



2021 ANNUAL REPORT

ANNUAL REPORT

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Wilderness Program burns bright

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Donations fuel scholarship
program as endowment grows



FOUNDATION LOOKS AHEAD TO 100 YEARS

The year 2021 was the most important year in the history of this organization. I write this knowing all that we have overcome in our nearly 100-year history, including two world wars, the Great Depression, the 2008 financial crisis—even the great Rainy Lake flood of 2014!

Through all of this, we never shut down camp—not until the pandemic forced us to cancel the 2020 season. Had we been closed for a second year in a row, like so many camps, the bells on Deer Island and Ogichi's campus may have stayed silent.

As we have come to learn during these challenging times, nothing is guaranteed, not even time in the Northwoods. But we did prevail, opening our doors again in 2021 thanks to a monumental effort by our staff, supporters and, most importantly, families who couldn't wait to send their sons and daughters back to Rainy Lake.

By the time this Annual Report lands in your mailbox, we will be preparing for yet another summer at Kooch-i-ching and Ogichi. And with our staff and campers vaccinated against the coronavirus, we will once again have access to our favorite lakes and rivers in Canada.

In the pages ahead, you will read about our Urban Wilderness Program, which is hiring new staff, constructing a Mobile Makerspace (think workshop-on-wheels) and creating a leadership pipeline that ends at Owakonze, our Canadian outpost. You will also read about

Kathy Dix, Ogichi's founding director, and her enduring legacy.

You might notice, too, we have four new board members: Katie Kemme, Rajan Kamath, Pebaamibines (aka Dennis Jones) and Noah Croom. Welcome, all!

Finally, be sure to look for an email or postcard about our Oral History Project. We have partnered with a publishing company in Dallas to capture hundreds of stories from former campers and staff members. The final product will be a beautiful coffee table book commemorating our 100-year history.

For now, our focus is on the present, the upcoming camp season, and the wilderness adventures ahead.



HUGH HALLER

President & CEO

Camping & Education Foundation

URBAN WILDERNESS PROGRAM BURNS BRIGHT

BY HUGH HALLER

It seems like just yesterday that a group of students from Gamble Montessori gathered on the banks of the Ohio River to experience the great outdoors, if only for a few hours.

Paddling through an urban landscape in voyageur-style canoes was only part of the adventure. At a mock campsite near the mouth of the Licking River, they rotated through stations teaching fire-by-friction, fireplace construction and baking in a reflector oven. The highlight of the day was a friction-fire teambuilding exercise that saw the students use a five-foot-tall cedar spindle and a length of rope to create a smoldering ember.

For those determined to create a new program for urban youth, that ember represented something much larger.

In the years that followed, that ember was stoked into a flame, and today the Urban Wilderness Program is burning bright. With a colorful new logo, catchy tagline (“The Forest Next Door”) and forthcoming

website, the program has established itself as a local leader in outdoor education.

To date, we have partnered with nearly 25 schools and organizations, introducing thousands of students to the outdoors through our core activities: boatbuilding, woodsmanship and canoeing. Some of those students have made their way to Kooch-i-ching and Ogichi on full scholarships, and two are now on staff.

Aaron Parker, the head of curriculum development at Aiken High School, describes the impact of a recent boatbuilding experience. “Each morning, our students bombarded the teachers with requests to join the canoe build,” he says. “What developed was the formation of a learning community that had been missing all year. Students finally got to work together and got to know each other in a meaningful way.”

Despite the program’s successes, there have been setbacks. In December 2020, we withdrew our proposal for a permanent Urban

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Cover: Kooch-i-ching camper Jasper Holena looks back from the bow of a canoe during his trip in the Boundary Waters last summer. (Ben Woods) Previous page: Ogichi staff member Emma Simmons eats a piece of watermelon. (Liz Hattemer)



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Business Administrator

ALEX ERNST

Wilderness Trips Director

BART VOLLMER

Facilities Director

BILL JOHNSON

Senior Accountant

STEVE SULLIVAN

Transportation Coordinator

Left: Keishon Middleton competes in a Little Council event at Kooch-i-ching.
(Jay Hunsche)

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JAY STOEHR

Senior Emeritus

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PAT BOWEN

Financial Advisor

Board members as of May 1, 2022

Right: Leah Dah paddles past a collection of pictographs during the Adventure Crew canoe trip in the Boundary Waters last summer. (Steve Luebke)





With a colorful new logo, catchy tagline and forthcoming website, the Urban Wilderness Program has established itself as a local leader in outdoor education.

