



EST. 2014
**ORKESTAI
FARM**

**ANNUAL
REPORT
2023**

9 years of Neurodiversity, Biodiversity and Expressive Arts

ORKESTAI FARM'S MISSION is to promote the creative participation in society of those differently abled, through practicing ecological agriculture and expressive arts.



What community members have to say...

“My son Daniel, who has non-speaking autism, has been farming at Orkestai every season since the year it began. The most important thing I can say about this is that his work there taught me to presume his competence. Every year he works there, I see his accomplishments grow along with the amazing vegetables he brings for his housemates at his group home to enjoy. He has learned to use all farming tools, to treat harvests with respect—and he has enjoyed the community and cultural opportunities Orkestai provides. Orkestai is a valuable part of our own family's life and we are grateful it exists.”



“It was great! Sean really enjoys coming to the farm and learning so many different things about plants and vegetables. When he brings them home he can't wait to make them and eat them. He is eating more healthily. He is also so proud of growing them and also has his own area to grow. It's great to see everyone work together.”



With your support we have offered the following to our community:

The Overwintering Course

Over the winter, we expanded on our nature connection course to renew the senses and cultivate inspiration in the dormant season. Overwinterers explored the forest, built a debris shelter, sparked fire, roasted vegan marshmallows, navigated new trails, and attuned their senses to nature's cold season rhythms. In addition, we began to offer a second day of Overwintering renewal in the form of a Waldorf-inspired art class that led us from January-March with seasonally attuned explorations of Light (dipping candles, crafting lanterns), Fiber (Finger knitting, felting, and sewing), and Mud/Pigment (painting, planting, and artfully preparing for the growing season)



The Organic Growers Course

The Organic Growers Course welcomed 2 new growers and 13 return participants. From mid-April through mid-November, Organic Growers made compost, planted and harvested, mulched, and cover cropped. They also tended community, expressed themselves in farm/neutral arts, and ended each morning with mindful movement.

This season, Organic Growers had the opportunity to welcome three new teachers who offered weekly special workshops to compliment the framework in the field. In April and May, September and October we continued exploring natural arts (a continuation of the Overwintering Course), in June we participated in a Movement circle with a somatic coach, and in August we had community building and expression with a music therapist.



Dig In! Farm Experience for Kids

For two weeks in July, 15 kids ages 5-10 y/o attended our first-ever inclusive Waldorf-inspired, farm and arts experience. They were immersed in soil, sun, and stem and participated in composting, planting, weeding, harvesting, and preparing and eating the fruits and vegetables they helped tend! We aimed to support sensory exploration, buoy wonder, and cultivate a sense of belonging to our shared Earth, as well as to have fun irrigating the plants and each other!



Community Supported Agriculture

We kept our CSA as a primarily “Harvest Your Own” model for educational purposes, while trying to add in more flexibility of vegetable selection for both members by offering a “farm card” that allowed our members to pre-buy varying amounts of veggies at a discount. The flexibility of this system will likely work best when we can offer more hours to come to the farm or even have a more permanent farmstand.



Community Days

On Second Saturdays, from May through November, we brought diverse communities together by welcoming friends and family of Organic Growers, as well as the wider public, to help in the fields, as well as participate in special workshops on topics including home gardening, healing plants, culinary arts, compost bin construction out of driftwood, and garlic planting in a no-till system.



Buck Moon Community Dance

On Saturday July 9th, we spun into the heart of the growing season with our first-ever Buck Moon Community Dance accompanied by refreshments from the farm made by our Organic Growers. The dances were simple called folk dances accompanied by fiddle music, and were aimed at being accessible to all. We threw our hoes down and shed our woes, and everyone had fun despite being rained off the farm and into the hall St Lukes Episcopal Church which proved to be the perfect location for a dance!



Harvest Moon Fall Festival

On Saturday October 7th we held our annual autumnal celebration and fundraiser, Harvest Moon, in gratitude for the Abundance of the Land and the contributions of our Neurodiverse Farmers. The evening was set to live music, dance performance, collaborative community art, farm-fresh hors d'oeuvres, and drinks. This year we were able to raise just over \$13,000 at this event, which was less than anticipated due to the event being rained out. Thankfully we were again so graciously hosted by St. Luke's Episcopal Church which allowed the party to go on!



Organic No-Till Farm

This season, after several years of focusing on intensive cover-cropping, mulching with local horse manure, composting, and not tilling, we reaped the benefits of less insect pressure and more productivity for less work input. They say it takes at least three years to get a farm ecosystem to begin to balance itself to the point where even organic fertilizers are not needed, and pest pressure is barely felt. We are well on our way!



Because of your support, we have been able to begin to ask the question of what kinds of growth are possible with currently limited infrastructure, and also to take steps to address this limitation.

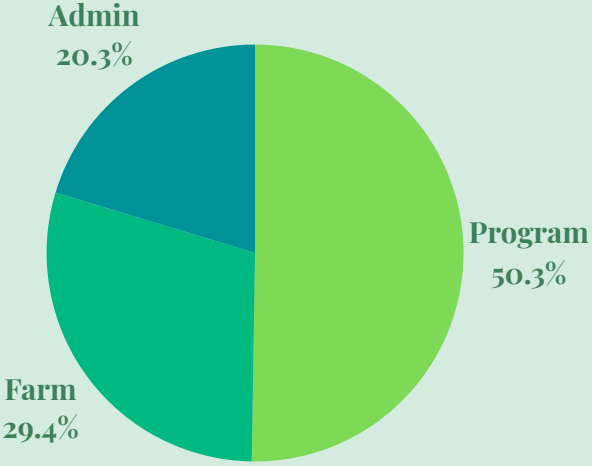
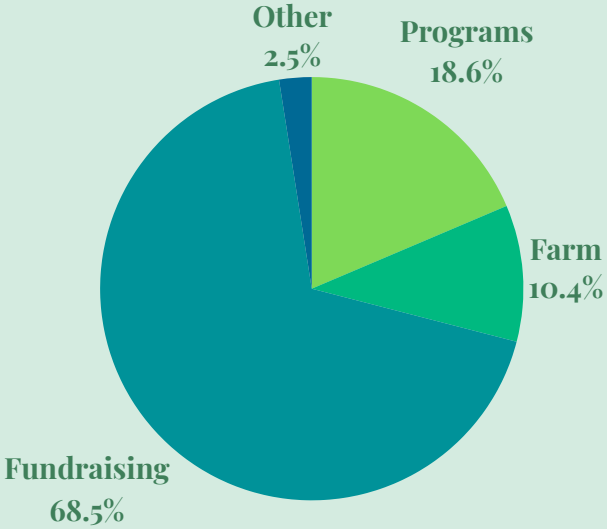


In January 2024 Orkestai Farm will turn 10 years old! We aspire to develop our work with the collaboration and guidance of the land, be inclusive in our offerings, and take the leap toward building more place-based infrastructure in a sustainable more permanent manner. In the coming season, we plan on asking many questions about place and belonging and will be embarking on a research and development project whose aim is to address those questions and enter a planning phase to implement a resilient and enduring site.

Revenue \$408,406.63*

Expenditures \$194,465.91*

*12/15/2022 to 12/15/2023



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