

# WINONA-DAKOTA UNITY ALLIANCE

*Mission: Creating sustainable alliances among Indigenous Nations and the Winona community with a mutual understanding that we are all related.*



## 2023 Year In Review

WRITTEN BY KATE ENGELMANN

The Winona-Dakota Unity Alliance wishes to express deep gratitude to the community for supporting the organization this year. In 2022, after drawback due to the global pandemic, the Board of Directors placed the call for additional community support in fulfilling Board Member positions. Dedicated individuals stepped into new roles and carried forward the vision and mission of the organization. On May 16, 2023 the new Board of Directors hosted a meet & greet, elder visit and planning event at Unity Park. Community members, city officials, Dakota knowledge keepers, and former board members were present to discuss the history of the organization, community commitments to the “Covenant of Friendship”, and partnerships for the Winona-Dakota Gathering & Wacipi.

On Saturday, July 15, 2023 the WDUA hosted Nicky Buck (Prairie Island Dakota) in Unity Park to share cultural teachings in the park gardens. Nicky is a member of the Prairie Island Dakota Community, a Coordinator with Honoring Dakota Project, and a Red Wing School Board Member, among other community roles. Several years ago, the WDUA received sweetgrass (waçanğa) and sage (pežihota bdaska) from Prairie Island Dakota Community gardens. The WDUA worked with Parks and Recreation in the City of Winona to steward these plants. Together they aim to highlight the cultural significance of the plants by hosting community education events and developing artistic and interpretive signs to increase visibility and public understanding. Thank you to Nicky Buck for sharing cultural teachings in Unity Park.

On September 20, 2023 community members joined together at Unity Park to create community artwork and tend the garden. The artwork featured sweetgrass/waçanğa and prairie sage/ pežihota bdaska. The artwork was created in gratitude to Prairie Island Dakota Community, honoring the gift of sweetgrass and sage shared with the Winona community. A special thanks to Sarah Johnson, The Joy Labs for helping with artwork and Sara Holger, Driftless Naturalist LLC for leading the gardening efforts.

The Winona-Dakota Gathering, Homecoming & Wacipi event was held September 29 through October 1, 2023 at Unity Park. The theme of the 2023 gathering was “Twenty Years Building Friendship/ Waniyetu wikcemna numpa Kadakiciyapi kagapi”. The theme honored the history of the WDUA, which shaped the “Covenant of Friendship”. Carrying on its unique tradition, the Gathering continued to be a space, not of competition, but an invitation for participation and cultural exchange. Events that were held include Sunrise Ceremony, Veteran Honor Guard flag raising, Community Talk Circle, Grand Entry, Unity Feast, and more. Thank you to Arnold Williams, Butch Felix, Gordon Weston Veteran’s Lodge, Hoka Hey Host Drum for your leadership and sharing.

The Gathering also devoted time to Remember Our Loved Ones, a memorial of those who have been lost to opioids or alcohol. People of all race, culture and class are affected by this epidemic. Names and photos of loved ones were displayed on memorial posters around the ceremonial circle during a time to share stories and connect with one another. The memorial included an opening prayer, stories shared by family members and loved ones, addresses by Scott Sherman, Mayor of Winona; Senator Jeremy Miller, District 26; and Jeremy Drucker, Director of Addiction & Recovery, Office of Governor Waltz. The Remember Our Loved Ones memorial was organized in partnership with Malia Fox of Winona and Suzanne Nash, Indigenous Peoples Task Force.

The WDUA kindly thanks all who offer their time, knowledge, talents, donations, efforts, and thoughts of goodwill as we work towards our mission.



