



# 2024 IMPACT REPORT



**NEW PIONEERS**  
FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

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# Director's Note



Dear New Pioneers Members, Friends, and Supporters:

As we close the chapter on another year spent educating, demonstrating, and advocating for greater sustainability; my eyes are focused on the horizon. I've taken more time lately to appreciate sunrises. *Have you gotten to see a sunrise recently?* In my opinion, there are few things better than seeing the first streaks of light - the pinks, oranges, and reds - break the darkness on a winter morning. **There's a childlike awe that accompanies a sunrise; the hope of a brand new start.**

Our work throughout 2024 carries this same feeling. Much has changed for New Pioneers, and our world, in the past year. We've welcomed two new staff members and various board members, we've dramatically grown our education offerings and programs (21 in total this year!), and we experimented with improvements to recurring programs (including our Empty Bowl Supper and Green Festival). **We've leaned into the reality that, together, we can do anything we set our minds to - and we've done it well.**

All transitions foster hope for a new beginning and many can carry a sense of loss for a closed chapter. As the sun rises on New Pioneers 20th anniversary in 2025, we start a new chapter in this changing political, social, and cultural landscape. **I hope that you can deeply see and feel the myriad of ways in which we carry forward a beautiful legacy shaped by Sr. Claire, our foundress, and many other organizational leaders; while feeling some childlike awe (and excitement) for the ways in which we're growing.** If you're new to our family, you're joining us at the perfect time!

Much like the sunrise reminds us that we're at the dawn of a brand new day, may our second annual impact report remind you of how much we have to celebrate together. **We can't do this work without you - it's clearer now than ever before how much we need each other to be increasingly sustainable, resilient, and well.**

From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for each and every small and big way you contribute to fostering sustainability locally. Together, we'll continue to nourish our communities into the light of a new chapter.

*The best is yet to come,*

**Julia Gerwe**

Executive Director

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# Who We Are

New Pioneers for a Sustainable Future is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization promoting sustainability in rural, Central Kentucky to ensure a healthy future for all. Since our founding in 2005 by Sr. Claire McGowan, our vision has been to build and foster a sustainability movement throughout our region and state.



## Our Why

New Pioneers believes that living sustainably is the key to a healthy future for all: Ourselves, our communities, the environment, and all life on Earth. To do so, **we must uphold the environmental limits of our natural world and embrace social equity and economic vitality to create resilient and thriving communities.**

## What We Do

### *Educate*

Educate local communities through a variety of programs, resources, and communications.

### *Demonstrate*

Demonstrate sustainable living practices alongside our network of members.

### *Advocate*

Advocate for strategies to support healthy ecosystems, locally and globally.

## How We Impact

As a community-based nonprofit, our impact comes alive through public engagement and education. We know that inspiring individuals to connect with the natural world motivates us all to embrace sustainable lifestyles and impact broad change. Change begets change, and our sustainability movement grows!

# 2024 By the Numbers

→ New Members	36	→ Received in Grant Funding	\$41,000
→ Counties Served	3	→ Environmental Programs	27
→ \$ Invested in Local Environmental Literacy	\$83,020	→ Individuals Reached with Sustainability Education	1,730



## Our Team

### Staff

Julia Gerwe, *Executive Director*  
[julia@newpioneers.org](mailto:julia@newpioneers.org)

Ivoree Sullenbarger, *Community Educator*  
[education@newpioneers.org](mailto:education@newpioneers.org)

Ami Black, *Administrative Assistant*  
[info@newpioneers.org](mailto:info@newpioneers.org)

### Board of Directors

Jackie Roberts, *President*  
 Michael Bickett, *Vice President*  
 Joyce Minkler, *Secretary*  
 Elizabeth Coulter, *Treasurer*  
 Deana Cissell  
 Susan Gatz, SCN  
 Pamela Grundy  
 Jessie Rathburn  
 William Rosenbaum  
 Jenna Wilson

# Education Highlights

New Pioneers grew our educational impact this year, reaching 142% more individuals than in 2023! Since environmental education is the first step in fostering a community with the knowledge, skills, and motivation to live sustainably; we invested much time and love to grow our programs this year.



