



MARINE EDUCATION
INITIATIVE



2021

ANNUAL
REPORT

FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

The COVID-19 pandemic has tested the resilience of everyone. Due to our hard-working team at Marine Education Initiative and our unwavering desire for continuous improvement, we have proved our ability to adapt to a changing and unpredictable environment such as this pandemic.

In response to COVID-19, we were able to adapt our food security efforts to enhance our capacity and bolster our overall impact. In launching our Aquaponics Food Security & Education Program, we have provided 15 times more meals and educated twice the amount of students than we did the year prior. Our focus on aquaponics is sustainable and has much less of an impact on the environment when compared to traditional agriculture.

We offer transformative experiences for our students and provide high-quality meals to food-insecure individuals in our community. We are extremely grateful to everyone who has supported MEI over the years and for our ever-increasing new donors, volunteers, and community partners. With your support, our students, the local community, and the environment benefited from the programs we offered in 2021. I am so glad to have you along for the journey we are on and I look forward to the years ahead as we continue to expand our programming and impact throughout South Florida and the Caribbean.

With gratitude,



Nicholas Metropulos, CFRE
Executive Director



OUR PROGRAMS



RESPONSIBLE ANGLING EDUCATION PROGRAM

Our Responsible Angling Education Program (RAE) has been running for 15 years! Initially, the pandemic greatly impacted this program; however, our team was able to adapt and continue offering the immersive marine conservation classes that were held pre-pandemic. Our team harnessed the power of technology to provide a hybrid program as well as virtual learning opportunities with Ocean First Education. Although the landscape of teaching this program has changed, we continue to offer the most immersive and educational activities possible for our students.



AQUAPONICS FOOD SECURITY & EDUCATION PROGRAM

According to the Palm Beach County Food Bank, "more than 226,280 residents in Palm Beach County struggle with hunger, a 35% increase since 2018". In January of 2021, we launched this program because of the food supply chain issues caused by the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the growing need for environmental education in school systems. From providing fresh produce every week to local soup kitchens to providing additional environmental education opportunities to local youth, this program has the potential to make a substantial impact in Palm Beach County, and other communities to come.



WITH YOUR HELP, WE

EDUCATED OVER

400

STUDENTS



PROVIDED OVER

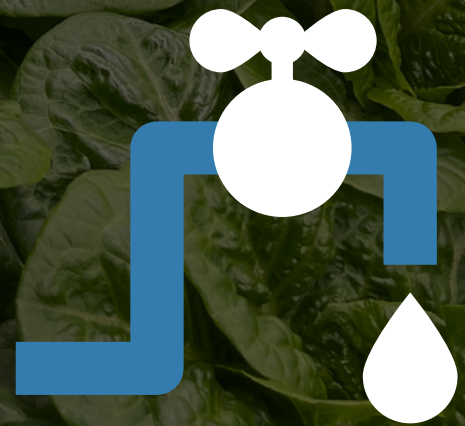
30,000


MEALS

SAVED OVER

105,000

GALLONS OF WATER





"The fresh greens we receive weekly from MEI are fabulous! The color is beautiful and it is so easy to work with. Fresh is always better, and you cannot any fresher than this."

- Barbara, Volunteer at Boca Helping Hands

"I never imagined I would be able to learn how to fish and even more jump in the ocean and snorkel with them, this has been such an awesome experience."

- Gianni, Program Participant

"MEI's mission is multifaceted in such a unique way. I am so lucky to have a career where I can impact the environment and the people around me in a positive way."

- Laura, Aquaponics Farm Operator

"It's really nice to be around the plants and fish, with the added benefit of learning about and growing them to help feed so many others."

- Walker, Volunteer

2021 CONTRIBUTORS

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT! We greatly appreciate the generosity from the following individuals, organizations, corporations, and foundation for helping to support our efforts.

