HIKE IT BABY
ANNUAL REPORT - 2017
What started in 2013 as a close-knit group of friends getting outside at local parks and trails has now grown to a nationwide nonprofit with 26,000 annual hikes, 650 ambassadors, and more than 237,000 participating families! For a few years, I wasn’t really sure what it would become, I didn’t imagine that it would reach so many families, or that we would have more and more ambassadors joining us nationwide to support and lead their local communities to get outdoors.

In 2016, with the support of the Hike it Baby team and those close to the organization, we transitioned to become a nonprofit. After a significant investment of time, consideration and funds, we concluded that this was the best way to ensure the future of Hike it Baby and build support in our mission of getting more young children outside right from the start.

In addition to creating a solid foundation for Hike it Baby to continue to flourish, we wanted to keep the movement as affordable as possible for our HiB community and allow more grantseeking and partnership opportunities than what a traditional for-profit business model would provide.

Note from our Founder, Shanti Hodges:

Photo: Arika Bauer
As part of these shifts, we started an annual membership with several donation and participation levels to ensure a continued foundation for a strong community that didn’t leave families behind. The membership has helped create financial stability within our organization, providing more opportunities for Hike it Baby to have a greater impact that strongly aligns with our mission and values.

In just the last 3 years, our impact on families getting on trail is visible and evident with every hosted hike. In that time, we have hosted over 100,000 hikes on our calendar! In the next few years, our goal is to create an even more inclusive environment for getting all families with young children into the outdoors. We will dedicate our resources to finding ways on many fronts to make it easier for families to find us and find their place outdoors. We plan to do this by building on the strong programs we already offer, delivering mobile-friendly web tools to make getting outside easier, and supporting and partnering with other community members and leaders to reach and welcome all who have a desire to get on trail.

I hope to see you on the trail!

Shanti
MISSION
Hike it Baby is dedicated to building communities that support getting families outside with children from birth to school age.

PURPOSE
Providing support to get families in nature as soon as they feel ready.

VALUES
We leave no family behind.
We are a strong community.
We are free of judgment.
We are raising a generation to love the outdoors.
We respect nature.
We inspire wellness.
HIKES ON THE CALENDAR IN 2017

2013
5 MOMS HIKING
BRANCHES: 1

2014
9,400 FAMILIES INVOLVED
BRANCHES: 58

2015
74,000 FAMILIES INVOLVED
BRANCHES: 195

2016
181,000 FAMILIES INVOLVED
BRANCHES: 312

2017
237,000 FAMILIES INVOLVED
BRANCHES: 352

2018
249,384 FAMILIES INVOLVED
BRANCHES: 338
(AS OF MAY 2018)

5.13 MILLION
MINUTES OUTSIDE
by Participants of the Hike it Baby 30 Challenges in 2017.

Hikes on the Calendar in 2017
26K

650 Branch Ambassadors & National Volunteers
spent over 140,000 HOURS hosting hikes,
developing their communities, and contributing to HiB goals and projects in 2017.

367 FAMILIES
became members through the scholarship program.
2017 at a Glance

**SOCIAL MEDIA**
- 29,800+ Likes on our Facebook page
- 20,600+ Instagram followers
- 54,500+ Newsletter readers

**ON THE TRAIL**
- 25,924 Hikes in 2017
- 3,100 Registered hike hosts
- 39,192 Volunteer hours contributed
- 2,100 Hikes/month on our calendar
- 650 Branch ambassadors

**WEB ACTIVITY**
- 229,200+ Average website views per month (7,535 per day)
- 338 Active local Facebook groups
- 237,000+ Families in our Facebook groups

**WWW.HIKEITBABY.COM**
- 2,000 visitors on a daily basis
- 5,826 visitors on our busiest day in 2017
- 22% of site traffic is new visitors
- 78% is returning traffic
- 27,000 families registered since August 2016 when we implemented a membership system

Visitors are distinct individuals coming to the site while views are eyeballs looking at pages in the site.
Understanding the makeup of our community

On average, there were 2,100 hikes per month were hosted in 2017. From infants to high school-aged children, Hike it Baby families are hitting the trails and continuing to join us as their families expand to add new little ones or transition beyond toddlerhood.

How ages are your children?

- Toddler: 37%
- Preschooler: 25%
- Infant: 14%
- Expecting: 20%
- Elementary & Older: 20%

How long have you been active with Hike it Baby?

- Less than 1 year: 37%
- 1-2 years: 43%
- 3-4 years: 20%

How important is getting outside regularly to your family?

