

ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

2016-2017

# GROWING PEOPLE'S POTENTIAL

Like tender seeds planted into soil, individuals at Laradon learn to grow and engage with their community, celebrating each person's unique abilities and potential.



[www.laradon.org](http://www.laradon.org)



# Rooted in Legacy, Growing People's Potential

## FROM OUR CEO

### Friends of Laradon,

I am pleased to share with you the 2016-2017 Laradon Annual Impact Report. I hope that you will appreciate the profound impact that we have made in the lives of 686 children and adults whom we serve each day.

The focus of our work is growing the potential of the children and adults who clamor for freedom, personal rights, and access to the amenities of society that many of us take for granted. In the Constitution, "We the People" means all of us—people with, and without, disabilities. For nearly 70 years, Laradon has nurtured the goals, needs, and freedoms of children and adults who aspire for a life without limits. Our history is replete with wonderful stories of these successes; we'd like to share just a few here in this report.

In the fall of 2018, we will celebrate Laradon's 70th Anniversary, recognizing this milestone with a salute to our founders, the Calabrese family, through festivities that honor the lives of the children, adults, families, and alumni.

Without the continued support of donors, volunteers, families, individuals and other Laradon stakeholders, Laradon could not have had impact on the lives of more than 8,000 individuals over the years. We rely on our community partners to nurture and sustain our service mission that enables children and adults to reach their potential with purpose and impact in their local community.



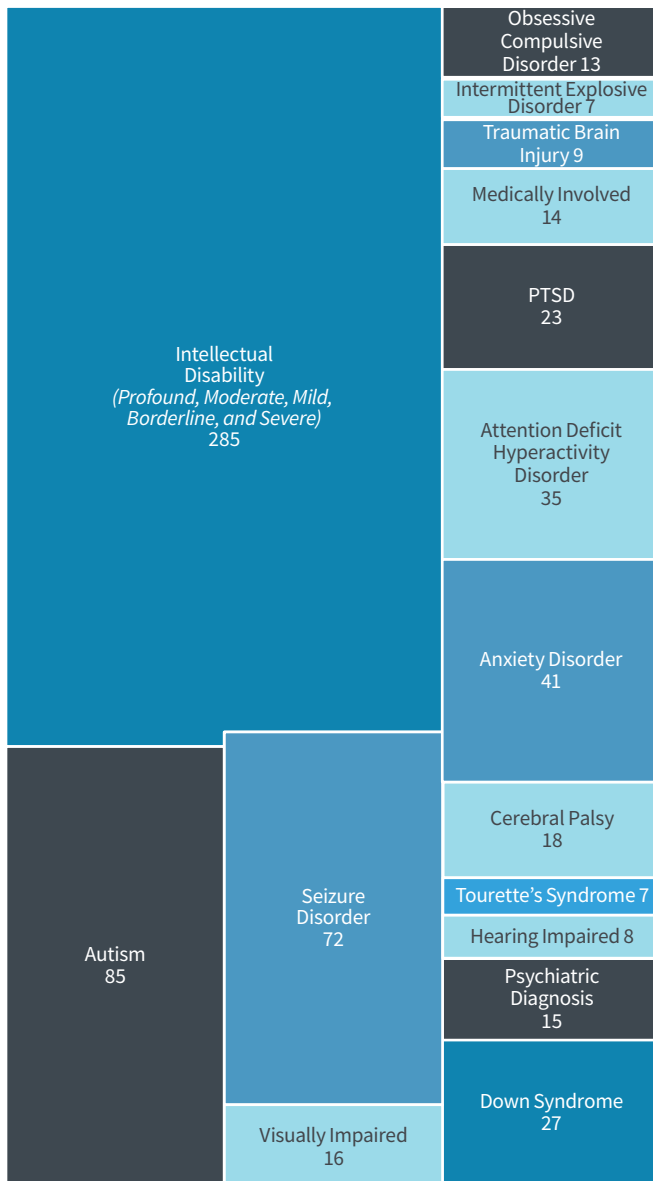
Thank you for being part of the legacy.

