



# Seeds of Learning

Early Care and Education Center

# Gratitude Report

2022

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# A Message From Our Executive Director

2022 has been a joyous and eventful year here at Seeds of Learning! Thanks to the support and generosity of our loyal donors, we were able to continue providing a high-quality early childhood program to approximately 57 families while maintaining affordable tuition for all. Our preschool halls were filled with the laughter of joyful children throughout the entire year, and our program had some first-time experiences, improvements in family involvement, and new educational staff.

**“There is joy and wonder everywhere when you see the world through the eyes of a child.”**

Our educators experienced this exact moment when we ventured off on our first ever out of town field trip to the Ignacio pumpkin patch. On a beautiful fall morning, we loaded 40 children on the big yellow school bus and traveled an hour to our destination. The children rode on a hayride, bounced on a big trampoline, went down a huge slide, blew bubbles, and even had the chance to pick out their very own pumpkins to take home. It was an amazing day filled with exploration and hands-on learning in the great outdoors.

**“The family is where most of our joy comes from.”** Involving families in the educational process has always been at the forefront of our philosophy here at Seeds, but we were able to fully implement this aspect of our program this year. Families had the opportunity to attend several family curriculum nights, as well as social family nights. Children and parents worked together in the classrooms on specific projects designed around learning concepts for math, science, art, and literacy night. We had science and math experiments, art murals, and reading fun with families! When parents left, they were given a handout with other activities they can use at home to support those skills with their children. This was also a great time for parents to build relationships with their child’s teachers and other families in the preschool.

**“A wise teacher makes learning a joy.”** Our program was thrilled to welcome a new program director to our educational team. Ms. Kathy Faber has extensive experience working with young children, including over 30 years of teaching Kindergarten, and she has much knowledge to share with our amazing teaching staff here at Seeds. Kathy was brought on board to support the curriculum and play-based learning in the classrooms, and mentor individual teachers as well as the whole teaching team when needed. She provided instructional coaching to help guide play experiences and assisted in implementing purposeful materials in the classroom environment. She aided in improvement in our overall program.

We cannot thank our donors enough for supporting our program here at Seeds. We are doing amazing things for our community and the families here, and we couldn’t do it without your help!

**“There are those who give with joy and that joy is their reward.”**

With warm regards,

*Michelle Cusick*



What we learn with  
Joy  
we never forget

# Our Story So Far



## WHO WE ARE

Seeds of Learning is a stand-alone, not for profit, nationally accredited (NAEYC) early care and education center, located in Pagosa Springs, Colorado serving approximately 58 preschoolers year-round, ages 2.5 – 5 years old in three classrooms. We have transformed the lives of over 1,000 preschoolers and their families for over 25 years. As a community-based facility, we encompass parenting classes, educational opportunities for our families and other early childhood professionals and participate in community outreach projects.

Education is our passion and you can expect the highest standards in early childhood education at Seeds. We are brain builders, not babysitters.

## OUR MISSION

Our mission at Seeds of Learning is providing a high quality, child-centered preschool education for our community with exceptional teachers facilitating the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development of children in order to foster a solid foundation for success and a lifelong love of learning.

## OUR VISION

The vision at Seeds of Learning is to work in partnership with families to provide a learning community in a developmentally appropriate environment which promotes the growth of the young children.

The target populations for Seeds of Learning are families from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds with a minimum of 51% of our enrollment from at-risk and/or low-income children and their families. Seeds offers a sliding scale tuition based on the income of each family. All tuition rates are greatly reduced from the actual costs.

**“You can expect the highest standards in early childhood education at Seeds.**

**We are brain builders, not babysitters.”**

# Our Unique Programming



## 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 the standards put forth for effective early childhood curricula by NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children).

## TEACHING STRATEGIES

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 & PARENT TRAINING

The Incredible Years, an award-winning 14-week parent training, teacher training, and child social skills training approach to early childhood education. Seeds of Learning proudly uses The Incredible Years Dinosaur School for children to learn to understand feelings and practice conflict management skills while improving their cognitive development using puppets.



## NURTURING THE BODY & MIND

Seeds serves breakfast, a nutritious afternoon snack and a hot lunch prepared every day by Archuleta Seniors, Inc. Nutrition is critical to the 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.



# Our 2022 Strategy for Success



- 1 Maintain a high quality early educational environment that develops the whole child learning experience.
- 2 Actively recruit and incentivize high quality staff.
- 3 Increase family involvement in the children's education to achieve warm, supportive, and respectful relationships between adults and children
- 4 Ensure funding to support operational needs through donor management and fundraising
- 5 Ensure proper Board of Directors governance.

