

**GREAT SMOKY
MOUNTAINS
INSTITUTE AT
TREMONT**

2018
ANNUAL REPORT



GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS INSTITUTE AT TREMONT

Grow with Us

We work with both urgency and joy towards a future where education inspires action, promotes a love of learning, and connects people to nature and to their communities around them. Because adults and youth alike spend up to 90% of their time indoors, our work is now more critical than ever to open the doors to the benefits of time spent in nature. In 2018, although we faced changes in our leadership team, we thrived. We strengthened our impact—serving more youth and adults from more states across the country. We increased the number of schools that visited our beloved National Park and multiplied our reach in school communities as we trained more teachers in the skills and confidence to increasingly take their students outside. This Annual Report is a recognition of those who make our work possible. Our work is only successful due to our passionate staff, dedicated Board of Directors, generous supporters, big-hearted volunteers, and strong partnerships.

In times of increased stress on our environment and in our daily lives, we believe that education is the most powerful tool we have in saving the places we love. Yet, we also know that these places we love can save us in return. We use this perspective to influence our vision for the future—to increase access to the benefits of nature and to shape education opportunities in our communities. As we look to our next 50 years, our bold agenda sets forth Tremont's programmatic growth in four key areas:

- residential programs that utilize a cooperative teaching model to serve both the students and the teachers,
- field programs that deepen a sense of self and of place, and through reflection leads to action and stewardship,
- professional development opportunities for adult learners and educators alike,
- collegiate studies to promote deeper levels of learning and open new career opportunities for college students.

We continue this work knowing that new perspectives and new voices will strengthen our mission. And with our 2019 purchase of 200 acres in Townsend, our growth will not just be in our programs—but in our facilities as well. We will expand our reach to new audiences and in new ways. Stay tuned. And in the meantime, we hope you will join us in our work today and our growth in the future.

Sincerely,
The Tremont Team

David Bryant



David Bryant

Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont delivers experiential learning for youth, educators, and adults through programs that promote self-discovery, critical thinking, and effective teaching and leadership.

From our home in Great Smoky Mountains National Park, our research and residential programs investigate the diversity that sustains all life, develop a sense of place, and cultivate a stewardship ethic that will influence lifelong decision-making.

Learn more at www.gsmit.org.

Faculty & Staff

president & ceo
Catey Terry

director of finance & administration
Tonya Campbell

development manager
Caleb Carlton

marketing manager
Kimberly Weber

office manager
Bridget Loland

registrar
Julie Brown

sales associates
Gail Amatangelo
Lisa Conner

education director
John DiDiego

manager of field programs & collegiate studies
Jeremy Lloyd

manager of school partnerships & teacher development
Jennie McGuigan

manager of science literacy & research
Erin Canter

youth programs manager
Logan Rosenberg

youth programs coordinator
Emily Stein

teacher naturalists
Lauren Anderson
Elizabeth David
Tyler Gonzales
Matthew Herron
Luke Schutzman
Emma Chapman

grounds & facilities manager
Phil 'Doc' Johnson

grounds & facilities assistant
Dalton Read

custodian
DeWayne Britt

executive chef & food service manager
Beth Steele

assistant chef & food service manager
Abbey Goss

chef
Sherry Presley

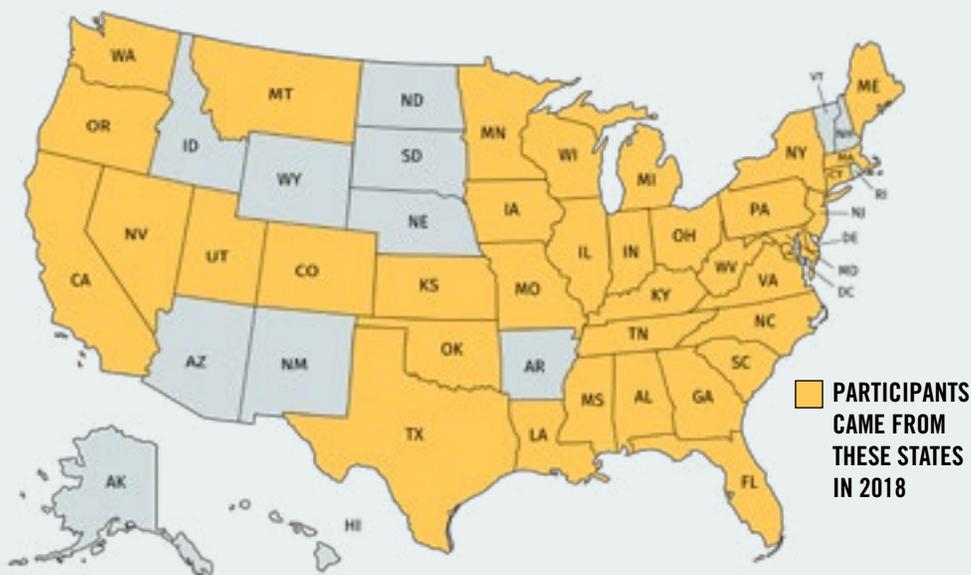
2018 americorps vista
Jessa Goldner
Rebekah Long
Emily Kraseke
David Reedy