Our annual **Springfield Green Festival** kickstarted a summer of fun, gathering sustainable living and eco-friendly community partners together to celebrate “where sustainability takes root”. New Pioneers also hosted our third annual **Space Night** this summer, where we geared up for the exciting mission of exploring celestial objects and viewing the Perseid Meteor Shower with over 100 attendees. Additionally, we partnered with the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth for their annual “**Spirit of the Wild**” day camp for local youth. This summer also included smaller, more intimate programs like a **Bioblitz** at the Loretto Community to count native species, **Nature Week** at St. Joseph’s Montessori Children’s Center to explore and appreciate the outdoors, and **Open Houses** at Washington County schools to connect students with sustainability knowledge.



New Pioneers was also proud to share sustainable living education at local community events this year, including offering our “Sustainable Living Challenge” at the **St. Catharine Farm Appreciation Day**, **Loretto Motherhouse Farm “Back to School Ag Bash”**, **Springfield Sorghum Festival**, and Boyle County’s **Earth Day Celebration!** We also grew some new partnerships this year, hosting a “Tree Detectives” program with the **Nelson County Public Library** and a water resource lesson for **Our Commonwealth’s Rose Dodson STEM mentoring program**. This much is clear: New Pioneers offered influential and important learning experiences for all ages this year - and our community has never been more responsive and excited for more!

# Demonstration Highlights

New Pioneers mission is deeply rooted in demonstrating sustainable lifestyles *for* and *with* our local communities. By sharing eco-friendly habits, guiding conversations about sustainable community development, and supporting “green” practices throughout our communities; New Pioneers has risen to the challenge of offering a “lens of sustainability” through which community members can work toward a healthy (and sustainable) future for all.

New Pioneers revived the beloved “**Moving Forward Forums**” this year, providing an opportunity for adults to discuss pressing environmental issues and inspire solutions. We also prepared our youth to take sustainable civic action during our “Teen Night Takeover” with the **Nelson County Public Library** this spring, where attendees presented their land-use solutions to a hypothetical City Council. New Pioneers also demonstrated our growth and 2024-2026 strategic plan goals through presentations to the **Loretto Community** and **Rotary Club of Springfield**. Finally, we were eager to host the **1,000 Hours Outside Challenge** this summer, inviting individuals and families across our communities to spend a collective 1,000 hours of intentional time with nature - which we achieved and exceeded!



A critical component of New Pioneers mission to demonstrate sustainability is fostering relationships with key community members to connect, inspire, and uplift local voices. One event that exemplifies this idea perfectly is our annual **Empty Bowl Supper**, during which we hosted our first annual **Pioneer Awards** to recognize local community action toward sustainability. We also empowered community members to preserve and promote local water quality by offering a **Kentucky Watershed Watch water sampler training** alongside the Kentucky Association for Environmental Education. Finally, we were thrilled to launch an opportunity for members to engage in an exclusive program called “**Member Mingles**” to connect with like-minded individuals and discuss environmental concerns in our communities.

# Advocacy Highlights

As the sole organization advocating for environmental conservation and sustainability in our region, New Pioneers has expanded our capacity to represent our community's voices both locally and in Frankfort this year.



New Pioneers continued to support **Kentuckians for Energy Democracy's** work toward a just energy transition and the **Kentucky Conservation Committee's** advocacy of pressing conservation issues by sharing and engaging in their "calls to action". We have grown and nurtured relationships with local Senator Jimmy Higdon, as well as Representatives Candy Massaroni, Kim King, and Michael "Sarge" Pollock. We specifically advocated for and celebrated the long overdue appropriation of funds to the Kentucky Heritage Lands Conservation Fund and the elimination of excessive taxes on level 2 electric vehicle chargers in Kentucky. We found strength in numbers advocating alongside our coalitions to see these initiatives pass in the Kentucky Legislature.



