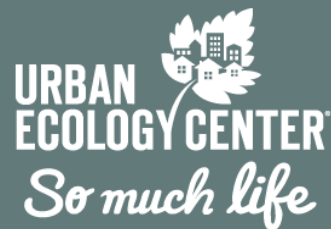




ANNUAL REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2024 - AUGUST 2025



MISSION

We connect people in cities to nature and each other.

VISION

To inspire generations to build environmental curiosity, understanding, and respect. We restore hope and heal our urban natural world, neighborhood by neighborhood.

BRANCHES

Riverside Park

1500 E. Park Pl.
Milwaukee, WI 53211
(414) 964-8505

Menomonee Valley

3700 W. Pierce St.
Milwaukee, WI 53215
(414) 431-2940

Washington Park

1859 N 40 St
Milwaukee, WI 53208
(414) 344-5460



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Washington Park
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Sr. Branch Director

Riverside Park
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You Are Planting Seeds of Wonder

Because of your support, the Urban Ecology Center's Preschool Environmental Education Project (PEEP) is giving Milwaukee's youngest learners something precious: a bond with the natural world right outside their door.



Christina Singer, a teacher at Parkside Elementary, sees the impact firsthand. She recalls one perfect fall moment when Urban Ecology Center (UEC) educator Matt Flower



found a beautiful tree at the peak of its fall colors. He had all the kids lie down under it and look up. They talked about the colors they saw, the breeze, and who might live in the tree. **"He makes nature so fun,"** Christina shared. "I never would have thought to do that on my own.

It's really cool to see the kids repeat what they learn on the trips, re-creating the activities on their own and with their parents. He's instilling a real love of nature at such a young age."

Matt Flower, our beloved early childhood environmental education leader and a 20-year UEC veteran, knows PEEP isn't just for the children – it's training their caregivers and teachers, too. "We're showing them new, fun ways of meeting enrichment goals," he explains.

This year, thanks to friends like you, we've expanded PEEP at our Washington Park branch, reaching hundreds of new children and caregivers. For Matt, this expansion is deeply personal. "There are more than 300 childcare centers within two miles of Washington Park, but there are not a lot of high-quality, age-appropriate enrichment opportunities available to them." Many of these childcare centers operate on tight budgets with zero government support, leaving them without resources for professional development or field trips. Your gifts change that.

The UEC's approach is simple but profound. We're introducing very young children to their world. Not the rainforest or the farm, but the world right outside their window. Making them comfortable at an early age allows them to be curious, and curiosity is the seed to empathy.

Because of you, children across Milwaukee are learning that the bird outside isn't just a bird—it's their bird, in their neighborhood. You're not just funding field trips. You're planting seeds of wonder, curiosity, and connection that will grow for a lifetime.

"Being able to bring the PEEP program to the Washington Park neighborhood is a dream come true."

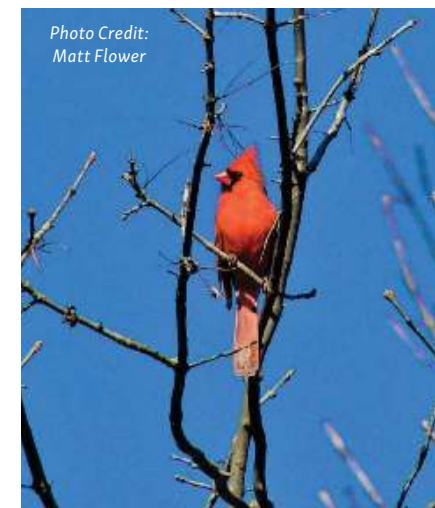
-Matt Flower

Find Your Own Moments of Wonder

At-Home Activity: Take a Wonder Walk

Set aside 30 minutes to walk through a natural space near you—a park, trail, garden, or tree-lined street. As you walk, let this question guide your attention:

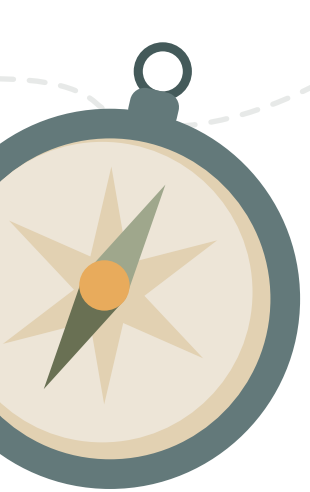
"What do I notice and wonder about the world I walk in?"



