

SEEDS OF LEARNING
EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION CENTER

HERES TO OUR

SUPERHEROES!



ANNUAL REPORT
2017

YOU ARE OUR SUPERHEROES!

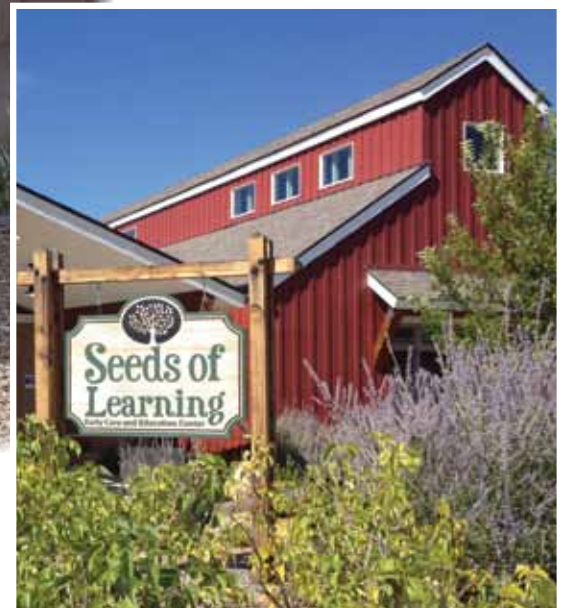
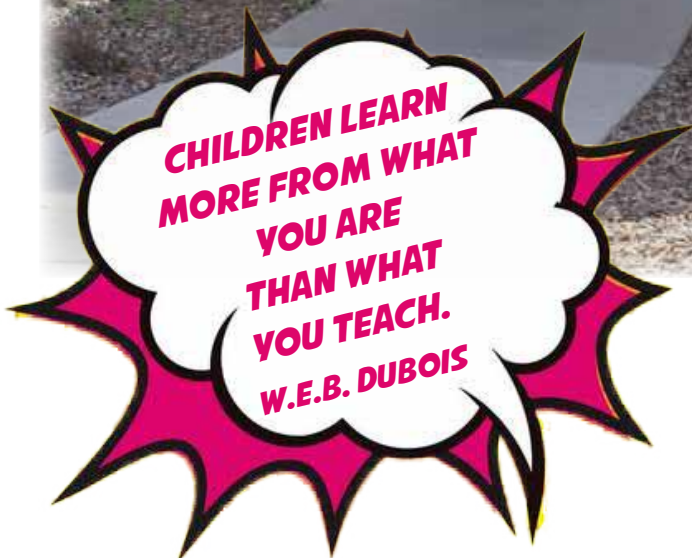
Your generous support of Seeds of Learning provides high quality early care and preschool education for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children in Pagosa Springs and surrounding areas.

A child's brain is most positively affected by learning up to age 5. Studies have proven that children enrolled in early education become better adjusted socially and academically throughout their lives. The safe and loving environment of Seeds of Learning allows parents to work, which positively impacts their future as well as the economic development of Pagosa Springs.

Seeds is the NAEYC-accredited Early Education Center in Archuleta County. As a non-profit that receives minimal support from local government, your contributions are critical to changing the lives of our at-risk preschoolers.



THANK YOU!



A LETTER FROM THE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR !

Hello!

Thank you for making 2017 yet another remarkable year for Seeds of Learning! Thanks to your commitment, time and talents, the program is better and stronger than ever.

When Susan got the call that a family member's twin boys had been taken away and placed in protective custody, she couldn't stop thinking about them. She had dozens of questions. After some thought, she called to see if there was something she could do. She knew being a single mom of a 16-year-old probably didn't qualify her to do much, but she asked anyway. She was wrong. As it turned out there was a lot she could do. She adopted them.

Before bringing them to Pagosa Springs she added their names to the waiting list at Seeds. Susan knew without the benefit of Pre-K, these boys would start kindergarten many months behind their peers enrolled in pre-K. Unfortunately, Seeds did not have an opening for one child, let alone two. And then a miracle happened! Twin boys in the classroom her boys would go into unexpectedly had to move! Susan's boys were in!