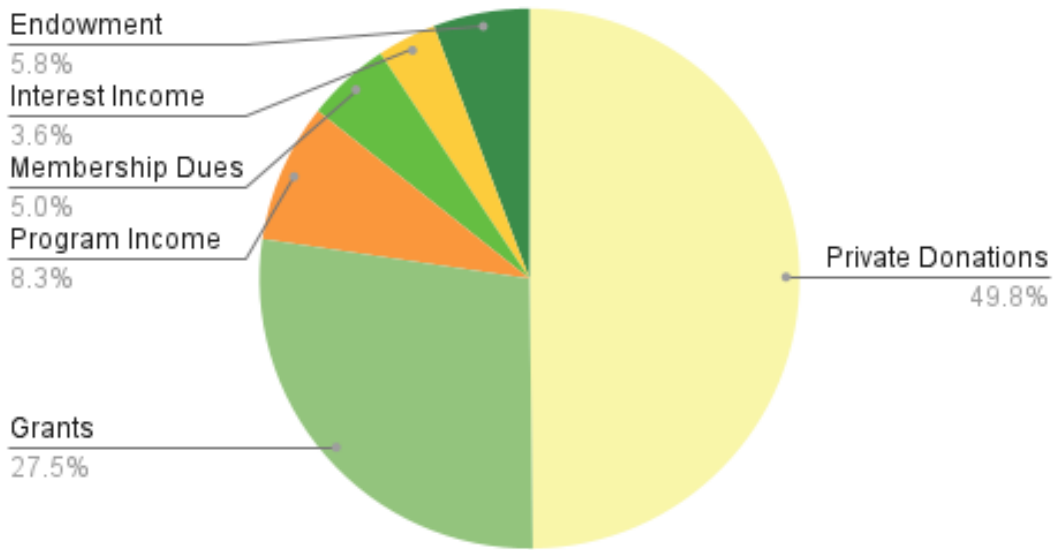
Additionally, we have stayed up-to-date alongside the **Save Bernheim Now Coalition** to protect our neighbors in Bullitt County, including Bernheim Forest & Arboretum, from a proposed natural gas pipeline. We also enrolled in the **Kentucky Watershed Watch's** "Support Hub" program to empower water quality samplers with the tools and knowledge to conduct citizen science and keep our local waterways clean. Finally, New Pioneers partnered with **Solarize Boyle** to promote solar energy installations in Marion and Washington counties through public education and a Solar 101 program at the Marion County Public Library.



