

# 2022-23 ANNUAL REPORT



# A Letter from the Executive Director



It was a landmark year for Outdoor Lab in 2023. Together, we contributed over \$400,000 in grants, in-kind donations, and volunteer support to our sites, schools, teachers. All of this toward making sure Outdoor Lab is a safe, fun, and impactful experience for every student in Jeffco. We opened two new buildings as well! Lastly, we launched a brand-new Career Pathways Program to help our High School Leaders and Interns sharpen their job readiness skills while also deepening their love for the outdoors.

The Foundation has many other things to celebrate in 2023, including our 20th anniversary, the release of a new impact report, new financial supporters, strengthened corporate partnerships, and a burgeoning volunteer corps.

As you know, we are 100% committed to making sure that no matter which neighborhood or articulation area a young person is growing up in access to Outdoor Lab is available to them. This means breaking down barriers to access.

Our most important philanthropic outlay is our Tuition Assistance Program. This year we granted \$177,000 to 35 middle schools to ensure our most under-resourced students had their Outdoor Lab fees paid for. In addition, we worked with Jeffco leadership to change how fees for free and reduced lunch students are assessed so that local schools are not feeling overly stressed to cover costs for our most vulnerable students going forward.

We also recognize that not every kiddo sees themselves in outdoor culture so we have set up a number of support systems to make sure Outdoor Lab is a unifying experience for everyone. Specifically, this past year we garnered donations of outerwear valued at over \$75,000 to ensure students are warm dry and comfortable. We've made important investments in the sites to ensure they're both welcoming and inspirational venues for outdoor learning. And, we've been engaging more at schools to support teachers and coordinators with outreach to students and families so that everyone is welcomed and prepared - and feeling confident - they'll have an extraordinary experience at Outdoor Lab.

We wouldn't be able to achieve these milestones without you. You are the visionaries, supporters, volunteers, and practitioners who engage weekly, monthly, and annually to help us achieve our mission. Thank you for your continued support and advocacy of this important local tradition.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bryan Carter".

# Our Team

## Foundation Staff

**Bryan Martin**

Executive Director

**Misha Shearer**

Community Relations Manager

**Kaelib TeeGarden**

Donor Relations Manager

## Administrative Staff

**Jason Dewar**

High School Leader Coordinator

**Tarah Blazek**

Program Coordinator

## Board of Directors

**Kristen Meier**

Board Chair

**Doug Hanisch**

Treasurer

**Kim Gieseler**

Immediate Past Chair

**Jason Dewar**

At-Large

**Ben Dorland**

At-Large

**Jonathan Weimer**

At-Large

**John Hamilton**

Vice Chair

**Emily Cranford**

Secretary

**Kathy Weiss**

At-Large

**Brandon Guernsey**

At-Large

**Allison Torpey**

At-Large

# Thank You Site Staff!

## Mount Blue Sky

**Ryan Bazz**

Principal

**Michele Wright**

Principal's Secretary

**Christopher Kenney**

Program Director

**Jason Harding**

Program Specialist

**Kathy Farnsworth**

Registered Nurse

**Katie Moser**

Registered Nurse

**Donna Deneke**

Kitchen Manager

**Daniel Martinez**

Site Manager

**Kathy Della Mia**

Assistant Site Manager

## Windy Peak

**Robb Gneiser**

Principal

**Roxanne Herzog**

Principal's Secretary

**Garden Marantino**

Program Director

**Shawna Spivey**

Program Specialist

**Nicole Collins**

Registered Nurse

**LeAnne Downing**

Registered Nurse

**Danny Aronson**

Food Service Manager

**Kari Gneiser**

Food Service Lead

**Sawyer Gneiser**

Food Service

**Pat Bramblett**

Site Manager

**Ricky Martinez**

Assistant Site Manager



# 2023 Highlights

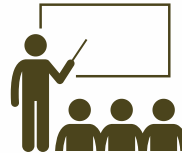
**5,000 STUDENTS**  
ATTENDED OUTDOOR  
LAB



