

# Valley Settlement Project

**A two-generation approach to  
improving the prospects of  
immigrant families living in poverty  
in the Roaring Fork Valley**



# THE COMMUNITY

- **Central Colorado mountains**
- **Long, narrow river valley spans 3 counties**
- **3 rural resort towns: Basalt, Carbondale & Glenwood Springs, each w/population under 10,000**
- **Rapid increase in Latino population over last 15 years**
- **Immigrants work primarily in construction, restaurant & housekeeping jobs in Aspen, CO**
- **Area: Roaring Fork School District w/5,600 students**
  - **56% Latino (86% qualify for FRL)**
  - **44% Anglo (50% qualify for FRL)**

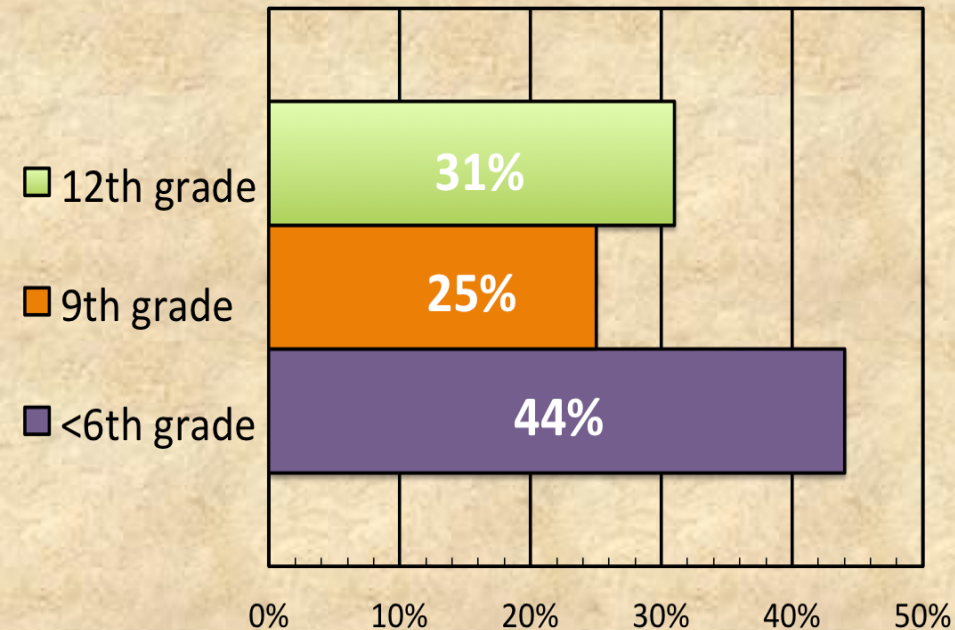
# THE CATALYST

- **Manaus Fund was Founded in 2005 with a focus on social justice**
- **Involved in a preschool cooperative that had challenges reaching Latino families**
- **W.K. Kellogg Foundation conversation in 2011 led to a planning grant to knock on doors and listen to people's stories**
- **Started Valley Settlement Project in 2012 with multiple programs: all in response to what people said they needed and what they were willing to work for**

