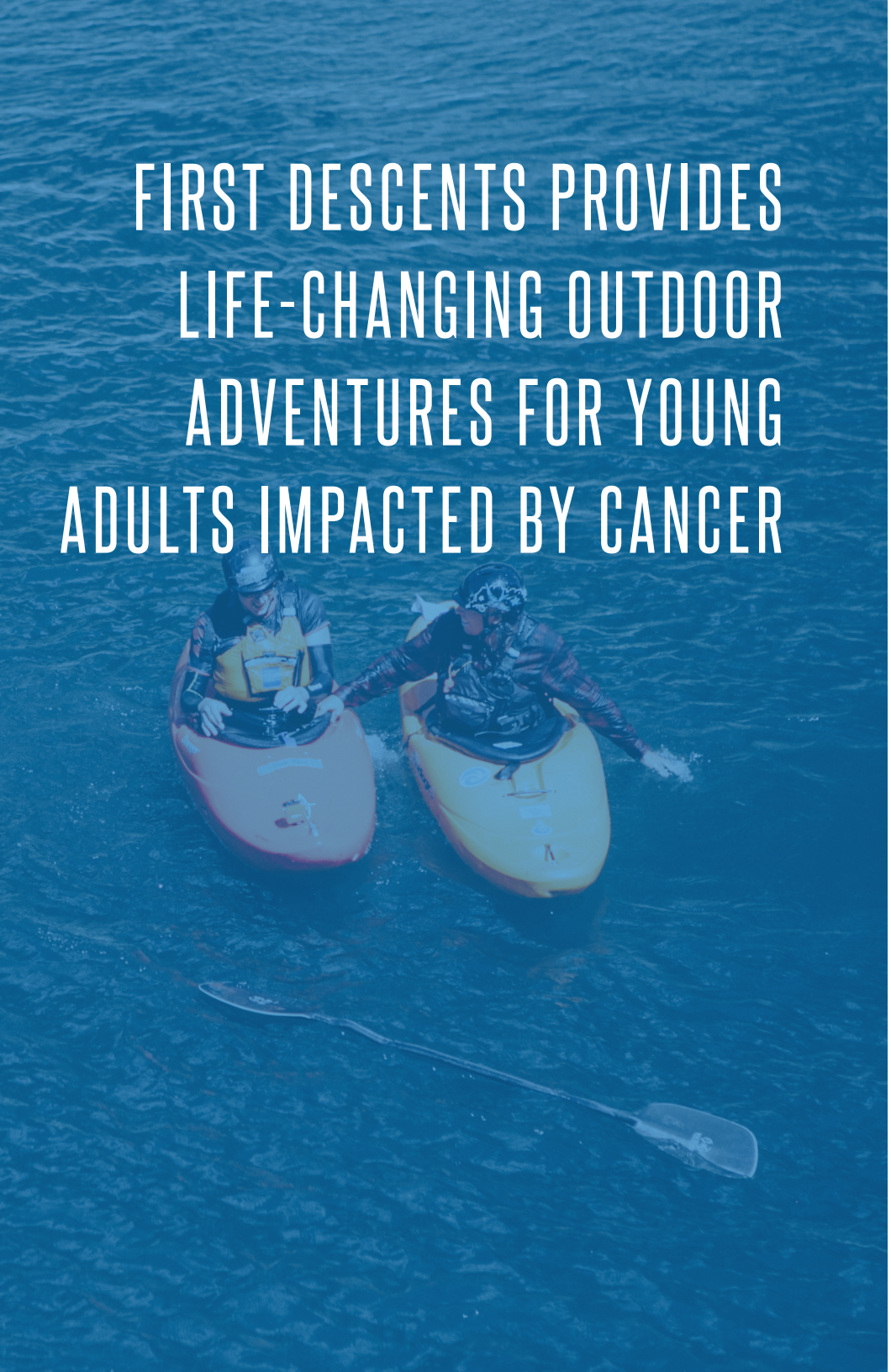
FIRST DESCENTS

AN INTRODUCTION

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.

FD 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 December 2016 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.

