



Immigrant Welcome Center, 24 Preble Street, 3rd Floor



ANNUAL REPORT

APRIL 2023

Our values are embodied in our members



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REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT



This has been a year of rich learning for me. As we began to emerge from the isolation imposed by Covid-19, I realized that we can't merely return to how we did things before Covid but need to forge new paths, new habits of mind; and become even less hierarchical and more flexible. Last fall I was observing a little white moth who seemed to navigate by using moment by moment environmental cues, rather than by the determination to get from one point to another, regardless of what happens in between. This is the kind of flexibility and orientation we need as we face a growing climate emergency. As a small local relationship-centered organization, we have the very real potential to be an island of sanity (in the words of Margaret Wheatley) in the midst of increasing chaos.

This year I have had many thought-provoking conversations with a variety of members, many of whom I had not met previously. I learned that every interaction, especially the challenging ones, is a gift, but only if I stand back and let the conversation or the situation unfold organically. If I listen and wait, and avoid swooping in like God to diagnose and fix the problem, I will know when it is my turn to enter. It is analogous to the person who wants to help the butterfly emerge from the cocoon, dooming the butterfly to an early death because its wings won't have properly developed. Sometimes the best support is to avoid interfering.

The BTS Center Co-learning community (described in greater detail elsewhere in this report) made me much more flexible, willing to change my mind and to be open to emerging opportunities, like an amoeba that, while retaining its essential identity and maintaining necessary boundaries, changes its shape in response to external conditions. Much of what we do is iterative and experimental and if we fail, that's also where we learn; and I have learned to be unapologetic about that. After all, evolution produced lots of failures, but it also produced humans!

After having served on the Board for six years, five as president, I am stepping down, and I am happy to say I am leaving it in very good hands. In the last year I have focused on preparing the soil so that my successors have what they need to enable Hour Exchange to flourish going into the future. May it be so.

Sarah Braik
Board President

ECOLOGICAL IMAGINATION AND HOUR EXCHANGE

Between October 2021 and November 2022 Hour Exchange participated in the [BTS Center Research Collaborative](#), a cross-sector group of leaders from a variety of organizations from Boston to Montreal to explore the question, “How would organizations act differently today if they embodied an ecological imagination?” The project began with an overnight retreat. Over the next year we met in various groupings by Zoom. The finale was a day-long wrap up at Gilsland Farm. Deb Boxer and Sarah Braik represented Hour Exchange, although after a few months Deb dropped out. Sarah continued to share her learnings and reflections with the Board at monthly meetings.

We explored the [ten principles of nature](#) and learned from the non-human world how to be more resilient, responsive, creative and collaborative. We came to understand that process, learning, participation and point of view are at least as important as the final product. We looked at success in terms of stories of lives changed, rather than mere metrics, and came to accept that failure is a valuable learning experience rather than, well...failure! We learned about the centrality of interrelationship, of being open to emergent possibilities and when something good emerges to nurture it without turning it into a fixed thing, to think strategically without being encumbered by an inflexible strategic plan, to live in the midst of apparent contradictions without reverting to the polar extremes, and that small changes can lead to huge outcomes.

Although it became clear that Hour Exchange already embodies many of these principles, we realized many ways we have been molded by the dominant corporate culture. We began to reevaluate our language, our organizational structure and culture, our policies and procedures and most importantly, our ways of thinking.



ECOLOGICAL IMAGINATION AND HOUR EXCHANGE

As part of our work with the collaborative we devised and carried out a “small experiment with radical intent” (the ecological imagination survey we distributed in the spring of 2022) and a slightly larger experiment, the development of member leadership circles to serve particular functions within Hour Exchange, in particular the Kitchen Cabinet, which plans Hour Exchange activities, and the Purpose, Vision and Mission Circle, which met for several months to craft statements of our purpose and vision, which had not previously existed, and on that basis to review the mission statement. These three statements are necessary to keep us grounded and focused.

These have been rich conversations indeed. The next step is for the Board to review and propose changes, and then to share with all our members to also review and propose changes. We hope to have this process completed some time this summer. The Board will then review our policies and written materials, including our website and brochure to ensure that they are consonant with our purpose, vision and mission. Here is a sneak peek at a portion of our proposed purpose statement: “We are...a love economy rooted in abundance, where everyone's hours are equal. Relationships, equity, reciprocity and justice are the heart of who we are and what we do.” Our work this coming year will be to live into our vision.



ECOLOGICAL IMAGINATION AND HOUR EXCHANGE

On May 7 Ben Yosua-Davis, the Director of Applied Research at the BTS Center, led an Hour Exchange discussion of the learnings of the Collaborative. Here is a [recording](#) in case you missed it. Ben is still in the process of preparing a full report, which we will share with our members when it is ready.

