

**Project Title: To connect children in need from the greater San Antonio area with free outdoors programming that teaches new skills, opens new opportunities, and provides peer, mentor, and grief counseling.**

**Amount of funding request: \$15,000**

**Brief statement of TO's purpose and history:**

Trinity Oaks' (TO) mission is to use outdoors experiences to give back and make a difference in the lives of others. The outdoors heals, teaches, and provides an extra support for people in emotional need. Our programs focus on both veterans and youth coping with disabilities or terminal illness, mourning the loss of a loved one, or simply not having opportunities because they live in single family households or their parents lack resources. Since our 2007 inception, thousands have participated in programming that provide new recreational skills and opportunities and also focused peer and mentor support. Also, with partners like Boy Scouts and dozens of dedicated volunteers, we have processed and distributed tons of pounds of meat for soup kitchens, homeless shelters, and orphanages throughout Southern Texas and Northern Mexico. We currently operate two camps, the Guadalupe River Camp in Seguin, and Paige's Place - a fishing retreat - in Port Mansfield.

**Project Description: Program Expansion with New Capital Acquisition**

Thumbtack Ranch in Batesville, Texas is a **2,000-acre paradise only 85 miles from San Antonio** – close enough to easily access but far enough to be a retreat. In the past, owners have permitted us access for outdoors excursions for our youth program and dream trips for terminally ill children and disabled veterans alike. Seeing the impact that those programs have, they have granted us an opportunity to **purchase the property outright. Doing so will enable us to centralize our programs to one site - a perfect getaway distance from the city - saving us tens of thousands in operating costs and allowing us to exponentially increase our impact.**

With a few improvements, we will be able to **triple our impact, and we will establish a conservation park of native game, plants, and wildlife for San Antonians in general and other nonprofits helping children and people in need.** Our ultimate goal, within 5 years, is to own the property outright and be completely sustainable in our service offerings to at least **1,000 youth, 500 veterans, and thousands more** through local partnerships with schools, church groups, 4H clubs, local universities, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, and countless other **partners who will have FREE access to use the site.**

As we work to make the project sustainable, we are widening our base of funding from community partners to increase our programming immediately. Toward that end, we are respectfully asking The Harvey E. Najim Foundation to invest in our fishing, hunting, and outdoors skills programs for San Antonio children in need. Specifically, we project that with only a **25% budget increase, we will be able to offer at least twice as many programs.**

**NO previous funding received from The Harvey E. Najim Family Foundation**

**How We Relate to The Harvey E. Najim Family Foundation's Funding Priorities:**

- **Disabled and ill youth:** A comprehensive study (2015) on “Make a Wish” programs for children with life threatening cancer showed that granting a wish improved not only mental health and decreased anxiety, but also physical health outcomes and general quality of life. **We provide, on average, a trip a month for a disabled or terminally ill child, with even more on our waitlist.** While many wish foundations and support systems serve those in medical need in our area, **we are the only hunting and fishing program for local Texans.** For example, last year we were able to provide a dream hunting trip for Hayden, a 17-year old from Denton dying after years fighting osteosarcoma. “I want to forget about the hospitals and needles. I want to drive the Polaris, shoot a bunch of cool guns, shoot a monster deer, hang out with a bunch of neat people, and just live normally this weekend,” claimed Hayden. We took him and his family on that trip early in the spring, for free, with our volunteer guides and special action track chair, and he passed only a few

months later with a buck mounted above his bed.

- Grieving Youth:** Since 1996, The State of Texas has lost 292 peace officers in the line of duty. In that same period our nation has lost 3,430 law enforcement officers and 1,452 firefighters. Hundreds more, a majority of whom were fathers and mothers, have fallen responding to disasters, working as game wardens, or providing emergency medical services. Thousands of more veterans have passed. **Experts indicate that teens are especially vulnerable to psychological problems after the sudden death of a parent**, and that vulnerability is exacerbated by the fact that their surviving family, suffering from bereavement themselves, may not be able to provide sufficient comfort and support. Extra support in anxiety-reducing environments, such as outdoors camps and retreat centers, can help these children grieve and develop coping mechanisms for life. **StarKids is a new program designed specifically for survivors of fallen first responders.** Youth are paired with mentors from their parent’s police force, veteran squad, or other agency, and they are then trained together in responsible hunting and shooting. We then take them out on a hunting excursion with 5 other StarKids pairs. The result is a lasting mentorship bond for the child and a new network of peers, as well as new outdoors skills to help them cope with emotional stress for life. We will offer at least 4 trips annually. We will offer at least **4 trips annually**, along with fishing and follow-up retreats for past participants and additional StarKids.
- Quality of Life:** A comprehensive literature review by Stuart and Jana Cottrell (2012) of Colorado State University on the benefits of outdoors recreation for disadvantaged youth revealed that: 1) outdoor skills education provides critical opportunities to connect with nature, social networks, and themselves; 2) playing outside as a child or teen combats obesity for life; 3) outdoors programs improve academic achievement with increased concentration and mental acuity, improved understanding of science, and higher GPAs, especially for low income and minority populations; and 4) participants are much more likely to develop a conservation ethic - becoming our next generation of environmental stewards. **Our Outdoors Adventure program for youth in need from San Antonio increases the quality of life for children in economically insecure households.** Children are taught survival and hunting skills and provided mentorship with our dedicated youth volunteers. We will be able to offer this program to **up to 1,000 local children** annually.
- Food for Hungry Children:** Meat and fish harvested at Thumbtack is processed into more than a **million meals annually** for local charities and group homes that feed our food insecure children (28% of our total youth population) in the greater San Antonio area.

