



WILDERNESS LEADERSHIP & LEARNING  
FY2024 ANNUAL REPORT



*ADVENTURES IN LEARNING — LESSONS FOR LIFE*



## WILL'S MISSION



**Wilderness Leadership & Learning's Mission** is to provide diverse growth experiences and challenging learning opportunities to inspire and assist youth to make good decisions, become effective leaders, and achieve their goals.

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WILL is honored to have been in the Catalogue for Philanthropy since 2012, as one of the best community-based nonprofits in the Greater DC region.



Some of the words 2024 WILL graduates used to describe their WILL experience:  
Awesome, Empowering, Eye-Opening,  
Fun, Growth, Inspirational, Life-Changing  
Valuable, Wonderful



## MESSAGE FROM WILL'S PRESIDENT

Dear Members of the WILL Family and Friends:

A word to describe WILL's FY24 is *CELEBRATORY*. We celebrated 20 years of WILL unleashing the potential of and positively impacting underserved DC area youth.

The youth who graduated in 2023-2024 WILL Class were engaged in 344 hours of quality experiential learning, youth leadership and life skills development programs. 100% of these youth said that they benefited from being in WILL.

Some highlights of WILL's 20th year include:

- Biggest WILL graduating class
- New revenue high
- Launched new website
- Unveiled new logo
- Hired Julie Crookham as Program Coordinator

At The WILL Power Party, our signature fundraising celebration, we honored WILL Partners of the Year – Grif & Alix Johnson for their exceptional commitment to and support of WILL.

THANK YOU to everyone who has been involved in the success of WILL's first 20 years - the WILL youth and their families for believing in us and the positive impact WILL has on the youth with whom we work, the schools with whom we partner, our program partners who assist us to provide amazing learning experiences for WILL youth, our volunteers, current and past Board members, and the donors and funders who make the work we do possible.

WILLiciously yours,

*Steve*

*ADVENTURES IN LIVING - LESSONS FOR LIFE*

## WILL'S PILLARS

Wilderness Leadership & Learning is a transformative holistic 12-month, experiential learning, youth leadership, and life-skills development program.

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“Everything and every moment in WILL was an adventure that created many new experiences for me.” - Marcos

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**OUR VALUE is found in our FOUR PILLARS:**

### **Leadership & Self-Empowerment**

Individual leadership, self-esteem, and confidence growth assist WILL youth increase their appreciation that each has the power and the ability to determine their life trajectory, to self-advocate, and to make decisions that lead to self-determination and self-sufficiency.

### **Critical Life Skills Development**

WILL develops critical life skills, which are under-emphasized or not taught in school, such as financial literacy; accountability for behavior; communication skills; the importance of saying “please” and “thank you;” and how to make healthy nutrition decisions, set SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-Bound) goals, and create action plans to achieve them.

### **Environmental Awareness & Stewardship**

Youth become more aware of the world around them and to be better stewards of the environment.

### **Cultural Awareness & Appreciation**

WILL youth learn to be receptive to, to appreciate and to respect diversity and differences in others (e.g., race, gender, religion, country of origin, sexual orientation, and beliefs).

“The purpose of the financial literacy sessions is to teach us to live with financial dignity - to spend money wisely and to take care of needs first and wants after.” - Taylor

## WILL PROGRAMS

WILL believes that every youth has the potential to succeed and to create a full and meaningful life.

## WILL'S CORE PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

- Ropes Course
- Biodiversity & Environmental Literacy on the Anacostia & Potomac Rivers
- Holiday Party
- Nutrition & Cultural Awareness/Appreciation
- Biases, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Social Justice
- Spring Break at a Chesapeake Bay Foundation Environmental Education Center
- Financial Literacy & SMART Goals Setting & Discussion
- CPR & 1st Aid
- College Admissions Forum/Expedition Orientation
- Environmental Service
- Scavenger Hunt on The Mall
- Mount Vernon
- Resume Writing & Interview Skills
- Canoeing on the Anacostia River
- Service at Clagett Farm
- 7-Day Wilderness Expedition
- Graduation

## WILL'S ALUMNI SERVICES

- Letters of Recommendation
- Alumni Holiday Lunch
- Summer Picnic

“Though WILL, I’ve learned to be mindful with litter disposal and to follow resource-conserving practices at home.” - Daymon



## YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

WILL's **positive youth development programs** are critical to the ongoing growth process by helping WILL youth (1) meet their basic personal and social-emotional needs to be safe, feel cared for, and have value, and (2) to build upon skills and competencies that allow them to be agents of change, and to be effective in their daily lives.



