

STRATEGIC PLAN 2014-2019

***Our Mission** is to educate youth, families, and the community about food, farming, and the land.*

***Our Vision** is of a community that embraces and supports local and sustainable farming and provides equitable access to healthy food for all.*

Who We Are

The Sauvie Island Center provides elementary school students with hands-on learning experiences on a working farm, helping them make the connection between the food they eat, farming and the land. We believe that when children understand where their food comes from, our whole community benefits.

Since 2005, we have hosted over 7,000 Portland area children at the farm. **For many, it was the only day of outdoor education they participated in all year and for more than half, it was their first visit to a working farm.**

Our classroom is the 16-acre Sauvie Island Organics farm and the grounds of the adjacent 120-acre Howell Territorial Park, owned and managed by Metro. Through community support, students experience food, farming and the land by digging in to our inter-related curriculum, which has been designed to reinforce science standards.

SOIL INVESTIGATION

Students dig into compost to discover what makes up healthy soil, and to gain a better understanding of its relationship to the farm system.

PLANT PARTS INVESTIGATION

Students explore the farm while searching for and tasting vegetables that represent each of the six plant parts: roots, stems, leaves, flowers, fruits and seeds.

WILDLIFE AND THE FOOD WEB

To learn about the food web and the relationship between the farm and the forest, students explore the forest for signs of wildlife.

SEED TO HARVEST

Students plant, tend and harvest vegetables from their own field, the Grow Lunch Garden.

POLLINATION STATION

Students look for pollinators at work in the native plant hedgerow, in the heritage orchard and on the farm, while learning about the critical role that pollinators play in our food system.

Why We Exist

Forty-six percent of Portland Public School (PPS) youth live in poverty. Research has shown that economically disadvantaged children suffer disproportionately from health concerns related to poor nutrition such as obesity and diabetes.

In addition to poor health outcomes for low-income youth, many children today don't understand how and where their food grows, and well-over half of the children we serve have never seen food growing on a farm.

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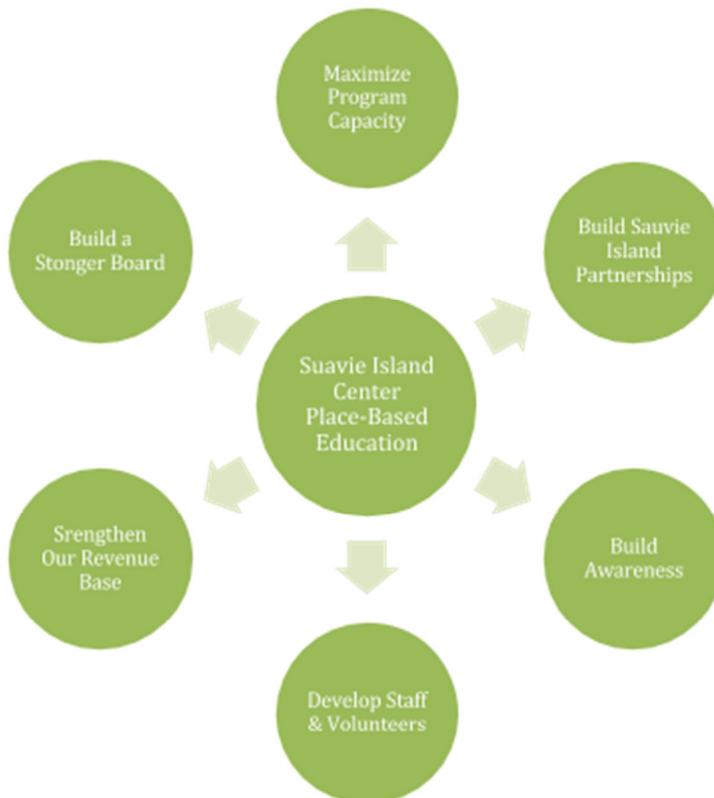
In recognizing the need to show children where food begins, teachers turned to Shari Raider of Sauvie Island Organics for informal farm tours. Believing that children would benefit from a more structured approach, she teamed up with renowned chef Cory Schreiber of Wildwood Restaurant and a group of volunteer educators. Together they crafted the plan for a hands-on, farm-based curriculum. In 2005, the Sauvie Island Center was born.

