



FOOTPATH FOUNDATION

THE COMPASS

The 2025 Footpath Foundation Newsletter

You help connect kids with nature

Your support made Footpath Foundation's 10-year journey possible

Yanuri, 8, stands in the cool shade after an afternoon of **creek exploration and hiking** at Footpath Foundation's property in Parma. "This," he says, "is like ten times better than being at home."

He says Footpath has helped him feel **more comfortable outdoors**.

"I learned how to take care of nature and treat animals good," says Yanuri, who lives in Cleveland.

Yanuri is one of the more than **11,000 young people** you have helped connect to the outdoors over the past 10 years through your support of Footpath. Your dollars have given our kids the opportunity to spend nearly 127,000 hours outside since 2015 - the equivalent of more than 14 years.

Your generosity has changed countless lives.

Providing outdoor experiences helps build confidence, enabling kids to overcome their fears and try new things. These experiences are the building blocks that help kids become responsible adults and leaders in their communities. We believe **every child deserves the benefits of nature**, regardless of their race or income level.

Thank you for joining us on this important journey.

In honor of our 10-year anniversary, we're listing a few milestones on the next two pages of this publication along with the observations of Footpath CEO and co-founder Mary Macias. Since 2015, you have made it possible for:

- **819 kids to attend overnight camp**, supplied with sleeping bags, pillows and personal-care items.
- Kids throughout Northeast Ohio to receive **5,970 Outdoor Connection Kits**.
- More than **400 kids to go fishing** with us.



- 225 young people to receive **equestrian therapy**.
- **998 youth to attend day camp**, where they experience a wide variety of activities, including rock-climbing, fishing, swimming, archery and hiking.
- 1,100 sixth graders to take part in Fall Outdoor Discovery Days.

You are the engine of a once-tiny nonprofit that is now making a big impact on the lives of children throughout our region. We are so glad you are with us as we take the next step on the trail.

Memories will fuel our next chapter

As I reflect on 10 years of Footpath Foundation, kids' faces and memories flood my thoughts. There are so many **special moments** that come to mind:

- Watching a 7-year-old old girl with tears streaming down her face from fear of a horse to, less than an hour later, seeing her smiling face while riding and saying, "Look at me, Miss Mary. **I overcame my fear!**"
- Michael, 10, describing something "so weird, and **nothing like I've ever felt under my feet.**" I looked down. He was on a run-of-the-mill hiking trail, feeling only dirt, rocks and roots.
- A 12-year-old girl stopping in her tracks to look up at the dark night sky, then asking me, "What are those?" I followed her gaze. **She was seeing stars for the first time.**
- Strapping a life jacket on a 14-year-old boy larger than me and realizing **he didn't trust that the device would work.** He slowly waded into the lake before seeing other campers floating happily.
- Watching a young girl smile in delight as she tried her first **gooey s'more** by the campfire.



By Mary Macias

- Hearing the scream of joy from Tanesha as the canoe was pushed into the lake, marking her **first time in a boat.**
- Watching dozens of kids overcome their fear of heights by climbing a rock wall and seeing the pride wash over their faces as they returned to the ground, **feeling brave and confident.**

These are more than mere happy memories. These are life-changing moments for our kids. Trying something for the first time, feeling brave, building self- confidence and bringing joy to a child- so many moments that will **stay with each child forever.** They will draw from these memories and feel these emotions whenever they need them.

We can share impressive numbers – spending more than 127,000 hours outside, touching the lives of 11,000 young people – in our 10-year-history. But these moments might matter even more. I share these memories with you now because they are a few snapshots of what I was lucky enough to witness. We know **hundreds of life-changing moments** happened outside over the last 10 years. And these moments only happened because of you. Without our donors, supporters, partners, board members and team, these experiences would not have been possible. It truly takes a village of Footpath friends. **Thank you.**

Working together is essential to our mission

Slade Cecconi's finger manipulations typically help him throw a four-seam fastball, a curve or a circle changeup. Today, they involve baiting a hook for a first-time angler at Berea's Wallace Lake.

"You're all set," the Cleveland Guardians pitcher tells the girl.

