

## FY2023 Buncombe County Tipping Point Grant Report

<b>Organization Name:</b>	RiverLink
<b>Project Name:</b>	Take Me To The River: Piloting A New Afterschool Program

Activities Accomplished	Annual Goal	Amount Completed
Number of organizations included in test program	3	4
Number of activities hosted with partners	6	18
Number of students participating in activities	60	160
Percent of students who report an increased interested in the environment and/or the river	50%	70%

Expenses (please list <u>all</u> grant related expenses)	Amount Spent
Orbeez and Kinetic Sand	\$95.92
Watercolor pencils	\$111.07
Candy	\$17.32
Chemistry testing refills	\$163.47
Stream Table supplies	\$62.15
Snack for afterschool	\$65.71
Incredible Journey supplies	\$69.00
Education & Outreach Manager's time	\$2,500.00
Water safety gear and toys	\$29.79
Lake Powhatan entry fee	\$30.00
RiverLink gear for new educator	\$65.34
Open Doors feedback session	\$500.00
Big Brothers Big Sisters feedback session	\$250.00
Youth life jackets	\$363.76
Water shoes and craft supplies	\$175.95
Stream Table supplies	\$20.97
Take home resources and prizes	\$448.58
Remaining funds release for staff time	\$30.97
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$ 5,000</b>

**Narrative summary of grant related activities**

**Mid-Year:** During the fall semester we worked with Open Doors Asheville to host an activity once-a-week for 4 weeks. Turnout varies from week to week, but the average attendance was around 12 students. Together we sampled for macroinvertebrates, tested water quality, explored the impacts of stormwater, and investigated erosion and flooding with our interactive stream table. At the end of our 4 weeks together we utilized a short game show style feedback session to assess the students knowledge and opinions about the river. We had started the planning process for programming with The Christine Avery Learning Center, but they had some scheduling issues related to construction at their facility so we had to postpone that partnership until the spring. We are currently in the process of hiring a new Science and Equity Educator who will oversee this expansion of our program into the afterschool realm. We hope to have this new educator on board by mid-February so they can work more with community partners and meet the deliverables for this grant.

**End of Year:** We are delighted to announce that we have successfully hired and fully trained our new Educator, Leah Worley. Leah has been leading engaging and educational lessons with our partners, marking a significant milestone for our organization.

Throughout the spring season, we had the opportunity to collaborate with both new and familiar partners, resulting in a diverse range of programs. We continued our once-a-week activities with Open Doors, a program that allowed us to work closely with 10 enthusiastic children. Every week, these kids eagerly joined us to explore the outdoors and take part in exciting adventures in local waterways.

In addition, we established a promising partnership with Big Brothers Big Sisters, organizing our inaugural program with eight "littles" and their mentors. Together, we conducted macroinvertebrate sampling activities, fostering a deeper connection with local streams. We have already begun planning future activities with Big Brothers Big Sisters, and we are excited about the potential for further collaboration.

Our collaboration with the City of Asheville Parks and Recreation Department was rekindled, allowing us to participate in programs offered at various community centers across the area. We successfully hosted a lesson at each center, reaching 10 to 15 children, and anticipate further opportunities once school is back in session. The centers we collaborated with include Wesley Grant, Burton Street, Shiloh, Stephens-Lee, Tempie Avery, Oakley, and Malvern Hills.

Furthermore, we forged a partnership with YMCA Horizons, enabling us to lead engaging stream table demonstrations and macroinvertebrate sampling lessons for all 60 of their summer campers. Recognizing the success of this collaboration, we are actively exploring the possibility of extending our involvement with YMCA Horizons to their afterschool program during the school year.

It is important to note that while our partnerships with Parks and Recreation and YMCA Horizons allowed us to reach a larger number of children, our level of interaction with them was comparatively lower than the programs we ran with Open Doors. Hence, the disparity in student participation numbers. As we continue to build these partnerships we're hoping to find ways to connect even more with their students.

We are proud of the achievements and progress made over the course of the year, thanks to the dedication and support of our partners. Looking ahead, we remain committed to expanding our reach, deepening our existing partnerships, and creating transformative experiences for the children we serve.