

2020 ANNUAL REPORT



Photo Credit Ken Francis

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



To say that the year 2020 was one of challenges would be an understatement. Taking over as president in such uncertain times caused by a global pandemic provided the opportunity to look closely at the sustainability of Warmshowers.org Foundation.

Most of our donations come from North America and Europe (less than 10% of users have donated), coinciding with spring and the start of the northern touring season. In 2020 we had little confidence that the northern touring summer would be a normal one, and we feared a dramatic drop in donations. As our only income stream to fuel our entire technology and operations, we made the decision to make several fundamental changes to our organization.

The new Board completed intensive business modelling and strategic planning to develop the best approach to deal with the threat to our income streams and the impact of replacing our technology platform. After much deliberation and analysis, we decided to charge a one-off administration fee for new users (all existing users would be "grandfathered in", 170,000 users). We were determined to maintain the essential premise that Warmshowers provides a platform for free reciprocal hosting. The platform costs money to maintain and develop so we need secure income streams to protect that essential premise.

We knew the number one request from users was for a more comprehensive mobile app. Following an open proposal process, we selected a developer and created new Android and iOS apps. Combining developing new mobile apps with the need to review and upgrade our technology, the Board of Directors is now confident that with our new financial model we can take to our technology platforms from good to excellent.

The iOS and Android apps are funded by a small monthly, or annual, fee to allow us to update, maintain and continually improve our apps functions.

Our priority was to ensure our communications to users was the top priority and we released many announcements along the way to keep everyone informed. I'm very pleased to say that the business model's shift has been successful, and our income streams are now becoming more sustainable. Though, with such a low capital base to start with, we still do need donations to help us move forward.

Looking ahead, our priority remains to provide excellent technology for our touring cyclists and hosts to easily connect and provide reciprocal hospitality.

I would firstly like to take the opportunity to thank our touring and hosting community for all of the support they have offered to each other during this very difficult year. I would also like to acknowledge the incredible work of our very diligent and hard-working Board, volunteers, and Executive Director in bringing about the changes we have sought.

Lance Bickford
President

STRATEGIC PLAN

Against a landscape of exciting growth, the Warmshowers team shares their strategic plan to establish goals and priorities for next 18-24 months.

OUR VISION

We envision a future where everyone, everywhere views Warmshowers as THE community for connecting touring cyclists, and those who host them, making millions of connections possible.

OUR MISSION

To facilitate and promote safe, free reciprocal hospitality for the world-wide touring bicycling community.



STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS

TECHNOLOGY

Develop Framework for Excellent Technology.

- Identify and create architecture necessary for excellent technology.
- Invest resources needed to create “excellent” technology platforms.
- Create reporting for deeper understanding of demographics of users.

COMMUNICATION

Increase storytelling capacity across organization platforms.

- Drive value, knowledge, and training with consistent communications.
- Create a system to streamline communications.
- Align brand consistency across all organizational platforms.

GOVERNANCE

Improve Board Governance Practices.

- Develop management structure that aligns with strategic plan and vision for growth including Board development, sustainable staff growth to advance strategic goals in technology, communications and volunteer management.
- Develop organization Core Values and Code of Conduct.
- Add income streams and develop solid and sustainable financial reporting structures to analyze and compare revenue and performance goals in real time.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Develop partnerships that bring value to the organization and the users.

- Develop a Board-approved plan for strategic partnership that is:
 - Aligned with organizational values
 - Consistent with organizational goals
 - Reflective of user needs
 - Measurable with respect to results

EMERGENT AREAS OF STRATEGIC FOCUS

Warmshowers identifies the following longer-range areas of organizational focus.

Increase the **global reach** of Warmshowers so **more connections** can be made.

Create a mechanism to **identify and respond** to barriers to hosting (and cost).

Investigate the creation of a **Global Advisory Council**.

