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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

There’s no doubt that our world is in crisis. Extreme weather, environmental disasters, increasing numbers of climate refugees, and rampant misinformation inundate us daily. The worst impacts of climate change are experienced by many of whom are unable to protect themselves and their families. It’s easy to feel helpless. Yet, to borrow a phrase from Dr. Michael Mann and Dr. Katharine Hayhoe, “The antidote to doom is doing.”

Everyone has a part to play in solving the climate crisis, though not everyone knows if and how they can make a difference. At SEI, we believe the best solution to this is equipping and empowering individuals at scale and at all stages of life with the education and skills training they need to take action and effect climate justice in their communities.

SEI bridges the gaps — between individuals, communities, and the workforce, between policy, research, and implementation, and between global issues and regional needs. This holistic approach puts people first, whether in kindergarten, recently retired, or somewhere in between. With a quarter-century of experience, SEI is committed to providing our leadership, insight, and ideas to help other organizations address the barriers or gaps needed to be overcome to accelerate climate solutions.

In this impact report, we have captured empowering stories of climate leaders across the country. Reflecting on the last year at SEI, it’s inspiring to see the impacts of our programs, and I’m so grateful for our incredible partners, funders, staff, and supporters.

Thanks for joining us on this journey!

With hope and gratitude,
Cyane Dandridge
ABOUT SEI

MISSION
Building leaders to accelerate climate solutions

VISION
A resilient world where all communities thrive

SEI (Strategic Energy Innovations), founded in 1997, is an environmental nonprofit consultancy that partners with schools, communities, businesses, and government agencies to develop climate leadership pathways for people of all ages and stages in life. Our flagship programs (Energize Schools, Energize Colleges, Climate Corps, Climate Corps Education Outside, and Energize Careers) educate and empower students and emerging professionals to create thriving, resilient communities.
We envision a resilient world where all communities thrive. SEI’s programs have been forwarding this vision by building climate leaders of all ages, abilities, skills, and parts of society in distinct ways. Here we share their visions of how to solve the climate crisis and some highlights from 2024.

**IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS**

**ENERGIZE SCHOOLS**

Students are equipped to drive climate solutions in the future by actively engaging with climate issues in the present while being supported by trained educators.

- 289 schools supported
- 458 educators reached
- 18,500 students reached
- 77 Title 1 schools supported

**CLIMATE CORPS**

Schools and educators are equipped to provide nature-based education in outdoor classroom settings to foster student engagement with climate issues, now and in the future.

- 10,000 Bay Area students served
- 99% of students deepened their connection to nature
- 95% of students gained enthusiasm for science
- 96% of students gained environmental stewardship knowledge

**ENERGIZE COLLEGES**

By taking a whole campus approach to climate education, students graduate with key competencies to lead a transition to an equitable and sustainable world.

- 30 CA faculty and staff in a Community of Practice
- 22 Courses added energy efficiency
- 16 Internships & fellowships across the US
- 4 renewable energy academic projects

**CLIMATE CORPS**

A diverse array of emerging professionals is empowered to address the urgent challenges of the climate crisis while meeting the workforce demands of the public and private sectors.

- 42 Partner organizations hosted Fellows
- 47 Fellows advanced urgent climate initiatives
- 132 Projects were completed by Fellows
- 98.8% Fellows got a job in climate or went to school

**ENERGIZE CAREERS**

Preparing and connecting people affected first and worst by climate change with careers contributing to climate solutions creates a skilled, thriving, diverse workforce.

- 257 workers affected first and worst by climate change trained
- 131 participants placed in green trades jobs
- 79% of trainees gained knowledge of energy efficiency
- 100% of program forms and assessments revamped
BUILDING OUR LEADERS

This last year was one of investments in SEI's capacity, ensuring we have the staff and expertise to take us forward as a larger and more complex organization than ever before.

SEI hired our first-ever Controller, a Human Resources Director for our People Experiences Division, and innovative Program Directors. We also have 14 staff members enrolled in a comprehensive leadership and management training academy.

These milestones in the executive functioning of our organization signify an exciting time of continued growth and advancement of our mission.

