



PO Box 7067, Denver, CO 80207 | 303.447.1076 | www.CottonwoodInstitute.org

COTTONWOOD INSTITUTE

2013 Annual Report

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:



August 2014:

As I take a moment to reflect back on what Cottonwood Institute (CI) accomplished last year, 2013 was a phenomenal year! We are incredibly proud of our students who really pushed themselves, stepped out of their comfort zones, explored the outdoors, and tackled some impressive “Action Projects” to make the community a better place.

In 2013:

- **We served more students.** CI served over 545 students in the greater Denver Metro Area, logged over 17,000 program contact hours, and recorded over 7,900 service-learning project hours through its educational programs, outreach programs, and volunteer projects. This is a 45% increase from the number of students we served in 2012!
- **Students tackled important local issues.** In the fall of 2013, STRIVE Preparatory School Excel campus students wanted to address food waste at their school. They collaborated with Waste Farmers and Denver Urban Gardens and created a vermicomposting project (composting with worms) to compost the food waste from their school cafeteria. They donate the soil they created to local school gardens at North High School and Valdez Elementary School. They helped solve a local issue at their school, learned about soil science, reduced their school's waste stream, and helped local school gardens thrive! This is an excellent example of the multi-disciplinary programs that CI delivers that help strengthen 21st century skills to prepare students for college and the workforce.
- **We are in a great financial position.** Because of our loyal donors and supporters, we increased our operating budget 33% compared to 2012!

During our programs, students get to know each other better inside and outside of the classroom. They apply academic concepts from the classroom to the real world, explore their community, and learn about local environmental issues. Many go camping for the first time, see stars much brighter than they do in the city, go on night hikes, and have unique experiences they will remember for the rest of their lives. Last year our students helped complete fire mitigation projects and gathered firewood that would be sold to help raise money for Cal-Wood Education Center programs. Some of our students met a wolf face to face, helped feed them, and repair their habitat.

Thank you so much for being a champion of our important work in the community. We could not accomplish what we do each year without the incredible support from our students, parents, staff, instructors, board members, educational partners, donors, supporters, and cheerleaders. Thank you for making 2013 such a success!

Sincerely,

Ford Church, M.A., Founder and Executive Director, Cottonwood Institute

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2013 EDUCATIONAL PARTNERS:

We are extremely proud of our educational partners, including:

- **Casa de la Esperanza**, serving 100% low-income, 100% Latino middle school youth in Boulder County.
- **Colorado Youth For A Change**, a drop out prevention program primarily serving 70% low-income, 80% students of color in Denver and Boulder County.
- **Johnson & Wales University**, serving university students in Denver, CO
- **Littleton Academy**, serving public middle school students in Littleton, CO
- **New Vista High School**, serving public high school students in Boulder, CO
- **STRIVE Preparatory Schools**, serving 90% low-income, 95% students of color in Denver, CO.



TOP 10 STORIES FROM 2013:

1. [Exploring, Water Quality, and Camping: Casa de la Esperanza Youth Impact Their Community](#)
2. [Local Farmers + Local Food + Local Action = Local Lunch](#)
3. [STRIVE Prep Sunnyside Explores Questions About Trash, Food, And Trail Use](#)
4. [Dropping Into The Wild: Cottonwood Institute Teams Up With Colorado Youth For A Change](#)
5. [Casa de la Esperanza Families Enjoy Time Together Outdoors](#)
6. [Video: Green Star School Education Campaign](#)
7. [And The 2013 Ripple Effect Award Goes To...Camille Lauer!](#)
8. [Graffiti, Local Food, and Night Hikes: Strive Prep Makes Lasting Memories With Cottonwood Institute](#)
9. [Elk, Camping, and Reflection at New Vista High School](#)
10. [We Did It! Cottonwood Institute won \\$25,000 from Chase Community Giving During Denver Startup Week](#)



TESTIMONIALS FROM 2013:



“We tried to stop pollution in the air. We asked people to ride their bikes to school, or walk, or take the bus if they don’t bike. If they rode their bikes they received a reward when they got to school and will pollute less and save the earth! Doing the Cottonwood Institute program was the best experience ever! The camping trip was tons of fun and it was fun to organize the Bike to School Day!” - STRIVE Preparatory School Westwood Campus Student

“The Casa de la Esperanza community has boasted hundreds of incredible collaborations in the program’s 19-year history. Cottonwood Institute is one great one example of a partnership that effectively works to bring incredible enrichment opportunities with long-lasting impact to the Casa community, which is composed of over 30 families with limited resources. The opportunities the CI offers the youth of our program will help shape who they are as future keepers of our environment and leaders in our society. A small investment to nurture who they will become can only serve to benefit us all in the larger scheme of our greater society.” - Carlota Loya Hernandez, Program Coordinator, Casa de la Esperanza

