



2023



Annual Report

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“ **KABOOM! envisions a world filled with vibrant communities and generations of happy and healthy kids.** ”

We know that play is a necessary part of childhood and a key ingredient to this vision, so we remain committed to ensuring that every child in every community can access, use, and feel a sense of belonging in amazing places to play.

This year, we pushed ourselves to reimagine a child’s landscape, including beautiful schoolyards and communities aligned in purpose. We took significant steps towards realizing our vision by assessing how we approach our work and building out capabilities that will lead us to a more sustainable future. We learned and challenged ourselves to be more intentional about the playspaces we build and how we can help address climate change to protect our environment. Our commitment to innovation will help our kids have responsible access to nature so they can experience the full benefits of playing in these spaces. At the same time, our fiscal sustainability remains a priority, as we make strategic decisions and investments to ensure that our organization remains resilient, adaptable, and able to take some risks to build momentum for our work across the country.



LETTER FROM KABOOM! CEO & BOARD CHAIR

Launching our 25 in 5 Initiative to End Playspace Inequity in 2022 was a bold move. We invested in ourselves to develop a model for building cross-sector partnerships that address needs across entire systems and we are seeing progress to let us know we are on the right path. Our work with the Eat. Learn. Play. Foundation (ELP) and Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) is the blueprint for the work we need to lead to show up for our kids. That's why we're highlighting our ambitious joint commitment to build 25 more playgrounds by the end of the 2025 school year in this report. But working with cities alone is not enough. This year we also intensified our advocacy efforts to make a difference at the policy level. With our partners and supporters, we celebrated the passage of SB291, which guarantees that kids in California will get 30 minutes of outdoor recess every school day. These examples of cross-sector action and partnership are advancing our mission and we're so proud of our work together.

With so much progress, there's still a lot more to do. We will continue to be bold in how we forge new partnerships, drive collective action through public policy, and use data to inform decision-making to address playspace inequity everywhere it exists.

And we need your ongoing support more than ever. Thank you for all of the ways you've championed our mission.

Together, we will create the change that kids need to build brighter futures and live out their greatest dreams.



Lysa Ratliff

CEO

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lysa".



Lynn M. Ross

Board Chair
Founder and Principal
Spirit for Change Consulting

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lynn".

2023 Playing by the Numbers



98

playspaces created or transformed



145K

kids with access to new playspaces



6.4K+

community members engaged





KABOOM! 25in5

end playspace inequity

Since announcing our groundbreaking 25 in 5 Initiative to End Playspace Inequity in January 2022, we have accelerated progress towards achieving our mission. New partners have joined the Initiative, and together, we are unified in addressing complex issues and bringing resources together for this generation. Delta Air Lines and Travelers have invested in our 25 in 5 Fund which allows us to direct more funding to priority locations where it's needed most. Our goal is to end playspace inequity at the scale it exists, ensuring that every child can experience the critical developmental benefits of having quality places to play.

LEARN MORE about how you can join or support the 25 in 5 Initiative.

KABOOM! 25 IN 5

San Francisco

We envision nature-rich environments for kids to experience and enjoy as a part of every day childhood. In May, we announced that KABOOM! and the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department will lead an ambitious \$10 million plan to address gaps in access to quality, nature-rich playspaces in communities that disproportionately lack resources. Through this partnership and in collaboration with San Francisco Children & Nature, we will ensure equitable connection with nature through play for kids in every neighborhood through playground transformations.

“ Having access to the outdoors is vital to children’s development and sense of community... Equity and access to the benefits of nature and creative play drive so many of our projects, and our partnership with KABOOM! will help us take it further by guaranteeing innovative playspaces for all San Francisco kids, no matter where they live.”

Phil Ginsburg

General Manager
San Francisco Recreation and Park



Photo credit: SF Children & Nature



KABOOM! 25 IN 5



Uvalde

Our work in Uvalde started with one playground at DeLeon Park. Two years later, we remain committed to Uvalde and are on a journey to support the community through healing after the unthinkable tragedy at Robb Elementary School on May 24, 2022. Last year, the City of Uvalde became an official Playce Partner in our 25 in 5 Initiative to End Playspace Inequity. With four new playspaces built alongside the community last year and more planned for 2024, kids in Uvalde are closer to equitable access to places to play for a community in need of normalcy, restored childhoods, and joy.

