

RIVER LEGACY FOUNDATION January - December 2024

WE ARE WILD FOR WILDLIFE!







A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The past year's accomplishments are a testament to the ongoing support and commitment received from the community and our partners for River Legacy Foundation's environmental mission. Significant progress has been made in protecting the natural world and encouraging a stronger community connection with the outdoors.

This year saw an expansion of outreach, with more individuals and families participating in environmental education and outdoor activities.

Programs aim to inspire environmental stewardship and address the growing concern of nature-deficit disorder. Providing opportunities for the community to spend more time outdoors is crucial for physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

The focus has been on creating accessible and engaging opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to connect with nature, including:

ELCOME Sincerely,

Shormer Portu Executive Director Expanded Nature Education Programs: These immersive programs help participants learn about local ecosystems and cultivate a sense of responsibility towards the environment.

Partnerships and Advocacy: Collaborations
with local schools, community organizations,
and healthcare providers advocated for
increased access to green spaces and
promoted nature-based health interventions.

The goal is to create a New
Nature Movement – one that
goes beyond traditional
environmentalism and
connects people to the lives
around them, fostering a sense
of kinship and wholeness.
Research supports that
spending time outdoors can
reduce stress, improve mental
health, and even help manage
conditions like ADHD.

SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS
HAS BEEN MADE IN
PROTECTING THE
NATURAL WORLD AND
ENCOURAGING A
STRONGER COMMUNITY
CONNECTION WITH
THE OUTDOORS.

Looking ahead, the commitment includes:

- Deepening impact: Continuing to evaluate the effectiveness of programs and refine strategies to ensure the greatest reach.
- Building a resilient and nature-connected community: Envisioning a future where the community thrives, embracing the outdoors as a source of health, healing, and joy.

Continued support and collaboration is deeply appreciated as the work continues toward a future where all children and their families can connect with nature and become passionate stewards of our planet.



2024 RIVER LEGACY FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS & STAFF MEMBERS

Robert Blake	President	Shannon Porter	Executive Director
Mark Warren	Vice President	Becky Nussbaum Ge	rro Director of Development
Jason Jones	Treasurer	Sherrie Ripple	Director of Education
Cindy Salter	Secretary	Ellen Edwards Ravkir	nd PhD. Public Programs Manager
Chris Bookout	Board Member	Leanne Haynes	Special Events Manager
Samuel Briones	Board Member	Connor Leferink	Naturalist Supervisor
Paul Brodie	Board Member	Scott Matula	Naturalist
Stephen Cavender	Board Member	Jorge Garcia	Naturalist
Susan Eaves	Board Member	Chad Etheridge	Naturalist
Richard Greene	Board Member	Anne Aldefer	Naturalist
Carole Hoyer	Board Member	Monica Ingram	Fundraising Coordinator
Vince Hrabal	Board Member	Brittni Greenberg	Marketing Coordinator
Pete Jamieson	Board Member	Mary Moreno	Venue Coordinator
Steve Martindale	Board Member	Whitney Campbell	Volunteer Coordinator
Jerry McCullough	Board Member	Amy Evans	Administrative Assistant/Registrar
Dick Moise	Board Member	Lisa McCaskey	Front Desk Assistant
Judy Rupay	Board Member	Jude Rodriguez	Guest Experience Host
		Elly Khoei	Guest Experience Host
		Mary Humes	2nd Grade AISD Liaison
		Angela Chadwick	2nd Grade AISD Liaison
		Robin Swindle	4th Grade AISD Liaison
		Traci Alley-Brown	Nature School Teacher

2024 ANNUAL SPONSORS







Tiffany Dragun Nature School Teacher





2,937 OUTDOOR HOURS

were accumulated by students in our paid education programs, with a minimum of 30 minutes of outdoor play per day! Learning in a natural environment enhances a child's imagination and inborn sense of wonder. came to the Nature Center and learned about the environment through a regular day visit, community festival, exhibit, or public program at the Nature Center.



gained a deeper understanding of our natural environment thanks to our public programs and outreaches. Our ability to teach in and away from the Nature Center helps us reach further into the community!



7,203 STUDENTS made a connection to nature

made a connection to nature during a STEM related field trip. Hands- on activities, animal encounters, and naturalist-led hikes are just a few of the many tools offered to inspire connections to nature.

OUR STUDENTS COME FROM...

