



Singing Creek Educational Center
Annual Report 2024



Our Mission

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

The Year in Review

In 2024, Singing Creek Educational Center (SCEC) partnered with many local organizations in Western Oregon and brought our programs to more counties than ever before. We branched out to schools as far away as Portland, Salem, and Roseburg. We also doubled the reach of our Acorn Circle program, bringing Indigenous children’s education to six libraries serving hundreds of families. Our Executive Director worked closely with Tribal partners to bring traditional Kalapuya ways education to children and adults at three events in Linn County. In 2024 our board of directors (which included several new members) participated in six months of training with a certified board trainer from U of O.

Featured Community Partners and Initiatives

Los Pueblos Spring/Summer Camps

SCEC had a successful 4th year of this program, funded by the Yarg Family Foundation and the City of Cottage Grove, in partnership with the Family Resource Center. Our Latina instructor, Janet, became our Program Coordinator and has been given more responsibility. This program served 45 low-income Guatemalan children with free day camps based on the history of Mexico and Guatemala, including transportation and meals.



Native American Cultural Encampments Partnership

For the 2nd year in a row we partnered with the Native American Cultural Association of Oregon and Deitrich Peters to bring Kalapuya Ways education to three public campout events in Linn County. Hundreds of families learned about indigenous culture and made handcrafts while enjoying food and traditional music and dancing. Our Director attended several traditional Native cultural events in 2024, including private ceremonies and public events.



Acorn Circle Library Program: Six Libraries

We adapted the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde curriculum to teach younger children about local Indigenous culture. Six local libraries received sessions including a story, game, and craft, highlighting language arts learning. Each library hosted a cultural presentation with local Kalapuya culture-bearers including flute playing, storytelling, basketry examples and more. The Acorn Circle is funded by Woodard Family Foundation, the City of Cottage Grove, and participating libraries. More libraries have begun to ask for this program, and we will expand it again in 2025.

SMJ house History Homeschool/Field Trips

Our hands-on homeschool was full again this year, with 10 kids coming to the historic Shelton McMurphey Johnson House in Eugene once a month for unique educational experiences about history and nature. School field trips continue to happen as well. These history programs include learning about the pioneer settlers, fur trappers, and Native Americans. This year we hosted a field trip for deaf students and a Kalapuya presentation for developmentally disabled adults.



Our Impact

In 2024, SCEC served 3,400 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 584 students at outdoor school presenting Kalapuya culture and atlatl throwing (a hunting tool).

Our homeschool remains 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.

Our Acorn Circle program brought together members of the public with Indigenous culture bearers in meaningful ways. One woman said to our presenter, Deitrich Peters: **“What you have said here today will stay with me for the rest of my life.”** We hear these type of respectful, appreciative comments frequently at our programs.



