

WHISKEYTOWN ENVIRONMENTAL SCHOOL COMMUNITY - NEWSLETTER

WESCOMMUNITY.ORG



Keeping Environmental Education Alive in Shasta County

January 2023



Proposed student housing

GROW BACK STRONGER CAMPAIGN TAKES OFF



WES Community has launched the Grow Back Stronger Campaign to rebuild student housing at WES. Active fundraising began in early September and we are pleased to report that for the year 2022, we have raised **\$373,088**. Thank you for believing in and supporting our mission to return students to Whiskeytown Environmental School.

We continue to work cooperatively with our partners, Whiskeytown National Recreation Area/NPS and Shasta County Office of Education in seeking foundation grants and government funding sources.

“I’m Hoping to Bring My Students to WES” TEACHER JOHN LIGHTHILL REFLECTS



John Lighthill as a fifth grader in 1995

“Going to WES as a Junction Elementary School 5th grader in 1995 was an experience that I have never forgotten, it was one of the best experiences from elementary school,” says former WES camper (and current teacher) John Lighthill. “I’ve remembered that trip all my life, and I saved all my pictures.”

Lighthill is quick to list his WES highlights: tossing the giant earth ball in the field, taking nature walks, spotting deer, exploring the stream, identifying fish, classifying trees and flowers, and learning that “all things are connected—it’s the circle of life.” He also mentions a not-so-highlight: getting put on clean-up duty in the mess hall because he was misbehaving (he now finds this amusing).

As a second-year teacher at Evergreen Union Elementary School in Cottonwood, California, Lighthill was researching options for 4th grade outdoor education when he discovered WES had closed its overnight programs due to the 2018 Carr Fire. “I was so disappointed because I was hoping to bring my students to WES,” he said.



John Lighthill today

He’s optimistic that the Grow Back Stronger campaign will help WES reopen soon. “Camps like WES provide students a real-life experience—not just watching videos or reading about something. Kids get to experience nature firsthand, with their classmates and their teacher. WES helps every kid, no matter what their learning style, make a real connection to science and nature. It’s important for our community to keep the WES tradition alive, for future generations to share just as past generations have shared.”

CELEBRATING GIVING TUESDAY'S BUNKBED CHALLENGE



A heartfelt note to celebrate the generosity of our local community and the many supporters from across the country who rallied to the bunkbed challenge. Thanks to you, we raised \$25,695 for bunkbeds to be used by students when WES reopens!

Many thanks to the generosity of Kool April Nites, who provided \$10,000 in seed money to get us started. We are also grateful to the Harry Daniell Fund of the Community Foundation of the Northstate who gave us a generous boost on fundraising day.

As a result, we were able to raise a total of \$35,695, that's 43 bunkbeds!

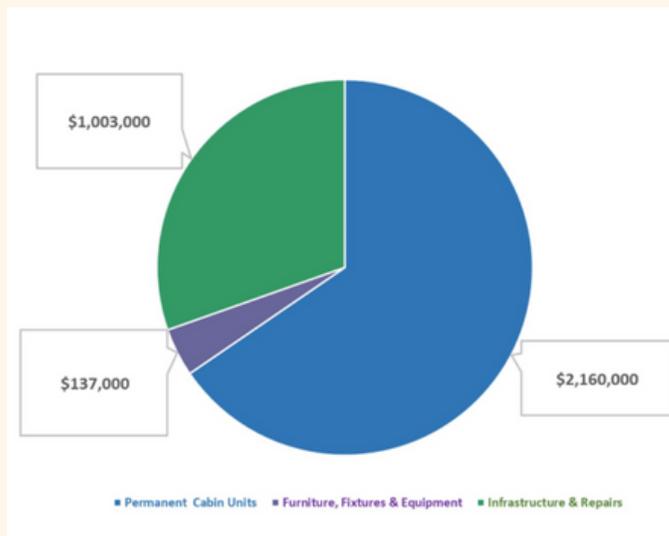
ROTARY CLUB OF REDDING AWARDS ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR BUNK BEDS