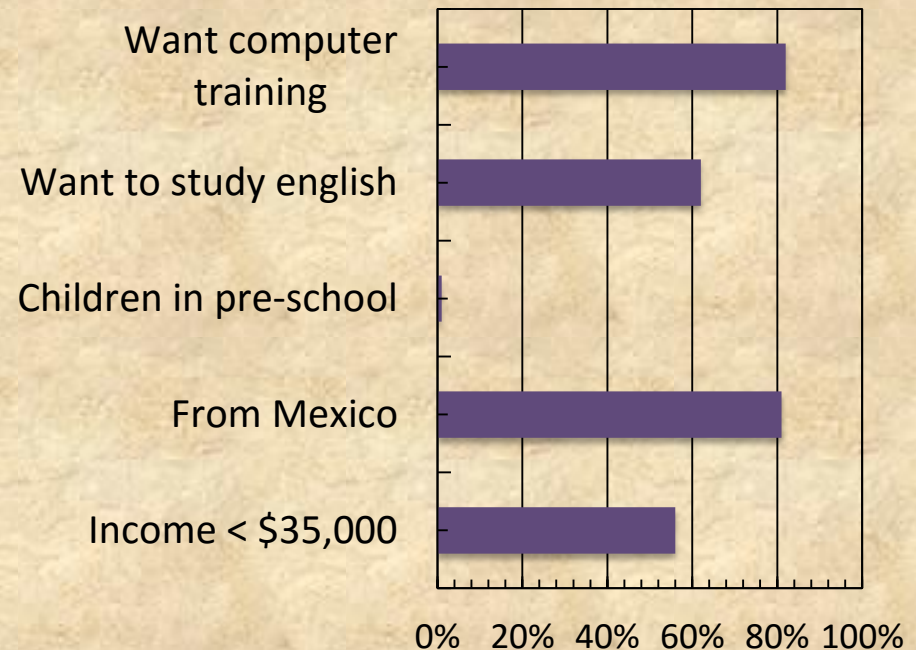
# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (circa 2011)

- Held 270 one-on-one interviews in homes
- Presented to thousands in the community

