



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Crooked River Exploration Camp Honored by American Camping Association, Ohio Board with
“Program Excellence” Award**

PENINSULA, Ohio (February 11, 2020) – The Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park and Old Brooklyn Community Development Corporation (OBCDC) are proud to accept the American Camping Association (ACA), Ohio Board’s “Program Excellence” award for their Crooked River Exploration Camp.

The “Program Excellence” award recognizes organizations that use camp experiences to creatively address the needs of groups, individuals and/or societies. Recipients must be ACA accredited, meaning nationally recognized standards focused on health, safety and risk management are all met.

Crooked River Exploration Camp, which launched in Old Brooklyn in 2018, was carefully designed by the Conservancy and OBCDC to connect underrepresented youth to greenspaces. While learning about ecological concepts and the impact of human activity on the Cuyahoga River and the environment, campers get to experience the joys of being outdoors. Ample time is spent in Old Brooklyn’s greenspaces, as well as Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CVNP) – Ohio’s only national park.

This satellite camp model is the first of its kind in CVNP. During the two weeks of camp offered in 2019, 80 youth and four high school micro-interns experienced over 60 hours of programming that was exclusively in outdoor spaces—nearly 5,000 combined hours of time spent immersed in the natural world.

“We feel that we have created something very unique by collaborating with Old Brooklyn to bring the National Park to a community organization,” shared Jesús Sánchez, Conservancy Education Director. “This partnership allows the Conservancy to bring our staff and resources to engage kids within their own parks and communities, not just Cuyahoga Valley National Park.”

Several community fundraisers organized by OBCDC and grants secured by the Conservancy allowed for more than \$4,000 in scholarships to be awarded to support more than half of the attendees. All meals, program supplies and transportation were provided to the campers. The result was a program that was equitable in access and is sustainable for future iterations.

“Safety is the number one priority during camp programming, but access was the reason why this camp was developed. The camp being based in Old Brooklyn and transportation to and from Cuyahoga Valley National Park provides physical access. The development of scholarships helped to build the financial



access many families in Cleveland need,” said Carlos Laboy, Community Outreach Coordinator for OBCDC.

In 2020, Crooked River Exploration Camp will include the opportunity for campers to explore underwater ecosystems with a visit to the Cleveland Aquarium during the first week of camp and/or discover how the earth has changed over time with a trip to the Cleveland Museum of Natural History during the second week! The Conservancy also offers four weeks of summer camp, beginning July 6, at the Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center.

Details and registration for all camps can be found online beginning February 19 at cvnpedu.org or by calling 330.657.2796

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About the Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park

The Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park is the official friends group and philanthropic partner for Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CVNP) – Ohio’s only national park. With a mission to enrich lives and our communities by inspiring use, appreciation and support of CVNP and ensure its preservation, the Conservancy offers cultural and educational programming, operates a year-round environmental education center, comanages the park’s volunteer program, provides venues for weddings, meetings and special events, and operates three park retail spaces.

About Old Brooklyn Community Development Corporation (OBCDC)

Old Brooklyn Community Development Corporation (OBCDC) is a community development corporation that develops and revitalizes the City of Cleveland’s Old Brooklyn neighborhood by uniting and empowering residents, business leaders and government around initiatives that achieve social, economic, and civic improvement. For additional information about OBCDC, visit

<http://www.oldbrooklyn.com/>