



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

COTTONWOOD INSTITUTE

2011 Annual Report

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

July 2012:

I really get fired up about our work because we are addressing two really important issues in our community:

1. So many kids along the Front Range see the mountains every day and either never have been to the mountains, don't have access to the outdoors in terms of gear or transportation, or don't have positive role models that recreate outdoors. We believe that we can't expect kids to care about the environment until we give them an opportunity to explore the outdoors.

2. So many kids see local environmental issues affecting their communities, but don't know how to help or think the problems are too complex for one person to do anything about. We believe that every student has the power to be a changemaker to do something positive to address the issues that they are passionate about in their community.

To address these issues, the Cottonwood Institute collaborates with schools and youth organizations in the Front Range to put together fun and engaging programs that connect kids to the outdoors and empower them to tackle local environmental issues to help improve their schools, the community, and the environment through our high quality, high impact environmental education and service-learning curriculum.

2011 has been a phenomenal year in terms of the new partnerships we have created, the students we have impacted, and the projects students have addressed in their communities. We are getting kids outside, inspiring students to become leaders, problem solvers, critical thinkers, and engaged in their community instead of sitting on the sidelines and feeling powerless.

The Cottonwood Institute would like to thank all of our students, parents, staff, instructors, board members, educational partners, donors, supporters, and cheerleaders for making 2011 such a success!

For more information about the Cottonwood Institute, please visit our website at www.CottonwoodInstitute.org or contact me directly at 303.447.1076 or ford@cottonwoodinstitute.org.

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 2011:

1. In 2011, CI served over 350 youth, over 1,200 total participants, delivered over 13,000 program contact hours, and completed over 6,000 environmental service project hours through its educational programs, outreach programs, and volunteer projects.
2. In 2011, CI students were the recipients of the 2011 National Environmental Education Foundation Green Prize and received \$10,000 to continue the sustainability initiatives they pioneered at their public school.
3. In 2011, CI's Earth Task Force received the Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education Award for Excellence and the Center For Conservation Resource Youth Conservation ReWard.

TOP 5 PROGRAM STORIES FROM 2011:

1. [Casa de la Esperanza Girls Gobble It Up](#)
2. [West Denver Prep "Whips" Into Shape This Spring!](#)
3. [A Meal For Many: New Vista High School and The Kitchen Restaurant Host Local Lunch 2011](#)
4. ["Sit and Listen" – Operation: Military Kids Overnight Teaches More Than Just Survival](#)
5. [Cottonwood Institute Hosts Environmental Leadership Summit With Johnson & Wales](#)

NEW PARTNERSHIPS IN 2011:

We are extremely proud of the new nonprofit and community partnerships we developed, including partnerships with:

- **Buckley Air Force Base:** Benefitting underserved youth from military families.
- **Casa de la Esperanza:** Serving primarily low-income Latino(a) middle school youth in Boulder County
- **Johnson & Wales University:** 93% of Denver students receive federal, state, or institutional aid.
- **Lakewood High School:** Primarily serving low-income Latino(a) high school students who are at-risk of dropping out of school

TESTIMONIALS FROM 2011 PARTNERS, PARENTS, AND STUDENTS:

According to Ryan Kockler, West Denver Prep – Lake Campus Principal: "The school I lead within the network, West Denver Prep's Lake Campus, was so lucky to partner with the Cottonwood Institute in our founding year last year and to continue this partnership this year. This partnership has greatly increased our capacity to serve our students well by complimenting our core curriculum with fun, hands-on, relevant, project-based educational and service-learning programs. The Cottonwood Institute's projects develop environmental awareness, teamwork, leadership skills, and a strong service ethic among our students. Simply put, they are providing life-changing experiences for our kids. We deeply value this partnership with the Cottonwood Institute."

"The Community Adventure Program was, without a doubt, one of the best classes I have taken at New Vista High School. The Community Adventure Program helped me understand more about my place in the world and how I want to save it. It has helped me understand the incredible potential and opportunity I have as a high school student to make a true difference in the world." - Community Adventure Program Participant.

"We so appreciated the opportunity to go out on a survival adventure sponsored by the Cottonwood Institute. Your founder and donors should be very pleased with how your organization is helping to nurture a love of the outdoors and the confidence to enjoy it as only a true camping experience can provide. My husband, who is deployed to Afghanistan, also wants me to pass on his gratitude for getting his girls up to the Colorado mountains this summer. It's non-profit groups like yours that take up the slack when our troops are off serving and away from family." Parent and Participant, Operation: Military Kids Project.