- Extremely: 77%
- Very: 23%
- Somewhat: 11%
- Not: 9%

How often do you get outside in a month?

- 10+ times: 57%
- 7-10 times: 15%
- 5-6 times: 11%
- 3-4 times: 11%
- 1-2 times: 11%
- less than 1: 9%

How do you hike and get outside more year-round since joining Hike it Baby?

- Yes: 93%
- No: 6%
- About the same: 1%

93% of our surveyed community says Hike it Baby helps them continue an already established habit or get outside even more year-round.
Website Updates

Another key focus for 2017, and into 2018, has been improving our website and the tools that have set Hike it Baby apart from many hike groups and community groups.

The website allows us to serve the thousands of families online who use our website as a resource for information to help get their families outside. It also gives our members the ability to connect across the country and find hikes no matter what city or state they visit. We are excited about 2018 and the possibilities that building such strong tools will give us to contribute to getting families outside in the future.
Our Volunteers

Our volunteers are the heart and soul of Hike it Baby. About 87% of all hours logged in our day-to-day operations are volunteer hours! From Ambassadors to National Volunteer Team members, and everyone in between, our organization grows and thrives because our members are so generous with their time and knowledge. The influence of our volunteers is powerful, both locally and in capacities that are far-reaching.

Our Ambassadors host hikes, encourage respect for the outdoors, foster imaginative play, inspire innovative thinking and connect families. These are gifts that are valuable beyond measure.

- Our Ambassadors notably spend an average of 190 hours a year strengthening and growing their individual communities.

Our National Team is comprised of 61 volunteers across 14 teams. They work hard on a vast array of projects and reported many successes this year:

- The Social Media Team helped to grow our organization by providing content and photography for use across all of Hike it Baby's platforms. We had photographs shared in numerous local and national publications, including Backpacker magazine!

- The Calendar Team reduced the time to publish hikes from 24-48 hours to 6-12 hours and started monthly calendar tips in the newsletter.

- The Mentor Team implemented regional mentor groups, which streamlined regional communication and improved teamwork.
The Photography Team added new photographers, creating more opportunities for varied types of photographs, reflecting different communities across the country.

The Blog Team has improved the blog look and feel with good, consistent content, thanks to existing writers and new writers who joined the team. Additionally, the team created and has implemented a planning calendar, which allows them to organize the content 2-3 months in advance.

The Training Team rebuilt the ambassador support site and implemented a new, more streamlined process for those going through training, allowing ambassadors to complete the training course at their own pace.

The Newsletter Team implemented the HiB Style Guide to create a consistent look all around, including the weekly newsletter.

The Tech Support Team expanded to help our community resolve issues faster and address any problems as we rolled out several new initiatives such as the 10K Project, membership changes, new features, etc.

The Education & Experience Team had an enlightening and informative meeting with the Leave No Trace education coordinator, which allows us to incorporate Leave No Trace ethics into our community tools, improving the impact we have on local trails and parks systems as a whole.
- The HiB 30/Events Team spends the non-HiB months transitioning to organize events for our annual partnerships like Kids to Parks Day and National Trails Day. Last year we successfully had 450 hikes for those two events alone. They also rolled out a brand new hike log and released some fun worksheets to help our members get outside more.

- The Data Team identified and classified all branches’ activity levels. They also worked with a volunteer programmer to collect Facebook branch member data with only a few clicks, which makes it a more efficient system.

- The Community Values Team organized a HiB statement showing support for our core guiding values and reiterating that we are a no-judgment community. This grew into graphics shared in branches, as well as a dedicated effort by HiB to clearly and consistently remind our members of our values via ambassadors, social media and our newsletter. These guiding values are also key considerations when identifying partnership and grant opportunities.

- The HiB Shop Team created a plan to run our own T-shirt campaigns, allowing us to manage campaigns directly and have more quality control to deliver better products to our community.

- The Facebook Moderator Team has engaged our members in a variety of conversations based on commonalities outside of hiking, such as parenting twins, being a dad, traveling with kids, and many more great topics that help strengthen our community bonds. These spaces have been well received by a great number of Hike it Baby families.

Our work would be impossible without the many hours of hard work by our amazing volunteers!
External Connections

Sponsorships

Some of our major sponsors in 2017-2018 include: OAKI, Babyganics, Deuter, BOB, Adventure Medical Kits, Sunday Afternoons, Fifty/Fifty, Baby K’tan and WOOM. We have numerous smaller partners as well who contribute to helping our organization thrive.

