

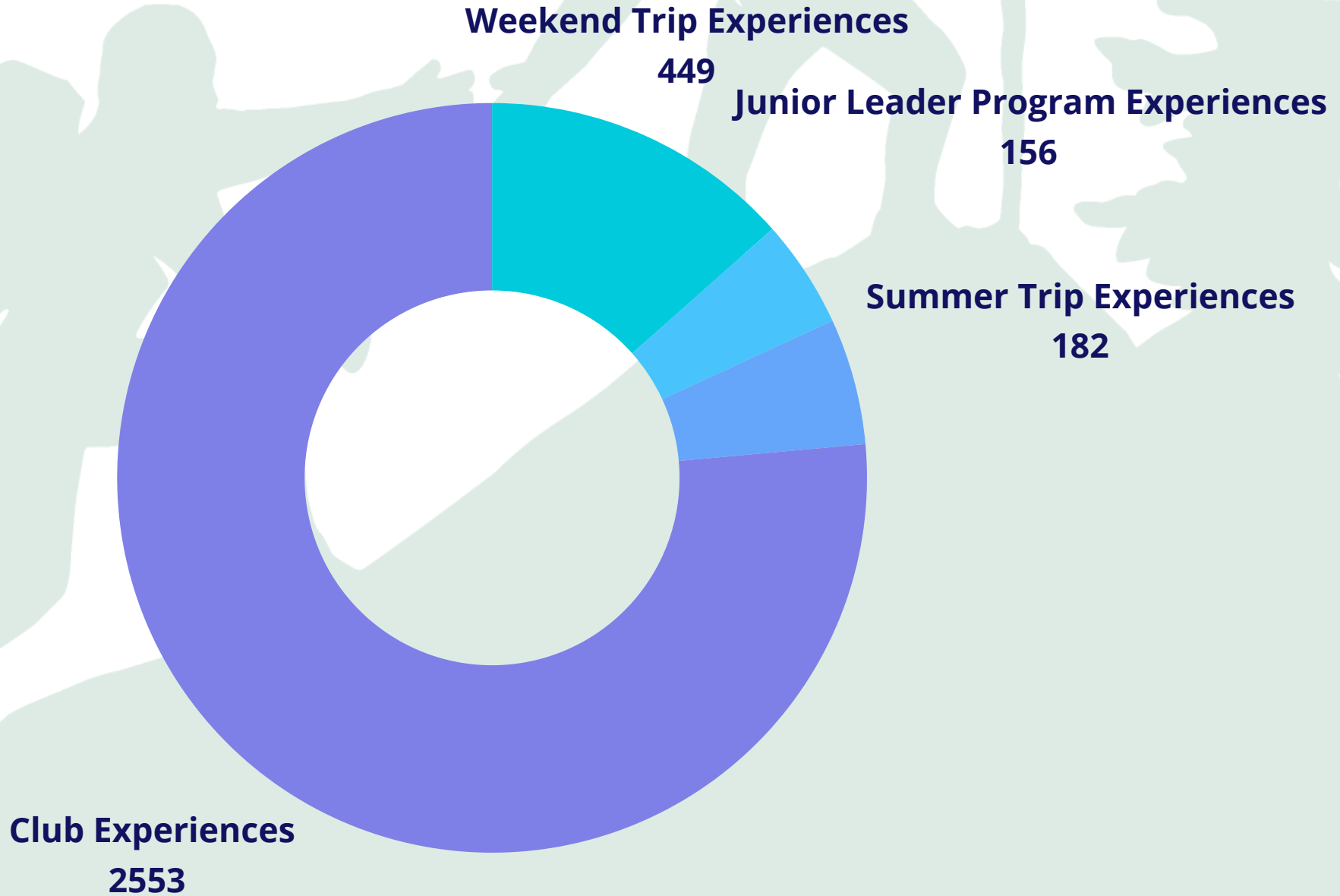


The Woods Project 2024 Impact Report

Creating wilderness exploration experiences that promote academic success, college and career readiness, and lifelong thriving for Houston high school students who wouldn't otherwise have access to these opportunities.

