

Stories of Gratitude

How Your Giving Changes Lives

WINTER 2023



WILDERNESS
AWARENESS
SCHOOL

Growing Resolve

by Amy and Bill Taylor

Maci and Lucas have never been strangers to the outdoors. Before coming to Wilderness Awareness School, we would enjoy family backpacking trips and exploring the beaches of the Hood Canal.

Our nephew participated in WAS programs a few years back, and he gained an increased sense of confidence and a love for the outdoors. **We also watched as his self-sufficiency blossomed.** As parents, we not only value time spent in nature but also self-sufficiency. This is why we enrolled our kids in Wild Within, the program for teens that takes place one weekend each month during the school year.



Maci and Lucas have come into their own self-sufficiency, confidence, and resolve thanks to the scholarship you provided.

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As with most kids, Maci and Lucas had been isolated during the lockdown and were excited to return to in-person activities, school, and their social lives. They were also trepidatious after being out of practice.

“We watched them grow their individual resolve, and gain confidence in their skills...”

Our kids have historically gotten along well, but **this experience really deepened their connection with each other.** They were grateful to be in the same program! We also watched them grow their individual resolve and gain confidence in their skills, especially the use of their gear.

Over the course of the year, they were able to slowly branch out socially, both individually as well as collectively, outside of their safety zones. The timing of the program with the pandemic was both hard and wonderful. They both experienced periods of anxiety going into each weekend, and yet they were always glad they went.

Notes From the Eagle's Nest

by Warren Moon, Executive Director

As I reflect on this past year, I am extremely thankful for you, our generous and compassionate community. Your support enabled over 3,100 students to have nourishing and transformative experiences in nature — an amazing gift and blessing. I am truly inspired and humbled by your selfless giving. Thank You!

I am excited to share with you the Annual Report edition of our Stories of Gratitude newsletter, so you may see how your giving makes a difference.

In *Growing Resolve*, you'll read how your donations helped Maci and Lucas build self-sufficiency, confidence, and resolve.

In *Expanding Rings of the Soul*, you'll see how Allison connected to a regenerative source of energy, joy, and peace through her time in The Immersion.

In the Annual Report, you will see all the amazing accomplishments your giving helped achieve for our 2021-2022 fiscal year.

Thank you for being our wonderful and caring donors and for all you do to create a healthy future for our students and the earth. As we look toward the unpredictable and unknown future, I know that the wisdom of nature will continue to be the guide that will help us navigate these challenging times.

With gratitude,

Warren
Moon



Their favorite part of Wild Within was the field trips, especially when they traveled east of the mountains. They were able to see and experience another terrain, soak up the sun, and go swimming. This was so special for them after an exceptionally wet fall and winter. They also loved the icebreakers, games, crafts, interacting with the instructors, and spending a considerable amount of time crafting “would you rather” questions for their group.

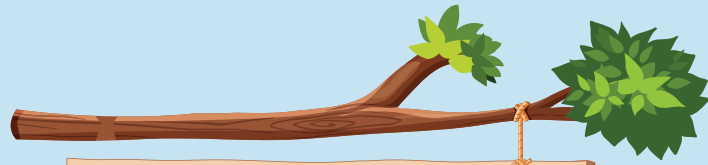
“They were not always comfortable, yet we could tell they were proud that they pulled it off.”

Our favorite part was listening to them on the way home as they deconstructed the weekend. The good parts, the hard parts, and the inevitable laughter about something silly that happened. We would also hear about the lessons they learned from not packing or wearing the best thing for the weather and what they would do differently next time.

We love hearing them talk about the time they went hiking through snow. They were not always comfortable, yet we could tell they were proud that they pulled it off. Self-sufficiency, confidence, and resolve. **Without the scholarship that your donations provided, these kids would have missed this life-changing opportunity.** We're so grateful that this experience was possible for Maci and Lucas.

WILDERNESS AWARENESS SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT

September 2021 - August 2022



Accomplishments

Up 130% from last year!

\$68,775

toward Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion training, development, and initiatives.

\$168,765

for the development of our new well and water pump on Coho Ridge; bringing more readily available drinking water to students.

2,604

youth (our most ever) enjoyed fun adventures in nature throughout the year, including **2,137** in summer day camps.

Your support provided **\$56,420**

in scholarships, giving **116** students the ability to attend our programs.

42 more students than last year!

107 more students than last year!

531 adults participated

in a variety of programs, from our 9-month Immersion, to intensives, to weekend/weeklong programs.