Now all she had to think about was how to pay for this early care and education program these boys needed so badly. Working two jobs already took Susan away from the boys more than she wanted. Adding another job to her day was unthinkable. Donor contributions that allow at-risk children equal opportunity to begin kindergarten totally prepared to succeed in school and later in life came to her rescue.

Susan's story is not unique. The generosity of our individual and business donors made a huge difference in the lives of over 80% of other Seeds children over the past year.

According to the Children's Defense Fund, "High quality child care and early education are critical to the success of two national priorities; helping families work and ensuring that every child enters school ready to succeed." Thanks to you, Seeds' 2018 graduates will enter school ready to succeed. You are breaking the cycle of illiteracy that leads to poverty - you have truly made a difference in the world.

With warm regards,

Lynne L. Bridges



A LETTER FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT!

It has been an honor to serve on the board of Seeds of Learning Early Care & Education Center for the past five years. Pagosa Springs is blessed to have this extraordinary child-centered, play-based, non-profit program in our rural, low income community. This program not only benefits at-risk children, but also their families and community.

The teachers at Seeds either have or are working towards a Bachelor or Associate degree in Early Childhood Education. Along with providing a safe, learning environment each day, the staff hosts a themed family event once each quarter such as a Fall Festival or Dr. Seuss' birthday celebration. It's heartwarming to watch the kiddo's pride as they show off their classrooms and share activities with their family members.

Seeds' staff offers the Incredible Years Parenting Class twice a year to the families. Along with child-rearing skills, family members develop lasting friendships and support for each other. This 14-week program is a big commitment for working families and serves as a testament to the success of this educational training.

One of the reasons I serve on the board is because of the amazing changes I've seen in children's emotional growth. The Dinosaur School Social Skills and Problem Solving Curriculum utilizes puppets to role-play real situations. The children gain social and emotional competencies such as understanding and communicating feelings, problem solving, and anger management. With life size puppet Molly, they practice friendship skills and learn appropriate classroom behaviors. Families recognize the benefit of this teaching and have made comments such as "I see what she has learned through her play and interactions with children away from school."

Graduates of Seeds enter kindergarten with social, emotional and academic skills ready to learn and succeed in school and beyond. The seed has been planted for them to become productive adults contributing to their communities

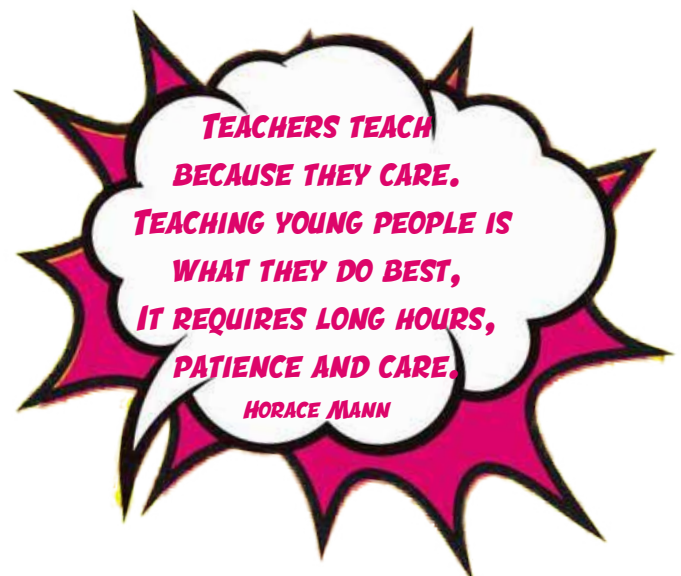
I'm impressed by busy families who volunteer two hours a month in a variety of capacities. They help with laundry, work in the classroom and attend Family Involvement Committee meetings to plan projects that benefit the Center. Families are thankful to have such an amazing place for their child to learn in while they are being productive at work.

We sincerely appreciate the support of our donors for their generosity towards the care and education for our at-risk children and their families.

Deb Jennings,



Seeds of Learning Board President



MISSION

Our mission is to empower and inspire a diverse population of young children, nurturing lifelong learning as they become successful adults.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

It is important for us to inform donors of HOW your generous gifts were used and the IMPACT your support makes for the young children at Seeds of Learning.