“What an awesome experience! I really hope to continue a Colorado Youth For A Change/Cottonwood Institute partnership. I am amazed by the adaptability and emphasis on youths’ unique interests and personalities. What an incredible sense of community in a short period of time. You really helped each of our youth feel like they belong. Thank you!” - Amy Austin, Youth Leadership Intern, Colorado Youth For A Change

“STRIVE Prep middle and high school scholars across our network have benefited enormously from our multi-year partnership with the Cottonwood Institute. Their hands-on Action Projects give students creative new experiences that reinforce classroom instruction and critical thinking, including our new Colorado Common Core standards. The experiences also reinforce character education, particularly the values of curiosity, innovation, collaboration, service, and an environmental stewardship ethos -- values necessary in today's competitive world.” - Camille Howells, Director of Development and Communications at STRIVE Preparatory Schools



2013 DEMOGRAPHICS:

For our donor-supported programs, CI primarily works with schools and youth organizations that serve high-need students of color that qualify for free or reduced lunch. In 2013, on average:

- 72% of students were eligible for free or reduced lunch, and indicator of poverty.
- 66% of students were Hispanic/Latino
- 24% of students were Caucasian
- 5% of students were African-American
- 5% of students identified with other races

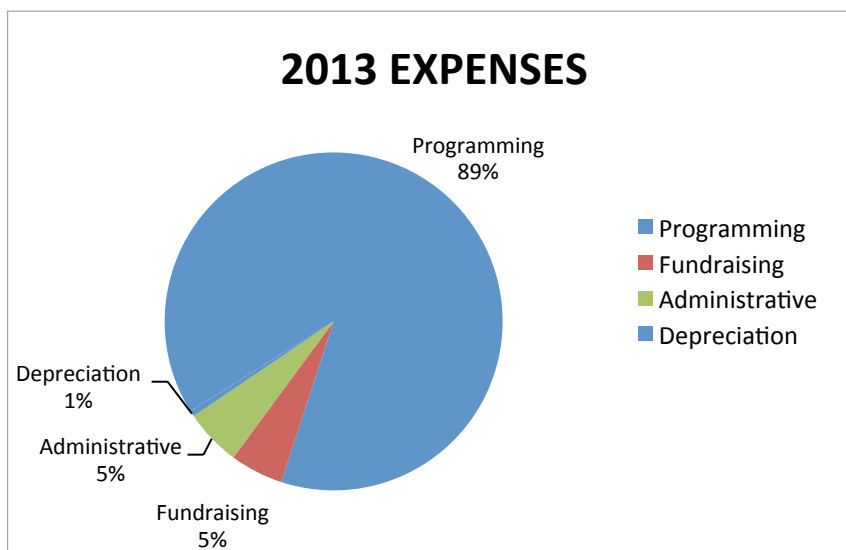
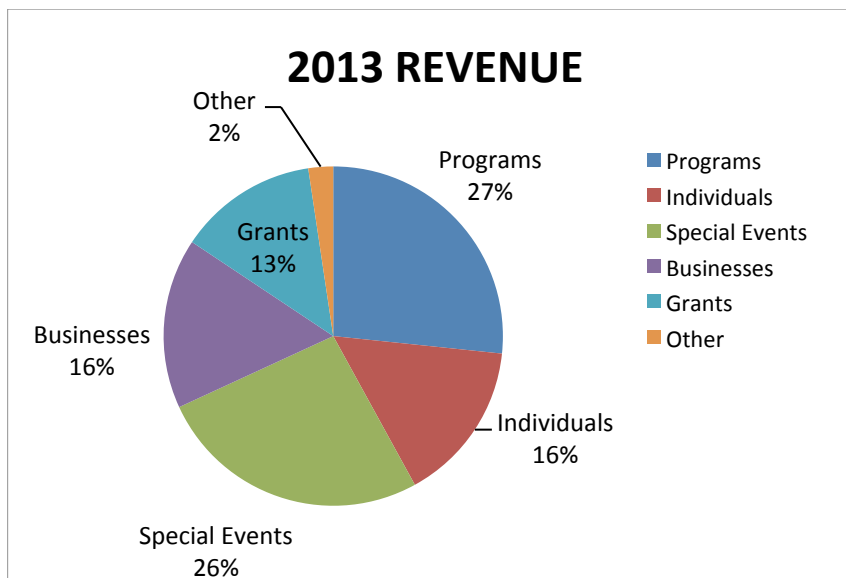
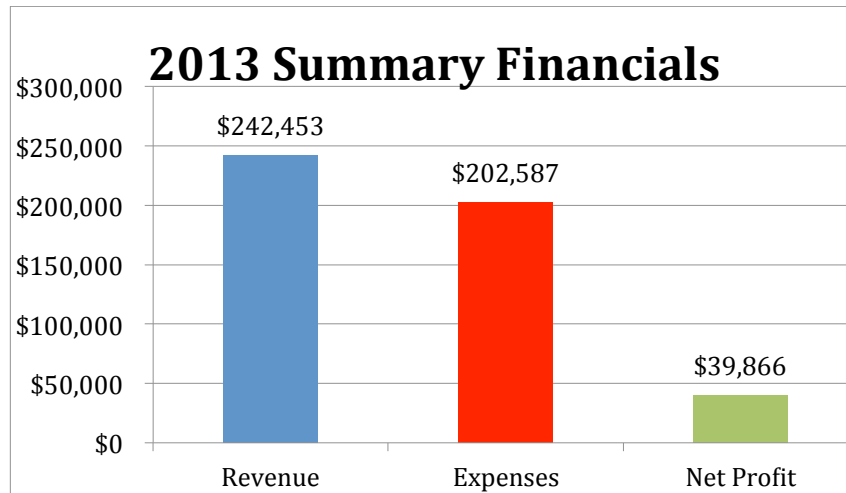
2013 PROGRAM EVALUATION DATA:

Below are key evaluation results from CI's 2013 Strive Preparatory Schools Westwood program according to post course student surveys:

- 92.86% of students strongly agreed or agreed they would recommend the class to other students.
- 92.86% of students strongly agreed or agreed to the statement that they liked spending time outside.
- 71.43% of students strongly agreed or agreed to the statement that they know more about local environmental issues after taking the class.
- 85.71% of students strongly agreed or agreed to the statement that they know what they can do to help protect the environment.
- 92.86% of students strongly agreed or agreed to the statement that they think it is important to help their community.



2013 FINANCIALS:



2013 TOP SUPPORTERS:

\$25,000:

- Chase Community Giving

\$10,000:

- Taddonio Family Foundation

\$5,000 - \$9,999:

- Anonymous Donor
- Carson Foundation
- Dr. and Mrs. John M. Church, Jr.
- Mr. and Mrs. Chris Zook
- Payback Foundation
- Utah Society for Environmental Education/
US Environmental Protection Agency Region 8

\$2,500 - \$4,999:

- Anonymous Donor
- Avnet Technology Solutions
- Brett Family Foundation
- Dr. and Mrs. William Conway
- Enterprise Holdings Foundation
- Jared Polis Foundation Gift Fund
- Mr. and Mrs. Alan Mumford
- New Belgium Brewing Company
- The Kenneth King Foundation
- Wynkoop Brewing Company

\$1,000 - \$2,499:

- Anonymous Donor x 2
- CoBiz Financial/Colorado Business Bank
- Community Foundation Serving Boulder County
- Dr. and Mrs. Stefan Mokrohisky
- Freeport McMoRan Copper and Gold
- Kelly & Walker, LLC
- Messner & Reeves
- Microbreweries for the Environment
- Mr. and Mrs. Emily McDermott
- Mr. and Mrs. George Villere Fund
- Mr. and Mrs. James C. Landis
- Mr. and Mrs. Jerry D. Ladd
- Mr. and Mrs. Ray Jones
- Mr. and Mrs. Scott Beckett
- Mr. and Mrs. William Sullivan
- New Belgium Brewing Company
- St. Charles Capital
- Wilma Shepherd

\$500 - \$999:

- Andrea J. Grant
- Colorado Asphalt Services, Inc.
- Cook Street Consulting
- Dr. Jonathan Kaufman and Mrs. Milissa Hicks
- Dr. Vincent Ho and Dr. Shelley Miyamoto
- Elizabeth Meck and Corey Knight
- Marley Steele-Inama and Dean Paulson



- Microsoft
- Mr. and Mrs. Adam Fiedor
- Mr. and Mrs. Jeff Paulson
- Mr. and Mrs. Matt Holzmann
- Mr. Rex O'Neal
- Mr. Stan Deetz
- Mr. Toby Waters
- Mrs. Linda Bjork
- Technical Integrity
- The IMA Financial Group
- Wallace Scott, PC
- Warren Alloy

