



the  
square

# Biennial Report

Fiscal Years 2020-21 & 2021-22

Pioneer Courthouse Square | Portland, Oregon



Pioneer Courthouse Square  
**Biennial Report:**  
FY 2020–21 & 2021–22

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[thesquarepdx.org](https://thesquarepdx.org)

Administrative Office  
715 SW Morrison Street, Suite 702  
Portland OR 97205

PREPARED BY

**LEVERENZ**  
& ASSOCIATES

# Pioneer Courthouse Square is where Portland comes together.

Through stewardship and strategic community programming, our nonprofit ensures The Square remains the foundation of a healthy and thriving downtown, and in turn a better Portland.

## Our Goals

### Be stewards of the park

For The Square to serve its purpose as Portland's living room, it's essential that it be clean, safe, and accessible to all.

### Activate the city

Our organization plans and executes some of Portland's most exciting live events and beloved traditions. We offer The Square as a living canvas for the diversity, creativity, and generosity for which the city is known.

### Be a collaborative conduit for the community

Fostering healthy relationships within the community, The Square listens to Portlanders and quickly directs resources and attention toward their ideas, needs, and visions.

### Create sustainable funding for The Square's present and future

Through collaborative fundraising, events, brick sales, and management of civic resources, we execute a strategic plan for the present, and ensure that The Square is in a position to serve the community in the future.

## Friends,

I'm not sure there's ever been a greater argument for Pioneer Courthouse Square's critical role in Portland than the last two years.

Coming out of the pandemic is among the toughest obstacles our downtown has ever faced. The challenge was, and remains, to bring people back. To remake the heart of our city into the vibrant, bustling place we remember and know it can be again. We understand the diligence, creativity, and consistent presence it's going to take to get us there, but we believe no city block better symbolizes our ongoing recovery.

We want to extend gratitude to all of our partners throughout the City of Portland for their continued support, including park maintenance personnel, public safety officers, local businesses, tenants operating at the Square, performers and artists who share their creative talents, and community members. Thank you all for making The Square the place where Portland comes together, particularly in the times we need to most.

During the past two years, Polka Dot Downtown provided many of us our first opportunity in months to experience the joy of live performances. The Welcome Dome, in partnership with the City, reminded us of the rich tapestry of culture and creativity that makes up our city. PDX Live put Downtown Portland back on the map as a first-class destination for the biggest and best bands in the country. Our holiday programming maintained a sense of tradition amidst much disruption. And for nearly 200 days in 2020, when Portlanders needed to gather and make their voices heard, our bricks were the town square that an earlier generation intended them to be.

Thank you for being a part of our comeback, and we can't wait to show you what's in store next for the heart of downtown Portland.



**Paul Andrews**

President, Pioneer Courthouse Square



# Programming

Programming community events has been—and will continue to be— more important than ever as we work to build a healthy downtown. As The Square faced the challenges of quarantine requirements and social distancing we are proud of the role we have played in bringing people together.



# Polka Dot Downtown



Polka Dot not only brought benefits to both visitors and residents downtown, it also provided artists with funds and open-air venues to perform during the pandemic. Here are some local artists and performers describing the impact in their own words.

“...it’s a testament to the Square’s role in the city: to be the stage for our greatest celebrations, but also to help us rise up during tough times.”

Brian Libby, Architecture Journalist  
*In Search of Portland*

Designed by acclaimed artist Bill Will, as a means of encouraging community during COVID restrictions, Polka Dot Downtown installed over 100 adhesive vinyl 12’ dots throughout Downtown Portland to serve as outdoor pop-up stages for local artists, musicians, dancers and cultural groups to perform in the public realm safely. The installation brought together visitors, artists, businesses, and residents, representing The Square’s ability to creatively meet challenges and our continued commitment to our mission, in spite of the global pandemic.

