



# COTTONWOOD INSTITUTE

*"Changing the world, one adventure at a time!"*

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## COTTONWOOD INSTITUTE

*2010 Annual Report*

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

July 2011:

Cottonwood Institute was founded in 2004 to inspire young people to initiate positive change in their schools, communities, and the natural environment in order to foster civic engagement, environmental stewardship, and leadership skills. Nearly seven years later, we remain committed to inspiring a new generation of leaders. In short, our Board and staff believe that all children have the power to initiate positive change, but that we can't expect them to care about the environment if they never have a chance to explore the outdoors.

People often ask me about the impact Cottonwood Institute programs have on our participants and the communities we serve, and I am reminded of a quote by Paul Loeb, the author of *Soul of a Citizen*, we share with students at the end of our programs:

*"We never know how the impact of our actions may ripple out. We never know who may be touched. That's one more reason why, although the fruits of our labors can't always be seen, they matter immensely."*

Through exciting programs like our Community Adventure Program (CAP), our collaboration with West Denver Preparatory Charter School, and Operation: Military Kids, we are having a tremendous impact in the lives of our students.

According to one 2010 CAP student, "we made a difference in our community. We rose above and saw what the actual problem was and how it broke down into many problems. CAP helped me learn that we need to be aware and that we need to change in positive ways. I hope to take this class again and again. CAP was a life-changing experience for me!"

A special thanks goes out to all of our students, parents, instructors, educational partners, volunteers, donors, supporters, and Board members who help us increase the accessibility of the outdoors to more and more public school students every year.

For more information about how Cottonwood Institute is "changing the world, one adventure at a time," please visit our website at [www.CottonwoodInstitute.org](http://www.CottonwoodInstitute.org) or contact me at 303.447.1076 or [ford@cottonwoodinstitute.org](mailto:ford@cottonwoodinstitute.org). Thank you in advance for your support!

Sincerely,

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

## **MEASURING IMPACT:**

Here are a few of the ways Cottonwood Institute programs impacted the communities we served in 2010:

1. More than 1,000 participants, including more than 375 diverse youth, logged more than 11,000 program contact hours, and completed more than 3,500 environmental service-learning project hours through our educational programs, outreach programs, and volunteer projects in 2010.
2. The Earth Task Force implemented the first student-directed high school environmental summit in the Boulder Valley School District, which was attended by more than 70 students, teachers, school district, nonprofit partners, and county officials. They also flipped the switch on the \$32,000 solar panel system that they helped secure funding for just before Earth Day 2010.
3. We successfully piloted three new projects to connect diverse public school students to the outdoors, including: *Operation: Military Kids Essential Survival Skills Project*, the *Cesar Chavez Organic Gardening Project*, and the *Three Trees and a River Project*.
4. We are extremely proud of the new nonprofit and community partnerships we developed, including partnerships with:
  - West Denver Preparatory Charter School
  - Operation: Military Kids
  - I Have A Dream Foundation
5. According to one Cottonwood Institute parent, “Our son participated in the *Endangered Wolves and Animal Tracking Project* last summer and the *Stone Age Survival Course* the previous summer. The experiences he had during these courses have shaped his development and have helped him grow into an environmentally and socially conscious teenager who understands the complexities of human interaction with the natural world and his place in this mosaic. He gained skills and knowledge that he now puts to use in other areas of his life. For example, his experiences have made their way into his papers for school, his commitments and emerging world views, and have boosted his confidence. In a culture that has lost many of its rights of passage for young men and women, the Cottonwood Institute provides the critical skills and experiences that allow young people to understand the world and their place in it.”

## **2010 DEMOGRAPHICS:**

Cottonwood Institute works primarily with schools and community groups that serve low-income students. In 2010, on average:

- 53% were eligible for free or reduced lunch — an indicator of poverty
- 23% were Hispanic/Latino(a)
- 59% were Caucasian
- 19% identified with other races

