

A night scene of a traditional thatched-roof building on a lake. Several people are gathered around a fire on the dock, and the sky is filled with stars. The foreground is a solid blue triangle.

FIRST DESCENTS

2016 ANNUAL REPORT

A photograph of two people in kayaks on a body of water, overlaid with a blue tint. The person on the left is in a red kayak and the person on the right is in a yellow kayak. They are both wearing helmets and life jackets. A paddle is visible in the foreground.

FIRST DESCENTS PROVIDES LIFE-CHANGING OUTDOOR ADVENTURES FOR YOUNG ADULTS IMPACTED BY CANCER

I did not expect to form intense, lifelong bonds with participants. It was exactly what I needed. The physical challenge of surfing allowed me to reconnect with the active, vibrant person I was before cancer.

2016 PARTICIPANT

FOUNDER LETTER

When we started this crazy journey that has become First Descents, the notion that an outdoor adventure could translate into a healing experience was far-fetched at best. Furthermore, the population we aim to serve was most commonly referred to as "forgotten."

Fast forward to last December when I found myself on an international stage in front of millions of people to accept the award as a CNN Hero on behalf of First Descents; it was on that stage and in that moment that I realized two things: 1) adventure can and does heal, and 2) young adults with cancer are no longer forgotten.

In fact, it's quite the opposite. For years through First Descents, we've watched in awe and inspiration as thousands of young adults have taken on countless outdoor adventures in an act of defiance of their diagnosis. In doing so, they have connected with and cultivated the tribe that has become the insurmountable First Descents young adult cancer community.

All of this has led to what can only be described as a movement, and one that shows no signs of stopping. Together in this tribe, we stand united, courageous, and eager to seek the next adventure.

Together, we are Out Living It!

Join us.

We dare you.



“THOUSANDS OF YOUNG ADULTS HAVE TAKEN
ON COUNTLESS OUTDOOR ADVENTURES
IN AN ACT OF DEFIANCE OF
THEIR DIAGNOSIS.”

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LETTER

Since 2001, First Descents has evolved to meet the growing demand for young adults impacted by cancer. With 70,000 young adults diagnosed each year, we are serving the fastest growing and most underserved cancer demographic. Needless to say, we have work to do.

With the 15th Anniversary behind us, we have turned our focus to the next decade of impact. While we are still in the early stages of a comprehensive planning effort, one thing is profoundly clear: the growth of our local adventure communities – our FD Tributaries – is critical to the future success of First Descents. This commitment to long-term community creation sets FD apart by broadening and deepening the impact of our work.

First Descents is not a singular, one-off experience. We do not enter your life, teach you how to roll a kayak or paddle a point break, then leave. The FD Tribe is with you every step of the way. And we want to be closer to the spaces and places you call home.

This is where you come in. If you're reading this, you are either already invested in our mission, or interested in learning how to get involved. Contained within our 2016 Annual Report, you will find information about FD's programs growth and impact, fundraising initiatives, financial health, and recognition of the donors who make our work possible.

We welcome your energy, enthusiasm and expertise as we work to shape the future and ensure FD's ability to inspire the lives of thousands who can – and will – benefit from our mission.

Thank you for believing so strongly in the healing power of adventure!



“WE WANT TO BE CLOSER
TO THE SPACES AND PLACES
YOU CALL HOME.”



WHY YOUNG ADULTS

CANCER IS THE LEADING DISEASE-RELATED CAUSE OF DEATH IN ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG ADULTS (AYAS) AND CONTINUES TO BE THE FASTEST GROWING AND MOST UNDERSERVED CANCER DEMOGRAPHIC.

YOUNG ADULTS IMPACTED BY CANCER FACE A UNIQUE SET OF CHALLENGES INCLUDING LOSS OR LACK OF INSURANCE, LOSS OR LACK OF FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE AND RE-ENTRY INTO THE WORKPLACE. THESE CHALLENGES ARE FREQUENTLY ACCOMPANIED BY FEELINGS OF ALIENATION AND ISOLATION, DEPRESSION, AND DECREASED SELF-CONFIDENCE.

