



Annual Report

2024



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sustaindane.org

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| About us | 3 |
| Meet the Team | 4 |
| Letter from our Executive Director | 6 |
| Accelerate Sustainability Workshop | 7 |
| Sustainable Breakfast Series | 9 |
| All Around Dane County | 13 |
| Volunteer & Community Building | 15 |
| School & Restaurant Sustainability | 18 |
| Powerful Teen Leaders | 18 |
| Efficiency Navigator | 19 |
| Farmers' Market Food Scraps Collection | 20 |
| Recycle Better | 20 |
| Sustain Dane Summit | 21 |
| Supporters | 23 |
| Financial Statement | 24 |
| Support Sustainable Actions | 25 |



The Sustain Dane Team

About us

Sustain Dane is the sustainability organization of Dane County. Our programs support individuals, organizations, and businesses to learn, connect, and take action for sustainability.

Holistic sustainability can successfully guide us through the challenges and opportunities ahead as we build a more resilient and inclusive community. Through our network and beyond, we see that change happens when inspired people take action.

Mission and Vision

Sustain Dane's vision is a thriving and inclusive community with a sustainable environment and economy we are proud to pass on to future generations. Our mission is to inspire, connect, and support people to accelerate equity and sustainable actions for community well-being.



Meet the Team

Staff



**Claire Schaefer
Oleksiak**
Executive Director



Lorenza Zebell
Program Manager



Samantha Worden
Program Coordinator



Spencer Bierman
Development &
Partnerships Manager



Frankie Fosdick
Efficiency Navigator



Maggie Radl
Communications
Specialist



Valora Gutierrez
NOAH Outreach
Specialist



Keenih Allen-Wallace
Powerful Teen Leaders
Program Manager



Marcus Johnson
Powerful Teen Leaders
Program Assistant

Interns



Ardell Taugher
Compost Intern



Amanda Fox
Compost Intern



Jeanne Welch
Compost Intern



Jennifer Sandor
Compost Intern



Anna Jurena
Compost Intern



Siri Wagner Grund
Compost Intern



Zaria Romero
Compost Intern



Jay Davis
Compost Intern



**Powerful Teen
Leaders**

Board Members



Mark Richardson
President
Unfinished Business



Sandy Xiong
Vice President
City of Sun Prairie



Jim Bradley
Treasurer
Retired



Richard Heinemann
Secretary
Boardman Clark LLP



Steve Whayland
At-Large
DC Engineering



Yvette Jones
designCraft
Advertising



Angeline Mboutngam
Wisconsin
Foundation and
Alumni Association



Tom Thompson
UW Health



Amanda Goetsch
University of
Wisconsin Sustainable
Management



Robin Lisowski
Slipstream



Dave Benforado
MG&E



Ben Reynolds
Reynolds Transfer
and Storage



Melissa Flores
Nordic Consulting



Abigail Corso
Elevate Energy



Christopher Peguero
DEI Consultant

Letter From Our Executive Director

Sustain Dane and community members in our network understand the importance of nurturing a healthy environment for future generations. Sustain Dane's programs foster learning, connection, and action to enhance community well-being.

The extreme weather in 2024 felt daunting at times. Together, our community is committed to addressing the effects of a changing climate, and striving for a future filled with resilience and hope.

Sustain Dane is a resource and a convener – we provide an avenue to channel the anxiety for the future into programming that provides opportunities for positive change. Educational programming like our Healing Your Climate Anxiety Sustainable Breakfast Series plays an important role, as does our work increasing awareness and accessibility to energy efficiency in affordable housing, food scrap composting, and green jobs pathways for young people.



Claire Schaefer Oleksiak
Executive Director, Sustain Dane

As one of the attendees to the Sustain Dane Summit shared, "It was rewarding to learn from people within our own community who are doing great work. We walked out of the [program] feeling hopeful for the future of our planet!"

