



Nature Sacred



# 2021 ANNUAL REPORT



# CEO LETTER

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Sunrise is my favorite time of day. It marks new light, new life, new possibility and a new opportunity to meet the moment. It's when the first sounds of day life begin, with birds atwitter in anticipation of the light. The sunrise marks a moment of hope, possibility and opportunity.

That is where Nature Sacred is today. In 2020, we experienced a new sunrise as we became an operating foundation. It marked a moment to invite new light — YOU — on the journey with us as we expand our reach and deepen our impact.

25 years ago, we began at Inspiration Point at the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's headquarters in 1996 (see photo below), and in the ensuing decades brought nature to people who need it most from hospitals to prisons, from universities to communities.

This is our first Annual Report, and we are invigorated to share what we are doing together in communities across the country. 2021 was a big growth year with new spaces in new cities, new Firesouls, and lots of new mindful moments for so many. And as always, we invite ideas, thoughts and connections for helping expand and inspire more of the healing power of nearby nature.



*Alden E. Stoner*

**ALDEN E. STONER**

CEO, Nature Sacred



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# MISSION

To provide the opportunity for a deeper human experience by inspiring and supporting the creation of public green spaces that offer a temporary place of sanctuary, encourage reflection, provide solace, and engender peace and well-being.



# VISION

We envision a time when every urban community in the U.S. will provide people with opportunities for intimate, intentional daily doses of nearby urban nature through the creation of a system of nature spaces.







## A NATURE SACRED GLOSSARY

### SACRED PLACE

Sacred Places are green spaces designed using a process and model honed over 25 years; spaces created with a specific purpose: to provide mindful reflection and solace to intentionally improve health & wellbeing.



### THE FIRESOUL

Firesouls are volunteer community leaders — catalysts for change who recognize the need and vital role a green space can offer within their community. They serve as community liaisons, ensuring that each Sacred Place is designed with the community's needs at the forefront.



### BENCH & JOURNAL

In each Sacred Place, you will find a Nature Sacred bench, inviting visitors to take a moment of respite and enjoy the nature around them. Tucked under each bench is a little yellow journal, a place for visitors to connect and reflect.



# What is Nature Sacred?



## SERVICE PROVIDER AND PARTNER

We help enable the creation of Sacred Places where they are needed most.



## NETWORK BUILDER

Our Nature Sacred Network now comprises more than 100 Sacred Places and Firesouls.



## RESEARCH AGGREGATOR

We bridge academia and the green space movement.



*Through over 100 Sacred Places across 40+ municipalities in 12 states and Washington, DC, Nature Sacred brings the healing power of nature to over 60 million community residents and visitors annually.*





## Where are Sacred Places Sprouting?



# Nature Sacred, Service Provider and Partner.

We support the design and creation of Sacred Places that can be found everywhere — from once-neglected urban lots to hospitals to school campuses. We help guide communities and organizations through the process of bringing their nature spaces to life.



**22**

**New Sacred Places  
underway**



**11**  
**PLANNING**



**9**  
**DESIGNED**



**1**  
**UNDER  
CONSTRUCTION**



**1**  
**COMPLETED**

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**128** **Sacred Places in  
total.**

