



HELPING KIDS DISCOVER NATURE'S PLAYGROUND

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CONTACT: ALYSSA WALKER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
603-730-2715
alyssa@kismetrockfoundation.org

**THE NORTH FACE EXPLORE FUND AWARDS GRANT TO KISMET ROCK
FOUNDATION**

Kismet Rock Foundation supports a national effort to increase outdoor participation among Massachusetts, Maine and New Hampshire youth

North Conway, NH – JUNE 20, 2011– The North Face has awarded a \$2,400 grant to Kismet Rock Foundation to help children and families explore the outdoors. Kismet Rock Foundation enhances the physical, intellectual and emotional development of well-functioning but economically disadvantaged children by providing access to the immense value of a comprehensive and multi-dimensional education in technical rock climbing. Kismet Rock Foundation was selected from hundreds of applications because of its focus on providing technical rock climbing instructions to economically underserved youth. In the first of two grant cycles in 2011, The North Face awarded \$125,000 Explore Fund grants to 52 projects helping more than 30,000 kids to connect to nature.

“We are thrilled that the North Face Explore Fund chose Kismet Rock Foundation as a philanthropic priority. Like North Face's Explore Fund, Kismet Rock Foundation believes in the physical, emotional and social benefits of connecting young people with the outside world and an active lifestyle. Kismet specifically uses rock climbing as a catalyst for these benefits. Our sincere thanks to the fund for enabling children from low income families in New England to be a part of the Kismet family,” says Sasha Eisele, Kismet's Board Vice-Chair.

Kismet Rock Foundation emerged out of a desire of the director, Mike Jewell, to offer the same climbing instruction to economically disadvantaged children as he had given to

many children with greater resources throughout his guiding career. After nearly a decade of consideration, Mike asked a childhood friend, Stanley West, to find four children in southern New Jersey and bring them to New Hampshire for one week of technical climbing instruction. During the summer of 1999, this initial project was accomplished with little money and with much effort on the part of some very kind and generous people. Luckily, the project received media attention, including a piece on the television show "New Hampshire Crossroads." As a result, Mike was approached by members of the North Conway community with the idea of starting a nonprofit organization. Thus, Kismet was born in the year 2000 with a small board of six, and the support of many friends and organizations.

"First-hand experience is essential to ignite a passion for the outdoors, and that shouldn't be limited by gender, race or income level," said Ann Krcik, director of outdoor participation at The North Face. "At The North Face, we're dedicated to providing everyone with the access to our natural playgrounds and the resources they need to get outside."

Kismet's summer season will launch on July 17, 2011. To learn more about Kismet, visit www.kismetrockfoundation.org To learn more about all of the Explore Fund grantees and to keep up on their progress visit www.planetexplore.com.

About The North Face Explore Fund

The North Face® Explore Fund™ is a grant program committed to supporting non-profit, community organizations that break down the barriers preventing children and families from experiencing the outdoors. The Explore Fund, administered by The Outdoor Foundation, finds, engages and provides funding for new partners that help further the mission of inspiring the next generation of explorers and conservationists by helping them discover nature's playground.

About PlanetExplore

PlanetExplore is an online community founded by The North Face, powered by partner organizations that share a passion for the outdoors, and designed to help individuals and families learn about and participate in outdoor activities and events in their area. PlanetExplore is a portal to the outdoors designed to inspire and enable people of all ages to become regularly active outside, and to enjoy the benefits gained through a connection to nature.

For more information, please visit our websites:

The Explore Fund www.explorefund.com

Planet Explore www.planetexplore.com

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