

TREKKERS ANNUAL REPORT

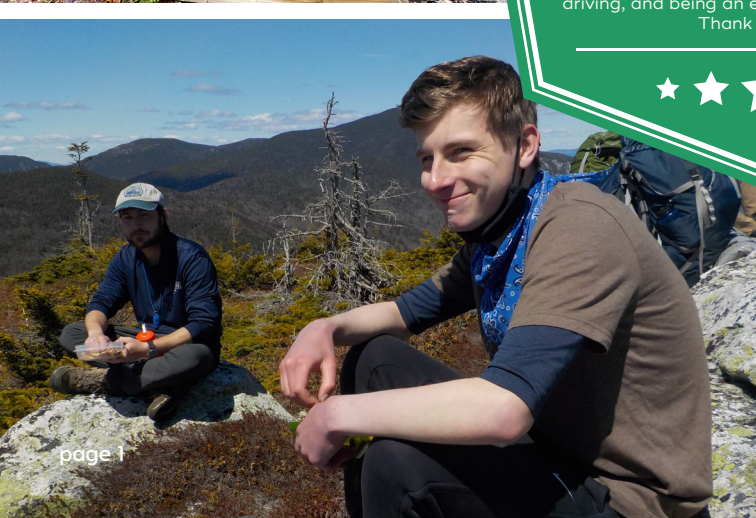


September 2020 - August 2021



THIS REPORT IS DEDICATED TO

Stu Rich, in honor of his 9+ years of board service and leadership, volunteering on expeditions, bus driving, and being an engaged Trekkers parent.
Thank you, Stu!



A Letter from Trekkers

What if we looked back on the last year and saw growth instead of just challenge?

You would see increases in student resilience during unprecedented disruption. You would see organization-wide flexibility, responsiveness, and growth during steep challenges across the community. You would see relationships, from mentorships to partnerships, flourishing at a time of social distancing.

In many ways, the pandemic was a stark reminder of something we practice every day: that trusted, long-term relationships are a critical component of resilience. As the pandemic unraveled routines and supports, **our students already had caring mentors ready to listen, help them cope, and ease into new rhythms of life.** Our data demonstrates just how powerful these relationships have been in championing their growth during challenge.

In the spring, we hired a risk management specialist to assess our safety protocols and were thrilled to return to overnight expeditions. Though challenged to stay closer to home instead of travelling to the far reaches of the country as in a typical expedition year, we took the opportunity to showcase the unique strengths, cultures, and beauty of Maine and surrounding states. As always, students took an active role in selecting, planning, and preparing for their annual expeditions. As a team, each cohort of students planned trips based on

Trekkers' five education components: **community service, wilderness, cultural awareness, environmental education, and adventure-based education.** They may not have traveled as many miles this year, but their trips were as transformative as always, as students explored new perspectives and landscapes – from Amish culture in Unity to large-scale agriculture in Presque Isle.

As an organization, we modeled the resilience that we ask of our students. Despite the challenges, we took advantage of new opportunities to purchase our first building, secure state and federal recovery funding, and convene a talented group of students, staff, board members, and community volunteers to embark in anti-racism work. At the same time, our board began a strategic planning process to guide Trekkers as we continue to cultivate the inherent strengths of young people – no matter what challenges may lie ahead.

This growth would not have happened without the unwavering support of our community. We are tremendously grateful for our donors, volunteers, families, community partners, and our students for their partnership in this work.

With gratitude,



Kathleen Meil
President of the Board



Amie Hutchison
Executive Director

What Made Last Year Different

September
2020

Diversity,
Equity, and
Inclusion (DEI)
Committee
formed.

Fall 2020
through
Spring
2021

December
2020

Trekkers purchased its own
office, at 325 Old County
Road in Rockland.

New program amendments
for gender-inclusivity and
physical accessibility

February
2021

New nine-
week program
for St. George
School
6th grade
students

New student leadership experiences with Hurricane Island Outward Bound School. Trekkers Training Institute's first virtual Circles of Change training.

