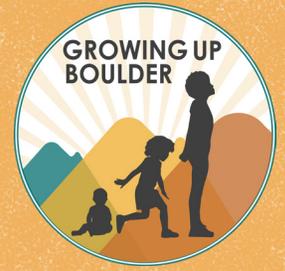


# Growing Up Boulder Impact Report

2023



Dear Growing Up Boulder Community,

The end of the year is a wonderful time to reflect upon all that has transpired in the previous 12 months. As we consider Growing Up Boulder's journey in 2023, we are amazed by how much the organization has grown; GUB's workload has quadrupled! GUB continued its traditional projects, which focused on integrating young people's voices into specific places (Iris Avenue Corridor, Violet Park) and plans (Reimaging Policing Plan) within the City of Boulder. We added three new, long-term initiatives: UNICEF Child Friendly Cities, the Boulder Youth Nature Initiative, and Growing Up Boulder's first strategic plan. In collaboration with teens, we co-facilitated a workshop for educators and nonprofits on how to use our Healing Toolkit. We updated and printed 20,000 copies of the 5th edition of our beloved Boulder Child Friendly City map. And we finished designing GUB's first online course, which teaches communities how to design their own Child Friendly City Map.

To manage GUB's growth, we have focused inward this year. GUB's staff and board created (and approved!) the organization's first-ever strategic plan, which will be our north star for the next 3-5 years. Thanks to a generous grant, we hired our first Development and Operations Coordinator, a position that serves as the backbone of our organization. We brought in consultants to round out our knowledge in the areas of strategic planning, racial equity, inclusion for children with disabilities, and internal organizational systems.

A sincere thank you to each of our partners and funders, who have helped GUB make an impact locally while serving as a model of great practice nationally and globally. And thank you to the insightful children and youth who remind us why we do this work. As a GUB middle school student said, "It felt good that someone wanted to hear OUR opinions; yes, we are important, and yes, we do have a voice."

In gratitude and partnership,



Mara Mintzer, Executive Director



Debbie Brown, Board Chair



Growing Up Boulder's team spent **5,000 hours** elevating young people's voices in 2023



**600 children and youth** from 31 different school and out-of-school groups participated in **37 engagements** with Growing Up Boulder



**87 parents and caregivers** engaged in GUB projects



**46 educators** engaged with Growing Up Boulder projects



GUB worked with **13 City of Boulder departments** and **30 community organizations**



## OUR IMPACT

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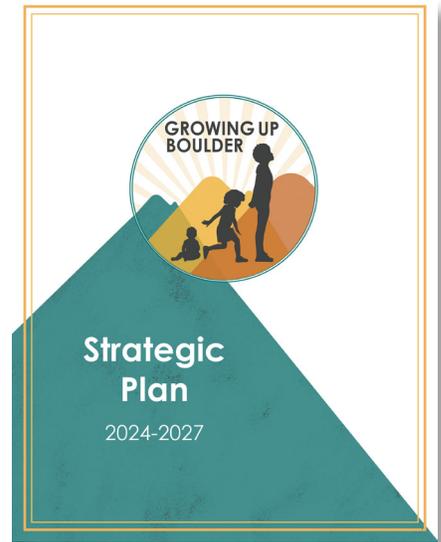
Growing Up Boulder's **vision** is **to cultivate vibrant communities** where all young people thrive.

Growing Up Boulder's **mission** is **centering young people's rights, voices and agency** to advance equitable and sustainable communities for all.

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Since Growing Up Boulder launched in 2009, the organization has evolved significantly. GUB was founded at the University of Colorado, and our work centered on participatory planning with children and youth. In 2021, we left the University to become a nonprofit program under the fiscal sponsorship of the Colorado Nonprofit Development Center (CNDC), which provided the organization with more autonomy; we could now choose projects, fundraise, and communicate in ways that supported our mission. GUB's "staff" in 2009 consisted of one part-time volunteer (current Executive Director, Mara Mintzer) and one part-time graduate student; in 2023, we have a team of 5 (mostly part-time) staff and multiple consultants! In 2023, we also created our first full board. As the scope and complexity of our work expanded over the years, we recognized the need for a strategic plan to bring GUB to its next phase of maturity.