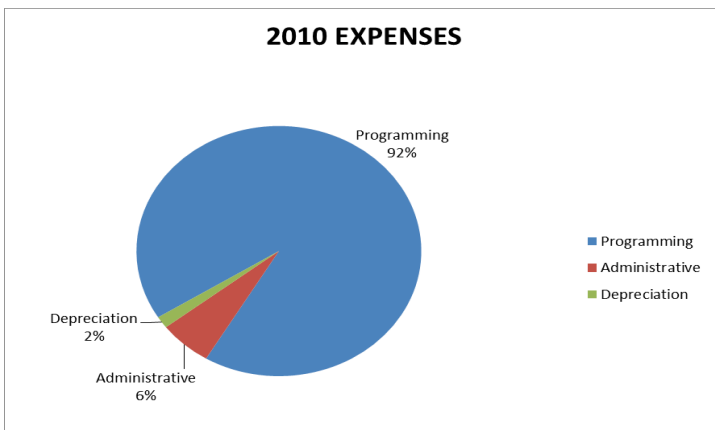
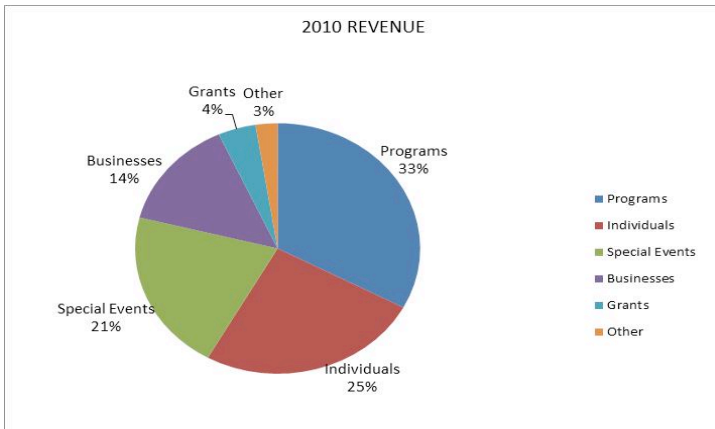
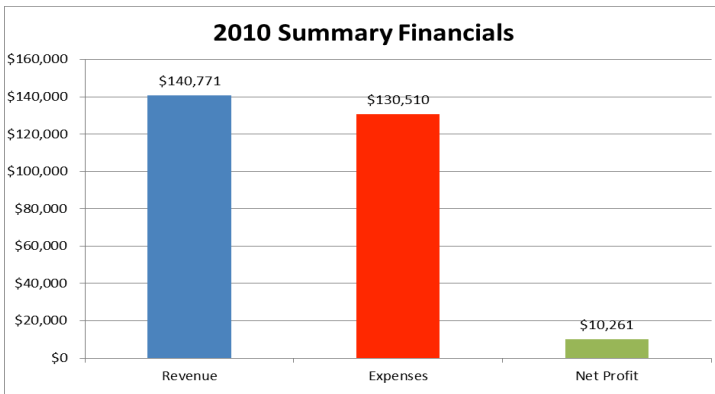
## **2010 PROGRAM EVALUATION DATA:**

In 2010, an average of Community Adventure Program post-course participant evaluations demonstrated the following results:

- 98% of our students would recommend our programs to other students.
- 98% of students indicated they had a deeper awareness and appreciation for the natural world compared to when they started their course.
- 95% of students indicated they had a better understanding of future careers pertaining to their course compared to when they started their course.

- 88% of students said they were more aware of environmental issues compared to when they started this course.
- 87% of students indicated they were more likely to take steps to reduce their environmental footprint compared to when they started their course.
- 87% of students indicated they had the skills to identify a need and come up with a solution to make a positive impact in their school, community, or the environment compared to when they started their course.

## 2010 FINANCIALS



## **2010 TOP SUPPORTERS:**

*\$5,000+*

- Anonymous
- Anonymous
- Beatport
- Mile Hi Specialty Foods
- Jack A. Derby, Jr.

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

- Megastar Financial Corporation
- The Kenneth King Foundation
- Dr. and Mrs. John M. Church, Jr.

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

- Avnet Technology Solutions
- Ben & Jerry's Foundation
- Integrated Storage Consulting Services
- New Belgium Brewing Company
- Mr. and Mrs. Scott Beckett
- Linda Bjork
- Dr. and Mrs. William Conway
- Mr. and Mrs. James Landis
- Dr. and Mrs. Stefan Mokrohisky
- Mr. and Mrs. James Muchmore
- Mr. and Mrs. Alan Mumford
- Mr. and Mrs. George Villere

*\$500 - \$999:*

- CoBiz Financial
- Community First Foundation
- Redgarden Engineering
- Whole Foods Market
- Mikal E. Belicove
- Mr. and Mrs. Kyle Covell
- Jack A. Derby, III
- Mr. and Mrs. Adam Fiedor
- Meredith Graham
- Robert Gosset
- Mr. and Mrs. Amy Lassers
- Mr. and Mrs. Trent Peaker
- Mr. and Mrs. William Sullivan
- Chris Zook