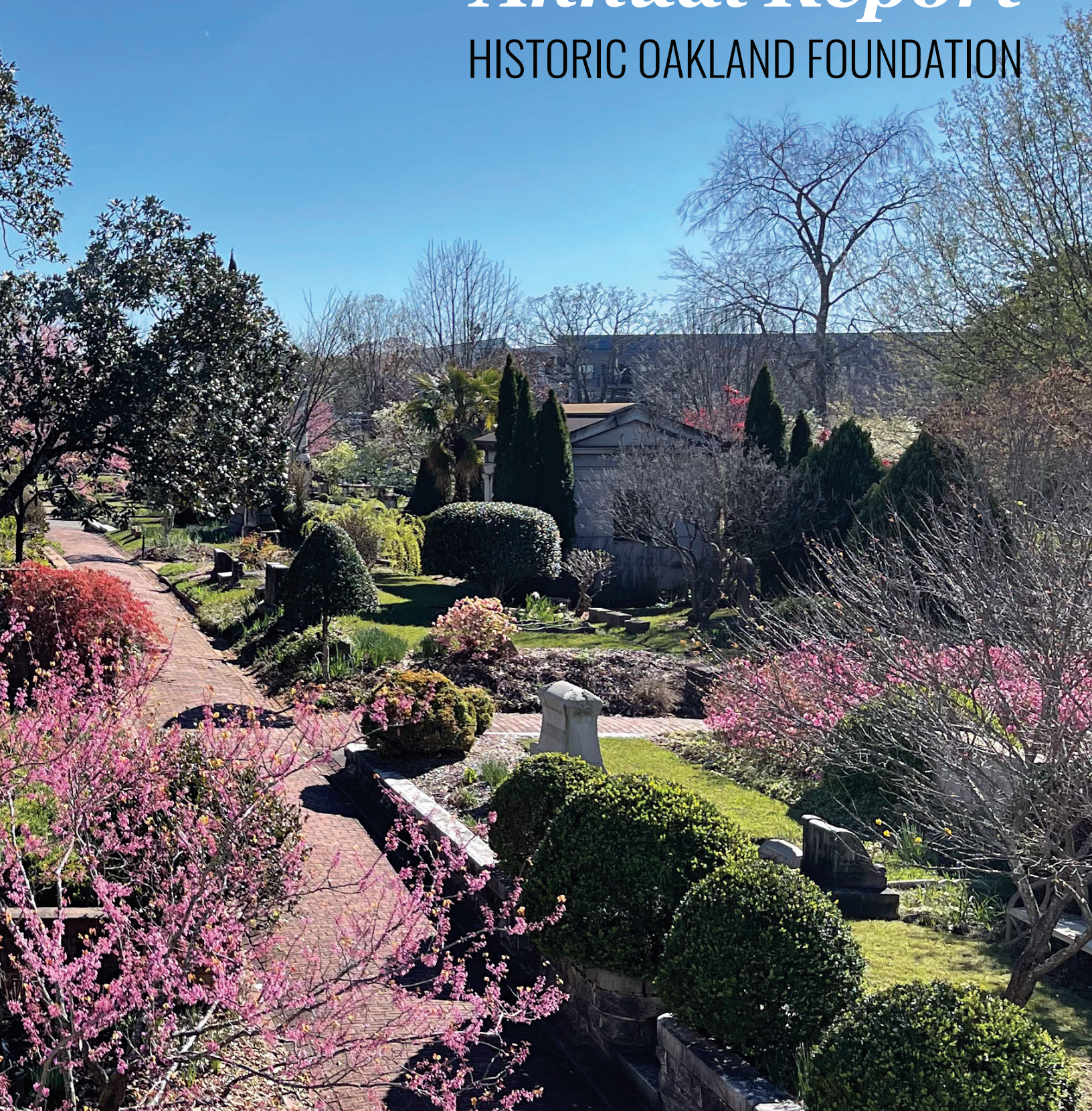


2023

Annual Report

HISTORIC OAKLAND FOUNDATION





FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & BOARD CHAIR

So much of the impactful work happening at Oakland is made possible by HOF’s deep partnership with the City.

2023 was a landmark year for Historic Oakland Foundation and Oakland Cemetery, marked by new programming delivering a meaningful impact to participants, sustained care for even more of the Cemetery, and record visitation.

The rehabilitation of the Oakland Bell Tower in late 2022 (one component of the *Living History* capital campaign) has transformed HOF’s ability to serve the public and share Oakland Cemetery. Nearly 50 private events, meetings, luncheons, and rentals were hosted at the Bell Tower in 2023.

