

2023

Annual Report



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MISSION STATEMENT

Landforce is committed to building a just world, where everyone belongs, lives in a healthy environment, and surpasses their greatest dreams.

VISION STATEMENT

We nourish a culture of self-empowerment for people aspiring towards meaningful and stable employment, as we protect and improve the environment.

Message From Our Executive Director

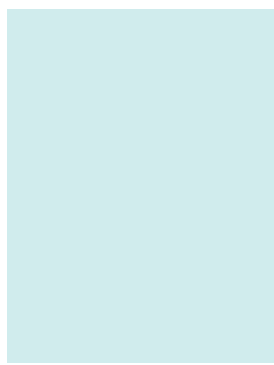
I've been wondering if, in a few years time, when we think back on 2023, will it be the year we all remember life beginning to feel "normal" again? At Landforce that was certainly the case -- our crew member recruitment was up, our contract revenue exceeded our contract revenue in any previous year, and we were able to shift some deep attention to future planning, including building our back bench for our impending expansion. We've done this by hiring consultants in Fund Development, a fractional CFO, and an Alumni Program Coordinator. In 2023 we also grew our staff by two -- hiring Kayleigh Del Cotto as our Director of Strategic Partnerships and Elijah Johnson as our Communications Manager. Kayleigh and Elijah work closely together on our public face -- perhaps you've noticed a difference?

This expansion is intentional and laid out clearly in our 2022 to 2025 Strategic Plan, thus enabling us to develop an ever-increasingly strong foundation. Also included in our Strategic Plan is the creation of a second business line. After conducting a feasibility study for a variety of business options, our board chose urban wood reuse as the one that would have the largest environmental impact, reduce our reliance on seasonal employment, and provide the best skills-building for our crew members. Our entry into the circular economy will ensure that trees that are cut down or fall down in and around the City of Pittsburgh can be kept out of the landfill and turned into lumber or biochar for resale, creating a sustainable model for the local production of lumber. What we could not have planned for was the simultaneous award in October 2023 of \$9 million in federal Inflation Reduction Act funding through the US Forestry Service to the Pittsburgh Canopy Alliance, a collaborative of Pittsburgh organizations, including Landforce. This well-timed award means that we will be able to expand our traditional training and impact into urban tree care, or arboriculture, at the same time that we are building out our urban wood reuse business. There is a simple and beautiful elegance of both of these initiatives happening at the same time, meaning that we will be able to begin serving the Pittsburgh area's urban forestry needs from "seed to slab."

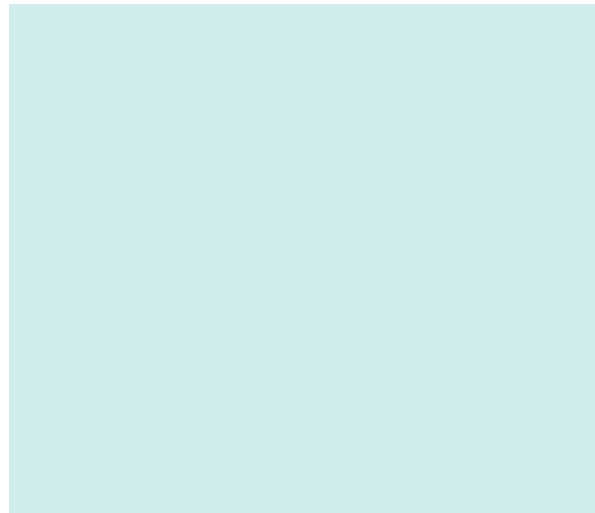
It also means that expanding our back bench came at the perfect time, as over the next 12 months we anticipate our staff of 10 growing to a staff of 16, our crew member trainees nearly doubling from 25 to 40 per year with the introduction of a second training, and 12 months of programming as we become less seasonally dependent. So we may think about 2023 as the first normal year in a while, but I also wonder if, at Landforce at least, we one day will look back on it as the last "normal" Landforce year? So with a tip of our hat to all of our staff, board members, funders, partners, and, especially, crew members who have helped us create "normal," we invite you to continue to join us as we step upwards and onwards.



Dr. Ilyssa Manspeizer
Executive Director



2023



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The first eight 8 weeks at Landforce consist of the newly hired crew members participating in training and workshops that address hard and soft skills. Several components make up this experience; resulting in this cohort receiving 5,427 hours of training, or 268 training hours per crew member.

