



**Outdoor Lab**  
FOUNDATION

# 2023-24 ANNUAL REPORT



# Letter from the Executive Director



***"Far and away the best prize that life has to offer is the chance to work hard at work worth doing."***

—Theodore Roosevelt

Teddy Roosevelt is credited with a number of great quotes that I reflect on often, but this one seems the most apropos for me as I reflect on four years with the Outdoor Lab Foundation.

Looking back on all that we have accomplished together and how we have achieved our success, it is in large part because of our incredible community of supporters. Thank you for being part of our community, for your generous gifts, for your time, and your partnership. Your support will be even more critical as we march forward in pursuit of an ever more impactful, meaningful, and relevant Outdoor Lab experience for all Jeffco students.

In the pages that follow you will see how we continue to stay true to the vision that guides us – an enduring program, inspired students, and cherished sites. This year, we have been able to deliver over \$420,000 in total contributions to Outdoor Lab. This includes direct cash contributions, in-kind donations and services, and volunteer labor.

Most importantly, we have remained focused on supporting schools and families through our Tuition Assistance Program. Over the past four years, we have made over \$760,000 in tuition assistance grants to ensure enrollment fees are not a barrier to participation for our under-resourced students.

We have increased the pace with which our mountain campuses are being maintained by increasing volunteer projects, hiring outside contractors ourselves, and coordinating with Jeffco's Facilities Department on important beautification, maintenance, and safety projects. We have also built a Career Pathways Program to invest more deeply in our Interns and High School Leaders. And we have supported our teachers by being more hands-on and involved in their trips so the planning process is less administratively onerous. Allowing them to focus on the experience and their students more directly.

I know we cannot reach these goals alone. I'm grateful to have you by our side. Real change is made by people, not projects. Whether you've supported us as a donor, volunteered for us at Windy Peak or Mt. Blue Sky, or participated in an event, your commitment has been instrumental in our success in connecting more young people to the outdoors.

