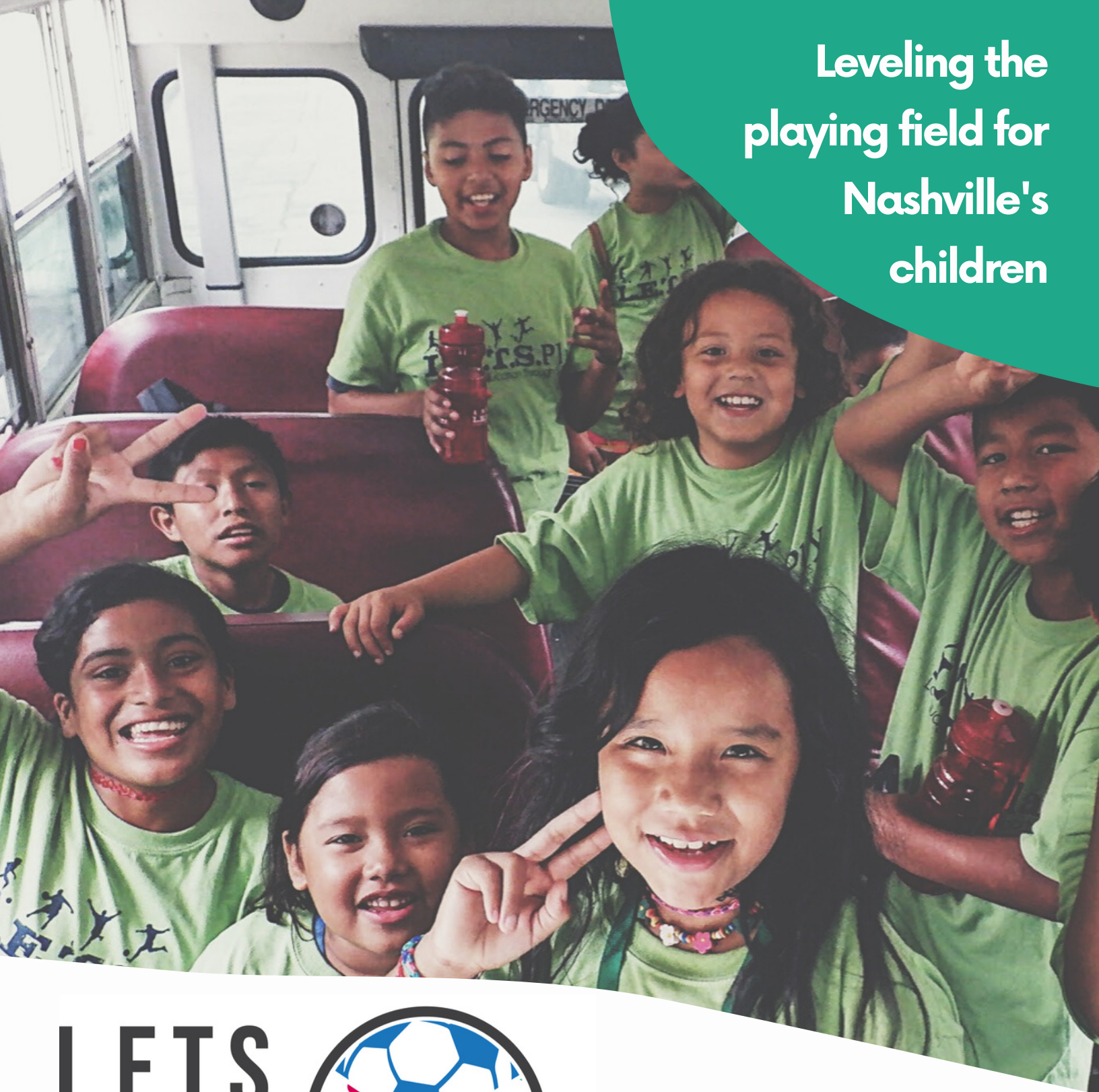


Leveling the  
playing field for  
Nashville's  
children



**L.E.T.S.  
PLAY**



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**ANNUAL REPORT  
2020**

# OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

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Dear L.E.T.S. Play family,

As we reflect on the past year, one thing is certain—our community has overcome significant challenges, and we have done it together.