Your generosity allowed low-income children the opportunity to learn skills they will put to use in kindergarten and beyond. Without your help, many of the 23 children graduating would have been unable to afford tuition. Your generosity means these children now have a head start in life. Each of these children successfully attained the goals set for them in their Individualized Learning Plan. They confidently entered Pagosa Springs Elementary socially and educationally prepared to succeed in kindergarten. Multiple studies have proven that with the quality preschool education they received at Seeds of Learning, these students will have a better chance of graduating from high school, earning more money, and becoming responsible members of their community.

Through your donations, Seeds of Learning was able to install another child-sized bathroom in the Pre-K classroom, which allows the Center to add 6 more students to the rolls. This means that 6 more children will be able to enter kindergarten with the skills they need to be confident and successful.

THESE STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES WOULD DEFINITELY CALL YOU THEIR SUPERHEROES!



BIG DREAMS

2016-2017 graduates were asked what they wanted to be when they grew up.

Avitt - Skate Board Trainer

Brooke - Nurse

Camellia - Gymnastics Girl

Carlie - Cowgirl

Chloe - Cinderella

Cooper - Scientist

Isabel - Cook

Juniper - Firefighter

Kolby - Firefighter

Landen - Ninja

Leon - Police Officer

Lilabeth - Supermarket Worker

Mabel - Ballerina

Neitzey - Worker like Dad

Noah - Police Officer

Olivia - Forest Ranger

River - Teacher

Rown - Police Officer

Shiloh - Actor Samuel - Transformer

Tevye - Veterinarian Toby - Teacher

Trent - Wildlife Explorer

FAMILY OCCUPATIONS

All families at Seeds pay tuition based on their income. They work in many areas providing critical services and economic vitality to our community. Family occupations in 2017 included:

Business Owner	18	Archuleta County	2	Engineer	1
Construction	8	Springs Resort	2	Legal Secretary	1
Administrative/Clerical	7	Utilities	2	Biologist	1
Teacher	5	Graphic Designer	1	Restaurant Manager	1
Chef	4	Musician	1	Banking	1
Food Service	4	Law Enforcement	1	Computer Tech	1
Forest Service	3	Daycare Provider	1	Home Health Care	1
Retail	2	Nurse	1	Office Administrator	1
Retired	2	Real Estate	1	Licensed Electrician	1
Artist	2	Non-Profit	1	Ski Mechanic	1
Hotel Owner/Operator	2	Architect	1	Therapist	1
		Landscaper	1		

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE PEOPLE!

SERVICES

Total children served **99**

Average Waiting List **40**

Kindergarten-ready graduates **23**

At-risk students **75**

VOLUNTEER HOURS

Board of Directors **2,538**

Parents **1,606**

General Public **352**

Total Volunteer Hours **4,496**

STAFF

Degreed Teachers **8**

Assistants **4**

Administrative Staff **3**



PROGRAMS

CREATIVE CURRICULUM

This child-directed, play-based program was chosen for our Seeds students because it is based on the latest research about how children learn best. It allows teachers to autonomously decide what needs to be taught to meet every child's individual needs. It meets all of the standards put forth for effective early childhood curricula by NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children).

TEACHING STRATEGIES GOLD

Children's progress is observed, assessed and recorded online daily. Quarterly the staff completes check points on all 38 developmental goals for each child and twice a year teachers conduct Parent-Teacher Conferences with families to create an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) for each child. Online assessments are available to families to follow development progress.

THE INCREDIBLE YEARS DINOSAUR SCHOOL

An award winning training approach that promotes social, emotional, and academic competence in children through the use of puppets Dina, Molly and Wally. Our children learn to understand feelings and practice conflict management skills while improving their cognitive development.

THE INCREDIBLE YEARS PARENT TRAINING

This 14-week training class focuses on strengthening parent competencies and encouraging parent/child relationships. This program includes limit-setting, problem-solving and anger management skills. Families feel included and supported in their own child-rearing as they participate in their child's learning experience at Seeds.

