

Dream of Wild Health

CELEBRATING

25

YEARS!



Annual Report
2023

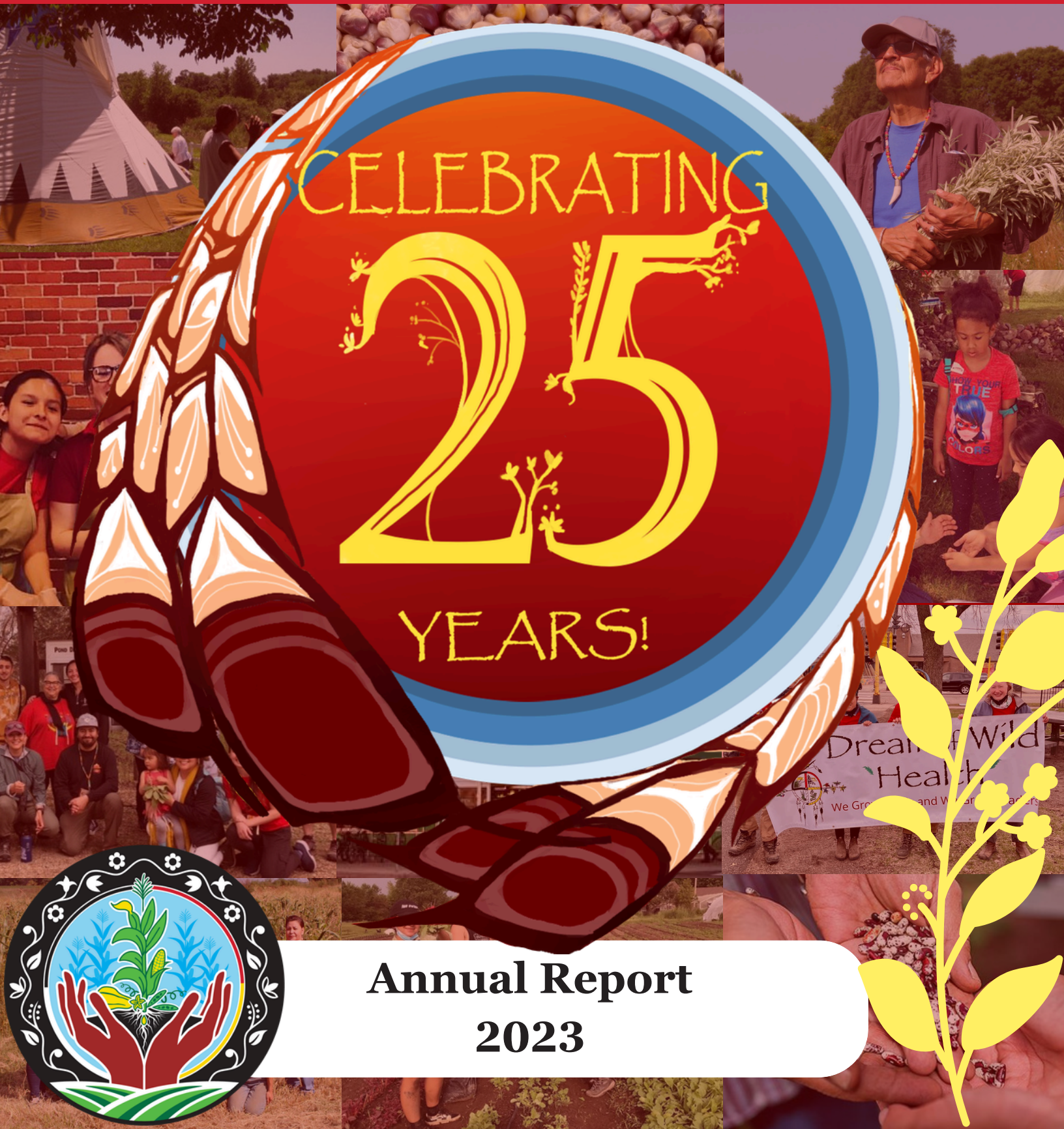


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A Message from our Executive Director

Dear Friends,

What an honor it has been to celebrate our 25th year around the sun. Dream of Wild Health was created in 1998 as a small garden program with a powerful vision to recover and preserve the relationship between Native people and the land. Twenty-five years later, that seed has flourished into a thriving movement for food sovereignty and cultural revitalization.