Douglas W. McNeill, CEO

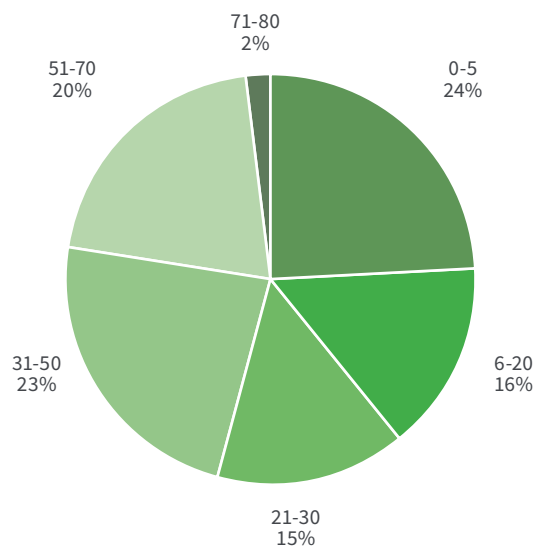
# Producing Meaningful Impact

## BY DISABILITY

Many individuals report multiple disabilities.

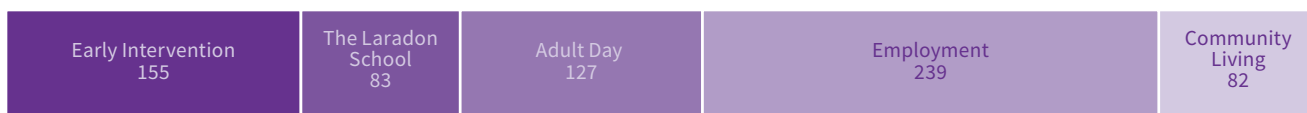


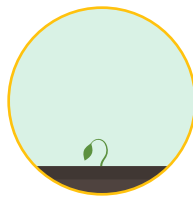
## BY AGE



## BY PROGRAM AREA

Some adult individuals are served in multiple programs.





# Early Intervention

## NURTURING A POSITIVE BEGINNING

For children diagnosed with developmental disabilities or delays, early intervention can be the key to success later in life. The Laradon Family, Infant, and Toddler (FIT) Program provides family-centered therapeutic support for children, aged birth to three, to encourage healthy physical and cognitive development and nurture a safe and loving environment at home.



### MEET ISAIAH

**When Isaiah was born with a developmental delay, his parents wondered what they could do to support his development and growth, so they reached out to Laradon.**

For nearly two years now, Gina Fernandez and Alejandro Corral have opened the doors of their home to Laradon therapist, Sharla Marshall. Sharla visits weekly to help model communication tactics, play strategies, and ways to encourage skill development.

In addition, Gina and Alejandro bring Isaiah to Play-and-Learn Group sessions coordinated by Laradon's Family

Navigator. These sessions provide a time for families and their children to interact with typically-developed children from the neighborhood, encouraging integration and varied skill development.

At first, Isaiah was shy and didn't enjoy engaging with others. Now, he is at the ready with hugs for Sharla! He thoroughly enjoys playing with others, reading books, stacking blocks, and other developmentally appropriate play.

Gina and Alejandro say that Laradon's support has given them perspective. They are more comfortable with Isaiah out in the community and they are confident that he will be well-prepared for preschool — and beyond.



**Sharla is like my coach. She has provided me with the tools and resources to help my son. I can see the growth; Isaiah has come a long way!"**

*Gina Fernandez, Isaiah's mom*



LARADON STARTED PLAY-AND-LEARN GROUPS TO HELP BOTH TYPICALLY DEVELOPED KIDS AND THOSE DIAGNOSED WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES OR DELAYS WORK ON SOCIAL AND LANGUAGE SKILLS THROUGH PLAY





## HOME VISITS

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In-home parent education and modeling techniques help the whole family learn how to care for their child and encourage healthy development at an early age.

## PLAY-AND-LEARN GROUPS

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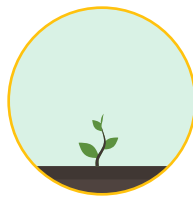
Integrated groups of typically developed children and those with a developmental disability or delay from the local neighborhood play together to encourage development, teach inclusiveness, engage with their community, and allow parents to create a social network.

## INDIVIDUALIZED SUPPORT

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According to the unique needs of each child, services can include speech therapy, occupational therapy, bilingual services, Early Childhood Specialized Education, assistance with preschool enrollment, and access to community resources.