Photo credit: La Vida es Bella Photography

KABOOM! 25 IN 5

Saint Paul

Saint Paul boasts one of the highest park rankings in the country, yet local leaders also recognize that until this is true for all residents, there is work to do. As an official Playce Partner in our 25 in 5 Initiative to End Playspace Inequity, we are working with Saint Paul Parks and Recreation and the Saint Paul Parks Conservancy to lead an ambitious plan to invest \$7.5 million to address gaps in access to quality places to play in communities that disproportionately lack resources and to help achieve the City's goal to make Saint Paul a city that works for all.

We kicked off this initiative with a new playspace at Dunning Park, a special place for Mayor Melvin Carter – his childhood park!





KABOOM! 25 IN 5



Atlanta

Atlanta Community School Parks Initiative to Transform Schoolyards

The 25 in 5 Initiative to End Playspace Inequity requires us to work with partners in new and bold ways to achieve community-led outcomes, and our partnerships in Atlanta are a perfect example of that work. KABOOM! is partnering with Atlanta Public Schools (APS), the City of Atlanta, Children & Nature Network, and Trust for Public Land as part of the Atlanta Community School Parks Initiative to create more environmentally resilient schoolyards that support kids' mental and physical health and academic achievement. This announcement came on the heels of APS' 150th anniversary and in support of Mayor Andre Dickens' declaration of 2023 as the Year of the Youth to highlight the urgency of our commitment to kids as leaders, equipping them for success. Together, partners will work to achieve transformative impact for kids through the Atlanta Community School Parks Initiative.





Empowering Communities, Empowering Youth

We are committed to ending playspace inequity for good because we know it will create generations of happy and healthy kids. The imprint of our kids' imagination can be found on every playground we build. Not only are they the main architects of our playspaces, but they continue to demonstrate the power of their voice and are emerging as leaders of our future. Nurturing kids' physical and mental health and centering youth and community voices is critical to our work. Through innovative partnerships and fundraising, we hope to ignite a ripple effect of positive change in the world our kids will one day inherit.



EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES, EMPOWERING YOUTH

When Kids Take the Lead

As part of his mitzvah project, 13-year-old Harry Hirsch raised over \$20,000 to help build a playground at Avalon Park Elementary School in Chicago. An ambassador for kids everywhere, Harry knows all about the importance of access to places to play – he’s donated his birthdays to KABOOM! for the past eleven years!



The Washington Post featured our CEO Lysa Ratliff in an article where she highlighted the history of playgrounds, the freedom they provide, our kid-designed process for building playspaces in communities, and the importance of equity in deciding where playgrounds are built.

[READ THE ARTICLE](#)