# 2022 Accomplishments with Your Support

## **Human resources**

- Maintained a high employee retention rate
- Implemented a Program Director position
- Acquired a early childhood nurse consultant
- Continued health insurance program upon hire for all employees
- Reinstated the preschool tutor elective with the Pagosa Springs High School since the pandemic began

## **Family & Community Involvement**

- Reinstated family involvement in the classroom the first time since the pandemic began
- Provided no cost 14 week Incredible Years parenting class
- Provided all children with free dental, vision, and hearing checks from community partners

## **Fundraising**

- 62% success rate on grants awarded (Seven total grants awarded)
- Secured an event coordinator for Seeds signature event which raised the second highest amount in five years.

## **Program & Building**

- Designed new user friendly website for donors and families
- Secured funding and installed new shade structures for two playgrounds
- Ordered new books for all three-classroom
- Replaced dishwashers in two classrooms

## **Professional Development**

- Provided seven monthly onsite professional development days for teachers
- Provided professional Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale training for all staff.
- Provided CPR/First Aid training for all staff
- Provided training on behavior and social emotional development (mental health) with licensed professional counselor
- Provided medication administration training with onsite early childhood nurse consultant
- Director achieved Level 6 Early Childhood Professional Credential for Colorado Shines (highest level)

# Counting our Blessings



## 29

### GRADUATES

29 preschoolers graduated in 2022 and went on to kindergarten.

Seeds of Learning students demonstrate a higher readiness for learning at the beginning of kindergarten and continue to grow at a faster rate throughout the school year compared to their peers according to an Archuleta County School District Kindergarten 2015 Diebels comparison. Investing in preschool today pays off tomorrow.

## 23

### FAMILY INVOLVEMENT EVENTS WITH 75% PARTICIPATION

We value our parents and encourage families to participate in our program as much as possible. Some of the events included a back-to-school night, math night, literacy night, science night, and art night. All of these events were highly successful with most of our families in attendance!

## 70%

### PARENTS ATTENDED INCREDIBLE YEARS PARENTING CLASS

Due to your support, Seeds offered free research-based parenting courses for families who might need some extra strategies and encouragement. We love our families and understand we are partners in supporting their child's development and success.



# 1st ever

## OUT OF TOWN FIELD TRIP

Seeds offered families four field trips in 2022, one of which was to Jack-a-lope Acres in Ignacio. Children road on a school bus for the first time!

Seeds recognizes the extraordinary benefits of introducing young children to various occupations and age groups in our community. They spent time with elementary school students & teachers, fireman, police officers, EMT's, Forest Rangers and more!

# 100%

## OF SEEDS LEAD TEACHERS HOLD EDUCATION DEGREES



# 100%

## OF FAMILIES AT A GREATLY REDUCED TUITION

Less than half of our expenses are covered by tuition.



# 42%

## OF SEEDS CHILDREND QUALIFIED FOR C.P.P.

The Colorado Preschool Program (CPP) is a state-funded early childhood education program administered by the Colorado Department of Education. This program was created in recognition of the need to adequately prepare children with specific at-risk factors to learn. The intent was that helping these children at an early age could result in lower dropout rates, less dependence on public assistance, and less involvement with criminal activities. Funding is provided to early childhood education programs who demonstrate high quality standards.

# Our 2022 Board of Directors



Charged with overseeing the financial health of Seeds of Learning, this dedicated group guided efforts to supplement tuition for over 100% of Seeds' students in 2022. Their determination and hard work prove what passionate volunteers can accomplish.

## **2022 Board of Directors:**

Lisa Peters ~ Board President

Martin E. Rose ~ Board Vice President

Bob Scott ~ Board Member

Janae Ash ~ Board Secretary

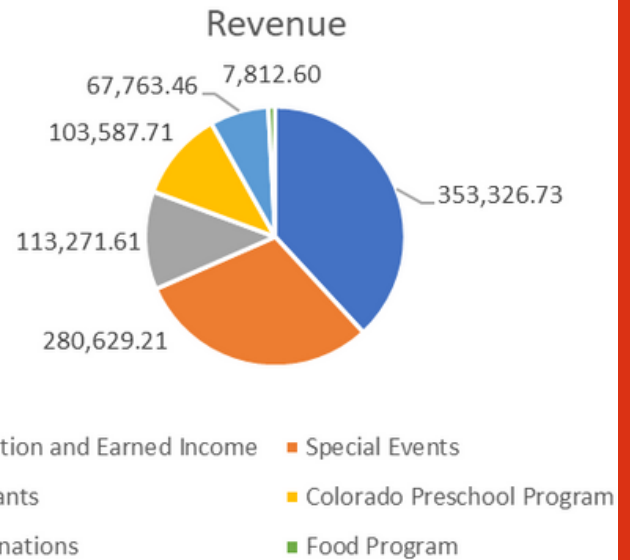
Bob Brobst ~ Board Treasurer

"Seeds of Learning has more than lived up to our expectations. Our 3 year old loves going to "his school" and has grown wonderfully under the guidance of his teachers and the customized developmental program they maintain for each child. The teaching staff and administration have always been professional, caring, and very responsive. There is no where else in Pagosa, we would rather him be." ~ Doug Saylor, Seeds Parent

