

TETON SCIENCE SCHOOLS

2021 ANNUAL REPORT



Learning Is In Our Nature



Dear TSS Community,

First and foremost, I want to express my sincerest appreciation to each and every one of you who supported Teton Science Schools during a critical time. Without your support, the organization would not be poised to resume full operations in the coming months.

The pandemic caused many educational organizations to struggle and dig deep - into our resolve, financial reserves, and more. TSS was not spared the additional level of challenges that COVID-19 and other impacts brought forth. Through strong and forward-looking decisions, we were able to weather the storm even though we shuttered major parts of our organization's programming. For the first half of the fiscal year, our campuses were unusually quiet and TSS quickly learned to embrace

remote work and virtual learning for our faculty, staff and students.

When I first arrived on campus in May to interview for the interim head of school role for Mountain Academy, I immediately felt a sense of possibility. With each meeting, I knew that it was the people who made up the TSS community that fueled the mission and passion of this unique educational institution. There truly is no other place like TSS in the educational ecosystem around the world.

Stepping into the CEO role in August, one of my goals is to help TSS reach its potential as a leading educational institution focused on academic rigor through hands-on learning, community engagement and conservation. Success will be measured by



Shawn Kelly
CEO

the organization's financial health, programmatic sustainability, and by the positive student impact through TSS's educational approach.

This fall, we hosted our first residential program on the Jackson Campus in over a year. This school group's visit coincided with our October board meetings. To come out of a meeting, and be surrounded by both the distinct sounds and contagious energy of students at play, was absolutely magical. These are just some of the tangible reminders of why we are here and how important the work of Teton Science Schools is in furthering place-based learning.

The return of our vibrant community marks our path forward. I am personally excited to see TSS get back to the business of educating students of all ages and making an impact locally, nationally, and globally. Thank you for your ongoing support of TSS and being an engaged part of our community. As we approach 2022, I look forward to connecting with you to share what we have in store as we re-envision the important work of TSS and continue to serve our students and mission.

Shawn Kelly

The Murie Spirit Lives On



"Docent Dan" McIlhenny



Mardy & Olaus Murie

The spirit of the Muries remains ever strong this year, exemplified through two remarkable honors bestowed upon Murie Ranch matriarch Mardy Murie (in memoriam) and long-time Murie Ranch Docent, Dan McIlhenny in 2021.

Grandmother of the Conservation Movement

Margaret "Mardy" Murie was inducted into the Alaska Women's Hall of Fame in a virtual celebration on October 18th. A founding board member of Teton Science Schools, Mardy spent her childhood in Fairbanks, Alaska, and was the first woman to graduate from the University of Alaska in 1924.

She is the author of several books including *Two in the Far North* and *Wapiti Wilderness*. Mardy played a key role in the passage of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, the greatest land preservation act in US history.

Mardy served on the council of the Wilderness Society and is an Honorary Park Ranger. She received an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Alaska and the prestigious Audubon Medal. In 1998, she was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Bill Clinton for her lifetime service to conservation. Mardy lived on the Murie Ranch in Grand Teton National Park until her death in 2003.

Mardy ends her memoir, *Two in the Far North*, with the question: "Do I dare to believe that one of my great-grandchildren may someday journey to Sheenjek and still find the gray wolf trotting across the ice of Lobo Lake?" She made preserving the wilderness her life's work and looked to future generations to carry on this important legacy.

Docent Dan Retires

Grand Teton National Park Chief of Interpretation and Partnerships Vickie Mates awarded Murie Ranch's "Docent Dan" McIlhenny the prestigious title of Honorary Interpretive Park Ranger this fall. McIlhenny announced his retirement in October after serving for more than seven years. McIlhenny joined the Murie Ranch staff as Docent in 2014.

An avid storyteller, Dan came to life when surrounded by friends and strangers on the front porch of the main house, sharing the story of the Muries. He would weave tales of their time together in Alaska, the home they created together in Wyoming, and the enduring impact they made on the conservation movement over the course of 80 years. During his tenure, Dan helped connect people to the surrounding public lands of Grand Teton National Park and inspired Murie Ranch visitors to engage with nature.

