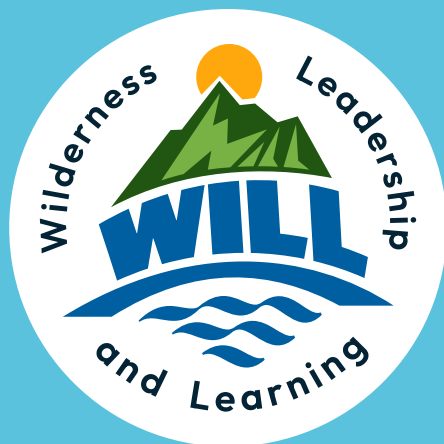




# WILDERNESS LEADERSHIP & LEARNING

## FY2025 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 2025 WILL graduates used to describe their WILL experience:

Amazing, Beneficial, Educational, Excellent, Extraordinary, Fun, Grateful, Helpful, Learning, Necessary, Purposeful, Rewarding



## MESSAGE FROM WILL'S PRESIDENT

Dear Members of the WILL Family and Friends:

A word to describe WILL's FY25 is *MEMORABLE*. We celebrated 21 years of WILL unleashing the potential of and positively impacting underserved DC area youth.

The youth who graduated in 2024-2025 WILL Class were engaged in a record 350 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 21st year include:

- 3rd biggest WILL graduating class
- 90% attendance rate
- 75% retention rate

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

THANK YOU to everyone who has been involved in the success of WILL's first 21 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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**"I benefited from being in WILL by learning important life skills that no one else would have taught me". – Kaleb**

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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

### **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).

**"WILL does the financial literacy sessions for us to learn about living with financial dignity, proper spending like needs v. wants, saving, the credit score, and more that will benefit me in life." – Mateo**

## 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
- CPR & 1st Aid
- College Admissions – Post High School Options 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

**"We cleaned up at the Anacostia River to instill environmental stewardship in us. I learned that I love cleaning and picking up trash outdoors, and I felt exhilarated as I got to see the impact of my work." – Shahad.**

## 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 Clagett 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



"The scavenger hunt on The Mall was my favorite WILL activity. I had a lot of fun with my team searching for answers. Not only was it fun, but it also taught us the importance of communication and teamwork, and I learned some US history and looked at some great art." - Matthew.

## 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 during the Ropes Course



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



Expedition -Canoeing on the James River

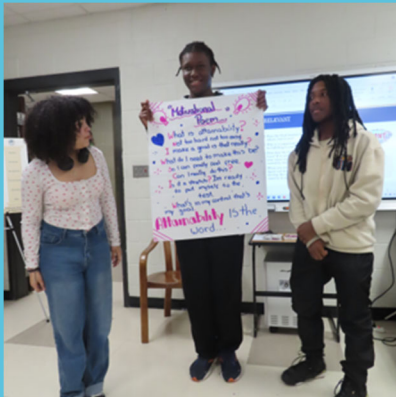


Caving during the Expedition

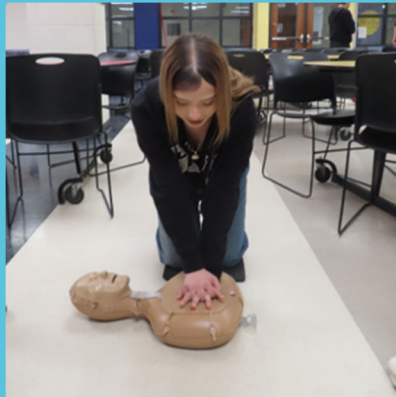
"The purpose of the nutrition lessons is to teach us how make healthy eating decisions and the importance of reading food labels." – Miguel

## LIFESKILLS DEVELOPMENT

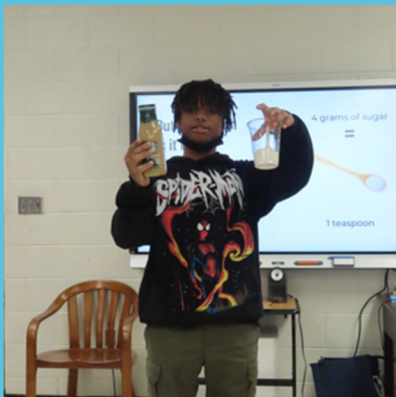
WILL's life skills development programs develop youth abilities for adaptive and positive behavior, that enable youth to deal effectively with life's challenges.



