



# THE CRANDELL WALLER SCHOLARSHIP FUND



## The Crandell Waller Scholarship

Friends of the Rainforest (FOTR)'s mission is to connect kids to the Rainforest, and we believe that cost should not be a deterrent for students and families who want to experience the Rainforest for themselves. Our Crandell Waller Scholarship will provide important financial aid to school groups that want to visit the Children's Eternal Rainforest but may have limited resources to do so. In memory of Friends of the Rainforest founder, Rachel Crandell, and Rainforest and education visionary, Laurie Waller, this scholarship continues the legacy of both of their work as two brilliant, inspirational leaders of Friends of the Rainforest.

**Initially, this scholarship is only open to high school level classrooms and groups in the greater St. Louis area. The scholarship will be limited to up to 12 travelers. If a group wants include more than 12 travelers, the group will be responsible for the additional costs.**

### Information in this packet:

- History of Friends of the Rainforest
- About the Scholarship
  - Costs Covered
  - Requirements
  - Qualifications and Application Process
- About Natural Solutions CR
- Sample itinerary



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## About the CW Scholarship: History of FOTR

### **Mission and Programming:**

Friends of the Rainforest's mission is to inspire kids and adults to take action to protect, expand and save the Rainforest. We provide free environmental education for schools and communities in the St. Louis area, organize Ecotours to the Children's Eternal Rainforest in Costa Rica, and provide funding for conservation grants that directly protect the Rainforest in Costa Rica and beyond.

### **History:**

In 1987, Swedish schoolteacher, Eha Kern, and her students began a classroom unit on Rainforests. She invited an American biologist, Sharon Kinsman, to visit their classroom to speak about the Cloud Forest Reserve in Monteverde, Costa Rica, and the destruction and deforestation the tropical Rainforest faced. Eha's students were shocked that the Rainforest was being destroyed. With Eha's energy and guidance, the kids of the class began hosting bake sales, making cards to sell, and raising money for the Monteverde Conservation League. Soon, other schools began to join in the fundraising efforts. They raised enough money to purchase 15 acres of Rainforest land. This land was then named the Children's Eternal Rainforest (CER) Today, the Children's Eternal Rainforest is the largest private reserve in Costa Rica with over 50,000 acres and growing.

A decade later, Rachel Crandell, a schoolteacher in St. Louis, wanted to find something hopeful and inspiring for her 2nd-grade class to learn about. Like Eha Kern's class, this search led her to discover the CER. She had a deep love for education and conservation and these passions led to the creation of Friends of the Rainforest. Rachel gave us a wonderful example of how one idea put into action can make a huge difference. Rachel taught her students about the Rainforest, fundraised for the Monteverde Conservation League, and led Ecotours to the CER - building on the legacy of Eha Kern and her students.

After moving to St. Louis in 2006 and volunteering with Friends of the Rainforest, Laurie Waller accepted the role of Executive Director after Rachel passed away in 2009. Laurie was unique in her ability to rattle off scientific facts about the Rainforest, and she understood the connection of all living things, the earth, the air, and the water, and took her role in protecting it all very seriously. With FOTR until 2014, her hard work was pivotal to the organization, helping to build on Rachel's legacy and to set a foundation for future work to come. Laurie passed away in 2020.

This scholarship is named after two extraordinary women who shaped Friends of the Rainforest's mission and programming, made incredible strides in Rainforest conservation and local environmental education, and changed the lives of those they interacted with.

**We continue their legacy by dedicating this scholarship to both of their memory.**





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## About the CW Scholarship: Costs Covered

**The financial aid provided through the Crandell Waller Scholarship will cover (up to \$30,000):**

- Ecotour costs as outlined by Natural Solutions CR
- Airfare to Costa Rica
- Travel insurance
- Passport fees, as needed
- Rainforest gear, as needed

**Please note:** Teachers and students are encouraged to host their own fundraiser to cover additional travel costs.

- **Ecotour Costs as outlined by Natural Solutions Costa Rica**

Natural Solutions Costa Rica is the environmental education and ecotourism company that manages Friends of the Rainforest's trips in Costa Rica. The cost of the Ecotour covers lodging, food and in-country transportation for the entirety of students' stay in Costa Rica. The length of the trip will be determined individually by groups with a maximum stay of a week. Students will travel to the Children's Eternal Rainforest, stay in a field station in the Rainforest, conduct field research, and learn from the incredible Dr. Jeff Norris, teacher at the United World College of Costa Rica and owner of Natural Solutions CR.

- **Airfare to Costa Rica**

The scholarship fund will cover the cost of airfare up to \$800 per person. We understand that flight prices are constantly fluctuating, and Friends of the Rainforest will work with the point person of the trip to determine the best time to travel based on price.

