

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

Back on the Trail



SUNFISH POND NATURAL AREA

Sunfish Pond, a 41 acre glacial pond, is one of the seven natural wonders of New Jersey. Due to its natural acidic composition only a few hardy species of fish such as pumpkinseed, sunfish and yellow perch can survive.

Preserve the Beauty of this area by:
1. No Smoking at B.P. Site
2. Only 2 Dogs Allowed
3. No Fires
4. No Swimming
5. No All-terrain Vehicles
6. No Tramping
7. No Trapping
8. No Trapping
9. No Trapping
10. No Trapping



PHILADELPHIA
OUTWARD BOUND SCHOOL



A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

I hope you and your family have kept safe during year two of the pandemic. At POBS, we've continued to focus on following our COVID safety protocols and were thrilled to restart in-person programming in late Spring 2021. After a year confined to online spaces for virtual programming, we knew our students and partners needed Outward Bound more than ever. And we needed them too!

At the start of the year, we planned conservatively to deliver 6,000 "student program days," just 50% of what we did in our busiest year to date, 2019. As it turned out, we exceeded our goal by 30%, providing over 8,000 days for nearly 6,000 students in 2021. Our instructors and program staff worked so hard to make this happen and I want to thank them here for their dedication. We were able to be nimble, in part because in 2020 we started evolving our instructor staffing model from per diem to salaried with benefits. When we identified this goal in our current strategic plan, our main objective was to support our DEI efforts – my dream is to hire lots of POBS alumni as instructors. The model has also made our organization stronger during pandemic uncertainty. It was the right way to go in 2020 and we'll be working hard in the months ahead to continue making progress toward equity.

Part of serving more students last year meant welcoming new partners to our rosters. Support from the Connelly Foundation, for example, helped underwrite new work with Parochial Schools in Philadelphia, and the School District of Philadelphia's Office of School Climate and Culture identified a way to complement our 9th Grade Academy High School work – we're now administering a progression model with several K-8 and Middle Schools near The Discovery Center to provide ongoing programs for 7th and 8th graders as well as for educators within the schools.

Like you, I know there is much ahead of us that we can't predict, and it can be unnerving to dwell on the unknowns. Instead, we're digging deep into what we know works – solid partnerships that center our students and position them to tap their inner strengths. We believe in the youth we serve, and we're grateful that you believe in the ability of our programs to transform their lives. Kurt Hahn was so right, *there is more in us than we know*. We are putting this to the test every day, for POBS and for our students. 🌟

Thanks for your support!



MEG WISE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

STRATEGIC PLAN *Update*

2021 was year two in POBS's three-year strategic plan. Although the pandemic slowed us down in some areas, we are making progress toward our long-term goals. Work was structured along several "pathways" and key accomplishments over the past year include:

1 PROGRAM AND EVALUATION

- Staff conducted a paddle reconnaissance in Pine Creek in central Pennsylvania to help identify additional, new course areas.
- Support from the 25th Century Foundation helped us build new elements at our Wigard Avenue facility and purchase new equipment, so we can operate all challenge course elements across both sites simultaneously and serve more students.
- The Outward Bound Professional Learning Lab (OBPLL) evaluation tool expanded to include a short course survey to help us identify and track student progress after Insight Days.

2 STAFF AND TALENT

- We increased per diem Instructor and Apprentice pay, aiming to offer a sustainable Philadelphia wage.
- We built on the salaried instructor positions that were added in 2020, adding one more Program Coordinator position for a total of 6, and 4 more Faculty Instructors for a total of 9 for 2022.

3 PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- With Audubon, we expanded hours at The Discovery Center; Discovery Day public programming restarted and grew to two POBS-led events per month at The Discovery Center, including canoeing, ziplining, and rock climbing.

- We Launched a new School District of Philadelphia partnership with "Learning Network 11," a cohort of K-8 schools in North Philadelphia; consistent programming is now underway with 7th graders and educators, and is expected to expand to 8th graders in 2022.

- We increased the scope of responsibility for a staff position, and hired Kadafi El-Kardah as Associate Director Community Engagement.

