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December 10, 2015

David Allen  
608 W Dean Ave  
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*"Hiking the Ice Age Trail changed the way I look at Wisconsin. There is so much beauty right out our back door and the Ice Age Trail covers it all."*

-Naleah, Janesville

Dear David,

It all started with a school hike.

Three years ago, Naleah hiked part of the Ice Age Trail near her home in Janesville. The hike was through the Ice Age Trail Alliance's Saunters program. Between the distraction from other school and social activities, the time spent outside – in nature – and the workout related to hiking, Naleah realized something unexpected. **She felt happy.**

Many people think the work of the Ice Age Trail Alliance is simply building and maintaining the Trail. They aren't wrong. Most resources are devoted to trailbuilding and trail stewardship. And there's so much more: permanent land protection, cultivating the next generation of conservationists, and helping people learn to use the Trail and enjoy it.

That's why I'm writing to you – to encourage you to help keep all of this important work going.

**You can help by making an extra gift today.**

Naleah discovered the Trail through the Saunters program. The name Saunters honors Henry David Thoreau's essay about the nature of sauntering. Thoreau said the saunterer has no particular home.

“...but is equally at home everywhere. For this is the secret of successful sauntering.”

Saunters is one of many Ice Age Trail Alliance programs to get people out on the Trail. The Alliance also works together with:

- Wisconsin companies like Uline and Brady Corporation to get their employees out on the Trail,
- Medical facilities to include hiking on the Trail as part of their rehab and mental health programs, and
- School educational programs to use the Trail as a classroom.

And that brings us back to Naleah.

After one hike on the Trail, Naleah was hooked. Before long, Naleah was a mentor for other young hikers. Then she really took off.

“When I hike, everything else just kind of melts away and I can really be myself. It makes me feel good! I want to make sure my friends have the same chance as I have had to hike the Ice Age Trail.”

Naleah understands that efforts like these don't just magically fund themselves, so she started her own effort to raise money for the Janesville Saunters.

Naleah asked for a supply of brochures that tell the Ice Age Trail story and requested photos and stories that she could include in emails and on Facebook. She started talking to family, friends and local businesses about donating and spreading the word.

Her energy and dedication were infectious. Naleah even started working with the Ice Age Trail Alliance's Rock County Chapter to leverage their community involvement.

This is where you come in. **Your gift of \$50, \$100 or more** will make a real difference for teens like Naleah, for local volunteers like the Rock County Chapter, and for communities who understand the mental and physical benefits of hiking the Trail.

**Please make a special gift to the Alliance this holiday season.**

Ray Zillmer's dream of a thousand-mile footpath across Wisconsin was never going to be realized in a day or even a single decade. It was always going to take generations of enthusiastic, passionate dreamers – like you, and scores of others like you.

Where will the next generation of trail leaders come from?

**You can be a part of that story – a part of that tomorrow.**

You can ensure more field trip students like Naleah can discover the Ice Age Trail by **giving today!**

The children we serve today are the future of the Ice Age Trail Alliance. By reaching them now, we make trail builders and stewards of them tomorrow.

Help turn the corner. Help spread the word. Help kids like Naleah.

Make an additional gift to the Ice Age Trail Alliance this year. Please consider **a gift of \$50 or \$100**. If you can do more, be as generous as possible. If not, find a number that is right for you.

No gift is too small. Your donation will ensure hikers – like Naleah! – continue creating, supporting and protecting the Ice Age Trail.

With gratitude,



Mike Wollmer

Executive Director & CEO

**P.S. Don't forget to make your donation before December 31!**