

# PORTLAND URBAN DEBATE LEAGUE

# Annual Report 2023



[www.portlanddebate.org](http://www.portlanddebate.org)



## Mission

The mission of Portland Urban Debate League is to address opportunity gaps in education and empower students through competitive policy debate to become engaged learners and critical thinkers who are effective advocates for themselves and their communities.

## Vision

Creating a thriving debate community, in which engaged students are partnered with trained coaches, the Portland Urban Debate League provides workshops and evidence to students, continuing education and curricular materials to coaches, and debate competitions with experienced judges throughout the school year. These resources are free or low-cost for member schools and available for purchase by non-member schools. We are committed to sharing expertise and ideas between programs, to mentoring and support, and to further discussions about debate and education. We also connect students to college and further education and leadership opportunities.

## Contact Us

[info@portlanddebate.org](mailto:info@portlanddebate.org)

P.O. Box 1684  
Portland, OR 97207

## Our Team

### Executive Director

Mal Copeland

### Board of Directors

Jared Hager

Russell Hanes

Amanda Pham Haines

Avneet Sidhu

Kristi Skalman

Jake Weigler



# Dear PUDL Community,

It feels incredible to sit here, looking back over the last year and seeing how far we have come. In many senses, this is the year we finally became a fully grown debate league.

After the stop and start disruptions of COVID-19, it meant a lot just to get in a full year of in-person practices and competitions. We hosted a full season of tournaments, including the first ever qualifier for the urban debate league national championship. We expanded to add a novice and varsity division. And we instituted the official sweepstakes belt, which as of this report McDaniel HS has won two years in a row!

Not only did we host more rounds of policy debate than the rest of the Oregon Student Activities Association (OSAA) combined, we also saw our students starting to compete and succeed against other schools from across Oregon and the nation. For the first time ever, our students traveled outside the state to the National Urban Debate League National Championships in Dallas, Texas. One of our teams ended the tournament with a 4-2 record, and the other team finished with a respectable 3-3 showing. These teams encountered new arguments, new styles of debate, and made new friends across the nation.

We also sent four teams to the OSAA state championship tournament at Western Oregon University where our students saw unprecedented success! A senior team from one of our first-year programs took second place. Our other teams all finished in the top half of competitors, and to build on their success every single debater on those teams attended summer camp just three months later to get a jumpstart on their competitive season.

Truly, witnessing the growth of PUDL over the past several years has been an immense privilege. Debate changed my life when I joined the community 13 years ago and it makes me incredibly thankful that I get to see students find joy in argumentation, develop their own strategies, and dive deeper into their zest for learning through debate.

Sincerely,

Mal Copeland  
**Executive Director**



# What's New!

## Learning for Our Debaters: New Advisory & Alumni Boards

The addition of advisory and alumni boards to our organizational leadership offers an exciting way to learn how we can better support our debates and prepare students to be leaders. Made up of existing and former PUDL participants respectively, they join board meetings and have a direct line to our executive director to share ideas and offer feedback. Students see how nonprofits operate and navigate the governance decisions of an organization, giving them the civic education necessary to serve on boards and commissions.

## Starting them Early: Adding Middle School Debate

What former debater doesn't wish they had one more year to get it just right? With the addition of middle school debate now our students will! In partnership with the districts we serve, we are developing the addition of debate in middle schools feeding our participating high schools. Students will use a trimmed down format with research and evidence matched to their education level. Our high school debaters will provide coaching and judging support to help build the urban debate league community and give them valuable leadership experience.