With a focus on Portland’s highest poverty schools, those with the fewest opportunities for field trips where it is unusual for the children to spend a day outside in a natural area, the Center provides hundreds of children each year an experience they can’t get in a classroom. Each year, more than half of our programs are provided as scholarships to children who attend Title 1 schools in the region.

How We Drive Community Change

The Sauvie Island Center is a growing organization in our ninth year of operation. Over the last five years, the Center has blossomed from a small start-up into an emerging and stable organization. Programs and services have more than quadrupled and the Center currently manages a small staff and a budget of approximately \$120,000.

The Sauvie Island Center is a unique place-based experiential education program. At the heart of our strategic plan is the desire to maximize our programs and services at the Sauvie Island Center. Our impact and growth will be achieved by pursuing five strategic priorities that include maximizing program capacity, building Sauvie Island partnerships, building awareness of our work, developing staff and volunteers, and strengthening our revenue base.



Maximize Program Capacity:

Over the next five years we will work to maximize our program capacity at the Sauvie Island Center. This will include expanding opportunities to host school groups on site, strengthening and expanding our school partnerships, building connections to other youth-servicing community agencies, and expanding programming opportunities for children and families.

Building Sauvie Island

Partnerships: The local option levy that was approved by voters in 2013 expands Metro’s ability to invest in and care for its

natural areas including property they own on Sauvie Island. It is understood that within the next two years, Metro will begin to develop a planning process to guide capital investments to Howell Park, the site of the Sauvie Island Center (barn) and possibly new space Metro acquires. This planning process creates new opportunities to expand the infrastructure supporting our site. We will strengthen our partnerships on the island including the Sauvie Island Academy, Sauvie Island Organics and the Food Works farms and increase our engagement with Metro program and planning staff members. The purpose of strengthening partnerships is to advocate for investments in the infrastructure supporting our site.

Building Awareness of our Work: The Sauvie Island Center has developed a track record of community events that combine education, awareness raising, fun, and fundraising. In the last decade we have also established a growing program brand and have made progress in developing marketing and communication strategies. Building on this progress, we will broaden our community awareness, including exploring the strength of our brand, expanding events, and developing educational opportunities for families.

Developing Staff and Volunteers: The strength of any nonprofit organization is found in the recruitment, development, and retention of passionate, engaged and talented staff and volunteers. Recognizing that staff and volunteers are the core to our success, this plan calls for continued investment in developing a dynamic team of staff and volunteers committed to advancing our organizational success.

Strengthening Our Revenue Base: Concurrently we need to continue to build a sustainable nonprofit organization. We have had modest success in developing long term funding relationships with several corporations and foundations. In this plan, we will expand this core revenue strategy by strengthening our investments in developing individual donors, and earned income streams.

Build a Stronger Board: The final dimension of this strategic plan is that as a growing organization our board is shifting from a working board to a board that focused more on the long-term strategy. To accomplish this we will invest in strengthening our Board of Directors.

To achieve the community change that we envision, this strategic plan will focus on building a sustainable program by investing resources in the following specific strategies for change.

<p>Goal 1</p> <p>Grow the number of children, families, and community members served through our high-quality experiential education programs.</p>	<p>How Tomorrow will be Different</p> <p>The Sauvie Island Center will be a thriving organization that provides experiential education to a growing number of children and community members year round. By engaging our community in the process of education, experience, and community change, we will see measurable differences in the lives of those we serve.</p>
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Why it is Important

Since our Inception we have been driven by a desire to create a meaningful and unique experiential education experience for children. Under this plan we seek to expand the community we serve to include families and other community members. We will achieve our goal through a combination of more individuals participating in existing and new programs across a longer season of the year. As we expand our programming to include more summer camps and family experiences, we remain committed to developing a high-quality program supported by demonstrated outcomes.