More so than any other year, L.E.T.S. Play has relied on partnerships to help us reach students throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. After our school-based programming was shut down because of school closures, we worked with Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) to create virtual content that every student could access during the MNPS Virtual Summer Experience.

Thanks to funders like the Nashville Predators Foundation and Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency, we were able to provide masks and other personal protective equipment and make the necessary accommodations to host a two-week summer camp, albeit with fewer students than usual and with some modifications to our regular programming. Campers and staff practiced social distancing, wore masks, washed their hands regularly, and kept up-to-date with the latest information about the COVID-19 spread in our community. Without these resources, it would have been impossible to keep our campers and staff safe while having fun.

When cases spiked in Nashville during the summer, L.E.T.S. Play quickly pivoted to reimagine our second camp. Rather than host a traditional soccer camp, our senior staff traveled to apartment complexes where a significant portion of our students live and led fitness challenges that provided outdoor activity for our students while emphasizing greater social distancing. A note from our Executive Director provides some insight into how students were feeling during the pandemic, “Students were clearly longing to play with others. Their energy had been so confined during the lockdown, that it burst forth, whether sprinting in our fully distanced camp, playing ultimate frisbee in the full camp, or engaging in English interviews. The need for affirmation, achievement, and resolution was clear. We are proud of how our community has engaged students in need of attention during this trying year.”

And finally, thanks to our donors, we had our best fundraising year yet. In the spring, we hosted a virtual campaign for The Big Payback—#LETSPlayatHome—where we showed you how to stay active while adhering to Nashville’s Stay at Home order. This fall, our Virtual Global Soiree invited you to learn about L.E.T.S. Play while celebrating the diverse cultures represented among Nashville’s immigrant and refugee communities.

While the pandemic is not yet over and there are many prevailing challenges in our community, we want to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support of L.E.T.S. Play.

With gratitude,



Board Chair



Executive Director

# THE NEED

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**100+**

**LANGUAGES ARE SPOKEN BY  
METRO NASHVILLE PUBLIC  
SCHOOL STUDENTS**

**20%**

**OF MNPS STUDENTS ARE  
ENGLISH LEARNERS**



L.E.T.S. Play serves children ages 6-13 in the greater Nashville area, the majority of whom speak English as a second language. Our refugee and immigrant students come from all over the world and speak many different languages.

Many students who are English Language Learners struggle academically for a variety of reasons. We believe ELL students need creative, inclusive, and fun learning environments in order to feel comfortable, be engaged, build authentic relationships with peers, and confidently participate in their own learning and comprehension.

The path to English proficiency can be frustrating, especially without the right type of support and programming to keep students motivated. L.E.T.S. Play seeks to combine the fun of sports with English skill-building practice to keep students active, engaged, and eager to learn.

## OUR MISSION

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**L.E.T.S. Play builds language skills  
and confidence for students  
through sports while establishing  
lasting partnerships with schools  
and communities.**

# 2020 BY THE NUMBERS



**69** CHILDREN SERVED



**7** LANGUAGES SPOKEN

**10** NATIONALITIES REPRESENTED

**94%** PERCENTAGE OF SUMMER STUDENTS WHO ARE LOW- OR VERY-LOW INCOME

**11%** AVERAGE INCREASE IN TEST SCORES ACROSS ENGLISH PROFICIENT STUDENTS



**14%** AVERAGE INCREASE IN TEST SCORES ACROSS NON-ENGLISH PROFICIENT STUDENTS

**5** NASHVILLE AREA COMMUNITIES SERVED



# SUCCESS STORIES

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Amisa is from the country with the world's longest running and most deadly conflict since World War II—the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Amisa has participated in L.E.T.S. Play programming for the past three years.

Amisa says that, while she feels safe in her community, at school she worries about gangs, being ostracized as a refugee, and doing something wrong that offends someone else and puts her in danger.

While Amisa has only been in the United States for about five years, her English has greatly improved and she makes good grades at school. With her positive attitude, zest for play, and concern for the other children in her neighborhood, Amisa is a natural leader among her peers.

