



*Elevating Educational Opportunities*

# Hood River County Education Foundation 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

## SUCSESSES

**90** scholarship funds managed through Kaleidoscope

**\$267,600** in scholarships awarded to HRVHS graduating seniors

**\$61,250** in scholarships awarded to HRVHS current college students

**\$64,300** awarded to educators for Impact Teaching Grants

**761** students in Kindergarten, 2nd, and 4th grades received free swimming lessons

## Message from the HRCEF board president

In 2024/25, we awarded more college scholarships than ever and saw record applications for Impact Teaching Grants. We continued to fund swim lessons, field trips, and need-based after-school care. With a generous gift from the Farmer’s Conservation Alliance, HRCEF worked with the School District to launch **LITTLE STEPS, BIG DREAMS**, a new program which helps families of kindergarten students open 529 College Savings Plans. Behind the scenes, we began a comprehensive update of our Strategic Plan to guide the Foundation’s future work.



Aspen McKenna

This year also saw transitions for the Foundation. We celebrated the retirement of long-time board members Chuck Bugge, Karen Asai, Celia Newton, and Yesenia Sanchez-Oates. Their contributions over the years (even decades!) have fundamentally shaped who we are today. While sad to see them go, we happily welcomed five new board members who bring fresh experience and dedication to our mission: Kristi Heck, Matthew Roth, Mo Wright, Barry Paul, and Dan Goldman.

As our schools and students face new challenges, our work is all the more vital. We continue to focus on expanding educational opportunities, enriching learning in and outside the classroom, and supporting our graduates as they pursue their goals beyond high school.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you to all of you in our community who support the Foundation in so many ways. Your generosity makes a huge impact in shaping brighter futures for Hood River County students.

Sincerely

Aspen McKenna, President of the Board of Directors

## MISSION

To enhance education for students of the Hood River County School District by providing financial support for programs, services, and scholarships.

## VISION

A community that values education, where students are prepared to succeed, and teachers are supported and valued in their work.

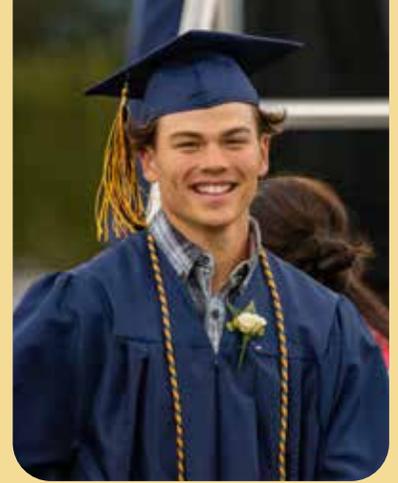


# OUR PROGRAMS

## SCHOLARSHIPS

Local scholarships provide critical financial support for HRVHS graduates to attend vocational school or college. In 2024/25, donors provided funding to establish 2 new scholarships, bringing the total to **57** donor-based funds. HRCEF also awarded **31** scholarships from the Board of Directors Fund based on individual merit and financial need. In total, **\$318,850** in scholarships was awarded to **118** students.

HRCEF manages **KALEIDOSCOPE**, an online platform that allows students to easily apply for local scholarship opportunities and provides an accessible scoring process for review committees. The Foundation provides Kaleidoscope for **ALL** local scholarships, including many offered by other organizations. The annual license fee is reimbursed by the school district and HRCEF raises funds to administer the program.



## OPPORTUNITY FUND

Our **Champions Program** continued supporting families seeking access to elementary-age after school programs that provide homework time and allow parents to fulfill work obligations, **\$12,000** went to select students at May Street and Westside.

HRCEF also provided **\$2,200** for need-based scholarships for CPR/AED training for Advanced Health class students at HRVHS.



Thanks to a generous gift from the Farmer's Conservation Alliance, the Foundation and the school district initiated **Little Steps, Big Dreams**, an exciting program to encourage kindergarten parents to open 529 college savings accounts. When a family starts a 529 plan, HRCEF seeds their account with \$100, which is then matched by Embark (Oregon College Savings Plan), giving that student \$200 to grow for the next 12 years as well as an account that family and friends can contribute to on behalf of the student.