4 STRATEGIC BUSINESS MODEL

- We increased the scope of responsibility for a staff position, and hired Chris Richter as Director of Marketing Communications; and hired Emily Overstrom as part-time Social Media Coordinator.
- Support for the Fund for Impact campaign began to come in from major donors.
- We added TikTok to the POBS roster of social media platforms.
- We hosted two alumni events at The Discovery Center – an Alumni Hike and Cookout in September and Love Your Park Volunteer Day in November.

5 DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

- We completed an Organizational Culture Audit with local firm Cultured Enuf.
- Staff participated in a 6-month series of Cultural Relevancy workshops funded by the William Penn Foundation and led by Justice Outside; this opportunity included time to focus with Justice Outside on a specific project and we've chosen to draft an Equity Statement as a prelude to an Equity Plan. 



2021

by the Numbers



\$475,579

SCHOLARSHIP & FINANCIAL AID

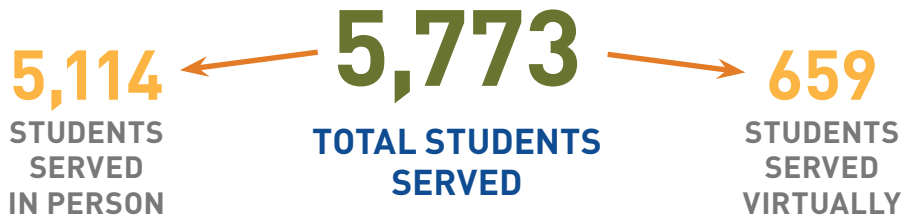
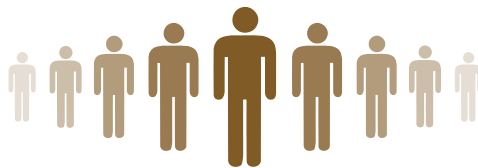
95

PROGRAM
PARTNERS



25

NEW
PROGRAM
PARTNERS



SPECIALIZED
12
VETERANS

**YOUTH
SUMMER PROGRAMS**

53
MERIT AWARD
SCHOLARSHIP

128
OPEN ENROLLMENT

490
NONPROFIT

PUBLIC
378
DISCOVERY DAYS

**OUTWARD BOUND
PROFESSIONAL**

123
CORPORATE

308
HIGHER EDUCATION

300
NONPROFIT

3
GRIEVING
TEENS

472
EDUCATORS

**YOUTH
SCHOOL-BASED
PROGRAMS**

1,362
SCHOOL DISTRICT
OF PHILADELPHIA

774
PRIVATE

1,370
CHARTER

NOAM'S STORY

“He Came Back a Different Kid”

“I want you to know how much this program has meant to me and my boys,” began an email from Penny, the parent of a 10th grade student who had been on a two-week expedition. “Noam actually came back a different kid. I think Jeremy [the course instructor] had a huge impact on him. He taught him how to be a leader and how to avoid getting distracted. Noam is more focused, and when upset he doesn’t drag everyone down, he controls it and works out a resolution. It’s lovely to watch and I think it all started with his summer and the things he learned.”



Noam’s instructor Jeremy (left) and Noam on the rock climbing portion of the expedition

In a chat with POBS staff, Penny elaborated on her son’s Outward Bound experience. “He still talks about his instructors a lot. I think Jeremy got Noam in a way that a lot of people don’t have the ability or patience to see. He saw in Noam a leadership quality, and told him, ‘you have this awesome ability, you can lift a crowd up, and also bring it down,’ and he explained the difference. He encouraged Noam to do better.”

“Noam was very capable on course,” said Jeremy. “He had the physical components down as far as hiking and canoeing, but when it came to others who might be struggling, he didn’t seem to care much about their position. As a result he required a bit more one-on-one coaching and

support to address his impact on the group. So Noam’s challenge was more about developing compassion and empathy. As the expedition wore on, he came to understand that, and it was clear he wanted to change, but it is not something you can just switch on. Those changes take time.”

Penny says, “Jeremy was honest with Noam, and paid attention. And because of that, Noam is now more positive, and does better at school. Since his instructor saw the goodness in him, Noam got to see the goodness in himself.”