Develop the capacity to devote more time to **community building** and less time to technology.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

I am inspired daily to be on the front lines of our organization's impact on communities and families across the globe. The experience you share and the stories we receive creates ripples of change. This is the essence of who we are at Warmshowers.org Foundation. The core of making this possible is providing excellent technology.

One of our work's essential facets is to continue to provide opportunities to share your stories and connect with others. We are a passionate, global community. To do this, we have created new forum-specific areas to post your fantastic YouTube videos, launched the Bike Life Podcast ranked in the top 50 in 6 different countries, and shared your amazing Stories From the Road across our social media platforms. We will continue to grow in these areas to create even more meaningful ways for our hosts and touring cyclists to connect. Our community remains strong and united.



Our Board of Directors has set forth a strategic plan that focuses on improved technology and systems development. As Executive Director, my mandate is to carry out the Board's directives; however, my passion continues to remain with you, our touring cyclists, and hosts. The generous spirit of our hosts changes the lives of those that visit. Our touring cyclists continue to share profound experiences of their life on a bicycle, and I thank you for allowing me the opportunity to journey with you.

As a non-profit organization, our goal is to carry out our mission while keeping an eye on emerging issues and trends, not only for our organization but for the touring community at large. We maintain close track of our strategic plan while allowing for flexibility during these ever-changing times.

As the woman behind the scenes ensuring our technology is operating as efficiently as possible, managing any spam or security issues, heading up new technology developments, overseeing partnerships, leading compliance and legal requirements as a US based non-profit organization and keeping in daily touch with our passionate community through social media and communications, I am dedicated to our ongoing growth and evolution as the number one organization for touring cyclists and hosts.

We will continue to evolve alongside you.

Tahverlee Anglen

Executive Director

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

2020 was indeed a year of change for everyone across the globe. We launched our new mobile app for all users. Users have the option to choose from a nominal monthly or annual fee to best suit their needs. Additionally, we implemented a 1-time new user fee granting users access to our robust touring platform. These generated funds allowed us to fund the app development and continue to enhance our plans to upgrade our technology.

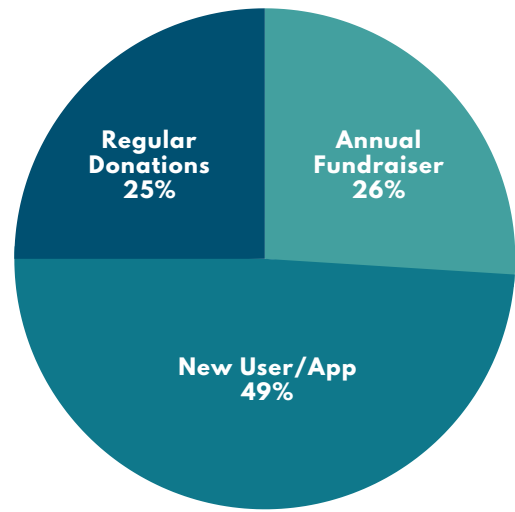
We received \$169K in 2020 from both regular donations and app/user fees, including \$45K during our bike giveaway fundraiser in May.

Each year we deal with periodic cyber-attacks, and in 2020 we spent \$58K (35% of total operating expense) on website hosting and fortifying our security to keep your data safe.

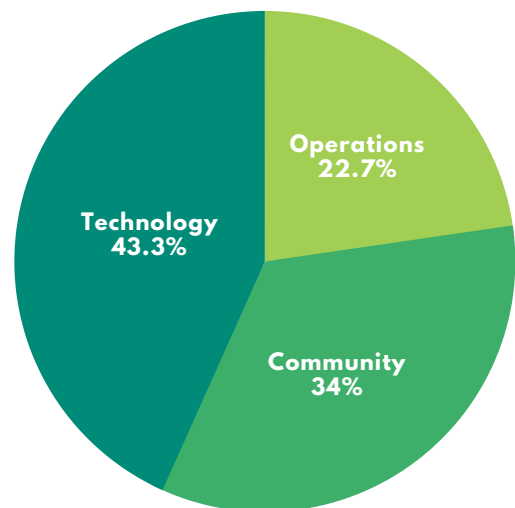
We have one part-time leadership staff along with our stellar and passionate team of volunteer Board Members from across the globe supporting the remainder of our operations.