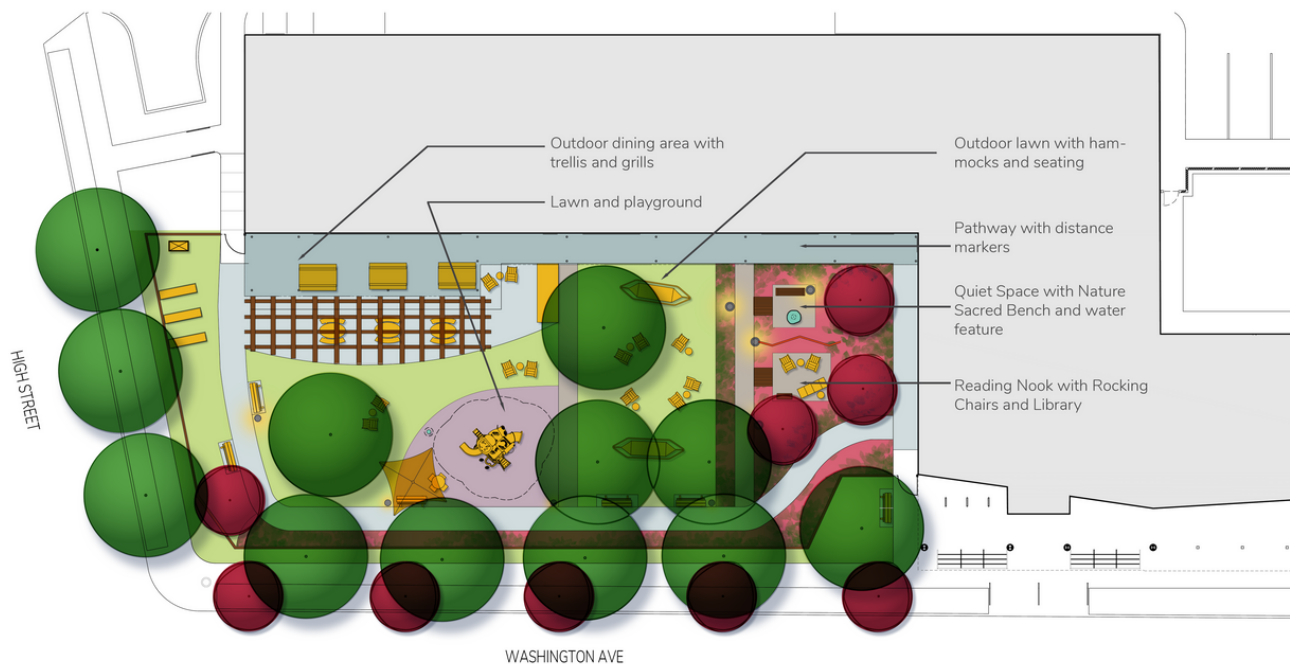


## Community Healing Spotlight

### The HUB | Memphis, TN

Three Sacred Places have been designed for the Hospitality Hub, a first-of-its kind environment that provides services and resources to thousands of Memphians experiencing homelessness.

These spaces will include features like water filling stations, hammocks and outdoor eating areas adjacent to food trucks that will serve free meals and will meet essential needs while offering a welcoming place of respite.



Design by Flaura Teeter Landscape Architects



## Nature for Wellness Spotlight

### Greater Baltimore Medical Center | Baltimore, MD

In conjunction with numerous campus improvements and greening efforts, Greater Baltimore Medical Center (GBMC) is partnering with Nature Sacred to provide a Sacred Place design that incorporates quiet contemplative space with active programming needs. This site is planned to sit adjacent to the Labor and Delivery Unit, and will provide a much needed space of calm, healing and respite for patients, visitors, and the dedicated staff and medical providers at GBMC.

Firesoul David Brierley



#### Proposed Design Features

1. Paving (Brick or Stone)
2. Expanded Sidewalk
3. Steps
4. Seat Wall
5. Boulder Retaining Wall
6. Cascading Waterfall
7. Shrub Planting
8. Hillside Perennial Planting
9. Specimen Tree
10. Understory Tree
11. Turf Area
12. Rain Garden Planting
13. Floating Deck
14. Nature Sacred Bench
15. Metal Screen Panels
16. Existing Bald Cypress
17. Existing Cryptomeria Stand
18. Existing Manholes

Design by Moody Graham



# Nature Sacred, Network Builder.

We bring together community leaders to spearhead the unique design, programming and events of each space, tending to them physically and spiritually through the Nature Sacred Firesoul Network, our long-term site stewardship program.