# 2023 Highlights



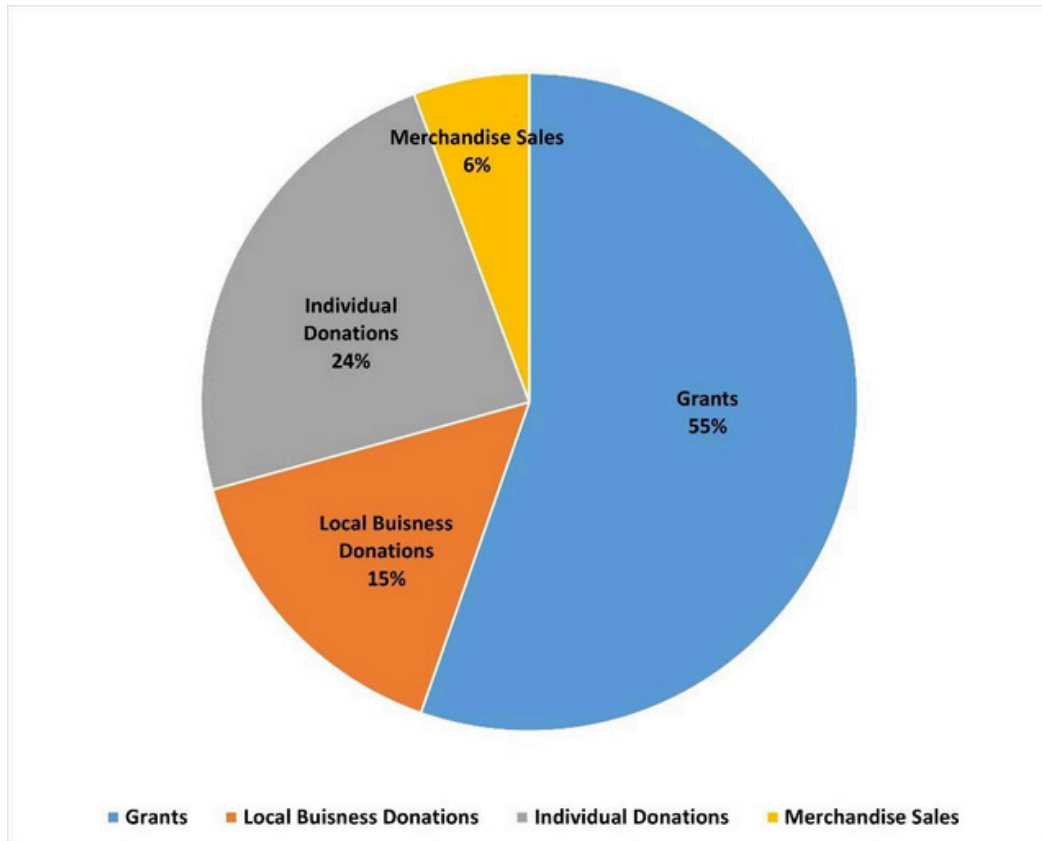


# 2023 Financial Report

Twelve-month Period ending December 31, 2023

## Revenus

<b>Grants</b>	<b>\$15,500</b>
<b>Local Business Donations</b>	<b>\$4,300</b>
<b>Individual Donations</b>	<b>\$6,600</b>
<b>Merchandise Sales</b>	<b>\$1,600</b>
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$28,000</b>



The Winona-Dakota Unity Alliance extends our deepest thanks to everyone that made a contribution in 2023. Your support is the driving force that makes our work possible. Every gift is valued and directly benefits our mission. Apologies for any errors or omissions.