We ended the year with a surplus of \$4,884, bringing our year-end cash position to \$69,480.

SOURCE OF FUNDS



UTILIZATION OF FUNDS



TRUST AND SAFETY

Our Trust and Safety Committee reviews and responds to reports and complaints from users involving safety and security issues. In 2020, the Committee began taking a more proactive approach by reviewing all new posts on our Forum and any negative feedback made on a Warmshower's user's profile. We respond to any complaints or reports made to our Help Desk or our Executive Director.

We continue to have very few reports involving safety and security issues, especially considering the large number of Warmshower users. Most of the negative feedback we see deals with communication issues between hosts and guests. These include hosts not responding to hospitality requests from cycling tourists and cycling tourists failing to show up when a host expects them. On occasion, we receive a report of a serious trust and safety issue and determine that it is in our community's best interest to remove a Warmshower user. This is a rare occurrence, but we do not hesitate to remove a user to help keep our community safe.

Most interactions between hosts and guests are positive and rewarding. These connections are why Warmshower continues to grow and thrive.

HERE ARE A FEW DO'S AND DO NOT'S THAT WILL HELP OUR COMMUNITY TO KEEP MAKING POSITIVE CONNECTIONS

- **DO promptly respond to any hosting requests.**
 - Guests and hosts should keep each other informed about any change in plans. If you need to cancel previously made plans, tell the other party as soon as possible.
- **DO NOT be shy about communicating your expectations as a host or as a guest.**
 - Guests should mention any hosting issues that are important to them. For example, if a guest is allergic to cats or does not like to be around large dogs, they should mention that in their profile to avoid an uncomfortable experience.
 - Hosts should include any restrictions they have in their profile. For example, if you don't accept guests that arrive after dark or need guests to leave the house by a certain time the following day. Clear and open communication can help avoid uncomfortable situations.
 - Communicate your needs openly and honestly
- **DO use common sense and trust your instincts. You are ultimately responsible for your own safety.**
- **DO NOT be afraid to move on if you feel unsafe for any reason.**
- **DO provide honest feedback about guests and hosts.**
- **DO report any safety concerns about other users to Warmshower.**



Photo Credit: Andreas Garcia

COMMITTEES

PEOPLE MAKE WARMSHOWERS WORK

Communications Committee

Outreach and engagement continue to expand. Our new Bike Life Podcast has been launched with great success. The committee works collaboratively to share Stories From the Road and to communicate regularly with users about Warmshowers and its strategic plans.

Partnership Committee

As outlined in the strategic plan, partnerships will be a focus moving into 2021. The committee began identifying potential partners in the cycling community and crafting what ideal partnerships can bring to Warmshowers. The primary goal of building partnerships is two-fold -- first, to bring value to Warmshowers users. Second, expand our reach and grow the user base to have more hosts available worldwide and more touring cyclists connecting with those hosts.

Finance Committee

Ensuring the organization is financially viable and meeting its fiduciary and compliance responsibilities with monthly review and reporting to the board of directors.

Technology Committee

Ensure that the organization's electronic website and applications are developed and maintained in a manner that is responsive to user's needs in an effective and efficient manner within the directional framework of the organization's Strategic Plan. Ensure that data held by the organization conforms with regulatory requirements, including confidentiality and retention.

Future technology planning is responsible for looking at our current structure and making recommendations to the board on future upgrade planning.

Volunteer Management Committee

The Volunteer committee's focus is on creating and managing a new volunteer database to connect and organize volunteers with roles that support the organization's needs. The priorities include streamlining the volunteer application process, creating an easily accessible and user-friendly volunteer recruitment process, volunteer appreciation, and enhancing the feeling of community despite digital boundaries.