**940**  
Musicians, dancers, and artists featured

**300+**  
Polka Dot Downtown Performances

**\$200k+**  
Stipends paid to performers when venues were closed

**43**  
Pieces of national and local media coverage

“ We are very grateful as artists to be able to perform. The power was in the opportunity to share with others. Mentally it is important. And spiritually, it is important for musicians to have a place to perform. It’s just the way we are made. I needed it. I was grateful— and not just for the economic benefits of performing.”



LaRhonda Steele  
Singer/Songwriter

“ The more we have really great public art, performance, and culture that is free and in public spaces, those are the seeds that grow good things ... The dots are an example of how we will continue to forge ahead. The dots give a way for performers to perform and for people to connect.”



Megan Diana  
Composer, Performer, Producer, and Founder of Piano. Push. Play.

“ I love that the dots are throughout downtown. It is a wonderful gift and surprise to passersby. We all need a little surprise in our life.”



Alexis Hamilton  
Portland Opera

“ One of the standout things for the dots is that it was free and open to the people. It was special that people truly just happened upon it. The spontaneity of it was powerful; people passing by get completely fulfilled in an unexpected way. That is the true pop-up performance.”



Jen Livengood  
A-WOL Dance Collective



# Welcome Dome

“It was truly amazing to see the community coming together to dance...Pioneer Courthouse Square’s support provided the experience we need[ed] to apply and obtain several other grants that partially funded six additional, free, outdoor community events this summer.”

**Prashant & Lisa from Dance United**  
 (who used their experience at The Welcome Dome to launch a summer of community events elsewhere)

The Welcome Dome was a three-month partnership with the City of Portland Recovery & Events Action Table in 2022. The temporary, semi-enclosed community space hosted events, workshops, art installations, and performances from April 6 – June 10, 2022. The Dome was free and accompanied by event production support from The Square that included lighting, sound, staging and much more.



**50**  
Arts Programs  
over 75 Days

**\$100k**  
Grants for  
BIPOC Artists



# PDX LIVE

“Portland’s Living Room is about to become the city’s hottest music arena.”

*Andi Prewitt, Willamette Week*

In the summer of 2022, we partnered with True West to launch the PDX LIVE concert series. From the opening concert with The Indigo Girls to The Roots to Portland’s own, The Shins, the concert series transformed The Square into a celebration of music and togetherness over four months. The concerts not only activated downtown with much needed energy, they also attracted thousands of people back to the city center.

**40k**  
Attendees

**17**  
Concerts

**36**  
Pieces of Media  
Coverage





# Cultural Festivals

Throughout the year, we not only provide a space for cultural events and performances, we partner with artists and groups to help plan, facilitate, and provide resources to produce safe and successful events.

In 2021 and 2022, The Square was thrilled to partner on the American Indian Celebration, Chinese Festival, India Festival, National Tibetan Uprising, Yom HaShoah, and the Portland Persian Party. By working together with event organizers from cultural associations throughout Portland some of these community celebrations have now been occurring at The Square for decades.



## Cultural Festival Spotlight: India Festival

India Festival exemplifies the type of event programming that activates downtown Portland and enriches the entire city. 2022 was the 28th year India Festival was held at The Square, where a full day of dance, music, and food celebrates the Portland metro area's Indian Community.

7,000  
Attendees

100  
Performers  
from across  
Oregon



“ You get the foot traffic there. People hear the music and get drawn to the atmosphere... The location is ideal for festivals.”

Jaisen Mody  
India Cultural Association



# Holidays

# Bigger than a block



**Our relationships often lead us beyond The Square.**

Adjacent to The Square is Portland's central transit mall, which spans more than 57 blocks along SW 5th and 6th Avenues. This heavily trafficked area of downtown is managed by **Portland Mall Management, Inc.**, and together we partner to bring year-round live weekly performances and art installations to nearby landmarks and key retail locations to activate the downtown neighborhood surrounding the Square. As a result, one of Portland's busiest pedestrian corridors bustles with music, movement and art.