Noam credits his transformation to Jeremy’s positivity. “Jeremy was always happy, even at the roughest of times,” said Noam. “He always had a good mentality and that’s what he taught me. At the end of the trip I wasn’t looking at things the same way anymore.”

“SINCE HIS INSTRUCTOR SAW THE GOODNESS IN HIM, NOAM GOT TO SEE THE GOODNESS IN HIMSELF.”

Jeremy was glad to learn that Noam benefitted from the course. “As instructors, we talk a lot about planting seeds, and we normally aren’t with the students long enough to see them take root. It is up to the student to nurture and grow it, and I’m happy to hear that Noam continued to foster that sense of growth.”

much chaos. It just gives a real moment of clarity where our kids can focus on who they are and who they can become.”

“These memories, the lessons I learned about being positive, they’ll stick with me the rest of my life,” said Noam. 🌟



Penny is happy as well. “From a parent’s perspective, this is a really special program. Having the instructors and staff being so kind and aware in a world where there is so



Noam (right) believes his Outward Bound course changed him for the better.

OUR PARTNERS

A. Randolph Career Academy *
 Alliance for Watershed Education
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 Audubon Mid-Atlantic
 Belmont Charter H.S.
 Bethune E.S. +
 Better Tomorrows
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 Blaine E.S. +
 Boys and Girls Club of Philadelphia #
 Boys Latin of Philadelphia H.S.
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 Camden Schools Executive Leadership
 Character Lab
 Community Academy of Philadelphia Charter School
 The Crefeld School
 Cristo Rey Philadelphia H.S.
 Crozer Chester Medical
 DeSales University
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 Drexel University
 Duckrey E.S. +
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 Ed Snider Youth Hickey Foundation
 Edison H.S. *
 FamCom #
 Frankford H.S. *
 Freire Charter School
 Friends Central
 George Washington Carver H.S. of Engineering and Science
 George Washington H.S. *
 Gideon E.S. +

ICF
 Independence Charter School
 Kenderton E.S. +
 Kensington CAPA H.S. *
 Kensington H.S. *
 Kensington HSA H.S. *
 Lankenau Environmental Science
 Magnet High School
 Laurel Hill Cemetery
 Leadership Philadelphia
 The LINC H.S. *
 Lingelbach E.S.
 Maritime Charter School
 Martin Luther King H.S. *
 Masterman H.S.
 Mastery Charter Schools
 Mitchell E.S.
 Neustar
 Northeast H.S. *
 Oak Street Health
 Office of Student Support Services
 One Day at a Time (ODAAT) #
 Overbrook Education Center
 Overbrook H.S. *
 Penn Treaty H.S. *
 PENNCAP at UPENN
 Penn Presbyterian Medical Center
 Perkiomen Valley School District
 Philly Counts (Gov.)
 Police Athletic League–North Penn #
 Pollock School
 PowerCorps PHL
 Project HOME #
 Roxborough H.S. *
 Russell Byers Charter School

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 School of the Future *
 SDP Office of Climate and Culture
 South Philadelphia H.S. *
 Springside Chestnut Hill
 SquashSmarts
 St. James School
 St. Mary's Interparochial School
 Steppingstone Scholars
 Strawberry Mansion H.S. *
 Summer Search Philadelphia
 Swenson Arts and Technical High School*
 TEAM Inc. #
 Temple University
 Tower Hill School
 The U School *
 The University of Pennsylvania
 Uplift Center for Grieving Children
 Vaux Big Picture H.S. *
 Vessel Health Care
 W.B. Saul H.S.
 W.D. Kelley E.S. +
 West Chester Area School District
 The Wharton School
 Williamson College of the Trades
 Wissahickon Charter School/Awbury
 Wissahickon Charter School/Fernhill
 YEAH Philly #