NUTRITION

Seeds serves breakfast, a nutritious afternoon snack and a hot lunch prepared every day by Archuleta Seniors, Inc. Nutrition is critical to brain as well as physical development. The children are provided with the opportunity to learn about a wide variety of foods and get started on a path to healthy eating habits.



MEET OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS!

Charged with raising funds to supplement tuition for almost 80% of Seeds students, this small but mighty group of dedicated people spent countless hours in 2017 helping Seeds in a multitude of ways.

One third of Seeds income was raised by the Board through activities like The Little Black Dress Affair, newsletter, annual appeal and business sponsorship presentations. The board conducted several opportunities for donors and newcomers to learn about Seeds through thank you events and house parties. They participated in events supporting Seeds' families and staff like the Back to School Bar-B-Q and Teacher Appreciation Week, not to mention monthly meetings and committee assignments.

Their dedication, guidance and hard work is a monument to what volunteers can accomplish. Seeds' staff, families and children can't thank them enough.

Deb Jennings - PRESIDENT

Jean Smith - VICE PRESIDENT

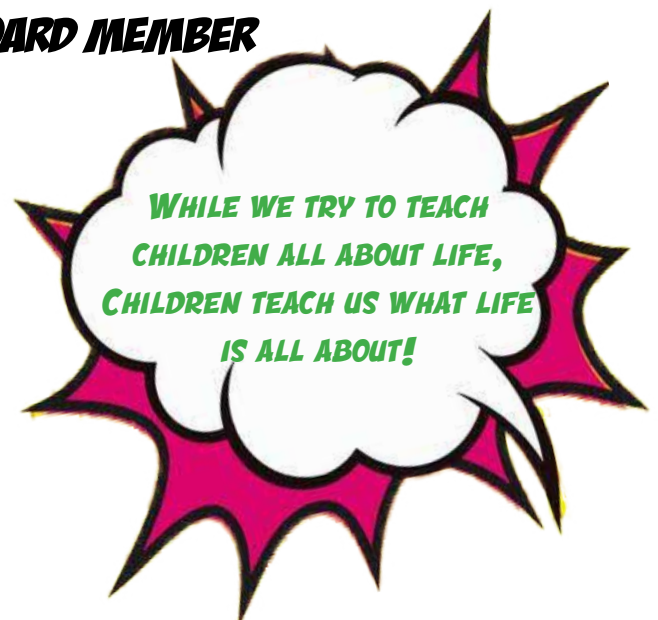
Connie Knief - SECRETARY/TREASURER

Terri Hardeman - BOARD MEMBER

Allyson Jones - BOARD MEMBER

Lisa Peters - BOARD MEMBER

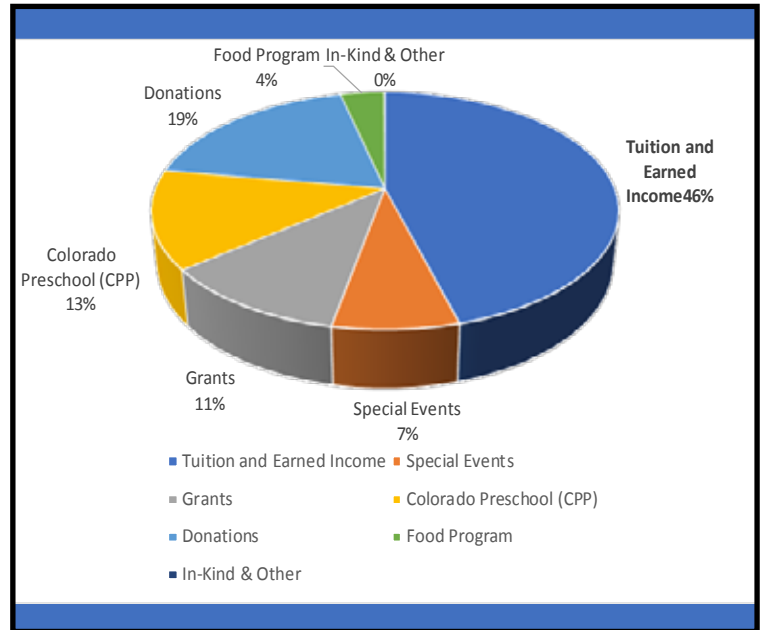
Dee McPeck - BOARD MEMBER



2017 FINANCIALS

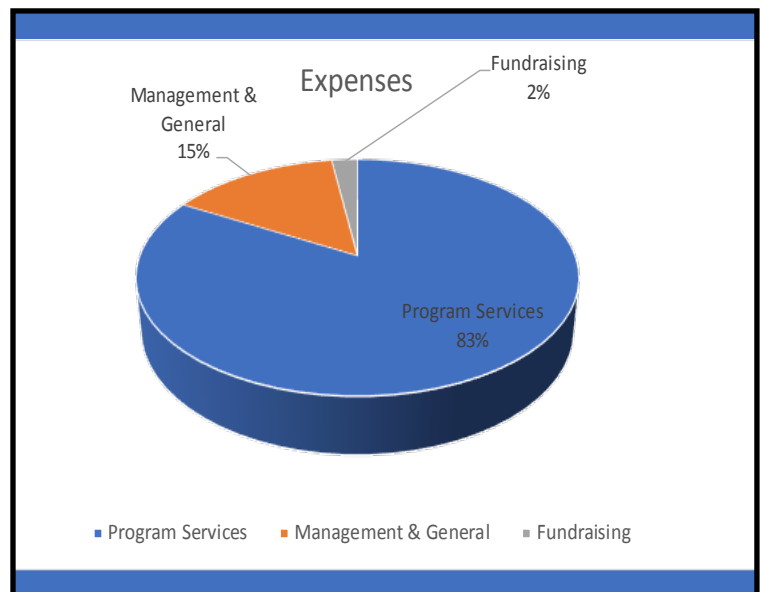
Revenues

Tuition and Earned Income	\$290,659.48
Special Events	\$46,785.72
Grants	\$70,800.00
Colorado Preschool (CPP)	\$85,191.82
Donations	\$119,153.00
Food Program	\$22,936.00
In-Kind & Other	\$489.00



Expenses

Program Services	\$547,255.56
Management & General	\$96,569.80
Fundraising	\$14,794.57



Tuition, fundraising events, grants and individual donations comprise the bulk of Seeds' revenues. The Colorado Preschool and Food Program funding help offset the costs of the program.

