

## **The Clearing Summary**

### **Number of employees:**

4 Full Time year-round, 3 @75% Full Time year-round, 1 @ 8 hours per week year-round and 8 seasonal Full Time and Part Time (April-November).

### **Number of volunteers:** 260

### **What is your Mission Statement?**

The Mission of The Clearing is to provide diverse educational experiences in the folk school tradition, in a setting of quiet forests, meadows and water. The Clearing is a place where adults who share an interest in nature, arts or humanities can learn, reflect and wonder. This is in keeping with the goals of Jens Jensen, founder of The Clearing, who loved it as a special place where one could feel kinship with the earth and reassess one's life.

### **What is the main source of your funding and what percent of your funding does that source provide?**

On average, about 70% comes from program fees. In 2019 (the most recent "normal" year of operation), 71% came from program fees. This is different during the years of the pandemic as fewer class program fees were collected.

### **What is the geographic scope of your services throughout Door County?**

The majority of students and volunteers in Door County are from Sturgeon Bay to Northport with lesser impact from Southern Door and Washington Island communities. This is the base of students and volunteer instructors in the mostly local Winter Program of classes, as well as volunteers serving year-round in the Bookstore/Gift Shop, facility projects, docents and event staffing. The Workshop Program of one and two-day classes is about 40-50% local vs. visiting students and instructors, and the Summer Program of weeklong retreat classes, where students reside on campus, have approximately a 10-15% local commuter student population.

### **Explanation of how you serve Door County including primary programs your organization offers to the community.**

The Clearing provides diverse, lifelong learning opportunities to the community through weeklong retreats and day-classes in the arts, humanities, and natural sciences. The Clearing also offers its facilities as a community gathering spot for various local organizations, of which it is also a member, such as the Ellison Bay Arts Group, the Door County North community association, and provides the venue and volunteers for the Hardy Gallery's Gibraltar High School Exposure to Creativity day and Gibraltar School's 5th Grade field trip for a day of hiking, painting, and writing (all prior to the pandemic, of course). The Clearing has offered classroom space to Destination Door County for Certified Tourism Ambassador training. Leadership Door County participants have also been provided tours as part of their Arts and/or Education days. Community events such as The Clearing's summer Ice Cream Social and winter Christmas Open House days are free and open to the public. The Clearing is the lead coordinating organization and has partnered with

the Door County Land Trust and Crossroads at Big Creek to offer the statewide Master Naturalist training program for volunteers to become citizen scientists, land stewards and nature educators/interpreters in support of The Clearing and other local non-profit environmental organizations and state parks.

The Clearing's 128-acre property is open for free hiking May-October on weekends, noon-4 p.m., and every day sunup to sundown the rest of the year to provide neighbors and visitors an opportunity to reconnect with nature. Plus, free, public docent-led tours (50 in 2022) provide insights to visitors (298 in 2022) into the rich history of Jens Jensen's life and The Clearing's 87-year history, Jensen's "'school of the soil'" that he was determined to start in 1935 to teach hands-on landscape architecture to his followers/students. The campus is on the National and State Register of Historic Places.

### **How would you define the impact your organization is making in Door County?**

The Clearing employs local residents full-time year-round and provides full/part-time seasonal employment opportunities with various levels of benefits.

The Estimated Collateral Spending Impact of The Clearing, per the 2014 Arts & Economic Prosperity IV: The Economic Impact of Nonprofit Arts and Culture Organizations and Their Audiences in the State of Wisconsin (Americans for the Arts), was \$94,154 (excluding the cost of admission, or in The Clearing's case, tuition.).

Programming of classes is impactful to Door County in a non-financial way as well. The Clearing's Winter Program began as far back as the 1940's, when classes were offered to the local population with Jensen and other Door County friends of his including painter Gerhard Miller, naturalist Emma Toft, and longtime assistant and master weaver Mertha Fulkerson. Today's version of the Winter Program of day classes started by local Clearing volunteers in 1976 and now averages over 600 local, adult students in 100 classes led by local volunteer instructors who share their skill and knowledge with their neighbors. Multiple sessions over an eight-week period run January through February culminating with a Student Exhibit of work open to the public. The Winter Program also brings together this winter community of local students every other Friday night in January and February with potlucks open to students, instructors and their guests, averaging 150-200 attendees. Winter Program attendees stay social and physically and mentally active in January and February. Many winter classes have gone on to become year-round gatherings and social opportunities outside of The Clearing, and longtime friendships have been established.

Other programming includes the Workshop Program of one and two-day classes which usually averages about 40-50% local attendance (pre-pandemic 2019 total attendance was 433 students), and the Summer Program of weeklong classes with approximately 10-15% local commuter students (2019 total attendance was 709 students), which is the closest to Jensen's vision of students getting away from everyday life and a "clearing of the mind". It is also the largest of The Clearing's

programs. These same students attend theater, enjoy shopping and stay in hotels providing a positive economic impact to Ellison Bay and surrounding communities.

The Clearing is a destination for landscape architects who come to see Jensen's last "great work", as The Clearing is known, and students attending classes learn of Jensen's legacy in landscape architecture and design, conservation, and sustainability. Jensen's landscape design work include the Chicago West Park District (Garfield, Columbus, Union, Humboldt Parks) during his long career as Superintendent of the district, parks in Springfield, IL, Madison, WI, Racine, WI and estates of the Ford family and other newly minted industrialists of his time. Jensen's conservation efforts include Indiana Dunes State Park and National Shoreline, Cook County (IL) Forest Preserve, and Door County's own Ridges Sanctuary, Whitefish Dunes State Park, Door Bluff Headlands and Ellison Bluff County Parks. These Door County parks are part of the fabric of "natural" Door County preserved for generations thanks to the foresight of Jens Jensen.

**What is your annual budget?**

\$1,250,000.

**If you were to receive a donation from 100+WWC, how would that donation be used?**

The Clearing would use the donation received for the central campus area flagstone path improvements where retreat students reside, and the Jens Jensen Visitor Center flagstone walkways making for improved safety and ease of navigation for students/guests, maintenance (snowblowing, ice removal, leaf removal) improvement, and general aesthetics. This three-year project (2022-2024) is estimated to cost \$132,645 with about \$53,000 yet to be completed in three different areas. It was initiated when another construction-related project was taking place in 2019-2020 on central campus with heavy equipment that required flagstone paths be taken up to prevent damage to the flagstones. Prior to re-laying the flagstones, a decision was made to significantly improve the flagstone path, an area serving the kitchen with food supply delivery, by placing a concrete pad for stability then mortaring the flagstones for a more smooth pathway. This section of improved flagstone path proved to be so successful, the balance of other flagstone paths in the campus area and the Jens Jensen Visitor Center areas are now being upgraded.

The current paths of large, flat flagstones are laid with grass or gravel in between them. In winter, the flagstones have heaved over time resulting in possible tripping hazards and require re-setting for the safety of the many retreat guests and other visitors who navigate the pathways at The Clearing. Maintenance issues such as leaf debris and weeds collecting in between flagstones as well as grass overgrowth on the stones, and winter snow blowing and shoveling are more difficult with the current individually placed flagstones. Safer navigation by the students, instructors and the public is the primary purpose of this project.