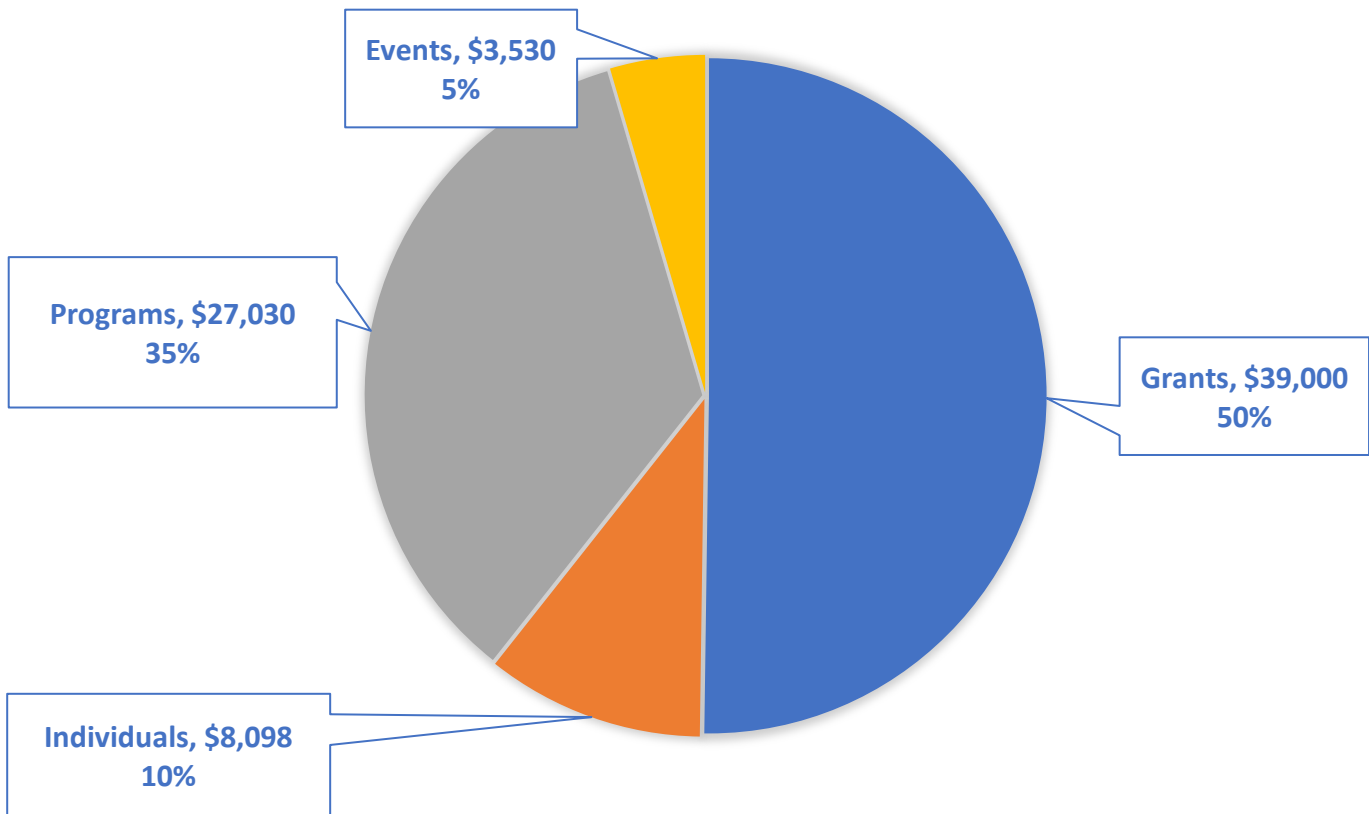
3000
Children
Served

400
Adults/Teens
Served



2024 Revenue Sources

Total Revenue: \$80,188



Executive Director Karen Rainsong

Our founding Executive Director, Karen Rainsong, has led Singing Creek since 2007. Karen engaged in many professional development opportunities in 2024, 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



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@aragonalpacas.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

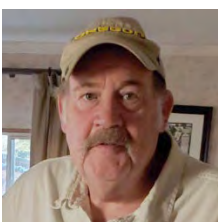


Secretary- Karen Williamson

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.

storiesbysteve@gmail.com



Board Member- Courtney Reidel

Graduate Student in Applied Behavior Analysis/Works with Autistic Children
Courtney joined the board because she is dedicated to serving the community, particularly regarding ensuring equitable educational opportunities for children.
courtney.riedel@outlook.com



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.
amandafergus@gmail.com



Board Member- Sue Whitacre

Retired Art Teacher
Sue joined the board to help bring quality educational experiences to children and adults, especially Indigenous and nature-based learning.
scwhitacre@sbcglobal.net



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.
rvasquez2227@gmail.com

“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

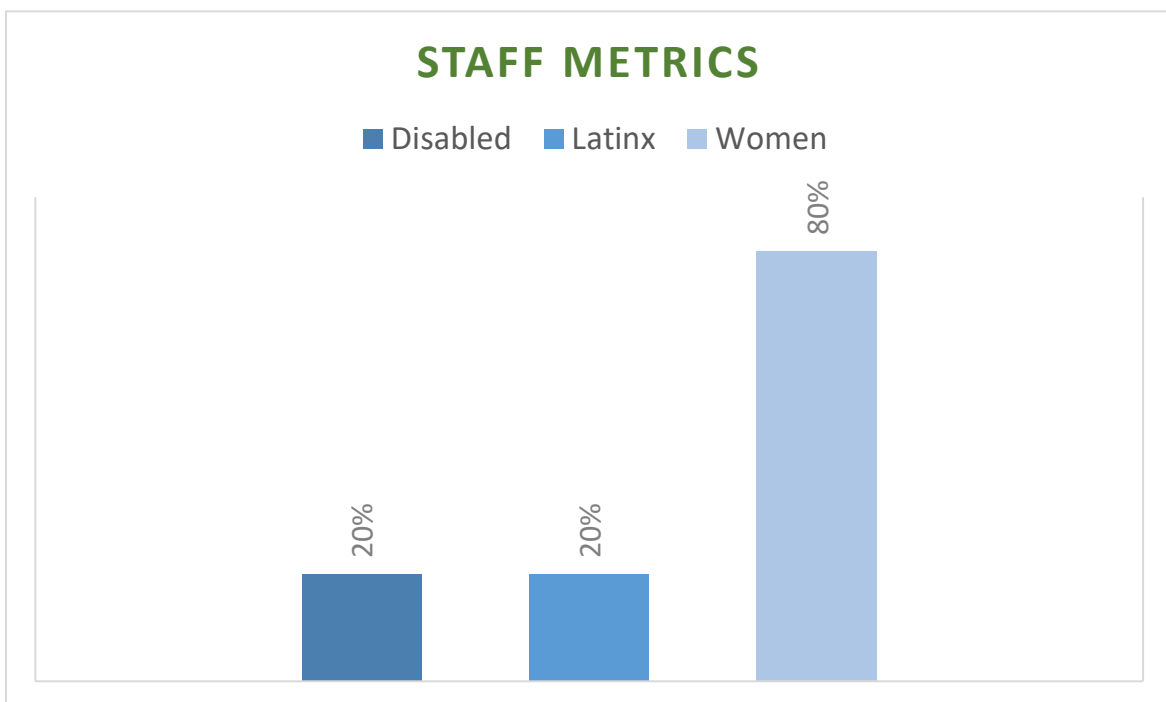
Our staff are dedicated to high-quality, equitable and respectful teaching about history and land-based learning. Many staff stay with us for several years, growing and moving into positions of greater responsibility and mentoring teen volunteers.



Janet Hernandez has worked for us for two years as an instructor and in Fall 2024 she became our Program Coordinator for the Los Pueblos programs. She works closely with the Early Learning Center and is a bridge for us to the Guatemalan families in the community. Her happy, enthusiastic spirit is a joy for all who get to work with her.

Many of our volunteers come from the Cottage Grove/Creswell area and step in to support us with special events such as the Pleasant Hill Pioneer Day and the Grandparents' Pioneer Tea. Children often volunteer with their parents to help at our booths at fairs, such as the Frontier Heritage Fair. In 2024, we worked more extensively with the Assistance League of Eugene volunteers who provide living history programming at the Lane County History Museum. Volunteer guest presenters with skills to share often help at homeschool and summer camp, and with projects at home as well. We are grateful for so much community support!

Approximately 300 Volunteer Hours for SCEC in 2024



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. Our reputation in the community is very positive, with great name recognition and participation by families and schools. We continue to look for a physical space to call home in the Lane County area. We are looking forward to refining our programs and growing our staff, volunteers, donor base and budget in future years.