Cecconi, an avid fisherman, is helping young people from **Ohio Guidestone** at a Footpath Foundation outing in the Cleveland Metroparks. He is patient and helpful. The kids love him.

The collaboration between Footpath and Ohio Guidestone is just one of the partnerships now **helping kids across Northeast Ohio connect with the outdoors.** The collaborations help Footpath provide nature opportunities ranging from camping to equestrian therapy to fishing.

Other **key partnerships** include those with:

- **Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority:** Kids from three CMHA community centers – Lakeview Terrace, Riverside Park and Outhwaite Homes – took part in weekly Outdoor Adventures this summer at our Parma headquarters and received Outdoor Connection Kits. In addition, youth from each center spent a week doing daytime outdoor activities at Red Oak Camp; three teens from Outhwaite went to a week-long overnight camp at Red Oak.
- **Boys & Girls Clubs of Northeast Ohio:** Club members from Cleveland and Lorain County fished, went on Outdoor Adventures and received



Fishing with Slade Cecconi



Creek exploration with CMHA kids



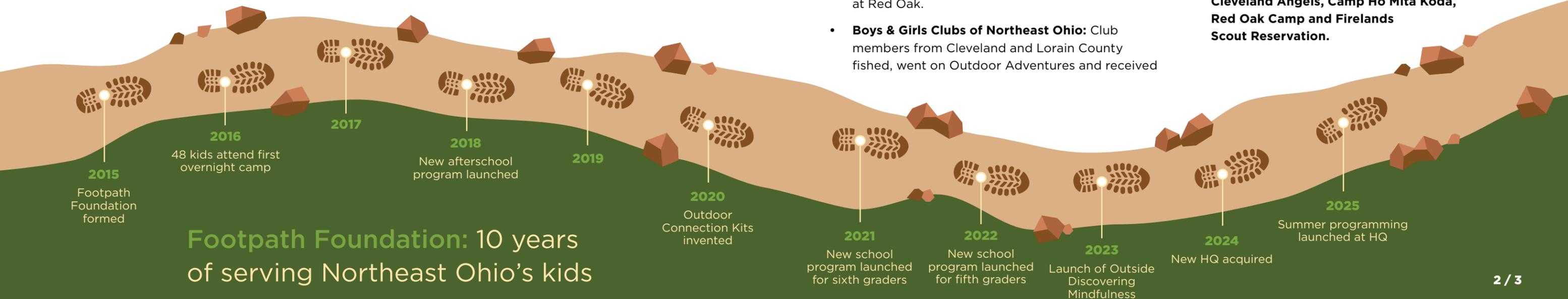
Taking aim at Firelands Scout Reservation



Swimming at Camp Ho Mita Koda

Outdoor Connection Kits. In addition, 40 Club kids from Lorain went to a week of camp at Firelands Scout Reservation.

- **Camp Cheerful (Achievement Centers for Children):** Throughout the summer, three **residential care** cottages of young people from Ohio Guidestone received weekly equestrian therapy sessions.
- **Elyria City School District:** Now, in addition to Cleveland and Lorain City Schools, about 400 5th grade students are receiving Footpath programming through a partnership launched this fall.
- We are also proud to partner with **West Creek Conservancy, Cuyahoga Soil & Water Conservation District, Save Our Children, Cleveland Angels, Camp Ho Mita Koda, Red Oak Camp and Firelands Scout Reservation.**

