

All Children Need Nature Worldwide

By Cheryl Charles, Ph.D., President and CEO, Children & Nature Network  
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All children need nature. More people are recognizing that need and working to restore its

When Richard Louv and others of us founded the Children & Nature Network (C&NN, [www.childrenandnature.org](http://www.childrenandnature.org)) in 2006, we knew there was a significant worldwide need to reconnect people with nature beginning most urgently with children. Children everywhere, for a host of reasons, are more sedentary, more disproportionately using electronic media more of their time and more than they do much of anything else in waking hours, and have almost no time at all doing anything like being outdoors in nature whether walking to school, building forts, turning over rocks, making fairy houses, climbing trees. The evidence is clear, and growing all the time, that most children are spending almost no time at all outdoors in nature, much less exploring freely, by their own invention and direction. That disconnect is associated with a host of problems including obesity, diminished creativity and less problem-solving ability. Critically important to the work of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), children who do not have direct experiences with nature during their formative years are less

and the IUCN Commission on Education and Communication. We released the Summary in Jeju, with the attendant rationale for its importance.

I knew there would be a CEO Summit on Connecting People with Nature, with CEOs of national parks and protected areas from throughout the world along with CEOs of non-governmental organizations, including the Children & Nature Network. And I knew there would be a resolution presented for action by Dr. Annelies Henstra and others, building on ours of 2008 that spoke to the importance of connecting children and youth with nature and taking it to a significant new level ***right*** to nature.

The Research Summary was a given. We had prepared it, and planned for its launch to this worldwide audience. The next two events—the unanimous passing of the Jeju Declaration on Connecting People with Nature and the passing of the motion in support of ***right*** to nature—those were accomplishments beyond my hopes, and within my dreams. I find myself genuinely thrilled that more happened to help further the worldwide movement than I had hoped for at this point in time.

amount of further work to do—as we  
however, to give some thanks for the incredible momentum that can be felt from the volcanic