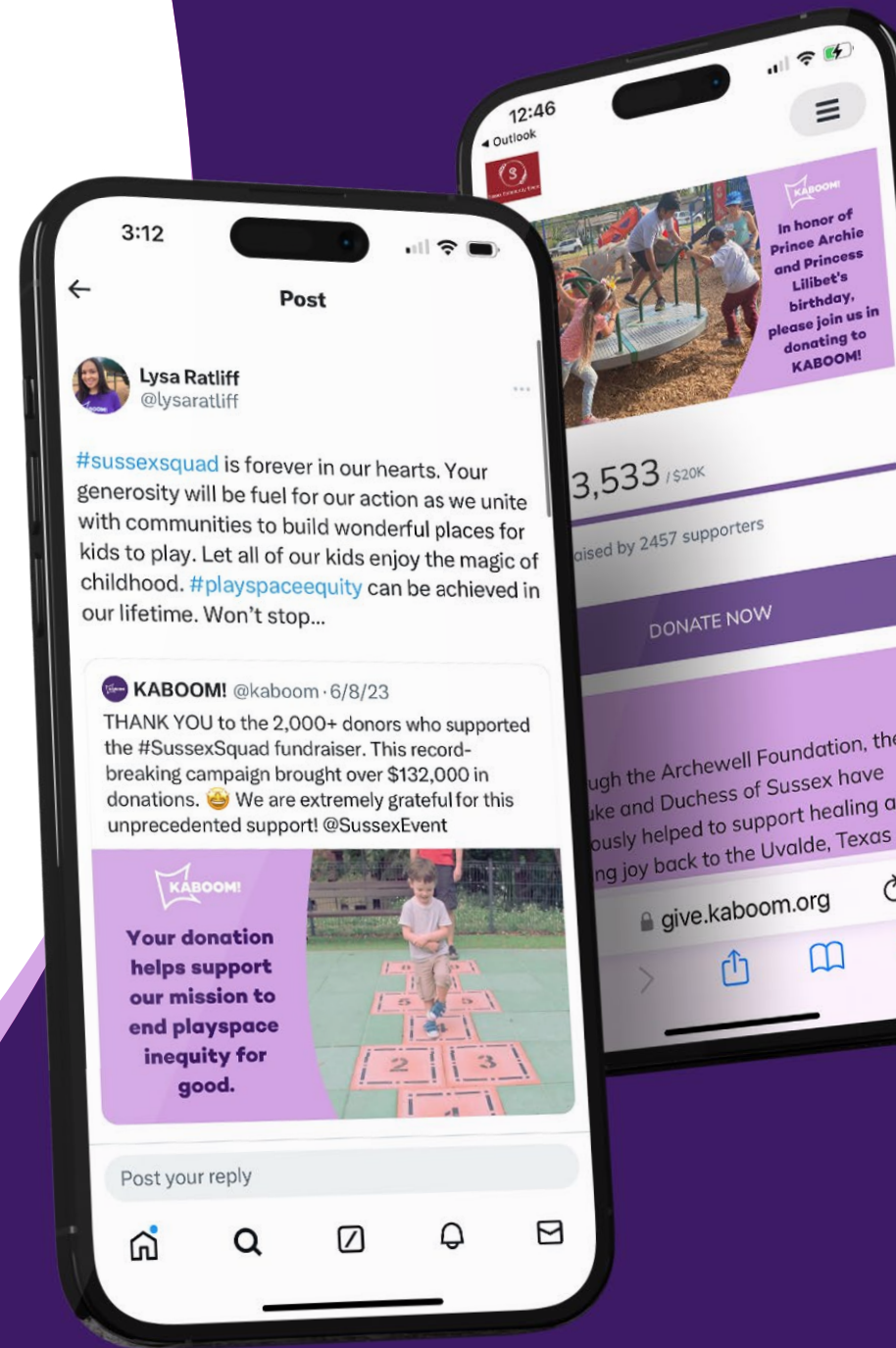


Kids are the first designers of a KABOOM! playground – we see them as the experts, an essential part of the community that we engage.”

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES,
EMPOWERING YOUTH

Sussex Squad

The #SussexSquad brings their group together to organize for community action in honor of Prince Archie and Princess Lilibet's birthdays every year. In 2023 they selected KABOOM! as their partner. The squad first learned about KABOOM! through our partnership with The Archewell Foundation in 2022 at DeLeon Park in Uvalde, TX. The month-long campaign raised over \$131,000, with contributions from over 3,000 people worldwide, including donations from every continent! We are grateful for this unprecedented, grassroots support.





Equity by Design:

Redefining Playspaces Through Advocacy and Data

If we don't know where inequity exists, we won't be prepared to solve the problem. In addition to being bikeable and walkable, we want communities to be vibrant and playable. We continue to work alongside stakeholders, including policymakers, to advance systems changes that support equitable access to play and playspaces for children. We are committed to using a data-informed approach to understand where and why playspace inequity exists nationally, as well at state, county, city, and neighborhood levels.



EQUITY BY DESIGN

Progress in Ensuring Every Kid Has Mandatory Recess

Remember recess?! With only a handful of states with mandatory recess policies, we are fighting to make recess a fundamental right of a student. In 2023 we celebrated the passage of SB291, which guarantees that kids in California will get 30 minutes of outdoor recess every school day! Working together with our partners we wrote letters, visited representatives, and raised awareness about the importance of play and recess for all kids – and our collective effort paid off! Most states have laws that encourage school districts to provide daily recess, but it's often not a requirement. California is now one of ten states to require recess for every kid.