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 working on their resumes

## WILL'S 2025 GRADUATION - WILL'S 20TH

September 13, 2025, WILL graduated its 20th class. 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. Aleksandr 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 does SMART Goals to teach us how to set goals and plans to achieve them. I learned to be specific when creating a SMART Goal, and I will use them every day to be more effective in my life." – Winnie

# 2024-2025 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 2025 WILL graduates reported that they benefited from being in WILL

2025 WILL Graduates had a 90% attendance rate at WILL programs

## 2024-2025 WILL Youth Evaluation Survey Results

WILL youth showed increased knowledge and understanding of WILL pillars and the subject matter of the pillars and the fundamentals taught in WILL, including financial literacy, environmental awareness, leadership, SMART goals, nutrition, and accountability. 100% of the youth who graduated in the 2024-2025 WILL Class reported that they benefited from being in WILL/their WILL experience and also demonstrated improved perceptions about themselves following completion of the WILL program.

“We went to the Bay to learn about the environment. We also went there to learn about conservation and have fun. My favorite activity was playing games in the marsh. I describe the trip as *peaceful* because of the sunsets and sunrises and listening to the calm water.” - Shaanan.

# 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 Caster Fund  
Chesapeake Bay Trust  
Clif Family Foundation  
Dimick Foundation  
Carl M. Freeman Foundation  
The Hanson Family 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  
The Ronus Foundation  
Share Fund  
Shiffrin Family Foundation  
Silberstein Family Foundation  
The Albert & Lillian Small Foundation  
The Steuart Foundation  
The Aaron Straus & Lillie Straus Foundation  
Texas Instruments Foundation  
Webber Family Foundation  
Westminster Foundation

“A word to describe my WILL experience is *useful* because everything that we learned, we will use at some point in our lives.” – Enhely

## WILL'S DONORS (CONT'D)

### Businesses

Anonymous  
Brown Advisory  
Capital Laser & Skin Care  
Chase Contractors, Inc.  
City First Bank  
ClearVision Optical  
Exterior Medics  
Forbright Bank  
General Dynamics  
Goldman Sachs Gives  
Johnson & Johnson Services, Inc.  
JP Morgan Chase Employee Good Works  
Mount Vernon Ladies Association  
Raconteur Creative LLC  
Rocklands Barbeque & Grilling Co.  
Target Circle Community Support  
Three Crowns LLP  
Tri-State Stone & Building Supply

### Individuals

Anonymous  
Steve Abraham  
Jane Adams  
Kevin Agatstein  
Arif & Rachel Ahmed  
Steve Amity  
John & Barbara Apostle  
Will Baker  
Becky Balliet  
Latosha Baldwin  
Robert King & Deena Barlev  
Rob Barnett  
Mark & Jeyalene Baron  
Justin & Elizabeth Bausch  
Amy Bersett  
Steve & Kristen Best  
David Blackwood  
Lyle Blanchard  
Steve Bloom  
Corey & Becky Boles  
Dawn Bowen  
Marty Bowers  
Patrick Boylan  
Bruce & Sharon Bradley  
Tricia Braun  
Al Bready  
John Patrick Brown, Jr.  
Barry & Phyllis Caldwell  
Tom Carr  
Bill Casano  
Meg Caulk  
Robert Chandler  
Bill & Anne Charrier  
John Chapoton  
Aaron Claggett  
Helen Blundin Cheromeka  
Cynthia Cleveland  
Calvin Cobb  
Sig Cohen



Having fun in the marsh  
at Port Isabel over  
Spring Break

John Van Etten &  
Stephanie Connor  
Eddie & Shaila Cordone  
Kevin Cosimano  
Steve Cottreau  
Kathy Cox  
Don & Margot Critchfield  
Colton Crookham  
Jack & Caroline Daggitt  
David & Sally Daniel  
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  
Marianne Diwik  
Kevin Donahoe  
Jim Dooley  
Glen Drake  
Karen Dresden  
Gary & Tricia Duncan  
Stephanie Duncan-Peters  
Donna Duquette  
Henry Dworshak  
Scott & Kerith Eckart  
Dianne Edwards  
Tom Egan  
Charles Elkins  
Val Ellicott  
Sean Falvey  
Paul & Gretchen Fearey  
Nancy Fearheiley  
Paula Feeney  
Carlos & Martha Fernandes  
Gail Fleming

