It’s been a difficult two years, especially for children and teens. The combination of an uncertain future and a lack of outdoor activity has resulted, according to many researchers, in a doubling of clinically diagnosed depression and anxiety symptoms among youth.

Even before 2020, any pediatrician or youth health expert would have told you at length about the benefits of children spending time outdoors, including increased fitness levels, social aptitude, and – especially – diminished stress. The increased reliance on virtual communication and decreased outdoor socializing we experienced during the worst of Covid-19 further reinforced the importance of these benefits and the activities that deliver them.

Thankfully, the Scouting program stands ready to help young people overcome all these challenges. Dealing with uncertainty is at the very heart of the Scout Motto, Be Prepared. Few if any other programs give young people experience with engaging and overcoming uncertainty, in roles ranging from leader to team member. Age-appropriate physical challenges test younger Scouts’ stamina and abilities, with positive adult role models providing supervision and support. Advanced problem-solving and group activities allow teens to plan, adapt, and – sometimes – fail, all while in a safe, judgement-free environment that prioritizes evaluation and growth.

I hope you’ll consider supporting Scouting here in Central Texas so that as many boys and girls as possible can benefit from these incredible programs. You can give now or on Giving Tuesday, November 29, by visiting [www.bsacac.org/givingtuesday](http://www.bsacac.org/givingtuesday).

Thanks!