Today, our organization operates from an office in South Minneapolis and a vibrant 30-acre farm in Hugo, where we tend annual vegetable fields, perennial fruit orchards, biodiverse native food forests, a pollinator meadow, and restored wetlands. Together, these spaces have become a living classroom and a place of healing for our youth and community.

Over the years, we've deepened our partnerships with Tribes, Native-led organizations, and community members across the region to restore traditional foods to our ceremonies and ways of life. Our work centers on providing access to healthy, Indigenous foods for Native families, while growing the next generation of leaders and seed keepers who will carry this work forward.

Reaching our 25th year of programming is a tremendous milestone. I am so proud of what our team has accomplished in such a short time together and inspired by the possibilities ahead for our future generations.

In celebrating this milestone year, we are proud to share some of our accomplishments from 2023:

- Completed major earthwork, utility installation and driveways, and constructed an outdoor pavilion on our recently acquired 20 acres of farmland.
- Distributed nearly 27,000 pounds of fresh produce to the Native community.
- Expanded our team to 20 full-time employees for the first time.
- Received record-breaking individual donations exceeding \$100,000.
- Honored as a recipient of the Bush Prize for Native Nations.

As we look toward the next 25 years, we remain guided by our values of relationship, reciprocity, and respect for the land and one another. We're grounded in our responsibility to the generations yet to come.

Miigwech (Thank you) for walking this path with us.

**With Gratitude,
Neely Snyder, Executive Director**





Native Youth Education and Leadership

Our youth programming is committed to maintaining family and youth knowledge of and access to our traditional foods, lifeways, and medicines by strengthening the structure and pathways of our programming. We delivered safe, quality youth programming to our young people during the summertime and strengthened youth leadership within our Indigenous food sovereignty programs.

Overall highlights of youth programming this year included initiating our youth council program, implementing a successful summer program that served over 50 families, and retaining over 60% of our Garden Warriors for our Youth Leaders program. One Garden Warrior, new to our programming, expressed “This organization has changed my life. I feel like I have found where I’m supposed to be.”

Native Youth Education and Leadership

In 2023, we worked to shift our growing program toward one that gives youth more trust, agency and power within Dream of Wild Health's work— and importantly, a voice in the planning and future growth of our organization's work. With the help of our amazing team and supporters, we were able to continue safe, quality summer programming for youth in our communities while bringing our families closer into our circle with increased food distribution and community education opportunities that were implemented throughout the organization.

Six former Garden Warriors were hired as Youth Interns this summer. This has been a long-term goal for us to develop leaders that continue on in the field and to retain our young people as leaders in our organization. It is our fifth year in which we were able to achieve that goal.

In the 2023 season, we had 81 youth in our in-depth programs:

Cora's Kids 1 (ages 8-12): 15 youth

Cora's Kids 2 (ages 8-12): 14 youth

Garden Warriors 1 (ages 13-18): 12 youth

Garden Warriors 2 (ages 13-18): 12 youth

Youth Leaders (year-round high school program): 22 youth

Youth Interns (ages 15+): 6 youth

Our Cora's Kids youth reported increased knowledge of farming and gardening, food as medicine, cultural traditions, language, cooking healthy food, and COVID-19 safety.

Garden Warriors reported learning job skills, leadership, language, cultural traditions, gardening/farming, seed saving, cooking, healthy lifestyle, and environmental justice. 100% of Garden Warriors stated that they would recommend this program to their friends.



100% of Dream of Wild Health families said they would recommend this program to friends or family members, or would sign their child up for the program again.