# A Glance at Your Incredible Support

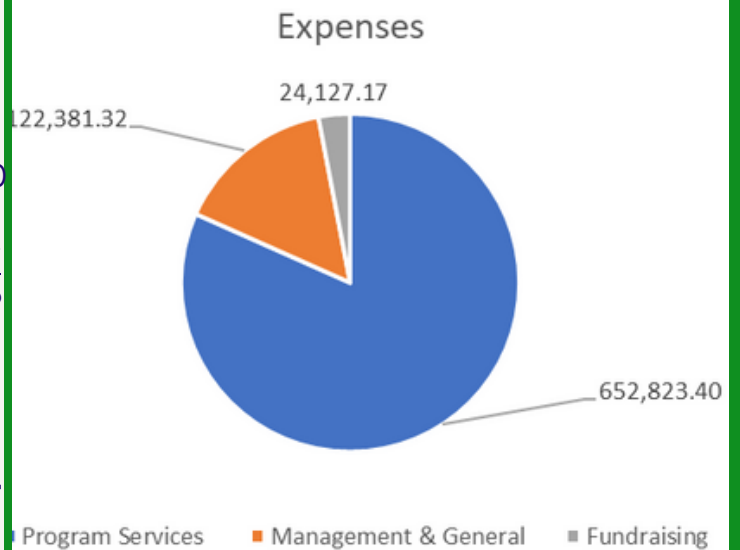
## REVENUE

Tuition and Earned Income	353,326.73
Special Events	280,629.21
Grants	113,271.61
Colorado Preschool Program	103,587.71
Donations	67,763.46
Food Program	7,812.60
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>926,391.32</b>



## EXPENSES

Program Services	652,823.40
Management & General	122,381.32
Fundraising	24,127.17
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>799,331.89</b>



## ASSETS

Long-term Investment Fund	<b>759,744.94</b>
Reserves	<b>608,300.60</b>

“Seeds of Learning excellently equips young children in our community to successfully navigate the next phase of their education and development. As a kindergarten teacher at Pagosa Springs Elementary School for over thirty years, I saw firsthand how confident, settled, and ready to learn the Seeds of Learning students were. The child directed learning and support from teachers given to parents help students of all backgrounds to learn and flourish. The teachers take children where they are and challenge and motivate them to soar!” – Ms. Kathy Faber

# 2022 Year End Evaluation



1. Board Generated Revenue	<b>2021</b> \$650,490	<b>2022 Final</b> \$444,529
2. Relationship Management Goals	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022 Final</b>
Total number current year donors	362	329
Average Gift	\$1074	\$1024
Retention Rate	42.5%	27.52%
# of New Donors	211	172
3. Total amount of dollars netted through each fundraising method compared to 2020:		
<b>Appeal</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022 Final</b>
Board Giving	\$2518	\$1200
Business/Corporate	\$3864	\$3650
Government Support	\$124,000	\$96,338
Individual	\$11,269	\$9896
Annual Appeal	\$67,524	\$41,935
FIC Fundraising	\$550	\$1377
Dancing with the Pagosa Stars	\$216,194	\$238,615
Major Gifts	\$222,200	\$48,401
Recurring Gifts	\$2371	\$3116
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$650,490</b>	<b>\$444,529</b>
4. Percentage of Giving Levels compared to 2021 (excluding grants):	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022 Final</b>
% of cumulative gifts over \$10,000	3% from 10 donors	3% from 11 donors
% of cumulative gifts \$2,500 - \$9,999	8% from 29 donors	10% from 34 donors
% of cumulative gifts \$1,000 - \$2,499	12% from 42 donors	10% from 32 donors
% of cumulative gifts \$500 - \$999	9% from 34 donors	12% from 37 donors
% of cumulative gifts under \$499	68% from 247 donors	65% from 215 donors
5. Percentage of the Board that made a financial donation	100%	100%

Board Giving Total = \$49,035 (including in-kind, annual appeal, and DWTPS)  
 Board Hours = 1,468 hours

## Contributed Support Goals 2022

Contributed Support consists of the income the Board of Directors is responsible for raising through diversified income streams to balance the annual budget. This excludes tuition, grants and Colorado Preschool Program funding.