Gar Secrist

Quick Look at 2018

Tremont has been educating and hosting groups for 50 years. Participants typically stay onsite for 3-10 days living and learning in the world's greatest classroom — Great Smoky Mountains National Park. We believe everyone can benefit from time spent in nature.



Hosted **adults and youth** from **38** states and Canada

24,380 Collective days that Tremont participants spent living and learning in the national park

Programs hosted **12** months a year

Tremont participated in **66** community outreach events

70% of participants who came to Tremont received financial aid



School Programs

93 School groups participated in a residential program at Tremont

Our lessons align with education standards and emphasize hands-on exploration and reflection. Through our unique co-teaching exchange, skills and techniques teachers use here are easily transferred back to the classroom.

Adult Programs

9 New graduates from the Southern Appalachian Naturalist Certification Program

Who says kids get to have all the fun? Join us for a hiking week, naturalist class, photography workshop or professional development opportunity. Be apart of an incredible community of learners.

Educator Programs

220 Teachers participated in Teacher Escape Weekends

Our workshops train teachers for experiential learning and include transferable skills to take home to the classroom. Teacher Escape Weekend is a great way to learn Tremont's teaching methods and to maximize your students' school program at Tremont.

Summer Youth Programs

386 Adults and kids participated in a summer program

Imagine splashing around in an icy cold mountain stream, climbing ridges to an unbelievable view, or choosing from a variety of activities to discover nature through hands-on explorations and daily hikes. After attending a camp at Tremont, students often leave with a greater sense of confidence and leadership skills.

Community Science Programs

15 Species of birds captured during bird banding days for local and national research

At Tremont, we use community science as another tool to connect people with nature. Personal experience with real research projects engages and excites students, adults, and volunteers alike!



Finding Your People at Tremont

A Volunteer's Perspective by Lisa Peterson

Walt and I are relatively new volunteers at Tremont. Although we've been making treks to the Smokies since our kids were little, we only found our way to the Great Smoky Mountain Institute at Tremont after Walt enrolled in the Southern Appalachian Naturalist Program. Walt knew immediately that he had found his people among the staff and fellow learners who shared a deep passion for the natural world and an infectious enthusiasm for sharing that love with others: "That first weekend at Tremont provoked a desire in me to reconnect with nature: a yearning I had not felt since I was a young boy playing in the woods behind my home. My parents didn't really understand that passion, but here I was surrounded by an entire family of people who encouraged it. It was like coming home, and I knew immediately I wanted to support Tremont's mission."

When a call went out for Citizen Science Day volunteers, Walt signed up, and I joined him. While he spent the morning parking cars, I greeted families who had come to explore the wonders that make up this magical place called Tremont. It is a privilege to meet like-minded adults who make exposing children to the natural world a priority. And it is a delight to share in a child's excitement as he tells of spotting his first salamander, or she shows you the butterfly that is sitting on the tip of her finger and in no hurry to leave.

Since that initial volunteer experience, we have served as greeters for bird banding and extra hands for Homecoming. But my favorite volunteer experience to date is helping out in the Tremont store with school groups. Students and their teachers arrive for several days of experiential learning, and before they pack up, they shop. They arrive at the end of a very full day: dirty, a little smelly, often times wet, money (also wet) wadded up in their pockets. As a volunteer, my job is to meander among them, helping out with math ("Do I have enough for sweatshirt, a stuffed animal, and a sticker?"), and to help them unwind their cash to streamline the check out process. It's mom-stuff really. But while answering questions and sorting out soggy money, I also have the privilege of hearing their stories from the weekend and witnessing the profound impact Tremont has made on them very quickly. So rather than helping souvenir shoppers, I am among young people intent on taking home a piece of the Smokies because this place has touched their hearts, and that touches mine.

David Bryant

View a list of our 2018 volunteers online at www.gsmit.org/2018-volunteers.

Partners & Affiliates

Only a handful of residential education centers around the country can call a national park home. Tremont Institute serves park patrons by providing in-depth education experiences in one of the most biologically diverse and beautiful locations. Tremont Institute depends on partnerships with local and national organizations and institutions like Great Smoky Mountains National Park to further our mission. Thank you to the following partners, affiliates, and the many others who help make the Tremont experience possible year-round.