2023-24 Program Year Overview

3,340 Total Experiences



2023-2024 At A Glance



**Club Program at
12 School Partners**



**13 Weekend Trips In and
Around Houston, Texas**



**220 Volunteer Leader Experiences
During Weekend and Summer Trips**



3,264 Student Nights in the Woods

Summer Locations and Partners



**Olympic National Park
with NatureBridge**



**Apostle Islands National Lakeshore
with Wilderness Inquiry**

**Donner Summit/Desolation Wilderness
with Gateway Mountain Center**



**Green River in Labyrinth Canyon
with Breckenridge Outdoor Education Center**

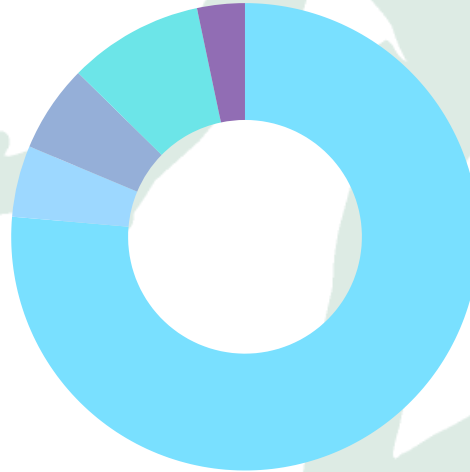
**Holy Cross National Forest
with Breckenridge Outdoor Education Center**



About Our Summer Students

African American
9.3%

Asian American
4.9%



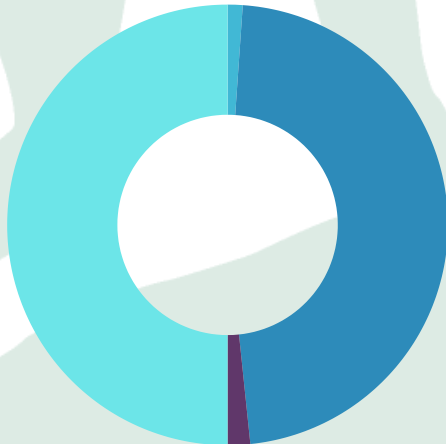
Hispanic or Latin(x)
76.4%

Gender Fluid
1.1%

Female
50%

Male
47.3%

Nonbinary
1.6%

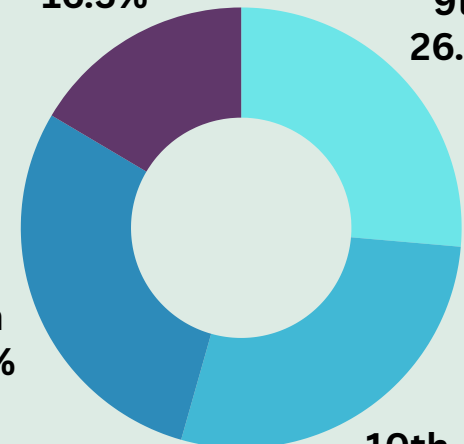


12th
16.5%

9th
26.4%

11th
29.1%

10th
28%



Theory of Change

The background features a light green silhouette of a hiker with a backpack and a walking stick, ascending a hill. To the right is a stylized evergreen tree. The overall theme is outdoor education and nature.

WHAT THE WOODS PROJECT PROGRAM DOES

Positive Youth Development

- Challenge Growth
- Engage Authentically
- Expand Interests
- Manage Goals
- Promote Peer Bonds
- Share Power

WHAT OUR STUDENTS DEVELOP

CORE SEL

- Academic Self-Efficacy
- Contribution
- Positive Identity
- Self-Management
- Social Skills

OUR STUDENTS THRIVING!

- Academic Performance
- Career/Workforce Readiness
- Health and Wellness
- Positive Behavior
- Reduced Risky Behavior

Social Emotional Learning

The background features a light green silhouette of a person climbing a tree on the right side. On the left side, there is a silhouette of a person sitting on a log, with their arms outstretched. The overall scene is set against a white background with a light green wash at the bottom.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is the process of developing the capacities young people need for their long-term success.

In an era increasingly focused on academic outcomes, programs for young people need an alternative — a short-term outcome we can measure that is tied to real long-term goals. Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process of developing the “soft skills” young people need to thrive: to manage themselves as they engage with the world; build and maintain relationships; and treat setbacks and challenges as learning experiences to prompt growth. As they grow, young people with strong SEL skills are more college- and career-ready, experience better mental health and social functioning, and report a greater sense of overall well-being. (Hello Insight)



Young People

THRIVING

Long-Term Outcomes

Young people who develop SEL are on a journey to understand and cultivate their unique interests and talents in many aspects of life — they thrive. Thriving goes beyond competence, with success defined as an ongoing trajectory towards full potential in life.

