

2023 Educational Program

School for the Deaf

Being a student, a teacher, or an administrator can be stressful. Sometimes an escape outside is needed every now and then, to just allow everyone to be at one with nature. A change of environment in a safe place that soothes is so very crucial to youth and adults' overall well-being. Experiencing the therapeutic benefits of nature through "*shinrin yoku*" or forest bathing, is one way to allow us to experience that. Studies show that forest bathing can boost memory and focus, promote empathy, reduce stress, and improve attention and behavior in school settings.

More Deaf schools and educational programs are incorporating this forest bathing practice in their curriculum with the guidance of Summer Crider, a guide with The Giving Cypress. This proposal has been created specifically for **(Name of school)** *for a special program to occur during (insert Date).*

A customized program includes:

1. *Campus-wide presentation on importance of mental health, self care, and Nature connection.*
2. *Staff training/ professional development with Mental Health counselors.*
3. *Speaking with and interacting with students and teachers/staff, with a mini Forest bathing experience.*
4. *Other ideas include: Scouting and studying the "climate" and green spaces surrounding the schools/buildings. Attending Deaf retreat- outdoor & forest bathing/nature connection activities, campfire stories. "Family Sign Night" or storytelling/entertainment events.*
5. *Wrap up with program coordinators, school administrators, and a typed-up debrief/summary of what schools/programs can do for the future.*

Presentation and entertainment can include topics like:

- Nature Therapy as Self-Care
- Discussing mental health/suicide: "You Are Not Alone"
- STEM focus- Nature, Ecology, Biology. Current environment studies: Climate Change.
- Wilderness Survival Tips (making fire, shelter, know what is edible)
- ASL Storytelling about the Giving Cypress- ie. *The Giving Tree*

What does a Nature Therapy program for students look like?

During a Forest Bathing experience, students/ teachers are led through a series of nature invitations during a leisurely walk on a gentle trail or pathway. The focus will be on mindfulness practices and opportunities to slow down, unplug, and soak up the magic of our wild places. The experience typically lasts 2.5 hours which culminates in a tea ceremony with healthy snacks provided. Other activities can be incorporated.

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Benefits of Nature Therapy activities for youth:

- Outdoor fun + mindfulness = mental health boosts for youth
- Reduces frustration and stress in kids with ADHD and other learning disabilities
- Teaches us ecology, biology, and nature related STEM focus
- Promotes more resilience and focus on academic subjects
- Techniques of calming the body/mind, finding sit spots & befriending the Trees in natural spaces/ settings
- Integrating Nature Therapy into daily life/work balance
- Silent Walks & Sharing Circle for stress reduction and conflict resolution
- Expressive Therapy through art, dance, body movement, and other forms of expression
- Learning about the land and local edible plants and wilderness survival skills

Why be guided by The Giving Cypress?

Surely, we can benefit from simply being outdoors and walking in the woods by ourselves- but to be guided by a trained and certified Nature Therapy guide can help us deepen our connection with ourselves, each other, and the environment. Guides show us various techniques such as connecting with our bodies through breath-work, teaching us about local wild edible plants, and helping us explore our connection with the environment in a safe setting.

Summer Crider is currently the only known Deaf certified Nature & Forest Therapy guide. She is also a former k-12 school teacher for Deaf, DeafBlind, DeafDisabled, and hard of hearing students. Being Deaf, Summer understands the various obstacles that Deaf and hard of hearing children face in schools... whether it's being alone in the mainstream, struggling to catch up with language milestones as a result of language deprivation, and all the emotional and mental health challenges of being Deaf navigating in a hearing world.

Summer has taught and worked with teachers, counselors, and school administrators, so a specific package can be customized to meet the needs of the school culture. The Giving Cypress is insured by [Alternative Balance, LLC.](#)

Cost of Service:

\$_____ worth of consulting & service by **The Giving Cypress, LLC.**

Airfare, meals & lodging are covered by _____

What The Giving Cypress will need:

- Email for the financial person to send an invoice, 50% deposit to secure the date.
- Contract in place with clear objectives, schedule, and signed blanket permission form for liability and media releases.