

# Ben's Bells Annual Report

2021-2022





## *Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity Statement*

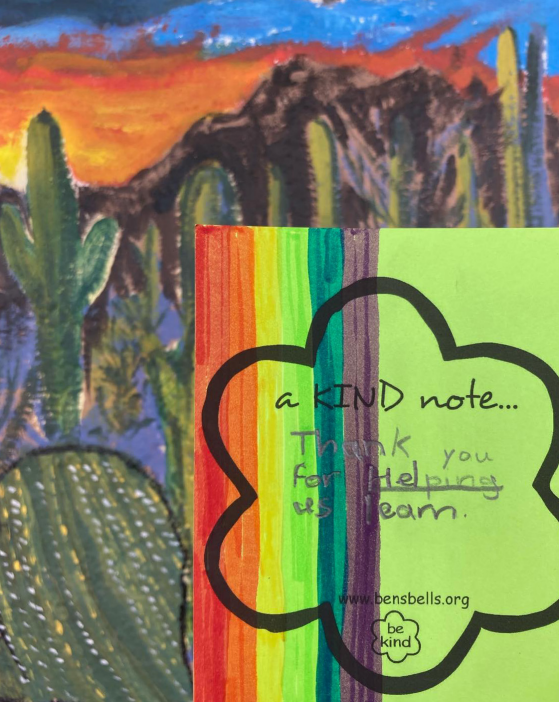
Part of the practice of kindness is doing the work to ensure a diverse, inclusive, and equitable community space and workplace. We welcome and we value employees, volunteers, and participants whatever their gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, age, sexual orientation or identity, education, class, or disability. At Ben's Bells we work to create kinder communities, and such work requires dedication to serving constituents that represent the diverse makeup of our communities.

We strive to maintain a kind culture where all perspectives are welcomed, shared, and valued, and are committed to nondiscriminatory practices in the workplace and as we serve all members of the public. We work to ensure equal opportunity of access to our programming and public spaces as well as to employment and advancement opportunities. We value the perspectives that diverse backgrounds and life experiences bring to the table and maintain a safe space for respectful, kind, and inclusive dialogue that encourages listening, sharing, and self-reflection.

We are committed to communicating clearly, questioning our assumptions, acknowledging our mistakes, incorporating a growth mindset, doing this work even when it is difficult, recognizing the ongoing nature of these responsibilities, and building kinder communities for everyone. We expect all employees and board members to lead with kindness and to hold equitable practices as core values that translate into their personal and professional lives. All visitors are expected to use kind behavior, exhibit equitable treatment, and join us in maintaining a safe space for all participants.

We're firm in our stance that equitable treatment for everyone is a crucial aspect of kindness and that only diverse and inclusive spaces represent the true scope of what it means to do kindness work and be a kind community. Diversity, inclusion, and equity are deeply connected to our mission and critical to the wellbeing of our staff, board, volunteers, and the communities we serve.





## Mission

To teach individuals and communities about the positive impacts of intentional kindness and to inspire people to practice kindness as a way of life.

## Vision

Kindness becomes highly valued and ingrained in each of us, strengthening our communities, our relationships, and ourselves.

## A letter from our Executive Director

Twenty years ago, Ben's Bells started with a Bell distribution to honor Ben on the anniversary of his death. With each year Ben's Bells has grown and offers kindness education programming, mosaic murals, community engagement opportunities, and so much more! As we reflect on this milestone, we are grateful for the many collaborations, community partnerships, and individual supporters who have helped us put down roots and create kinder communities.

You have inspired us through your intentional acts of kindness, your time spent volunteering, and your generous donations. Your support inspires kinder communities all around the world.

With kindness and gratitude,

*Helen Gomez*

**Helen Gomez**  
Executive Director







# *Ben's Bells' Impact*

More than  
**TWENTY THOUSAND**  
volunteers have visited  
Ben's Bells studios.

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**SHOP**  
kind

Merchandise is sold at  
all 4 studio locations,  
as well as retail locations  
including Miraval,  
The Toy Tree, and more!

