



Singing Creek Educational Center
Annual Report 2022



Our Mission

To inspire children and families
toward an appreciation of local history
through hands-on learning.

PO Box 1012 Cottage Grove, OR 97424 | director@singingcreekcenter.org | 541 968-1986
www.SingingCreekCenter.org

The Year in Review

In 2022 Singing Creek Educational Center (SCEC) rebounded from the COVID-19 years, bringing back our in-person programming while maintaining more relaxed masking protocols. Our location was the historic Dr. Snapp House in Cottage Grove, until November. The Goldiggers & Prospector's Club, the house owners, lost their insurance on the house in early 2022, that impacted our programs negatively. We had to cancel several programs in March and April, leading to lost revenue. In Fall they needed to do some remodeling on the house and wanted to utilize the space for their own purposes, so our contract was terminated. We bounced back by partnering with other local organizations such as the Dorena Grange to host our programs.

Community Partners and Initiatives

We partnered with the Cottage Grove Chamber of Commerce to host an alternative Halloween experience for kids. Our booths downtown in the main square featured volunteers in fun costumes offering game experiences that were not candy-based, with a much smaller footprint and specially designed for kids with sensory issues or developmental disabilities. Families that stopped by appreciated this focus.

Our Los Pueblos Summer Camp for local Latinx/Guatemalan families had a successful second year, funded by the City of Cottage Grove and Oregon Community Foundation. We partnered with the Family Resource Center on this project, hiring two local Latina instructors, and serving 20 children with free day camp based on the history of Mexico and Guatemala.



For Earth Day, we partnered with EcoGeneration, a local recycling nonprofit, to bring the Green Living Fair to downtown Cottage Grove, inspiring people to live more eco-friendly lives. This one-day event drew about 250 people and included 25 vendors, a children's art show and contest, a silent auction, and community workshops. We worked with local schools and had 5 classrooms of children participate by creating art for the art show, sponsored by the Woodard Family Foundation. Numerous volunteers helped with all aspects of bringing this event to life.

In keeping with our values of culturally responsive teaching, **we worked with the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde** to examine and update our Kalapuya Ways curriculum and our Lewis & Clark Program to ensure best practices. Their Curriculum Specialist provided us with photos of modern-day Tribal Members engaged in cultural practices, and we purchased modern clothing designed by Tribal artists for our Kalapuya interpreters. Teachers were impressed with our careful and respectful handling of Oregon's history and this is our **fastest growing program, increasing by 50% in 2022**.



Kalapuya Ways Instruction

“The students were able to really visualize what it must have been like to live as a Kalapuya in the past as well as acknowledge and see Kalapuya now. We loved seeing the artifacts and playing the game!”

- Susan Reeves
Adams Elem, Corvallis

Our Impact

In 2022 we served 869 children and 120 families across five Oregon counties and six school districts from Salem to Riddle. One of our programs is available for purchase online at the “Teachers Pay Teachers” website.

Our Hands-On Homeschool program saw the biggest enrollment ever, including 40% children with autism, special needs, or learning disabilities. Our students learn about Oregon’s history and how our choices today impact the future through engaging activities. We’ve gathered feedback from the students and parents to improve this program over time, incorporating more special guests and nature exploration.

In November we worked with a local Navajo Nation elder, Ruth Bixel, who spoke with 17 Girl Scouts at our Native American Heritage Day at the Cottage Grove Community Center. This event was made possible in part by a grant from the Lane County Cultural Coalition.