WHAT OUR STAFF IS SAYING

95%
of staff agree it’s easy to build good working relationships at SEI

90%
of staff agree that SEI’s programs equip participants with foundational climate leadership skills

STAFF TURNOVER IS 50% BELOW NONPROFIT INDUSTRY STANDARD

EQUITABLE RECRUITMENT

We furthered equitable hiring practices with more structured interview processes, updates to job postings, interviewer tutorials, a comprehensive compensation review, and transitioning to an Advanced Applicant Tracking system to reduce administrative and applicant waiting time.

15
new staff members hired

75%
staff retention increase

30%
increase in program Fellow hiring rate
SEI is honored to present Dr. Timothy Volk with our inaugural SEI Champion Award!

Dr. Volk’s commitment to environmental education and creating a sustainable economy has guided his professional and personal path. He has 30 years of experience working in the fields of agroforestry, short-rotation woody crops, forestry, bioenergy, and phytoremediation in the United States, Bangladesh, Sweden, China, and Africa. Dr. Volk’s Ph.D. research focuses on the potential of establishing a bioeconomy in New York that makes the best use of its biomass for achieving net-zero emissions.

When recent graduates of SUNY’s Environmental Science and Forestry enrolled in the SEI’s Climate Corps program, Dr. Volk saw “a real need for this program in New York,” and “for more people to work in the sustainability, climate, and energy fields.”

Since connecting with SEI in 2020, Dr. Volk has become an invaluable strategic partner. He sponsored the graduate certificate in climate and environment associated with SEI’s Climate Corps trainings, and Dr. Volk also brought SEI conversations to SUNY systemwide levels, which has vastly expanded SEI’s ability to support student experiential learning and career pathways.

“|I’m excited for Climate Corps Fellows to get both real-world experience as well as focused leadership and professional development training in New York,” he said. “This will set them on a track to make significant impacts in their communities and organizations for decades to come.”

SEI’s Energize Colleges is partnering with Dr. Volk to facilitate a Climate Change Solutions Community of Practice during the 2024 academic semester, which will include 40 participants, faculty and staff, from six campuses across the SUNY system.

With Dr. Volk’s support, our work across SUNY will help build the workforce needed to address New York state’s ambitious goals codified under the Climate Leadership & Communities Protection Act.

Thank you, Dr. Volk, for being SEI’s champion in New York and beyond!
This school year, Energize Schools focused on intentional expansion while nurturing relationships with and providing support for school communities in our 14 active programs.

This year’s expansion work included growing our resources on Career and Technical Education (CTE) and presenting them to teachers across California, the pilot of a new direct service program with the Marin-based Safe Routes to Schools program, standardizing tools and resources for the School of Environmental Leadership, and supporting Portland Public Schools’ School Sustainability Champions Network, 32 district educators focused on advancing sustainable change at their school sites.

Our team continued to engage with teachers and students through project-based climate curriculum. This included developing and revamping 5 curriculum units and disseminating 693 units of curriculum to 233 educators. We also facilitated 69 hours of direct instruction and 5 hours of guest speakers, directed bilingual student-led challenges and campaigns, and distributed $4,850 worth of prizes and stipends to educators and schools.
In partnership with the Zero Waste Schools Program, SEI helps schools in Marin County, California, reach their zero waste goals by hosting assemblies and classroom visits, performing waste audits, partnering with school staff, and supporting student-led green teams to educate students about waste-sorting practices. None of these initiatives would be possible without our zero waste superheroes: the custodians!

During the 2023-2024 school year, four new schools joined the program, with 36 schools now participating. Of those schools, 7 achieved Bronze status, 11 achieved Silver, 4 achieved Gold, and Strawberry Point Elementary earned the Platinum Certification for its outstanding waste-reduction infrastructure, practices, and education! A Platinum-certified school is unprecedented for both the Zero Waste Marin Schools program and SEI; Strawberry Point is the first of Marin County schools to reach this sustainability caliber.

This year, the Zero Waste Marin team also created informative one-pagers for schools and a new curriculum unit on zero waste for middle schoolers. Want to bring Zero Waste to your school in Marin? Fill out the info form on the ZWM Schools page.

“I love to teach the kids how we can maintain a clean planet Earth.” —Mr. Alex
CLIMATE CORPS
EDUCATION OUTSIDE

Climate Corps Education Outside, a member of the American Climate Corps program, places Garden Educators at Bay Area public elementary schools to provide hands-on nature-based education in outdoor classrooms.

Over the 2023-2024 school year, CCEO engaged more than 10,000 students across 32 elementary schools, activating their school gardens as grounds for sparking curiosity and developing lasting relationships to nature.