**35 NEIGHBORHOOD  
SCHOOLS**  
PARTICIPATED



**900 HIGH SCHOOL  
LEADERS CONTRIBUTED  
76,500 HOURS AS  
INSTRUCTORS AND  
MENTORS**



**280 CORE  
CLASSES TAUGHT**

**\$177,000 IN TUITION  
ASSISTANCE DISTRIBUTED**



**\$20,000 IN INTERN  
STIPENDS  
COMMITTED TO 40  
INTERNS**



**ONE DINING HALL AND  
BUNKHOUSE FUNDED**



**1,082 VOLUNTEER  
HOURS  
CONTRIBUTED**

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



**20,000 YOUTH  
PROGRAM DAYS  
IN THE FIELD**



**ONE HISTORIC  
PRESERVATION PLAN  
COMPLETED**



**56 ASTRONOMY  
NIGHTS HELD**

## - More Stats -

**40,000 MILES  
HIKED BY SIXTH-  
GRADERS**

**1 TEACHER'S  
RESIDENCE  
RENOVATED**

**448 FLAG  
CEREMONIES**

**500 SOCIAL  
EMOTIONAL SURVEYS  
CONDUCTED**



# Why is Outdoor Lab Important?

We have all experienced the pleasure of taking a walk in nature or simply sitting beneath a tree on a beautiful day. A crisp winter chill, rustling leaves falling around you, the smell of wildflowers coming to life in spring. These experiences stir the senses and leave us all feeling refreshed and energized. But what has come into focus in recent years are the **many tangible benefits - academic, physical, and emotional** - that spending time in nature can yield.

Hundreds of studies across the globe have examined exactly what happens to hormone levels, heart rate, mood, education outcomes, civic-mindedness, focus, and other physiological and psychological measures when we are immersed, even briefly, in the natural world. The extensive evidence converges on the same conclusion: being outdoors, especially outside in green spaces, is good for us.

Nonprofit organizations such as the **Children and Nature Network**, the **North American Association for Environmental Education**, the **Search Institute**, **Hello Insight**, and **Fresh Tracks**, are coalescing the best academic research on the physical, academic, mental, and communal benefits of a close connection to nature.

Outdoor Lab has been producing these benefits for students since its inception. Beyond the curricular lessons of environmental science, natural history, sustainability, or geology, Outdoor Lab

offers a unique opportunity for developing social-emotional learning in an awe-inspiring wilderness setting. Environmental education and outdoor science programs, especially those providing longer and overnight experiences like **Outdoor Lab**, can play an important role in supporting students' social and emotional development.



# Findings - SEL Overall Results

When comparing Outdoor Lab students to approximately 125,000 young people participating in 1,500 programs nationwide, **Outdoor Lab has proven to be a solid research-based intervention that promotes SEL development.** Outdoor Lab was particularly strong at growing Academic Self Efficacy, Social Skills, Positive Identity, and Well-Being in the Outdoors.

95%



**Students who grew in at least one Core SEL capacity**

**Students who showed significant growth in one of the three Outdoor SEL capacities**



70%

50%



**Students who reported an increase in the number of adults who care for them and want to see them succeed**

**Students who would recommend Outdoor Lab to a friend**



74%

70%



**Students who told us that Outdoor Lab engaged them in learning styles that they prefer**

**Students who reported “Engage Authentically” experiences, which measure a young person’s experience with an adult who takes the time to get to know them by listening and understanding who they are**



68%

70%



**Students who reported “Challenge Growth” experiences, which measure a young person’s experience with an adult who encourages them to take risks and perform beyond their own expectations**

# Findings - SEL Title 1 Results

Title 1 students exceeded the overall population in having Engage Authentically, Promote Peer Bonds, and Challenge Growth experiences while at Outdoor Lab. Growth in Academic Self-Efficacy was the same in Title 1 students as in the overall population.

