

# ANNUAL REPORT 2022



Children's  
Environmental  
Literacy  
Foundation



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# MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

During the past nearly three years, our communities and education systems have experienced compounding public health, economic, and environmental challenges that have pushed us to develop our resilience, grow our empathy, and reimagine our ways of learning and connecting. While school districts across the country still grapple with the urgent challenges of shifted student learning trajectories, teacher shortages, and rising student mental health challenges, CELF has taken inspiration from the tenacious teachers, students, and communities we work with to innovate and deliver meaningful services that are responsive to what teachers need now. In turn, we've seen teachers find community and become re-invigorated through our programs.

Indeed, 2022 was a year of renewal and new growth for CELF. In February, after nearly 20 years of building and leading the organization, CELF's Founder, Katie Isaak Ginsberg, retired, and I enthusiastically and gratefully took the reins following a decade leading global education programs at Columbia University's Center for Sustainable Development. With Katie's continued guidance and support, our team had one of our biggest years yet.

Building on our expanded reach enabled by our growing presence in Texas and California, and virtual capacity developed during the pandemic, in 2022 our team explored hybrid approaches that embrace in-person and virtual modalities, engaging educators from six US states and Ghana across our 2022 programs. We also began conducting demographic analysis of student populations served by our participating educators. We believe this is key to improving equity in access, and ensuring our programs are responsive to the voices and needs of the communities we work with who are directly impacted by environmental injustice. With this strategic focus, we've seen a 13% increase in the portion of US Title 1 schools served since 2020, and are continuing on this trajectory in 2023.

With the support of our donors, the talents of our growing array of community partners, the resilience of our staff, and the commitment of our educator community, in 2022, CELF engaged over 600 formal and non-formal educators and administrators, and over 30,000 students. As the policy landscape in places like New York, California, and New Jersey lay the groundwork for more rapid scale up of the best practices we've honed over our twenty-year history, CELF is heeding the call to help implement these ambitious initiatives at scale, supporting teachers and students to develop a stronger sense of agency across the environmental, economic, and societal dimensions of our shared challenges, with our collaborative action serving as a balm for our anxieties about the future.



Tara Stafford Ocansey  
Executive Director



# Mission

Establish sustainability as an integral part of every child's K-12 learning experience.



## Core Values



Integrity



Innovation



Collaboration



Continuous Learning



Diverse Perspectives



Resilience and Tenacity



Commitment to Environmental Sustainability and Systems Thinking





# 2022 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS: BY THE NUMBERS

## 600+

### EDUCATORS & ADMINISTRATORS

Engaged via professional learning workshops, Summer Institute programs and classroom support services, a 32% increase from 2021.

## 38,000+

### STUDENTS

Reached by CELF programs – via their teachers who've participated in our workshops, field experiences, Green Careers sessions, and the Student Symposium.

## 69%

Title 1 Schools that participated in our programs

## 92%

Students in Spring Civic Science cohort reporting that they can influence others to take positive actions.

## 200+

Attendees at CELF's culminating event for the Civic Science: Inquiry-to-Action Program – The Student Symposium.

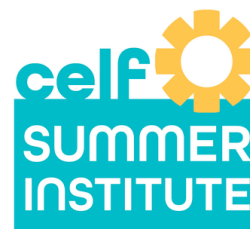
## 7 2

States Countries

Places represented by CELF's Spring and Summer Civic Science participants.



# SUMMER INSTITUTES: GOING FOR THE GREEN



CELf's annual Summer Institutes provide an opportunity for educators and administrators to immerse themselves in a multi-day learning experience centered on sustainability, environmental literacy, and best practices in place, project, and problem-based learning methods.

In 2022, CELf hosted a Summer Institute with the Kenmore-Tonawanda school district focused on [Whole School Transformation](#) to support teachers and district leaders in developing a district strategy for going for the US Department of Education's [Green Ribbon Award](#).

CELf also hosted its first in-person Summer Institute in Houston, bringing together educators from 7 districts across Texas in a three-day professional learning experience to explore outdoor learning activities and develop student-driven projects incorporating CELf's [Big Ideas of Sustainability](#).