Sustain Dane's programs deliver significant impacts for Dane County. We foster inclusive climate leadership and work in partnership to make positive change happen. In addition to engaging 1,700+ people through educational programming, and reaching 31,000+ people through ripple effect impacts, in 2024 we also:

- Reduced energy bills for over 177 units of affordable apartments, as well as improved energy efficiency, comfort, health and resilience in Madison, Middleton, and Fitchburg
- Collected 30,000+ pounds of food scraps at the Southside, Eastside, and Westside farmer's markets to regenerate soil at the Neighborhood Food Solutions farm in Fitchburg
- Led over 5,000 students in lunch-time recycling and waste audits at 13 schools
- Facilitated the Powerful Teen Leaders summer youth employment program for 11 Northside teens focused on green economy careers, job readiness, and leadership

Working together with committed Dane County residents and community leaders, Sustain Dane will continue to provide impactful sustainability programs and amplify climate actions in the workplace, at home, in schools, and throughout our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Claire Schaefer Oleksiak". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light blue horizontal line.

Claire Schaefer Oleksiak Executive
Director, Sustain Dane

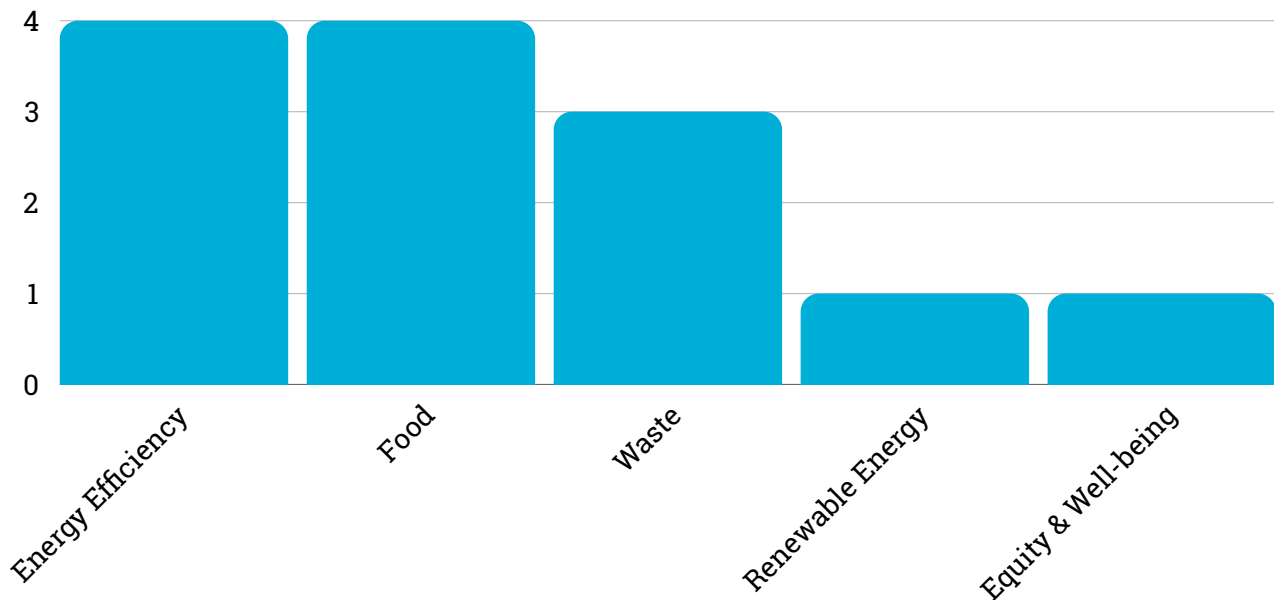
Accelerate Sustainability Workshop

Our Accelerate Sustainability Workshop is a professional development opportunity designed to help achieve sustainability initiatives at local businesses and organizations.

The workshop includes:

- Change-making and sustainability leadership strategies
- A panel presentation of local business case studies featuring successfully implemented sustainability initiatives in areas such as energy efficiency, renewables, food management, and alternative transportation
- Information on how to harness incentives from the Inflation Reduction Act and more

Project Areas



Participants gather to learn and connect about local business sustainability.



