

Since 1970, Teaching Tree has been promoting self-sufficiency in Northern Colorado families by providing quality, affordable early childhood care and education.

SPECIAL ISSUE: TEACHING TREE EXPANDS!

Growing a Child Care Center

Teaching Tree's child care center in Fort Collins is growing! We have expanded into the other side of the city-owned building we occupy at 424 Pine Street, and construction is progressing on schedule and on budget.

The expansion responds to a critical community need: More than 14,000 infants, toddlers, and preschoolers in our community are on child care wait lists. The child care deficit affects families' ability to work; impacts the quality and consistency of care that young children receive; and challenges employers' ability to hire and retain quality employees.



Once complete, the \$2.1-million expansion will more than double our licensed capacity in Fort Collins.

Teaching Tree has partnered with the City of Fort Collins and United Way to bring this dream to fruition. In January, the City made Teaching Tree the building's sole lessee and provided a long-term lease at an annual cost of \$600. In June United Way relocated, and construction of our new classrooms began.

Each year, Teaching Tree budgets for a surplus to reinvest into our business model and to meet short- and long-term organizational goals. Thanks to the organization's sound financial management, Teaching Tree was able to contribute \$500,000 of operating reserves to kick off the capital campaign for the expansion project. The remaining \$1.6 million is coming from fundraising endeavors including foundation grants, donations from individuals and business, and fundraising events.

To date, we have raised \$1,827,649. We continue to work hard to raise the balance of \$271,964 to meet the campaign goal.

The project has 4 key objectives:

- Children will progress toward widely held expectations for physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development.
- Low-income families will receive affordable, quality care that will support their self-sufficiency endeavors.
- Teaching Tree's licensed capacity will increase from 101 children to 215 children.
- We will be able to serve more low-income families, thereby strengthening their efforts to break out of the cycle of poverty.

To learn more, visit growthtree.org.



Six New Classrooms Open



On Oct. 21, families with children enrolled at Teaching Tree Fort Collins entered the center through a new reception/check-in area and found their way to one of six bright, new, fully furnished classrooms that were among the first areas to be completed in our expansion project. Phase 1 of construction involved renovating that part of the building that was previously occupied by United Way of Larimer County and creating new classrooms, staff offices, a conference room, a teacher lounge, and a laundry room.



Phase 2 of the project is now in progress and includes remodeling and reconfiguring the old classrooms, enlarging the kitchen and adding new equipment to serve a larger student population, and creating two new natural playgrounds—a.k.a., outdoor learning environments—that will ignite children's imaginations and inspire them to explore, move, interact, observe, and learn from nature. Phase 2 is scheduled to be done in early 2020. At that time, Teaching Tree will begin enrolling as many as 114 new students. We will first approach those families that are on our waiting list.

Teaching Tree Receives \$200,000 Challenge Grant

A \$200,000 challenge grant from an anonymous foundation has inspired Teaching Tree to ramp up fundraising activities and encouraged foundations and individuals to make donations that will be matched dollar-for-dollar by the challenge grant.

Thanks to our generous donors, Teaching Tree is continuing to meet the challenge! We are striving to secure at least \$75,000 in donations from individuals and businesses and at least \$125,000 in new grant funding. To receive the challenge grant, we must meet these goals by the challenge period deadline of Dec. 30, 2019.

There's still time to help Teaching Tree reach this goal! In addition to contributing to our expansion project and providing our community with greater access to affordable, quality child care, your donation will provide economic benefits to you as well. Fifty percent of your donation will be returned to you in the form of a Colorado Child Care Contribution Tax Credit. Depending on your financial situation, you'll also be eligible to receive federal and state tax deductions.

Thanks to all of you who have supported our expansion project, and thanks in advance to those who will still make a contribution before year end!

\$200,000

Challenge Grant

Donations will be Matched
Dollar-For-Dollar



Letter from the Executive Director



Ten years ago, knowing the need was great, Teaching Tree had a vision to build a new child care center and provide greater access for families across Larimer County. Working with community cohorts, we explored building sites and began conceptualizing what our new center would look like and how many it would serve. At that time, however, we were not poised to purchase a piece of land and embark on a multi-year, multi-million-dollar campaign to build a new center.

We never lost sight of that vision. Instead, we considered how we might expand our center at 424 Pine Street in Fort Collins, a city-owned building we have shared with United Way since 1985. When Annie Davies came on board as United Way's new executive director, she understood our community's need for greater access to affordable, quality child care, and she embraced our vision to expand in place. United Way moved to a new location better suited for its needs, and the City of Fort Collins agreed to a plan for Teaching Tree to become the building's sole lessee and convert the other half of the building into new classrooms.