# Student Feature: Niko, Parkrose High School



*I feel so much passion when I am debating in my rounds and I feel like it's a place where I truly belong.*

*Going to debate camp this summer with my squad and other teams from PUDL was so fun and a memory I will always remember. It excelled my debate career of course, but most importantly I got to meet new people and interact with amazing people that will last a lifetime.*

*Although debate is super fun and competitive in rounds and at practice, it goes beyond that. It helps me succeed in school and in life. I learn a lot about the real world around me, get better at public speaking, and learn lots of new words.*

*I've had such a great experience with debate, and I want more kids to have the opportunity to do this activity too.*



# Our Impact in 2023

**165**  
students  
from **6**  
schools

**277**  
rounds of  
debate

**93**  
students  
competed

## We Offered:

- ✓ Weekly school and afterschool programming
- ✓ **1 summer camp**
- ✓ **5 tournaments**

# Texas-Sized Debate in the Big D



For the first time in our history, students traveled to compete at the National Urban Debate League Nationals – hosted this year in Dallas, Texas. They enjoyed trading league stickers with students from all over the country, eating authentic Mexican food, and of course, debating in college classrooms at Southern Methodist University! After two days of competition and six rounds each, our teams ended up with 3–3 and 4–2 records.

We narrowly missed making elimination rounds and decided to explore the city with our free afternoon before our evening flight home. The weather had other plans. Tornado warnings in Texas grounded all flights out – stranding PUDL and many of the other leagues who had planned on leaving Sunday night.

We managed to get an Airbnb and stayed an additional two nights in Dallas. With our additional free time the students and their coach Derek Heath explored downtown Dallas, bought some cowboy hats to commemorate their time in the South, and trekked their way across town to try some Texas barbecue!



# Reaching the Championship Round at State



It wasn't the first time PUDL qualified for the state championship – that was Reynolds in 2022. But PUDL showed up in force at Western Oregon University this year representing nearly 30% of the teams that qualified for state. Our students did well with every winning at least half of their debates.

The star of the weekend was Franklin's McEwen & Scholl who won their semifinal debate and fought hard in the state championship finals. We are incredibly proud of them for representing all of PUDL with an incredible run.

And congratulations to our other teams who placed at State!

5th – Luke and Cameron from Franklin

6th – Anika and Sidrah from McDaniel

7th – Niko and Kayla from Parkrose

# Who We Served in 2023

**165**

students enrolled in League-supported debate courses or afterschool programming

- **51%+** qualified for free/reduced lunch
- **39%** identified as BIPOC
- **45%** are women and **11%** identify as outside the gender binary
- **18%** speak a language other than English at home
- **94.5%** are on track to graduate on time



# 2023 Program Graduates

We get a little choked up to see them move on, but we know it is for the best. We had 15 students graduate at the end of the 2022–2023 school year: eight students from McDaniel, five from Reynolds, and two from Franklin.

## **Sophie McEwen, Franklin Grad and Second place at State Debate**

“ I’m currently attending Macalester College in St. Paul MN where I’m majoring in anthropology with a concentration in community and global health and a minor in biology. I’m judging debate for MNUDL and just joined the Macalester Policy Debate Team. I’m a member of our school’s chapter of Friends of Doctors Without Borders and Swing Dancing clubs. I am also a varsity athlete on the cross country and track teams. Next semester I will be working as a student EMT on campus as well! I’m hoping to end up working in health policy with an anthropological approach or epidemiology.



**Sophie (right) and her debate partner Bella (left) at State**

# Welcome to our New Board Member, Kristi Skalman!

We are excited to share with you about our newest board member, Kristi Skalman. Kristi practices family law in the Portland area.

Kristi owns her own law firm, Vibrant Law that provides divorce, custody, and probate services. Prior to this, she worked for a non-profit representing low income and underrepresented populations, as well as other small family law and estate planning firms.