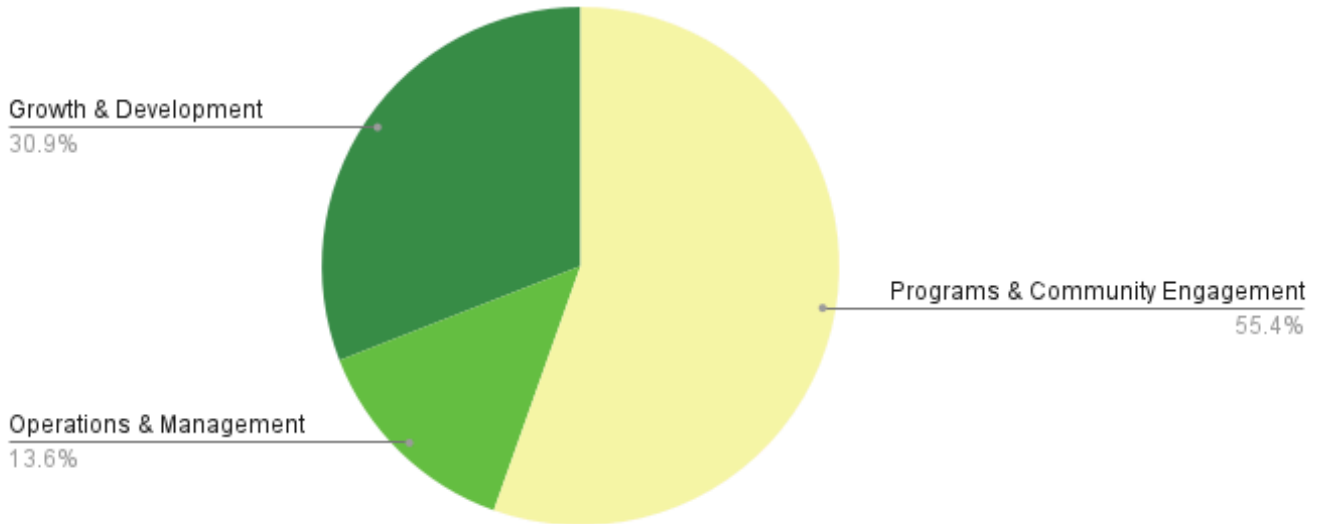
# Financial Summary



## Sources of Funds



## Use of Funds



# Member Appreciation

## **Corporate**

Mattingly, Simms, Robinson & McCain, PLLC

## **Pioneer**

John Boone  
Anne Harrison\* & Kim Stacey  
Adam Maciuba  
Jackie Roberts  
Hamilton Simms  
Deborah Wakefield

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Cole Alexander  
Bardstown Mills  
Deana Cissell  
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David & April Donathan  
River Fuchs  
Pam Grundy  
Joe Pat & Nell Haydon  
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John Hundley  
Spalding\* & Jennifer Hurst  
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Sarah Legett  
Brenda Mattingly  
Claire McGowan, OP  
Susan Mercke  
Joyce Minkler  
Eldon Morgan  
Ed & Kris O'Daniel  
Eileen O'Donohue  
Heather & Vince Pennington  
Hale Polin Robinson Funeral Home  
Jessica Rathburn  
Bill Robinson  
Will Rosenbaum  
Simms & Montgomery  
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Pat Smith & Cynthia Massek  
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Isaac Sutton  
Laura Webb  
Martha & Arthur Young

## **Family**

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Angela Benz & Anne Chaney  
Michael Bickett  
Fran Carrico  
Susan Christensen  
Elizabeth Croom  
Marilyn Fox  
Mary Gene Frank  
Julia Gerwe & Jonathan Nicholson  
Joyce & Kenny Hamilton  
Ed Krebs & Susan Hamilton  
Barbara Lammers, SCN  
Angela Rakes  
George & Donna Snider  
Sylvia & Bob Tatum  
Leo & Gussie Thompson  
Marsha Wells  
Ashton Wurzel  
Whitney Wurzel & Casey Hammett  
Joe & Pam Zarantonello

## **Individual**

Elena Acosta  
Carmel Bowman  
Alida Coughlin  
Lisa Downs  
Joan Dunning, OP  
Bill Edelen  
Robert Ernst  
Lisa Ferris  
Kenny Fogle  
Joann Gates  
Susan Gatz, SCN  
Rose Goodlett  
Becky Greenwell  
Earl Grigsby  
Joye Gros  
Maggie Hettinger  
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Myrna Page  
Maria Spalding Pasley

Susanna Pyatt  
Beverly Roberts  
Patricia Robinson  
Jane Rudnick  
Angie Shaughnessy  
Jessica Shelton  
Lindsey Sweis  
Kate & Robert Thomas  
Erin Westover  
Jenna Wilson  
Gary Young

## **Senior/Student**

Phyllis Bastin  
Bud Blair  
Johanna Brian  
Anna Carrico  
Cheryl Coleman  
Rose Marie Cummins, OP  
Mary Louise Edwards, SCN  
Brenda Gonzales, SCN  
Joel Gubler  
Carolyn Hardin  
Patricia Hart  
Ron Hustedde  
Barth Johnson  
Michael Lutz  
Mary McGivern  
Mary Catherine Medley  
Jeanne Moore  
Tillie Polin  
Olivia Raley  
Marie Surette  
Ron Voss

THANK  
you

*\*Extra thanks to these members, as well as Wren Smith, for their exceptional service in supporting our Board of Directors and committees this year.*

# Celebration of Donors

## \$1-99

Elena Acosta  
Gwyn Artz  
Randy Banks & Eileen O'Donahue  
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Dominican Sisters of Peace  
Jonas Hurley  
Loretto Community  
Rotary Club of Springfield  
Signarama (Elizabethtown, KY)  
Springfield State Bank  
Springfield Tourism Commission

## \$5,000-\$9,999

Michter's Distillery

## \$10,000+

Heaven Hill, Inc.  
Owsley Brown II Family Foundation  
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth  
Ursuline Sisters of Louisville



# Contact Us

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