Farm and Food Access

While climate change has been manifesting in previous seasons at Dream of Wild Health, the reality of its impacts on the land, water, air, human and animal relatives was more pronounced than ever before in 2023. A record-breaking wet and warm winter left our fields underwater deep into the spring planting season. This led to later spring plantings, and some crop losses. The wet beginning was followed by extreme drought conditions and a very hot summer. This led to extraordinary pressure on our garden beds by deer relatives who were looking for water in all the plants in the garden. Additionally, smoke from Canadian and Minnesota wildfires blanketed the region impacting health and safety of adult and youth workers as well as our plants and pollinators.

While those impacts are real, our farm team continued to carry out their work with a serious commitment to the Twin Cities Urban Native community we serve, especially the youth and families who visit the farm and purchase Indigenous Food Share (IFS) shares. The work outlined in this report reflects their creativity, hard work, training, skill, care, collaborative spirit and dedication.

Farm and Food Access

The Dream of Wild Health Farm harvested 26,428 pounds of produce and seeds and donated 9,566 pounds of food during the 2023 growing season. We grew a wide variety of fruits, vegetables, herbs, and flowers including greens, root vegetables, and Indigenous crops, such as peppers, tomatoes, corn, beans, squash and much more! We increased biodiversity within our crop selection and varieties, trained new and returning staff, experimented with new regenerative farming techniques and initiated construction on our additional 20 acres of farmland. We continued our no-till production for about half of our garden, and tractor production for the other half. We have been incorporating more insectary plantings to encourage beneficial and pollinating insects into the garden.

We had 90 Indigenous Food Shares (IFS) distributed each week during the 2023 growing season, reaching at least 280 people weekly with farm produce. We had approximately 20 participants engage in our Reclaiming Lifeways programming and 30 participants engage in our gardening classes. We donated 36% of our total harvest to the Urban Native community through our network partners. We also distributed our produce, flowers and herbs to Owamni Restaurant, the Indigenous Food Lab (North American Traditional Indigenous Food Systems/NATIFS), and Gatherings Cafe (Minneapolis American Indian Center).

For the Upper Midwest Indigenous Farmer Incubator Program, our efforts centered on site design, infrastructure development, program planning, and business visioning. In collaboration with key partners, we advanced the overall farm plan, completed building designs, and began improving soil fertility. We now have finalized site designs, architectural renderings, and civil engineering plans for major earthwork projects.



This year, we
**planted around
200 trees,**
including over 100
maples.

We delivered **1900
lbs of produce**
through Elder Box
Vegetable
Distribution.