70,000

young adults are diagnosed annually

Poor Improvement
in five-year survival rates

Minimal Peer Support

Rare and Aggressive
tumor biology

Lack of
participation in clinical trials

Disrupts
normative milestones of adulthood

2016 PROGRAMS OVERVIEW



1,031

EXPERIENCES PROVIDED



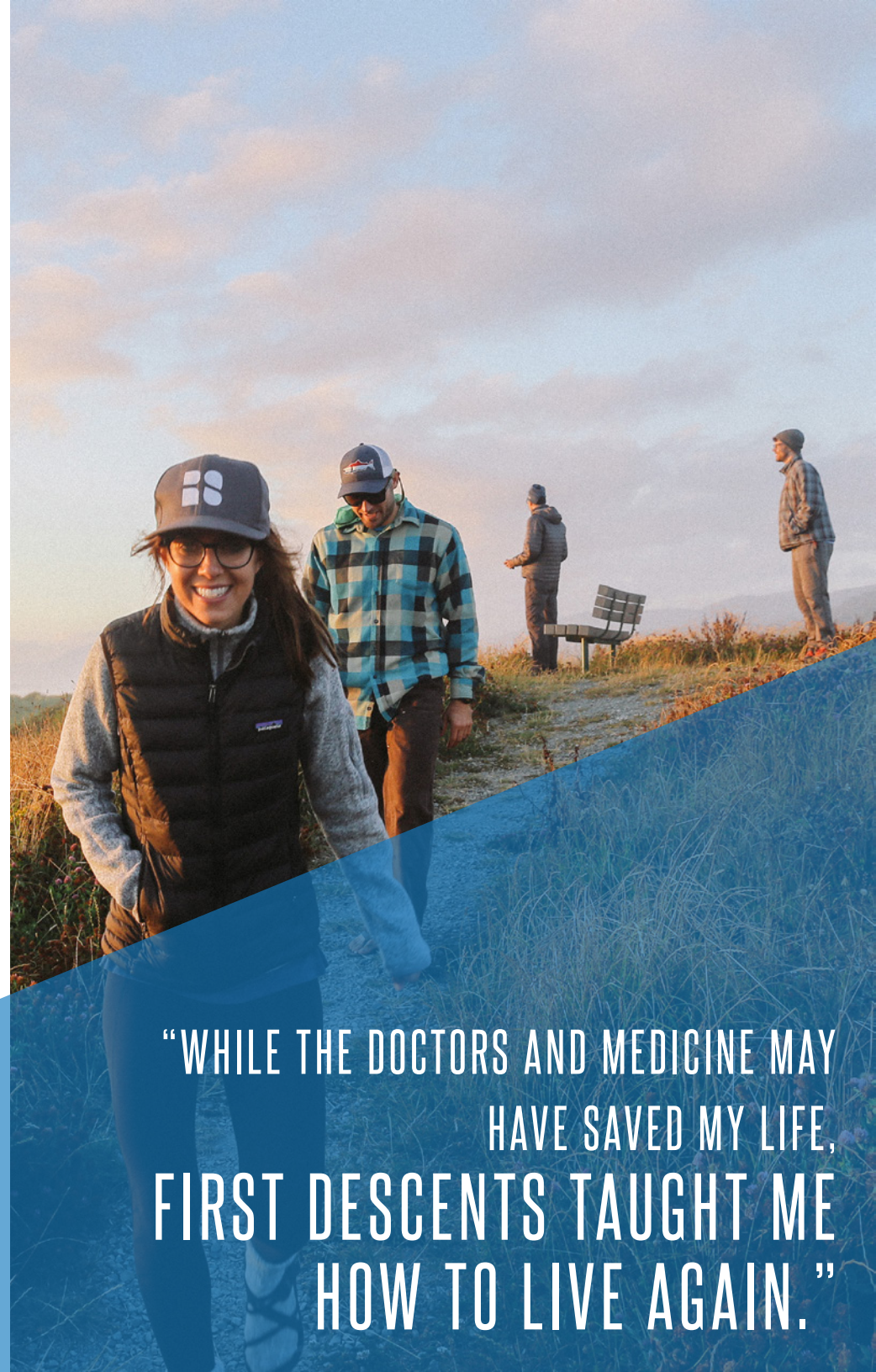
90

PROGRAMS ADMINISTERED

FDi

25+

HOSPITAL & MEDICAL CLINIC PARTNERSHIPS



“WHILE THE DOCTORS AND MEDICINE MAY
HAVE SAVED MY LIFE,
FIRST DESCENTS TAUGHT ME
HOW TO LIVE AGAIN.”

