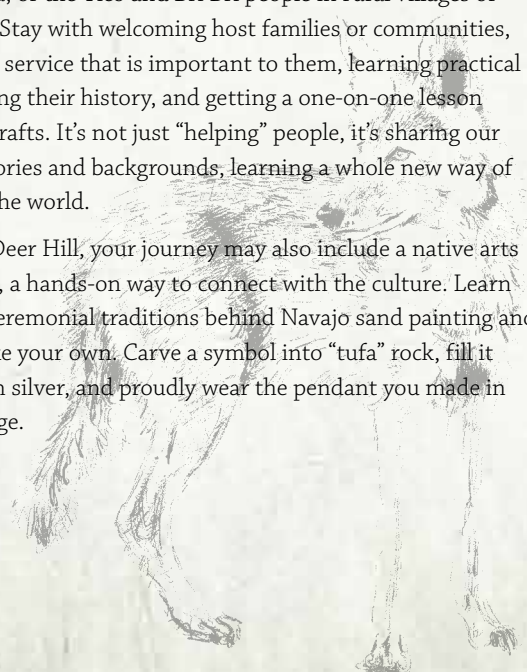
the spirit of service

You have the opportunity to **do something, however grand or small, to make things better.**

Call it gratitude, or the human instinct to connect. Don't define it at all.

Deer Hill is renowned for the quality and integrity of our service experiences. We have spent 25 years forming deep and rewarding friendships with native peoples in our area. Most expeditions include several days spent working with one of our partner tribes: the Navajo, Hopi, Zuni, and Ute in New Mexico and Arizona, or the Tico and Bri Bri people in rural villages of Costa Rica. Stay with welcoming host families or communities, engaging in service that is important to them, learning practical skills, hearing their history, and getting a one-on-one lesson in ancient crafts. It's not just "helping" people, it's sharing our different stories and backgrounds, learning a whole new way of looking at the world.

Unique to Deer Hill, your journey may also include a native arts component, a hands-on way to connect with the culture. Learn about the ceremonial traditions behind Navajo sand painting and how to make your own. Carve a symbol into "tufa" rock, fill it with molten silver, and proudly wear the pendant you made in a Hopi village.



meet our hosts

Milton and Irma

Navajo Nation | Arizona

YEARS WITH DEER HILL EXPEDITIONS: 20

One of the first families to work with us on service projects, Milton and Irma have become great friends of Deer Hill. As a former interim President of the Navajo Nation, Milton loves sharing his knowledge of current issues, as well as traditions in Dinétah. Irma is an expert on the history of the Navajo and their struggles for their ancestral lands. Milton's brother, Philmer, a "Peacemaker Judge" for the Navajo people, also hosts our groups.

Recent projects: fencing, landscaping, and restoring a hogan on the family homestead; building access ramps and other facilities for elderly people.

Milton says: "We all have common concerns – we want to learn, we want to help. Working together as people of different societies can build bridges and, ultimately, respect and understanding. That's what I believe Deer Hill does. What's even more important than the projects we complete is how we solidify our friendships and look together for peace in the world."

Iva and Ed

Hopi Nation | Arizona

YEARS WITH DEER HILL EXPEDITIONS: 9

Iva is a gifted silversmith and basket-weaver, and teaches our participants how to create their own traditional silver pendants. Iva grew up in an ancient Hopi village, and Deer Hill groups often work with her community to prepare for their annual Homedance, a major event in the Hopi ceremonial calendar. Iva's young son, Richard, eagerly awaits our arrival each summer, and assists on every project!

Recent projects: whitewashing and renovating buildings in the village; repairing stone benches in plazas; building bread ovens; creating trails and tending spring-fed gardens; assisting Hopi elders in their cornfields; classroom sessions with Hopi schoolchildren.

Iva says: "I always tell students that they are part of our family for this week. That's Hopi tradition; we welcome people in our homes. Deer Hill is a cultural exchange program that is really working for us."

