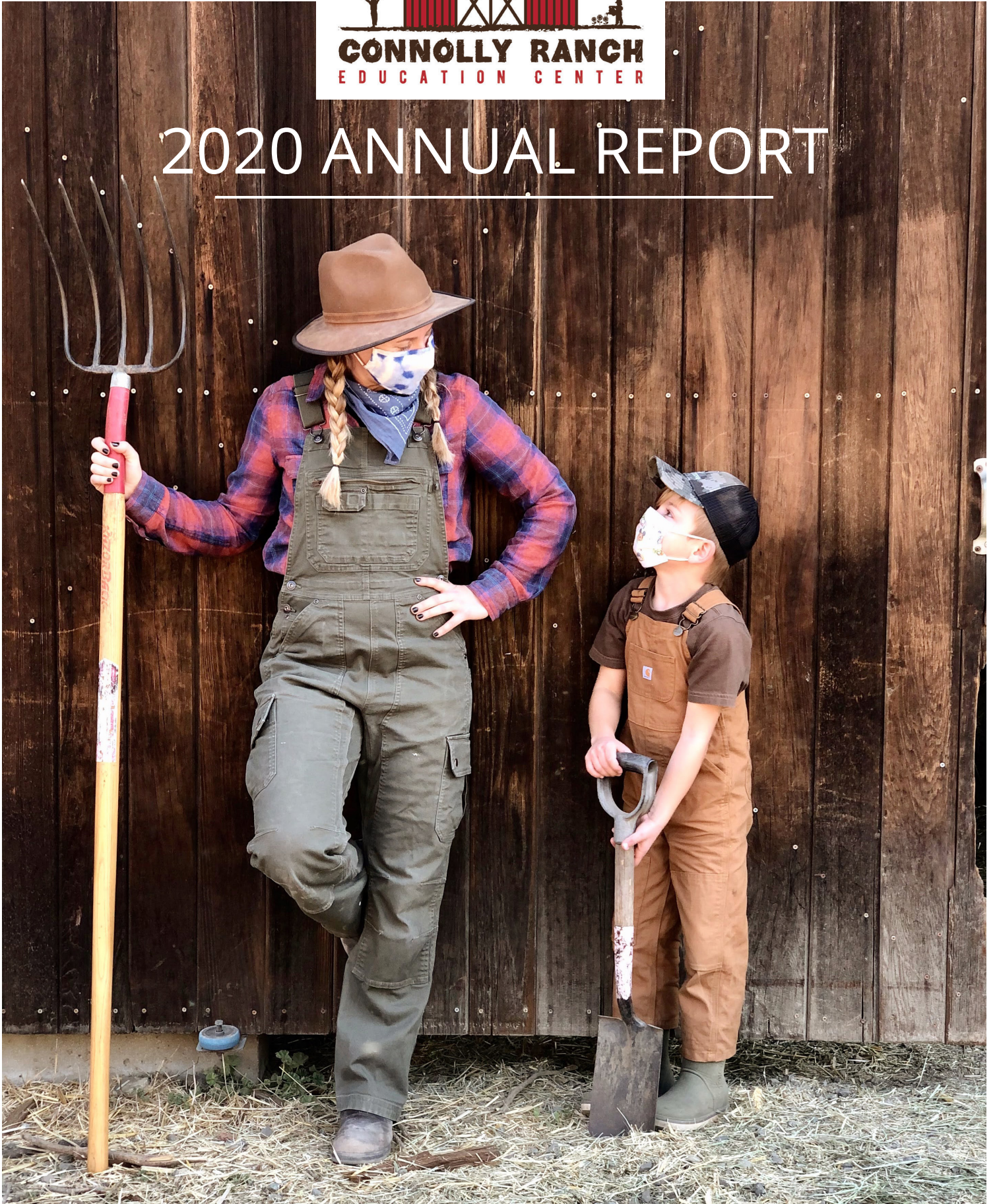




# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

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"Connolly Ranch is my child's  
second home!"

*K-5th Outdoor School Parent*



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## WELCOME

Per has been volunteering at Connolly Ranch since 2016 when both his kids were campers. Having grown up on a 'retired' farm in rural NH, Per understands and loves the Connolly Ranch mission. He is committed to helping the Ranch provide farm-based education and experiences to the Napa Valley community and beyond.

Hello and thank you for joining us on this incredible journey. In 2020 Connolly Ranch Education Center completed its 11th year providing unique farm-based, outdoor-ed experiences for children and families in Napa Valley and beyond. And while a global pandemic was not anywhere in our contingency preparedness plan for the year, the staff at the Ranch, our volunteers and our generous donor community rose to the challenge.

