

# HISTORIC CANE HILL

2023 Annual Report



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**THIS YEAR, 2023, MARKED TEN YEARS** since Historic Cane Hill was established. The year was appropriately busy and successful for this milestone.

We became the stewards of additional properties: the circa 1887 Kirby-Colburn House and the circa 1900 Colburn Barn. Plans are underway to stabilize and restore these prominent landmarks. We strived to create unforgettable experiences for visitors and area residents through events like the Cane Hill Harvest Festival and exhibitions like Niloak & Beyond: 20th Century Art Pottery. We also delighted in providing the backdrop for special occasions through our wedding and event rentals.

**AS WE MOVE INTO OUR SECOND DECADE** and approach the bicentennial of Cane Hill's founding, we are charting an ambitious course for the future.

In addition to record-breaking fundraising numbers and program participation in 2023, we were also excited about expanding our staff.

Carly Squyres was promoted from part-time Administrative Assistant and Festival Coordinator to full-time Administrative and Operations Manager. Jared Biggs returned to Historic Cane Hill as our Historic Sites Manager, overseeing maintenance and repairs of our historic buildings. Finally, Amanda Cothren joined the team as Programs and Events Coordinator to take on planning and executing educational and engaging programs and coordinating event rentals.

We continue to create ways to engage with Cane Hill, including new opportunities for you to be a part of Historic Cane Hill's future, like our Membership Program and Apple Blossom Society. I am continually impressed by the generosity of the community who love Cane Hill and your willingness to invest in this special place.

I invite you to continue with us into our next decade and help ensure Cane Hill is open for enjoyment and exploration for generations to come.

With Gratitude,



Vanessa McKuin  
*Executive Director*



ON THE COVER: Visitors to the Cane Hill Harvest Festival take a closer look at a quilt in the quilt show, held every year inside the Cane Hill College during the festival. Photo by Russell A. Cothren.

**“SUBARU IS DEDICATED** to making the world a better place. At Adventure Subaru, we believe in being a positive force in the communities in which we live and work. Supporting Historic Cane Hill was an easy decision as we believe that the actions we take today help conserve and protect our resources and environment for future generations, just as Historic Cane Hill does. We were glad to provide support in 2023 for exhibitions and educational programming and look forward to continuing this partnership into 2024.”

**- Danielle Hoffman**  
Adventure Subaru Marketing Director



**Kelley Carey (left) and Danielle Hoffman of Adventure Subaru enjoy the trails at Historic Cane Hill.**



**“HISTORIC CANE HILL** has been an important part of my life’s work since 2014, as I was deeply involved in the preservation of the Cane Hill College and the Presbyterian Church. I have been honored to serve as a member of the Board of Directors since 2016. Supporting Historic Cane Hill has come easy to me, as historic preservation is my focus as an architect. I encourage you to take a moment, visit and enjoy all that Historic Cane Hill has to offer: the beautiful historic buildings, museum, art gallery, and walking trails. And, perhaps join us as a Member for an even closer look at this beautiful part of our state.”

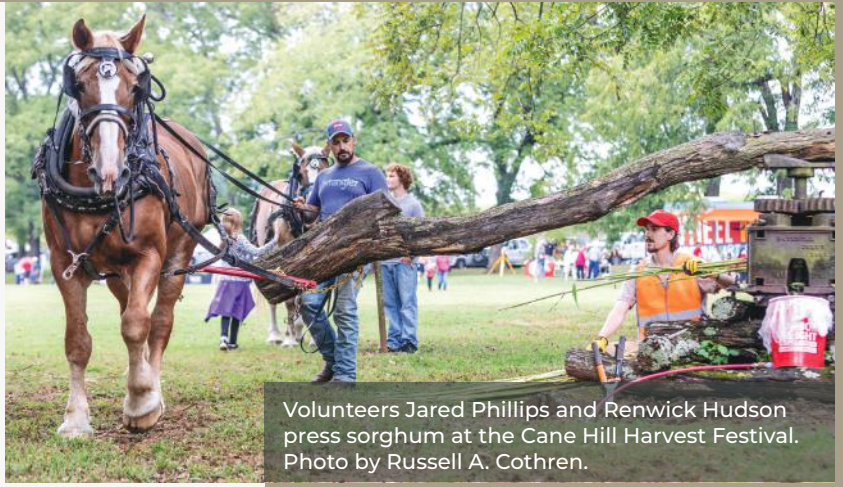
**- John Greer, Jr.**  
Board Chair, Historic Cane Hill  
Principal & Vice President,  
WER Architects

John Greer leads a tour of the Cane Hill College.