2023 was the first year, where we saw recruitment numbers inching towards pre-Covid numbers, and began the season with 22 trainees. 19 trainees completed the 8-week training successfully, and 18 people accepted our offer of transitional environmental work.

The work readiness components of our 8 week training included certificates for “Bring Your A Game To Work” and “Restorative Practices”. Additional modules included healthy eating on a budget, mental health, financial empowerment, and employee rights and responsibilities. The Landforce Team enjoyed a successful day of Mock Interviews with 7 of our closest employers and partners. Once again Landforce partnered with the City of Pittsburgh’s Department of Public Works to offer our crew members a two-day, eight-hour job shadowing for the Laborer position. This opportunity serves as an excellent introduction to municipal employment. This year, Landforce also secured an exciting new opportunity for crew members to shadow Utility Workers at Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority (PWSA). Both job shadows have led to greater discussions supporting collaboration on training, joint funding opportunities, and employment pipelines for Landforce crew members.



- **93% of crew members showed improvement in work readiness over the course of their time at Landforce**
- **The average wage for new employment was \$19.42**
- **Landforce crew members completed 182.5 hours of career coaching**

Highlights

2023 was the inaugural year for Landforce’s Alumni Network (LAN). In keeping with our sentiment, “once a member of the Landforce family, always a member,” we invited all past crew members to join. The LAN Coordinator, in collaboration with the Work Readiness Manager, coordinated and hosted monthly meetings. Meetings featured a speaker and a group meal and focused on a topic of interest to alumni. In 2023 the predominant theme was entrepreneurship. We are happy to share that the Alumni Network will continue in 2024.

LAND STEWARDSHIP

After Landforce's 8 weeks of training, crew members move into transitional work, completing environmental stewardship projects including trail building and maintenance, green stormwater management, vacant lot redevelopment and invasive species management. Landforce is well known for our trail capabilities and trail building is a crew favorite. In 2023 alone, we constructed 7,458 feet of new trail and maintained 69,067 existing feet in the Hazelwood, Churchill Valley and Seldom Seen Greenways and Southside and Emerald View Parks. The year ended in the culmination of 11,207 total hours of environmental stewardship work.

In 2023, we had 18 project partners across 21 distinct projects. Fourteen were returning clients, and 4 were new to Landforce. Of those project partners, 4 were developers, 2 were municipalities or municipal authorities, 2 were houses of worship, and 2 were private residents. The other 8 project partners were local, environmental nonprofit organizations. We worked on a record \$300,000 worth of projects - a 20% increase from the previous year.

Highlights

In 2021 Landforce began working within the Hazelwood Greenway with the intent to pilot a land stewardship model for transitioning Pittsburgh's Greenways to Parks. For the past three years, we have developed a more comprehensive trail system, removed invasive vegetation and dumpsites, and planted 100's of trees. In 2023, we continued this work and expanded the model to the Seldom Seen Greenway where we maintained or reconstructed a mile of existing trail and constructed 1.2 miles of new trail.



The Greenways to Parks program is not just a Landforce project; it is a collaborative effort involving Allegheny GoatScape, Tree Pittsburgh, Allegheny CleanWays, the Student Conservation Association, and several community, educational, and corporate volunteer groups. Together, we are creating active green spaces for the community to enjoy.

'Structures' is a blanket term we use for a project type that is not clearly defined. In 2023, some of the structures we built and installed included wooden box steps, boardwalks, and a turnpike as a part of trail infrastructure. Landforce crews also installed two separate deer enclosure fences for private homeowners. The deer enclosure fences are a service we can foresee being a larger part of our projects as more community garden and restoration area developments in the future.

Our City Steps Project was funded by the Garden Club of Allegheny County, providing Landforce the opportunity to complete an urban infrastructure project. We partnered with project partner Allegheny Cleanways to provide maintenance and upkeep to 5 Northside staircases. Crew members removed invasive species, cleared debris, repainted handrails, and planted native shrubs like red chokeberry and winterberry. A full list of project types can be found on the next page.

