

Growing Up Boulder

Impact Report

2020-2021



Message from the Executive Director


September 2021

Welcome to the new Growing Up Boulder Impact Report--a reimagined annual report that is shorter and narrative-based, yet still offers readers a deep dive into our work through links. Our report is a perfect metaphor for how Growing Up Boulder (GUB) operated in 2020-2021; our organization iterated and reimagined itself, and has become stronger as a result!

In response to covid, we engaged children virtually or [outdoors](#), instead of in physical classrooms. In response to the emotionally charged nature of our work, we employed a new and wildly successful "[healing-centered approach](#)" with youth. And in response to the increased demand for our services, we developed and acted upon a new business strategy. Additional highlights include building a new governing board, [moving out of the University](#) to become a fiscally-sponsored nonprofit (while maintaining close ties with the University), holding our first fundraiser, and developing new relationships with sponsors and donors; such strategic planning and development efforts were key to our organization’s survival!

We enacted these changes all while engaging local children and youth for 4,400+ hours on community change projects (including two master plans), sharing our expertise globally to 10 countries and countless cities, and managing covid-related budget cuts. We worked with fewer students in 2020/21 but interacted more deeply with them. Because our volunteers donated 3,000+ hours, our small team made a big impact!

Thank you to our wonderful partners, supporters, staff, board, volunteers, friends, and young people for walking alongside us in this journey to include young people’s voices in local issues which affect their lives.

In gratitude,


Mara Mintzer
Executive Director and Co-Founder, Growing Up Boulder

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GUB directors, Mara and Cathy (right), and youth leaders in a treehouse designed with input from GUB kids

Growing Up Boulder's Vision and Mission



YSI youth share input for the Parks and Rec Master Plan on a windy day.

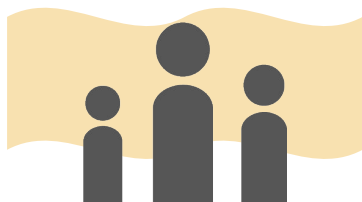
Using participatory planning methods with young people, Growing Up Boulder's **vision** is to **lead a global movement in child-friendly cities**, resulting in more equitable and sustainable communities for all.

Growing Up Boulder's **mission** is to **empower young people** with opportunities for inclusion, influence, and deliberation on local issues that affect their lives.



A Whittier 4th grade student shares her vision to "Reimagine Policing."

Our Impact



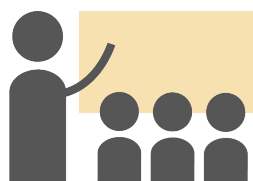
279 children and youth engaged for a total of **4,436 project hours** on community projects



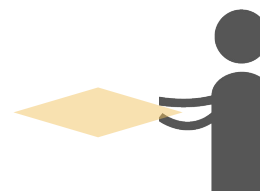
26 different child and youth groups engaged with GUB



Growing Up Boulder's team spent **5,752 hours** elevating youth voices



45 educators engaged for a total of **420 project hours** on community projects



Volunteers donated 3,082 hours and the equivalent of **\$173,000** worth of time, products and office space

Our Young Collaborators

Organization	Program/Class	Noteworthy Demographics
Boulder County Public Health	GENERATIONS	Latina girls
Boulder Journey School	Parent and teacher group	Preschool children, their parents and their teachers
Boulder Valley School District (BVSD)	Black Student Alliance & Z Club	Black and Latina high school girls
BVSD	Eisenhower Elementary School	2nd grade (3 classes)
BVSD	Heatherwood Elementary School	4th grade; 24% students at Heatherwood have disabilities
BVSD	Southern Hills Middle School	Self-selected kids
BVSD	Fairview High School	Self-selected kids
BVSD	Whittier International Elementary School	3rd & 4th grade English Language Learners; 4th grade class; 33.5% students of color + 36% Free and Reduced Lunch schoolwide
BVSD	Youth Equity Council (YEC)	Diverse youth dedicated to promoting equity (83% students of color)
City of Boulder	EXPAND youth	Young people with disabilities
City of Boulder	EXPAND parents	Parents and caregivers of young people with disabilities
City of Boulder	Youth Initiative Services (YSI)	Under-resourced youth
El Centro AMISTAD	ELLOS	Latino boys
I Have a Dream Foundation of Boulder County	Youth Council	Latinx & first-generation youth
TGTHR	Tenant Association	Formerly unhoused young adults
GUB	Youth Leaders + Kid Emcees	Diverse children and youth in Boulder
Watershed School	9-12th grades	Humanities class