► **CONTINUED**

Wilderness Center in Cincinnati's Burnet Woods due to a lack of neighborhood support for the project.

Not to be deterred, we pivoted to the concept of a "Mobile Makerspace," a 22-foot trailer with tools, workbenches and a hydraulic deck that will allow us to bring our boatbuilding program to other cities. The Makerspace is being built by Caged Crow Customs in Wisconsin, and we're hoping for delivery in April.

The most difficult hurdle for the Urban Wilderness Program, however, was the sudden loss of Robert Shuman. Robert had become a mainstay of the program, teaching kids to build canoes in his deliberate Shuman style and even creating an afterschool leadership program that combined outdoor education, environmental awareness and good old Kooch and Ogichi chutzpah.

Since Robert's passing, Trace Dunning, the Urban Wilderness Program manager, has made two new staff hires: Kyle Oblong, who we met through the Experiential Leadership Course and canoe trip that we sponsored in partnership with the University of Cincinnati, and

CONTINUES ►

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► **CONTINUED**

Andy Silva, who participated in a canoe build at Aiken and was on staff at Kooch-i-ching last summer.

A major goal of the Urban Wilderness Program now is to create a pipeline between the program and our new pristine wilderness outpost at Owakonze. Through this pipeline, students who have helped build a canoe in Cincinnati would have an opportunity to put their skills—and boat—to use on a weeklong canoe trip.

Last summer, we partnered with Adventure Crew, a Cincinnati nonprofit that works with underprivileged teens, to send a co-ed trip to the Boundary Waters under the Owakonze banner.



“The trip also exposed our teens to new experiences that will stick with them forever: portaging between bodies of water, canoeing alongside beaver dams, listening to the song of a loon, and drinking water directly from a lake,” says Katie Kemme, who co-led the trip with Steve Luebke and runs the Zoo Academy in Cincinnati. “The participants are stronger for the challenges they overcame.”

The dream of a permanent space for the Urban Wilderness Program is still very much alive. With an expanded curriculum, indoor and outdoor classrooms, and an afterschool mentoring program, we could reach even more kids, introducing them to the magic of the wilderness and the joy of being alive. That, too, is an ember worth stoking.

Above: the new Urban Wilderness Program logo. Right: Kooch-i-ching camper Jack Kazdal loads a wannigan after returning from his trip last summer. (Jay Hunsche)



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Chair, Kooch-i-ching

TORY KOTSINONOS**JR VERKAMP**

Director, Kooch-i-ching

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Board members as of May 1, 2022



Strong Spirited

**THE ENDURING LEGACY
OF KATHY DIX, OGICHI'S
FOUNDING DIRECTOR**

BY BEN WOODS

It was August 2004, and the Ogichi Daa Kwe Founders Committee was meeting to discuss candidates for the camp's first director. Following a national search, the committee had narrowed the field to two individuals, recalls chairwoman Janet Vandembark.

One of those individuals was Kathy Dix, a Chicago native and the mother of two Kooch-i-ching campers. Kathy had also recently returned from the Ogichi Inaugural Trip, a 10-day trip down the Turtle River that was designed to test the hypothesis that young women had as much to gain from wilderness adventures as their counterparts at Kooch-i-ching.

During the Founders Committee meeting, Kathy confirmed that hypothesis in a glowing report. When she finished speaking, George Simmons, another committee member, turned to Janet and growled, "Ogichi's first director is right in front of us. No need to overthink this one."

Over the next 15 years, Kathy transformed a tumbledown fishing lodge into one of the finest wilderness camps in the world—worthy of its association with Kooch-i-ching in every way, and distinct in many others. By the time Kathy retired in 2020, passing the role to Johanna Ernst, her legacy was forever intertwined with the camp she helped found.

