

# VOYAGER YOUTH PROGRAM

Inspiring youth to lead healthy lives since 1997



# 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

As the new executive director, I am honored to have the opportunity to contribute to the legacy of Voyager and its philosophy. This annual report offers a glimpse into the vibrant and nurturing environment that we have cultivated within Voyager. Our programs are designed to foster independence, interpersonal connections, and positive choices. As we move forward, continued support and collaboration will be invaluable in helping us fulfill our mission and create a brighter future for Ouray County children and families. Together, we can make a lasting impact on the lives of those we serve.

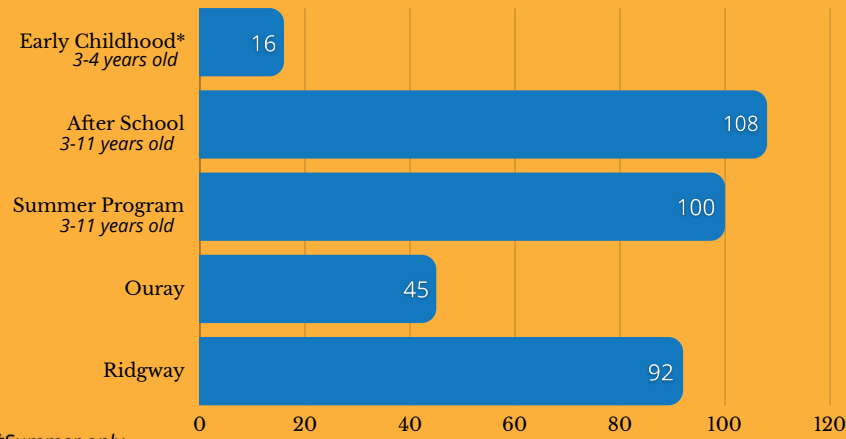


*Janine Rusnak*



# Enrichment

Number of participants



We have a full year under our belt with our Early Childhood Program. The program builds social-emotional skills and positive problem solving, promotes fine and gross motor development, creative learning, and outdoor play. Using the Pyramid Model, we establish routines and responsibility with our preschoolers, giving them the skills to transition into kindergarten.

## After School Program

This year, Voyager continued to provide valuable after-school and full-day programming during holiday breaks — serving 108 kids in our communities. Our activities included craft time at the library, dedicated homework and reading help, and a variety of enriching experiences designed to support the growth and well-being of each participant. Through these diverse programs, we helped foster creativity, academic achievement, and personal development, ensuring that every child had access to meaningful and engaging opportunities outside of school hours.



Ouray ASP continues to grow with an average of 8-12 children daily, compared to between six and eight kids in 2023.



## Summer - School Age

Over the summer, Voyager provided an exciting and engaging experience for 84 kids, ages five to eleven. Kids launched rockets, explored science and math at the Eureka Museum, and spent many hours outdoors hiking and biking. Thursdays were a favorite as we cooled off with swimming sessions. Through these diverse activities, we created a summer full of fun, learning, and unforgettable memories for all our participants.



Ouray summer highlight: we brought back the summer tradition of ending the summer with a Bananas field trip (Grand Junction). The 8-11 year old Voyager group also had a successful and educational field trip to the Bachelor-Syracuse Mine.

## Summer - Preschool

This summer, our preschool program welcomed 16 children for an enriching season of discovery and growth. The kids explored the community garden, enjoyed Water Wednesdays, and participated in story time at the Ridgway Library every Monday. We also took time to explore the Ridgway community, while focusing on developing social-emotional skills and learning how to be kind friends. Preschoolers also learned responsibility as they helped with gardening in the raised beds at Voyager.



# Teen Program

As a rural area and small town, opportunities and experiences can often feel isolating. Our goals for the Teen and Community programs are to provide support in creating safe and enjoyable spaces for youth in Ouray County —helping them to build confidence and broaden their horizons.



Teen Trivia Night

## Summer Adventures

We had a blast this summer getting our teens outdoors. Participants expressed a deepened appreciation for the natural world, mentioning wildlife sightings, the peacefulness of streams, and memorable outdoor experiences like summiting Mount Hayden. Many reflected on what they learned about themselves, nature, and the importance of the journey itself, creating a sense of accomplishment and fulfillment. The Teen Summer program combines adventure, personal development, and strong social connections to engage our youth in a healthy way outdoors.



Via Ferrata



Deer Hill Rafting

## H.U.B.B.

The Help Us Break Boredom program is going strong in its second year! Youth are learning how to conduct outreach, fundraise, and plan community events, with standout presentations to the school board and at Music in the Park. The group organized several fun teen nights, including the first-ever Karaoke and Trivia Nights. HUBB leaders also had their first outing to the Colorado Youth Diversity Conference in Denver, where teens connected with peers from across the state, gained skills, and learned about social justice and diversity issues. Additionally, they launched a D & D (Dungeons & Dragons) club to foster bonding and connection among members, creating a prosocial environment for youth in our area.