## INTEGRATING THE ARTS

Recognizing the growing intensity of the teaching profession in recent years, CELf planned a summer field event with the intention of offering teachers an opportunity to heal and connect in nature through the arts. CELf worked with Strawtown Studio to bring participants on a journey of self-discovery in nature. Activities included [Colors of Place](#) to explore ecosystem connections through natural pigments, and [Eco Rhythms](#) to appreciate humanity's role in nature through music.



## KEN-TON PRESENTERS

**BRAD DAMSTEDT**  
Senior Technology Expert in Combustion  
R&D, Linde PLC

**MICHELLE LOCKETT**  
Community Engagement Manager  
Niagara River Greenway

**JOHN HANNON**  
Recycle Consultant  
Casella Waste Systems

**JAY BURNEY**  
Special Projects Director  
Pollinator Conservation Association

## HOUSTON PRESENTERS

**DR. RYAN CHABARRIA**  
Interim Dean for the Department of Health  
Occupations and Biological Sciences

**DR. BRIAN SHMAEFSKY**  
Professor of Environmental Science  
Lone Star College - Kingwood

**ALICIA MEIN-JOHNSON**  
Naturalist  
Jesse Jones Park and Nature Center

**KEN WILLIAMS**  
CEO  
GROW Houston

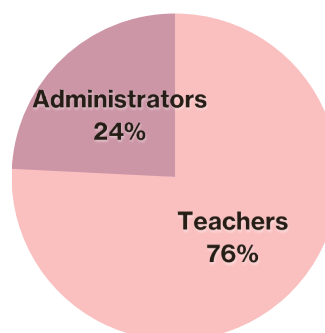
## SUMMER INSTITUTE: QUICK STATS

**9,900+** K-12 Students engaged by teacher participants

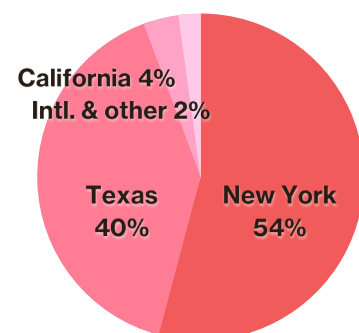
**72%**

Participating teachers from Title 1 Schools

### ROLE IN EDUCATION



### PARTICIPANT LOCATION





I want to talk a bit about 'sustainability' and how much I appreciate that your work with CELF is focused on this: in particular the links between environment, economy, and social justice which, as you know, are the foundations of sustainability.

**Jay Burney**  
Special Projects Director  
Pollinator Conservation Assoc., Buffalo, NY

What I loved about CELF are the collaborations and the learnings of other people, but I also love the resources you guys give us and being able to take those resources and use them. Now, I have the CELF community and I can add that to my bucket.

**Stephanie**  
Middle School Science Teacher  
Texas



# CIVIC SCIENCE: EXPLORING NEW PATHWAYS

Since launching in 2017 with student inquiry around air quality, CELF's Civic Science program has expanded to explore **waste, water quality, and infrastructure**.

In Houston, at Blanson CTE, students focused on the lack of safe, continuous sidewalks around their school community. They interviewed locals to highlight pedestrian dangers, and met with a city official to advocate for improved sidewalk upkeep and new bike lanes.

Southwest of Houston, students investigated water quality in their local **Rio Grande River** watershed – sampling water from three locations near Rio Grande City. They tested for turbidity, acidity, salinity, oxygen, and bacteria content. Finding fecal coliform bacteria at all three sites motivated them to focus on educating the public.

In NYC, CELF led a workshop in partnership with the Department of Education's Office of Sustainability on Air Quality and Environmental Justice, engaging 28 teachers and leading to new school partnerships during the 2022-23 school year.