The Murie Ranch is a National Historic Landmark district that sits at the intersection of sage, forest and riparian habitats in Grand Teton National Park. The Muries purchased the STS dude ranch in 1945, which served as their home and a hub for the conservation movement. In 1997, The Murie Center was established as a non-profit to steward the Murie Ranch and the legacy of the Muries. The Murie Ranch became an official campus of Teton Science Schools in 2015.

Murie Spirit of Conservation Recognizes Innovator Rose Marcario & Youth Activist Robbie Bond



Rose Marcario, Murie Spirit of Conservation Award recipient



Robbie Bond, Murie Spirit of Conservation Rising Leader Award recipient

In its 10th year, the Murie Spirit of Conservation Award is an annual honor bestowed upon an individual who has made marked contributions to conservation efforts and has proven to be a leader in the important work of environmental stewardship.

Former Patagonia CEO Rose Marcario received the 2021 Murie Spirit of Conservation award for her decades-long work modeling social and corporate responsibility and advocating for climate and environmental policy in the business world.

Known for her leadership for equity and inclusion in the workplace, Rose championed businesses to take a more active role in protecting our environment and also influenced critical societal changes such as family-friendly work policies. Fast Company named her one of the most “creative and innovative CEOs.” Today, Rose serves on the boards of Meati, a plant-based food company, and Rivian, an electric vehicle company, and is a partner at venture capital and private equity firm ReGen Ventures.

Each year, the Murie Spirit of Conservation Awardee has the opportunity to select an individual to receive the companion Murie Spirit of Conservation Rising Leader Award. Rose selected Robbie Bond, a high school freshman who has dedicated the last five years to raising awareness of the importance of America's national parks and monuments amongst kids, and in the process, making activism cool.

Born and raised on the island of Oahu, Robbie was inspired by his grandfather at an early age to care for the natural environment. In 2017, at nine years old, Robbie founded Kids Speak for Parks to ensure that our national parks and monuments will remain protected long into the future. Robbie hopes to inspire his peers across the country to learn, understand and appreciate how vital access to public lands are to our country and why their preservation is of utmost importance. His organization engages kids by speaking at local schools and Robbie hopes to use videos and other technology to help bring other kids along his journey so they can also experience our amazing natural wonders.

For a week in early September, Robbie and his parents had the honor of staying at a cabin on the Murie Ranch campus. During his time in Wyoming, Robbie joined a Teton 5th cohort at the Kelly Campus for a day of place-based learning and presented to fourth and fifth graders at the Jackson Campus. For more about Robbie, check out his featured episode of Marvel's Hero Project “Roving Robbie” streaming on Disney+.



At a virtual event held in September, Rose (R) engaged with the Honorable M. Margaret McKeown (M), TSS board member and chair of the TSS Murie Committee, in a healthy discourse on topics close to both their hearts. Here are some highlights from their virtual “front porch conversation” - the full Q&A is available online at TetonScience.org.

M: What does the spirit of conservation mean to you?

R: I think of spirited people committed to saving wild places and protecting what they love. Being a voice to those places and creatures who don't have a voice. It also means taking action in whatever form you can, in whatever role that you're in. I cannot think of a higher calling than protecting the beauty of nature.

M: You had a successful career path in finance, and then you joined Patagonia. What does conservation mean to you professionally?

R: At the time, I was looking for ways I could live my values through my work. I wanted to participate in the business world with my skills, leadership and commerce, and provide a different way of executing

on my values. It's about making business more interdependent and more connected to people and the planet. When I became CEO of Patagonia, I felt that we had to do so much more. The times really demanded that we do more. The things I'm most proud of ... are bringing attention to the serious and significant threats to our public lands, over 3M acres and bringing awareness to our customers that their consumption habits affect the planet. I'm proud of connecting our customers with our causes. A lot of people are worried about climate crisis and biodiversity loss, but don't know what to do about it. We gave them a way to connect with groups who are protecting wilderness; and helped them think about wilderness, not just as a transactional relationship where you go to have fun, but a place that you love and want to protect.