**Line-item budget for project in which funds are being requested: \$200,000 cash needs to serve over 1,000 youth. Foundation funding would go towards a particular program as requested or general program support.**

Projected 2017-2018 Youth Programs Budget			
Line Item	Cost	Cash	In-Kind
<b>StarKids - 4 Courses for 12</b>			
6 Staff/Volunteers	\$ 6,000		\$ 6,000
Equipment and Supplies (\$9,000 per course for 12)	\$ 36,000	\$ 36,000	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 42,000</b>	<b>\$ 36,000</b>	<b>\$ 6,000</b>
<b>Youth Outdoors Program - 1,000 participants</b>			
Staff/Volunteer Time (100 hours a week, \$20/hour)	\$ 104,000		\$ 104,000

Trailer and Wrap	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	
Shirts and Hats for Participants	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	
Archery Kits (4 annually, \$3,500)	\$ 14,000	\$ 14,000	
Youth Hunts (\$900/participant for mounts, fees, lodging, rentals, ammo)	\$ 360,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 260,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 503,000</b>	<b>\$ 139,000</b>	<b>\$ 364,000</b>
<b>Youth Dream Trips (average costs from historical analysis, goal is 6 trips)</b>			
Staff/Volunteer Guides	\$ 4,000		\$ 4,000
Airfare/shipping costs for special equipment (\$2,000 per trip)	\$ 12,000	\$ 2,000	
Vehicle rental (\$500 per trip)	\$ 3,000	\$ 500	
Lodging and Food (\$2,500 per trip)	\$ 2,500		\$ 2,500
License, ammo, and arms	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000	
Trophy Fees and Taxidermy (\$7,500 average)	\$ 45,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 25,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 69,500</b>	<b>\$ 25,500</b>	<b>\$ 31,500</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 614,500</b>	<b>\$ 200,500</b>	<b>\$ 401,500</b>

**Children impacted:**

- The TOTAL project initiative will **impact 1,050** (unduplicated).
- NFF requested funds will impact 78 unduplicated children (as calculated as 7.5% of total project budget, thousands more will receive meals from meat processing program).

**Organization total revenue and expenses for current fiscal year:** \$1,049,000 – TO keeps operating costs at less than 10% and receives foundation gifts from its board of directors to cover all costs. **100% of foundation funding goes toward programming.**

**Project timeline (beginning and ending dates):** September 2017 through August 2018

**Brief project evaluation criteria:** Trinity Oaks uses **Social Support, in alignment with the Outdoor Recreation Alignment Model**. Our board and volunteers are experts and top notch sportsmen and women that we train in how to engage youth and people mourning or suffering from emotional or stress disorders. The entire process is socially driven and effective as a result – **up to 90% of our program participants report back** to us within a year that they are still hunting, shooting, or angling, or they participate directly in more of our programs. We track individual progress and reactions through surveys, follow-up, and mentor and group interviews. **Our mentors are involved for life** – they personally reach out to program participants if they have not been involved or are not answering feedback surveys. The result is a **holistic and successful means to engage thousands of youth and families** in need, who would otherwise not engage in outdoor recreation.

**List other project funders (pending and committed foundations):**

- Thumbtack Ranch Acquisition: Gurney Foundation - \$2,000,000 committed, challenge grant to purchase Thumbtack Ranch, West Texas Safari Club International - \$75,000 committed,
- Individual Pledges – \$300,000 committed for Thumbtack, general operating, or program support; \$1 million 2017 goal from annual Gala
- Other Foundations and Corporations for Program or Capital Support – 40 pending or planned asks, \$2,000,000 total asks by November 2017

**Contact information of primary and secondary person within organization:**

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