96%



**Students grew in at least one Core SEL capacity**

**Students showed significant growth in at least one Outdoor SEL capacity**



73%

53%



**Students reported an increase in the number of adults that care for them and want to see them succeed.**

**Measures where Title 1 students' growth outpaced overall Core SEL measures**



3/5

100%



**Of Title 1 students' growth outpaced the overall population in Outdoor SEL measures**

**Title 1 students reported a higher Program satisfaction score**



79%

74%



**More Title 1 students told us that Outdoor Lab engaged them in learning styles that they prefer**

**Title 1 students reported a higher Program satisfaction score**



79%



# 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.

## In the last year:

- Mount Blue Sky opened its new **6,000-square-foot** building for dining and meal preparation, with a wrap-around deck and "garage-style" doors, supported by a **\$100,000 gift** from the Foundation
- Windy Peak opened a new **2,000-square-foot** bunkhouse that will sleep 20 students
- The Foundation donated **\$35,000 to renovate** a teachers' residence at Windy Peak

This summer, along with community partners, corporate sponsors, and dedicated volunteers, the Foundation has been working hard to maintain and improve trails for the upcoming school year. Thank you to our volunteers who attend our Site Workdays to make necessary improvements that ensure the safety and comfort of students and staff on our mountain campuses!



## A special thank you to...

- **Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado** for their expertise in planning and executing a trail re-route and stair re-build at Munt Blue Sky.
- **Athletic Brewing Co.** for selecting the Outdoor Lab Foundation as a recipient of their Two for the Trails grant that provided crucial funding for this project.
- **Jordan's Building Center** in Wheat Ridge for donating all of the treated timber needed to re-build stairs on the Ecosystem trail.
- **Pioneer Co.** for donating all of the crusher fines needed to fill in the new staircase.
- **Newmont Corporation** for organizing a company volunteer day to help re-route and maintain the Ecosystem trail.
- **Team Rubicon** for their well-organized multi-day fire mitigation project on our Windy Peak campus.



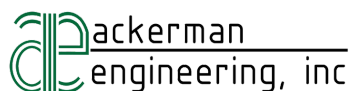
# Legacy Society

- Don Ackerman
- Mick & Angie Alcock
- Marcia Anker
- Sally Blanchard
- Ed Bohn
- Holly & Jeff Brekke
- Vivian Burrows
- Alex Campbell
- Karlyn Carpenter
- Nicholas Christenson
- Louise Colvert
- Emily & Kip Cranford
- Karen Cravens
- David & Kelly Deidel
- Amy Dempsey
- Jason & Jennifer Dewar
- Ben & Tracy Dorland
- Dan Faath
- Ken & Jill Fellman
- Barbara Fuller
- Greg & Kim Gieseler
- Linda Gieseler
- Robb Gneiser
- Marcus Gregory
- Gus Greivel
- Jason Guerrero
- Megan Haggstrom
- Anne Hallock
- Blair Hamill
- John & Jennifer Hamilton
- Doug Hanisch
- Susan & Larry Harmon
- David Harris
- Heather Hawker
- Judith Hill
- Peggy & Terry Horton
- Amy Jacobs
- Susan Jantzer
- Jens Jensen
- Blanche Kapushion
- Kathryn Keach
- Sondray Kellogg
- Matt and Allison Lausten
- Abby Lilly
- Tony Lodice
- Ryan and Kelly Lucas
- Rafe Maestas
- Charlotte Maybury
- BJ Meadows
- Kristen Meier
- Dave Miller
- Leonard Nelson
- Henry and Roberta Nieto
- David Olson
- Jennifer & Marcus Pennell
- Joe Pierzchala
- Roger and Carolynn Pool
- Hilary Porter
- Harold & Norby Pratt
- Ashley Pratt
- Jim & Marilyn Prichard
- Debbie Queen
- Nancy Reisher
- Tressa & Bo Riley
- Derek Riley
- Barbara & Layle Robb
- Scott and Tori Rommel
- Laurie Sanderson-Walcott
- Steve Sandifer
- John Schroeder
- Mark Schultz
- Sue Shucard
- Kevin Smith
- Meghan Stinton
- Julie Tolleson
- Teresa Ulmer
- Kim and Rod Wagner
- Jonathan Weimer & Emily May
- Kathy & Bob Weiss
- David Weiss
- Eric Wilhelm
- Rich & Katie Winner
- Bob Workman

