

The Jarrett Meeker Foundation
Destination Nature
Media Kit



The Jarrett Meeker Foundation
3755 Avocado Blvd. #211
La Mesa, CA 91941-7301
619-660-1274 • info@thejmf.org

Mission & Vision

The Jarrett Meeker Foundation is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that was established in July 1987 in memory of 8-year-old Jarrett Meeker after his accidental death on April 27, 1987. JMF is run by an all volunteer Board of Directors.

The mission of JMF is to support educational programs related to wildlife, conservation and the environment for children and young adults throughout San Diego County.

Since 1987, JMF has provided once-in-a-lifetime educational experiences to more than 100,000 children representing over 50 schools throughout San Diego County. Overall contributions to these programs total more than \$500,000.

Our vision for the next 20 years is to continue to expand our support for wildlife and conservation-related educational programs, carefully choose programs that have a meaningful and lasting impact on the lives of the children we serve, and consequently improve the condition of the natural world.

History

Jarrett's Story

Nicknamed the Little Zookeeper, Jarrett Meeker was an active, fun-loving third grader who loved nature and all living things. For Jarrett, frequent trips to the Zoo and out with nature with family and friends were a part of life, a part he really enjoyed.

His affection for nature was not limited to animals; he also had a genuine concern for people and, in particular, for other children who had less than he had. When he lost his life in a backyard accident in April 1987 at age eight, it wasn't long before his parents, Judy and Keith Meeker, found a way to transfer their grief into something positive.

Judy and Keith were grateful that they were able to provide Jarrett with outdoor nature experiences he grew to love so much. When they lost him, they were inspired by his love of nature and people to help disadvantaged kids experience and learn about wildlife as he did. They co-founded the Jarrett Meeker Foundation in July 1987, just three months after Jarrett's death.

With the commitment and support of a few family friends, JMF set out initially with a mission to give children who might not otherwise have an opportunity to attend the Zoo's educational programs or even visit the Zoo, the chance to do so. Through its work, JMF has helped underprivileged and disadvantaged children learn about and experience the wonders of nature, animals, conservation and habitat preservation in Jarrett's memory. The Foundation and the work that it does is Jarrett's gift—his legacy.

Meaning of the Fishing Logo

Our logo originated from a vision that Judy Meeker had the day of her son's accident. She was in the sheriff's car, following the ambulance, when she saw Jarrett, surrounded by animals, doing one of the things he so enjoyed—being a part of nature. He told her that he was okay, and not to worry.

Board of Directors

The JMF is fortunate to have a diverse and talented group of people to serve on the Board of Directors. They are friends and community members who care about making a difference.

Founders

Keith and Judy Meeker

Officers

President: Keith L. Meeker (Attorney, Private Practice)

Director of Community Relations: Judy Meeker (Broker, Judy Meeker Realty)

Treasurer: Lisa Barnett (Tax Attorney, Law Office of Ronson J Shamoun)

Secretary: Monica Steele (Registered Dental Hygienist)

Directors:

Connie Bley (Retired Director Special Education Dehesa Elementary School)

John Bley (Retired Administrator, La Mesa-Spring Valley School District)

Jackie Grobarek (Retired Math/Science Teacher, Magnet School; San Diego Zoo)

Pegi Harvey (Ecotourism Consultant, Travel Alchemy)

Linda Homuth (Administrative Assistant)

Ron Homuth (Transportation, Naval Hospital)

Jenny Meeker (Attorney at Law, Keesal Young & Logan)

Jon Meeker (College Student, Attractions Host Disneyland0

Linda Rice (Real Estate Agent Century 21 Award)

Mark Rivaldi (Director of Dealer Sales, Graphic Business Solutions)

Samira Seidu (Attorney at Law)

Diana Steele (Library Tech Substitute, San Diego County)

Walt Weisman (Certified Public Accountant, Private Practice)

William Weisman (Staff Accountant, Walter L. Weisman, CPA)

JMF supports educational programs that benefit the children and young adults in our communities who desire to understand, appreciate and improve the condition of our natural world. Each year the Foundation strives to create and support innovative, fun and inspiring programs that get children excited and motivated about conserving wildlife and making a difference for the environment.

Our current programs include the following:

This year the Foundation has launched new creative, innovative and inspiring programs that will get children and young adults and families motivated but conserving and enjoying the out of doors.



DESTINATION NATURE

Through our **“JMF Campout - Destination Nature”** JMF has partnered with San Diego Unified School District’s Central Elementary School to sponsor the third grade’s overnight campout. This program is designed to meet the needs of our students through hands-on interactive learning strategies and in correlation with the California State standard based curriculum. We focus on economically disadvantaged children who are traditionally less exposed to natural environments. By this program, JMF provided an authentic overnight camp experience at the Louis A Stelzer County park in Lakeside for the entire third grade class (112 students) from Central Elementary School in City Heights. These students were able to study and explore firsthand the outdoor environment in a thrilling and adventurous learning experience.

Adventures that the student experienced included Ranger guided hikes, learning about composting, planting oak trees, learning about the Kumeyaay life and playing Indian games with the Barona Cultural Museum, seeing and handling artifact and activities relating to the Mexican Gray Wolves from the California Wolf Center, creating their very own clay turtle, Star gazing at night with the San Diego Astronomy Association, Campfire with songs, stories with the help of Boy Scout Troop 362, and of course S’mores, and sleeping in a tent for the first time ever. Studies from the National Wildlife Federation show that children benefit greatly through participation in activities that bring them in contact with the natural world. Children grow lean and strong, enhances creativity and attention spans, decreases aggression, and boosts classroom performance. Bottom Line- Healthier and happier kids.