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The original Bells  
are not available  
for purchase  
and can only be  
obtained by finding  
one or being Belled.





Since 2012 Team Kind  
has been riding in  
El Tour de Tucson  
and raising money for  
kinder communities.



## Income

Individual Charitable	\$154,085.50	15%
Organization Charitable	\$68,197.70	7%
Special Events	\$64,006.64	6%
Shop Sales	\$392,120.72	38%
Program Fees	\$150,017.99	15%
Gifts In-Kind	\$81,134.13	8%
PPP/ERC Funds	\$11,064.54	11%
Other	\$838.90	0%
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Total	\$1,020,466.12	100%

## Expenses

Program Services	\$654,109.33	69%
Administration	\$161,114.55	17%
Fundraising and Development	\$132,138.82	14%
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Total	\$947,362.70	100%
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Ending Net Assets	\$475,438.00	

For more information on how to support our work visit [BensBells.org](https://BensBells.org)

# Board of Directors



**Daniela Siqueiros**

**Board Chair**

Director of Advertising and Marketing  
Tucson Lifestyle

*Board Member since 2019*



**Christopher Fonseca**

**Board Treasurer**

Assistant Vice President  
of Accounting and Finance  
Tucson Federal Credit Union

*Board Member since 2021*



**Mary Vikupitz, RD**

**Board Secretary**

Director of Wellness  
Tucson Medical Center

*Board Member since 2018*

**Erika Barnes**

Executive Senior Associate Director of  
Athletics

University of Arizona

*Board Member since 2022*

**Forest Melton**

Research Specialist

University of Arizona Cancer Center

*Board Member since 2017*

**Debbie McGuire**

Property Manager

*Board Member since 2020*

**Shannon Tighe**

Director of Clinical Operations

Bridge Family Center

*Board Member since 2016*

**Ryan Shirley**

Project and Growth Manager

Ultra Air Conditioning

*Board Member since 2020*

**Andrew Luria**

Senior Director of Major

Incident Management

ADP

*Board Member since 2022*

**Ashleigh Kruk**

Professional Volunteer

*Board Member since 2017*

**Joshua Pebbles**

Assistant Principal

Tucson Unified School District

*Board Member since 2021*





# Return of CAMP Kind

Camp Kind made a return to Ben's Bells during the summer of 2022.

Campers spent five days learning about different ways to practice kindness while creating lifelong memories. Throughout the week, campers took part in hands-on activities including a recycled "be kind" mural, dance parties, and kindness-themed crafts, and each day learned a new step in the process of ceramics and the community impact of kindness.

The University of Arizona's Cooper Center for Environmental Learning joined camp to discuss how to be kind to the environment. They led interactive play, performed a puppet show, and introduced campers to special guest Mo the desert tortoise.



## Camp Mantra

I am kind.  
My hands are kind.  
My words are kind.  
My choices are kind.  
**I AM KIND.**

*\*Shared from Mister Ben's Classroom  
Emily Meschter Early Learning Center*



# Starting the Day with Kindness

The original Bells are not available for purchase and can only be obtained by finding one or being honored as a Bellee. Between July 2021 and June 2022, Ben's Bells **honored 85 individuals** who make our community a better place to live.

One of these Bellees was Blenman Elementary School's crossing guard, Vernon Williams. Vernon is known for greeting everyone with a gigantic smile, emphatic wave, excellent dance moves, blowing kisses, and sharing kindness.

Vernon goes above and beyond to get drivers to pay attention to the road to protect the children crossing the busy intersection. Mornings can be a stressful time for families trying to get to school and work, but passerbys can't help but pause to smile and wave back.

Vernon enjoys helping the Tucson community start the day with kindness. If you find yourself near the intersection of Country Club and Pima on a school morning, make sure to slow down, stay vigilant, and wave good morning.

