

Aaron's Acres

2021 Impact Report



1861 Charter Lane #114
Lancaster, PA 17601





A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends:

It was a year of slowly returning to in-person meetings and in-person programs in 2021. Our staff and families were beyond excited to see one another, and not on a computer screen! When we welcomed campers on the first day of camp in June 2021, it was such a highlight for everyone! Several parents shared that their child woke up early, got dressed independently, and repeatedly said statements like “camp, go to camp”. While it was only 6:00 am, parents were thrilled to see their child so happy! Children who typically cling to their parents and become anxious with the transitions, ran from their parents to greet the Aaron’s Acres staff.

Pool time, horseback riding, music therapy, visits with reptiles and a petting zoo all occurred once again this year; smiles were seen, and laughter was heard during each day of camp. Yellow t-shirts, a display of the daily schedule, hello and goodbye songs at circle time---these all helped our campers to feel safe and secure. One parent shared, “I got my child back”, as this child had become withdrawn and depressed during the pandemic.

Meetings with donors, service clubs, community members and businesses were also scheduled in person once again. Many shared with our team that it felt good to meet for coffee or to hear our presentation offline. Communicating, exchanging ideas, and sharing stories occurred throughout the year, reinforcing our commitment to these relationships within our community.

As a result of the pandemic, we realized even more, how important it is to connect with others and create a supportive, caring environment for everyone. For families raising children with disabilities, their needs and challenges are complicated and at times, more intense. As an organization that serves this population, we will continue to be sensitive to their situations and address their needs as best as we can. As an organization that connects with the community in so many ways, we will continue to explore ways to add and strengthen these relationships and connections to improve the overall well-being of our community.

As we move forward, we will continue to listen to our families and provide programs and services in meaningful ways. Our mission and vision will guide us in all that we do. As always, we are most grateful to our many supporters who ensure that we can continue to serve children and young adults with varying abilities and disabilities. Thank you for partnering with us and believing in the work that we are doing! Together, we are building powerful connections that are truly life changing.



Executive Director

TESTIMONIALS



"Finding out that Matty would get to come to camp in person this summer was one of the best moments in the last 18 months. He loved every single minute of the last few weeks. What a gift it has been for him to be surrounded by people who love him and embrace all of his abilities despite his disabilities. If you would have asked me if I would see photos of my son trying scuba diving, I would have told you that you are crazy! Aaron's Acres means family to our Matty, and to us. Our hearts are so full knowing that he is well taken care of, is challenged to do new things that are often outside of his comfort zone, and is truly surrounded by people that are patient, loving, and dedicated to provide the most amazing experience for children and young adults with disabilities. We love Aaron's Acres as our family, and would truly be lost without having this camp for Matty."

- Melissa R.



"We were so thrilled when it was announced camp would be happening in person this year. Our daughter spent most of the last 16 months at home. While she had some anxiety getting back out there she loved her time at camp. When the day ended she would ask when she could go back. She would ask me to find videos of the songs they sing at camp almost everyday when we got home. This camp experience was so needed and good for her and the entire family. This full time mom needed a break as well. We all endured a lot and are so grateful for the two weeks she was able to get at camp this summer."

- Nicole C.



"This is my 13 year old grandson's first experience at Aaron's Acres and he is really enjoying it. I am impressed with the level of individual care and attention he receives, and I also appreciate that he is having fun and learning with a staff who recognize and accentuate his abilities, as well as working on the things he needs to understand and improve upon, helping him in his growth. It has made his parents' hearts and my heart very happy to bring him here and know that he is safe and enjoying camp."

- Cindy G.

TESTIMONIALS



"Quite often the phrase, 'words cannot express' is used to try to convey a thought, a praise, an action or a moment in time. [...] That is how I feel about the experience of our J.J. being a part of the Aaron's Acres family at summer camp. For 2 weeks in the summer, they truly become a part of our extended family. From the top down, everyone that myself and J. J. interact with are absolutely 'AMAZING'. What makes them so great is that I genuinely sense that everyone who works with our kiddos loves them as much as we, parents and family, do! When we turn our loved ones over to them, we are entrusting them with our most prized possessions. Aaron's Acres staff truly does not disappoint.

