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**Outward Bound USA Names Richard Stopol 2018 Kurt Hahn Award Winner**

*Outstanding Service Honor Will Be Celebrated at National Benefit Dinner September 25*

GOLDEN, CO (August 31, 2018) The 2018 Outward Bound Kurt Hahn Award Committee today announced Richard Stopol as this year’sKurt Hahn Award recipient.  The award, named in honor of the founder of Outward Bound, is presented each year at Outward Bound USA’s National Benefit Dinner (New York City – Tuesday, September 25, 2018) to a person who has made a contribution through his or her life’s work on behalf of others, exemplifying the Outward Bound mission of outstanding service.

“Richard epitomizes the philosophy of Kurt Hahn for the betterment of society,” noted the Committee in an internal announcement. “His belief in the power of youth and the importance of an equitable education for all, so that everyone may live into their great capabilities, is at the root of his work.”

As the longest serving Outward Bound leader in the USA, Stopol has dedicated his entire professional life to public service and, more specifically, to serving individuals from underserved communities. Before helping to establish NYC Outward Bound Schools, he worked as a Legal Aid lawyer representing indigent defendants and at The Fund for the City of New York working on a number of child welfare projects.

Having joined NYC Outward Bound Schools thirty years ago at its very inception, Stopol recognized its extraordinary power to improve students’ lives and provide the foundation for what good education should look like. He agreed to lead the fledgling organization because the idea of bringing Outward Bound principles, practices and activities to NYC’s young people and their public schools captured him. He saw its potential to transform schools and change lives, and as a vehicle to ensure that all students, regardless of zip code, background or circumstance, have access to a quality education. These transformations are testaments to Mr. Stopol’s relentless focus on equity for all students.

Under Richard’s leadership, NYC Outward Bound Schools has built a network of 12 public schools that are based on Outward Bound’s educational approach and that it operates in partnership with the NYC Department of Education. These schools utilize the EL Education model, which has its roots in Outward Bound, and also feature character and leadership development programming for students as well as an extensive set of supports aimed at helping them to enroll in and complete college. This network of schools truly embodies Outward Bound’s core values and are proving to be a model for the nation.

NYC Outward Bound Schools also serve thousands of other NYC students through Adventure & Team Building programs and hundreds of educators through its Select Strategies for Schools programming. During Richard’s tenure, NYC Outward Bound Schools has served over 100,000 students from more than 300 NYC public schools, and currently reaches 10,000 students per year. Richard’s committed, humble and passionate leadership reflects what he hopes for all young people and what he believes about the power of education to change the trajectories of their lives.

As the consummate educator, Richard is always looking for ways to help serve students better. In his own words, “We have, from the beginning, stood for an educational approach that blends individual best effort with concern and support

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for others, and treats learning not as an abstract exercise but as a concrete one grounded in genuine experience from which

 knowledge and skills are acquired and applied in real world learning contexts.” His commitment to students and innovative spirit, as seen with ‘To and Through’ – a program which supports NYC Outward Bound Schools’ graduates as they progress to college – has led to countless successes.

“The wide and positive recognition of the strength and innovations of NYC Outward Bound Schools are a testament to Richard’s outstanding dedication and leadership and his adoption, in a tangible and highly visible way, of the Hahnian philosophy and approach to education,” added the Committee. “Richard’s compassion for his students, his pride in their accomplishments and his humble deflection of any praise from himself to his team are traits that are an integral part of him. Having impacted more lives than any other Outward Bound leader in US history, Richard is a pioneer for urban programming and has forever expanded the definition of what it means to be Outward Bound – this is his legacy. “

Recognition of the Kurt Hahn award winner is an integral part of Outward Bound USA’s National Benefit Dinner coming up on September 25 in New York City. An unforgettable evening is planned to celebrate and support curiosity, integrity, excellence and above all, compassion, surrounded by adventurers, leaders and students from all across the country who support Outward Bound’s mission. For more information or to inquire about tickets, visit <https://www.outwardbound.org/donate/events/nationaldinner/>

*Members of the 2018 Kurt Hahn Award Committee include:*

*Laura Kohler, Outward Bound USA Board Chair*

*Frances Ashley, Outward Bound Center for Peacebuilding Board Member*

*Josh Brankman, Outward Bound USA Executive Director*

*Barb Doran, Outward Bound USA Community Member*

*Clay Fowler, Hurricane Island Outward Bound School Board Member*

*George McCown, Former Outward Bound USA Board Chair*

*Whitney Montgomery, North Carolina Outward Bound School Executive Director*

*Erin Murnan, Omaha Outward Bound School Board Chair*

*Lee Skold, Outward Bound USA Board Member*

**About Outward Bound USA**

Outward Bound, founded in 1941 by educator Kurt Hahn, is a nonprofit educational organization serving people of all ages and backgrounds through challenging learning expeditions focused on character development, leadership, and service. As the pioneer and leading provider of experiential and outdoor education in the United States, Outward Bound offers over 1,000 courses throughout the year across the country. Outward Bound serves nearly 50,000 students annually and has a nationwide community of more than 1 million supporters and alumni.

In the U.S., Outward Bound is a national network of eleven regional schools dedicated to helping individuals learn through challenging experiences so they may grow as individuals and become active in the communities where they live and work. With expeditions in remote wilderness settings, in close proximity to bustling urban communities and in classrooms, Outward Bound serves a diverse population of students while delivering courses with consistently high standards of quality, safety, and results.

If you would like further information, please visit [www.outwardbound.org](http://www.outwardbound.org) or contact Christy Borst at cborst@outwardbound.org.

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