## *GUB's First-Ever* **Strategic Plan**

Our strategic plan will:

- Guide our direction for the next 3-5 years, ensuring every step we take aligns with our mission, vision, and values.
- Provide a framework for decision-making with prioritized goals and measurable actions.
- Serve as a tool to effectively allocate our resources for optimal impact, ensuring sustainability and growth.

We look forward to using the strategic plan as a tool to help us set clear priorities and goals and direct us towards our vision of "cultivating vibrant communities where all young people thrive."



Have you heard the news that GUB is working with the City of Boulder and UNICEF USA to become a “Child Friendly City”? This means that we are making the city a better place for children and youth, especially those from historically marginalized backgrounds. Boulder’s “UNICEF Child Friendly Cities Initiative (CFCI)” officially launched in April 2023 and will take two to three years to implement. We started by collecting government data that examines how children and youth are doing in Boulder; for example, do they have enough nutritious food? How is their mental health? Do they feel like they have opportunities to contribute to their community?

Next, we’re asking similar questions to young people themselves. We’ve already worked with more than 400 young people, and we expect to hear from many more children, youth, caregivers, and service providers (i.e. teachers, therapists) by February 2024. Both the quantitative and qualitative data will help us co-create a Youth Action Plan with young people in 2024 to improve children’s well-being in Boulder.

Many people are involved in this project, including children, youth, city staff, county programs, and community partners like nonprofits, healthcare providers, and businesses. We are all working together to make things better for kids in Boulder!

## Child Friendly City Initiative

*“I have been so incredibly grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with Growing Up Boulder! Thank you for reaching out to include youth voice from our school in the CFCI process. This experience has been meaningful, memorable, and motivating for all of us. It was the highlight of the fall!”*

--BVSD Teacher



We celebrated the printing of our map's 5th edition this year, and printed 20,000 copies!

## CFC Map, 5th Edition



# Child Friendly City (CFC) Map News



## Creating a Child Friendly City Map

Since Growing Up Boulder launched its Child Friendly City Map in 2019, communities and individuals around the world have asked, "How might we create a child-friendly map for our community?" We now have an answer! Under the leadership of GUB Education Director, Cathy Hill, GUB created an online course to walk interested teams through the child-friendly map-making process. While there will eventually be a cost for the course, we will first test out the course with two pilot cities for free. Stay tuned for how your city can participate in 2025!

## CFC Map Course

Growing Up Boulder (GUB) collaborated with the City of Boulder Parks and Recreation Department to facilitate two community engagement sessions aimed at understanding the wishes of the Boulder Meadows and Ponderosa Manufactured Home Community's children, youth, and caregivers regarding the future development of the park at Violet Avenue (temporarily called Violet Park). The themes that emerged from these engagements include:

- Commitment to and enjoyment of nature
- Requests for active play
- Strong interest in water and creek play
- Desire for educational and community programs
- Gathering spaces where everyone can come, relax, and have fun
- Adults are interested in maintaining health through exercise, getting fit, and eating well

The feedback and ideas from community members will impact the design and program activation of the park over the next several years.

- 38 Children and youth, ages 0-18
- 18 Caregivers
- 2 Community Connectors
- 2 City staff
- 6 Growing Up Boulder staff

## BY THE NUMBERS

## Violet Park



GUB staff collaborated with the City's Transportation Department and two Boulder Housing Partner Community Sites to learn what children and youth's experiences have been along the Iris Avenue corridor. The Iris Avenue project endeavors to implement a series of transportation improvements to make Iris Avenue between Broadway and 28th Street safer, more connected, and more comfortable. GUB heard that children, youth, and their caregivers find that Iris Avenue works well for cars, but it does not work well for pedestrians and people riding bicycles (skaters, scooters, strollers), and safety was the primary concern. Residents cared deeply about their neighborhoods and appeared happy to learn about future improvements to

## Iris Avenue Core Arterial Network (CAN)

- 16 Children and youth, ages 5-18
- 8 Adults and adult caregivers from the Iris Hawthorne Community
- 2 Youth Services Initiative (YSI) staff
- 4 Growing Up Boulder staff

