



Fidalgo Nature School
Annual Report

2022-2023

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FIDALGO NATURE SCHOOL

ABOUT US

It all started in June of 2018 as a seed of belief in the importance of children having access to nature and connection to the land on which they live, and one question asked by one mom to a group of local parents, “want to start an outdoor preschool here in Anacortes?”

With the dream of eliminating financial barriers to those who wanted to attend, along with months of planning and tender care, those seeds formed roots, shoots, and stems that bloomed into a colorful garden of 3 to 6-year-old students at our licensed all-outdoor preschool located at Deception Pass State Park on the traditional, ancestral, and contemporary land of the Coast Salish Peoples.

With the light from our students and community, our nutrient-rich soil of grant funding, generous donations, dedicated staff and board members, and the ever-present rain in the Pacific Northwest: we are grateful to say we are thriving.

Still we know there is more work to do to ensure our school is an inclusive environment. **While more children than ever** across the country have access to outdoor preschools, they are still not accessible to everyone.

We want to help change that, and we are more dedicated with each passing year to keep pursuing our goal of providing quality nature-based education that is accessible to all children.



OUR MISSION

FNS is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization **providing quality, accessible, nature-based education for children in the local community, fostering their sense of belonging in the natural world and a lifelong connection with the outdoors.**



IMPACT

\$4,331.91

raised to support our mission and provide our staff a fair living wage

236

children served

11,474

hours spent outdoors

24

scholarships provided to families in need

1,184

meals provided to children in Wednesday classes (plus an additional 592 snacks!)

10

classes provided in partnership with Deception Pass Park Foundation and Friends of the Anacortes Community Forest Lands



SELF-ASSESSMENT

HOW WELL ARE WE SERVING OUR FAMILIES?

Detailed family surveys helped us assess our strengths and challenges this year. We are proud that our families and students have enjoyed their experiences at FNS. Here is some of what they've shared:

“You all have done a phenomenal job with the children this school year. Thank you for all your hard work!”

“Thank you for all that you did to make our child’s Nature School experience an amazing one!”

“Thank you for caring for my child so well!”

“Great program. Great staff. Great year.”

WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS TO ACCESS?

This year, the most common challenges reported were:

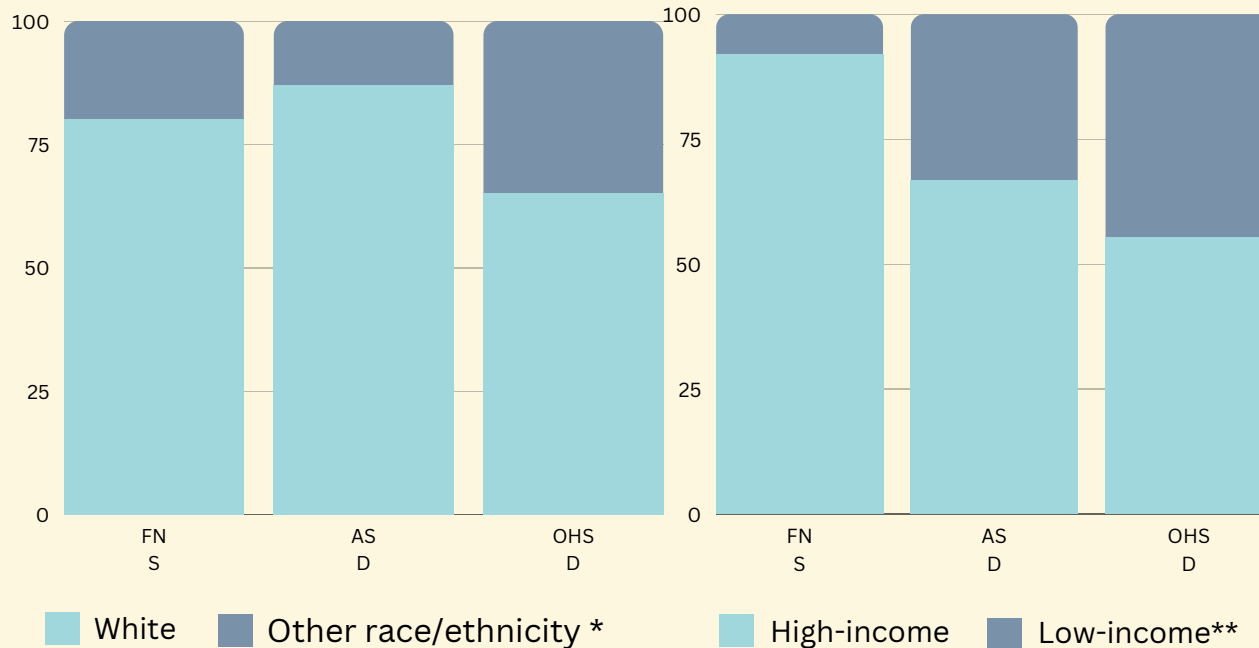
- getting ready in the morning (38.9%)
- lack of full day classes (16.7%)
- packing lunches and snacks (16.7%)
- cost of tuition (16.7%).



