

Stories of Gratitude

How Your Giving Changes Lives

WINTER 2024



WILDERNESS
AWARENESS
SCHOOL

Nurturing Deep Connections

by Karen Joy Fletcher

We are very grateful for Orion's ability to participate in Wilderness Awareness School's programs. It is a deepening of the nature connection we foster as a family in our camping, gardening, hiking, and tracking adventures, as well as in our fire-making, tool crafting, fairy village building, and developing relationships with the land. **The programs at WAS play a central role in the "village" of raising our son, and nurturing his own deep connection to our Earth.**



Thanks to you, Orion is full of vigor and joy being outside with his community of peers and mentors.

When considering becoming a mama, one of many things strong in my heart was the desire for our child to grow up with strong, vibrant, wise, loving, and playful nature mentors from his youngest years through his teen years. Wilderness Awareness School is an amazing place that offers just that and so much more.

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Orion is now in his 2nd year of Roots and Wings and absolutely LOVES it! He started at age 4 and was quite shy with both adults and other kids, both from his own personality and from some of the effects of the pandemic. That first year, he was mostly quiet and observed his instructors, yet I could tell he was absorbing every moment. Every Wednesday he would come home bright-eyed and happy, full of vigor from his joy of being outside with this community of peers and mentors. Every now and then he'd start singing a song he learned at WAS, and in the spring when we were out picking nettles, just as we were approaching them, he shared how he had learned to first ask the plant's permission to pick it. I loved that and loved hearing him recount the story.

"We are ever grateful for the generosity and support of donors, who provide the opportunity for our son to grow and blossom...."

Orion is a wonderful naturalist. He found his first beaver tracks and scat at four years old and learned to make fires at age three. However, finding mentors who could meet him where he's at, help

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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 almost 3,000 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 *Nurturing Deep Connections*, you'll see how Orion is thriving through his connection with strong, vibrant, wise, loving and playful nature mentors.

In *Becoming a Holistic Guide*, you'll read how your donations helped Amy open the school of her dreams.

In the Annual Report, you will see all the amazing accomplishments your giving helped achieve for our 2022-2023 fiscal year. This includes providing 70% more scholarships to students in need!

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. Your support is helping more students become healthier and happier, and grow into the next generation of compassionate leaders, mentors, and environmental stewards that our world desperately needs.

With gratitude,

Warren
Moon



him grow socially and emotionally, and deepen his connection with these lands, is something we can only find at Wilderness Awareness School. He comes home bubbling with excitement as he recaps his day playing Wolf Ball, sneaking through the forest, building fairy shelters, and getting his face painted as a rainbow butterfly on Pollinator Day. He recently enjoyed one of his best days yet with his class, playing by the Snoqualmie River.



Orion comes home bubbling with excitement, thanks to the scholarship that your generosity has provided.

He is happiest outside. He loves finding bones (we call him the “Bone Master”), making stone knives and spears from sticks, and building castles for roly polies in the garden. He has found joy in a community of talented instructors and mentors, peers, and elders. **This community models a deep nature connection, which is one of the most important gifts to be given to any child.** It is the foundational piece for living a good life, grounded in our true selves and the beautiful web of life we are a part of. We are ever grateful for the generosity and support of donors, who provide the opportunity for our son to grow and blossom in this connection. Thank you! It is a gift that will ultimately give back to all life.

WILDERNESS AWARENESS SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT

September 2022 – August 2023

Accomplishments

\$64,370

toward diversity, equity, and inclusion training, development, initiatives, and scholarships.

\$127,189

for the renovation of Crow Cabin on our land, in order to provide critical housing for our students.

2,458

youth enjoyed fun adventures in nature throughout the year, including **1,998** in summer day camps.

70% more than last year!

Your support provided **\$95,902**

in scholarships, giving **113** students the ability to attend our programs.