VISIONARY: \$100,000+

The Sodexo Stop Hunger Foundation
The Colburn Family Foundation

ADVOCATE: \$10,000 - \$49,999

Fish Florida
Gary Peters Family Foundation
Pat Moran Family Foundation
The Hamilton Family Charitable Trust

LEADER: \$1,000 - \$9,999

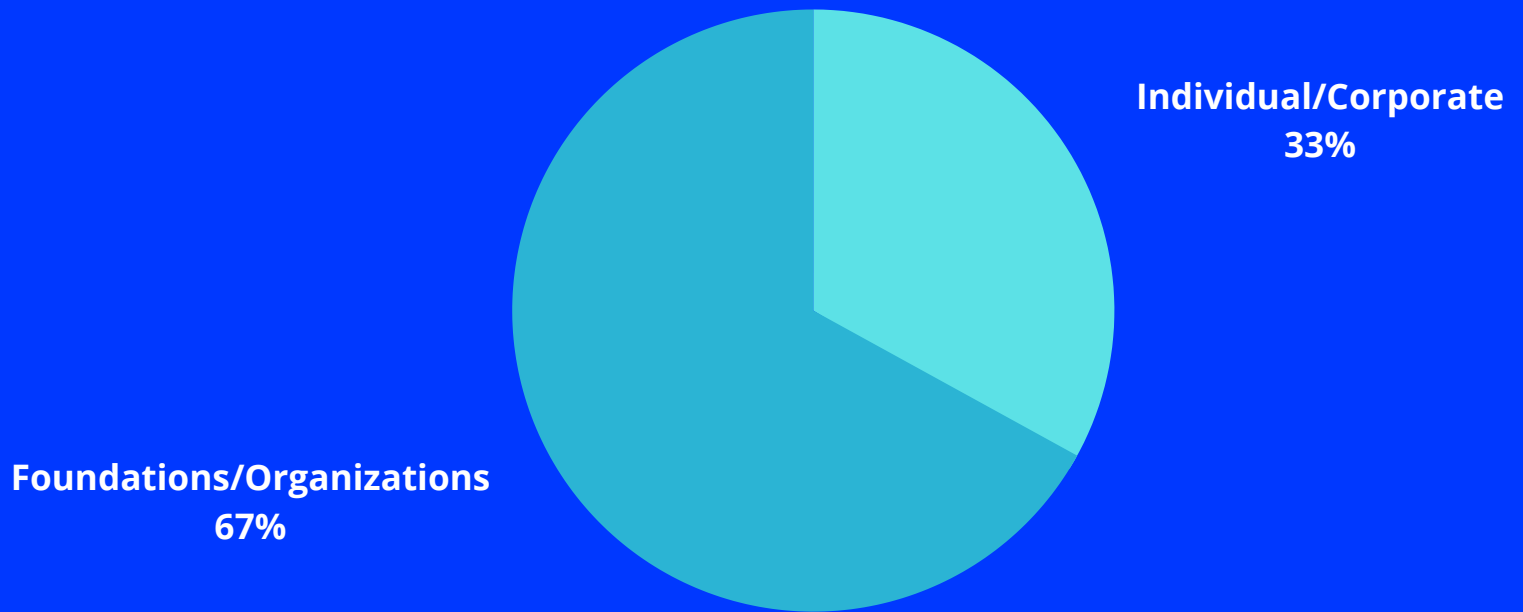
Mr. Michael Baskin
Boca Rio Foundation
Mr. Chad Gottsegen
Mr. John Ioannou
JM Family Enterprises
Marine Industries Association of Palm Beach County
Mr. Matthew McKay
Mr. Lucas Metropulos
Networking to Help Children
Mr. Mickey Nolen
Mr. Juan Pellerano
The Quantum Foundation
Mr. Barry Schnittman
Ms. Carolyn Schulein
Rev. David Taylor and Mrs. Pilar Forero Taylor