EQUITY BY DESIGN

Uvalde on The Hill

When the well-being of kids is at stake, we unite and find ways to agree and get things done. In July, two of our most powerful community members from Uvalde joined us to meet with congressional offices on Capitol Hill to discuss our work in Uvalde and how it's helped their community heal. We asked members of Congress to consider ways that the federal government can support play infrastructure and highlighted the difficulty in securing federal funding that prioritizes the need for playspaces.

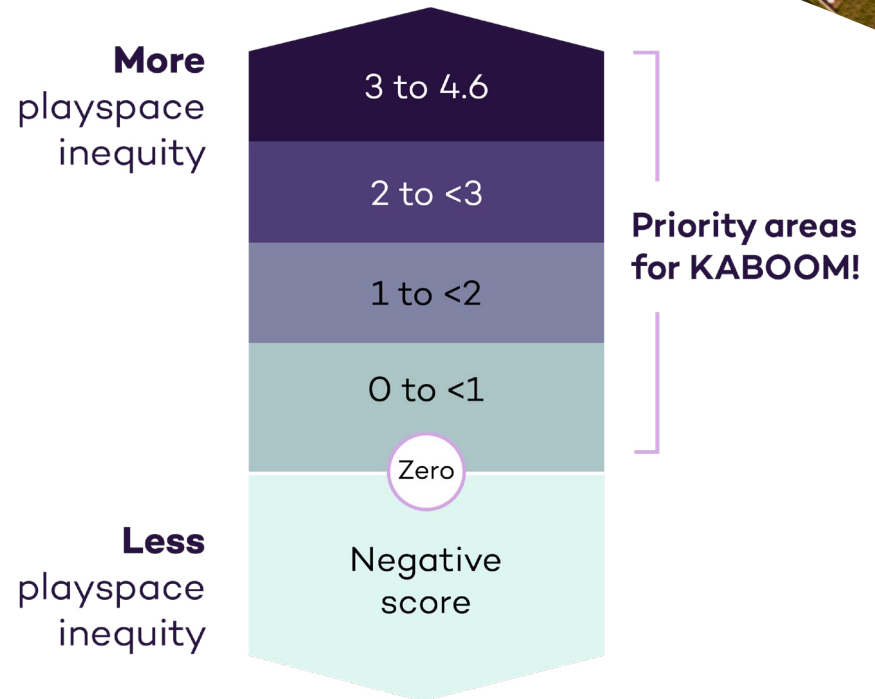




EQUITY BY DESIGN

Playspace Inequity Prioritization Index (PIPI)

This year, KABOOM! put PIPI into practice. Ending playspace inequity requires a data-informed approach that drives resources to communities where the need is greatest. This tool helps us determine where playspace inequity exists so that we can prioritize where we build.



EQUITY BY DESIGN

PIPI in Action

The introduction of PIPI into our day-to-day work allows us to more effectively lead conversations and inform leaders and funders about areas experiencing the most playspace inequity.

However, PIPI is not only a tool we use to help decide where playspaces can make the most impact. Given the record heat waves and floods last summer and an increased interest in combating the effects of climate change, we've begun using additional data that highlights areas where there is high heat or flood risk. This allows us to build playspaces that address playspace inequity, as well as plan to provide shading and appropriate surfacing to help mitigate heat and flood risk.





Transformative Partnerships in Action

At KABOOM!, we're intentional about the partnerships we pursue, ensuring we unite on our shared priorities for kids and communities so we are well positioned to end playspace inequity for good. We are grateful to our partners for joining us in our efforts to increase access to nature for kids and expand our reach across the country to achieve our mission.

Photo credit: Roberto Hernandez for the Dallas Mavericks



TRANSFORMATIVE PARTNERSHIPS IN ACTION

Commitment to Equitable Access to Playspaces in Oakland

Stephen and Ayesha Curry's Eat. Learn. Play. Foundation and KABOOM! have continued to partner to ensure that every Oakland kid has equitable access to amazing playspaces. Together with Oakland Unified School District (OUSD), we announced that we will work together to create new schoolyards with 25 more schools over four years (through 2026), giving 10,000+ more students per year over the next generation great play opportunities during recess and before and after school. This is part of the Eat. Learn. Play. Foundation's announcement at the recently renovated Lockwood STEAM Academy schoolyard to raise and invest \$50 million in additional support and resources for OUSD public schools.