March
2021

The infographic features a series of concentric circles in shades of blue, green, and purple at the top. Below them, five colored circles (blue, green, purple, light blue, and teal) are arranged in a row, each connected by a vertical line to a text box. The text boxes are also colored to match their respective circles. A horizontal line at the bottom connects the green and light blue text boxes.

Successful completion of a risk assessment audit, ensuring quality safety protocols and procedures

April
through
August
2021

A cautious return to expeditions in the Northeast

April
2021

First virtual-only alumni panel and discussion for 11th graders

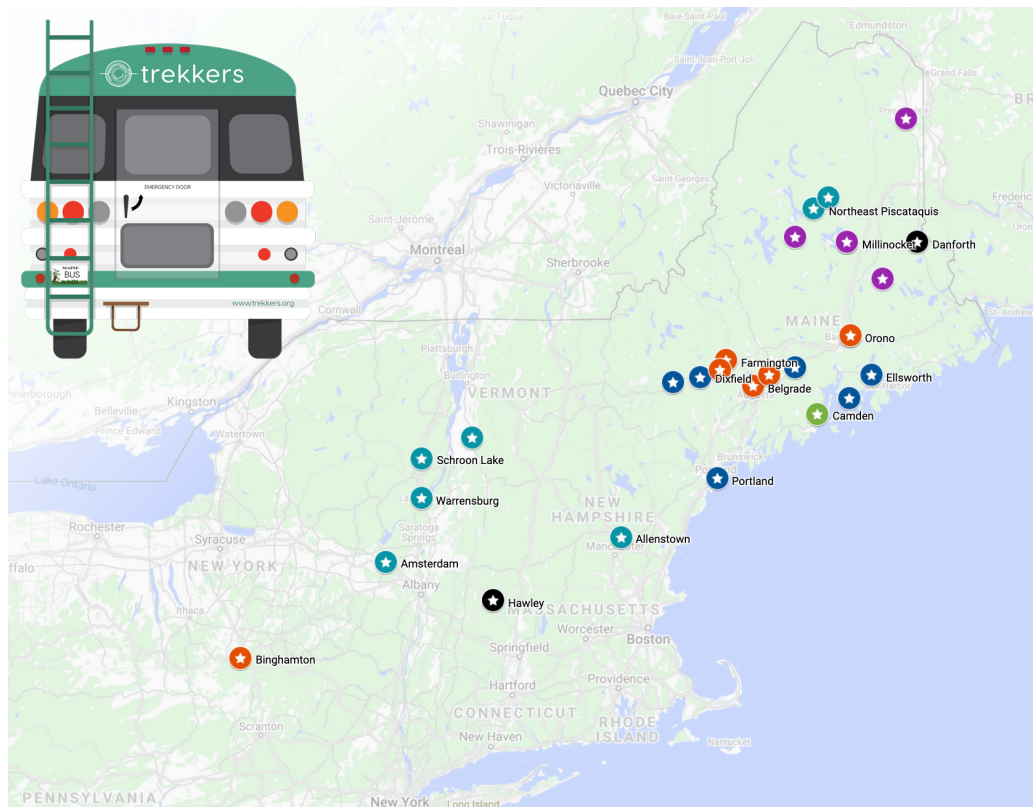
Summer
2021

Safe in-person events. Our most successful events to date!

ALL
YEAR

Trekkers maintained discounted student dues.

Where Students Went in 2020-2021



7TH GRADE

Camden Hills State Park

8TH GRADE

Ellsworth, ME
Unity, ME
Dixfield, ME
Newry, ME
Portland, ME

9TH GRADE

Northeast Piscataquis, ME
Millinocket, ME
Baxter State Park
Schoon Lake, NY
Warrensburg, NY
Amsterdam, NY
Middlebury, VT
Allentown, NH

10TH GRADE

Baxter State Park
Piscataquis, ME
Millinocket, ME
Presque Isle, ME
Orono, ME
Lee, ME

11TH GRADE

Belgrade, ME
Farmington, ME
Waterville, ME
Orono, ME
Binghamton, NY

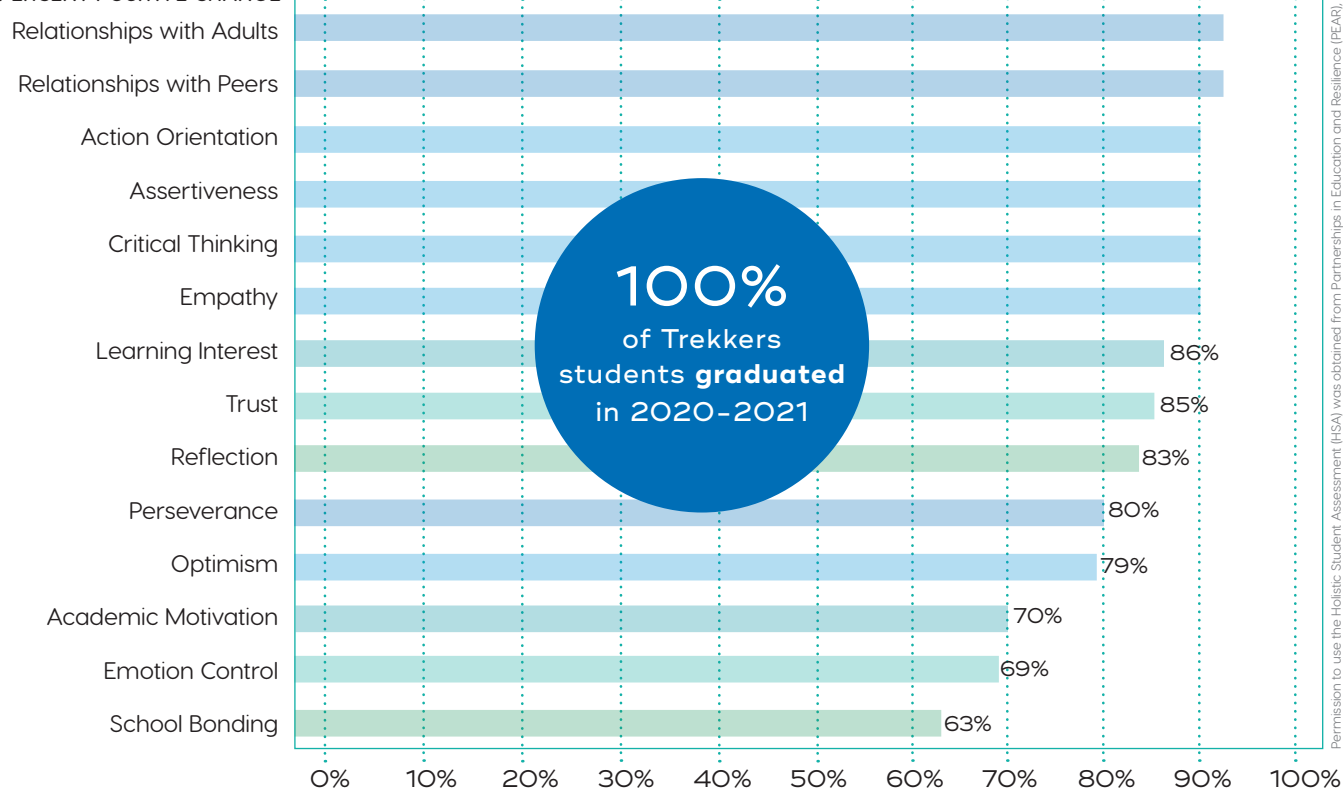
12TH GRADE

Danforth, ME
Hawley, MA

Impact Overview

At the end of every program year, Trekkers evaluates students' social-emotional well-being. Students report increases in:

PERCENT POSITIVE CHANGE



7th Grade • Ready to Go

In March, the newest Trekkers emerged as Team **Crux** and Team **Crag**. Unfortunately, expeditions were rescheduled to the fall due to COVID-related complications at the campground. Instead, Trekkers took teams on hiking, canoeing, and rock climbing daytrips to learn the basic outdoor skills and reflection practices they'll use throughout their six-year

journey. Volunteers and junior and senior student leaders joined them and brought the Trekkers spirit, already stepping in as role models to many younger students.



