



HIGH 5 ADVENTURE LEARNING CENTER

2022 Annual Report

Dear Friends,

As we mark the occasion of our 22nd year, we find ourselves both celebrating our journey and reflecting upon the path that has brought us here. Growth and change have been a big part of that journey as stories from our team and customers will reveal in this report. All the while, we're discovering new opportunities to stay true to our mission of **helping individuals, schools, teams and communities use adventure experiences for improving the way they live, learn, work and lead together**. From every corner of the organization, we've got stories to tell about how our work is creating positive and transformative experiences for individuals and groups day in and day out.



First, 2022 brought a change in leadership to High 5 Adventure Learning Center. Jim Grout, formerly Executive Director, transitioned to the Founding Director. Jim has been our unwavering leader and an integral part of our organization since its inception, playing critical roles in shaping our culture, mission, and impact. He continues to serve the organization in a new capacity as an invaluable ambassador, advisor, coach, and mentor. We are deeply grateful for his continued involvement and support. Personally, I'm thrilled to continue our work together and to keep learning from him.

My voice is new to the front of the Annual Report, but not new to High 5. After 21 years of working side-by-side with Jim, I've stepped into serving as Interim Executive Director. My institutional knowledge is deep, and I'm very proud to both lead and support our highly-skilled and dedicated team of professionals who make High 5 an amazing force in the world of experiential education.



Our Mission

High 5 Adventure Learning Center is a non-profit educational organization dedicated to helping individuals, schools, teams, and communities use adventure experiences as an effective tool for improving the way they live, learn, work and lead together. High 5 provides educational experiences for all ages that develop a sense of connection and community in a learning environment of discovery, challenge, and fun.

We are determined to continue on a path of delivering on our mission and vision in even more meaningful and impactful ways. Our new strategic plan—currently in development—will utilize our deep, established roots in adventure learning to grow programs and products that will serve our customers in a post-pandemic world that needs what we offer, with resilience and adaptability. We are proud of how we responded to challenges and turned them into opportunities for growth and learning, and we can't wait to share with you what's next.

We are so grateful for your belief in the work that we do – it makes everything possible and then some.

Sincerely,

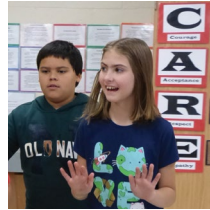
Jen Ottinger, Interim Executive Director

Connect.
Empower.
Lead.

Our Mission Brings Change and Continuity

Part of High 5's mission is to inspire change. We do this using our foundational roots of adventure education to teach others to facilitate impactful programs, to build challenge courses and climbing towers, and to foster leadership skills in youth and adults. All of our work helps people strengthen one's awareness of self and one's impact on others and the collective group around them. That's when change happens.

Here are some examples of how we keep change and continuity at the forefront of our work to deliver our mission of helping people live, learn, work and lead together.



Edge of Leadership (EOL)

In 2022, EOL completed its 10th year working with the public schools in Keene, NH. Throughout the year, the staff responded to changing needs, in the process enhancing their knowledge of sequencing and program design. They slowed the pace in order to better meet students' and teachers' needs, crafting sessions that spoke to their experience in the classroom, allowing them to stay attuned and responsive to what was happening in the moment.

EOL Program Highlights:

- **Spring 2022:** A favorite moment was the opportunity to bring sixth graders to the challenge course. COVID restrictions had prevented this cohort of students from participating in these powerful growth experiences.
- **Summer 2022:** We embarked upon a new initiative to develop a year-long professional experience that supports educators' growth in a way that is wanted, needed, and practical. By facilitating intentionally sequenced and responsive programming using an educator-centered and adventure-based approach, cohort members are able to experience EOL's themes of Connect, Empower, Lead for themselves. We offer a pedagogy that centers on reflection, connection, exploration, and thoughtful support in our unique learning environment with equally invested educators.
- **Summer 2022:** EOL Summer Program for High School students and teachers returns to the High 5 campus.

Training & Team Development (T&TD)

Forging a Path to Meet Changing Customer Needs

Realizing growth and change with consistency of programs was a hallmark of the T&TD team's year. Adventure training continues to be the core of those programs, with increasing emphasis on facilitation skills and social-emotional learning. This combination has attracted a growing number of clients, including organizations with large staffs and varied needs for collaborative work and increased levels of interpersonal social intelligence.

The growing list of clients and their need for specialized training to meet those needs has fueled a steady increase in work, and grown to include social intelligence-oriented workshops, health and wellness of teachers and students, and team building and cooperative learning. Lisa Hunt earned the designation of Certified Practitioner Everything DiSK®, another tool to further assist customers seeking team-building services.