Short Term Strategies

- Invest in the development and implementation of robust and continuous improvement system across all of our program areas. We define this as ensuring that trained staff and volunteers deliver accurate information in a consistent manner.
- Design a strategy to ensure that all programs have identifiable outcomes and plan of evaluation to measure program outcomes.
- Strengthen school recruitment and retention strategies that maximize the number of children served on a year-to-year basis.

Mid Term Strategies

- Seek out opportunities to pilot and test innovative educational opportunities to new audiences such as families and youth-serving nonprofits.
- Convene a teacher advisory council to inform the development and expansion of the curricula and explore the development of teacher training modules.

Longer Term Strategies

- Institutionalize successful pilot programs developed during the first years.
- Implement a comprehensive program evaluation and disseminate a summary report of the findings.

We will know that we have succeeded when:

- We exceed 90% of our service capacity at the existing Sauvie Island Center Site.
- When our evaluation data demonstrates an impact beyond pretest and posttest comparisons.
- We are expanding our reach by hosting experiential education for a variety of groups beyond school children including youth served by other community based agencies, families, and other community members.

<p>Goal 2</p> <p>Strengthen Partnerships to expand our programs and work with other Sauvie Island groups to support Metro’s master planning for Howell Territorial Park.</p>	<p>How Tomorrow will be Different</p> <p>The Sauvie Island Center will have expanded community education, and engagement as a result of strengthening partnerships with schools, community groups and other nonprofit organizations. Further, program opportunities will expand as a result of capital investments by Metro in Howell Territorial Park.</p>
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Why it is Important

Our growth has been based on our ability to create meaningful partnerships with schools, funders, and other supporters. As we continue to grow, the ability to develop and maintain partnerships will strengthen our ability to offer programs and services to wider audiences. In addition, the pending master planning and capital investments by Metro in Howell Parks creates a long term potential for our work. We are in a unique position to be part of designing and advocating for expanded education and engagement opportunities for the Sauvie Island Center.

Short Term Strategies

- Work in partnership with other organizations, schools and community groups to develop collaborative program opportunities.
- Support the Metro planning process by offering to be planning process stakeholder, convener and community organizer.

Mid Term Strategies

- Develop new or expand existing programs in collaboration with other stakeholders on Sauvie Island.
- Engage in the Metro initiated Master Planning process for Howell Territorial Park and adjacent properties.

Longer Term Strategies

- Take advantage of new opportunities as they emerge from the Metro master planning process.

We will know that we have succeeded when:

- Our community partnerships result in an increase in collaborative programming.
- We are a leading voice in the master planning process for Metro-owned properties on Sauvie Island.

<p>Goal 3</p> <p>Expand awareness of the Sauvie Island Center that, in turn, increases participation in our programs and services, supports our volunteer engagement, and strengthens fundraising.</p>	<p>How Tomorrow will be Different</p> <p>The Sauvie Island will be recognized as a leader in experiential education related to working farms and food systems that generates engagement in our programs, services, as well as financial and volunteer support.</p>
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Why it is Important

We have developed a growing identity as an organization and are developing a growing community of support. Building on this momentum we want to attract, retain and foster a strong participant base and an extended community of supporters willing to invest time and fiscal resources in the sustainability of the programs. Central to building this community is the development of a strong awareness building and communications program.

Short Term Strategies

- Conduct a formal assessment to determine the durability of the Sauvie Island Center’s name, market position and brand strength.
- Develop benchmarks to monitor our progress towards expanding our community awareness.

Mid Term Strategies

- Strengthen and expand partnerships with local businesses to extend our limited marketing and communications dollars.
- Expand to at least half time our marketing and communications coordinator position.

Longer Term Strategies

- Implement an ongoing a strategic communications campaign to promote the Sauvie Island Center.

