

WE BELONG PDX
NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION

IMPACT REPORT

2023



A Note from Founder & Executive Director Sarah Lopez



In May of 2023 our U.S. Surgeon General, Vivek Murthy, released an advisory on the epidemic of loneliness and isolation. The findings are shocking. “Loneliness is as damaging to our health as smoking 15 cigarettes per day”, just one of many statistic highlighted in this report.

At We Belong PDX, we’re seeing relational connection on a unique level. Our communities give children the opportunity to see the same peers and adults week after week, year after year. We’re enjoying nutritious food together, sharing highlights and low-lights from our day, laughing together through games, adventuring to new places with one another and developing our creative genius through collaborative art and craft activities.

As one parent noted, “Your program isn't just a place to learn a skill; it's a way of life.” The need being satiated, a human need for meaningful social connectedness, is feeding into a lifetime of health and wellness.

We’re excited to watch the continued growth in confidence, courage and inner joy as we ensure each child is seen, heard and given a safe space where they know they belong.

We thank our community of champions who make these spaces possible. It’s been an honor and a joy to do this work.

Sarah

TAGLINE

Ending the epidemic of loneliness through communities where children know they belong

MISSION

We Belong PDX is supporting kids mental health through year-round programs that give children access to trusted relationships and strategies to live healthier

VISION

We believe in a world where every child has a sense of belonging and value

VALUES

Belonging

We believe every child is worthy of a safe, welcoming space that gives them a strong sense of belonging

Healing

We believe it's essential for volunteers and staff to be trauma informed and using latest research-based, effective strategies that promote healing

Faithfulness

We believe in consistent, long-term support as key to transforming communities

Fruitfulness

We believe in the importance of providing a space where kids experience love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness gentleness and self-control

OUR SITES IN 2023:

Three full years of investment in youth living on 160th and Alder and wow, what a joy it's been. This space has become a second home where friendship, laughter and new experiences reside. We are forever grateful to Freedom Foursquare church, for being the first to hand over a set of keys, sparking the beginning of a new way to form community for wellness.



FREEDOM

"I've seen a difference in the way my son is at his core. He's always so happy to be with everyone at the program. We were going through bad times during the COVID pandemic and all of my children were changed for the better by program. My daughter had difficulty interacting with other girls and she learned how to make friends there.

~ Mother of three Freedom youth

5 Languages

7 Ethnicities

19 Families served

31 Youth engaged

230 Hours of on-site connecting and creating

The kids know that when they are here, they are in a safe place, free to have fun, be their authentic selves and grow healthy relationships with other kids in the area. The program also gives parents peace knowing that their child is being loved, valued, and cared for...We Belong PDX is a definite light to the community!

~ Joey Pauli, Program Coordinator at Freedom

Parklane continues to thrive as we build upon relationships we began in February of 2022, and pour into families who have joined since. The irrepressible joy these children exude upon arrival will continue to keep us giving these children our all each program day.

We're grateful for our partnerships with Parklane Elementary, to find families with the greatest need, and Parklane Christian Reformed Church, providing a safe space for the transformative impact to take place.



PARKLANE

“The program has given my family lots of support. It has helped in my time of need. Also, it gave the boys something to look forward to. We appreciate it and will always be grateful.”

~ Guardian of three Parklane boys

3 Languages

6 Ethnicities

8 Families served

16 Youth engaged

145 Hours of on-site connecting and creating

“Pues la verdad mis niñas se sienten muy agusto porque les encanta colorear y aprenden cosas nuevas. Además el personal es muy amable.”

~ Mother of three Parklane girls

The Hope Center site launched in April of this year, and wow has it been a success! Alicia Gonzalez, Program Coordinator for this site, runs activities four days a week for two different groups of children ages five to twelve.

The connections formed with the families and among the youth has been transformative in just the nine months it's been operating. Special thanks to AS IS Church for our partnership that makes this opportunity possible.



THE HOPE CENTER

"He's improved socially so much and become more comfortable with kids. This program has made him open up more. I've seen a big difference in attitude between him and his brother."

~ Father of two Hope Center boys

3 Languages

6 Ethnicities

54 Families served

65 Youth engaged

357 Hours of on-site connecting and creating

"Your program isn't just a place to learn a skill; it's a way of life. As parents, our reach is limited, and you've quenched that essential need."

~ Mother of 9 year old Hope Center girl

WELLNESS IMPACT

TRUSTED RELATIONSHIPS

732 Hours Growing in Social Connectedness

At the center of our work is meaningful relationships. These happen among peers, through community members who volunteer as Group Mentors, and through our Program Coordinators who invest in both the youth and their families.

We now know that our level of social connectedness is a greater determinant of our mental health than our number of adversities. We're investing in relationships long-term because we know it makes all the difference.



