

Singing Creek Educational Center Mission,  
Vision and Values Statement  
revised 2024



## Mission Statement

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

## Vision Statement

We believe knowledge and appreciation of local history stimulates people toward lifelong values of sustainability, stewardship, and preservation. Learning homesteading and traditional place-based skills connects children and adults to the natural world and instills personal pride while also building a sense of shared community. Indigenous perspectives and lifeways are a source of wisdom and knowledge about the natural world and our place in it. We acknowledge the sovereignty of indigenous peoples and their traditional knowledge and involve local tribes in our curriculum. We believe that children and adults learn and retain information best through participatory activities, and that empowering people in this way inspires empathy, intergenerational connection, and leadership.

## Our Values

We inspire young people to understand and connect with Oregon history while learning about sustainability, indigenous cultures and lifeways, and the forces that shaped this region through time. We believe the youth are the future and we strive to teach in ways that are inclusive of and respectful of indigenous tribes and non-white people, being truthful to impacts of colonization and settlement of the West. We also strive to make our programs and events as accessible as possible for everyone in the community.

The values we uphold:

- ✓ Self-Reliance
- ✓ Sustainability
- ✓ Perseverance
- ✓ Respect for the land
- ✓ Teamwork
- ✓ Honoring Elders
- ✓ Appreciating Cultural Perspectives
- ✓ Gratitude

## How we Accomplish our Mission and Results

We serve an average of 3,000 youth each year. With our varied programs and special events, we bring exceptional hands-on history education to youth and families across Oregon. We offer summer camps, field trips for classrooms and large groups, in-classroom curriculum, home-school sessions, Outdoor school teaching and more. Our special events include classes for adults and teens, a multi-generational Grandparent's Tea, and booths at local fairs and seasonal celebrations.

Many of our programs are intergenerational and honor elders and their role in relating history to young people. We also encourage older children and teens to become leaders through helper roles. Children not only learn the values above, but through personal growth and leadership they are more prepared to face the challenges of adulthood and citizenship.

## History

Karen Rainsong, our executive director, has a passion for teaching children about history and nature, and has been an educator for over 25 years. Before SCEC, she developed and ran similar programs at the Alvord Farm and Museum in Eugene, where many of the current programs were shaped. In 2015, when that space was outgrown, she moved the organization to the private property of Tom and Sue Hunton in Junction City, a 250-acre working farm with woods, a pond, and a one room historic schoolhouse. In May, 2019 SCEC moved into the historic Snapp House in Cottage Grove, until November of 2022. SCEC then moved to a model of sharing space with partner organizations such as the Shelton McMurphey Johnson House in Eugene. We received our nonprofit status in January 2016 and have been building our programs and events sustainably ever since. Our logo and name come from *The Singing Creek Where the Willows Grow*, a book by Opal Whiteley, who later became famous around the world. Opal was a girl who grew up in Cottage Grove around 1900 and had a unique, compassionate way of relating to children and nature. SCEC operates with a Board of Directors and several committees that include members of the community.

## Funding

Our funding comes from a mix of grants, program revenue, donations, and fundraisers. Local funders include the Woodard Family Foundation, the City of Cottage Grove, the Lion's Club and others. We have several fundraising events in Lane County throughout the year. Other opportunities include donating to our scholarship fund so low-income families can attend summer camp, our operating support fund, in-kind support, and volunteering. We are seeking board members who are committed to the mission and would like to support our work and help guide the organization.

Karen Rainsong, Executive Director

[www.singingcreekcenter.org](http://www.singingcreekcenter.org) EIN # 47-3354809  
[director@singingcreekcenter.org](mailto:director@singingcreekcenter.org) (541) 968-1986