A key part of transforming these schoolyards is prioritizing access to nature. With multi-sport courts, teaching gardens, outdoor classrooms, libraries, and nature exploration areas, KABOOM! and our partners in Oakland are committed to achieving playspace equity through nature-rich schoolyards.

Photo credit: Desmond Gribben (@dcpphotosf) for Eat. Learn. Play.

TRANSFORMATIVE PARTNERSHIPS IN ACTION

The City of Hamtramck

With only 2.6% of the City's land dedicated to parks, Hamtramck, Michigan ranks among the cities with the least amount of green space. This means kids in the city have almost no place to play outside, limiting their ability to enjoy the essence of childhood and all the benefits play can provide. The Hamtramck Recreation District Plan aims to convert an underutilized 26-acre recreation area into a vibrant park with updated amenities and expanded recreational activities. KABOOM! was honored to partner with The City of Hamtramck, Hamtramck Public Schools, Hamtramck Parks Conservancy, and General Motors Factory Zero to build a kid-designed playspace in Veterans Park as part of this plan.





TRANSFORMATIVE PARTNERSHIPS IN ACTION



Milestone Celebrations

We are blown away by all we have achieved with our partners! This year, we celebrated 100 playspace builds with The CarMax Foundation and 10 years of partnership with Delta Air Lines! In those 10 years, KABOOM! and Delta have teamed up to build 37 playgrounds in 16 different cities across the United States. With this 100th build, KABOOM! and The CarMax Foundation have built playspaces in 74 cities and increased access to playspaces for over 150,000 kids! Both Delta Air Lines and The CarMax Foundation are among the first partners to invest in our 25 in 5 Initiative to End Playspace Inequity. These milestones demonstrate our partners' commitment and continued support of our mission, their communities, and kids' well-being.



Photo credit: Andrea Montoya (top)

TRANSFORMATIVE PARTNERSHIPS IN ACTION

Marketing for a Cause

From building playgrounds to awarding grants, Sierra has supported our mission to end playspace inequity for the past five years! In 2023, Sierra ran a point-of-sale cause marketing campaign during the back-to-school season, sold special playspace-themed wrapping paper in stores, and partnered to build a new playground at Dunning Park in Saint Paul, our newest 25 in 5 Initiative to End Playspace Inequity partner. With nine store locations throughout the Saint Paul and Minneapolis area, Sierra is committed to encouraging outdoor play in the communities they represent.





TRANSFORMATIVE PARTNERSHIPS IN ACTION

Marketing for a Cause

This was the second year in a row that Kellanova and Minecraft have partnered with KABOOM! on a brand campaign that has helped to broaden our awareness and raise funds for our mission through in-store activations. The project was part of the Kellanova Better Days™ Promise to advance sustainable and equitable access to food and create better days for 4 billion people by the end of 2030.

We also partnered to build a new playspace with David K. Sellars Elementary School, Fort Worth Independent School District, Kellanova, and Minecraft to increase access to play for kids in Forest Hill, Texas.





KABOOM! Culture

Progress toward our mission to end playspace inequity would not be possible without the dedication and passion of our staff. As it's central to our values, we led and participated in a variety of training opportunities to continue to grow our knowledge about equity, inclusion, and how we can foster a sense of belonging internally and externally. Together, we worked with our teams either in the office or on the ground to build 87 playgrounds across the country, leaving time to play as well. We kicked off dedicated time for Recess – an hour set aside each month to play with and get to know our colleagues. As we refocus our goals to include sustainability in all aspects of our work, our core values of partnership, humility, equity, play, and accountability guide our decision-making more than ever.

KABOOM! CULTURE

Boomers in Action: M-NCPPC Fort Washington Build

In November, several KABOOM! staff volunteered to build a playground with the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission and the Lids Foundation at Fort Washington Forest Park in Prince George's County. This new playspace will bring joy to over 1,100 kids per year. Boomers and other volunteers rolled up their sleeves and showed their commitment to the project, leaving time to test out the new slide!





KABOOM! CULTURE

Life as a Boomer

Every year, KABOOM! staff gathers to regroup, recharge, and refocus on our work with a three-day retreat we affectionately call Play Academy. With the theme of “The Future is Now,” we discussed the urgency behind our mission to end playspace inequity, our personal “why the work matters to us” stories, and the importance of partnership and collaboration. Of course, we also left lots of time to play!