2023 LAND STEWARDSHIP PROJECT TYPES

Trails

Maintained - 69,067 feet
Constructed - 7,458 feet
Re-Routed - 2,098 feet

Trees

Planted - 25
Maintained - 40
Removed (dead or damaged) - 12

Green Infrastructure

21 Installations
Raingardens, Bioswales, Bumpouts Maintained - 75
Stormwater Grates Maintained - 62

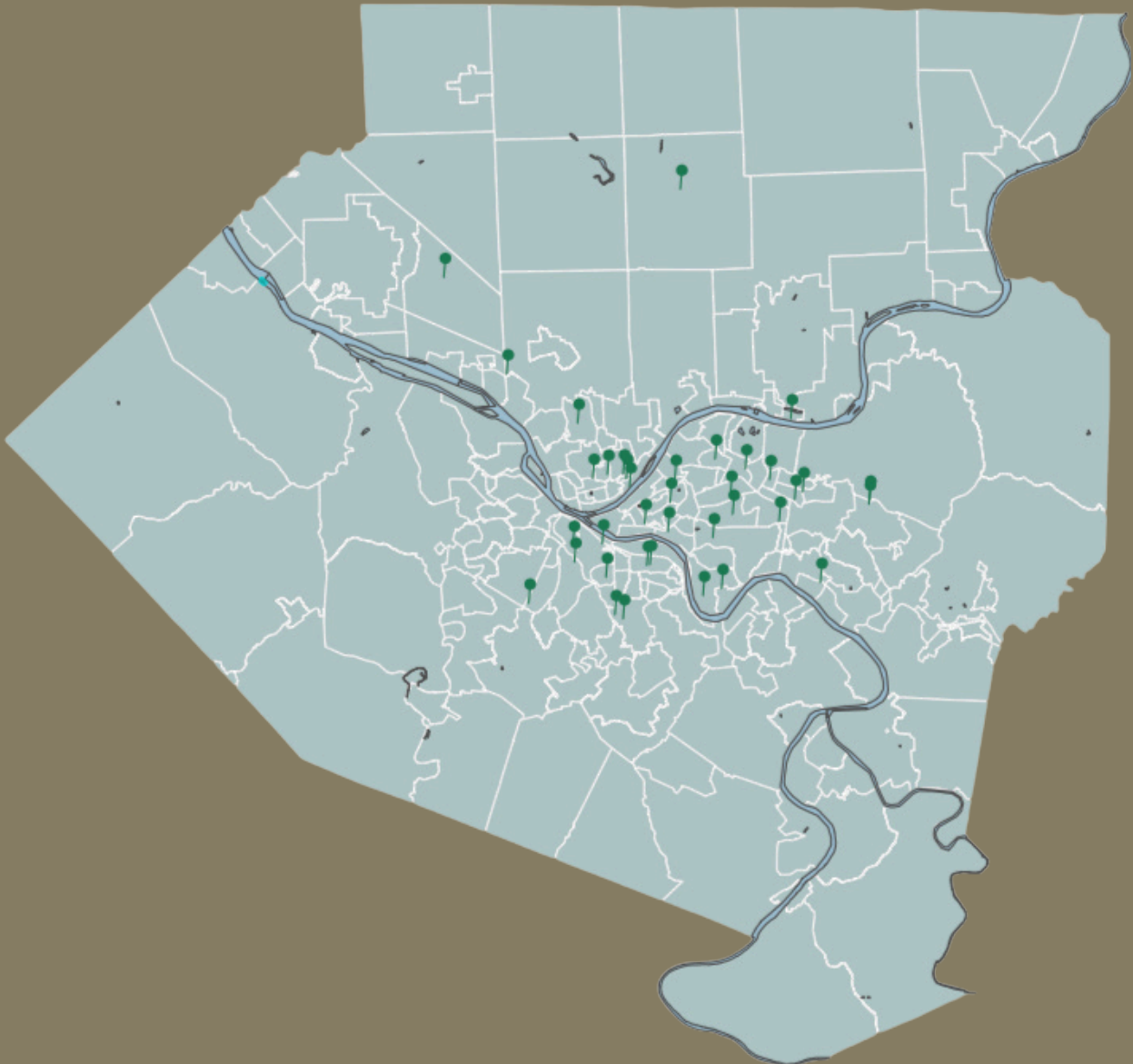
Invasive Species Management - 227,901 square feet

Lot Management - 122,577 square feet

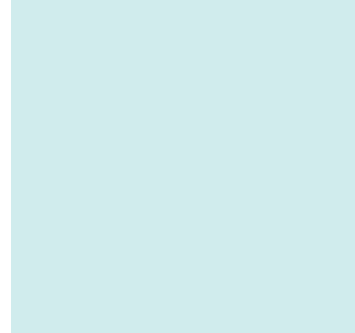
Structures

Box Steps Constructed - 19 steps
City Step Railings Painted - 2,726 feet
City Steps Maintained - 758 steps
Rock Inlay and Crossing - 117 feet
Boardwalk + Bridge Maintenance - 35 feet
Deer Fence - 160 feet