+ Learning Network 11

* 9th Grade Academy

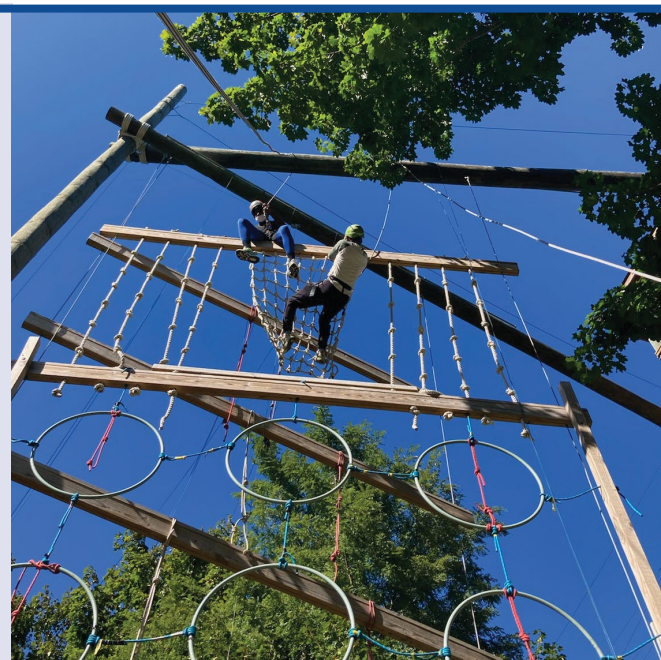
Community Organization

Our work with the Learning Network 11 is an extension of our partnership with the School District of Philadelphia, and allows POBS to serve students and staff during the school year and summer using the District goals as a guide and POBS' experiential learning model and tools for delivery.

Being able to collaborate with the LN11 team on program goals, program progressions and professional development days has been a work of love, bound by a commitment from both sides to seeing students grow and thrive. Together, we are reimagining what school partnerships can be.

– Kim Glodek, POBS Director of Partnerships

Students from Gideon Elementary getting out of their comfort zone on the POBS challenge course at The Discovery Center.



The Discovery Center

“DISCOVERY DAYS” CATCHING ON IN THE COMMUNITY

A top priority for POBS in 2021 has been to introduce our nearest neighbors to Outward Bound programming and to make The Discovery Center and its amenities accessible and welcoming.

This year, hundreds of community members came out to the Center for “Discovery Days” — events held on select Saturdays each month that include canoeing on the Reservoir in the summer, ziplining on the Challenge Course in the fall, and rock climbing in the Climbing Tower during the winter.

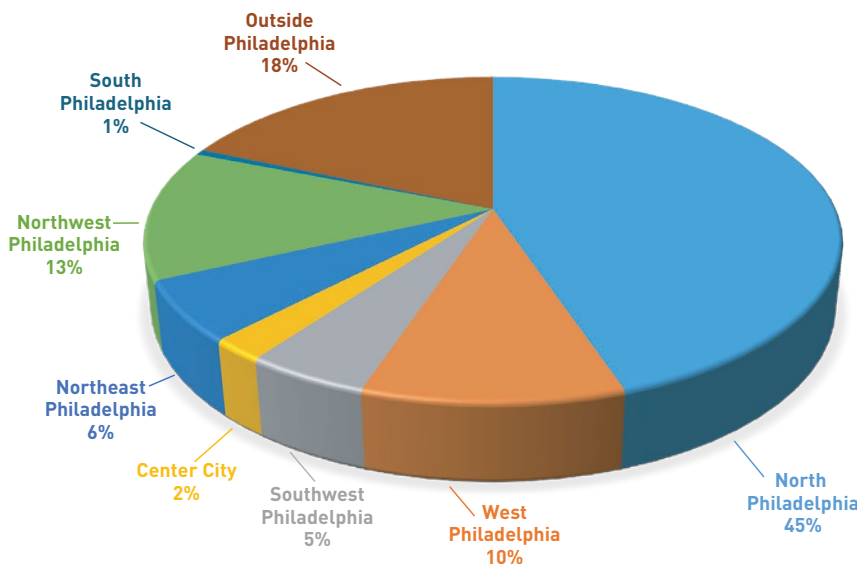
Many of these events have been held in conjunction with programming by Audubon Mid Atlantic, so participants could, for example, attend a bird walk in the morning and canoe or zipline in the afternoon.



