

F I R S T D E S C E N T S

# HEALTHCARE PARTNERS





**FIRST DESCENTS  
PROVIDES  
LIFE-CHANGING  
OUTDOOR ADVENTURES  
FOR YOUNG  
ADULTS (AGES 18-39)  
IMPACTED  
BY CANCER AND OTHER  
SERIOUS HEALTH  
CONDITIONS**

## PROBLEMS

Cancer is the leading disease-related cause of death in adolescents and young adults (AYAs).

MS is the most common neuroinflammatory disease affecting young adults.

Cancer, MS, and all serious health conditions present unique challenges and obstacles to young adults.

## OBSTACLES

80,000 adolescents & young adults are diagnosed with cancer each year

Minimal peer support

Rare and aggressive tumor biology

Lack of participation in clinical trials

Disrupts normative milestones of adulthood

Higher rate of depression and psychosocial distress in young adults impacted by MS and cancer

## WHY IT WORKS?

## FD PROGRAM OUTCOMES

100%

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

81%

REPORTED INCREASED SELF-EFFICACY

99%

OF PARTICIPANTS WANT TO STAY INVOLVED

17%  TO 7%

PARTICIPANTS WHO REPORTED FEELING DEPRESSED BEFORE AND AFTER FIRST DESCENTS

WHY IT WORKS?





# 20 YEARS OUT LIVING IT



**2001**

First Program

**2006**

1st Annual First Descents Ball

**2010**

Rock Climbing Programs Launched

**2011**

Surfing Programs Begin

First FDX International Program

**2012**

Healthcare Partner and FDRock Caregiver Programs Created

Over 1,000 Participants Served

Keck Graduate Institute Research Study on the Psychosocial Benefits of FD

**2013**

FD Tributaries Launched

**2014**

Team FD Rebranded to the Out Living It Project

**2015**

University of Michigan Research Study on the Psychosocial Benefits of FD

Out Living It Magazine Launched

**2016**

1,000+ Participants Served Annually

FD Founder Brad Ludden Recognized as Top 10 CNN Hero

**2018**

Prescribe Adventure Launched

Expanded Programming to Young Adults Coping with MS. Hosted Pilot Program

**2019**

18 Established FD Trib Communities

Provided 3 Programs for Young Adults Living with MS

**2020**

**20th Anniversary**

10,000 Participants Served

# 20 YEARS OUT LIVING IT



# WHO WE SERVE



## YOUNG ADULTS LIVING WITH AND SURVIVING CANCER

Founded in 2001, First Descents' mission was to serve young adults impacted by cancer. Since that first whitewater kayaking program, we've provided outdoor adventures to thousands of oncology participants.

## YOUNG ADULTS LIVING WITH MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

In 2018, First Descents piloted our first program for young adults impacted by MS. After FD Founder Brad Ludden was recognized in 2016 as a Top 10 CNN Hero, we realized that adventure could be transformative for young adults impacted by other serious health conditions. Since 2018, we've continued to scale our programs for those living with MS year after year.

## HEALTHCARE WORKERS

In partnership with the Dunkin Joy in Childhood Foundation, First Descents launched HERO RECHARGE - outdoor adventure programs for frontline healthcare workers in 2020. Initially focused on healthcare workers fighting on the COVID-19 frontlines, First Descents plans to scale our healthcare worker programming to those serving oncology and MS populations.



# WHO WE SERVE





## Core Programs

Each participant is eligible for a multi-day or week-long destination program around the country. Programs are free of cost, fully-adaptive, and include lodging, gear, outfitter instruction, and delicious meals prepared by First Descents chefs!



## Out Living It Project

The Out Living It Project is FD's peer-driven platform designed to support alumni as they design and facilitate their own local adventures with fellow young adults impacted by cancer and MS, caregivers, and friends



## Lifestyle Content

From outdoor skills-development, to mindfulness and nutrition, FD's Out Living It Lifestyle Content provides resources that help participants lead healthier lives.



First Descents partners with medical centers to provide opportunities for young adults impacted by cancer and other serious health conditions to attend outdoor programs. Prescribe Adventure engages healthcare professionals to empower young adults to connect with their peers through community and adventure. Research shows that our programming improves survivorship, and we're reaching more young adults through our growing network of healthcare professionals than ever before. Below are just a few of the incredible medical centers with whom we partner.

# 1,000+

HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS  
ENGAGED THROUGH PRESCRIBE  
ADVENTURE

# 500+

MEDICAL CENTERS AND  
HEALTHCARE ORGANIZATIONS  
REFERRING PATIENTS



Tampa, FL



Hartford, CT



Durham, NC



Springdale, AR



Boston, MA



Tacoma, WA



Wauwatosa, WI



Los Angeles, CA



Philadelphia, PA



Chapel Hill, NC



Milwaukee, WI



Portland, OR





“First Descents provides a unique, empowering opportunity for young adults with cancer to feel like themselves again, often for the first time since diagnosis. They are given a safe, welcoming space to not only be active and feel like a normal young adult again, but also to connect with their peers who simply “get it” and can relate on a different level than other friends or family. First Descents is truly a gift to young adults facing the physical and emotional challenges of cancer. As someone who works closely with young adults in an academic medical institution, the relief and comfort of knowing FD exists is felt not only by patients, but also those who care for them.”

