



CASA DE LA ESPERANZA

LEARNING CENTER

Program Report 2023



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Meet Our Team



Vanessa Arritola
Program Coordinator



Michael Lozano
STEM Educator



Alejandra Saldana
Custodian

Vanessa has been in the program since 2014, and took over as Program Coordinator in January 2016. Mike Lozano has been involved with the program since 2000, initially helping families in computer classes, then as an hourly employee and contracted staff, but most recently has been full-time since 2014. Alejandra Saldana was a resident living in the community and has been the custodian for the center since 2016. She continues to participate as a parent but also helps staff with other tasks including keeping our center clean and welcoming for youth and families. Thank you to the staff for keeping this program going through all of the obstacles.

The Casa de la Esperanza Learning Center team is here to help families succeed and specializes in the education of youth in the Longmont area, especially those low-income, underserved, underrepresented youth of color. The program has a focus on families living at Casa de la Esperanza Housing Community and surrounding communities who mainly labor in Agriculture.

220 individuals were served in 2023!!!



History

The Community Action Programs worked with the Boulder County Commissioners, the Boulder County Housing Authority and other community members to make this award-winning housing community a reality. The first migrant families moved in during the fall of 1993. CAP staff worked with the site manager to hire a bilingual coordinator June 1994. For almost thirty years, the program has been responsive to the unique needs of the dozens of farm worker families of the Casa de la Esperanza community. The program has served hundreds of families and children over the years.

Vision

Casa de la Esperanza's educational center is a state-of-the-art learning center providing opportunities and resources toward excellence and self-empowerment through collaboration and programming that nurture each individual's potential.

Mission

Our vision is one of a thriving community that encourages those around us by exemplifying the ideals of education, leadership, and self-sustainability.

CASA ROBOTICS ACADEMY

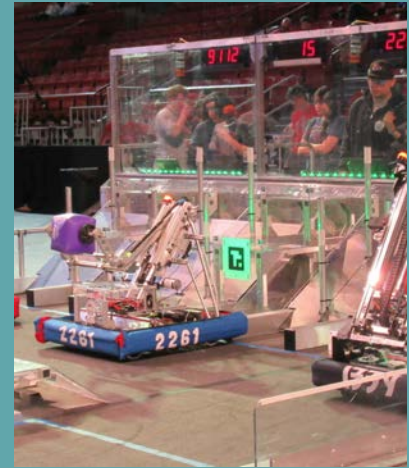


The **Junior Robotics Program** is designed to introduce STEM concepts to kids ages 5 to 8 while exciting them through a brand they know and love – LEGO®. It's never too early to discover STEM. The students learn to program their robots with basic robotics components.



The **First Lego League (FLL)** is for youth in 4th-7th grade for up to 10 youth joining the team. They research real-world problems such as safety, recycling, energy and are challenged to develop a solution. They also must design, build, and program using LEGO MINDSTORMS, then compete with up to 20 other teams. This year, the Casa FLL placed 4th in the competition. Their mentor, Sharla Benjamin, received the Mentors Award.

CASA ROBOTICS ACADEMY



The **First Robotics Program** is designed for youth in 8th - 12th grade. Combining the excitement of sport with the rigors of science and technology. We call FIRST Robotics Competition the ultimate Sport for the Mind. High-school student participants call it “the hardest fun you’ll ever have.” Under strict rules, limited resources, and an intense 10-week time limit, teams of 8 or more students are challenged to raise funds, design a team “brand,” hone teamwork skills, and build and program industrial-size robots to play a difficult field game against like-minded competitors. It’s as close to real-world engineering as a student can get. Volunteer professional mentors lend their time and talents to guide each team. Each season ends with an exciting FIRST Championship at the University of Denver.



CASA ROBOTICS ACADEMY FIELD TRIPS



Sierra Space is a technology company building a platform in space to benefit life on earth. On May 26th, 2023 youth from the First Robotics Competition took a field trip to the site to learn more about their work. Ross Cohlmiya, Robotics Mentor, gave our youth a thorough tour of the facility which included learning about the Dream Chaser which took a trip to the Space Station. The space plane is crucial in carrying supplies like food, water, and science experiments into space.



