

# iexplora!

Annual  
Report  
July 2016 –  
June 2017

**Explora:**  
creating opportunities  
for inspirational discovery  
and the joy of lifelong learning  
through interactive experiences  
in science, technology, engineering,  
art, and math



# What is Explora?

Explora is an innovative experiential learning center that provides exhibit activities and inquiry-based classroom programs to engage people of all ages with scientific phenomena.

At Explora, families use educational, science-rich materials in personal spaces; they get interested in science by manipulating a wide range of physical variables and by engaging in shared learning. Everyone has an opportunity to develop his or her own ideas about what they are experiencing, and parents and teachers see their children as capable and interested science learners.

Explora is driven by our core values of **Community, Learning, Generosity, and Sustainability.**



# Community Value

*Community* is a core value at Explora, and it informs our focus on diversity, collaboration, and achieving shared goals. One way in which we express this commitment is through our *Community Partner Membership Program*. Each year, Explora provides tens of thousands of no-cost museum memberships to low-income families working with our partner schools and organizations.

We also work with these partners to offer financial assistance for educational programs, such as Explora summer camps.

The parents of one of these campers described the value of their child's experience this way: "Thank you for another day of amazing learning and creative projects for [our] little one. She comes home so confident,

assured, and happy. Each and every instructor she had has given her an amazing experience with scientific, educational fun. It truly does take a community to raise a child, and [we] believe this community at Explora is truly amazing."

Explora remains committed to increasing access to quality educational opportunities for all. In collaboration with organizations and individuals throughout our community, we will co-create programs, grow alongside each other, and continue to offer a safe place for people of all ages to explore and deepen their engagement with science, technology, engineering, math, and more.

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***"I love coming here as a family day. It's exciting trying new things that kids can touch and experience about science. Keep up the good work."***

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Explora worked with over **110** community partners and provided over **22,000** no-cost memberships to low-income families this year.

Since 2004, Explora has provided local families with **87,000** of these no-cost memberships.



# Partnering for Success

## Listen. Welcome. Co-create.

*This describes Explora's partnership and engagement strategy. Here are a few stories about partnering for success.*

- This year Explora became the backbone organization for STEM-NM, New Mexico's nationally-designated STEM Learning Ecosystem. With this group, Explora held the 2017 *NM Science Fiesta* in Tiguex Park, attracting over 3,000 people to this celebration of science, engineering, and art. In addition, Explora and STEM-NM prepared to launch a city-wide, community-based math program, called *12 Months of Math*. STEM-NM also helped Explora receive our first National Science Foundation grant to address the math achievement gap in our community.
- In partnership with the Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) Title I program, Explora continued to engage parents and families by offering a *Family Science Night* for each of Albuquerque's 36 Title I schools. More than 17,000 students, their extended families, and their principals and teachers participated in this impactful program. In addition, nearly 500 teachers took part in professional development workshops on science practices. They gained skills to help them ask effective inquiry questions when facilitating family engagement during these Explora *Family Science Night* events—skills which extend to classrooms and beyond.
- Explora began a new partnership with the New Mexico Out-of-School-Time Network (NMOST), becoming that organization's fiscal sponsor. Now housed at Explora, NMOST brings together policymakers, educators, and out-of-school-time providers interested in ensuring positive youth development opportunities and outcomes through afterschool and summer learning programs.



- Explora partnered with the New Mexico Autism Society and strengthened relationships with local families and therapists to develop new resources, summer camps, and sensory-friendly events for children and families affected by autism. Explora staff learned about the various sensory needs of children with autism, and gained skills and strategies to support these children and enable them to have successful museum experiences. We will continue to build and grow relationships with the local autism community, so that families know Explora is always a safe and welcoming space for them. These projects were made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services and United Way of Central New Mexico.

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***“Enjoyable way to teach basic scientific concepts. Great job!”***

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# Learning Impact

Explora excels in creating learning experiences that make science, technology, engineering, and math understandable, approachable, and engaging. Explora ensures these opportunities are accessible to students throughout New Mexico, including piloting *Family Science Outreach Events* to chapter houses on the Navajo Reservation. Peter Ippel, a 5th grade teacher at Indian Hills Elementary School, relates how he has “had the privilege of having Explora outreach for family science nights at two schools where I've taught. Consistently, when everyone else has packed up, there will still be families exploring the science presented at the Explora stations. Explora provides a valuable service to our students and families and engages the families of New Mexico in learning beyond the classroom.”

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### **[Explora teacher training]**

**“We would love to do this again. It also inspired us as a school. My education students also got good modeling about interacting with children and materials.”**  
**– College Education Program Faculty,  
Farmington, NM**

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Our *Summer Camps* are another way in which we increase our learning impact statewide. This year, Explora offered camps in Taos, Santa Fe, Gallup, and Las Cruces. We also actively partnered with key allies to expose more New Mexicans to STEM-rich learning experiences. A prime example is our work training librarians to integrate STEM and literacy into library programs and developing new activity trunks that families can check out from state libraries around New Mexico. Thanks to these efforts, over 1,200 people attended “STEM to READ” programs at 26 different libraries during the 2016-2017 fiscal year.