Service learning and giving back to one's community are important aspects of WILL. WILL Youth learn that leaders give to others and to their communities. Service at Claggett Farm. 1/3 of the produce grown at the Farm is donated to the Capital Area Food Bank or to other food distribution centers.

WILL Youth learn about art in the National Gallery of Art during the Scavenger Hunt on the National Mall



"One word to describe the my WILL Scavenger Hunt on The Mall experience is *beautiful*. I really loved the art gallery because of the many pieces that connected to me. I learned that I love art and how my thinking about each piece allows me to reflect on the past." - Herimon

## EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

WILL's **experiential learning activities** enlarge the life experiences, enhance decision making and life skills, build character, and develop the leadership potential of WILL youth.



Stretching comforts zones & lending a hand during the Ropes Course



A new experience  
Driving the *CBF* boat during WILL's Rivers Days



Canoeing on the Anacostia River



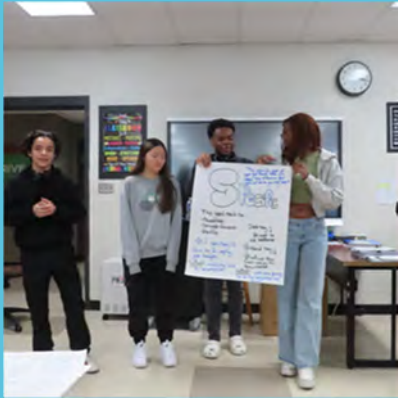
Caving during the Expedition

"The purpose of the nutrition session is to educate us on what is good for us and what is in our foods. I learned to always look at the labels." - Alexis



## LIFESKILLS DEVELOPMENT

WILL's life skills development programs develop youth abilities for adaptive and positive behavior, that enable youth to deal effectively with the life's challenges.



Teaching each other about SMART Goals



WILL Youth learn CPR & First-Aid



Investigating how much sugar is in certain products  
During WILL Nutrition Days



WILL Youth creating their resumes

"The purpose of WILL doing CPR/First Aid training is to know what to do in emergencies and help people. Today was inspiring and now I want to be an EMT/paramedic." - Norah

## WILL'S 2024 GRADUATION - WILL'S 19TH

September 14, 2024, WILL graduated its biggest class to date. Youth who successfully completed the year gathered with their families at the Thurgood Marshall Center to celebrate and honor their accomplishments and their year of new experiences and experiential learning. Marcos received the Jack Bauer Environmental Stewardship Award given in honor of Jack Bauer, a WILL Board Member and friend, who passed away in December 2012.



"WILL teaches us about nutrition to make us more aware of what we put into our bodies. I learned about the 'My Plate' and know I need to eat more veggies and fruit." - Moses

## 2023-2024 WILL OUTCOMES & IMPACT

**100%** of youth who have graduated from WILL have graduated from high school or are on track to graduate.

**100%** of the 2024 WILL graduates reported that they benefited from being in WILL

2024 WILL Graduates had a **88%** attendance rate at WILL programs

### 2023-2024 WILL Youth Evaluation Survey Results

WILL youth showed that they increased knowledge and understanding of WILL pillars and the subject matter of the pillars, including nutrition, cultural awareness, leadership, the ability to set SMART goals, and accountability, and the youth universally increased knowledge of fundamentals taught in WILL. Youth also demonstrated improved perceptions about themselves following completion of the WILL program. .