# Our Team

## Foundation Staff

**Bryan Martin**

Executive Director

**Misha Shearer**

Community Relations Manager

**Ian Nawalinski**

Development Manager

## Administrative Staff

**Sean McLaughlin**

High School Leader Coordinator

**Tarah Blazek**

Program Coordinator

## Board of Directors

**John Hamilton**

Board Chair

**Doug Hanisch**

Treasurer

**Kristen Meier**

Immediate Past Chair

**Jason Dewar**

At-Large

**Brandon Guernsey**

At-Large

**Jonathan Weimer**

At-Large

**Leslie Olsson**

At-Large

**Wes Paxton**

Ex-Officio

**Ben Dorland**

Vice Chair

**Emily Cranford**

Secretary

**Kim Gieseler**

At-Large

**Brandon Guernsey**

At-Large

**Allison Torpey**

At-Large

**Adrienne Fischer**

At-Large

**Nicole Collins**

At-Large



## Thank You Site Staff!

### Mount Blue Sky

**Ryan Bazz**

Principal

**Michele Wright**

Principal's Secretary

**Jason Harding**

Program Specialist

**Kathy Farnsworth**

Registered Nurse

**Amanda Ruleman**

Registered Nurse

**Katie Moser**

Registered Nurse

**Donna Deneke**

Kitchen Manager

**Daniel Martinez**

Site Manager

**Kathy Della Mia**

Assistant Site Manager

**Lois LaGrange**

Food Service

### Windy Peak

**Jeremy Brasher**

Principal

**Ellie Steyn**

Principal's Secretary

**Garden Marantino**

Program Director

**Shawna Spivey**

Program Specialist

**LeAnne Downing**

Registered Nurse

**Katie Moser**

Registered Nurse

**Danny Aronson**

Food Service Manager

**Sal DeNichilo**

Food Service Lead

**Robbie Eke**

Food Service

**Pat Bramblett**

Facilities Manager

**Ricky Martinez**

Facilities Assistant

**John Berry**

Health Aid



# 2024 Highlights

**4,057 STUDENTS**  
ATTENDED OUTDOOR LAB



**36 NEIGHBORHOOD**  
**SCHOOLS PARTICIPATED**



**1,029 HIGH SCHOOL**  
**LEADERS CONTRIBUTED**  
**87,465 VOLUNTEER HOURS**



**260 CORE CLASSES**  
**TAUGHT**

**\$175,000 IN TUITION**  
**ASSISTANCE DISTRIBUTED**



**\$22,000 IN STIPENDS**  
**COMMITTED TO**  
**40 INTERNS**



**1,374 UNDER-RESOURCED**  
**STUDENTS ATTENDED**  
**FOR FREE**



**985 VOLUNTEER**  
**HOURS VALUED**  
**AT \$35,796**

**\$75,000 IN OUTERWEAR**  
**DONATED TO**  
**GEAR LIBRARIES**



**16,228 YOUTH**  
**PROGRAM DAYS**  
**IN THE FIELD**



**\$16,000 TO SUPPORT**  
**SITE MAINTENANCE**



**53 ASTRONOMY**  
**NIGHTS HELD**

**TOTAL VALUE OF CONTRIBUTIONS: \$420,184**

32,456 MILES  
HIKED BY  
SIXTH-GRADERS

416 FLAG  
CEREMONIES

\$8,000 GRANTED  
FOR EVENING  
PRESENTATIONS

\$6,000 IN  
SCHOLARSHIPS  
DISTRIBUTED



# Farewell to Robb Gneiser!

For 14 years, Windy Peak was blessed to have Robb Gneiser serve as Principal. Robb served with distinction as a kind and thoughtful leader, a role model for students, and a trusted confidante and mentor for staff. In May 2024, Robb retired leaving a legacy few have matched nationally in the field of environmental education. It is estimated that Robb welcomed over 40,000 students to the Windy Peak campus during his tenure. Moreover, it was a family affair. Robb's wife Kari, and children Merritt and Sawyer, played paid and volunteer roles on the campus to keep it running well and ensured every weeklong camp was a fantastic experience for the students.



This past September, the Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education (CAEE) honored Robb with their Outstanding Retiring Environmental Educator Award. Simultaneously, the Outdoor Lab Program was recognized for CAEE's Advancing Environmental Literacy Award. Robb and the Gneiser family will be missed at Windy Peak but their influence on the program and on the thousands of students who fondly remember their time at Outdoor Lab will last for generations.

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## 2024 Excellence in Environmental Education Awards



**caee**  
Colorado Alliance  
For Environmental  
Education

**Advancing Environmental Literacy**

**OUTDOOR LAB SCHOOLS**

*Jefferson County Public Schools*

**Outstanding Retiring Environmental Educator**

**ROBB GNEISER**

*Windy Peak Outdoor Lab School*

# Peak Performers

The Outdoor Lab Foundation's Peak Performer Awards celebrate the outstanding individuals and teams who go above and beyond to make the Outdoor Lab experience unforgettable. Our work relies on the collective efforts of countless passionate people—teachers, staff, volunteers, and community members—who help bring our mission to life. The Peak Performer recipients are the shining stars among them, recognized for their extraordinary dedication and impact. These awards honor their unwavering commitment to inspiring the next generation of environmental stewards and leaders.



## VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

# EINAR JENSEN

*Risk Reduction Coordinator & Public Information Officer  
Evergreen Fire & Rescue*



## COUNSELOR OF THE YEAR

# LORI MCGLONE

*Counselor, Ralston Valley High School*



## TEACHER TEAM OF THE YEAR

# FALCON BLUFFS

*Thor Erickson, Sam Wizemann, Stephen Woodruff,  
Kelly Stern, Nicole Turner, Kevin Lansing, Michelle  
Bremer, Tori Rommel, Nina Longbrake, Andy  
Vandal, Nina Chapman, Michelle Javidi, Erin  
Kunkle, Tom Burns, Kim Fowler, Rob Longbrake*



**TERSUS**  
SOLUTIONS

## PARTNER OF THE YEAR

# TERSUS SOLUTIONS

*Textile Re-commerce and Recycling*



## Q&A with Jeremy Brasher



We caught up with our new Windy Peak principal to talk about his experience at Outdoor Lab. Spoiler alert: It turns out great leadership is fueled by eggs, nature, and a whole lot of heart!