Academic Performance

Career/Workforce Readiness

Health and Wellness

Positive Behavior

Reduced Risky Behavior

Core SEL Measures



SOCIAL SKILLS

The ability of a young person to take others' perspectives into account, and to develop a sense of caring and empathy



POSITIVE IDENTITY

A young person's internal sense of who they are and confidence to explore the multiple facets of their identities



CONTRIBUTION

A young person's desire to engage with and contribute to family, community, and society



ACADEMIC SELF-EFFICACY

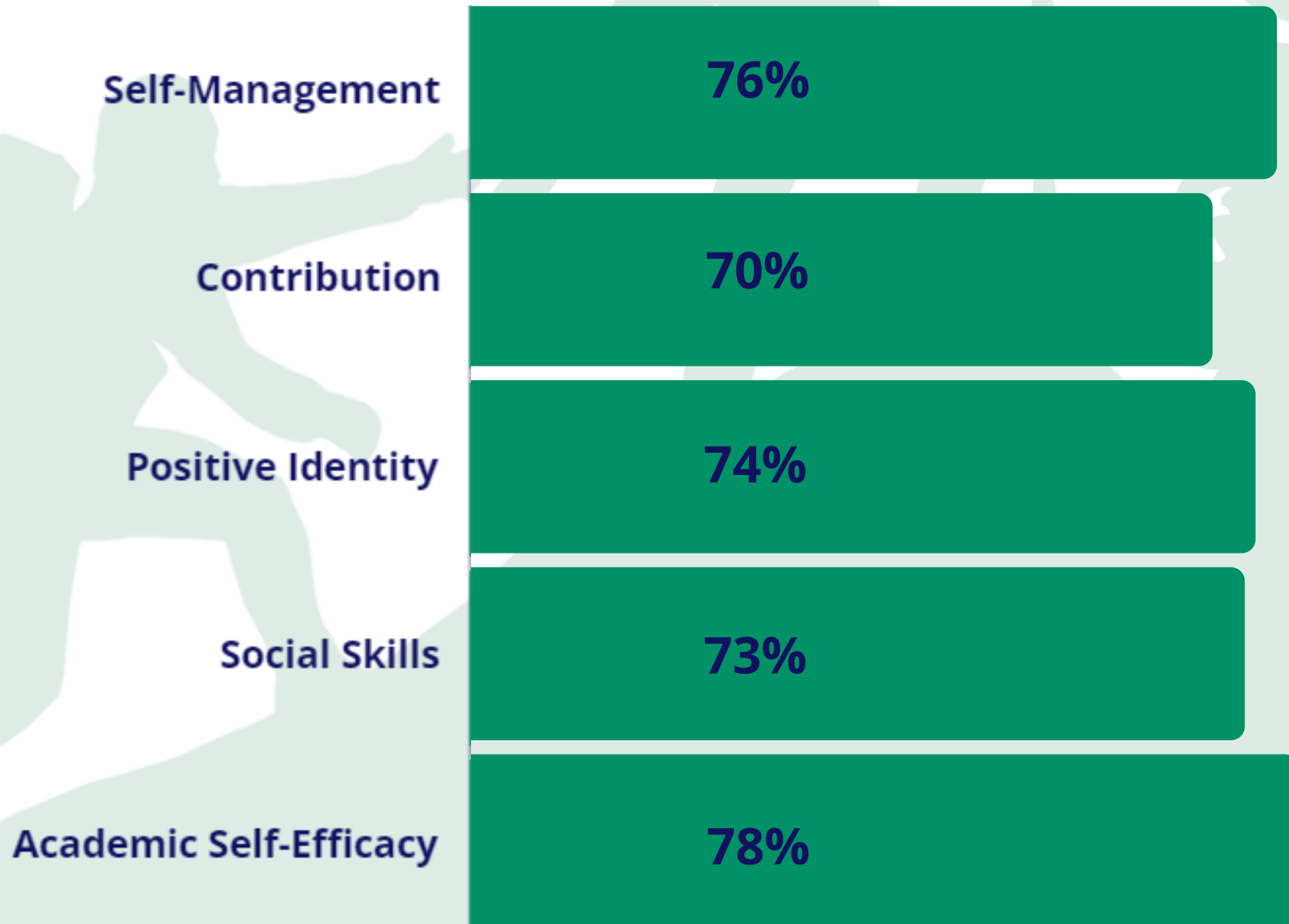
A young person's motivation and perceived mastery over their own learning, school performance, and potential to attain academic success



SELF-MANAGEMENT

The ability of a young person to regulate their emotions and behavior, take positive risks, and persist through life's challenges