## IMPACT TEACHING GRANTS

HRCEF provides grants to teachers for specific tools or materials to enhance classroom learning. 2024/25 saw a significant increase in demand with \$155,000 in grant requests – far exceeding prior years. Based on funds available, **29** grants were awarded totalling **\$64,300**.

Grants included books of all genres and grade levels, special education tools, microscopes, a ceramic kiln, marching band drums, yearbook cameras, and an indoor greenhouse, to name just a few.



## FIELD TRIP GRANTS

Hands-on experiences outside school allow young students to learn new skills, grow confidence, and enhance learning. **\$30,000** was awarded to elementary and middle schools based on both enrollment and financial need. Highlights include field trips to the Oregon Zoo, Columbia Gorge Discovery Center, OMSI, and Packer Orchards.

## SWIM LESSONS

The Foundation recognizes the life time benefits of water safety for kids in Hood River County. In 2024/25 HRCEF provided **\$5,500** to support learning to swim and basic water safety programs for all kindergarten, 2nd, and 4th graders.



## OUR IMPACT

*"I am very grateful for your support for Ag in our community. I plan to attend Oklahoma State this fall and major in Agricultural Communication. I have grown up surrounded by Ag and wouldn't be the person I am without it!"*

**Karyna, Jason Ashby Memorial Scholarship**

*"It is an honor to earn this scholarship that pays tribute to Megan Perkins. It is a privilege to take her with me through my secondary education, my life and my career. Thank you for telling me "you can do it", and thank you for being a part of my future."*

**Kai, Megan Perkins Memorial Scholarship**

*"As a first generation student this scholarship means a lot to me and I will not take it for granted. Thank you!"*

**Adamaris, AVID Scholarship**

*"Thank you for this scholarship. I am planning on using this opportunity to train in the construction trades. Thank you for helping me grow as a person"*

**Jaden, Jeff & Melissa Rippey Scholarship Fund**

*"I am currently pursuing a degree in public health at Linfield. Your generosity inspires me to continue working hard and to give back to my community in the future. Thank you for believing in my potential."*

**Ernesto, Isabel Gilkerson Memorial Scholarship**

## CONTRIBUTORS

HRCEF is incredibly grateful for the support of many local businesses, families, and individuals.

Here are some contributions received in 2024/25:

**JoAnn von Lubken**

\$7,500 Opportunity Fund

**Jeff & Melissa Rippey**

\$33,000 Rippey Scholarship Fund

**Wy'East Foundation**

\$30,000 Impact Teaching Grants

**Doug Beardsley & Courtney Jackson**

\$20,000 Carmen's Route Scholarship Fund

**Abby Cohn**

\$10,000 Cohn Family Scholarship Fund

**Susan & Richard Roth**

\$10,000 Reserve Fund

**Cascade Locks Alumni Assoc.**

\$10,500 CLA Scholarship Fund

**John & Susan Harrington**

\$10,000 General Operations

**Warren Morgan**

\$10,000 Mary Clifford Scholarship Fund

**Matthew & Sarah Roth**

\$20,000 Community Service Scholarship

## FY 2024/25 FINANCIALS

The Foundation operates on a fiscal year basis from July 1-June 30. Assets are invested in a Trust Account composed of a conservative portfolio of equities and securities, and a Local Account invested in short term instruments.

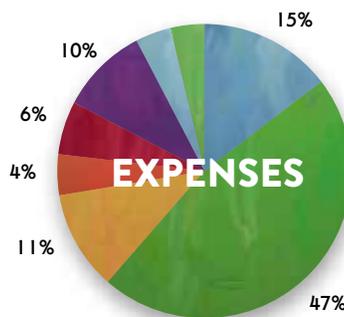
### Of Note:

Market value of the Trust Account decreased by about 5%, primarily due to a market pullback in Q1

Restricted gifts were higher, primarily for Board of Directors scholarships and 529 program

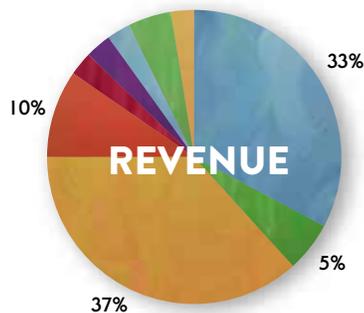
Total income for GO increased by 15% due to greater unrestricted gifts and an increase in local interest

