

Looking at Nature Through a New Lens

by Rebecca Patterson-Markowitz



On June 16, 2016 seven students from the Patagonia Youth Enrichment Center joined Seeds of Stewardship for the third Arizona Arts on the Trail outing. Photographer Josh Schachter was along for the outing, offering students instruction in his preferred medium.

Josh introduced himself and asked the students “If you were being sent to Mars and you could only take two pictures, one of a person and one of a place, what would you choose to photograph?” This kicked off some lively responses and set the playful tone for the outing. Josh then presented briefly on his career in photography and some of the places his work has allowed him to travel. Finally, he engaged the students with the concept of visual metaphor. They spent a while trying to define this concept and think of examples of how to convey human feeling through non-human subject matter.



Josh Schachter (right) introduces youth to the basics of digital photography.

The activity we had devised for the day was a photography scavenger hunt, where students picked two themes from a list and chose one of their own to photograph. They also were looking for “stewardship” as an assigned theme.

Each student was beaming as they took the digital camera out of its case that would be theirs for the day. Many hadn’t ever had the opportunity to use a digital camera, and they had questions for Josh about zooming and all the settings.

We headed out into the warm and cloudy afternoon. Our outing location was a portion of the Sonoita Creek and a nearby wash. The students were turned loose on the landscape with their cameras. They crouched down to get close to flowers and trees to find an “ant’s view,” and looked closely at the texture in the sand and rock and mud for repeating patterns. One student chose “habitat” as one of their themes and so they got up close and personal with an ant mound teeming with activity.



Exilee and a beetle



Chloe captures a flower



Lalo in the creek

From the dry wash we moved towards the creek, taking our shoes off to wade in the water and try and capture the texture of the light reflecting off the water. After observing the students’ obvious passion for taking pictures, Anna Coleman, founder of the Patagonia Youth Enrichment Center, was inspired to begin a photography club and seek funding to provide cameras for her students.

The students were very reluctant to part with their cameras at the end of the outing. They all had found a new way to get up close and personal with the beauty that surrounded them, and a new perspective on their home.

This Seeds of Stewardship outing made possible by a grant of funds from:



These are a few photos taken by Patagonia Youth Enrichment Center students as part of the Arizona Arts on the Trail Seeds of Stewardship outing:

