

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

*A year like
no other*



PHILADELPHIA
OUTWARD BOUND SCHOOL



A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I was recently telling an Outward Bound veteran about the first in-person program day POBS had run in over a year. Our instructors led an Insight Day for administrative staff to demonstrate that our COVID safety protocols worked as intended. It was a beautiful day. Everything ran smoothly, we all had a great time, and I was nearly moved to tears more than once by the sheer normalcy of it all. My conversation partner was a little incredulous. “No one got lost? No weather induced discomfort? Doesn’t sound like Outward Bound!”

He was right, of course. Our learning model is designed to produce discomfort. It’s supposed to be hard — at least in the middle. And by these standards, 2020 was a perfect Outward Bound year. It was *really* hard. And I’m thrilled to report that we made it through.

In these pages you won’t read about the Philadelphia Outward Bound School setting a record for students served (as we did in 2019) or opening an amazing new homebase (as we did in 2018). You will read about an organization digging deep into our core values of compassion, integrity, excellence, diversity and inclusion to stay true to our mission and serve our students and partners as best we could under incredibly challenging circumstances.

I am so proud of my colleagues for their creativity and persistence in adapting our experiential learning curriculum to be delivered online to over 1,000 students. For providing service in our North Philadelphia neighborhood with food and mask deliveries. For designing comprehensive new guidelines that will keep students and staff safe as we return to in-person programming in 2021. I’m proud and I’m not at all surprised.

I’m also very grateful to our Board of Trustees and to our donors for believing in our ability to navigate a tough course. All of the skills we seek to inspire in our students — confidence in their innate abilities, commitment to working together, and compassion for the crew — are the skills we relied on over the past year.

While I hope that the heartbreaks and white knuckle moments of the pandemic are behind us, POBS is a stronger organization for the experiences we had in 2020 and we’re ready to leave harbor again. Speaking from experience, Outward Bound really works. 🌟



MEG WISE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Service

IS AN OUTWARD BOUND CORE VALUE

Service is an important value of Outward Bound. It instills in us a sense of care and connection to the world around us and reminds us that we are important members of our communities capable of making a difference. In the past pandemic year, when all in-person programming was paused, our staff made service a priority.

Our team made over 350 reusable cloth masks. We dedicated over 700 hours in 2020 to cleaning up local parks and picking up trash around The Discovery Center. And we coordinated with community partners at the St. James School, the office of State Representative Donna Bullock, the Hank Gathers Recreation Center, and the Strawberry Mansion NAC/CDC to support local food and mask delivery efforts for our North Philadelphia neighbors. 🌟



PHILADELPHIA OUTWARD BOUND SCHOOL *by the Numbers*



2,257
PROGRAM DAYS

2,159
YOUTH AND ADULTS
SERVED VIRTUAL

98
YOUTH AND ADULTS
SERVED IN PERSON

23
PARTNERS



209
NUMBER OF DAYS THE
POBS OFFICE WAS CLOSED



350 REUSABLE CLOTH MASKS
MADE BY POBS STAFF



POBS STAFF SPENT
700 HOURS
CLEANING PARKS AND TRASH
AROUND THE DISCOVERY CENTER



1,102
TOTAL STUDENTS
60 IN PERSON ADULT
350 VIRTUAL ADULT
40 IN PERSON YOUTH
652 VIRTUAL YOUTH

MAJOR ZOOM FAILURES
DURING A PROGRAM

ONE!

Healing TOGETHER

Partnership is the backbone of the POBS program model, and in recent years we have worked with 100 schools and nonprofit organizations each year. The School District of Philadelphia (SDP) is our largest and oldest partner, and serving its students inspired POBS's founding nearly 30 years ago. We support students' social and emotional learning directly, and *indirectly* by helping educators sustain and support learnings from their course when they are back in their classrooms.

While the pandemic prevented POBS from delivering in-person programs last year, including leading expeditions for educators in summer 2020, we were thrilled when the SDP invited us to be part of their district-wide professional development initiative, *Healing Together*.

In a series of online workshops delivered synchronously and asynchronously over the summer and early fall, POBS instructors helped educators understand **belonging** so they could create online learning environments that are socially strong, emotionally aware and equitable.

The course was structured so school administrators and educators could take leadership and action to:

- *Engage in practices that affirm diverse social and cultural identities*
- *Cultivate a sense of belonging and community*
- *Provide structures for physical and emotional safety*
- *Use engaging, relevant, and culturally responsive instruction built on an understanding of how children and adolescents grow and develop socially, emotionally, and academically*
- *Create space for student voice and agency*
- *Offer frequent opportunities for students to discuss and practice anti-racism and develop collaborative solutions to address inequities*
- *Provide tiered supports that meet the needs of all students*

Our schools have been through so much this past year, and continued investment will be required to help students and educators recover from the many stresses of the pandemic. We are honored to have played a part in helping our school partners integrate the Outward Bound educational model in their classrooms and look forward to continuing our journey together. 🌟

“POBS was one of a small handful of trusted partners the District turned to for the development of our Healing Together initiative during the summer of 2020. This initiative focused on social-emotional learning, community-building, mental health, and adult wellness, and was designed to help schools navigate COVID-19 and the many needs of our students during this difficult time. POBS really delivered! Schools loved the virtual community-building activities they developed for us and we were really happy with the way they connected with our social-emotional learning programming.”

— ABIGAIL GRAY, PH.D.

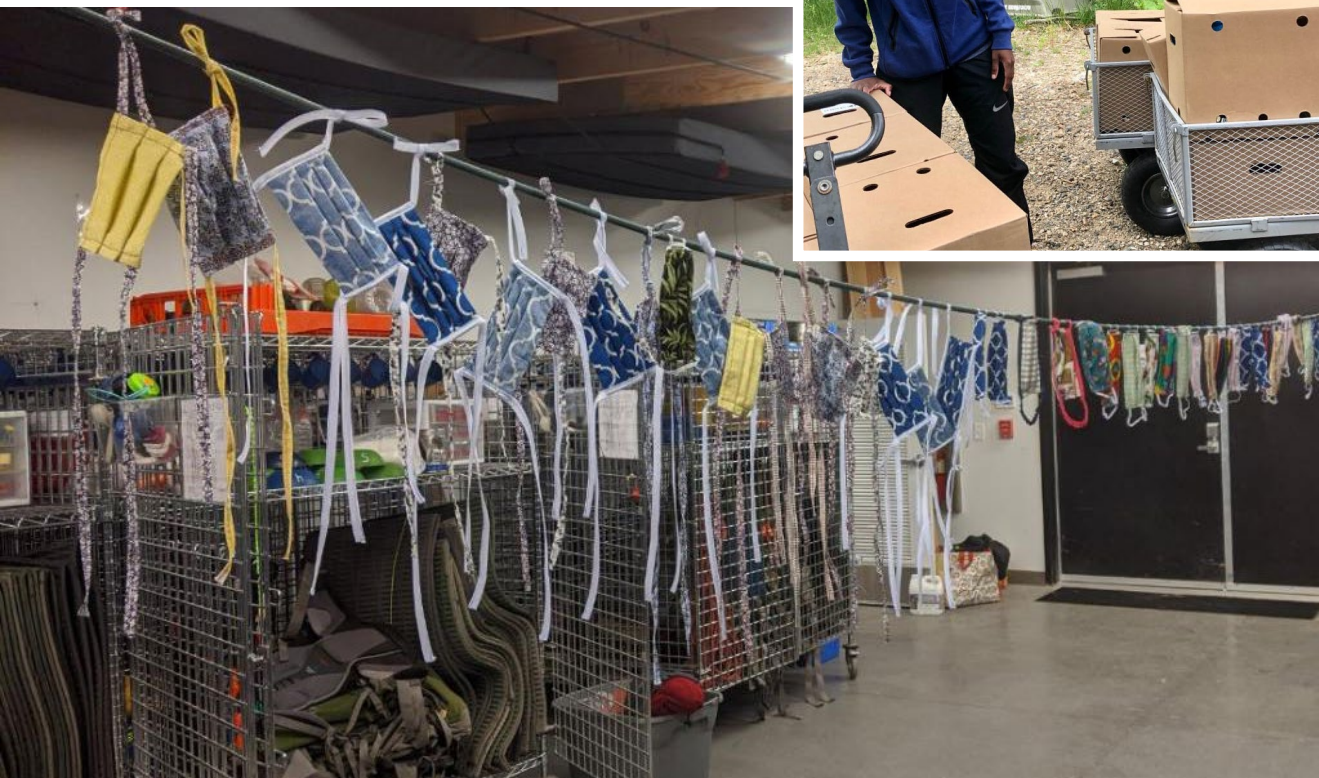
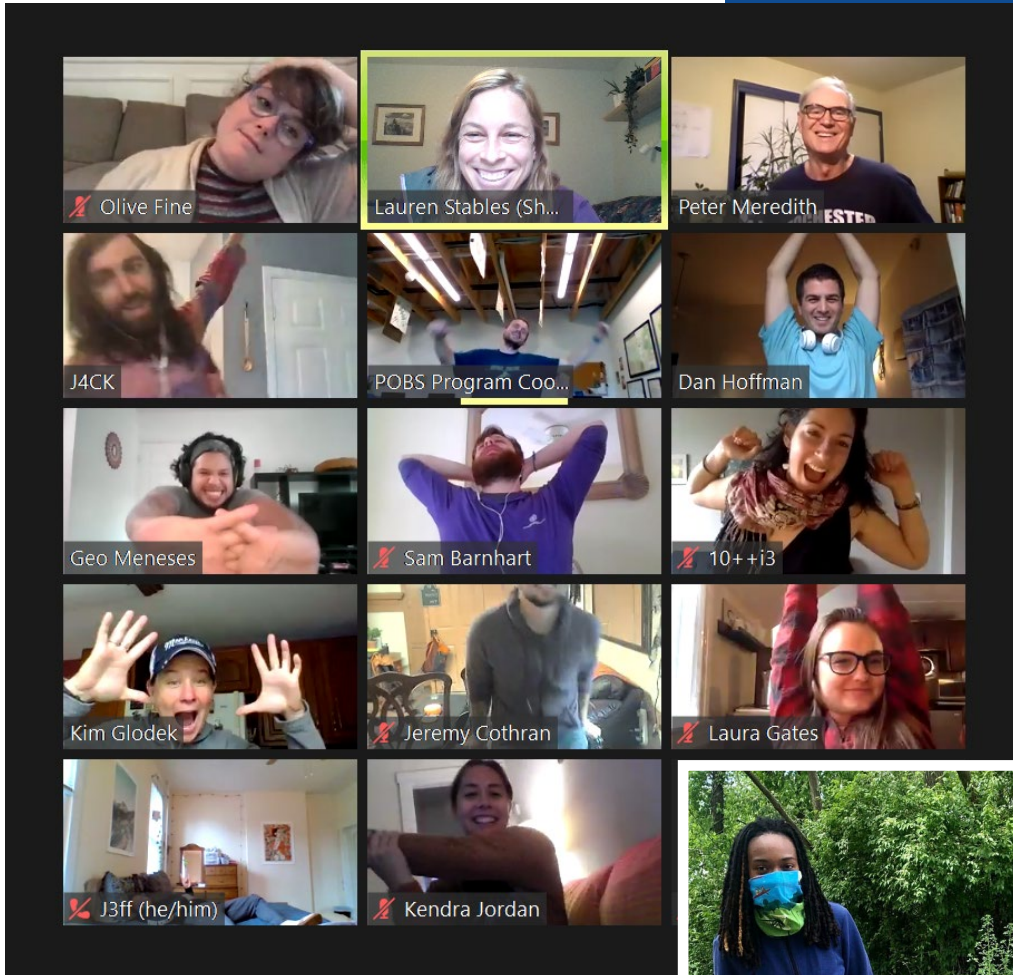
Deputy Chief, School Climate and Culture,
School District of Philadelphia



POBS has a long-standing relationship with the School District of Philadelphia, and the majority of our programs serve SDP students.

A year like no other!

FROM ZOOM
MEETINGS,
TO FOOD PACKING,
TO MASK-MAKING,
THE PHILADELPHIA
OUTWARD BOUND
SCHOOL FOUND
WAYS TO SUPPORT
OUR COMMUNITY IN
AN UNPRECEDENTED
TIME.



Meet Caleb



FACTS ABOUT CALEB:

He is 17.

He is a Junior at Collingswood High School.

He took up boxing to complete the physical activity requirement for the award.

His brother Zinedine is going on an Outward Bound Get Out and Lead expedition in summer 2021.

School in Collingswood, N.J., is one of two dozen students on this independent journey of exploration and transformation, and is working with Jennifer Raymond, the Alumni and Scholarship Manager at POBS. Caleb received the Bronze Award last summer and is now working towards the Silver Award. Here's a conversation between Caleb and Jennifer.

POBS: HOW DID YOU FIRST HEAR ABOUT THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S INTERNATIONAL AWARD? WHAT DREW YOU TO APPLY FOR THIS PROGRAM?

CZ: I first heard about it from Jennifer after doing a 10-day Get Outside and Lead program with POBS when I was in middle school. My mom did a POBS expedition as a teacher and she told me about this program and encouraged me to apply.

The program provided me an opportunity to get out there and do things I wouldn't otherwise be able to do. At my school, I don't do any sports and I wasn't too sure about joining any clubs. It gave me opportunities outside of my school to be physically active and pick up lots of new skills like boxing and learning Spanish.

POBS: WHAT WAS IT LIKE PARTICIPATING IN THE PROGRAM REMOTELY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC?

CZ: It was sometimes difficult to brainstorm ideas, but I liked how open-ended it was to find ways to complete the missions and it taught me to

The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award is a powerful self-discovery program that equips young people with important skills and experiences. Started in the 1950s in Great Britain, the program has three award levels- bronze, silver, and gold, with each level requiring a greater commitment from participants. One must create an individualized regimen to

satisfy the four required sections of the award: service, skills, physical recreation, and adventurous journey. In the third year of our participation in this distinguished program, POBS is part of a select group of U.S. organizations certified to recruit, mentor, and encourage students at all award levels. Caleb Zuzga, a junior at Collingswood High

ADDITIONAL 2020 BRONZE AWARD WINNERS

“This program provided me an opportunity to get out there and do things I wouldn’t otherwise be able to do.”

not overthink it. There are ways to do things inside your house or in your neighborhood to accomplish the mission laid out by the program.

Although we couldn’t meet in person, a positive outcome was that everyone in the program had to learn how to communicate with each other. It pushed me to be more self-sufficient and communicate more with the other program participants than before. It is a very independent program and the pandemic just added to the independence.

JR: The pandemic pushed the participants to adapt, to communicate with others, and to brainstorm with each other. They really improved their communication skills and were able to build and grow their networks of support.

POBS: WHAT IMPACT HAVE YOU SEEN FROM THIS PROGRAM?

CZ: It taught me about being more resilient and not giving up if things seem hard. You just have to get over that first hill, but once you do that, it’s like you take the training wheels off the bike. You don’t need the training wheels anymore once you take them off. If there is a tough assignment in school, I feel like I can now overcome procrastination and

be able to achieve things easier. Jenn makes everything more enjoyable and inspires us to keep going, so this program never feels like work. After getting my Bronze Award this past summer, my mom asked me if I was going to continue to get the Silver Award, and I responded “Of course, why wouldn’t I?”

JR: I have seen that it pushes students to be proactive and accountable in doing what they have to do. Students aren’t in their shell anymore, they are doing things they have never done and wanting to add it to their own resume. Their self-confidence is growing and they are building self-esteem through this program.

