

“These experiences set the stage for the journey I’m on today...”

When Elijah was in fifth grade, his father passed away, leaving an irreparable hole in his life. In the years that followed, Elijah’s bereaved family struggled to find a sense of normalcy. During that difficult time, Wildflower stepped in and provided the support needed to navigate those challenging years.

“They helped my sister and me attend summer camps/programs where we could be ourselves again, build lasting connections, and make happy memories. Not to mention, for my mom, it was a chance to see us thrive and to take a much-needed break from the constant demands of being a single parent. These experiences set the stage for the journey I’m on today—one that has taken me from a reluctant camper to someone who has biked across continents, led life-changing trips for other young people.”



Elijah and his father

Elijah had never imagined that he would find himself biking across continents and sleeping in tents. Before Apogee, he preferred the comfort of his home, bed, and familiar routines to camping in the wilderness and grand adventures.



The thought of spending weeks on a bike, waking up before dawn in a new town every morning, and living out of a tent was far from appealing. However, this changed in 2016 when Elijah’s best friend convinced him to join a cycling trip in California. With his friend’s encouragement, Elijah signed up for his first trip with a company called Apogee Adventures, biking from Eugene, Oregon, to San Francisco.

“On this journey I discovered a side of myself I hadn’t known existed. The thrill of traveling by bike, the challenge of pushing myself beyond my comfort zone, and the joy of forming deep connections with a small, cohesive group became the things I lived for. I quickly fell in love with the simplicity of life on the road, where each day was a new adventure and every mile brought a sense of accomplishment.”

In 2022, Elijah decided to give back by becoming a trip leader for Apogee. **“Over the past three summers, I’ve had the privilege of leading six trips, including the same Europe Coast to Coast journey I did as a student in 2017. My goal has always been to provide my students with the same transformative experiences that shaped me.”**

In 2018 and 2024, Elijah raised money for Team Wildflower as a rider and a virtual participant. Wildflower is extremely proud of Elijah for all his great accomplishments since being accepted to Wildflower in 2013.

Elijah’s story demonstrates that a donation to Wildflower is a gift that keeps on giving; by supporting and empowering a Wildflower camper, you become the catalyst for change in not only their lives, but the many that they will go on to impact.

Mission

Wildflower is dedicated to serving children and families who have experienced the death of a parent. We provide the gifts of camp, enriching experiences, and consistent, long-term support to help families strengthen their resilience and create positive opportunities for the future.



Elijah with his co-leader & their Apogee Europe tour group



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