Medtronic is a company interested in the positive human welfare that focuses on the application of biomedical engineering to research, design, and sells instruments or appliances that alleviate pain, restore health and extend life. Youth from the First Lego League Robotics Team visited the company and got a hands-on experience. They learned how robots are used in medical devices and how they apply science and technology to come up with new innovations when designing robotic machines which support doctors during surgeries and other medical procedures.



The **YWCA Boulder** invited our FLL Robotics Youth to Participate in a Jam session at CU Boulder on December 2nd. Comcast, a high-capacity fiber optic network service of Ethernet, internet and phone service, spoke to youth about their innovative technology and how they design their network to provide optimal performance to their customers.

Enrichment Opportunities



The **Art Attack Program** happens once per week at the community room year-round. Youth got a chance to explore their artistic side and create different pieces. Youth also did a tour of the Firehouse Art Center, who sponsors the program. Joy has been the instructor for the last 3 years, but our partnership with the Firehouse has been going on for more than 12 years.



The **Cub Scouts Program** took place in the fall semester with the idea of continuing as a year round program. It happened once per week and youth from K-5th grade work to earn scouts badges, fundraise for their troop and learn new skills like making rockets, derby cars and much more. Our instructors Kate and John worked very hard to make this troop happen and the youth are so glad they were able to be part of the program

Enrichment Opportunities



The **Bike Giveaway and Bike Ride** was sponsored by Can'd Aid - a non-profit growing a movement in generosity. Their Treads + Trails program aims to educate, inspire, and empower community members to lead healthy, active lives by fostering a love for the outdoors. Through people-power, they have assembled and donated more than 16,000 bikes and skateboards to kids in underserved communities nationwide, built and maintained access to trails + parks, and more! Casa de la Esperanza received more than 20 bikes, and another 10 skateboards plus a helmet for each child.



The **Bike Ride** took place one evening after all the youth in the community had picked up their donated bike. Parents joined us in the ride and we went to the St. Vrain Greenway with the community youth, volunteer leading the program, and staff. It was a lot of fun to be outdoors and active!

SUMMER PROGRAMS



The **4H Science Program** took place over the summer twice per week for one month. The youth in the program had the opportunity to learn about wild animals in their community. They were able to construct their own water filter as well and explore the outdoors. Our program instructor Santiago and Emma did a great job engaging youth in the program and giving them new projects to do and lots of valuable information about their environment. The 4H program is sponsored by Boulder County 4H extension office.



The **Celebrando a la Tierra** took place over the summer at the Longmont Museum. The Program focused on the Spanish Language through hands-on arts and crafts while learning the importance of soil in our lives with Kena Cuttridge from Ollin Farms. Youth ages 5-13 were able to participate in the program and 6 of our youth signed up for the program. Youth and staff would walk from the center to the Longmont Museum to participate. The Longmont Museum sponsored all 6 youth.



SUMMER PROGRAMS



The **Growing Gardens Gardening Program** took place over the summer. Casa received plants from Growing Gardens and prepared the soil for youth to plant them. On a beautiful summer evening, youth were able to go outdoors, get on their knees and plant peppers, tomatoes, cilantro, and even some fruits like watermelon. Plants also went to additional families so that they could have their own garden. In late August, youth harvested all their veggies to make salsa and Growing Gardens donated an additional amount of veggies for the community.



A partnership with Parks and Open Space Boulder County gave us two trips to beautiful outdoor spaces like a **Mother's Day Hike at Heil Valley Ranch** and **Visit to the Agricultural Heritage Center** for families and youth in the Casa de la Esperanza Program. Both events helped families learn of nearby outdoor spaces that they can visit on their own.



