



Brown Girl Surf Summer 2019 Newsletter

Dear Brown Girl Surf Community,

We had an awesome spring and summer, and we're launching into our fall season! In this newsletter, we'll share with you:

- 1) Upcoming events
- 2) Program highlights since this spring
- 3) Development news and other highlights
- 4) Organizational needs

Upcoming events

We're hosting the **2019 Creek to Bay Day Kayak cleanup** on September 21, in partnership with the City of Oakland and the California Canoe and Kayak Company. This is part of the California and International Coastal Cleanup Day, the largest volunteer day in the world! This event is open to everyone! Past Surf Sister Saturday or Summer Camp participants receive complimentary kayak rentals for themselves and one guest. Register [here](#) and come join us in Jack London Square!



2018 Creek to Bay Kayak Cleanup!

Registration is now open for our **Fall Surf Sister Saturdays**, open to female-identifying and nonbinary individuals ages 9-99. No experience is required, and we provide all of the necessary equipment as well as transportation from Oakland. Can't swim? We'll provide a safe and supported environment for you to be in the ocean. Registration is on a sliding scale. This fall, we're reserving one session for **first-time participants**, to help more people join our community. We're also reserving one session for **returning participants**, so we can work on further developing our surf skills.

Sept. 28 – Surf Sister Saturday

Oct. 5 - Surf Sister Saturday for first-time participants only.

Oct. 12 - Surf Sister Saturday

Nov. 2 – Surf Sister Saturday for returning participants only.

Nov. 9 – Surf Sister Saturday

Links to all registrations are at www.browngirlsurf.com/register

Program highlights since this spring



On April 20, we held our annual **Earth Day Fun Day** at Lake Merritt Channel Park, in partnership with the Oakland Museum of California and the City of Oakland Environmental Services. This year, we did a deep dive into understanding estuaries - where fresh water meets ocean water. Did you know that Lake Merritt is an estuary? That means it's connected to the ocean! One longtime volunteer told us, "You are totally blowing my mind right now!" after learning that the tides affect Lake Merritt and

observing for herself the difference in water levels and current direction at the beginning of our day vs. at the end. We also played a game, “That Critter was seen Where?!” as part of our discussion of animals that live both in Lake Merritt and in the ocean... including bat rays and leopard sharks!! Estuaries are incredibly productive places, with abundant food and shelter for many animals. Trash and pollution in estuaries, like Lake Merritt, can end up in the ocean, and can affect the health of the many animals that depend on the estuary.

Armed with a deeper understanding of why our efforts matter, we then carried out various habitat restoration projects and trash removal at Channel Park. Thanks to the Whale Tail Grant from the CA Coastal Commission for helping us make this day possible! Join us for our next environmental stewardship day at the [Creek to Bay Kayak Cleanup!](#)

We held five [Surf Sister Saturdays](#) this spring, with a total of 69 participants and 31 volunteers! We had a lot of first-time participants this spring – including a group of girls from the Urban Promise Academy in Oakland! There was an explosion in demand this year, with one of the sessions having 43 people on the waitlist!! We continually get feedback that there is no other organization that does what we do – create a safe, inviting, and accessible space for girls and women of color to connect with the ocean, the sport of surfing, and each other. We are stoked to fill an unmet need in so many lives. The 2019 Spring Surf Sister Saturdays were supported by the CA Coastal Conservancy (Explore the Coast program), Youth Outside, Patagonia, San Francisco Foundation, and other [institutional partners](#) – and your individual contributions! With your support, we are working hard to increase the number of surf program days to match our growing community!





2019 Spring Surf Sister Saturdays!

Our redesigned [Surf Sister Summer Camp](#) was a huge success! Historically, our summer camps were held Tuesdays to Thursdays in Half Moon Bay. This year, thanks to the Whale Tail Grant and a new partnership with East Bay Regional Parks, we were able to add an extra day at Alameda Crown Beach on Mondays. The additional day allowed us more time for team building, and learning about our amazing ocean. We developed an all new environmental education curriculum – including games about food chains, and activities linking climate change and pollution to our everyday actions. Through seine netting and plankton tow activities, campers discovered various critters that can be found in our local waters off Alameda – and we were surprised to find out that the same organisms can be found in Half Moon Bay! With more knowledge and curiosity, we explored the beach on the subsequent surf days and identified sea lettuce, isopods, jellyfish, crabs, and more!

We also piloted a new **Counselors-in-Training Program**, where girls who have been Rising Leaders for several seasons led teambuilding, environmental education, and surf activities for younger girls throughout the last session of summer camp. Clara, Shaunti, and Masai'a participated in this pilot program, and did an incredible job!!! They told us they “learned how to be leaders in a whole new way”. The girls demonstrated that our Rising Leaders are ready for more opportunities and responsibilities. We want to make the CIT program an integral component of Summer Camp in future years.



2019 Surf Sister Summer Camp!

Special thanks to the campers’ family members, who helped with carpooling and logistical support! And as always, we could not run our programs without our incredible volunteers. Our volunteers and Rising Leaders are the heart of Brown Girl Surf. Each spring, we hold a day-long **New Volunteer Training**, as well as **Rising Leader training**. All new and returning volunteers also participate in a rigorous, annual **Ocean Safety Training**, co-hosted by Brown Girl Surf and Doug Armstrong - the Ocean Rescue Supervisor of the National Park Service. Thanks to our volunteers and Rising Leaders, our programs are fun AND safe!



The 2019 Brown Girl Surf Ocean Safety Training

Development news and other highlights

This spring, the Patagonia Santa Monica store hosted a **film screening** to benefit our programs! We get multiple participants from Southern California (and beyond) each season, and receive inquiries about opening Brown Girl Surf chapters all across the country on a regular basis. Thank you to Patagonia for helping us spread the stoke!

