

2020 IMPACT REPORT

# A YEAR OF DISCOVERY

AARON'S ACRES



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## A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In our 2019 Impact Report, we focused on our [relationships](#) and our community. We know that Aaron's Acres is where we are today because of the many connections we have made over the years, beginning in 1998. This past year, our focus was even more so on these [relationships](#) due to the pandemic. How would we connect with our families and our supporters during a pandemic, when everyone was remaining at home, working and "going to school" virtually?

Thinking innovatively, being creative and stretching ourselves became a constant at Aaron's Acres. Time was spent re-examining our programs in order to provide for our participants and their families virtually. I am extremely proud of our team and how they continue to work hard on behalf of those who are involved in our programs. Each day brought on new challenges; our team faced each challenge, working tirelessly to address the issues and arrive at appropriate answers.

In this past year, everyone was impacted by COVID. No doubt it was a stressful time. Yet, it was also a time in which our team had the opportunity to step out of doing what we always did because it had worked. We were able to revisit our mission and take the time to develop new ideas and new ways of connecting with our participants and their families. Without the pandemic, chances are we would have continued implementing our programs as we have always done. Changing things up and expanding the way in which we met the needs of our families was a definite positive during a very challenging time.

Looking towards the future, it is clear that the way we operate will be much different. We are confident that we will continue to meet the needs of our participants and families by continuing to make changes as we move forward. We recognize that this is a whole new world and we remain focused on maintaining [relationships](#) and personal connections. We will take a slow, cautious pace with our next steps for program delivery, considering the safety of our staff, volunteers, and families along the way.

Our team will continue to strengthen already existing [relationships](#) as well as create new ones in order to remain true to our mission of providing meaningful, age appropriate programs to children and adults with disabilities. With all that we have done and all that we will be doing moving forward, we are most grateful to our steadfast supporters who help to make it all possible!



**Risa Paskoff**  
Executive Director

# 2020 IMPACT REPORT



When the 2019-2020 school year ended early for many of our participants, Aaron's Acres jumped into action. We wanted to create a sense of normalcy for those we support and a resource for the larger community, during a time when the "usual routine" for most was lost. We shared weekly video content from entertainers, performers, experts and trainers – some new to Aaron's Acres – to bring our children and families a time of music, fun, laughter, exercise, yoga, story time and more! We received a positive response from parents and their children and even learned that our families shared our content with Autistic support teachers and others within the local community.

Although the Aaron's Acres Team made the difficult decision to cancel 2020 summer camp for the health and safety of those we support, we did provide an exciting virtual summer camp experience – free of charge to registered families. We made it a priority to not only offer programming in whatever way possible, but also to pay staff and all performers, specialists and friends of Aaron's Acres who are participating in camp.

We are thankful to each family who encouraged us, each staff member who brainstormed **innovative** and new ideas, each donor who supported us, and each performer willing to share content with the children and young adults of Aaron's Acres.

## Mission:

Aaron's Acres provides individuals with disabilities ages 5 to 21 year-round therapeutically based age-appropriate recreational programs directed by specially trained and certified staff in a supportive environment that enhances socialization and communication skills. Emotional, educational, and recreational support is offered for the entire family.

## What makes us unique:

- Supervisory staff comprised of professionals
- 1:1 or 1:2 staff to child ratio
- Nurse on staff at all times to address medical needs
- Everyone is included in all activities regardless of disabilities or challenges

## TESTIMONIALS

*“Aaron’s Acres was the best decision we ever made 7 years ago. We were hesitant - Adaline doesn’t talk, doesn’t walk - how would she fit in? Would she be able to participate? No question, hands down – YES!!! This amazing organization goes above and beyond including all abilities into their program. So, this year when it became virtual camp, we again hesitated - how will this work?*

*Will Adaline be able to participate? YES, YES, YES!!! Virtual camp was amazing! Adaline was so engaged with the Zoom calls - watching the entertainment, participating in the crafts and singing/dancing away. We cannot imagine our summers without Aaron’s Acres! Adaline’s face lights up as soon as she hears the word camp! To sum up Aaron’s Acres in one sentence - Aaron’s Acres camp has given my special needs child the ability to experience the excitement of being a kid at summer camp and it has changed her life and ours.”*

