

ANNUAL REPORT 2021



*Growing funds
for growing futures.*

SISTERS GRADUATE RESOURCE ORGANIZATION



Thank you for your continued support!

www.SistersGRO.org - info@SistersGRO.org

BOARD STATEMENT

We all know how difficult the pandemic has been, so I am choosing not to focus on it. Instead, I want to highlight some of the positive things that occurred in the past year. The first being that the majority of Sisters High School students are still opting to pursue continuing education and we saw fewer students taking a GAP year. Our donors stepped up once again to sponsor 66 scholarships (including four new scholarships) that provide much needed support to help these students as they begin the next chapter of their lives.

We welcomed three new board members last year - Brian Harris, Wendy von Kalinowski, and Zoe Willitts . Since we are an all-volunteer board, anytime we can add a quality individual to help it is a reason to celebrate. This time we got three!!! They all bring different experiences and perspectives to our group that are much appreciated.

As our organization has continued to grow, our workload has also been increasing. I am amazed with how our board has been able to keep up with the changes, but we knew that we needed help if we were going to continue to expand scholarship offerings. So, last year we hired our first part-time employee and were extremely fortunate to find Laura Kloss. She came to us from OSU-Cascades and has over 15 years of experience working as a career counselor in higher education. She is a great source of energy and new ideas that are already having a positive impact on how we operate.

I continue to be thankful for living in such a generous community and being associated with an organization that continues to do great things by giving back!

TIM ROSS

Chair, Board of Directors

Tim.Ross@SistersGRO.org



Support Sisters GRO Through Central Oregon Gives

In addition to a tax-deductible contribution, donors will receive free perks (think free cup of coffee, loaf of bread, or pint of beer from a local business) **with every donation now through December 31st**. There are also opportunities to compete for larger, weekly prizes. Donate online at SistersGRO.org or mail a check to Sisters GRO, P.O. Box 1546, Sisters, OR 97759 with 'Central Oregon Gives' in the check memo line.

Sisters GRO

P.O. Box 1546
Sisters, OR 97759

info@SistersGRO.org
www.SistersGRO.org



Board of Directors

Tim Ross
Chair

Charlie Kanzig
Vice-Chair

Ann Thompson
Secretary
Sisters GRO Co-Founder

Bob Landwehr
Treasurer

Susan Parker
Donor Development

Karen Lord
Board Member

Karen Hensley
Emeritus Board Member
Sisters GRO Co-Founder

Brian Harris
Board Member

Wendy von Kalinowski
Board Member

Zoe Willitts
Board Member

Rick Kroytz
SHS Counselor
Ex-Officio Board Member

Steve Stancliff
SHS Principal
Ex-Officio Board Member

Staff

Laura Kloss
Program Director
Laura.Kloss@SistersGRO.org

2020-21 OVERVIEW

There were 119 individual scholarship awards distributed to Sisters High School students this past year. In total, \$180,000 was disbursed, reducing student debt and ensuring the pursuit of higher education for 52 members of the Class of 2021. Although we were unable to host the Senior Celebration again this spring, students were acknowledged during a Senior Awards Assembly on May 20, 2021.

Of the students that received scholarships, 65% are currently attending institutions in Oregon. The remaining 35% are pursuing education in Idaho, Washington, California, Wyoming, Montana, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Louisiana, and New York.

Thirty-six percent of the students are enrolled in a two-year community college while 59% are pursuing a four-year degree and three students are engaged in technical or trade programs.



Felix Leahey '21
Oregon State University
Bioengineering

"Thank you for helping me begin my college journey. Your support of my future will empower the advancement of bio-engineering and paving the future of human wellness and capability"

