

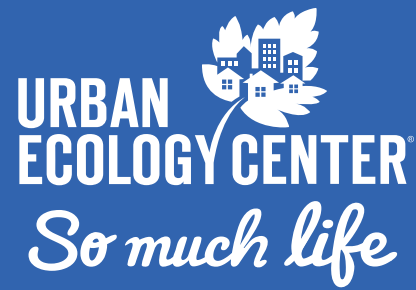


So much life



ANNUAL REPORT
SEPTEMBER 2018 - AUGUST 2019

SEE HOW YOU'RE CONNECTING PEOPLE IN CITIES TO NATURE AND EACH OTHER



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

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Branch Manager

Menomonee Valley

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

Glenna Holstein
Branch Manager

Washington Park

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

Terry Evans
Branch Manager

Cover photo:

A young visitor to Urban Ecology Center's Menomonee Valley branch discovers a worm in Three Bridges Park

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Operations
Rachel Nielsen



Rebeca and her son, Roque, enjoy nature together in the Menomonee Valley.

RECONNECTING COMMUNITIES

“I grew up in this neighborhood and I knew that with the UEC coming, things were going to be different. The neglected spaces we had growing up were going to be transformed.”

When Rebeca Heaton Juarez heard that the Urban Ecology Center was coming to the Menomonee Valley back in 2012, the announcement was personal. “It’s been one of the best experiences of my life to be able to say that my son is playing in the same area that I used to play in, but it’s much more beautiful, it’s cleaner, it’s safe and it has very intentional programming.” Rebeca remembers clearly how everything was once rusted over and trash cluttered the neighborhood, and her appreciation for the work of the Menomonee Valley Partners and Urban Ecology Center runs deep. “I’m seeing my neighborhood transform and become a better place where people can raise their family.”

This transformation comes with an additional benefit for her son Roque. “As a child I didn’t know how to

interact with nature because I was never a part of it.” Rebeca had to be taught later in life how to connect to and respect the land. But Roque had a way to be outside and be a self-starter in nature. And his experience in Forest Camp working with UEC educators impacted him by encouraging him to speak up and become more of a leader. “He has more confidence and is more social. Nature has a way of dropping barriers because it makes an equal playing field with everybody else.”

“I’m glad the UEC is making these experiences accessible to young children and people who are from the neighborhood who don’t traditionally have experience with playing outside or whose main language isn’t English. I love this place so much and I wouldn’t be in the neighborhood if the UEC wasn’t here. You guys are the reason why I am living here and raising my child here.”

**Read more about your impact
in our 2018-19 Annual Report**



Thanks to you, the Urban Ecology Center is thriving! This year, we were able to connect people of all ages to nature and each other across Milwaukee, all because of you. Let's explore the incredible impact you've created...

Ken Leinbach, Executive Director

STUDENTS AT
64
SCHOOLS

RECEIVED HANDS-ON, NATURE-BASED SCIENCE EXPERIENCES THROUGH OUR NEIGHBORHOOD ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROJECT PROGRAMS



56%
OF SUMMER CAMPERS
ATTENDED ON
SCHOLARSHIPS IN 2019

"Nature can offer something that no teacher can replicate in the traditional classroom. It is unique, it is alive, and it is a true sensory experience for kids."

- Partner school teacher after environmental education field experience

97%

of teachers reported improvement in student academic performance from nature-based learning.



8,150+

NATIVE PLANTS AND TREES WERE PLANTED BY OUR LAND STEWARDSHIP STAFF & THOUSANDS OF VOLUNTEERS!



OTTERS HAVE RETURNED TO THE MILWAUKEE RIVER!

River otters have been spotted by the Community Science team! Habitat restoration efforts have resulted in increased water quality and habitat for fish, frogs, and crayfish - all of which are food sources for otters.





Now that you've seen the positive impact you've created, let's see what's ahead! This year, we've been laying the groundwork for even more positive transformation across Milwaukee and the world.