Great Schools Partnership



ROAD SCHOLAR



Board of Directors

Tremont's board of directors is a dedicated group of professional leaders who graciously volunteer their time and provide support to Tremont.

- Cathy Ackermann
- Billy Carroll
- Bill Cobble
- Hank Dye, Chair
- Joe Emert
- Elizabeth Estill
- Kim Friar
- Connie French
- Mack Gentry
- Daniel Green
- Jim Haslam
- Chuck James
- Steven Kramer
- Ed Pershing
- Dick Ray
- Tim Topham
- Bill Varner (ex officio)
- Keith Widmer



Gar Secrist



Gar Secrist



Elizabeth Davis



Gar Secrist

Inspired by the Smiles of Students

An Interview with Donors Joe and Maria Guenther

Joe and Maria Guenther are longtime supporters of Tremont Institute. Their daughter, Rochelle, attended Tremont summer camps throughout her youth. In more recent years, Joe and Maria have leveraged both their business—The Day Hiker, an outdoor gear store in Gatlinburg, Tennessee—as well as their social media group and community—Hike the Smokies—to fundraise for Tremont Institute, taking a lead position in supporting the Environmental and Community Leaders Fellowship program with Fulton High School in Knoxville.

Tell us a little bit about your backstory with Tremont. How did you first get involved?

Our daughter attended a Tremont camp every summer since grade school, and it was always the highlight of her summer vacation. It steered her to a career path in biology and a continued love for nature and the outdoors.

What impacts of Tremont Institute are you inspired to support?

Anyone attending a Tremont program, whether youth or adult, will always walk away with a greater sense of the natural world and their relationship in it, which always translates to becoming better stewards of our planet.

Tell us how you've been able to leverage your business to increase and maximize your donor impact for Tremont.

The Day Hiker, besides being a downtown Gatlinburg retail shop, is also an online retail business to include wholesaling to other businesses. We have the systems in place to merchandise Hike The Smokies products on our Facebook group website and ship them to members, thus being able to raise the necessary funds to support Tremont and all that they do.

Tell us how/why you've rallied the Hike the Smokies community to support Tremont Institute.

Originally our Facebook group fundraising was directed at another park partner for Trails Forever, but we also explored the idea of buying summer camp sessions for deserving youth that couldn't otherwise afford to go, so we approached Tremont about the possibilities. When the Fulton High School Environmental and Community Leaders Fellowship program was presented to us, we

knew it was a perfect match for our group to sponsor to include having our meet & greet at Tremont where the students could foster their leadership skills by interacting and teaching our members what they learned during their experience.

What is the most inspirational thing you've witnessed that is a result of your donor efforts for Tremont?

Actual tears of joy—the smiles and students sharing what they learned and knowing that the fellowship program will be something they will always remember.

What words of advice, inspiration or wisdom would you offer other potential supporters?

When a student is introduced to nature and our national park through Tremont, they are sending back a student who is now more keenly aware of their own backyard green spaces, outdoor ethics and environmentalism, which is good for everyone.

What are you most excited for regarding Tremont's future?

Obviously Tremont's expansion is very exciting in the possibilities of educating even more people. Many of today's younger generation seem a lot more interested in environmental issues, so I'm confident in the years ahead that each generation will be given a clean and livable world.

View a list of our 2018 donors online at www.gsmit.org/2018-donors.

Make your impact today at www.gsmit.org/donate.

Pathways to Personal Discovery

Written by Jessa Goldner, 2018 AmeriCorps VISTA member

On a warm June day in the Knoxville, Nature Explorers Campers investigate nature items in their local park. With ages ranging from 6 to 10 years old, these students from Lonsdale Community School are learning the skill of careful observation that they will use throughout their lives. Campers are prompted, “What do you notice? What do you wonder? What does it remind you of?” One girl looks at a monarch butterfly specimen held in a petri dish and asks, “How long does a butterfly live? What does this butterfly smell like?”



This student later has the opportunity to go to Tremont Institute for a residential program with her 5th-grade class,

continuing her exploration of the outdoors. The class is immersed in Great Smoky Mountains National Park for three days, creating testable questions about salamanders caught in Loan Branch, observing land snails to learn about air quality in East Tennessee, and discovering evidence of the changing Appalachian geology on a one-mile hike to Spruce Flats Falls.

