

2024-2025
ANNUAL REPORT

**BLUE
SKY
FUND**

blueskyfund.org

A MESSAGE FROM AMANDA AND SALLY

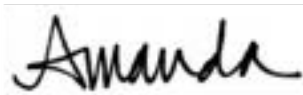
As we reflect on the 2024-2025 program year, we have much to be grateful for as an organization. We completed our 2021-2024 Strategic Plan, which focused on organizational stability and sustainability as we position ourselves for future growth opportunities.

A key goal of this plan was to assess and address our long-term facility needs—laying the groundwork for a physical space that could grow with us. This vision led to the launch of our Capital Campaign, supporting our move to a new basecamp at 1806 Creighton Road. We officially moved in October 2024 - if you haven't had a chance to visit, we encourage you to stop by soon!

The new space has been transformational - increasing our operational efficiency, improving access to gear and supplies for all our programs, and creating a more functional and inspiring workspace for our team.

Our Board of Directors and staff are now focused on developing our next Strategic Plan with input from our community to help shape our priorities for the next 3-5 years - we look forward to sharing that with you soon!

Our work is only possible because of the incredible support of our community. Every day, as we collaborate with partners, funders, caregivers, and students, we're reminded of the strength and spirit that define Richmond. This community is rich in collaboration, generosity, and energy, and we are grateful to be a part of it. Please enjoy diving into this Annual Report highlighting our programmatic accomplishments from the 2024-2025 year!



Amanda Godbold Payne
Executive Director



Sally Hunnicutt
Board President



MISSION

To provide transformational experiences for Richmond area youth through outdoor education.

VISION

To give every young person the opportunity to discover themselves by actively engaging the natural world.

PROGRAMS OVERVIEW

At Blue Sky, we work to center youth in the environment through positive experiences in the outdoors.

We are always excited to have the opportunity to connect our students to outdoor spaces around the Richmond region. Beyond this, we work to make sure our youth identify themselves as a part of their local environment. Our focus is to ensure every participant develops a feeling of belonging and connection to the local environment, whether that's a park, riverfront, or schoolyard.

This goal is reflected in our programs through mindfulness and reflection in every space we visit. It could be elementary students practicing yoga on Belle Isle Rocks, middle schoolers relaxing in hammocks in Byrd Park, or high schoolers engaging in solo reflection and journaling on Mt. Rogers.

In every case, Blue Sky program staff help our students experience not only the excitement of discovery, but also the comfort and safety that we all deserve to feel in nature.

Check out each program page to learn more!



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink.

Josh Bearman
Programs Director



2024 - 2025 OUTCOMES

2,166

3RD TO 12TH GRADE PARTICIPANTS

461

OUTINGS LED BY BLUE SKY

1

INCREDIBLE YEAR OF ADVENTURES



PROGRAM GOAL 1

Help children achieve academic success, especially in the sciences, through active outdoor education that is appropriate for their current science curriculum.

PROGRAM GOAL 2

Help children develop character and leadership through outdoor experiences that expand horizons, increase confidence, and build collaboration skills.



EXPLORERS

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Educational programming during school hours that creates hands-on outdoor experiences through nature-based science lessons that enrich Virginia Science Standards Of Learning (SOL).

The Explorers program partners with the following twelve Title I Richmond Public Schools:

Bellevue	Henry L. Marsh, III	Overby-Sheppard
Chimborazo	J.H. Blackwell	Swansboro
Fairfield Court	Miles J. Jones	Westover Hills
Frances W. McClenney	Oak Grove-Bellemeade	Woodville

EXPLORERS QUICK STATS

1,923
3RD TO 5TH GRADERS

148
TRIPS LED BY BLUE SKY

14
UNIQUE OUTDOOR SITES

12
HOURS SPENT OUTDOORS BY EACH YOUTH

.. ————— ◆ ————— ..

"I love Blue Sky. I have so much fun and learn a lot too. I wish you guys were at my school everyday."

- Serenity, 4th grader, Fairfield Court

.. ————— ◆ ————— ..

97% of teachers agree or strongly agree with the statement "My students had a positive experience with the natural environment "



Crossing a bridge on a hike in Forest Hill Park



Sorting through compost at Shalom Farms while learning about soil and the water cycle



Our first cohort of RPS Teacher Liaisons working to improve communications and connection between field trip and classroom



Learning about plants at Bellemeade Park through chlorophyll coloring



OAC QUICK STATS

222
5TH TO 12TH GRADERS

37
GREEN SPACES EXPLORED

290
TRIPS LED BY BLUE SKY

6
OVERNIGHT TRIPS

9,000+
CUMULATIVE OUTDOOR HOURS

Thanks to Blue Sky I learned that there are other things to do than just staying inside."