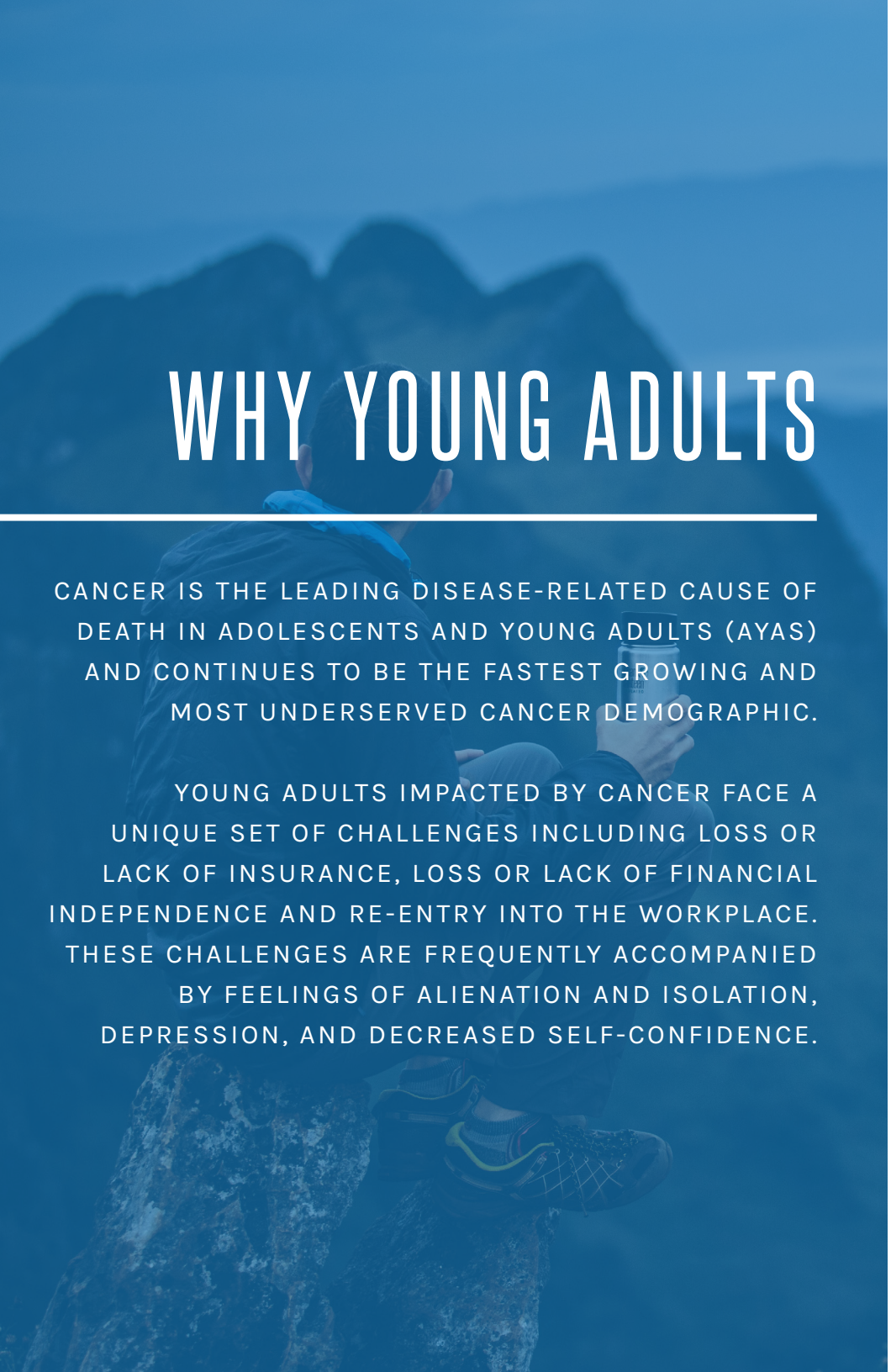
All of this has led to what can only be described as a movement, and one that shows no signs of stopping. Together in this tribe, we stand united, courageous, and eager to seek the next adventure.

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."



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

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

97%

SAID FIRST DESCENTS MET THEIR EXPECTATIONS

99%

WOULD RECOMMEND FIRST DESCENTS TO A FRIEND

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:

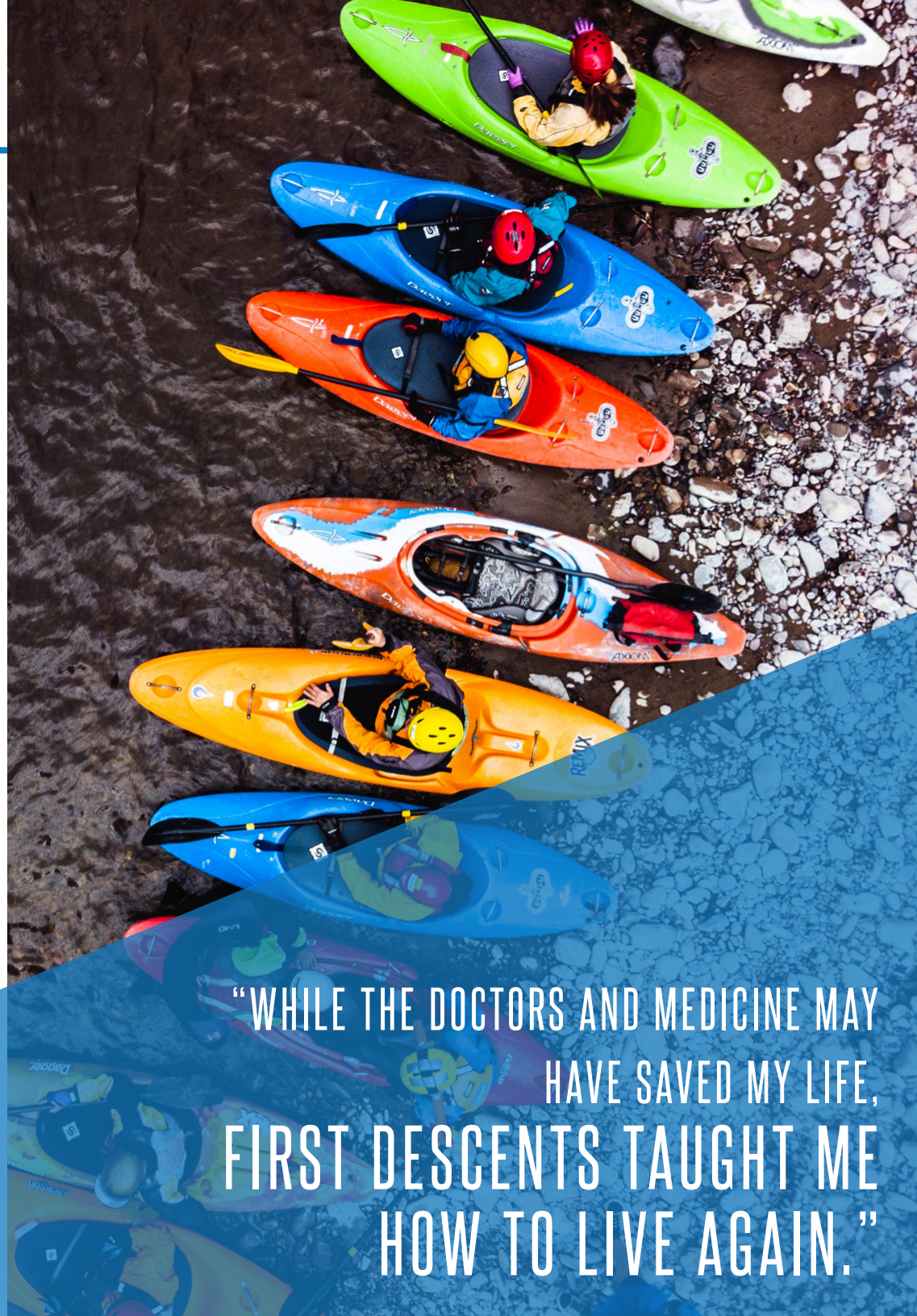
LEARN MORE

2018 PROGRAMS OVERVIEW

1,281
EXPERIENCES PROVIDED

122
PROGRAMS ADMINISTERED

175+
HOSPITAL & MEDICAL CENTER PARTNERSHIPS



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

PROGRAMMING

EXPERIENCE THE HEALING POWER OF ADVENTURE.

LEARN MORE

Week-Long (FD1)

THE ORIGINAL FIRST DESCENTS EXPERIENCE. A FREE MULTI-DAY ADVENTURE PROGRAM CENTERED AROUND WHITEWATER KAYAKING, ROCK CLIMBING, ICE CLIMBING OR SURFING.

Local Adventure Communites (FDtribs)

FIRST DESCENTS TRIBUTARIES OFFER LOCAL ADVENTURES AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR YOUNG ADULTS IMPACTED BY CANCER. CURRENTLY, THERE ARE 18 FD-SUPPORTED TRIB LOCATIONS ACROSS THE COUNTRY THAT PROVIDE MULTI-DAY AND SINGLE-DAY ADVENTURES AS WELL AS MONTHLY MEETUPS AND MORE.

International Adventures (FDX)

THE ULTIMATE ADVENTURE EXPERIENCE. FDX IS YOUR TICKET TO PURSUING LIFE-LONG ADVENTURES AND OUT LIVING IT IN SUCH DESTINATIONS AS NEW ZEALAND, ITALY AND BALI.