**MORE THAN 4,200 PEOPLE** visited the Historic Cane Hill (HCH) campus in 2023. Highlights from our exhibits, events, and signature programs included:

- The Arkansas State Quail and Turkey Stamp Competition, a national juried show in partnership with Game and Fish Commission
- The annual Cane Hill Harvest Festival, with more than forty partners, vendors, and demonstrators
- The innovative Niloak & Beyond: 20th Century American Swirl Art Pottery exhibition
- The J.D. Wilbur Kiln production site Public Day with the Arkansas Archeological Survey
- The Ozark Bug Crawl, in conjunction with the University of Arkansas Entomology and Plant Pathology department

Our interactive programming is offered alongside tours of our historic campus and fifteen historic sites. Without ongoing preservation work (funded by our generous donors), these landmarks would be in danger of being lost.



Volunteers Jared Phillips and Renwick Hudson press sorghum at the Cane Hill Harvest Festival. Photo by Russell A. Cothren.



Swirl pottery from the Niloak & Beyond Exhibition.

## EXPLORING THE ROOTS OF CANE HILL

**THE EXPLORING THE ROOTS** project is a special volunteer-supported program. With the help of a grant from the Arkansas Humanities Council, we set out to learn more about the history of Cane Hill's Black residents, formerly enslaved people, and their descendants. We were able to compile stories, photographs, and data about places like Happy Hollow with involvement from descendants like Jimmye Deffebaugh Whitfield, Tom Lackey, Elnora Lackey Jackson, and Connie Fisher. Long-time residents including Margaret Loftin and Betty Colburn, as well as local historians Susan Young, Margaret Holcomb, and Michael Anthony, contributed to this research.

Several of the seven Black students who desegregated Fayetteville schools in 1954 attended school in Cane Hill. We are honored to recognize these courageous young people. The students shown from left to right are Preston Lackey, Peggy Taylor, Mary M. Blackburn, Roberta Lackey, Elnora Lackey, Kenneth Morgan, and Virginia Lee Smith. Former residents of Cane Hill are outlined.



Cane Hill descendants Jimmye Whitfield and Connie Fisher join HCH Executive Director Vanessa McQuin and historians Margaret Holcomb and Michael Anthony for a photo at a recent event.

Photos below are from the 1956 Fayetteville High School yearbook.





Jordan Rosso, pictured in front of her art, won the 2023 Historic Cane Hill Young Artist Scholarship.

**IN ADDITION TO PRESERVING THE PAST** architecture, history, and art of Cane Hill, Historic Cane Hill is committed to building on this rich legacy by supporting the next generation of Ozark artists.

For five years, Historic Cane Hill has showcased the incredible talents of high school students from across Arkansas through the High School Art Competition and Exhibition. In partnership with the University of Arkansas School of Art, this event gives many students their first chance to be featured in a juried show. The grand prize for an Arkansas senior is a full scholarship to the University of Arkansas School of Art for one year. In addition to the much-coveted scholarship, six cash prizes are awarded for the curator's choice and jurors' choice awards.

"I have never experienced having my work shared in a gallery before Cane Hill," said Jordan Rosso, a Bentonville High School Senior and the 2023 scholarship winner. "My largest dream as an artist is to have my work displayed in galleries and museums. To see so many people celebrating my work and looking at it was an incredible feeling."

"I have had two students receive the Best of Show scholarship, and this scholarship is a difference-maker in the life of a high school student," said Shane Beyer, an art teacher at Bentonville Schools.

The competition is open each fall.

## MUSEUM HIGHLIGHT

### DIRECTOR OF ARTS AND CULTURE

Lawrence McElroy acquired this rare 1878 painting of the Cane Hill Mill for the museum collection. The painting is one of two known images of the mill.

William Smith Moore joined John Rankin Pyeatt as co-owner of the mill following the Civil War, and became the sole owner following Pyeatt's death. Moore's son, Henry, painted the piece and was a student at Cane Hill College during the 1870s. Henry was enrolled in art courses and may have been taught by professor and lauded artist, William Quesenbury. The mill was demolished in 1907 and the equipment used in a new mill, constructed south of town that same year.

The painting was recently discovered in California in the collection of Carin D'Innocente, granddaughter of Henry Moore, who generously donated the painting to HCH. It will soon undergo preservation work.



Henry Moore's 1878 painting of the Cane Hill Mill is now part of the HCH museum collection.

HCH was able to kickstart preservation of the Colburn Barn thanks to support from the Apple Blossom Society.



Photo by Russell A. Cothren.

**HISTORIC CANE HILL** would not exist without the support of our donors. This year we were excited to launch a new membership program, donor society, and expanded Harvest Festival!

The 36th annual Cane Hill Harvest Festival saw attendance double from 2022, with more than 2,500 patrons. In addition to the beloved sorghum pressing, craft demonstrations, quilt show, and live Ozark-inspired music, last year's festival introduced a market for vendors to share their wares and an expanded children's area.

The event raised more than \$8,500 for HCH—a significant leap from previous years and a much-needed boost in support for

maintenance of the Cane Hill College and other structures, as well as HCH programming.

The Apple Blossom Society, a giving club dedicated to the preservation of HCH's fifteen historic buildings and a nod to the area's history of apple farming, also launched in 2023. In the Society's first six months, we surpassed our goals for number of donors and overall dollars raised.