-Tatyana, River City Middle School

OUTDOOR ADVENTURE CLUBS

SECONDARY SCHOOL

Out-of-school time outdoor adventure programming focused on developing confidence & resilience through mastering new skills in natural spaces. OACs partnered with the following organizations:

Anna Julia Cooper School
Bellemeade Community Center
Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Richmond
MLK Middle School
Teen & Community Center
Higher Achievement
Mary and Frances Youth Center
Peter Paul Development Center

Richmond Public Schools Summer School
The Salvation Army Boys & Girls Club
NextUp RVA at:
Albert Hill Middle School
Boushall Middle School
Henderson Middle School
Lucille Brown Middle School
River City Middle School



Exploring the rocks along the James at 22nd street



Taking a break by hanging out under a tree chatting, journaling, and just being in nature



Learning how to build fires in the Forest Hill Park Shelters (and of course s'mores)



Creating a perfect retreat in Byrd Park with hammocks



OUTDOOR LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

HIGH SCHOOL

A year-long program that brings together students from diverse economic and cultural backgrounds for an immersive experience including a 5-day wilderness trip and monthly community service projects designed to foster individual growth, increase personal resiliency, and cultivate leadership skills. This last year included:

OLI QUICK STATS

21
9TH TO 12TH GRADERS

30
SERVICE HOURS EACH

150
OUTDOOR HOURS EACH

“I have learned that there is not just one type of person that enjoys being outdoors. Nature is a place for community building, and Blue Sky encourages you to face every challenge as a team.”

- Abbi Kate, 18, Open High Graduate



- 22 miles through Grayson Highlands to Mt. Rogers
- 55 miles on the James River from Scottsville to Maidens Landing
- 9 Service Saturdays across the Richmond area



OLI participants were rewarded with sweeping vistas on their trek!



Taking a break on a rocky outcrop while hiking Mt. Rogers



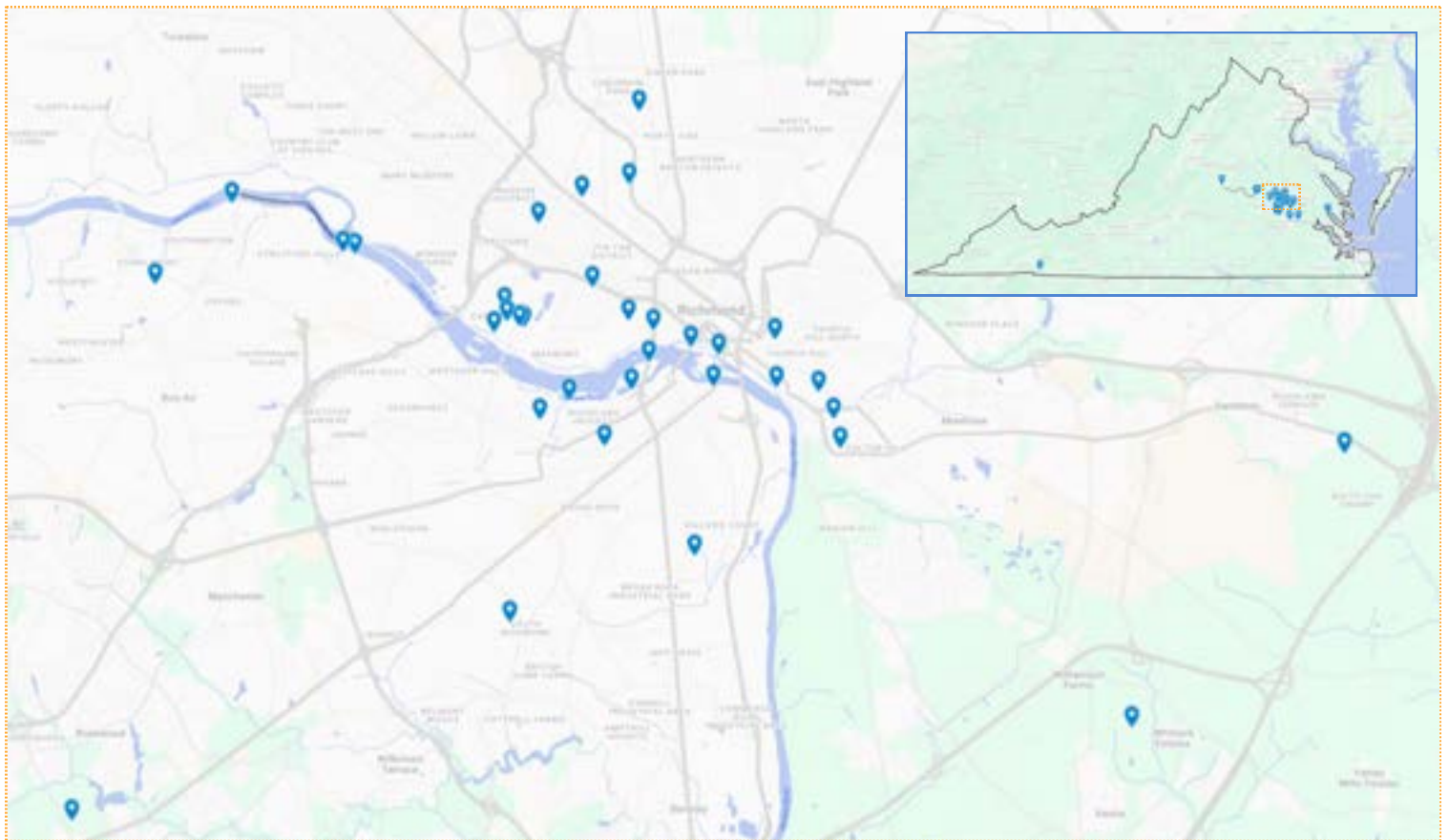
Peaceful evening on the James during the canoe camping trip.