Matt & Christina Fleming  
Mike & Karen Foley  
Brian & Nancy Ho Foster  
Ki-Aura Fraizer  
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Becca Garmin  
Lia Garman  
Jeff Gelman  
Nick Gill  
Jeffrey LaRiche &  
Sharon Goldenberg  
John Racin & Sarabeth Goodwin  
Julian Good  
Adam & Liz Goozh  
Greg Gosnell  
Reggie Grant  
Francis & Caroline Grant-Suttie  
George Graves  
Abe & Deena Greenstein  
Shanica Guidry  
Paul & Heather Haaga  
Ernie & Rosemary Haas  
Albert Hart & Kirsten Hagen  
Luke Sobota & Anna Haglund  
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Marilyn Hamilton  
Elsa Haubold  
Peter Hawley  
Tyna Hepburn  
Erik Hoffland  
Laura Hoffman  
Scott & Kathy Hoffman  
Steve & Louisa Hollman  
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Ted Holt  
Ross Honig  
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 Grif & Alix Johnson  
 Deirdre Jones  
 Freeman Jones  
 Carter & Smythe Kannapell  
 Frank & Leanne Kannapell  
 John Kannapell  
 Lori Kaplan  
 Jennifer Katt  
 Bob Katz  
 Peter & Debbie Keefe  
 Karl Kelley  
 Walt & Jennifer Kelley  
 Ryan Kilpatrick  
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 Jill Landefeld  
 Gabriella Lanzi  
 Michael Lazarus  
 Diane Leatham  
 Raysa Leer-Gray  
 Karen Leichtnam  
 Sarae Leuckel  
 Richard Levie  
 Rebecca Lindhurst  
 Thelma Little  
 Felda Looper  
 Lucy Lowenthal  
 Richard Luchs  
 Gerry Malmo  
 Paul & Lois Maloney  
 Mike & Kathy Marshall  
 Ted Martin  
 Melinda Maxfield  
 Melissa Maxfield  
 Michael McElwain  
 Doug McGuire

Mayada Mannan-Brake  
 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  
 Laura Nickelhoff  
 Kevin & Karen Nimerick  
 Nana Nyanin  
 Ned Scharpf & Tania  
 Odabashian  
 Greg & Amy Ossi  
 Khai Overton  
 George Pappas  
 Henrik & Jennifer Parker  
 Steve Pellegrini  
 Hermina Peters  
 Kathryn Petrillo-Smith  
 Bill & Ann Peyser  
 Garrett & Jane Phelan  
 Nandini Pillai  
 Mark Policy  
 Brian & Cathy Porto  
 Rahul Ravel  
 Dave Reeves  
 Raoul Renard  
 Jeff & Caroline Revis  
 Eddie Reyes  
 Wayne & Carol Rhodes  
 Scott Rhodes  
 Domonique Roberts-Mack  
 Constance Robey

Sabrina Rose-Smith  
 Tom Snedeker  
 Bennett Ross  
 Aubrey Rosser  
 Amy Rudnick  
 Mark & Marissa Ruhe  
 Jeannine Rustad  
 Jim Sadowski  
 Lucas Samaras  
 Michael & Deborah Sauri  
 Joan Schrager  
 Karl Schreiber  
 Jim & Katie Sebastian  
 Eric Sella  
 Edard Shanahan  
 Tracy Shaw  
 David & Peggy Shiffrin  
 Kison Shin  
 Patrick Shooltz  
 Tomm Sibert  
 Richard & Carol Silberstein  
 Dave & Anne Simms  
 Rachel Skerritt  
 Sonny & Tina Small  
 Hatton Smith  
 Jeffrey Smith  
 John & Kim Snedden  
 Tom Snell  
 Michael Solomon

Jon Sobota  
 Thomas Sobota  
 Cecile Srodes  
 Chip Stelljes  
 Brad Steuart  
 Clint Stinger  
 David Stout  
 Brooke Suiter  
 Elaine Tama  
 Dr. Elizabeth Tanzi  
 Ariel Teitel  
 William Toles  
 Courtney Tucker  
 Tracy VanDuston  
 Hall Vetterlein  
 Mark & Mandy Watson  
 Kevin & Catherine Webb  
 Adam Wenchel  
 George Wenchel  
 David & Theresa West  
 Adam & Vicki Wickline  
 Don & Mary-Bacon Williams  
 Leora Willis  
 Richard & Lena Wise  
 Marc & Jennifer Witowski  
 Tom Barr & Minh Woods  
 Wendy Wright  
 John Zamoiski  
 Philip Zettle