Patricia and Larry

Navajo Nation | New Mexico

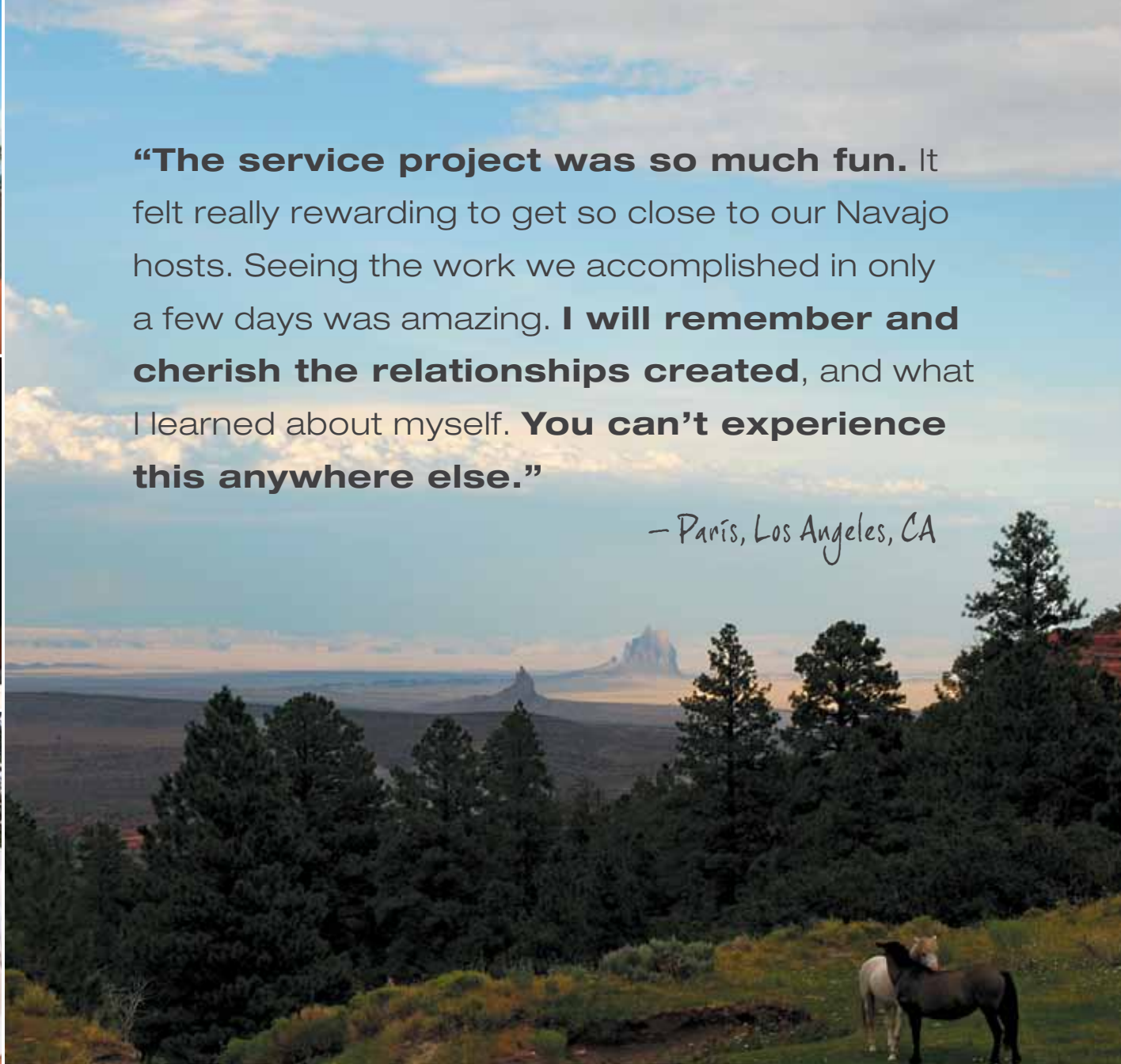
YEARS WITH DEER HILL EXPEDITIONS: 11

This host family's home lies in beautiful desert country close to the Zuni Pueblo. A medicine woman, Patricia loves to share the Navajo language, ceremonies, and her knowledge of medicinal plants with our groups. Her brother Patrick, a former soldier, has established a Veteran's Park near their home, a place of healing where many Deer Hill groups have helped out over the years.