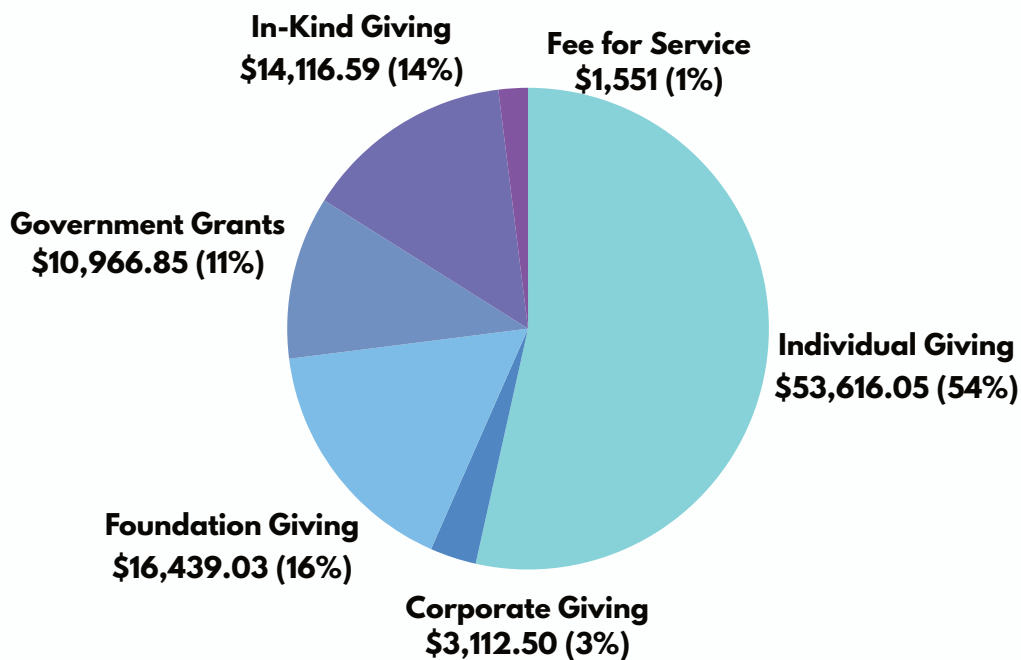


Growing up, Kristi began working and taking care of herself at age 15. She completed her GED and went on to community college and then Portland State University. After completing her Bachelor's degree, she enrolled in Willamette Law School.

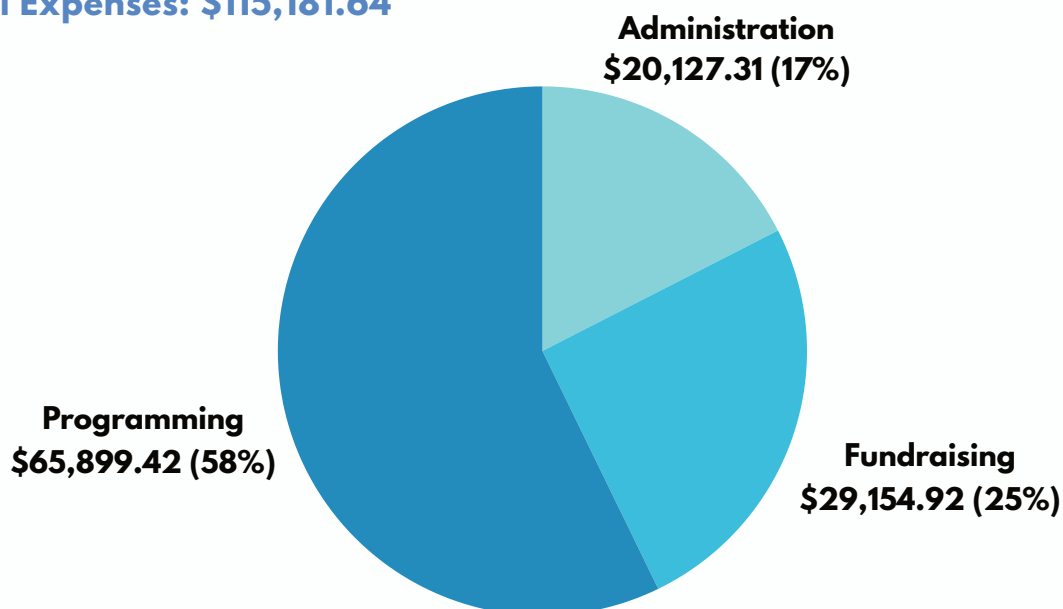
When she isn't practicing law, Kristi enjoys playing and composing music, spending time with her husband and three chihuahuas, hiking, and exploring the beautiful Pacific Northwest.