Our dedicated educators foster positive relationships with their students and deliver science and ecoliteracy lessons. Additionally, they engage their school communities during volunteer work days, farmers markets, and more! Interested in bringing garden education programming to your school? Reach out to cceo@seiinc.org.

TEACHER FEEDBACK

Of 130 teachers polled, this percentage agreed or strongly agreed that their students grew in the following areas as a result of participating in the CCEO program in the 2023-2024 school year:

- Environmental stewardship knowledge: 99%
- Connection to nature: 96%
- Attitude toward fruits and vegetables: 95%
- Enthusiasm for science: 95%
- Composting and waste systems: 94%
- Social-emotional learning: 90%
“Working with children truly opens up a new side of yourself that craves growth, and I'm extremely proud of the students that taught me that. I find myself aspiring to be a student of life just to gather knowledge for the future students I teach. Professionally, I learned that teaching has always been a passion of mine, and it will always be one. My favorite memory at Garden Village was watching the students organize themselves to do tasks. I've seen kindergarteners talk out action plans to move a heavy stump just to look at worms and mycelium.”

SIMONE WRIGHT
Garden Village Elementary School

“...I enjoyed being able to create inclusive activities and lessons with students in both English and Spanish. From festivals to morning circles, the opportunity to connect with parents, students, and others in informal settings is bountiful and feels so supportive. I am encouraged to bring this idea of community engagement spaces wherever I go in the future alongside prioritizing urban garden and nature spaces, too. I'm also taking forward with me a deep respect and understanding of the importance of experiential learning.”

DMI RODRIGUEZ
Dolores Huerta Elementary School

GARDEN EDUCATORS

The Garden Educators for the 2023-2024 school year pose at the Children’s Garden at the SF Botanical Garden.
ENERGIZE COLLEGES

Higher education must take a whole campus approach to graduate students with key sustainability competencies to lead a transition to an equitable and sustainable world.

This academic year, Energize Colleges expanded our Communities of Practice (virtual learning communities), empowering faculty and staff to integrate sustainability content into curriculum and campus outreach and education. This led to the revision of 22 academic courses and the creation of a Climate Change Solutions Community of Practice that will include 40 participants from six campuses across the State University of New York system later this year.

The Energize Colleges team supported four academic projects, empowering faculty to integrate heat pump technology and renewable energy topics into their curriculum.

Following our mission to empower students as problem-solvers and change agents to address climate challenges, Energize Colleges continued our successful program offerings of internships, fellowships, and trainings. We revamped our internship program, adding soft-skill and topic-specific training sessions, intern and site supervisor orientations, and enhanced intern support. Email energizecolleges@seiinc.org to learn more.

IN 2023-2024:

30 Faculty and staff from California colleges and universities participated in a Community of Practice
6 Fellowships (in California and North Carolina)
22 Courses were revised to include energy efficiency
10 Energy efficiency internships

Scenes from Energize Colleges programs: (From left: Interns at Cabrillo College Earth Day; teacher and student at Bakersfield College; Johnson C. Smith University interns pose with campus waste, recycling, and compost baskets.)
INTERN FEEDBACK
"What I found most meaningful is being able to educate my campus community on something that should be widely known but unfortunately is not. Being able to get people involved and informed on what energy efficiency is was something that I am proud of." — Galilea Ramirez

"This entire experience has been very insightful and fulfilling. I would say being able to collaborate with another SEI intern on projects and presentations and being able to attend outreach events with her has been very rewarding. I've been able to bounce ideas off of her, coordinate events together, and create infographics for events with her."
— Bailey Foster

SITE SUPERVISOR FEEDBACK
“It has been extremely rewarding to see my SEI interns develop over the semester. They had no prior knowledge of the various energy-related initiatives on our campus and I got to introduce them to the projects and staff on campus responsible for maintaining those projects. I allowed them to choose the direction of their educational materials, within a structured set of options, because I believe personal interest and enthusiasm drives student success more than any predetermined project I could've placed them on.” — Feng Teter, Sustainability Analyst and Specialist at the Office of the Provost, Division of Academic Affairs, Fresno State
SEI’s Climate Corps program is an innovative bridge-to-career fellowship program that has supported more than 900 recent graduates and transitioning professionals looking to enter the climate sector since 2010.

