

# The Mayfly Project

Lead Mentor Handbook

2022-2024



[www.themayflyproject.com](http://www.themayflyproject.com)

## Hello TMP Lead Mentor!!!!!!

Thank you for joining us on this important mission! We are looking forward to working with you to help create some amazing experiences for the foster children in your community. TMP is an open book and we are here to guide you through this entire process, so please always ask questions and let us know if you have any needs or concerns.

We've detailed out our processes and steps so you can hopefully spend less time organizing and more time having fun with mentees and mentors. These handbooks were created by TMP Founders, Kaitlin Barnhart and Jess Westbrook, copyrighted to TMP and only to be used for TMP purposes. This handbook pairs with these documents:

- Mentor Orientation Handbook—Includes program rules and training pieces
- Project Manual—Includes everything project outing related
- Mentor Agreement Form

The most successful projects are the ones that follow our guidelines (because we've learned from mistakes for sure), and who utilize our help. Keep in touch, put your mentors to work, and let's make this project happen!

Thank you for all you are doing to bring The Mayfly Project to the kids who need us most!

Best,

The Mayfly Project Team





## **Table of Contents**

- Introduction TMP and Staff.....Page 1-6
- Tools We Use.....Page 7
- Project First Steps.....Page 8
- Building Your Team.....Page 9-11
- Project Mentor Roles.....Page 12
- Project Check-List.....Page 13-14
- Finding Children to Mentor.....Page 15-17
- Group Home/Agency Questions.....Page 18-20
- Ordering Project Gear.....Page 21-22
- Project Outing Stages.....Page 23-24
- Project Problems Q&A.....Page 25-26
- Fund Balances/Fundraising.....Page 27-31
- Social Media.....Page 32
- Project Wrap Up List.....Page 33-34

## **About The Mayfly Project**

### **Mission Statement:**

The Mayfly Project is a 501(c)(3) organization that uses fly fishing as a catalyst to mentor children in foster care.

Our mission is to support children in foster care and introduce them to their local water ecosystems through fly fishing. We believe that by connecting youth in foster care to the rewarding hobby of fly fishing, it provides an opportunity for them to have fun, build self-confidence, and develop a meaningful connection with the outdoors.

Find out how we got started here: [Who We Are | The Mayfly Project](#)

### **TMP Goals:**

- To support children in foster care by offering them a mentoring friendship and teaching them about fly fishing.
- To provide a physically and emotionally safe environment for mentees to learn about fly fishing.
- To be a role model to children in foster care-- exemplifying consistency, honesty, patience, healthy lifestyles and sharing our genuine love for the outdoors (at all times).
- To introduce children to their natural environments and local ecosystems, while providing a positive example of being a good steward to the environment.
- To share The Mayfly Project, starting with our local communities and reaching across the world!

## **The Mayfly Project Information**

The Mayfly Project is a tax-exempt, nonprofit organization, as described in section 501(c)(3) of the IRS code. Our tax identification number is 47-5685618.

TMP Mailing Address: 3541 Harrison Rd. Benton, AR 72019

Website: [www.themayflyproject.com](http://www.themayflyproject.com)

Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/themayflyproject/>

Instagram: @themayflyproject

VIMEO: <https://vimeo.com/user61659104>

Mentor Information Center: [Mentor Information Center | The Mayfly Project](#)  
Password: TMP2015!

Project Locations Map: <https://themayflyproject.com/project-locations/>

## **The Mayfly Project Staff**

### ***Jess Westbrook, TMP Founder, Executive Director***

Jess manages all of the financials, partnerships, and gear for TMP. Contact Jess for specific questions regarding ordering gear, talking to fly fishing companies, how to manage donations, and individual project fund balances. Jess is also an accountant and part owner of a clothing print company in Arkansas. He randomly calls people and uses a bunch of exclamation points, so get ready!!!

Phone, 501-317-5864. Email, [Jess@themayflyproject.com](mailto:Jess@themayflyproject.com)

### ***Kaitlin Barnhart, TMP Co-Founder, National Program Director***

Kaitlin will be working with you to establish project connections, assisting in finding foster children to mentor, helping prepare mentors as needed, and will be with you through the project process. Kaitlin now works full time for TMP! She has a background in mental health and program management, and does most of the writing in our program. If you have any problems with mentors or need an ear to listen, give her a call. She prefers to text than randomly call you, but likes to check in on you to see if you need support or a high five!

Phone, 208-659-6584. Email, [kaitlin@themayflyproject.com](mailto:kaitlin@themayflyproject.com)

### ***Debbie Harrington, TMP Project Coordinator***

Debbie manages all of the shipping of gear and also assists with project management. If you are receiving something from TMP in the mail, Debbie most likely sent it to you! She also assists with mentor interviews, background checks, and organizing teams. Debbie is a retired school counselor and she's been with us since TMP's first year. Send her an email if you need her help!

Phone, 501-519-0674. Email, [Debbie@themayflyproject.com](mailto:Debbie@themayflyproject.com)

***Hana Knight, TMP Executive Assistant***

Hana assists with organizing teams, conducting mentor interviews and background checks, planning events, and supporting our administrative staff. You'll hear from her throughout the project and she is always available to chat or problem solve. Hana joined TMP in 2021 and has been a huge help! She works part-time, so an email is usually the best way to catch her!

Phone, 208-946-1184. Email, [Hana@themayflyproject.com](mailto:Hana@themayflyproject.com)

***Heather Sees, TMP Project Liaison***

Heather helps TMP with setting up shows and assisting TMP admins as needed. She resides in Pennsylvania and brought TMP to Colorado in 2018. Heather has been a huge asset to TMP throughout the years! Email is the best way to reach Heather!