In her post-summer interview, she said, "I love myself because I'm active and I like spending time with people. I want to work for L.E.T.S. Play as a counselor next year!"



**ANDREW**



**AMISA**

Andrew is the son of Mexican immigrants who speak Spanish at home. 2020 was Andrew's first year with L.E.T.S. Play.

During the pandemic, Andrew relished the opportunity for safe, organized play alongside children his age from other neighborhoods.

His constant enthusiasm and excitement won the hearts of his counselors and his performance gained the respect of his peers. Between the beginning and the end of summer camp, Andrew's English test scores increased from 57% to 93% (out of 100%)!

Andrew hopes to participate in L.E.T.S. Play's programming again next year.

# LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

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In 2020, L.E.T.S. Play continued to partner with the Nashville Mayor's Office's Opportunity Now initiative by employing Nashville teens as mentors and coaches for our summer programming.

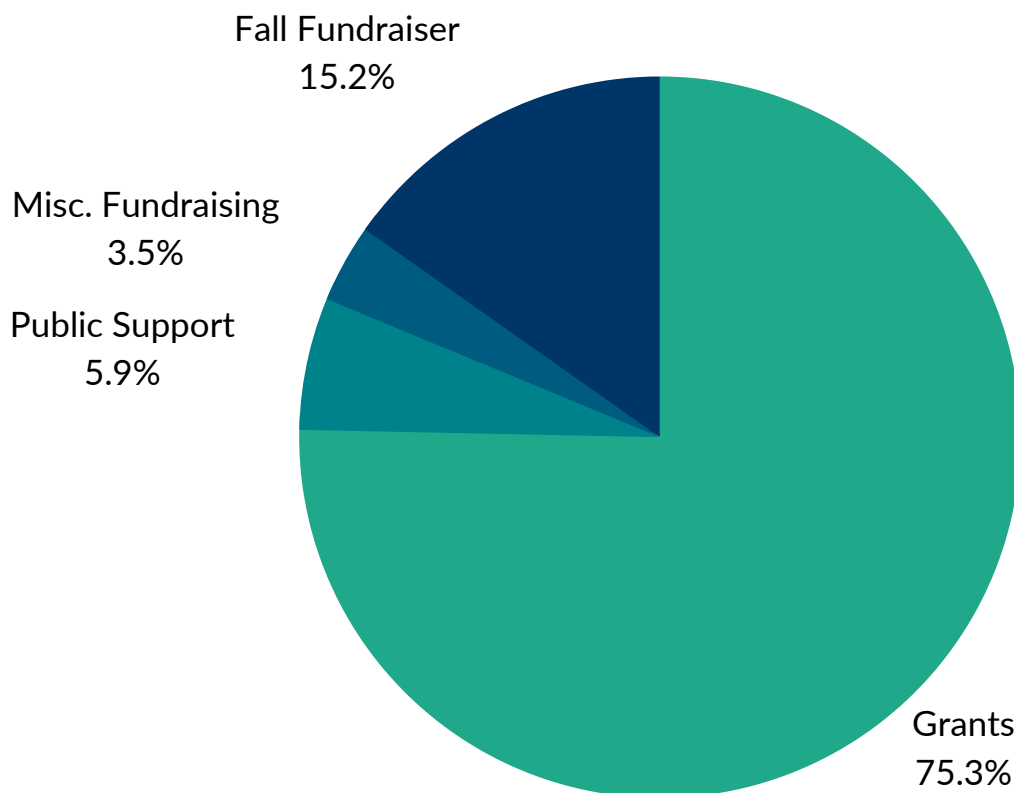


For the third consecutive year, L.E.T.S. Play worked with high school staff to develop professionalism, self-awareness, responsibility, and confidence. The teens developed skills and knowledge in English instruction, diversity and inclusion, setting healthy boundaries, and non-violent communication. As we have come to expect, they delivered!

