



WMEAC

ANNUAL REPORT
2017 - 2018

*“WATER IS THE DRIVING
FORCE OF ALL NATURE.”*

LEONARDO DAVINCI



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

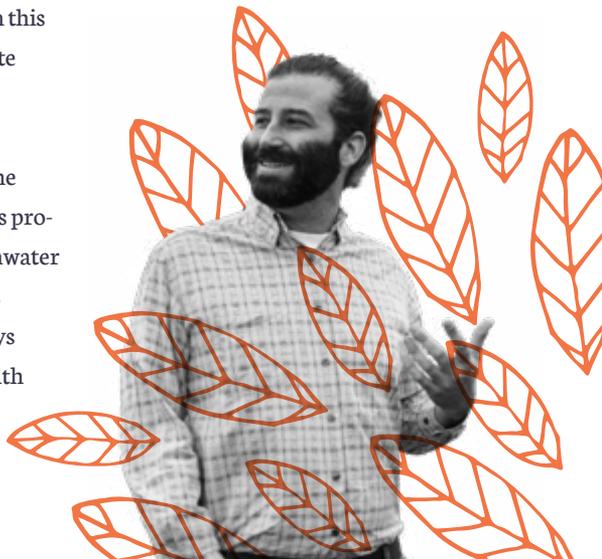
50 Years into our service to the community and one thing is clear here at WMEAC. We need an environmental movement for all, where all of us enjoy, benefit from, and protect the environment. Whether it's protecting our natural resources from unsound policy decisions, educating our leaders about best environmental practices, or helping West Michiganders save money and conserve energy by reducing their water use, WMEAC is actively engaged in creating a collaborative, inclusive "environment for all," defending our environmental progress in West Michigan while educating all of our region's residents about good stewardship for this generation and those to come.

During the past year, WMEAC has entered into or continued collaborative partnerships with the City of Grand Rapids, Grand Rapids Public Schools, Boys and Girls Club of the Greater Muskegon Lakeshore, Saugatuck Dunes Coastal Alliance, Muskegon River Watershed Assembly, and Grand Valley State University, as well as several other community organizations. Our “Rainy Day Project” is the first of its kind in Grand Rapids, designed to save money for low-to-moderate income homeowners on their water bills while empowering them to mitigate stormwater runoff on their properties or in their neighborhoods. By collaborating with Seeds of Promise, GreenHome Institute, Inner City Christian Federation, The City of Grand Rapids Sustainability Department, GVSU’s Geography and Sustainable Planning Department, and the Wege Foundation, WMEAC is changing the narrative of residential green infrastructure deployment in this pilot project that we hope to replicate city-wide.

Working directly with the City of Grand Rapids, WMEAC has produced a new song and video, Stormwater Rock - Watersheds, that illustrates nonpoint source pollution and ways residents can tackle this water health

issue. Translating these materials into Spanish means we grow the movement ever larger, acknowledging Latinx environmental stewards who are ready to be activated in the struggle to keep our environment healthy and sustainable.

Of course, we continue to educate the youth in three West Michigan counties through Teach for the Watershed and our zero waste programs, we continue to work with local, regional and state government on environmental policy, and still make the occasional trip to Washington DC to advocate for clean water, clean air, and science-based environmental policy that ensures we have an environment for all. WMEAC has been working to protect the environment for 50 years, and we’ll be here as long as we are needed. Thank you for your support.







WATER

Stormwater runoff is one of the greatest source of pollutants to local waterways. Best practices for managing stormwater include “green infrastructure” - such as rain barrels, rain gardens, green roofs, porous pavement - which allow rain to soak into the ground closer to where it falls.



— WMEAC works collaboratively with a number of partners on projects that are encouraging implementation of these stormwater green infrastructure practices. The City of Grand Rapids has been a key partner in this work, as well as the Grand Valley Metro Council's Lower Grand River Organization of Watersheds, Trout Unlimited's Rogue River Home Rivers Initiative, Calvin College's Plaster Creek Stewards, American Rivers, and River Network.