The Square also serves as one of the central anchors for **The Portland Winter Light Festival**, an annual citywide event produced by The Willamette Light Brigade. In partnership with The Square, the Portland Winter Light Festival expands the footprint of its free citywide festival that builds community by bringing art and technology to inclusive audiences while invigorating Portland in the winter season.



**Every year, on the day after Thanksgiving, Portlanders gather in The Square to light the tree, which marks the beginning of our holiday season programming.**

The last two years have required some modifications due to COVID. However, from the lighting of the menorah to Portland Bazaar, The Square serves as a gathering place for traditions, music, and celebrations.



-  **Tree Lighting**  
20,000+ attendance | 75,000+ live TV viewers
-  **Great Figgy Pudding Caroling Contest**  
200+ Carolers | 2,500+ attendance
-  **Tuba Christmas Concert**  
200+ Tubas | 7,500+ attendance
-  **Portland Bazaar**  
35+ Vendors | 3,500+ attendance



# A Forum for Portland

**There's nothing like coming together in celebration, but The Square has long served as a vital place for Portlanders to unite and make their voices heard.**

Freedom of expression and activism play a role in any major city, and as we witnessed in the summer of 2020, when thousands of demonstrators convened in downtown Portland night after night, The Square's named bricks reinforced their role as the foundation of our city's town square. There are important debates to be had about the realities and direction of our city, nation and global community. The Square is proud to continue fulfilling its role as a natural gathering place for our most critical public conversations today and into the future.



# Park Operations

- 1 TriMet MAX Train Station**  
Additional MAX stations are located on the north and east sides of The Square
- 2 All-User Public Restroom**
- 3 Nordstrom**
- 4 Starbucks**  
Oregon's flagship location since 1989
- 5 Carts on The Square**  
The food carts on The Square serve more than 130,000 customers each year.
- 6 TriMet Customer Support Center**
- 7 KGW Studio on The Square**  
Local station KGW broadcasts to over 2.4M viewers each year
- 8 Pioneer Place**  
Upscale, urban shopping mall consisting of four blocks of retail, dining, parking and office tower
- 9 Portland Transit Mall**  
57 blocks along SW 5th and SW 6th Avenues
- 10 TriMet Bus Stop**
- 11 Pioneer Courthouse**  
Built in 1869 this federal courthouse is the oldest federal building in the Pacific Northwest and the second-oldest west of the Mississippi River

Photo taken in 2021 during Polka Dot Downtown by artist Bill Will.

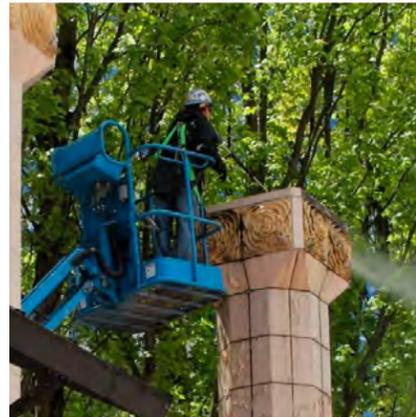


# Managing the Facility

## The Square is so much more than events and programming.

For every festival or concert, there are countless hours of planning, maintenance, setting up, and cleaning up. There is safety and security, as well as public bathrooms that serve a crucial role in the center of downtown. We also manage the leases for Starbucks, TriMet Customer Support Center, KGW, Bank of America and The Carts on The Square.

This isn't always the most visible work, but it is absolutely crucial for both The Square and the broader downtown area. None of this would be possible without The City of Portland, Portland Parks & Recreation, the Square's staff, its volunteers and donors that help to make the Square safe, clean, and accessible to the public.



### Fiscal Year 2020–2021



### Fiscal Year 2021–2022



## Staff Spotlight

This year we are highlighting Squiggy Lyons, The Square's Lead Production Assistant who has been working at The Square for 14 years.

