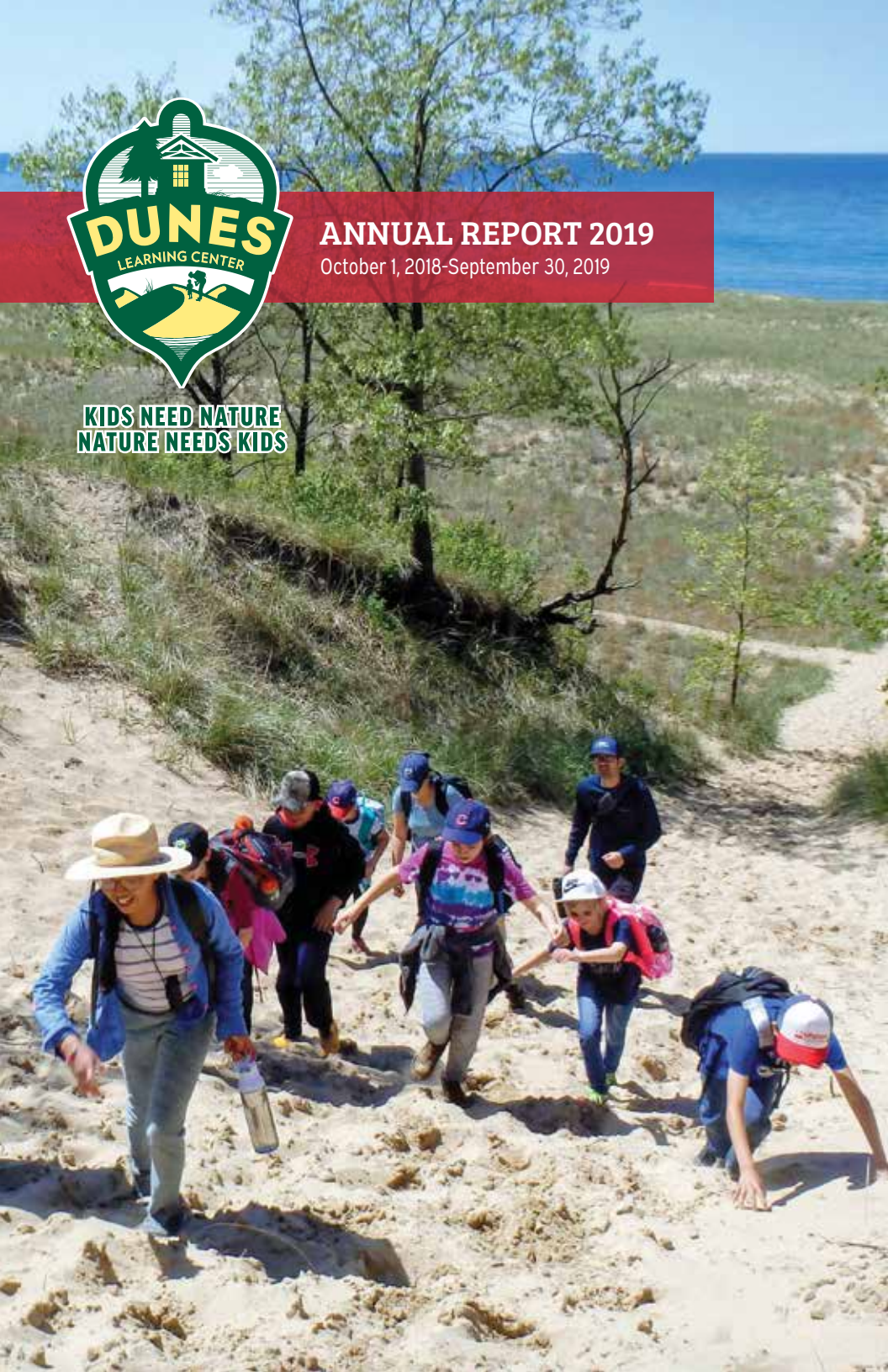


ANNUAL REPORT 2019

October 1, 2018-September 30, 2019

**KIDS NEED NATURE
NATURE NEEDS KIDS**



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“Dunes Learning Center exceeded my expectations in both facilities and staff. Your team made our trip easy and educationally valuable. The program prioritizes mindfulness and develops an awareness of how our actions affect the world around us. Thanks to the overnight experience, my students also developed a kinship that prevails in the classroom today!”