Winona Foundation

Santa Fe Natural Tobacco  
Company Foundation

Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux  
Community

Elizabeth Callender King  
Foundation

Fastenal

RTP Company

Winona National Bank

Hoff Funeral & Cremation  
Services

Hiawatha Broadband  
Communications, Inc  
Bremer Bank

Bluff Country Co-op

Orno Gift + Home

The Blue Heron

Acoustic Café

Miller Scrap & Disposal

Culligan of Winona

William & Joan McNeil

Mary Bambenek

Ruth Charles

Anne Zehren

Denis Carter

Hannah Kosel

Sharon Mansur

Michael Bowler

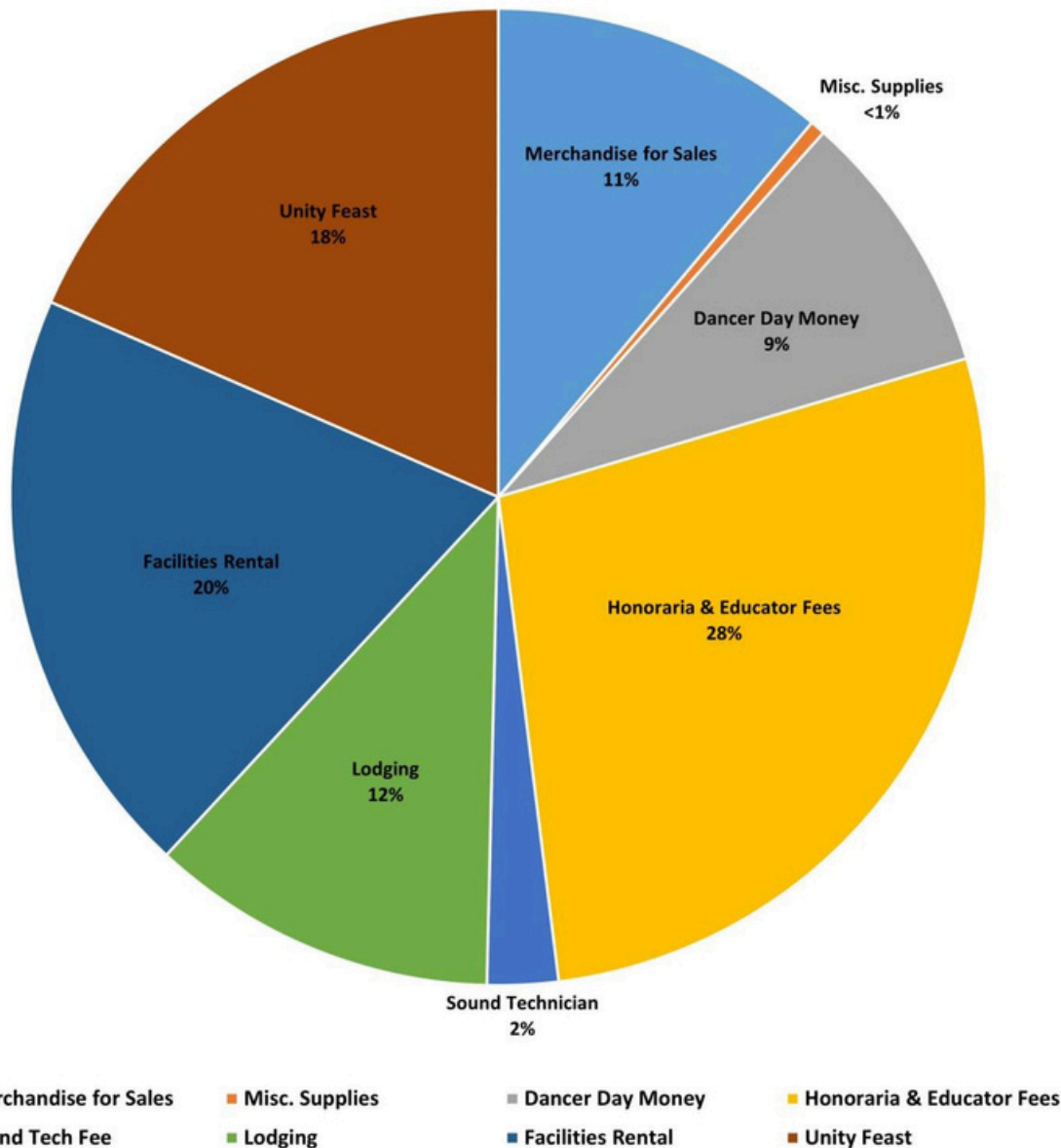
Doreen Moesch

South Wind Orchards

**Expenditures**

<b>Communications</b>	<b>\$398.57</b>
<b>Office Expenses</b>	<b>\$308.03</b>
<b>Dues &amp; Fees</b>	<b>\$151.00</b>
<b>Community Education</b>	<b>\$1,635.00</b>
<b>2023 Winona-Dakota Gathering</b>	<b>\$25,507.40</b>
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<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$28,000</b>