*Bellee nomination submitted by:  
Colin Deeds, Dina Scalone,  
and Maxi Romero*

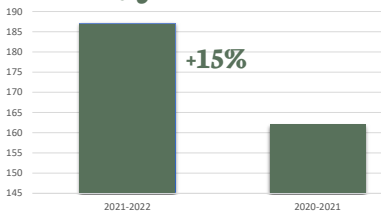




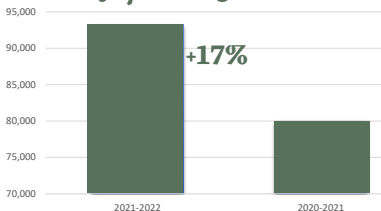
**FREE**  
Kind Campus  
programming  
has reached  
over 1.6 million  
students!



### *Registered Schools*



### *Impacted Students*



Innovation Academy's Student Council invited Ben's Bells staff to come to campus and assist them in passing out Ben's Bells flower ornaments to each classroom. Each classroom was filled with excited students and many examples of how they brought kindness into their space including Kind Campus posters, kind drawings, and kindness-themed classroom decorations. They also utilized Kind Notes in a variety of creative ways to express kindness to fellow students, staff, class pets, and school neighbors. It was amazing to see how their campus has embraced Ben's Bells programming and made it their own.





## Celebration of Kindness

In April 2022, Ben's Bells celebrated 20 years of kindness at a Celebration of Kindness. The evening included the inaugural J. Maré Founder's Award to Karenne Koo for her work breaking down barriers between groups and fostering understanding of our differences. Attendees sold out the event and made record bids in the silent and live auctions helping Ben's Bell **raise over \$65,000** to support kinder communities.

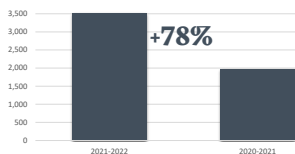
## Shop Kind

Shop Kind was happy to welcome shoppers back and see many dedicated supporters at returning community events. During temporary closures, Shop Kind created new displays and stocked the shelves with many new products. Every handmade, hand-selected, and embroidered item sold helps fund Ben's Bells' community art studios and kindness education programs, and further encourages kindness.



## Volunteers

Since day one, Ben's Bells has brought the community together through volunteer opportunities. Volunteers with all experience levels create handmade ceramic Bells and other items. Over the past year, Ben's Bells was happy to welcome volunteers back into the studio after a temporary closure due to the global pandemic.



# Future Plans



Ben's Bells is celebrating their 20th anniversary in Tucson by re-creating the iconic "I am Tucson" Mural with the help of the community.

Through the generosity of the Tucson Convention Center (TCC), the new mural will be installed prominently at the front entrance of the TCC in the fall of 2022.

The original "I am Tucson" mural was the 2012 Greater Tucson Leadership class project. Hundreds of volunteers created thousands of personalized tiles that represented the culture of Tucson. Due to downtown expansion, the mural was removed in 2019. The new "I am Tucson" Mural is again created with the help of our community of volunteers and their commitment to kindness.

In December of 2009, Ben's Bells, Tucson Unified School District's Community Transition Programs, and the Marshall Foundation brought world-renowned mosaic artist Isaiah Zagar from Philadelphia to Tucson. Since then, Ben's Bells has been involved in creating dozens more community murals, and we regularly install our beloved "Be Kind" Flower and Kindness Tree at schools and community organizations in Arizona, Connecticut, and the surrounding areas.

These brightly colored public art pieces symbolize community connection and support through kindness, and are created by a diverse group of students, local artists, and community members wherever they are located.







**TUCSON  
DOWNTOWN STUDIO**

40 W. Broadway Blvd.  
Tucson, AZ 85701

**TUCSON  
MAIN GATE STUDIO**

816 E. University Blvd.  
Tucson, AZ 85719

**PHOENIX STUDIO**

918 N. 2nd St.  
Phoenix, AZ 85004

**CONNECTICUT STUDIO**

32 Stony Hill Rd.  
Bethel, CT 06801