Josiah Skeats



Alex de Chantal



Caroline Burrows



Andrew Lee



Ken Francis



Antonio Piretti



Mike Dits



Candi Dawson

Our recently launched **Bike Life Podcast** has become an overnight success! Join host Tahverlee as her guests recount amazing stories from the road and the unforgettable people they meet along the way.

Bike Life has over 15,000 downloads and is ranked in the top 75 podcasts in Slovenia, Germany, Austria, Denmark, Switzerland, Belgium, South Africa, New Zealand, and the Netherlands.



BikeFlights



Harry Shepherd

From solo touring to overcome crippling depression, spreading messages of goodwill, raising funds for worthy causes, and participating in projects to help protect and preserve our planet, these stories of transformation will truly inspire you.

You can find the Bike Life podcast [HERE](#).

Join us for this fantastic journey!



Anastasia Bouzdine



Jessica Levine

LISTEN NOW



Jerome Pilette



Josh Garman



Mark



Seth Davidson



Bill Roy



STORIES FROM THE ROAD

From Milan to Rome with Warmshowers

Contributed by Neil Warne

Last summer,

four of us cycled from North of Milan to Rome. Although there were four on our trip, we did a rider-swap in Florence, so there were only three of us at any one time. We identified our start and finish points and then plotted the most attractive route. Research showed that we could follow Eurovelo routes 5, 8, and 7, but Warmshowers would mean that we might have to deviate from that occasionally.

Before we carefully mummified our bikes in foam and bubble wrap and packed them into cardboard boxes, we knew we had three consecutive days of Warmshowers hosts. After a night at an Airbnb in Vaznaghello, we cruised down through Lombardy.

We were hosted in Cremona that evening by Enrico and his baby son. After showering, we sat in the courtyard eating, drinking, and chatting until the sun went down before retiring to our tightly pitched tents.

After a dramatic alarm call from the adjacent church bells and a relaxing breakfast, facing 40-degree heat all day, we continued to roll on across the flat, featureless landscape, thankful that Italy was generous with water fountains.

Roberto was our host in Quistello that evening, whose only request was to bring wine and dessert. After another hearty dinner, which was perfect for hungry cyclists, he took us to the local Festival of Sports with his family.

Before we left in the morning, we had to graffiti the wall in his house and sign the guestbook. By then, Roberto and Family had hosted over 100 times. Incredibly that spring, I had hosted a guest that they had. By departure time, the temperature was already climbing, and for the first time in three days, so were we.

Giuseppe was our host near Riola, where the plains gave way to the jagged Apennines. Ultimately the relentless climbing was forgiven for the beautiful views we were treated to at the top. We soon found that our biggest climb was to Giuseppe's house. We were late, one man down (who'd lost his wallet and gone looking for it), and it was dark. Giuseppe spoke little English but was a remarkable and kind host, and we sensed he had been on plenty of adventures of his own.

Our missing friend re-joined us late in the evening, and by daylight, we realized what a beautiful location we were in. It was dramatic and inspiring, but we had to move on. Our Warmshowers available hosts had dried up as we went through less well-trodden areas and had to use campsites as far as Rome. The scenery changed, yet the thrill and hospitality never wavered.

Our hosts always gave us more than we needed; they gave us friendship too.



Photo Credit: Neil Warne

STORIES FROM THE ROAD

Warmshowers Hosts Go Above and Beyond

Contributed by Maya Kosok

We recently returned

from an 11-week family bike trip through Korea and Japan with our 4- and 5-year-old daughters, and our love affair with Warmshowers is stronger than ever. We stayed with 9 Warmshowers hosts for a total of 23 nights during our trip, and it was a true highlight of the trip for our whole family.

We had hosts who biked out to greet us and one who accompanied us 10 miles in the rain just for fun. We had hosts who wowed the kids with magic tricks and gifted them their own props to take home. One host surprised us at our stealth campsite 20 km outside of town and then deftly guided us through the city traffic to his lovely apartment.