We are very excited to announce that we received three **new grants** this spring and summer! One is from the [San Francisco Foundation](#), for supporting our work in connecting youths to nature. This grant has also included some very valuable training resources for Brown Girl Surf's growth! We also received a new grant through the California Conservation Innovations program of the [Resources Legacy Fund](#). This grant will support our work to amplify the voices of women of color surfers in shaping park and coastal access issues, as well as conservation strategies, in California – in partnership with the Parks Now coalition. Finally, we received the Community Organization Grant from [Soroptimist International of Oakland](#), which will cover snacks and lunches for our programs. We had a wonderful time at the Soroptimist 2019 Awards Tea!

Brown Girl Surf is part of the California Academy of Sciences' new [Skin Exhibit](#)!!! This exhibit explores the incredible nature of skin across an array of animals, including humans, as well as the science behind its diversity. It also dissects how artificial, racialized concepts and meanings arose regarding skin, and are reinforced in the United States. Brown Girl Surf is featured at the end of the exhibit as an organization that is working to advance racial equity and justice in the Bay Area. The Cal Academy is a renowned scientific and educational institution in San Francisco, and hosts 1.5 million visitors a year! The exhibit will run through Jan. 2020 and we are thrilled to be part of it!



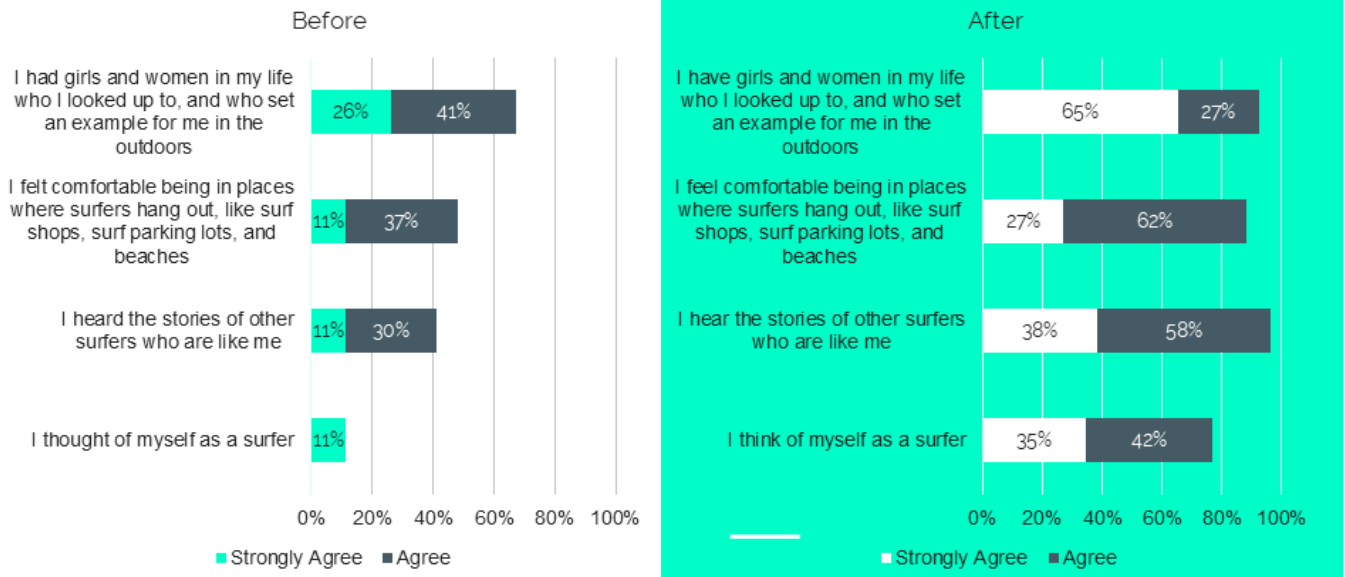
Mira and Maya at the Cal Academy's Skin Exhibit



MetWest Students painting the BGS storage shed

MetWest mural: This year, our storage shed got a big makeover, thanks to the MetWest arts program run by Kristi Holohan of the [Rock Paper Scissors Collective](#)! Special thanks to the art students, who painted the mural – including Angela Vallejo, who designed it! It was not too long ago that our programs were run out of Mira's house, with wetsuits stored on her bed and sand everywhere. We are so grateful to MetWest High School for providing a better storage solution, and the art students for adopting the shed for their spring project!

Surf Sister Saturday Surveys: Last year we launched our new online surveys, which allow us to evaluate our programs and measure our impact – and the survey results are in! After joining Brown Girl Surf, most participants come to think of themselves as surfers and become more comfortable and confident – in themselves, and being in the ocean. Check out some of the survey results below. Special thanks to Evan Gattozzi for helping us with survey design and analysis! **This year's participants have received a link to our Spring 2019 surveys.** Please fill them out so we can continue to improve our programs!



Snapshot of survey responses from 2018 Surf Sister Saturday participants

Our impact is not limited to just participants. In the volunteer survey, one of our volunteers shared with us, **“I have surfed for many years but had always felt like an outsider, because I rarely saw others who looked like me. Not until I joined BGS did I start to feel like I had a place in surfing and the ocean.”**

A 15 year old Rising Leader wrote, **“[BGS] is a second home to me and one of the most beautiful communities I've ever been a part of. I've made lifelong friends with both girls my age as well as older and care for these people like no other.”** Testimonials are shared with permission; you can read more of them [here!](#)

Organizational needs

Brown Girl Surf relies on your contributions to help sustain and grow our programs. Thank you for being part of our movement!

Click [here](#) to support the programs of Brown Girl Surf!