# School Programs

## CULTIVATING A SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Nearly 70 years ago, Laradon began as a school for individuals with disabilities to have access to the same educational opportunities as their peers. This legacy lives on at The Laradon School, where children learn in a supportive environment where their needs, interests, and goals are celebrated with the intent of returning to their local public school.



### MEET JULIAN

**Julian, who has multiple diagnoses including autism, was first referred to The Laradon School in 2014 because he was having a difficult time at his local public school.**

When the 15-year-old experienced any change to his environment—a common occurrence at school—he would become very agitated and his stress levels would oftentimes make him resort to verbal and physical aggression. He was taken out of the classroom so frequently that he was typically spending less than an hour in an actual learning environment. Julian’s family worked with their local school district to seek help from The Laradon School.

With the help of a team of Laradon behavior specialists, a plan of treatment was put into place to support Julian and give his teachers and caregivers the tools to help him succeed. The team spent time discovering what motivates Julian—focusing on his own interests. They worked to understand why he behaves in certain ways. From there, they set up a schedule of positive reinforcements that would appeal to Julian. The team then defined clear, consistent systems that Julian could count on.

It is apparent to everyone that Julian has benefitted from the specialized, individualized support. He is now an active and engaged student in his class at The Laradon School, spending a significant amount of his day in the classroom, learning alongside his peers.



**Just like anyone else, Julian is motivated by different things. Once our team took the time to discover what those were, he really began to thrive.”**

*Megan Johnson,  
Laradon Treatment Coordinator*



LARADON IS COLORADO  
PARENT MAGAZINE’S FAVORITE  
SPECIAL NEEDS ORGANIZATION  
OVERALL WINNER FOR 2017!





## ACADEMICS

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Laradon provides age-appropriate educational programming and individualized instruction to address each child's needs and unique abilities, while also meeting Colorado Academic Standards and achievement indicators. Class sizes are small with a teacher-to-student ratio that ranges from 1:1 to 1:3.

## BEHAVIORAL SERVICES

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Our innovative approach to shaping behavior includes Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) and school-wide positive behavior interventions. Laradon's team of certified educational and behavioral specialists develop individualized support plans to help each student maximize self-sufficiency.

## THERAPY AND SPECIAL PROGRAMS

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Students have access to occupational, speech, and physical therapy as needed. Special programs, like adaptive physical education, music, digital literacy, self-advocacy, and intra/interpersonal skill development promote holistic learning.

83

STUDENTS SERVED, NO MORE  
THAN 70 AT A TIME



# Adult Day

## PRODUCING AN EMPOWERED COMMUNITY

At Laradon, we value putting people first. It is our intention to support individuals at any stage of their adult life to grow and gain independence, while prioritizing their interests, goals, and unique abilities. The Laradon Adult Day Programs give individuals the opportunity to learn skills, promote self-sufficiency, and engage with their communities on and off of Laradon’s north Denver campus.



### MEET RICKY

**For many years, Richard ‘Ricky’ Dinges has dreamed of being a truck driver. He has always idolized his brother who drives a truck for a living.**

One day, when he was out and about with his group in the Laradon Transitions Program, they saw a large Pepsi truck making deliveries and it made him so happy. From then on, he decided that someday he’d like to drive a Pepsi truck.

He shared this dream with the staff at Laradon, who took it upon themselves to put the wheels in motion. They contacted

the nearby Pepsi bottling plant and asked if they could stop by. Pepsi was more than accommodating, organizing a tour of the plant, a meet-and-greet with a long-time Pepsi truck driver, and lots of Pepsi gear for Ricky to take home. Ricky’s sheer excitement could not be contained that day. It was an exhilarating and inspirational event for all involved.

What is even more remarkable is that ever since that day, Ricky has shown incredible progress at Laradon. He’s transitioned into a higher-functioning day program that allows him even more opportunities to learn, grow, and explore his interests.

**“Ricky’s story is a great example of how Laradon puts people first, helping them meet life goals and forming activities and programming around each individual’s abilities and interests. I am so proud of Ricky and how far he’s come.”**

*Janita Rodarte,  
Ricky’s staff coordinator at Laradon*



THE LARADON OFFICERS ADVOCATE ON BEHALF OF FELLOW INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES. DURING RECENT DEBATES ON THE FUTURE OF MEDICAID, INDIVIDUALS—LIKE ERIN—MET WITH STATE AND FEDERAL OFFICIALS TO HAVE THEIR VOICES HEARD.