NUTRITION

30+ Healthy Snacks Prepared by Youth

Our youth are learning the value of feeding our bodies well. Whole and minimally processed foods are always provided and we have youth participate in the snack preparation process multiple times each month.



ADVENTURE

70+ Hours Adventuring in the PNW

Our youth experience at least one outing per month. These are new experiences and often outdoors, helping them see the value of adventure on our mental health.



CREATIVITY

140 Activities Introduced

730+ Hours of Screen-Free Activity Time

Our youth are learning the value of taking a break from screens and getting more in-tune with their inner creative.

WHO WE SERVE



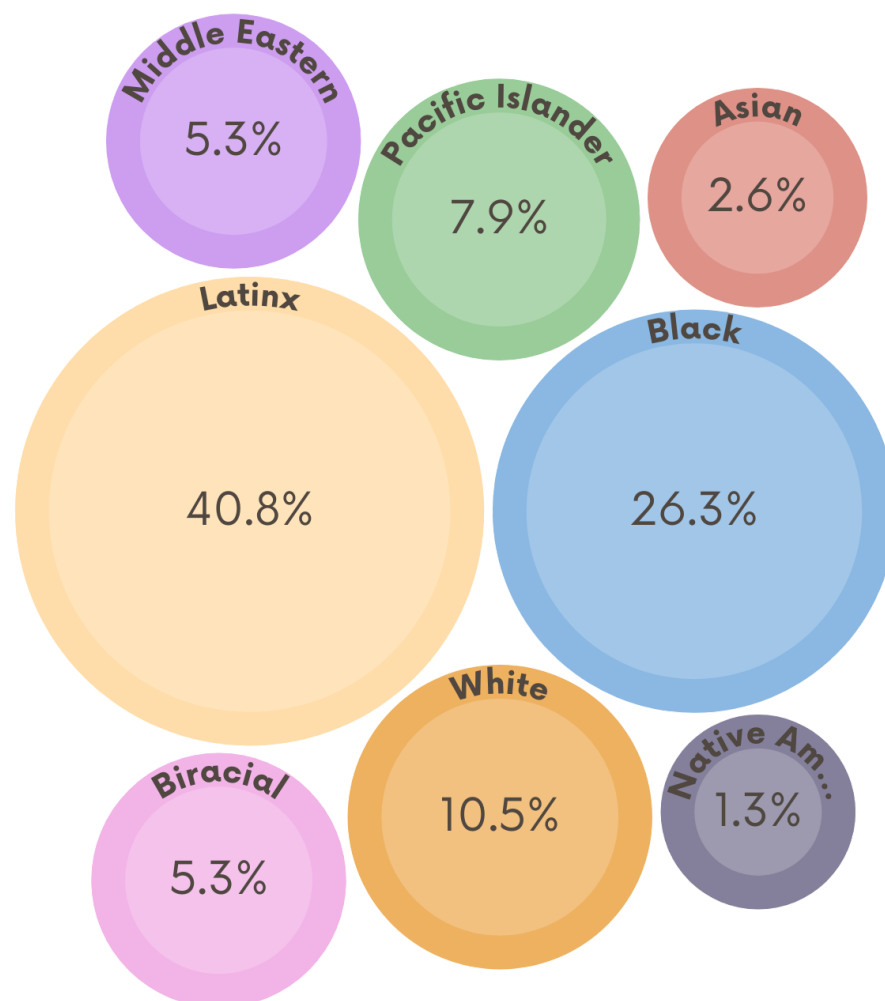
99% of families are on free or reduced lunch