“The purpose of WILL going to the Chesapeake Bay is for us to learn and have fun in nature. Marsh Mucking was my favorite activity because it was a new experience. I was scared at first, but then I got a bit comfortable. I will help the bay by using less water because we waste a lot of it and there isn’t a lot of clean and drinkable water.” - Kailyn

## WILL’S DONORS

We are pleased to recognize our growing community of supporters. Their generosity has allowed WILL to provide diverse, transformative growth experiences and challenging learning opportunities to more than 535 underserved youth in the Washington, D.C. area.

THANK YOU to all who contribute to WILL and invest in the futures of these incredible youth.

### **Foundations/Trusts**

Gwyn & Nancy Ackland  
Memorial Fund  
Anonymous Foundation  
Walter A Bloedorn Foundation  
Bou Family Foundation  
The Morris and Gwendolyn  
Cafritz Foundation  
Charities Aid Foundation  
America  
Chesapeake Bay Trust  
Clif Family Foundation  
Columbia Foundation  
Marguerite G. Cooley  
Foundation  
Dimick Foundation  
Carl M. Freeman Foundation  
Healy Foundation  
Jockey Hollow Foundation  
Corina Higginson Trust  
Live Like Jack Fund  
The George Preston Marshall  
Foundation

The McCutcheon Foundation  
Charles H. Miller Charitable  
Foundation  
The Morningstar Foundation  
Nord Family Foundation  
PayPal Giving Fund  
Nora Roberts Foundation  
Share Fund  
Shiffrin Family Foundation  
Silberstein Family  
Foundation  
The Albert & Lillian Small  
Foundation  
The Steuart Foundation  
The Aaron Straus & Lillie  
Straus Foundation  
Hattie Mae Strong  
Foundation  
Texas Instruments  
Foundation  
Westminster Foundation

“It was great to experience and to learn about Ukrainian music and a different culture and tradition in the world.” - Erynn



## WILL'S DONORS (CONT'D)

### Businesses

Anonymous  
Brown Advisory  
Capital Laser & Skin Care  
Chevy Chase Contractors, Inc.  
City First Bank  
ClearVision Optical  
Exterior Medics  
Forbright Bank  
General Dynamics  
Grosvenor Americas  
Johnson & Johnson Services, Inc.  
JP Morgan Chase Employee Good Works  
Mount Vernon Ladies Association  
Rocklands Barbeque & Grilling Co.  
Three Crowns LLP  
Tri-State Stone & Building Supply  
Varian Medical

### Individuals

Anonymous  
Arnie & Karen Able  
Steve Abraham  
Alyson Abramson  
Jane Adams  
Mary Addison  
Kevin Agatstein  
Arif & Rachel Ahmed  
Steve Amity  
Katryna Andrusik  
John & Barbara Apostle  
Paul Armstrong  
Sefakor Ashiagbor  
Alexandra Asihel  
Dzifa Awunyo-Akaba  
Sika Awunyo-Akaba  
Becky Balliet  
Will Baker  
Robert King & Deena Barlev  
Rob Barnett  
Mark & Jeyalene Baron  
Justin & Elizabeth Bausch  
Amy Bersett  
Steve & Kristen Best  
Amida Betts  
David Blackwood  
Lyle Blanchard  
Bryan & Jackie Blanken  
Helen Blundin  
Steve Bloom  
Core & Becky Boles  
George Borababy  
Dawn Bowen  
Marty Bowers  
Patrick Boylan  
Bruce & Sharon Bradley  
Tricia Braun  
John Patrick Brown, Jr.  
Tom Jarrett & Mimi Burke



Having fun in the marsh  
at Port Isabel over  
Spring Break

Barry & Phyllis Caldwell  
Allen Carney  
Bill Casano  
Robert Chandler  
Catherine Chapman  
Bill & Anne Charrier  
John Chapoton  
Aaron Claggett  
Cynthia Cleveland  
Michelle Cohen  
Sig & Susan Cohen  
Jason Colenda  
John Van Etten & Stephanie Connor  
Dennis Corbett  
Kevin Cosimano  
Kathy Cox  
Don & Margot Critchfield  
Michael Crowe  
Dlyan Dadd  
Jack & Caroline Daggitt  
David & Sally Daniel  
Peter Darke  
Burr Datz  
Edwin Davis  
Geoff Davis  
Ham Davis  
Lowell Davis  
Joe Sellers & Laurie Davis  
Michael Day IV  
Gil & Margaret DeLorme  
Caulley Deringer  
Patrick Boyle & Rebecca Dernbach  
Tim Detwiler  
Marianne Diwik  
Kevin Donahoe  
Jim Dooley  
Philip Douglas  
Glen Drake  
Karen Dresden  
Gary & Tricia Duncan