SUPERLATIVES

Most determined new Trekkers!

"Students have charged head first into the first Trekkers' experiences, together overcoming challenges with tenacity. It's honestly been impressive! We can't wait to do more with them."

—Kaleb Robinson, Program Manager

HOW IT BEGINS

Trekkers serves up to 240 students from rural towns of Cushing, Owls Head, Thomaston, South Thomaston, Rockland and St. George and works closely with area schools. Each fall, staff visit 7th grade classrooms to present a program overview. Come spring, Trekkers hosts a community meeting for families and publishes an invitation to apply in local newspapers. No student is ever turned away because of an inability to pay. Student dues are kept purposefully low and Trekkers offers opportunities to fundraise for dues as well as a scholarship.





What Teams Did

Adventure/Challenge

Hiked Bald Mountain and canoed
Megunticook Lake in Camden.
Learned rock climbing in Portland.

SKILLS

Foundational relationship-building.
Confidence in basic outdoor skills.



8th Grade • It Starts With a Plan

In year two, teams **Wobbegong** and **Squaliform** have started to show their personalities! Physically active Team Wobbegong is forming favorite rituals like playing soccer, taking turns with radio hour, and dancing on the bus. This year, they showed an ability to switch from being goofy to being reflective, an admirable level of self control.

Team Squaliform leaned into consensus decision-making this year and successfully created a supportive, welcoming space for everyone even though there are many different personalities. After getting rained on for much of their seven-day trip, they had a tropical-themed party to celebrate the sun.

SKILLS

Making choices
and collaborating
as a team.



What Teams Did

Adventure/Challenge

Kayaked and white water rafted on the Kennebec. Sledded in Rockland. Played soccer at The Pitch in Warren. Visited swimming holes. Game and movie nights during the year.

Environmental Stewardship

Explored Frenchman's Bay and Mount Desert Island by boat with the College of the Atlantic. Spotted wildlife, discussed climate change. Visited Morning Glory Farm in Bethel to learn about organic farm operations. Made fresh yogurt.

Wilderness Exploration

Hiked Black Mountain Cliff in Franklin, Bald Mountain in Camden, and Table Rock Loop in Grafton Notch, viewing the waterfalls.

Community Service

Clean-up at Bagaduce River Equine Rescue. Helped at Harrison Food Bank and learned about food waste, community need, and how to run a food bank.

Cultural Awareness

Toured the Amish Community Market in Unity, Maine, discussing cultural differences with owner Caleb Stoll. Attended a Sea Dogs game in Portland.



"[We used consensus-based decision-making] to plan our trip. It included everyone in the decision. We were able to hear everyone's voice."

-8th Grader



SUPERLATIVES

Most Hawaiian shirts worn at one time. Most bus aisle dancelines formed on a single expedition.

9th Grade • Learning in and Loving it

Both teams **Sequoia** and **Yosemite** embraced challenge this year, either travelling furthest from home or becoming the first team ever to backpack on their seven-day expeditions.

Yosemite is a team that seeks understanding, enjoying both collaboration and debate, often playing games. Together, they became a well-oiled machine, working together on community service projects or white water rafting class 2 to 4 rapids.

Team Sequoia also craves a challenge. Their go-with-the-flow attitude helped whenever they needed to improvise, and often used their imagination to make experiences more fun. They prepared a Thanksgiving-like dinner after backpacking several hours to camp!



SKILLS

Empathy.
Voice and choice.
Perseverance.