8 Different ethnicities

5 Languages Represented

30% Live in a single-caregiver household

90% served are from the BIPOC community

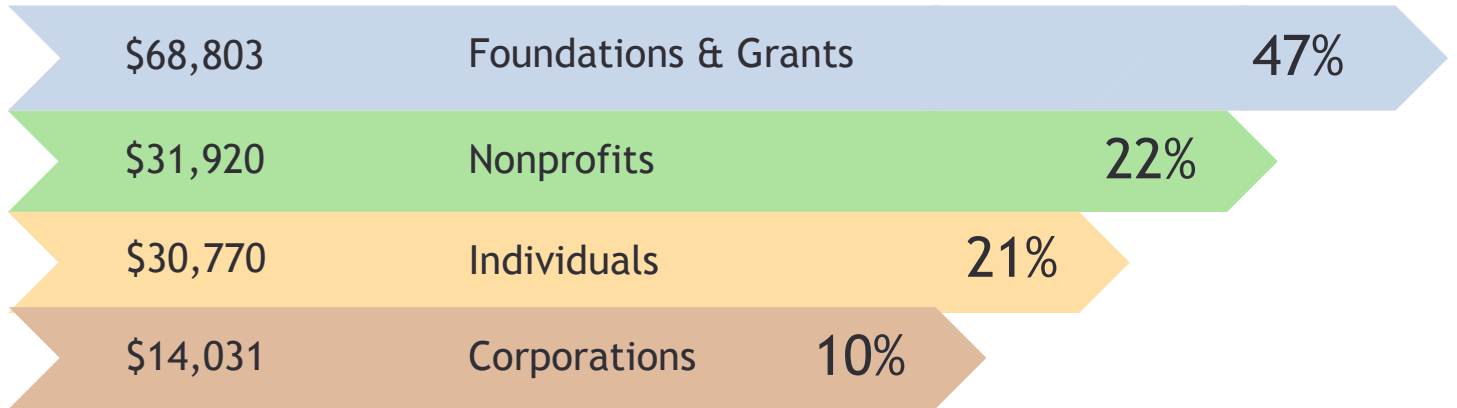


OUR FINANCIALS



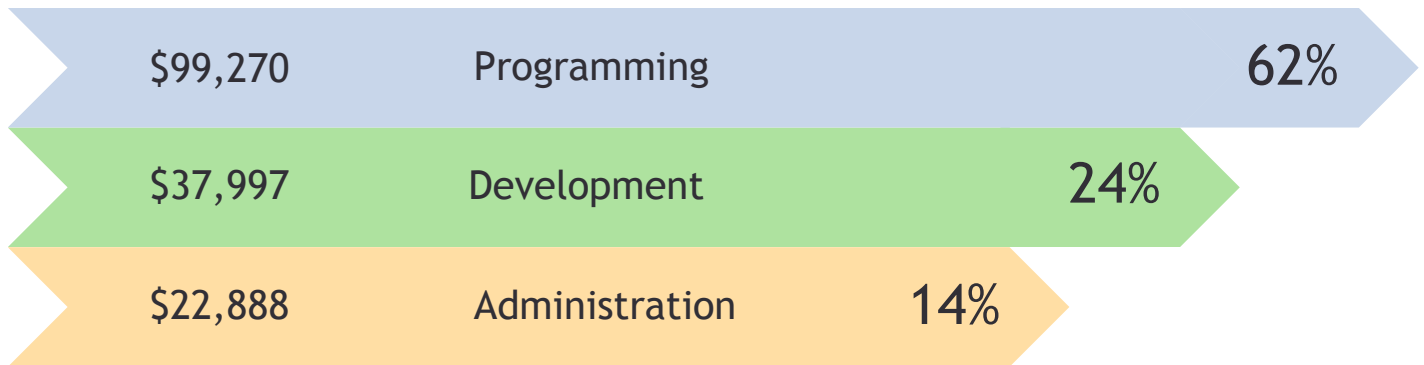
\$145,524

Revenue



\$160,155

Expenses



WHAT IS OUR CURRENT FINANCIAL SITUATION?

Great news! Due to the generosity of our supporters, we began 2023 with a net positive of 76k. This enabled us to enter 2024 in the green after having raised just shy of 15k of our expenses.

WHAT DOES PROGRAMMING INCLUDE?

Program Coordinator Salary
Group Mentor Training

Nutritious Food

Monthly Adventure Outings

Activity Supplies

OUR VALUED VOLUNTEERS

“Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart.” ~ Elizabeth Andrew

Group Mentors

Sara Majitiscic
KC Weimann
Dena Muraski
Craig Gruenwald
Sterling Mitchell
Becca Blevins
Tonya Storment
Andrew Diedrich
Pete Armstrong
Brent Osborn
Larry Nienmeyer
Pam Lemar
Trey Steele
Juan Carlos Tellez Flores
Alain Clements
Eric Loyd
Ricky Navarro
Kheilany Lopez
Paulina Levaggi
Kaleb Gonzalez

Remote Support

(gave time to special events, social media or other needed support)

Laura Wells
Allison Vidaurri
Gregory Madrigal
Melissa Monroe
Tammy Thompson
Kayla Drozd
Tyra Grove
Josue Diaz

Board of Directors

Melanie Brown
Taylor Wells
Leah Gabler
Amanda Allquist
Heather Hollingsworth
Sarah Collins

Summer Support

Tony Williamson
Kelly Elknton
Joshua Al-Jaouni
Juan Paz
Israel Gonzalez
Julian Johnson

OUR VALUED PARTNERSHIPS

“Unity is strength...when there is teamwork and collaboration, wonderful things can be achieved.” ~Mattie Stepanek

Church Partners Providing the Program Space

Freedom Foursquare Church
Parklane Christian Reformed Church
AS IS Church

Outside Partnerships in 2023

Wildly Kind
Faithful Friends
Big Brothers, Big Sisters NW
Project LEDO
The Underground PDX
All City Church
Neurosequential Network
Anchors Outdoor Adventures
Portland Parks & Recreation
Parklane Elementary School
Pacific International Academy
Rockwood CDC

GIVE



**JOIN OUR
MOVEMENT TO END
THE EPIDEMIC OF
LONELINESS**