



Linking community,
education and environment
through service

For Immediate Release

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Rocky Mountain Youth Corps Announces Ryan Banks as New CEO

Veteran employee to take reins from Gretchen Van De Carr Feb. 2, 2024



Steamboat Springs, CO (Oct. 25, 2023) – The Rocky Mountain Youth Corps board of directors has announced that longtime employee and Chief Program Officer Ryan Banks will take over as the local nonprofit’s new CEO, replacing 30-year founder and retiring CEO Gretchen Van De Carr, on Feb 2, 2024. The transition takes place as the organization celebrates its 30th year in 2023, continuing its award-winning tradition of engaging youth in the outdoors while linking community, education and environment through service.

“It’s refreshing to know that the organization will be led by someone with Ryan’s vision and passion,” said Van De Carr, who has seen the organization grow to have a \$7 million annual operating budget. “We are looking forward to what the future holds and are super excited for this transition.”

With a background in education, environmental studies and community service work, Banks holds a BS degree in Education from the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh and has spent several years working with AmeriCorps-sponsored programs throughout the country, including an Environmental Education internship through the Student Conservation Association in Alaska’s Kenai National Wildlife Refuge. His introduction to RMYC came in 2012 when he spent two seasons as a Conservation Crew Leader. After leading the Youth Conservation Corps Crew for Idaho’s Caribou-Targhee National Forest, he moved on to become community outreach and program manager of the Wisconsin Fresh Start Program in Portage, WI, working with at-risk youth in GED attainment, community service and construction. He became the Program Director for RMYC in 2017 and was promoted to Chief Program Officer earlier this year. He lives in Hayden, where he also serves as mayor, with his wife, Caroline, and daughters Beatrice and Genevieve.

"I am humbled and honored to be offered this opportunity to lead RMYC into its next chapter," says Banks. "Gretchen has provided me with immeasurable opportunities to grow as a person and a leader within this organization and I am lucky to have spent the last seven years learning for her. I look forward to working with our team to continue to provide meaningful service opportunities to the young people of Northwest Colorado and beyond, while strengthening partnerships with land managers throughout our service region."

Housed in a 4,300-square-foot headquarters on a 3.4-acre campus in Steamboat Springs, RMYC has served more than 13,000 youth in its three decades of service, including more than 5,000 through its Yampa Valley Science School program. Its crews perform such services as community cleanups; planting and watering trees; building and maintaining hundreds of trails for hiking, biking and equestrian use; rerouting and maintaining trails on 10 Colorado 14ers and 250 miles of the Continental Divide Trail; GIS programming; hydrology and archaeology projects; felling and removing beetle kill hazard trees from 2,500 acres of public and private lands to reduce wildfire risk; and, this year, tripling its fire crew program, including a first-ever all-ladies crew. RMYC's Historic Preservation Crews have worked to preserve such local iconic structures as the Yock Homestead of the More Barn, Hahn's Peak Fire Lookout Tower and Diamond Window Cabin. Its newest program—Natural Resource Internships—has grown to more than 110 participants in seven short years and it has provided AmeriCorps Education Awards to more than 2,200 members, totaling \$3.5 million.



Providing more than \$4 million in wages and benefits to its 15 senior level employees, seasonal staff, paid corps members and interns, RMYC is building its long-term financial sustainability for its next 30 years through two primary efforts: building its endowment fund held at the Yampa Valley Community Foundation to \$2 million by 2025; and a major capital project—in 2024 RMYC will begin construction on \$7 million in improvements, including an 8,800-square-foot office building and pavilion for its year-round staff and converting its existing offices and headquarters into dormitory-style employee housing for its long-term field coordinators and crew leaders.

"We've come a long, long way in 30 years," adds board president Frank Mayer. "With the continuing support of our local community, donors, partners and other stakeholders, we're looking forward to Ryan carrying on Gretchen's vision and leadership."

About RMYC

Rocky Mountain Youth Corps engages the strength and potential of youth and young adults to make a difference in themselves and their community through meaningful service opportunities, educational experiences, and group recreational activities. RMYC strives to meet the needs of the communities of northwest Colorado and southern Wyoming by offering a variety of programs and services for youth ages 11-35 years. For more information visit www.RockyMountainYouthCorps.org.

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