



# SäJai® Insights

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July, 2010

## Upcoming Events:

**FRPA** Sept 1, Orlando, FL  
Melissa will speak at the annual conference.

**NRPA Annual Congress**  
Oct. 25-29, Minneapolis, MN  
The Foundation will exhibit, and Melissa will speak on Oct. 28.

**WPRA** Nov. 4, La Crosse, WI  
Melissa will speak at the annual conference.

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## National Get Outdoors Day

Saturday, June 12 was National Get Outdoors Day ([www.nationalgetoutdoorsday.org](http://www.nationalgetoutdoorsday.org)). Here in Minnesota, REI stores and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources have teamed up for three years to celebrate by hosting a free event at Ft. Snelling State Park. This year, the SäJai Foundation was invited to set up an activity table for kids.

The forecast was dismal, but we set off with the chosen activities: making fossils using items found in nature and homemade play-doh, and planting bean seeds into cups to take home.

Sadly, the turnout was much lower than expected—because it rained nearly the entire time, and



the temperature hovered around 59°F.

But we don't consider the event unsuccessful. In fact,

it reminded us of something important about kids: they **love, love, love to be out in the rain.**

From toddlers in slickers and boots to tweens in shorts and flip-flops, no one complained, and everyone had a great time.

Which just goes to show—kids instinctively understand that nature in any form is a great playground!

If REI and the DNR repeat the event next year, which is likely, we'll be there—and see you there!

*Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Dept. of Natural Resources*

## Barb King Celebration of Life Award

This spring marked the first annual Barb King Celebration of Life Award. This award honors Barb's commitment to kids, and to helping them become healthier and more connected to nature. The

award will be given each March to a deserving organization that goes above and beyond in making a healthy difference in the lives of children. The 2010 recipient is Minneapolis' Plymouth Youth Christian

Center, a group which is doing outstanding work with youth in a low-income community and wants to help those kids live healthier lives. Congratulations to PCYC!



*Learning about growing plants at an organic farm.*

“The lesson was a ton of fun. I liked the fact that the lesson focused on how no food is off limits, just some foods we should stop and think before we eat them.”

—Bridget Ideker,  
Rochester, MN

## From the President

Summer is here and we hope you take time to be active in the great outdoors. All humans are connected, instinctually, to the natural world. Nature can increase your activity levels, reduce stress, and revive the soul all at the same time. Often as adults we forget to get outdoors because of busy schedules. We want to encourage you to take

your own “nature break” and focus on energy balance via the outdoors. We’re excited because approximately 600 kids this summer are working with our Wise Kids programs. They’re learning about healthy living and loving it. And, we know we are having impact. In fact, in a recent parent survey done in Milwaukee, 65% of parents said

their children were sharing information they had learned in Wise Kids at home, while shopping, or when out and about in the community! Through our collective efforts we can and will make a difference. Thank you for your support and enjoy your outdoor adventures this summer!

—Melissa Hanson

## Program Leaders Rock!

Yes, the Sājai Foundation is really proud of the Wise Kids programs. But the real magic happens when program leaders begin customizing them. We’ve heard from leaders who have:

- Taken kids on field trips to organic farms
- Had kids analyze the offerings at Old Country Buffet to determine what was healthy—and what wasn’t
- Helped kids log their snacks and classify

to learn about vegetable gardening

them as healthy or junk food, which lead to a decline in junk food consumption

- Turned a recycling mission into a relay race for extra fun (and physical activity!)

Thank you, leaders!!

## Did You Know?

We’re all over the internet! Follow us at [twitter.com/sajaifoundation](https://twitter.com/sajaifoundation), and come “like” us at [www.facebook.com/sajaifoundation/](https://www.facebook.com/sajaifoundation/)

Part of the fun of so-

cial media is finding all kinds of new resources we might not have heard about otherwise. Check out these sites for year-round activities with kids:

Activities to engage kids

outdoors: [discovertheforest.org](http://discovertheforest.org)

The summer family walking pledge: <http://tinyurl.com/24gw3j8>

Why recess before lunch makes sense: <http://tinyurl.com/yd3zkdd>

*Kids getting strong and healthy in a Wise Kids Two program!*



# News from the Field



*Foundation CEO/  
President Melissa Hanson*

Our CEO/President is a media star! Last year, Melissa was selected to be a beta tester for Microsoft’s Office 2010. They liked her feedback and efforts so much that they asked her to be part of the product launch in Seattle in June. They flew her there and arranged a photo op with Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer, and they also donated copies of Office 2010 for the Foundation staff.

Even better, it gave Melissa a fantastic opportunity to talk about the Sājai Foundation and the work we do to a wide national audience. Since the launch, the Foundation has been discussed in several newspaper stories and blog posts (check the “About Us” page on our website for links). You can also see the video of the ad here: <http://tinyurl.com/26hrnbu>

Thanks to Microsoft for the opportunity!

**“[Her father] grinned, and said [she] had requested that he bring a lunch that was healthy and contained fruit.”**

## Wise Kids® in Action

Thanks to a grant from the Northwestern Mutual Foundation, Wise Kids expanded into six Milwaukee schools this spring. A standout among them was Camp Thoreau. The staff and 60+ kids got fired up about living a healthy life. They added their own activities, including a trip to a local organic gar-

den/farm, morning calisthenics, and even physical challenges for parents, leaders, and janitorial staff! Camp Director Karen Rosio recalls, “One girl’s father would bring her fast food every day for lunch but on Friday he came at noon, grinned, and said his daughter had request-

ed that he bring a lunch that was healthy and contained fruit. We were really amazed that it took hold that quickly and the parent responded in such a positive way.”



## How You Can Help

Did you know the average child 8-10 year-old spends 5 ½ hours with media each day, and 71% of 8- to 18-year-olds have a TV in their room! At a time when our world has so many high-profile issues from oil spills to war to World Cup excitement, we often forget

the basic things like helping children learn about healthy living. You can play a key role in making sure kids don’t miss out. First, make a point to spend some time with a child you know outdoors or being physically active. Your involvement can pull them away from

the media and get them active. Then, consider donating to the Sājai Foundation so we can continue teaching children the basics of healthy living through great programs like those highlighted in this issue.

For more information on how you can help, visit our website at [sajaifoundation.org](http://sajaifoundation.org) or call Melissa Hanson at 763-257-2022.



The Säjai® Foundation

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## Who We Are

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