- [Hour Exchange Ecological Imagination Survey](#)
- [Summary of Results of April 2022 Ecological Imagination Survey](#)



Another Look at New Member Orientation

An ad hoc group of HXP members is brainstorming ideas for a more effective and welcoming new member orientation. Rather than a one-time training session, orientation was redefined as an ongoing process to help new members become engaged in the community. In contrast to overwhelming, time-consuming tasks, orientation should be simple, fast, welcoming, and flexible enough to meet the needs of diverse community members. Options for self-directed learning would include face-to-face meetings, live and pre-recorded sessions, as well as short videos, links to resources, and graphics. The group explored ways to help new members feel valued, and ways to create enthusiasm within the Hour Exchange community. Suggestions included interviewing new members, celebrating exchanges, using humor and lightheartedness in communications, and making it fun. The group plans to continue this work and welcomes additional ideas and suggestions from members.

NEWS FROM HOUR EXCHANGE PORTLAND

- After Member Care Coordinator Abby Greenfield stepped down to devote herself to the Kitchen Cabinet, the Board decided not to pursue replacing her, but to remain an entirely member-led organization, and to focus on encouraging and supporting members to take collective responsibility for Hour Exchange's operations.
- The four Kitchen Cabinet members planned some wonderful picnic potlucks beginning in May 2022 and culminating with the first in-person Bizarre Bazaar in two years. Since then three of them have decided they need a rest and Barbara Nucci is looking for two to four members to assist her in planning monthly events.
- Member Mentor Gail Wyman has also stepped down. Gail is the kind of member we can all aspire to be: she saw an unfulfilled need and made a proposal to the Board to serve as a matchmaker. We would love to have someone succeed her in helping members to navigate the website and to connect with other members.



NEWS FROM HOUR EXCHANGE PORTLAND (cont.)



- Stephen Beckett, with the blessing of the Board, has been reinstating members whose accounts had been deactivated under previous leadership for reasons including high balances or not exchanging often enough, giving them an opt-out option. Some have chosen to opt out, while others have thanked us. From one reinstated member: "Thank you so much!!!!!! I am beyond grateful!!!!!!"
- As our web hosting/domain provider was becoming increasingly unreliable, we changed providers and created a new domain name: HourXPort.org. We have been trying to move away from the use of HEP as an acronym since we learned that it was a Nazi rallying cry. You may have noticed that we have started using HXP instead.
- hOurworld has redone the website and continues to make changes toward a more intuitive and attractive interface.

NEWS FROM HOUR EXCHANGE PORTLAND (cont.)



- The Board has become increasingly aware that orientation as currently offered can be a barrier to active participation, and we are exploring alternatives to our current orientation system. You can read our thoughts on this elsewhere in this report.
- The Board has enabled members to use their hours to provide gifts of services (gifts of items have always been permitted and encouraged, i.e. the Bizarre Bazaar) to friends and relatives who are not currently members, including through intertrade. The major obstacle was lack of insurance for non-members, but we developed a non-member hold harmless agreement, which was approved by our lawyer. Members of course have the prerogative of declining to provide services to non-members as they wish. What prompted the policy change was a request from a member of another timebank to one of our members to provide meals for a very ill Portland relative. The food was delivered and all parties were delighted with the exchange. We are still working out the parameters of this new policy.

Board of Directors



Sherry McAndrew

Creative collaboration brings me the greatest joy. Whether I'm working as part of an inventive team, joining forces with another artist, or enjoying the spark of committed relationships, collaboration always makes me feel that the sky's the limit, and my imagination soars. I also think the most important problems we face in the world, the ones really worth solving, require the collaboration of diverse people forging their ideas into never-before-seen combinations. I'm thrilled to be part of the creative collaboration that is Hour Exchange Portland. To this role, I bring a professional background in technology and higher education, a passion for non-hierarchical processes, and the hope that our work together will strengthen the social fabric of our community.