Supporting our Mission

First Annual FUNdraiser

"I am so, so grateful for this experience. GUB has made such a positive impact in my life I truly feel like I made a difference and my voice matters. I am so, so sad this project is over because it was so fun and so meaningful to me. I would LOVE, LOVE, LOVE to do this again."

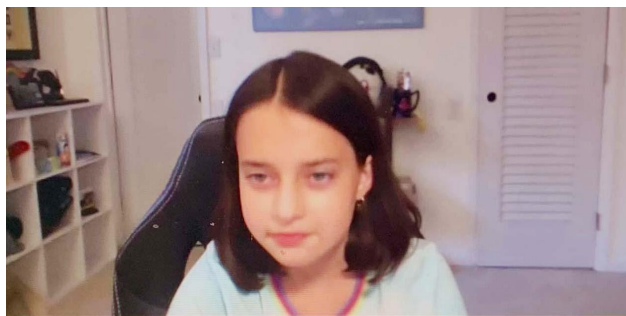
-Mads, kid emcee for GUB FUNdraiser

"What an incredible event – hearing this from the mouths of kids was so inspirational. Thanks for a fantastic evening and all you do to give youth the empowerment needed to make a difference in our world."

-Whitney May, Planning and Design Specialist, Open Space and Mountain Parks

"UNICEF USA is so proud to partner and stand with our many incredible leaders of all ages in Boulder."

-Danielle Goldberg, Managing Director, U.S. Programs and the Child Friendly Cities Initiative, UNICEF USA



Our May 4th virtual [FUNdraiser](#) was a big success! With attendees from all over the US and world--representing diverse leadership in government, education, the nonprofit and private sector-- we celebrated youth voices and the powerful impact of participatory city planning with young people of all backgrounds. Congressman Joe Neguse participated and spoke of the importance of including young people in government.

We are especially proud of our kid emcee team and youth speakers, who inspired our guests to take action and support child-friendly cities! It was a fun and meaningful project, entailing over 120 GUB hours of mentoring young people.

\$60,000
raised

Nature-based Learning & Eco-Stewardship

OSMP-Heatherwood

“Growing Up Boulder is a tremendous asset to the Boulder Valley School District. They are one of the very few initiatives that create truly authentic opportunities for students to engage with real-world problems and present their own designs and solutions to community leaders.”

-Samantha Messier, Assistant Superintendent, Strategic Partnerships and Academic Support, BVSD



OSMP staff and the public identified opportunities to improve nature-based learning on OSMP land called the “Wood Brothers” property and to support restoration efforts on additional, nearby OSMP land called “Gunbarrel Hill.” [GUB and OSMP staff engaged youth at Heatherwood Elementary School](#) through verbal, written and artistic communications. In partnership with the community, the goal was to improve the quality of the habitat for native ground-nesting birds and other wildlife, while providing an enhanced visitor experience to promote enjoyment of the area.

Students view both properties as community assets with great potential to teach residents about the natural world and a place in which to enjoy the benefits of spending time in nature. They also want to see measures to protect and preserve the area. As a result of working with GUB, Heatherwood students demonstrated a greater sense of eco-stewardship, appreciation for nature, and excitement for civic engagement.

“Working with GUB has been such a benefit to our 4th graders and teachers. The organization, enthusiasm, and help connecting us to resources was beyond any program we have ever worked with...I would definitely work with GUB again.”

