

# Reaching Underserved Youth With Community Partners

Reflections from Kestrel Land Trust



**KESTREL  
LAND TRUST**

## Where We Began

- ▶ Founded in affluent college town 50+ years ago
- ▶ Nature walks as first public engagement program
- ▶ Built organizational visibility and built grassroots financial support



# Who Are We Reaching?

- ▶ Event participants mostly over age 50 and almost always white
- ▶ Started asking ourselves: Who are we leaving out?



# Creating the Capacity

- ▶ TerraCorps (AmeriCorps) Service program provided full-time, year-long service member for Youth Education



**TerraCorps**



**MASSACHUSETTS  
SERVICE ALLIANCE**



# First Partnership: Eagle Eye Institute

- ▶ EEI mission: offer learning opportunities for BIPOC youth to experience well being, belonging and empowerment through a relationship with nature.
- ▶ Small organization with shared goals trying to get established in our region serving urban youth





## Sharing Skills & Resources

- ▶ EEI had only 1 staff person; Kestrel's TerraCorps service member provided additional capacity for collaborative programs
- ▶ EEI had environmental education experience and curriculum that Kestrel didn't have
- ▶ Kestrel had a wide educator & professional network to call on as program guides

# Partnership Successes



# Partnership Challenges

- ▶ Partner staffing changes
- ▶ COVID shut down
- ▶ Rotating Kestrel service members each year





# Building More Partnerships

**BIG BROTHERS/BIG SISTERS**



# Building More Partnerships

CARE CENTER OF HOLYOKE



# Next Step: Creating Our Own Program

## REVIVE OUTSIDE

- ▶ Mindfulness in nature for young children/families; teens
- ▶ Dedicated, skilled Kestrel volunteer leading the program with TC and staff support
- ▶ Reaching out to new community partners





## Partnerships: Lessons Learned

- ▶ Be willing to try new things
- ▶ Look for complimentary skillsets and share resources
- ▶ Celebrate incremental successes
- ▶ Understand and accept limits: Your own and your partners'
- ▶ Commit to the effort

# Takeaways

- Land trusts can begin engaging underserved and BIPOC communities by collaborating with social service organizations to create nature/land-based activities that can add value to existing programs offered by the social service organizations.
- Partnering with social-service organizations provides a way to build new relationships outside the traditional land trust circles, which may lead to opportunities to diversify the land trust's membership, board, and staff in the future.