While outreach continues to be positively affected by T&TD's annual training letter, the growing popularity of High 5's podcast Vertical Playpen, produced by Phil Brown, our topical blogs, and the team's collaboration with their CCS colleagues has opened doors to serving our clients. Together they work with clients to address program goals, current trends and safety practices, and program evaluation. This exploration of program effectiveness supports clients in raising program standards, meeting parental expectations, and getting higher value out of their curriculum and their investment in challenge course facilities.

EOL Summer High School Program Returns

Students and adults from Greater Lowell Technical High School joined us on campus for three days of meaningful and sometimes challenging activities to build stronger relationships through the development of leadership skills. After pausing the program for two summers, it was beyond fantastic to have folks back at High 5 for our foundational program.



Challenge Course Services (CCS)

Building and Rebuilding on the Job

The CCS team had some changes in their ranks last year, with two lead builders heading off for new adventures. Three new well-rounded builders joined the team (all with experience in challenge course programming), and have been mentored by our exceptional veteran builders.

CCS Accomplishments in 2022:

- 3 New Staff Added to the Team
- 34 New Builds/Additions to Existing Facilities
- 290 Visits to Customer Sites for Inspections, Installations and Repairs

Change and Continuity in Action

One collaborative experience took shape in rebuilding the challenge course for the New Haven Public Schools' Project Pride program. The whole team turned out for this effort, allowing our experienced builders to work with the new recruits, guiding them in the practical work of element construction, with an emphasis on teamwork and collaboration that drew on everyone's skills. This build was facilitated by time reserved each day for discussion and reflection. The team planned their work for the day, sharing experiences from previous builds, and explored the uses of the elements and finished with debriefing the day's work.



High 5's motto played out in real time, as the seasoned builders worked with the newcomers, connecting with them and sharing experiences and practical knowledge, empowering them to become confident members of the team. The time for reflection allowed the pros to explain the CCS philosophy that the 'why' of a build is as important as the 'how.'

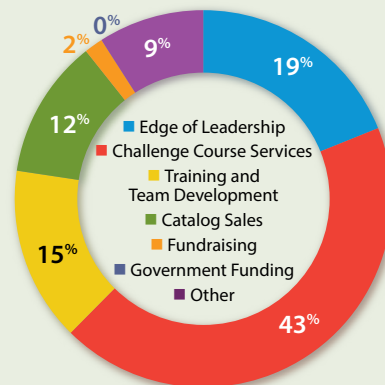
Increasingly last year, the team's services emphasized a new relationship with clients, including a pre-build survey of intention, analysis of the elements needed to meet that intent, and follow up to ensure clients are thoroughly trained in course operation, safety procedures and maintenance.



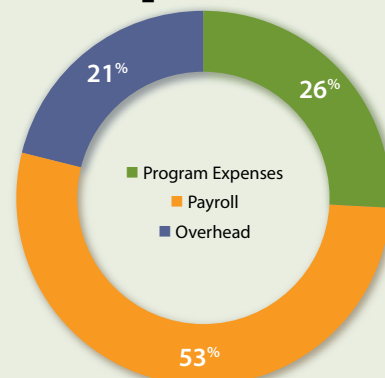
Financial Overview

The following charts reflect sources of High 5's Income and Expenses for FY 2022 (pre-audit)

Revenue



Expenses



"The true reward for the teacher happens when students accomplish personal and group goals on the adventure course. Students learn to work together and support one another to achieve the things that they couldn't do alone – that's what it's all about, and the students are doing exactly that."

J. Doornweerd,
CT High School Teacher



A Time for Change & Action (ATCA)

A Time for Change & Action (ATCA), a 9-member working group, continues challenging systems of injustice, namely racism, in our field. Established in 2020, the group meets monthly to address DEI in the workplace and beyond. In 2022, the group nurtured partnerships with existing customers, published a blog on Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) and BIOPIC-led organizations, and worked closely with a DEI consultant for guidance related to hiring and diversity. Removing obstacles for more BIPOC and BIPOC-led organizations to flourish in this field remains a paramount goal for the group.



"A parent shared a powerful story about how their child was forever changed by an inclusive and fun day on the High 5 challenge course. This program is good for everyone: students, teachers, and the whole community. Teaching kids what it means to be a leader in elementary school... that's going to help kids grow from the ground up."



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Grateful for Our New and Existing Donors!

We want to thank all of the donors who gave so generously in 2022. We received Annual gifts from a record number of individual donors, including grants from 5 charitable foundations. Once again, High 5's Board of Directors provided their unanimous support for our work, for which we are enormously grateful.

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