River Legacy Nature Center offers Arlington and surrounding communities a unique opportunity for environmental education and outdoor exploration in a rapidly growing urban area. The quality of our programs is unmatched... just ask the families that travel every week, month, and summer to take part in our programs!

parker tarrant dallas johnson ellis

"This is the first camp my daughter has ever requested to go back to! She is fully engaged and learning all day and comes home excited to tell me what she learned."

- Anonymous, Summer Camp Parent

We've built a reputation for offering high-quality environmental education, and we hope to continue to reach students and families across Texas and beyond.



RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES WITHIN RIVER LEGACY PARKS SHALL NOT ENDANGER THE ENVIRONMENTAL INTEGRITY OF THE PARKS OR THE SAFETY OF PARK USERS. POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES MUST BE MEASURED AGAINST A NATURE STANDARD, AS WELL AS AN URBAN STANDARD.

RIVER LEGACY FOUNDATION RECREATION PHILOSOPHY

VOLUNTEERS

Our volunteers support education, recreation, and conservation—helping with trail cleanups, plant removal, front desk, and summer camps—expanding River Legacy's reach and impact along the Trinity River and inspiring the next generation of environmental stewards.





807 VOLUNTEERS



5374.5 HOURS



\$150,486 OF VALUE

FEATURED EXHIBITS

As River Legacy Foundation endeavors to inspire the next generation of environmental stewards, sparking an interest in wildlife, the forest, and conservation is an important first step. Visiting exhibits, like Forever Forest and Bug Squad, both created by Omaha Children's Museum, are just a few of the ways the Nature Center facilitates such moments through interactive exhibits.

PERMANENT EXHIBITS

In 2024, we welcomed a new animal ambassador to our team, a Diamondback Terrapin turtle named Dragonfruit.

These ambassadors are at the heart of our educational programs, helping us inspire visitors to love, appreciate, and protect Texas' native wildlife and natural habitats.





KIDS SUMMER CAMP

Time spent in nature has many benefits; however, the greatest impact may come from nature education. At River Legacy Nature Center, we offer a wide range of educational programs designed to inspire and engage nature lovers. Our Nature School provides preschoolers with an experiential curriculum that includes opportunities to encounter various native plants and animals, helping them understand nature's diverse life forms. Our **Summer Camps** present interactive and engaging ways to learn about our natural world. For those interested in additional learning experiences, our Enrichment Classes feature a variety of science, art, and outdoor activities tailored for different age groups, such as guided hikes, wildlife tracking, and botanical studies. In our Homeschool Clubs, topics draw on our extensive collections and specimens, bringing science to life. Our Field Investigations give students hands-on, field-based learning opportunities that deepen their understanding of ecology and conservation. Each program is carefully designed to foster a lifelong love for the environment and promote stewardship of our natural resources through experiential outdoor learning. MY FAVORITE SUMMER CAMP MEMORY...



MEMORY NOTES



RIVER LEGACY PARKS SHALL BE PRESERVED, MANAGED, AND RESTORED IN A MANNER THAT PROTECTS THE PARKS RESERVOIR OF BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY.

RIVER LEGACY FOUNDATION PRESERVATION PHILOSOPHY



2,200 PRIVET PLANTS REMOVED

Privet (*Ligustrum*) is an invasive plant that grows at an astounding rate, adapts easily, and will take over and kill native plant life that is beneficial to our ecosystem. Privet Patrol meets once a month to remove privet from River Legacy Park in an effort to control growth and help our local flora and fauna.

350+ NATIVE PLANTS FOR THE NATURE CENTER

Thanks to the pollinator crew from the North Central Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas (NPSOT), the Nature Center's ecosystem thrives and provides an exceptional habitat for butterflies, bees, birds, and other local wildlife.



COMMITTED TO OUR COMMUNITY

By actively embracing a nature movement, you invest in your own health and well-being, cultivate stronger communities, and contribute to environmental protection.

At a critical point, the well-being of both people and planet requires attention. A "nature-movement" - one that champions reconnecting with the natural world - has the potential to create a healthier, happier, and more sustainable future.

IN THE NATURE CENTER

- Scholarships for Nature Education.
- Subsidized admissions for 1st responders, military and veterans
- Field trips for all Arlington ISD 4th graders and Title 1 2nd graders.
- Internship opportunities for college students.

IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

- Free access to our Discovery Trail App which helps families learn about the environment and get connected to nature.
- Free community festivals that provide families a chance to enjoy family fun activities, games, crafts and demonstrations while learning about the environment.

BEYOND OUR WALLS

- Outreach programs delivered directly to underserved students.
- Provide technical assistance and funding to schools for outdoor classroom development and enhancements.

"We had a very positive experience with the summer camp program. It is difficult to find programs for kids under five and we are so lucky we found this place. Our son looked forward to each day. Well priced. Great communication. Easy registration process

- Courtney C. Summer Camp Parent





Discovery Trail mobile app available on Apple App store with release on Android expected for 2025



The iOS App is made possible through the generous funding from Women Inspiring Philanthropy.

SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

The Android App is made possible through the generous funding from Sid W. Richardson Foundation.

2024 LEADERSHIP NEW BOARD MEMBERS

In 2024, the River Legacy Foundation Board of Directors welcomed two new members, Laura DiStefano (*Nonprofit Fundraiser*) and Kelly Geer (*Urban Tree Merchants*). Bringing the current total to 19 River Legacy Foundation Board Members.



LAURA DISTEFANO

Laura has been living in the Arlington-Fort Worth-Grand Prairie area since 1976. After high school graduation I went to Kings County School of Nursing. I met my husband there and moved around while he completed his medical training. I spent most of my time caring for our first-born son, Mathew, who was born with cancer.

After moving to Texas, we had four other children and I enjoyed helping their schools raise funds. I worked on fundraisers for Country Day School of Arlington and Nolan Catholic high School.

As my children got older and I had more free time I became involved in Not-for-profit fundraising on a larger scale. I was on the Board of Directors of the Multiple Sclerosis Society; The Cancer Research Foundation of North Texas (10 + years); and the Boys and Girls.-Club of Arlington (10 years).

I have been involved in many fundraising projects including Fundraising for the CRFNT through the Silver Spurs Gala, raising over 2 million dollars in 10 years for cancer research. I was involved in yearly fundraising for The Oakridge school. The year I chaired the event we raised \$250,000. For the boys and Girls Club of Arlington I co-chaired the event 1150 on the 50'~ This celebrated the 50-year anniversary of the Boys and Girls club and involved the fundraiser on the Field at ATT Stadium on the 50-yard line.

I am excited to elevate my involvement in fund raising for River Legacy which includes two of my favorite things: children and Nature.



KELLY GEER

Kelly is the Director of Communications and Business Development for Urban Tree Merchants, an urban-sourced sawmill, lumber supplier, and custom woodworking company she co-founded with her husband, Caleb, in January 2019. Drawing from her extensive background in catering, event management, social media marketing, and operations management at Tree Shepherds Tree Service, Kelly skillfully leads communications, operations, and strategic growth for the business.

In addition to her work with UTM, she also serves as the Business Resource Specialist at the Greater Arlington Chamber of Commerce, where she supports local businesses with the valuable resources they need to grow and succeed. Kelly holds a degree in Communication Studies with an emphasis in Rhetoric and Persuasion, along with a minor in Spanish, from Texas State University. Passionate about travel, she has visited 18 countries and enjoys photography, exploring new restaurants, and attending events. In her spare time, she prefers to be on the beach.

THANK YOU FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE!

Last year, River Legacy Nature Center facilitated more than 35,000 experiences for individuals across all age groups— children, teens, adults, and seniors—to explore nature. The Nature Center is a fantastic community resource, offering educational programs and a place for those seeking a tranquil retreat. River Legacy's Mission only becomes a reality because YOU work alongside us.

DONORS

GRANTS

Anonymous Fund at the North Texas' Community Foundation

Gary and Judi Martin Charitable Fund

Fort Worth Audubon Society

Jack W. & Paula J. Winter Charitable Fund

Anonymous Donor Fidelity Charitable

Amon Carter Foundation

Sid W. Richardson Foundation

Wells Fargo Bank Texas

Texas Mutual Workers' Compensation Insurance

William and Catherine Bryce Memorial Fund

H-E-B Tournament of Champions Charitable Trust

Ecolab Community Relations

\$5,000 AND ABOVE

Baylor Scott and White Orthopedic and Spine Hospital at Arlington, LLC

Capital Street Scapes

Curnutt & Hafer, LLP

Graham Associates, Inc.

