

Stories of Gratitude

How Your Giving Changes Lives

—
WINTER 2022



WILDERNESS
AWARENESS
SCHOOL

A Life In The Making

—
by Anna Constance

Although I graduated from the Immersion Program years ago, I continue to return to the nature connection teachings of Wilderness Awareness School. Each time I revisit these places and people, I deepen and expand my relationship to nature, community, and self. I become more convinced of the life I am meant to live.

Years after my time at WAS, I can see more clearly the threads that led me there. My story is different from so many others. I did not grow up tromping through wildlands. I grew up in an urban jungle, climbing metal space rockets and swimming in chlorinated pools.

When I started college, I knew that I wanted to pursue a career related to the environment. During my freshman year, I noticed a flier on a campus bulletin board about a nature workshop. During the class, we learned fox-walking and how to make cordage. The instructor told me he had learned from Michael Douglas at Maine Primitive Skills School. I wrote these names down in a notebook that I carried with me for years, but never followed through on looking up Michael or his school.

After transferring to Evergreen State College I met a classmate who introduced me to Wilderness Awareness School. When I visited the webpage, I had an immediate resonance and a realization that this is what I had been looking for all along. **I felt a deep calling, a longing to connect to the natural world so I signed up for The Immersion Program.** When I look back on it now, I know that something bigger than myself was stalking my life to get me here.

CONTINUE TO PG 2

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A Life In The Making..... page 1 - 2

Notes From the Eagle's Nest.....page 2

2020/2021 Annual Report..... page 3

A Resource for Healing..... page 4

"I had an immediate resonance and a realization that this is what I had been looking for all along."



Anna has been living her dream as an environmental educator for the past 11 years thanks to her time spent in The Immersion

Notes From the Eagle's Nest

by Warren Moon, Executive Director

As I write this, Omicron cases are rising rapidly in Washington state. Over the past two years, each time we think we have turned a corner with the pandemic, something changes.

Throughout the pandemic, one word has been a guiding force for me: Resilience. With every decision I ask, "How will this build resilience for our organization, our staff, and most importantly, our students?" We have made constant adjustments over these past two years, from lowering our student:teacher ratios and hiring more staff, to frequent improvements to our health and safety protocols. All of which not only built resilience to deal with the next twist or turn of the pandemic, but also allowed us to serve a record number of students this past year.

If there is one thing that has been reinforced by the pandemic, it is this: quality time in nature with peers and skilled mentors builds health and well-being. It helps us grow into the best versions of ourselves. While this has been true throughout the course of human existence, it is even more important today.

Amidst it all, **you are the true heroes of this story**, as none of this would be possible without your ongoing generosity! Your support enabled thousands of students to have nourishing and transformative experiences in nature — an amazing gift and blessing. I am truly inspired and humbled by your compassionate and selfless giving. Thank You!

With gratitude,

Warren
Moon



“The instructors helped me realize that my natural skills with people make me a good teacher. Because of their encouragement, I began my career as an environmental educator.”

During my year in the program, I built and slept in debris shelters, plunged in frigid waters, wandered around barefoot, made fire by rubbing sticks together, ate wild plants, and found a way of being that deeply called to me. After graduating, I started the Nature Instructor Training program. The instructors helped me realize that my natural skill with people makes me a good teacher. Because of their encouragement, I began my career as an environmental educator. I worked at Wilderness Awareness School and Vashon Wilderness Program before **I was hired as a Public Education Program Specialist for Seattle Public Utilities almost 11 years ago.**

Over the last two years, something has been unfolding in my life and I am listening. This deep listening is influenced by my time at Wilderness Awareness School. This is what I am hearing: slow down, be embodied, and embrace wildness. As I allow the unfolding of my life to happen, to bring about whatever transformation is coming, I have realized I want more heart and soul in my life. So once again, I have returned to the nature connection community, to Wilderness Awareness School, and to the land.

My involvement with Wilderness Awareness School has profoundly and completely saturated my life in ways that continue to be revealed. I am immensely grateful for the teachings of the school and the people and donors that keep the teachings alive. Our world has never needed deep nature connection and connection to community more than it does right now.

WILDERNESS AWARENESS SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT

September 2020 - August 2021

Accomplishments

\$29,905

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

\$59,130

for capital expenses. Including the Coho Development Project, new website and database, and COVID-19 land improvements.

2,483

kids, our most ever, enjoyed fun adventures in nature throughout the year, including

2,054

in summer day camps.

Your support provided

\$34,861

in scholarship, to allow **74** students the ability to attend our programs.