2023 LAND STEWARDSHIP PROJECT LOCATIONS



WORK READINESS TRAINING & CERTIFICATIONS



Bring Your A-Game to Work *
Discussing & Understanding Criminal Backgrounds
Job Searching, Resume Writing, Mock Interviews
Financial Empowerment/Bank Accounts - Financial Empowerment Center
TABE Test (Literacy/Numeracy)
Mental Health & the Impact of Trauma - Dr. Channing Moreland
Employer Site Visits
Understanding the effects of trauma & the importance of Restorative Practices - Brandi Taylor *
Healthy Eating on a Budget - Univ. of Pgh - Dept. of Nutrition
Employer Showcase Day
Resume/Cover Letter Writing
Defensive Driving - Ultimate Defensive Driving

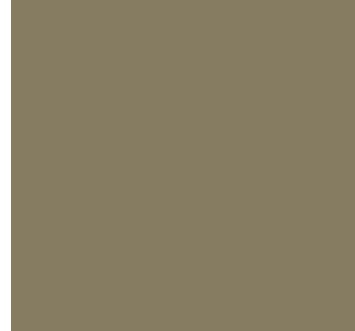
KEY

External

Internal

Certificate - *

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIPS TRAINING & CERTIFICATIONS



First Aid & CPR - The Beat Goes On *
Tree Tender - Tree Pittsburgh *
National Green Infrastructure (NGICP) Certificate of Completion - Franco Harris Center at Penn State *
Game of Logging Chainsaw Safety - Kevin Snyder Logging *
OSHA 40/HAZWOPER - A. Philip Randolph Institute *
Invasive Species Identification - Allegheny Land Trust
Trail Terminology Tool Identification and Skills Training
Plant & Tree ID - Allegheny Land Trust
Tool Use, Safety, & Body Mechanics
Spotted Lanternfly Identification and Reporting - Penn State Cooperative Extension
Basic Carpentry and Carpentry Math
Environmental Justice Awareness
Appropriate Use of Personal Protective Equipment

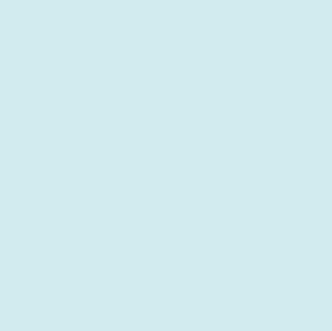
KEY

External

Internal

Certificate - *

UNDERSTANDING WORK TRAINING



What Is A Nonprofit?
Completing New Hire Paperwork
Employee Rights & Responsibilities
Competency/Anti-Harassment
Understanding The Role Of Organizational Culture
Drugs & Alcohol On The Worksite
Team Building Activities
Traveling To & From Work
An Introduction To Landforce, Staff & Culture
Filling Out Timesheets/Calling Off



KEY
External
Internal
Certificate - *

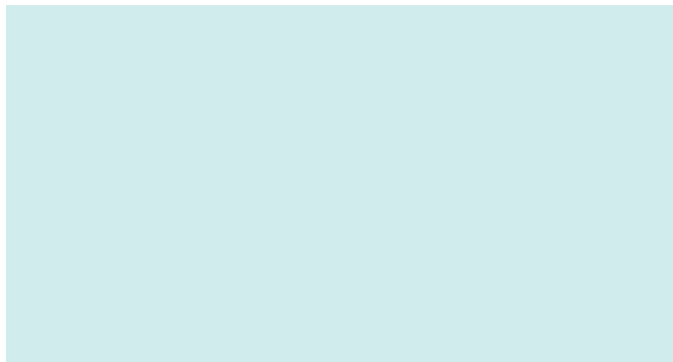
IN THEIR OWN WORDS



Mental health and trauma are not talked about enough and are stigmatized. "Landforce is helping to break down the stigma while helping us at the same time. It's great, no, it's phenomenal. I felt relieved to see that Landforce understood that side of things."