In June of last year, after almost three months of pandemic-induced shutdown, Connolly Ranch reopened to host a full complement of modified summer camps and childcare programs while adhering closely to Napa City and County covid safety protocols. The amount of work and adjustment required to make this happen was staggering but also the norm for schools everywhere in these times.

In the fall, Connolly Ranch redesigned its programs once again

to provide school-age children in our community with in-person learning opportunities that coincided with the revised Napa Valley Unified schedules. And in the winter, our team was hard at work once again creating alternative program models to fit whatever the 'new normal' was going to be in 2021.

As you might guess, we're exhausted... but we're also energized. With the pandemic now behind us (please let it be behind us), the Connolly Ranch team has pivoted once more to set its sights on exciting new projects like upgrading our facilities, designing new curriculum for older students and improving our animal husbandry program.

In a survey of our community conducted this year, 78% of our parents said that the primary reason they send their children to Connolly Ranch is to let them be in nature. And as we return to a somewhat more normal world, we are honored and proud to have been able to provide that outdoor refuge for so many of our community during this trying year.

Thank you, again, for all your support. We look forward to seeing you on the Ranch!

*Per Casey, Board Chair*





1:6  
1:8

**TEACHER TO CHILD RATIO**

Early childhood programs (Earthlings & Explorers) have 1:6 teacher to child ratios.

Elementary programs (Outdoor School) have 1:8 teacher to child ratios.

## WHO WE ARE



Located on a 12 acre farm, Connolly Ranch provides educational programs for people of all ages in an outdoor classroom setting. From organic gardening, the sources and benefits of healthy foods and knowledge of how nature works to sustain us, kids and families learn about farm life, the role of animals, ecology, sustainability, and an appreciation for nature.

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In 1915 the Connolly Family moved to Napa County and acquired the property in which present day Connolly Ranch Education Center operates. They cultivated a small homestead on the land, which stayed in their family until the early 1990's when Peggy Connolly generously donated the property to the Land Trust of Napa County.

The Ranch hosted its first field trip in 1993. In 2009, Connolly Ranch Education Center formerly became a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Today our programs serve over 5,000 community members each year.

## MISSION

Connolly Ranch Education Center is a leader in farm-based education. We instill children of all ages with a deep respect for the environment, a strong understanding of farming and sustainable agriculture, and a love for the natural world.



## OUR CORE PILLARS TO GROWTH & SUCCESS

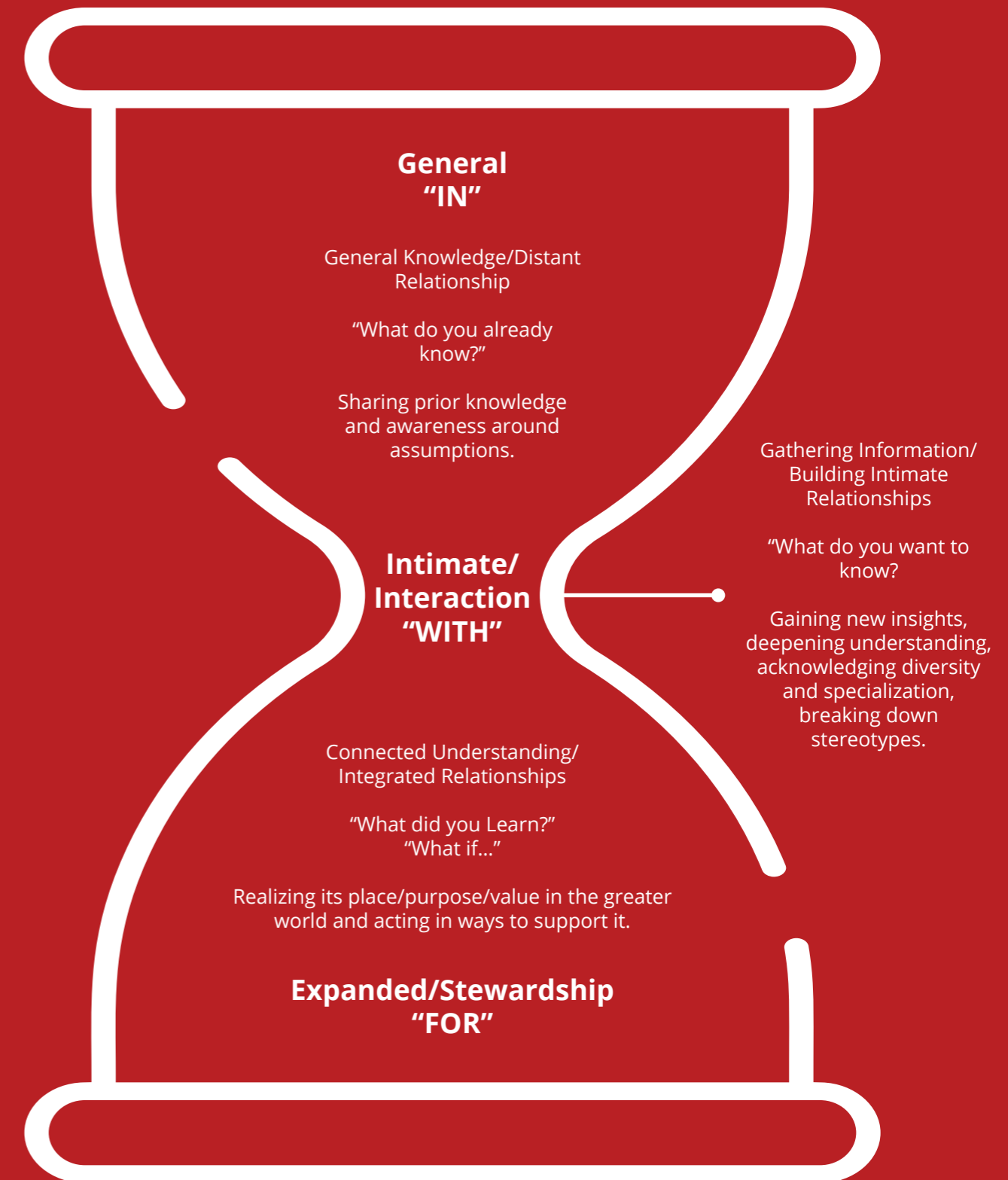
Our core pillars for growth and success are the foundation of what we believe, how we work, and where we put our resources.

