



MCDOWELL  
SONORAN  
CONSERVANCY

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The McDowell Sonoran Conservancy focuses on three core pillars – Science, Education and Stewardship. Today we share more with you about Education, specifically youth education.

The Conservancy engages with youth, families and adults so we can all build our understanding and knowledge of our local environment and understand we each have a role to play in protecting it for future generations.



Each year we hold “Expedition Days” which is focused on Title OO students. **Title I** is the largest federally funded educational program providing schools with additional federal funding to assist in meeting low-income student's educational goals. Expedition Days has a goal and vision to bring in students from all backgrounds to be united in their learning of our environment and their place within it. During Expedition Days, we host students in the living laboratory that is the McDowell Sonoran Preserve.

As the students arrived this year and were guided from their bus to the first education station, they were bubbling with excitement. The sun was shining, the weather was perfect, and enthusiastic volunteers were greeting them at every turn.

**“Are you ready to learn something?!”**

With big smiles, the students would excitedly reply ‘YES!’



Among those students was Francisco\*. Francisco was quiet among his peers despite having wide eyes at every turn of seeing new and exciting things. His teacher explained that his family had only three days ago immigrated to the U.S. Francisco was navigating a new school, learning a new country, and now was out in the desert for the very first time.

Francisco had one major hurdle, though - he was still learning English. One of his peers, Antonio\*, was translating for him. These two third-grade students were doing the best they could to keep up with the lessons but Antonio was struggling to take in the day *and* help his fellow classmate.

One of our volunteers, who is one of several fluent in Spanish, ran over to him and asked if he'd help guide Francisco through the day. *"Of course," was the jubilant response.* The volunteer introduced himself to Francisco: "¡Hola! ¿Cómo estás? ¿Cómo te va hoy?" *"Hi! How are you? How is today for you?"*

**The volunteer served as translator for Francisco, walking the wide-eyed child through the lessons.**

**According to our staff volunteer, Francisco is *"Quite the biologist. He had answers immediately. He is passionate about the environment."***



Had he not been given the opportunity to have a translator, that education experience might've been lost. Our ability to literally translate across these divides, across education disparities and demographics, across varied backgrounds and across class; our ability to bridge the gap is what makes Expedition Days so important.

Francisco reflects the culture of inclusiveness that we want to foster, in which every student has the opportunity to be a part of and see their place in the Sonoran Desert. Next year, we plan on continuing to ensure that every student that comes to Expedition Days is able to fully engage and feel the connectedness through the Sonoran Desert.

It costs the Conservancy \$130 per student to involve them in Expedition Days. I urge you to consider making a tax-deductible gift to help student's like Francisco take part in such an enriching educational program like Expedition Days. Your gift will go a long way toward ensuring our education programs continue to provide opportunities for our youth to help give them a strong future.

Warmly yours,

Justin Owen  
Executive Director

DONATE NOW \$50

DONATE NOW \$75

DONATE NOW \$100

DONATE NOW - ANOTHER AMOUNT

\*Names changed for privacy.

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