We will know that we have succeeded when:

- We have a unified communication plan that is achieving our outlined benchmarks for success.
- We have at least a half-time marketing and communications coordinator.
- We are seen in the community as a source for expertise related to farm and food systems education.
- We have created at least one partnership that helps us in funding and implementing a communications campaign.

<p>Goal 4 The Sauvie Island Center has a staffing structure that ensures the recruitment, retention, and development of competent, professional staff and volunteers.</p>	<p>How Tomorrow will be Different</p> <p>The Sauvie Island Center staff and volunteer structure will be comprised of a vibrant team working to provide high quality programs and services. Shared leadership, learning and action will be the values built into the organizational infrastructure that supports the high functioning team.</p>
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Why it is Important

The Sauvie Island Center’s vibrant workforce of staff members and volunteers has been an effective model as we have been developing core programs and services. However, as a growing organization we need to invest in expanding the capacities of our staffing and strengthen our volunteer structure and training to create clearer expectations and a more stable staffing pattern for the organization. Without such an expansion the future development of our programs and services will be constrained.

Short Term Strategies

- Assess staffing needs related to development, fundraising, and administrative support.
- Increase the Executive Director time.
- Explore the use of paid contract workers or seasonal staff for some positions currently filled by volunteers.

Mid Term Strategies

- Using a tool to assess our current volunteer program¹ create a shared understanding of our volunteer management program and develop a quality improvement plan based on the assessment results.
- Strengthen and expand the opportunities for staff to grow professionally and expand staff compensation.
- Develop multiple pathways for volunteer involvement with our program and service.

Longer Term Strategies

- Ensure that staff compensation is at market rate.
- Strengthen our volunteer recruitment, training and recognition by implementing a quality improvement plan.
- Expand the size of the staff, including management staff, to accommodate the growth in our programming.

¹ http://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/Management_Brief.pdf

We will know that we have succeeded when:

- We have expanded our staffing to accommodate a stronger administration of the organization.
- Have adequately compensated staff to promote retention.
- We have high retention of qualified volunteers working in support of our programs.

<p>Goal 5</p> <p>Define a clear business model for the Sauvie Island Center to create a mix of operating revenues that are reliable and have some autonomy to allow for growth and innovation.</p>	<p>How Tomorrow will be Different</p> <p>The Sauvie Island Center will have growing operating revenues sustaining the growth of programs, an adequate infrastructure and a modest operating reserve to ensure our agencies fiscal health.</p>
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Why it is Important

Creating and acting on a clear revenue model is an essential strategy to support the long-term stability of our organization. An intentional revenue strategy will make us more proactive, resilient and will give us more control of our future. By making strategic decisions about preserving, increasing and/or expanding revenue streams with the highest potential of both reliability and autonomy, we will be able to both sustain and grow our programs and services and also have the opportunity to innovate and capitalize on emerging opportunities.

Short Term Strategies

- Create new staff capacity to support revenue development, volunteer management, and community engagement and a supporting plan to raise the capital to support the new capacity.
- Cultivate a broad range of family and small foundations willing to support our core program areas. Build relationships individually and as a group.
- Assess the strength of our donor database and develop systematic improvements related to the donor cultivation process.

Mid Term Strategies

- Develop a donor engagement strategy with a focus on individual monthly donations to strengthen the reliability and amount of small donations.
- Strengthen and expand fee-for service opportunities with a focus on summer programming.

Longer Term Strategies

- Expand revenue from fundraising events to diversify our funding base.
- Strengthen our individual donor campaign and integrate donor cultivation strategies, social media, and events.
- Develop a planning model that allows us to assess the potential for profit or a break-even point for events and fee-for service activities.

We will know that we have succeeded when:

- We have created new staff capacity to support revenue development, volunteer management, and community engagement.
- We have a growing and broad base of support that reflects our business model.
- We will have a thriving community of supporters as measured by engagement in our programs, volunteering, and donations.