Viridian

\$2,000-\$4,999

Bob and Marge Dawson

Brad & Judy Rupay

\$1.000-\$1.999

Anonymous

Alicia Lay

Chip May

Dick and Helen Moise

George and Nesha Morey

Kamaron Erbatur

Kent and Diane Rasmussen

Mike & Becky Gerro

Steve and Vicki Dixon

Sylvia & Richard Greene

\$500-\$999

Alfred and Laura DiStefano

Denise Dillow

Dr. Ella Jo McGovern

George & Carole Hoyer

Michael and Linda Wolfson

Sam Elliott

Scott and Elizabeth Marks

Stephen and Ann Cavender

Jeff and Karen Williams

\$250-\$499

Anonymous (2)

Brad Bowman

Brian and Karen Ellen Anderson

Carol and Tommy Crumpton

Charles Duke

Clyde and Virginia Godfrey

Curt and Ginger Osiek

Doreen and Joe Bruner

Jack & Becky Upchurch

Jim and Mary Turner

Mark and Jennifer Warren

Marla & Jason Jones

Pete Jamieson

Regal Metals International

Ron and Ann White

Scott and Sammie Slocum

Trey and Shana Yelverton

Buttermilk Sky Pies

\$100-\$249

Allen and Mollie Clemson

Anne Alderfer

Ashley Golsorkhi

Barbara Hinds

Beth Behrmann

Brittany and Blaine Carnes

Chaplain Rich & Reecia Stoglin

Chris and Kim Wong

Christopher Bookout

Chuck & Margaret Baskin

Dan and Susan Eaves

Dave and Diane Brinkman

David & Kristine Johnson

Botterman

Deborah Vernon

Dennis & Jan Barry Botterman

Deborah Vernon

Dennis and Jan Barry

Dick Schoech

Donny and Jill Rorschach

Duncan Roofing Concepts

Fred and Louann Schulze

James and Shelby McLean

Jay Six

Jeff and Terry Eaton

Jerry and Becky McCullough

Jessica Chew

Jill Regina

John Bator

John and Priscilla Promise

Jose Perez

Julia Hunt

Julie & Jay Ryan

Kathleen Bragg

Kathleen Emerson

Paul and Kay Sweeney

Rachelle Hyde

Richard Urso

Robyn Barrere

Ronnie and Cathy Ridgeway

Scott and Genia Matula

Shannon Porter

Sidney David D'Aquin

Steve and Lori Plamondon

Steven and Cathy Latham

DONORS

\$100-\$249 (CONTINUED)

Susie Hood

Teddy Dillingham

Tim and Barbara Perry

Timothy Goss

Tom and Kathy Barnard

Tom and Nancy Reneau

Vince Hrabal

Wesley and Nan Cloud

Curt and Sue Taylor

\$1-\$99

Anonymous (2)