869 Children Served

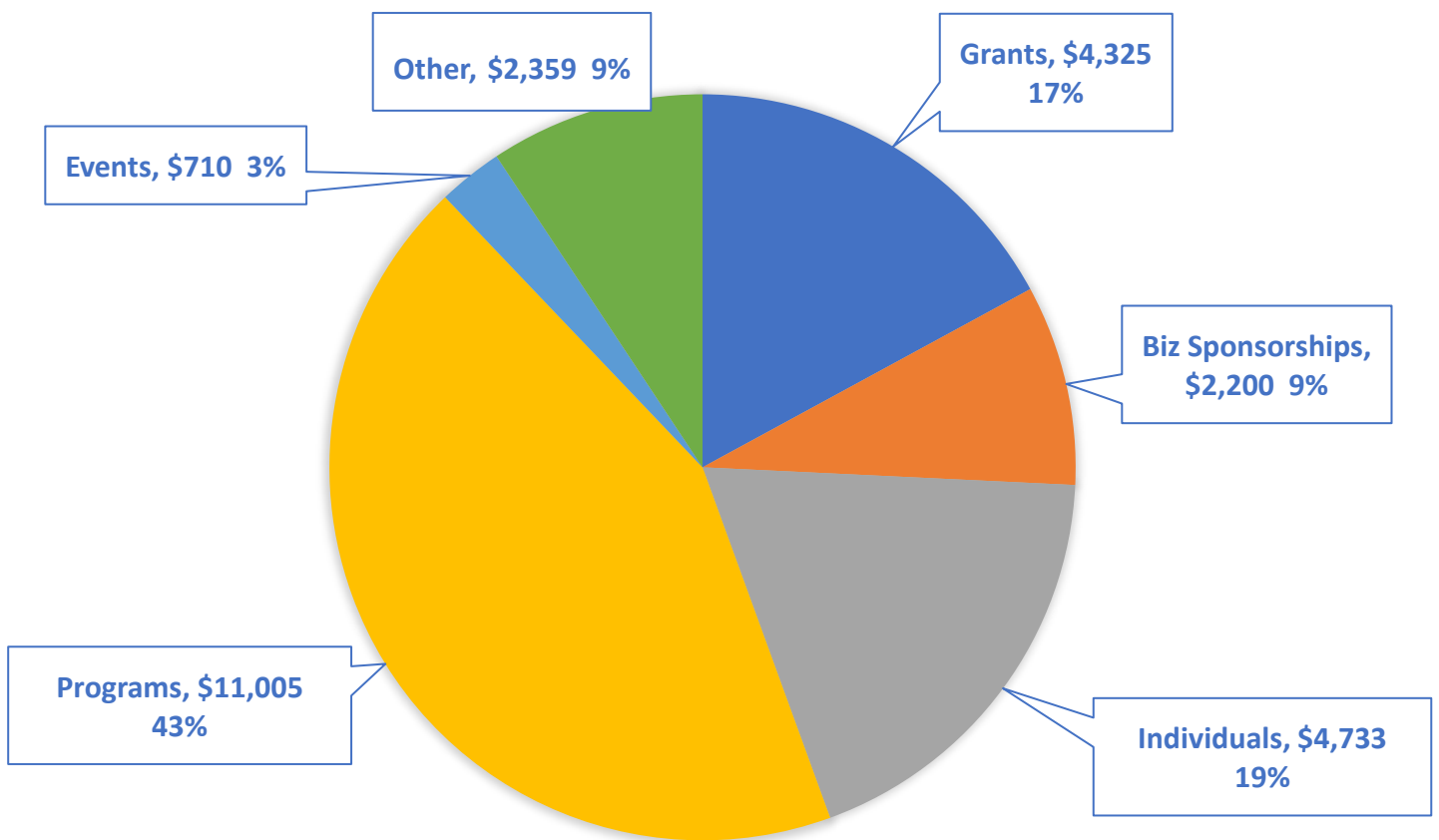
In our programs and special events including Summer Camps, Field Trips, Girl Scouts Days, Classes, Outdoor School, In-Classroom Presentations and Library Presentations

120
Adults/Families
Served

At our fair booths,
special events such as
Grandparent's Pioneer Tea,
classes and historical
guided walks



2022 Revenue Sources



Total Budget: \$32,500
In-Kind Community Support: \$7,200

Executive Director Karen Rainsong

Our founding Executive Director, Karen Rainsong, continues to provide stable leadership since 2007. As part of the natural growth into the next stage of the nonprofit, she looks forward to moving into a position as Operations Manager in 2-3 years, to work more closely with staff and students. Karen engaged in many professional development opportunities in 2022, including a week-long conference in Tacoma, Washington by the Association of Living History Farms and Museums (ALHFAM) for which she is the Webmaster and Membership Coordinator. At the conference she presented a paper on the Los Pueblos Summer Camps program of SCEC, including successes and challenges. In Fall, Karen attended an Educational Summit by the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde in Oregon, and several other professional webinars.