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Stephanie Duncan-Peters  
Tom Egan  
Charles Elkins  
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Nick Gill  
Greg Golden  
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John Racin & Sarabeth Goodwin  
Julian Good  
Adam & Liz Goozh  
Reggie Grant  
Francis & Caroline Grant-Suttie  
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Ernie & Rosemary Haas  
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George Hager  
Luke Sobota & Anna Haglund  
Marilyn Hamilton  
David Haskelkorn  
Elsa Haubold  
Peter Hawley

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 Jacob Hodes  
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 Don & Courtney Holmes  
 Keyshana Holmes  
 Ross Honig  
 Steve & Cissy Jackson  
 Peter Jaffe  
 Alicia Jefferson  
 Grif & Alix Johnson  
 Freeman Jones  
 Marc Silberberg & Barbara Julius  
 Carter & Smythe Kannapell  
 John Kannapell  
 Lori Kaplan  
 Bob Katz  
 Peter & Debbie Keefe  
 Karl Kelley  
 Walt & Jennifer Kelley  
 Ryan Kilpatrick  
 William Fawley & Tekoa King  
 Don & Tammie Kirson  
 Joshua Krutoy  
 Jill Landefeld  
 Irene Lane  
 Michael Lazarus  
 Raysa Leer-Gray  
 Karen Leichtnam  
 Sarae Leuckel  
 Felda Looper  
 Sharon Lobo  
 Lucy Lowenthal  
 Richard Luchs

Nicole Macdonald  
 Gerry Malmo  
 Paul & Lois Maloney  
 Scott Marschall  
 Mike & Kathy Marshall  
 Dale Martin  
 Melinda Maxfield  
 Melissa Maxfield  
 Doug McGuire  
 Dave Hagigh & Ellen McRae  
 Jake Michel  
 Ben & Elysa Mills  
 Peter O'B. Moore  
 Sandy Murdock  
 Emaan Abdelbaki & Nicole Naassan  
 Melissa Nelson  
 Akito Nguyen  
 Stu & Liz Nibley  
 Susan Niblock  
 Laura Nickelhoff  
 Kevin & Karen Nimerick  
 Carl Northrup  
 Susan Orlins  
 Greg & Amy Ossi  
 George Pappas  
 Henrik & Jennifer Parker  
 Chris Payette  
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 Steve Pellegrini  
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 Jim & Katie Sebastian  
 Jim Sadowski  
 Lucas Samaras  
 Ned & Tania Scharpf  
 Karl Schreiber  
 Eric Sella  
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 Tracy Shaw  
 David & Peggy Shiffrin  
 Tomm Sibert  
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 Gregg Skall  
 Sonny & Tina Small  
 Haskell Smith  
 Hatton Smith

Jeffrey Smith  
 John & Kim Snedden  
 Michael Solomon  
 Jon Sobota  
 Thomas Sobota  
 Cecile Srodes  
 Chip Stelljes  
 Brad Steuart  
 Clint Stinger  
 Brooke Suiter  
 Dr. Elizabeth Tanzi  
 Ariel Teitel  
 William Toles  
 Joe & LeeAnn Turkal  
 Tim & Katie Tyler  
 Tracy VanDuston  
 Hall Vetterlein  
 Mark & Mandy Watson  
 Kevin & Catherine Webb  
 George Wenchel  
 David & Theresa West  
 Adam & Vicki Wickline  
 Don & Mary-Bacon Williams  
 Leora Willis  
 Richard & Lena Wise  
 Scott & Jennifer Wohlander  
 Tom Barr & Minh Woods  
 Marvin & Nina Yudell  
 Philip Zettle

