



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.

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

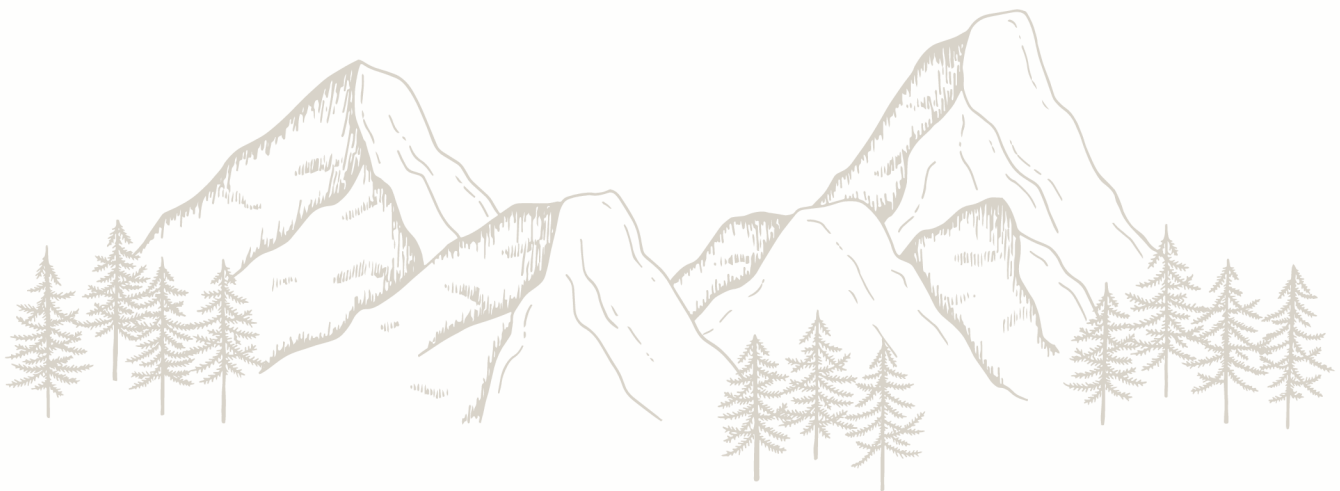
One of the reasons Outdoor Lab has been so successful and beloved through the years is the culture of student leadership that has been instilled in the program. Each year, 40 Interns and 1,000 High School Leaders support the full-time teachers and staff at Outdoor Lab. These young adult mentors serve 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

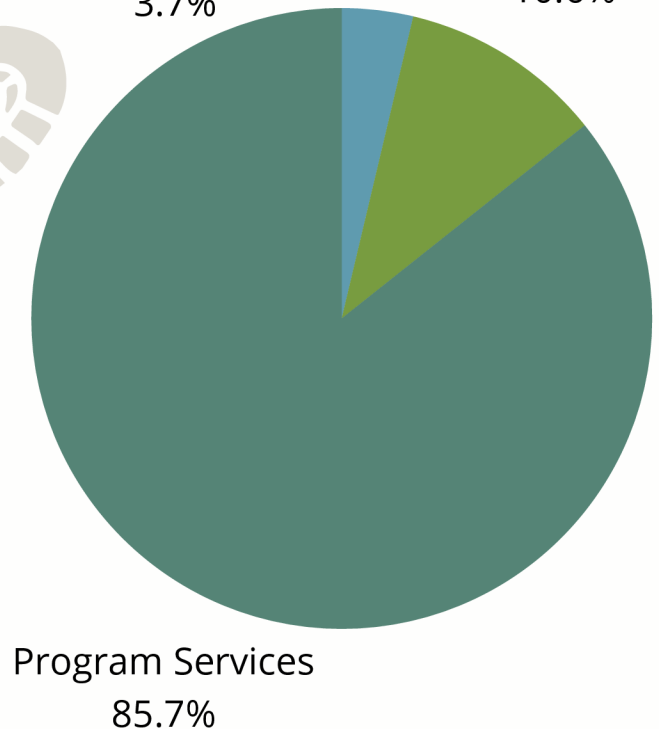
General & Administration: \$84,500

Total Expenses: \$796,737

2023-24 Expenses

Fundraising 3.7%

Administrative 10.6%



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



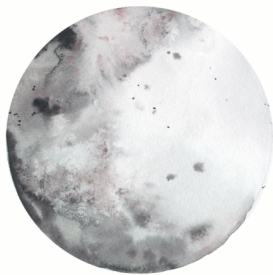
1 Stop Printing ● Alpine Remediation ● Applewood Community Foundation
Benson Family Foundation ● Blue Quill Anglers ● Brannan Sand and Gravel
Cloudnexion ● CO Dept of Labor & Employment ● Evergreen Dental Group
Gaylord of the Rockies ● Golden Lions Club ● Golden Mountain Guides
Jeffco Business & Workforce 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

(720) 403-8241