YOU turned “I’ve never” into “Follow me!”

How your support engaged Akai who inspired her mom Starr
Starr, mother to 8 year old Akai, remembers how she felt before her first camping experience with her daughter’s UEC Young Scientist Club: “I was actually terrified and trying to talk myself out of it! But I enjoyed it a lot. I don’t think we would have ever gone camping on our own—it was a really good experience.”

Camping is just one of many new outdoor experiences Akai has enjoyed. She was first introduced to the Urban Ecology Center through the Neighborhood Environmental Education Project with her school Neeskara Elementary. When Starr realized they lived just a few blocks from UEC, she brought Akai over right away and signed her up for the Young Scientist Club after-school program.

Akai has been a regular ever since. “I like it here. I have a lot of fun and get to learn how to fish, feed the animals, how to have adventures and how to enjoy the wild. I thought the places we were going on field trips were like another world, but it’s just other parts of Milwaukee!”

Starr sees the positive impact the UEC has on her daughter, and has even learned how to fish, camp and canoe at the UEC herself! Sometimes she sits in when the kids cook things grown in the gardens at the Washington Park branch and then tries the recipes at home. Starr sees long-term benefits from spending time at the UEC, too:

“If [Akai] doesn’t get to experience the outdoors here, how will she ever get into it and appreciate it? She goes fishing here, and that might become a hobby when she’s older, and she might continue to go camping. Who wouldn’t want their child to experience that?”

As for Akai, she sees herself as a leader for other friends who might come to Washington Park branch UEC programs. She says she knows what she will tell them, “Come follow me, I know what to do now!”

Will you help others like Starr and Akai turn “I’ve never” into “Follow me!”?

Give today to connect more kids to the joy of urban nature!
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Interested in being a volunteer advisor to a UEC branch?

Menomonee Valley, Washington Park and Riverside Park UEC’s are currently seeking advisory committee volunteers who live or work in our neighborhoods and reflect the diversity of our communities. Contact your local branch to speak with the Branch Manager!

Care for the Planet Begins with a Love of Nature.

You can help make Giving Tuesday on Tuesday, December 3, very special!

Every $42 you give helps a young person like Akai enjoy a Young Scientist Club experience. Whether they are finding caterpillars, learning to fish, or going on an outdoor adventure, you can give the foundational experiences that build our next generation of environmental stewards.

Donate here  URBANECOLOGYCENTER.ORG/GIVINGTUESDAY
If you have named the UEC in your will or trust, thank you!

If you are considering your own gift for the future, please connect with Jen Hense at (414) 964-8505 or jhense@urbanecologycenter.org

CANDLELIGHT WALK for kids & adults
December 14 | 4:30 - 9 p.m. | Riverside Park | Register online
Celebrate the Winter Solstice with a guided, candlelit walk through Riverside Park! Enjoy seasonal poetry along the way. Then, warm up inside by the fire with cider, snacks and music!

WINTERFEST at Washington Park
January 25 | 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. | Washington Park | Free!
Join us for arts, crafts, homemade pie and guided nature walks. If we have snow, we’ll skate on the lagoon and go sledding!

URBAN CANDLELIGHT HIKE
February 22 | 5:30 - 8:30 p.m. | Menomonee Valley | All ages | Register online
Enjoy warm refreshments and hike among candles that transform Three Bridges Park into a beautiful urban oasis.

Storytime and marshmallow roasting in the Riverside Park tipi is a great way to spend a winter day.