POBS: WHAT KIND OF IMPACT HAS THIS PROGRAM HAD ON YOUR PLANS FOR THE FUTURE AND AFTER THE PROGRAM IS OVER?

CZ: You really get some perspective on volunteering and traveling from this program. I want to travel as a result of this and perhaps take a gap year after high school to see new places and volunteer in developing countries around the world. This has been an eye-opening experience and has expanded my horizons in a lot of ways. 🌟



LUCAS GRAHAM

George Washington Carver High School of Engineering and Science, Philadelphia, PA



MAYA BRIDGES

Central High School, Philadelphia, PA



JONATHAN SIM

Central Bucks South High School, Chalfont, PA



RUBY MOSER

John W. Hallahan Catholic Girls' High School, Philadelphia, PA



Summer 2020 Action Steps

TAKE A DEEP LOOK AT OUR PRACTICES

- Release funds to hire a consultant to help us identify our weaknesses and conduct an audit to assess internal and external experiences of inclusion
COMPLETED
- Listen and learn from partners and peers who are achieving success
IN PROGRESS
- Provide a process of ongoing Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion (JEDI) training for all staff and board
IN PROGRESS

2 WITH OUR CONSULTANT, IMPLEMENT STRATEGIES TO FURTHER DIVERSIFY OUR STAFF AND BOARD TO BETTER REFLECT OUR STUDENTS

- Hire more Black, Indigenous and people of color for leadership, administrative and instructor roles
IN PROGRESS
- Create programs and pathways to employment for our students at POBS or in experiential outdoor education, including new opportunities for high school graduates under 21
IN PROGRESS
- Continue to diversify the Board of Trustees, including POBS alumni
IN PROGRESS
- Assess employee compensation to make sure POBS is a viable career choice
IN PROGRESS

3 MAKE CHANGES TO ENSURE POBS IS WELCOMING, INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE

- Revise scholarship processes for equitable access by Black, Indigenous and people of color students
IN PROGRESS
- Increase public access programming for neighbors in The Discovery Center
FUNDED and **SCHEDULED**
- Commit to hiring local vendors who are Black, Indigenous and people of color
COMPLETED
- Update our curriculum and marketing materials to prioritize voices of Black, Indigenous and people of color and include indigenous people's history for the lands our students explore on expedition
IN PROGRESS

DEI in Action

We started 2020 with a new three-year strategic plan in place, and a long list of activities we wanted to accomplish in order to reach our year one goals for 1) program and evaluation, 2) staffing structure, 3) partnerships, 4) sustainable business model, and 5) Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) and organizational culture.

The pandemic disrupted the timeline for much of what we expected to do for the first four “Pathways,” but the national reckoning over racial injustice sparked by the murder of George Floyd in May intensified our focus on the DEI work we had planned for Pathway 5. In early summer we created a series of anti-racist Action Steps that we thought would help POBS — an organization led mostly by White people and serving mostly Black and Brown students in an industry that has been historically White — achieve our vision of racial equity. The first action on the list was critical: we hired the firm Cultured Enuf to help us *learn what we didn't yet realize we needed to do better*.

Staff, board, students, partners and neighbors participated in surveys and focus groups during the fall, the results of which informed a comprehensive culture audit and recommendations to help us set standards for equity. Now in 2021, we remain committed to and are making progress on our original Action Steps, and a team of staff and board is driving continued learning and change.

The students who participate in POBS programs are likely to witness racial injustice every day. Our organization was founded on powerful ethical concepts, like compassion and personal responsibility. We live up to those ideals best not only when we help our students overcome the trauma of systemic racism, but when we work with them to eliminate it. 🌱