Recent Projects: landscaping, masonry work and fence building in the Veteran's Park; painting and landscaping at the local school; helping local elders with their home and yard work; erecting tipis.

Patricia says: "For a decade we have enjoyed your kindness, eagerness to work and the fun of working alongside you. We hold your friendship, respect, integrity, and honor in our hearts like family. Deer Hill Expeditions has made a big difference in our community."

Meet more hosts and learn more about our cross-cultural service work in our [new video](#), filmed in the summer of 2011. View on our [website](#), or at [facebook.com/deerhill](https://www.facebook.com/deerhill).



“The service project was so much fun. It felt really rewarding to get so close to our Navajo hosts. Seeing the work we accomplished in only a few days was amazing. **I will remember and cherish the relationships created,** and what I learned about myself. **You can’t experience this anywhere else.”**

— Paris, Los Angeles, CA

core activities



▼ The rivers of the Colorado Plateau have eroded sheer rock into a landscape of rugged contours and rich colors. Deer Hill is a permitted outfitter on the beautiful San Juan, Dolores, Green, and Colorado Rivers. We run **MULTI-DAY RIVER EXPEDITIONS** – not day trips – in rafts, inflatable kayaks, and canoes. Learn the ways of the river, run the rapids, visit ancient ruins, spot bighorn sheep and other wildlife, float through a chasm deeper than the Grand Canyon. At night, we camp on sandy beaches in the shade of cottonwood trees, enjoy five-star dutch oven meals like lasagna and chocolate brownies, and sleep under a blanket of stars.

▼ **BACKPACKING** is the best way to get deep into the wilderness. Carrying all that we need on our backs, we hike through gorgeous aspen and spruce forests to high alpine bowls bursting with wildflowers. Take charge as leader of the day, learning navigation, campcraft, and group management skills. One day, rise before dawn to summit that rugged 13,000-foot peak you have been staring at for days. Our less challenging **MOUNTAIN BASECAMP** programs hike into a pristine backcountry campsite, which we use as a base for exploration and peak ascents.

▼ Join us for a **CANYON BACKPACKING** trek through a red rock wilderness in one of the richest archeological regions in the world. Pass by towering cliffs, rock arches and weird hoodoos; swim in inviting pools; see desert flowers blooming in the shade of overhangs, and navigate the rugged canyon floor. Our most advanced groups descend labyrinthine networks of sandstone, scrambling over boulders, and rappelling into the deep ‘narrows.’ See an eagle soaring, or a bighorn sheep silhouetted on the cliff wall, but no trace of modern man. Instead, find the legacy of the prehistoric peoples who inhabited these canyons.

▼ Ever cruised through an aspen grove at 10,000 feet? Or ridden world-famous “slickrock”? Swing a leg over your mountain bike and swoop down some of the premier trails in the West. Deer Hill offers **MOUNTAIN BIKING** on the smooth singletrack of southwestern Colorado and the rocky terrain of Moab, Utah. With quality dual-suspension bikes, talented instructors, small groups and a variety of challenge levels, everyone can improve their skills. After riding Boggy, Maverick, Ledges, and Ribcage – trails that range from mellow to gnarly – return to camp in the whispering ponderosa pines and cook high-altitude pizza to refuel!

“Honestly, it’s **impossible to describe** Deer Hill to somebody. You need to **experience** it.”

– Gillian, New York, NY



▼ **ROCK CLIMBING** is the perfect blend of athleticism, mental focus, and exhilaration. Deer Hill has access to some of the most fun and picturesque climbing sites anywhere, from red rock amphitheaters to towering granite peaks. And, with almost three decades of experience, you can trust us to help you progress your skills, whether or not you have climbed before. With careful supervision, learn to belay your buddies, and try your hand on a variety of routes of differing challenge levels. Hand jams, cruxes, smearing, laybacks – immerse yourself in the language and techniques of the rock face.

▼ For many years, Deer Hill participants have documented their experience of the West with **LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY**. The amazing light and dramatic scenery make for memorable images. In the old days, we had a darkroom in the House where we would develop our pictures. Nowadays, we’ve gone digital. Certain programs include an introductory photo workshop, and ongoing assistance from leaders who know how to help you get great results out of your camera.