**What's something you learned about The Square since you began working here?**

"Before working here, I didn't know how many events we do. And the diversity of all the events. One day we'll be doing cultural events like India or Chinese fest, and another day we'll be giving out free ice cream. It's just an honor to represent The Square and the town I love."

**What is your favorite thing to eat at the food carts?**

"The Block Philly Cheesesteak. They've been down here longer than I have."

**What has been one of your favorite moments working down at The Square?**

"Well, one day I was working down here during the holidays and my middle school teacher and her class walked by. So I yelled at her and she came over. I got to explain everything about The Square's Holiday Tree building process to her whole class. She was so proud of me, and it made me really happy."

**What's your motto?**

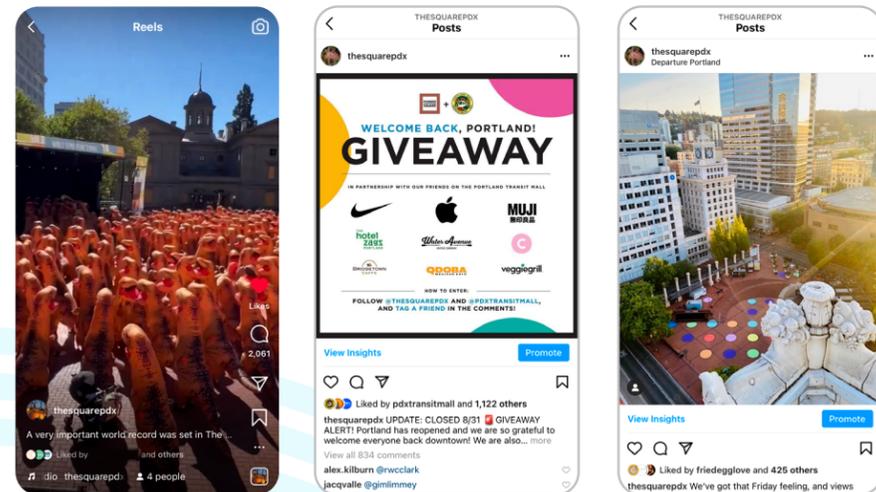
"My motto down here is it's a square, but we make it run like a circle"



# In the Media

In both local and national media, The Square has been a vehicle for positive coverage for downtown and the city as a whole.

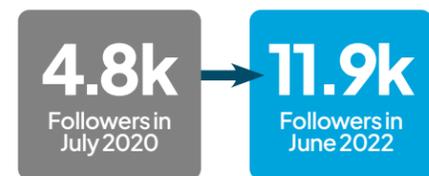
While the last two years have been especially challenging for Portland, we've been proud to be a part of facilitating and promoting some of the amazing things that have been happening here.



This post from June went viral and continues to gain traction, with over three million views to date.

## Instagram

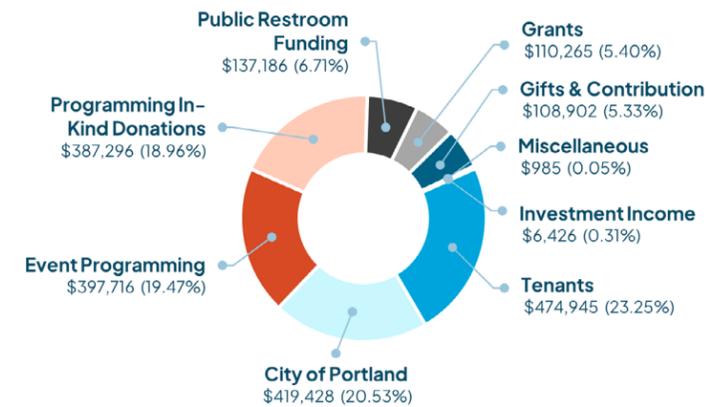
The pandemic accelerated our digital marketing with a focus on Instagram. Our aim is to reinforce our mission, publicize events, as well as to promote local artists, businesses, and partners. It has also created opportunities to connect to other organizations downtown.