Accelerate Sustainability Workshop continued

Participants

- All Comfort Services
- AMPED Association Management
- Banzo
- Best Western Plus InnTowner Madison
- Boardman & Clark Law Firm LLP
- Cambridge Winery
- Children's Theater of Madison
- City of Madison
- Covenant Presbyterian Church
- Dane Buy Local
- DC Engineering
- Embassy Suites Madison
- FairShare CSA Coalition
- Findorff
- First United Methodist Church
- FlannelJax's
- Fluno Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison
- Gnarly Tree Sustainability Institute
- Green Box Compost
- Hampton Inn & Suites Madison Downtown
- HCG-Madison
- Hodgepodge
- Holiday Inn Express & Suites
- Holy Wisdom Monastery
- Hotel Indigo Madison Downtown
- Illumina
- J. Henry & Sons
- Johnson Financial Group
- Kahler Slater
- Legacy Solar Co-op
- Little Luxuries
- Local Motion Real Estate
- Madison BCycle
- Madison Children's Museum
- Movin' Out, Inc.
- N/A
- Olbrich Botanical Gardens
- Overture Center for the Arts
- Promega
- Promega Corporation
- River Oaks Industries
- Silvernail Studio for Geodesign
- Sketchworks Architecture
- Starkweather Brewing Company
- Student–Cornell University
- Summit Credit Union
- Textile Arts Center of Madison
- The River Food Pantry
- Therma-Stor
- Travel Wisconsin
- Trek Bikes
- UW Stout
- UW-Madison Campus & Visitor Relations
- Village of Waunakee
- Virent
- Visit Middleton
- Wisconsin LGBT Chamber of Commerce



"Sustain Dane goes above and beyond to connect and inspire our local community. A Sustain Dane membership is an incredibly valuable resource for businesses, nonprofits, and individuals who are passionate about sustainability but don't know where to start. Sustain Dane provides networking, guidance, and actionable steps to take action."

—2024 Accelerate Sustainability Workshop Participant

"I feel inspired to respond to climate challenges holistically. Thank you Sustain Dane!"

– Sustainable Breakfast Series Participant



Sustainable Breakfast Series

The Sustainable Breakfast Series highlights current sustainability topics through expert speakers and skill-building opportunities. Breakfast meetings are attended by regional business leaders and individuals who care about integrating environmental, social, and economic sustainability into their professional and personal actions.

Healing our Climate Anxiety

For our February Sustainable Breakfast Series, we featured a conversation on the impacts of climate change on mental health and strategies for healing. Speakers from the Center for Healthy Minds covered the complexities of climate anxiety and shared insights on fostering resilience.

Participants engaged in meaningful discussions, gained practical tools to navigate climate and wellbeing-related challenges, participated in a grounding meditation, and connected with like-minded professionals committed to driving positive change.

Featured Speakers

- Dekila Chungyalpa, Director of the Loka Initiative, Center for Healthy Minds and Healthy Minds Innovations
- Christy Wilson-Mendenhall, Research Assistant Professor, Center for Healthy Minds

Fashion with a Purpose

Our April Sustainable Breakfast Series had a panel discussion around fashion, clothing, and sustainability.

The program featured four different speakers discussing various topics on fashion and sustainability. Participants learned about alternatives to fast fashion, more sustainable apparel options like clothing made from hemp fiber, thrift stores, and the steps brands take to minimize impact.

Featured Speaker

- Marianne Fairbanks, Professor, UW Madison School of Human Ecology
- Julie Bennett, CEO & Executive Director, St. Vincent de Paul – Madison / Dane County
- Robert Behnke, Co-founder and President, Fair Indigo
- Carolyn Benforado, Designer and Board President, The Sewing Machine Project- Madison/ Dane County

“People take sheets and make them into clothes or alter thrifted clothes into new designs... there are so many creative ways to rescue things that would’ve gone to the landfill.”

– Julie Bennett,
CEO & Executive Director, St. Vincent de Paul



The panel of speakers for our April Sustainable Breakfast Series on Fashion with a Purpose.



The panel of speakers for our July Sustainable Breakfast Series on Bird Friendly Future.

Bird Friendly Future

At our July Sustainable Breakfast Series, we discussed the relationship between birds, people, and our built environment.