Above and beyond Outward Bound and Audubon programming, 2021 also saw a rise in use of The Discovery Center by local community groups. Nonprofit organizations in neighboring zip codes 19121 and 19132 are able to utilize the event space at no cost, and groups like Brothers of Strawberry Mansion, ISA and Friends Foundation, and Families & Communities on the Move have made regular use of the Center.

Local community members also receive discounts on hosting private events at The Discovery Center, and the past year has seen baby showers, memorials and even a few weddings! 🌟

In summer, Discovery Days give community members a chance to canoe the Strawberry Mansion Reservoir.



Discovery Days CANOEING PARTICIPANTS, SUMMER 2021

We were thrilled to see that our neighbors in North Philadelphia comprised the largest percentage of Discovery Day visitors.

(Based on a zip code survey of participants).

111
RAPPELLERS

2,000
INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS

\$313,000
RAISED



BUILDING ADVENTURE EVENT SOARS TO NEW HEIGHTS IN 2021

Building Adventure is a high-adrenaline peer-to-peer fundraiser for the Philadelphia Outward Bound School in which participants earn the opportunity to rappel down a skyscraper in Center City - and this year's event was an unqualified success!

With the participation of 111 rappellers and some 2,000 individual donations, POBS was able to easily exceed our \$200,000 goal, and raised in excess of \$313,000. This is the strongest Building Adventure performance EVER.

The proceeds from the event, which is held every two years, will be used to fund outdoor education programs for more than 100 public and charter schools and youth-serving community organizations in Philadelphia and across the region.

"This year's experience was especially cathartic!" said POBS Executive Director Meg Wise, who rappelled for the second time in as many years. "To see this level of participation and support after all everyone has been through with Covid, we're just thrilled."

THIS YEAR, LOCAL EDUCATORS WENT OVER THE EDGE

In 2021 we introduced a new element to Building Adventure in which educators and administrators from partner schools were invited to submit their names for a random drawing. Two winners got the chance to rappel 29 stories in the event.

One of the lucky teachers was Kimberlee Holness of Blaine Elementary, who, after teaching class the day of the event, traveled to the rappel site after school.

"I was squirming in my seat all day, I could barely sit still," said Holness. "I'd never done anything like this before!"

Holness conquered her fears and did it with a smile, setting a great example for her students. "I couldn't wait to tell them about it," she said. 🌀



TOP PHOTO:

Building Adventure participant Lea Ann Molineaux prepares herself for the long descent.

BOTTOM PHOTO:

Blaine Elementary School teacher Kimberlee Holness was excited to rappel down 29 stories.

OPPOSITE PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

Tonnetta Graham celebrates after her descent; Ian Matthew Johnson enjoys the view from on high; Rubén Muñoz makes his way down; Student Grace Hannigan is all smiles at the start of her rappel. Hannigan was one of several teenagers who overcame their fears and went "over the edge" for Outward Bound.



**"I TOOK ONE
OF MY GREATEST
FEARS HEAD-ON."**

*– Building Adventure participant
David A. Niles*



THANK YOU TO OUR BUILDING ADVENTURE SPONSORS!

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IN THE NEWS!

The event was covered on various Philadelphia television networks, and was featured on stations in over 40 cities across the country, including such far-flung locations as Juneau, Alaska, Shreveport, Louisiana, and Albuquerque, New Mexico!

The Philadelphia Inquirer

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Look, No Hands!



Dennis Wallace with Team Rotary showboats as he hangs from his harness more than 200 feet in the air off the Brandywine Realty Trust's Commerce Square building. He was taking part in the Outward Bound School Building Adventure 2021, rappelling down the building at 2005 Market Street in Center City on Friday. The event helps raise funds for outdoor education events for schools in the region. Bottom left: (from left) Team Rotary members Ken Myers, Wallace, and Gregory Bradley make their way down the side of the building together. Bottom right: Spectators inside watch as two women rappel down the building.



Nick Hazell, POBS Apprentice Instructor

“I first heard about Outward Bound through a social worker,” said Nick Hazell, who hails from Trenton, New Jersey. “He saw I was interested in things most city kids weren’t into, like the outdoors. I didn’t have video games. I was 15 years old.”