**12**

**Enhancement &  
Enrichment Grants  
awarded**

**Enrichment Grants aid Firesouls in providing activities for their communities while Enhancement Grants help defray upkeep and maintenance costs, as well as support the addition of enhancing features in Sacred Places.**

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**17**  
**New Firesouls**

**143**

**Firesouls -  
total - in our  
Network**

**22**

**Leadership  
Development  
Program offerings**



## Enrichment Grant Recipient Spotlight



**Naval Cemetery Landscape,  
Brooklyn, NY**

### **What did the grant support?**

Naval Cemetery Landscape (NCL) partners at City Growers installed a new honey bee colony in their hives; the result: frequent sightings of native bees throughout the site. The NCL also started its programming season with a family friendly bird program in early May and the popular sound bath meditation series, during which visitors had the unique opportunity to experience the NCL at dusk while being immersed in soothing and healing sounds.

“We are grateful for your support of this Sacred Place and of our work to connect a greener, stronger, healthier Brooklyn.”

TERRI CARTA





## Enrichment Grant Recipient Spotlight

Firesoul Steve Coleman



Josephine Butler Center and Marvin Gaye Park  
Washington, DC

### What did the grant support?

Washington Parks & People was awarded a grant to support programming related to gardening, farming, and learning about our human connections to the earth.

The collaboration has yielded continuous healthy food production in a severe food desert while also providing a safe haven to learn and grow outdoors, to connect with the land, all year round.

“We are helping to restore nature as a vital force in the lives of hundreds of thousands of people.”

STEVE  
COLEMAN







## Walk for Peace

The Nature Sacred Labyrinth Walk for Peace was conceived during a Firesoul Network Connection session for members whose Sacred Places feature labyrinths. Many major U.S. cities have seen spikes in violent crime during the past 18 months; these Firesouls wanted to respond. The idea was to draw attention to the availability of Sacred Places, which can encourage peace and community cohesion through the moving meditative practice of labyrinth walking. While the Covid-19 pandemic exacerbates existing high levels of stress and anxiety, labyrinth walking offers a means to evoke connection and inner peace.

## Milestone Anniversaries

This year, we celebrated the anniversaries of a number of Sacred Places, including Georgetown Waterfront Park in Washington, D.C., and the Joseph Beuys Sculpture Garden at University of Maryland Baltimore Campus.



**10 years**

**Georgetown Waterfront Park**

Transformed from a parking lot to a space of healing and respite in 2011, this Sacred Place — set inside a National Park and featuring a labyrinth — has become a cornerstone of the community.



**20 years**

**Joseph Beuys Sculpture Park**

2021 marked the 20th anniversary of the Joseph Beuys Sculpture Park at University of Maryland Baltimore County, home of the first Sacred Place on a university campus, that continues to be a thriving connection spot for students, staff and visitors alike.



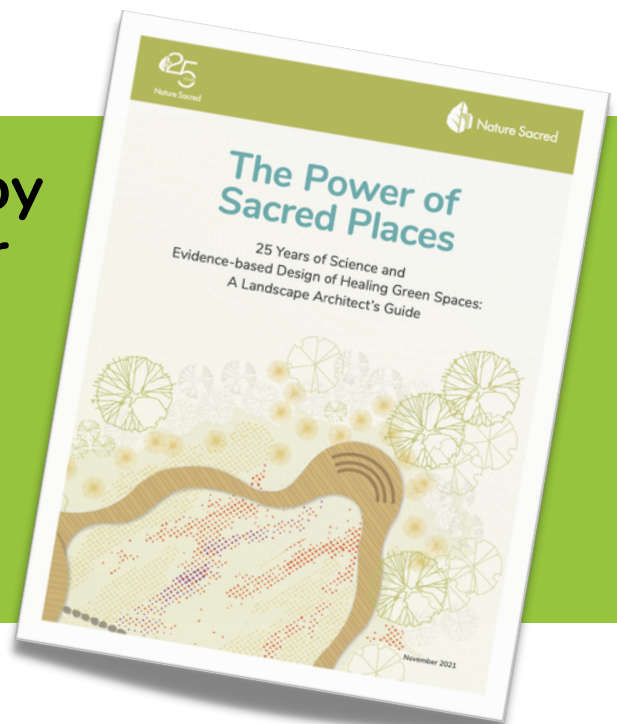
# Nature Sacred, Research Aggregator.