**Michele L.**

Aaron's Acres Parent



*Each time our son Carter attends camp or other Aaron’s Acres events, he and the rest of our family experience encouragement, acceptance, comfort, parental support and respite, just to name a few. The world can be a tough place, especially for a kid who’s differently-abled. Aaron’s Acres Summer Camp allows Carter to spend time in a group that encourages him to be himself and celebrate all of his unique abilities. As parents, our minds are at ease knowing that he is with highly-qualified and caring staff. We love seeing some of the same friendly faces year after year. Our family is so grateful to have Aaron’s Acres as a support and resource in our community!*

*The idea of “a house is not a home” comes to mind when I think about Aaron’s Acres, particularly during the time of the Covid 19 pandemic. Even though our son Carter can’t physically attend camp this summer, he has been able to participate in the drive-thru material pick-ups and virtual camp sessions on Zoom. It’s been especially important to him since he’s not able to see some of his favorite people and do some of the activities he looks forward to each summer. As I watch him anticipate and participate in the modified activities Aaron’s Acres is providing, it’s evident that camp is not just a place. It’s a feeling and it’s a **family**, and we’re thrilled to be a part of it!*

**Jen V.**

Aaron's Acres Parent



## TESTIMONIALS

*"I just want to take a minute to say "thank you" for the thoughtful delivery that Aaron's Acres made to our family earlier this month. The idea of connecting and providing something for the campers to enjoy while anxiously awaiting summer was such a nice surprise. Reece is excited to use his bowls and fudge with homemade ice cream this weekend! Thanks so much for being more than just another summer camp experience. We love Aaron's Acres and its amazing staff!"*

**Peggy Jo W.**

Aaron's Acres Parent



*"I absolutely love working for Aaron's Acres. Camp has changed my life in so many ways and I'm so thankful for all the opportunities I was given. I miss working with you and the other staff, but most of all I miss working with the kids. There's nothing better than being able to see the kids be kids, have fun, and be so purely happy..."*

**Zack M.**

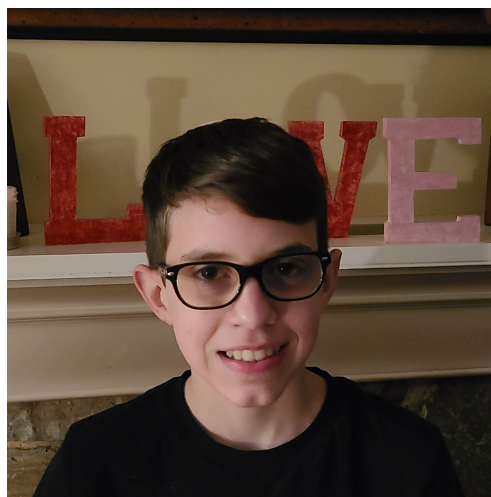
Aaron's Acres Staff



*"This year is quite different because of the Covid-19 pandemic, but Aaron's Acres is powering through! The staff has gone above and beyond all of my expectations by providing a virtual camp. Our first experience with virtual camp was the drive-through parade to pick up supplies needed for the week. Counselors and staff were so excited to see my son; they waved and shouted out his name! The fact that they remembered his name made him feel like a king. Seeing his smile and **excitement** melted my heart. My son has numerous challenges, but Aaron's Acres makes him feel special and successful. As a parent, I couldn't ask for a better, safer place for my child to attend camp. Aaron's Acres also realizes the difficulties parents and caregivers face raising a child with special needs. The staff is always willing to listen and offer helpful advice. Aaron's Acres even provides opportunities for parents to attend educational and pampering sessions while their child is at camp. Aaron's Acres truly cares about my child and my family."*

**Amy H.**

Aaron's Acres Parent



## PROGRAM & OUTREACH



### Virtual Summer Camp

Virtual summer camp was like nothing we have ever done before! Aaron's Acres held four 2-week sessions of camp via Zoom. Each session included a drive-by supply pick-up to kick off the session. Families were provided supplies needed for games, activities and crafts for the 2-week period. Participants enjoyed virtual visits from reptiles, horses and dogs, music and dancing sessions, games, activities and crafts. Parents and families were also offered access to virtual mind and body wellness yoga sessions.