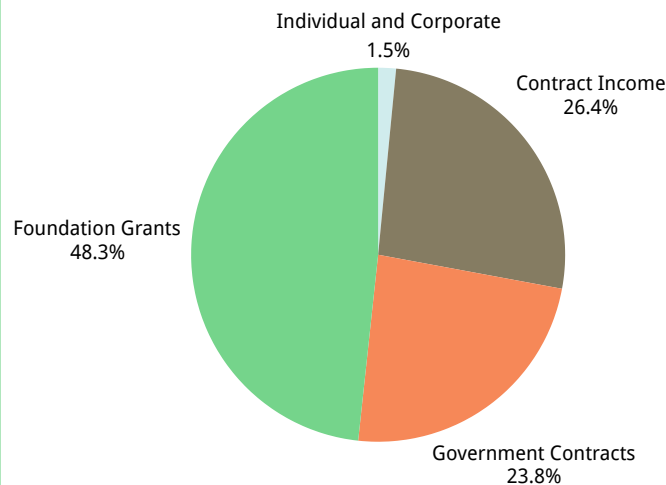
"I feel Landforce prepared me for my next steps and next job - mock interviews, cover letters. It helped me realize how much time I needed to go back on a resume. Even with the professional part, people coming in and showing us how to tie a tie, taking the time out to get us interview clothing, taking us to job shadowing fairs like Career Links. Mock interviews. All of this is literally preparing you for the next transition. It was fun and exciting. Even when people came in to talk to us it made us feel good. The acknowledgements of the crew members helped to build the morale of everyone."



"I would say that I have become more, what's the word, less nervous. I'm better at putting my foot down. Being around people who speak their minds freely has helped me find and sometimes use my own voice."

FINANCIAL REPORT

Income



Individual and Corporate: \$18,620

Contract Income: \$318,965

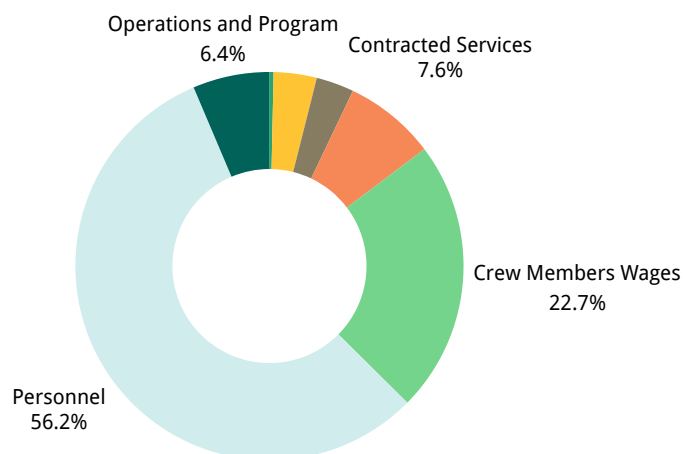
Government Contracts: \$287,700

Foundation Grants: \$584,088

Total: \$1,209,373



Expenses



Marketing and Advertising: \$4,132

Facility and Occupancy: \$43,372

Administrative: \$38,111

Operations and Program: \$77,290

Contracted Services: \$92,342

Crew Members Wages: \$274,858

Personnel: \$679,701

Total: \$1,209,806

IN OTHER NEWS

GROWING OUR ENTERPRISE: A SECOND BUSINESS FOR LANDFORCE

In February 2023 the Landforce Board approved the business plan for our expansion into urban wood reuse. Our entry into the circular economy will ensure that trees that are cut down or fall in and around the City of Pittsburgh can be kept out of the landfill and turned into lumber or biochar for resale, creating a sustainable model for the local lumber production, and reducing carbon emissions.

In October 2023 the Pittsburgh Canopy Alliance (a collaborative of Pittsburgh organizations, including Landforce) received \$9 million in federal Inflation Reduction Act funding through the US Forestry Service. This funding opportunity and partnership will increase the role we play in urban forestry in Pittsburgh, ensuring our crew members will play a larger role in planting and maintaining Pittsburgh's tree canopy, while also turning fallen timber into reusable material.

STAFF

As a part of our expansion plan, Landforce added two new members to our team. Elijah Johnson - Communications Manager - and Kayleigh Del Cotto - Director of Strategic Partnerships - joined Landforce to increase our visibility, drive partnership development, and help lay the groundwork for our 2024 to 2026 expansion.

As a part of our strategic planning process, we identified the need to improve how we communicate our strengths. To address this gap, they led the development and implementation of a Strategic Communications Plan. It will be implemented in 2024 and aims to establish advocacy protocols, boost engagement, and highlight the stories and successes of our crew members.



EVENTS/FUNDRAISERS

Landforce had a great year for fundraising and building connections. We surpassed our goal of \$15,000 by 5% from individual donations, marking our highest year of contributions to date. Several key events were instrumental in achieving this milestone. We held two Friendraisers, one in May at East End Brewing and another in September at Trace Brewing. Both breweries graciously hosted us and pledged a dollar donation for every draft beer purchase to Landforce.