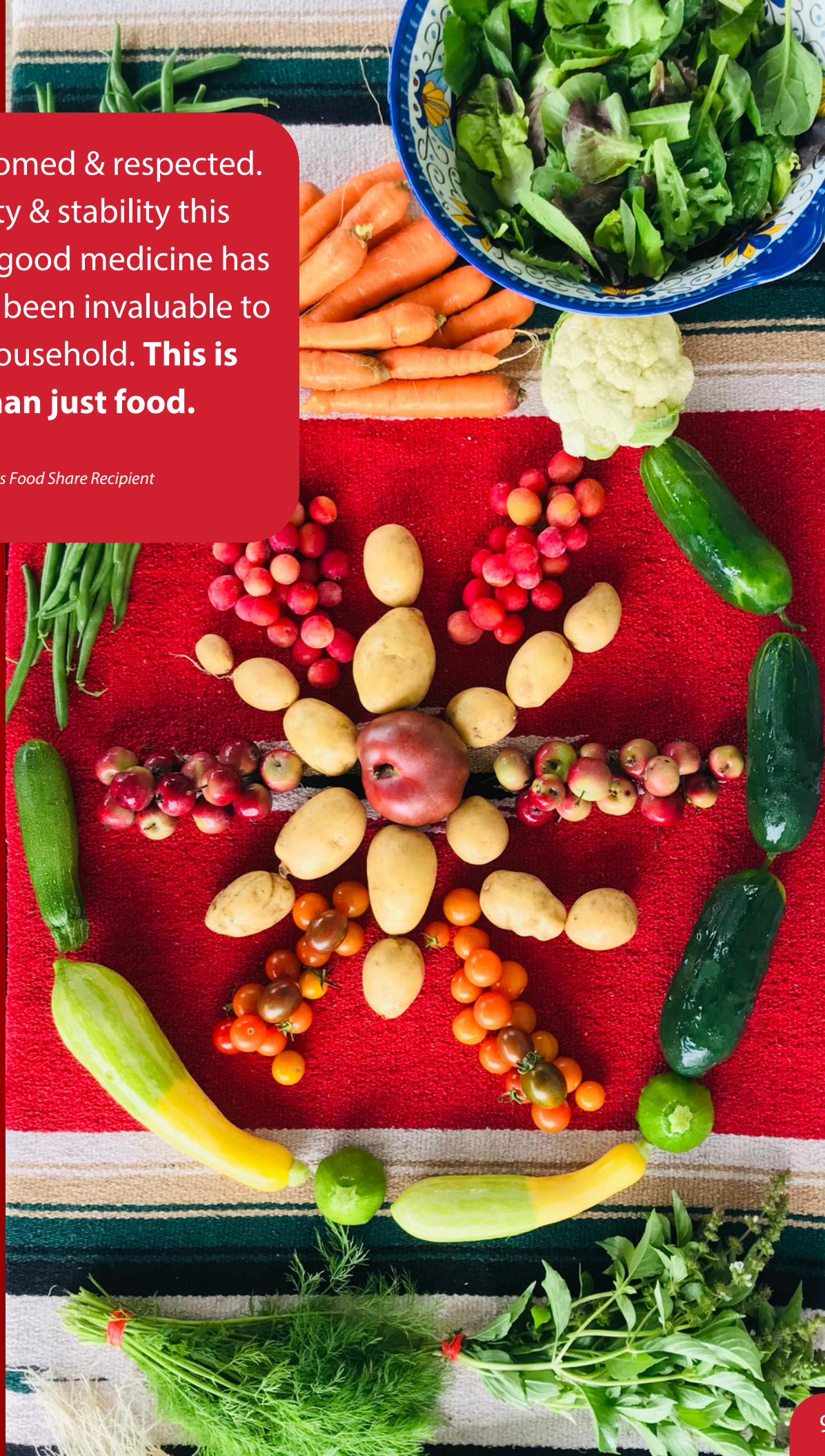


We hosted **367
volunteers and
farm guests**
throughout the
growing season.



I felt so welcomed & respected.
The security & stability this
good food & good medicine has
provided has been invaluable to
me & my household. **This is
more than just food.**

-Indigenous Food Share Recipient





Seed Stewardship

As we continue to reclaim our ancestral responsibilities, our farm team is creatively seeking a range of avenues to nurture interest and engage members of the Native community in this work. The Seed Team followed a seed curriculum in the Spring where they started seeds in the greenhouse, transplanted crops, harvested and processed crops for medicinal and culinary uses, and processed seed at the end of the season.

The Seed Team continued to grow varieties of seed for variety maintenance, seed rematriation and seed multiplication for continued growing and food production. The team harvested more than 60 different crops, with 125 different seed varieties seeded or planted.

Seed Stewardship

As part of historical and ongoing genocide, stolen seeds continue to be hoarded and exploited by colonial organizations, institutions, universities, museums, companies, and governmental entities. Seed repatriation is the act of returning these Native seeds to Native people. Seed sovereignty is essential to food sovereignty.

The Seed Team connects with tribal nations and communities of origin to learn more about the seeds in our care. We create pathways for the seeds to return home. We provide access to ancestral seeds through the seeds themselves and through traditional foods, primarily for Native community in the Twin Cities area.

In 2023, the Seed Team harvested hundreds of pounds of ancestral food and seeds. Four employees and four interns, all Indigenous, tended to the seed garden. They received intensive training as Native seedkeepers. Our harvest offered opportunities for recipe testing and development of value-added products featuring ancestral foods. We grew seeds for repatriation, community distribution, and food production. We grew, processed and distributed large amounts of traditional tobacco for prayers and offerings. The Seed Team is humbled to be caring for tobacco seed from late Dream of Wild Health Cultural Director Ernest Whiteman.