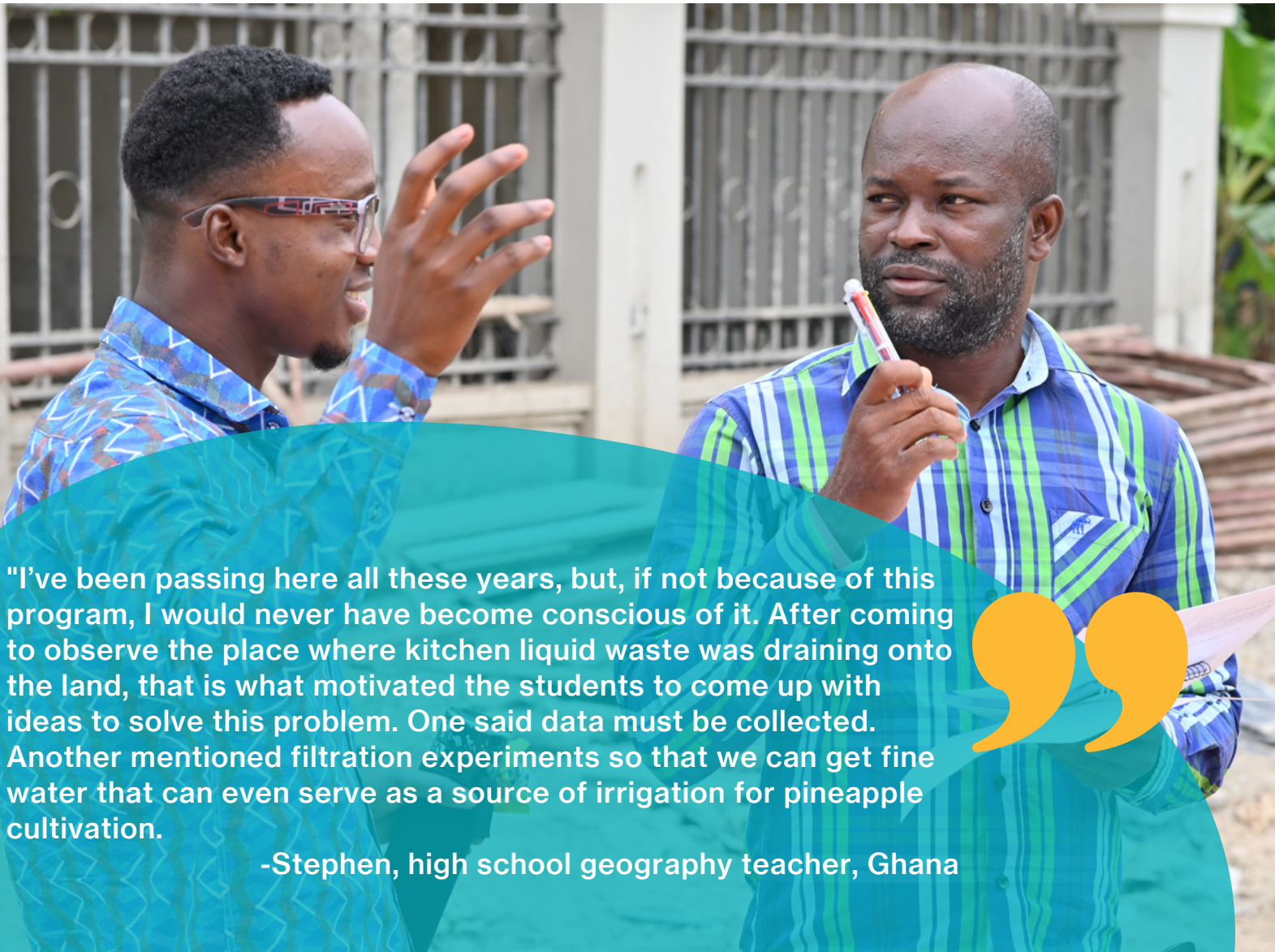




# CIVIC SCIENCE: GOING GLOBAL: TACKLING WASTE IN GHANA

Teachers from two schools in Ghana's Eastern Region took part in CELF's **Civic Science program** through an in-person workshop in Odumase-Krobo, followed by online participation in the **Virtual Civic Science Summer Institute**. With support from CELF's new 2022 donor with Tricon Energy, and grassroots partners YOWE and Green Africa Youth Organization (GAYO) in Ghana, this program empowers educators and students from Ghana and the US to promote zero-waste strategies and circular economy solutions in their communities.