Positive Changes in Core SEL



Overall Core SEL Impact

Change in at least 1 SEL

97%

Change in at least 2 SEL

89%

Change in at least 3 SEL

76%

Change in at least 4 SEL

67%

Change in all 5 SEL

42%

Outdoor SEL Measures



CONNECTION TO THE OUTDOORS

A young person's bond with nature or the outdoors



WELL-BEING IN THE OUTDOORS

A young person's feeling that their physical and mental wellness is enhanced by being in nature or the outdoors



SUPPORT FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

A young person's concern for environmental problems and their desire to be part of the solution

Positive Changes in Outdoor SEL

Connection to the Outdoors

75%

Well-Being in the Outdoors

76%

Support for the Outdoors

76%

Overall Outdoor SEL Impact

Change in at least 1 SEL

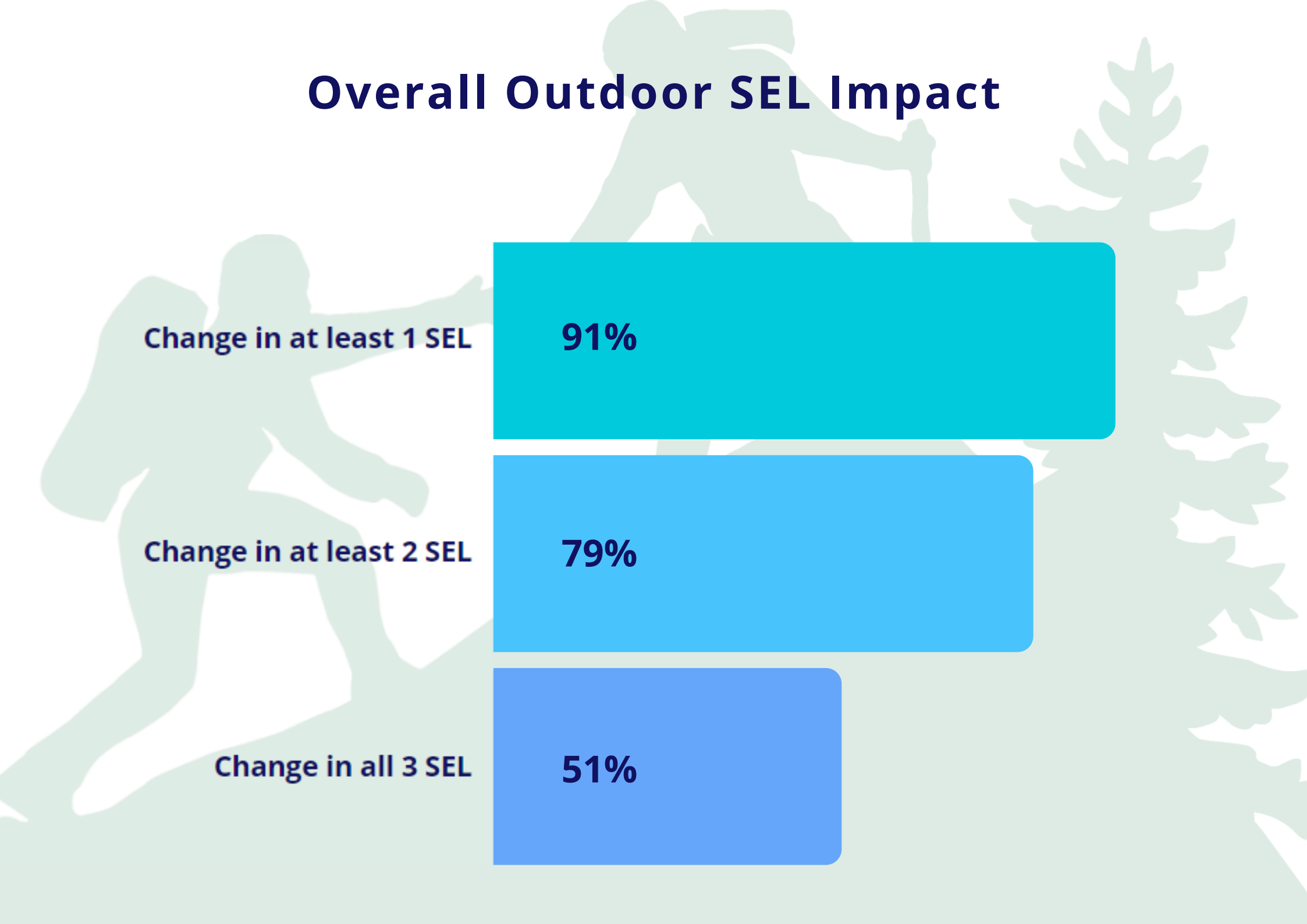
91%

Change in at least 2 SEL

79%

Change in all 3 SEL

51%



Positive Youth Development

Positive Youth Development experiences are not a set of activities or curriculum, rather; it is a way of working with young people that has been proven to promote SEL.