Healthcare Partner Programs (FDi)

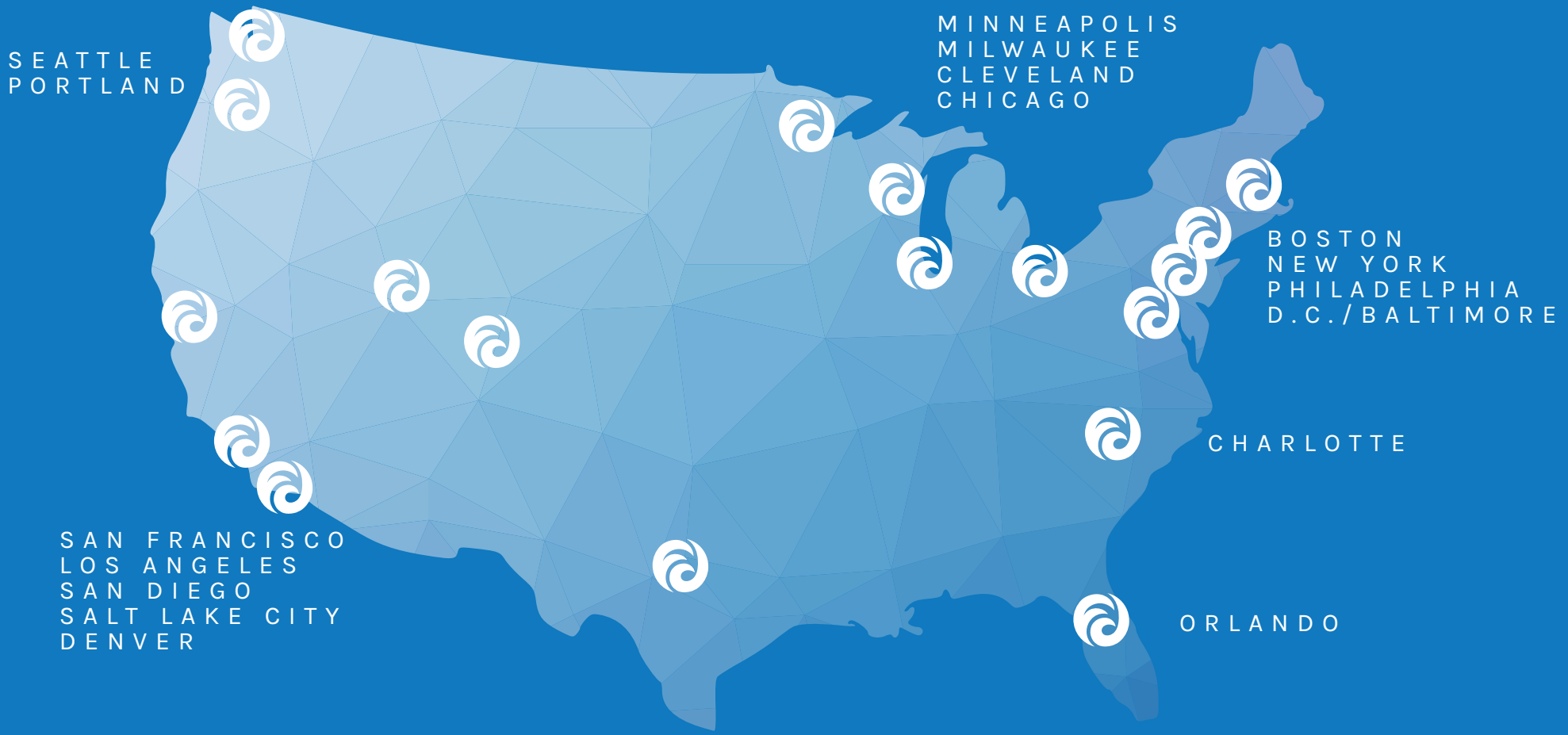
IN AN EFFORT TO REACH MORE YOUNG ADULTS LIVING WITH AND SURVIVING CANCER, FIRST DESCENTS PARTNERS WITH MEDICAL CENTERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY. THESE ARE THE PERFECT ADVENTURE FOR THOSE WHO WANT TO EXPERIENCE FD BUT ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND A PROGRAM DUE TO HEALTH, TREATMENT SCHEDULES OR PERSONAL OBLIGATIONS.

FIRST DESCENTS

TRIBUTARIES

MEET. CONNECT. ADVENTURE.

NOW IN 18 CITIES NATIONWIDE, FIRST DESCENTS TRIBUTARIES OFFER LOCAL ADVENTURES AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR YOUNG ADULTS IMPACTED BY CANCER.



LEARN MORE

THE OUT LIVING IT PROJECT NUMBERS TO DATE:

$4.8M RAISED

7,418 PROJECTS

17,298 SUPPORTERS

FIRST DESCENTS
OUT LIVING IT
PROJECT
SINCE 2001

LEARN MORE

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.

CONTACT

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