What Teams Did

Adventure/Challenge

Whitewater rafted the Penobscot River in Maine and the Hudson in New York. Card games throughout the year. Played soccer at The Pitch in Warren.

Environmental Stewardship

Learned about dam removal at the historic Veazie Dam with the Penobscot River Restoration Project. Visited Champlain Valley Apiaries in Middlebury, Vermont to learn about the role of bees and the impact of pesticide use.

Community Service

Painted the Ranger Cabin at Baxter State Park. Distributed food at Amen Place Soup Kitchen.

Wilderness Exploration

Hiked to Tumbledown Dick Falls and stayed overnight. Hiked to Roaring Brook Falls, Bald Rock Mountain in Camden, and hiked at Merryspring Nature Center. Built campfires at the new office.



SUPERLATIVES

Most miles travelled by land or water. Most talented paint scraping team.

“[A strength I developed was] understanding people. I realized that everybody has different opinions, and (I) accept that.”

-9th Grader

"[Trekks] has made big decisions less scary because I know that I have an awesome support system."

-10th Grader



What Teams Did

Adventure/Challenge

Whitewater rafted on the Penobscot. Visited Urban Air Trampoline and Adventure Park in Bangor. Played soccer at The Pitch.

Environmental Stewardship

Toured Smith Farm in Presque Isle and learned about large-scale farming among numerous heads of broccoli.

Wilderness Exploration

Hiked Borestone Mountain in Piscataquis. Swam at Blueberry Ledges in Baxter State Park. Camped at Big Eddy in Millinocket.

Cultural Awareness

Attended a presentation and tour of the Hudson Museum in Bangor to learn about Maine's indigenous peoples.

Community Service

Helped out at 4R Animal Shelter and Horse Rescue in Lee.

SKILLS

Appreciation of natural resources. Personal strengths and aspirations. Cultural experiences and perspectives.



SUPERLATIVES

Most miles spent on the Golden Road, a logging road that can make your teeth chatter!

10th Grade • Gaining Perspective

Throughout the year, teams **Krakatoa** and **Vesuvius** met to plan their trips, enjoyed movie nights, did arts and crafts, and played mini golf.

Typically, the 10th grade trip is a highly anticipated one because students travel far to explore a landscape that is completely different from the one in Midcoast Maine. However, to reduce risk during the pandemic, this seven-day expedition stayed within Maine and the two teams joined

forces to form **Volcania**, coming together as a mellow and connected team that enjoyed hanging out and downtime.

Throughout these changes, staff were impressed by the group's ability to bounce back from disappointment, move forward, and have a great trip full of Taylor Swift tunes and daily "fit checks" (each person models the fit and style of their outfit that day.)



11th Grade • Forging a Path

Team **Nighthawk** was the first team to embark on their seven-day expedition this year. They leaned into new challenges, like going white water rafting for the first time, exploring challenging topics, and expressing perspectives about the future. All year, they have been a team that enjoys playing games together and watching movies, developing a thoughtfulness toward each other, and an ability to adapt to change.

For example, this team wanted to learn more about racism in Maine. Despite challenges with arranging an in-person experience on expedition, they watched “The Letter” by Ziad Hamzeh and had challenging but important conversations about which of their own perceptions were changed by the film.

“I feel like I have a lot of options for my future. I used to be set on doing one thing, but now I know and feel more comfortable about doing other things and expanding my choices.”

-11th Grader



What Teams Did

Adventure/Challenge

White water rafted in Bingham. Played soccer at The Pitch.

Environmental Stewardship

Learned more about renewable energy at Saddleback Ridge Wind Project in Carthage, and discussed both sides of the proposed CMP Corridor issue.

Cultural Awareness

Film screening and discussion of "The Letter."

Community Service

Cleaned up rain gardens at 7 Lakes Alliance, learning about water quality and our impact on soil and water.

Future Planning

Took driving tours and compared fact sheets of Colby College, UMaine in Farmington, and UMaine in Orono. Listened to a Trekkers Alumni panel about different paths after high school, and discussed as a group.