Nick was encouraged to apply for a slot on the Philadelphia Outward Bound School’s New Jersey Youth Leadership program, a merit-based scholarship expedition that features 14 days of backpacking, rock climbing, and canoeing in and around the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area.

Hazell was selected for the course and felt taken care of right away. “They provided me with anything I needed: hiking shoes, sleeping bag, a headlamp. I don’t come from money so I needed



Outward Bound
“just clicked with me,” said Nick.

“Learning the Magic of it All”

NICK WAS SO ENTRANCED WITH HIS FIRST OUTWARD BOUND EXPERIENCE, HE BECAME AN INSTRUCTOR

everything. They even gave me socks. I had packed some deodorant and they said, ‘you won’t be needing that.’

“It felt great to be outside. After two or three days, I forgot I was from a poor home. We were eating good meals, I felt great. I hadn’t known this kind of outdoor experience existed.

“Outward Bound makes you realize you need to think about other people more.”

“One thing I noticed, everyone was so nice to the students. The adults I knew weren’t like this – why is everyone so nice? I thought it was weird. I learned that’s how you treat people: like you want to be treated. Outward Bound makes you realize you need to think about other people more.

“Ever since that first trip I knew I wanted to work for Outward Bound. I tried to explain it to my friends, but they didn’t get it. They’re still trapped in Trenton, where the only way out is the army or jail.”

By the time Nick was 20 he had gone on another scholarship expedition with POBS, and learned that they had an apprenticeship program to be an instructor. He was about to start his apprenticeship when Covid hit.

Flash forward to August of 2021, when Hazell was finally able to show up at POBS for a staff training expedition. “The training had all the amazing

elements of what I remembered from my trips, but with professional parts as well. We learned how to interact with students as instructors, how to deal with their food, their mood, and how to care. I didn’t realize when I was a student how much went into caring for me. Now I felt like I was learning the magic of it all.”

“Since training I have been working a lot of Insight days. Insight days are so fun. That’s when kids from schools in the area come here to The Discovery Center for the day and get a little bit out of their comfort zone.



“This is a selfie I took the day I got home from my first Outward Bound trip. I was so amazed with what I had done I just wanted to capture the moment. I was telling myself, it’s okay to be happy.”

“It’s so great for the city kids. I love it when they say ‘I didn’t know they had spots like this in Philly!’ That’s music to my ears. They are experiencing something they never thought of before. I have memories of my first encounter with Outward Bound, then I see me creating those memories for other kids. It’s a real déjà vu moment. I can see a kid looking at me thinking, ‘why is this adult so nice?’ And I get it.” 🌟

OUTWARD BOUND ALUMNI

2021's Hike & Cookout the start of a series of events for area alumni

In September, POBS hosted an Outward Bound alumni gathering at The Discovery Center. Over 40 attendees enjoyed an afternoon hike, a hearty barbecued meal, and story sharing.

Participants ranged from a gentleman who did Outward Bound in Kenya in 1972 to several recent POBS grads from 2019. A few of our guests said they had no idea there was an Outward Bound presence in Philadelphia when our event invitation showed up on their social media feeds.

All of the alumni who came out said they would like to attend an event like this again, so POBS is planning more opportunities for alumni to connect in 2022. 🌟

OB alumni, staff and board members set off from The Discovery Center to hike the nearby Boxers Trail.



NEW BOARD OF TRUSTEE MEMBERS ELECTED

Several Trustees rotated off the POBS Board at the end of the year. Jon Conant, Elinor Haider, Nancy Goldenberg, and Doff Meyer reached their term limits, and Mario Moussa and Rev. Anne Thatcher resigned. We are very grateful to them all for sharing their wisdom, making generous gifts, and believing so passionately in POBS's mission. As one of the POBS Founders, Nancy Goldenberg intends to remain involved, and Jon Conant was subsequently elected as a Trustee Emeritus.

At the December Board meeting, we were excited to elect new members for the 2022-2024 term: Keenan Corrigan, REI Co-op Path Ahead Ventures; Cory Dulaney, Community College of Philadelphia; Kate FitzGerald, McNulty Leadership Program at Wharton; Allison Martin Nguyen, Merck & Co., Inc.; Matthew Norcini, Springside Chestnut Hill Academy; and Claire Robertson-Kraft, ImpactED. 🌟



L to R: Mitch Young (Board), Scott McAllister (Board), Dan Hoffman (POBS), Kimberly Togman (Board), Jenn Raymond (POBS), Bob Haas (Board Chairman), Chris Richter (POBS).

