FIRST DESCENTS PROVIDES LIFE-CHANGING OUTDOOR ADVENTURES FOR YOUNG ADULTS (AGES 18-45) IMPACTED BY CANCER AND OTHER SERIOUS HEALTH CONDITIONS
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.
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First Program | 1st Annual First Descents Ball | Rock Climbing Programs Launched | Surfing Programs Begin | Healthcare Partner and FDrock Caregiver Programs Created | FD Tributaries Launched | Team FD Rebranded to the Out Living IT Project

2015 | 2016 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020
---|---|---|---|---
University of Michigan Research Study on the Psychosocial Benefits of FD | 1,000+ Participants Served Annually | Prescribe Adventure Launched | 18 Established FD Trib Communities | 20th Anniversary

Out Living It Magazine Launched | FD Founder Brad Ludden Recognized as Top 10 CNN Hero | Expanded Programming to Young Adults Coping with MS, Hosted Pilot Program | Provided 3 Programs for Young Adults Living with MS

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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 develop 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.
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.

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!
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

- Moffitt Cancer Center
  Tampa, FL

- Dana-Farber Cancer Institute
  Boston, MA

- Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia
  Philadelphia, PA

- Connecticut Children’s
  Hartford, CT

- Mary Bridge Children’s Hospital
  Tacoma, WA

- UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center
  Chapel Hill, NC

- Duke Cancer Institute
  Durham, NC

- Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin
  Wauwatosa, WI

- Froedtert & Medical College of Wisconsin
  Milwaukee, WI

- USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center
  Los Angeles, CA

- Oregon Health & Science University
  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

“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)
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 (18-45) 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 or call us at 303.945.2490 to apply today.