The program featured a panel of three experts who gave different views on the connection between birds and sustainability. Participants learned about how modern climate change influences wildlife behavior, abundance, and distribution. The co-founder of BIPOC Birding club talked about how the club seeks to create safe spaces for people of color in the outdoors through outdoor birding activities and outdoor experiences. Lastly, a representative from SmithGroup spoke to her experiences with environmental policies and products such as bird-safe glass and how buildings of different uses respond to bird populations in different ways.

Featured Speaker

- Benjamin Zuckerberg, Professor, UW Madison
- Jeff Galligan, Co-founder, BIPOC Birding Club of Wisconsin
- Monika Miller, Project Manager, SmithGroup

“Birds are a very powerful story for being able to talk about climate change... these are stories that show up in people’s backyard.”

— Benjamin Zuckerberg, Professor, UW Madison



Net Zero and Beyond at Holy Wisdom Monastery

Our September Sustainable Breakfast Series featured a tour of the Holy Wisdom Monastery facility including their LEED platinum Monastery building, 300 kW solar array, and newly reopened geothermal heated/cooled retreat and guest house.

Since 1953, Holy Wisdom Monastery retreat and meeting center in Middleton, WI has prioritized sustainability. For more than 70 years, the Benedictine sisters have cared for the Monastery land from restoring the former farmland to native prairie and savanna to earning the title of highest-rated LEED-New Construction building in the US to date. By the end of 2024, the Monastery will produce 100% of its energy needs onsite from renewable resources.

Featured Speakers

- Toby Grabs, Director of Operations, Holy Wisdom Monastery.
- Mark Hanson, Director of Sustainable Services, Hoffman Planning, Design & Construction, Inc.



Attendees of the September Sustainable Breakfast Series getting a tour of Holy Wisdom Monastery and their net-zero campus.

All Around Dane County

Sustainability is happening all around Dane County. The All Around Dane County program is a community-driven initiative dedicated to fostering local engagement and promoting sustainability. This program is designed to provide opportunities for locals to connect with one another, learn about ongoing sustainability efforts, and discover ways to actively contribute to a more environmentally conscious and resilient community. The program creates a ripple effect that extends far beyond the individual sessions, building a more sustainable future for our county.

February: Monona

For our February All Around Dane County program we gathered in Monona at Fratelli's Trattoria to discuss the motivations and aspirations the citizens of Monona have for fostering sustainability, connection, and positive change within their communities. We heard from local leaders and residents whose stories intertwine to give a greener outlook for this community.

Featured Speakers

- Monona City Administrator
- Monona Alders
- Monona Sustainability Committee
- Monona's Bee and Butterfly Brigade
- Green Neighbor Challenge
- Aldo Leopold Nature Center
- United Methodist Church
- MGSD Ad hoc Sustainability Committee



Attendees at the All Around Dane County in Monona listening to the presentations.

All Around Dane County continued

June: Waunakee

For our June All Around Dane County we gathered in Waunakee at Octopi Brewing. Residents shared what they do and how their respective organizations are helping Waunakee and Dane County become a more sustainable community.

Featured Speakers

- Village of Waunakee Sustainability Committee
- Pellitteri
- Uniek
- Octopi Brewing
- Waunakee Utilities
- Waunakee High School ECO Group



Attendees at the All Around Dane County in Waunakee listening to the presentations.

September: Paoli

For our September All Around Dane County we gathered in Paoli at Seven Acre Dairy Company. There we touched on the topics of sustainable food systems and regenerative landscapes along with getting a historical tour of Seven Acre Dairy Company building.

Featured Speakers

- Paoli Schoolhouse American Bistro
- Hop Garden
- Seven Acre Dairy Company



Attendees at the All Around Dane County in Paoli getting a tour of Seven Acre Dairy Company.



Multiple photos showing stoughton where we held our October All Around Dane County

October: Stoughton

Our last All Around Dane County program took place in October as we gathered in Stoughton at Merшон's Cidery. We heard sustainability stories on native planting, the new net-zero public safety building, regenerative farms, and more.