- **Travel Insurance**

FOTR and Natural Solutions in Costa Rica strongly recommends that trip participants purchase traveler's insurance. The scholarship program will cover the cost of Allianz Travel Insurance for each participant (up to \$115).

- **Passport fees**

Friends of the Rainforest will reimburse the cost of ordering an expedited passport for students or teachers who don't have one (up to \$160).

- **Rainforest gear**

Exploring the rainforest requires gear that not everyone may have access to. Friends of the Rainforest will reimburse the cost of rubber boots (or "Wellingtons") for each participant traveling.



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## About the CW Scholarship: Requirements

### Requirements:

- Five (5) class visits from FOTR to prime students for Rainforest experience
- Monthly meetings with FOTR travel coordinator, as needed

### Optional:

- Write up for FOTR Newsletter
- Fundraiser to help cover any additional costs for students

- **Five (5) class visits from FOTR to prime students for Rainforest experience**

Students get the most out of their experience in the Rainforest when they have the vocabulary and knowledge to contextualize what they see. Our lessons are designed to teach kids about tropical ecology, the importance of biodiversity and the value of rainforests. Each lesson runs an hour long. These lessons will take place in the host teacher's classroom, or in a local library after school hours, depending on the needs of the participating group.

- **Fundraiser to help cover any additional costs for students**

Friends of the Rainforest is unable to cover any additional costs that may incur during travel. This could be souvenirs for students, special meals out, or activities such as zip-lining. A fundraiser is an important way to get the kids excited and involved in trip preparation, as well as an opportunity to share their upcoming journey with their community. Friends of the Rainforest will provide resources to help design and implement a fundraiser.

- **Monthly meetings with FOTR travel coordinator**

A lot of preparation goes into these trips, especially if this is a student's first time traveling internationally. In the months leading up to the trip, monthly meetings will be required to ensure that the participants are securing their passports, filling out the registration forms, acquiring any additional gear that may be necessary, and hosting a fundraiser. Parents of participants are also welcome to join these meetings and bring any questions they may have.

- **Write up for FOTR Newsletter**

This can be written by the trip leader, an individual student, or it can be a collaborative effort between all participants. The intention is for FOTR to be able to share the group's experience to promote our scholarship program in hopes to secure additional funding to continue to be able to offer this experience for more students.





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## About the CW Scholarship: Qualifications and Application Process

### Qualifications:

- This program is for students in high school
- Groups must be located in the greater St. Louis area
- Groups must be a maximum of 10 students and 2 chaperones (email Sophie at [sophie@friendsoftherainforest.org](mailto:sophie@friendsoftherainforest.org) if you have a larger group and are looking for financial aid)

### Application Process:

- General application with essay demonstrating need and interest
- Applications will be considered on a rolling basis with priority given to schools with a demonstrable financial need and interest in visiting the Rainforest.

### Deadlines:

- **April 1<sup>st</sup>:** Application for following school year due.
- **May 1<sup>st</sup>:** Teachers informed of Friends of the Rainforest's decision.
- **2 months before departure:** Participant passports secured.
- **1 month before departure:** All registration forms in, FOTR lessons scheduled.

### Please Note:

- **While we begin the implementation of this program, the scholarship will be invite-only, offered on a case-by-case basis for local schools and organizations that Friends of the Rainforest has built relationships with. At this time, the qualifications and application process outlined above are for informational purposes only.**
- The applicant must be prepared to act as the point person for the trip. This role involves collecting all the necessary information from students, supporting the passport application process (if applicable) and being the main liaison between Friends of the Rainforest and the travelers and their parents.



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## About Natural Solutions Costa Rica and Dr. Jeff Norris

Natural Solutions is a Costa Rican, family-run environmental education and ecotourism company dedicated to finding sustainable solutions to the problems facing our natural landscapes caused by human development. As a tropical ecologist, educator, and long-time resident of Costa Rica, owner/operator, Dr. Jeff Norris offers visitors a superlative educational travel experience.

Most of his professional life has been dedicated to classroom education (over 20 years) in both US and Costa Rican schools; and he has taught science, biology, and ecology courses at every level from Kindergarten through College.

Off-and-on for nearly the same amount of time Jeff has been leading natural history tours in Costa Rica during his breaks from the classroom. His goal with each visitor is to share the love and wonderment he has developed for Costa Rica's diverse tropical ecosystems and the marvelous species they support in just a few short days provided with each trip. Jeff is fond of saying if Costa Rica embodies the global conservation movement, then the Friends of the Rainforest and the Children's Eternal Rainforest represent the heart and soul of conservation in Costa Rica. Fluent in Spanish, he holds an M.Ed. in International Education through Framingham State University and a Ph.D. in Ecology from the University of Missouri at St. Louis.

When Jeff is not out exploring Costa Rica with clients or engaged in research, he can be found teaching International Baccalaureate (IB) Biology and acting as the Sustainability Coordinator at The World College in Costa Rica.