Karen Canoeing with Puyallup Tribal Members
in Puget Sound, June 2022

Our Board of Directors



Board President- Steve Williamson

Retired from a career working with developmentally disabled adults/
Cottage Grove Historical Society researcher

Steve is a huge supporter and is always giving of his time and finances to help us grow and connect with important community members.

storiesbysteve@gmail.com



Treasurer- Justin Ahrenholz

B.S. in Sociology

We call Justin our "CFO", or Chief Fun Officer, as he brings a ready sense of humor and joy of being with children to all our endeavors.

justinahz@gmail.com



Secretary- Beth Armbrust

Occupational Therapist/ M.S. in Entomology and Occupational Therapy
Beth is very capable and manages our online marketing since she lives in Washington state.

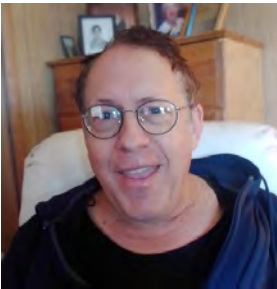
betharmbrust@gmail.com



Board Member- Ann Dockendorf

Alpaca Farm Owner/ M.S. in Early Childhood Education
Ann hosts several gatherings a year for us at her Alpaca farm and brings her fiber arts skills and enthusiasm for education to our programs.

ann@aragonalpacas.com



Board Member- Tom Romano

Author/ Illustrator/ M.S. in Education

Tom is passionate about local history and working with children; he teaches our nature drawing classes.

thomasromano3829@gmail.com

Being a Board Member

Ann Dockendorf

"I recognize how important it is for children in these days of hyper-technology to learn self-reliance, respect and collaboration, and to be comfortable in the outdoors where privileged attitudes tend to slip away. Digging in the garden, embroidering a sampler, writing in a journal, woodworking ~ the wisdom of simpler times encourages both peaceful moments and critical thinking skills which will be translated into many situations and levels of life. By participating with Singing Creek, I can extend this vision to more children and families than I can connect to by myself."