Featured Speakers

- Stoughton Sustainability Committee
- Sustainable Stoughton
- Parisi Family Farm
- Innovation Center Stoughton
- Emmi Roth

Volunteer & Community Building Events

In 2024, Sustain Dane hosted four volunteer and community-building events:

- Food pantry support with River Food Pantry
- Earth Month Cleanup with Ian's Pizza and Delta Beer Lab at Garver Feedmill
- Park clean-up and management at Warner Park
- A Summer Social at the Biergarten at Olbrich Park



The Sustain Dane community getting together at our volunteer and community-building programs.

Biotech Professionals Sustainability Workshop

The panel of presenters at the Biotech Professionals Sustainability Workshop at Illumina.



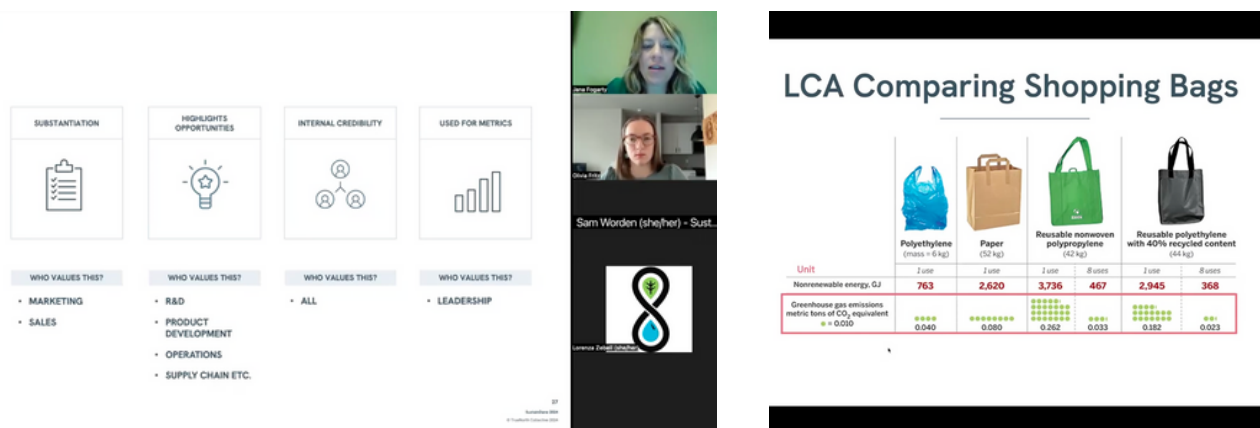
This program was designed for scientists and biotech professionals who wanted to encourage more environmentally conscious practices in their lab. Attendees connected with local biotech professionals also interested in sustainability, heard presentations on current sustainability initiatives from local biotech professionals, gained ideas for how sustainable actions can be implemented at their organization, and learned strategies to influence change at their organization.

Featured Speakers

- Heidi Umhoefer, development scientist, Illumina
- Katelyn Geleynse, production scientist, Promega
- Alyson Kenny, associate research scientist / technical project manager, PPD

Navigating Sustainability Decisions

This program explored Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) as a way to navigate sustainability decisions. True North Collective taught us that LCA is a robust, data-driven method for identifying environmental impact hotspots across products, services, systems, or even entire enterprises. Attendees learned how LCA can enhance your sustainability strategy and help drive meaningful change in your organization.



Photos of the online lunch and learn hosted by True North Collective.

Odyssey Farm Tour



Community members getting a farm tour from the owner of Odyssey Farm, Ryan Erisman.

Sustain Dane partnered with Odyssey Farm in Sun Prairie to provide a farm tour and show community members the integration of grass-fed beef, pastured pork, and feed crops all raised in rotations. Attendees learned about the different sustainable, regenerative, and organic practices at the farm and the opportunities for environmental benefits and public health.

Climate Circle: moving from stuck to engaged

Sharon Barbour, MPH, PCC led participants in a Climate Circle - a safe, courageous, and kind space to share one's climate-related thoughts and feelings in a coach-approach environment. Attendees had the opportunity to share their internal climate narrative and start developing a different narrative that supports them better.

School Cafeteria Recycling, Share Tables, & Food Waste Audits

This past year, we expanded our mealtime recycling program to all six elementary schools in the Sun Prairie Area School District. Students were eager to participate in recycling and give their milk cartons another use.