Al Whiting

Allen and Leslie Qualman

Amy Evans

Angela and David Chadwick

Anna Gant

Anna and Justin Chapa

Avant Gardeners

Becky Bratsven

Becky Stumbaugh

Beth Jones

Bethany Scott

Brittini Greenberg

Carol Thornton

Carolyn Price

Cheryl Mathis

Dan and Patty Kunko

Dan and Rebecca Tatsch

Dave and Laura Munson

Dave and Lisa McCaskey

Debra Manns

Dr. C. Franklin

Ellen Ravkind

Elly Khoei

Frank and Josephine Keeney

Genevieve Thomason

George and Holly Heid

Jan Miller

Janet Stephens

Jay Six

Jorge Garcia

Karla Hernandez

Kelly and Chad Geer

Kevin and Diane England

Kroger Community

Rewards

Laurie & Tim Ackermann

Leanne Haynes

Mary Moreno

Mary and Richard Humes

Mary Beth Vono

Melissa Koke

Michael and Sarah Bishop

Mike and Susan Bartlett

Nanci Meza

Onofre Chapa Jr

Polly Walton

Randy and Betsi Goode

Robert Blake

Robin and Greg Swindle

Ronny Abrams

Sam and Kimberly Briones

Sandra Godwin

Scott and Linda Church

Sharon Croxton

Sherrie Ripple

Steve and Andrea Meller

Steven and Carmen Marsic

Teresa Vonder Haar

Tiffany and Gregg Dragun

Tom and Kathy Barnard

Traci Alley-Brown

Vone Dempsey

Warren and Elena Mason

Wendell and Linda Black

Werda Veliu

Whitney Campbell

William J. and Loretta Marie Gase

Randy and Cathy Williams

HONORARIUM

Adam and Monica Ingram In honor of The Ingram Family

Amy Jackson In honor of Diane Powell

Betty Susini In honor of David, Angela, Justin and Heather Chadwick

Brig and Dawn Serman In honor of Becky

Carmenza Moreno In honor of Becky Gerro

Charley and Nancy Amos In honor of Dr. Ellen Ravkind

Clark and Beth Hellier In honor of Becky Gerro

Dave and Laura Munson In honor of Becky Gerro

David and Teresa Weldon In honor of Becky Gerro

Debbie and Sam Emmerson In honor of Becky Gerro

Dennis and Jan Barry In honor of the teachers at River Legacy summer camps

Dina Jazrawi In honor of Becky Gerro

Dr. Clayton and Cassandra Wills In honor of Becky Gerro

Emalie Dockery In honor of Becky Gerro

Impact Safety In honor of Becky Gerro

Jack and Roslyn Glaze In honor of Terry Carver

Julie Nicholson In honor of Becky Gerro

Lori and Blake Kretz In honor of Becky Gerro

LouAnn and Mike O'Donnell In honor of Becky Gerro

Margaret Holden The Fearless Staff of River Legacy Foundation!

Martha Duesterhoft In honor of Becky Gerro

Matthew Loh In honor of Becky Gerro

Paul Brodie In honor of Becky Gerro

Ricky Gerro In honor of Becky Gerro

Rob and Patti Franz In honor of Becky Gerro

Scott and Kathy Bukhair In honor of Becky Gerro

Stephanie Melchert In honor of Becky Gerro

Steve and Jill Hill In honor of Becky Gerro

Steve and Tracy Brooks In honor of Becky Gerro

Sylvia & Richard Greene In honor of Elzie Odom's 95th Birthday

Sylvia & Richard Greene In honor of Laurie Bianco's 60th Birthday

Terry and Teresa Gaines In honor of Becky Gerro

The Dan Dipert Family Fund In honor of Becky Gerro

William Sierra In honor of Luke, Liam, Piper, Blake & Olivia, My Grandkids

Kathy Goodrich In honor of Becky Gerro

Scott and Cathy Russell In honor of Becky Gerro

DONORS

MEMORIALS

Amy, Vonnie and Stacy Whisenhunt In memory of Hanna Whitley

April Poitras In memory of Ellis Elliott

Barbara and George Sorrells In memory of Hanna Whitley

Bernadette Reed In memory of Hanna Whitley

Cindy Bond In memory of Hanna Whitley

Cortland Savage In memory of Hanna Whitley

Craig and Terry Carver In memory of Terry Cooper Powell

Dan and Patty Kunko In memory of Hanna Whitley

Edward Agura In memory of Hanna Whitley

Huagang Chen In memory of Dr. Joseph Fay

Jack & Becky Upchurch In memory of Hanna Whitley

Jared Johnson In memory of Terry Cooper Powell

Linda Dryden In memory of Ellis Elliott

Mike & Becky Gerro In memory of Hanna Whitley

Mike and Sandi Ray In memory of Gene Trumble

Pamela Tackett In memory of Hanna Whitley

Pat Cox In memory of Hanna Whitley

Helen Elliott In memory of Ellis Elliott

Sherri Woods In memory of Hanna Whitley Sidney & Sue Huston In memory of Hanna Whitley

Susan Leake In memory of Hanna Whitley

Sylvia & Richard Greene In memory of Allan Saxe

Sylvia & Richard Greene In memory of Dr. Kermit Olson

Linda and Michael Wolfson Philanthropic Fund of the Dallas Jewish Community Foundation In memory of Allan Saxe

4Front Engineered Solutions In memory of Hanna Whitley

Dog Training Club of Dallas County In memory of Kendall Lake

North West Arlington Association In memory of Ellis Elliott

Jimee Petrich In memory of Hanna Whitley

IN-KIND

Edward Agura

Charley and Nancy Amos

Anything Goes

B&B Theaters

Baker Brothers Plumbing, Air & Electric

Baseball Diamonds

BJ's Brewhouse

Robert Blake

Bolder Adventure Park

Camp Thurman

Chick-Fil-A at North Collins St

Chicken-n-Pickle

Christopher Goetz Clothiers

Chuy's

Cidercade

City of Arlington Parks and Recreation Dept.