"She was Ogichi's John Holden and then some," says Hugh Haller. "The ultimate pied piper in an era ripe with challenges, not the least of which was convincing anyone who would listen that young women deserve a chance to experience wilderness tripping."

Hugh, who became the Camping & Education Foundation president a few years after Kathy assumed her role, recalls meeting her for the first time. "I was sitting in the lobby of a hotel in Cincinnati waiting for my first round of interviews with the Camping & Education Foundation," Hugh says. "I didn't really know what to expect or who was involved in the process. A few minutes before my interview was to begin, this woman with the most engaging smile approached me out of nowhere and asked, 'Are you Hugh Haller? You look like you would be him. I'm Kathy Dix, director of the girl's camp, Ogichi Daa Kwe. Good luck.'"

"It wasn't what she said, but how she said it, as if she knew your life story instantly," Hugh adds. "I am forever grateful that we walked this walk together. I will always remember getting lost in conversation and heading in the wrong direction down I-95."

Among her many leadership qualities, Kathy was quick to empower those around her. "We often joked, during the earlier years at Ogichi, that if you had no experience in a certain field, you were naturally the perfect person for the job, and would end up in charge," says Haley Simmons, a longtime camper and staff member.

"As staff, we laughed ourselves to tears as we learned new skills and found ways to make seemingly impossible tasks come together. Kathy's unwavering trust allowed staff and campers alike to jump into new experiences by embracing silliness and imperfection," she says.

When Liz Hattemer arrived at Ogichi to take on the role of camp photographer in 2015, Kathy grabbed her hand. "Before you unpack,

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we're going to stain the floor in the new staff cabin. I want to make it special for staff this summer," she told Liz.

"Within minutes, we were swabbing the cabin floor a deep rich chestnut, admiring Bart Vollmer's fine carpentry—me in my work boots, Kathy in her espadrilles—moving back and forth together across the room," Liz says. "We returned the next day ready to apply the second coat, dismayed to find somebody had been in the cabin, leaving footprints all over our fresh handiwork."

"As we applied the second coat to the cabin floor, we speculated (and griped) at length about who could have possibly been dumb enough to traipse about a freshly stained floor. We suspected Bart himself or maybe Shuman, coming in to get a power cord," she says. "Then, like photographic film in a dark room, the footprints emerged—more defined with every stroke of our brushes—revealing an even clearer set of prints in total lockstep: my size 10 work boots and Kathy's petite size 7 espadrilles."

Upon realizing their mistake, Liz and Kathy laughed hysterically before confessing to Bart, who wasn't upset, knowing the footprints would disappear over time. "We all laughed, saying, 'It's the Ogichi way,'" Liz says.

In her time at Ogichi, Kathy perfected the art of adaptation—effortlessly making the best of bad situations. "She has a gift for gracefully shooting from the hip when necessary, which is a lot of the time at

camp," says Johanna. "Kathy advised me to plan as best I could and then expect all of those plans to change. The key, she said, is to act as though you knew all those changes were coming and had already planned for them. This is nothing short of genius and a skill that very few people can pull off well. Kathy has it mastered."

"Camp and she were destined for each other," says Kathy's daughter Libby, who has been involved with the camp since attending the Inaugural Trip in 2004. "Who could have done what she did? Twinkle in her eye, not afraid to hear no, will always find a way, creative, spontaneous, executive-minded, direct, loving and uncannily wise."

There is a recording of Kathy as a 4- or 5-year-old girl talking about "taking the precious little flowers to Canada," Libby says. "She did, and we have all benefited from her perseverance, vision and destiny."

Rosie Ecker, who was a camper and staff member at Ogichi for nearly 15 years, is among the many young women who have benefited from Kathy's leadership, having grown up at Ogichi as the camp itself came of age. "I don't remember much of 2006, but I do remember it was the year I met Kathy Dix. I think most Ogichi alumni remember meeting Kathy, because it's at this moment your life seems to change," Rosie says.