SUPERLATIVES

Most uses of the word "stoked" to refer to how they felt.

SKILLS

Exploring post-secondary opportunities. College and career readiness. Cultivating curiosity. Voice and choice. Decision-making.





What Teams Did

Reflection & Celebration

36-hour solos in Hawley, MA, and Danforth, ME, with training to construct their own shelters.

Gatherings

Campfires at Trekkers. Board games. Holding a gift exchange.

Community Service

Volunteering for One Less Worry, a nonprofit that distributes free menstrual products to schools and businesses in Knox County.



SUPERLATIVES

Most games played in the shortest amount of time. Most students who attended Fired Up.



12th Grade • A Rite of Passage

After six years in Trekkers, teams **Beacon** and **Atlas** have the most defined group personalities. Beacon (a deeply connected, respectful, and at times loud group that loves making multiple pitstops on the road) and Atlas (a group that's both naturally reflective and endlessly goofy, and a

team with strong convictions) each embarked on their final five-day expedition, which includes the 36-hour solo in the woods. Both teams talked about the impact they'd had on one another in the last six years. Students walked away reflecting on how to move forward in life with intention.

SKILLS

Acknowledgement and preparation for transition into adulthood. Personal responsibility. Trust. Self-expression.



"[I take with me] a real sense of self and a confidence for who I am and want to be."

-12th Grader



Ongoing Partnerships

To meet the ever-evolving needs of our communities, Trekkers works closely with local schools and partners with neighboring youth-serving organizations. For example, beginning in 2020, Trekkers launched a **nine-week program** to meet with 6th grade students at St. George School. This has sparked new ways we are collaborating with the St. George School in 2021-22.



Trekkers also intentionally reimagined the Student Leadership Program – allowing students to choose between a Mentorship or Expedition Behavior track. Throughout the year, Trekkers collaborated with Hurricane Island Outward Bound School, together developing **curriculum and a five-day backpacking expedition** for student leaders, which took place in western Maine last May.

“The pandemic has forced schools to rethink and adapt their practices to meet complex student academic and social emotional needs.

Because of this, it is clear to me as a school administrator that thoughtful collaboration with local youth-serving organizations is critical to our mission.

Last spring and continuing into this fall, Trekkers has stepped in to offer school-based mentoring and experiential educational opportunities to our students in the middle level. I feel very fortunate knowing that more St. George students are engaged with their passionate staff than would previously have been anticipated before the pandemic and am eager to work more closely with Trekkers in the future.”

– Adam Bullard, Instructional Administrator,
St. George Municipal School

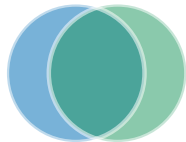
The Trekkers Training Institute (TTI)

The training team at Trekkers is dedicated to giving organizations and youth practitioners the tools needed to champion youth social-emotional well-being in their own communities.

TTI's first ever virtual-only training sessions were held for its cornerstone training, the Circles of Change, for students in the final Aspirations Incubator cohort. This summer, we began working with The Apprenticeshop to provide social-emotional learning and skills for practitioners.

Offerings

- Workshops By Topic
- Circles of Change
- Custom-Built Training
- Speaking Engagements
- On-Call Consulting



trekkers
TRAINING INSTITUTE

MORE INFORMATION AT [TREKKERSINSTITUTE.ORG](https://trekkersinstitute.org)

Thanks to Our Community

Our work is made possible by an incredible community of volunteers, donors, and supporters.



165
Total
Volunteers

(19 alumni + 58 students)



35
Business
Sponsors



15
Event
Sponsors



530
items
donated
by 131



2,717
hours
volunteered...



...at a value of
\$42,663

businesses, artists, collectors, quilters, and families to help students
fundraise over the past year.

Explore events and volunteer opportunities at trekkers.org/volunteer.

Ways to Give

Join Trekkers in investing in young people and the future of Maine.