In 2017, 83% of the funds raised went toward program expenses while 15% was used for administration costs and 2% was used to pay for fundraising costs.

Detailed financials are available on request.

Our current 990 (non-profit tax return) is posted on our website:
www.growingseeds.org

OUR INCREDIBLE SUPERHERO CONTRIBUTORS!

In 2017 donations were received from a wide range of individual supporters, businesses and foundations.

To protect the privacy of our donors, they will not be publicly acknowledged in a list. However, the following numbers illustrate the extraordinary levels of giving that we received. These figures represent numbers of donors at various giving levels. What it does not reflect are the many donors who have created automatic recurring donations over the course of the year which allows for more realistic budgeting.

We thank each and every one of you for giving to the children at Seeds. Many of the at-risk kids are "expected to fail". You are the superheroes that have given them the opportunity to learn and succeed every day.

NUMBERS OF DONORS AT VARIOUS GIVING LEVELS IN 2017

\$10,000+	5
\$2,500+	12
\$1,000+	28
\$500+	41
\$500 AND UNDER	293

In-kind donations as well as hundreds of hours of volunteer time create amazing contributions that support the children at Seeds. Just a few of these efforts include:

- Silent Auction Donors for The Little Black Dress Affair
- Donations of food and time for the Donor Thank You Party
- Volunteers for all our events and activities
- Families who did laundry, wrote thank you notes to donors, cleaned classrooms, watered the garden and made notecards, just to mention a few tasks.

It truly takes a village to raise a child and Seeds proves that is very true. Thank you to everyone who helps make a difference in the lives of the kids.



2017 COMMUNITY OUTREACH

2017 was an active year for students, teachers, parents and board members at Seeds of Learning. The Family Involvement Committee held monthly meetings and family events. The committee also met to make art cards using the children's art and sold them at local businesses.