Through a partnership with Seed Savers Exchange, we grafted and planted hundreds of heritage apple trees with ties to tribal communities. We built several raised beds for a tree nursery and additional growing space. We equipped the new pole building at the farm to be a seed hub and centralized workspace for the Seed Team. Throughout the year, we built community seedkeeping capacity in the region through network building and sharing seed teachings at conferences, events, and workshops.



Community Outreach and Education

Our community outreach includes teaching in local daycares and schools, community organizations, tours on-site at our farm, virtual and in-person presentations & workshops across the country by our youth and staff, and supporting our partner organizations through event tabling, co-hosting, resource-sharing, workshops and engagement.

DWH prioritizes knowledge sharing within the Native community, primarily in the Twin Cities area. We have worked with several community organizations and local school programs to ensure Native students and their families have easy access to traditional knowledge, medicines, food and language.

We continue to focus on building community and increasing food donations through network partnerships and directly to those most in need.

Community Outreach and Education

In our 2023 growing season, we hosted over 300 volunteers to work at the farm, including individuals and members of a variety of organizations. We had more than 100 volunteers support our work at the farm on Volunteer Fridays.

At Dream of Wild Health we recognize that youth work doesn't just fall within our typical 9-5 work week or within our scheduled programming. We meet with our youth, Cora's Kids, Garden Warriors or beyond, upon request. Many reach out to our Community Outreach & Cultural Teacher about culture, language, medicines, plant questions and support throughout the year. We also connected with our youth and their families for in-person meetings outside of normal programming this year.

The relationships that are formed within the one-on-one sessions are priceless to the youth, it shows that they know who to go to and where to go when they need help. Many of these youth continue this close communication with us even after graduating our program.

We reach over 12,000 people annually through our outreach programs, including approximately 2,000 youth. Some of our activities included food delivery and community distribution efforts, storytelling, farming and gardening lessons, cooking lessons and demonstrations, Indigenous foods cultural and history, language, songs, medicinal plants and wild foraged foods, birchbark lessons, seed saving, and many more.



We really enjoyed the cultural classes. Our adopted plants are thriving. **I feel so blessed** that my family has found DWH.
-IFS Participant





Indigenous Food Network

Dream of Wild Health is the founding and parent organization of the Indigenous Food Network (IFN), a program dedicated to rebuilding sovereign food systems within the intertribal urban Native community through collaboration. The Network recently developed mission and vision statements, logo and branding, and started the trademark process.

The long-term goals of the network include increasing access to healthier and more culturally-relevant foods for the Native community in Minneapolis, improving economic opportunity among Native food producers, chefs & restaurants, cultivating community connectedness, and changing the systems and policies that lead to continuing inequities. The network has since gained significant momentum and has expanded to the larger Native communities in the Twin Cities (Minneapolis and Saint Paul).



Indigenous Food Network

Working with partners is vital to the success of Dream of Wild Health programs as we rely on the skills and expertise of other organizations to complement the work we do in our community. Our network building and coalition leadership work helps us influence long-term systems change in order to improve the overall health of the Native community.

The IFN continues to support community partners by sharing funding resources for staffing, licensing, infrastructure, and community education efforts to increase accessibility and knowledge of healthy Indigenous foods. Dream of Wild Health has worked with several community partners to distribute produce at free or reduced pricing, including the Native American Community Clinic Harvest Health Fair and Dream of Wild Health Farm Produce Pop-up where 1,850 pounds of DWH produce was distributed to the community. At the Pop-up, 500 Food is Medicine cards were distributed as a resource to provide families with recipes, nutrition, and storage tips.

We have developed our mission and vision statements collaboratively. Through regular meetings, we've shared opportunities and deepened our understanding of community needs, enhanced collaborations, and supported our collective goals of health and community change. With our community, from youth to elders, and allied partners, we are rebuilding a Native American cultural food system that addresses the community's health and food needs and redistributes resources within the community.



1,850 lbs of Dream of Wild Health produce were donated at the NACC pop-up!