Key Staff and Volunteers

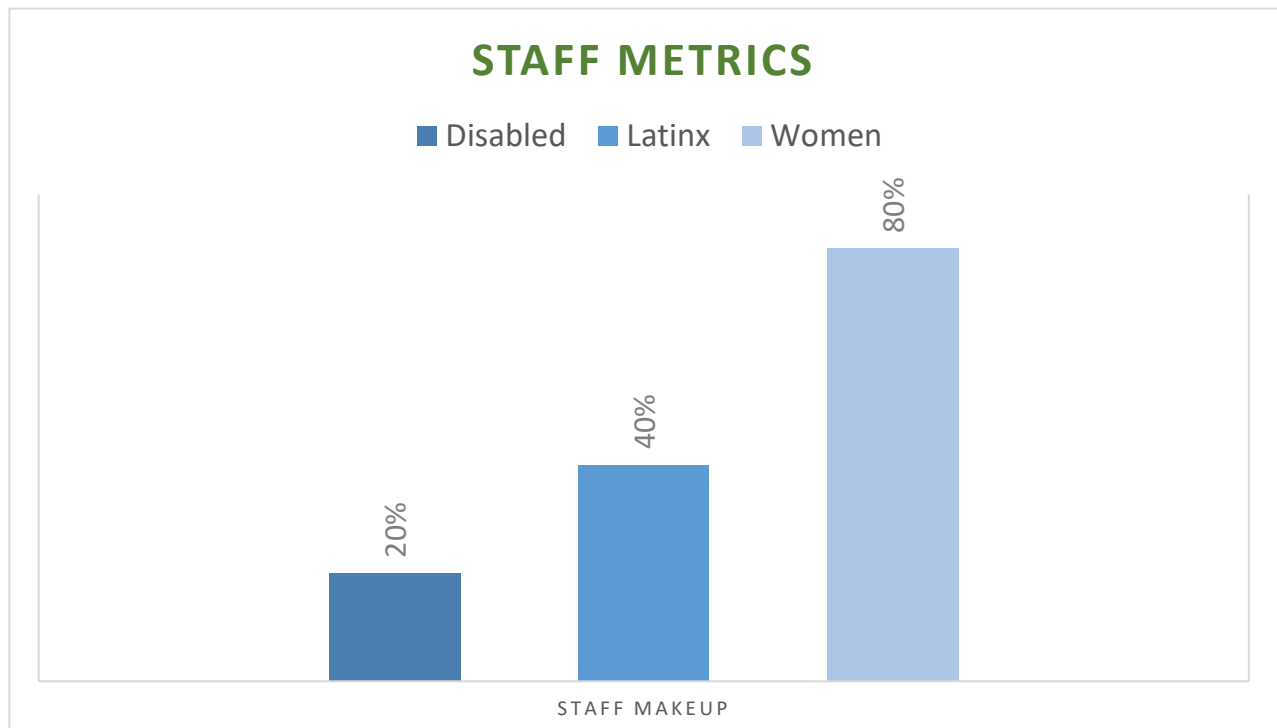
Liza Starr-Lily and Kevin Prier have been with us for many years, teaching children in our programs and events. In 2022 we honored their commitment to SCEC with a special evening including thank you gifts. Other instructors included Veronica Barahona and Elda Carrillo, local Latina women who helped develop and who taught our Los Pueblos Summer Camps. Our Executive Director, Karen Rainsong, teaches many of the programs as well.



Many of our volunteers come from the Cottage Grove/Creswell area and step in to support us with special events such as the Green Living Fair and the Grandparents' Pioneer Tea.



Approximately 150 Volunteer Hours in 2022



Funders and Supporters

SCEC counts on community support from our funders, donors, and local organizations. Programs and operational support were funded in part by:

- Oregon Community Foundation
- Lane County Cultural Coalition (Oregon Cultural Trust)
- Woodard Family Foundation
- Cottage Grove Community Foundation
- Lion's Club of Cottage Grove
- City of Cottage Grove

SCEC Advisory Council Member and Parent, Yvette LeClair



“I homeschool my daughter who has developmental delays and is autistic. Karen was more than welcoming to us and encouraged us to join. Though there was excitement coming from my daughter, I still questioned if this was the right program for her. Then one day, my daughter started playing “nature school” with her dolls. My daughter, despite not always participating, was absorbing everything that Karen and the children did, and enjoyed replaying this experience with her dolls. This was a real “aha” moment in my parenting. I hope anyone with a special needs child feels encouraged to contact Singing Creek. You won’t be disappointed!” - Yvette LeClair

Looking Forward

SCEC is in a transition period, as we look forward to our relocation to a new site in the Cottage Grove/Creswell area in early 2024. Development of our Board of Directors and Advisory Council is a key priority for 2023, leading up to strategic planning and capacity building activities for the next two to three years.

As we grow, maintaining close relationships with Tribal partners and BIPOC organizations in Oregon will continue to be important. Our goal is to tell the story of history in an accurate and respectful way, providing resources and talking points for teachers and parents in our community. New programs and events will be developed through this lens of equity and compassion. When history is taught honestly, students gain a better understanding of current systemic issues and feel empowered to take action to ensure equity, justice and liberation are a reality for all.

In 2023 we plan to grow our Advisory Council by adding parents and community members to advise the Executive Director and Board of Directors on matters relating to governance, policies, programs, and community engagement.