Amigos de las Américas
Annual Report
2019

Reaching New Heights
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I am honored to serve in my sixth year as President and CEO of AMIGOS.

My passion for AMIGOS comes from the extraordinary leadership that the organization offered to me and continues to offer to so many others. The lifelong learning continues no matter what role you have in this amazing organization. And it continues for me every day.

Ten years ago, I returned to work at AMIGOS headquarters in Houston in the role of Director of Programs. I wanted to join the team because I would have two very exciting areas of focus. First, I was asked to increase opportunities for Latin American youth in programming, something that I was and still am incredibly passionate about. And second, I was charged with building new types of AMIGOS programs and experiences.

It has been powerful to reflect on how much the AMIGOS team and our network of supporters have accomplished over the past decade and the cumulative mission impact that culminated in a recording-breaking enrollment in 2019. With four distinct programs in operation, 793 students joined our programs this year! They are joining nearly 30,000 alumni from our 55-year history.

It has been my honor to lead the organization this year. Together, we are working to inspire the next generation of youth to care about their neighbor, about their community, and about the world beyond. We are launching into a new strategic vision where we will continue to create AMIGOS opportunities for more young people.

Thank you to all our partners and stakeholders for making 2019 a most memorable year for AMIGOS. We could not pursue our mission without your support.

Sara Nathan
President & CEO
“While in community, I felt like the best version of myself. I felt more caring, and the connections I made with people were very strong. AMIGOS changed the way I look at the world and people. I feel like AMIGOS really made me the best version of myself.”

- 2019 Summer Immersion volunteer, Pérez Zeledón, Costa Rica
2019 PROGRAMS

793 volunteers in the field
610 service projects
120,215 service hours completed
$300,000+ financial assistance awards
Discover AMIGOS Program
• 2-week introductory leadership development group experience for 13–15-year-olds
• Host family stay and hands-on service projects
• No Spanish language requirement
• 114 students and 15 Project Staff
• Costa Rica and Panama

AMIGOS Summer Program
• 4-8 week authentic service and leadership programs for 15–22-year-olds
• Host family stays, community led service projects, and local youth involvement
• 516 volunteers and 70 Project Staff
• Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, and Panama

AMIGOS Gap Program
• Semester or academic year immersion programs for 17–22-year-olds
• Accredited by the Gap Year Association
• Internship placements, Spanish language classes, and leadership workshops
• Local group excursions
• 54 volunteers
• Ecuador and Uruguay

Youth Ambassadors Program
• Binational exchange program in five countries including the U.S. with 3–4 weeks in country and 6–8 months of community service at home
• Funded by U.S. Department of State
• 100 students and mentors
• Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, U.S., and Uruguay
¿Porqué AMIGOS?

Students choose AMIGOS over other ways to spend their summer or academic year. They are drawn to AMIGOS due to the independence and high level of immersion that are provided in our programs.

Students seek a meaningful experience where they will have opportunities to grow and to challenge themselves. 74% of volunteers reported considering other opportunities before ultimately deciding to participate in AMIGOS.

Why Students Chose AMIGOS Programs in 2019

Katherine Conway
Managing Director of Programs

Katherine joined the team in June 2019. She is a decorated Amiga, having served as a volunteer, Project Supervisor, and three-time Project Director in the Summer Program. Katherine had previously been working at the National Democratic Institute. She brings tremendous experience to this role in global and youth programming.
DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Financial Assistance Program

AMIGOS volunteers received more than $300,000 in financial assistance awards through funding from the National Office (AMIGOS headquarters) and our chapter network throughout the United States. These awards allowed more volunteers to join our programs and have strengthened our relationships with schools and community organizations.

This year, we conducted an audit of the Financial Assistance Program. The following changes were implemented in the fall and will be fully instated for the 2020 programming cycle:

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE APPLICATION
Applicants will complete one financial assistance application to be considered for awards from headquarters or their corresponding chapter. This change will ease the burden on applicants who previously had to complete multiple applications depending on the award type.

ALUMNI AWARDS AND INCENTIVES
We value AMIGOS alumni who return for a second or third AMIGOS experience or come back to our programs even more times. This year, we transitioned from providing an automatic discount to alumni to an award based on merit and need. This change underscores our commitment to accessibility by ensuring that funds reach students with the greatest financial need, whether alumni or first-time volunteers.