# Our Fiscal Year 2023 Finances

Total Raised: \$100,228.60



Total Expenses: \$115,181.64



PUDL received several significant grants during the final months of FY 2022, allowing the organization to end that year with a record cash balance.

# Thank You to the Foundations and Institutions Supporting Our Work!



SPIRIT MOUNTAIN  
COMMUNITY FUND



The Confederated Tribes  
of Grand Ronde

**THE HOLZMAN FOUNDATION, INC.**

# Thank You to our Supporters!



PORTLAND  
PUBLIC  
SCHOOLS



# Thank You to our Supporters!

## \$1000+

Dan Bates  
Lisa Bates  
Cindy Robert  
Bradley Rosen  
Jerry Weigler  
Jake & Heather Weigler  
Madeline Gochee &  
Melaura Wittemyer

## \$500-\$999

Christopher Dominic  
Jon Eames  
Jared Hager  
Russell Hanes  
Christie Kline  
Elizabeth Knight  
Greg Macpherson  
Thomas McDermott  
Damien Munsinger  
Joe Patrice  
Hai Pham  
Ellen Rosenblum  
Brian Shipley  
Barbara Smith Warner

## \$250-\$499

Steve Blackhurst  
Kara Borden  
Julia Brim-Edwards  
Shelley Brown  
Leah Castella  
Keith Eddins  
Ken Edwards  
Nicholas Greenfield  
Slok Gyawali  
Morgan Holm  
Mark Jackson

## \$250-\$499 Cont.

Jackie Kamins  
Brian Simmonds Marshall  
Cameron Nilles  
John Treadway  
Tiffany Yelton Bram

## \$101-\$250

Rima Ghandour  
Mick Harris  
Greg Oakes  
Thomas Spisak-Mosher  
Hannelore Tanasse  
Genevieve Weber  
Randy Weisberg

## \$1-\$100

Ashlee Albies  
Jeff Allen  
Suzanne Asmus  
Sucheta Bal  
Akriti Bhargava  
Laurie Blair  
Ian Brown  
David Brown  
Victoria Brown  
Leslie Carlson  
Ryan Clark  
Jill Collins  
Cassidy Copeland  
Mal Copeland  
Natalie Copeland  
K Cox  
Jack Crowder  
Laura Debney  
Michelle DePass  
Paula Dion  
Thea Donovan

## \$1-100 Cont.

Elisa Dozono  
Deandra Ellerbe  
Jessica Epstein  
Leon Fishlyn  
Ann French  
Kelsey Furman  
Jasmine Gadie  
Zoe Garrett  
Aftyn Garvin  
Jesse Gay  
Amanda Pham Haines  
Jim Hanson  
Scott Harden  
William Hathaway  
Jackson Hermann  
Cody Hoesly  
Allison Holstein  
Sheryl Horwitz  
Misha Isaak  
Jordan Joyce  
Lydoa Kentowski  
Scott Kerman  
Sarah Knudsen  
Karina Leach  
Caroline Lewis  
Alex Li  
Rosie Lutz  
Mikaela Marino  
Jeff Masonek  
Mary Matthias  
Elizabeth Mazzara Myers  
Anne E McLaughlin  
Brit McLean  
Phoebe Nguyen  
Josh Ottosen  
Jennifer Owen  
Ian Paik

## \$1-100 Cont.

Blaine Palmer  
Priscilla Parrett  
Janice Peterson  
Amanda Pham Haines  
Kimberly Phillips  
Stephen Pilson  
Andrea Reed  
Dani Renner  
Bonnie Richardson  
Andrew Ring  
Tawna Sanchez  
Jenny Scott  
Joseph Shapiro  
Avneet Sidhu  
Jefferson Smith  
David Song  
Chris Stevenson  
PJ Tarallo  
Emma Thatcher  
Kristin Thiel  
Joshua Tripp  
Stephanie Vardavas  
Hans-Michael  
Vermeersch  
Ann Wales  
Anya Walker  
Megan Wever  
Simon Whang  
Joe Worthey  
Lex Zhang

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