We continued our waste reduction work with three Madison Metropolitan School District elementary schools by implementing share tables and conducting food waste audits. We conducted quantitative and qualitative data measurement of how share tables can reduce food waste in the cafeteria. Overall, in 2024, we led over 5,000 students in lunch-time recycling and waste audits at 13 schools.



The share table located at Shorewood Hills Elementary School

Powerful Teen Leaders

The Powerful Teen Leaders program is a paid summer employment program focused on serving Northside teens. It is led by Sustain Dane and held at the Warner Park Community Recreation Center.

Participants engaged with a curriculum that includes sustainability and green jobs, natural resources, employment skills, leadership training, community-building activities, S.T.E.M., financial empowerment, and professional workshops from local businesses. This program aimed to prepare youth for employment, particularly in the green economy, and connect them to a network of businesses and support for them to be successful.

"I wish that this program was longer. The people I know now and the experiences I have now I wish I could have more of."

– Kiki Turvey, PTL Participant





Efficiency Navigator

The Efficiency Navigator program, in partnership with Elevate, helps small to medium-sized multifamily housing become more efficient, affordable, and resilient while reducing operating costs and energy cost burden. The program provides complimentary efficiency assessments and step-by-step navigation of implementation for renter-occupied buildings with rents affordable to residents at or below 80% of Area Median Income.

In 2024, 178 units in Madison, Middleton, and Fitchburg participated in the program. The residents living in the apartment housing include vulnerable populations of approximately 48 children under the age of 18-years old, along with 29 senior citizens.

Energy efficiency measures such as attic insulation and air sealing, wall insulation, and rim joist insulation were frequent implementations. The program also installed six air source heat pumps. Through the energy efficiency work, the program also identified and addressed 17 health and safety measures. We also incorporated six water softener optimizations and incentivized seven clunker replacements in multifamily buildings with support from the Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District. This program reduced chloride (salt) going into the water system.

We appreciate the opportunity to have worked with Sustain Dane to receive some energy efficient upgrades. Which not only benefits the property but the tenants as well. It was a great process, and all parties involved corresponded in a timely & positive manner."

– Participating Owner in the Efficiency Navigator program

"I think it was a very thorough process that found some good areas for improvement for energy savings."

– Participating Resident in the Efficiency Navigator program

Farmers' Market Food Scrap Collection

Sustain Dane expanded to three food scrap drop off sites for the 2024 season: Eastside, South Madison, and Westside Community farmers' markets. Collection for the Eastside and South Madison farmers' market lasted the whole season while the Westside was a successful 16-week pilot. In partnership with the City of Madison and Dane County Department of Waste and Renewables, we collected 31,651 pounds of food scraps and surpassed our fun goal of collecting the weight of two woolly mammoths.

Sustain Dane transported the food scraps to a local urban farm operated by the social justice and workforce development nonprofit Neighborhood Food Solutions. There, the food waste was composted and used to grow organic food sold locally. The program had over 5,600 drop offs and was free for participants.



Compost intern dropping off the food scraps at Neighborhood Food Solutions farm.

Recycle Better

Our award-winning Recycle Better program turned four this year. We developed this program in partnership with the City of Madison. The program gives participants the tools they need to teach their family, neighbors, friends, and coworkers how to improve recycling and community sustainability. Each session has two 90-minute classes which together enable you to become a Recycling Steward.

This program is part of our broader efforts for better recycling in the region. In total, the program has reached over 102,281 people through participant outreach projects. This year, we also held Spanish language versions of this program in partnership with Latino Academy of Workforce Development. This version is presented in Spanish and English and is culturally relevant to the Latino community.



Recycle Better presenters Lorenza Zebell, Sustain Dane and Bryan Johnson, City of Madison.

Sustain Dane Summit

The Sustain Dane Summit is a conference for sustainability enthusiasts to learn, connect, share, reflect, and build new personal and professional skills. This year's program featured 320 attendees, 16 speakers, 14 exhibitors, 22 award nominees, and much more.



Speakers Luke Kloberdanz, Ice Age Trail Alliance & Facilitator Toral Livingston-Jha

"Sustain Dane never fails to be a beacon of hope. Thank you for amplifying diverse voices and inspiring others to make a difference."