- 1** To provide meaningful lifelong **EDUCATIONAL** experiences that empower individuals to build healthy relationships with themselves, others and the natural world.
- 2** To provide a unique outdoor environment where all **COMMUNITIES** are welcome to take part in stewardship and experience the magic of the natural world.
- 3** To fully utilize our **FARM AND FACILITIES** in a sustainable manner to support Connolly Ranch's mission consistent with the donor's original intent.
- 4** To build a strong and continuously improving **FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION** program that results in the health and stability of CREC in perpetuity.



## HOURGLASS MODEL OF LEARNING & RELATIONSHIPS

How we grow as individuals, communities, and beyond all comes down to relationships.







## OUR EDUCATIONAL APPROACH



CULTIVATING SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, & ECOLOGICAL INTELLIGENCE. CREATING DYNAMIC LEARNERS. MINDFUL LEADERS. DIVERGENT THINKERS.

Connolly Ranch Education Center's unique discovery-based pedagogy is centered around cultivating social, emotional, and ecological intelligence as children of all ages explore and interact with our animals, garden, and wild spaces. Our natural and ever-changing educational environment provides spontaneous opportunities to explore and learn from "what just happened." We lead with inquiry to encourage children to become

dynamic learners, mindful leaders, and divergent thinkers.

### DUAL LANGUAGE OFFERING

More than half of Napa County's grade school children are dual-language learners. To best serve our community, we now provide dual-language sessions for all our educational programs.

*"Connolly Ranch is my child's happy place and I want her to continue attending throughout her childhood."*

*Earthlings Early Childhood Playschool Parent*

*"I don't know what we would have done without Connolly Ranch this year. Our kids have thrived in tough times."*

*K-5th grade Outdoor School Parent*



## HOURGLASS MODEL OF LEARNING & RELATIONSHIPS

How we grow as individuals, families, communities, and beyond comes down to relationships. We are committed to providing children with learning experiences that build healthy relationships with themselves, other people, and the natural world. Our unique hourglass model guides educators and the children on enriching and expanding on their relationships to new information and experiences. The three levels foster the desire to be: in nature (general), with nature (intimate) and for nature (stewardship). They also support social-emotional health and the mind-body-spirit balance through mindful practices, active listening, cooperation, and reflection.

OUR HOURGLASS MODEL OF LEARNING/RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING IS USED AT EACH LEARNING STATION.

Each week culminates with activities that provide opportunities to:

- make connections across experiences
- reflect and celebrate the week's discoveries
- gather with other cohorts (safely)
- imagine new possibilities





## 2020 HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS

**500+**

Provided over 500 children, ages 3 to 16, with a safe and memorable summer camp experience during the pandemic.

**\$615,000+**

Raised over \$615,000 to help care for and feed our barnyard animals, sustain us through the required springtime closure, and provide financial assistance for summer campers.

