



*Nurturing children. Supporting families. Strengthening community.*

## 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

### Serving Families All Year Despite COVID Challenges and Staffing Crisis

The COVID pandemic presented challenges again in 2021. Fortunately, we had learned in 2020 how to keep our classrooms safe and we continued to follow these protocols. The most effective strategy was cohorting—keeping the same teachers and children in the same classrooms every day. This increased staffing costs, as we were not able to combine classrooms during those times when attendance was low. However, if there was a COVID case or exposure to COVID, cohorting allowed us to close just one classroom for a brief period, rather than close an entire center.

Hiring and retaining quality staff was also a challenge. On July 1, 2021, we began implementing a monthly incentive bonus program for employees who met the criteria for attendance, job performance, quality, and attitude. The bonuses helped retain existing staff, and we secured some grant funding to help support the additional cost. Additionally, our board approved raising starting pay for teachers and aides and giving annual raises to existing staff. We are working toward raising teacher pay to a living wage.

We also needed to address the mental health needs of our kiddos and our staff. The Early Childhood Council of Larimer County provided mental health specialists to help with children’s challenging behaviors. These visits were only available via Zoom meetings, which are not particularly effective with young children. Some mental health support was available for our teachers but there wasn’t nearly enough support to meet the need. In addition to their own parental responsibilities, staff were stressed by the pandemic, the additional demands placed on them, the limitations posed by cohorting, and the growing list of tasks and expectations their jobs demanded.

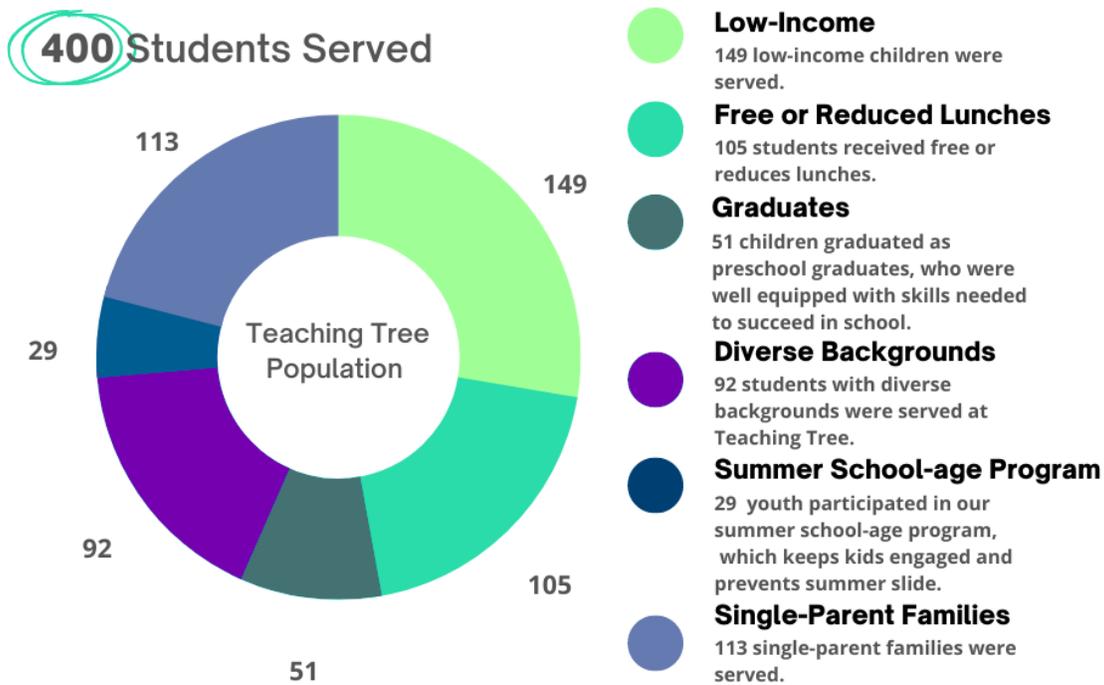
Despite those challenges, we were able to keep our classrooms open all year and provide quality care and education to 400 children, bringing some relief for families amid critical childcare shortages throughout Larimer County. In this report, we celebrate the funders, partnerships, and accomplishments that led Teaching Tree to survive another challenging year – and become stronger, as a result.

*-Anne Lance, Executive Director*

#### **Our Mission**

Provide affordable, quality early childhood care and educational programs in a culturally and economically diverse environment, ensuring a climate for individual growth, comfort, and security.

# 2021 At a Glance



## Evidence of Success

- Provided \$220,379 in childcare scholarships, enabling low-income families to have quality child care while parents worked toward self-sufficiency.
- Raised \$389,200 in general operating grants (as compared to \$294,572 in 2020)
- Developed an incentive bonus program to retain and reward childcare specialists
- Served 104,860 nutritious meals and snacks
- Achieved Level 4 Colorado Shines Ratings, indicating exceptional quality in the areas of workforce qualifications and professional development; family partnerships; leadership, management, and administration; learning environment; and child health.