"[...] Thank you for your hard work and dedication, which I know is not always easy but you make it look effortless. Always with smiles, always with grace, and overflowing with love for our kids and families. You bless us more than you will probably ever know!"
- Michael A.



"Charlotte gets up with such gusto on camp days and leaves the car in such a good mood upon arriving at drop-off. When Charlotte comes home from camp, she is so talkative, expressive, and engaging. She tells me right away about what she did at camp that day and various things that may have happened that day. During the school year, I have to 'pull' this information out of her. I believe the difference between the end of the school day versus the end of the camp day is because Aaron's Acres is a place where Charlotte feels deep connection with the staff and other campers, is motivated to do the activities, and is included in all activities. One of my favorite things during camp season is listening to Charlotte sing a medley of camp songs in her bed each night.



"As a parent of a child with Autism and global developmental delays, I tend to worry a lot and about so many things. I get a break from that stress when Charlotte is at Aaron's Acres because I never worry when Charlotte is with Aaron's Acres. Camp is such a gift for our whole family (mom included). Char has been bringing the camp directories (of campers and staff) you mailed home to bed EVERY night. She LOVES Aaron's Acres so much. Thank YOU for all the love, acceptance, and happiness you bring into the lives of others."

- Melissa Z.

TESTIMONIALS



"As soon as you walk toward the campers, you can literally feel the love and joy that surrounds the site. Each child is participating as their ability allows, and their individual counselor is with them every step of the way. Each time I go, my heart fills with the pure joy that comes from these campers.

"I laugh with them, smile with them, and always shed some tears – not from sadness, but from seeing them accomplish what might have seemed impossible just a few minutes before. I am forever indebted to the staff, the counselors, the nurses, and the helpers who make this organization what is – a haven for the kids, and a blessing to their parents."

- Marianne D.

"I was really looking forward to seeing the kids again in person and it did not disappoint! It was so great to see them interacting with peers and participating in all of the fun camp activities. I also enjoyed working with the staff and seeing them learn and grow."

- Eric B.



This summer is going to be one that is so special because although I have been able to see the smiling faces of our participants through Zoom over the past year, I just cannot wait to actually see them in person and how much they have all grown. I have watched some of these participants grow up for the past 15 years and it is just so fulfilling to be able to see and interact with them in person again. Their smiles and enthusiasm make me smile and that is why I continue to come back each year!

- Jackie M.

It was so wonderful to witness the magic of camp once again! Kudos to you, your staff and your amazing camp counselors who support, bond with and empower the campers to have their very best experience!

- Carol B.

ABOUT AARON'S ACRES



Mission: Aaron's Acres provides individuals with disabilities ages 5-21 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.