"As Kathy watched me grow from child to adult, I watched her grow Ogichi," she says. "The infirmary used to be the men's restroom at Rainy Lake Lodge. Now it's an entire building. I was the youngest

CONTINUES ►

Right: On the Inaugural Trip, Kathy shoots a set of rapids with Curtis Simmons, enjoys a beverage at a campsite, and reads a book next to Tory Patterson. (Ken Neiheisel)





► CONTINUED

camper my first summer, at 12 years old. Now there is a Chickadee program dedicated to our youngest campers, starting at 7 years old. We once stored our shoes in the old appliances left in the Rainy Lake Lodge cabins. Now there are shoe racks, drawers and shelves for stinky footwear.”

“She made the early chapters of Ogichi so enjoyable that if we’d had the choice, we’d have kept our hiking boots in ovens forever. But Kathy was somehow able to mold, transition and grow the camp we knew and loved into the same camp we know and love.”

Those who worked with Kathy outside the camp season saw even more of her captivating personality and rare talents. Carrie Alt, a former Ogichi parent and board chair, remembers helping Kathy host the annual Friends of Ogichi reunions in Kenilworth, Illinois.

“As the guests arrived, I would station myself near the front door, watching camper eyes widen and smiles broaden at the first glimpse of a summer friend, cabin counselor, trip buddy or beloved Elder. Hugs abounded, stories flowed freely, adventures were recreated, and amid all of this was Kathy, radiating her amazing energy and connecting people effortlessly with her engaging smile, warmth and passion for camp.”

“She was the best travel buddy,” says Kooch-i-ching Director JR Verkamp. “We spent so many nights on the road together. Some of our events were spectacular, some were complete busts. Kathy never frowned about anything and always found the good in our travels.”

“I miss the days of scrolling through our phones, showing pictures of our families, and having ‘one more’ during a late-night meal at the hotel,” JR says, adding that more than anything, he missed Kathy’s ability to come up with metaphors for life lessons. “I wish she were here right now to help me come up with one,” he says.

“I often find myself asking, ‘What would Kathy do?’” says Peggy Vollmer, an Ogichi Elder and one of the Kathy’s closest camp friends. “Kathy has taught me so much over the years and oh, the memories! Like the trouble we thought we were in when the Kooch staff arrived at RLL as we ate lunch. We both thought we were in trouble from the dancing at Sha Sha the night before!” she adds.

Bart Vollmer, Peggy’s husband and Ogichi’s builder, is equally grateful for Kathy’s friendship. “We had so many good times with plenty of laughs. It just all went too fast,” he says. “Kathy should be so proud of what she has built and the blueprint she developed for the future of Camp Ogichi. Her friendship, opinions and pointed advice mean more to me than she’ll ever know.”

Today, although Kathy no longer walks the trails of Ogichi’s lakeside campus, her presence can be felt. Her strong spirit resides in the trees, the buildings, and the countless young women she inspired and empowered.

“When I drop my own daughter off for her first summer one day,” Rosie says, “I’ll remind her to wear sunscreen, make new friends, and to think of Kathy when it’s her turn to share at Grateful Circle.”

GIVING SUPPORTS TUITION AS ENDOWMENT GROWS

BY HUGH HALLER

It was another tremendous year for the Foundation's Annual Fund, scholarship program and endowment.

For a second straight year, we raised more than \$1 million in Annual Fund donations. Total gifts numbered 1,036, including donations from 71 first-time supporters. We continued to make inroads with young alums; 95 donors gave less than \$100 and 41 made recurring donations (both are indicators of a growing base of support). We also received a record 20 stock gifts and 15 employer matching gifts. Private foundations contributed 41 donations and our summer staff made exactly 72 gifts for the second year in a row. (BJ, that is not a misprint!)

Restricted gifts, meanwhile, contributed to the growth of our tuition assistance program. In 2021, Kooch-i-ching and Ogichi provided tuition assistance to nearly 80 young men and women, including more than 30 first-time campers. Funding for this program exceeded \$300,000, thanks to support from 13 partner organizations, such as Operation Breakthrough and A Thousand Summers.