***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



Newmont Corporation Ethos Veterinary Health LLC Avid 4 Adventure Golden Mtn Guides

Hamill Design Group 5280 Burger Bar Kullestrand PTA Kiwanis Club of Columbine

Homegrown Tap and Dough Golden Lions Club Virgin Experiences Katherine Homes

Mountainsmith Grip6 Exxel Outdoors Christy Sports Pioneer Sand and Gravel

Lakewood ELKS Lodge Jordan's Building Center National Geographic Maps Hestra Gloves

## Grants Received

Colorado State Historical Fund City of Golden City of Wheat Ridge City of Lakewood

Westminster Human Services Board Aegon Transamerica Foundation Virginia Hill Foundation

Community First Foundation Whole Foods Market Community Giving Program

Golden Civic Foundation Colorado Parks and Wildlife Applewood Community Foundation

City of Arvada Colorado Outdoor Recreation Industry Office

# All The 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 of Appreciated Assets

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 2022-23

## Assets:

Unrestricted: \$1,211,036

Restricted: \$247,472

Total Assets: \$1,458,508

## Income:

Contributions & Grants: \$506,988

In-Kind Support: \$48,227

Investment Loss: (\$3,856)

Assets Released from Restriction: \$180,297

Total Income: \$551,359

## Expenses:

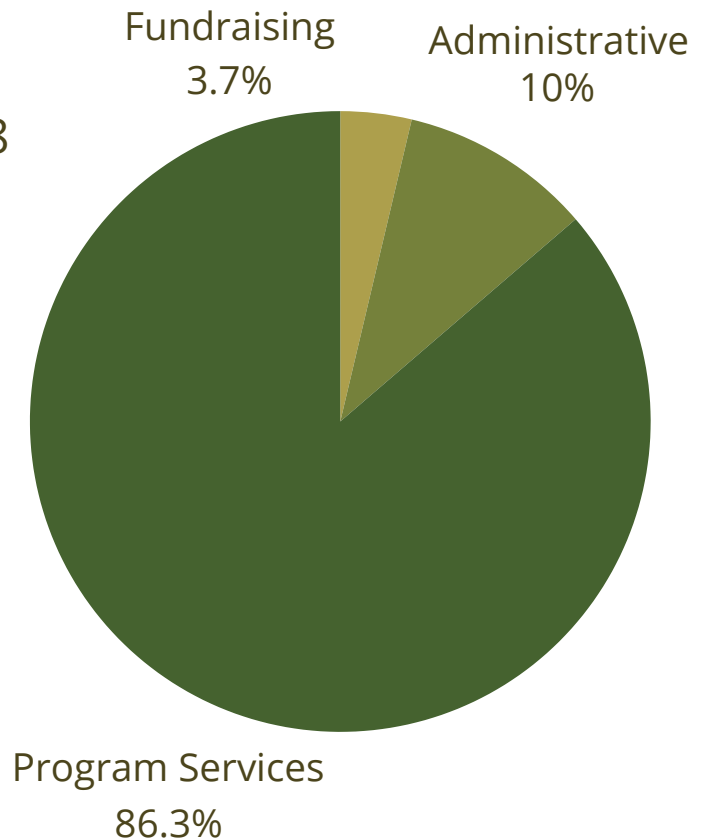
Fundraising: \$27,262

Program Services: \$638,523

General & Administration: \$74,258

Total Expenses: \$740,043

## 2022-23 Expenses







**History Colorado**



**ATHLETIC BREWING CO<sup>®</sup>**  
NON-ALCOHOLIC BREWS



City of  
**Golden**



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Wheat Ridge, CO 80215  
OutdoorLabFoundation.org  
(720) 403-8241