Another host welcomed us just before the super-typhoon hit and insisted we spend four nights with them to wait out the storm, during which they entertained our kids with origami and hours of cat's cradle. We tagged along on a house-hunting adventure in rural Korea with another couple and went to a hip rooftop flea market in Seoul with our first hosts of the trip. We were inspired by several hosts who took multi-year bike trips, and we were grateful for all the insights we got into Korean and Japanese culture.

As we often do, we planned our route around where we could find hosts, this time with our two young children in tow. We sometimes showed up muddy and wet; we often showed up a little bit cranky (well, 2 of us anyway), we always showed up smelly, and every single time we were warmly welcomed.

We had such a close connection with our first hosts in Seoul that they booked a flight to meet us on Jeju Island a month later. Despite a typhoon that shortened their trip to less than 24 hours and required multiple trips to the airport, they still came to join us. We spent a very rainy day wandering around together, and it remains a highlight of our trip.

We returned home with a heap of amazing memories and a renewed commitment to hosting every cyclist we can.



Photo Credit: Maya Kosok

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



LANCE BICKFORD, CHAIR | NEW ZEALAND

Board Member since January 2018

Lance lives with his wife and two teenage children on a beautiful lifestyle block north of Auckland, New Zealand. He has been a Warmshowers host and tourer for 11 years. Lance and his wife have two teenage sons, and they love hosting people from other counties and cultures to share stories. He loves to cook and is happy to cook for guests when they stay with his family.

Lance is an experienced multi-sector CEO and nowadays focuses on governance roles, including being a TEC (Vistage) Advisory Board Chair and Mentor. He is enjoying the challenge of being the Warmshowers Chair during these challenging times. He feels that our talented Executive Director and Board is focused on turning good into great and bringing tourers from all over the world into our unique fraternity.



CESAR AGUIRRE | COLOMBIA

Board Member since February 2021

César has been active in Warmshowers since 2014 and has been a host for cyclists from all over the world. He has made several solo bike trips of his own, allowing his mind to expand with the colors and flavors of Colombia's magic nature.

César is an electronic engineer focused on software development, startup creation, and technology management. He is passionate about technology and how it can impact social behaviors and positively transform the way people interact.



LUCY BINFIELD | CANADA

Board Member since February 2021

Originally from the UK, Lucy Binfield is a Ph.D. student in Forestry at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada. Her research looks at the impact of bamboo industry development on local communities. Lucy has been involved with Warmshowers, both hosting and touring for about six years, particularly while living in Beijing and touring across Asia on her trusty bamboo bike. She is passionate about the sharing/gift economy and the opportunities that Warmshowers offers for exchange, community spirit, and interaction while traveling.

A favorite Warmshowers memory is camping on the Great Wall with a touring guest and a three-course homemade meal! Apart from cycling, she spends her spare time rock climbing and hiking with her partner and dog.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



HARJAN VAN DAM | HOLLAND

Board Member since February 2021

Harjan got his masters in Human Movement Sciences and in Management. These two studies were his basics throughout his career, which went from commercial sales functions in health through various management and CEO positions in sport and healthcare. In 2013 he made the switch to Certe - medical laboratory - where he as CEO was commissioned to build a future proof brand with enough scale to keep standing tall in a quickly changing world of healthcare.

In his spare-time, Harjan loves to go road cycling. He raced when he was younger and now treks through Europe and contributes to several societal organizations. Harjan says, "Warmshowers is for me the ultimate organization for discovering, meeting & connecting people and cultures. And to learn from them is most valuable for life. To help Warmshowers to reach their goals and bring the love of biking to the world is my personal contribution."



JERRY KOPACK | UNITED STATES

Board Member since February 2020

Bikes. As far back as Jerry can remember, they have always been a part of his life. There is just something so magical in the exuberance and freedom that they provide.

