



HELPING KIDS DISCOVER NATURE'S PLAYGROUND

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**THE NORTH FACE EXPLORE FUND AWARDS GRANT TO GATES COUNTY**

*Gates County 4-H supports a national effort to increase outdoor participation of Gates County youth*

**GATESVILLE, NC – December 7, 2011**– The North Face has awarded a \$2500 grant to Gates County 4-H “Send A Kid to Camp Program” to help children ages 8-14 years explore the outdoors. 4-H has long history of providing educational opportunities for youth to explore the outdoors through its residential camping program. They learn knowledge and skills as it relates to the environment, ecology, out door living skills along with teamwork, leadership and citizenship. Gates County 4-H was selected from hundreds of applications because of its ability to garner resources and reach youth. In the final grant cycle of 2011, The North Face awarded \$125,000 Explore Fund grants to 51 projects helping more than 30,000 kids to connect to nature.

“This is truly an honor to have the Gates County 4-H Program be recognized by a national organization such as North Face and to be a part of the national movement to inspire youth to explore the outdoors.”, said Reba Green-Holley, County Extension Director. “Even though we live in a rural environment our youth do not take advantage of the beauty of nature and what it has to offer.”

The Gates County 4-H Program was established over 100 years ago to help youth make the best better. Since it’s founding, the program has increased youths access to research based knowledge and opportunities which broadens their perspective of the world around them and enables them to gain new skills and knowledge that enhances their quality of life as youth and as they become adults. The Gates County 4-H program has enabled youth to experience a wide variety of activities that they would not have had the opportunity to do so otherwise. It has enable youth to gain access to activities that may have been unaffordable or just not available due to the rural nature of Gates County. Gates County 4-H provides innovative programming to help youth address issues facing them and engages them in the planning, implementation and evaluation process. Youth become engaged in their community thus improving the overall community. In addition, Gates County 4-H, which is a part of the NC Cooperative Extension Service, has been able to advance the mission exponentially with the support of several important partner organizations. Strategic partners that will

assist with additional funding to match the North Face grant will be area businesses, the faith based community, Eastern 4-H Environmental Education Center and donors.

“We believe in the importance of bringing youth together from diverse backgrounds and providing them with opportunities to get outdoors,” said Ann Krcik, director of Outdoor Exploration at The North Face. “We support organizations that work to create these opportunities for youth because we’ve seen firsthand how these programs can ignite a passion for the outdoors and teach them the importance of protecting the places we play for generations to come.”

Gates County 4-H “Send A Kid To Camp will launch on January 2, 2012. To learn more about Gates County 4-H and [Send A Kid to Camp visit <http://gates.ces.ncsu.edu>. To learn more about all of the Explore Fund grantees and to keep up on their progress visit [www.planetexplore.com/explorefund](http://www.planetexplore.com/explorefund).

### **About The North Face Explore Fund**

The North Face® Explore Fund™ is a grant program committed to supporting non-profit, community organizations that break down the barriers preventing children and families from experiencing the outdoors. The Explore Fund, administered by The Outdoor Foundation, finds, engages and provides funding for new partners that help further the mission of inspiring the next generation of explorers and conservationists by helping them discover nature's playground.

### **About PlanetExplore**

PlanetExplore is an online community founded by The North Face, powered by partner organizations that share a passion for the outdoors, and designed to help individuals and families learn about and participate in outdoor activities and events in their area. PlanetExplore is a portal to the outdoors designed to inspire and enable people of all ages to become regularly active outside, and to enjoy the benefits gained through a connection to nature.

For more information, please visit our websites:

The Explore Fund [www.explorefund.com](http://www.explorefund.com)

Planet Explore [www.planetexplore.com](http://www.planetexplore.com)

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