The historic building also hosted the Youth Landscape and Hardscape Team for much of the six-week summer program. The 10 local high school students who participated in the program’s inaugural year learned landscape and hardscape skills, gained career readiness and financial literacy training, networked with professionals in the field, and, importantly, were paid for their work. A program of this scale, ambition, and impact would not have been possible without the Bell Tower and the spaces it provided for the program to operate.


We are excited to launch new programming like this in the coming years as our new visitor center, scheduled to be completed in early 2025, provides even more space for HOF to have a profound impact on our

communities. Breaking ground on this project after decades of planning marks a transformational moment for HOF and for Oakland Cemetery. We can’t wait to open the building to the public in early 2025.

The City of Atlanta crew led by Sexton Sam Reed continues to improve and maintain Oakland’s grounds, and they have never looked better. So much of the impactful work happening at Oakland is made possible by HOF’s deep partnership with the City. The current road repaving and infrastructure improvements—a massive, long-overdue project funded by the Moving Atlanta Forward infrastructure bond—will transform Oakland’s accessibility, making it safer and more attractive for visitors. We are grateful to the Department of Parks and Recreation, Commissioner Justin Cutler, Councilmember Liliana Bakhtiari, Mayor Andre Dickens, and all who work tirelessly with us to preserve, restore, enhance, and share historic Oakland Cemetery.

We intend to make 2024 our best year yet with the completion of the roads and infrastructure project, progress on the construction of the Oakland Cemetery Visitor Center, and the launch of many new programs—including summer camps. We would not be able to deliver on our mission without the support and generosity of many thousands of supporters. Thank you.

Yours in service to Oakland,


Richard J. W. Harker
Executive Director


Gavin Manickaraj
Board Chair

ABOUT *Historic Oakland Foundation*

OUR MISSION

Founded in 1976, Historic Oakland Foundation (HOF) partners with the City of Atlanta to preserve, restore, enhance, and share Oakland Cemetery with the public as an important island of tranquility in the heart of the city.

OUR VISION

A revered cemetery and vibrant park honoring Atlanta’s past and celebrating its future.

OUR CORE VALUES

EXCELLENCE
We conduct all work in pursuit of the highest professional standards and strive to push the boundaries of excellence.

SUSTAINABILITY
We focus on the long-term environmental, programmatic, organizational, and financial resiliency of HOF and of Oakland Cemetery.

COMMUNITY
We center, serve, and empower Oakland’s communities and strive to make Oakland Cemetery a place that includes and engages all.

INTEGRITY
We prioritize honesty, transparency, and the highest ethical standards in fulfilling our mission and serving the Cemetery and stakeholders.

OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CITY OF ATLANTA

Oakland Cemetery is a City of Atlanta park managed in partnership with the Department of Parks and Recreation. Sexton Sam Reed manages a crew of city employees who are responsible for the publicly maintained areas and buildings. HOF works closely with Sexton Reed and the Department of Parks and Recreation through a Memorandum of Understanding to care for and share historic Oakland Cemetery.



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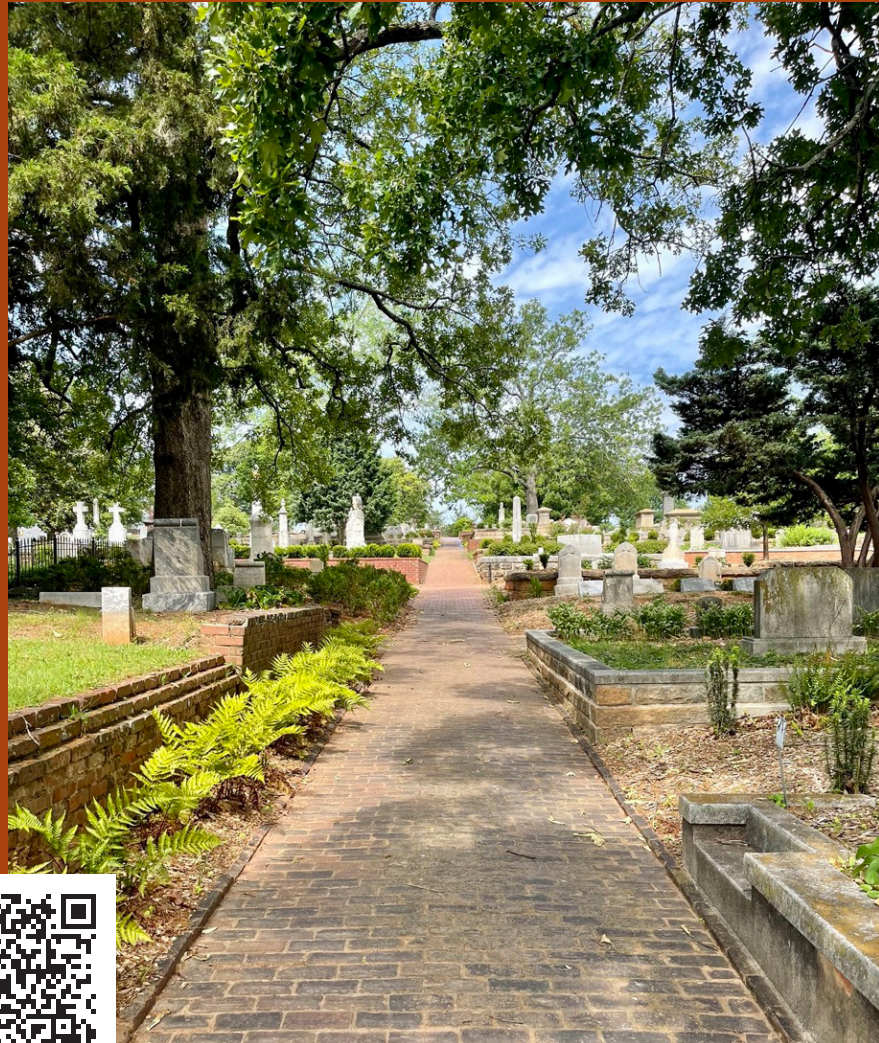
Historic Oakland Foundation would like to thank Michael Stephens and Tad Mitchell for their service to Oakland as their term on the Historic Oakland Foundation Board of Trustees ends.