*Photo Credit:
Matt Flower*



*Manager of Early Childhood
Environmental Education, Matt Flower*



YOU MADE A DIFFERENCE!
Your support guided
kids, families, and adults
on their nature journey
this year.



70
Schools in NEEP
29,130
student visits

Through the Neighborhood Environmental Education Project (NEEP), schools partner with the UEC for an entire year. Students explore science concepts with hands-on outdoor activities during multiple visits (transportation included!)



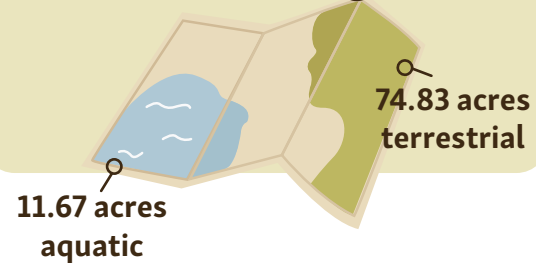
**New
Record**

“ Thank you for
teaching us new
skills that we can
use later in life. ”

32lbs
Native Seeds Planted

3,750
Trees, Bushes, and
Seedlings Planted

86.5
Acres Managed



**You were
here!**



672,087
Park Visitors



83,484
Building Visitors

146
*Wings
Surveys

*Wisconsin Night Guardians
for Songbirds (WIngs) is a
monitoring program to rescue
injured birds and document
bird collisions with buildings.

21
Wings
Volunteers



60
Public Programs

Public Programs include
educational workshops,
adventure days, and community
festivals. They provide nature-
based learning and connect
neighbors to each other.



Noche de Altares at our
Menomonee Valley Branch

45%
of Summer Camp registrants
received financial support
\$108,668
scholarships provided

41
Partners in PEEP
5,110
student visits

Through the Preschool
Environmental Education
Project (PEEP), organizations
serving children ages 0 - 5
participate in nature-based
enrichment activities.



**New
Record**

“ The students had
so much fun and
learned so much

Thank you for
making this such
a meaningful
experience for the
students. ”



474
Take It Outside Day
Participants

Take It Outside Days are free opportunities
to learn introductory outdoor skills with
lessons on campfire building, canoeing,
skiing, orienteering, biking, and fishing.



Imagine Campaign

Transforming a vision into life-changing experiences in nature



“ Being outside and learning is such a gift! All kids should get to experience this! ”

-Teacher from Washington Park NEEP field trip

Your support of the Urban Ecology Center’s Imagine Campaign has transformed Milwaukee into a place where nature and community thrive together.

Launched in 2022, the comprehensive Imagine Campaign brought to life a renovated Urban Ecology Center branch in Washington Park, created a new event space in Riverside Park, and invested in the long-term sustainability of the UEC through a growing endowment.



Washington Park: A Bridge to Nature in the Heart of Milwaukee



On Feb 1, 2026, we celebrated one year in the new Washington Park branch building, and what a year it’s been! From Feb 1 to Dec 31, over 25,000 visitors and participants enjoyed the new space! Here are a few highlights:

- **9,277 student visits** through the Neighborhood Environmental Education Project (NEEP).
- **2,251 children ages 6 months - 5 years** participated in the Preschool Environmental Education Project (PEEP).
- **10,462 community visits**
Family favorites include: free fishing pole lending, paddle boats, and grab-and-go backpacks
- **2,106 meals served** through our free summer meals program in partnership with CFI.
- **3 new acres of native plants** were planted.