**Q: What is your favorite meal in the dining hall?**

**A:** I absolutely love having breakfast! It's so fun to talk with teachers and students during this time because it is most often very different than what they are used to at home. The conversations are real and you get to know everyone as individuals! The eggs are the best!

**Q: Do you have a favorite place on campus?**

**A:** There is something about sitting on the dock and looking over the pond that feeds my soul. Day or night it is a special place. The water brings so many different animals. Every experience is different.

**Q: What drew you to outdoor education, and what do you love most about being the principal of an outdoor school?**

**A:** I have always valued the power of what nature can do to educate myself and others. As a former Windy Peak attendee, my experience was life changing. It's in part why I pursued Natural Resources Management in college and was a volunteer firefighter for the Roosevelt National Forest Service. I'm so honored to have this position because it is so much more than just being a principal. It is an opportunity to advocate for the student experience and manage something I love so much.

**Q: What excites you most about the future of Outdoor Lab, and what are you hoping to achieve in the coming years?**

**A:** Windy Peak is a magical place! A place that exudes this such magic requires preservation and upgrading for future visitors. I plan to lead that charge and continue to make the experience for all visitors and staff amazing.

# Career Pathways Highlights

One of the reasons Outdoor Lab has been so successful and beloved through the years is the culture of student leadership that has been instilled in the program. Each year, 40 Interns and 1,000 High School Leaders support the full-time teachers and staff at Outdoor Lab. These young adult mentors serve as instructors, teacher aids, role models, and land stewards to ensure the smooth operation of the program and a safe and impactful experience for all.

Thanks to a Colorado State Outdoor Recreation Grant, the Outdoor Lab Foundation has been able to more deeply invest in students who serve in these capacities. This seed funding allowed us to pilot our Career Pathways Program and, since 2023, the program has been building momentum.

This year, we were able to offer 100 CPR/First Aid/AED courses to High School Leaders. We increased the pay of interns from \$1,000 or \$1,500 per semester. We instituted Wilderness First Aid and Leave No Trace certifications for each intern. Moreover, High School Leaders still earn their 85 hours of community service which can convert to .5 elective credit. And, our partnership with Red Rock Community College ensures that interns can receive up to 6 credits in their Outdoor Education degree program. Lastly, we still offer three \$2,000 scholarships to our most stalwart and enthusiastic graduating seniors.



Going forward, we plan to offer more learning modules and certification opportunities through partnerships with the Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education, Desert Mountain Medicine, NOLS, and Outward Bound. We also plan to offer more professional networking and mentorship for our young leaders so they can continue to pursue their passions in the outdoor industry.





# Site Support Highlights

Outdoor Lab's inspirational mountain campuses are the backdrop of every experience at Outdoor Lab. The Foundation's Site Support Program ensures that Mount Blue Sky and Windy Peak are maintained and improved so they may continue to host transformational outdoor experiences for thousands of Jeffco sixth-graders each year.

## 2024 Accomplishments

- o 48 volunteers constructed over 400 feet of trail
- o Improved 100 feet of trail tread
- o Removed 8 downed trees
- o Built 12 feet of rock walls
- o Completely renovated two elements on the low ropes course at Mt. Blue Sky



# Community Engagement

Our community outreach program builds awareness, fosters connections, and engages the community in our mission. We participated in twelve festivals this year including the Colfax Marathon, Outside Festival, Buffalo Bill Days, Carnation Festival, and Jeffco Back to School Bash. We engaged more than 30,000 people through interactive booths such as "Are You Smarter Than a 6th Grader?", make your own s'mores, face painting, and pin the antler on the moose. By involving the community, the Foundation ensures long-term sustainability and inspires a shared commitment to preserving and enhancing outdoor educational experiences for future generations.