Additionally, Knoxville educators keep our student’s fascination with the natural world alive because they are part of a professional development series with Tremont Institute where they learn how to facilitate hands-on routines of learning in their schoolyard. As a result of this professional relationship between Tremont faculty and resources and Knox County teachers, our student never forgets what it is like to explore an unknown area and feel that sense of wonder as she uncovers a sparkling colorful beetle she’s never seen before.... *What does it eat*, she wonders...

For many students in the United States, academic gains from the school year are lost during summer break. It’s a phenomenon called summer learning loss. However, as our student gets older, she has the opportunity—through scholarships and grant support—to attend week-long summer camps at Tremont Institute. Each year, Tremont Institute awards financial aid to students in Knoxville’s low-income schools so that their students can cultivate their wonder and love for the outdoors during the summer.

Eventually, our student is 16 years old and beginning junior year at Fulton High School. She wants to continue exploring the world of east Tennessee as a young adult, so she they joins the Environmental and Community Leaders Fellowship for the next two years. Through this program, our student learns how to reflect on and interpret her outdoor experiences so that she can lead the next generation of environmental stewards.

After graduating from high school, our student chooses to go pursue a degree in education at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, in order to pass on a legacy of experiential learning to teachers and kids in east Tennessee schools.. Through the UT Urban-Multicultural Cohort Graduate Program, our student learns the fundamentals of teaching diverse, urban populations and the impact green spaces have on these students. Through her own journey of owning her education and experiencing the world with wonder, she is set up to embrace her role as a facilitator of learning as a part of this Tremont-UT partnership.



All of these experiences result from Tremont’s dedication to equal access of outdoor learning experiences and the work of the AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) team that makes sure this happens. We are a team of four federally funded full-time volunteers who work to make outdoor experiential education more accessible for students in low-income communities surrounding Great Smoky Mountains National Park, with the long-term goal of alleviating poverty. Though VISTA at Tremont is not forever, we are confident in Tremont’s ability to continue to support local communities by connecting people to the wonders of the natural world.



David Bryant



Tiffany Beachy

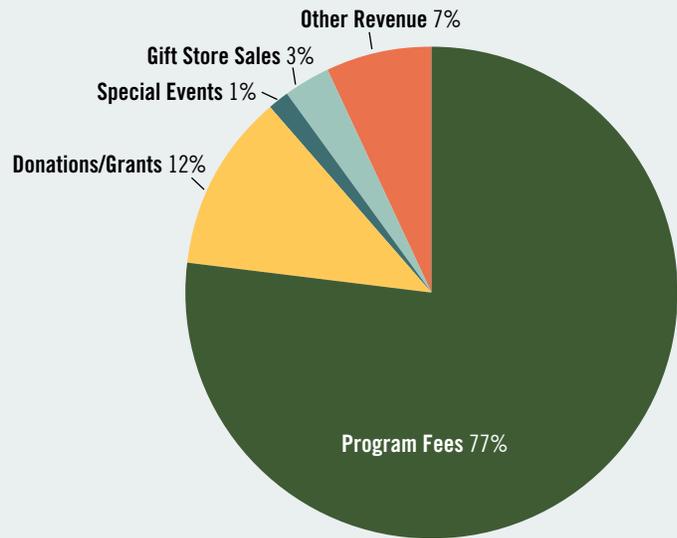
2018 Financials

The financial results depicted are derived from Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont audited financial statements from December 31, 2018.

Revenue

Program Fees	\$1,720,089
Donations/Grant Income	\$262,459
Special Events	\$31,729
Gift Store Net Sales	\$65,066
Other Revenue (Expense)	\$155,106

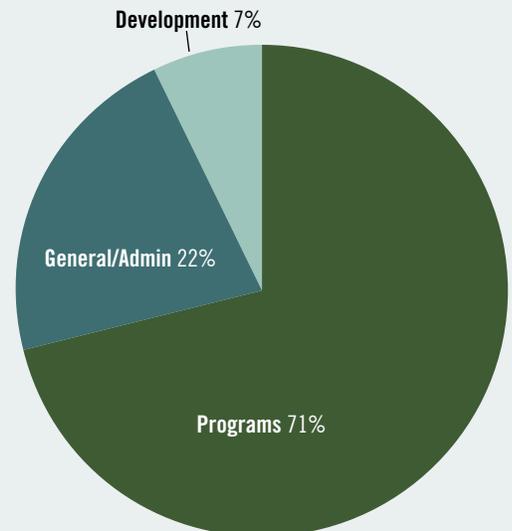
Total Support & Revenue: \$2,234,449



Expenses

Programs	\$1,388,685
General & Administrative	\$425,181
Fundraising & Development	\$138,454

Total Functional Expenses: \$1,952,320





David Bryant



Emily Stein



Gar Secrist

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Connect with us online!

www.gsmit.org



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