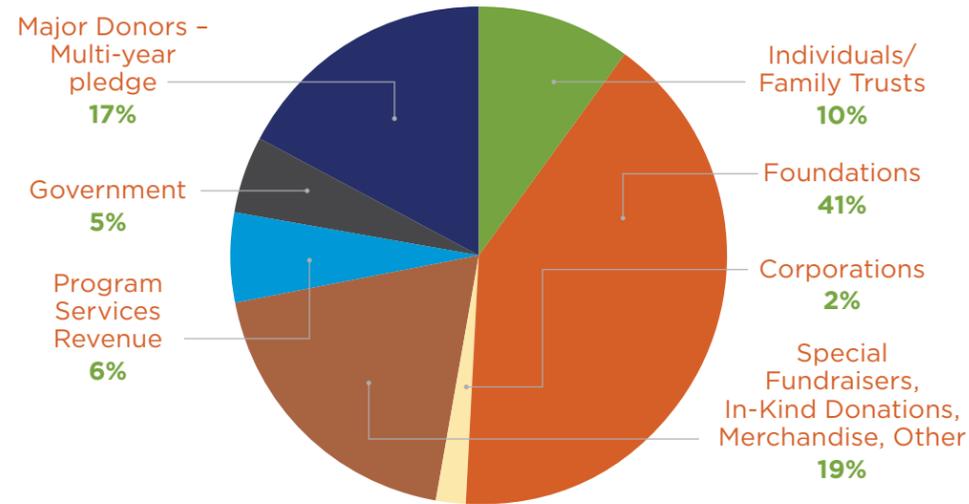


Footpath Foundation's 2024 financial report

The organization posted a modest gain in revenue while investing heavily in programs – we expanded to serve all Lorain fifth graders as well as those at additional Cleveland Metropolitan School District sites – and made improvements to our new headquarters. We are grateful for the growing support from individuals, foundations and companies who view outdoor experiences as a must for all children.

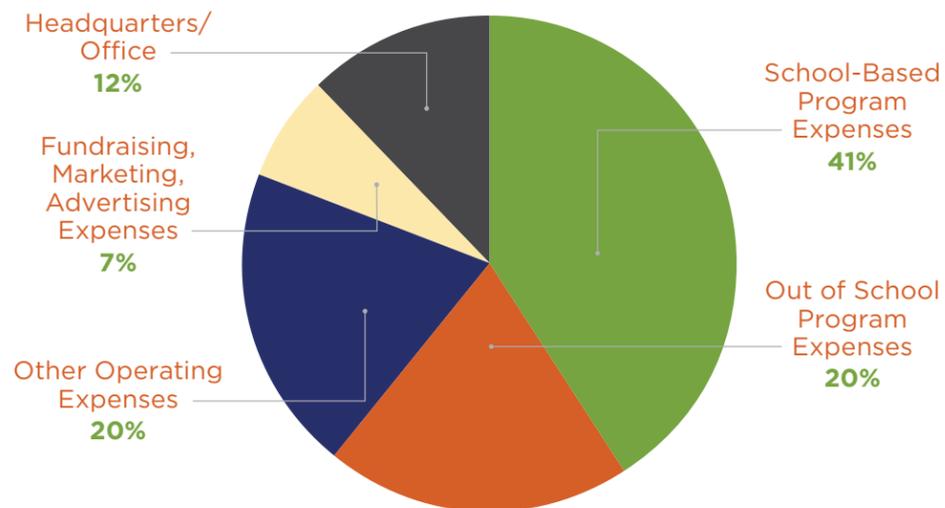
2024 REVENUE

\$539,801



2024 EXPENSES

\$429,274



Supporting foundations

- The Stocker Foundation
- The Lubrizol Corporation
- The Huntington Foundation
- Martha Holding Jennings Foundation
- Lloyd D. Hunter Memorial Fund
- Bruening Foundation
- Thomas White Foundation
- Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District
- Norton Family Foundation
- Sears-Swetland Foundation
- Abington Foundation
- Cleveland Rotary Foundation
- Murphy Family Foundation
- GPD Employees Foundation Inc.
- Peggy & John Garson Family Foundation
- Shaker Lakes Garden Club Charitable Projects
- Veterans United Foundation
- Bass Pro Shops & Cabela's Outdoor Fund
- Crane Charitable Funds
- The Love Express Fund
- The Triple T Foundation
- Good Neighbor Thrift Store Foundation- Avon Lake UCC
- The William Corley Foundation of Westlake - Bay Village Rotary Club
- The Cyrus Eaton Foundation
- Cleveland Hiking Club

**Foundations that donated \$1,500 or more from 1.1.2024 to 6.30.2025*

We thrive with a little help from our friends

Nicole Cyran keeps an eye on a group of students as they walk from a climbing wall at Firelands Scout Camp to a trailhead surrounded by pine trees. The fifth-grade teacher at Lorain's Stevan Dohanos Elementary School says her kids love **connecting with the natural world**.