Finally, our endowment experienced a second consecutive year of significant growth. It began the year with roughly \$7.2 million in total assets and was valued at more than \$8.2 million at the end of 2021. Fueled by a third year of strong growth in the stock market, the endowment posted a return of 14.35% in 2021 and a three-year annualized return of 15.6%—net of fees. Seventy percent of our portfolio remains allocated in equities (including 5% in private equity), with the rest allocated to fixed income. The private equity portion was up 29.95% last year and 24.32% over the past three years.

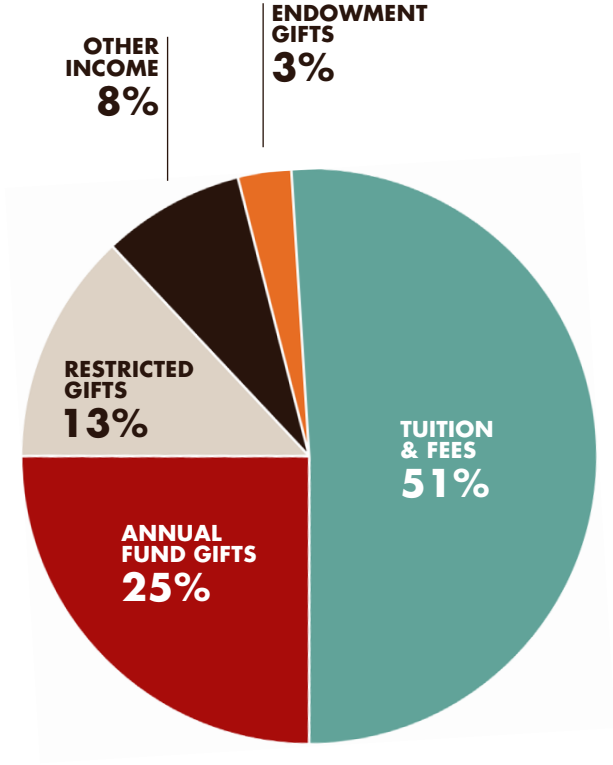
Our endowment is made up of more than 20 individual funds that are either restricted to specific areas, or for unrestricted use. Our spending rate policy allows for up to 5% of the trailing 12 quarters' average portfolio value to be granted.

The endowment is critical to our financial independence and its importance will only continue to grow. Camper scholarships, staff training and campus upkeep are just some of the areas where the endowment will provide additional value for generations to come.

Right: Owen Pence participates in a Witch's Broom Ride competition at Kooch-i-ching. (Jay Hunsche)



INCOME & EXPENSES



SOURCES OF INCOME

INCOME

Tuition & Fees	\$2,506,717
Tuition Assistance	(248,219)
Annual Fund Gifts	1,100,519
Capital & Restricted Gifts	550,298
Other Income*	351,258
Endowment Gifts	149,448

TOTAL INCOME 4,410,021

EXPENSES

Program	2,154,574
Land, Buildings & Equipment	462,889
Fundraising & Marketing	131,173
General & Administrative	1,051,020