## Parent Education



## Findings



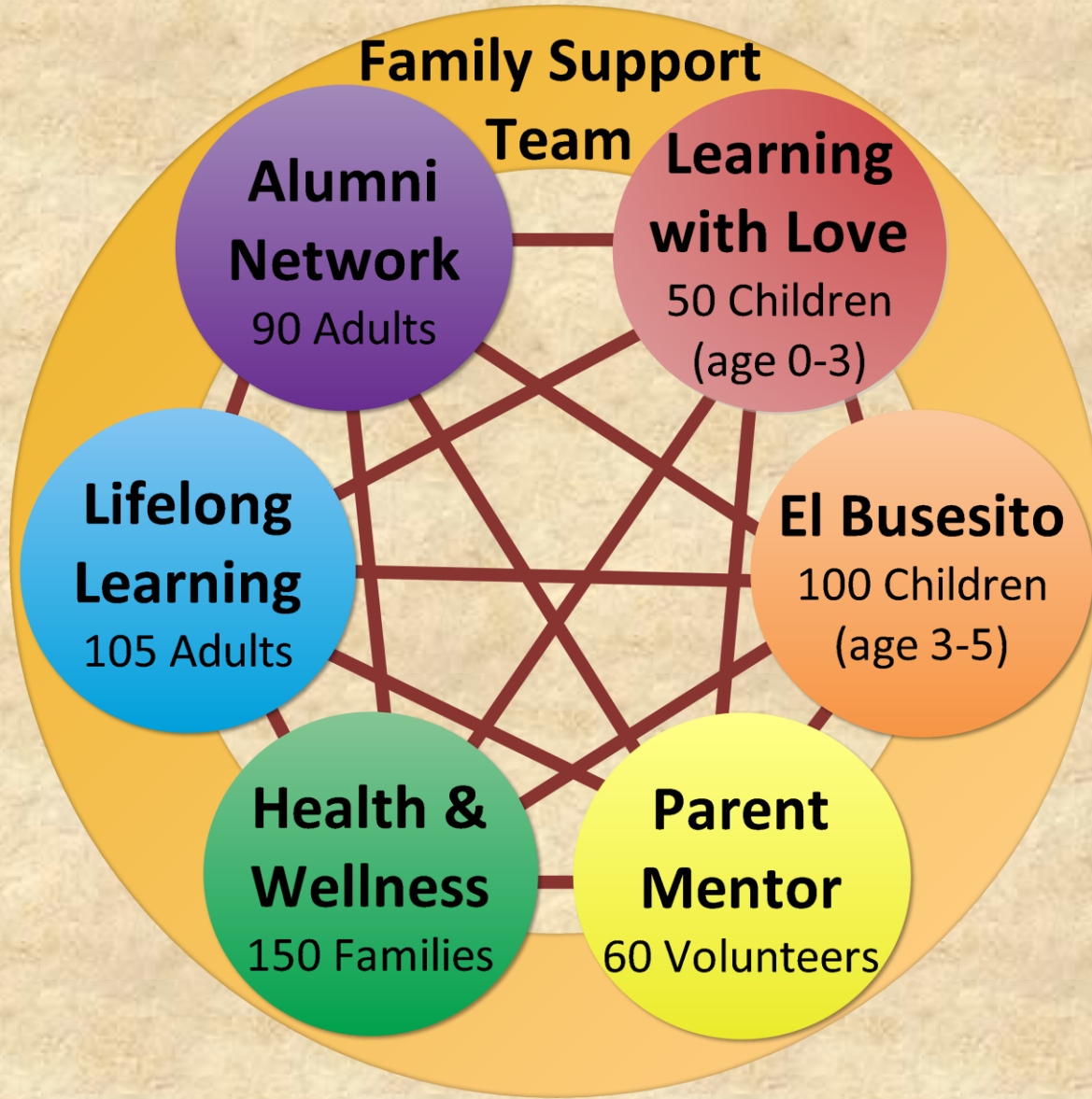


# PROGRAM GOALS

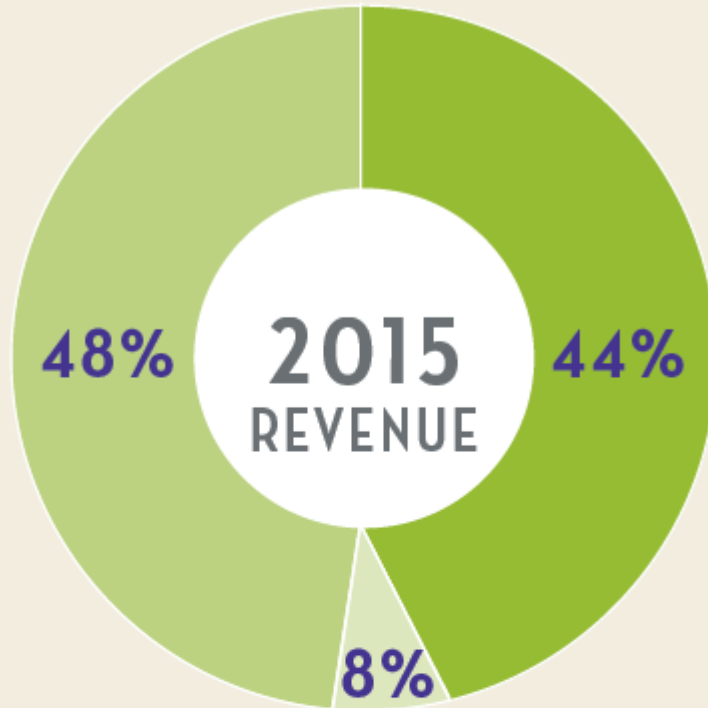
- **Children:** Improve school readiness & elementary school achievement
- **Adults:** Increase family economic stability & community engagement