### BY THE NUMBERS



*"The staff at Growing Up Boulder are a dream to work with. Cathy and the team have been professional, responsive, and authentically enthusiastic to facilitate child and youth engagement in our transportation projects. They designed two fantastic events to gather feedback and were quick to pivot and readjust to ensure children and youth had the right opportunity to tell us about their experiences. We got awesome input AND you can tell the participants had a blast! Many community members have thanked the team for including the youth voice on this project. A huge thank you to the GUB team for enriching our community engagement for the Iris Avenue Transportation Improvements Project."*

*--City of Boulder Senior Transportation Planner*

From spring 2021 to fall 2023, Growing Up Boulder and partner, Mayamotion Healing, engaged with more than 530 children and youth on the City of Boulder's Reimagine Policing Plan. Young people, across demographics, expressed common themes in feedback throughout the process: they felt both hope and fear about the future of policing in Boulder. They hoped for a more equitable and just policing system, but they feared that real change would not happen. Children and youth also requested transparent and straightforward communication, now and in the future. They recommended that health care providers respond to non-emergency calls. Finally, young people requested an acknowledgement of the harm policing has caused, particularly to people of color and those with disabilities, and they hope to see a movement towards repair in order to build better future relationships between police and young people.

We're happy to share that the City has already implemented some recommendations from young people. The Police Department has dedicated two staff as "youth ambassadors" to build relationships with youth via the City's Youth Opportunities Advisory Board (YOAB), and the City is launching the "CARE pilot program," composed of a behavioral health clinician and a paramedic, to create an alternative to police response for some 911 calls!

## Reimagine Policing

- 81 youth, ages 12-18
- 3 Organizations serving youth
- 3 Community Partners
- 5 GUB/MMH staff and interns
- 5 Engagements

### BY THE NUMBERS (2023)

- 530 Young people, ages 9-24
- 14 Organizations serving children and youth
- 32 Parents
- 41 Educators and Community Partners
- 10 GUB/MMH staff and interns
- 26 Engagements
- Total GUB/MMH/child, youth, young adults, parents, and partner time on project: 5,000+ hours

### BY THE NUMBERS (2021-2023)



Growing Up Boulder (GUB) collaborated with eleven City of Boulder departments on the Boulder Youth Nature Initiative (BYNI), a collective impact model that aims to connect all youth to the outdoors from neighborhood spaces to wilderness places. The focus of this work is twofold: 1) to improve park spaces through Capital Improvement Projects, and 2) to activate use and participation in park spaces through programs. GUB is supporting these efforts by ensuring youth voice is represented in engagements with the community and by developing a program model that can be used across park sites.

## Boulder Youth Nature Initiative (BYNI)



On April 19, 2023, Growing Up Boulder, Mayamotion Healing (MMH) and two youth from the original Youth Leadership Healing Committee, facilitated an emotionally powerful Healing Toolkit Workshop for teachers, school counselors, administrators, and community partners at Boulder Valley School District's (BVSD) Education Center. The toolkit was developed by teens and GUB/MMH in response to the Table Mesa tragedy. Now, our healing toolkit is available for teachers to use in classrooms and for any other program that desires a resource to help children and youth cope with stressors in their lives.

To learn more and access our free Healing Toolkit, click [here](#). And to hear why this work matters to our young people in their own words, watch [Liya's video](#).

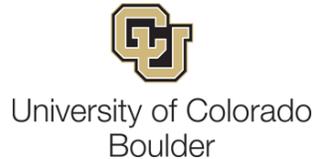
- 25 adult participants
- 6 GUB and Mayamotion Healing staff
- 2 Youth Leadership Healing Committee members