Grants

REI Force of Nature Grant

REI awarded Hike it Baby a grant through a program developed in response to a 2017 study that identified barriers to women and girls getting outdoors. With our grant, HiB launched the yearlong 10,000 Women Trail Project to get more women and girls on trail, and also implemented much-needed technology improvements to our website.
OHSU Knight Foundation Grant
In 2016 we were awarded a grant for an almost 2-year buildout of a Hike it Baby community in Eastern Oregon to help combat high cancer rates and create a healthier community. The grant was so successful that a second branch started up in a neighboring town after being inspired by the Hike it Baby Baker City branch.

Partnerships

Kids to Parks Day
Hike it Baby partnered with the National Park Trust in 2017 and 2018 for Kids to Parks Day, connecting kids and families with their local, state, and national parks and public lands. In May 2017, we helped contribute 18% of the 1,700 Kids to Parks Day events.

National Trails Day
Together with the American Hiking Society, we celebrate National Trails Day each June in an effort to get more families out on the trails. HiB contributes more than 11% of the 1,490 hikes on their calendar.
Leave No Trace & Hike it Baby

Raising a generation to love the outdoors and to also respect nature is key to Hike it Baby’s values. In 2017, the Leave No Trace, Center for Outdoor Ethics, officially partnered with Hike it Baby, solidifying Hike it Baby’s role as an active steward of the outdoors and providing access to Leave No Trace education and tools.

The Seven Principles

- Plan Ahead and Prepare
- Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces
- Dispose of Waste Properly
- Leave What You Find
- Minimize Campfire Impacts
- Respect Wildlife
- Be Considerate of Other Visitors

While walking on a local trail last weekend, my daughter came up to me to show me a treasure she had found. I’m entirely accustomed to her handing over sticks, leaves, and rocks, so I was quite surprised when I saw a large shard of glass in my toddler’s tiny hand. In a moment of poor judgement, I threw the glass to the ground as I frantically examined my daughter’s hands for cuts. It was not until we reached the end of our walk that I realized I should have taken that piece of glass with me and disposed of it properly and that regret has been weighing on me.

Tonight, we went back to that same trail prepared to pick up any litter we found. The picture below shows the trash that we collected on a 0.5-mile section of trail. The brown pile at the bottom of the picture is entirely shards of glass, much like the one my daughter picked up. During this walk, we passed at least five garbage bins that these items could have been tossed in.

As we explore nature during this challenge, let’s remember what nature has given to us. Personally, my time on the trails has helped me find community, strength, happiness, confidence, and so much more. It seems only fair that I start to use more of my time to show a little love to the trails that have given me so much.

If you’re interested in getting involved in litter cleanup, here are some sources that other Hike it Baby members have kindly shared:

- The Trash Free Trails Project
  https://www.facebook.com/trashfreetrailsproject/
- Litterati
  https://www.litterati.org
- Keep America Beautiful
  https://www.kab.org/home
In 2017, we aimed to work on becoming more independent. Our first goal was to generate new revenue that wasn’t dependent on sponsorship relationships and helped us demonstrate public support based on IRS requirements to maintain our 501c3 tax-exempt status. By implementing a membership model, we were able to start meeting that goal. It has also helped us begin to build a more focused, defined organizational structure complete with a tight-knit team of accountable staff members who are committed to helping Hike it Baby blaze trails and build communities for families in the outdoors well into the future.

With the new membership, we were able to establish a team to rely on and give small salaries to help ensure we would have consistent, accountable management month after month, year after year. As of May 2018, Hike it Baby employs two executive level managers who oversee operations and direct the organization. They each receive annual salaries of $23,660. Four managers oversee the key departments of Hike it Baby. Each manager receives an annual salary averaging $12,480, depending on hours reported monthly. Our managers and departments are supported by a team of seven coordinators who receive an annual salary averaging $5,200, dependent on hours reported.
We also have a handful of specialized, professional contractors like a bookkeeper, graphic designer, and web developers who work on a contractor basis. This staff team works with our 70 or so national volunteers to ensure smooth day-to-day operations support to our 650+ branch ambassadors and the almost 250,000 families who participate in our 300 communities across North America.

As of March 2018, we now have 13 part-time employees working across the country on various aspects of Hike it Baby from branch management to special events to grants to partnerships and overall operations. This has given Hike it Baby the much-needed skeleton structure to support our branches and all of the amazing volunteers who make the local communities thrive.