We distill and share thousands of sources of research, all of which builds compelling evidence for the creation of Sacred Places in communities across the country. In addition, we archive thousands of journal entries collected in the yellow journals placed in every Sacred Place.

## A white paper written by landscape architects for landscape architects

RESEARCH + A PROVEN  
METHODOLOGY FOR CREATING  
HEALING GREEN SPACES

RELEASED NOV 2021



**Nature Sacred**  
presents

**Three short films share study  
findings of prominent scientists  
and physicians on nature and health.**



Featuring research by Roger Ulrich, Ph.D., EDAC; Professor, Department of Architecture and Centre for Healthcare Architecture, Chalmers University of Technology; and Fred Foote, MD, Capt, MC, USN, (Ret) & Firesoul for The Green Road

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## The Greatest Evidence of All

### Entries left in our Little Yellow Journals



6/28/19

THIS BOOK IS A WILD GIFT, so silent,  
so detailed so hidden then available to  
those who see. This place is such a  
strange epiphany that i've ~~been~~ passed  
but never thought had so much to  
give. Spaces like this are what  
will save us all. moments inserted into  
your day to day to pull you out of your  
own drama, stress, noise, routine to  
pull out your headphones and remember  
you're just another animal full of fear  
and lust and curiosity. Thank you  
to everyone who found this book and added  
to it. This week is the first week  
i've had a job in two months. the stress  
of paying rent this week (tomorrow) is  
vast, but this ~~space is free~~ space  
is the antidote to it all. I feel so  
rich and full. Thank you

xoxo

Lila

Journal entry:  
Sacred Place at Naval Cemetery Landscape,  
Brooklyn, NY

Photo: Sacred Place at the Brenton Arboretum,  
Dallas Center, Iowa



# 2021 Financials

*All figures are based on unaudited financials.*

## Statement of Activities

January 1, 2021 - December 31, 2021

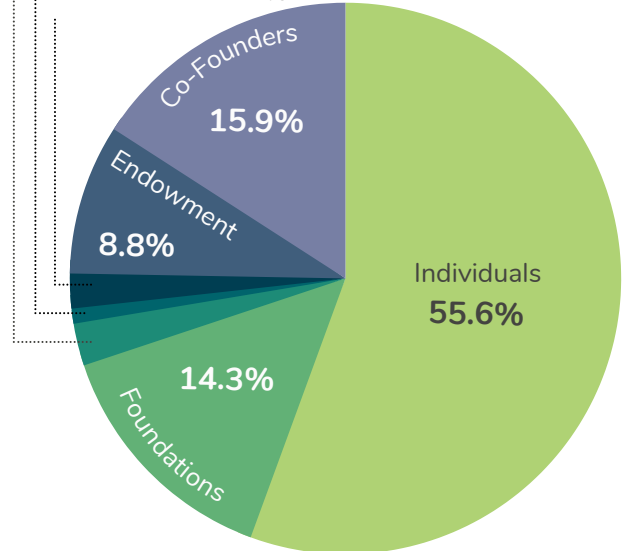
### SUPPORT & REVENUE

Individuals	\$1,574,465
Foundations	\$405,100
Corporations	\$70,190
Fee for Service	\$25,000
Co-Founders Capacity Grant	\$450,000
Endowment [5% distribution]	\$250,000
In-Kind Services	\$57,652
<b>Total Support &amp; Revenue</b>	<b>\$2,832,418</b>