Email, [Heather@themayflyproject.com](mailto:Heather@themayflyproject.com)

**TMP's Current Board of Directors:**

Nick Grisham, President

[ngrisham@hotmail.com](mailto:ngrisham@hotmail.com)

Annette Hurley, Vice President

[ahurleybird@gmail.com](mailto:ahurleybird@gmail.com)

Kim Bearden, Treasurer

[kbearden97@gmail.com](mailto:kbearden97@gmail.com)

Amy Shores, Secretary

[amy.b.shores@gmail.com](mailto:amy.b.shores@gmail.com)

Cullen Bullard, Board Member

## Tools We Use at TMP

**Project Organization:** Lead Mentor Handbook, Project Manual, Mentor Orientation Handbook, Agency Brochure, Foster Child Registration Forms, TMP Mentor Agreement Form (every mentor needs to sign this), COVID19 Policy Form, Trauma Informed Care Videos, Further Information Page, Mentors Needed Poster, Sterling Volunteers Background Checks, and [Mentor Information Center](#) (where all the forms are found). Monthly Lead/Co-Lead Mentor Calls!!! Those are so helpful, please join when you can!

**For Mentoring Kids:** Curriculum, Art of Tying Program (tying kits with matching videos on our website), Conservation Initiative & Button Incentive Program (the buttons kids can earn for program participation), Mentee Education Center (where they can continue to learn after the project).

**For Fundraising:** Donor Packet, Donor Infographic, Individual Project Fundraisers (linked to website), Facebook Fundraising, and TMP's Fundraising Plans Document.

**National Fundraisers:** Giving Tuesday, Buy a Fly Event, and TMP's 25 On the Fly Tournament.





## **Project First Steps**

Once you have been approved by TMP to start a project in your state, it's time to get the ball rolling! Here are the initial steps you need to take:

- Familiarize yourself with the TMP program. Read through our Mentor Orientation Handbook, Lead Mentor Handbook, Project Manual, Mentee Curriculum, and the forms on our Mentor Information Center: <https://themayflyproject.com/mentor-information-center/>  
Password: TMP2015!
- Sign up for a Lead Mentor Training Call with Kaitlin and Jess.
- Start to talk to your friends and fly fishing clubs about The Mayfly Project. You can order business cards and post cards from TMP to hand out. Email Jess and Kaitlin for these.
- Send over your Project Web Page Questionnaire and bio so we can add your project to the map. You can find it here: <https://themayflyproject.com/mentor-information-center/>
- Join one of our optional Lead Mentor monthly zoom meetings. It's a great way to get to know the project and leads across the country.
- Keep up on emails from TMP staff, we try to keep everyone up to speed on new events or program news/suggestions, etc!
- Schedule a call with Kaitlin as needed to chat about your project plans or needs. Before you start to network for kids, please schedule a call with her to go over next steps: <https://calendly.com/themayflyproject/the-mayfly-project-phone-call>

## **Building Your Team**

### **Where To Find Mentors**

#### **TU Groups and Meetings-**

We can help tailor our slide deck presentation to fit your needs, if you are interested in presenting to a TU group.

#### **Fly Fishing Festivals or Film Tours-**

We can send you postcards to hand out, or if you are able to do a booth, you can have a sign up sheet for mentors and hand out information.

#### **Local Fly Shops-**

Chat with your local shop to see if you can put up a flier, or participate in any upcoming events. Get a feel from them if they would be interested in supporting a local project by donating gear or the use of rental waders.

#### **Utilize Social Media-**

Post amongst your friend base that you are searching for mentors. Let TMP staff know if you would like us to post on our TMP Facebook to search for mentors as well. Finding mentors to join your team is the first step in building your project. We do not advise you to talk with any group homes or foster families until you have **at least three mentors on your team**.

### **Find Mentors Who Fit This Criteria:**

- Has a good reputation in their community and in the fly fishing community (including void of racism, sexism, and any form of discrimination towards others).
- Has experience working with children or teaching other people fly fishing.
- Does not have a recent history of illegal drug use or alcoholism, abuse, or trouble with the law.
- Has free time to commit to a project and lives within a close proximity of your project.
- Is good at communicating and following through with commitments.
- Diversity is important for our projects as we serve a diverse group of children so please add mentors that range in different ages, genders, skin colors, and careers.

### **Steps for Mentor Approval:**

Application on our website, phone interview, reference check, and background check.

### **What to do with new mentors:**

- Once we send the email introducing you to the approved mentor, we expect lead mentors to be in charge of the mentors from that point on. Ask Hana or Debbie for a mentor report anytime.
- Introduce the new mentor to the team, have them sign the TMP Mentor Agreement Form, find their shirt size for when you order, and encourage them to submit their bio on our mentor information center.
- If you have any concerns about the mentors you are working with, please let our staff know and we can help you sort through it!
- Please communicate with your mentors often regarding the timeline of the project, new happenings, etc. The more you meet with them, give them tasks, keep them engaged, the stronger your project will be. Also, the better you know your mentors, the more you will know their strengths and weaknesses, so you know where to plug them in the project.

### **Managing Your Team:**

- Monthly meet ups or calls with your team is important throughout the year. You can set up a call to talk about parts of the training handbook, fundraising plans, mentor roles, places to fish, or simply just fish together! Our Boise project has TMP mentor fishing days every 2nd Saturday of the month. Lots of great ideas from our monthly lead calls!
- **Background Checks**
  - Every mentor needs to have a background check completed prior to working with children. Each state and each group home may have different policies regarding background checks, so check with your group home first about checks and then check with us and we will help you figure out the process. Mentors are required to pay for their own checks unless you have a high fund balance in your project and want to pay for mentor's checks.
  - **Every mentor needs to have an updated background check every two years,** and commit to report to TMP immediately if any information on their background check changes within those two years.