— In addition to the Rainy Day Project and Teach for the Watershed, which are mentioned in other sections of this report, WMEAC continues to design new ways to bring public education about how and why residents, developers, and municipal leaders can help control stormwater runoff.

RAIN BARREL WORKSHOPS

Since 2009, we have hosted rain barrel workshops to educate residents about stormwater. To date, we have distributed more than 3,400 rain barrels to residents in West Michigan. Rylee's Ace Hardware continues to provide rain barrel components to WMEAC at a discount, and frequently hosts workshops at their locations.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

"HOW TO" GUIDES

In partnership with the City of Grand Rapids, WMEAC is developing informational guides to highlight the City's leadership and innovation in green infrastructure implementation and education. These will be made available to general audiences through public events and workshops.

RAIN SOLUTIONS WORKSHOPS

In an effort to expand our stormwater education programming beyond rain barrel workshops, we are developing the Rain Solutions Workshop, which provides information and resources regarding additional ways that individuals can implement stormwater green infrastructure.



GRAND RAPIDS OVERSIGHT

WMEAC continues to serve in leadership positions on both the Stormwater Oversight Commission and Vital Streets Oversight Commission for the City of Grand Rapids. These Commissions offer policy and practice recommendations to the City Commission; WMEAC provides advice and expertise in a number of matters, but particularly in green infrastructure implementation, budget, and policy.

RAINWATER REWARDS STORMWATER CALCULATOR:

The Rainwater Rewards (RWR) online calculator tool provides cost/benefit information about the implementation of stormwater green infrastructure practices in small- to medium-sized cities in the Great Lakes basin. WMEAC has just completed a Great Lakes Green Infrastructure Champions Network project in Michigan City, Indiana. Serving as a Pioneer Champion to the Sanitary District of Michigan City, WMEAC brought in Michigan City-specific data to the calculator tool and offered advice and resources regarding other green infrastructure questions for this Emerging Champion. WMEAC also continues to do RWR workshops throughout Michigan and other parts of the Great Lakes basin.