— Ken Leinbach, Executive Director



A birds' eye view of Washington Park and the Milwaukee skyline. Photo: Ross Buckner



Young Scientist Club participants show off the weeds they've pulled from the Washington Park raised bed gardens.

STRENGTHENING LEADERSHIP

WELCOME, ED AND RACHEL!

The Urban Ecology Center welcomed Rachel Nielsen, Finance and Operations Director, in April 2019. Rachel joins our team from Rockwell Automation where she was a Global Finance Manager. Throughout her career, Nielsen has held finance and operations positions at Rockwell and Best Buy. Ed Krishok joined the team in August 2019 in a limited term role as Managing Director. Ed is a seasoned professional in both for-profit and non-profit spaces, bringing experience from Harley-Davidson and Foley & Lardner to Tamarack Waldorf School and the Academy for Systems Change.



DREAMING BIG IN WASHINGTON PARK & BEYOND

Through partnership with Milwaukee County Parks, the UEC successfully secured a long term lease for the Washington Park building paving the way for consideration of renovation and additions to the building. During the fall of 2019, the UEC shared a vision for the future which included the Washington Park building project, and possible plans for the land west of the Riverside Park building and additional goals related to financial stability, including an endowment. The results of these conversations are being reviewed by the board and staff to determine the best way forward.



UEC volunteer extraordinaire Dennis Grzezinski converses with intensive participant Anusha from Pakistan.

SHARING THE MODEL IN MILWAUKEE & WORLDWIDE

In addition to the second annual Urban Ecology Center Intensive, we offered two additional 'focus workshops' for the community. Both the Nature Based Early Childhood Education workshop and the Fund Development workshop allowed the UEC to share a piece of the work we do and encourage others to use this knowledge to improve their own programs.



FISCAL YEAR 2018-19 FINANCIAL REPORT

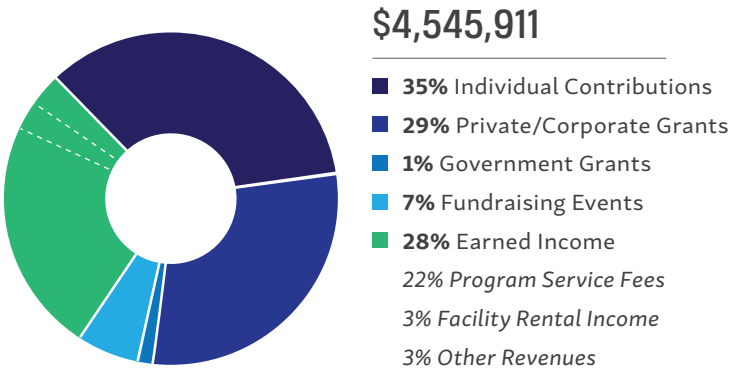
The Urban Ecology Center once again conducted a successful financial year thanks to our dedicated community of supporters and the hard work of our volunteers and staff. Our 2018-19 fiscal year resulted in a balanced budget, thanks to a continued focus on expenses and generous support from our donors. We remain committed to ensuring our long-term fiscal sustainability through strategic planning for the future.

The Urban Ecology Center carries no long-term debt and enters only into agreements that are supported by existing pledges and contributions from our donors. The Board of

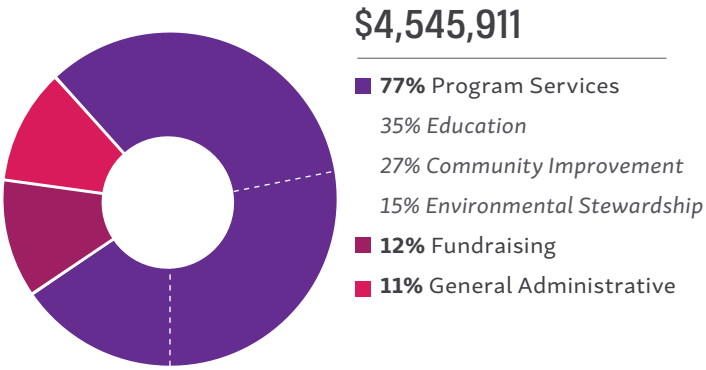
Directors and Finance Committee maintain a keen focus on the adequacy of cash, while also providing oversight for all material financial aspects of the organization. The Center has a positive ratio of assets to liabilities and a robust donor base, ensuring a solid financial foundation from which to cultivate future growth. Our annual financial statements are audited by the Milwaukee based accountants of Scribner Cohen & Co.

