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March-April 2013

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ALAMEDA MAGAZINE » MARCH-APRIL 2013 » NATURALIST

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## Naturalist

### His Business Is Connecting Kids to the Outdoors

by Susan E. Davis

Scott Wolland, the new executive director of Bay Area Wilderness Training—an Oakland-based group that helps get urban youth out into the woods—has 19 years of outdoor education experience and is passionate about connecting kids with the Bay Area’s spectacular, and easily accessible, outdoors.



#### How did you get into environmental education?

When I was a teenager I lived in New York City but spent my summers in rural Maine, living in a log cabin. The woods felt like home to me. I came to California in 1990 to protect old-growth trees during Redwood Summer [an environmental activism movement]. One day I was hiking with a friend and her sixth-graders from a science camp in the Santa Cruz mountains. She asked me to talk to the kids about redwoods and everything clicked. From there, I went on to become a naturalist and teacher.

#### What does Bay Area Wilderness Training do?

We train teachers and professionals who work with kids to take urban youth out into the wilderness. We provide all the gear and transportation, but because these adults already have relationships with the children, we believe they’re the best teachers. It’s a train-the-trainer kind of model.

#### Why is it important for kids to get outside?

Getting connected to nature can be a transformative experience. I’ve seen kids change from inside out, doing a 180-degree turn to become better students, develop higher esteem, acquire more skills, even become more likeable. When people are more connected to the natural world, they are more connected to their selves, and they become better human beings because of it.

#### What about people in the suburbs? How should they get their kids into the woods?

What’s key is to incorporate the values you want your kids to have into your own life. If you make connecting with nature a priority, your kids will, too. Turn off the technology for 12 hours sometimes and just be with each other. Make plans to go hiking on the weekend. Find ways to go outside and have fun. Send older kids away on backpacking trips.

#### How can people in the Bay Area get involved with Bay Area Wilderness Training?

We have Discovery Session meetings the third Wednesday of every month at which citizens

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Bruce Pizzichillo and Dari Gordon open their studio to display and sell one-of-a-kind, handcrafted glass vases, sculptures, bowls and jewelry. The artists will be on site to answer any questions about their process and discuss their work. Nov. 28–30, Dec. 6, 13, and 20.
- [2014.11.28 Holiday Art Glass Studio Sale](#)  
Holiday Art Glass Open Studio and Sale. Bruce Pizzichillo and Dari Gordon create unique glass artwork in their Oakland studio; their work has been exhibited nationwide, as well as in Canada, Europe and Japan and is featured in numerous collections, galleries, museums and publications. At this once a year event they will be offering a selection of handblown art glass including vases, bowls, tumblers, lighting, jewelry and sculpture, most at 25% -75% off regular prices, as well as studio “seconds”. Cost
- [2014.09.08 Aereal Alchemy](#)  
Areal Alchemy is a teaching tool that shares essential ingredients for the creative brew of aerial acrobatic art. By usage of categorization, cross – apparatus comparisons, and repeated patterns, the Alchemy series portrays the mystical art through safe audio – visual learning

tools. The lessons use cyber space to promote timeless learning, focusing on the student as an individual, fostering processing around specific learning needs. Actualized in curriculum for Skyhigh Odditorium students, all lessons have been tried, tested, and taught to humans ranging 15 - 50 years young, and are continually refined by the ongoing research of its manifestor. Beginning classes on Rope are Mondays at 11am, Aerial Hoop Tuesdays at 2pm, and Silks Wednesdays at 630pm. Classes occur in 4 week series, and are additionally available for drop in. Register on our website ! [www.skyhighodditorium.com](http://www.skyhighodditorium.com)

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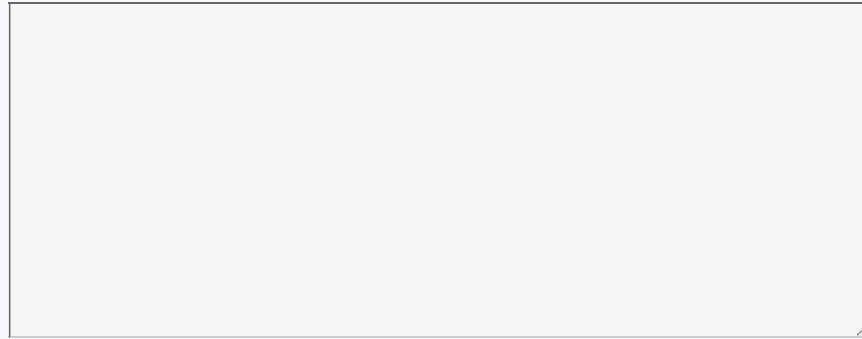
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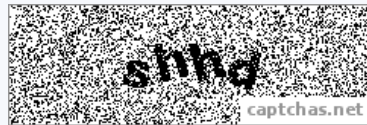
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can learn about our work and then help us repair and stage our gear. As fundraisers, we also take adults out on guided backpacking trips for three days. They raise the \$1,000 fee via sponsorships—and then they get a guided trip plus \$500 worth of brand-new equipment that was donated to us. We do a similar mountain climbing trip as a fundraiser. You can learn more about these and our other programs at [www.bawt.org](http://www.bawt.org).

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