At the end of December WES received a generous gift from Rotary Club of Redding (Local Project Grant Program) in the form of a \$2,502 grant to purchase three additional bunkbeds. Here's how this gift will play out over time:

Three bunkbeds will sleep six children. Each year we expect students to be in residence at WES and using these beds for approximately 15 weeks. **That's 90 students who will benefit each year. Over a 40-year expected lifetime for these beds, that's 3,600 children who will directly benefit from this gift!**



GROW BACK STRONGER \$3,300,000



The plan to rebuild WES includes new student sleeping cabins, modern bathhouses, a new administration safety building with health services and teacher housing, as well as improvements to Hatcher Hall, the main campus dining facility, and other structures. **The goal of Grow Back Stronger is not just to replace what was lost, but to improve it, with an eye to the future.** Replacement designs for structures will include consideration for fire resistance, energy efficiency, ventilation, air quality, temperature control, lighting, views, safety, and security. Keep up with planning process progress by visiting:

wescommunity.org

SOJOURNING IN SASQUATCH'S KINGDOM



Snow has returned to Northern California, creating joy for nature and nature lovers. A friend and I returned to one of my favorite locales, Manzanita Lake inside of Lassen Volcanic National Park for a cross country ski. Our destination was a trail around the lake, a short loop that always inspires joy, no matter the season.

It was a cold day, perhaps 28 degrees in the sun, with sunshine and clouds rolling by. The air was so cold that the snow sparkled in the sun. Showers of diamonds gently fell from tree branches in the breeze. The lake was frozen, piled with snow and crisscrossed by the tracks of a few hungry creatures. The view of Mt. Lassen was stupendous. From one side of the lake, we could see the far-off tracks of small avalanches. The view from the other side encompassed distant ridges, trees plastered white in frozen, windblown snow. Certainly the legend of Sasquatch must have originated there.

The snow was perfect, gliding seemed effortless and didn't require too much work or thoughts of balance. We had to stop frequently to enjoy the moment, take in the views and tell each other how lucky we were to see this. I looked up at a ponderosa pine, perhaps 200 years old watched the clouds race by, and listened to the wind in the trees and a rushing creek. Harmony swept through me and all was well in the world. I want this for all our children, grandchildren and generations flowing into the future.

This is my New Year's message to you, let's provide a space where all children can experience, through nature, a sense of wellbeing. Not everyone wants to be a skier or backpacker, but they can still derive joy from nature. Perhaps they will find a passion for fishing, day hiking, car camping or walking down a beach. These activities can be shared with family and friends. Some cost a few dollars, others a larger investment. Nature offers something for everyone.

This is why I am on the board of WES Community, working to rebuild and reopen Whiskeytown Environmental School. I want our community's children to have an outdoor education opportunity, to be exposed to a natural environment. I grew up in a huge metropolitan area and outdoor education was not part of the public school experience as it is here. It's personal for me, make it personal for you too. Be part of the campaign.

Happy New Year. Sasquatch and Francesca Huntsman, Board Secretary





Your gift to WES Community in 2023 will ensure we can bring students back soon! It's easy to give online at www.wescommunity.org, or by mailing a check to WESC PO Box 3, Whiskeytown, CA 96095. Consider making a three-year pledge, or making a non-cash or asset-based gift such as stocks, vehicles, or real estate. For more information about giving, contact us at wescommunityinfo@gmail.com or call Melinda Kashuba, 530-440-5584.

OUR MISSION

Whiskeytown Environmental School Community (WES Community) exists to support educational goals through immersive outdoor experiences for learners at Whiskeytown Environmental School (WES). WES Community contributes to the school's mission through advocacy and relationship building with communities, businesses and public agencies to generate funds and further shared goals.

DONATION OPPORTUNITIES

- Donate online, wescommunity.org or by check, WES Community, PO Box 3, Whiskeytown, CA 96095
- Facebook Birthday Fundraisers
- Benevity Corporate Matching program

CONTACT US:

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