



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

COTTONWOOD INSTITUTE

2014 Annual Report

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:



August 2015:

As I take a step back to reflect on what Cottonwood Institute (CI) accomplished this past year, I am in awe at the incredible adventures, growth, and Action Projects our students have tackled in the community.

CI's change theory is: Gift + Issue = Change. Every student has a gift and when they apply it to an issue they are passionate about, they will change themselves and ripple out to impact their friends, family, schools, communities, the environment, and the world.

In 2014, CI served over 415 students, logged 12,600+ program contact hours, and recorded 4,900+ service-learning project hours through its educational programs, outreach programs, and volunteer projects. Students tackled flood restoration projects, wildfire mitigation projects, organized bike to school days, bring your own mug days, food waste and composting projects, organic gardening projects, and more.

We are also incredibly grateful for support from the Ladd Foundation, who granted us \$30,000 over the next 3 years to help us execute a more sustainable business model by focusing on the following goals we identified with the help of JVA Consulting:

- **Goal One:** Focus on CI's hedgehog concept, the intersection of what it is passionate about, what it can be best in the world at, and what can drive its economic engine.
- **Goal Two:** Refine and execute a robust evaluation plan to improve the quality of our programs and track the short-term and long-term impact of each of CI's core programs.
- **Goal Three:** Position CI as a leader in providing high quality, high impact environmental education and service learning programs for schools and youth organizations in Colorado, including continually improving its curriculum and cultivating high quality instructors.
- **Goal Four:** Create a sustainable funding plan that continues to maintain and grow diverse revenue streams.
- **Goal Five:** Strengthen CI's marketing and communications to effectively communicate CI's mission, vision, key message, and core programs to cultivating long-term program partnerships and donors.

None of this would have been possible without the generous support of our educational partners, students, parents, staff, instructors, board members, donors, corporate sponsors, and foundations that believe in the power and impact of our work.

Now let's get out there and #ExploreOutdoors and #ChangeYourWorld!

Sincerely,

Ford Church, M.A., Founder and Executive Director, Cottonwood Institute
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2014 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 charter 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 2014:

- [2014 Ripple Effect Awards Honor Cottonwood Institute Students Making A Big Impact](#)
- [CAP Students Shed Light On The GMO Debate](#)
- [Flood Recovery At Cal-Wood: Students From CYC Rebuild Trails](#)
- [Strive Prep Sunnyside Students Host Bike To School Day](#)
- [Fossils, Fun, and Camping With Military Kids and Families](#)
- [Earth Task Force Collaborates with Local Vendors and The Kitchen Next Door to Serve a Local Lunch](#)
- [College of Menominee Nation Explores Floods and Fires in Colorado](#)
- [Strive Prep Excel Students Visit Mission:Wolf](#)
- [Earth Task Force Hosts Bike Repair Day](#)
- [Students at Strive Prep Excel Backpack, Lead, and Learn with CAP](#)



TESTIMONIALS FROM 2014:

“During this current school year, my mind keeps wandering back to my trip. I keep thinking of my view from my sit-spot area and how amazing the mountains were. This week in my English class, I have to write about a life experience, and I’ve decided to write about this. I just wanted to say thank you for this great experience.” Cottonwood Institute Student

“You have an engaging style of teaching where the students learn easily and are enthusiastic about their learning. More was learned about communication in the game you played than hours of lecture about the importance of communicating well. The GMO project gave Sydney a taste of issues in her back yard, and real life exposure to political reality.” Cottonwood Institute Parent