### Touch Points & Steinman Grant

A lot of things looked different in 2020, but one thing that did not was our commitment to the participants and families of Aaron's Acres. It was important to the Aaron's Acres Team that we check in with and remain **connected** to the members of our Aaron's Acres Family. Funds received from the Steinman Foundation allowed us to provide for the needs of our participants and families as they navigated the changes created by the pandemic. In the fall, the Aaron's Acres Admin Team hopped in the van and made personal surprise visits to every participant's home -- just to say "Hi!" and "We're thinking about you!"



### School Year Program

The 2020 School Year Program was different from years past. Aaron's Acres offered adolescents and young adults ages 13-25 age-appropriate virtual programming October through December and was excited to expand this offering to young adults ages 22-25 for the year. Virtual Zoom sessions occurred monthly and included activities such as games, crafts, cooking, music and more. Based on feedback provided by parents of younger participants, Aaron's Acres offered younger children pre-recorded videos from friends of Aaron's Acres. Videos included music, Aaron's Acres camp songs, reptiles, dancing and more.

## Year in Review

### REVENUE

As detailed in this financial overview, Aaron's Acres has a diverse revenue stream which is used responsibly to cover our expenses. The majority of Aaron's Acres funding is from our **community**. This support allows us to continue to provide programs to children and young adults with disabilities. Support comes from a wide variety of funders, including foundations, individual donors and businesses. This generosity also helps to build our scholarship program which ensures that all families are accepted; no family is ever turned away at Aaron's Acres.

*\*Fundraising revenue is generated from events, hosted by Aaron's Acres and community members.  
\*Donation revenue is comprised of donations made directly to our organization.*

### Third Party Fundraisers

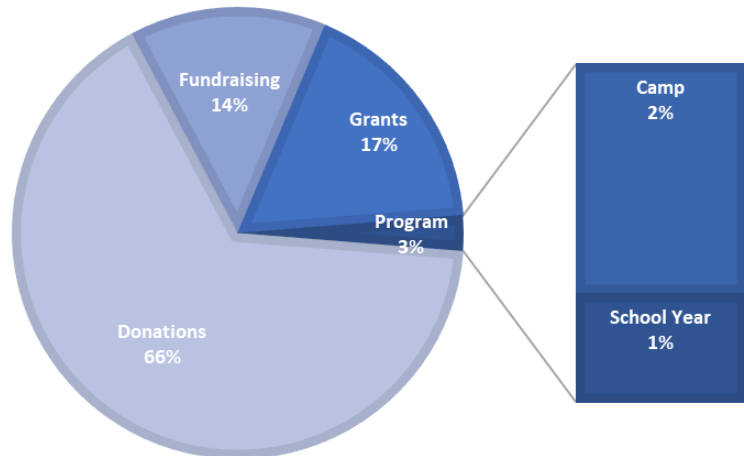
**\$23.1K**

**Community** members and businesses think of Aaron's Acres when they wish to raise funds for local nonprofit organizations.

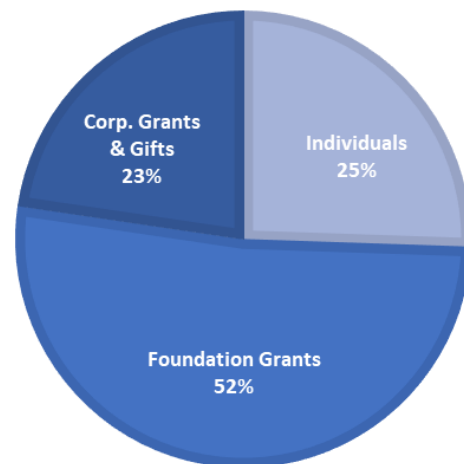
### EXPENSES

During 2020, because of COVID, there was no in-person camp program and only 3 months of our school year component (before those programs were cancelled). As a result, the number of direct staff hours for 2020 as compared to 2019 were 560.5 and 13,833 respectively. Total expenses shifted due to less programming, resulting in a higher percentage in fundraising and administrative expenses, which is atypical for our organization. As we return to full capacity, our expectation is that these percentages will shift to pre-COVID status.