- Opened Fall and Winter Outdoor School for K–6 graders to compliment state required virtual learning.
- Offered first-ever dual-language educational programs.
- Launched our virtual classroom—a free resource to bring our curriculum to homes and schools.
- Completed Rotary Plaza capital project that brings electricity to a covered community space and is accessible by an ADA path.
- Transitioned from Interim Executive Director to internal Co-Executive Director promotions.

## 2021 AND BEYOND

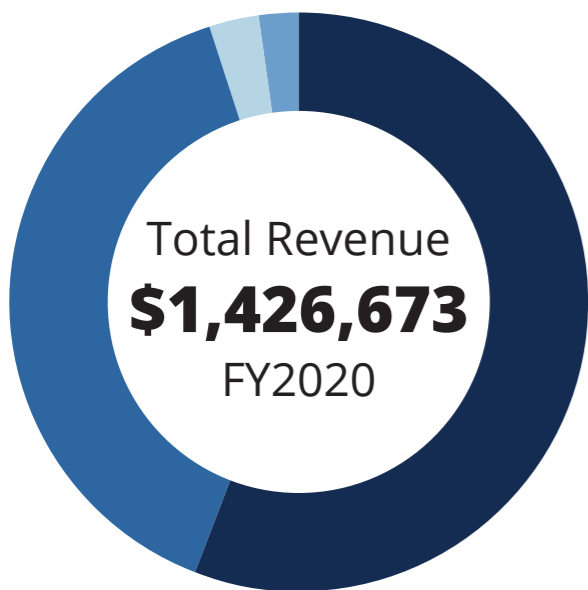
***MAY THE FUTURE BE BRIGHT!***

- Share our unique educational approach and Hourglass Model of Learning & Relationship<sup>®</sup>
- Expand *Explorers Playschool* kindergarten readiness program as an alternative or supplement to traditional kindergarten half-day programs.
- Provide dynamic farm-based outdoor field trips and afterschool programs, teaching grade schoolers naturalist and survival skills while meeting their developmental and social and emotional needs.
- Increase financial assistance program to provide 50% or 100% tuition for 80 children annually.
- Maintain and optimize use of wild space, farm, and garden for education programs for children that instill a respect for the environment and a love of the natural world.
- Become a licensed Forest School.
- Strengthen inclusionary practices in programs and curriculum, organizational structure, and with community partners.

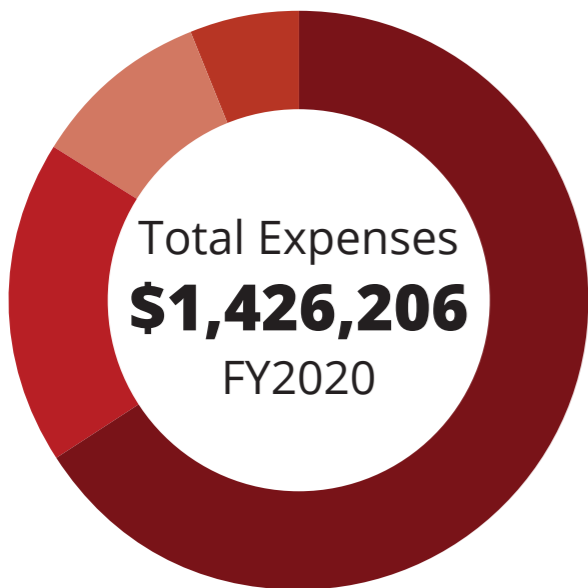


# FINANCIALS

We believe it is important to be financially responsible and make our quality education programs accessible for anyone who wants to participate. Economic diversity is crucial to fostering a healthy environment and enhances the students' learning experience. Our financial assistance program, which is permanently part of our annual budget, allows us to include families from a wide range of economic circumstances.



