



NatureWorks pairs environmental experiences with Long Beach Unified School District's Common Core education standards. The Catalina Island Conservancy recently received funds to support the program. Courtesy photo

Conservancy receives \$250K grant from Andeavor

Company supports the NatureWorks Kids in Nature program

FOR THE ISLANDER

The Catalina Island Conservancy announced recently that it received a \$250,000 grant from Andeavor to support its NatureWorks program, an innovative partnership with the Long Beach Unified School District that offers students strong academic and field experiences on Catalina. The program helps students see firsthand how they could work in ecotourism, conservation or other fields requiring STEM-related skills.

NatureWorks is building a model for how school systems and conservation organizations can collaborate to expand environmental stewardship training and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education, with a particular focus on underserved youth. Andeavor is a premier refining, marketing and logistics company with operations in Carson and Long Beach and throughout the western and mid-continent United States. The company values the opportunity to help create cleaner, safer, well-

educated communities where it operates.

"We thank Andeavor for their generous support of the Conservancy's NatureWorks program," said Suzy Gardner, Conservancy chief development officer. "This grant demonstrates Andeavor's commitment to being a socially responsible corporate citizen, and the objectives of the NatureWorks program align perfectly with their community investment priorities of environmental stewardship and STEM education."

The grant will provide \$100,000 for a new Wildlands Express van to provide transportation for kindergarten through fifth grade (K-5) students enrolled in NatureWorks Kids in Nature after-school program and \$50,000 a year for three years for NatureWorks staff, materials and other associated program costs.

The van will provide transportation for the students, including 90 percent of Avalon students who have no transportation now to visit Catalina's wildlands. The program's current bus is more than 10 years old and is due to be decommissioned because it doesn't meet air quality emissions requirements.

"At Andeavor, we value the

opportunity to make community investments that better prepare students for professional and academic success by increasing access to high-quality education resources and instruction," said Tiffany Rau, director of government and public affairs. "The Conservancy's NatureWorks program is making a tremendous impact in the lives of Avalon and other Long Beach School District youth, and we're proud to help fuel their continued success."

NatureWorks is an innovative ecological literacy learning model that pairs environmental experiences with Long Beach Unified School District's Common Core, as well as Next Generation Science Standards. A key strategy of the program is to infuse STEM principles of integration, relevance, cutting edge technology and challenge throughout the lessons, meeting the pressing need for essential preparation for all careers in the modern workforce. The program annually serves more than 1,000 Avalon and Long Beach K-12 students.