A highlight for many visitors are the pollinator habitats attracting dozens of species of native butterflies, bees, wasps and flies.



Just east of Prairie Springs on Park

a once-neglected eyesore...



transformed into a beautiful community green space.

+ a new entrance to the beloved Oak Circle in Riverside Park.

Riverland Development: Reimagining the Riverside Park Campus

Prairie Springs on Park opened in March of 2025 and has already become a vibrant hub for celebration and connection. This eco-friendly event hall has hosted weddings, corporate gatherings, and fundraisers—bringing people together while generating revenue to support the mission of the Urban Ecology Center.

The final phase of this project will feature a facilities and land management building to replace temporary shipping containers. This streamlined area will provide the teams who care for our green spaces and buildings with a much-needed work area to complete all the behind-the-scenes tasks in a safe and appropriate setting.



The Urban Ecology Center Endowment Sustaining the Urban Ecology Center for Future Generations

The UEC endowment is your vote of confidence that nature belongs in cities. That every child deserves to feel soil under their feet and sun on their face, and that Milwaukee can be a place where people and wildlife flourish together.

Through the Imagine Campaign, our generous community has donated \$4.3 million towards our \$10 million goal. If the last few years have taught us anything, it’s that challenges will come. A strong endowment ensures the Urban Ecology Center will be here through every season and every storm. Thank you for being a part of this future.



Thank you to everyone who is imagining more with us.

A full list of Imagine Campaign donors can be found on our website.



Imagine Campaign Endowment

Goal \$10M.

\$4.3M. Raised



We are deeply grateful to the 14 new people who have joined the UEC’s Legacy Society during the campaign.



THANK YOU, VOLUNTEERS!

The Urban Ecology Center thanks you, our amazing volunteers, for your work in the 2024-25 fiscal year. Thank you to the following volunteers who contributed 10 or more hours of service to the Urban Ecology Center between September 1, 2024 and August 31, 2025. We are grateful for your gift of time and commitment to our mission.