-Cathy Zimmerman, 4th grade lead teacher for Wood Brothers Project

Reimagining Policing

Boulder Police Master Plan

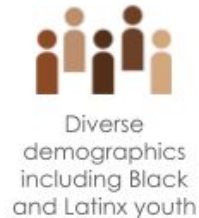
“Safety is being able to be myself and be confident wherever I am, regardless of my race, location, or the people around me.”

-ELLOS participant (high school)

Growing Up Boulder and [MAYAMOTION Healing](#) (MMH) partnered to solicit feedback from young people during the first public engagement window of the Boulder Police Department’s Master Plan. They sought the voices of those who are historically and currently excluded from processes of engagement and/or heavily impacted by the policing system. Using the framework of “Safety, Values, Hopes, and Concerns,” GUB and MMH designed and facilitated high-quality, psychologically-based interventions that were both culturally relevant and accessible.

GUB/MMH’s “healing-centered engagement” was grounded in positive youth development, integrated knowledge about systems of oppression, power, and privilege, and offered practices for wellness. Thus, the work aimed to respectfully hear from young people while simultaneously minimizing re-traumatization or tokenization.

Across the age spectrum, young people expressed that safety looks like “the ability to be your authentic self, in any space, without fearing for your emotional or physical safety.” For many, family and community represented safety. For others, police represented safety. But for the vast majority of young people from targeted identities, policing did not equate with safety. [GUB/MMH’s report will be available on our website in October 2021.]



“We’re not only going to ask young folks to share their experience to inform something that’s going to ultimately benefit us, but create a pathway in which young people will also greatly benefit from this process, because down the road they are going to be the ones most impacted by the decisions that we make as people in leadership, positions of power, and adults.”

-Maya Sol Dansie of MAYAMOTION Healing

Promoting Health and Well-being

Parks & Recreation Master Plan

In January 2021, GUB began conducting phase one [master plan](#) engagements with nine partner groups. Each group was asked to learn and think about Parks and Rec facilities, parks, and programs, consider how they currently use them and identify what recommendations and priorities they had for the master plan update. A bandana printed with GUB student artwork on it was created by the Parks and Rec department and given to all participants.

Students expressed a deep appreciation for Boulder's Parks and Recreation department as a whole. They expressed enthusiasm to improve upon programs, parks, and facilities and repeatedly asked for Parks and Rec to bring even more people together in community--to connect, learn, play, celebrate, and develop new talents.

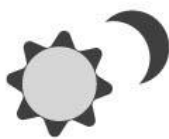
"I worked with Growing Up Boulder in school at Eisenhower Elementary and loved being a part of planning new playgrounds!"

*-2nd grade student
Eisenhower
Elementary School*



GUB youth imagine possible park features, including an interactive fairy garden and a rocket ship.

Frequently Requested Themes



Amenities for **extended play**



Opportunities to **interact with nature**



Community, equity, and inclusion



Opportunities to **interact with pets**



Novelty and challenge in play structures



New and improved **water features**

Impact on Children and Youth

“I was able to be a youth speaker and representative of what it looks like when youth are given the opportunity to voice their opinions and make positive social change.”

-Lerato, youth leader and kid emcee for GUB FUNdraiser

During 2020/21, GUB staff was thrilled to mentor three truly outstanding young women: Lerato Osnes, Paola Garcia Barron, and Eliana Valenzuela. By bringing these young adults into our organization as [GUB Youth Leaders](#), we created many meaningful opportunities for reciprocal teaching and learning. GUB staff appreciated the perspectives on local and national issues that our Youth Leaders voiced throughout the year. In return, we shared our expertise regarding Child-Friendly Cities and GUB Participatory Planning methodology. Youth Leaders applied what they learned by facilitating a peer engagement on the Boulder Police Department’s Master Plan project, and emerged more empowered and confident young leaders.



“Youth have so much they can contribute, and it's just a matter of giving them space to articulate that, and that's exactly what Growing Up Boulder did.”

