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Contact: Thatcher Heldring, IslandWood
206-518-2151

Community Event In Compton Celebrated Launch of New Leadership Program for Compton and Alaska Youth

Compton Mayor Aja Brown, Youth Leaders from Compton and Arctic Alaska, Spoke About Impact of Fresh Tracks Leadership Expeditions – Supporting White House Priority on Youth and the Outdoors

COMPTON, CA – A community kickoff event at Compton Creek Natural Park today marked the official launch of **Fresh Tracks Leadership Expeditions**, a partnership between [IslandWood](#), [Sierra Club](#), [Children & Nature Network's Natural Leaders](#), [REI](#), and action sports retailer Zumiez. Inspired by the Obama Administration's commitment to connecting more young Americans to the outdoors and in support of the goals of the My Brother's Keeper Initiative, Fresh Tracks will enable young leaders from Compton and Arctic Alaska to experience diverse cultures, explore the outdoors, and build critical leadership and workforce development skills.

The kickoff at Compton Creek brought together nearly 100 community leaders, including Compton Mayor Aja Brown, prospective Fresh Tracks participants and their families, and representatives from the partner organizations. The festive atmosphere featured locally catered food, outdoor recreation activities facilitated by REI, and opportunities to learn about Fresh Tracks and the Alaskan Arctic.

"The City of Compton and our My Brother's Keeper team is proud to partner with Fresh Tracks on developing, cultivating, and displaying the leadership potential of Compton's young adults," said Compton Mayor Aja Brown. "This is a wonderful opportunity for young people from Compton to expand their cultural understanding and make a real connection to the outdoors beyond the borders of Compton. I'm proud to support President Barack Obama's commitment to making sure that more young Americans have the opportunity to build critical leadership and workforce development skills that they need to succeed. Young people are our future. Every investment in our youth is an investment in a better tomorrow."

Compton is one of nearly 250 cities, towns, counties, or tribal nations that has accepted President Obama's My Brother's Keeper Community Challenge, and is executing a cradle-to-college-and-career strategy for improving the life outcomes of all young people. The students chosen to participate in Fresh Tracks from Compton are being selected through Compton's MBK Community Challenge initiative.

To create a lifetime impact, Fresh Tracks provides participants with career exposure opportunities, beginning with week-long apprenticeships immediately following the Alaska expedition. "We are thrilled to see this exciting new initiative launch that will not only expose a diverse group of young people to the transformative power of the great outdoors, but will also open the doors to potential outdoor career and service pathways as well," said Broderick Johnson, Assistant to the President, Cabinet Secretary and Chair of the My Brother's Keeper Task Force. "We commend this coalition of public and private sector partners that have answered the President's call to make sure all young people, especially those traditionally underserved or underrepresented, have clear pathways to opportunity and success."

Fresh Tracks will take place in August 2016, beginning with an immersion experience at IslandWood, a leading outdoor learning organization based near Seattle. Both groups will then explore the ecological and cultural landscapes of southern California. Fresh Tracks will culminate in Arctic Alaska, where participants will engage in traditional community activities, subsistence culture, and discussions about local climate change implications. Service learning opportunities will be incorporated throughout the experience, which is being looked at as a model for national expansion of Fresh Tracks Leadership Expeditions.

"I am excited to participate in the Fresh Tracks program because it will provide me with a wonderful leadership and cultural opportunity to learn with, and from my peers in my own community and from Alaska," said Jared Savage, a rising senior at The Buckley School, and lifelong Compton resident. "Serving as youth leaders, we can serve as the microphone to amplify the message of collaboration, advocacy, and leadership."

"I'm looking forward to sharing our culture through Fresh Tracks," said Margorie Gemmill, Tribal Administrator for the Arctic Village Tribal Council. "The Gwich'in people have always been welcoming of people who are interested in our way of life and the protection of the Arctic Refuge. I think the students from both communities can get a good perspective of what it's like to see other parts of the world and how life is different for other people."

Mentoring the participants will be members of the Children & Nature Network's Natural Leaders. "Mentors in Fresh Tracks are speaking from experience, and are trying to create change and connect their own communities to the outdoors," said CJ Goulding, one of the Natural Leaders involved with Fresh Tracks. "We'll be learning about different cultures, communities, and developing as leaders right alongside the participants."

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