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Since 1998 Dunes Learning Center has had the great privilege to operate within Indiana Dunes National Park.

Thanks to this partnership, our outdoor classroom spans more than 15,000 acres and boasts biodiversity that ranks seventh out of all 400-plus National Park units. Students have the opportunity to explore and learn at Bailly Homestead (a National Historic Landmark), Chellberg Farm, Cowles Bog Trail and Indiana Dunes State Park (National Natural Landmarks), West Beach, and more.

Over the last century, many people fought extremely hard to preserve these natural, historic, and cultural treasures along the south shore of Lake Michigan. Our founders –Lee Botts, Dale Engquist, and Mark Reshkin–were certainly passionate warriors who also had the vision to educate the next generation of stewards in the dunes.

Young people need to appreciate the natural world, and you make it possible.

This year, with your support, hands-on outdoor science programs at Dunes Learning Center connected more than 14,000 students with the local environment to investigate the impact of everyday actions. These young people developed skills to make intelligent, informed decisions and took action to improve natural areas in their communities.

Thanks to you, we are making a larger and lasting impact!

Human behavior ranks as the largest threat to the environment, so it’s going to take as many of us as possible—working together in areas as varied as education, science, technology, engineering, the arts, and public policy—to make a measurable difference.

Thank you for your commitment to Dunes Learning Center, environmental education, and a world where people and nature thrive.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Geoff Benson".

Geoff Benson
Executive Director
Dunes Learning Center

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Zully JF Alvarado".

Zully JF Alvarado
Board Chair
Dunes Learning Center

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Labovitz".

Paul Labovitz
Superintendent
Indiana Dunes National Park

**ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS TO INSPIRE
LASTING CURIOSITY AND STEWARDSHIP WITH NATURE SINCE 1998**



DUNES LEARNING CENTER'S LIFELONG LEARNING MODEL

Environmental Education to Inspire Lasting Curiosity and Stewardship with Nature

Discovery in a National Park:

Public events celebrate the natural world and introduce Citizen Science through guided hikes, water quality investigations, live animal encounters, and more.

OPEN HOUSES



1,715 attended a Dunes Learning Center event

Free public open houses give students and their families, as well as the general public, the opportunity to enjoy a day outdoors on campus with event sponsorship support.

Outdoor science with stewardship connected to the classroom:

Students explore natural areas, discover how everyday actions impact the environment, and work together to make a difference in their communities.

SCHOOL YEAR IN THE COMMUNITY



5,025 participated in a school-year outreach program

Environmental-STEM programs are delivered free of charge in partnership with school corporations thanks to grant support with major funding provided by ArcelorMittal.

Team building and personal growth:

Unplugged and immersed in nature, students and summer campers try new things, learn new skills, gain confidence, and build a strong team culture over 3-5 days on campus.

SCHOOL YEAR & SUMMER CAMPS



4,429 participated in an overnight program on campus, 51% received scholarship support.

The average free and reduced lunch rate for students receiving support through the scholarship fund was 74%—well above the Indiana state average of 47%—while grants reduce the cost of residential programs for all participants.

Training future leaders:

Interns receive professional development to inspire the next generation of environmental stewards and pursue a wide range of career paths.

INTERNSHIPS



27 interns were trained to lead programs and gained interpretation, leadership, classroom management, and public speaking experience.

Nearly 400 former interns now live and work around the world as accountants, doctors, fire fighters, lawyers, park rangers, PhD professors, teachers, wildlife managers, and more.

Individuals make a difference:

Continuing education for those who seek sustainable solutions to protect the environment, strengthen our communities, and foster prosperity.

CONTINUING EDUCATION



3,369 participated in Nature Nights, STEM events, and workshops with Dunes Learning Center

A wide range of educational programs are delivered on campus and in the community thanks to grants and event sponsorships.

Education Partner of Indiana Dunes National Park



HIGHLIGHTS

NATURALIST INTERN PROGRAM

Recent college graduates put their education into practice, develop leadership skills, and gain a competitive advantage for future opportunities. With more than 5 weeks of training and professional development to lead programs on campus, interns work alongside professional role models who provide guidance, feedback, and support.