-Edgar Chavarria, speaking twelve years after engaging with Growing Up Boulder as a child



Our amazing youth leaders - Lerato, Paola, and Eliana

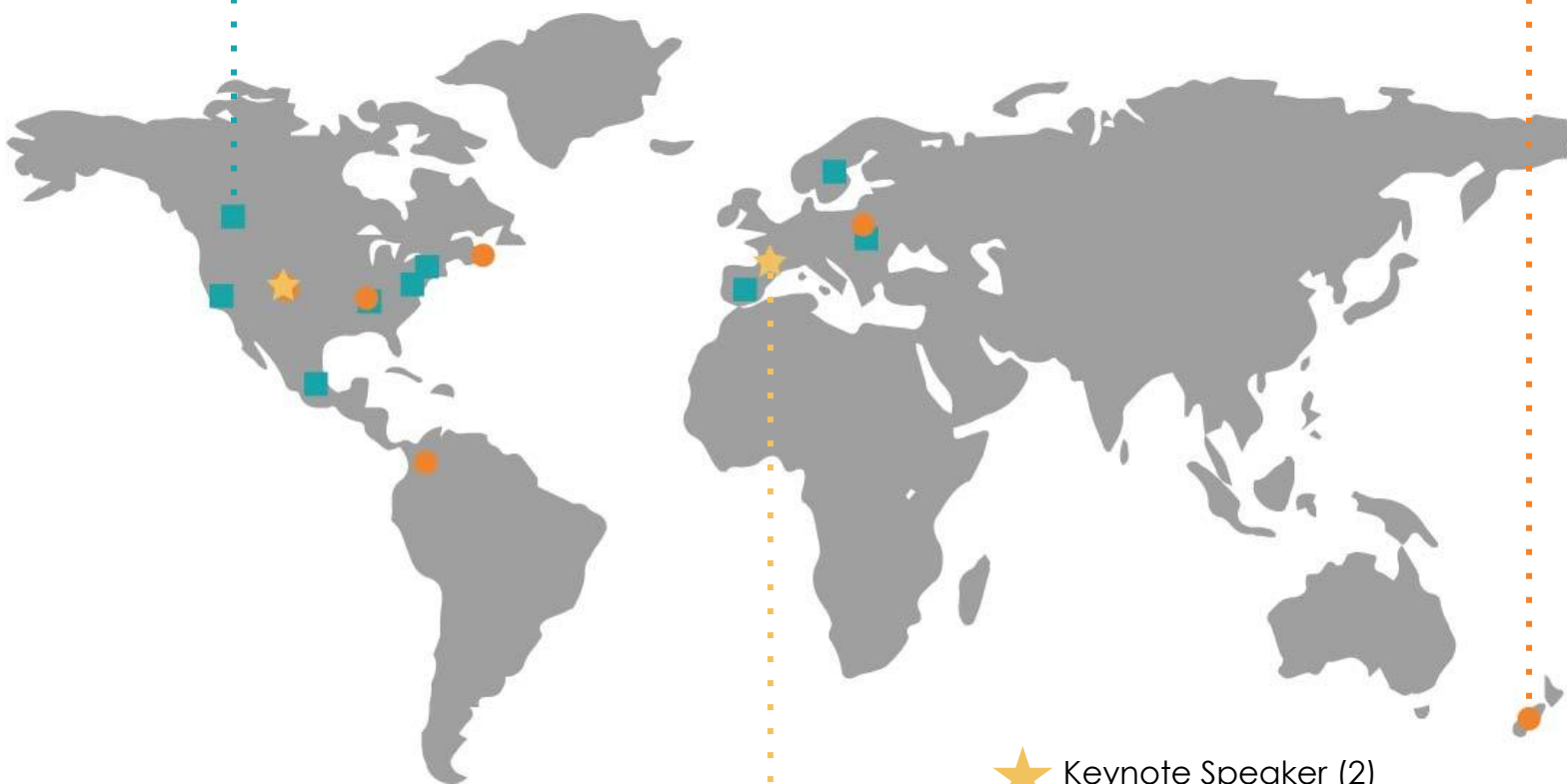
Impact on the World

Mara Mintzer and Sarah Huntley (City of Boulder) led a top-rated workshop at the IAP2 conference, educating on **elevating youth voices in government**