Caitlin Acosta	Katie Fisher	Erin Kavanagh	Timothy Nuenninghoff	Kevin Stalheim
Liz Adkins	David Flowers	Anna Keebler	Rachel Nuetzel	Michele Stanton
Louis Agnew	Johnswel Fontánez	Patrick Kim	Drake Ostrowski	Paul Steinhafel
Mohamed Ahmed	Lauren Foust	Joe Kirschbaum	Hunter Ott	Tim Steinhauer
Chris Allbrooks	Tabitha Frazier	Emma Knickelbine	Alexandria Otto	Ahryanna Swanson
Bruce Anthony	Olivia Frederickson	Judy Knight	Danielle Pahlisch	Nathan Tennies
A'netra Armstrong-Powell	David Froiland	McKenzie Kruchten	Justin Parker	Olivia Tetzlaff
Karin Awve	Robin Fuchs	Paul Kullerstrand	Zach Parry	Robert Thielke
Erin Baumgartner	Jessica Fuller	Amy LaMacchia	Eric Peterson	Catherine Thisted
Kathy Beaver	Michael Garvey	Sandra Lamers Hernandez	Beth Phillips	Amberly Thomas
Jeff Bentoff	Aidan George	Josh Levy	John Plummer	Tiffany Thomas
Anna Bernhardt	Dave Glenn	Precious Lewis	Jose Podilla	Sean Thompson
Bert Bleke	Jovan Goldsmith	Debra Liebhauser	Jane Porath	Alex Townley
Andrew Bochman	Zavier Gonzalez	Elaine Lindstrom	Dominic Poulter	Mikalanne Turner
Donnie Boe	Kit Gould	Yontel Love	Montoria Powell	Sharon Untz
Kristiana Brennan	Emily Grandy	Kent Lovern	Virginia Pratt	Erica Veto
Monica Broeckling	Dennis Grzezinski	Lucia Loza Galezewski	Angela Price	Patti Vollmer
Jodi Brzezinski	Mary Gute Witte	Kaitlyn Lund	Jennine Pufahl	Chris von Briesen
Ray Buckner	Devin Guthrie	Pam Lyons	Todd Rakowski	Sara Vondrachek
Bob Bukowski	Donovan Guthrie	Jessica Mailhot	Noah Reinkober	Benjamin Watzka
Markell Carradine	Samantha Gutschow	Mary Beth Malm	Kyla Reyes	Susan Weistrop
Dennis Casper	Charles Hagner	Lindsay Marx	Lenore Rinder	David Wenstrup
Maria Castillo	Marilyn Hamilton	Cody Mazell	Caryl Roberts	August West Migas
Nevaeh Childress	Edward Hammond	Ryan McCarthy	Betty Salamun	Finwe Wiedenhoef
Andrew Chittick	Heavin-Lei Hampton	Antoine McDuffie	Ganesh Salunke	Jonathan Wiemer
John Clancy	Anthony Haning	Michael Medcalf	Lucy Schick	Mark Willmering
John Contreras	Emma Heinrich	Lillian Miller	Jim Schleif	Sara Wilson
Catrina Crane	Justin Heitman	Rebecca Mitich	Michael Schultz Jr	Renate Witt
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Elizabeth Dalton	Suzy Holstein	Bill Morley	Maxwell Sitterly	Diane Yurasovich
Avery Danlin	Connor Hoose	Amber Mose	Elsie Smith	Jean Zachariasen
Courtney Deering	Anajha Johnson	Derek Mosley	Guy Smith	Michael Zaleski
Dale Durrent	Ashley Johnson	Lily Mounsey	Nia Smith	Gisela Zelenka-Drysdale
Marissa Endter	Gwen Johnson	Madison Mount	David Snell	
Mateo Espinosa	Sydney Johnson	Daniel Narvey	Miran Songara	
Ashley Fait	Claire Jones	Bill Nelson	Jeff Spence	
Kyle Farmer	Shane Judd	Erik Nelson	Tracy Staedter	
Morgan Fischer	Beth Kaplan	Peggy Noonan	Cathy Stagmer	



VOLUNTEER SERVICE GROUPS

Allspring Global Investments	Enerpac	Logan's Eagle Scout Project	SoftwareOne
Baird	Enterprise Rent-A-Car	ManpowerGroup	St. Anthony High School
Brazen Standard Hospitality	Federal Probation Eastern WI	Marquette University	Stone Creek Coffee
Cargill Cocoa	Goodwill Community Service	Men Mending Men	Trane
Carmen Northwest	Helping Others Together	Michael Best	Truity Partners
Middle & High School	Club of Milwaukee	Milwaukee Brewers Baseball Club	U.S. District Court
Carroll University Pios Volunteer	HIPPY	Milwaukee Bucks	University School of Milwaukee
Casa Romero Renewal Center:	HNTB	Ogletree Deakins	Upper School Service
Urban Plunge Immersion	Huntington Bank	PEAK Initiative	UWM Conservation Club
Common Mutual Alliance	Hydrite Chemical	Pierce Engineers	Valley Community Presbyterian
(CMA) Milwaukee	JLA Architects	Pius XI Catholic High School	Church Youth Group
Cream City Mortgage	Johnson Controls	Potawatomi Ventures	VJS Construction Services
Cristo Rey Jesuit High School	JP Cullen Young Leaders	Public Allies Wisconsin	Working On Refining our
Easterseals Southeast Wisconsin	Kids Impact Community	PwC Green Team	Community (WORC)
- Wauwatosa Adult Day Center	Kohl's Marketing	Regal Rexnord Green Team	Yale Alumni Association
Eaton	KPMG	Reyes Coca ColaRishi	YMCA Camp Minikani LT2s
Elliot Eagle Scout Group	LIFT Field Hockey	Tea & Botanicals	Zurn Elkay Water Solutions

Wonder Walk Inspiration: Belonging

As you walk in nature, ask "How do the different living things interact with each other here?"