I'm

SELF-ASSESSMENT CONTINUED

ARE WE SERVING OUR WHOLE COMMUNITY?



Anacortes and Oak Harbor School District (ASD, OHSD) data from [washingtonstatereportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us](https://www.washingtonstatereportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us) (most recent data: 2022)
 *Other race/ethnicity includes two or more reported
 **Low-income ASD/OHSD = free/reduced lunch eligible; FNS = Headstart/ECEAP/Working Connections Childcare eligible

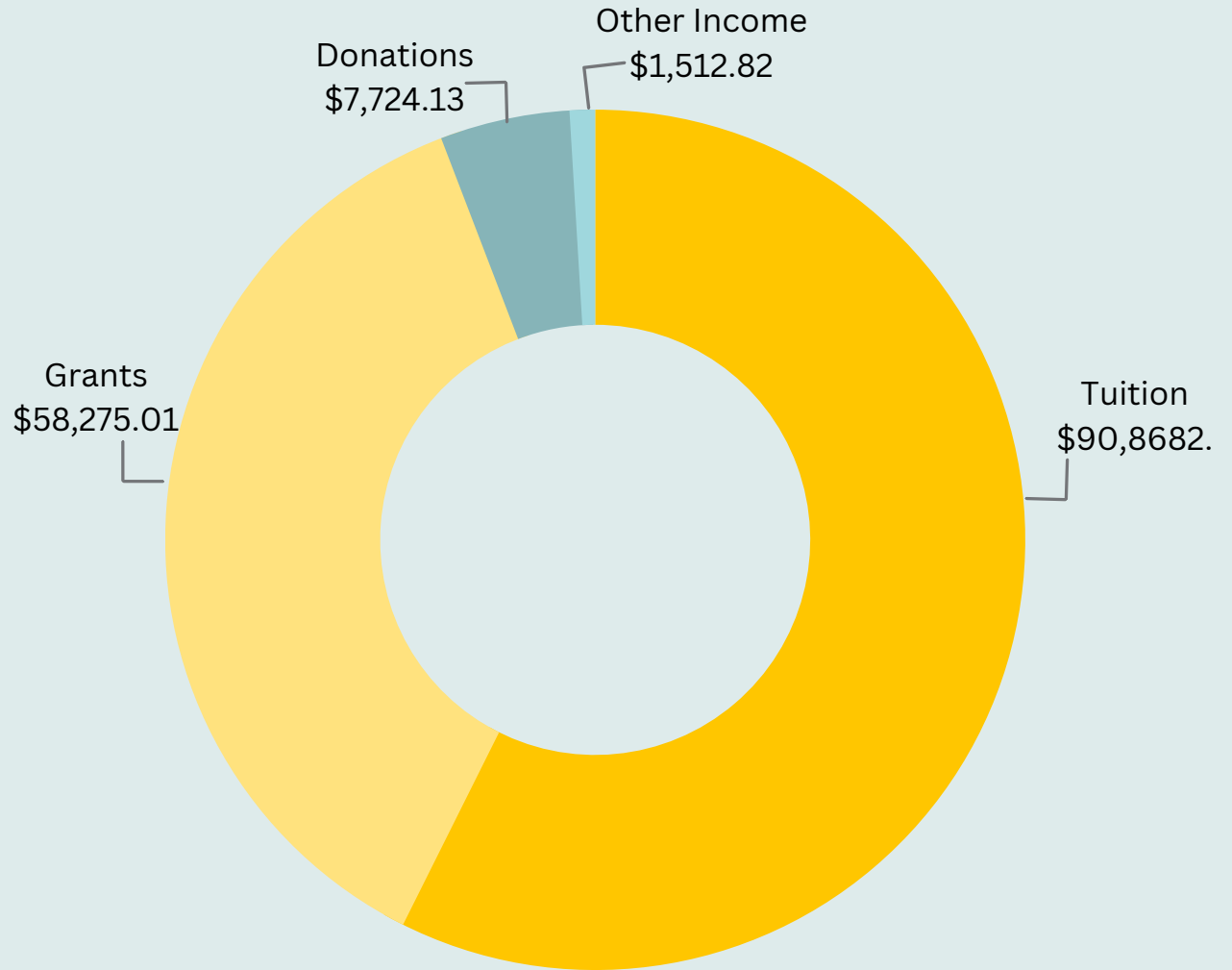
These data on barriers to access for our school families and how our school demographic compare to our local community are guiding our program direction, growth, and fundraising goals.