2018-2019 BY THE NUMBERS

Total Participants	14,565
Internships	27
Students	8,075
Teachers	277
Chaperones	658
Summer Camp	444
Community Outreach/Events	5,084
Hours Outdoors	112,394
Learner Days	22,195
Nights in a National Park	10,338
Meals Served	33,309
Stewardship Hours	7,976

Read about the impact of this experience on our blog at DunesLearningCenter.org/blog



SUMMER CAMP

The 2019 Summer Camp season was water themed. Each week, campers enjoyed a scenic boat cruise on Lake Michigan with Harbor Country Adventures, thanks to a grant from Indiana American Water.



WALK THROUGH TIME

Time travel has been a part of the Frog in the Bog program since the beginning. Students spend the afternoon hiking to Bailly Homestead and Chellberg Farm, encountering previous “inhabitants” of this region along the way. This year, with help from South Shore Arts, the Indiana Arts Commission, and National Endowment for the Arts, we were able to upgrade the authenticity of some of our props and costumes.



CITIZEN SCIENCE SYMPOSIUM

The first Citizen Science Symposium was a huge success, with nearly 300 middle school students in attendance. This day-long program was for participants of the new Citizen Science program, which gets students into their communities, collecting data to contribute to ongoing scientific studies. Major funding for this pilot program came from the Legacy Foundation Women’s Philanthropy Fund.

A DUNES AFFAIR

The annual gala was a wonderful celebration! Over 200 people generously supported a “paddle raise” with a matching grant from BP America as well as silent and live auctions to benefit the scholarship program.



Green Apple Award winner Ken Schoon spoke about the history and importance of Dunes Learning Center as the premier environmental education center in the area. “Environmental education is really important. It puts together what you learn in other science classes [...] with your own life. Students begin to understand they are part of nature.”



ENDOWMENT FUND

In honor of the foresight of our founders, the board of directors is proud to establish the Founders’ Fund. This endowment fund will support all aspects of Dunes Learning Center operations.

Sadly, over the past three years, Dunes Learning Center has lost all three of its founders—Dale Engquist (2017), Mark Reshkin (2018), and Lee Botts (2019). This fund will ensure their legacy—for Dunes Learning Center to inspire lasting curiosity and stewardship with nature as the premier provider of outdoor environmental education programs in our region.

2019 FINANCIALS

Year ended September 30, 2019

Operating Revenue and Support

Tuition and Fees	\$420,751
National Park Service Operating Funding	\$160,000
Grants (Program/Education Support)	\$387,921
Individual/Sponsorship Support	\$293,890
Endowment Investment Income (Scholarships)	\$5,310

\$1,267,872

Expenses

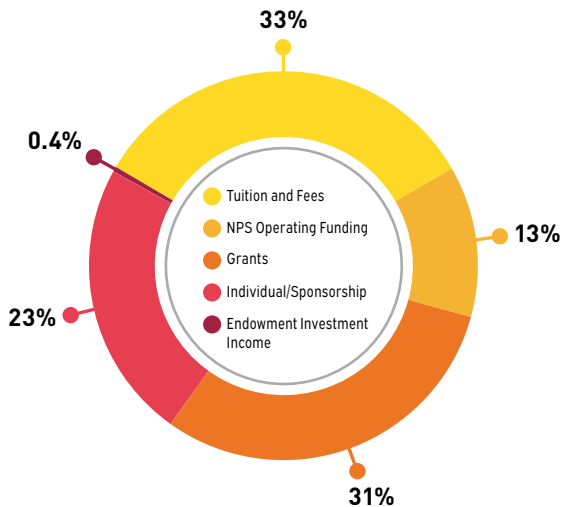
Educational Programs	\$963,249
General and Administrative	\$290,945
Fundraising	\$85,346

\$1,233,878

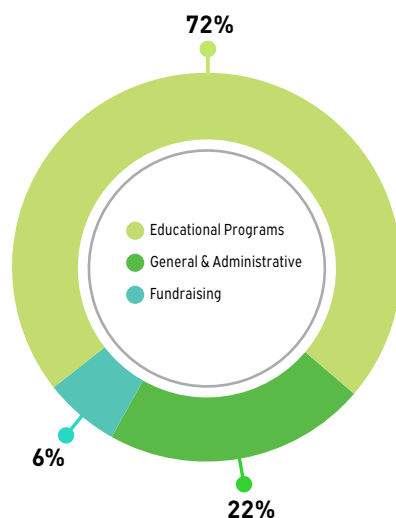
Special Projects Income and Expenses

National Park Service Special Projects	\$33,961
NPS Habitat Restoration Partnership	\$103,993
NPS In-Kind (Facilities and Service)	\$237,000
Endowment Assets, held at Community Foundations	\$244,804

Operating Revenue & Support



Expenses



Thank You

to the many generous supporters who contributed to Dunes Learning Center between October 1, 2018 through September 30, 2019. Your donations help fund our outdoor science education programs, and we are tremendously grateful for your support.