Volunteers are at the core of the UEC's operations. Their contributions of time and expertise are vital to our mission!

9,395
total number of
volunteer hours

2,438
total volunteers

Value of
\$299,324

*Based on a \$31.86 per hour value determined by Independent Sector for the State of Wisconsin.





Corporate and Foundation Giving

Gifts given September 2024-August 2025 by a corporation, foundation or government entity. We are grateful for these philanthropic partnerships.

Every effort was made to ensure that this list of donors is accurate. If you made a gift between September 2024 and August 2025 and your name is not listed or is listed incorrectly, please contact Aria Duax in the UEC's Development Office at 414-626-8569.

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We Energies Foundation
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Wiemer Law Group, LLC
Wisconsin Athletic Club
Wisconsin Business Travel Association
Wisconsin Coastal Management Program
Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, Inc.
YMCA of Metropolitan Milwaukee
YourCause, LLC
Ziegler Family Foundation, Inc.
Zurn Elkay Water Solutions

FISCAL YEAR 2024 - 25 FINANCIAL REPORT

What an exciting year of growth at the Urban Ecology Center! In fiscal year 2024-25, we opened the renovated and expanded Washington Park building and launched the Prairie Springs on Park event hall. Our financial position benefited from the start-up revenues of Prairie Springs on Park event rentals and the expansion of summer camps in Washington Park.

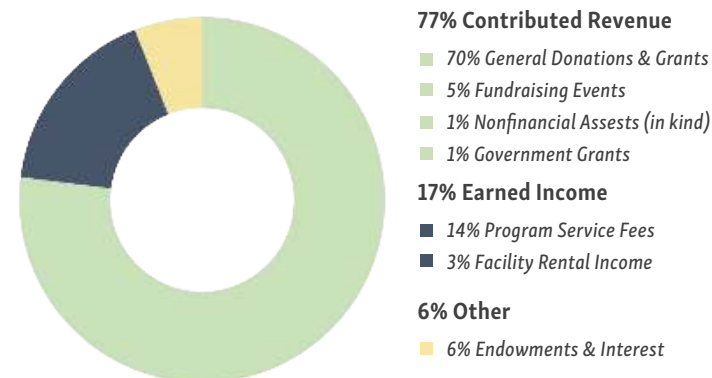
However, like many nonprofits, the Urban Ecology Center was impacted by the changes in the federal funding landscape, particularly related to our work in environmental justice, climate change, and serving marginalized communities. In response to these changes, staff implemented a mid-year contingency plan that brought expenses under budget to mitigate the impact of these shortfalls and the UEC was able to end the year with only a slight deficit.

The UEC remains committed to ensuring long-term fiscal sustainability, focusing on both immediate financial needs and future strategic planning. The 990 and audit present the combined balance of Operating and Capital Campaign funds in the 2024-25 fiscal year. To date, the UEC has carried no long-term operating debt - in part by only entering into agreements supported by existing pledges and donor contributions. Any reported long-term debt is related to the Imagine Campaign construction projects and will be paid down in full as pledge payments are received. The UEC Board of Directors and Finance Committee maintain an intense focus on the adequacy of cash and oversight for all material financial aspects of the organization. The UEC has a positive ratio of assets to liabilities and a broad donor base, ensuring a solid financial foundation for future growth. Its annual financial statements are audited by the Milwaukee-based accountants Wegner CPAs.

Please visit our website at www.urbanecologycenter.org for additional information, including the IRS Form 990 and audit report.