POBS BOARD EXPEDITION

In October, POBS board members had the opportunity to go Outward Bound and see for themselves what our students experience on a multi-day canoe expedition in the Delaware Water Gap. Board member Kimberly Togman was one of those who attended, and had this to say about it:

The expedition was an amazing experience. As they would with any group going out, POBS outfitted us with canoes, tents, sleeping bags, water bottles, foul weather gear, basically everything we needed.

Like every POBS expedition crew, each day we divvied up responsibilities: leader, cook, medic, and a Leave No Trace coordinator. At the end of the day we circled up, shared appreciations, and learned something new — either about the land we were traveling through and its earliest inhabitants (the Lenape), the history of Outward Bound and its evolution to today, or some useful techniques to help us navigate the waters.

It was truly an honor to experience how POBS lives the Outward Bound mission to “inspire participants to stretch beyond their perceived abilities.” 🌟

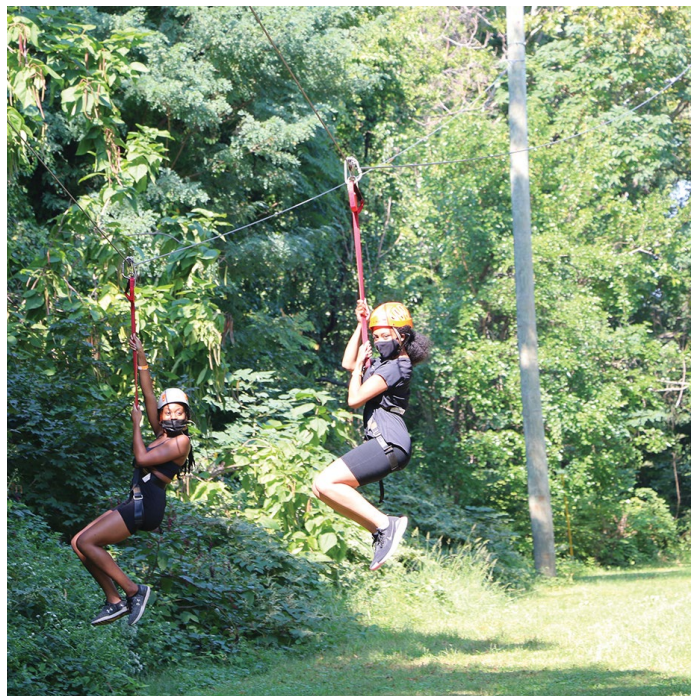
Safety Update: COVID PROTOCOLS EFFECTIVE

In March 2021, after a year of virtual programming, POBS staff were excited to get back outside and work with students face to face. For that to happen safely, and to ensure compliance with all CDC, state, local and Outward Bound USA safety protocols, POBS implemented built in COVID-safe practices for all day programs and expeditions, including masking, physical distancing measures and COVID testing for all instructors and expedition students.

Katie Nelson, POBS' Director of Program and Safety, reported that the new changes in the field had little-to-no negative impact on the effectiveness and success of our programs in 2021.

"Our amazing instructors played an integral role in designing and implementing our new COVID-19 mitigation protocols," said Nelson. "I am continually impressed by their eagerness to remain actively engaged in adjusting and improving our risk management systems despite the added workload that often comes with change."

She added, "Our commitment to students' safety and program excellence has remained unwavering, even during a global pandemic." 🌟



POBS GEAR GETS AN UPGRADE AND SOME NEW ADDITIONS



Thanks to funding from the 25th Century Foundation, in 2021 the Philadelphia Outward Bound School was able to expand, improve and enhance the challenge courses used in our Insight day programs, which have grown into an integral part of our partner schools' curriculum and culture because of their meaningful impact.