PROGRAM SUPPORT

\$100,000+

ArcelorMittal ^
National Park Service

\$25,000-\$49,999

Alphawood Foundation Chicago
Flora Richardson Foundation
Foundations of East Chicago
Legacy Foundation

\$10,000-\$24,999

BP America
Covanta Environmental Solutions
Friends of Indiana Dunes, Inc.
John W. Anderson Foundation
NIPSCO ^
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration/Indiana Department of Natural Resources/Lake Michigan Coastal Program
Porter County Community Foundation
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

\$5,000-\$9,999

Dr. Scholl Foundation
Herman and Katherine Peters Foundation
South Shore Arts/Indiana Arts Commission/National Endowment for the Arts

\$2,500-\$4,999

Cargill
Dunes National Park Association
Friends of the Chicago River
Indiana American Water
National Park Foundation

Under \$2,500

Chesterton Tri Kappa Chapter
Crown Point High School
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Sophia Stratton & Rick Novak
Thorgren Tool & Molding

^ indicates Matching Gift Company

ANNUAL GIVING SOCIETY

At the end of 2018, we introduced a new way to recognize our leadership donors: the Annual Giving Society. Through the giving circles, donors who are passionate about Dunes Learning Center and outdoor science education enjoy special recognition, updates on programs, and social opportunities. For more information or to join, please contact us or visit DunesLearningCenter.org/giving-society.



Giving Society



INDIVIDUAL DONORS



Lake Michigan Circle:
\$10,000+

Susan Eleuterio and Tom Sourlis
Carolyn and Patrick Gorman



Dunes Circle:
\$5,000-\$9,999

Monica Conrad and Chris Hoham
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Owl Circle:
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Frog Circle:
\$1,000-\$2,499

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 Anderson's Winery
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 Art From Elements
 Deb Backhus
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 Geof Benson
 Matt Benus
 Marjilee Blackwell
 Tiffany Bley
 Blue Man Group
 Blue Point Oyster & Sushi Bar
 Janis Boldenow
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 Diane Brown
 Bun's Soapbox
 Patricia Carlisle
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 Chesterton Feed and Garden
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 Duneland Styles
 Dunes Learning Center
 Kitchen Staff

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 Northwest Indiana Paddling
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 Town of Porter
 US Forest Service
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 Virginia Tech & Clemson University
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 Wildlife Habitat Council
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Rebecca Presson

In Memory of Dale Engquist

Judith Gaskell
 Nancy Moldenhauer and Sharlene Livesay

In Memory of John McKeague

Constance McKeague

In Memory of Charlotte Read

Izaak Walton League of America – Porter
 County Chapter



Thanks to funding from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Indiana Department of Natural Resources, and Lake Michigan Coastal Program, we had the opportunity to work with our education partners to publish a guide for teachers and group leaders. "Educational Adventures in the Dunes" is available online at DunesLearningCenter.org/resources.

Dunes Learning Center is deeply grateful to all of its donors. If your name was inadvertently omitted or incorrectly listed, please accept our apologies, and contact us at 219-395-9555 or friends@duneslearningcenter.org so that we may correct it in the future.



**“I THINK WHAT WE NEED
IS MORE GOATS.”**

Instant celebrities on campus, Thelma and Louise made the move from Chellberg Farm to Dunes Learning Center last summer. The goats, who are half-sisters on loan from hobby farmer, National Park Service volunteer, and ArcelorMittal employee Kyle Wilson, worked to remove bittersweet, multiflora rose, bush honeysuckle, and garlic mustard from a quarter-acre enclosure as part of the National Park Service’s ongoing restoration project.

The experiment was a success beyond the use of goats to naturally control invasive species. “They were good company, and they taught kids to be good stewards of the land,” executive director Geof Benson said.

Along with outdoor classrooms that demonstrate the long-term benefits of locally-grown produce, rain gardens, native landscaping, and pollinators, Dunes Learning Center strives to lead by example using all renewable energy to power campus, solar energy to light storage areas, and clean energy to fuel buses while also minimizing food waste during meals and supplying hot water on-demand for campers.



Education Partner of
Indiana Dunes National Park



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