We ensure the next generation of environmental leaders is empowered to address the urgent challenges of the climate crisis while meeting the workforce demands of the public and private sectors through holistic professional development workshops and industry-specific skills trainings.

This year, Climate Corps operated in six states, with 47 Fellows working to forward projects spanning all facets of climate resilience including environmental justice, corporate sustainability, renewable energy, green infrastructure, facilities, education, conservation, and more. 45 Fellows completed the UC Climate Stewards program to “improve climate change literacy and civic engagement.” Through an innovative braided funding model in the Pacific Northwest, Fellows advanced decarbonization, strategic energy management, and statewide clean building performance objectives, and 6 Fellows received their Building Operator Certification.

Could hosting a Fellow help drive your organization’s sustainability and climate-related projects forward? Are you looking for a way to join the climate industry? Email team@climatecorps.org to learn more!

IN 2023-2024:

132
Projects completed by Fellows

98.8%
Fellows accepted a job in sustainability or began a higher education program after completing their fellowships

45
Fellows were certified by the UC Climate Stewards program
Grace Yockley (Olympia School District): With the critical support of Fellow Grace Yockley, Olympic School District’s Capital High School became the first school in Washington to achieve compliance with the Clean Building Performance Standards!

Grace worked on the Energy Maintenance Plan, detailing the district's energy efficiency improvements, as well as the Operations and Maintenance Plan, showing how buildings will be operated and maintained. "Our submission can serve as a model and resource," said Grace.

Executive Director of Operations at Olympia School District Frank Wilson, who is also Grace's supervisor and team lead said: "Grace has an excellent grasp of our district goals. They align well with her own personal beliefs, which helps keep the [sustainability] conversation at the forefront."

Robby Barnes (UCSF): Saved 42,000 gallons of water annually by assessing workplaces and managing UCSF’s Green Certification Program to share resources and information on energy, water, and cost savings.

Ajah Quawiy (County of Alameda): Conducted a yearly waste assessment of how county waste trends within the facilities are meeting with GOCAP standards and created a recycling training video for county employees.

Annie Johnson (City of Durham): Saved the city $21,300 through her winter energy data analysis and also tracked the city's progress toward its Carbon Neutrality and Renewable Energy Action Plan Goals.

Alejandra Chase (City of Brisbane): Managed the Brisbane Building Efficiency Program and implemented SB1383 while supporting initiatives such as Open Space Ecology Committee’s night hike to show residents the effects of city light pollution.
Energize Careers strives to create a skilled, thriving, diverse green workforce by preparing and connecting people affected first and worst by climate change with high-wage, high-growth careers that contribute to climate solutions.

Energize Careers supports the holistic needs of participants through partnerships with wrap-around service providers, training programs, and high-quality employers.

In the last year, we administered two flagship programs focused on supporting people with barriers to employment: The Career and Workforce Readiness program and The Green Workforce Pathways program.

Our work with partners includes outreach, capacity building, program design and management support, assessing participant needs to better support their success, ongoing training project development, and training material purchasing support. As a result of the Green Workforce Pathways program contributing $300 for tools and equipment, our training partner Applied Building Science staff now provide all new staff members a tool kit for training.

Interested in supporting people with barriers to employment secure fulfilling careers while filling the growing workforce gap in the green industry? Email energizecareers@seiinc.org.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training partners for the Career and Workforce Readiness program</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individuals trained from July 2023 to June 2024</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants placed in jobs from July 2023 to June 2024</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training participants who increased energy efficiency knowledge or awareness</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PARTNER HIGHLIGHT:
BARNETT PLUMBING & WATER HEATERS

“Our mission at Barnett Plumbing & Water Heaters is to build a respectable profession. SEI’s support has allowed us to expand our curriculum and purchase a cut-away heat pump water heater, which we otherwise would not have been able to do. This curriculum is helping us train a wide range of individuals, from seasoned technicians with 20+ years of plumbing experience to those with no prior experience but an eagerness to get into the trades for the first time, while the cut-away Heat Pump Water Heater has been a powerful tool for an industry of visual learners. We take pride in being one of the top installers of Heat Pump Water Heaters in California and are grateful for SEI's support in helping us educate our team and our community along the way.”

ENERGIZE CAREERS TEAM

This year, the Energize Careers program underwent a reorganization, adding a Program Director and Associate Program Manager, and thoughtfully reviewing and revising all assessments and forms. This has allowed better information collection, amassing complex data to better serve partners and participants while accurately measuring the program’s impact.