## FOUNDATIONS

For individuals with significant and chronic needs, the Foundations Program seeks to provide meaningful relationships, therapy, and activities in a safe environment.

## TRANSITIONS

Designed to empower people to overcome behavioral and psychological barriers, The Transitions Program helps individuals explore the community at their own pace, with high staff-to-client ratios.

## OPPORTUNITIES

In the Opportunities Program, individuals enjoy social, recreational, educational, and volunteer opportunities with their peers in order to maintain optimum levels of physical and mental functioning.

127  
ADULTS SERVED



# Employment

## NOURISHING THE NEED FOR INDEPENDENCE

Laradon provides an opportunity for willing individuals with developmental and other disabilities to obtain, return to, and/or maintain work. A job—and the chance to earn a paycheck—can provide unparalleled opportunities to increase independence and confidence in the pursuit of self-sufficiency.



### MEET CATHY

**When you ask Cathy Chavez what she likes about her job, she begins listing off all of her duties one by one.**

This is not a mistake or a misunderstanding because truly, Cathy loves her job—every part of it. Her work at the ARC Thrift Store five days a week has given her a sense of accomplishment and makes her feel like she is contributing to society. Cathy is very proud of what she does.

A typical day for Cathy begins at Laradon, with employment classes to explore basic work skills, like coming to work on time, staying on task, and practicing good ethics on the job. From there, a crew of three to four individuals loads into the

van to head out to the thrift store. They are responsible for changing out tags, straightening shelves, removing extra hangers, and generally making the store look tidy and inviting to shoppers. Cathy can be seen doing all of these tasks with a permanent smile on her face. She has a reputation for being the most charismatic on the floor.

Laradon job specialists work hard to identify each individual's abilities and goals in order to find an opportunity that will broaden their horizons. For individuals with developmental disabilities—and all people—a job provides a sense of purpose, accomplishment, and the pride that comes with earning a paycheck.



**When she first started her job at ARC, Cathy was really shy. Now, she's really social and initiates conversation. She's also created a close network and support system in our program with her peers."**

*Jesse Hanson, Laradon's Vocational Program Manager*



LARADON PROMOTES FAIR WORKPLACE PRACTICES, LIKE ENSURING THAT ALL INDIVIDUALS ARE PAID AT MINIMUM WAGE OR HIGHER.





## INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP EMPLOYMENT

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Laradon helps individuals find meaningful work opportunities in individual or group settings and supports them with job skills, training, and on-site job coaching.

## PREVOCATIONAL AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

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Individuals who aspire to work in community jobs can receive specialized instruction and skill development to prepare for employment. Some also enjoy volunteering in the community.

## TICKET-TO-WORK

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Laradon provides services, including counseling and advocacy to Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) recipients who want to return to work.







# Community Living

## PUTTING DOWN ROOTS IN A LOVING HOME

Laradon provides opportunities for individuals to become fully integrated and involved in their local communities—this oftentimes begins at home. In the Community Living Program, Laradon works with families and other providers to provide services and support for activities of daily living. Individualized services can include medical or safety support, and social and community skill development.



### MEET LINDA

**When you walk into the home of Rattu and Robin Merin, you become a part of the busy, loving goings on of the family.**

Linda Parker’s life changed exponentially when she joined this family’s home four years ago. Back then, Linda looked and felt like a completely different person.

Living in an assisted living facility where she had little to no activity each day, Linda was overweight, had diabetes, and grew disinterested in participating in any activities at all. When she finally made the move to her current host home, life took on a different hue.

Her Host Home Providers encouraged her to be more active, eat healthfully, and explore her hobbies. Additionally, they

enlisted the help of Laradon’s program manager to work with the doctor to help Linda to take charge of her health. They explored alternative therapies and helped Linda learn to keep track of blood sugar levels and eat accordingly. Eventually, Linda lost weight and was even able to stop taking medications that were causing her physical distress.

Feeling healthier and happier, Linda now enjoys participating in activities like painting, puzzles, and getting exercise. She also helps out around the house with tasks like cleaning dishes and making her bed like every member of a household.

