



Singing Creek Educational Center

Annual Report 2025



Our Mission

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

The Year in Review

In 2025, Singing Creek Educational Center (SCEC) partnered with many local organizations in Western Oregon and found a new home at Dorris Ranch in Springfield. We reached new schools as far away as Portland, Salem, and Roseburg. We also added new history and indigenous programs for pre-K and teens. Our Executive Director worked closely with tribal partners to bring indigenous education to children and adults at many schools and libraries across multiple counties. SCEC hosted the Western Region Conference for ALHFAM, the Association of Living History, Farm and Agricultural Museums. Our board remains strong and diverse and our engagement with the business community is growing.

Featured Community Partners and Initiatives

Los Pueblos Day Camps

SCEC had a successful 5th year of this program, funded by the Yarg Family Foundation and the City of Cottage Grove. Our Latina instructor and Program Coordinator taught history and culture camps for 55 low-income Guatemalan children with free day camps including transportation and meals. We sunsetted this program and gave it to the Family Relief Nursery of Cottage Grove at the close of our season.



Native American Cultural Encampments Partnership

For the 3rd year in a row we partnered with the Native American Cultural Encampments and Deitrich Peters to bring Kalapuya Ways education to hundreds of people in Linn and Lane Counties. We supported indigenous groups such as the Blue River Native Welcoming Center and worked with Oregon Black Pioneers to bring an exhibit about Black history to Eugene.

Acorn Circle Library Program: Three Libraries



For the third year in a row, we presented the Acorn Circle Program for local libraries. The curriculum is adapted from the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde to teach younger children about local Indigenous culture. Local libraries, including Eugene, received teaching sessions with a story and craft activities, highlighting language arts. Each library hosted a cultural presentation with our partner Deitrich Peters, a local Grand Ronde culture-bearer. These programs reached about 400 people in two counties. The Acorn Circle was funded by Woodard Family Foundation, the City of Cottage Grove, and participating libraries.

History Homeschool/ Field Trips

Our hands-on homeschool at the historic Shelton McMurphey Johnson House in Eugene was a success, featuring unique educational experiences about history and nature. These history programs include learning about the pioneer settlers, fur trappers, and Native Americans. At our new location at Dorris Ranch our first field trip was for a group of developmentally disabled teens who really enjoyed learning about history.



Our Impact

In 2025, SCEC served 4,000 people across seven Oregon counties and six school districts from Portland to Riddle. We reached new audiences in libraries, schools, parks and community centers. We taught 600 students at outdoor school presenting Kalapuya culture and atlatl throwing (a hunting tool).

Our homeschool remained full, including 20% 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, and special guests share traditional handicrafts and stories. In 2025 we partnered with the SMJ House and Oregon Black Pioneers to present an exhibit about Black history in Eugene for three months, reaching hundreds of visitors.

In September we hosted the ALHFAM (Association of Living History, Farm and Agricultural Museums) Western Region Conference in Eugene, attended by 30 history professionals from all over the Western US. Our Executive Director presented a paper about the history of the Applegates and the Kalapuya of the Yoncalla Valley.