The Butterfly and Ladybug classrooms had an adventure into the outdoors on a field trip to Yamaguchi Park to celebrate GECKO (Giving Every Child Knowledge of the Outdoors). Parents, staff and board members enjoyed time with the kids learning about camping, National Parks and leaving only footprints.

May brought graduation for 23 of our students and the annual Kindergarten field trip to meet their new school, teachers and classrooms. Smiles and tears were shared by all.

Our annual Donor Party featured a dinner prepared by a generous donor. Lead teachers explained some of the program highlights of each classroom. Our Back to School Barbeque was a big success with families seated at the picnic tables and spreading blankets to eat in the field!

Our premier fundraiser, Little Black Dress Affair "Prom Night" was held October 14, 2017 with great community support. The new format for the silent auction was a big hit and the Cannondolls provided some lively dance music for the ladies.

A successful community raffle was also held to help offset federal funds lost from the cancellation of the Secure Rural Schools program.

At Christmas the Butterfly, Ladybug and Dragonfly classes made gifts and visited the Senior Center where Pagosa Seniors were entertained with songs and gifts. The children had lunch with their families and seniors. It is always wonderful to see the interaction between generations.



I AM IN PRESCHOOL
I am not built to
sit still,
keep my hands to myself,
take turns,
be patient,
or keep quiet
ALL OF THE TIME.
I need:
motion,
novelty,
adventure,
and to engage the world
with my whole body.
LET ME PLAY.
(Trust me, I'm learning)

PARENT COMMENTS

My most positive aspect of Seeds is the teachers take time to get to know each child and always give me feedback of my child's progression.

My child loves school, has made positive relationships and Seeds is very supportive of his needs.

All caregivers and parents are encouraged to participate as much as possible.

We have absolutely loved Seeds for nearly 7 years. It is the best little school and we are sad we are leaving.

Most positive so far is Lillie is happy when we pick up. Had a good day. Also she loves her teachers esp. Miss Robyn.

Nothing bad. "All nice" says Leon.

Dinosaur school - the developmental & emotional learning is wonderful.

Great teachers & kids.

Paisley continues to develop/grow from all the good social interactions.

The positive aspect of Alex's experience is that he comes home really happy.

As for positive, she has already learned so much in the short time she has been at Seeds.

She is thriving! Thx.



Erica recently moved from a large city to Pagosa Springs for a smaller, safer community for her family. A single mother of two daughters, she begins and ends her day with worry.

Can I find a safe apartment or house? Where will my preschooler go when I am at work? How can I afford tuition? What if my old car won't last the year?

Erica does everything in her power to give her children a good life. After finding a comfortable house for her little family, Erica learned about Seeds from her realtor. She toured the Center with Director Lynne Bridges and felt her 3-year-old daughter Ava would be challenged and safe while she worked.

Sadly, full tuition at Seeds of Learning was well above what Erica's retail job would allow her to pay on a daily basis. She hated the thought of trying to find a babysitter for Ava. But thanks to donors like you, Ava is growing and learning at Seeds. Your gifts help pay the extra \$22 for Ava's tuition each day.

Erica said, "With Ava going to Seeds, I am able to go to work each day and I know that she is safe, cared for, and receiving quality preschool education." Like Erica, we are grateful for kind and compassionate friends like you!

IMAGES OF 2017

*Please visit our website
to learn more about us
or to donate to
the children.*



WWW.GROWINGSEEDS.ORG
970-264-5513

Seeds of Learning would like to thank our
**BUSINESS SPONSOR SUPERHEROES
OF 2017**

*who demonstrated their commitment to
changing young minds through their financial support.
We ask our donors, families and staff to show them support in return
by frequenting their businesses whenever possible.
And when doing so, please thank them
for their support of Seeds.*

Treasure Falls Silver Sponsors

Citizens Bank of Pagosa Springs
Reynolds Ash + Associates Architecture

BAM!

San Juan Bronze Sponsors

Galles Properties
Growing Spaces

KA POW!!

Quartz Lake Copper Sponsors

Colorado Timber Ridge HOA

POP!

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