

Vida Verde: What it means to me

Hi! My name is Boris Aguilar. I am a 10th grader at the Lighthouse Community Charter School in Oakland. When I was in 6th grade, I went to Vida Verde with my classmates. It was one of my first outdoor experiences where I had the most fun.

At Vida Verde everything was different from the city--the air, the environment, the sounds, and being with a small group of people. I had a lot of great experiences that I still remember—milking a goat, making cheese, and singing around a campfire. It was a very cool, and exciting trip that had an impact on me for sure.

The first lesson I learned was that life takes risks—and it is important to take them. At first, I didn't want to go to Vida Verde because I was scared of bears, being in the woods, and I had never been apart from my family for a long period of time. But, I decided to go. And while I was there, I still had to take risks and try new things like going the bathroom in the woods and walking at night without a light. The experience taught me that being in nature is cool. It's fun. You feel less stressed and mad because things are simpler and you can leave all that behind. (I also learned that there are no bears at Vida Verde).

Vida Verde also brought out my curiosity. I remember wanting to know everything about the goat, the plants, doing our business in the woods, being able to see the stars in the sky that I couldn't see in Oakland, and wondering why our eyes begin to adjust and see shapes in pitch blackness.

My experience at Vida Verde has helped me take more risks and be open to things in life. Before 6th grade, I did not care about the earth—I even littered. Now I hear about global warming and I think about nature—and all the plants and animals that are affected by human actions. I care.

I think that a trip to Vida Verde is important for people to experience—to learn about yourself and nature. Just one year ago, my brother went to Vida Verde and he kept talking about how much fun he had when he returned. It brought back a lot of good memories and made me want to go back to Vida Verde or go somewhere in nature to have that kind of experience again.

Now, even more than a few years ago, do I ever appreciate Vida Verde for sharing and showing me a part of the world and what I am capable of.