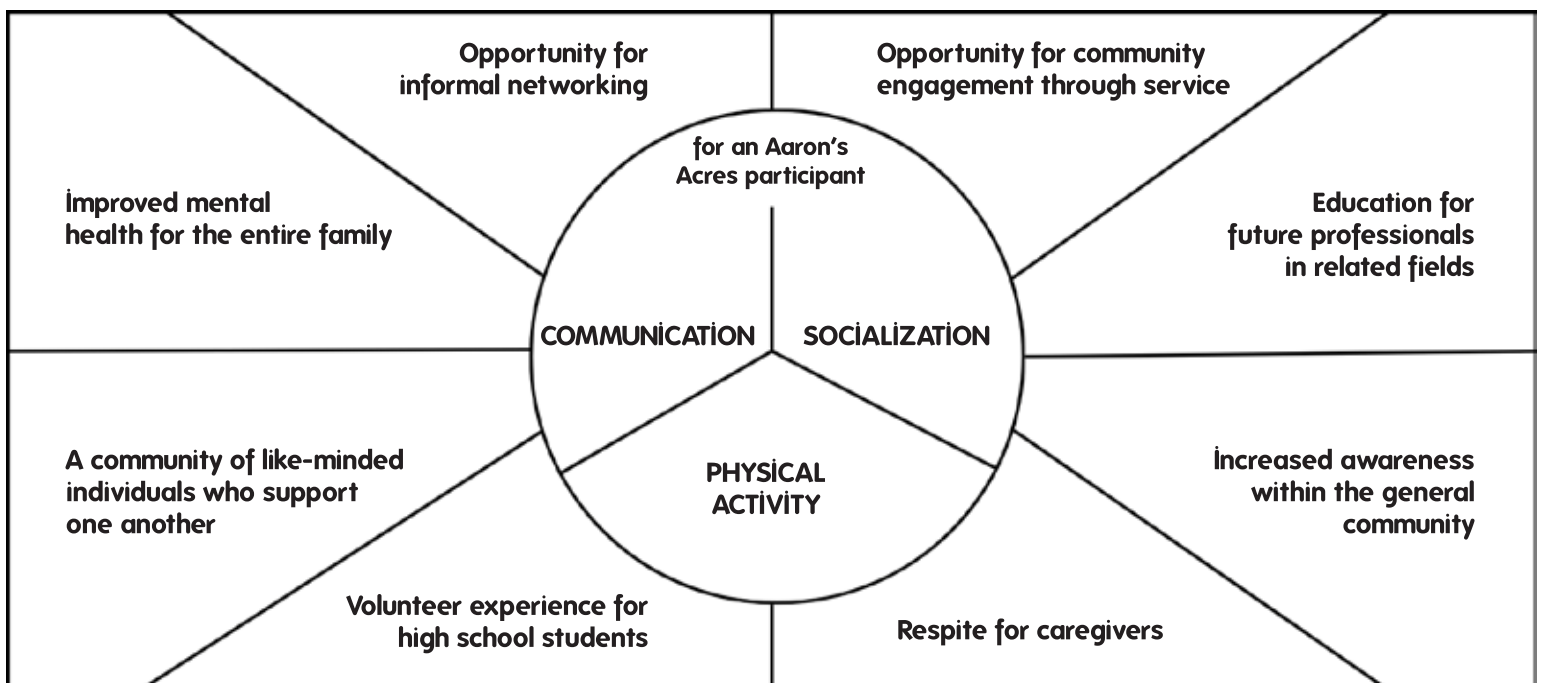
What makes Aaron's Acres unique:

1:1 or 1:2
staff to child ratio

Supervisory staff
comprised of
professionals

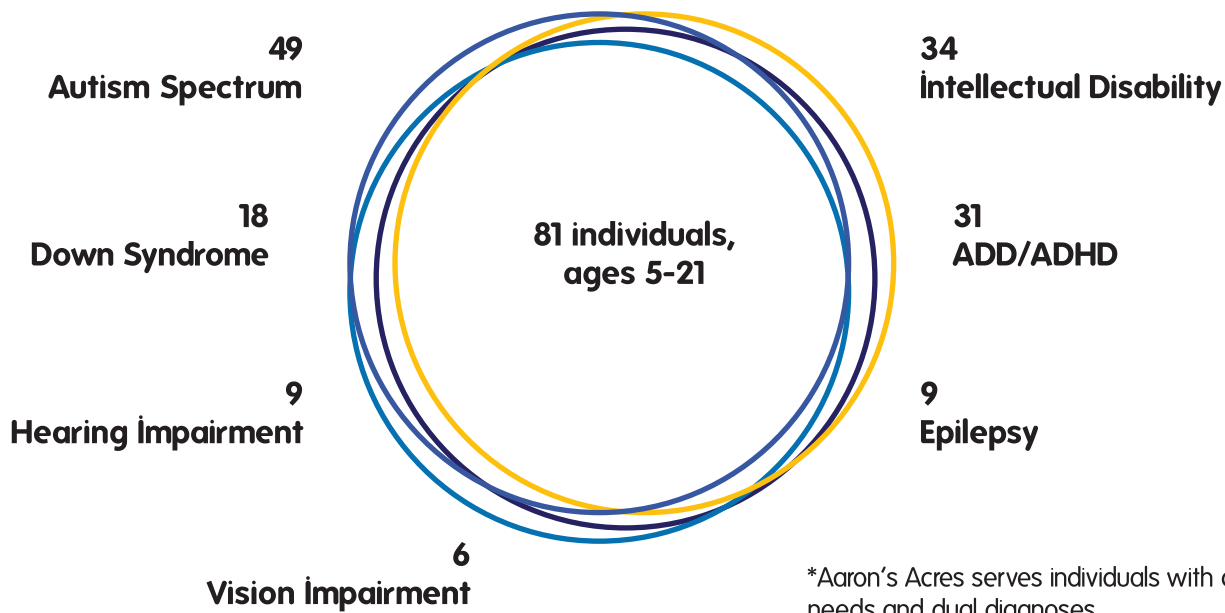
Nurse on staff
at all times

Program Impact:

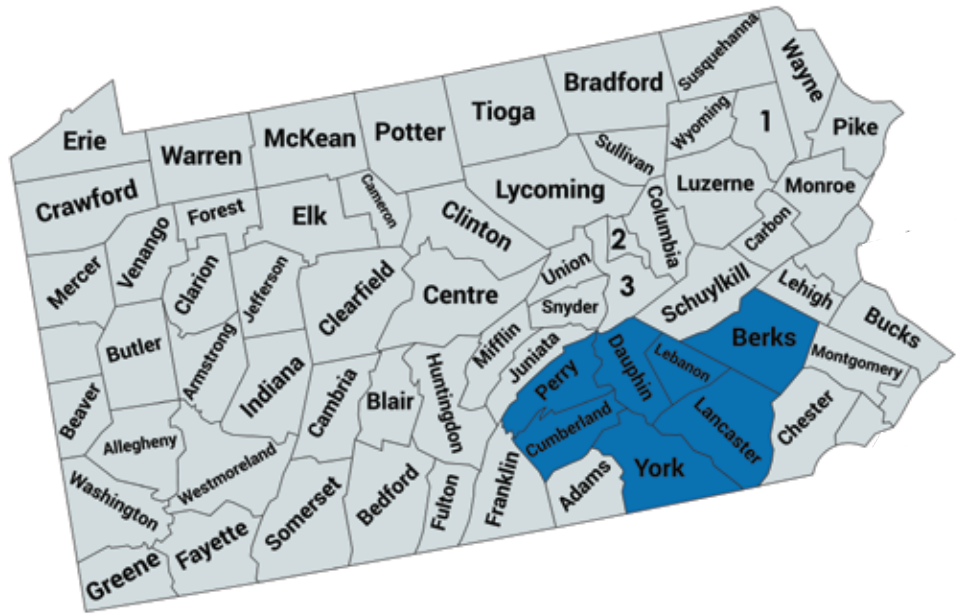




PROGRAM DEMOGRAPHICS



*Aaron's Acres serves individuals with complex needs and dual diagnoses.