Living with a Host Home Provider has empowered Linda to find the things in life that make her happy and enabled her to be an active member of her community.



**“Everywhere I go, I take Linda with me. She just loves coming with me to church, the mall, and walks in the park.”**

*Rattu Merin, Host Home Provider*



LARADON NO LONGER PROVIDES RESIDENTIAL LIVING ON ITS CAMPUS, BUT RATHER ENCOURAGES LIVING IN THE COMMUNITY TO PROMOTE COMMUNITY INTEGRATION AND INDEPENDENCE.



## INDEPENDENT LIVING

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Laradon offers certain support services, such as personal care, cleaning, and meal prep, in the home of individuals who wish to live independently in their own homes.

## HOST HOME PROVIDERS

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Laradon coordinates with private families to host individuals in their homes, providing a caring support system, meaningful relationships, and an increased opportunity for independence and community engagement.

## FAMILY CAREGIVER PROGRAM

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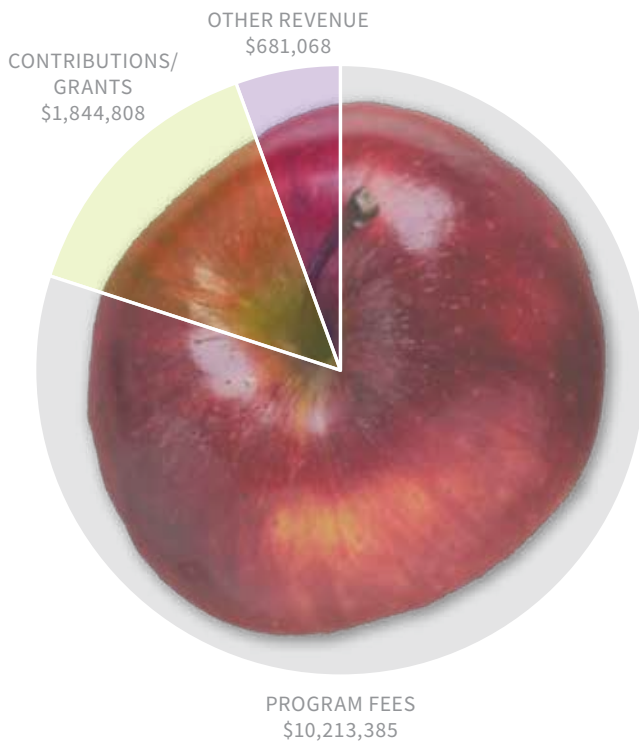
Individuals are able to receive services like bathing, dressing, meal prep, and other supportive services directly from a family member with paid support.



# 2016 - 2017 FISCAL YEAR audited financials

Funding from individual donors, foundations, service organizations, contracts, and partners feeds our mission, allowing Laradon to help people reach their full potential.

## REVENUE \$ 1 2 , 7 3 9 , 2 6 1



## EXPENSES \$ 1 2 , 6 2 9 , 1 2 2





THANK YOU  
to our donors

\$665,270.86

We continue to grow through the generosity and support of donors and partners. Together, we ensure that children and adults with disabilities are given every opportunity to live, learn, and grow within their communities.

**\$100,000+**

The Anschutz Foundation

**\$50,000-\$99,999**

Colorado Elks Association  
Daniels Fund  
The Denver Foundation

**\$20,000-\$49,999**

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*\*Retired*

# Ways to Get Involved

## **GIVE**

Your financial gift ensures that individuals with disabilities are given the opportunity to live, learn, and grow within their communities. Give today at [www.laradon.org/give](http://www.laradon.org/give)

## **PARTNER**

Contact us to see how your company can support Laradon's programs and help individuals reach their full potential. Email [Tilman.Adair@laradon.org](mailto:Tilman.Adair@laradon.org)

## **VOLUNTEER**

Give the gift of your time and make a difference. Email [Angela.Rotello@laradon.org](mailto:Angela.Rotello@laradon.org) to find a fit that is right for your schedule and volunteer goals.

## **HOST**

To become a Host Home Provider, please contact Christin Frasier at [Christin.Frasier@laradon.org](mailto:Christin.Frasier@laradon.org).

To learn more and get involved, visit [www.laradon.org](http://www.laradon.org)