508 adults participated

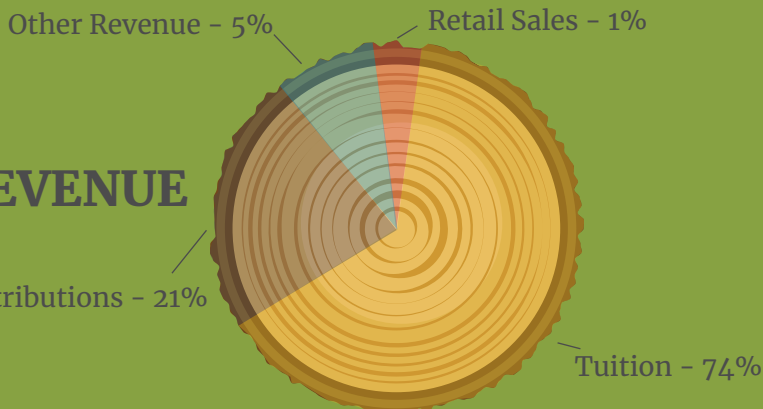
in a variety of programs, from our 9-month Immersion, to intensives, to weekend/weeklong programs.

228

volunteers gave **12,595** hours of invaluable time and energy, playing essential roles in our programs.

Financial Report

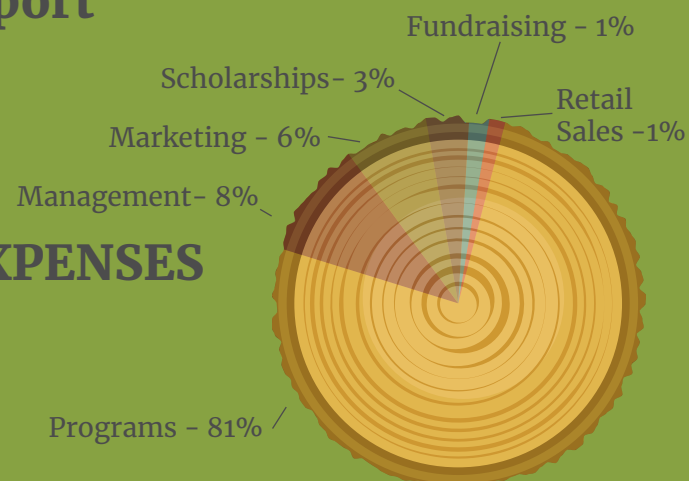
REVENUE



Tuition	\$2,748,046
Contributions	\$762,586
Retail Sales	\$34,113
Other Revenue	\$168,137

TOTAL **\$3,712,883**

EXPENSES



Programs	\$2,705,401
Management & General	\$282,625
Marketing	\$201,324
Fundraising	\$39,257
Retail Sales	\$25,419
Scholarships	\$95,902

TOTAL **\$3,349,928**

Becoming a Holistic Guide

by Amy Ma

My worn copy of *Coyote's Guide to Connecting with Nature* had been regularly pulled from my bookshelf for a decade. I had been implementing the philosophy at my Montessori school in California, and dreamed of studying at Wilderness Awareness School, where the book originated. After three years in a row of reaching out to the school to become a student, I knew it was finally time. I knew that becoming a student in the program was the last component I needed to create the school of my dreams.



Amy found liberating joy during her time in The Immersion, thanks to the fellowship that your support provided.

I was awarded a fellowship that The Immersion program has recently made available for BIPOC applicants. Thanks to the donors who made this financial support possible, I closed down my Montessori school and headed north to attend the program.

“The person I grew into allowed me to come back home and build a stronger community.”

As I stepped into this program, I set my intentions, and it was exactly what I needed. I was able to sink into playfulness, honoring the child within and witnessing myself and my fellow students experiencing a new freedom in play within our adult bodies. Playing games as an adult was an edge for me, and it took some time to succumb to my inner child fully, but when I did, I found liberating joy and excitement.

The person I grew into at The Immersion allowed me to come back home and build a stronger and more cohesive community. Since leaving the program, I have opened Sol Gratitude Village, a Montessori school that brings rites of passage to youth, in addition to also hosting opportunities for adults. **My experience in The Immersion allowed me to complete my journey, opening the school of my dreams.** I feel whole and so very healed.

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