

iexplora!

Annual Report
July 2014 –
June 2015

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 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 27 new partner organizations enlisting over 10,000 additional families.

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

kids learn in school “comes alive.”

Partner organizations use the space 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: engaging your children in playful learning, observing and coaching with leading questions, and discovering your child's learning style. Moms from Nurse Family Partnership come to Explora to study for their GEDs while their toddlers explore, and therapists from NM School for the Blind & Visually Impaired bring toddlers to practice using their canes.

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

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

This year, Explora worked with over **92** different community partners and provided over **10,000** no-cost memberships to low-income families. Since 2004, Explora has provided **44,400** no-cost memberships to low-income families.



Partnering for success

Listen. Welcome. Co-create.

That describes Explora's partnership and engagement strategy. We're happy to share just a few stories of how we've partnered for success this year.

- Explora and the Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) Title I program continued our highly successful *Family Science Nights* series during 30 evenings at Explora for over 15,000 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 inquiry science questions and create analogies as they facilitate student science learning during the events. Over 450 teachers participated in professional development workshops on inquiry science prior to *Family Science Nights* this year.
- Explora enhanced its materials-based, experiential science exhibits and programs with new resources, co-created with the New Mexico Autism Society, to help children and families affected by autism better utilize the museum's exhibits and programs. New Mexico Autism Society held a Family Night at Explora, which was attended by hundreds of families affected by autism, and each family received a membership to Explora.
- Explora and Central New Mexico Community College (CNM) worked together to provide additional learning opportunities for early childhood care providers. These educators learned about doing inquiry science with our youngest explorers and received continuing education credits. CNM families now can access Explora memberships on CNM's South Valley Campus at the Cariño Toy Lending Library.

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



Learning impact

This year Explora educators worked from our home base in Albuquerque and from three new regional hubs in Taos, Gallup, and Las Cruces, to provide educational programs across New Mexico. An Explora regional educator describes a *Family Science Event* and how facilitated play can engage people with science, math, and engineering principles: “A family started building a hexagon-shaped hogan with blocks. As it grew into a huge tower, its sides undulated as its diameter changed, and the family worked to stabilize it. As the mom placed the top piece, everyone cheered. A debate ensued between audience, family, and facilitator about

how to take the tower down without knocking the whole thing over. The family decided to remove a piece from a wide spot near the bottom. It worked—the tower stayed! Then, they removed a block near a skinny section and the tower toppled. We all talked about why it came down when the second piece was removed. It was great to see people excited about engineering!”

Explora facilitated over **2,300** educational programs to more than **81,500** students this year. More than **27,200** of these were served through off-site outreach programs. The number of students served rose by almost **20,000** over last year!

“Our Explora educator was superb! He had an excellent grasp of how to engage and talk to our young students. He clearly enjoyed his job and had lots of enthusiasm for the hands-on activities, and that got our kids excited, too.”

“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 also had a blast making their glue (slime). My students had fun and asked ‘when can we do science again?’”

Planning for the future

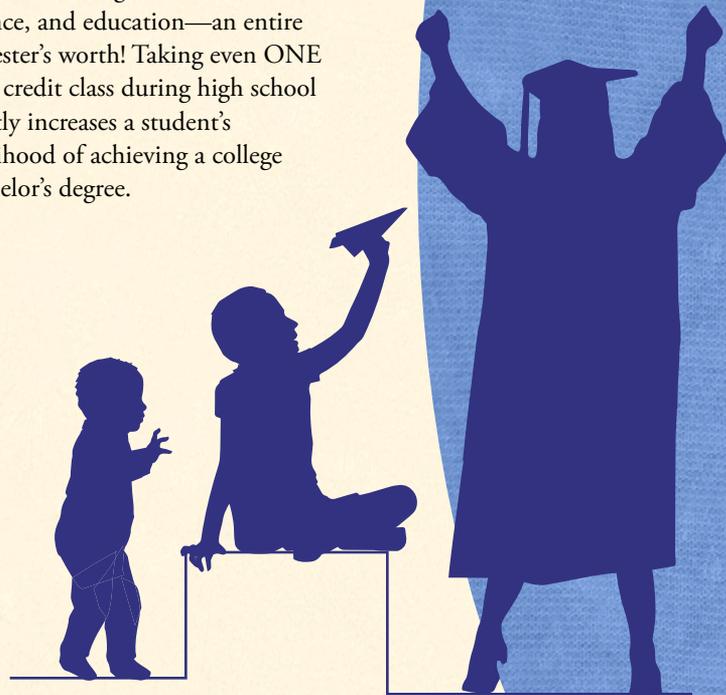
Program planning has deepened around “Cradle though Career” learning initiatives, from enhancing early childhood programs for our youngest learners to supporting STEM workforce development for teens.

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

This year, Explora added new dimensions to its *Youth Intern Program*. Explora educators and interns are working together to offer *Teen Science Cafés* that connect local scientists with teens and deepen teen interest in science careers. In addition, Explora is working with

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

**Engage.
Educate.
Employ.**



Organizational strength

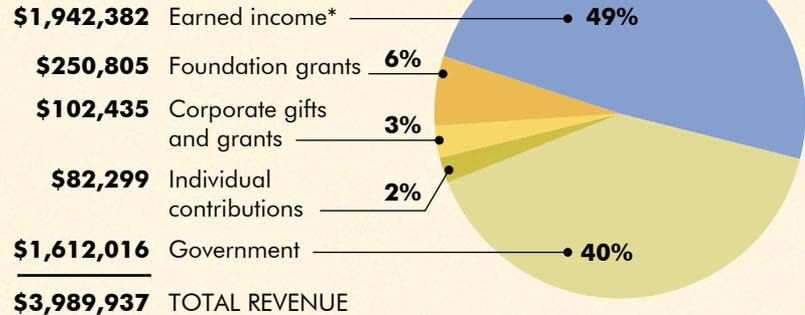


Record High

Over **273,000** people experienced Explora last year, up over **35,000** from the previous year, and a record high for Explora!

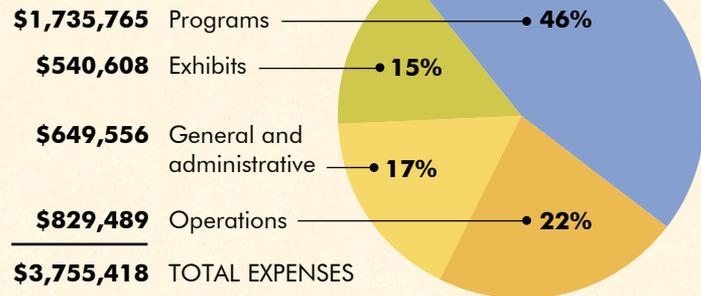
Explora's dollar allocations for fiscal year 2014-2015 from audited year-end financial reports

Revenues



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

Expenses



\$234,519 Net

Year-end operating cash and cash equivalents: **\$907,875**

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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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