## Teachers implemented the Creative Curriculum and Teaching Strategies Gold

- Evidence-based curriculum and assessment tools designed to promote children’s growth in 6 developmental domains essential to school readiness

## Family Satisfaction

- Over 90% of parents reported that Teaching Tree supported their child’s growth and development; provided a warm and nurturing environment where their child was happy; supported their child’s growth and development; and was accessible to their family and their family’s needs
- 100% of families said that using Teaching Tree allowed their family to be employed.

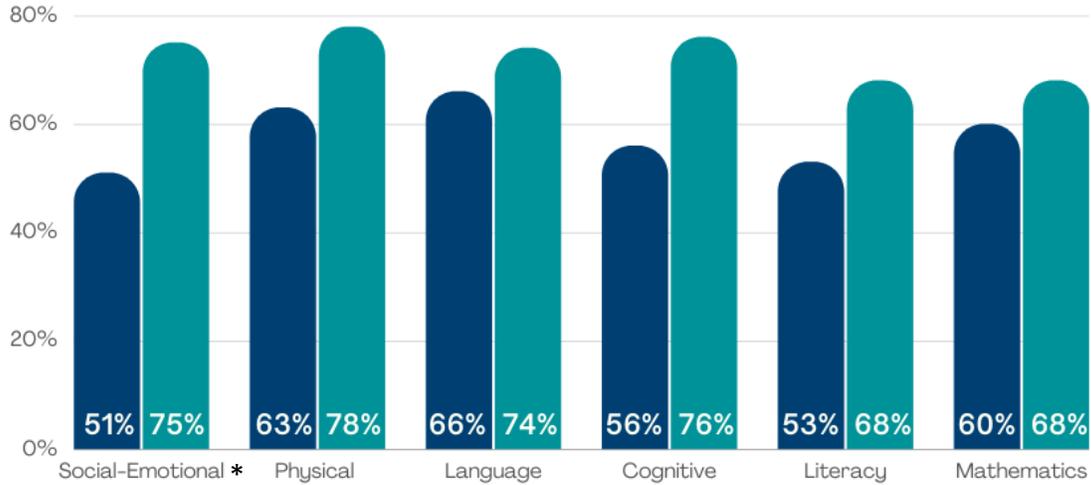
# Children's Growth

## IN KEY DEVELOPMENTAL AREAS

● Pre-test (Fall 2021)

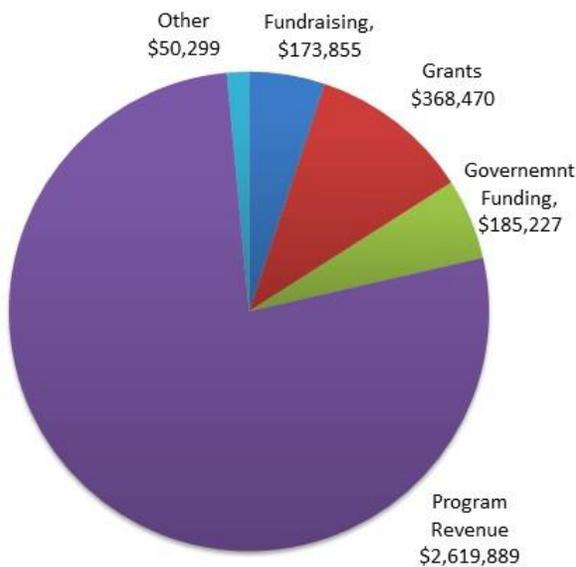
● Post-test (Spring 2022)

\*Research shows that social-emotional competence is the foremost indicator of a child's likelihood to succeed in school. Children who are socially and emotionally competent are able to regulate their behavior, follow routines, respect others, and follow instructions.



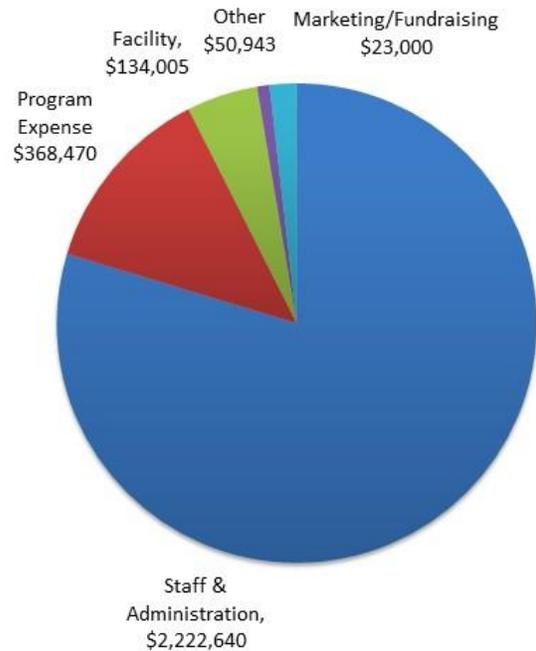
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### Operating Revenue