PARTICIPANTS ORIGINALLY HAVING THE GREATEST SYMPTOMS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS SAW THE LARGEST GAIN FOR THE LONGEST TIME. IN OTHER WORDS, THOSE WHO NEED FD THE MOST, SAW THE MOST BENEFIT.

PARTICIPANTS FELT RECONNECTED TO THEIR BODIES AND MORE CONFIDENT IN THEIR PHYSICAL ABILITIES. THEY ALSO FELT AN INCREASE IN RESILIENCY AND FELT LIKE THEY HAD MORE RESOURCES TO NAVIGATE THE HEALTH SYSTEM AND THEIR OWN TREATMENT SCHEDULES.

100%

100% OF PARTICIPANTS REPORTED INCREASED ABILITY TO COPE WITH CANCER AND ITS EFFECTS

99%

WANT TO STAY INVOLVED

99%

WOULD RECOMMEND FIRST DESCENTS TO A FRIEND

97%

SAID FIRST DESCENTS MET THEIR EXPECTATIONS

BEFORE FIRST DESCENTS

17%

EXPERIENCED DEPRESSION

POST PROGRAM

7%

REPORTED DEPRESSION

WHY IT WORKS

In 2015, First Descents partnered with researchers at the University of Michigan to continue to study the quantitative and qualitative success of our programming. In 2016, we completed the research and analysis on this study. Here are the top findings from that study:



FIRST DESCENTS

TRIBUTARIES

MEET. CONNECT. ADVENTURE.

NOW IN 15 CITIES NATIONWIDE, FIRST DESCENTS' LOCAL ADVENTURE COMMUNITIES CONTINUE TO PROVIDE ONGOING POST-PROGRAM SUPPORT AT THE LOCAL LEVEL. IN 2016, FD TRIBS HELD 42 MULTI DAY EVENTS PROVIDING 508 UNIQUE EXPERIENCES IN THE PLACES OUR PARTICIPANTS CALL HOME.



2016 HIGHLIGHTS



Raised \$3,000,000

A milestone for First Descents and a strong testament to the impact of our mission. We remain fully funded by charitable contributions and our programs will forever be provided free of charge.

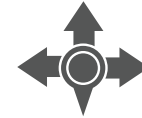
CNN HEROES CNN Heroes

Honoring FD Founder, Brad Ludden, with a 2016 CNN Hero Award in recognition of his iconoclastic vision for First Descents and the healing impact of our programs. The live broadcast aired on December 10, resulting in tremendous awareness of our mission. The CNN Heroes experience also generated \$100,000 in new crowd-funded revenue, accelerated by a \$50,000 challenge match from Subaru of America. More importantly, this event cast the spotlight on the unique challenges faced by young adults living with cancer – often referred to as the forgotten demographic.



1,000+ Experiences

Providing over 1,000 unique experiences to young adults impacted by cancer across nearly 100 program offerings nationwide.



3 New Cities

Establishing local adventure communities in three additional cities including **Chicago, San Diego, and Salt Lake City**. Knowing that community building and frequent, regional programming are essential to promoting continued healing, First Descents launched an aggressive rollout of local adventure communities (affectionately called FD Tributaries) beginning in 2013. Now in 15 cities, FD's local adventure communities provide quarterly (and often monthly) adventure experiences for young adults impacted by cancer designed to empower, inspire, and connect.



Leadville 100

Celebrating 10 years of participation in the world-renown Leadville Trail 100 Mountain Bike Race, our 2016 team generated a record \$230,000, surpassing the \$1 million milestone.

THE OUT LIVING IT PROJECT NUMBERS TO DATE:

\$4.2M **7,107** **13,186**
RAISED PROJECTS SUPPORTERS



OUT LIVING IT PROJECT

The **Out Living It Project** is FD's grassroots fundraising platform that embraces the confluence of adventure, creativity, and philanthropy. Launch your own unique fundraiser or join an existing project to raise funds and awareness for First Descents.