Throughout the year, the staff looks forward to opportunities to have fun together. From anniversaries and birthdays to attending our monthly lunches and annual BBQ, we celebrate each other’s achievements and time to connect.



Our annual BBQ coincided with a very special celebration – CEO Lysa Ratliff’s birthday!

Partners

LEADERSHIP

Eat. Learn. Play. Foundation
Maryland-National Capital Park
and Planning Commission
Oakland Unified School District
The CarMax Foundation
The Powell Foundation
Vanguard Strong Start for Kids
Virginia Foundation for
Healthy Youth
William Penn Foundation

SIGNATURE

Challenge of Tarrant County
Discover
General Motors
Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust
Morgan Stanley Foundation
Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation
UnitedHealthcare Services, Inc.

PARTNER IN PLAY

Allstate Foundation
Amway
Anaheim Community Foundation
Anaheim Ducks
Baltimore Ravens
Bank of America
Blue Cross and Blue Shield
of North Carolina
BOSS
Citizens Charitable Foundation
City of Akron, OH
City of Anaheim
Community Services
City of Burlington
City of San Francisco
Community Foundation of
the Texas Hill Country
Danimals
Delta Air Lines, Inc.
Delta Health Alliance
Denver Broncos Foundation
Élan Academy Charter School
Emerson Collective
Equitable Foundation
Fairytale Brownies, Inc.
Fiesta Events, Inc.
Foresters Financial
Hancock Whitney
Hearst Foundations
Hirsh Family
Howard Johnson Foundation
Integrity
Jerami Grant's Hour Generation
Foundation
Kaiser Permanente
Kellanova
King & Spalding LLP
LA Sprout Fund
Landscape Structures
Lids Foundation
MAPCO
Markelle Fultz's Faithful
2 the Grind LLC
Mead Family Foundation
MercyHealth System
Monumental Sports &
Entertainment Foundation
Nashville Predators Foundation

Nora Roberts Family Foundation
Pacific Life Foundation
Public Service Enterprise Group
(PSEG)
Quaker Oats Chewy Play Fund
Related Affordable Foundation
Saint Paul Parks Conservancy
San Antonio Area Foundation
Sidley Austin
Sierra/TJX Companies, Inc
Sport for Healing Fund
The Archewell Foundation
The Colorado Health Foundation
The Knight Foundation
The League & The City
of Bethlehem, PA
The Maia Family Foundation
The Smile Generation
Travelers
Unilever
United Way of San Antonio
and Bexar County
Venable LLP

Our Board of Directors



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Board Chair
Founder and Principal
Spirit for Change Consulting



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Vice Board Chair
Senior Advisor, Business
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Georgetown University



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Management Client Segments
Morgan Stanley



Tiffany Manuel, PhD

President and CEO
TheCaseMade



Natalie Vega O'Neil

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Junior Achievement of
Washington



Lysa Ratliff

CEO
KABOOM!
Ex-Officio Member

Senior Team



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Carey Palmquist
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Carlyne Cardichon
Vice President
Finance & Operations



Jen DeMelo
Vice President
Organizational Innovation
& Strategic Partnerships



Tamara Grider Harris
Vice President
Marketing & Communications



Ronda Jackson
Vice President
Policy, Advocacy & Impact



Kathryn Lusk
Vice President
Regional Programs



Danielle Turnage
Vice President
Program Operations



James Siegel
Senior Fellow

Financials

REVENUES

Contracted Program Services	\$9,508,759
Contributions & Grants	\$11,041,589
In-Kind Contributions	\$159,651
Total Revenues	\$20,709,999

EXPENSES

Programs	\$22,105,123
<i>Direct Impact</i>	\$20,124,344
<i>Thought Leadership</i>	\$1,980,779
Development	\$1,816,597
Management and General	\$1,152,485
Total Expenses	\$25,074,205

Change in Net Assets from Operations*	(\$4,364,206)
Investment Income/(Loss), net	2,017,689
Change in Net Assets	(\$2,346,517)

Net Assets, Beginning of Year	\$22,526,621
Net Assets, End of Year	\$20,180,104

View our full Consolidated
Financial Statement.

[CLICK HERE.](#)

* Investment approved by Board to scale capacity,
funded by prior year \$14 million donation.



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