From 2005 – 2015, Jerry founded and ran a hospice and, during that time, stumbled upon something that he calls the "human experience." It pertains to the intrinsic value and necessity of connection. In April 2019, he was bike touring through a small mountain village in Turkey called Camardi. A storm was coming, and a man named Isa approached him and asked if he had heard of Warmshowers. Isa was a host and offered Jerry food, a hot shower, and room for the night. It is kindness and connection like this that Jerry has experienced from individuals and families such as Isa throughout the 16 countries that he has bikepacked through. From that time, Jerry knew that he wanted to be connected with an organization working to make the world a little bit smaller.



REMI LAURANT | CANADA

Board Member since February 2019

Rémi took his first bike tour from Turkey to Malaysia, crossing Central Asia, China, and Southeast Asia. During this trip, he had the chance to meet wonderful people. People ready to share their time, their home, and their food. More than landscapes and pictures, the people he met made the journey inspiring. This first experience led him to continue traveling with his young children to open them to the world. (Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Cuba, Atlantic Provinces, Vermont).

Rémi gives back by working for charity in Montreal (Canada) and volunteering as a board member for the amazing Warmshowers. In daily life, Rémi runs a charity whose mission is to recycle bikes for vulnerable people. He believes that everybody should have access to a bike to discover the world and meet amazing people.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



DONNA PRICE | UNITED STATES

Board Member since January 2018

Donna is a lifelong cyclist, mom, partner, and business/marketing strategist. She lives in the wilds of northwest New Jersey with her partner Ken and their two daughters. Donna created a US cross-country bike tour for the Hosteling International Niagara Chapter in 1996 and led the tour from Portland, Maine to the coast of Oregon, 4500 miles. Her book **Launching Your Dreams: Making Wild Ideas Happen** shares her cross-country ride and the HOW to making wild ideas happen.

Her family rides and tours on tandem bicycles in the northeast. They have been hosting Warmshowers guests for ten years, enjoying guests from around the world, sharing cycling stories, good food, and always some route advice. Donna is an entrepreneur and brings a background of non-profit management and marketing strategies to Warmshowers.



ALBERTO ROSSO | ITALY

Board Member since March 2020

Alberto Rosso works as an ICT Project-Process Manager and manages many community projects in his hometown near Venice, Italy. He is the founder of a small green organic business, co-founder of One Cultural Coop. Also, He volunteers on the board of a non-profit organization that buys and sells local organic products. Alberto has managed a European Community grant for saving local organic seeds for the past three years.

He enjoys traveling and challenging himself with new experiences. During his free time, he backpacks through many countries around the world. Alberto is married and has one daughter named Agata. He bikes to and from his office whenever possible and loves to take bike touring vacations. Alberto's goal is to slow down and live a simple life of natural intent.



BRUCE SQUIRE | UNITED STATES

Board Member since January 2017

Bruce first learned about Warmshowers in 2013 while talking to touring cyclists on the Katy Trail in Missouri. After learning about the mission of Warmshowers and wanting to 'pay it forward,' Bruce became a member in 2014. Bruce and his wife live in Arizona near the ACA Southern Tier route, where it passes through the metropolitan Phoenix area. They have had the opportunity to host cyclists from all over the country, as well as from Canada, France, Chile, and Sweden. They enjoy supporting touring cyclists and hearing about their journeys.

Bruce is a lawyer and manages his own law firm, so his busy schedule does not allow him to tour as much as he would like. However, hosting touring cyclists is a way to enjoy bike tours vicariously.

Bruce particularly enjoys rails-to-trails routes. He has ridden the Katy Trail as well as the Great Allegheny Passage and the C&O Canal Path twice, once in each direction. He also enjoys bikepacking on gravel roads with trips to Catalina Island and Northern Arizona. Bruce volunteers as a mechanic and shop assistant at a local non-profit bicycle cooperative in his spare time.



A COMMUNITY OF BICYCLE TOURISTS
**AND THOSE WHO
SUPPORT THEM**



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