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To: jasdesign@earthlink.net

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Yosemite National Park

Yosemite News

For Immediate Release

Yosemite National Park Launches "Open the Gateway to Yosemite"


Yosemite Launches "Open the Gateway to Yosemite" for All Program
This week, three buses full of excited 4th graders (and chaperones) arrived at Yosemite National Park. This event starts the beginning of a month long program to have all 4th graders (1300 students, most of them having never been to Yosemite) from Merced City Schools come free to the park for a day long educational trip. Yosemite right now is spectacular, with recent snow gracing the high granite cliffs and the waterfalls cascading at full throttle. The awe-inspiring scenery is incredible.

Highlighting the program is the energetic organization provided by talented Pathways student rangers of the UC Merced Wilderness Education Center. These exceptional students wrote the grant for the program, designed curriculum and are leading the 4th graders around the park. The goal of the program is to "Open the Gateway to Yosemite" for all.

A lot of hard work created this student centric program. The rangers first visited all 13 schools to introduce the students to the National Park System.

and Yosemite. Next, during the nine field days in the park, the students will rotate through three different ranger programs focusing on Ecology, Geology and Cultural History. Each school will also have their EKIP vouchers exchanged for the authentic passes on the day of their field trips. The final components are class assemblies that will focus on the ideas of protecting national parks and preserving them for the future. Discussion will center on different threats to national parks and all of the different ways that 4th graders can protect public spaces, both when visiting parks and when at home.

Both the school district and the rangers are hoping to make this opportunity an integral part of the 4th grade curriculum and continue to provide opportunities for every kid in a park. The National Park Foundation is providing the grant to cover costs for transportation. The Yosemite Conservancy helps fund the UC Merced Wilderness Program. Thank you to the National Park Foundation and Yosemite Conservancy. (E. Kretsch)

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