"I think what's different for them is being outdoors and being more hands on with learning versus just hearing it and reading a book," she says.

Nicole's students are among the approximately **400 Lorain youth** who took part in Footpath Foundation's Outside Discovering Me! program through a grant from **The Stocker Foundation**. The foundation's support was critical to offering these engaging outdoor science lessons.

From day and overnight camping to fishing to installing a driveway at our Parma headquarters, the **contributions of individual donors, foundations, corporations and volunteers are vital to everything we do** at Footpath Foundation. We extend our deepest gratitude.

Support from individuals, corporations and foundations enabled kids who don't have easy access to nature enjoy **vital outdoor experiences**.

The driveway project – critical to giving kids access to our wooded property – was made possible by the **Ohio Contractors Association, Shook Construction, Kurtz Bros. Inc., Contractors Choice Ready Mix, The Great Lakes Construction Co., The Chas. E. Phipps Company, The Ruhlin Company, Murphy Tractor & Equipment Co.** and **Independence Excavating**.

We also thank the dozens of volunteers – special shoutouts to those from **Sherwin Williams, Stantec, Rotary Club of Cleveland and Ridgewood Garden Club** – who spent hours shoveling soil and mulch to create a beautiful new pollinator garden and outdoor classroom area at the headquarters property. Other volunteers made a huge difference by helping put together classroom kits and Outdoor Connection kits.

Did someone mention fishing? We were blessed to have individual volunteers, including **Cleveland Guardians pitcher Slade Cecconi**, and groups such as the **Polish Fishermen's Club of Lorain** help kids learn to fish.



Help send even more kids to camp by scanning this code and donating to Footpath Foundation.



Golf outing helps Footpath's cause

The 10th annual Footpath Foundation Golf Outing was a huge success, raising **more than \$38,000** for the organization's efforts to connect kids with the outdoors through activities and experiences.

We thank the **sponsors, golfers, spectators and volunteers** who made it a great day.

There was a heated competition for 'Best Foursome Theme Outfits' between **Kobra Kai, Cleveland Browns QB Room and Average Joe's Dodgeball** as well as putting, driving and hole-in-one contests. We were grateful that the rain held off, leaving Sweetbriar Golf Course in Avon Lake in good condition. Money raised through the golf outing helps Footpath deliver a variety of outdoor programming to kids in Northeast Ohio, including day and overnight camping.



She connects Footpath to the community



Two years ago, **Lauren Schneider** jumped at the chance to join Footpath Foundation as an instructor because the organization's mission of **getting kids outdoors** aligned with her own beliefs. Lauren, who holds a bachelor's degree from Northwestern University and a master's degree from Cleveland State University, is now **Footpath's Outreach and Volunteer Leader** as well as **Program Instructor**. A former education and outreach staffer for the Cleveland Guardians and Piano Cleveland, she also has a business called Lauren's Bakery. She and her husband Danny live in Cleveland's West Park neighborhood and are expecting a baby girl this month. "When we take kids outside and encourage them to embrace their role in nature, **the positive impacts are immediate,**" she says. "They develop confidence, cultivate curiosity and end the day with a sense of calm and belonging they didn't have when they arrived."

Her passions match those of Footpath



Stephanie Silverman, an outdoor enthusiast and former business leader with extensive child welfare agency board experience, is the **newest member of the Footpath Foundation Board of Directors**. Stephanie, who lives in Shaker Heights, is the board chair of The Wingspan Care Group, the parent company of Bellefaire and Applewood Centers. In 2007, she founded Your Teen Media, a resource for parents; she and her partner sold YTM in 2023. In her free time, she enjoys **hiking, kayaking, reading, listening to podcasts and being with her family**, including husband Todd, three adult children and Luna, their rescued Chocolate Lab. Footpath Foundation CEO and co-founder Mary Macias says, "Stephanie brings a passion for the outdoors and for the kids we serve."

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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Sarah Tabeling, Co-founder



Stephanie Silverman

Footpath Foundation

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Photos by Ken Wood and Karen Menyhart

“ I like nature, surprisingly. I like how I can experience the world around me without being on an electronic device because if I experience the world more I will know more places and I will explore more. ”

- Ayden, 12
Footpath camper



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