OLI participants during their Service Saturday experience in Forest Hill Park.

45 UNIQUE SITES VISITED

BY BLUE SKY PARTICIPANTS FROM GRAYSON HIGHLIGHTS TO YORK RIVER STATE PARK



Chesterfield County Parks

- R. Garland Dodd Park
- Rockwood Park

Henrico County Parks

- Deep Run Park
- Dorey Park
- Taylor Farm Park
- Three Lakes Park

Hollywood Cemetery

James River Park System

- 22nd St Dry Rocks
- Belle Isle
- Brown's Island
- Great Shiplock Park
- Pipeline Trail
- Pony Pasture
- Pumphouse Park
- Reedy Creek
- Southside Flood Wall

Maymont

Peak Experiences RVA

Richmond City Parks

- Bellemeade Park
- Broadrock Park
- Bryan Park
- Byrd Park
- Carter Jones Park
- Chimborazo Park
- Dell Meadow
- Dogwood Dell
- Forest Hill Park
- Gillies Creek Park
- Jefferson Park
- Larus Park
- Oregon Hill Park
- Petronius S. Jones Park
- Pine Camp
- Powhatan Hill Park

Science Museum of Virginia

Shalom Farms

VCU Rice Rivers Center

Virginia State Parks

- Grayson Highlands State Park
- Pocahontas State Park
- Powhatan State Park
- York River State Park

VMFA

YMCA Camp Thunderbird

James River Canoe Trips

Scottsville to Maidens Landing

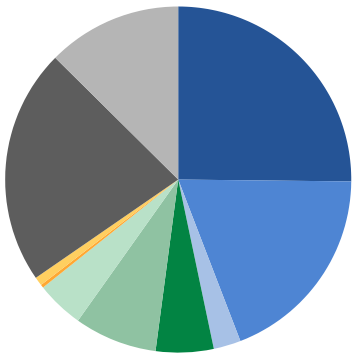
Huguenot Flatwater to Pony Pasture



FINANCIALS

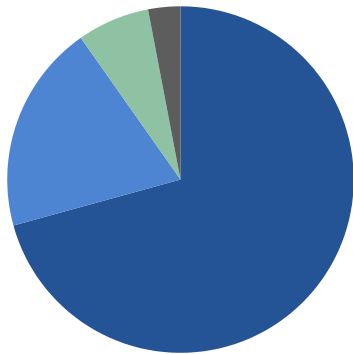
FY 2025 financials as reported on audited year end statements of revenues and expenses.
FY 2025 = July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025

\$1,504,213
TOTAL REVENUE



Foundations \$376,500
Individuals \$283,820
Board \$38,147
Events \$80,687
Earned Income & Interest \$115,722
Corporations \$66,452
In-Kind \$13,033
Service Organizations \$12,160
Capital Campaign \$329,529
Employee Resource Credits \$188,163

\$1,121,110
TOTAL EXPENSES



Program \$792,892
Fundraising \$218,791
General Management \$75,751
Capital \$33,676

PEOPLE

FY 25 Board of Directors

President: Sally Hunnicutt
Vice President: Margo Webb
Treasurer: Darin Moore
Secretary: Kathy Hoverman

Directors

Karen Butterfield
Sue Davies
Miriam Fisher
Katherine Gerber
Gail Maddox Taylor
Nina Marino
Brad Nott
Chris Piper
Jummai Sarki-Hurd
Ty Toepke
Logan Vetovec



Blue Sky Fund Staff

Includes all staff employed during the 2024-25 fiscal year

Josh Bearman
Diane Brown
David Buenrostro
Elsbeth Collard
Mackenzie Crockett
Thomas Fuller
Alyssa Gagne
Amanda Godbold Payne
Taimir Gore
Izzy Guerrero
Kate Haacke-Golden

Victoria Harmon
Tori Hovater
Emma Jones
James Kane
Sydney Koetter
Hannah Lederle-Ensign
Jacob Minnick
Jayana Murdoch
Noah Nottingham
Dameron Ownby
Payton Palmerton

Rachel Pater
Max Peronnet
Hunter Rivera
Carl Smith
Nicholas Tambellini
Annie Taylor
Sebastion Tesauro
Noah Thomason
Andy VanDeusen

**Bold indicates full-time staff member*



GET INVOLVED

Join Blue Sky Fund on the path ahead to connect youth in the Richmond area to the positive impact of learning in nature! From experiential science education to skills-based activities, we look forward to continuing to advance equity in the outdoors by developing diverse groups of environmental stewards and leaders in our community.



DONATE

Make a donation with ongoing impact by setting up a recurring monthly gift



VOLUNTEER

Experience the joy and positive impact of nature firsthand by volunteering



Contact Us

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email: info@blueskyfund.org

phone: (804) 410 - 4273

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