Classic Christmas

Coyote Drive-In

Crayola Experience

Dallas Symphony Orchestra

Dave & Buster's

Defender Outdoors

Steve Deitz

Alfred and Laura DiStefano

Division Street Brewery

Dyno Rock

Everything Arlington Texas

Fort Worth Museum of Science and History

Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra

G-creates

Mike & Becky Gerro

Ricky Gerro

Graham Associates, Inc.

Great Skin Spa

Green's Produce

Hilton's Flooring

Horizon Plumbing, Ltd.

HOTWORX of Arlington,

Viridian

Courtney LaQuey

Lazy Dog

Lost Oak Winery

Piccolo Mondo

Ripley's Believe it or Not

Sanford House Inn and Spa

Shake Shack

Jay Six

Tanner Smith

Southwestern Exposition &

Livestock Show

Spring Creek Barbeque

Stockyards Heritage

Development Co.

Sugar Bee Sweets & The

Hive

The Arlington Shop

The Melting Pot

The Southlake Hotel

Total Wine & More

UTA Planetarium

Wild Birds Unlimited

Spec's Wine, Spirits and Finer Foods

Urban Tree Merchants

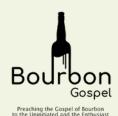
2024 EVENT SPONSORS

















































































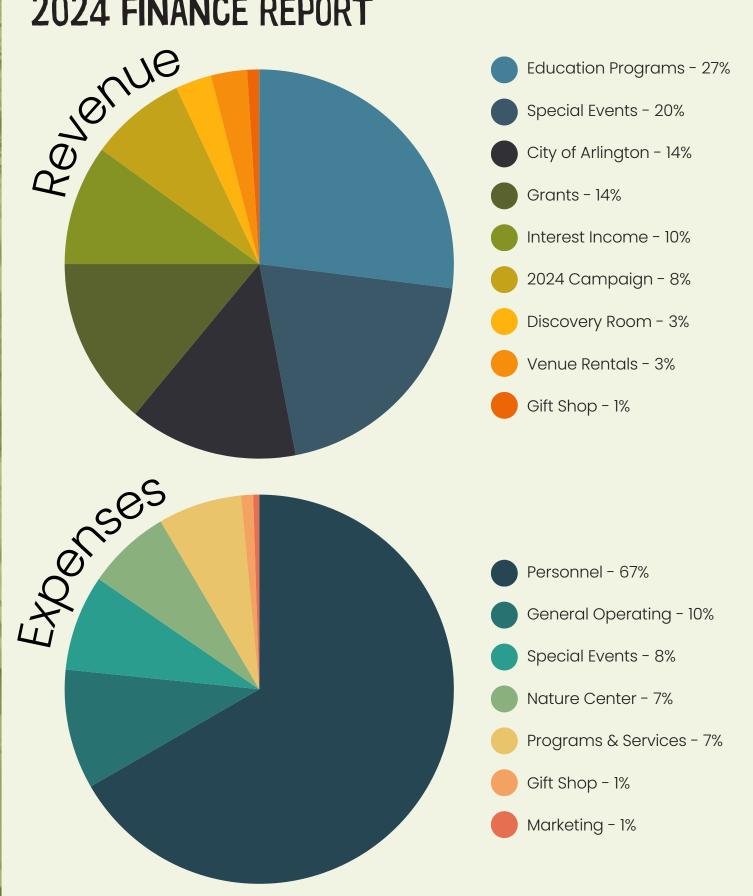




Al & Laura Distefano Steve Martindale Samuel Briones



2024 FINANCE REPORT



RIVER LEGACY FOUNDATION IS A 501(C)(3) NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION.



RIVER LEGACY



CONNECT



DONATE



VOLUNTEER

River Legacy Foundation is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization formed in 1988 to preserve and enhance the land along the Trinity River and its tributaries as an extraordinary education, recreational, and nature resource.

RIVER LEGACY NATURE CENTER | 703 NW GREEN OAKS BLVD. ARLINGTON, TEXAS 76006 817-860-6752 | WWW.RIVERLEGACY.ORG