2021 CONTRIBUTORS

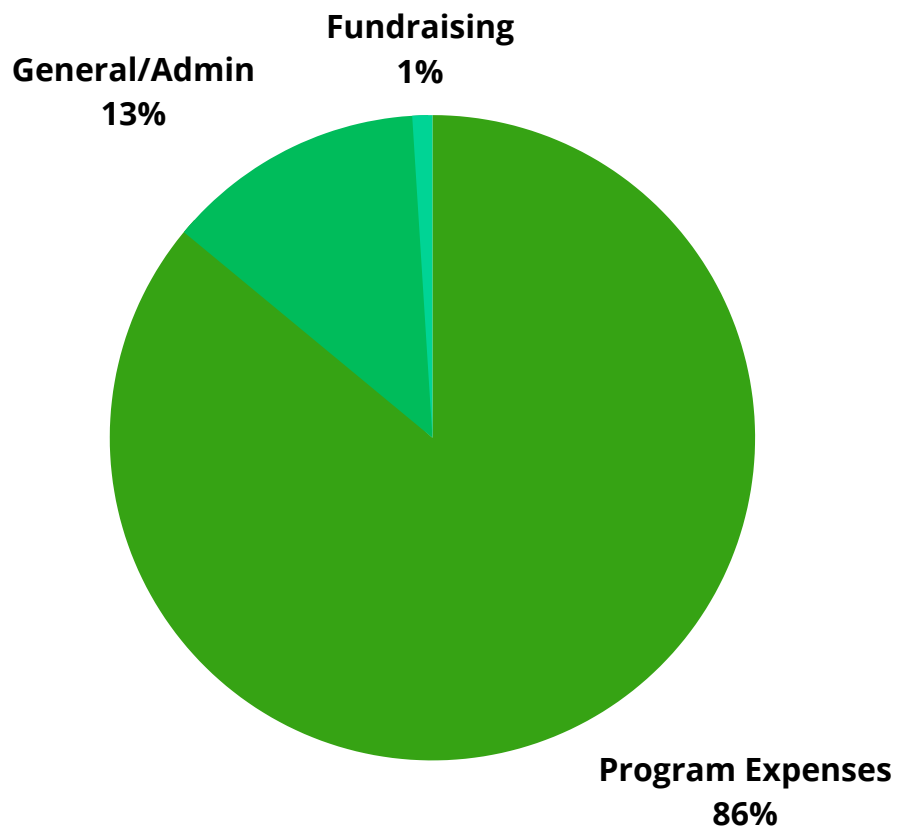
EVERYDAY HERO: \$1 - \$999

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SOURCES OF INCOME

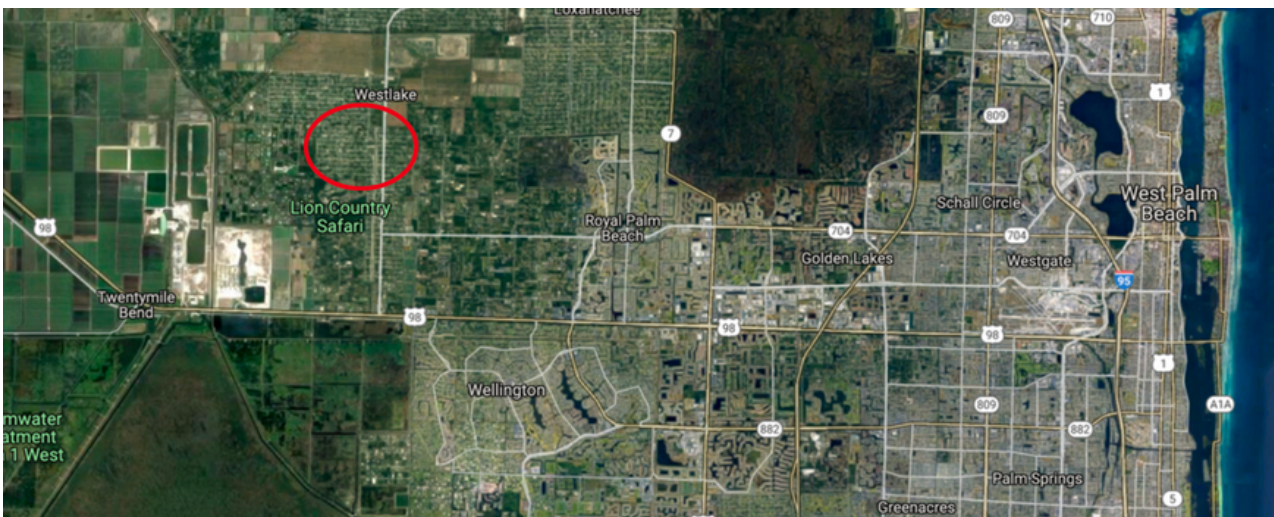


EXPENSES



THE YEAR AHEAD

We are extremely excited to announce the expansion of our Aquaponics Food Security & Education Program. Recently we acquired a 2-acre parcel of land in Loxahatchee, FL to serve as the future site of our aquaponics food production facility. Sitting adjacent to Lion Country Safari, we will be building a 20,000+ square foot aquaponics farm to expand our food security efforts throughout Palm Beach County. We will be seeking to raise \$1.5 million for this project. Thank you to the many supporters who have helped launch the Aquaponics Food Security & Education Program and believe in our ability to scale this great initiative. You can learn more about the expansion [HERE](#).



SPONSORS



THANK YOU FOR AN AMAZING YEAR!