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

FY 2018-19 OPERATING REVENUES



FY 2018-19 OPERATING EXPENSES



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.

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

3,658 volunteers dedicated
22,462 hours to the Urban Ecology Center.

That's **\$564,245** of contributed labor!*

**Based on a \$25.12 per hour value determined by Independent Sector for the state of Wisconsin.*

*Volunteers help plant native trees in the Milwaukee Rotary Centennial Arboretum.
Photo: Matt Unrau*

HERE'S TO YOU

The Urban Ecology Center thanks you, our generous donors, for your support in the 2018-19 fiscal year.

We are grateful for the support of the following foundations, corporations, and individuals who made a contribution to support our mission, programs, or operations. Donor levels reflect total giving for the year, including gifts-in-kind. A full listing of donors can be found on our website.

Symbols next to a donor's name reflect that either a portion of their gift or their entire gift supported one of the following: Milwaukee Rotary Centennial Arboretum (*); Menomonee Valley – From the Ground Up (#)



A highlight from a stellar summer of community programming: a Kayaking for Beginners group explores the beautiful Washington Park lagoon.

\$25,000 and Up

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We had the help of 28 wonderful interns this year. Here, Community Science interns collect data on a sunny summer day.

Every effort was made to ensure that this list of donors is accurate. If you made a gift between September 2018 and August 2019 and your name is not listed or is listed incorrectly, please contact the Center's Development Office at (414) 964-8505.



A class of students learns about bird banding at Washington Park from GIS & Field Data Coordinator Ethan Bott.

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Here at the Urban Ecology Center, we encourage nature exploration (and in this case, admiration!) in every season.



Volunteer and talented photographer Bruce Halmo snapped this photo of a Field Sparrow in the natural areas we steward.

GIFTS IN MEMORY OF

Gifts given September 2018-August 2019 in honor or memory of an individual that are not designated to a specific fund support the Urban Ecology Center's Endowment. Donor name appears below the person being recognized.

§ - Either a portion of gift or entire gift supported the Deep Roots Native Tree & Plant Program

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Every effort was made to ensure that this list of donors is accurate. If you made a gift between September 2018 and August 2019 and your name is not listed or is listed incorrectly, please contact the Urban Ecology Center's Development Office at (414) 964-8505.



Prairie Smoke, a native wildflower planted by Land Stewardship staff, sways in a summer breeze outside the front doors of our Riverside Park branch.

Rain couldn't stop hundreds of happy hikers of all ages from having fun - and raising funds! - at HKE MKE, our annual fundraising hike in urban nature.

JOIN THE FUN!

VIEW OUR FULL PROGRAM & EVENTS CALENDAR ONLINE

EARTH DAY OF SERVICE

April 18, 2020

All three UEC branches

All ages | Register online

Let's have a working celebration of the Earth! Bring your friends and spend a morning helping in our parks. Meet new people and have fun making a difference!

SUMMER SOLSTICE SOIRÉE

June 20, 2020

Riverside Park

Join us as we celebrate the 13th Annual Summer Solstice Soirée, a unique gala-style evening in celebration and support of the Urban Ecology Center.



HKE MKE 2020

Autumn 2020

Riverside Park

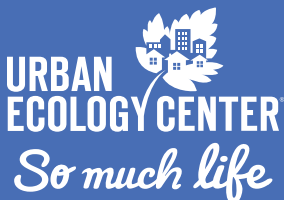
Let's hike Milwaukee! Our annual fall fundraiser takes you on a scenic hike through the heart of the city — with lots of fun stops along the way!



You can connect more people in cities to nature and each other.

Volunteer. Give. Participate.

Learn more at www.urbanecologycenter.org!



Riverside Park

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(414) 344-5460

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