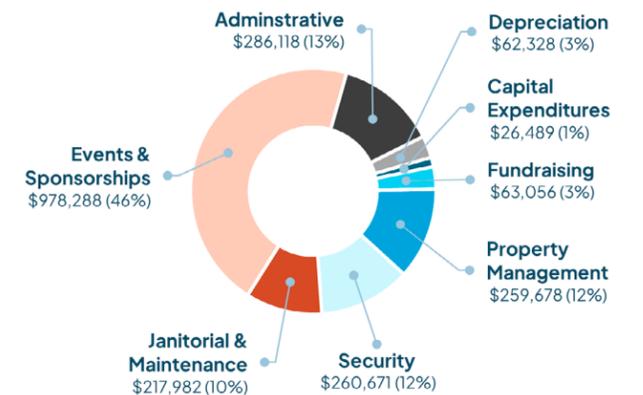
# Finances

## Fiscal Year 2020 – 2021

Income: \$2,043,149

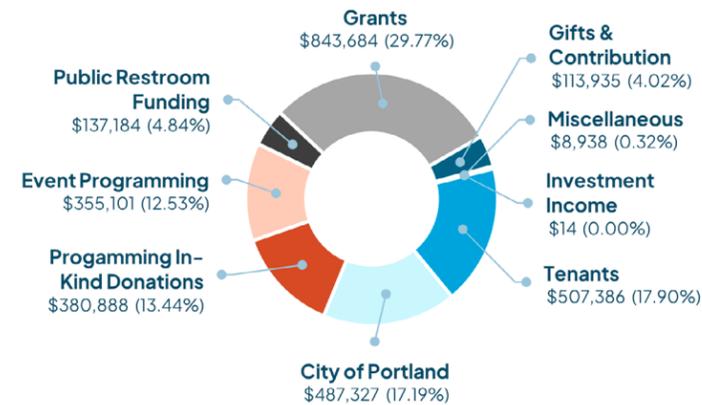


Expenses: \$2,154,610

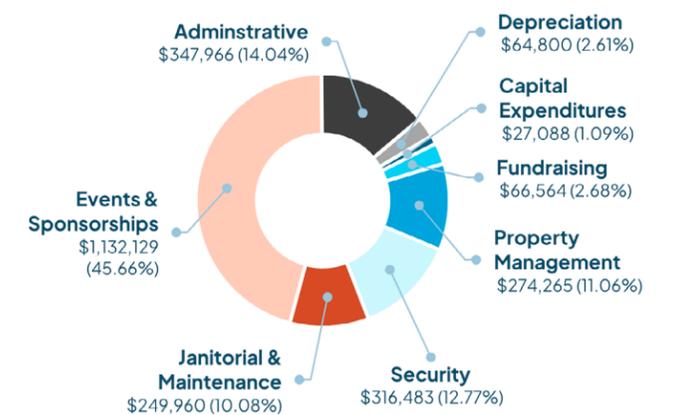


## Fiscal Year 2021 – 2022

Income: \$2,834,457



Expenses: \$2,479,255



# Programming Partners

## Polka Dot Downtown

|   |  |  |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| <br>MELVIN MARK<br>EST. 1948   | <br>200<br>MARKET   | <br>UNICO   | <br>OREGON COMMUNITY<br>FOUNDATION  | <br>LINCOLN<br>PROPERTY<br>COMPANY                                    | <br>ELIZABETH LEACH |
| Bill Will<br>Prosper Portland<br>Halprin Landscape<br>Conservancy<br>Hoffman<br>Construction<br>Company<br>Downtown<br>Portland<br>Gallatin Public<br>Affairs | The Reserve<br>Vineyards and<br>Golf Club<br>Truebeck<br>Construction<br>Downtown<br>Development<br>Group<br>Ferguson Wellman<br>Packouz Jewelers<br>Edlen & Co. | Nordstrom<br>Nike<br>Meier Family<br>Limited<br>Partnership<br>Patricia Reser &<br>William Westphal<br>Moda Health<br>Oregon State<br>University<br>Foundation | Oregon<br>Community<br>Foundation<br>Turner<br>Construction<br>Killian Pacific<br>J.K. Gill Building<br>Portland Art<br>Museum<br>Oregon Historical<br>Society | Keller Auditorium<br>The Union Bank<br>Building<br>First Interstate<br>Bank<br>Ron Stewart<br>Harriet Cormack<br>Tad Savinar<br>Peter and Julie<br>Stott | Elizabeth Leach<br>Mort Bishop<br>Portland Art<br>Museum<br>Oregon Historical<br>Society               |