211

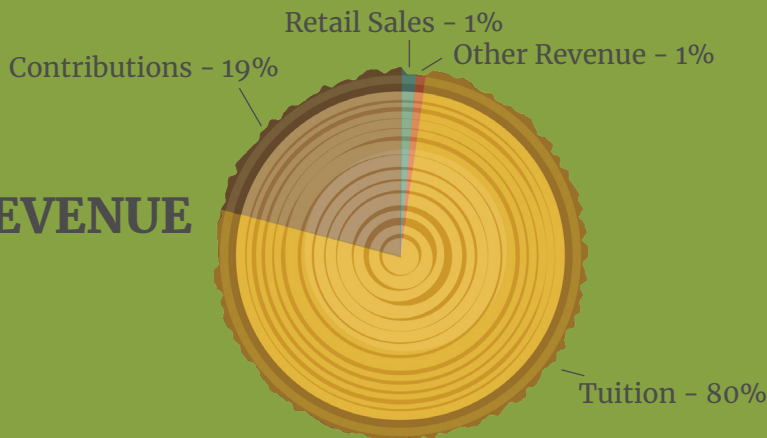
volunteers gave

11,717

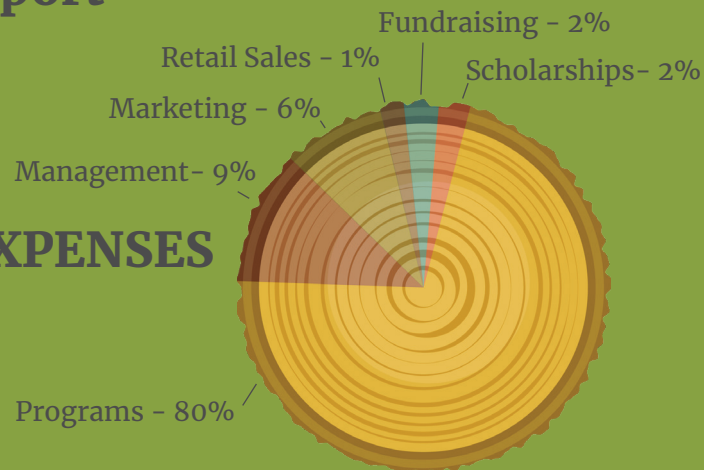
hours of invaluable time and energy, playing essential roles in our programs.

Financial Report

REVENUE



EXPENSES



Tuition	\$2,413,420
Contributions	\$580,319
Retail Sales	\$40,607
Other Revenue	\$40,460

Programs	\$2,261,218
Management & General	\$258,601
Marketing	\$173,110
Fundraising	\$44,864
Retail Sales	\$24,516
Scholarships	\$56,420

TOTAL \$3,018,387

TOTAL \$2,818,729

Expanding Rings of the Soul

by Allison Durazo

One of the best things I ever did was quit working in 2017 and move to Washington state to attend The Immersion at Wilderness Awareness School. At the time, I was completely burnt out from working as a traveling occupational therapist from Florida to Alaska. In 6 years, I moved 21 times.

I could write a whole book on the experience, but perhaps it will suffice to share with you my short list of lessons learned:

- How to listen without judgment. Without putting myself into another person’s story, or bringing the conversation back to me
- How to grieve in a community
- How to walk, hide, play and enjoy the forest without making a sound or being seen
- How my senses connect me to myself and the natural world. How they help me find my way in both the literal and figurative dark
- How to unearth, love, and heal generational traumas
- How to speak to my family from a place of strength and vulnerability (without my usual go-to’s of sarcasm and anger)
- How to track animals, but also to track myself by understanding patterns of behavior
- And, of course, how to make friction fire and shelter, survive on the land, and understand the language of the birds.



After graduating from Wilderness Awareness School, Allison has connected to the regenerative source of all energy, joy, and peace.

Interestingly, that last one is what I thought I was going for. And those things were wonderful. **But the real magic happened inside of me.** Like a stone dropped into a still pond, the rings of this experience continue to expand out in ever-widening circles, continuing the work of returning to my own soul.

The healing precipitated from those nine months has prepared me to work as a health and wellness coach with others to facilitate their own healing from burnout, depression, and anxiety. **I have been able to step into a lifelong dream of service.**

Now, instead of getting depleted and giving from a shallow well, I have connected to the regenerative source of all energy, joy, and peace.

Yes! I want to help people have life-changing experiences in nature.



- \$35
- \$50
- \$100
- \$250
- \$_____ - the possibilities are endless!



Name: _____

Email: _____

Address: _____

Donate securely online at wildernessawareness.org/donate