



Dear Friend,

Thank you for your support of KIND in the past year. 2022 was filled with change and we are emerging from these transitions filled with gratitude, clarity, and hope. We want to share a bit more about that with you.

Last year started with two significant changes; **first, our highest-volume clinic in Commerce City began construction on its new home after years of careful planning and fundraising.** As of May, we completed and re-opened an expanded-capacity clinic inside the innovative Commerce City Community Campus, or the C4 as it's come to be known. We were even honored by a guest visit and endorsement from Governor Jared Polis at our grand opening!

The second transition was unexpected, as we learned in January 2022 that our donated administrative offices were to be torn down with only 60 days' notice. Our community came together, and KIND's administrative offices and clinic now share the same location within the C4 in Commerce City. While no longer "free", this space answered an unrealized need for connectedness amongst our internal teams and within our community.

As we navigated these challenges-turned-opportunities, we were encouraged by successes such as the **full-scale return of our beloved Chopper Topper school-based program**, including its **expansion into new school districts.** We were also proud to be recognized by thought leaders such as US Senator John Hickenlooper, ADA Director Dr. Jane Grover, the Adams County Commissioner's board, amongst others.



By 2025 we will

Embed oral health's integral role in a child's healthy development

Increase health equity for underserved youth

Empower dental health advocacy *In and By* the communities we serve

These external recognitions reflect the mounting internal shift at KIND towards patient empowerment.

This shift began during the pandemic and first materialized in 2021 with the growth of our team to include Community Dental Health Coordinators (CDHC's). We also brought on our first Promotora, Anid Naranjo, whose work has focused on bridging gaps for families by addressing the social determinants of health

This year, Anid worked alongside Erin Metz, our newly-promoted Director of Partnerships, to **launch a Family Partners program as a means to elevate community voices into places of power in KIND's program design.** The valuable contribution of Family Partners has quickly evolved from a small pilot into a potential catalyst to scale community-led oral health advocacy, amplifying marginalized voices into the community, state, and national circles.



In reflecting on this progress, we find ourselves faced with the same reality as many direct services organizations—that the answers to the problem we exist to address extend beyond offering high-quality programs and services, to persisting systemic inequities.

Our approach to addressing systemic inequities for 2023 and beyond is to build upon the groundwork we've laid through our Family Partners program and CDHCs. Early this year, we will be conducting needs assessments and strategic planning sessions with our Family Partners.

Through their leadership, we endeavor to create the first community-led oral health advocacy group in Colorado, based on the Promotora- model of care.

Of course, we cannot do this work alone. Community-led advocacy work and care navigation is still largely unfunded within the framework of our healthcare systems, especially within oral health. **Your continued investment in our vision forward in 2023 will improve quality, outcomes, and cultural relevancy across KIND's longstanding programs and services.**

In pursuit of our 2023 vision, we want to let you know of our plans to scale back our special events in the coming year. While we still intend to gather, something no longer sits well with us about spending thousands of dollars and valuable staff effort planning dinners and golf outings to support our families, while those same families often struggle to put dinner on the table.

We have decided to “ungala” this year, and host fewer events that feel more authentic to our community—events that allow you, our supporters, and fellow health equity warriors, to connect directly with those we serve through cultural celebrations and gatherings. We look forward to sharing more about those plans with you soon, but feel free to email me anytime if you have questions: eburbee@kindsmiles.org

We need your help to ensure that critical donor-based funding continues! While we understand that fewer events could result in less financial support, we know that our shared belief in **a healthy smile and body for every child** is what drives your investment in our work. We are so grateful for your partnership, and as always, welcome you to make plans to join us again in 2023.

In health equity,

Ellie Burbee

Executive Director



Kids In Need Of Dentistry

Kids in Need of Dentistry's (KIND) mission is to increase the oral health and happiness of Colorado children in need by eliminating dental disease through treatment and education.