Of our 250,000 participating families, 101,567 have registered on our website and 16,150 families have purchased paid memberships since we started the membership program. We count our participation on Facebook as important influence and inspiration in helping get more families outside, but we know it’s only one part of the equation. Our future goals focus on growing our membership base and reaching families to help get them into nature and actively participating in their local communities. We want to make those first steps out of the front door with a new baby as easy and inviting as possible. Our membership helps us do that.
How membership is helping us raise a generation to love the outdoors:

2017 Revenue: $232,646.56

- Membership & Store: 66.15%
- Sponsorship: 29.23%
- Grants: 2.15%
- Direct Donations: 1.73%
- Corporate Donations: 0.75%

General, HiB30 & Ambassador memberships, store inventory sales, and gifts from general partners.

2017 Expenses: $256,037.07

- Payroll Expenditures: 30.01%
- Contract Services: 24.34%
- Website Development & Maintenance: 22%
- Administrative Expenses: 9.79%
- COGS + Postage: 6.72%
- Advertising/Promotional: 4.38%
- Travel & Meetings: 2.76%

Employee payroll, taxes, and fees, accounting, legal, graphic design, photography, videography, independent contractor's developer time, servers, software plugins, etc.

2016 Direct Donations
- $0.00

2017 Direct Donations
- $270.00
- $1,338.60
- $830.20
- $451.41
- $250.00

*2017 numbers are preliminary and subject to adjustment based on review by tax accountants and final preparation of 990. 990 will be available as public record once filed.

*Due to the 2017 Knight Foundation grant, funded in 2016, our revenue appears to be less than our expenses. The grant was split across two fiscal years and, for record keeping, funds were transferred to OPHI control for the remainder of the project. In actuality, we broke even for 2017.
Hike it Baby Is Community

The Hike it Baby community goes beyond the trail, whether it’s to help a new parent carrying their infant on a hike or supporting a community that has been hit by a massive weather catastrophe!

Hurricane Harvey, one of the costliest tropical cyclones on record, made landfall in August 2017, affecting numerous Hike it Baby families.

When news of the hurricane set in, the Hike it Baby community was on high alert, knowing that there were a number of branches in the area. As we got word from local Ambassadors and members about the home losses within our circle, we launched nationwide support efforts within Hike it Baby and beyond, knowing that hope and the strength of community could make a difference.

Support came in both physically and monetarily from our amazing sponsors: Deuter, BOB, Baby Bjorn and Mountain House. Individual Hike it Baby members helped via Amazon Wishlists and communication through Facebook.

Texas Branch Ambassador and Hike it Baby Photographer Jen Campbell helped to coordinate a donation drop-off trailer. “We had to take a trip to Dallas a couple of weekends ago so we took my husband’s work trailer with us and left it with his sister as a donation drop-off point. By putting the word out via social media, we were able to fill the floor space of a 15-foot trailer.”

Members locally watched each other’s children, cooked dinners, and gutted and cleaned houses side by side. Members like Kristie Huffman reported back how, in spite of losing her home, she could feel the love from the community and that made all the difference during a really hard time. The community pulled together to be the beacon of a hope and strength needed to pull the families through.

The community’s response to Hurricane Harvey has since led to efforts following other natural disasters across the US. We are proud to see strong communities grow from friendships found while getting our children outside.
Looking into the Future

In 2018, we hope to continue building an organization that will last well into the future. We dream of grandkids hitting the trail with their Hike it Baby parents - our children who learned to love the outdoors in our current Hike it Baby communities. We will continue working to connect families in nature through a supportive community to build healthier, happier communities across North America and create a more connected world.

In addition to making our current programs more robust, we plan to continue improving Hike it Baby’s internal operations and growing our board of directors so that we are sustainable from the inside out. Our ultimate goal is to get a million boots on trail with little ones by 2020. More importantly, we want to focus on getting more diverse boots on trail along the way. It isn’t enough to say we welcome all, but part of our initiative is to actually create those meaningful relationships that will break down barriers and get all on trail. We have to live it and make it true across each of our local communities on a daily basis. That means learning about diversity and inclusivity in the real world so we can bridge gaps to truly leave no family behind.

We recognize this is a new challenge for families getting into the outdoors. We hope that by creating communities where young children see tolerance in action, are exposed to not just nature but a variety of people, and where adults support each other in a healthy and respectful community, we can change the world, one little hike at a time.
Join us on a hike! Host a hike! Become a volunteer!

www.hikeitbaby.com

Photo: Arika Bauer