Get Outside Gala

LIKE SO MANY ORGANIZATIONS, POBS WAS FORCED TO CANCEL ITS SPRING GALA ON SHORT NOTICE, ENDANGERING A CRITICAL SOURCE OF FUNDING DURING A VOLATILE YEAR. IN LIEU OF A TRADITIONAL EVENT, WE PIVOTED TO A “GET OUTSIDE GALA” AND ENCOURAGED OUR SUPPORTERS TO GO FOR A HIKE, PADDLE, OR CLIMB AND REPORT BACK. “ATTENDEES” GOT A LIST OF LOCAL HIKING RECOMMENDATIONS, TRAIL RECIPES, AND AN OUTDOOR PLAYLIST COMPOSED BY POBS STAFFERS. THANKS TO OUR GENEROUS INDIVIDUAL AND CORPORATE SUPPORTERS, WE WERE ABLE TO RAISE OVER \$133,000 IN SUPPORT OF POBS PROGRAMS AND GET EVERYONE SOME SUNSHINE AND FRESH AIR, TO BOOT!

POBS Board member Scott McAllister and family demonstrate proper social distancing on the trail for the Get Outside Gala.

Thank you to our Partners

CORPORATE/HIGHER EDUCATION

Vanguard
Drexel University
LeBow College of Business
The University of Pennsylvania,
Wharton School

VETERANS

Philadelphia Veterans Affairs
Medical Center

YOUTH-SERVING NON PROFITS

Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia
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Educators

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Wissahickon Charter School -
Awbury Middle School

Wissahickon Charter School -
Awbury Elementary
Wissahickon Charter School -
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PRIVATE

Delaware Valley Friends School
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PUBLIC SCHOOLS

School District of Philadelphia

There are many ways to support POBS:

For more information about how to support POBS, contact John Frisbee, *Director of Development*: jfrisbee@pobs.org or 215-372-8938.



CARES ACT TAX CREDIT

The CARES Act allows taxpayers who do not itemize their returns to receive a tax deduction of up to \$300 for their cash donations. For taxpayers that itemize returns, you may deduct gifts of cash to offset as much as 100% of your income. These provisions were renewed for 2021.



DONATE BY MAIL

You may mail a check payable to:
Philadelphia Outward Bound School
3401 Reservoir Drive | Philadelphia, PA 19121



RECURRING DONATION

When you donate online indicate the amount you would like to be automatically charged to your credit card every month. You may cancel your recurring donation at anytime.



EMPLOYER MATCHING

Thousands of companies in the U.S. will match an employee's donation to Philadelphia Outward Bound School. This is a great way to double your impact. Usually all you need is your donation receipt and our Employer Identification Number (EIN): 56-2472884



STOCK TRANSFER

Gift of stock may allow you to avoid capital gains and claim your tax deduction at the full market value, if you itemize your taxes. Stock gifts can be initiated by your broker.



DONOR-ADVISED FUND

If you have a donor-advised fund — either with a family foundation or a banking institution — you can go online or call to instruct your fund manager to send a grant to Philadelphia Outward Bound School, 3401 Reservoir Drive, Philadelphia PA 19121.



PLANNED GIVING

When planning for the future, consider leaving a legacy for future generations of young leaders by including POBS in your estate plans. For more information, contact John Frisbee, Development Director at jfrisbee@pobs.org.