Teacher Appreciation



Second Chance Shelter

# Communités That Care

CTC is actively building partnerships and aligning its strategies with our coalition's mission: to engage the community in offering tools and opportunities that empower youth to create positive, healthy futures.

Our efforts remain rooted in prevention science, addressing common risk and protective factors. We support this mission by creating pro-social learning opportunities, fostering leadership and group connections, and facilitating community conversations about mental health concerns in Ouray County.

Our approach to identify and address the interconnected risk factors and protective factors within a community allows for a more comprehensive strategy to prevent negative behaviors like substance abuse, violence, and school failure among youth by focusing on multiple areas of influence such as family, school, and peers. This long term systems change work is in its final phase as we implement, evaluate, and determine sustainable ways to continue to support our youth at the community level.



Hayden Lodge Hut Trip



## PARTNER OF THE YEAR



John Clark

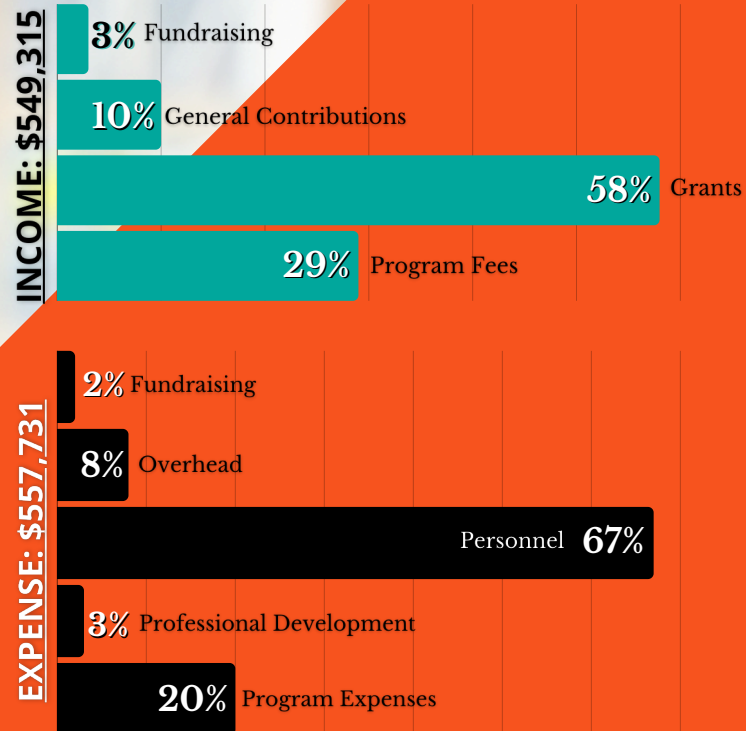
John has supported Voyager's mission, work, and growth for as long as any of us can remember. He has been deeply engaged with the Ouray County Communities That Care Coalition since its inception in 2016. He is CTC's biggest champion. He attends every key leader meeting and participates in various workgroups including data and evaluation, strategic planning, youth development, safe youth spaces, mental health, and prosocial campaigns. Over the last year, John made invaluable contributions to CTC's mental health workgroup. He helped to host a community potluck, two film screenings and discussions, and the first county Behavioral Health Fair in spring 2024. John embodies the best qualities of a community leader: empathy, listening, integrity, accountability, positive thinking, and DEDICATION. Most importantly, he leads not by telling others what to do but elevating their voices to empower them to be the change they want to see in their community. He works tirelessly to elevate youth voice via the Youth Advisory Council he started in 2020 and in every municipal and organizational initiative he works on. He is a trusted adult and most recently has been seen singing karaoke at a teen night out.

Thank you Mayor Clark for being an inspiration to all of us!

### Major Contributors \$1,000+

Western Colorado Community Foundation  
 CO Dept. of Public Health & Environment  
 Edmund T. & Eleanor Quick Foundation  
 Mount Sneffels Education Foundation  
 Rocky Mountain Health Foundation  
 George Gardner Scholarship Fund  
 Ouray County Community Fund  
 Barbie Parish and Gary Roberts  
 Tony Grampsas Youth Services  
 CO Dept. of Early Childhood  
 Dave and Mary Wood Fund  
 Rob and Sarah McNutt  
 Telluride Foundation  
 Guttman Foundation  
 Laura and Paul Ricks  
 Faraway Foundation  
 Citizens State Bank  
 Ouray Real Estate  
 Double RL Ranch  
 Town of Ridgway  
 Buell Foundation  
 Ouray County  
 Claudia Rebne  
 City of Ouray  
 Alice Leeper  
 Alpine Bank  
 JBARM, Inc.  
 El Pomar

### 2024 Financials



### VOYAGER STAFF

Janine Rusnak - Executive Director  
 Alex Durham - Former Executive Director  
 Madison Gustafson - Enrichment Site Director  
 Cat Geras - Teen & Community Development Mgr.  
 Michelle Melendez - Enrichment Program Coordinator  
 Agnieszka Przeszlowska - Development & Grants Mgr.

### 2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Marissa Mathis - Chair  
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