<b>Overall Goal for Contributed Support in 2022 = \$277,920</b>	
Board Giving	\$5000
Business/Corporations	\$4000
Government Support	\$23,000
Individuals Appeals	\$2,500
Dancing with the Pagosa Stars	\$184,000
Annual Appeal	\$40,000
Major Gifts	\$17,020
Recurring Gifts	\$2200
Family Involvement Fundraising	\$200
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$277,920</b>

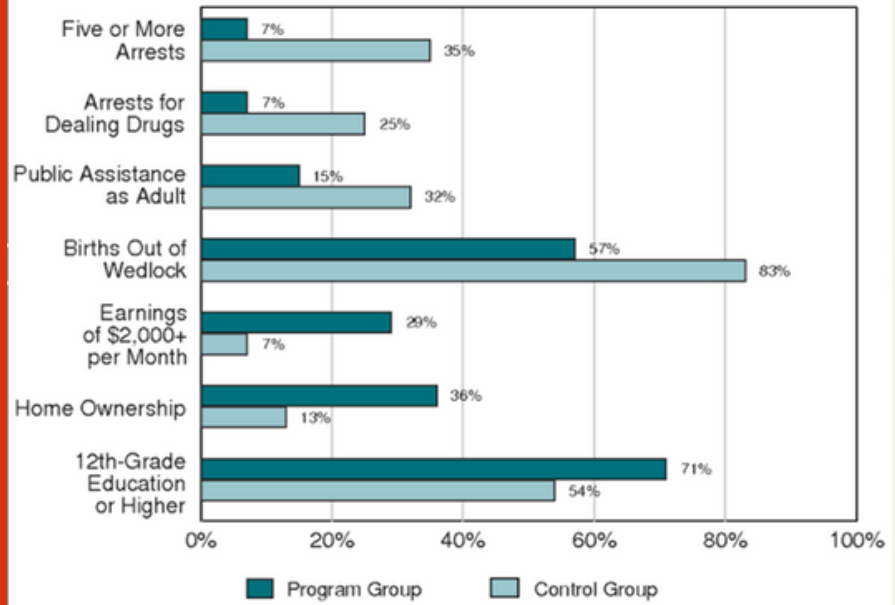
# Community Benefits

**"It is easier to build strong children the repair broken adults."**

**"By supporting Seeds programming, children will become contributing members in our society and have a foundation that they will need to graduate high school, go on to college, or a trade school."**

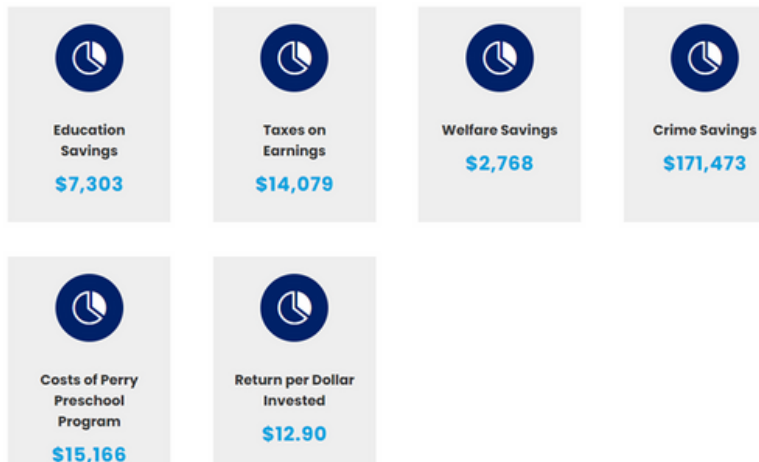
**~Evelyn Tennyson, Seeds Supporter**

**Figure 1: Major Findings of the High/Scope Perry Preschool Project for Participants Followed Up at Age 27**



Though all children benefit from high quality early education, at-risk children receive the greatest value. Children who have access to high quality early childhood education experienced: fewer teen pregnancies, less arrests, higher graduation rates, earned a higher income, are more likely to go obtain a higher education or trade, lower rates of substance abuse, are less likely to be on public assistance programs which lowers the cost of more expensive interventions later in life.

## Return on Investment



- Return on investment is up to 10% for ages 3-4
- Supports working parents
- Attracts new talent to the community
- Reduces at-risk factors

**"Without Seeds' sliding tuition scale, my family and I could not have afforded to remain in Pagosa Springs" ~ Seeds parent of two.**

# Acknowledgements

We thank you for your continued support in our programs.

Early education is vital for our children, our community, and our future. Please know that your generous support has changed the lives of our at-risk children in Pagosa Springs that will affect generations.

Your support also allowed Seeds to offer competitive wages and benefits to our teachers and staff.

Simply put, we could not have done this without the support of our community and beyond and we are so grateful!

We would also like to thank all of the teachers, administrative staff, Board of Directors, parents, event sponsors and volunteers. Without all of you this would not be possible!



If you are new to the area or just want to learn more about Seeds & how you can get involved with the organization please reach out - we would love to hear from you!

Seeds of Learning  
970-264-5513  
575 S. 7th Street  
P.O Box 5831  
Pagosa Springs, CO 81147  
GrowingSeeds.org  
Seedsoflearning@growingseeds.org