PARTNERSHIPS FUND
We will continue investing in partnerships to increase enrollment and diversity in our programs. A distinct partnerships fund will be used to further these relationships for long-term impact and success.
AMIGOS experienced the highest level of enrollment in our 55-year history.

793 students became empowered leaders in 2019.
AMIGOS Leadership Ladder – Evolution and Diversity

Over the past decade, AMIGOS has continued to increase opportunities for Latin American youth and community members to assume positions of leadership in the organization.

In 2019, this effort culminated in the most diverse and inclusive staff in our 55-year history.

SUMMER AND GAP PROJECT STAFF

6 countries represented: Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Paraguay, U.S., Uruguay

FULL-TIME STAFF

5 countries represented: Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, U.S., Uruguay

Leadership Ladder

The “Leadership Ladder” of AMIGOS refers to opportunities for students to deepen their involvement in AMIGOS, ranging from participating in our programs as volunteers to joining a seasonal staff team and to becoming a staff member at our headquarters. Historically, these positions were filled only by residents of the United States. Young leaders throughout Latin America are now climbing the AMIGOS Leadership Ladder.

Latin American Youth Fund

AMIGOS first opened programs to students from the Americas in the late 1990s. In 2010, this effort was expanded through new partnerships for Latin American youth recruitment in five countries. Upon her departure from the organization, then CEO Emily Untermeyer inaugurated a fund for Latin American youth which supported volunteers in our programs for five years. Since that time, AMIGOS has committed to maintaining financial awards for Latin American students. Since 2010, 413 Latin American students have participated in AMIGOS.

Youth Ambassadors

In 2011, AMIGOS won a federal grant award to operate the Youth Ambassadors binational exchange program. Each year, 100 students and mentors from five countries including the U.S. participate in this program. Through this programming, AMIGOS has deepened our presence and relationships in these countries with year-round staffing and new partners.
Health and Safety

Mental Health Services
As our organization’s highest value, the health and safety of our students, staff, and program partners is always our top priority. AMIGOS has a robust Health & Safety System that is guided by a team of professional physicians and mental health experts.

In 2019, we expanded our capacity to accommodate mental health needs in our system’s services by adding additional mental health services for students throughout their program experience. We also expanded the initial mental health screening during the application process. AMIGOS implemented these measures so that:

- Students are prepared for what our programming entails;
- Students are confident that our team has identified and accommodated their unique mental health needs before they begin their program; and
- Staff receive additional training in how to support the mental health needs of students.

Challenge by Choice: Disconnect to Reconnect
The Disconnect to Reconnect initiative offered Summer Program students the option to disconnect from personal technology devices during their program. This initiative was “challenge by choice,” meaning that students opted in. It offered students two primary health and safety benefits by removing the distraction of technology:

Safety First and Always – Without their devices, students are more situationally present and aware of their immediate surroundings and environment, increasing the likelihood that they can successfully follow AMIGOS protocols if in an emergency.

Transformational Outcomes – Without their devices, students can make deeper connections with one another, their host families, and other members of the local community. They can also engage in language learning at higher levels.

29% of students in our Summer Program participated in this initiative and reported an overall better experience than students who did not participate.
LETTER FROM THE CHAIR OF THE AMIGOS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

It has been my greatest honor to serve as the Chair of the AMIGOS Board of Directors and to be a steward of the organization in such an impactful leadership role. This is my third and final year in this role.

The board of directors has always been driven by a passionate group of alumni, parents of current volunteers and of alumni, and advocates for youth development and leadership. This year was an important year for the board as we have increased our focus on high-level governance and on driving philanthropy to sustain our mission.

In 2018, the board approved increased spending from reserves to propel the organization forward in strategic areas, with the main objective to increase student enrollment. We saw these investments pay off with the highest level of enrollment in our 55th year of programming!

We look forward to supporting the organization as it continues to seek increased mission impact. In December of this year, we ratified the AMIGOS 2020–2022 Strategic Plan and revised the mission and vision statements for the organization:

**New Mission Statement:** Amigos de las Américas inspires leaders though authentic service and immersion experiences.

**New Vision Statement:** Our vision is a world where all people are lifelong leaders sharing responsibility for our global community.

**The 2020–2022 Strategic Plan will guide the organization through three strategic areas:**

- A sustainable financial model and program offerings
- A simplified and effective organizational structure that drives enrollment
- Brand visibility for increased mission reach

The board is proud of the work AMIGOS has accomplished in 2019. Together, we are truly creating the kind of world AMIGOS envisions: one where all people are lifelong leaders sharing responsibility for our global community.