SUMMER PROGRAMS

The **Cottonwood Institute** camping trip took place at Mission: Wolf, a solar-powered nature center that provides a sanctuary for unwanted captive-born wolves. They spent three days and two nights in the open environment, cooking outdoors, hiking and sleeping in tents. Youth were also involved in a service project, painting posts for new enclosures for the wolves and building a ramp for handicap folks wanting to visit the nature center. Youth participating in the program were between the ages of 5 and 18 years old.



SUMMER PROGRAMS

The **Cal-wood Latin Family** camping trip took place at the Education Center in Jamestown. Family members are fully immersed in nature - camping in cabins, hiking, fishing, archery, and building connections and confidence as they accomplishment new outdoor activities. The families were able to sit around a camp fire and roast marshmallows for s'mores. The following evening a carne asada feast went on in the kitchen for the families, children, staff and instructors. The families were very happy with their experience that they requested a longer stay for the following summer.



Community Food Share

In 2023, the Community Food Share program distributed a total of 79,931 pounds of food to 50 families. The community food share organization has a mission to eliminate hunger in Boulder and Broomfield counties through engagement, collaboration, and leadership. Their vision is one of a hunger-free community. Casa de la Esperanza and Community Food Share have been partnered since the late 1990s.



Pinewood Derby Race

On October 14th, the Casa de la Esperanza Art Attack program took a trip to the Old Town Marketplace to participate in their 4th Annual Pinewood Derby Car Race. The youth worked weeks prior to the race - they designed, cut, painted, and added wheels to their cars with the help of their art instructor Joy. On that afternoon, two of our students received 1st and 3rd place.

Congratulations!



SPECIAL EVENTS



Valentine's Day



Easter Egg Hunt



School Supplies Give-Away



Family BBQ



Halloween



Day of the Dead



Cooking Class



Christmas 2023
Christmas Posada

Volunteer Hours for 2023

Volunteers play a crucial role in the success and impact of the Casa de la Esperanza Youth Program. Their dedication, enthusiasm, and commitment contributes significantly to creating a positive and nurturing environment for young minds. Volunteers serve as Robotics Mentors, Tutors, Reading Instructors and Food Bank Leaders. They provide valuable guidance and support, fostering personal and skill development among the youth. Their diverse backgrounds and experiences bring a richness to the program, exposing participants to a variety of perspectives and insights.

We are so THANKFUL FOR OUR VOLUNTEERS!!!

Tutors

Alexia Dew
Elena Dunlop
Emily Haynes
Allison Duh
Piper Lewis
Joshua Palomares
Milana Campana
Alyssa Feinberg
Rachel Gessent

Special Events

Jonathan Chamling
Jorge Crespo
Katia Kriakova
Maggie

Program Intern

Alondra Perches

Instructors

Tiffany Flanders
Joyanna Gittings
Kate Mulder

Community Food Share

Janet Stickler
Kay Aitchison
Desiree Bencomo
Olivia Fuentes

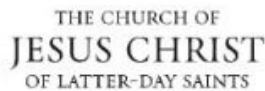
Robotics Mentors

Greg White
Sharla Benjamin
Sarah Gjestvang
Maria Madera
Luke Engvall
Ross Cohlmi
Serena LaFave
Alondra Cabrera
Alexander Esquivel

32 Volunteers completed **1,516** hours
A values of \$46,996 (at \$31/hour)

FUNDING SOURCES FOR 2023

SPONSORS, PARTNERS & KEY SUPPORTERS



DONATIONS AND GRANTS FOR OUR NON-PROFIT "BOULDER COMMUNITY HOUSING CORPORATION"

Ball Aerospace Donation

High Country Bank Donation

The Longmont Community Foundation Donation

Lynn & Helen Clark Fund Donation

Intrado Foundation Honor of Katie Pegg Donation

Jack Klarfeld Donation

Denver Broncos Foundation Community Grant

Sharla Benjamin Donation

Medtronic Grant

Jess & Maria Aweida Donation

AMD Grant

**Thank you for supporting
Casa de la Esperanza Learning Center**



*Thank
You*