Jo Sorrentino tabling with Lois Smith and Priya Cortez from GWP funder MCE at an HVAC contractor conference.

Isai Rea, Tyler Honrada, Shandiin Nez, and Tiffany Mrotek gather at 2024’s Staff Retreat.
DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

CULTURE AND INCLUSION ANALYSIS
SEI has partnered with Soil and Shadow, a DEI consulting agency with 17 years of experience working at the intersection of social equity, ecological regeneration, and economic justice. We started by implementing a DEI-focused employee survey which provided baseline data for ongoing assessing, monitoring, and prioritizing of DEI initiatives and support within the organization. Through the survey, we identified top priorities for the organization and our staff and have worked both internally and with Soil and Shadow to address them.

CLIMATE JUSTICE
During our annual strategic planning event in April, we were honored to welcome Richa Poudyal to share about Climate Justice and the Just Transition Framework by Movement Generation. The Just Transition power analysis allows an organization to see the historical and situational context of power and the role it plays in addressing and working with that power in structures and programs. This workshop sparked many conversations about how to apply a Just Transition framework to SEI.

EQUITY CAMPAIGN
The end of 2023 marked SEI’s first targeted donation campaign, centering internal project-based work to advance equity. We hope to continue these dedicated campaigns to support: partnership-building with environmental justice organizations; training staff and program partners on cultural competency and intersectionality; assessing and addressing inequities within the organization; and creating Racial Equity Action plans for all of our programs.

LOOKING AHEAD
There is still much work ahead. Intentional, meaningful, and equity-centered change takes both time and resources. We recently completed the first of many accessibility audits for our websites to enhance usability and an equitable experience. Launching in early 2025, SEI will participate in a comprehensive three-year Working Toward Racial Equity program in partnership with Lawrence Hall of Science and Justice Outside. SEI is committed to this path as a critical and necessary approach to resiliency and is looking forward to taking actions and learning from external consultants and partners. Learn more about SEI’s commitment to DEI on our website.
GET INVOLVED

Please join us in amplifying the power of climate leaders of all stages of life to create a resilient world where all communities thrive.

GIVE

Contributions to SEI help strengthen our valued partnerships with communities, schools, and businesses to sustain a climate leadership pathway for people at all ages and stages of life.

We are deeply appreciative of your gift to make our work possible. Thank you!

DONATE HERE

PARTNER

We’d love to partner with you. Please get in touch!

• Email us: sei@seiinc.org
• Give us a call: (415) 507-2181
• Check out seiinc.org to see some of our partners and supporters

EMPLOYEE MATCHING

A great way to maximize the impact of your donation is by giving through your employer. SEI relies on you, our incredible donors, to talk with employers about matching funds.

All of SEI's information is listed below. If you need further information such as direct deposit / bank info please send an email to accounting@seiinc.org and we will help set you up.

EIN: 68-0404081
Address: 100 Smith Ranch Road, Suite 124, San Rafael, CA 94903

CONNECT

Champion our emerging leaders' stories by connecting with us online and sharing our impact with others.

• Visit our website
• Sign up for our newsletter
• Network with us on LinkedIn
• Follow us on Instagram and Twitter
• Like us on Facebook
We’d like to extend our gratitude to our board members, regional advisory committee members, partners, funders, and the greater environmental community for supporting our work in small and big ways. We appreciate being part of a strong network of individuals and organizations committed to addressing the climate crisis.

To our board members and regional advisory committee members: Thank you for the time spent advising our teams, making connections on our behalf, and providing organization oversight.

To our partners: Thank you for the myriad ways you have collaborated with us to build climate leaders from elementary school through career.

To our funders: Thank you for enabling us to make sustainability impacts in education and workforce development. The work would not be possible without your support!

To other environmental organizations: Thank you for everything you do to advance climate solutions. We are grateful to work alongside and co-create with you.

**FUNDER SPOTLIGHTS:**

**Z SMITH REYNOLDS FOUNDATION**
Thank you for your partnership in the expansion of SEI’s programmatic work within North Carolina. Your General Operating Support Grant has allowed us freedom and flexibility to expand our impact in the region.

**MEYER MEMORIAL TRUST**
Thank you for your support in strengthening BIPOC leadership development and climate policy advocacy through the placement of Fellows within Oregon’s key nonprofit organizations.
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