- Lead mentors are in charge of making sure all of their team is background checked prior to the first outing.
- **Mentor Training:** In the Mentor Orientation Handbook there is an entire section on mentor training, safety policies, and about confidentiality. Please go over this a few times with your mentors and let them know they have to understand all of our policies and tools for mentoring. This is SO important and will help your project go smoother, will help kids feel safe, and will ensure you are creating the safest project for all involved.
- **Trauma Informed Care Videos:** In the mentor information center you will find training videos that include our Trauma Informed Care Videos. All of our mentors receive these videos in their welcome email as well. We know they can seem long, but please make your team watch them! Even if you guys choose one to watch together during a zoom meeting once a month during the off season, that's perfect!

### **Team Meeting Topics**

Project Manual- Go through every outing and decide who will do what at projects and have them mark the pages of the curriculum they will teach from.

Mentor Orientation Handbook– Go through the handbook rules and tips for being a good mentor.

Trauma Informed Care Videos– Watch one together or set a goal to talk about them.

Characteristics of an Angler– Go over the first part of the curriculum and decide how to integrate these teachings into your outings.

Project Plans– What will your team do if a kid isn't catching fish, or what if the weather changes, etc.

Fish Scouting- Once you have a place in mind, check it out. Does it have bathrooms, cell service, is it safe, what are the dangers, do you need approval to fish there?

Fundraising–How are you going to support kids in the project financially? What events can you put on or grants can you apply for together?

## **Project Mentor Roles**

### **Lead Mentor:**

In charge of organizing the project details, organizing mentors, communicating with TMP staff about project-specific details (ordering gear, needs for mentors, etc), communicating with foster parents or group home managers for project set up. Lead mentor is also in charge of making sure the mentors and group adheres to TMP safety policies and creating the safest environment for the children. The lead mentor can delegate another mentor to one of these roles if needed, but communication is the key. The lead mentor is also in charge of making sure all of their mentees have completed their background checks and signed the confidentiality and safety agreement forms.

### **Co-Lead Mentor:**

A co-lead assists the lead mentor with tasks and organizing the project. It's so helpful for leads to have someone to work with that can help motivate mentors and add more support.

### **Conservation Mentor:**

In charge of educating the group at each outing on the guidelines outlined in the project manual that encourage TMP mentors and participants to use conservation techniques and proper fish-handling techniques. The goal of having a conservation mentor is to educate the children on how to care for their environment and for the fish they get to experience, with the goal that they will not only form a deeper connection with the outdoors, but they will be more curious about their environment and also begin to understand why it is essential we try our hardest to protect it. Roles include doing a quick talk at the beginning of outings, setting up the reward button initiative program, working with TMP staff to provide needed materials that teach conservation and appreciation of the children's local environments.

### **Other Roles for Mentors:**

Having consistent mentors is truly the best gift you can get. Projects also depend on mentors with skills in teaching casting, etymology, river safety, reading waters, managing depth, understanding fish seasonal behavior, etc. If you feel any of your mentors are qualified to teach on any of this, feel free to assign them to these roles. The more folks involved in teaching, the more eclectic perspective the children have of fly fishing. Please find out if you have a mentor on your team who has a CPR and First Aid certification and notify TMP.

## **Full Project Steps Checklist**

\*Please see the Project Manual for further project outing instructions\*

\_\_\_\_ **Organize Mentors:** After you've added a bunch of mentors, meet with your mentors to go over the handbook, sign the TMP Mentor Agreement Form, formulate ideas for the project destinations, set roles for the project, discuss barriers to success, and get to know each other. This is also a great time to write down everyone's shirt sizes and discuss possible fundraising efforts. Assign someone in your group to contact a local deli or store to see if they will provide lunch or snacks for your outings. Assign someone to be in charge of taking pictures, or see if you can have support mentors (have to be approved) to take pictures.

\_\_\_\_ **Set Dates:** Lock down your outing dates for the year as soon as you can. Let TMP staff know as soon as you know the dates. Make sure your dates fall in the guidelines of creating a safe environment (no ice fishing please), and the time of year where the kids will be able to catch fish. Also be aware of seasonal and holiday breaks for the children's school schedules.

\_\_\_\_ **Find Kids to Mentor:** About 3 months prior to your start date, it's time to network to find kids to mentor (see more information about finding kids in the next section). A month before your first outing it's time to register kids. Grab the registration form off of the mentor information center and send it to your contacts, along with your dates! Once you receive these forms, please send a copy of the form to Kaitlin and contact her with any questions regarding concerns about children or diagnosis you are unfamiliar with etc. We have tools we can use to make sure each specific child has a great time. Ask the group home if there are any restrictions for children, such as making sure certain kids do not take any flies with them if they are prone to self-harming, etc.

\_\_\_\_ **Order Gear:** Order your first set of gear for your project **at least 1 month prior to your start date**. You can order online from the Mentor Information Center. Talk to Jess if you have questions about gear (see section about ordering gear as well).

\_\_\_\_ **Prompt your Conservation Mentor:** Have them order or buy any extra gear required to teach their portion of the project and you can either add the gear to your stuff to bring to the project or have them be in charge of it.

\_\_\_\_ **Check Background Checks:** Make sure all background checks are completed prior to working with any children and communicate the results with the agency and TMP staff.

\_\_\_\_ **Check the Project Manual:** Check out this manual to find your list of items you may need to purchase or remember to bring (we can reimburse you). Make sure your team is familiar with the plan to earn buttons and the art of tying program.

\_\_\_\_ **Gear Check:** Talk with the group home or foster families about any specific items they need to bring with the mentees, such as medications, water, sunscreen, towels, or life-jackets. Double check the gear you received and make sure you're ready to go. If you need to purchase bins to carry gear, just chat with Jess!

\_\_\_\_ **Over Communicate with Mentors and Foster Care Partners:** Confirm with the group home the week of your project and make sure you have the staff member's name and cell phone number who will be transporting the children. Make sure mentors are ready and have signed TMP Mentor Agreement Form.

\_\_\_\_ **After your first two project sessions, it's time to order the final gear the children will get to take home.** You order this the same way you ordered the practice rods (see gear section). At the final session, give the gear to the children and make sure they have their rod all set up and know how to use their gear.