Cross-pollination between Ghanaian and US educators resulted in innovative student project ideas, including school water quality testing and filtration, air quality monitoring, and campus waste segregation. These projects were presented at the **Spring 2023 CELF Student Symposium**.



"I've been passing here all these years, but, if not because of this program, I would never have become conscious of it. After coming to observe the place where kitchen liquid waste was draining onto the land, that is what motivated the students to come up with ideas to solve this problem. One said data must be collected. Another mentioned filtration experiments so that we can get fine water that can even serve as a source of irrigation for pineapple cultivation.

-Stephen, high school geography teacher, Ghana



# CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT APPLYING CELF FRAMEWORKS FOR WIDER ADOPTION

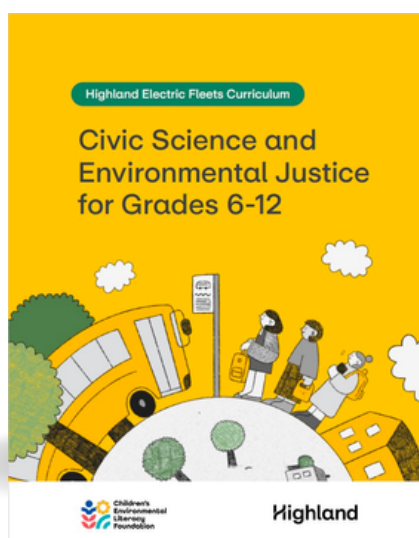
## Highland



Climate Change and  
Environmental Justice  
Program

In 2022, CELF and Highland Electric Fleets collaborated to develop activities and resources to support educators in fostering student voice for change through inquiry-driven action projects. They worked on building an understanding of the connections between community challenges and environmental health and solutions like electric school buses.

Applying CELF's Inquiry to Action framework and experience supporting student-led inquiry projects focused on air quality, this [curricular resource](#) helps teachers bring an environmental justice lens to their classrooms.



In Summer 2022, CELF embarked on a two+ year initiative in California to develop K-12 curriculum units as part of the [Climate Change and Environmental Justice Program \(CCEJP\)](#), led by California-based nonprofit [Ten Strands](#), and financed by the San Mateo County Office of Education and the California Department of Education.

CELF was selected as one of seven diverse organizations developing different grade level curriculum across the K-12 spectrum, with CELF leading development of the K-2 units.

CELF team members Tara Stafford Ocansey and Vicky Garufi Lolacono joined a partners retreat in Yola, California in August 2022 to build community, orient to the curriculum development approach, and start scoping ideas for the units. In October, CELF welcomed Kirsty Hameleers to the team to spearhead the work in California.

The curriculum is projected to be completed for the 2025-26 school year.







# GREEN CAREERS: INSPIRING TOMORROW'S INNOVATORS

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Schools Districts Speakers

CELf's youngest program provided programming to 8 schools across 6 districts in Texas and New York with support from Blue Bear Capital, Baker Hughes Foundation. Crestwood, Tricon Energy, and the Westchester Community Foundation. We had over 10 speakers representing an array of sustainability-focused industry roles providing guided opportunities for K-12 audiences and educational services in Title 1 schools.

Students heard from speakers from organizations like the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), American Bird Conservancy, Black Girls Do Engineer, US Fish and Wildlife, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Con Edison, Baker Hughes, and Accuweather. They covered topics from ocean conservation to weather tracking and shared their experiencing building outdoor careers.

CELf also partnered in facilitating three Career Day events at Houston Community College in partnership with Green Opportunities Houston and at Channelview High School in Texas, as well as with Sleepy Hollow Middle School in New York.