Ribbon Cutting for the Oakland Visitor Center, September 5, 2023. L to R: Former Board Chair Steve Paro, Councilmember Liliana Bakhtiari, Richard Harker, Mayor Andre Dickens, YLHT attendee Jayden Williams, Eloisa Klementich of Invest Atlanta, and Parks Commissioner Justin Cutler.

FOUNDATION HIGHLIGHTS: *The East Hill*

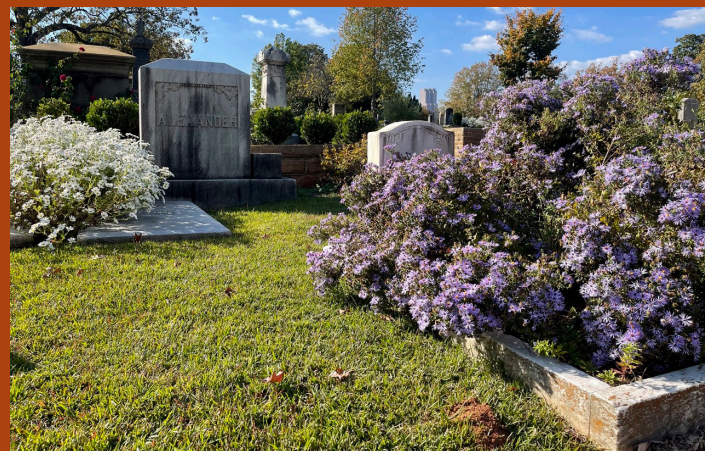
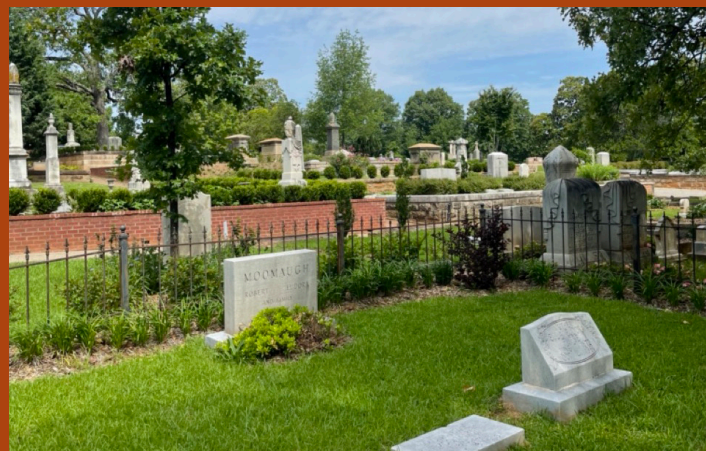
RESTORATION SUCCESS: THE EAST HILL

In 2023, the Foundation's largest restoration project, covering six acres of the Cemetery's East Hill, entered its fourth year. The remarkable efforts of HOF's preservation and gardens teams are now evident, with full restoration and landscaping completed south of Oakland's main road, including the planting of more than 20 native trees by partner Trees Atlanta.



