



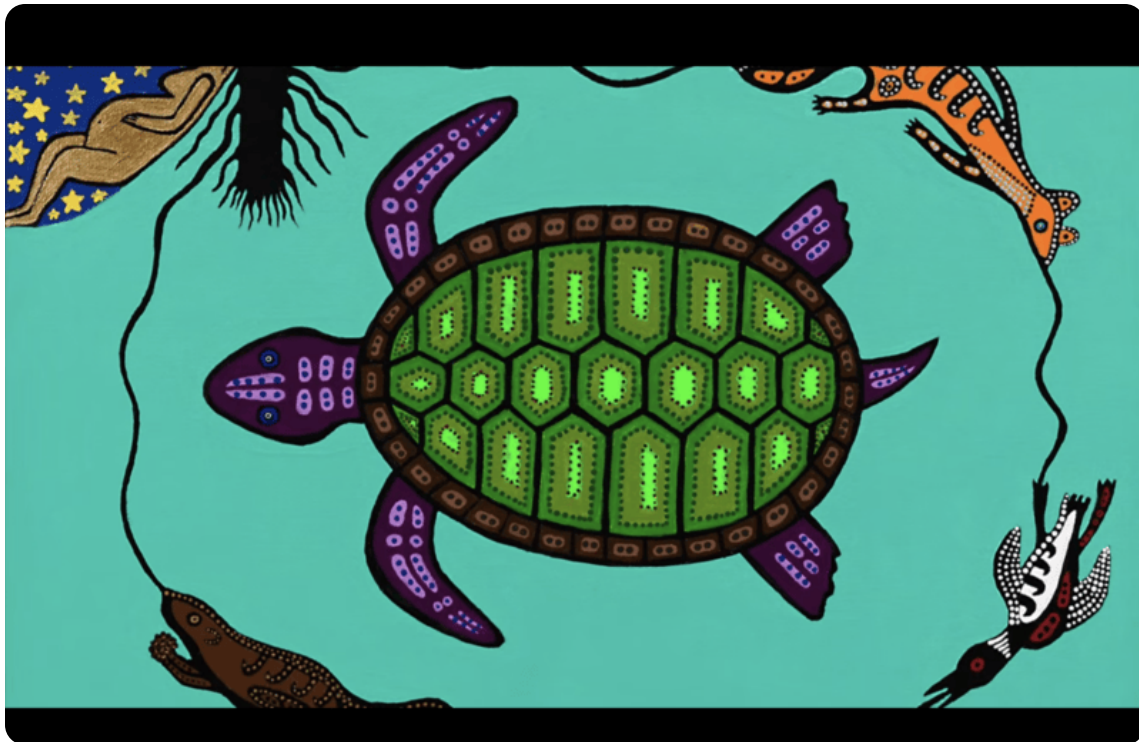
## Celebrating Nature and Sky Woman

June comes to a close and July is about to begin. Summer has definitely arrived! As PRA focuses on promoting time outdoors in nature, we also celebrate nature itself, and all that it has to offer, which includes a moment of reflection. It's becoming increasingly clear how interconnected we humans are with the "more than human" world; and, I'm also constantly reminded, by the perils of climate change, that the "more than human" world was here long before the arrival of humans, and despite our belief in the human-centric word, will undoubtedly outlive our species.

The author and climate activist, Katharine Hayhoe, Ph.D., a Canadian by country of origin, currently Horn Distinguished Professor and Endowed Chair in Public Policy and Public Law at Texas Tech University, so aptly titled her book [Saving Us: A Climate Scientist's Case for Hope and Healing in a Divided World](#). She makes a good case that it's not about saving our planet, as our planet Earth will

certainly outlive our species. It's really more about saving ourselves, when it comes to the perils of climate change.

While thinking about the relationship between humans and the "more than human" world, and especially our interdependence, I can't help but think about the [indigenous creation story of Turtle Island](#), a.k.a. North America. Although there are many versions, there are common themes that are worth noting.



In Indigenous oral traditions, Sky Woman falls down toward the Earth, entirely covered in water, and a water bird notices her falling, and catches her on its back to gently bring her down for her to rest on the back of a giant turtle. The story continues that several animals, including the otter, the beaver, and the muskrat attempt to dive down to the depths of the ocean, to grab a fistful of ocean floor, from which to create the beginnings of what is to become North America. Although all the animals sacrifice their lives in their attempts to grab a piece of ocean floor, only the tiny muskrat is successful in returning with a small fistful of mud. It is from this small piece of dirt, which Sky Woman takes and places on the back of the giant turtle, with the help of the four winds, to create Turtle Island. Sky Woman then gives birth to twins,

from which the human species is created.