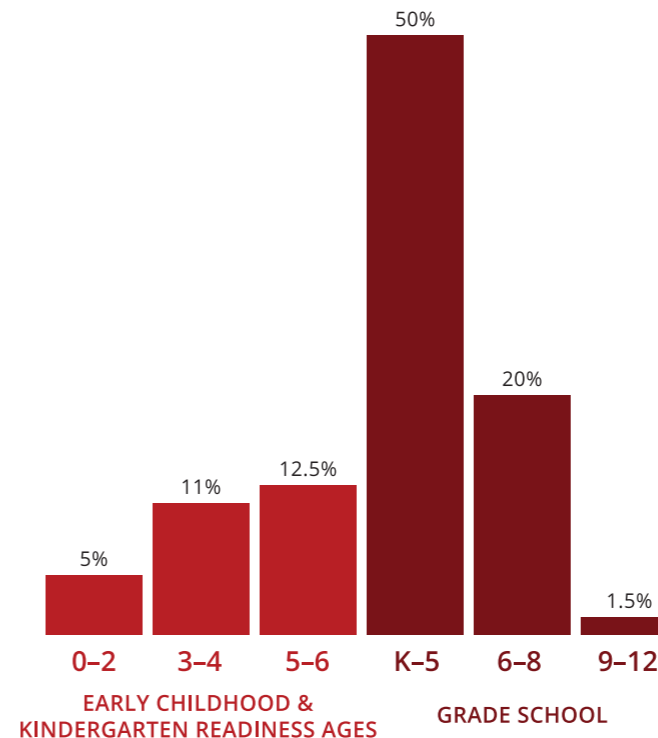
- 56% Program Fees
- 39% Individual & Private Foundations
- 3% Grants
- 2% Business



- 66% Personnel & Health Benefits
- 18% Farm Operations
- 10% Financial Assistance Program
- 6% Management & General Expenses

# SERVING CHILDREN OF ALL AGES

Our educational programs have been thoughtfully designed to create a holistic pathway for children and families to embrace new experiences, build deeper connections with nature, and gain a stronger sense of self.



## TOP REASONS FAMILIES SEND THEIR KIDS TO CONNOLLY RANCH

*Based on 2021 Connolly Ranch Education Center Survey*



**1** To create a connection to nature



**2** To be in a supportive community allowing for individual growth



**3** To receive childcare in a safe, 100% outdoor environment



**4** To spend time with the farm animals



**5** To meet the scheduling needs of working parents



## A FAMILY'S STORY

"In a year that has had more shadows than rainbows, our family is left with the gift of Connolly Ranch. It's been the one constant in our lives since it safely reopened in summer and we joined the ranks of nervous, cautiously optimistic, and deeply appreciative parents who gingerly sent their children back into the world.

The responsibility and care that this organization has provided for our community during this deeply unsettling and traumatic time has been nothing short of a blessing. While our love ran deep before the 2020 journey, now it knows no bounds. Conscious, small, consistent pods of children, gathering outside daily to explore the Ranch, work with the animals, fingers in the dirt, growing kale, collecting salamanders, swinging from trees, racing down hillsides, skipping rocks, searching for treasures, placing wishes on trees, scavenging for sticks, getting bumped and bruised in all the right (and wrong!) places, hoarding acorns and roly pollies, and staying physically connected to this place. This Earth. This community. I do not know if I'll ever be able to fully express my gratitude."

**STRADA JENNARO**  
CONNOLLY RANCH 2020 OUTDOOR SCHOOL PARENT



## OUR YEAR ROUND PROGRAMS

### Educational Programs

Parent/Child Classes	Ages 0-3
Earthlings Outdoor Playschool	Ages 3-4
Explorers Outdoor Kindergarten Readiness	Ages 5-6
Outdoor School (After School)	Grades K-6
Farm & Facilities Interns	Ages 13-18
Summer Camp	Ages 3-16
Field Trips (virtual only in 2020)	Grades K-12

### Community Programs For All Ages!

Saturday Farm Open House & Camps	Every Saturday April-October
Seasonal Festivals	Earth Night (APR), Harvest Party (OCT), & Green Friday (NOV)
Volunteer Program	Supporting Our Garden, Animal Husbandry & Facilities

"We love the Ranch and all the people and animals it comes with...small cohorts, teachers, donkeys, goats, pigs, chickens...EVERYONE!"

*Explorers Outdoor Kindergarten Readiness Parent*

"Thank you for all your flexibility this year, making magic happen during a difficult time! We appreciate the availability and impact of your educational programs this year."

*K-5th grade Outdoor School Parent*

"We are so, so, so thankful for the support for our daughter the Connolly Ranch has provided during the pandemic. I hope that we will be able to volunteer to give back, you have forever brightened our daughter's life. Thank you!"

*K-5th grade Outdoor School Parent*



# MEET THE TEAM



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Per Casey, Board Chair  
Katharine Falace  
Holly Finkelstein\*\*  
Craig Finster  
Gene Kelly  
Chelsea Kohler\*  
Arthur Roosa\*  
Michele Truchard\*\*

\* new 2021 board member  
\*\* past 2020 board member

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

Katie Hackett, Co-Executive Director  
Heidi Soldinger, Co-Executive Director  
Tracey Schear, Interim Executive Director

*Special thanks to the **COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE** for producing the 2020 Annual Report*

Lacey Boatman  
Per Casey  
Ann Danielson  
Chelsea Kohler







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