**2023 Winona-Dakota Gathering, Homecoming & Wacipi Expenses**  
**Total: \$25,507.40**



We are deeply grateful for the traditional knowledge keepers, elders, and leaders who share wisdom and lifeways on Dakota homelands.

# 2023 WINONA-DAKOTA GATHERING, HOMECOMING, & WACIPI

Everyone Welcome

HOST DRUM: HOKA HEY

*Honorarium for Invited Drum Only*

First 50 registered dancers will receive a small payout

**September 29 – October 1, 2023**

Unity Park (east end of Lake Winona)

Winona, MN

Spiritual Leader: Arnold Williams

MC: Butch Felix

Veteran Honor Guard: Gordon Weston Lodge

## FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 29<sup>TH</sup>

- Evening Grounds Blessing

## SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 30<sup>TH</sup>

- 7 am Sunrise Opening Ceremony
- 9 am Flag Raising
- 10 am Talk Circle
- 1 pm Grand Entry - Traditional Dancing
- 5 pm Evening Unity Feast

## SUNDAY OCTOBER 1<sup>ST</sup>

- 7 am Sunrise Ceremony
- 9 am Flag Raising
- 10 am-12 pm Remembering Our Loved Ones,  
Led by Suzanne Nash, Indigenous Peoples Task Force

*A time to honor and remember loved ones lost to opioids or alcohol*

Free Onsite Camping - No RV hookups

No alcohol, drugs, or firearms allowed

Native vendors are welcome and free to set up! Call 507-458-2422



**A special thank you to Bill and Joan McNeil for generously  
sponsoring the 2023 Memorial Unity Feast.**

WDUA Memorial  
September 30, 2023

At this gathering we remember friends and relatives who have supported the Gathering in many ways. They shared their time and talents in the spirit of reconciliation and friendship. We continue our efforts while honoring their passing.

Danny and Patsey Seaboy

Dave Seaboy

Ambrose Littleghost

Ernest Wabasha

Bob Bone

Rod and Shirley Steiner

Linda Bernard

John Borman

Gus Higheagle

Phillip Higheagle

Ed Lohnes

Myrna Weston Lewis

Iris Greybull

Midge Clancey

Sidney Byrd

John Trudell

Emmett Eastman

Bernadette Mahfood

Carol Jensen

Gail Bradbury

Ron Moline

Joe Morse

Mark Swart

Barry White

Don Hayes

Mike Kohler

Dan McNeil

Amos LaFromboise & Edward Upright  
(Spirit Lake Tribe and Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate children)





## Programs & Volunteers

1. We hosted 6 community events including local meet ups, public education events, & the Winona Dakota Gathering.

2. 655 community members participated in these events.



3. 47 community volunteers served the organization.





From left, Arnold Williams, Casey Finnerty, Jessica Kasper, Martin Bernard, Lyle Rustad, Paul Barrett, Katie Engelmann, Butch Felix, Ken Heaser, Amy Holubar, David Grant. Dakota Knowledge Keepers, present and former board members, and city officials, & community members join together at Unity Park. May 16, 2023.

**Winona-Dakota Unity Alliance**  
**Board of Directors 2023-2024**

**Katie Engelmann (Chair)**

**Ken Heaser (Treasurer)**

**Paul Barrett**

**Cea Lewis**

**Casey Finnerty**

**David Girod**

**Jessica Kasper**

**David Grant**

**Rob Brault**



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