# Ways to Give



## Become a Recurring Donor

Becoming a recurring donor has a significant impact here at the Outdoor Lab Foundation. It's reliable funding we can count on each month. By signing up, you're saying to the community: "This is important and Outdoor Lab and its legacy matter." Caring for and guiding our students to care for the outdoors, matters. Scan the QR code to become a recurring donor today.

## Make a Gift of Stock

Appreciated securities or mutual fund shares you've owned for more than one year are excellent charitable gifts. Each stock gift we handle strengthens our programmatic work while providing tax benefits for supporters. Donating stock or securities offer numerous benefits: • A federal income charitable contribution tax deduction based on the stock's fair market value on the date of the gift (up to 30% of your adjusted gross income) if the stock was owned for more than one year; • Carryover of the deduction for up to five additional years if the fair market value of the gift is more than 30% of your adjusted gross income; and • Avoidance of capital gains tax that is due when you sell appreciated stock. Note: Stock owned for one year or less is considered a short-term asset and usually won't produce attractive tax benefits. We recommend that you consult with your attorney or tax advisor about the various tax benefits and restrictions that may apply to your specific situation. We are available to you and your advisors to answer questions or help arrange a planned gift to Outdoor Lab Foundation.

## Become a Corporate Sponsor

Our corporate partners play an important role in our ability to achieve our mission. We have developed a tradition of generous, committed support from companies large and small over the years. We offer a variety of platforms for companies and their employees to become involved and engaged with Outdoor Lab. Whether your interest lies with a corporate sponsorship, volunteerism, employee engagement, cause-related marketing, in-kind donations, or event promotion, the Outdoor Lab Foundation can help meet your unique objectives.

## Make a Planned Gift

Planned giving, like including the Outdoor Lab Foundation in your will, allows you to decide how to distribute your assets after you pass away. Listing us in your estate is a fantastic way to ensure future generations of Jeffco students have access to Outdoor Lab. We recommend that you consult with your attorney or tax advisor for the various tax benefits and restrictions that may apply to your specific situation. Staff at the Foundation are available to you and your advisors to answer questions or help arrange a planned gift that meets your needs.