Fundraising from events was down about 50%, primarily due to rescheduling the Melissa Manchester concert



General Operations	\$88,475
Scholarships	\$283,650
Impact Teaching Grants	\$66,282
After School Programs	\$27,200
Field Trips / Swim Lessons	\$35,558
Program Admin	\$58,558
Edwards Jones Trust Mngmt	\$23,724
HRCEF Admin Fees	\$22,600

Total Expenses \$606,047



Portfolio Gain	\$286,873
Gifts: Unrestricted	\$48,000
Gifts: Restricted	\$321,044
Fundraising	\$84,420
Memberships	\$22,815
Little Steps Big Dreams	\$25,000
Administration Fee	\$22,600
Reimbursements	\$41,560
Interest	\$22,500

Total Revenue \$874,812

## Board of Directors

Aspen McKenna  
*President*

Karen Heinemann  
*Vice President*

Mo Wright  
*Secretary*

Matthew Roth  
*Treasurer*

Chip Dickinson

Pat Evenson-Brady

John Fine

Jacky Garcia

Dan Goldman

Kristi Heck

Tre Hendricks

Sue Hukari

Caroline Lipps

Luke McCarthy

Barry Paul

Chrissy Reitz  
*HRCS D Board Liaison*

Mike Schend

Fred Trujillo

Jan Veldhuisen Virk

Bill Newton  
*Ex Officio*

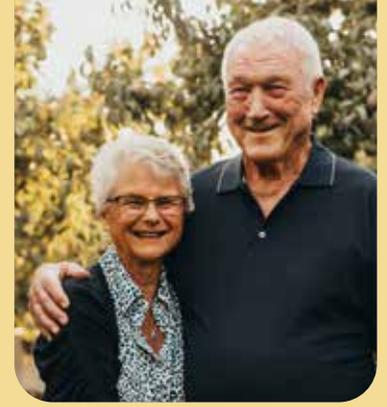
## STAFF

Michael S. McElwee  
*Executive Director*

Alex Fleming  
*Director of Programs*

## DONOR FOCUS

**JoAnn von Lubken** is a longtime resident of the Hood River Valley. With their family, JoAnn and her late husband Fritz, have owned and managed von Lubken Orchards in the Hood River Valley for three generations. The von Lubkens have been strong and consistent contributors to the Foundation for many years, with particular emphasis on the Opportunity Fund and its support for youth involvement in co-curricular activities at the middle school level. The Foundation is very grateful for their generosity.



*JoAnn and Fritz von Lubken*



## How You Can Help

HRCEF is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that supports public education. In 2024/25, our programs were made possible by generous gifts from **LOCAL BUSINESSES, FAMILIES, AND INDIVIDUALS**, and through fundraising events like the popular Columbia Gorge Toyota Car Raffle.

The Foundation is overseen by an active volunteer board, who work hard to carry out the programs that enrich learning and enhance the future of our students — but we can't do this without you!

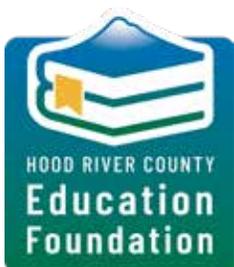
***Please consider being a part of the Foundation's important work, every contribution makes a difference for our students!***

### Here are some of the ways you can help:

- Become an HRCEF member
- Support a program through a one-time or recurring gift
- Create an employee matching/giving or payroll deduction program at your business
- Fund a perpetual or renewable scholarship fund
- Consider the Foundation in your will, trust, or Donor Directed Fund



For more info, reach out:  
Michael S. McElwee, *Executive Director*  
541-387-5713 | michael.mcelwee@hoodriver.k12.or.us



## Become a member today

**Individual:** \$45 donation

**Family:** \$100 donation

**Advocate:** \$250 donation

**Patron:** \$500 donation

**Benefactor:** \$1000 donation

**Business Membership:** \$350 donation

[hrcef.org/contribute](https://hrcef.org/contribute)

Charity  
Navigator  
96% Four Star Charity



SCAN THIS!