This creation story reminds me that all of us are merely visitors on this planet, and in some respect, all of us are immigrants, including Sky Woman herself. It also reminds me of the interconnection between humans and the "more than human" world, the relationships that we have with plant and animal species, our interdependence, and the sacrifices that each of us must make for each other in order for all of us to survive and flourish.

## Summertime Musings

One of my absolute favorite things to do in the summertime, especially given the short summers where I live, is to visit my friends, the serviceberry trees, at Rideau Hall in Ottawa. These are not berries that you'll find in the supermarket, as they are not bought with currency, but are rather gifted to us.



The serviceberry goes by many other names, including Saskatoon berry, Juneberry, and shadbush, and a more detailed explanation, including its role in the gift economy, can be found in Robin Wall Kimmerer's book, *The Serviceberry: Abundance and Reciprocity in the Natural World*. I am reminded of the gifts that these trees offer me, and with every berry comes a familiar taste and pleasure, and with that, a gratitude to the tree that has borne this fruit, and to the arborists who so carefully tend these trees throughout the year.

For those of us so privileged to do so, summertime can be a time of reflection, and we invite all of you to take whatever time you can carve out of your busy schedules, to reflect and connect with a natural world around us.

## PRA and NIH Study Results



### **Landmark Randomized Controlled Trial Shows Park Prescriptions Boost Physical Activity in Youth - A Scalable, No-Cost Tool for Clinicians Nationwide**

A [newly published randomized controlled trial](#) - the first to rigorously test the impact of Park prescriptions on children's health - shows that routinely co-produced park prescriptions in a busy primary care practice setting increases moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (MVPA) among youth.

Conducted from 2020 to 2024 in a federally qualified health center in Washington, DC, the study followed 514 youth ages 6-16, most of whom were Latinx or African American and managing chronic health conditions. Providers issued park prescriptions approximately every three months using Park Rx America's virtual platform, which includes more than 160,000 parks nationwide. Accelerometer-verified data showed that children receiving park prescriptions experienced:

- A 12% increase in MVPA at 3 and 6 months
- 14 additional minutes of MVPA per week
- One extra park visit every two weeks
- 30 more minutes spent in parks per visit at 12 months
- 12,557 logged park visits over the study period
- 97.3% prescription uptake among intervention participants

For healthcare professionals, this study offers a rare example of a non-pharmacologic, evidence-based intervention that can be adopted immediately. For public health professionals, it highlights a scalable strategy requiring no new infrastructure. For environmentalists and the public, it underscores the role of nearby nature as a public health asset.

[View the Study](#)

## 2026 Urban Trees Summit



### Mark Your Calendars!

On September 23, 2026, Montgomery County Parks and Casey Trees are holding the 2026 Urban Trees Summit at the Silver Spring, Maryland Civic Center. For more information, see full [agenda](#). Please sign up and [buy your tickets](#) now!

[Buy Tickets](#)

## PRA Welcomes Jessica Schrank

We'd also like to take a moment to introduce the newest member of our [PRA team](#), Jessica Schrank, as our Funding & Partnerships Strategist.



### Jessica Schrank

Funding & Partnerships Strategist, *PRA*

Jessica is a public policy and project management professional with experience leading cross-sector initiatives focused on government innovation, technology, and community impact. She currently supports Microsoft's Tech for Society team, working with government and civil society partners on responsible AI and emerging technology governance, and previously served as Deputy Director of the Innovation Team in the Office of Maryland Governor Wes Moore.

Jessica is passionate about advancing whole-person health, social connection, and community-based solutions that strengthen belonging

and well-being, and can often be found hiking, spending time near local lakes, or exploring neighborhood parks with her kids.

## We want to hear from you!

With over 1,800 registered providers across the country, we know there are a lot of stories out there of prescribing nature for the first time and patient successes. Take a moment to **Share Your Story** and get a chance to be showcased on our **Provider Spotlight** page.

[Share Your Story](#)

PRA is grateful for your donation to help us keep our website and platform accessible to all!

## Support our Work

Park Rx America is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization.  
All donations are tax deductible.  
Our EIN is **82-0856734**.

*Keeping in mind the secondary trauma of caring for others, please take the time you need to recover and consider a dose of nature for yourself.*

**Robert Zarr, MD, MPH**  
*Founder & Chief Executive Officer*

**Stacy Beller Stryer, MD**  
*Chief Health Officer*

**PRA** *nature  
prescribed*