- Patient Navigator

# 50/51

NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE  
DESIGNATED COMPREHENSIVE CANCER  
CENTERS PRESCRIBING ADVENTURE

“Treatment can challenge so many aspects of one’s self-image. I’ve had people living with metastatic disease come back from a trip and say they were reminded what their body could do, what they could accomplish despite their disease. This provides hope, some relief and a piece of their identity that gets lost. This isn’t something I can process with someone. They have to experience this on a physical level.”

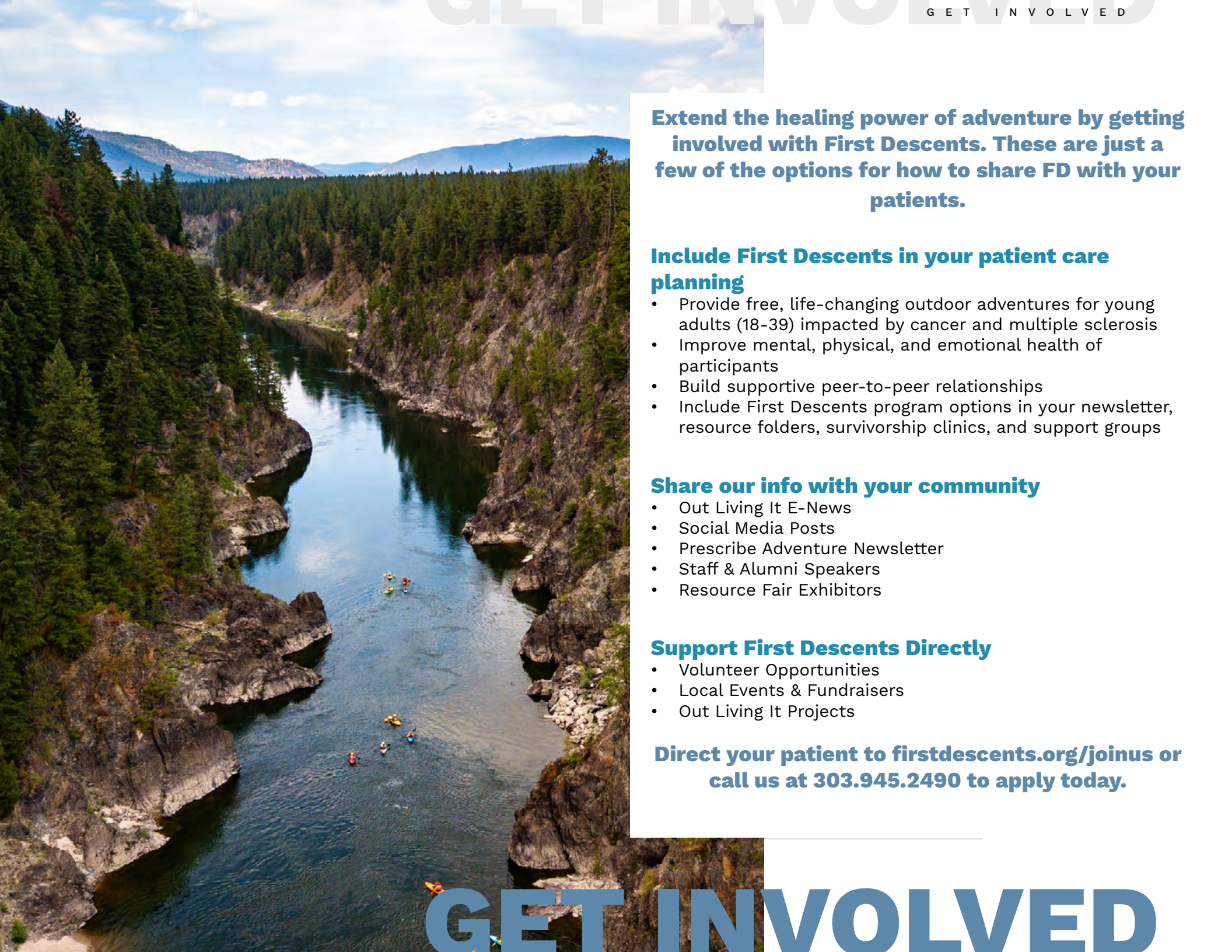
- Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Clinical Social Worker

“As an oncology nurse, I meet people in the midst of their worst days. I don’t have the privilege of knowing who they were before they heard the words “you have cancer” and their lives were changed forever. First Descents reassures me that those terrible days won’t define their future, and that beyond that diagnosis — beyond all of the tests, procedures, and treatments — there is still an entire world of adventure waiting for them. The continued support of the First Descents family reminds me that, if you’re willing to look for it, something really beautiful can come out of even the worst of circumstances.”

- FD Medical Volunteer (RN)

# TESTIMONIALS





**Extend the healing power of adventure by getting involved with First Descents. These are just a few of the options for how to share FD with your patients.**

**Include First Descents in your patient care planning**

- Provide free, life-changing outdoor adventures for young adults (18-39) impacted by cancer and multiple sclerosis
- Improve mental, physical, and emotional health of participants
- Build supportive peer-to-peer relationships
- Include First Descents program options in your newsletter, resource folders, survivorship clinics, and support groups

**Share our info with your community**

- Out Living It E-News
- Social Media Posts
- Prescribe Adventure Newsletter
- Staff & Alumni Speakers
- Resource Fair Exhibitors

**Support First Descents Directly**

- Volunteer Opportunities
- Local Events & Fundraisers
- Out Living It Projects

**Direct your patient to [firstdescents.org/joinus](https://firstdescents.org/joinus) or call us at 303.945.2490 to apply today.**





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