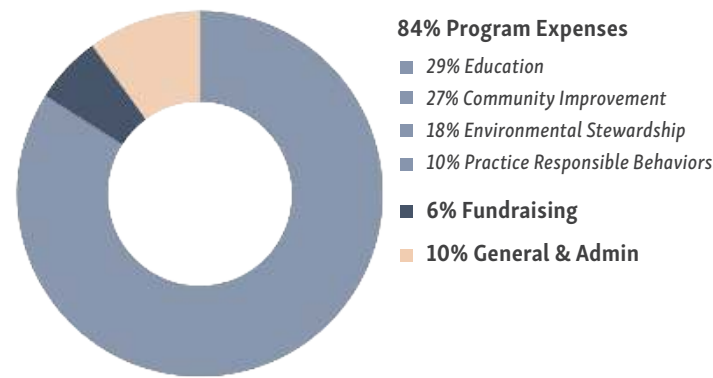
FY 2024-25 OPERATING REVENUES

\$ 5,634,461



FY 2024-25 OPERATING EXPENSES

\$ 5,787,149



The charts above represent operational revenue and expenses and are derived from Urban Ecology Center cash-basis financial statements. This statement is not required by Generally Accepted Accounting Principles and is not part of the audited financial statements.



Wonder Walk Inspiration: The Seasons

Take a family Wonder Walk and ask "What are the plants and animals doing today? How might that change next season?"



HERE'S TO YOU

The Urban Ecology Center thanks you, our generous donors, for your support in the 2024-25 fiscal year.

As an organization that started small, the UEC understands that something small can make a big impact. As we’ve grown over the years, we’ve depended on donations - of all sizes – to support our mission of connecting people in cities to nature and each other. For that reason, our Annual Report lists supporters alphabetically rather than by giving level. We are pleased to acknowledge the following donors for their generosity and support. Below are donations of \$250 or more. A full list of donors can be found on our website.

Every effort was made to ensure that this list of donors is accurate. If you made a gift between September 2024 and August 2025 and your gift is not listed or is listed incorrectly, please contact Aria Duax in the UEC's Development Office at 414-626-8569.

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Paul Anders
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Mike Anglea
Philip Ankel and Alberta Ashbrook-Ankel
Bruce and Julie Anthony
Laura and Mike Arnow
Mary and Tom Avery
Elizabeth and Kurt Baehman
Timothy Bailen and Diana Luepke
Anne and Jeff Ballentine
Paul E. Barkhaus, M.D.
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Patricia Calvy
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When you include the Urban Ecology Center as a beneficiary in your will, living trust, insurance, or retirement plan, you help ensure that the UEC’s mission and your values continue into the future. We are pleased to recognize the following Legacy Society members who have made a lifetime commitment to the Urban Ecology Center.

- Anonymous (3)
Nancy Aten and Dan Collins
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We are honored and grateful to have received legacy gifts from the following individuals this year. Their generosity will have a lasting impact on our community and the natural world.

Ann G. Pier
Janine Arseneau
Roslynnne Ost
Ron Gutschow



Interested in becoming a Legacy Society Member?
Please contact Gillian Spence at gspence@urbanecologycenter.org or 414-626-8554 for more details.



Or scan the QR code to learn more

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Gifts given September 2024-August 2025 in memory of an individual.

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As you walk through a familiar place ask “What will help shape the future of this place? What might that future look like?”

Every effort was made to ensure that this list of donors is accurate. If you made a gift between September 2024 and August 2025 and your gift is not listed or is listed incorrectly, please contact Aria Duax in the UEC’s Development Office at 414-626-8569.





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February 21, 2026
Menomonee Valley

Cure your winter blues with a hike on the Hank Aaron State Trail, complete with over 500 candles and fun activities along the way!
5:30 - 8pm | Free Event

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April 20-25, 2026
All three UEC branches

Join us for Milwaukee Riverkeeper's annual spring clean up on April 25th to finish off Earth Week!

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June 26, 2026
Riverside Park

Think sunny thoughts! Save the date for our annual gala - a unique event to celebrate and raise funds for the Urban Ecology Center!



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(414) 344-5460

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3700 W. Pierce Street
Milwaukee, WI 53215
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