



## **Jorge Calzadilla**

Nearly 30 years of experience in education and an extensive track record of contributions to positive youth development and community change have afforded Jorge Calzadilla recognition as a visionary and pioneer for “out-of-the-box” thinking and leadership.

Throughout his professional history, Calzadilla has demonstrated expertise in the areas of organizational administration; strategic partnership development among state, regional and national networks of communities and organizations; creative design of nature-based, experiential academic programs; curriculum development and program management; staff development; and direction of student athletic programs.

Calzadilla joined Clemson University in 1987 to direct a nine-week summer camp program as the only full-time, permanent staff member. With a vision of serving young people from all across the state through multiple, nature-based educational experiences, he proposed the establishment of the Youth Learning Institute (YLI), for which he presently serves as executive director. YLI is a division of the land grant university’s public service arm, chiefly responsible for accomplishing goals focused on outreach to youth and families. Today, the Youth Learning Institute consists of three sites that operate year-round, additional leased properties, 77 active programs and more than 200 employees. Last year alone, YLI served nearly 30,000 participants.

Calzadilla has led YLI in developing numerous external partnerships that have yielded groundbreaking programs that serve a broad spectrum of audiences including young mothers and their babies, youth with chronic illnesses like cancer and diabetes, academically talented high school students, elementary and middle school students, educators, youth development professionals, adults with disabilities/special needs and active seniors. Successful collaborations allow YLI to operate two year-round residential facilities for at-risk youth, two alternative schools in partnership with local public school districts, residential summer camps, academic field study programs, professional development trainings and nature-based, team building programs for youth and adults.

Among numerous other awards and recognitions for effective leadership and service to youth and communities, in 2007 Calzadilla received the Clemson University Board of Trustees Award for Excellence. Also in 2007, he was appointed an advisor to The Conservation Fund for its National Forum on Children and Nature initiative aimed at identifying best practice programs that respond to the issue of children’s isolation from nature.

Calzadilla has both a B.A. and M.Ed. in Education. He and his wife, Debby (Rhodes) Calzadilla, have two children – Chelsey (18) and Austen (16).