Thank you,

Patricia Grad
Chair, AMIGOS Board of Directors
2019 Financials

Program, including fees and group fundraising
- Summer Immersion Program: $2,805,905
- Gap Program: $744,384
- Discover AMIGOS Program: $442,500
- Custom Programs: $49,275

Fundraising and grants
- Individual, Corporation, and Foundation: $698,116
- Government Grants/Youth Ambassadors Program: $572,565

Investment and other income: $147,576

Total Revenue: $5,419,839

Program-related expenses: $4,426,489
- Financial assistance: $148,775
- Administration: $573,562
- Fundraising: $271,275

Total Expenses: $5,420,101

Board of Directors
Patricia Grad, Chair
Mike Kercheval, Treasurer
David Baron, Officer
Adolfo Jiménez, At-Large
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Howard Wright
Philanthropy

The Guy Bevil Legacy Society

Established in 2018, The Guy Bevil Legacy Society is named in honor of Guy Bevil, the founder of AMIGOS. In 1965, Guy turned his belief that young people could make a difference into action by forming AMIGOS, with the first cohort traveling from Houston to Honduras to fight a growing polio epidemic.

54 years later, The Guy Bevil Legacy Society unites donors who appreciate the value of AMIGOS programs: language and cultural immersion, youth leadership, and community engagement. It recognizes donors who are paving the way for future AMIGOS volunteers by making a legacy gift to the organization via a will or other vehicles for legacy giving.

In 2019, we ran the first campaign for this newly formed giving society. We applaud the foresight of our founding Legacy Society Members who are securing our vision for future generations of young leaders.

Founding Legacy Society Members

Douglass and Margaret Beeman
Charlie Evans, MD
Ann Sandford
Mary Stelletello and Andy Howick
Marvin Trotter
Emily Untermeyer

2019 Philanthropy Highlights

• 3rd Annual Breakfast to Benefit AMIGOS raised over $90,000
• AMIGOS was named a 2019 Charity Beneficiary of the Offshore Technology Conference via Spindletop Charities, resulting in a $25,000 gift
• 2nd Annual Supporters Trip to visit Costa Rica programs
• Donors increased number of matching gifts from their employers
• The Project Staff Team raised over $10,000 during their annual campaign

Thank you to all our supporters!
2019 Philanthropy Priorities

Reconnecting with our past, building connections, and energizing our community for the future. Funding supported our Financial Assistance Program, Latin American youth participation, seed funding costs for community service projects in host communities, and organizational capabilities in IT and Marketing.

Increasing Philanthropy for Mission Impact

The first AMIGOS capital campaign, the Path Forward Campaign from 2014–2017, increased the role of philanthropy in the organization. The campaign elevated the major giving program and inspired the board of directors to focus on philanthropy and high-level governance. The AMIGOS Annual Fund, the annual operating fundraising revenue, has increased by 184% over the last seven years.

The Inaugural AMIGOS Summit

This new AMIGOS event provided an updated format for Annual Meetings that convene the board, chapter leaders, and staff per the organization’s bylaws. The first AMIGOS Summit was also open to other stakeholders and AMIGOS supporters.

Hosted in Houston at the Hotel ZaZa on October 18–19, 2019, the event brought together more than 100 guests.

Throughout the weekend, alumni panelists discussed where life after AMIGOS had taken them in the fields of film, government, and entrepreneurship. AMIGOS staff discussed the role of international youth leadership programming across the Americas in today’s world. And, our leadership groups conducted formal business.

What innovations excite you?

What stories inspire you?

Why do you believe in AMIGOS?
Donors

Gifts of $1,000 or more to the Amigos de las Américas Headquarters

Corporate and Foundation Donors
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Ann C. & C. Hamilton Sloan Family Foundation
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John and Elizabeth Donnelly in memory of George Donnelly
Mark and Rachel Donnelly in memory of George Donnelly
Mateo Eaton and Mayumi Yagi
Julie Edwards in memory of Tom Edwards
Don Freedman and Martha Kaplan Freedman
Greg and Maria Elena Grannen
Fred and Betsy Griffin
Andrew Haas and Susan Seligman-Haas
Joseph and Merrill Hafner in memory of George Donnelly
Michael Hafner and Samantha Schnee
Scott Horsley
Fred and Karen Hulting
Adolfo Jiménez and Ulrike Falkenberg
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QUESTIONS?

Contact us to learn more about AMIGOS.

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