424

adults participated in a variety of programs, from our 9-month Immersion, to intensives, to weekend/weeklong programs, to our Kamana Naturalist Training program.

202

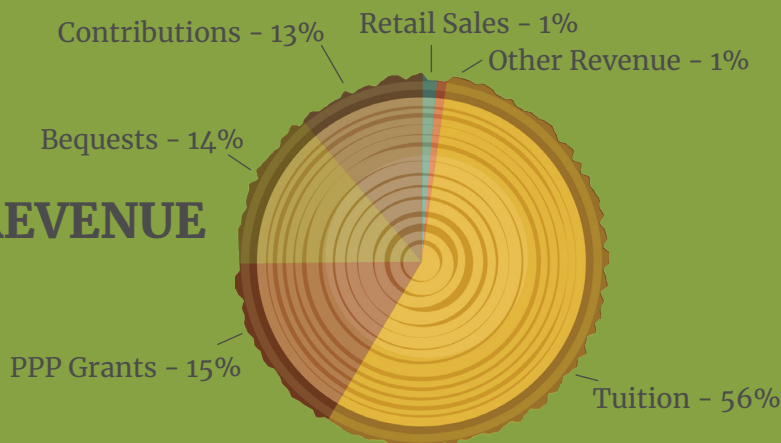
volunteers gave

11,307

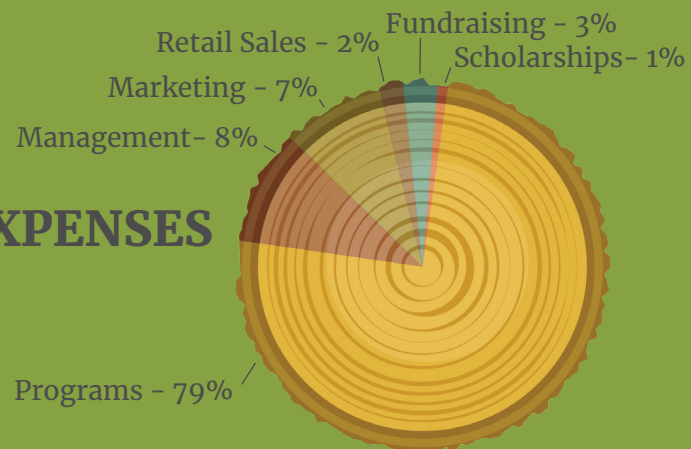
hours of invaluable time and energy, playing essential roles in our programs. Thank you!

Financial Report

REVENUE



EXPENSES



Tuition	\$1,974,559
PPP Grants	\$536,903
Bequests	\$501,646
Contributions	\$446,848
Retail Sales	\$52,313
Other Revenue	\$28,047

Programs	\$1,928,752
Management & General	\$191,649
Marketing	\$174,558
Fundraising	\$60,814
Retail sales	\$40,990
Scholarships	\$34,861

TOTAL **\$3,540,316**

TOTAL **\$2,431,624**

A Resource for Healing

by Lynne, mother of J

The Coyotes program has been invaluable to our son and to our family. Like many, we were struggling with the shut-down back in 2020. There wasn't in-person schooling or activities that have been such a vital part of our son's development and social-emotional health.

“The scholarship made a way for my son to be nurtured for his long-term health and healing.”

We are so grateful for the investment in our son. Over two years ago, J moved into our home as a foster kid. We were already in process of adoption and had no idea that the journey would be delayed and almost derailed. He had to move schools, start mid-year and leave the few friends he had from his previous house. He was new to the neighborhood and had just started making friends before school went virtual.

Permanence for kids is very important. As the adoption lingered, and the hotspot of Covid grew near our district, we were the first of schools to shut down. J was spending hours in online school alone



Thanks to your donations, J has been able to receive healing and nurturing time in nature with other kids in the Coyotes program.

without sports or activities and without access to resources that would help him heal. We knew we needed to do something different for him.

In faith, we pursued Wilderness Awareness School. I had known about the program through a neighbor. **This seemed like a great opportunity for him to be outdoors all day healing in nature, connecting with other kids, and soaking in some good mentorship from their instructors.**

As a parent, I have been very grateful that we could access this program for him. It would not have been possible without the generous scholarship we received from donors. During the pandemic, my husband was injured and lost his job, and I was furloughed to part-time. The scholarship made a way for my son to be nurtured for his long-term health and healing. Thank you to the generous donors for making this possible for him.

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



\$35

\$250

\$50

\$_____ - the possibilities are endless!

\$100

Name: _____

Email: _____

Address: _____

Donate securely online at wildernessawareness.org/donate