This year, Explora facilitated over **2,500** educational programs, reaching more than **98,000** students. This is an increase of over **5,000** from last year! More than **35,000** of these were served through off-site outreach programs.

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**“Your [Explora outreach] staff are receiving rave reviews, and teachers have asked me to fund another visit next year. I'm sure happy we have this in New Mexico for kids. Thank you for an excellent ed. team in science.”**  
**– Library staff,  
Gila, NM**

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# Planning for the Future

To address our community's need for high-quality early childhood education and students better-prepared for the future workforce, Explora further honed its *Cradle through Career STEM Learning Strategic Focus*, which is designed to engage, educate, and employ New Mexico's students in STEM. This includes programs and initiatives for Early Explorers, ages 0–4 years, Young Scientists, ages 5–12, and Future Science Leaders, ages 13–adult.

Planning for the future included developing strategic partnerships with the University of New Mexico (UNM), the Early Childhood Accountability Partnership, Cariño TTAP, Central New Mexico Community College (CNM), Air Force Research Laboratory New Mexico, and more. Explora worked with these partners to pilot new programs, draft feasibility studies and potential business plans, and develop funding matrices for sustainability in our strategic focus growth areas.

One of our exciting pilot programs, *Frontiers for Young Minds (F4YM)*, is an online science journal for kids.

In collaboration with UNM's neuroscience department, Explora provides mentorship opportunities for 40 middle school students as they become journal reviewers and ensure scientists write appealing articles. Kids learn about neuroscience and the peer review process. UNM graduate students support them as they read articles, try hands-on activities, and "tell scientists what to do." Along the way, the middle school students get STEM mentors from UNM and start to envision themselves as STEM professionals.

Explora's *Cradle through Career STEM Learning Strategic Focus* strives to keep New Mexico's children on pathways to STEM courses of study and careers, while helping the community achieve educational and economic aspirations.



**Engage.  
Educate.  
Employ.**



# Organizational Strength

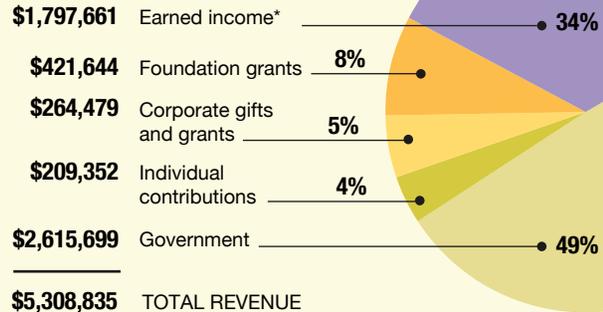


## A New Record!

Over **316,000** people experienced Explora last year, up almost **17,000** from the previous year, and a record high for Explora!

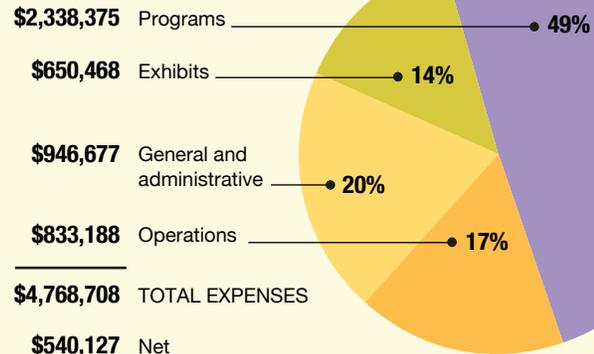
## Explora's dollar allocations for fiscal year 2016-2017 from audited year-end financial reports

### Revenues



\*Includes program fees, admissions, memberships, rentals, and store sales

### Expenses



Year-end operating cash and cash equivalents: **\$1,174,542**

# Explora's Board of Directors: Calendar Years 2016, 2017

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**Benjamin Gardner**, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President  
**Mary Jo Daniel**, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President  
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Educator, Explora

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New Mexico

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Educator, Explora

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University of New Mexico

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*The Eames Society recognizes and honors those who make a financial contribution to Explora of \$10,000 or more.*

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Brian & Jada Bower  
Jeff Brown & Keri Piehl  
Nick & Sharee Estes  
Peggy & Russ Foos  
Dorothy Giacinto  
Jim, Darbi, Sawyer, & Tanner Gill  
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Susan & Neal Shadoff  
Dianna & John Shomaker  
Tom Taylor  
Janet M. Thompson  
Tom Walker  
Catherine Woodward,  
in honor of Woody Woodward

# *Galileo Society*

*The Galileo Society recognizes and honors those who make a financial contribution to Explora of \$25,000 or more.*

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Don & Dianne Chalmers  
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*The da Vinci Society recognizes and honors those who make a financial contribution to Explora of \$100,000 or more.*

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Leonard & Patricia Duda  
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Mike & Donna Mullane  
Deborah Peacock & Nathan Korn  
Elizabeth R. Quinn

# Thank You

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## **Gifts in memory of:**

Patricia Decker

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Bernard & Sylvia Tye

Nicki & Lloyd Voights

Marianne Walck & Eric Chael

Dr. Joy Watnik Saul & Jeff Saul

Bretchen Winchester

Brad Winter



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***"I love it here.  
#bestplaceever!"***

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