Oakland's East Hill, looking west, Summer 2023

*Learn more about
this project*



Plots on Oakland's East Hill, Summer 2023

FOUNDATION HIGHLIGHTS: *Programming*

NEW FAMILY PROGRAMMING

In recent decades, the neighborhoods surrounding Oakland Cemetery, such as Grant Park, Ormewood Park, Summerhill, Chosewood Park, and East Atlanta, have experienced an influx of new families. In response, we introduced new family programming in 2023 featuring events like a new Juneteenth program, the Pumpkin Patch, and Holiday Spirit in early December. These initiatives attracted thousands of families to Oakland, aligning with our goal of ensuring every child in Atlanta feels welcome.



Families enjoy the pumpkin patch on October 7, 2023

*“The event was more
than a celebration;
it was a tapestry of
culture, community,
and connection.”*

— a Día De Muertos attendee on Instagram



PROGRAMMING SUCCESS: DIA DE MUERTOS

In its second year at Oakland Cemetery, Atlanta's free Día De Muertos festival, organized in partnership with the Consulate General of Mexico and the Institute of Mexican Culture, took place on November 4, 2023. Welcoming more than 12,000 guests, the event showcased Mexican culture, food, and decorated altars. Guests experienced a celebration of life, death and ancestors at what has quickly become one of the Cemetery's most vibrant days.

Visitors browse the food vendors at Día De Muertos 2023

FOUNDATION HIGHLIGHTS: *Education*

YOUTH LANDSCAPE AND HARDSCAPE TEAM

Under the guidance of HOF's new director of education and youth programs, Charvis Buckholts, the Youth Landscape and Hardscape workforce development program hosted 10 high school students for a six-week paid work experience in June and July. The YLHT students gained landscape and masonry skills, explored Oakland and City of Atlanta history, and attended weekly workforce readiness sessions covering financial literacy and resumé workshops. This successful program was generously supported by the Georgia Power Foundation and Bank of America.

The 2023 YLHT team



YLHT preservation students cleaning historic bricks, July 2023



*Learn more about
this project*



YLHT landscaping students work on a landscaping project, July 2023



The YLHT team and participating staff celebrate at the end-of-program ceremony, July 2023

FOUNDATION HIGHLIGHTS: *New Visitor Center*



For decades, Historic Oakland Foundation has planned to build a visitor center outside the Cemetery’s main western gate. After extensive planning, land acquisition, and collaboration with numerous partners, we broke ground on the Oakland Cemetery Visitor Center in September. The event was attended by Mayor Andre Dickens, Invest Atlanta CEO Eloisa Klementich, Atlanta City Councilmember Liliana Bakhtiari, dignitaries, and hundreds of community members.

The journey began in 2007 when Historic Oakland Foundation, in partnership with the Robert W. Woodruff Foundation, Invest Atlanta, and the City of Atlanta Department of Parks and Recreation, purchased the land outside the Cemetery gates, initially serving as a gravel parking lot. In 2018, with a bridge loan from The Conservation Fund and support from donors and Invest Atlanta, a second parcel adjacent to the parking lot was acquired. These parcels, combined with an abandoned section of George Street, created a 1.75-acre parkland site for the new Oakland Cemetery Visitor Center under a 50-year ground lease between HOF and the City.

The design and construction of the visitor center, led by Smith Dalia Architects and Southface Institute, prioritize environmental sustainability and features such as a bioretention system diverting over a million gallons of stormwater each year, solar panels for net-zero energy, and the use of salvaged tiles from the shuttered Nabisco Factory in Sylvan Hills via the LifeCycle Building Center. The project aims for EarthCraft Certification upon completion.

The new visitor center, scheduled to open in early 2025, will feature a 2100-square-foot event and classroom space, meeting rooms, a store, and outdoor facilities including a welcome plaza and event lawn. This transformative facility will enable HOF to expand its engagement with Oakland Cemetery while generating revenue to support its mission and the Cemetery’s preservation efforts. Designed by Smith Dalia Architects and constructed by J.M. Wilkerson, the visitor center promises to enhance the visitor experience and contribute to Oakland’s ongoing legacy.

Designed by Smith Dalia Architects and built by J.M. Wilkerson, the new visitor center is scheduled to open in early 2025.