One-Time Gifts

You can make a gift online at [Trekks.org/donate](https://trekkers.org/donate) or by mail to 325 Old County Road, Rockland, ME 04841.

Monthly Giving

Trekkers' Compass Club is a meaningful plan for helping local youth chart their future. An automatically deducted monthly gift in the amount of your choosing provides Trekkers with the consistent support we need so we can do the same for our students. Set up an automatic, recurring gift at trekkers.org/donate or by calling (207) 594-5095.

Carpenter Legacy Circle

Adding Trekkers to your IRA, will, or life insurance policy is a wonderful way to leave a legacy and impact the next generation. If you are interested in naming Trekkers as a beneficiary, please contact us at (207) 594-5095.

Reminder: Charitable tax benefits have been extended through 2021! Taxpayers taking the standard deduction in 2021 can deduct up to \$600 in cash donations to qualified charitable organizations. For taxpayers who itemize, the deduction limit for cash donations has increased from 60% of Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) to 100% of AGI. This charitable tax benefit is scheduled to end on December 31, so please act now to take advantage.

For more information on ways to give, please call our philanthropy department at (207) 594-5095 or email Kate Elmes at kate@trekkers.org.

Board of Directors

Kathleen Meil, President

Douglas M. Erickson, Treasurer

Alyssa Landrith, Secretary and Alumna

Makaila Hickey, Trekkers Alumna

Bryson Cowan King, Trekkers Alumna

Fletcher Smith-McNaboe

Leah Nickerson

Matthew Graham

Suzanne Luzius

Laura Miller

Kamryn Prior, Current Trekkers Student



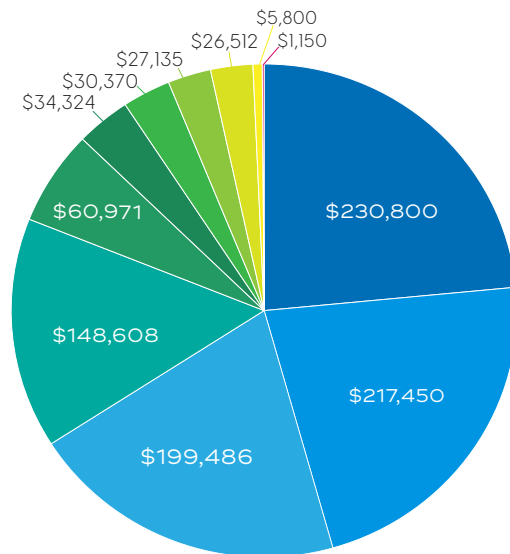
Financial Overview

FY2021 Revenue

Payroll Protection Program*	\$230,800
Operating Grants	\$217,450
Individual Contributions	\$199,486
Events	\$148,608
Student Dues	\$60,971
Maine Economic Recovery Grant	\$34,324
AmeriCorps Grant	\$30,370
In-Kind Donations	\$27,135
Business Support	\$26,512
TTI Workshops	\$5,800
Other Income	\$1,150

* Amount includes Trekkers FY20 and FY21 loans, as both loans were fully forgiven in 2021.

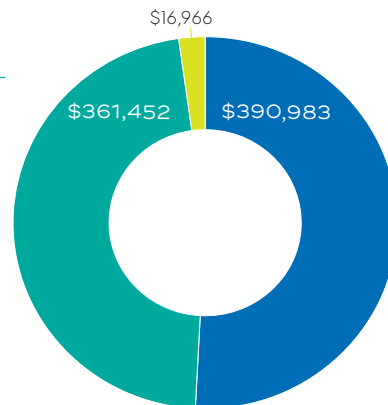
\$982,606



FY2021 Expenses

Operations and Administration	\$390,983
Direct Program	\$361,452
Events	\$16,966

\$769,401



For more information on our financials visit trekkers.org/financials.



trekkers

Cultivating the inherent strengths of young people through
the power of long-term mentoring relationships.

www.trekkers.org | 325 Old County Road, Rockland, ME 04841