# Financial Overview 2023-24

## Assets:

Unrestricted: \$1,183,655

Restricted: \$169,429

Total Assets: \$1,353,084

## Income:

Contributions & Grants: \$656,758

In-Kind Support: \$38,966

Investment Income: \$46,553

Total Income: \$766,313

## Expenses:

Fundraising: \$30,171

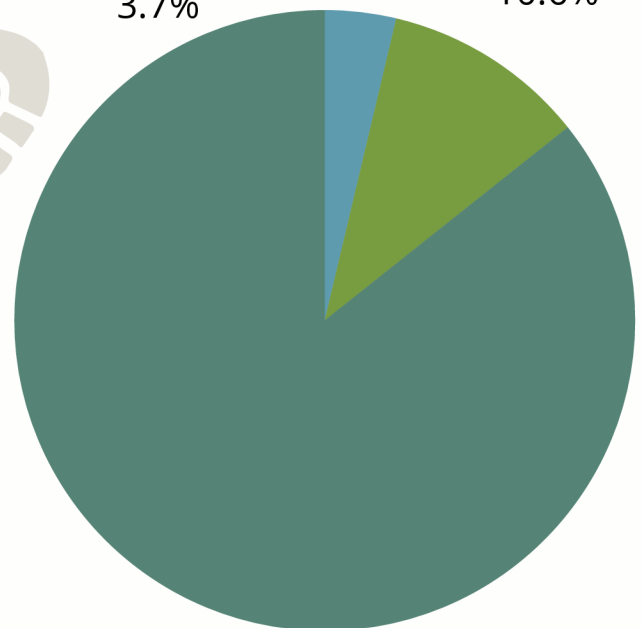
Program Services: \$682,066

General & Administration: \$84,500

Total Expenses: \$796,737

## 2023-24 Expenses

Fundraising 3.7%      Administrative 10.6%



Program Services  
85.7%

# Legacy Society

Abby Lilly  
Alex Campbell  
Allison Torpey  
Amy Jacobs  
Anne Hallock  
Ashley Pratt  
Barbara & Layle Robb  
Barbara Fuller  
Ben & Tracy Dorland  
BJ & Harold Meadows  
Blair Hamill  
Blanche Kapushion  
Bob & Kathy Weiss  
Bob Workman  
Charlotte Maybury  
Chris & Kristen Meier  
Dave Miller  
David & Kelly Deidel  
David Harris  
David Olson  
David Weiss  
Deb Miller  
Don Ackerman  
Doug & Cori Hanisch  
Dustin & Stacy Smoot  
Ed Bohn

Emily & Kip Cranford  
Eric and Kelly Wilhelm  
Greg and Kim Gieseler  
Gus Greivel  
Harold & Norby Pratt  
Henry and Roberta Nieto  
Holly & Jeff Brekke  
Jake Cummins  
Jason and Jennifer Dewar  
Jason Guerrero  
Jim & Marilyn Prichard  
John and Jennifer Hamilton  
Jonathan Weimer & Emily May  
Josh and Debbie Queen  
Judith Hill  
Julie Tolleson  
Karen Cravens  
Kathryn Keach  
Ken & Jill Fellman  
Ken Zinn  
Kevin and Shelley Smith  
Kim and Rod Wagner  
Laurie Sanderson-Walcott  
Leonard and Mary Lou Nelson  
Linda Gieseler

Louise Colvert  
Marcus & Jennifer Pennell  
Mark Schultz  
Matt & Allison Lausten  
Megan Haggstrom  
Meghan Stinton  
Nancy Reisher  
Peggy & Terry Horton  
Rafe Maestas  
Ralph & Ruth Pautz  
Rich & Katie Winner  
Robb & Kari Gneiser  
Ryan & Kelly Lucas  
Sally Blanchard  
Scott & Victoria Rommel  
Sondra Kellogg  
Steve Sandifer  
Sue Gallagher  
Sue Shucard  
Susan & Larry Harmon  
Susan Jantzer  
Teresa Ulmer  
Theresa Sorrells  
Tony Lodice  
Tressa & Bo Riley  
Vivian Burrows

***Thank you to each and every one of our Legacy Society members.***

*Legacy Society members have walked the trails of Outdoor Lab with our students, and their footprint will have a lasting impact.*

# Thank You Generous Partners



City of Golden



PROPELLER



1 Stop Printing ● Alpine Remediation ● Applewood Community Foundation  
Benson Family Foundation ● Blue Quill Anglers ● Brannan Sand and Gravel  
Cloudnexion ● CO Dept of Labor & Employment ● Evergreen Dental Group  
Gaylord of the Rockies ● Golden Lions Club ● Golden Mountain Guides  
Jeffco Business & Workforce Ctr ● Jeffco Schools Foundation ● Kelty ● MtnStuff  
National Geographic ● Newmont Corporation ● Outdoor Market Alliance  
Patagonia ● Robert R. Nathan Fund ● Taste of Vail ● The Weifield Group  
Virgin Experiences ● Virginia Hill Foundation ● Whole Foods Market

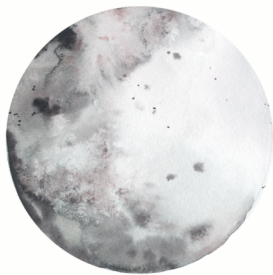


# *A Big Night to Make* **A BIG IMPACT**

Get your ticket to After Dark, our biggest fundraiser of the year.

Scan the QR code below for more information.

**AFTER DARK**  
**APRIL 26TH, 2025**



3000 Youngfield St, Ste 167

Wheat Ridge, CO 80215

[OutdoorLabFoundation.org](http://OutdoorLabFoundation.org)

(720) 403-8241