Above: Oakland Cemetery Visitor Center in progress, December 2023



HOF staff tour their future offices, February 2024



Oakland's gate as seen from the future museum store, February 2024

Learn more about this project



2023 AT A GLANCE



\$7,000,000

Construction of the new Oakland Cemetery Visitor Center



34

Private Rentals of the Bell Tower, in addition to dozens of community events



150,517

Visitors to Oakland in 2023



12,000

Visitors at Oakland's Día de Muertos festival in partnership with the Consulate General of Mexico



10,000

Visitors at Capturing the Spirit of Oakland 2023, designed to enlighten not frighten



30

New trees planted in the Cemetery



2,100

Attendees at HOF's family programming



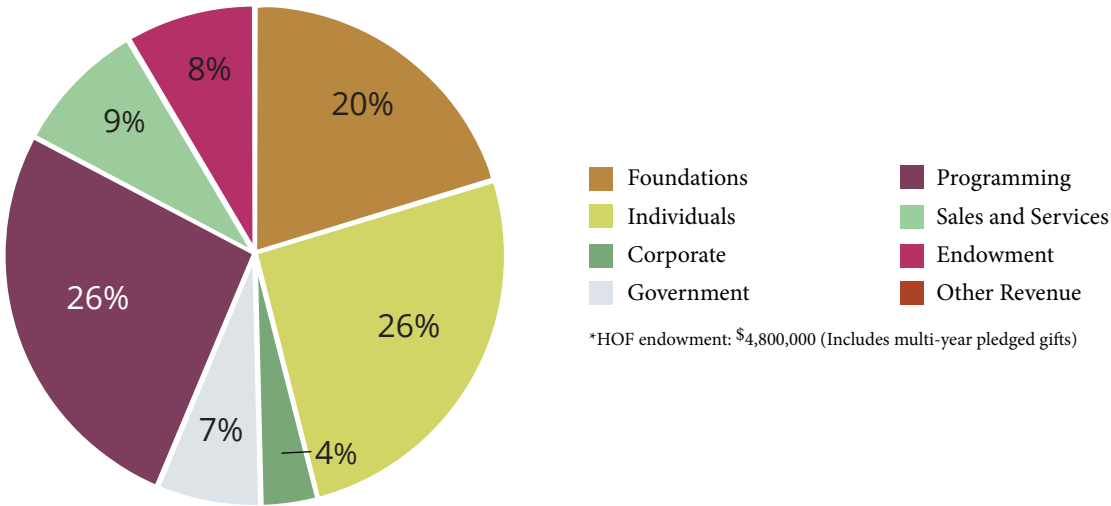
10

Students participating in the inaugural Youth Landscape & Hardscape Team workforce development program

REVENUE & EXPENSES

2023 REVENUE

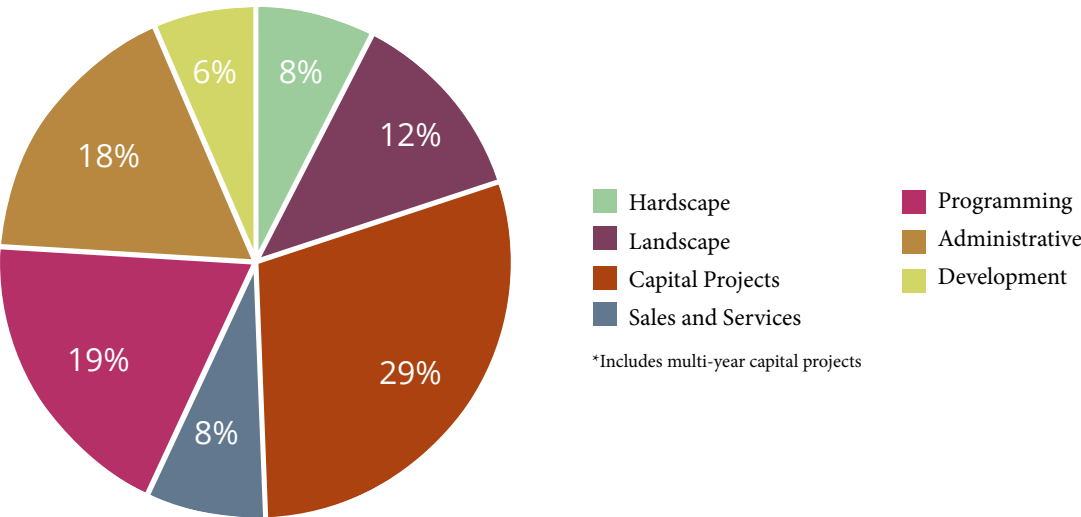
\$4,636,408*



*HOF endowment: \$4,800,000 (Includes multi-year pledged gifts)

2023 EXPENSES

\$5,379,565*



*Includes multi-year capital projects

2023 DONORS

Historic Oakland Foundation is sincerely grateful for its many donors without whose generosity Oakland Cemetery would cease to serve as the region's premiere historic site. With gratitude we recognize our 2023 Bell Tower Society-level contributors.

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