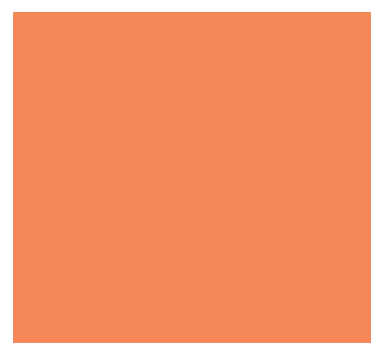
These events helped us raise funds and provided an opportunity to connect with new friends. In August we participated in The Pittsburgh Foundation's Critical Needs Alert Day of Giving. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our new supporters and eagerly anticipate organizing more events in the future to expand our donor base and actively involve more individuals in our mission.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS



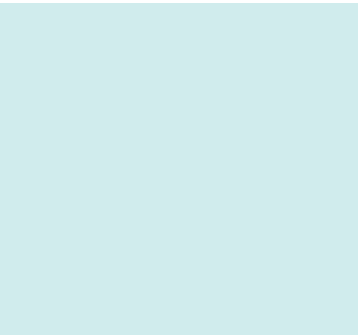
Auberle	Community Kitchen	Davey Tree
Department of Public Works, City of Pittsburgh	Eichenlaub	Mistick Construction
PCSI (Pittsburgh Community Services, Inc.)	PWSA (Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority)	Plantscape
Tree Pittsburgh		

LAND STEWARDSHIP PROJECT PARTNERS



Allegheny CleanWays	Allegheny Land Trust	Beulah Presbyterian Church
Department of Public Works, City of Pittsburgh	Friends of Southside Park	Griffin Commons
Mistick Construction	Pine Creek Land Conservation Trust	Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy
PWSA (Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority)	Scenic Pittsburgh	SOTA Construction
Tree Pittsburgh	Triumph Baptist Church	Trying Together

FUNDERS



Bank of America	Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Human Services	Environmental Protection Agency
EQT Foundation	The Garden Club of Allegheny County	The Heinz Endowments
The Jack Buncher Foundation	New Sun Rising	The Pittsburgh Foundation

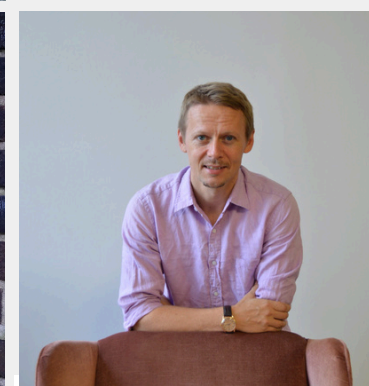
MEET THE CREW



MEET THE CREW



MEET THE STAFF



Anders Kloch Jeppessen
Project Manager

Elijah Johnson
Communications Manager

Dr. Ilyssa Manspeizer
Executive Director

Jasimine Cooper
Director of Workforce
Development

Kayleigh Del Cotto
Director of Strategic
Partnerships

Marquita Brown
Work Readiness Manager

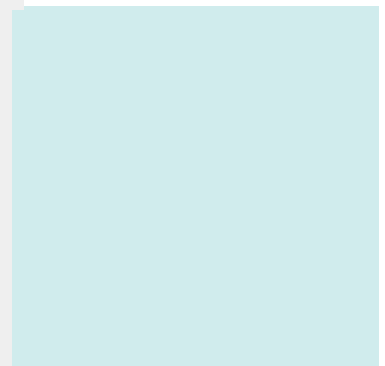
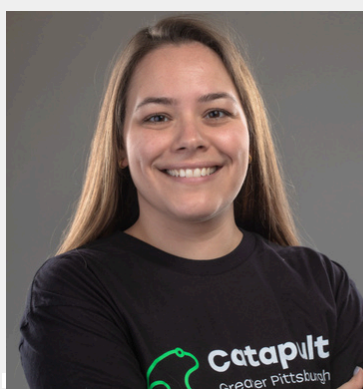
Ricky Hebron
Site Supervisor

Shawn Taylor
Site Supervisor

Thomas Guentner
Director of Land Stewardship

Tricia Dougherty
Director of Operations

MEET THE BOARD



Alyssa Lyon	Brian Bozzo	Brittany J. Becker Treasurer	Demi Kolke	Emilie Rzutkiewicz President	Erin Tobin
Gabrielle DeMarchi	Isaac Smith Secretary	Marcus Shoffner	Markese Long Vice President	Raymond Miles	Rhonda Madden

2023