<p>Goal 6</p> <p>Invest in the ongoing development of our board of directors to ensure effective governance and organizational support.</p>	<p>How Tomorrow will be Different</p> <p>The Sauvie Island Center board of directors will continue to evolve to meet the needs of a growing organization.</p>
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Why it is Important

Without question, leadership is critical to the success of a nonprofit organization. Pivotal to leadership is the strength of the organization’s board of directors. We will continue to invest in our board development to ensure that our board is providing strong organizational support, governance, and helping to extend the civic reach² of our agency.

Short Term Strategies

- Conduct a board self-assessment to identify the strengths and opportunities of the board.³
- Re-align board organization and committee work to ensure a focus on the core strategies of the strategic plan

Mid Term Strategies

- Create a succession plan for the key organizational leadership positions⁴ that includes both planned and unplanned departure scenarios.
- Revise board recruitment materials, job descriptions and develop a board recruitment strategy.

Longer Term Strategies

- Reassess the effectiveness of the board and continue to improve the board through professional development activities.
- Seek to add board members that *reflect the communities we serve*.

² Vandeventer, P. Spring 2011. Increasing Civic Reach. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. Online: http://www.ssireview.org/images/articles/2011SP_FirstPerson_Vandeventer2.pdf

³ McKinsry & Company tool: http://www.denverfoundation.org/postfiles/Board_self_assessment_long.pdf

⁴ Quick, A. Nonprofit Executive Succession-Planning Toolkit. Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City Online: <http://www.kansascityfed.org/publicat/community/Nonprofit-Executive-Succession-Planning-Toolkit.pdf>

We will know that we have succeeded when:

- We have revised board operating policies, job descriptions and a working recruitment plan.
- Our Board has 100% engagement in the committees and revenue development functions of the organization
- We have a succession plan in place for key organizational positions.

Appendix I: Revenue Model

The Sauvie Island Center is a growing organization. With a budget of approximately \$120,000 the distribution of revenues is fairly diversified coming from the traditional sources of foundation, government and corporate grants, individual donations and events.

On our current trajectory, this plan calls for the Sauvie Island Center to maximize our programs and services within the constraints of our existing physical infrastructure. As such, we are making the strategic decision to grow to capacity. The future master planning process conducted by Metro, will unfold concurrent with this plan and may open unexpected growth opportunities within this planning cycle or may open new opportunities for the next planning cycle.

To support the strategic decision to pursue growth to capacity, we will invest in reinventing our revenue model through a greater emphasis on individual donations, and fee-for service work, with an overall annual revenue target of **\$200,000⁵** by the end of the plan.

This growth will allow us to increase the time for the Executive Director and Marketing Manager, as well as adding a new position to support revenue development, volunteer management, and community engagement.

This ambitious growth lies in the two-fold strategy of developing a modest but growing grant-seeking strategy and investing additional personnel in the development of events and individual giving.

⁵ This growth target is based on preliminary numbers suggesting that additional staffing might cost about \$70-80,000. Subject to revision.

Appendix II - Managing Opportunities

The success of the Sauvie Island Center can be attributed in part to the ability of the executive team and board to stay responsive to opportunities and pursue new programs consistent with the organization's mission and vision. Over the course of this strategic plan the Sauvie Island Center will pursue the identified concrete strategies for growth. However, we anticipate that as we progress towards the goal we will continue to manage opportunities that arise. Specifically we will employ five opportunity management criteria to assist us in evaluating program opportunities:

1. Is the opportunity essential to our expanding our core education, and community development goals?
2. Is the program opportunity aligned with at least one of the priority strategies of this plan?
3. Does the opportunity address a need that cannot be better served by a partner organization or in partnership with another organization?
4. Is there a clear pathway to sustainability for the program opportunity over the next 2-3 years that is net neutral or a positive revenue gain for our organization?
5. Does the program opportunity further our mission or build our capacity?
6. Do we have the resources (time, staff, & expertise) to ensure program success and quality with sacrificing our strategic priorities?
7. What do we sacrifice by pursuing this opportunity?