



PRESS RELEASE

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Michelle Obama gets kids into national parks

-- Minnesota author asks Obama to make school Nature Program a priority

ST. PAUL, Min. – April 1, 2016 -- Michelle Obama championed healthier food in schools, and best-selling author Geoffery Saign feels it is imperative she also champion the minds and spirits of children with a national school Nature Program.

"Children are being told that their happiness depends on screen time--video games, TV programming, and smart phones," said Saign. "I believe Obama should dispute that and help children realize happiness depends in part on time spent in nature. Research shows that time in nature soothes stress, increases exercise and stimulates creativity."

In 2015, \$91 billion went to the video game market, and the National Park Service will spend \$826 million in 2016.

"We are raising a generation that is disconnected from nature, wildlife and the beauty of this planet," said Saign. "Nature has become just another tourist amusement spot. We need kids to fall in love with the planet and take care of it. That won't happen if they do not spend time outdoors. We need students to understand their health of mind and body depends on spending time in nature."

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“In the U.S., 90 percent of children do not spend time outdoors on a regular basis, and 18 percent of children in the U.S. are obese,” said Saign. “A national school Nature Program would ensure students spend daily time in nature—whether at a local wildlife refuge, state park, national park or any other protected area of nature. Children must learn that nature is as important as mathematics or any other subject.”

“Michelle Obama should champion a National Nature Program as vigorously as she pushed for healthier foods in school lunches,” said Saign, “I am dismayed that so many students spend so little time outside in nature and are stuck inside at desks all day when they need exposure to nature.”

Geoffery Saign is the author of middle-grade fantasy novel, WhipEye. WhipEye received the 2015 International Book Award for Children's Fiction and the 2015 Outstanding Children's Fiction. Saign is also the author of Green Essentials, African Cats, and Great Apes.

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