Recognizing A 50-Year Partnership Focused on Connecting Students to Their Backyard



In September 2021, Teton 5th commemorated its 50th anniversary, as fifth graders from Teton County, Wyoming public elementary schools visited the Teton Science Schools for a two day-long field education program. TSS believes that students learn more when they are engaged in the learning process and when learning is embedded in the context of place.

For the past 50 years, TSS shared that philosophy with local students and teachers as they visited Grand Teton National Park to learn more about their own backyard. During Teton 5th programming, students spend their days exploring the natural world, undertaking scientific investigations, and developing interpersonal skills. Normally the programming occurs as a two-and-half day-long residential experience at the TSS Kelly Campus. This year and last, because of COVID, it was two days of day programming in Grand Teton National Park. Typically scheduled early in the school year, the trip plays a key role in class bonding that bears fruit for months to come.

"Every new 5th grader's first question is: When is TSS?" said Niki Walters, a 5th-grade teacher. "This means that students are sharing how cool the program is with their younger siblings. Teton 5th gets so many children out in the woods and gives them a chance to be impacted by nature when they may not have done that on their own or had the means to."

Connecting to nature

Instructors often start the program by teaching about community ecology and helping students understand the plants and trees they see around them and why they thrive in their current environment. Students are encouraged to observe the landscape around them and catalog different creatures they notice as they explore and discover.

This, in turn, allows students to ask questions about why animals are the way they are: Why are an eagle's talons structured the way they are? Why does a weasel turn white in the winter? All of these curiosities and questions are prompted when students have the opportunity to observe and interact with flora and fauna in their environment.

A key aspect of Teton 5th is engaging students in the local legacy of Olaus and Mardy Murie and the conservation work that they did to make this valley

what it is today — a bastion for plants and animals and human exploration. Whether local students have spent time in the park or it's their first time visiting, Teton 5th provides an opportunity to increase equity and access to national parks and outdoor learning.

Connecting to each other

Not only does Teton 5th focus on studying the environment, but the program also focuses on social and emotional learning at a pivotal time. Students come together in a new social setting and learn to navigate the social dynamics of a dining lodge and learn accountability for making their own lunch and making sure it gets into their backpacks before heading out for a field day.

Cheri Witz, one of the teachers who advocates for the program, shares, "for many [students], it's their first 'away' experience which allows them a sense of independence. I love how kids had chores and the excitement to pitch in."

As part of social learning, students get to see that their teachers are real people, too. When students see their teacher as another human being and another member of the community, they become more engaged and more eager to learn in that classroom space because they understand the human connection. In the same way, the teachers' relationships with the students grow because the teachers have more time to interact with their students and more time to dedicate to supporting the whole student — their struggle to get ready in the morning, their triumph when they hike to the top of a big hill, and other challenges and successes that may not appear in a classroom space but connect to the learning experience.

When the field-based experience aligns and supplements the classroom experience, field educators at TSS know they are delivering on the organization's mission. TSS is proud of its 50-year relationship with Teton County schools and looks forward to continuing to work with the school district to ensure these experiences are relevant and available for their kids for years to come.



Mountain Academy Celebrates 20 Years of Visionary Education

This September marked the start of the 20th school year for Mountain Academy, a two-decade legacy built on a hands-on educational approach fit for the school's awe-inspiring natural surroundings.

Founded in 2001, Journeys School was the first independent preschool to 12th grade day school in Jackson Hole, Mountain Academy now educates approximately 265 students each year across two campuses, with an alumni network of 150 graduates.

To start, the school hired eight inquisitive educators, including a number of TSS Graduate Program alumni, as its founding faculty. Given the faculty's teaching acumen and shared philosophy, there was great confidence that these educators would successfully bring the Journeys School approach to life.