\_\_\_\_ **Post Project:** Send surveys, plan wrap up calls, and take inventory of gear. See Project Wrap Up list in this manual.

\_\_\_\_ **Project Off-Season:** Fundraising, keeping mentors engaged, holding up your mentee connections, and networking in the community.

## Finding Children to Mentor

The process of finding foster children to mentor can sometimes feel tedious and take some persistence. We are here to help you navigate the system, but this process works best if you are the head of this team. Get your mentors involved as well!!

We have found that working with group homes seems to be the easiest group to work with because we don't have to coordinate a bunch of different schedules!

Some states do not have group homes for foster children, so we have worked with other nonprofits who support children in foster care, or the Department of Health and Welfare case workers to work with individual foster families. There are many options, but we generally start with finding out if group homes are available. Consider working with group homes, individual foster families, foster family support programs, children who have been adopted from foster care, or children currently up for adoption.

Here are some of the tools you can use to find group homes or foster families to work with:

- **Start with Google**--search for 'group homes for children in foster care' or 'support for children in foster care' in your county. Check if there are any local resource groups that would know what is going on in your community, such as social workers or community resource organizations. Starting with someone you may know in your community is the first step, because they would know you and be more willing to help you navigate the system.
- **Check out the Department of Health and Welfare's** website, specific to your county. Sometimes there can be a list of group homes on the website. You can also call the local department, or stop by, to ask questions about what group homes may be available. Sometimes you have to talk to many people at the department before you get through to the correct person. Some states contract out placing children in homes to other organizations, but they should be able to get you a list of organizations to work with. Don't be surprised if you don't hear back from DHS for a while; remember they are busy caseworkers, trying to place children in safe homes, so we want to be patient and respect their timeline (even though it's difficult sometimes!).
- **Find Local Foster Care Connections** There are many ways to reach through and find out how the foster care system works in your community--ask a social worker to lunch,



utilize social media on local forums, chat with a local Boys and Girls club, check with a local child psychotherapist' office, put flyers up at DHS, call adoption agencies, check with local churches, CASA programs, or school counselors. CASA has been helpful in most states.

- **Get Organized** Always create a spreadsheet of contacts you have found, including their information, names, date of contact, and a section for notes. This is a great tool if you want to split up the list and have mentors help you make calls.
- **Make the Calls** It's best to reach out to contacts via phone and then follow up with an email or if you are able to go into their office in person, that's ideal. Make sure you follow-up after two weeks. If you left a message for a caseworker and haven't heard back, see if you can find their email address and give them another call two weeks later. Just because you don't hear back from someone, it doesn't mean they aren't interested. This is a very busy population of adults, so it takes some understanding and persistence on our part.

**What to say to caseworkers or contacts at group homes:**

"Hello, I'm calling from The Mayfly Project, a nonprofit organization that supports children in foster care with fly fishing. We have a new program starting \_\_\_\_ and are networking to find group homes or foster families that are interested in our free program. Can I please speak with your program director or someone from your agency that works with foster families?"

**Tools Available:**

- Mentor Information Center has some examples of letters and tools.
- Agency Brochure (can email or send hard copy from national).
- Registration Forms
- TMP About Video, Vimeo: [The Mayfly Project About Video on Vimeo](#)
- Copy of the locked curriculum to show
- Postcards, business cards, stickers, anything you can think of to use to drop off, just let us know!

## **Example of an Email to Group Home or Caseworker**

Hello Jenny and Loney,

I am reaching out from The Mayfly Project, a local nonprofit that supports children in foster care with fly fishing. We are opening up registration for this program and are networking to find foster communities that want to be involved. Please check out this further information and please let me know if we could hop on a call or talk about spreading the word about this opportunity!

### **Information about The Mayfly Project:**

Our mission is to mentor children in foster care via the sport of fly fishing, and provide opportunities for children in foster care to have fun, build self-esteem, and develop a meaningful connection with the outdoors.

The children that participate in our projects learn all of the basics of fly fishing, join in our conservation initiative efforts, and receive 1:1 mentor ratio at our 5 TMP outings where we teach and mentor in groups together. When the project is completed, each child receives their own curriculum, specialized buttons for participating in the program, fly rod setup, and all the gear they need to continue to pursue fly fishing. Foster parents and group home staff are invited to participate as well!

Our mentors go through a rigorous background check, reference check, interview, and training.

Website: [www.themayflyproject.com](http://www.themayflyproject.com)

Vimeo Video: <https://vimeo.com/330261257>

### **How We Sign Up Foster Children:**

We have a permission form that needs to be signed by the caseworker or foster parent of the child signing up. We work with children ages 8-18, typically. We fill the spots on a first-come, first-served basis.

We understand the importance of confidentiality for this population and are not requesting you send us names, but if you could provide us information on the best way to let local group homes and foster families know of our service, that would be so helpful.

Please let us know if you are available for a conversation or if you can direct us to the appropriate contact.

## **Group Home/Foster Care/Case Worker Meetings**

Once you have found a potential group home, or case worker to work with, it's time to ramp up the communication. *\*Pro-tip: front end communication will save your project and keep you from scrambling to find kids!*

### **The main question we are trying to answer: Is this group home or agency contact a good fit for your project?**

We want to make sure the group home/agency will be a good fit, because we've found projects where the kids move in and out of the group home, or are not able to participate in most of the outings, which isn't great for the child or the mentor's. We are looking for a group of kids that will be in the group home for at least 4 months, and available on weekends.

### **What's the best way to cover all of these questions?**

Set up an in-person meeting if possible! If not, ask to schedule a call with the director or person in charge of planning the project. Start out explaining the project, the steps included, the timing of the steps, and why teaching fly fishing is important to this population. I would also email the group home our Mentor Orientation Handbook so they can see our safety policies and the Further Information sheet specific to group homes (found on Mentor Information Center).