2014 DEMOGRAPHICS:

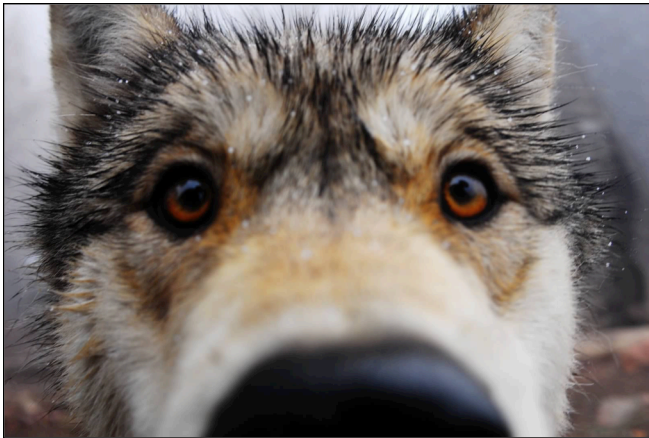
For donor-supported programs, Cottonwood Institute primarily works with schools and youth organizations that serve high-need students of color that qualify for free or reduced lunch. In 2014, on average:

- 72% of youth qualify for free or reduced lunch, an indicator of poverty.
- 67% of youth are Hispanic/Latino
- 24% are Caucasian
- 5% African-American
- 5% of youth identified with other races

2014 PROGRAM EVALUATION DATA:

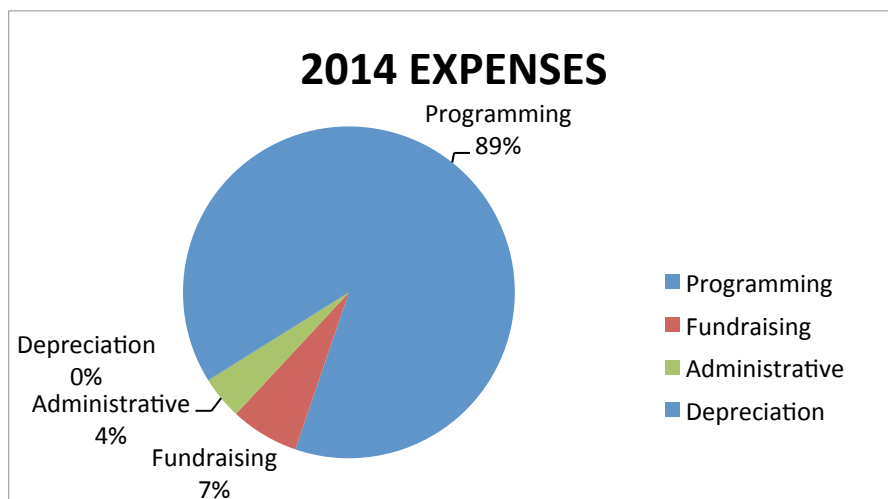
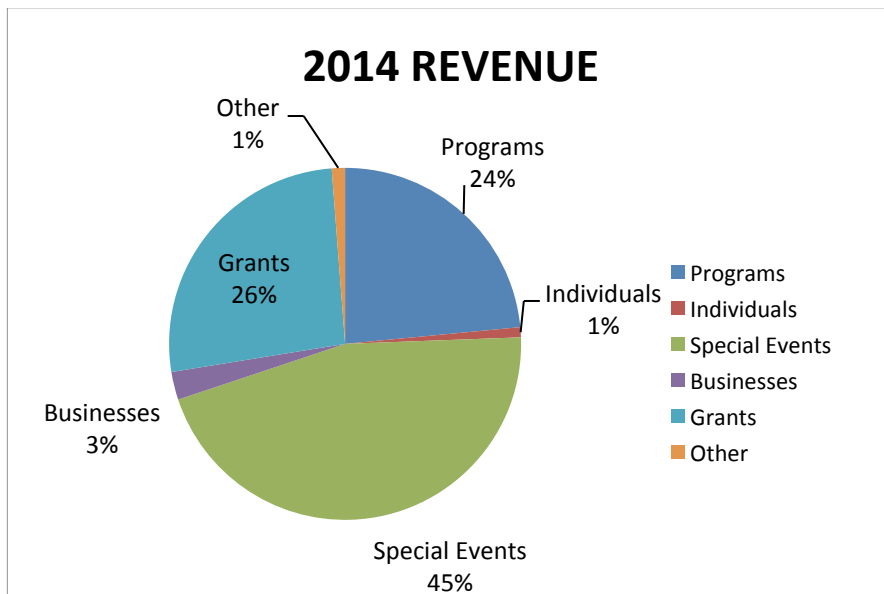
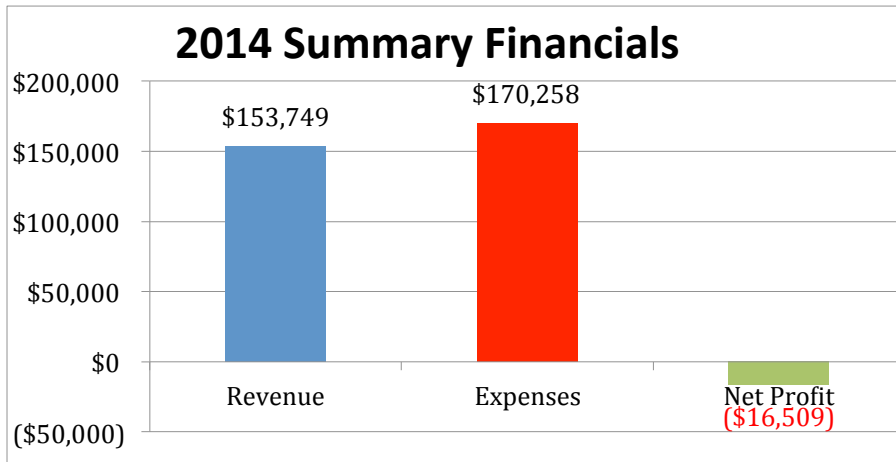
Below are key evaluation results from CI's 2014 Strive Preparatory Schools Westwood program according to post course student surveys:

- 100% of participants recommended their program to other students.
- 88% of participants increased their knowledge of local environmental issues.
- 100% of participants developed the skills to make a positive impact in their schools, the community, or the environment.
- 88% of participants said they would take personal responsibility to improve the local environment.
- 100% of participants developed 21st century student skills, including: leadership, critical thinking, and problem solving skills.



2014 FINANCIALS:

***Please Note:** Cottonwood Institute recently changed its fiscal year, so 2014 financials represent a short fiscal year from January 1, 2014 – September 30, 2014 and show a small operating loss. Cottonwood Institute is financially healthy and maintains a \$70,000 reserve with Rose Community Foundation. Cottonwood Institute’s next fiscal year will be from October 1, 2014 – September 30, 2015.



2014 TOP SUPPORTERS:

\$10,000:

- Ladd Foundation
- Salah Foundation

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

- CoBiz Cares Foundation
- PeyBack Foundation
- Rose Community Foundation
- Dr. and Mrs. John M. Church, Jr.

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

- Community Foundation Serving Boulder County
- Great Divide Brewing Company
- Anonymous
- Mr. and Mrs. Erich Bower
- Mr. and Mrs. John Cafaro

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

- CoBiz Financial
- Cook Street Consulting
- Freeport McMoRan
- Greater New Orleans Foundation
- Kelly & Walker
- Leprino Foods
- OtterBox
- Taddonio Family Foundation
- Mr. Ethan Bellamy
- Mrs. Linda Bjork
- Dr. and Mrs. William Conway
- Ms. Sarah Fox
- Mr. and Mrs. Scot Korth
- Dr. and Mrs. Stefan Mokrohisky
- Mr. and Mrs. Trent Peaker
- Mr. Joshua Maida and Mrs. Amy Stimmler

\$500 - \$999:

- Anadarko
- Benson & Case
- CASI, Inc.
- The IMA Financial Group
- Mr. and Mrs. Scott Beckett
- Mr. and Mrs. Adam Fiedor
- Mrs. Stacy and Jessica Howard
- Mr. and Mrs. Michael Lassers
- Mr. David Mattingly and Mrs. Ruth Andrews
- Mr. and Mrs. Ravi Morchi
- Mr. and Mrs. Jeff Paulson
- Ms. Rebecca Ross
- Mr. and Mrs. Matt Sitzmann