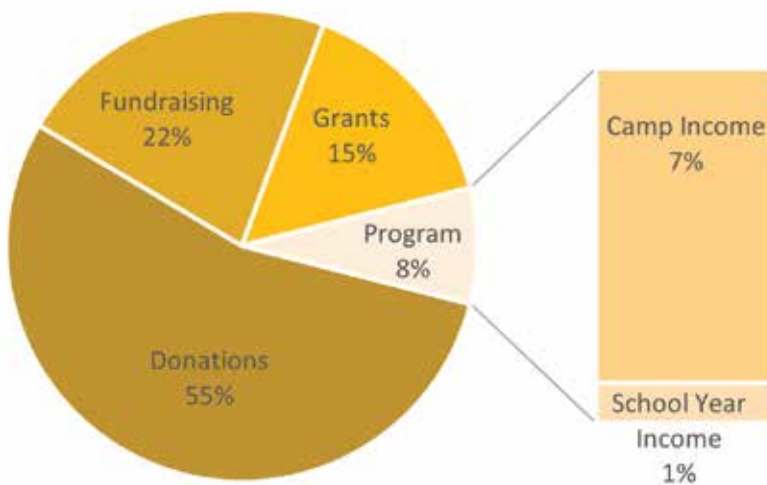
In 2021, Aaron's Acres served 30 younger participants (ages 5-12) and 51 older participants (ages 13-21) across 7 counties in Central Pennsylvania.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

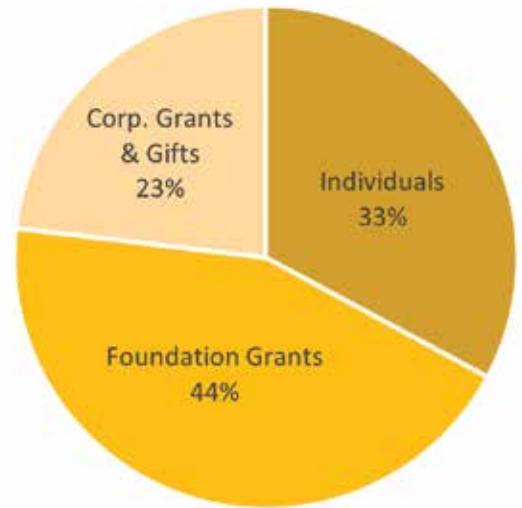


REVENUE

Revenues by Type



Gifts & Grants by Source



Third Party Fundraisers **\$76.4K**

A Note About Third Party Fundraisers

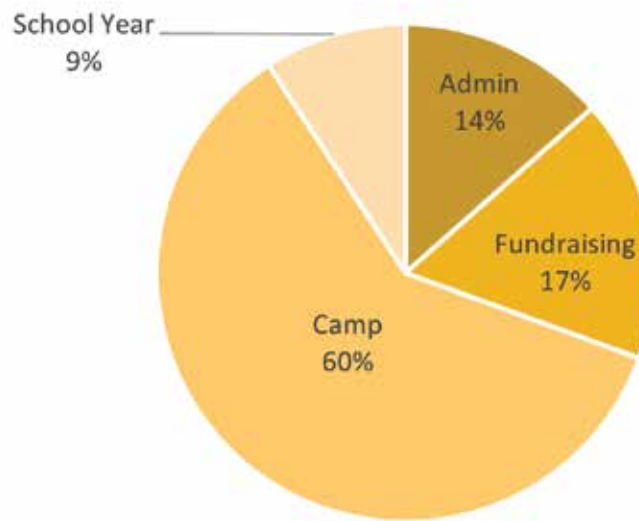
Third Party Fundraisers, which are events and initiatives hosted by community members and businesses, were also thriving again this year! We were fortunate enough to be selected by several individuals and organizations as the beneficiary of their fundraising efforts, resulting in over \$76,000 raised in 2021!

FINANCIAL REVIEW



EXPENSES

Functional Expenses



A Note About Expenses

For the summer of 2021, as we continued to take precautions and comply with state regulations due to COVID, our camp program was much smaller in the number of participants and was only a half day program (as opposed to having full day programs). These changes and the national staffing shortage resulted in hiring less staff and having reduced overall expenses related to the camp component. The organization's expenses shifted again, very similar to 2020, with an increase in percentage of fundraising and administrative expenses. As we return to full capacity with our programming, our expectation is that these changes will shift back to pre-COVID status and stabilize.