—Summit Attendee 2024



Local Sustainability Wins Panel



Summit Attendees network at the exhibit tables

Sustain Dane Summit Program Highlights

- Participants network, connect, & engage with facilitated conversations
- Keynote with Esha Chhabra, journalist and author of Working to Restore
- Renewed Purpose: How Nature Sustains Us with the Ice Age Trail Alliance
- Local leaders share stories of successful sustainability projects at businesses & orgs
- Live Forward awards honor regional change-makers



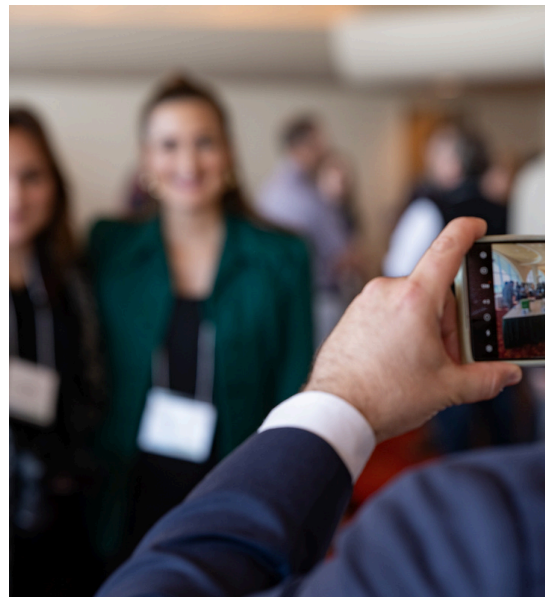
Attendee Dave Benforado



Live Forward Awardees Cody White (Madison College), Tiffany Malone (Alvarado Real Estate), and Isak Drangstveit (Waunakee Sustainability Committee)

“Sustain Dane has provided a community for passionate change-makers to inspire and empower one another to take on sustainable actions within their own organizations and daily life. Appreciate the work and look forward to being a more active member to extend my reach and impact!”

— Summit Attendee 2024



Attendees posing for a picture at the morning networking breakfast

Thank you for your support

\$40,000+

- City of Fitchburg
- City of Madison
- Elevate

\$20,000+

- Carton Council of North America
- Focus on Energy
- Madison Gas & Electric
- UW Health

\$10,000+

- Evjue Foundation
- Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District
- Youth Climate Action Fund

\$5,000+

- Common Wealth Development
- Community Shares of Wisconsin
- Everlight Solar
- Illumina
- Latino Academy of Workforce Development
- World Wildlife Fund

\$3,000+

- Associated Bank
- Dane County Office of Energy and Climate Change
- Ho-Chunk Gaming Madison

\$2,000+

- Catalent
- Dane County Waste & Renewables
- Steve Stricker American Family Insurance Foundation
- The Biergarten at Olbrich Park

\$1,000+

- Case Western Reserve University
- Full Spectrum Solar
- Home Savings Bank
- Miron Construction
- Tru-Stage
- UW Madison Office of Community Relations
- Zing Collaborative

\$500+

- CNJ Charitable Fund
- designCraft Advertising
- Festival Foods
- Good Oak Ecological Services
- Greater Madison MPO/Rountrip Program
- Greater Milwaukee Foundation, Inc.
- Madison LakeWay Partners
- Nordic Consulting Partners
- Ralph K Morris Foundation
- SCS Engineers
- SRF Consulting
- Summit Credit Union
- UW Madison Nelson Institute
- Wisconsin Energy Institute