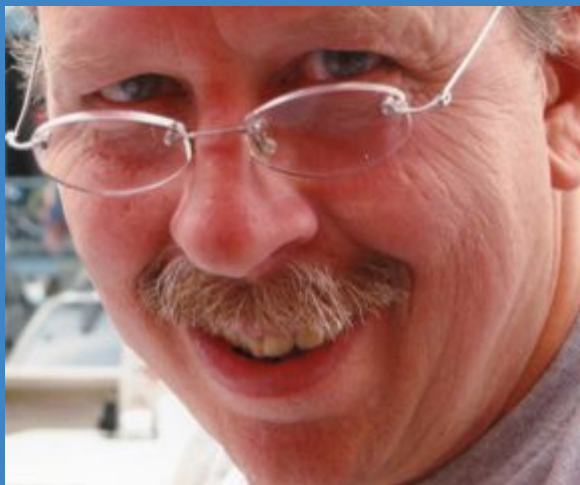
Board of Directors



Julie Sawtelle

I was taught from a young age that our purpose on Earth is to help others. My parents led by example, and instilled a strong sense of the importance of community in their children. Throughout my life, I have continued the family tradition by volunteer work with various groups and organizations. I've also been fortunate to be able to explore a wide variety of professional and recreational interests over the years, and I enjoy sharing the skills and knowledge gained through those experiences. I feel honored to have the opportunity to serve on the board of HXP.

Board of Directors



Stephen V. Beckett, PT, a Maine resident (47 years) from California will tell you, “I’m just a kid from Orange County and I swear I mean you no harm!” His friends call him a renaissance man. Born and raised a quarter mile from Disneyland explains, “most of what’s wrong with me.” He’s always had a compulsion for doing things his own way, and pretty much always has. Built his own house and homestead up in Central Maine back in the seventies, then started a harness and leather-goods business out of thin air. After twenty years of that he learned the healing arts and “switched to live hide”. Graduated from the University of New England Physical Therapy program with honors. One day in 2006 Jennifer Lunden walked into his office and invited the whole suite of practitioners to join the timebank since Health Care was a most provided service. He asked if he could see his statement online, and they said, “No” The rest of that story is here: [youtube.com/watch?v=rMiKkfxUSY0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rMiKkfxUSY0) Today Stephen continues to perform duties as a co-founder of hOurworld.org the umbrella organization that houses over 400 timebanks in 22 countries and 9 languages and maintains a strong interest in preserving Hour Exchange Portland, the birth mother of it all!

Board of Directors



Jennifer Lunden (term starts in July)

I've been a member of Hour Exchange Portland since it had a different name and was based in the building on the corner of Congress and Washington. I love everything HEP stands for: that everyone has something to contribute, that everyone's work is of equal value, and that HEP is a way to have community in a nation where that's harder and harder to come by. And I love that I can do what I enjoy to get what I need or want. I was a psychotherapist for 15 years and in that time also formed my own state-licensed agency offering referrals and clinical supervision to other therapists. I'm a self-starter who wants to do what I can to make the world a better place. I'm also a writer. My book *American Breakdown: Our Ailing Nation, My Body's Revolt, and the Nineteenth-Century Woman Who Brought Me Back to Life* is launching May 9. (Which is why I'm not available to join the board until July.) My book is about how America's distinct form of industrial capitalism impacts our health. Hour Exchange Portland is an antidote to that.

Board of Directors



Robin LoRé

I am interested in action pertaining to ecological preservation, inclusion, diversity, and the sharing of time and talent to build a strong, healthy, local community. I feel the Hour Exchange embodies these ideals perfectly, and it is what drew me to join. I'm happy to be of service to the Hour Exchange in any capacity, and hope that I can help move the ball forward in its growth and ongoing evolution.