TO LEARN MORE VISIT POBS.ORG/GIVE

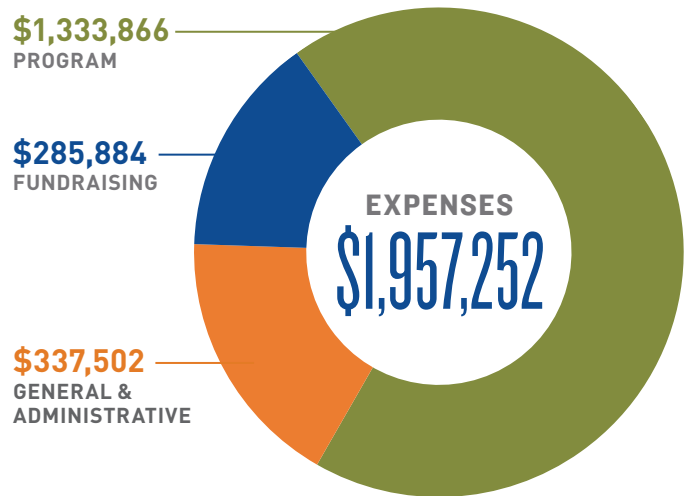
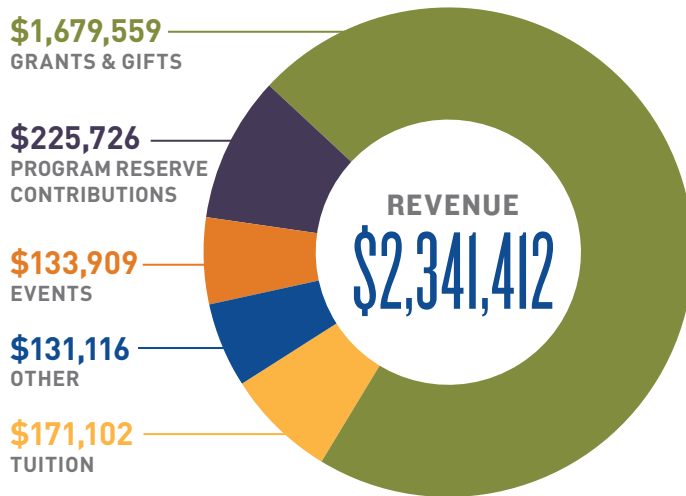
Thank you to John Neff



In 2020, the Philadelphia Outward Bound School was surprised and humbled to receive a charitable gift from the estate of John B. Neff, a visionary philanthropist and investor who passed away in June 2019. Along with his wife, Lillian, John supported a wide range of youth-serving and other nonprofits, particularly in the Philadelphia area. John and Lillian's son Stephen Neff had gone on course with Outward Bound in the late 1970s, and his decision to make a provision for POBS as part of his legacy giving is a strong affirmation of the lasting impact of Outward Bound programs. 🌟



2020 Finances



POBS BOARD OF TRUSTEES IN 2020

Thank you to departing board members Lars Beck, Patrick FitzGerald, Donald Smith, Mark Haslam, and Suzanne Biemiller. Mark reached his term limit in December after many years of service, including three as Board President, and Suzanne resigned in order to take a new job with the National Audubon Society, leading their Mid-Atlantic region, which includes The Discovery Center.

Filling their places for the year that started January 2021, Bob Haas was elected as Board Chair; Lee Nunery and Jim Bodine as Vice Chairs; Carrie Simons as Secretary; and Donald Mobley as Treasurer.

Also elected in November to terms for 2021-2023 are Dr. Crystal Edwards, Principal of nearby W.D. Kelley Elementary School; Kimberly Togman, an Executive Coach and Leadership Development professional; and Mike Van Pelt, Senior Director of Corporate Strategy at Comcast. 🌟

"Outward Bound is all about facing your challenges full speed ahead, and making the most of every situation. 2020 was a significant challenge for everyone, on every front. In the spirit of Outward Bound, it was remarkable to see how the organization adapted, and worked to discover new and creative ways to deliver for students. The leadership of Meg Wise during this period was awe-inspiring. With a steady and calming hand at the helm, she led the organization through one of the most challenging periods imaginable, ensuring that the impact of the Philadelphia Outward Bound School will be even more significant in the future than the past."

MARK W. HASLAM, former chair of the Board of Trustees



"My abiding admiration for what POBS helps its students achieve, which is life-changing, makes it an honor to serve as Chair. I am dedicated to supporting our talented POBS staff as we resume in-person programming in 2021, and to celebrating the 30th anniversary of POBS with innovation and ambition to enrich the power of its mission all the more."

BOB HAAS, current chair of the Board of Trustees

Thank you 2020 Donors!

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3401 Reservoir Drive | Philadelphia, PA 19121 | 215 232 9130 | pobs.org

Visit us at the Discovery Center

May-Oct: Wed-Sun, 10 am-4 pm | Nov-Apr: Thurs to Sat, 10 am-4 pm



@outwardboundPHL

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