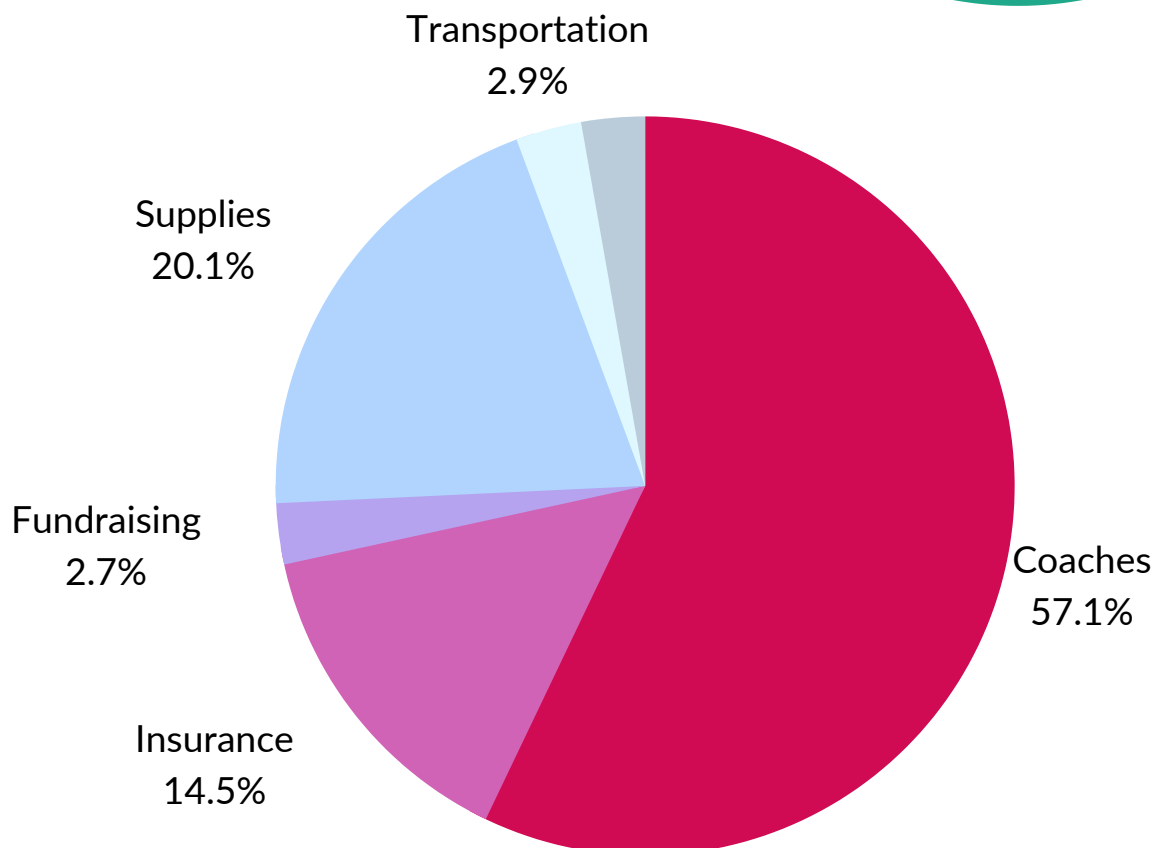


# OUR FINANCES

## INCOME



## EXPENSES



**Thank you  
2020 donors &  
community  
partners!**



LEAD Public Schools  
Madison Little League  
Metro Nashville Public Schools  
Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency  
Montgomery Bell Academy  
Nashville International Center for Empowerment  
Nashville Mayor's Office  
Nashville Predators Foundation  
The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee  
The Nashville Food Project  
The Sandra Schatten Foundation  
Tusculum Cumberland Presbyterian Church  
University School of Nashville  
Whitsett Elementary School



# GET INVOLVED

TO LEARN MORE, VISIT  
[www.languagesthroughsports.org](http://www.languagesthroughsports.org)



## VOLUNTEER

We are almost entirely volunteer-run and always in need of volunteers to coach, help with events, and provide organizational support.

## JOIN

Join our volunteer board of directors. We would love to have you!

## FUNDRAISE

Help us plan fundraisers throughout the year or host one yourself!

## DONATE

Make a tax-deductible donation to help support our programming.

## FOLLOW

@letsplaynashville