Prior to the meeting, make sure you understand the process and check with Kaitlin if you need more prep or guidance. If needed, we can also be in the conference call or zoom with you too! We do that quite often!

### **General Questions to Choose from for Group Home/Agency Meeting:**

1. What is the general process for the children who live in the group home? Or, what is the best way to find foster children who are in a home for a stable amount of time and who also have foster families who would be committed to participating in a project? Are the children here for longer than six months?
2. Are the children moved around very often from the group home? Are they available most weekends?
3. What level of care is this group home? Do the children have any major psychiatric disorders or behavioral issues? Would our mentors need any specific training to work

with these children? What is the general age group of the children in this home (we work with children generally ages 8-18 years old).

4. It's our policy to have a staff member from your organization, or a foster parent, along with our projects for safety reasons. What is your staff ratio and how many children would we need to take for outings to make sure we have a staff member along as well?
5. What time of year works best for a project for your population? Is there a turn-around part of your year where you receive a new group of children, or how would the rotation work since a project takes about 5 sessions?
6. Can your organization transport the children to and from the projects? What is the furthest distance you can take the children from the group home or foster home?
7. Are there any steps you need for us regarding background checks or volunteering checks? It's our policy that all of our mentors are background checked--do you have a process you prefer or would you just like the results sent to you if we work together?
8. What barriers do you foresee preventing us working together to teach fly fishing to your foster children? Are there any special circumstances or accommodations we can make to meet the needs of your group home?
9. We have confidentiality and agreement forms for the caseworker's or foster families to sign. This information is kept completely confidential and is only used to ensure we provide the safest environment for the children in our care. Do you foresee any problems having the caseworkers complete these forms?
10. Are any of the children over 16 years old? If so, can a group home employee help us fill out the online application for fishing license?

After your initial meeting, maybe let them know you will get back to them about a decision together so they know you take this commitment seriously and you want to ensure the group home is a good fit.

Other red flags, besides kids being moved around out of the group homes, is the caseworker or foster parents are difficult to get ahold of or they don't have any great answers to your questions, or they don't seem excited about what you are offering. Our goal is to make sure we

do not commit to a group home or foster care agency until we are sure it will be consistent and supportive of our efforts.

We can't back out on plans once the kids know they are fishing, but we can do enough prep to make sure we are all on the same page and shut things down if they are not going well, before the kids are aware of the opportunity to fish!

## Ordering Project Gear

### **Who provides gear?**

The Mayfly Project will provide all of the gear you need for your project. We have worked hard to build relationships with companies who provide us gear at a discounted rate. You are welcome to reach out to your local fly fishing shops to ask if they would like to donate any gear to your projects, but please do not reach out to any other companies without first talking to Jess. After the project year is done, TMP will bill your project for the funds we used to provide gear. If it's your first year, we don't expect you to have a full fund balance, but appreciate any efforts to increase that balance if possible.

### **What if our kids will need waders?**

If your kids need waders you can talk with your local fly shops or TU groups to see if there are any waders available to be rented. We generally try to plan projects for when the weather is decent, but if the fishing is best during colder water seasons, we will work with you to find waders! Another option is to do a local fundraiser or wader drive to support your project. We do have relationships with wader companies and we can make this happen for sure, if renting is not an option.

### **When do we order gear?**

We provide **two** sets of rods for the projects, one for the initial start of the project so the kids can practice, and then the other rod will be their gift, given on the final outing. You order your practice rods, flies, tippet, leaders, and everything needed for your outings **4 weeks prior to your project start date**. Then you order the kids their packs, fly rods and reels, tippet, fly boxes, etc, **after your second session (please give us 4 weeks to ship your gear)**. The goal is for you to hold on to the practice rods for your next project and for the kids to go home with all of the gear they need.

### **How do we order gear?**

To order your gear, head over to the Mentor Information Center. You will find a gear order form, which goes directly to TMP. We will email you when your order is shipped. Your Conservation Mentor is in charge of ordering their conservation gear on this mentor site as well.

### **When do we order buttons and Mentee Curriculum gear?**

You order these during your first wave of orders so the kids have them up front and available.

### **What if I want to get pizza for the kids, or have to buy something last minute for the project?**

Please check with Jess prior to purchasing anything for TMP, if possible. If you have to buy something for TMP, we have a section listed in the Mentor Information Center where you can submit receipts for reimbursement. This includes background checks reimbursement as well.

### **What do I do if gear is donated to my project?**

It is essential we record all gear donated and that we are able to properly thank those who donated. On the Mentor Information Center there is a section (Record In-Kind Donation) for you to report what gear you received, by whom you received it, and what the value of the gear received. **Please ensure you talk to Jess before asking for gear**, and make sure you record the address of the donator so we can send them a thank you note.

### **Why do I have to talk to Jess before I ask for gear from other companies?**

The Mayfly Project depends upon the kindness of fly fishing companies and donors. We work hard to develop relationships with companies and have already talked to the majority of the major companies, designers, and artists in the fly fishing industry. The main problem we have had is if a mentor reaches out to a company that we have already talked with, it can cause the company staff to be annoyed or frustrated to have to get back to that mentor. We also prefer to talk with the companies ourselves because we can give them our updated statistics, our vision, and hopefully more information about why a partnership would be beneficial. If you have a close relationship with a fly fishing company that you would like to introduce us to, we would appreciate it!

### **When do we get our shirts and hats?**

When you order your initial gear, you need to also order your shirts for your group. Make sure you have your mentor's correct sizes. Every year each mentor participating receives a free TMP shirt. We will also provide TMP hats or hats at cost (right now we are trying to find the best hat deals so this may change). Please do not print any shirts or gear with our TMP logo on them without permission. We are under copyrights for the logo and cannot alter it. We are also building a brand to help support TMP projects.

## **Project Outings and Stages**

Check out your Project Manual for detailed descriptions!