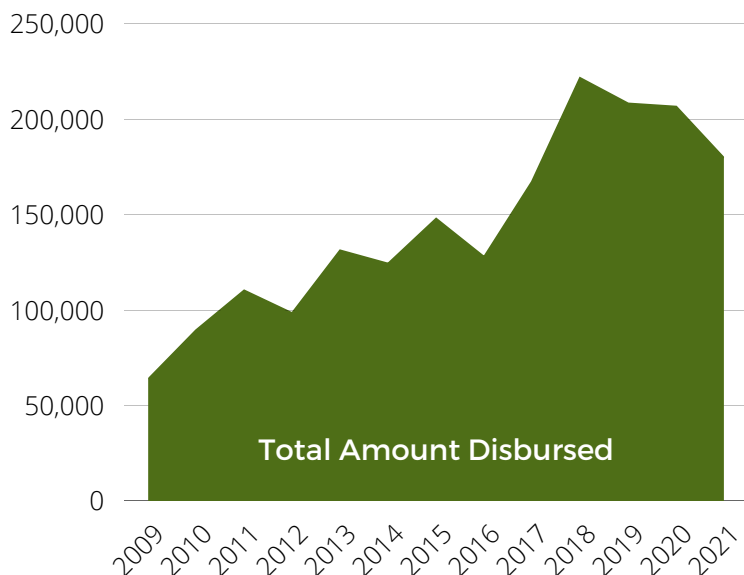
Ponderosa Heating & Cooling Scholarship



Emilie Turpen '21
Carroll College
Nursing

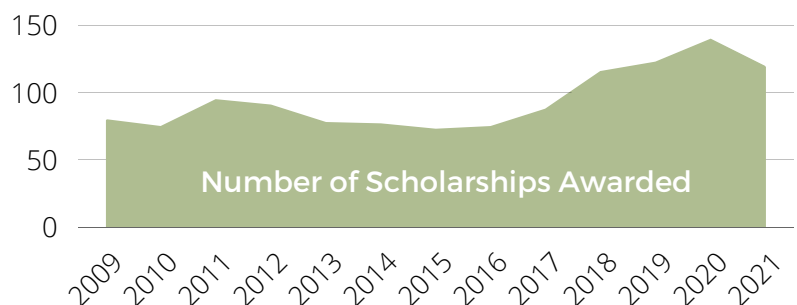
"Thank you so much for giving us the opportunity to pursue higher education and also in extension, supporting our hopes and dreams for the future. Your confidence in us means the world and does not go unnoticed. You are all very much appreciated by me, my family, and every Sisters graduate."

*Sisters Kiwanis Club Scholarship
Jim Gentry Memorial Scholarship
OSEA-Carlos Valdez Memorial Scholarship
Nugget Newspaper - Student of the Year Scholarship*



2008 - PRESENT

Thanks to the generosity of our private, non-profit, and corporate donors, Sisters GRO has awarded over 1,100 scholarships to Sisters High School students reducing local student debt by more than \$1,500,000.



SECURING THE FUTURE

Sisters GRO existed as an all-volunteer organization from 2008 to 2020. During that time, the number of scholarships more than doubled and the disbursements being managed increased over 150%. In December 2020, we hired our first part-time Program Director to sustain the mission of the organization and ensure our ability to support future generations of students at Sisters High School.

In 2020 we also began implementation of a 7% fee on scholarship specific donations. This fee contributes to the organization's cost for:

- administration of the online scholarship application and review system,
- individual support for students and scholarship committee members,
- management and acknowledgement of tax-deductible scholarship donations,
- verification process for student acceptance and check disbursement,
- administration of the Spread Process to increase equity of funds to students,
- coordination of committees to review Sisters GRO designated scholarships, and
- facilitation and resources for the annual Senior Celebration event.

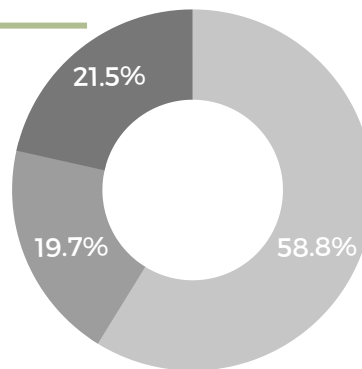
Estimated revenue from the 7% fee will cover nearly 25% of the overall operating budget in 2021-22. We understand that the implementation of this fee may have a significant impact on some of our private and non-profit sponsors and hope to identify ways in which we can work together to continue to service each existing scholarship while also continuing to grow scholarship opportunities for students as we look to the future.

Misc. Expenses:

- Senior Celebration
- Marketing/Mailings
- Sisters GRO Scholarships

Business Expenses:

- Fees and Dues
- Insurance
- Taxes and Licenses



Personnel Expenses:

- Wages
- Processing and Taxes
- Accounting Fees

Special Thanks to the Sisters School District!

Although Sisters GRO is completely independent from the Sisters School District, we receive substantial support from SSD and Sisters High School. The District sponsors the cost of the online scholarship application system, hosts Sisters GRO email addresses and offers technical support. The high school offers space for individual meetings and presentations with students as well as facilities for the annual Senior Celebration. SHS staff and administration also engage in Sisters GRO meetings and provide much needed support in preparation for events. We are incredibly grateful for the partnership of our local schools. Go Outlaws!