EVENTS & NEWS



In 2021, Aaron's Acres was one of the recipients of funds raised during the **Members 1st Credit Union's** annual golf outing. We were grateful to receive a donation of over \$25,000 from this event! These funds were designated to our own 2021 golf outing and enabled them to be recognized as the Diamond Sponsor as well as the Cart Sponsor at the event. In addition, they were able to serve as a Sponsor for one 2-week session of camp (with the funds raised through their golf outing). Members 1st has a tremendous impact upon our organization in so many different ways throughout the year!

Jersey Mike's Subs also supports Aaron's Acres in many different ways. In 2021, they donated lunch for our summer camp staff, they raised funds during the grand opening of their new location on Lincoln Highway East in Lancaster, and they selected Aaron's Acres as the beneficiary of funds raised during the Jersey Mike's Annual Day of Giving, raising an incredible \$30,404!

We were thrilled to welcome our sponsors, donors and volunteers to Bent Creek Country Club for our **11th Annual Aaron's Acres Golf Tournament** on May 17. With the support of so many dedicated community partners, we successfully raised over \$97,500 (our best fundraising year yet)!

During the **2021 ExtraGive** event on November 20, Aaron's Acres received a record-breaking \$75,789 in donations during this annual day of giving! We are grateful to live in such a generous community and feel fortunate that so many people believe in our mission of serving children and young adults with disabilities.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who supports our participants and families by partnering with Aaron's Acres. There are many ways to connect with us throughout the year and we hope you'll be in touch!





A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

We believe that even in challenging times, we can make dreams come true. We believe that everyone can contribute to our community in meaningful ways. We believe that every person deserves a bright future full of opportunities. We believe that we are better together and we are thrilled to have been back together IN PERSON with our programs once again this year!

All of us at Aaron's Acres extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who offers support for our mission of enriching the lives of young people with disabilities. Because of you, we had an unprecedented year when it came to community investment in our organization! You, our supporters, are the heartbeat of our organization. You help to make our programs and our impacts possible. Our outstanding network of over 500 community partners was active and engaged throughout 2021 – and we were thrilled to be able to gather in person and connect with many of you again!

Our **Dream Makers** are a group of 67 change-makers who make an annual commitment of \$100, empowering them to make a tangible difference in the lives of our participants as they choose where to direct their collective donations. We were able to meet in person at camp during the summer and at one of the Members 1st Credit Union locations in the fall, where the group voted to support program scholarships for 2021.

The **Aaron's Acres Angels** is a dynamic group of teens from schools throughout our community, all committed to learning about and supporting those with differing abilities. They gathered virtually several times throughout the year and were finally able to come together in person during the summer with a visit to camp. During their visit, they presented their group's donation of pool toys to our Program Director and provided a special snack (cupcakes!) for our participants. These items were purchased with the funds raised during the virtual bingo event that this group planned from start to finish. They were able to raise over \$1,500 during the event and the toys and treats were a huge hit with our campers!

We were also excited to be able to welcome back **nearly 100 volunteer photographers and over 100 visitors** during our 2021 summer camp sessions! We are most grateful for these vital connections in our community. Our volunteer photographers help us to create lifelong memories for our participants and our visitors help to spread the word about the work we are doing at Aaron's Acres! We were grateful to also have other volunteers assist with activities throughout the year, such as preparing supplies for our programs, organizing our storage facilities and assisting with administrative tasks at our office.



Director of Development & Community Relations

Administrative Staff

Risa Paskoff
Executive Director

Elaine Burnett
Program Director

Kate Mullen
Director of Development & Community Relations

Heather Good
Manager of Finance & Administration

Gabriella Kime Toews
Events & Communications Coordinator

2021 Board of Directors

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CONTACT AARON'S ACRES

Phone: (717) 917-6101

Email: info@aaronsacres.org

Website: aaronsacres.org