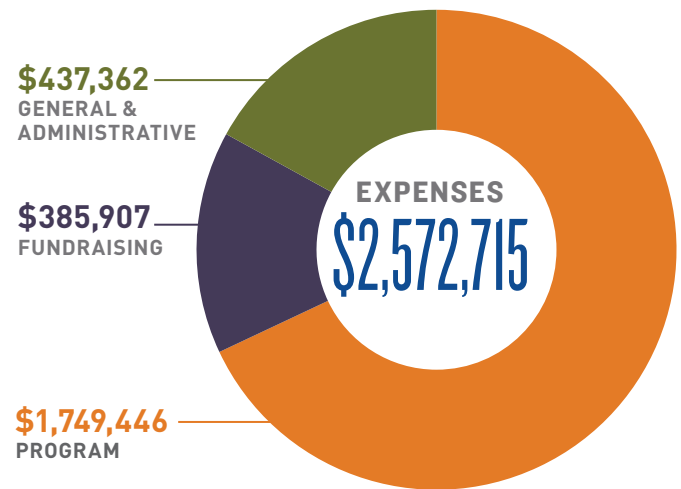
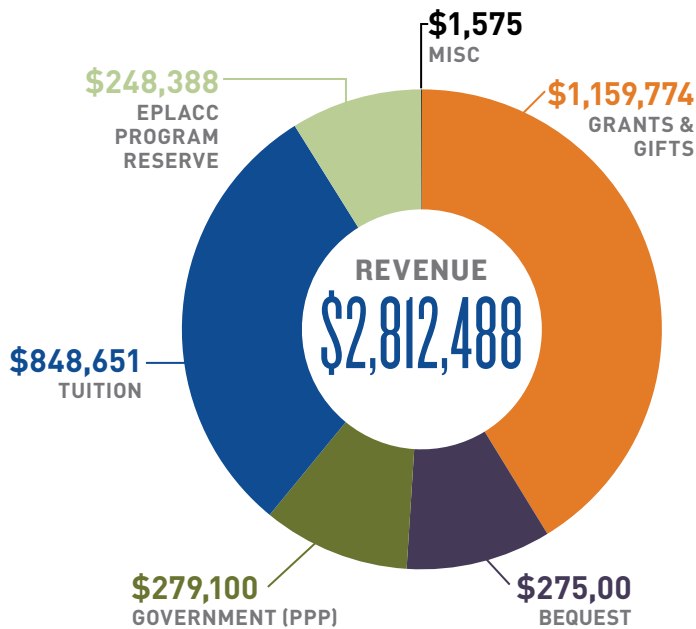
Some of the improvements made include:

- The purchase of new ropes, helmets and technical gear
- Sit and full body harnesses for our second goal pole and vertical play gym
- A storage shed was installed and customized by our staff to house all of The Discovery Center's gear and props

In addition, POBS acquired customized harnesses, helmets and technical gear that will be used specifically for our free community programs that serve our immediate neighbors in Strawberry Mansion. 🌟



2021 Financial Snapshot



Audited statements not available at time of printing. Please email info@pobs.org for a copy of our 2021 audit.

JAMIE MCLANE RECEIVES KURT HAHN AWARD

On Tuesday, October 26, the Philadelphia Outward Bound School and Outward Bound USA celebrated as POBS emeritus board member (and former OBUSA board chair) James “Jamie” McLane was presented the Kurt Hahn Award, the highest honor bestowed throughout the Outward Bound system in the US.

The annual award, named in honor of the founder of Outward Bound, is presented to those who exemplify outstanding service to the mission of Outward Bound. It has been awarded to individuals who have made a significant contribution through their life’s work on behalf of others, while demonstrating the values and ideals of Kurt Hahn –

an enterprising curiosity, an undefeatable spirit, tenacity in pursuit, sensible self-denial, and compassion.

POBS Executive Director Meg Wise spoke of the transformative effect Jamie has had, not only in Philadelphia, but across the entire OB system. “He is walking in Kurt Hahn’s footsteps, and my staff and I are walking in Jamie’s.”

Jamie has asked that his Kurt Hahn Award reside permanently at the Philadelphia Outward Bound School as a motivator for students and staff for years to come. Congratulations and thank you, Jamie! 🌟



Thank you 2021 Donors!

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\$10,000-\$24,999

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