



A look back at 2020



Shop at [AmazonSmiles.com](https://www.amazon.com/miles) and choose Seeds of Learning as your charity of choice.

Select Seeds when you sign up for the City Market Cares program.

Your help truly makes a difference.

Thank you!



*Seeds of Learning
Early Care and Education Center*

Coming Home



*2020
Annual
Report*

Learn more about us at www.growingseeds.org

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**Seeds
of Learning**
Early Care and Education Center

A Note from the Executive Director

2020 at Seeds of Learning was a year of "firsts" and a year of "lasts".

As with the rest of the world, it was the first time the staff, parents and children were faced with navigating the murky waters of a pandemic. While there were times it seemed impossible to follow all the guidelines and continue to educate our students, everyone involved made it work. With determination and support from staff and parents alike we were only forced to close our doors two and a half months while Covid 19 raged around us. The teachers kept teaching; the kids kept learning. It was remarkable.

Another first was the "coming home" of one of our graduates. The little boy on the cover is Gabe Heraty in 2006 at the age of three. The young man below is Gabe Heraty in 2020 at the age of 18 when he won first place in our fundraiser *Dancing with the Pagosa Stars*! He raised the most money of all the dancers to support the program that gave him his start 15 years ago.

Gabe attended Seeds in an old, run-down building on the river when the program was still relatively new. He was a serious little boy with big dreams. Next June Gabe will graduate from Pagosa Springs High School and plans to continue on to college. It was amazing to see what an accomplished, confident young man he has become. We thank him for being one of our first graduates to "come home" to help Seeds continue educating other children.

This will be my last note for the Annual Report as 2021 will be my last year as Executive Director of this incredible preschool. When I left my home daycare business to become ED almost 19 years ago I never dreamed it would become an accredited childcare center with an award-winning program, committed teachers, and graduates every year that continually exceed expectations.

As I look forward to retirement I will also look back at years of memories filled with generous donors and funders, wonderful staff, dedicated board members, helpful parents, and unforgettable kiddos. I will miss them all, but know this program and the children it serves will continue to flourish. I appreciate this "last" chance to thank everyone who has helped make my years so meaningful.

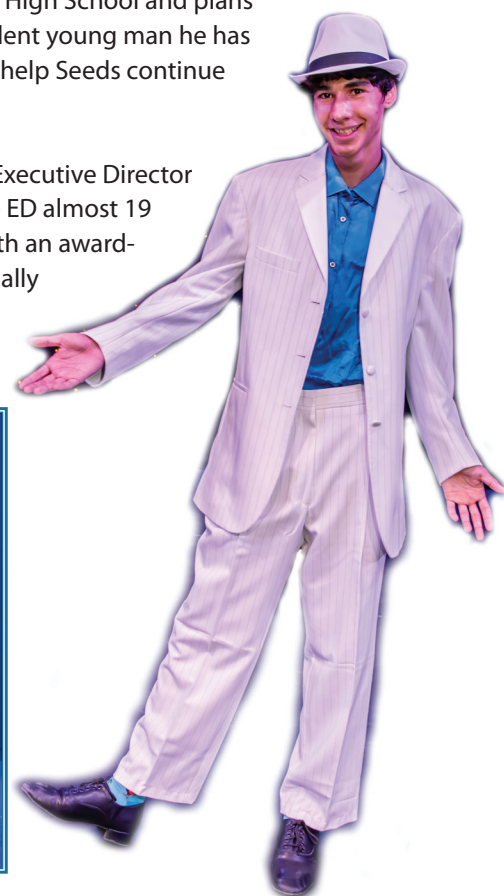
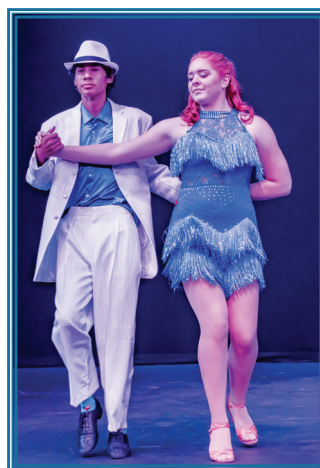
With warm regard,

Lynne

Lynne Bridges, Executive Director



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



Programs That Create Success

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 and 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.