EVENTS

At the heart of every First Descents event is our goal to extend the healing power of adventure to as many young adults impacted by cancer as possible. This year, we hosted The 80s Ski Party, consumed sweet treats at the Donut Mess With Me Cancer 5k, and celebrated 15 years of FD at the 10th Annual First Descents Ball! Our 2016 FD events raised enough money to send 445 young adults impacted by cancer on their first week-long FD program.

\$776,505

RAISED



STAFF



BRAD [Man Salmon](#) LUDDEN | FOUNDER

RYAN [Wolf](#) O'DONOGHUE | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MELISSA [Master Splinter](#) MARKLE | EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

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RAY [Fridge](#) SHEDD | DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING

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JENNA [Lucy](#) CATALONA | MARKETING MANAGER

PAUL [Crash](#) KELLY | PROGRAMS MANAGER

JOSHUA [Wildflower](#) SERNA | PROGRAMS COORDINATOR

KEVIN [Kappy](#) GALLAGHER | PROGRAMS COORDINATOR

ANDY [Panda Cakes](#) FRAME | PROGRAMS COORDINATOR

LIZZIE [Dizzie](#) LACOUR | COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR

WILLIE [Sweet D](#) KERN | GLOBAL EXPERIENCE DEVELOPER

COREY [Baryl](#) NIELSEN | GLOBAL EXPERIENCE DEVELOPER

RAMSAY [Supahfly](#) PIERCE | DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

SAM [Bieber](#) KIMURA | DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

ADAM [Toby](#) SCHUSTER | OPERATIONS MANAGER

OUR BOARDS

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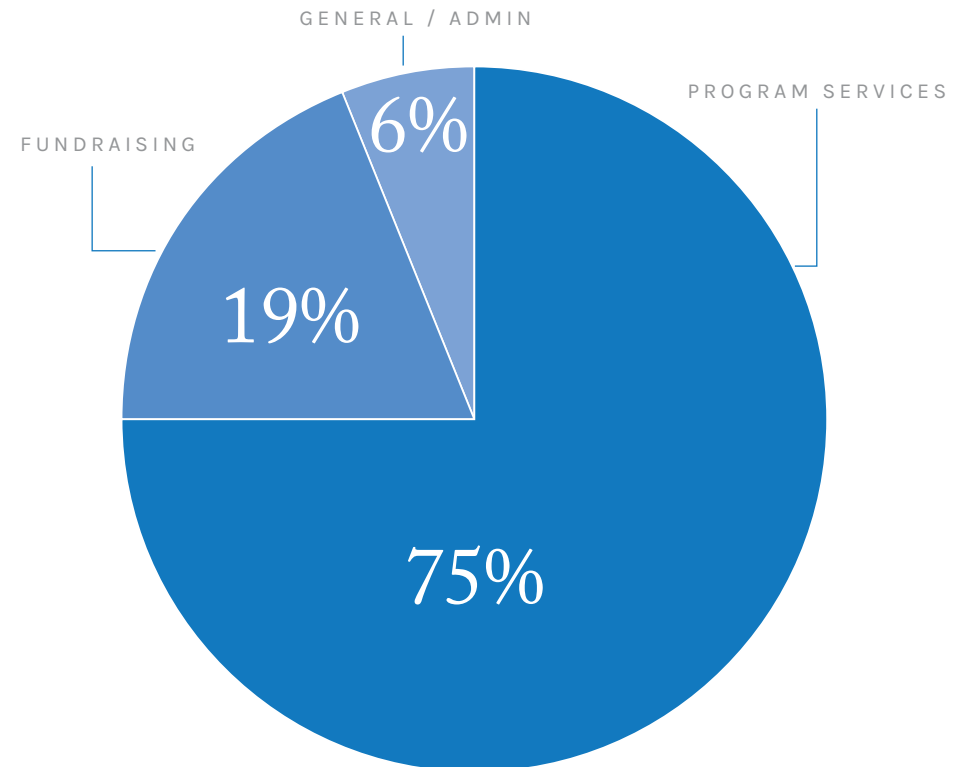
SUMMARY OF REVENUE

INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS	1,049,057	34%
FOUNDATION CONTRIBUTIONS	1,036,024	34%
CORPORATE CONTRIBUTIONS	206,455	7%
SPECIAL EVENTS	397,260	13%
IN-KIND DONATIONS	203,245	7%
OTHER INCOME	161,745	5%
TOTAL REVENUE	\$3,053,785	

11% Growth IN REVENUE OVER 2015

SUMMARY OF EXPENSES

PROGRAM SERVICES	2,091,400	75%
FUNDRAISING	516,399	19%
GENERAL / ADMIN	167,172	6%
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$2,774,970	



STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Assets	2016	2015
CASH & CASH EQUIVALENTS	1,126,583	1,315,728
CURRENT CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVABLE	202,464	179,740
PREPAID EXPENSES	170,435	205,496
LONG-TERM CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVABLE	272,500	335,000
OTHER ASSETS	13,687	20,247
	\$1,785,669	\$2,056,211

Liabilities & Net Assets

LIABILITIES		
ACCOUNTS PAYABLE & ACCRUED EXPENSES	54,046	54,384
DEFERRED REVENUE	1,360	549,662
TOTAL LIABILITIES	55,406	604,046
NET ASSETS		
UNRESTRICTED	1,457,763	1,117,165
TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED	272,500	335,000
TOTAL NET ASSETS	1,730,263	1,452,165
	\$1,785,669	\$2,056,211

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES



Revenue

	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	2016 Total
SUPPORT			
INDIVIDUALS	1,042,459	65,000	1,107,459
CORPORATIONS	206,455	-	206,455
FOUNDATIONS & OTHER ORGANIZATIONS	1,036,024	-	1,036,024
IN-KIND	203,245	-	203,245
LESS: NET DIRECT BENEFIT TO DONOR	(58,402)	-	(58,402)
			-
SPECIAL EVENT REVENUE			
CONTRIBUTIONS	714,702	-	714,702
TICKET SALES	61,803	-	61,803
LESS: NET DIRECT BENEFIT TO DONOR	(379,245)	-	(379,245)
	161,745	-	161,745
OTHER INCOME			
TOTAL REVENUE	\$2,988,785	\$65,000	\$3,053,785

Expenses

	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	2016 Total
PROGRAM SERVICES	2,091,400	-	2,091,400
MANAGEMENT & GENERAL	167,172	-	167,172
FUNDRAISING	517,115	-	517,172
TOTAL EXPENSES	2,775,687	-	2,775,687
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	213,098	65,000	278,098
NET ASSETS, BEGINNING OF YEAR	1,452,165	-	1,452,165
NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR	\$1,665,263	\$65,000	\$1,730,263

DONORS

\$100,000+

GENENTECH
HOGAN LOVELLS
WALTON FAMILY FOUNDATION

\$40,000 - \$99,999

DAVITA UNIVERSITY
GREER CHARITABLE GIFT FUND
ANONYMOUS
ICON MEDIA DIRECT, INC
INDUSTRY
JEWISH COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
OF MILWAUKEE JEWISH FEDERATION
JOEL & TIFFANY APPEL
KIRK AND KATHY MACKENZIE GIFT FUND
MICHAEL GROSS FAMILY FOUNDATION
THE CHAR AND CHUCK FOWLER FAMILY FOUNDATION

\$25,000 - \$39,999

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CONNECTICUT CHALLENGE
DEAR JACK FOUNDATION
GRADY & LORI DURHAM
JAMES WALTON
JON & MINDY GRAY FAMILY FOUNDATION
RITZ-CARLTON BACHELOR GULCH
SCOTT LYNES
THE ANSCHUTZ FOUNDATION
TRIFORD FOUNDATION
WACKY WARRIORS

\$10,000 - \$24,999

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NANCY OAKS
PETE RIVE & NATASHA DVORAK
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THE PRECOURT FOUNDATION
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VICKI GROSS

\$5,000 - \$9,999

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CLIF BAR FAMILY FOUNDATION
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