We had many camp partners who deserve to be recognized for their participation in this terrific program:

Louis A Stelzer County Park, Ranger Sean & Ranger Robert
Adventure 16, and REI - tents and camping equipment
Lake Murray Kiwanis Club - Pancake wagon and chef
San Diego Astronomers Association - 4 astronomers and their telescopes.
Barona Cultural Center and Museum - Kumeyaay life and games
California Wolf Center - Mexican Gray Wolf activities
Boy Scout Troop 362 from Rancho San Diego - set up the tents,
and maintained the campfire & activities

Promo Deli - significantly discounted fanny packs, T-shirts,
& floppy hats
Smart & Final and Costco for a discount
on the food for the meals
Carl Jr. Lemonade
Sprouts Farmer Markets - Hotdogs
Sharps Grossmont Hospital - sunscreen
REI - T-shirts for the campers

East County Earth Day is our effort to involve community partners in creating outdoor activities and environmental education for youth of all ages. In conjunction with the Mt Helix Park Foundation, JMF presented the first East County Earth Day at Mt Helix. Over 500 attendees were provide presentations and demonstrations relating to recycling, conservation habitat and wild life preservation and the environment. Included were hands-on- activities for children and the presentation of products and programs relating to alternative energy, conservation, recycling, and environmental and habitat preservation.



The focus of this annual event in partnership with Mt Helix Park Foundation is to bring Earth Day back to its roots, with environmental groups and ecology resources. The 2010 East County Earth Day was honored by proclamations from the City of La Mesa and the SD County Board of Supervisors.

Testimonials

Cindy Marten, Principal, Central Elementary School.

“Work Hard. Be Kind. Dream Big! No Excuses. - We call that THE CENTRAL WAY. At Central Elementary in City Heights we believe in Dreaming Big and we believe in our children. Thanks to the JMF we have been able to provide our students with an experience that teaches the power of a dream. Our children are categorized as the “poorest” in the county. 99% of our 900 students live below the poverty line. 85% come from homes where English is not spoken, so they are categorized, again, as English Learners. 60% are categorized as failing by the state of California because they can’t pass the state test which is given in English no matter how many years they have been in the country. They are categorized as “at-risk” because their parents or guardians have high school educations or less, and because they have one or more parent who is absent due to incarceration, deportation, abandonment or addiction. There are more categories to sort and label our students. But for us, the staff at Central Elementary, we don’t see the category. We don’t see the label. We see the child. The whole child. The brilliance of the child. The sparkle in their eye. We know that with excellent teaching and a world-class education these categories and labels will mean nothing. It won’t matter that the parents didn’t speak English, the father was in prison, the mother was an addict, the family survived on food bank donations. Those things will not matter because our children will grow to be active, productive, contributing, participating members of our society. They will become the citizens of tomorrow who will make a difference. We know that we have so much to do in order to produce this type of citizen particularly when the

modeling can't come from the home. This is where the JMF has stepped in and made miracle happen

At Central Elementary only 18% of the children were able to pass the state test in English Language Arts 7 years ago. This year we are anticipating a 40% passing rate. Not enough, but huge growth. We know that our children face many challenges to their learning. They need to learn a language while at the same time learn the curriculum state standards. The best way to learn for English Learners is through EXPERIENCE. You learn language by USING language. There is no textbook or classroom experience that could have ever taught the vocabulary that our 3rd graders now know: oak, trail, tarantula, tent, sleeping bag, camp fire, S'mores, conservation, compost, telescope,

Your organization has created an experience that has allowed 120 third graders experience the outdoors in an authentic camping experience. Most of our children have never spent a night away from home. None of them had ever slept in the outdoors, in a tent. The experience of going to Stelzer Park in Lakeside included:

- Sleeping in real tents with sleeping bags!!
- Campfire skits and songs with Boy Scouts
- A nature hike led by a real Park Ranger in uniform (most uniforms our students have seen have been police officers or Border Patrol)
- Learning about Indian Life presentation by an instructor from Barona Indian Reservation
- Learning about wolf conservation from
- A Star Party with the SD Astronomy Club and high powered telescopes showing our children to find Saturn with its rings. When we talk about Dreaming Big this experience literally shows them how to reach for the stars!
- Planting Live Oak Trees and learning about caring for Mother Earth
- Hearing a Native American legend about the turtle and then making a clay turtle to take home as a keepsake. They turned out so adorable!!!
- Amazing, home-cooked meals made by your Board! - Perfect "kid-friendly" food! S'mores. Hot Dogs. Mac n Cheese.
- Pancake breakfast!! By the Kiwanis
- Playing Indian Games

When I sit down and really think about all that you have done with our school I begin to cry. Really. I'm astounded. You have given us real, tangible, concrete ways to teach our children about DREAMING BIG. I know that this experience costs plenty of money. I know the actual cost might be thousands and thousands of dollars. That is what this trip costs, in dollars. That would be the dollar value of the camp out. But you need to know

that the VALUE of this experience for the children is well into the millions. In fact, it's probably priceless. You can't even really put a value on what it means to teach a child to dream big. Or what it means to give the child the gift of compassion for mother earth? Really, how much would you even try to charge for THAT? Our children have walked away from this experience with life-altering memories. For the rest of their lives they will remember this experience. How much could you possibly charge for that?"

Sarah Mathy, Teacher, Central Elementary School:

"With JMF's contribution, all of our third graders were able to build upon the classroom curriculum through the Night Owls overnight experience. One group of girls in particular was so eager to start a conservation plan after the first day that they stayed up past lights-out to list all the things they could do to help the environment. The experience gave the students a new way of thinking; they realized little kids can make a big change and that makes it more special for the teachers and parents who are now watching their projects come alive.