500 Food Is Medicine Cards were distributed at the NACC Harvest Health Fair.



We completed the **first Strategic Planning** with the IFN and our core partners in Spring 2023.



Capital Campaign

In 2023, Dream of Wild Health made significant strides in making our vision of a Native-led Food Sovereignty Center into a reality.

After acquiring an additional 20 acres in 2020, we officially launched our capital campaign. Despite facing supply chain challenges and a competitive construction market, we focused our efforts on the most urgent components of the project.

Here's what we accomplished:

Land Development

We finalized site layouts, phasing plans, and subcontractor bids to begin essential work. Construction began with grading, roadways, and utility infrastructure, laying the groundwork for future buildings and accessibility throughout the property.

Pathways & Parking

Pathways were designed and built to create clear and safe travel routes across the expanded farm space, including a new parking area to welcome more visitors, volunteers, and youth participants.

Pavilion & Outdoor Classroom

We completed a 710 sq. ft. open-air pavilion—our new outdoor classroom and gathering space—designed to host workshops, youth programs, and community events. The space is surrounded by native plants and trees, planted by our staff, youth, and partners.

Perennial Agriculture System

As part of our regenerative land management approach, we began developing a perennial agriculture system that will serve as a windbreak, pollinator and wildlife habitat, source of food and medicine, and a future source of harvestable crops.

Capital Campaign



Pavillion Progress

The pavilion not only serves as an outdoor classroom, but it also provides shelter during unexpected weather, allowing us to continue youth programming without interruption.

Every step we take brings us closer to creating Minnesota's first Indigenous Food Sovereignty Center: a place for health, education, and community.



Digital Rendering of Finished Development



Celebrating 25 Years

In 2023, Dream of Wild Health commemorated a milestone - 25 years of restoring health and well-being through traditional foods, medicines, and lifeways.

At our 25th Anniversary event, we were honored to welcome Senator Tina Smith. Guest speakers shared their perspectives on the impact Dream of Wild Health has had on the community over the past quarter-century. The celebration of our 25th anniversary served as a powerful reminder of the progress made and the journey ahead.

As we reflect on this milestone, we are also looking forward to the continued growth of Dream of Wild Health in the years to come, and we celebrate the resilience and vitality of indigenous foods, knowledge, cultures and traditions.



Guests were treated to a variety of indigenous appetizers provided by our resident Chef Vanessa Casillas, Nutrition Program Coordinator Alanna Norris, Chef Linus Yellowhorse at Gatherings Cafe, and Delilah Savage at Baby Cakes Wild Rice.





Dream of Wild Health would like to extend heartfelt thanks to our generous sponsors, PCL Construction and Bald Eagle Erectors, and our volunteers from the Medtronic American Indian Employee Resource Group. We are also deeply grateful to the community that has made this journey possible.