## Holiday Sponsors

|  |  |  |  |   |  |
|--|--|--|--|---|--|
|  |  |  |  | Pink Martini<br>SunState<br>Equipment Co.<br>Redmond Heavy<br>Hauling, Inc. | NessCampbell<br>Crane<br>EquipmentShare<br>Portland Business<br>Alliance |
|--|--|--|--|---|--|

## PDX LIVE

|   |   |
|---|---|
|  | Pink Martini<br>Salt & Straw<br>TMT Development |
|---|---|

## Downtown Reopening Event

Here For Portland  
City of Portland

## Media & Creative Partners

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
|  |  | Cinder & Piper<br>Dodge & Burn<br>Studios<br>Paper Flames<br>Shape |
|  |  |  |

## FY 2020-22 Civic Partners

|   |   |   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|--|
|  |  |  |  | City of Portland<br>Noise Control<br>Office<br>Department of<br>Urban Forestry<br>Multnomah<br>County District<br>Attorney's Office<br>Multnomah<br>County Health<br>Department | Recology<br>Regional Arts &<br>Culture Council<br>Portland Winter<br>Lights Festival<br>Office of the<br>Portland City<br>Attorney<br>Oregon<br>Liquor Control<br>Commission |
|  |  |  |  |   |  |
|  |  |   |   |   |  |

# Board & Staff

## Board of Trustees

|  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
| <b>Paul Andrews, President</b><br>Melvin Mark Brokerage<br>Company       | <b>Emily Crowley</b><br>Emily Crowley Consulting                   | <b>Matthew Jacobsen</b><br>Sergeant, Portland Police<br>Bureau | <b>Bob Proffitt</b><br>Alpha Media                                   |
| <b>Han-Mei Chiang<br/>Vice President</b><br>Hoffman Construction         | <b>Peggy Denfeld</b><br>Pendleton Woolen Mills                     | <b>Sue Keil</b>  | <b>Sandra Rollinson</b><br>CenterCal Properties                      |
| <b>Courtney Posey<br/>President-Elect,<br/>Secretary</b><br>Nordstrom    | <b>Comm. Amanda Fritz</b><br>City of Portland                      | <b>Tom Kilbane</b><br>Urban Renaissance Group                  | <b>Comm. Carmen Rubio</b><br>City of Portland                        |
| <b>Matthew Goodman,<br/>Treasurer</b><br>Downtown Development<br>Group   | <b>Patrick Gortmaker</b><br>Kalberer Companies                     | <b>Sara Krajewski</b><br>Portland Art Museum                   | <b>Tad Savinar</b>   |
| <b>Ron Stewart,<br/>Immediate Past President</b><br>Consult: Ron Stewart | <b>Randy Gragg</b><br>Portland Parks Foundation                    | <b>Mike Krantz</b><br>Portland Police Bureau                   | <b>Caitlin Smethurst-Davis</b><br>Bill & Melinda Gates<br>Foundation |
| <b>Mary Lee Alder</b>  | <b>Jorge Guzman</b><br>Vive   NW                                   | <b>Carol Kruse</b>   | <b>Karis Stoudamire-Philips</b><br>Moda Health                       |
| <b>Peter Angel</b><br>Pearl Real Estate Partners                         | <b>Justen Harn</b><br>Open Signal                                  | <b>Thomas Lauderdale</b><br>Pink Martini/ Heinz Records        | <b>Kristin Watkins</b><br>Oregon State University<br>Foundation      |
| <b>Harriet Cormack</b><br>Civic Leader                                   | <b>Michael Harrison</b><br>Oregon Health and Science<br>University | <b>Amber Lavender</b><br>Wieden+Kennedy                        | <b>Cameron Whitten</b><br>Brown Hope / Streams of<br>Resistance LLC  |
|  | <b>Steve Holwerda</b><br>Ferguson Wellman Capital<br>Management    | <b>Dan Lavey</b><br>Gallatin Public Affairs                    |  |
|  | <b>Tristan Irving</b><br>Art by T.K.                               | <b>Cobi Lewis</b><br>MESO PDX                                  |  |
|  |  | <b>Chelsea McCann</b><br>Walker Macy                           |  |

