

News Release

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## **The Future of Life, Inc. Participates in the Launch of The National Forum On Children And Nature**

*National leaders meet to find, fund 20 demonstration projects reconnecting kids and nature*

Philadelphia, PA— This month, millions of kids swap school for the pool, ready for summer break. But is nature part of their plans? For too many, the answer is no. With that in mind, an eclectic group of the nation's leaders— including governors, mayors, CEOs, educators, and clergy— is launching an ambitious effort to reconnect kids with nature. This new effort, the National Forum on Children and Nature, hosted by The Conservation Fund, will find and fund 20 projects across the country that demonstrate how kids can rediscover nature, through education, health, the media by the built environment.

The Future of Life, Inc. (FOL), a non-profit dedicated to preserving Earth's species by educating children about how to protect the environment, will partner in this effort. Bernard J. David, Chair of the FOL Board, and Janet Milkman, President of The Future of Life, Inc., will both participate in the program.

“My childhood experiences in the wilderness have stayed with me and still affect everything I do,” said Bernard David. “We must see that all children have the same access to the outdoors and ensure that nature will be there for their future generations as it was for us.”

In recent decades, nature has lost some luster among the nation's youth, who increasingly spend free time indoors or in structured activity. This trend contributes, researchers say, to skyrocketing rates of childhood obesity and more subtle effects on children's psychological and spiritual well-being. In his best-selling 2005 book, “Last Child in the Woods,” author Richard Louv lamented what he called “nature-deficit disorder” and inspired a grass-roots movement (dubbed “Leave No Child Inside”) to bring a natural balance back to children's lives.

Through its *Trees for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*<sup>TM</sup> program, The Future of Life, Inc. has entered into a nationwide partnership with the Girl Scouts of the USA to educate all 2.8 million Girl Scouts and 1 million adult members. “Over the next decade, we aim to plant a billion trees and teach the next generation of leaders how to care for their environment,” said Janet Milkman, President of The Future of Life. “We view the National Forum on Children and Nature as a terrific forum to help us achieve these ambitious goals.”

The National Forum on Children and Nature assembles some of the nation's most influential public and private leaders, including top executives from The North Face, Sesame Workshop, Disney and Travelocity, the presidents of the Turner Foundation and National Audubon Society, Govs. M. Jodi Rell (CT), Edward Rendell (PA), Mark Sanford (SC) and Mark Schweitzer (MT), and the mayors of Los Angeles, Houston, and Chicago. Altogether, the Forum represents more than 50 members, who will select 20 demonstration projects that reconnect kids and nature nationwide.

“Healing the broken bond between our young and nature is in our self-interest--not only because aesthetics or justice demands it, but also because our mental, physical, and spiritual health depend upon it,” said Louv. “And so does the health of the earth. For decades, environmental educators, conservationists, and others have worked, often heroically, to bring more children to nature. Now a grass-roots movement to leave no child inside is emerging, bringing people from across political, cultural and religious divides. By bringing executive-level business and government figures to that table, the National Forum on Children and Nature will create a new level of commitment and action. This could be the tipping point.”

For more information about how you can help support the effort, visit the Children and Nature Network at [www.cnaturenet.org](http://www.cnaturenet.org).

#### **About The Future of Life, Inc.**

*The mission of The Future of Life, Inc. (“FOL”) is to ensure there is a future of life on earth for all species. FOL pursues this goal through programs that:*

*Educate young people with a curriculum of scientifically-based environmental knowledge;*

*Encourage them to take actions which will help advance the mission; and*

*Ensure that these actions/activities can be repeated and expanded as participants grow in knowledge and capacity.*

[www.futureoflife.org](http://www.futureoflife.org)

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