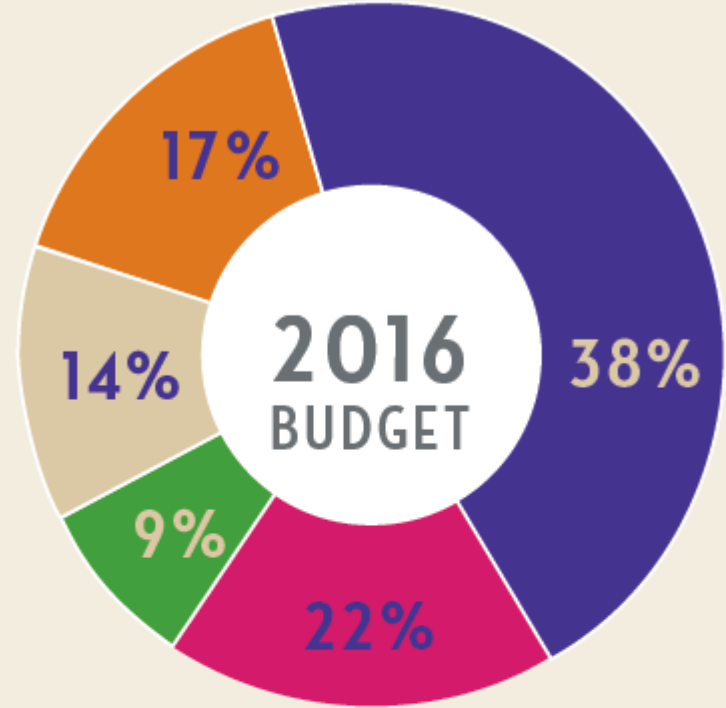
# THE PROGRAMS: 2015–2016



# VALLEY SETTLEMENT FUNDING



Foundation Grants	\$858,875
Government Support	\$162,000
Individual Donors	\$948,411
<b>2015 TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$1,969,286</b>



Early Childhood Education	\$805,852
Parent Mentor	\$445,839
Lifelong Learning	\$189,196
Family Support	\$305,632
Administration & Development	\$346,398
<b>2016 BUDGET</b>	<b>\$2,092,887</b>



# PARENT MENTORS

**Program: 6 elementary schools, 120 classrooms, 60 Parent Mentors, 5 school coordinators**

- Teachers apply to have a Parent Mentor assigned to their classroom
- Recruitment, training, empowerment
- Two hours, four days per week in classrooms with training provided on the 5<sup>th</sup> day
- Transformation in the classroom and throughout the school culture
- Provide \$600 stipend at end of each semester

\*Modeled after a program from Chicago's Logan Square Neighborhood Association: [www.lsna.net](http://www.lsna.net)





# PARENT MENTOR THREE DAY TRAINING

- Goal setting process
- Focus on personal goals, often for first time
- How to use a calendar
- The importance of being on time
- Teamwork, “others are relying on you”
- Peer support
- Classroom skills
- Filling out forms, record keeping





**Changing Lives**

# **PARENT MENTOR WEEKLY TRAINING**

- **Working in the classroom and the schools**
- **Principles of professional ethics**
- **Reading for champions**
- **Reading and math teaching skills**
- **Ten tips to keep the kids safe**
- **Supporting student learning**
- **Depression**
- **Financial literacy**
- **Nutrition**
- **The gift of giving**
- **The power of teamwork**
- **Ultimo seguimiento**
- **Chromebooks**
- **Health insurance system**
- **How to be a good community organizer**
- **Human values/Integrity**
- **Community Leaders working together**
- **Professional skills**
- **Resume styles**





## RESPONSE FROM TEACHERS

- **84%**...reported students had improved confidence in their school work
- **85%**...reported improved effort in children's class work with support of Parent Mentors
- **100%** would like their future students to have a Parent Mentor in the classroom
- Teachers report understanding more about their individual students with Parent Mentors





# RESPONSE FROM PARENT MENTORS

- 95% of participants agree being a Parent Mentor

*“supports my child’s social  
and emotional growth”*

*“supports my child’s interest in school”*

- 99% *“learned new skills”*
- 100% *“feel welcome at my child’s school”*



# CHALLENGES

- **Parent Mentors**

- Time commitment competes with part-time jobs for those who chose to work
- Requires basic level of executive functioning
- Requires home & time management skills
- Subtle shift in household rules and roles to accommodate mom's success
- Challenges remain around skills, language and documentation to work

- **Programmatic**

- Recruiting new cohorts each year—always recruiting
- Need for culturally appropriate mental health services

# ALUMNI NETWORK

- **Engage with each other & the community (107)**
  - Arts, church, volunteering, tutoring, promotora, peer support, photography, fitness, nutrition, etc.
- **Continuing Education (130)**
  - Connections to our Lifelong Learning classes: Spanish literacy, computer skills, GED prep, etc.
  - Support groups enrolling together in certificate programs at Colorado Mountain College
- **Connects Parent Mentors to jobs (57):**
  - Paraprofessionals and admins in schools
  - Positions at Valley Settlement
  - Other opportunities in the community

## ADVICE TO RURAL PROVIDERS

- Do not replicate any program before asking people in your community what they want.
- Never presume to know what families need.
- “Tell us about your life...”
- Ask families what they need & what they are willing to work toward.
- Be culturally aware, listen carefully.
- Hire staff who are from your community.
- Be responsive to evolving needs of families to improve your programs.



