



EDITOR'S NOTE

MARISA PALMIERI EDITOR

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Vitamin N

I'm on the cusp of the generation Richard Louv, author of *Last Child in the Woods* and *The Nature Principle*, defines as having "nature deficit disorder" or a deficiency in vitamin N (N is for nature). A child of the 1980s, I had minimal access to technology other than the television in my early years, unlike today's kids. But by middle school, my family had a PC. By high school we had an Internet connection. And by college I had a cell phone.

Still, I played *outside* as a kid. I got dirty. I ran around in bare feet. When we were 8 or 10 my sister, our neighborhood friends and I had a fort in the woods behind our house. I went to week-long Girl Scout summer camp. We played "spud" and "sardines," had campfires and caught lightning bugs late into the summer nights.

Will my daughters, Sadie and Paige, ages 3 and not quite 2, have the same type of childhoods? I'd be lying if I said I wasn't worried about it. On top of my concern that they'll miss out on a lot of fun, grass stains and skinned knees, there are potentially more serious repercussions for their generation: the soaring rates of childhood obesity, attention deficit disorder and anxiety, just to name a few.

As a member of the Green Industry, you probably have—or had at one time—a healthy dose of vitamin N. And you likely have the same concerns for the well being of the children in your life. That's not to mention the direct impact future generations' nature deficits may have on

the market for landscaping services.

Thankfully, you and I are far from the only ones concerned. There's Louv, his ground-breaking books and the work of the Children & Nature Network (C&NN) he co-founded. One of C&NN's initiatives is Let's G.O.!, which encourages people of all ages to "get outside" to play, serve and celebrate during the month of April. There are First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move and Let's Move Outside campaigns. In the landscape industry, there's Project EverGreen, which aims to preserve and enhance green spaces of all kinds. And there's Come Alive Outside, a movement founded by Green Industry consultant Jim Paluch and supported by the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET) and a handful of suppliers. (See page 6 for more on his presentation at PLANET's Green Industry Great Escape in Las Vegas last month.)

As Paluch puts it, the landscape industry has been out-marketed by Hollywood and the electronic communications industries. How many of your prospects don't have a 56-in. flat-screen TV with a complete indoor entertainment system? Very few of them, right? It's time to show them that by improving their outdoor living areas, they'll bring their families more memories, joy and wellness than a black box ever could. Sell them on *outside*.

When that happens, and when our nation's vitamin N levels rise, we'll have one fewer worry for our children and our children's children.

Landscape Management

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