TOTAL EXPENSES \$3,799,656

Net Variance** 610,365

GIVING

\$1,800,265
TOTAL GIFTS

\$1,100,519
ANNUAL FUND

\$149,448
ENDOWMENT GIFTS

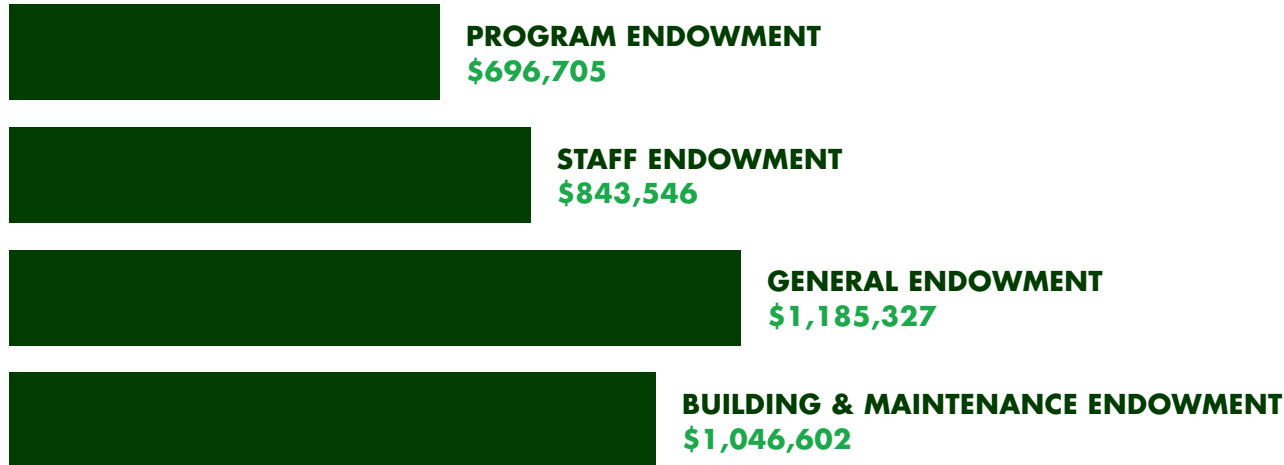
\$550,298
RESTRICTED GIFTS

*Includes PPP 1 loan forgiveness of \$219,000.

**Positive variance is earmarked for strategic projects and debt reduction in 2022.

ENDOWMENT FUNDS

KOOCH-I-CHING



OGICHI DAA KWE



The Kooch-i-ching Program Endowment and Staff Endowment include the Wadsworth Endowment.

FOUNDATION



POHL FAMILY FUNDS
\$387,429



DEXTER DAVISON TRIPPING ENDOWMENT
\$424,348



WILLIAM JOHNSON EDUCATIONAL ENDOWMENT
\$169,721



RONALD COLEMAN STAFF DEVELOPMENT ENDOWMENT
\$179,784



TIM HEINLE LEGACY ENDOWMENT
\$107,200



JOHN GRATE NATIVE AMERICAN ENDOWMENT
\$107,254

SCHOLARSHIPS

SCHOLARSHIP ENDOWMENT
\$2,802,575

\$8,225,590

TOTAL ENDOWMENT

SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS

Tikam Berry Fund
Stephen C. Bryant Fund
Mason Garner Fund
George F. Hattemer Fund
John L. Holden Fund
Adelaide & Stub Muhl Fund
Ed Rueve Fund
Marge & Charles J. Schott Fund
Geoffrey M. Smith Fund
Strong Spirited Fund
Kooch-i-ching General Fund

GENEROUS SUPPORTERS

LAW OF THE WOODS LEVEL \$25,000 & UP

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Austin E. Knowlton Foundation (9)
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GRAND MEDICINE LEVEL \$15,000—\$24,999

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Mr. Bradley Smith (9)
UnbridledACTS (3)
Mr. Randolph Wadsworth (3)
Mr. and Mrs. Michael Walsh (3)
Mr. Thomas Williams (7)
Williams Foundation (4)

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Suzy and Beau Brauer (1)
Chemed Foundation (1)
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Heinle Family Charitable Fund (3)
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James H. Woods Foundation (28)

The number next to a donor's name indicates consecutive years of giving.

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\$5,000—\$9,999

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 American Endowment Foundation (1)
 Anonymous (4)
 Anonymous (28)
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 Mr. Kenneth Green (2)
 Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Guirl (9)
 Mr. and Mrs. Richard Haller (13)
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 Dr. David Herman (1)
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 Mr. Stanley Hooker III (27)

Mr. and Mrs. Gregory Hughes (4)
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 Ayco Charitable Foundation (3)
 The Huguenard Family (6)
 J.P. Morgan Charitable Giving Fund (5)
 Jennifer Woods Tierney Foundation (3)
 Lair Kennedy Jr. (1)
 KLAATU Fund of the
 Marin Community Foundation (4)
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 Family Community Fund (1)
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 One Capital Management, LLC (5)
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 Mr. Robert Thompson (2)
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 Mr. Nat Roberts and Mrs. Laura Zung (2)

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\$2,500—\$4,999

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 Anonymous (5)
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 Mr. and Mrs. Kirk Baldwin (9)
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 Ms. Lara Brightwell & Mr. Jim Dexheimer (5)
 Mr. and Mrs. Brad Brockhoff (8)
 Mr. Jerome Clifford (6)
 Ms. Cinda Collins (5)
 Community Foundation of the Ozarks (7)
 Stephanie and Bob Day (2)
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 Mr. and Mrs. Kevin Henderson (22)
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 Mr. and Mrs. Ryan London (3)
 Mr. and Mrs. Martin Malloy (16)