▼ Learning how to care for the wilderness is as important as knowing how to enjoy it. **SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATION** is an integral part of every Deer Hill program. Whether picking veggies in the organic garden at Basecamp, restoring damaged banks on the Green River, or practicing Leave-no-Trace techniques in the San Juan Mountains, our programming areas provide stimulating outdoor classrooms in which to experience the complexity of local eco-systems, and the delicate balance between appreciation and preservation.

▼ Time for **REFLECTION** is an important aspect of our programs. Each night, we come together for evening Circle, to discuss the events of the day and share our experiences, feelings, and humor in a respectful forum. Since the early days of Deer Hill, we have brought each program to a close with a ceremonial sweat lodge. This is our own ceremony, not a Native American one, though it draws on the traditions of Navajo, Ute and Apache people. We gather in the sweat to honor our camaraderie, to celebrate friendships and adventures shared.

Find full summer program descriptions, galleries, itineraries and videos on our website.

A tropical beach at sunset. The sky is a mix of orange, pink, and purple. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright glow. In the foreground, there are silhouettes of palm trees and other tropical plants. In the distance, a person is standing on the beach looking out at the ocean. The overall mood is peaceful and serene.

“The whole Costa Rica experience was very meaningful. It helped me reflect a lot on my life at home, and **I now feel I have the power to do ANYTHING.** I will remember the people of Costa Rica, the **culture**, and the natural beauty. **Everywhere you go, you see a smiling face,** and the wildlife is amazing.”

— Marilyn, New York, NY

Costa Rica *Exploradores*

Costa Rica has made a national commitment to the protection of its ecological resources. This country's **rich natural and human diversity** make it an **ideal place for a Deer Hill expedition.**

These programs are the culmination of a decade of collaboration with Exploradores, a family-owned company, run by our friends Miguel, Yency and Carolina Cabrera.

Hike the Cloud Forest

After exploring vibrant San José, we hike into El Copal, a biological reserve run by local farming families – your first encounter with the incredible flora and fauna of Costa Rica. From here you hike down to the put-in of the Rio Pejivalle, and descend the river through a tropical forest to the sound of toucans and monkeys.

Raft the Wild Pacuare

One of the highlights of the trip is an exciting two-day whitewater rafting trip on the Rio Pacuare, named one of the top 10 whitewater rivers in the world by National Geographic. Renowned for its stunning beauty, the Pacuare plunges its way through canyons draped in waterfalls and primeval rainforest. These rapids are beyond anything most have experienced! Camping in comfortable sites along the way, we enjoy great food and salsa lessons from our guides. While rafting this jungle river, you visit the Cabecar Indians, an indigenous group in Costa Rica that retains many of its traditional ways.

Service and Homestays

The open and friendly people of Tres Equis welcome you into their homes. Work on service projects while immersing

yourself in the richness of the Spanish language. Make improvements to the local school building, or create the village's first recycling center. When work is done, relax, play soccer or attend a celebration with your hosts.

Continuing the cross-cultural theme, three days are spent in a remote village with the Bri Bri Indians, who for centuries have lived in harmony with nature in the picturesque Talamanca Mountains. Work alongside the Bri Bri on a project that helps the sustainability of their community, such as thatching a traditional dwelling, or renovating their Cultural Center. Through communal work and play, your understanding of this country and its people deepens.

Experience the Caribbean Coast

Spend three days at surf camp at Punta Uva, near Manzanillo, where white sand and great waves provide the perfect setting. As a final highlight, travel on foot to Punta Mona Organic Farm. Led by a local guide, you hike along the coast – learning about native wildlife and plant life along the way – to this thriving community based on sustainable permaculture. Help out in the gardens, pick fresh fruits and vegetables for your meals, and learn how to make chocolate.