**Webinar “Helping Rural Immigrants Earn a Living”  
Aspen Institute Community Strategies Group**

***Thank you for your time!***

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# Learning with Love

- Early childhood development program for families with kids 0–3 years' old
- Curriculum: Parents as Teachers<sup>®</sup> + FocusedKids<sup>™</sup> + group classes
- Meet twice a week near El Busesito
- One-on-one home visits twice a month

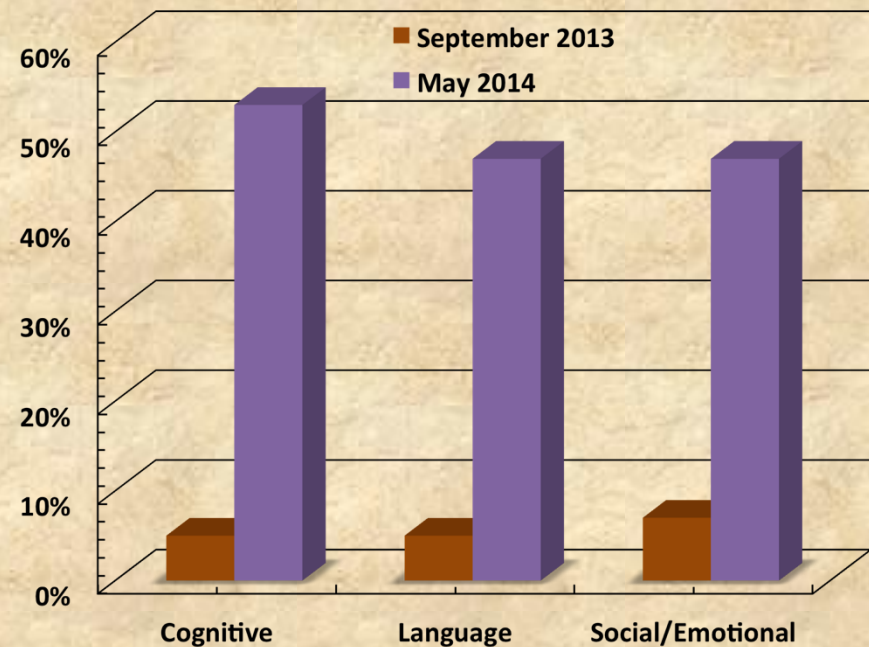


## El Busesito

- Improve school readiness prior to Kindergarten
- Identify kids with special needs much earlier
- Prioritize highest need 4 year olds
- Eliminate the Colorado Pre-school Program waiting list



### % Exceeding Expectations



\*Teaching Strategies Gold Assessment Data





# Lifelong Learning

- Reaching immigrant low-income learners
  - Basic Spanish Literacy (to 4<sup>th</sup> grade proficiency)
  - Spanish Literacy (to 8<sup>th</sup> grade proficiency)
  - Spanish language GED Class
  - English classes for first-time students
  - Math and computer literacy
- Partnering with Colorado Mountain College
  - English classes
  - GED classes in English (& hybrid Spanish/English)
  - Spanish GED testing site
  - Job training (*e.g.*, Personal Care Assistant)
  - Basic math class





# A Lifelong Learning Class



## Family Support Team

- Wraparound programming providing
  - Home visits for all families in early childhood programs
  - Targeted home visits for other high need families
  - Problem solving with low-income families and referral to other resources
- Promotoras (community health workers)
  - Wellness & nutrition program (*e.g.*, cooking classes, gardening & fitness)

# Community Engagement

“I belong. I am learning. I make a difference.”

- Working together with RFSD we are working with 450+ low-income families to ensure that every student develops enduring knowledge, skills and character to thrive in a changing world
- We are working with other organizations to share our learning's
  - Aspen Institute: Ascend & Community Strategies networks
  - Harvard's Center on the Developing Child: Frontiers of Innovation
  - Vail Valley Foundation
  - Aspen Community Foundation
  - Other Foundations, Governments & NGO's