**Natural Solutions**  
Costa Rica  
*Reconnecting people with nature*





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<https://www.naturalsolutionscr.org/>

## Sample Itinerary: Biodiversity and Peace Program

[www.biodiversityandpeace.org/about](http://www.biodiversityandpeace.org/about)

### DAY 1:

Fly to Costa Rica and arrive in San Jose (SJO, airport code). Here you will be met at the airport by Dr. Jeff Norris, the Biodiversity and Peace program director who will also serve as one of your bilingual naturalist educators for the duration of your experience. After getting everyone situated into our transfer vehicle, we'll be off towards Santa Ana and the western suburbs of San Jose. Our first stop will be the campus of the **United World College Costa Rica**. UWC Costa Rica is where Jeff, a tropical ecologist and educator by training, also *teaches* IB Biology. The plan is that some of his students will give the group a brief tour of the residential campus where 200 students from nearly 70 different countries complete the IB Diploma Program. UWC Costa Rica offers a non-traditional international education focused on experiential learning, sustainability, diversity, and peace. Where better to learn about Peace to start off our Biodiversity and Peace experience than with students from diverse cultures and nationalities? Before dinner we'll have a campus tour, meet some students, and briefly explore with them the concept of "Peace" and what it means to us. We'll all have dinner together before heading off to the boutique hotel, Posada Nena, which is just around the corner from the school.

**Overnight: Posada Nena (Included: afternoon snacks, Dinner)**

### DAY 2:

After breakfast there at the hotel we'll all head off to the **Pocosol station** of the **Children's Eternal Rainforest (CER)**. We should be at the station in time for lunch, and have our first forest experience later that afternoon. After dinner, and before turning in for the night you'll hear more about the trip program the CER, and why it's so special.

**Overnight: CER-Pocosol (Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner)**

#### About the Pocosol Biological Station :

The Pocosol Biological Station is located at approximately 800m elevation and is approximately a 45 min drive in 4x4 vehicles from La Tigra de San Carlos. Pocosol is also located on the Atlantic slope in the Tilarán mountain range. The Pocosol station includes a new building that comfortably houses groups of up to 32 people and offers simple facilities for students, tourists and researchers. There are 5 rooms on the second floor, each with a private bath and at least 2-3 bunk beds and/or a loft for students, and two rooms on the first floor with three bunk beds and private bath to house teachers and instructors. The station also boasts a new classroom for environmental education, as well as a spacious kitchen/dining hall with a covered terrace offering spectacular views of the forest. The nearby areas of the station contain 10+ km of trails along primary and secondary forest as well as regenerating pastures. The site has a variety of habitats and wonders such as a natural lagoon with an area of 3.8 hectares, a waterfall and fumaroles.



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## **DAY 3- DAY 5:**

Throughout these 3 days we'll engage in a variety of scientific and creative activities that will make your CER experience a memorable one by having you in the forest as much as possible. While in Costa Rica you will engage in meaningful scientific investigation as established in the goals and objectives of the Biodiversity and Peace curriculum. There is currently no database of even the most elementary information about the Children's Eternal Rainforest, such as weather data from season to season or year to year, and there are only sparse inventories for the fungi, plants, or animals. Absolutely everything you can observe and document will be meaningful. Your time on-task will be divided into two components; assisting with a long-term, scientific investigation designed or led by a specialist, and pursuing your own independent or small-group project. While the specialist-designed project will have a specific methodology and protocol to follow, the independent student projects may be either a scientific approach to an unanswered question (your own or one established by others), or something more artistic. With either approach to the independent project students will be leaving a lasting piece of work for other scientists, tourists, and visitors to the CER.

## **Overnight: CER-Pocosol (Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner)**

## **DAY 6:**

This morning we'll say goodbye to our rainforest classroom as we head towards the beach after breakfast. Continuing to the beach we'll have lunch en route. The approximately 3-4hr drive will take us from the Atlantic slope to the Pacific slope and obviously through a variety of different, and scenic landscapes. In the afternoon we'll arrive at Punta Leona and the group will have the afternoon/evening at leisure. Our dinner will be there at the resort.

## **Overnight: Punta Leona (Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)**

## **DAY 7:**

Our plan for you is to spend the whole day there at the resort. Jeff can help you organize some natural history exploration of the beach, tidal pool ecosystems, the surrounding forest habitat... – or just stay out of your way as you work between the different pools and beaches available on site. All meals will also be there at the resort.

## **Overnight: Punta Leona (Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)**

## **DAY 8:**

Sadly, this day would arrive, and today is the day we part ways. Up early and after a quick breakfast there at the hotel, we'll plan on an early morning transfer to ensure the group makes it through the airport in plenty of time for your flight back to the U.S.