■ Fundraising ■ Grants  
 ■ Government Funding ■ Program Revenue  
 ■ Other

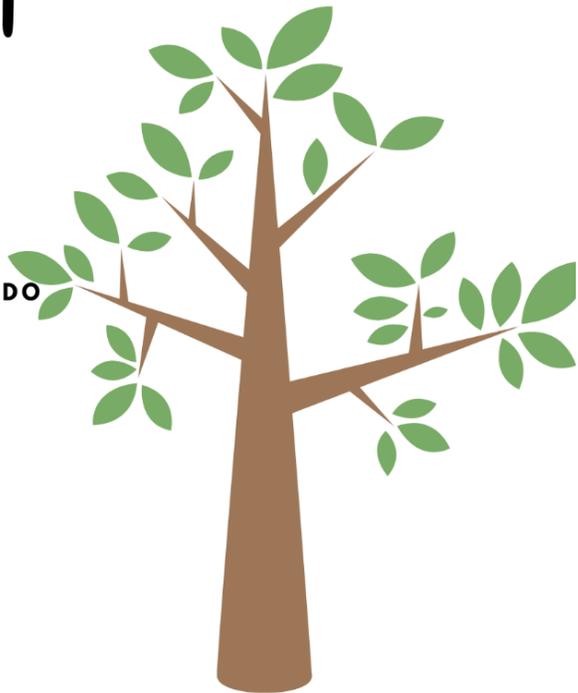
### Operating Expense



■ Staff & Administration ■ Program Expense  
 ■ Facility ■ Marketing/Fundraising  
 ■ Other

# Thank you to our 2021 Major Donors

**ANSCHUTZ FAMILY FOUNDATION  
BUELL FOUNDATION  
CITY OF FORT COLLINS  
CITY OF LOVELAND  
COLORADO DEPT. OF HUMAN SERVICES  
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF NORTHERN COLORADO  
EARLY CHILDHOOD COUNCIL OF LARIMER COUNTY  
OTTERCARES FOUNDATION  
REALITIES FOR CHILDREN  
RUN RABBIT RUN LLC  
ENT CREDIT UNION  
FIRSTBANK  
FOOTHILLS ROTARY  
GIVE NEXT  
HEALTHY CHILD CARE COLORADO  
INDIVIDUAL DONORS  
LARIMER COUNTY DEPT. OF HUMAN SERVICES  
NORDSON FOUNDATION CORPORATION  
SAM S. BLOOM FOUNDATION  
UNITED WAY OF LARIMER COUNTY  
VIRGINIA HILL FOUNDATION**



## Investing for the Future

Teaching Tree's sustainability depends on keeping all 15 of our classrooms full or nearly full for the entire year. This means we must have consistent, quality childcare specialists. This profession is critical to the physical, mental, and economic health of children, families, employers, and our community. For our childcare centers to remain viable, we need to acknowledge the importance of this profession and compensate our childcare specialists fairly for the vital work they do.

Our highest priority for the next several years will be increasing pay and developing other strategies to keep employees at Teaching Tree and treat them as the professionals they are. We will continue to seek ongoing and additional funding opportunities to ensure that we can keep our classrooms open and safe, help families continue working, and provide our community's youngest and most vulnerable members with consistent quality care, nutritious meals and snacks, and an early learning program that will prepare them to succeed in school.

Other goals for 2022 are to:

- Gain greater involvement of families to serve in leadership roles and provide program input
- Recruit and retain additional quality staff
- Continue building healthy reserves that will help sustain our organization
- Collaborate with community partners to expand access to affordable, quality child care and education
- Explore the feasibility of creating an in-house mental health support position
- Continue working with and supporting families in our shared goal of raising strong, healthy, resilient children.

Your support will change the course of the next generation of students who, through family-Teaching Tree partnerships, will be eager to enter school, prepared to succeed. Our children are our future. Together, we must provide the right foundation to help them become the best that they can be.

## How You Can Help

**Donate.** Your contribution to Teaching Tree will increase the quality and availability of child care in our community, benefit at-risk children, and help bring in matching dollars. Consider also our planned giving opportunities.

**Volunteer.** Serve on our board or committees; assist in our classrooms.

**Advocate.** Children are our most precious resource and our hope for a vibrant future. Learn more and spread the word about the importance of affordable, quality early care and education.

### Teaching Tree Early Childhood Learning Center

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