

Leaders for *Change*



Rue Mapp
Awarded '08

“Born the 5th child of a schizophrenic mother in an impoverished community, there was little hope for my future.”

Growing up in foster care, feeling uncertain about my life’s possibilities, and fearful that I would inherit my birth mother’s disease, I still finished high school.

I attempted college, but was without the skills and support to be successful; I dropped out after a short time, I got married, started a family, and thought I would never finish my undergraduate studies.

But in 2004, I found myself a single mother of three young children and knew they depended on me. I returned to community college at night while working full time. It was so hard on me and my children but I worked diligently, and was accepted to UC Berkeley. *Berkeley taught me the possibilities we each have to change the world.* After graduating, inspired by my studies, a passion for nature, and a desire to connect people, I founded Outdoor Afro, a social media community to introduce African Americans to the Great Outdoors -- and it changed my life. *In 2010, I was invited to the White House for President Obama’s Great Outdoors Memorandum signing and returned to the White House to participate in a think tank for the First Lady’s Let’s Move Initiative, and was named a Conservation Hero by the Wilderness Society.* Most recently, I was appointed to the National Parks Advisory Committee.

I am committed “to further move the needle”. I now also give back to my community as Program Officer at the Stewardship Council, where I oversee funding youth programs to help underserved California young people connect to the outdoors.