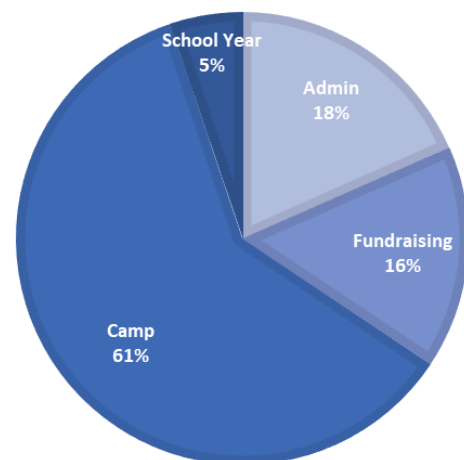
### Revenues by Type



### Grants & Gifts by Source



### Functional Expenses





## POSSIBILITY

For the past 23 years, Aaron's Acres has been committed to offering children and young adults with disabilities something that we all seek—**possibility**. The **possibility** to learn, to grow, and to thrive, despite any challenges. Our goal remains the same as it was when our organization was founded: to provide engaging programs that nurture socialization and communication skills.

Last year, our organization experienced something it had never been faced with before. As a result of the COVID-19 crisis, we had the opportunity to reimagine the format of our summer camp and school year programs. During a typical year of summer camp, children ride horses, participate in music therapy and even interact with reptiles. And during a typical year of our school year program, our participants would be creating crafts together and visiting various places in our community, such as the bowling alley and Hershey Park. While the delivery of these programs needed to shift to a virtual format last year, the positive impacts were still the same. We continued to provide our participants with vital personal connections and interactive experiences that helped them to flourish, despite the many difficulties they were facing as a result of the pandemic.

Throughout the unique and challenging time of the pandemic, our program team was there to support our participants and their families. We made phone calls to check in and offer assistance; we organized a caravan to deliver special treats to families, staff members and donors; we held drive-through supply pick-ups where we also celebrated our participants; we hosted two drive-in bingo events; and we offered video recordings of our sessions so that families could enjoy our programs together. We listened intently and responded in innovative ways to the needs expressed by the families we serve.

While most things changed last year, our commitment to our mission was unwavering. Thank you for helping us continue to provide familiar connections and transformative experiences for our participants through your support of Aaron's Acres!



## A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITY RELATIONS

As I started in my role with Aaron's Acres in early March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic was just becoming a reality and never could I have imagined what the next year would have in store. It has been challenging and everything but typical. From day one of the pandemic, Aaron's Acres has remained **committed** to our participants and families, creating new methods of communicating and delivering our programs throughout this very difficult time.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to our volunteers, our corporate partners and our individual donors, including our Dream Makers and Ambassadors, for the support they've given in so many different ways over the past year. From helping us to prepare supplies for our virtual camp, to providing funding to ensure that our families had what they needed during the lockdown period of the pandemic – and everything in between – you have been there.

We appreciate your unwavering support and your enthusiastic engagement in all that we are doing at Aaron's Acres! We invite you to continue to find ways to participate in our efforts that are meaningful to you. We have several exciting new opportunities that might be of interest, such as our Friends of Aaron's Acres Monthly Giving Program and our Partners for Possibility Legacy Society. I hope you'll reach out to learn more! Thank you!



*Kate*

**Kate Mullen**  
Director of Development & Community Relations

THE **EXTRAGIVE**<sup>™</sup>  
ORDINARY



What a year for ExtraGive! Our total impact amount was \$58,479.52. Thank you for supporting Aaron's Acres and the local community during The Extraordinary Give in 2020!



Aaron's Acres celebrated 10 years of support through the Annual Golf Tournament! The event's total revenue was \$68,640. We are thankful for the generous sponsors, donors, volunteers and participants of this event!





**28** VIRTUAL SESSIONS DELIVERED

**60** VIRTUAL MEETINGS OR CALLS HELD WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS

**79** VIDEO RECORDINGS SHARED WITH FAMILIES & THE COMMUNITY WITH 11,806 VIEWS

**73** DREAM MAKERS

**446** EXTRAGIVE DONORS

**40** INDIVIDUALS AND CORPORATE PARTNERS WHO PARTICIPATED IN VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

**284** 'TOUCH POINT' VISITS COMPLETED WITH DONORS, FAMILIES AND STAFF

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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- Elaine Burnett  
Program Director
- Kate Mullen  
Director of Development  
& Community Relations
- Heather Good  
Manager of Finance & Administration
- Gabriella Kime Toews  
Events & Communications Coordinator