**EGG STAGE** Introduction to fly fishing, the fly rod, and The Mayfly Project mentors. This first meeting is especially important—it's your time to prove to the kids that you are there to have fun, you are organized, and you will provide a safe environment for the kids. This is usually not much longer than 1-1.5 hours.

**NYMPH STAGE** Introduction to casting, knot tying, catch and release, and time to fish a local pond. Pinch those barbbs, make sure mentors feel prepared to help teach casting, and let the kids experience fly fishing for fish. It's messy, but it's worth it! 2-3 hours long

**EMERGER STAGE** Setting the hook, conservation education, casting and time to fish! 2-3 hours long

**DUN STAGE** Reading water, mending line, roll casting, and time to fish! 2-3 hours long

**BIG CATCH STAGE** Final fun day, fishing a special location and mentees receive their fly rod and gear! 3-5 hours long

### **Tips for Project Success:**

- **Name Tags:** Have each mentee fill out their name tags. On the section of gender where it has a male and a female icon, you can have them circle which one they prefer or if they would rather not be in a category, just x them out. Remind your mentors that we are there to make these kids feel comfortable, so if you have a mentee that looks like a boy but says they are a girl, please try your hardest to use female pronouns. You can also fill out the name tags ahead of time, based on the registration forms (add photos, safety problems, etc as you see fit).
  - **\*Pro-tip\*** Gather the name tags at the end so you have them for the next outing!
- **Ice Breaker:** This project needs to have an icebreaker for sure, to get everyone talking and feeling comfortable. Check out the Project Manual for more examples of icebreakers.



- **Pairing Kids/Mentors:** You can pair kids with mentors at this outing by assigning names to mentors, or split up into two groups and just see what kids end up working with what mentors...they are usually drawn to each other and this works best. If there's a high-needs kid, you want to make sure they are paired with a more experienced/patient mentor.
- **Teaching Tips:** Check out our Mentor Info Center for Tips! Keep your teaching moments brief and interactive! If you have a kid that has a struggle to keep still, put them in charge of holding the net or involved in the demonstration. Break up the teaching into chunks or divide into stations and have each mentor group rotate—such as a knot tying station, casting station, and invasive species education station. Make sure you get at least an hour to fish, and before you put a hook on that line, ensure the child understands the basics of a cast, especially a roll cast!
  - *\*Pro-Tip\** If a kid is struggling to learn with one mentor, switch out easily. The kids don't usually notice they have another mentor helping. I like to have a casting instructor mentor walking around and easily switching out when needed to help a kid.
- **Safety/Rules:** Please make sure all of your mentors have signed the Mentor Agreement Form, and when you circle up as a group, go over the safety rules.
- **Schedule:** It's wise to have your schedule printed out or sent to everyone's phones so you can keep on track. The group home staff and foster families are generally thankful for a timeline, and it's important your mentors understand the schedule so they can keep the kids on task.

## **Project Outing Problems Q&A**

### **Are foster parent's biological kids allowed to participate?**

We prefer to keep our service to foster children and adopted children, but we do allow bio kids to participate in certain circumstances, such as if you're looking for more kids to join or if it would be beneficial for the bio family to come along. We give those kids gear as well.

### **What if a kid says they don't want to fish or be involved?**

Sometimes this is just a test, to see how cool you will respond. But sometimes, there are kids that are only there because their group home wanted them to come. Respond with the priority of the child feeling cared about and safe. Some responses, "No problem, you can sit over here where a mentor can see you and just enjoy some fresh air." "Absolutely, if someone else catches a fish do you want to go check it out?". "Do you want to tie some flies when everyone is fishing maybe instead?".

### **What if a kid doesn't like the mentor they are paired with?**

You can decide to switch out with a float mentor, or see if there is another mentor who's kid has already caught a bunch of fish and doesn't mind switching out. It's nice to ask the kid for permission to leave though. Prep the mentors ahead of time, sometimes kids just get triggered by something mentors do and need to be changed out.

### **What if a kid reports to a mentor they are harming themselves, being abused, have plans to harm others, or anything drug/alcohol/inappropriate behavior, to a mentor?**

All mentors are mandated reporters, so anything that has to do with a child in a potentially abusive situation, even if you think it's not legit, needs to be reported to cps. We had a situation one year where a mentor heard that a kid was drinking antifreeze. We called the foster parents after the meeting and informed them.

### **What if a kid isn't catching any fish and is getting frustrated?**

It's super important that kids get as much of an opportunity to catch fish, so when the lead or float mentor is walking around, have them assess which kids still haven't caught a fish. It's wise to have a mentor that is skilled at teaching or just knows how to get a kid on a fish, to help that kid.

**Can a kid participate the following year if they want to?**

Yes, you can invite a kid back to participate if you feel it's beneficial to them and if you have enough mentors. If you have them back and they go through the whole year, let us know and we can send them something cool instead of first year gear.

**I have a mentor that I've had a problem with. Can TMP help me with this conversation?**

Absolutely! Please reach out to Kaitlin right away and she can help navigate a plan to help you and the mentor work through the problem or decide with you if TMP is not the best fit for the mentor. She's a huge resource, so please don't hesitate to reach out!

**I received a bunch of information from a foster parent about what the kids we are serving has been through. How much should I share with my team from the registration forms?**

Try to think of this as if you were those children, how much would you want people knowing about the trauma you went through? It's important to share that a child has significant trauma and suggest a specific mentor. If there are triggers listed on the form then communicate that to your mentors as well. One trigger we hear about is kids don't like to have people in their space so for that kiddo we'll give them an even bigger space bubble and ask permission to go past that bubble. Let Kaitlin know if you have more questions about this topic!