Journeys School offered students the unique opportunity to experience the outdoors as an extension of the classroom by incorporating real-world learning into a traditional academic setting. This was the foundation for the place-based education (PBE) curriculum currently taught at Mountain Academy.

This innovative way of teaching provided students the opportunity to learn through tangible experiences and to connect with the people, places, and experiences around them to lend greater meaning and context to lessons taught in a classroom.

In 2012, TSS brought Teton Valley Community School (TVCS), located in Victor, Idaho, under its organizational structure. Founded in the late 1990's by a group of dedicated parents and teachers, TVCS served the local community, providing an ahead-of-its-time farm and garden curriculum for its preschool to 6th grade students. With a mission closely aligned with TSS, this integration facilitated the expansion of the place-based education model into a new community over Teton pass.

In 2019, the two schools officially merged to become Mountain Academy of Teton Science Schools, bringing to fruition a multi-year vision to unite two campuses within one school.

Academic Progression

Mountain Academy students will be the first to share that their classroom goes far beyond four walls. The day in the life of a Mountain Academy student consists of "journeys" to local parks and the two national parks in our backyard, as well as time spent amongst the chickens and garden beds or in the woods surrounding campus. Classroom projects driven by passion and curiosity pave the way for student-led learning. Faculty and staff weave a sense of place into lessons every day.

With a focus on building critical thinking skills, nurturing curiosity and solving complex problems, Mountain Academy Upper School students are empowered to select the pathway that best suits their interest. This process has proven successful as 100% of Mountain Academy high school students go on to pursue higher education.

A New Chapter

Mountain Academy welcomed a new head of school in May 2021. An experienced independent school administrator, educator and parent, Shawn Kelly joined the school at a critical time. Coming out of a global pandemic, hands-on student learning supported by an engaged community matters more than ever. Shawn hopes to build a more vibrant campus experience and bring greater cross-utilization of the many program areas that TSS has to offer to Mountain Academy students.





Dr. Carolyn Finney

Virtual Place-Based Education Symposium Expands Reach

After a successful inaugural year with a virtual format, the 2021 Place-Based Education Symposium built upon last year's achievements and expanded its educational programming in a reimagined way.

Hosting the symposium online provided a true silver lining. When first conceived, the Symposium initially started as an internal TSS event to showcase projects across the organization. It was a chance for TSS educators throughout the institution to share in each other's projects and accomplishments.

The pivot to a virtual event allowed TSS to bring in a larger community of educators and expand the reach from local to global. Presenters from the United States, Ecuador, Bhutan, and Tanzania presented to attendees and shared stories of place and the impact on students across the world.

This year's conference brought together 275 attendees and showcased 20 individual presentations, 19 pre-symposium project posters, nine concise and engaging Pecha Kucha (Japanese for "chit chat") talks, and two musical acts. In the virtual setting,

enthusiasm, vulnerability, and curiosity shone through the screen, breaking down virtual barriers and allowing for meaningful learning and connection. These presentations and discussions created roots, that in turn fostered positive growth in educators' classrooms and communities.

"I left feeling empowered and joyful about my profession. I loved it!" shared one symposium attendee.

The keynote presenter, Dr. Carolyn Finney, inspired attendees through a direct invitation to move forward in meaningful and practical ways in the shared work of rebuilding with equity. A storyteller, author and cultural geographer, Dr. Finney shares her deep interest in issues related to identity, difference, creativity, and resilience with a national audience. The aim of her work is to develop greater cultural competency within environmental organizations and institutions.

TSS shares Dr. Finney's commitment and passion for the work of equity, diversity and inclusion and seeks ways to connect learning and community around the world.

University Charter School Empowers Students Through Understanding of Place



Teton Science Schools' Place Network is a collaborative network of rural Kindergarten to 12th grade schools that connect learning and community to increase student engagement, academic outcomes and community impact. As part of the Place Network, University Charter School (UCS) in Livingston, Alabama showcased student projects that provide an impact on the local environment and the community around them.