Corporations 2.5%

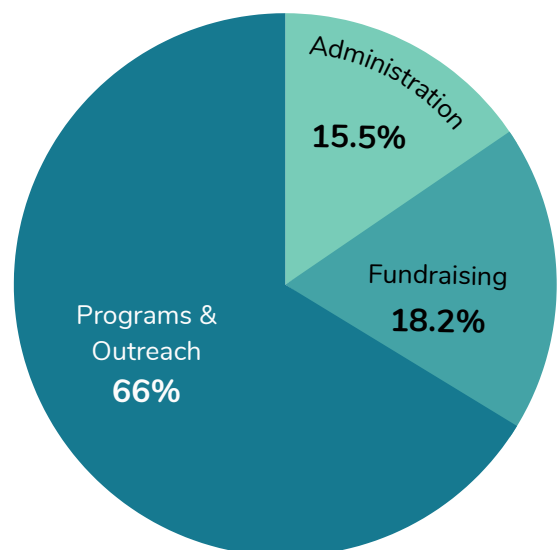
Fee-for-service <1%

In-kind services 2%



### EXPENSES

Administration	\$199,778
Fundraising	\$235,650
Programs & Outreach	\$856,053
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$1,291,481</b>





# 2021 Financials

*All figures are based on unaudited financials.*

## Statement of Financial Position December 31, 2021

### ASSETS

Cash	\$565,559
Investments	\$10,476,421
Other Assets	\$70,711
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$11,112,691</b>

### LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS

Current Liabilities	\$25,462
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#### Net Assets

Donor Restricted	\$2,071,370
Board Restricted (Endowment)	\$6,942,074
Unrestricted	\$2,073,785

<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Net Assets</b>	<b>\$11,112,691</b>
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# Planting, growing and thriving thanks to ...

Agape Fund

The Ariowitsch Family  
Foundation

The Awake Fund

William C. Baker Fund

Baum Family Foundation

Bernstein Family  
Foundation

The Jacob and Hilda  
Blaustein Foundation

The Blackburn Foundation

Brenton Foundation

Brinton Family Fund

Brown Advisory

The Morris and Gwendolyn  
Cafritz Foundation

Francis P. Chiaramonte, MD  
Family Foundation

Chesapeake Bay Trust

Clayton Baker Trust

Community Foundation of  
Greater Des Moines

David and Marjorie Murtagh  
Cooke Foundation

Suzy and Eddie Dunn Fund

R. S. Evans Foundation

Fresh Tonic

Garden Club of Old  
Annapolis Towne

Greenspring Associates

Gustus Vitae

Jonathan and Karry Hatch  
Family Fund

Ho Foundation

Korhonen Family Fund

The Levitt Family  
Philanthropic Fund

The Meadow Fund

Performance Home  
Automation Inc.

The Richman Foundation

Katharine E and Thomas H  
Stoner Fund

United States  
Environmental Protection  
Agency, Region 3

Peggy Taliaferro Fund

VMware Foundation

Bert and Debbie  
Winchester Fund

**... and the generosity of all individuals and contributors who make this work  
and impact possible.**

In October 2021,  
Kirby Lane Park in Baltimore, MD  
hosted its first Fall Festival with face &  
pumpkin painting and games thanks to  
an Enrichment Grant.



In October 2021,  
Wangari Gardens in Washington, DC — a  
Sacred Place opening in 2022 — brought  
the community together for Build Day.

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A new Sacred Place at BLISS Meadows in Baltimore, MD opened in September 2021.

## 2021 Leadership

### Board of Directors

Tom Stoner, Chair  
Kitty Stoner, Vice Chair  
Dick Blackburn, Treasurer  
Ami Aronson  
Nichole Battle  
Scott Brickman

Edward Dunn  
Chuck Foster  
Michael D. Hankin  
Lauren Marshall  
Pascal Mittermaier  
Fred Smith

Jack Bloodgood, Founding Director, *in memoriam*  
Chelle Stoner, Founding Director

*In 2020, the TKF Foundation officially became Nature Sacred, an operating foundation.*

**The Todd Marcus Jazz Orchestra performed at Firesoul Fest, the first in-person Firesoul Network gathering since before the pandemic, in August 2021.**



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