## Speakers



## Schools





## Statement of Activities

### January 1, 2022 - December 31, 2022

## Revenue & Support

Contributions & grants	\$630,929
Program Income	\$218,503
<b>Total Revenue &amp; Support</b>	<b>\$849,432</b>

## Expenses

Program Services	
Summer Institute	\$130,119
Civic Science	\$176,387
Professional development & training	\$269,868
<b>Total program services</b>	<b>\$576,374</b>
Support Services	
General & administrative	\$85,339
Fundraising	\$96,432
<b>Total support services</b>	<b>\$181,771</b>
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>\$758,145</b>
<b>Change in net assets</b>	<b>\$91,287</b>
Net assets, beginning of year	\$187,782
<b>Net assets, end of year</b>	<b>\$279,069</b>



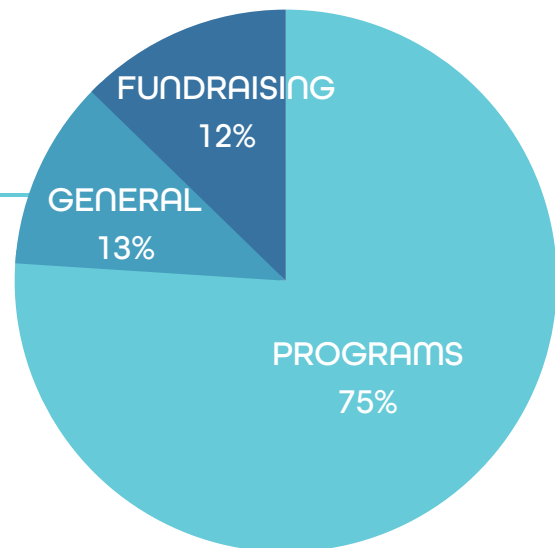


## Expenses by Department

Programs: \$576,374

General & Administrative: \$85,339

Fundraising: \$96,432

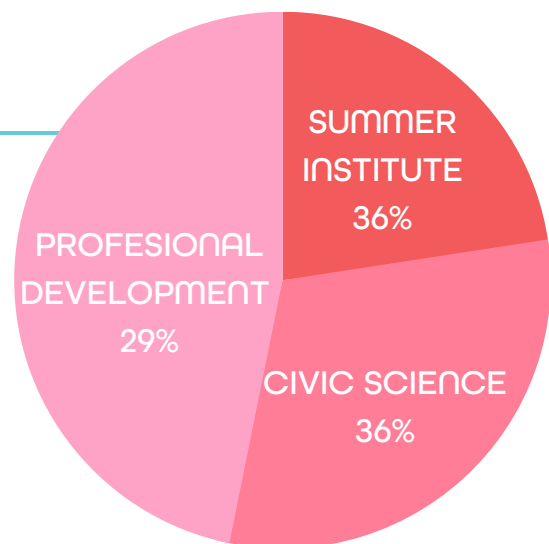


## Investments by Program

Professional Development\*: \$269,868

Summer Institute: \$130,119

Civic Science: \$176,387



Professional Development category includes allocations to curriculum development, Green Careers, and CELF in the Field





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to all of our supporters that help to sustain CELF's programs and operations!

## Sustainability Champions

Baker Hughes Foundation  
Crestwood Equity Partners  
First Reserve  
Linde PLC  
National Academies of Science, Medicine, and Engineering  
National Geographic Society  
Neuberger Berman  
Port Houston  
San Diego Foundation, Diane Fletcher Hoppe  
Mark Gallogly & Elizabeth Strickler  
Ten Strands  
Tricon Energy, LTD  
Van Evera Foundation  
Westchester Business First  
Westchester Community Foundation  
Worley Foundation  
Young Voices for the Planet

## \$5,000-\$10,000

Lawrence & Maureen Atinsky  
Blue Bear  
Cassandra E. Clark  
Con Edison  
Eleven Eleven Foundation  
Fluor Corp.  
Mary Duncan & Nick Gutfreund  
Howard Family Foundation  
Machiko & Charles Kimball  
Evan Matzen  
PNC  
Dean Slocum  
Michelle & Scott Urben