## **About Fund Balances and Fundraising**

### **How are TMP's individual project funds divided?**

We have all of the projects divided out into their own fund accounts, so each project can find out what they have in their account anytime, they just need to ask. We also try to keep your Pure Charity Fundraisers (donation button on your webpage) up to date. At the end of your project season, or if you have ordered a booth set-up with gear to keep, your project will be billed and those funds will be taken out of your account. Any questions about this?

### **What is my project required to raise each year to support our project?**

The fundraising goal is how many kids you plan to serve, times \$780. The \$780 is broken down in our cost-per-kid spreadsheet. This number is created by the estimated cost of gear for the year per child, not including our gear discounts. Your project is only billed for what funds are used, so if we have a great discount from Cortland and other gear, the cost per kid for the year will be lower and we won't need to bill your project for the full cost per kid. Please let us know if you have questions about this—TMP is an open book!

### **What happens to the money I raise locally? Do I have to raise money to start a project?**

All of the funds you raise locally will stay in your project. The benefit of adding funds to your project is it helps The Mayfly Project because we do not have to take funds out of the main TMP Fund account, which provides money for other projects as well. During your first year you are not expected to have big fund balances, but raising money sometimes helps get the word out in the community and is beneficial to networking.

### **Can I have a booth at a fly fishing show or event?**

We are only allowing booths at events if they are planned out 4-12 months in advance and have a specific format for our booth presentation, etc. Please talk to Jess or Debbie if you would like to schedule a booth at an upcoming event to find mentors or sell merchandise. We have an awesome booth set-up!

### **What should I do if someone donates money or gear to my project?**

If someone donates money to your project outside of mailing it directly to us or adding to your online fundraiser, you need to report the amount to Jess through the Mentor Information Center, in-kind donation form, along with the person or company's name, contact information, and the date you are sending the money in the mail. This ensures we get the person their tax receipt and a thank you note from us. Gear needs to be reported in the same way, but the

value of the gear needs to be listed for tax purposes. Please talk to Jess before you send gear in the mail.

### **What if I want to get donations for a fundraiser?**

Contact Jess or Kaitlin if you would like to reach out to companies or artists to receive donations for a fundraiser, such as a raffle etc. Please see the Fundraising Handbook located in the Mentor Information Center.

### **The Search for Grants:**

We have found that grants can be specific to your state, your town, your district, etc. Sometimes your rotary clubs, local community civic clubs, fly fishing clubs, TU groups, or church groups have easy money to pick up. Let us know what grant you want to go after and we will do our best to support you with budgets and grant information.

### **Shows and Gear to Sell:**

If you have a show that your team wants to have a table at, you need to submit a show request form on the Mentor Information Center, at least a month out from the show:

<https://themayflyproject.com/trade-show-request-form/>

Your project will be billed for the stuff we send for you to sell. The goal is for you to keep the gear to continue to sell, or if you want to inventory the gear and send it back to us, that works out. Jess will send you a statement after it's shipped to you. Ask Jess any questions you have about shows!

## **TMP Fundraising Ideas**

\*This handout is found in the Mentor Info Center, if you want to send it to mentors!

### 1. In-Person Fundraisers (depending on pandemic safety and comfort levels):

- a. Event Option 1: Small get together with friends and family to help spread the mission of The Mayfly Project

Goal: Ask the group collectively to sponsor one child.

- b. Event Option 2: Partner with a local fly shop or local business that would be interested in co-hosting an event with you. You would invite people you know and they would invite their own guest list. Ultimately, hoping to expose more people to TMP outside of your immediate circle.

Goal: Raise enough money to sponsor multiple kids.

- c. Event Option 3: Host a donor dinner at your home or at a bigger location. This would be an event where we ask you to reach out to people that you feel would be interested in contributing on a monetary level. We love casual get togethers, but this type of donor dinner would be focused on highlighting the mission of TMP and asking the guest to contribute financially. TMP would help with an itinerary, providing invitations, and giving you content to share. If it's a big enough event, TMP Founders may come out to assist as well!

Goal: To raise enough money to pay for your entire project expenses.

### 2. Social Media Fundraisers:

- a. Birthday Facebook Fundraisers are so helpful for your project. If you can get all of your mentors to do these, it could sponsor all of the kids in your project. Each person that does these types of fundraisers receives a specialized TMP birthday sticker.
- b. Giving Tuesday Facebook Fundraiser—this happens right after Thanksgiving. TMP will provide you with wording but your team has to create your own fundraiser and encourage team members to share it. Facebook matches donations on that day! [Giving Tuesday on Facebook!](#)
- c. Use social media to raffle off a float trip or a fancy rod (we can help you find items), either have a bidding war or sell raffle tickets in a unique way (can't do "raffles" on Facebook).

3. **Project Fundraisers:** Utilize your individual project fundraisers set up on our Pure Charity account, linked from your webpage. You can send these fundraisers around to local companies, ask for matching donations, etc. We can set the goal on each of your fundraisers to match the goal you are seeking to raise.
4. **Raffles:** Gather items in your community to do an online or in-person raffle. You can work with a local brewery to host a raffle night. There are all types of ways to do these events— if you are interested in hearing more, let's talk!
5. **Find Local and State Grants and Foundations:** We've had great success with reaching out to local foundations and local grant opportunities. Check out your state fish and wildlife organizations and look for grants along the lines of conservation, youth support, and mentoring. We can help you with all the needed financial documentation and wording as well.
6. **Fly Shops and Fly Fishing Shows:** Every shop that donates \$100, receives a special shop sticker that says they donated to your project. If you can have your shops sell TMP shirts, or help raise funds, that's a great resource. We have booth set ups available for big fly fishing shows or table set ups for local events. Check out shows like American Fisheries Society or the Wildlife Society, about having a booth at their shows too.
7. **Local Trout Unlimited and Fly Fishing Groups:** Several TU groups now have youth-focused initiatives where they support youth getting into fly fishing and conservation. Several support our projects, you just have to ask to do a presentation or to submit a blog post for their newsletters.
8. **Employee Matching Contributions:** Ask your mentors if their employers have any employee matching programs. We have some mentors that get funds donated to TMP from their employer for their volunteer hours! Sometimes companies also will match funds raised on Giving Tuesday, you just have to ask!
9. **Local Media/Community Connections:** Check with your local news to see if they can do a piece about your project. Check with the local Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Clubs, Kiwanas Clubs, and other groups that are there to support positive growth in the community!
10. **Mentor Find it or Fund it Challenge:** Lead Mentor, Doug Rohrer, invented this for his team. He challenged his mentors to find enough funds to sponsor a child, or to pay for it themselves. Together they worked on finding funds and then the team all pitched in to pay the final amount.