That plan is now becoming a reality, thanks to a clear vision, strong partnerships, and the generous financial and in-kind support we have received from so many donors! As we prepare to offer more than 100 *additional* families access to affordable, quality child care, we look forward to providing the same stellar level of care that has earned Teaching Tree a prestigious rating as one of our state's highest quality child care providers.

Quality pays off, as seen in the phenomenal progress our kiddos make toward meeting and even exceeding developmental milestones. In partnership with families, Teaching Tree is working to ensure that our community's youngest members have what it takes to succeed both in school and in life.

Anne Lance, Executive Director



Kids Are Excelling at Teaching Tree

Colorado Gives Day Dec. 10

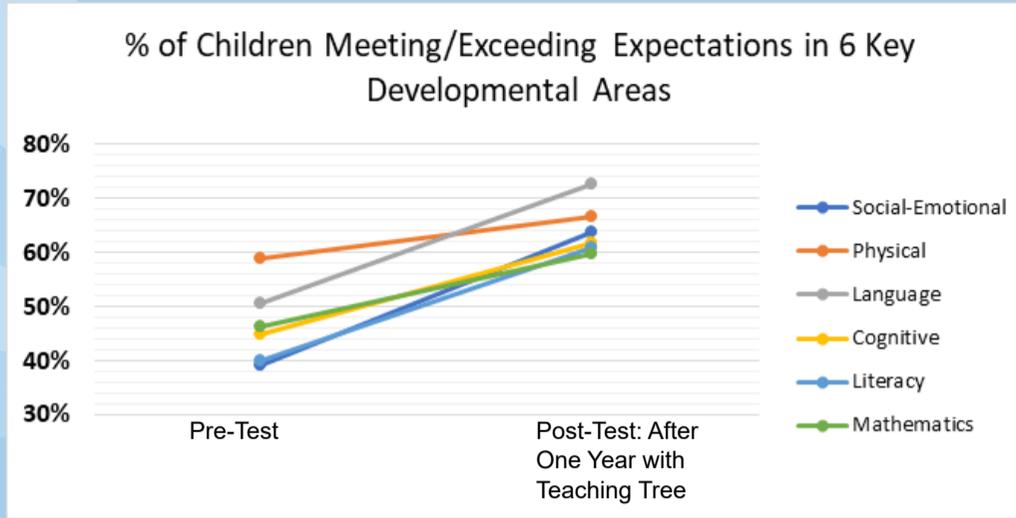


Preschedule or make an online donation to Teaching Tree on Dec. 10 at coloradogives.org, and the value of your gift will be boosted by a \$1-million incentive fund.

Teaching Tree's Board of Directors

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Teaching Tree implements The Creative Curriculum to teach intentionally to the needs of each child, and Teaching Strategies GOLD to assess children's growth. Pre- and post-tests conducted during the 2018-19 school year indicated our kiddos' impressive progress toward widely held expectations for development. The graph above shows that children who participated in Teaching Tree's school readiness program increased their skills in all six areas that are key to future school success.

Centers Receive Highest Quality Ratings



Every three years, Teaching Tree undergoes a rigorous Colorado Shines review. Evaluators from Colorado's Office of Early Childhood spend several days in our classrooms observing and rating quality in five key areas: Workforce Qualifications and Professional Development; Family Partnerships; Leadership, Management & Administration; Learning Environment; and Child Health.

In early 2019, we received our new certificates indicating that our Loveland center attained a Level 5, the highest rating possible. Our Fort Collins center was close behind with a Level 4 rating. Teaching Tree remains committed to providing a high quality early childhood program that focuses on meeting the needs of each child and building strong partnerships with families.

Fortifying Our Child Care Workforce



Early next year, Teaching Tree will begin hiring 16 new teachers and aides to lead our classrooms.

Increasing our workforce is critical to Teaching Tree's ability to serve the additional children we will enroll once our expansion project is complete.

For the last year, Teaching Tree has been a cohort program partner, along with the Early Childhood Council of Larimer County and Front Range Community College, in an effort to recruit, educate, and train the next generation of early childhood specialists.

The cohort program allows students to earn an income and gain experience working at Teaching Tree while also completing their early childhood education requirements at Front Range Community College.

Loveland Center Welcomes New Director



Teaching Tree is pleased to welcome Brittany Kanzler as the new program director of our Loveland center. Brittany comes to the position with more than 14 years of experience in early childhood care—all at Teaching Tree! Raised in Colorado, Brittany is married and has two sons ages 5 and 8. She became program director in May, shortly after former director Susie Breazier retired.