"If children feel safe, they can take risks, ask questions, make mistakes, learn to trust, share their feelings, and grow." ~ Alfie Kohn

Truly wonderful, the mind of a child is." ~ Yoda

A Special Village

Our Families

All families at Seeds pay tuition on a sliding scale that is based on their income. The staff and Board of Directors work with families whose income prevent their children from attending our NAEYC accredited program by supplementing tuition through grants and fundraising.

The occupations and the services provided by Seeds family members are varied and critical to the economy of Pagosa Springs. They include medical professionals and business owners, construction workers and food service employees, local government staffers and education providers. The one thing they have in common is their desire to provide the best education and start in life possible for their children.

Our Community

The community of Pagosa Springs is incredibly supportive of Seeds and it's mission. In a normal year the students at Seeds have multiple interactions with members of the community. Out of Covid 19 safety concerns, many of those entertaining and educational opportunities had to be postponed.

The children and staff will look forward to again spending time with Firemen, Police Officers, EMT's, Forest Rangers and Dental Professionals. They will make plans for sharing gifts and songs with local Seniors during the holidays. They will welcome second graders into their classrooms to read and giggle together. They will gleefully get on the bus to visit their new kindergarten teachers. These activities will seem even sweeter after this forced separation from the community that loves Seeds' children.

Our Board of Directors

Lisa Peters, President
Connie Knief, Secretary/Treasurer
Pete Macomber, Director
Deneice Stacy, Director

Charged with overseeing the financial health of Seeds of Learning, this small dedicated group guided efforts to supplement tuition for over 80% of Seeds' students in 2020. Their responsibility did not take a break during the pandemic. With more families affected by job losses the need only grew. They pushed forward to raise critical funds by conducting their major fundraising event "Dancing with the Pagosa Stars" virtually. Dancers rehearsed and shined and donors like you applauded their efforts with dollars. Their determination and hard work proves what passionate volunteers can accomplish, even during difficult times. Seeds' staff, families and children can't thank them enough.



"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." ~ Maya Angelou

What Your Support Provided

Your generous donations in 2020 made it possible for our graduating class to thrive and confidently move forward into Kindergarten. Longitudinal studies done over decades have proven early education produces adults who achieve higher wages, better health, fewer divorces and lower incarceration rates. Your support has created the groundwork for children, who are often expected to fail, to instead succeed in life.

Your dollars provided through fundraising events like *Dancing with the Pagosa Stars* and the annual appeal meant breakfast, a hot lunch and snacks for our kiddos every day. We know the meals at Seeds are often not only the most nutritious of their day, but in some cases the only meals they may get in their day. When tummies are full, brains can learn.

The children were not the only beneficiaries of your generosity in 2020. For the first time in Seeds history we were able to reward our outstanding educators with salary raises to match their experience. Equally exciting was that your help meant we could provide them with critical health insurance. In a pandemic year that so clearly illuminated the disparities in our health care system, your gifting allowed us to provide a safety net for our staff and their families. For these extraordinary benefits we thank you.



Teachers have three loves: love of learning, love of learners, and the love of bringing the first two loves together." ~ Scott Hayden

Graduating Class of 2020

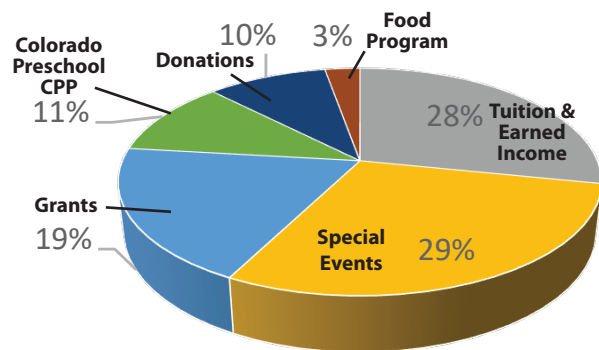
Emily Carpenter
Easton Caler
Connor Coleman
Noah Freeman
Amorah Forest
Wyatt Haas
Odin Hawthorne
Seton Hensle
Reed Hewitt
Ariella Holiday
Bristol Jacobson
Shiloh Kossler
Lillie Lemely
Paisley Mackey
Forest March
Ella Osmera
Aspen Perez
Emery Rohwer
Trent Tator
Hayden Thom
Sedona Zissman
Owen Zubia