11. Share your Impact: The more we can prove that your project is an important piece of your community, the more folks will jump onboard. We have the tools to write articles for you, do blog posts, or help in any way to tell your story. We need these stories so please send your mentors with stories our way and we can link them to your webpage!

Tools to Use: Donor Infographic (online), Donor Packet (physical), Project Fundraiser, TMP Social Media or Newsletter.

Fundraising Events for TMP National to help fund new projects: TMP's Buy a Fly Raffle, September TMP's Giving Tuesday, TMP's 25 On the Fly Fishing Tournament, TMP's Annual Banquet



## **Social Media**

**TMP's Image:** As stated before, we try to protect our image, our mentors, and the children we work with, so it's our priority to ensure we are being represented appropriately. If your mentors add they are joining The Mayfly Project, then we need to make sure that mentor is able to refrain from glorifying drugs or alcohol, illicit or sexual content, or any discrimination against any group or individual that causes emotional harm on another group or person. We don't expect you to be the hound dogs of social media, but if you could talk to your mentors about this and let them know that we have removed mentors from our team because of their online behaviors, that would be helpful! We not only want to uphold the integrity of The Mayfly Project, but we want to do our best to be a great example to the children we are mentoring! Thanks!

**Starting a TMP Social Media Page for your Project:** We are now allowing projects to start their own social media platforms. Please follow the social media guidelines, tag national TMP in some posts, and try to copy the type of wording and pictures we have on our national social media. Representation is important on social media, so please make sure you post a diverse range of kids and mentors, and use language that respects the foster care system and all involved. If we see something on your social media that does not represent TMP well, we will kindly reach out to you.

**Helping with Social Media:** If you have any interesting stories from your outings or experiences you would like to share, we would LOVE for you or your mentors to do a blog post for our website, or be able to share on our social media pages. Please just email Kaitlin if you have an idea for a blog post or something to share. Remember it is our goal to protect the identity of these children we work with, so please ask your group home or agency before you share any personal information about the children. If you capture pictures during your events, we would love to have them, even if we need to blur out the faces.

**Fundraising on Social Media:** We have also had great success with the online Facebook Fundraising, where folks can raise funds to support their favorite nonprofits for their birthdays or for any reason. We have raised over \$1,000 this year that way, so feel free to let your mentors know this is a way they can give back. Facebook does take a percentage of that amount raised though, so if you have a big donor, it is best you direct them to donate through the website or to contact Jess.

## **TMP Project Wrap-Up Check List**

*You did it! Congrats on making this project happen this year and thank you so much for your hard work! We know you're probably enjoying taking a break from TMP, which you deserve, but we would be so thankful if you could help wrap this project up for the year. Here's a checklist of things to wrap up:*

- Plan a final mentor celebratory dinner, fishing day, or meet up to have some closure from this year and chat about what everyone learned from this year, what you want to see happen next year, and how you can work on fundraising through the winter. Talk to Jess if you have any questions about funds available for a dinner or how to make this gathering special!
- Circle back with any foster care contacts to ensure they know they are appreciated and ask if you can continue to keep in touch about next year.
- Send in all receipts from the project that you need reimbursement for still. Also send in information about in-kind donations, such as restaurants that donated food, or fly shops that donated gear, so we can document and send thank you notes.
  - Please submit receipts through our portal here:  
<https://themayflyproject.com/expense-reimbursement-form/> (Password: TMP2015!)
  - Please send in kind donation information to Jess@themayflyproject.com
- Send out the surveys to caregivers, mentees, mentors, and co/lead mentors (see info below).
- Send us any stories and pictures we can use for a blog post or for social media. We would love to highlight you and your project on our website!
- Let us know, after you've had some time to reflect, what your plans will be for the off-season for fundraising and plans for next year. Preventing burnout is important to us, so please let us know if you need anything or if you would like to take a break from the lead mentor role. If you can schedule a call with us or send us an email to let us know what you're thinking for the next season, that would be excellent!

- Lastly, take a quick inventory of the gear you have left over (can be done closer to the end of the year). Let us know if you are not able to store those items. We have an inventory document attached.

**About Surveys:** these are SO important to us so we can gather data for future grants and plans. Please let us know if you would prefer for us to send these surveys out.

**Mentee Surveys:** If you could have your group home/individual foster families have the kids fill these survey's out, that would be great. We know this will be the most difficult survey to gather so please don't bug them more than once. I've attached an example email for them that you can copy and paste to your email. [Mentee Survey Here](#)

**Caregiver Surveys:** This survey is for any staff member, parent, or case worker that transported the kids to the outings, even if they only participated once. The caregiver gets a \$5 Starbucks gift card for completing this survey! [Caregiver Survey Here](#)

**Mentor Surveys:** Every mentor that completes this survey is entered into a drawing in January for a brand-new YETI cooler! We desperately need their help to prove our impact, so please request them to be completed! [Mentor Survey Here](#)

**Lead Mentor Survey:** We know this one is long, but it's our way to hear how things went and how we can better support you next year! If you can complete the mentor survey and this survey, that will give you two entries for the YETI cooler and also help us prove our impact! [Lead Mentor Survey Here](#)

YOU'RE THE BEST KIND OF HUMAN OUT THERE!!!!