"I love the fun atmosphere at Teaching Tree and being around the kids every day and knowing that we're making a difference in their lives," says Brittany. "I would love to see our center grow and help more families."

Coming Soon: New Outdoor Learning Environments

It's a fact: Exercising in a natural environment excites kids, contributes to their health, and helps them be more attentive and perform better in school. Phase 2 of Teaching Tree's expansion includes two new natural playgrounds: one for infants and toddlers, and another for preschoolers.

The natural playgrounds will complement our existing traditional playgrounds and will provide children with greater opportunities to be active and interact with nature.

Playground components will include natural, recycled, and donated materials to create a sunflower maze, log tunnels, a boulder amphitheatre, an



imagination station, garden beds for planting herbs, flowers, and vegetables, and more. Each day, children will have the opportunity to play on both the natural and the traditional playgrounds.

Our plan to include natural playgrounds as part of our expansion project is aligned with the City of Fort Collins' Social Sustainability Strategic Plan, which addresses the needs of underserved groups, with an emphasis on people with low incomes. As a City of Fort Collins grant recipient, Teaching Tree helps to advance the City's commitment to sustainability via a Triple Bottom Line approach—that is, using environmental, human, and economic resources to meet our present needs and those of future generations without compromising the ecosystems upon which we depend.



Help us reach our Capital Campaign goal



\$271,000 left to raise to meet our goal

All contributions to Teaching Tree earn a 50% Colorado tax credit and any state and federal tax deductions you may qualify for. That means the actual cost of your donation is one-half or less than the amount donated!

For more info or to donate, visit growthetree.org, or contact Tara Streeb, (970) 493-2628 ext 206, tstreeb@teaching-tree.org

Recognizing Our Donors

Step into Teaching Tree's new reception area and one of the first things you'll see are three beautiful hand crafted and painted trees decorating the wall. Attached to and surrounding the trees are hand-crafted leaves, acorns, butterflies, and boulders containing the names of those who are helping make possible the expansion of Teaching Tree Fort Collins.



Individuals and businesses making cumulative gifts of \$500 to \$5,000 to the expansion project are recognized on the trees.

On the opposite wall, an illustration of a child blowing on a dandelion puff recognizes donations from foundations and major donors. According to flower folklore, dandelions symbolize childhood, the warmth and power of the rising sun, long lasting happiness, youthful joy, and resilience.

We thank all of you who are helping to grow our child care center!



BE READY



Thank You to our Supporters

Creative Curriculum Expansion Kits, \$1,300



In recent years, a growing body of research has offered new and powerful insights into the importance of early learning and its relationship to school and success in later life. Much of this evidence links children's early cognitive, language, and social-emotional development to later developmental and school outcomes. For the last five years, Teaching Tree has been using the evidence-based Teaching Strategies GOLD and its linked curriculum, The Creative Curriculum, to observe, document, and report on children's growth and development. The Creative Curriculum is a comprehensive, research-based curriculum that features exploration and discovery as a way of learning.

Thanks to a grant we received from Rotary Club of Fort Collins, Teaching Tree was able to purchase an expanded version of The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool. The expanded kit allows teachers to expose our 4- and 5-year-olds to new activities and new challenges.

Expansion of Fort Collins Center, \$2.1 million

Expanding in place at 424 Pine Street in Fort Collins was an efficient, cost effective way for Teaching Tree to provide our community with greater access to affordable, quality child care and education. We could not have embarked on this project without the support of our many community partners, including City of Fort Collins, Early Childhood Council of Larimer County, Fort Collins Chamber of Commerce Talent 2.0 Task Force, Larimer Small Business Development Center, Saunders Heath, and United Way of Larimer County. Our community partners embraced our vision to expand and worked together to ensure the project would be done well and would meet the high standards required by the City, Colorado Shines, and the Office of Early Childhood.

This project also would not have become a reality without the generous financial support of so many organizations and individuals that believe an investment in our community's youngest members is an investment that provides multiple returns for generations to come. We extend deep gratitude and heartfelt thanks to the following, for helping us advance toward our \$2.1-million capital campaign goal and making our expansion a reality:

Anonymous Foundation
Bohemian Foundation
Buell Foundation
City of Fort Collins
Community Foundation of Northern Colorado
Davidson Family Fund of the Community Foundation
Fort Collins Community Fund of the Community Foundation
Fort Collins Forever Fund of the Community Foundation
Fundraising Events
Gates Family Foundation
Individual Donors
Kiwaniis Golden K
NoCo Unify
Nordson Corporation Foundation
Qualistar Colorado Capital Improvement Fund
Saunders Heath

Within the next few months, we look forward to raising the additional \$271,447 needed to meet our goal and to recognizing these supporters in our next newsletter and on our donor recognition walls.