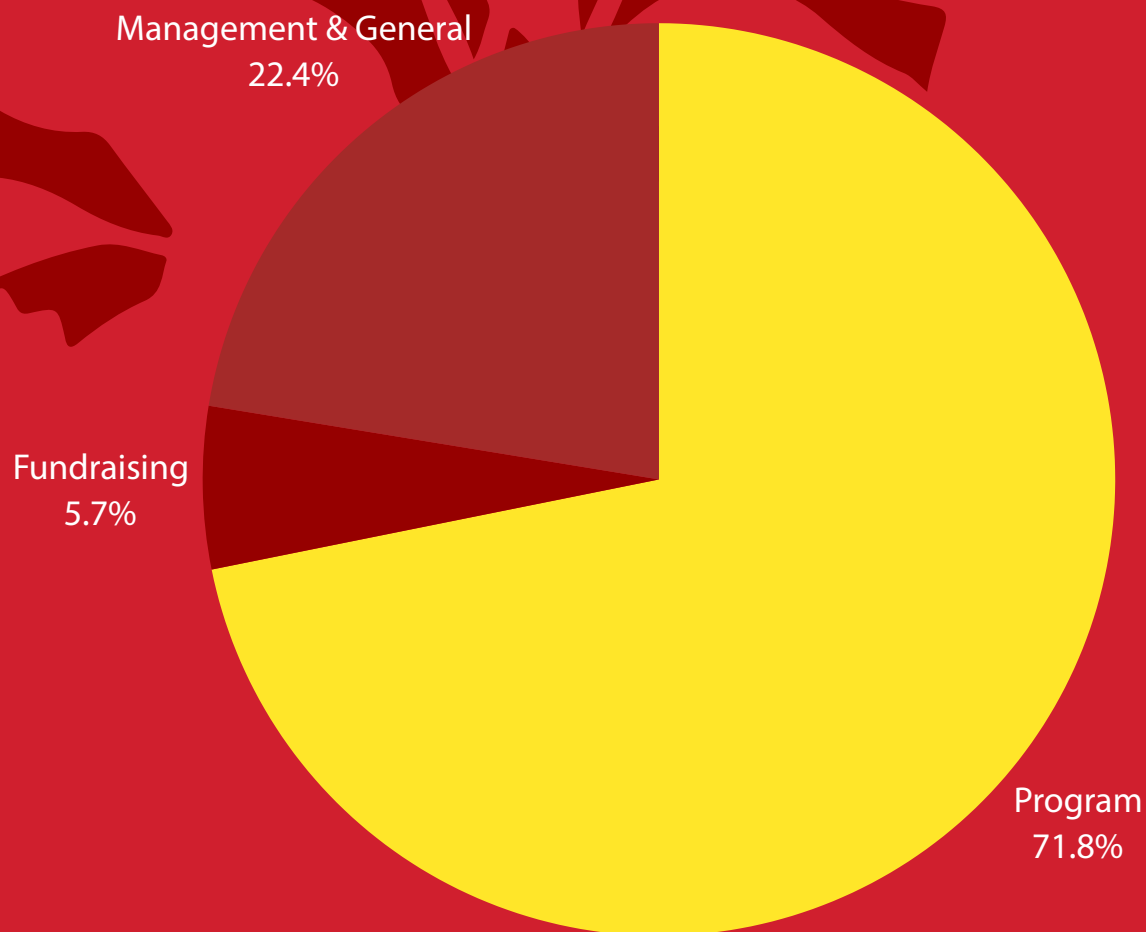
Here's to the next 25 years!

Financial Data

Program
\$1,301,044

Fundraising
\$104,110

Management & General
\$405,984





Closing

It has been an incredible 25 years, and 2023 brought so much growth. As we at Dream of Wild Health reflect on this milestone year, we are filled with gratitude. Gratitude for this land, for those who helped us grow, for the youth who inspire us, and for the incredible community we serve. With the continued support of our community, we will keep expanding access to Indigenous foods, stewarding relationships with community and the land, and teaching the next generation of Native leaders.

May the next 25 years be just as wonderful!

-The Dream of Wild Health Team

Thank you to our 2023 Team!

Staff

Ana Maria Arabanos
Anthony Barela
Shamira Caddo
Vanessa Casillas
Hope Flanagan
Jessika Greendeer
Bryan Henry
Madeline Johnson
Angela Kunkel-Linares
Emily Kunze
Matthew McDonald
Jason Montgomery-Reiss
Alanna Norris
Josh Phenow
Leidy Rogers
Neely Snyder
Kateri Tuttle
Sal Valli
Kaitlyn Walsh
Lilah White
August Yellow Bird
Phoebe Young
Rivianna Zeller

The mission of Dream of Wild Health is to restore health and well-being in the Native community by recovering knowledge of and access to healthy Indigenous foods, medicines and lifeways.

Board Members

Joy Persall, Chair
Carly Bad Heart Bull, Vice Chair
Nation Wright, Treasurer
Dave Bice
Sean Sherman
Pam Gokey

Thank You!



Chiokoe!

Kherkhem!

Ahéhee'!

Pidamaya!



Ashòògè!

Miigwech!

Ho'hou!

WetAXkoosšteéRAt!



**Dream
of Wild
Health**

Pinagigi!