## Honorary Trustees

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Stanley Geffen</b><br>Geffen Mesher & Co.         | <b>John Russell</b><br>Russell Development Co.    |
| <b>Brad Hutton</b>                                   | <b>Chet Orloff</b><br>Oregon History Works        |
| <b>Greg Goodman</b><br>Downtown Development<br>Group | <b>Stephen Schneider</b><br>City & Spire          |
| <b>Steve Janik</b><br>Ball Janik LLP                 | <b>Kerry Tymchuk</b><br>Oregon Historical Society |
| <b>Philip Kalberer</b><br>Kalberer Company           | <b>Dave Zier</b><br>MMDC Company                  |

## Ex-Officio

|                              |
|------------------------------|
| <b>Steve Carter</b><br>KGW   |
| <b>JC Vannatta</b><br>TriMet |

## Founding President

**Melvin 'Pete' Mark, Jr.**  
Melvin Mark Companies

## Staff

|   |
|---|
| <b>Jennifer Polver</b><br>Executive Director            |
| <b>Theresa Vetsch-Sandoval</b><br>Director of Marketing |
| <b>Lindsay Gay</b><br>Director of Operations            |
| <b>Stephanie Wisniewski</b><br>Administrative Manager   |
| <b>Squiggy Lyons</b><br>Lead Production Assistant       |
| <b>Carl Ward</b><br>Lead Janitor Associate              |
| <b>Robbie Felton</b><br>Assistant Janitor               |



“ Thank you to everyone who has visited, volunteered, or supported The Square over the last two years. Let’s keep showing up for each other, our downtown community, and Portland.”

Jennifer L. Polver  
Executive Director, Pioneer Courthouse Square

## Umbrella Members

- Evelyn Chiang
- Jeananne Edwards
- Stephen Schneider
- Chad Thayer

## Friends of The Square

- Stephanie Hillendahl
- Joseph Isaac
- James Loch
- Ann Werner

## Brick Backers

- Mohammed Albabtain
- Viki Bigler
- Leslie Brunker
- Christopher Calhoun
- Kimberly Davis
- Dewi De jarnett
- Myra Friedman
- Vickie Hanson
- Jill Hugon
- Julie Jacobsen
- Kyunghee Kwon
- J Lashbaugh
- Jeremiah Lucas-Tate
- Jamie McCormick
- Joni Pham
- Susanne Raab
- Bill Ryder
- Brent Stuntzner
- Paul Sutton
- Cason Swindle
- Michael Walker
- Lynn Smith

## Brick Sales

Brick sales are one of the key ways that the public contributes to support The Square, and it’s been that way since the very beginning. In 1980, Friends of Pioneer Courthouse Square came up with the idea to sell engraved bricks, enshrining the names of its supporters in its very foundation. They sold thousands of bricks, and were able to raise more than 1.5 million dollars to secure the park’s completion. The public is still invited to participate in this ongoing historic campaign, adding their names alongside the thousands of Portlanders who want to ensure The Square remains an indispensable feature of our downtown.





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