Using problem-solving skills to create real world solutions

UCS's first and eighth-grade students worked together on a bird study. First graders studied native birds and took bird walks to determine the local bird population. Next, they collected materials from their homes to design, sketch and construct model bird feeders. Students hung their completed bird feeders in trees around the school.

Eighth-grade students noticed a need for more bluebird houses on a local trail and designed a prototype for the houses and researched specific measurements. They created scaled drawings out of cardboard and identified specific bluebird needs. Students observed and tracked the bluebird population. Their plan is to collect data for many years to come!

Managing emotions through art

A part of the Place-Based Education Learning Model includes "Character & Leadership" and supporting student social-emotional learning. The second project showcased by UCS from the 2020-21 school year highlights connections between student social-emotional learning and art.

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are traumatic events that occur in childhood from 0-17 years old. During the pandemic, many ACEs were exacerbated in students. UCS teacher, Allie Cunningham, addressed ACEs through art. Her methods create a positive way for students to work out problems and address big emotions that might not otherwise be addressed in early childhood. The projects are shared with parents so they can help raise their children in a healthy social-emotional environment.

Each month, kindergarten students at UCS choose a reading focus together. Focus areas include various social-emotional aspects such as being happy, scared or sad. After reading together, children express their own experience with that emotion through art including use of paper mache, crayons and clay.

In April, the students showcased their art at a community art show, which included QR codes throughout the event center so visitors could take their own ACEs test. Visitors had the opportunity to get to know their own ACEs score and results. This exercise provided the participants a greater understanding on how to support and create a healthy community and environment for raising children.

Through their partnership with TSS, UCS finds innovative and meaningful ways to live out its mission. From protecting the environment or caring for their own emotional well-being, UCS students connect to each other, and to the larger world around them, as they learn and grow.

Thank You

We are grateful for all of our donors at Teton Science Schools. Whether through our TSS Annual Fund, support of the Mountain Academy, or our Murie Ranch Annual Fund, all our donors meaningfully impact the TSS mission. We remain grateful for the donors who have supported specific projects, have established endowed funds and those who have committed planned gifts through bequests and other means. To learn more about all the ways to have an impact at Teton Science Schools, please reach us at giving@tetonscience.org.

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DONOR SPOTLIGHT: Dave & Maureen Brown

Maureen and I moved to Jackson full time in 2014 after our children graduated from college. We first visited the Teton Science Schools campus in 2015. We both worked with educators for over a decade, and its mission resonated. As a result, I joined the Education Advisory Committee and eventually the TSS board. Maureen and I have always believed that investing in high-quality education programs is necessary for helping youth succeed in the modern world. In addition, we think that TSS's high-quality programs inspire students to connect with this beautiful place we call home and understand how their actions contribute to its vitality. We are blessed to live in the Yellowstone/Teton ecosystem; a great classroom our programs use and steward. We want to help TSS continue to strive to be the best it possibly can be. We firmly believe that place-based education is a pedagogy that prepares young people to become thoughtful community members and leaders in life.

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DONOR SPOTLIGHT: Petria & Scott Fossel

We have owned a home in the Aspens since 1993, and moved to Jackson full time in 2011. Our kids attended Teton Science Schools summer camps in Kelly and that is when our support for TSS first started. We first visited the Murie Ranch on a Greater Yellowstone Coalition trip in the winter of 2011. Scott was invited to join the Murie Center Board, where he has served as Treasurer as well as Co-Chair. The Murie Ranch is a treasure. We value our Grand Teton National Park partners and the access made available to learners of all ages across the US and abroad. We have supported the Ranch for several years through the Murie Spirit of Conservation Awards event. We also support programs across TSS, especially the TSS Annual Fund and Mountain Academy.