White, higher-income families are **overrepresented in outdoor preschools**, while Black, Latino, and lower income families still face decreased access.

We have more work to do to increase accessibility of our school and be inclusive to all.

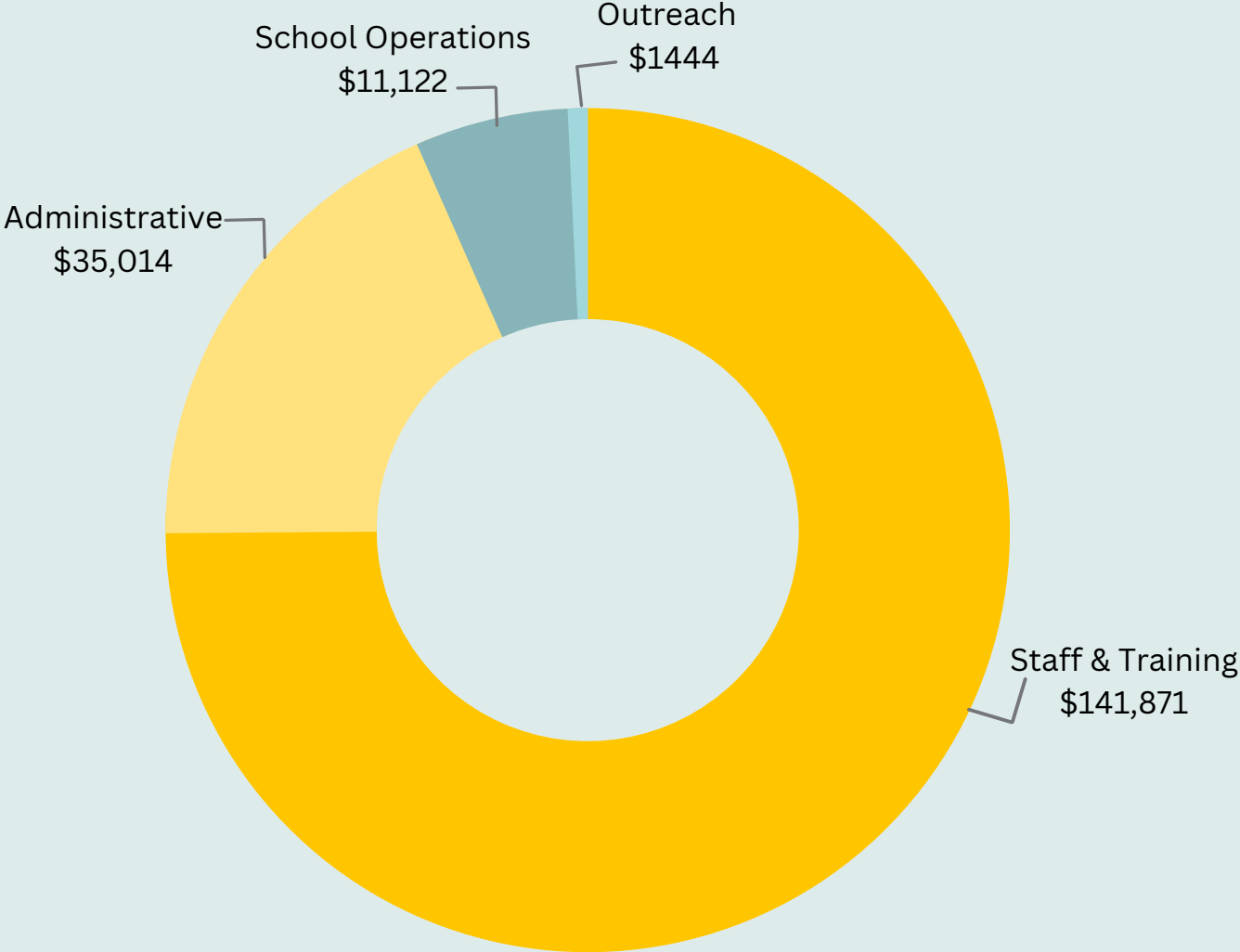
FINANCIALS

OPERATIONAL SUPPORT & REVENUE



FINANCIALS

EXPENSES



TOTAL: \$189,451.08

SINCE TIME IMMEMORIAL

We gratefully acknowledge that we operate on the traditional, ancestral, and contemporary lands of the Coast Salish Peoples who've loved, stewarded, and called this place home since time immemorial. We recognize that our ability to live, work, and enjoy this area can be traced to a legacy of their deep loss, and of settler colonialism from which we continue to benefit. We commit to using the **Since Time Immemorial curriculum** in our program, and to dismantling the practices and narratives that perpetuate the erasure of the history of the Coast Salish peoples, and the history of the land on which we reside. We affirm the tribal sovereignty of each nation, and through their example, we pledge to honor this land and all of its gifts.



COMMUNITY & COLLABORATION IN GRATITUDE

We are deeply grateful for our continuing collaboration with Samish Indian Nation Program Manager Denise Crowe, who has immeasurably enhanced our program with her knowledge, time, and generous sharing of the history, culture, and traditions of the Samish People with staff and students over the years.

FNS continues to be strengthened by our partnerships with Deception Pass State Park, the Deception Pass Park Foundation, and the Friends of the Anacortes Community Forest Lands, who assist us in our pursuit to fulfill Fidalgo Nature School's mission and vision with our jointly-run programs.

Generous donors have continued to humble us with their financial contributions, all of which help us support our teachers, families, and provide accessible nature-based education to the local community.

We greatly appreciate the support from everyone mentioned here. We couldn't do it without you! Thank you for everything.



COMMUNITY & COLLABORATION CONTINUED IN GRATITUDE

We extend our sincere appreciation to the following school districts, schools, and programs for their instrumental help in fulfilling our mission.

ECEAP

For helping us to identify families needing preschool and financial support

SAMISH LONGHOUSE

For helping us to identify families needing preschool and financial support.

ANACORTES SCHOOL DISTRICT