Customized trips in Costa Rica are also available to schools and families. Contact us for a detailed brochure and pricing.



staff profiles

Caroline Goodman

AGE: 26 | HOME: Durango, CO
YEARS WITH DEER HILL EXPEDITIONS: 8

About Caroline: Caroline has been spending summers at Deer Hill since she was a sophomore in high school. A graduate of Vassar College with a focus in Native American Studies, Caroline spent a semester attending the community college of the Navajo Nation, and has integrated much of the knowledge gained there in her leadership style. Caroline loves the Southwest in all seasons, and teaches Social Studies, History and English to high school seniors in Durango, Colorado. In recent years, she has volunteered on a program that provides HIV and nutrition education to rural communities in Kenya, led a Traveling School semester across southern Africa, and worked in an isolated wilderness lodge on the Kenai Peninsula in Alaska.

Caroline says: What makes working at Deer Hill special for me is the feeling of family: Deer Hill – the place, the Capelins, the administrative staff, the field leaders, and the Basecamp staff are a family. This feeling extends into the field as well, as each expedition group that goes out becomes a kind of close-knit family. The relationships you make and the experiences you have at Deer Hill are life-long.

Zach Cramer

AGE: 29 | HOME: Antwerp, Belgium
YEARS WITH DEER HILL EXPEDITIONS: 6

About Zach: Loved by our participants for his sense of humor, openness and sincerity, Zach is also our only leader who can fill a campsite or canyon with the sweet sound of the French horn! Originally from Tennessee, he has a Masters degree in Music from Yale University, has played for several years with orchestras in Boulder, Colorado, and Gothenberg, Sweden, and currently plays horn with the Royal Flemish Orchestra in Belgium. During his time off, Zach loves to solo backpack through mountainous terrain, and recently thru-hiked the 485-mile Colorado Trail from Denver to Durango.

Zach says: Leading young people through enchanting and humbling places, I'm always amazed at how essential each member of the group is to creating a successful expedition. Working and living together in the wilderness requires a certain kind of honesty and connection that is not unlike the most profound moments that occur between musicians while playing a symphony.

Miles Nowlin

AGE: 29 | HOME: Olympia, WA
YEARS WITH DEER HILL EXPEDITIONS: 9

About Miles: A loyal Deer Hill companion, Miles was a graduate of our Wilderness Leadership program as a youth. He worked two summers at Basecamp, and six consecutive years as field staff. Miles is a graduate of Evergreen State College with a degree in Latin American studies. His passion for Latin culture, tropical ecology and the Spanish language has led him to become a Program Leader on Costa Rica Exploradores. Miles resides in Olympia, Washington where he practices sustainable living in an off-the-grid community, plays banjo in a traveling acoustic band, and teaches part-time in public schools.

Miles says: The course in Costa Rica is unique in that it is planned as a "life expedition" instead of a tourist trip. The service/home stay section, for example, is five days spent in the homes of families in the small village of Tres Equis. The students eat three meals a day with their hosts, work on a community service project in the morning, and partake in activities with the local kids in the afternoon. It is a culturally enriching experience that offers unique insights into the lives of rural Costa Ricans. Plus, the white water on the Rio Pacuare is the most exciting I've ever experienced.



“I will always remember how happy I was on this trip. I feel so enlightened, and just absolutely loved my leaders, the group, the wilderness, and the family vibe here at Deer Hill.”

— Reed, Washington DC



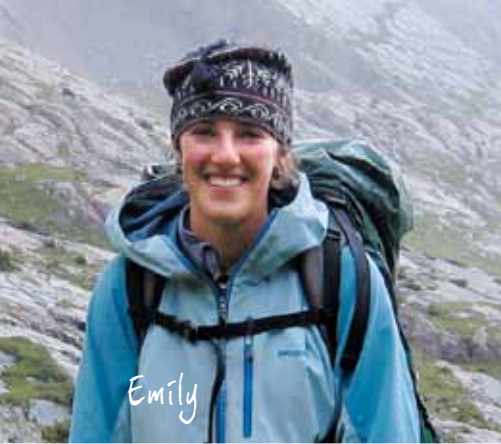
Caroline



Zach



Miles



Emily



Lexi



Michael



“The leaders were all **confident, patient, accessible, engaging, knowledgeable, prepared, SO fun, and just amazing.** I couldn’t have wished for any better.”