2020 Financial Report in a Nutshell (audited)

Revenues

Tuition and earned income	\$234,671.00
Special Events	\$244,300.99
Grants	\$160,206.48
Colorado Preschool (CPP)	\$89,845.58
Donations	\$79,654.07
Food Program	\$23,235.27

Total Revenues \$831,913.39



Tuition, fundraising events, grants and individual donations comprise the bulk of Seeds' revenues. Funding from the Colorado Preschool and Food Program helps offset the costs of the food program.

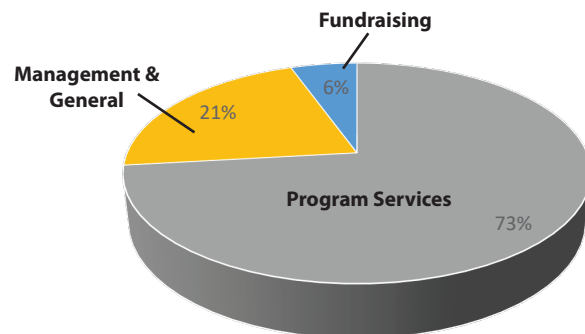
In 2020, 73% of the funds raised went toward program expenses, while 21% was used for administration costs and 6% was used to pay for fundraising costs.

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



Expenses (including depreciation)

Program Services	\$488,087.83
Management & General	\$142,253.37
Fundraising	\$36,543.07
Total Expenses	\$666,884.27



A Snapshot of Your Incredible Support

Retained Donors 30%	New Donors 99	Gift Commitments \$5,334	Average Donation \$876
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Individual Donations

To protect the privacy of our individual donors, they will not be publicly acknowledged. The numbers below represent the levels of giving and the number of donors who gave at each level in 2020.

\$25,000+	\$10,000+	\$5,000+	\$2,500+	\$1,000+	\$500+	\$1+
2	7	11	18	31	40	140

Sponsorships

In 2020, Covid 19 guidelines made it impossible for fans to attend *Dancing with the Pagosa Stars* in person. The planning committee, determined to hold this annual premier event which provides critically needed funding for Seeds programming, created a fun, virtual event and **netted over \$175,000**. Our heartfelt appreciation to the businesses, individuals, dancers, coaches, donors, virtual guests, committee members and volunteers that made it a such a remarkable success.

- Bank of Colorado - Mirror Ball Trophy Sponsor
- Alley House Grille - Food Sponsor
- Dale and Tiffany Wilson - Bar Sponsor
- Wilson, Rea, Beckel & Assoc. CPA's, LLC - Red Carpet Sponsor
- Hale Family Foundation- Costume Sponsor
- Pagosa Springs Medical Center - Ballroom Sponsor
- Two Old Crows Gallery - Ballroom Sponsor
- Queen Bee - Fred Astaire Sponsor
- Bank of the San Juans -Backstage Sponsor and Annual Contributor
- The Pagosa Springs Sun - Backstage Sponsor



Volunteers

Hundreds of hours donated by Seeds' families and supporters allow monetary contributions to directly benefit the children. From doing laundry and deep-cleaning classrooms to maintaining the grounds and creating notecards to sell in local stores, your extraordinary help allowed the staff time to concentrate on what they do best - educate the children.

We thank each of you for supporting the children that need financial help the most, and giving them this extraordinary opportunity to change the trajectory of their lives.

"It is vital that when educating our children's brains we do not neglect to educate their hearts." ~ Dalai Lama

"It takes a big heart to shape little minds". - Unknown