2022 By the Numbers

Members as of December 31, 2022: 461

New members: 23

**Percentage of members actively
exchanging 42%**

**Total # of transactions (excluding Board)
295**

Total hours earned 2235.85

Hours earned by Board Members 315.75

**Hours provided by member-helpers
249.65**

Most popular service categories

Arts and Crafts

Garden/Yard

Community

Health and Wellness

Transportation

Computer

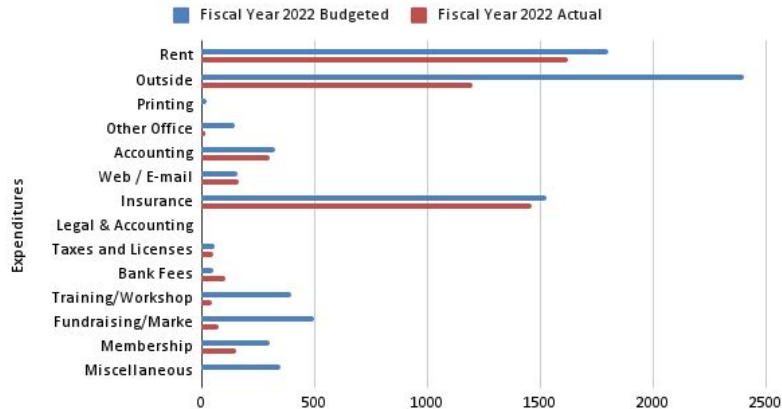
Fitness/Outdoor/Nature

Cooking/Food

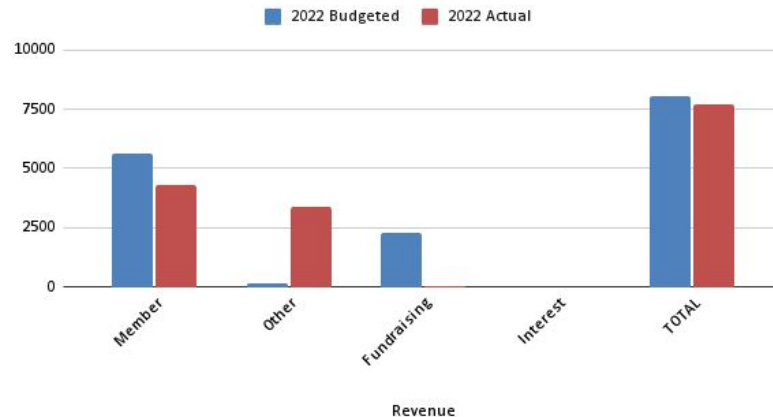
2022 INCOME AND EXPENSES



2022 Budget vs. Actual



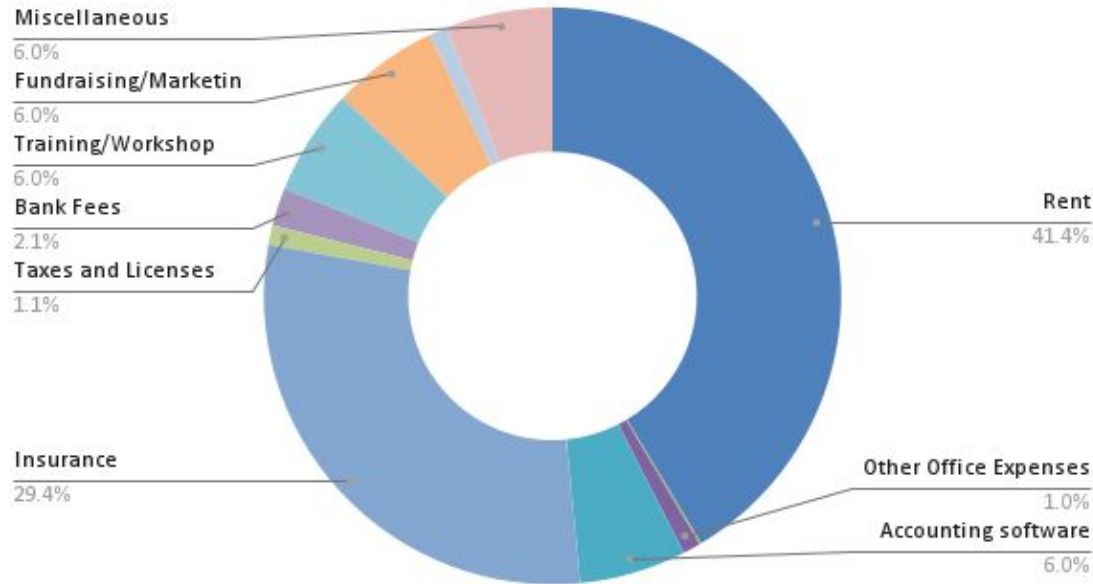
2022 Budget vs. Actual



2023 BUDGET



2023 Budgeted expenses



Thanks to the many members who provided services to Hour Exchange Portland. We couldn't continue to survive and thrive without you!



Member Services Coordinator

Abby Greenfield

New Member Orientation Leaders

Jackie Hawkins, Patty Renaud, Sarah Braik, and Marie Bakerpoole

Kitchen Cabinet

Abby Greenfield, Barbara Nucci, Patricia Campbell, and Lewie Bosler

Member Leadership

Gail Wyman

Bookkeeper

Marisa Ihara

Website

Stephen Beckett with some help from Robin LoRê

BTS Center Research Collaborative

Deb Boxer, Sarah Braik

Bizarre Bazaar

Abby Greenfield, Ann Marie Ray, April Barter, Patricia Campbell, Barbara Nucci, Meryl Troop, Diane Brakeley, Betsey Fecto, Peter Herrick, Cliff Krolick, Adriane Herman, Meryl Troop, Chrissie Libby, Becky Stanley, Paul Manoff, Marjorie Stone and Sally Trice

Purpose, Vision and Mission Revision

Stephen Beckett, Sarah Braik, Eric Fleischman, Ebyn Moss, Don Kauber, Cliff Krolick

And to all those who recruited new members, provided food for potlucks, responded to our Ecological Imagination survey and emailed us with suggestions for improving Hour Exchange. Thank you to anyone who we inadvertently omitted, and to all those who made financial donations. Your contributions make a difference!