

iexplora!

Annual Report
July 2015 –
June 2016

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



iexplora!

Ideas You Can Touch
Ideas que puedes tocar

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 vital to Explora, and we work to make Explora vital to the community. Through our *Community Partner Membership Program*, Explora disseminates no-cost museum memberships to families working with our partner schools and organizations. The program grew again this year, with record numbers of partner organizations and member families.

One of these member moms describes Explora as a safe place she and her children visit often. Membership means they can take their time thoughtfully engaging with just a few exhibits, knowing they can return to explore and learn more. She said that at Explora, the science her kids learn in school “comes alive.”



Partner organizations utilize memberships in creative ways. Inspirations, an organization that focuses on parenting skills and home-based therapy, brings their clients to Explora to teach important parenting skills such as engaging children in playful learning, observing and coaching with leading questions, and discovering a child's learning style. Moms from UNM's Nurse-Family Partnership come to Explora to study for their GEDs while their toddlers explore, and therapists from the New Mexico School for the Blind & Visually Impaired bring toddlers to practice using their canes.

Members share that as parents they appreciate that Explora supports their efforts to offer great educational opportunities for everyone in their families. We're building an enthusiasm for lifelong learning that continues to grow!

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

This year, Explora worked with over **100** different community partners and provided over **21,000** no-cost memberships to low-income families. Since 2004, Explora has provided **65,000** no-cost memberships to low-income families.

Partnering for Success

Listen. Welcome. Co-create.

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

- Explora and the Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) Title I program continued our highly successful *Family Science Nights* series during 36 evenings at Explora for over 18,000 people: elementary school children, their extended families, and their principals and teachers. Explora worked with APS to develop coaching materials that help teachers and parents ask scientific inquiry questions and create analogies as they facilitate student science learning during the events. Over 500 teachers participated in professional development workshops on scientific inquiry prior to *Family Science Nights* this year.

- In May 2016, Explora worked with several local STEM education organizations to hold a *STEM Fiesta*, an afternoon of free learning activities in Old Town's Tiguex Park. Over 400 people—families and school groups—attended. Building on that success, a 2017 event is being planned.
- Explora and Central New Mexico Community College (CNM) worked together to provide more learning opportunities for early childhood care providers, offering them training in scientific inquiry techniques for working with young explorers, for which they received continuing education credits. CNM families can access Explora memberships at Cariño Toy Lending Library, CNM South Valley Campus.
- Explora is a partner in *Farming for Fuels*, a project funded through the Department of Energy (DOE), in which several museums across the USA are developing hands-on activities that bring to life concepts about alternative, sustainable, and inexpensive energy sources, such as biofuels, solar power, and wind power.

***"Thank you!
We need more partners
in education like Explora!"***

- Semester-long partner programs include:
Explora Ingeniería, a collaboration between Explora and Partnership for Community Action (PCA), is an engineering club, facilitated in Spanish by Explora educators, that engages families served by PCA with science and engineering activities. Children of all ages, their parents, and even grandparents, have fun experiencing how engineering is relevant in their lives.

In the *Chain Reaction Club*, Explora educators work with Native American Community Academy gifted students from grades 6-8 on projects in which they explore physics and engineering by building exciting chain reactions.



Learning Impact

Explora educators work from our home base in Albuquerque and from three regional hubs in Taos, Gallup, and Las Cruces to provide educational programs across New Mexico. They facilitate programs that bring science, math, and engineering principles to life through materials-rich, hands-on activities.

A former 2nd grade teacher who is now an Explora educator notes, “While I was teaching at Church Rock Elementary on the Navajo reservation, we arranged a field trip to Explora in Albuquerque for the entire second grade class. We had so many chaperones sign up that our ratio of students to adults was 2:1! Since we had been studying soil, we chose a geology program and a guided exhibit tour.

Though the program was designed for older students, Explora adjusted the program so our youngsters could participate. It was so powerful for me to see students who often struggled in the classroom become completely engaged and excited about making scientific discoveries.”

She adds, “As school budgets tighten and field trip budgets get leaner, knowing that Explora offers these programs as low-cost outreach to schools has become especially important.”

Explora facilitated over **2,700** educational programs to more than **93,000** students this year. More than **34,000** of these were served through off-site outreach programs. The number of students served rose by over **12,000** from last year!

“Explora never fails to deliver a comprehensive immersion for the students. It reinforces what they are learning with fun activities and friendly explanations. I think Explora is one of New Mexico's gems. I love it and rely on their diligence and professionalism.”

“This is a great program. I appreciate that it is about exploration rather than a step-by-step explanation. The sound of awe and laughter says it all.”