Banff, Alberta

2,200 school students interviewed Mara Mintzer for **Dunedin 2040**, a project exploring **urban challenges and solutions**

Dunedin, New Zealand



Co-founder, Louise Chawla discussed GUB in her keynote for the **Festival of Early Infancy**, an event focused on **connecting children and nature**

Strasbourg, France

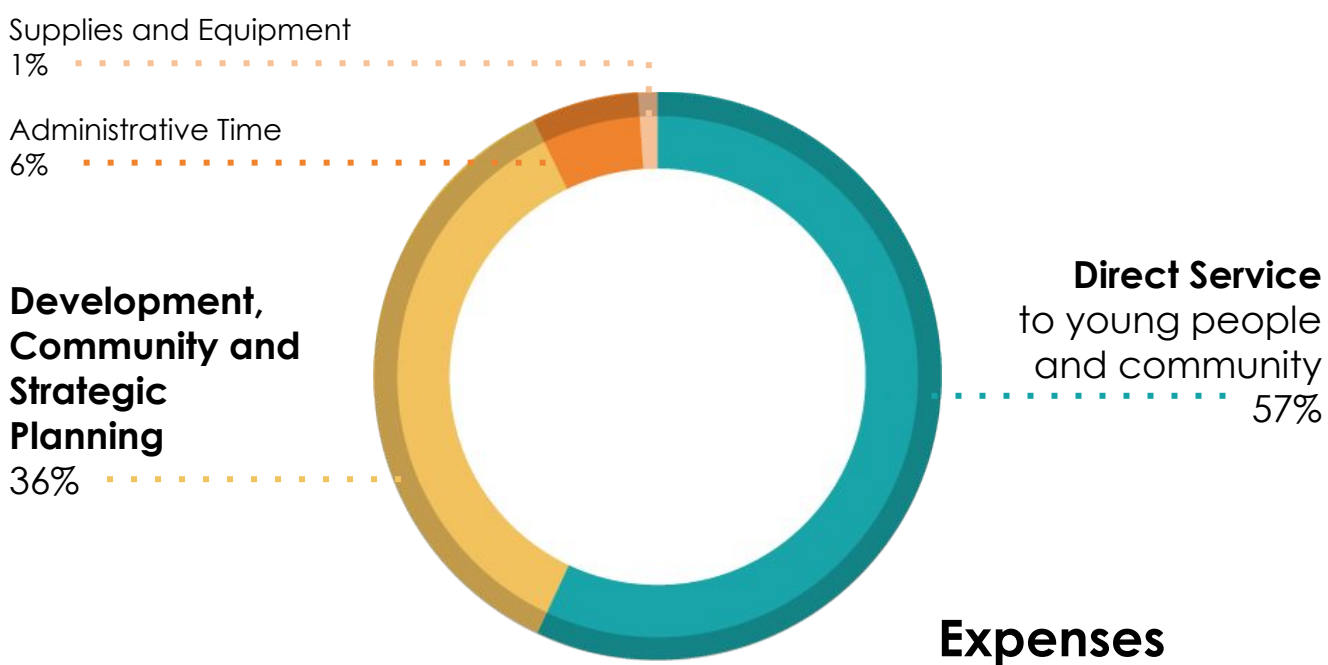
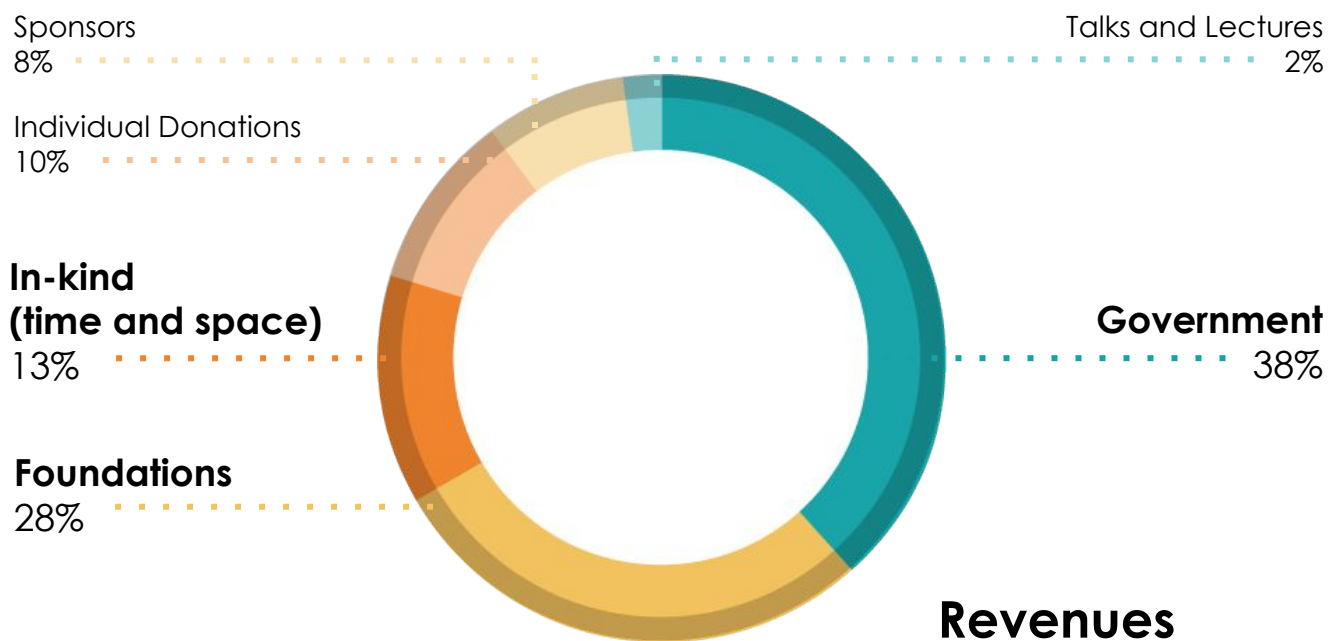
★ Keynote Speaker (2)