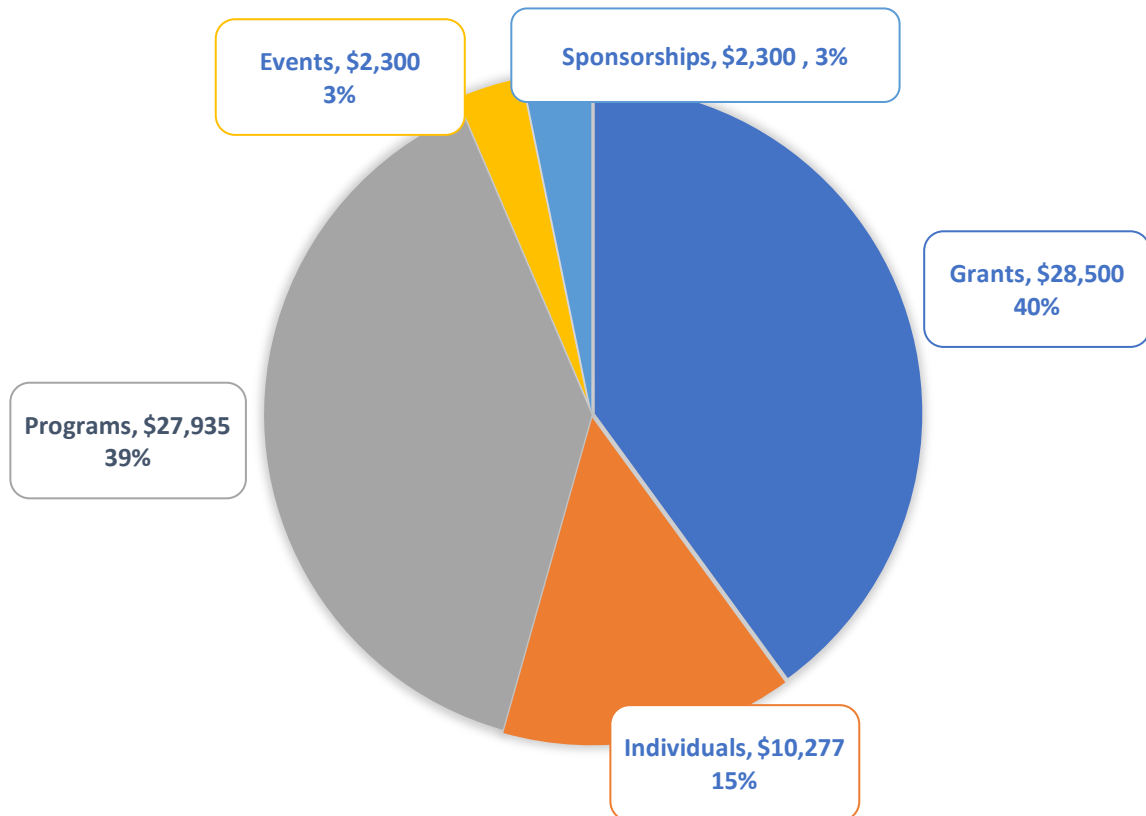
3200
Children
Served

800
Adults/Teens
Served



2025 Revenue Sources

Total Revenue: \$76,567



Executive Director Karen Rainsong

Our founding Executive Director, Karen Rainsong, has led Singing Creek since 2007. Karen engaged in many professional development opportunities in 2025, including history/culture presentations by indigenous people. Karen continues to support initiatives and projects that center BIPOC voices and histories for greater justice and equity. She is also the webmaster and membership coordinator for ALHFAM (the Association for Living History, Farm, and Agricultural Museums), an international organization.



Our Board of Directors- 2025



Board President - Ann Dockendorf

Alpaca Farm Owner/ B.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@singingcreekcenter.org



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

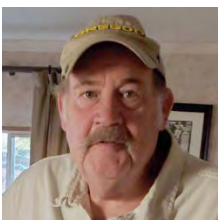


Secretary- Karen Williamson

Retired Music Teacher

Karen loves kids and music and has a background in managing a radio station.

karen.williamson232@gmail.com



Past President- Steve Williamson

Retired from a career working with developmentally disabled adults/Historian

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

steve@singingcreekcenter.org



Board Member- Elizabeth Starr-Lily

After working as a staff person for us for seven years, Elizabeth became a Waldorf Preschool teacher and joined the board. She brings her expertise with children and passion for teaching to everything we do.

elizabeth@singingcreekcenter.org



Board Member- Amanda Ferguson

Land Use Planning/Project Management

Amanda joined the board to share her experience with non-profit management and grant writing. She is a professional land use planner who works for the U of O.

amanda@singingcreekcenter.org



Board Member- Richard Andrew Vasquez

Native American Community work/ Legal and Educational Consultant

Richard is passionate about building community and wants to help others understand the values, history and culture of the Native community.

richard@singingcreekcenter.org

“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.” ~ Ann Dockendorf, Board President



Key Staff and Volunteers

Our staff are dedicated to high-quality, equitable and respectful teaching about history and land-based learning. Many staff stay with us for several years, growing and moving into positions of greater responsibility. We hired our first Program Manager, Kevin Prier, who has been an instructor for seven years with us.



Emma Russell became a paid staff instructor after being with us for ten years- from a participant, to a volunteer for seven years, to a wonderful instructor. Her enthusiastic spirit brings joy for all who get to work with her.

Volunteer hours totalled about 300 in 2025. We had many volunteers step in to support us with special events such as the Pleasant Hill Pioneer Day and the Grandparent's Tea. Children often volunteer with their parents to help at our booths at fairs, such as the Frontier Heritage Fair. Volunteer guest presenters with skills to share often help at homeschool and

summer camp. We are grateful for so much community support!

Staff Metrics

Our staff includes contractors who are highly trained and several are getting university degrees in education. One person is disabled and about 75% of our staff are female.

Testimonial from a Parent



"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 'a-ha' 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 continues to grow each year. As we grow, maintaining close relationships with Tribal partners and BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, Person of Color) organizations in Oregon will continue to be important. Our goal is to relate Oregon's 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 and justice are a reality for all.

As we add new board and committee members from the community, we seek to become more sustainable for the long term and to forge new and stronger partnerships with other organizations and cities. Moving into the new space at Dorris Ranch will allow us to expand our programs including nature focused field trips, workshops and summer camps. Our reputation in the community is very positive, with great name recognition and participation by families and schools. We are looking forward to refining our programs and growing our staff, volunteers, donor base and budget in future years.



Staff instructor Willow Corkery with her history homeschool students in the cedar plankhouse at the living history village.