— Sarah, Denver, CO

staff profiles

Emily Capelin

AGE: 25 | HOME: Mancos, CO
YEARS WITH DEER HILL EXPEDITIONS: 25

About Emily: As the eldest daughter of the founders of Deer Hill, Emily has spent her life on the rivers and in the mountains of the region, and for five years has been an immensely popular member of our field staff. After graduating from Colorado College, Emily spent several months volunteering with a healthcare NGO in Ecuador. She also drove from Colorado to the Arctic Circle and the tip of the Alaskan Peninsula, in a truck powered solely by recycled vegetable oil – a trip that included a three-week expedition on the Nahanni River in Canada. Emily spent another six months in Alaska in 2011 as a Botany intern with the BLM and the Alaska Natural Heritage Program.

Emily says: Growing up at Deer Hill has definitely given me a unique perspective and passion for what we do. What I have come to enjoy most about my work is the transformations I see in our participants as we travel in the wild. I watch them go from missing technology on day one, to laying happily in the mountains debating cloud shapes or inventing new constellations. I watch girls forget about make-up and gain the simple beauty of flowers in their hair and rosy cheeks. My love of working at Deer Hill is fueled by the fun, growth and confidence gained by those who come here.

Lexi Tuddenham

AGE: 27 | HOME: Brooklyn, NY
YEARS WITH DEER HILL EXPEDITIONS: 4

About Lexi: Lexi brings a wealth of leadership and teaching experience to her programs. She has led outdoor trips while a student at Harvard, taken high school students to China, taught kids to ski in Telluride, CO, and spent six months in Nepal working with the DZI Foundation, which works with remote Himalayan communities to address their needs in health, education and sustainable development. A biologist, Lexi is fascinated with the natural world, and with blending science with the stories that make up the human and natural history of place. Lexi is a rock climber, boater, mountaineer and certified Wilderness EMT.

Lexi says: Working for Deer Hill, I enjoy watching my students step outside of their everyday life and emerge confident in themselves, proud and strong. I really feel a sense of worth in what I do. At the beginning of a program, participants are hearing and seeing things they never have before – frogs calling in the night, canyon walls towering overhead. In the final days of a program, we face challenges in the mountains, but we walk together and support each other, surrounded by beauty and bonded by experience.

Michael Barton

AGE: 34 | HOME: Silverton, CO
YEARS WITH DEER HILL EXPEDITIONS: 10

About Michael: A self-described “Colorado boy, lover of snow, mountains and animals,” Michael makes his home in Silverton, Colorado, where for several years he has run his own guiding company, leading clients on a variety of winter trips. Michael is currently returning to school to complete his degree in Education. When not working, he likes to take on what he calls “adventures of great magnitude” – including traveling to Alaska by train and boat to ski the famous Chugach Range. Michael’s philosophical views, quirky sense of humor, and deep affinity with the mountains are greatly appreciated by staff and students alike.

Michael says: Being lucky enough to attend Deer Hill as a teenager instilled in me a desire for adventure, new places and interesting faces. I believe it is important to connect young people in a real way with the wilderness, to help them understand that it is worth saving, and to instill in them incredible strength and willpower. Seeing the sense of pride a Deer Hill student has after crossing the wilderness on foot, I know that this person will now be able to achieve whatever they set their mind to.”



frequently asked questions

I have been to “camp” for the last 5 years. I do not want to go to a camp again. What is Basecamp and will I be staying there very much?

Deer Hill, and its beautiful 130-acre Basecamp, is not a “camp.” Deer Hill is a wilderness and service program for those who want a fun, challenging and fulfilling summer. Each trip begins and ends at Basecamp, setting you up with all the food and gear your group needs for your program. Our Basecamp staff resupply your group with all that you need while you are in the field, which allows you to spend more time in the backcountry, and less time shopping and traveling. Basecamp allows us to run smooth multi-element programs, and it is one of the things that makes Deer Hill unique among teen adventure programs.

Can I get school credit for my community service work at Deer Hill?

Yes! Deer Hill service hours have been accepted to meet graduation requirements at hundreds of schools over the last 25 years. Deer Hill will provide your school with written verification of your work upon request.