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Mr. and Mrs. Jeremy Witham (15)

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\$1,000 – \$2,499

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Ilanthe and John Andress (1)
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Anning (7)
Anonymous (6)
Anonymous (2)
Anonymous (18)

Anonymous (1)
Anonymous (2)
Mr. and Mrs. Henry Bangert (5)
Mr. and Mrs. Charles Barnes (3)
Dr. Chip Barnes (3)
Mr. and Mrs. Reed Beery (6)
Mr. Gavin Campbell & Ms. Diana Aixala (7)
Mr. Brown Cannon (9)
Mr. Timothy Carmignani (15)
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Brianna Chamberlin (2)
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Mr. Dylan Conroy (3)
Mr. Robert Cowden III (1)
Mr. and Mrs. Tony Davis (7)
Mr. J. Michael Downey Jr. (3)
Ms. Janet Downey (3)
Ms. Kari Dunning (4)
Nancy and Joe Dwyer (3)
Mr. and Mrs. James Ellis (6)
Mr. Douglas Eustice (9)
Mr. R. Copeland Filoon (11)
First Midwest Bancorp, Inc. (2)
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Mr. and Mrs. Chris Frutkin (1)
Mr. Stuart Galvin (3)
Kate Garfield (1)

Mr. Karl Geiger (1)
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Greater Kansas City
Community Foundation (10)
Mr. Lon P. Haines (10)
Haines Consulting Group, LLC (2)
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 Mr. Erik Aufderheide (1)
 Dr. Paul Blackburn (1)
 Mr. and Mrs. James Bowers (4)
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 Mr. John Brainard (6)
 Mr. and Mrs. Patrick Brandstatter (12)
 Mr. and Mrs. Charles H. Brown III (22)
 C.H. Robinson (2)
 Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Christianson (13)
 Mr. and Mrs. John Clagett (10)
 Mr. Silas Collins (3)
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 Northwest Missouri (1)
 Mr. and Mrs. Kevin Conry (22)
 Mr. Patrick Conry (8)
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Anna Bax (2)
Mr. Matthew Beach (2)
Ms. Susan Blunt (3)
Mr. Andrew Brandstatter (9)
Mr. Hunter Brightwell (1)
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Mr. Thomas Bunn (3)
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Burke (1)
Mr. James Butz (1)
Mr. Peter Centner (3)
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Mr. Evan Dowell (1)
Erin and Scott Duba (1)
Mr. and Mrs. Roland Ecker (13)
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Mr. Richard Gorog (3)
Lyle & Cheryl Hanzal (1)
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Mr. and Mrs. Jason Heffner (7)
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Mr. Timothy Hughes (2)
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Carter and Robert Isham (1)
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Mr. William Kite (3)
Mr. and Mrs. William Kite (18)
Jennifer Landolt (1)
Mr. William T. Lincoln (1)
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 Ms. Shalae Warner (16)
Mr. and Mrs. Gary Machak (13)
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Sarah Baker (1)

Robert Baldwin (1)
Eamonn Bell (1)
Mr. Robert Beveridge (4)
Gunnar Black (2)
Haakon Black (2)
Mr. and Mrs. Michael Black (7)
Dr. and Mrs. H. Thomas Blum (3)
Mr. Benjamin Brandstatter (3)
Mr. and Mrs. Matthew Brokaw (5)
Ms. Lisa Burgess (2)
Mr. William Butt Jr. (1)
Dr. Richard Cammerer (13)
Ms. Patricia Carr (3)
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Cherene Ahlborn (1)
Wyatt Amdahl (1)
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Anonymous (7)
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Mr. Billy Barnes (1)
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Mr. Benjamin McGarey (1)
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The Midwesterns

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Ms. Lara Brightwell and Mr. Jim Dexheimer

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Right: An Ogichi camper stands at the start of a portage trail in the Boundary Waters. (Alice Petty)



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