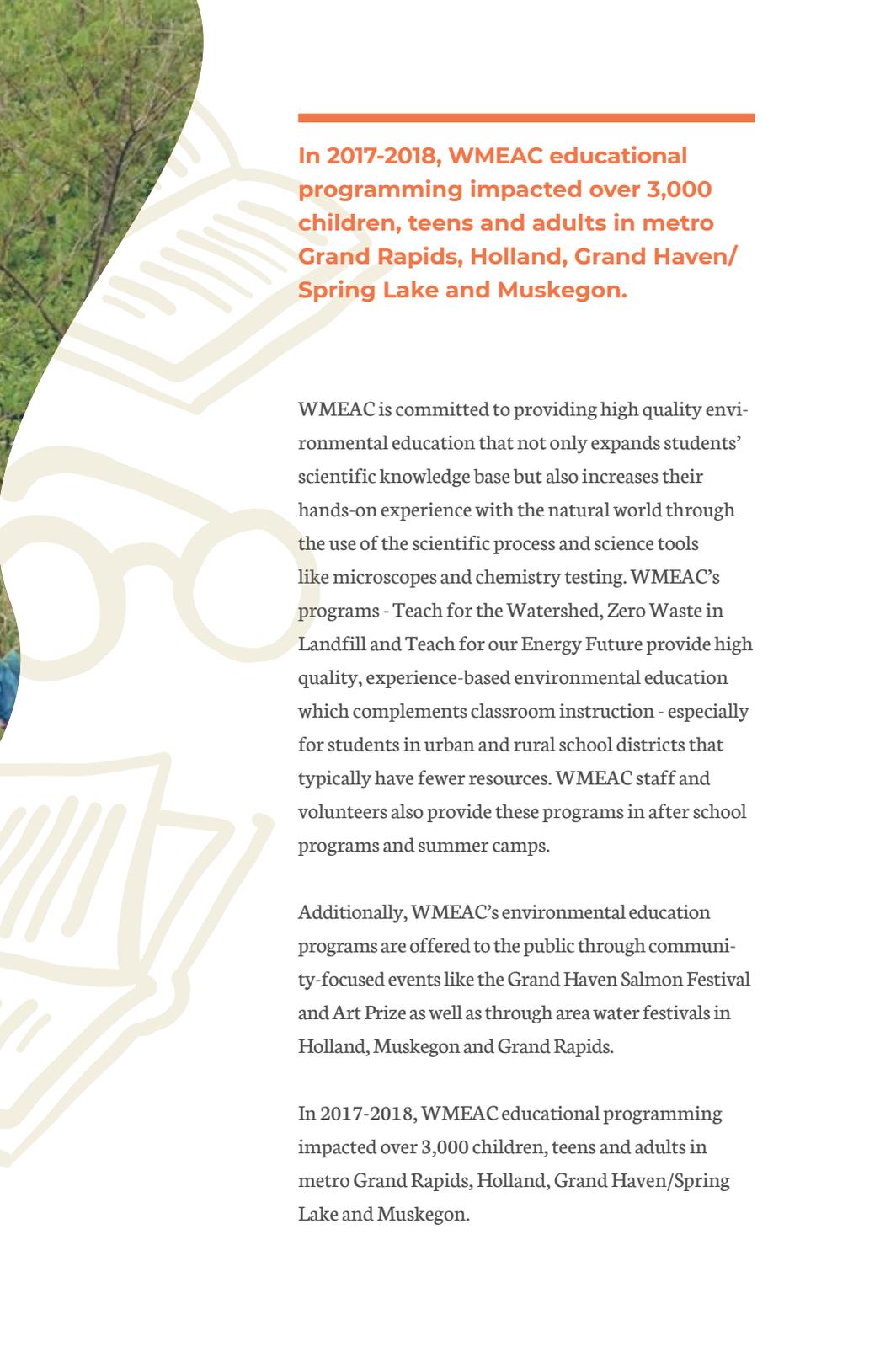
MASTER RAIN GARDENER CERTIFICATION

WMEAC staff have been certified as Master Rain Gardeners through the Washtenaw County Water Resource Commissioner training. We are planning on incorporating DIY rain garden education in upcoming workshop programming.





ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION



In 2017-2018, WMEAC educational programming impacted over 3,000 children, teens and adults in metro Grand Rapids, Holland, Grand Haven/Spring Lake and Muskegon.

WMEAC is committed to providing high quality environmental education that not only expands students' scientific knowledge base but also increases their hands-on experience with the natural world through the use of the scientific process and science tools like microscopes and chemistry testing. WMEAC's programs - Teach for the Watershed, Zero Waste in Landfill and Teach for our Energy Future provide high quality, experience-based environmental education which complements classroom instruction - especially for students in urban and rural school districts that typically have fewer resources. WMEAC staff and volunteers also provide these programs in after school programs and summer camps.

Additionally, WMEAC's environmental education programs are offered to the public through community-focused events like the Grand Haven Salmon Festival and Art Prize as well as through area water festivals in Holland, Muskegon and Grand Rapids.

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WOMEN & ENVIRONMENT SYMPOSIUM

— The 2018 Women & Environment Symposium marked its 7th year from February 22nd - 27th, 2018. The goal of this series of events is to include, educate, inspire and activate participants interested in the intersection of gender issues and the environment. Over 300 people participated through a networking night, film & conversation about Detroit activist Grace Lee Boggs, non-profit service fair that connected potential volunteers with local non-profit organizations, an advocacy workshop that gave participants hands-on skills training and an inspiring keynote speech by Peggy Shepard, executive director of WE ACT, New York City's oldest environmental justice and action council.