How much gear will I need to buy?

We will give you a list of the gear you will need well before your trip. If you wish to buy your own equipment you may, but the only thing you must bring is your own footwear. Our Outfitting Store stocks everything you need from dependable name-brand suppliers at modest rental prices, saving you many hundreds of dollars and hours of shopping. So, you don't need to buy gear that will get dirty, that won't fit next year, or that you may not use again. We fit the pack

to your back and select your clothing layering system for each expedition and environment. Brands we carry include Lowe Alpine, Helly Hansen, The North Face, Sierra Designs, MSR and Osprey.

What will I eat?

Great food has always been key to the Deer Hill experience. While in the field, you'll learn to prepare surprisingly delicious meals. We start with a hearty breakfast: anything from sausage and eggs to fruit pancakes, with plenty of hot drinks. Lunch might be sliced meats and cheese served with bagels, or pita bread with hummus and a tabouli salad. Cookies are always on the menu. Dinner is hot and tasty: dutch oven lasagna, or a make-your-own burrito spread, followed by a delicious dessert like cinnamon rolls or chocolate brownies. We carry plenty of roasted nuts, trail mix and other filling snacks so you'll never get hungry. At Basecamp, the meals are legendary (ask our alumni) with plenty of options including vegetarian and gluten-free.

How difficult is Deer Hill?

Do I need previous experience?

While you don't have to be an athlete to join us, you should be in good physical shape. Life is active at Deer Hill. You will have a better time if you are physically fit. However, a positive attitude and willingness to take part will assure success. Remember, most people who come to Deer Hill have little experience. They succeed and you can, too!

Find answers to more Frequently Asked Questions on our website: www.deerhillexpeditions.com/summer-programs/faq/



“My experience at Deer Hill was immensely entertaining, **enlightened my relationship with nature** and improved my leadership skills. This is **the best summer program I have ever been to!**”

– Charlie, Lincoln, MA

“Once again, Deer Hill staff provided our son with **a deeply nourishing and enriching experience** which will surely prove to be a **guiding star** in the years ahead. **He soaked up the wisdom of the Hopi elders**, he established deep friendships, and his wilderness leadership skills flourished – without losing sight of the power of the natural world. **Thank you for all you do to connect young people to the environment.**”

– Lynne, mother of Josh, Freeport, ME



for parents

We know that you want your child to have fun, expand their horizons, and learn new skills. At the same time, **you are seeking quality, and want to ensure your child is taken care of.**

Every company answers, “safety is our number one priority.” That’s true, but it’s not an answer. Please consider our response, and feel free to call us with questions.

Deer Hill has an outstanding safety record. In 27 years, not a single participant has had an injury requiring an overnight hospital stay. Despite this fact, you should understand that Deer Hill’s expeditions, like all outdoor recreation programs, involve inherent risks. These risks cannot necessarily be controlled or predicted. Moreover, removal of these risks would alter the nature and the benefits of our programs. Despite our absolute commitment to minimizing risks, we cannot guarantee safety. More importantly, here is what we do to manage risk.

Small Groups and 1:4 Participant Ratio

Typically, we staff each program with three skilled leaders to work with 12 participants, an industry-leading 1:4 ratio. This means that participants receive more individualized attention, whether it’s keeping an eye out for them on a peak ascent, giving a few pointers on how to hold a paddle, or just offering a non-judgmental ear to listen.

Quality Leaders

The average age of our field staff is 28, and we build long-term relationships with them. Our staff return rate is currently over 70%. Previous experience in

leading young people in the wilderness is a prerequisite for employment, and many of our staff are educators. Our leaders maintain Wilderness First Responder and CPR credentials, which require a minimum of 80 hours of training and biannual re-certification. Many are even EMT-certified. Unlike many other companies, we reinforce their skills each year with a rigorous 12-day field training.