### BY THE NUMBERS

## Healing Toolkit Training

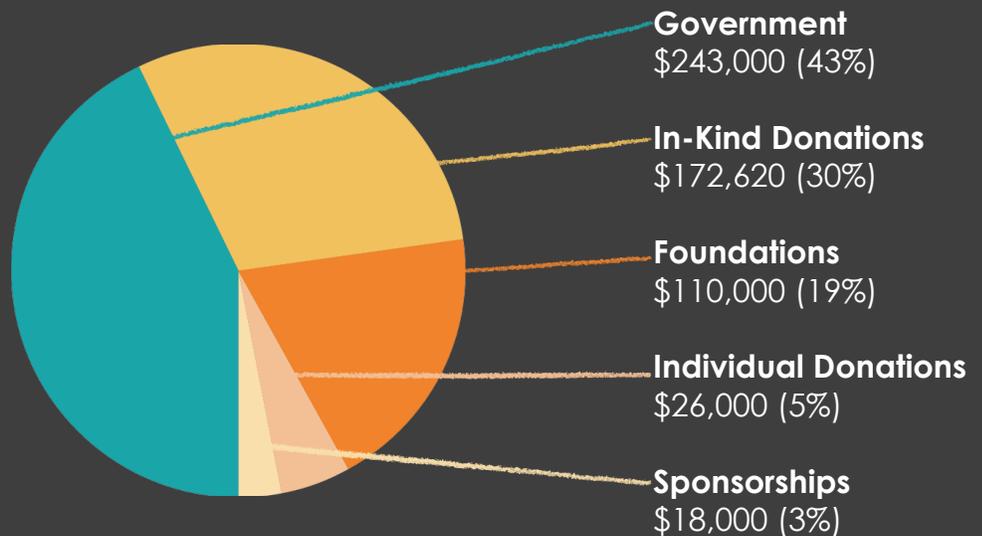


# Key Partners and Supporters

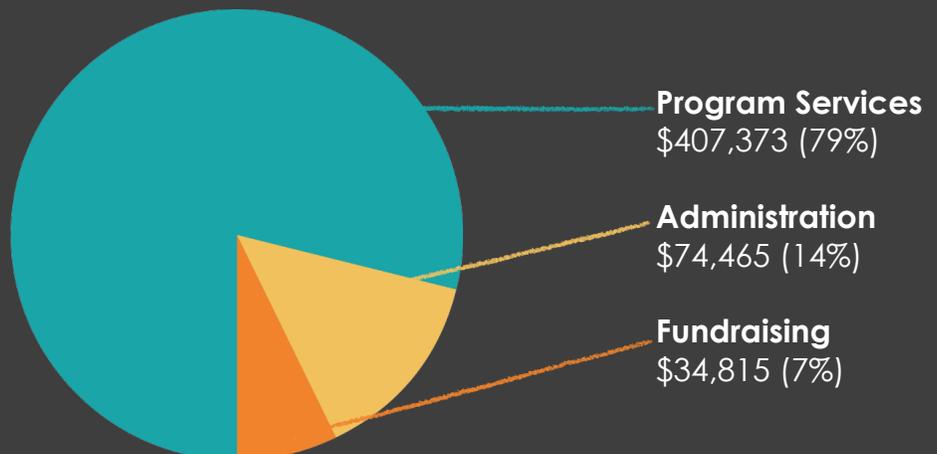


**Cynda  
Collins  
Arsenault**

**Total Revenue:**  
(including in-kind)  
**\$574,620**



**Total Expenses:**  
(including in-kind)  
**\$517,653**



GLOBAL IMPACT



**Children and Nature Network Conference**

*YMCA, Estes Park, Colorado*

**Designing Age-friendly Environments**

*Cornell University in Ithaca, New York*

**Child in the City**  
*Brussels, Belgium*

*The dots on the map represent cities around the world in which Growing Up Boulder delivered keynotes, workshops, interviews, or presentations in 2023*

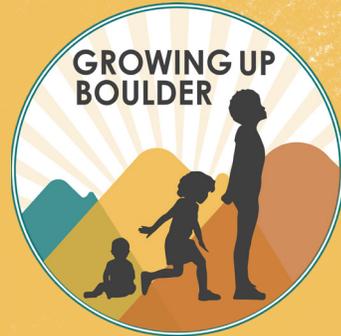
**JOIN US TO ELEVATE YOUNG PEOPLE’S VOICES & MAKE OUR COMMUNITIES MORE EQUITABLE AND SUSTAINABLE FOR ALL**



Support Growing Up Boulder today!

[www.growingupboulder.org](http://www.growingupboulder.org)

**2023**



*GUB is a fiscally sponsored project of the 501(c)(3) Colorado Nonprofit Development Center.*