MAYORS' CLEAN UP - WORKING IN NEIGHBORHOODS

— In September 2017, WMEAC teamed up with Seeds of Promise to include some parts of southeast Grand Rapids in the Mayors' Grand River Clean Up. What's the connection? Stormwater is the #1 pollutant of our streams, rivers and the Great Lakes. Whatever goes down our storm drains in Grand Rapids ends up in the Grand River - usually within 15 minutes! Our goal is to help people connect those dots. Volunteers collected trash and cleaned out storm drains resulting in neighborhood beautification and less trash ending up in our waterways - two birds, one stone. These efforts have continued in 2018 and WMEAC will continue to look for innovative ways to connect people, neighborhoods and our incredible water resources.

IDEAL

INCLUSION & DEVELOPMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL ALLIES & LEADERS

— The IDEAL Committee has been working toward a more intentional engagement of committee members to serve in an advisory capacity on WMEAC's projects, partnerships and processes. For example, IDEAL committee member Fran Dalton has taken on the role of an advisor for the Rainy Day Project, where she actively works with team members to ensure that inclusion and equity issues are being discussed and considered at every stage. She is also connecting WMEAC to the neighborhoods where the project is being piloted.

— The IDEAL committee is working to provide guidance for the upcoming strategic planning process and ensure that the complex values of environmental justice, inclusion, and equity are integrated into the organization and reflected in its practices, resulting in an environment that is safe, healthy, and accessible for all people in our community.





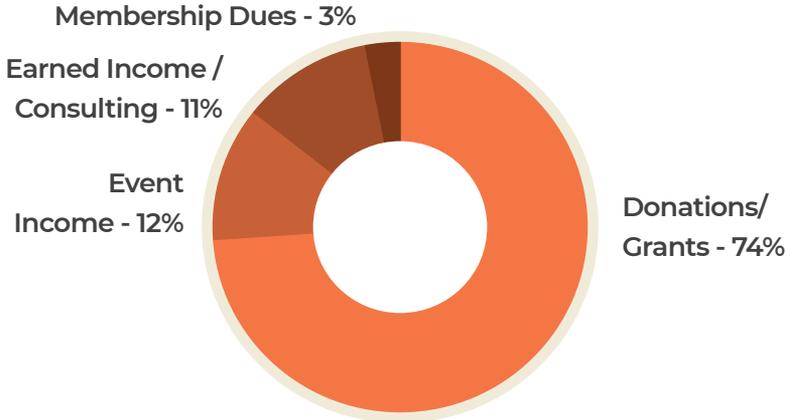


FINANCIAL INFORMATION

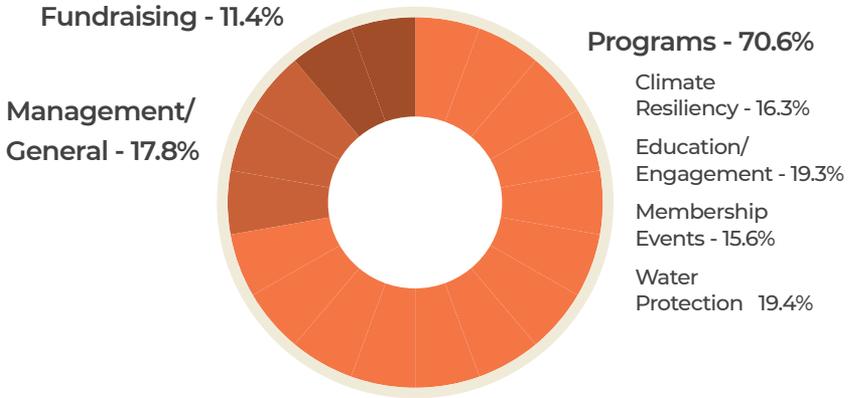
WMEAC could not do all its work without the support of individual and business member/donors, community institutions and foundations.

For a complete list of 2018 donors, go to wmeac.org/2018-donors.

INCOME



EXPENSES



We would especially like to recognize the following Annual Sponsors:





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