Forest & Trees Level Members



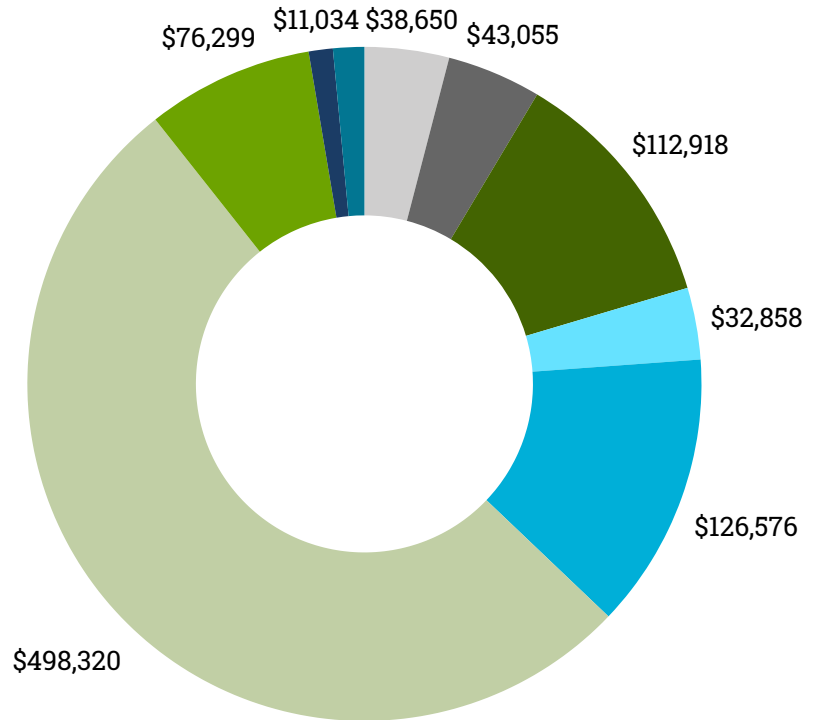
Financial Statement

Audited Statement of Activities for the Year Ended December 31, 2024

Audited financials and 990s are available upon request

Revenue: \$953,969

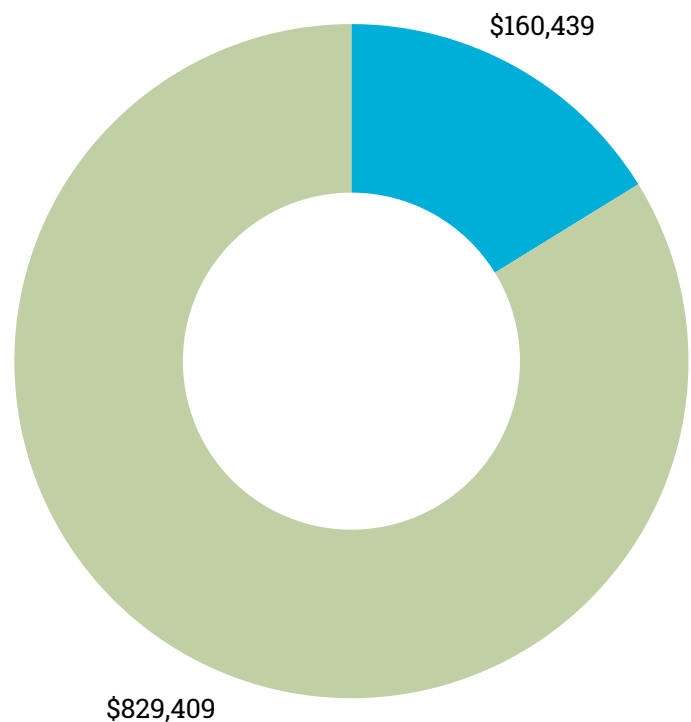
Sponsorships: \$38,650
 Corporate partnerships: \$43,055
 Government grants: \$112,918
 Contributed income: \$32,858
 Other Grants: \$126,576
 Fee for Service: \$498,320
 Memberships: \$76,299
 Program Service revenue: \$11,034
 Misc: \$14,259



- Sponsorships
- Government grants
- Other Grants
- Memberships
- Corporate partnerships
- Contributed income
- Fee for Service
- Program Service revenue
- Misc

Expense: \$989,848

Core Mission Support: \$160,439
 Program cost: \$829,409



- Core Mission Support
- Program cost

Support Sustainable Actions for Community Well-being

Join the Sustain Dane membership network, programs, and events for inspiration and connection.

- Implement a sustainability project that you are passionate about - Sustain Dane can help.
- Share your stories and vision for change with us – Connect with and inspire others.
- Donate to our sustainability movement. Any gift, big or small, helps us achieve comprehensive and collaborative sustainability in Dane County.