Safety Not Outsourced

At Deer Hill, our field staff are both the group leaders and the actual guides. “Of course,” you might say, but this is not typical. We do not shuffle our groups from one outfitter to another for each activity. We do not rely on another company’s equipment, staff, or notions of safety. Our leaders pick up your child at the airport and stay with them throughout the program. They are the river guides, mountaineering leaders, and rock climbing instructors. Each has the skills and the maturity, as well as the knowledge of your child’s needs in relation to the group, to help them do the best they can in each activity and environment.

Keeping in touch

We deliver mail to participants during their program, and it is always an exciting time. Our leaders also send messages back to Basecamp, letting us know what their groups have achieved so far, how each child is doing, and any stories there are to tell. Parents always

appreciate receiving these updates by email. While in the wilderness each Deer Hill group carries a powerful satellite phone that is linked to a 24-hour emergency telephone line back at Basecamp.

From the 2010 Association of Experiential Education Site Visit Report:



The overall quality, commitment and dedication of staff at all levels of the organization is exceptionally high.

Deer Hill is a “learning-culture,” where feedback and honesty are valued, and a belief in high standards is evident at all levels.

Deer Hill places a high level of attention on the individual development of the student.

The service component at Deer Hill is truly exemplary, as is the organization’s reverence, appreciation, and respect for Native American culture. Their service projects are compassionate and empowering.

The sense of community is very strong at the Deer Hill base. This translates to excellent role modeling for their students. The review team was impressed with such genuine, warm, caring individuals. Trust and communication level is high.

Location is a strength. Deer Hill has access to premier recreational and educational opportunities.



custom programs

Deer Hill creates **meaningful and fun programs for schools, families, and organizations** during the spring and fall months.

We are an expedition company with the staff, equipment, permits, and connections to design and lead a wilderness and/or service program suited to your specific needs.

We are not a tour operator who puts together a series of activities with various subcontractors. We work with you to incorporate your objectives, creating a customized program that will take you a long way from the everyday.

Your program can include any of the wilderness activities in this catalog. We match specific activities and environments with the skill levels and ages of the participants to assure challenging, yet achievable goals. Deer Hill also facilitates hands-on service projects for groups with communities in the Navajo, Hopi, Zuni and Ute Nations. The cultural interaction that takes place is an extraordinary opportunity that will broaden the hearts and minds of all participants.

Our solar-powered Basecamp in Southwest Colorado is a comfortable place to start and end your adventure, with a cozy dining facility, “green” meeting hall, cabins and hiking trails. Tasty menus provide wholesome nutrition and all-day energy. For your convenience, the Deer Hill Outfitting Store rents clothing and equipment for your expedition. We take care of the details, so you can make the most of your time together and focus on your goals.

Teachers, we can accommodate your educational needs. We can integrate a specific curriculum, incorporate topics related to the environment, and plan time for leadership training, team-building initiative, and the reflection that helps cement learning outcomes.

Contact us to discuss your program and request a customized proposal and pricing.

“Your leaders are incredibly competent, and we had complete trust in them. **Our learning was off the charts.** You encouraged students to try new things and hone their existing skills. **They gained experience, confidence and courage.** This trip redirected their perspective, engaged their souls in a new way, and fed their spirit.”

— Kelly, Teacher, St George's School, TN

“We loved how **the trip involved many different experiences.** The **students learned a tremendous amount** – not only about the Hopi way, but also about taking responsibility for oneself and being part of a community.”

— Willa, Teacher, Westridge School, CA



are you ready for *Deer Hill*?

Challenge Yourself

Real wilderness and real service experiences can be difficult. Deer Hill is not a survival program, but you will be asked to push yourself physically and emotionally at times. If you want to take your skills, and your summer, to the next level, join us.

Be Authentic

At Deer Hill, we listen with respect and speak from the heart. This simple doctrine underlies all communication during your expedition. Authenticity builds trust, and helps to build a feeling of community in just a few weeks.

Commit to a Group Experience

Every participant must be motivated to play a positive role on the trip, because we depend upon each other. We understand that it takes many different personalities to build a thriving expedition team – but all are expected to treat others with grace, do their share, and contribute their energy for the good of the group.



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Deer Hill Expeditions

PO Box 180 | Mancos, CO 81328

970.533.7492 | 800.533.7221

fax: 970.533.7221

info@deerhillexpeditions.com