## \$2,500-\$4,999

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Maureen Burgess  
Willam Davis  
Katie & Peter Ginsberg  
Janet Harckham  
McMac CX  
Hilary Spann  
David Stubbs

## \$1,000-\$2,499

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Gregory Cecere  
Kate & Scott DePetrus  
Marie DiPalma  
Jeremy Fitzgerald  
Margot & Stephen Holland  
Jessica Mendelowitz  
Liz & Tom Murley  
Jennifer O'Neil

## \$500-\$999

Margaret Davis  
Alissa Fasman  
Karina Franke  
Bob & Barbara Foley  
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Kim Larson & Gary Knell  
Leventhal Family Foundation  
Mastercard  
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Andrew Patrick  
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Vishal Verma





**\$200-\$499**

Christiaan Beeuwkes  
 Joan M. Bernhard  
 Susan Buck  
 Lauren Buonome  
 Thecla Chomicz  
 Justin Clark  
 M J Clark & V. Emmi  
 Dana Cowin  
 Mark E. Epstein  
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**Up to \$200**

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**Up to \$200**

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 Mark Thielking and Moira Trachtenberg  
 Zoe Weil  
 Billy Strauss & Lynne Weinstein  
 William Weisner  
 Johanna Alter Wilson  
 Rosalie Wind  
 Patrick Wong



## SPOTLIGHT ON...

## Baker Hughes

In 2021, the Baker Hughes Foundation provided its first grant to CELF, and renewed again in 2022. Going beyond financial support, the team at Baker Hughes has taken part in CELF's outdoor field events with teachers, shown up as Green Career guest speakers, and participated in our recent Student Symposium to provide constructive feedback and guidance to student researchers.

In the words of Allyson Book, Chief Sustainability Officer at Baker Hughes, "Sustainability at Baker Hughes means operating in a responsible way to minimize our environmental impact and maximize social benefits by providing affordable, sustainable, and secure energy for the people and planet. For 25 years, the Baker Hughes Foundation has been a steward of charitable resources for meaningful community impact, and its grant to CELF seeks to build the energy workforce of the future by promoting a diverse, equitable and inclusive education. CELF is doing tremendous work in educating the future generation in sustainability, and we are proud to be able to contribute towards its deep and meaningful impact in our society today."



# LOOKING FORWARD

In 2023, CELF will proudly celebrate its 20 year anniversary. As we approach this milestone, CELF is re-envisioning what our mission means for the years ahead, in a post-pandemic reality amidst the very real impacts of climate change that are being experienced by the communities we serve.

Based on lessons learned from teachers during recent years, and in our effort to better serve impacted, under-resourced school communities, CELF is working in 2023 to provide more direct resources and flexible programming options to teachers and schools.

In spring 2023, we piloted a microgrant program to support participating teachers in implementing student inquiry projects. Our goal is that these microgrants can help them engage students in place-based inquiry, through field trips to local green spaces, or supplies to start a school garden or STEAM project, and more.

The Climate Change and Environmental Justice Program in California continues to be a major focus in 2023. In the spring, we piloted lessons-in-progress with elementary school teachers from diverse school contexts in California, reaching nearly 1,000 students.

We're also proud to have hosted our first Student Symposium in Texas in March 2023, engaging over 30 students from 7 schools at the beautiful Hess Tower offices of our partner and new 2023 donor, EDP Renewables NA.

Our team firmly believes that collaboration is the only way forward. Grounded in this belief, our team continues to grow our network of program partnerships to help us reach more educators where they are. New partnerships have taken shape through our field-based professional learning events, and through sustainable product partnerships such as those with Moonflower Farms and The Bear Factory's Plush for Planet line of sustainably plushy toys.

On the cusp of our twenty year anniversary, our growing team is filled with hope and immense gratitude for the support of our partners and supporters, and the tenacity of our community of teachers who are doing the critical work of motivating the next generation of engaged citizens and solutionary systems thinkers.



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