We would like to express our thanks to the inaugural donors of the Apple Blossom Society and Historic Cane Hill Membership program (listed below) for their leadership and commitment to historical preservation.

**APPLE BLOSSOM SOCIETY**

**Founders Circle**

Tim and Amy Leach  
Dian Graves Owen Foundation

**Shannon Pippin**

Neil and Jean Helm

**Wilson June**

John and Tricia Greer  
Tareneh and Lance Manning  
Barry and Phyllis McKuin

**Howard Sweet**

Courtney C. Crouch III and Amber Crouch  
Tim Hudson and Charlotte Taylor  
Tim and Vanessa McKuin  
Stephanie Haught Wade  
Steve Wolverton and Linda Houston

**HISTORIC CANE HILL MEMBERS**

**Foundation**

Frances and Grant Billingsley  
Col. John and Jan Campbell  
Courtney C. Crouch II and Brenda Crouch  
Paula Irwin  
Tom and Cala Pence

**Cornerstone**

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Paul and JoAnn Biggs  
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Wes and Louise Norton  
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Darren and Stephanie Williamson  
Carol Sue and Alan Wooten

To sign up for Membership or join the Apple Blossom Society, visit [historiccanehillar.org/join-support](http://historiccanehillar.org/join-support)

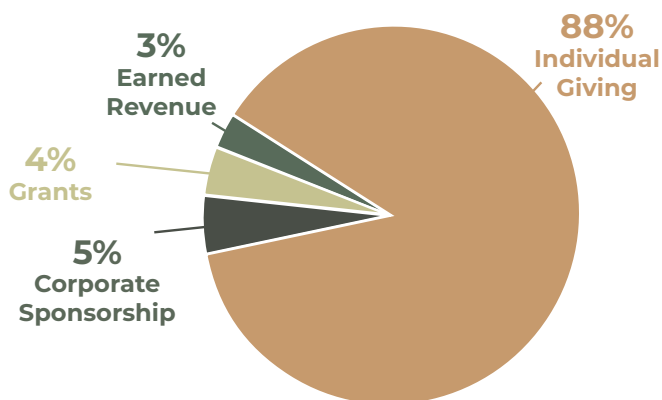


One incentive of membership was our first-ever members-only Trailblazers History Hike, held in November. Local historian and HCH Board Member Susan Young leads the group to explore historically significant sites on HCH campus.

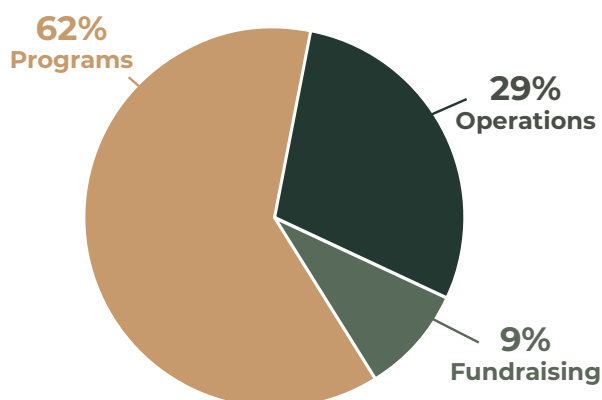
**THE WORK HISTORIC CANE HILL ACCOMPLISHED** in 2023 was possible because of support from more than seventy volunteers who helped with projects like the Cane Hill Harvest Festival, special events, museum work, trail and grounds maintenance, research, administrative support, and much more.

We ensure that the majority of all funding is directed to historic preservation, programs, and education. We are proud to report that, thanks to increased fundraising initiatives in 2023, we were able to invest more donor gifts into our mission than ever before. Below is a snapshot of our revenue and expenses.

### 2023 Revenue - \$837,250



### 2023 Expenses - \$741,094



## 2023 BOARD AND STAFF



**Vanessa McKuin**  
Executive Director



**Jared Biggs**  
Historic Sites Manager



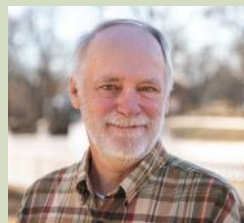
**Amanda Cothren**  
Programs and Events Coordinator



**Board of Directors**  
John Greer, President  
Neil Helm, Treasurer  
Susan Young, Secretary  
Mike Greene  
Tim Leach  
Tareneh Manning



**Daniel Crane**  
Grounds Assistant



**Lawrence McElroy**  
Director of Arts and Culture



**Carly Squyres**  
Administrative and Operations Manager

### Advisory Board

- Betty Colburn
- Scott Davis
- Bonnie Haegele
- Jim Lewis
- Daylene Reed
- Leonard "Archie" Reed

Historic Cane Hill's 2023 programs, events, and exhibitions were supported by the generosity of the following sponsors:

2023 SPONSORS

\$5000



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