2011 DEMOGRAPHICS:

Cottonwood Institute works primarily with schools and community groups that serve low-income students. While individual demographics vary based on each specific project, overall in 2011:

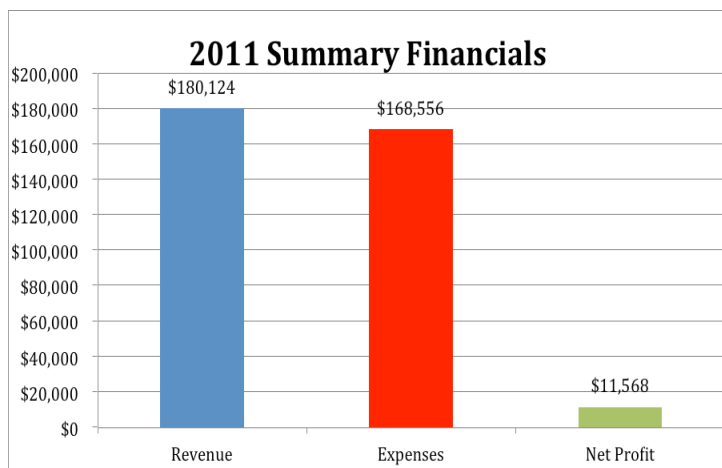
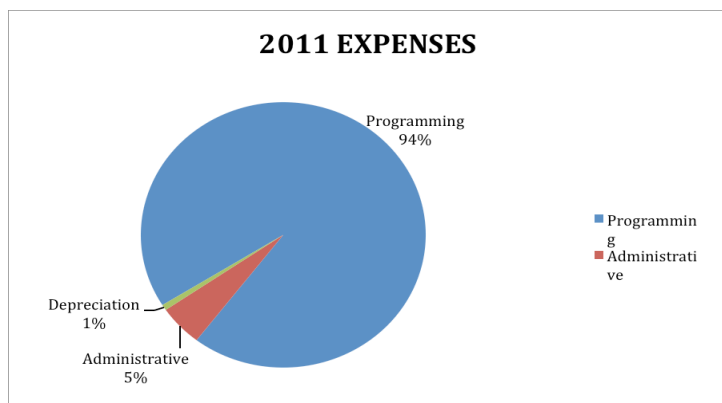
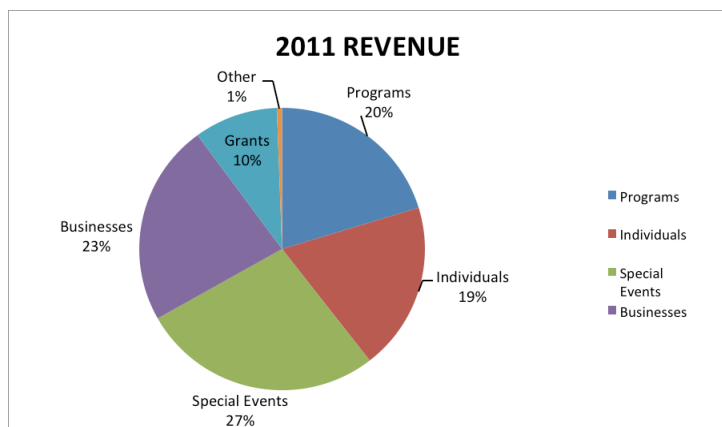
- 65% of youth are eligible for free or reduced lunch, and indicator of poverty.
- 40% of students are Hispanic/Latino(a)
- 42% of students are Caucasian
- 18% of students identified with other races

2011 PROGRAM EVALUATION DATA:

Below are key evaluation results from CI's 2011 West Denver Preparatory Charter School 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.

2011 FINANCIALS:



2011 TOP SUPPORTERS:

\$5,000+

- Anonymous Donors x 4
- Avnet Technology Solutions
- Dr. and Mrs. John M. Church, Jr.
- Markham Mark of Distinction
- Taddonio Family Foundation

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

- Brett Family Foundation
- Community Foundation Serving Boulder County
- De Joya Griffith & Company
- Mr. Jack A. Derby, Jr.
- Mr. and Mrs. Jason Lawrence
- New Belgium Brewing Company
- Patagonia Boulder Store

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

- Mr. and Mrs. Scott Beckett
- Dr. and Mrs. William Conway
- Mr. and Mrs. Kyle Covell
- Derby Financial Group
- Mr. and Mrs. James Landis
- Dr. and Mrs. Stefan Mokrohisky
- Mr. and Mrs. Alan Mumford
- Mr. Rex O'Neal
- St. Charles Capital
- Mr. and Mrs. William Sullivan
- The Kenneth King Foundation
- Mr. and Mrs. George Villere
- Patrick Williams and Molly Martin

\$500 - \$999:

- Mr. Mikal Belicove
- Mrs. Linda Bjork
- Leslie L. Cavness
- Colorado Asphalt Services, Inc.
- Colorado Business Bank
- Community First Foundation
- Mr. Stan Deetz
- Mr. and Mrs. Emily McDermott
- Mr. James Muchmore
- Mr. and Mrs. Ric Porreca
- Redgarden Engineering
- Mr. and Mrs. Byrne Reese
- Paul Texeira and Rene Howard
- Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Waters
- Mr. and Mrs. Robert Woodworth