Thumbs up for the  
 challenge of the  
 Giant Swing during  
 the Expedition



“WILL is a once-in-a-lifetime experience and taught  
 me that I can push through hard times.” - Pedro



## WILL LEADERSHIP

**Stephen H. Abraham**  
Director & President/CEO

**Matt Fleming**  
Director & Chair of the Board  
Portfolio Manager, Brown Advisory

**Raysa Leer**  
Director & Vice-Chair of the Board  
Assoc. VP for Financial Affairs,  
Univ. of the District of Columbia

**Greg Ossi**  
Director & Treasurer  
Partner, Faegre Drinker Biddle  
& Reath LLP

**John Van Etten**  
Director & Secretary  
Executive Director for Federal  
Government Relations,

“I am grateful that WILL teaches us SMART goals. SMART goals are powerful tools to guide me on what I want to achieve and how to do it. SMART goals help me create goals that are coherent, focused, and attainable.” - Daymon

**Brian Pelligrini**  
Director  
CEO, Aspekt Solutions

**Rose Quispe**  
Director  
Elementary School Teacher,  
DC Public Schools  
WILL Grad

**Luke Sobota**  
Director  
Partner, Three Crowns, LLP



## FY24 FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Oct. 1, 2023 - Sept. 30, 2024 Financial Statement Review



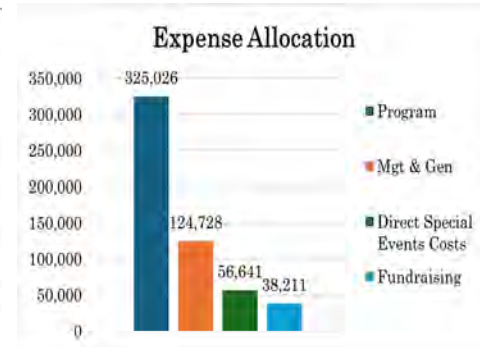
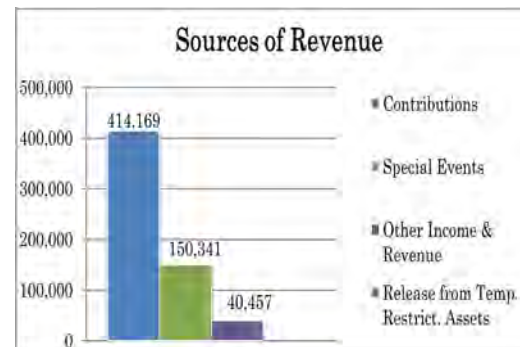
### REVENUE AND SUPPORT

	2024	2023
Contributions	409,140	400,823
Special Events	150,341	91,004
In-kind revenue	5,029	4,001
Other Income	40,457	23,760
Releases Temp. Restricted Net Assets	- - - -	- - - -
<b>Total Revenue and Support</b>	<b>604,967</b>	<b>519,588</b>



### EXPENSES

Program Services	325,026	287,856
Supporting Services:		
Management and General	124,728	85,821
Fundraising	38,211	16,737
<b>Total Support Services</b>	<b>162,939</b>	<b>102,558</b>
Direct Special Events Costs	56,641	55,370
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>544,606</b>	<b>445,784</b>
Change in Net Assets	60,361	73,804
Release from temp. restricted net assets	- - - -	- - - -
Net Assets – Beginning of year	1,028,826	955,022
<b>Net Assets – End of Year</b>	<b>1,089,187</b>	<b>\$1,028,826</b>





“Thank you so much for the opportunity to be in the WILL Program. It is amazing what WILL did for me and does for all WILL youth. This experience was so beneficial for me. WILL is truly a once in a lifetime experience that I will never forget.” - Norah



“The word I choose to describe my WILL experience is *incredible*. I am eternally grateful that there is a WILL program. I will never get to experience all I have done in WILL again. My experiences and memories are all precious to me.”  
- Daniel

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[WWW.WILL-LEAD.ORG](http://WWW.WILL-LEAD.ORG)