We made a wish; you made it come true.



Foundations and Major Donors
Teaching Tree Capital Campaign
2018-2020

Foundations	

Major Donors	



Thank You to our Supporters

School Readiness Program/Child Care Scholarships



Children living in poverty lag behind their peers in many ways besides income: They are less healthy, trail in emotional and intellectual development, and do not perform well in school. Participating in a quality early childhood program, however, allows them to overcome adversity and enter school on even footing with their higher income peers. Forty-two percent of the children enrolled at Teaching Tree live in low-income families. We provide tuition assistance that supplements the actual cost of care to make it affordable for low-income families. This assistance empowers families to work toward self-sufficiency and ensures that their young children are in a safe, nurturing environment, building skills and achieving developmental milestones that will foster their success in school.

Every year, Teaching Tree must raise the funds that allow us to make care affordable for the low- and middle-income families we serve, and to maintain the high quality of our school readiness program. This year, we extend our thanks to the following foundations, which have provided operating grants to Teaching Tree:

Anschutz Family Foundation
Bloom Foundation
Buell Foundation
City of Fort Collins
City of Loveland

Virginia Hill Foundation
Realities For Children
Nordson Corporation Foundation
Give Next-Fort Collins High School

Loveland Playground Project. \$57,813



Each year 60 to 100 young children exert themselves on the toddler and preschool playgrounds at our Loveland center. That activity and the stresses of Colorado's extreme climate result in significant wear and tear on our playground surfaces, structures, and equipment. Turf deteriorates, equipment breaks or loses parts, landscaping needs upgrading.

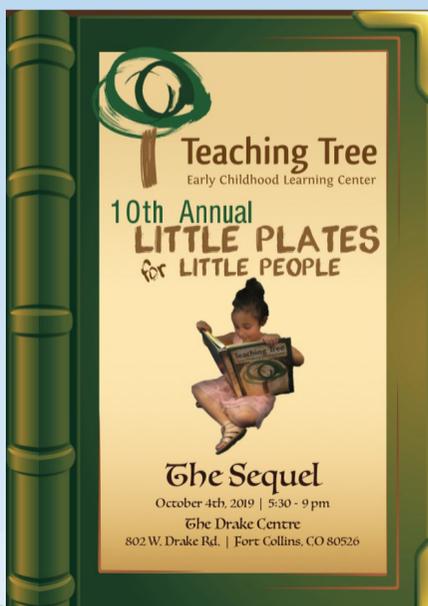
Raising money for playground improvements is one of our biggest challenges and often takes years to accomplish. Fortunately, five foundations that understand the importance of outdoor play, and providing our children with a safe environment to play in, came forward to support the playground improvement project at our center in Loveland.

Improvements included removing all of the deteriorated artificial turf and a broken preschool play structure and replacing these with Poured-in-Place Safety Surfacing, sod, a new play structure, a shaded sandbox, and two new shade trees.

We are grateful to the following foundations for the grants they provided to make this project possible:

Buell Foundation
Elevations Foundation
Qualistar Colorado Healthy Beginnings Active Futures
Schuster Family Foundation
Volentine Family Foundation

10th Annual Little Plates



More than 300 guests attended Teaching Tree's 10th Annual Little Plates for Little People event at the Drake Centre on Oct. 4. Dubbed "Growing a Child Care Center: The Sequel," the event program focused on the next chapter in Teaching Tree's expansion story: creating two new natural playgrounds to further foster children's physical, social, and cognitive development.

Featuring live music performed by Kelly Keeler and delicious foods prepared by Z Catering, the event raised over \$50,000 to support Teaching Tree's new natural playgrounds and our ongoing school readiness program. Thanks to all who participated in and contributed to this fun evening! Thank you to our sponsors:

Realities for Children
Bohemian Foundation
AMIC
OtterCares
Saunders Heath
Colorado Trust
Kiwanis Golden K
FirstBank
Alphagraphics

Poudre Valley REA
RLR
Santa Fe Craftsman
Eide Bailly
Reichert Real Estate
Big Grins
Salud Family Health Centers
Houska Automotive
IHeart Radio

High Country Beverage
Odell Brewing Company
Feisty Spirits
Horse & Dragon Brewing
Pinot's Palette
Human Bean