“My students enjoyed themselves, mixing their ingredients and watching the reactions... [They] had fun and asked ‘when can we do science again?’”

Planning for the Future

Program planning has continued to deepen around “Cradle though Career” learning initiatives, from enhancing early childhood programs for our youngest learners, such as Growing a Scientist™ for ages 2½-5, to growing STEM workforce development programs for teens.

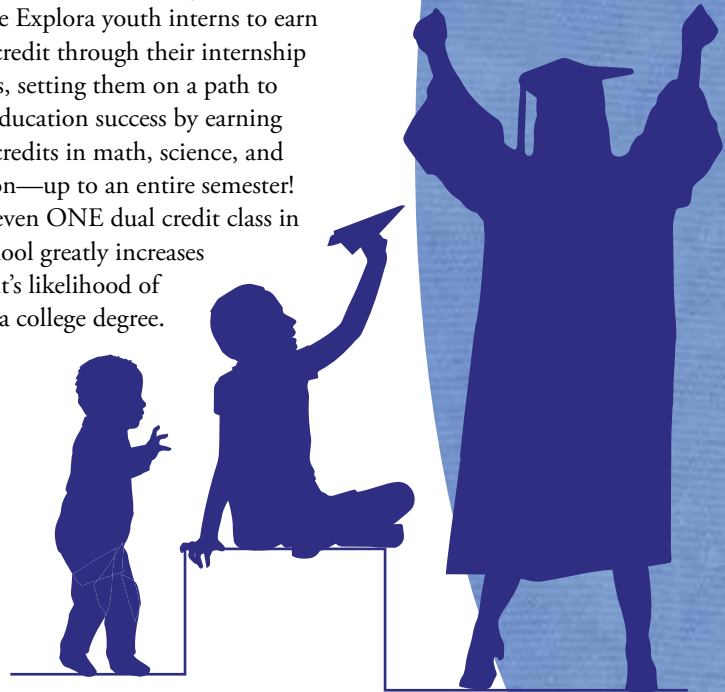
Explora began a new *Youth Apprentice Program* in which twenty five 12- to 15-year-olds learned about life sciences and the local environment, trained to be “Learning Buddies” for younger children in educational camps, and presented projects about science and engineering to museum visitors. Surveys indicated a significant gain in science interest for this group of teens.

Explora’s *Youth Intern Program* continues to offer high-achieving, low-income high school students a 2½-year internship that includes job skills training, help with college preparation and application, and training to provide STEM programs for elementary school children.

Explora educators and interns are working together to grow their *Teen Science Café* program, to connect local scientists with teens and deepen teen interest in science careers.

Explora works with Central New Mexico Community College (CNM) to enable Explora youth interns to earn college credit through their internship activities, setting them on a path to higher education success by earning college credits in math, science, and education—up to an entire semester! Taking even ONE dual credit class in high school greatly increases a student’s likelihood of earning a college degree.

**Engage.
Educate.
Employ.**



Organizational Strength



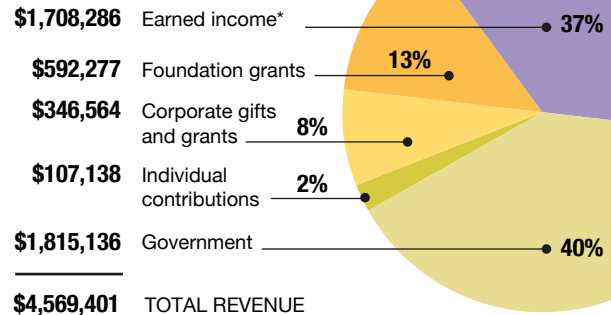
Record High

Over **299,000** people experienced Explora last year, up over **25,000** from the previous year, and a record high for Explora!

Explora's dollar allocations for fiscal year 2015-2016

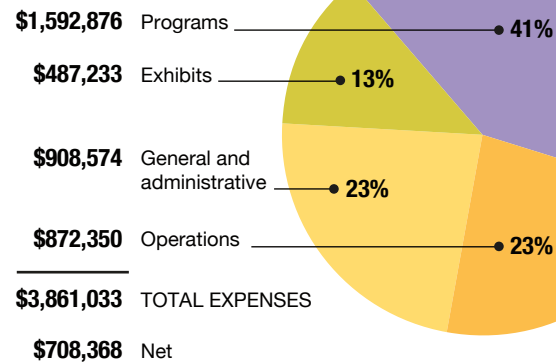
from audited year-end financial reports

Revenues



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

Expenses



Year-end operating cash and cash equivalents: **\$955,150**

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***"This museum is second to NONE!
What a gift, what a great place.
Thank you!"***



Thank You

Eames Society

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

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

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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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