“Experiences like WILL don’t come around often. I’ll definitely recommend WILL to my friends.” – Chris

Flying high and enjoying  
 the challenge of the  
 Giant Swing during  
 the Expedition



## 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  
Deputy Chief Operating Officer,  
Univ. of the District of Columbia

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

**John Van Etten**  
Director & Secretary  
Exec. Dir. for Federal Government  
Relations, JP Morgan Chase & Co.

“The purpose of the expedition is to provide a challenging new experience and for us to reflect on our lives. The WILL and the expedition taught me that if I give my all to something, I can truly achieve anything.” - Kaleb

**Brian Pelligrini**  
Director  
CEO, Ecotone, Inc.

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

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



## FY25 FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Oct. 1, 2024 - Sept. 30, 2025 Financial Statement Review



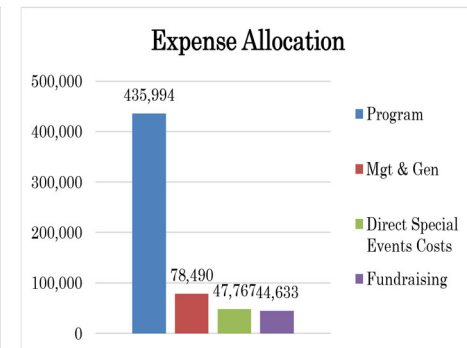
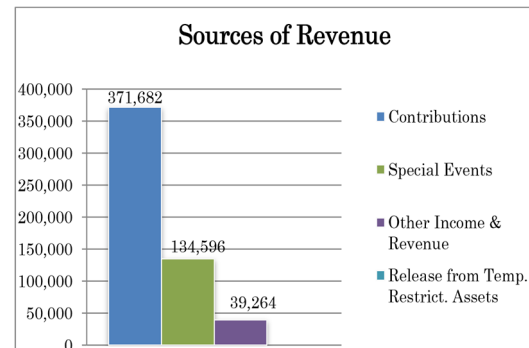
### REVENUE AND SUPPORT

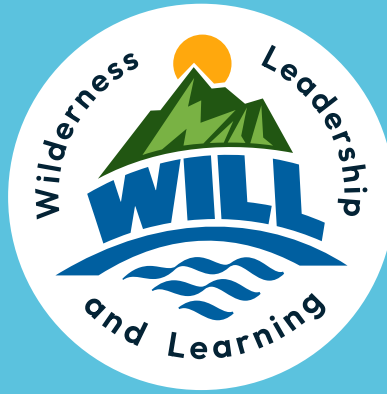
|                                      | 2025           | 2024           |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Contributions                        | 371,682        | 409,140        |
| Special Events                       | 134,596        | 150,341        |
| In-kind revenue                      | 10,493         | 5,029          |
| Other Income                         | 39,264         |                |
| 40,457                               |                |                |
| Releases Temp. Restricted Net Assets | - - - -        | - - - -        |
| <b>Total Revenue and Support</b>     | <b>556,035</b> | <b>604,967</b> |



### EXPENSES

|                                          |                |                |
|------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Program Services                         | 435,994        | 325,026        |
| Supporting Services:                     |                |                |
| Management and General                   | 78,490         | 124,728        |
| Fundraising                              | 44,633         | 38,211         |
| Total Support Services                   | 123,123        | 162,939        |
| Direct Special Events Costs              | 47,767         | 56,641         |
| <b>Total Expenses</b>                    | <b>606,884</b> | <b>544,606</b> |
| Change in Net Assets                     | (50,849)       | 60,361         |
| Release from temp. restricted net assets | - - - -        | - - - -        |
| Net Assets – Beginning of year           | 1,089,187      | 1,028,826      |





"The WILL experience was *necessary* in shaping the person I am today, a version of myself I am proud to have become. The life principles learned and the memorable moments gained in WILL were and are essential to my journey of growth and betterment."

– Mateo



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(202) 319-2765

Instagram: [will.lead.dc](https://www.instagram.com/will.lead.dc)

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