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Brit and I discovered Mountain Academy when we were considering high schools for our daughter and were interested in options that were most suited to her love of the woods. At the time we lived in Seattle, but we had recently purchased land in the Teton Valley and were building a house. The fall of 2020 was Hadley's first semester and our commitment to her, and therefore the school, inspired us to donate. Now that Hadley is in her second year, and seeing the opportunity we have to contribute to the growth of this incredible education experience, we are doubling down on our commitment. Mountain Academy has the potential to be the premier private educational institution in the Intermountain West. Ensuring a diverse socio-economic student base is one of the most important aspects of Mountain Academy & Teton Science Schools as they continue to strive to make this a place of inclusivity. We believe education is the most important investment we can make, above and beyond our base tuition.

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Statement of Activities (Unaudited)

Fiscal Year Ending May 31, 2021

	Unrestricted Operating Fund	Unrestricted Operating Fund	Unrestricted Operating Fund	Unrestricted Operating Fund
SUPPORT & REVENUE	2021	2020	2019	2018
Program Tuition & Fees	\$6,940,181	\$9,367,417	\$10,869,847	\$10,465,612
Contributions	\$4,331,280	\$2,403,596	\$2,520,264	\$2,885,854
Investment Income	\$957,153	\$1,006,082	\$978,861	\$897,612
Other Income	\$43,6279	\$708,231	\$652,021	\$502,542
Total Support & Revenue	\$12,664,893	\$13,485,326	\$15,020,993	\$14,751,620
EXPENSES	2021	2020	2019	2018
Program Services	\$10,643,364	\$12,497,084	\$12,348,770	\$12,012,781
Management and General	\$1,494,950	\$1,538,893	\$1,672,240	\$1,378,854
Fundraising	\$313,901	\$585,000	\$596,455	\$573,319
Total Expenses	\$12,452,215	\$14,620,977	\$14,617,465	\$13,964,954
Capital Investments	\$78,876	\$356,948	\$517,238	\$833,632
Net Surplus (Deficit)	\$133,802	-\$1,492,599	-\$113,710	-\$46,966

Scholarships/Tuition Assistance

Field Education	\$42,538	\$229,870	\$278,954	
Wildlife Expedition	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Graduate Program	\$109,345	\$100,820	\$91,837	
Place Network	\$22,950	\$41,834	\$18,671	
Teacher Learning Center	\$116,097	\$130,701	\$156,655	
Mountain Academy	\$1,570,748	\$1,397,946	\$1,336,353	
Total	\$1,861,678	\$1,901,171	\$1,882,470	

Statement of Financial Position (Unaudited)

Fiscal Year Ending May 31, 2021

ASSETS	Ending May 31, 2021	Ending May 31, 2020	Ending May 31, 2019	Ending May 31, 2018
Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$3,941,963	\$3,638,292	\$1,054,594	\$210,270
Accounts Receivable	\$527,406	\$216,081	\$823,785	\$635,972
Inventory and Prepaid Expenses	\$140,573	\$132,245	\$223,423	\$189,308
Investments	\$20,421,027	\$17,304,488	\$17,930,612	\$19,309,704
Property & Equipment (net)	\$30,408,754	\$31,316,468	\$31,902,883	\$33,154,683
Total Assets	\$55,439,723	\$52,607,574	\$51,935,297	\$53,499,937
LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS				
Accounts Payable	\$676,674	\$201,048	\$392,359	\$489,281
Accrued Expenses	\$323,041	\$2,440,313	\$1,788,878	\$1,304,716
Course Deposits	\$1,078,002	\$996,736	\$1,311,245	1,152,995
Notes Payable	\$3,793,835	\$2,235,230	\$299,538	\$714,240
Total Liabilities	\$5,871,552	\$5,873,327	\$3,792,020	\$3,661,232
Net Assets	\$49,568,171	\$46,734,247	\$48,143,277	\$49,838,705
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$55,439,723	\$52,607,574	\$51,935,297	\$53,499,937



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Teton Science Schools is a private, 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational organization operating year-round in Jackson Hole, Wyoming and Teton Valley, Idaho.

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Operating in partnership with Grand Teton National Park and as a permittee of the Bridger-Teton and Caribou-Targhee National Forests.