For sharing early learning resources and opportunities with local providers in order to best serve this community.

OAK HARBOR SCHOOL DISTRICT

For providing nutritious meals and snacks

OPERATIONS

STAFF

Molly Harrigan, *Executive Director*
Emma Rohleder, *Ed. Prog. Director/Lead Teacher*
Luanne Ferrell, *Assistant Teacher*
Lyssa Petitclerc, *Teaching Aide*
Christy Ascione, *Substitute Teacher*
Christina Tristan, *Substitute Teacher*
J.R. Sosky, *Substitute Teacher*
Angela Sheppard, *Substitute Teacher*

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Amelia Kolb, *Chair*
Casey Harwood, *Vice Chair*
Natalie Clark, *Treasurer*
Deena Fort, *Secretary*
Krystle Taniguchi
Katharine Isserlis
Carrie Gassett
Lee Henderson

ADVISORY BOARD

Anastasia Brencick
Jason Armstrong
Kat Y.K.



OPERATIONS – CONTINUED

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS & GRATITUDE

Our school would not be what it is without the dedication of our staff to the students, the school, and our mission. They have weathered all kinds of weather to teach outdoors and have lovingly watered the seeds of early childhood education that will flourish for a lifetime.

Board members volunteered over 1,000 hours of their personal time in support of our school. Their presence is important, and their efforts have made a difference.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

We are proud have maintained alignment with our mission and vision by providing affordable outdoor schooling, scholarships, meals, full-time classes on Wednesdays, and free outdoor classes alongside our partners at the Deception Pass Park Foundation and Friends of the Anacortes Community Forest lands. Together with staff and community, we've marked another successful year for our school.

We are also proud to have an 100% staff return rate, which improves morale, strengthens connections, and provides consistency for our returning students.



LOOKING AHEAD TENDING OUR GARDEN IN 2023-2024

SCHOLARSHIPS

Remain available to families in need through diligent budgeting created to fund this effort and includes \$34,740/yr for scholarships and \$1,000 to language translate school materials.

SIX-HOUR WEDNESDAY CLASSES

Previously funded by the No Child Left Inside Grant, these classes will continue to be provided through the budgeting and fundraising of Fidalgo Nature School. We are glad to offer meals, snacks, and a nap station to our Wednesday students again in the upcoming year.



GROWING HIGHER
2023-2024

We bend toward the light and keep growing
**until quality, nature-based education
is accessible to all children.**