● Interview (7)

■ Training, Webinar, or Lecture (9)

For a complete list of talks, media, and publications, please visit our bibliography at www.growingupboulder.org

Financials



Donor Spotlight

"Amy and I support numerous local non-profit initiatives through our [Anchor Point Foundation](#). The [\[video\]](#) with GUB kids, Bella and Mads, and directed by Vanessa Schatz] captured my attention this morning and resulted in a bathroom-sized donation to Growing Up Boulder. Bella and Mads – well done! This is a gift in y'all's name...and, if you are a Boulder local, consider [donating to Growing Up Boulder](#)."



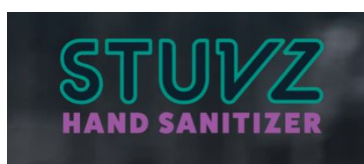
Brad Feld and Amy Batchelor of Anchor Point Foundation

"I was drawn to GUB because I was so impressed with their engagement work with very young children, whose opinions are not often sought and counted. I am a big fan of the [child-friendly cities](#) concept, and I'm so glad the US is well-represented by GUB's efforts. What a great model GUB has developed with a few very capable visionaries; it deserves, now, to be replicated in culturally appropriate ways around the globe."



Jane West of [Two Lilies Fund](#)

Funders, Sponsors & Donors



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The Colorado Health Foundation™



Collaborators & Partners



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Find us at our new location!

**Boulder Public Library
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