ENGAGE AUTHENTICALLY

A young person's experience with an adult who takes the time to get to know them by listening and understanding who they are — their cultural and lived experiences, their interests, and their passions

① Help young people feel safe and supported by consistently and purposefully applying their recommendations.

90%

① When young people share thoughts and opinions, let them know how much you value their ideas.

89%

① Carve out time in your day to learn about and listen to young people.

85%

① Take the time to really understand young people and their lives outside the program.

83%

PROMOTE PEER BONDS

A young person's experience with an adult who helps them work with peers in teams and groups, creating a safe space to learn with and from one another, exploring similarities and differences, and developing deep bonds and relationships

① Create opportunities for young people to work in small groups to solve problems.

89%

① Create a sense of team or group identity.

86%

① Create opportunities for young people to work together and help one another.

85%

① Create an environment in which young people feel safe and supported by one another.

84%

Positive Youth Development

EXPAND INTERESTS

A young person's experience with an adult who supports them to try new things, broaden their horizons, learn about other people's cultures and perspectives, and explore their own identities

- ① Encourage young people to take a risk and try something new, even when it seems difficult to do. 91%
- ① Provide opportunities for young people to meet and connect with new people. 91%
- ① Create opportunities for young people to try new things they have never done before. 89%
- ① Ensure that young people have the opportunity to engage in activities they like to do. 87%
- ① Support young people to learn about one another, both their similarities and their differences. 86%
- ① Provide opportunities for young people to explore their own passions, cultures, identities, and histories. 82%
- ① Create activities that reference or include things young people enjoy. 80%

CHALLENGE GROWTH

A young person's experience with an adult who encourages them to take risks and perform beyond their own expectations

- ① Frequently remind young people that you believe in them and their ability to succeed. 94%
- ① Express often to young people that you expect them to try hard and do their best. 92%
- ① Encourage young people to work through difficult problems. 91%
- ① Support young people to reflect on their progress toward goals. 86%
- ① Support young people to envision their future. 85%

Positive Youth Development

MANAGE GOALS

A young person's experience with an adult who assists them to set and manage goals important to them and that build upon their passions and interests

- ① Provide opportunities for young people to set individual goals. 83%
- ① Provide opportunities for young people to pursue various strategies to meet their goals, reflecting on progress along the way and shifting gears when necessary. 81%
- ① Provide opportunities for young people to set group goals. 77%

SHARE POWER

A young person's experience with an adult who ensures that their voices and opinions matter

- ① Create opportunities for young people to work on group projects that they have defined. 72%
- ① Create opportunities for young people to make choices and have a voice. 71%
- ① Collaborate with young people to develop group agreements for how you will work together. 67%
- ① Step back and make space for young people to lead. 58%

Positive Youth Development

REFLECT ON OUTDOOR EXPLORATION

- ① Create opportunities for young people to reflect on what they see, hear, and feel in the outdoors 88%
- ① Encourage young people to reflect on how their actions impact the environment 85%
- ① Create opportunities for young people to think about what they achieved and what was challenging during their outdoor experiences 84%
- ① Help young people connect what they learn outdoors with their everyday life 83%

FOSTER OUTDOOR EXPLORATION

- ① Create outdoor experiences that young people will experience for the first time 89%
- ① Encourage young people to express their thoughts and feelings about their outdoor experiences 88%
- ① Support young people as they encounter and take on outdoor challenges 88%
- ① Plan outdoor activities that young people find interesting or meaningful 85%

Changing Lives

One of the main changes I've seen in myself through my experiences with The Woods Project is that I've grown new skills for problem solving. I experienced a lot of new things including packing a backpack, setting up the tents, and cooking in the woods. I had to use problem solving to be able to learn how to do these essential parts of camping. There are honestly so many changes I've seen in myself but a lot of it is the new skills that I learned when figuring things out in the woods without access to "traditional" resources. It felt freeing to be able to grow out there in the middle of nowhere and come back with a fresh mindset on life. After coming back from the quietness of the woods, I felt ready to embrace the rest of the world with a positive outlook. -TWP Summer Participant

The Woods Project gives kids the opportunity to form a relationship with the natural world and to experience more of our beautiful country outside of their Houston bubble. Expanding their horizons open them up to the possibilities which include possibilities for how their communities might improve. -TWP Summer Volunteer Leader

