

3399 BAY RD



**pau**  
CENTER

**2023-24**

**ANNUAL  
IMPACT REPORT**

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## ON PEOPLE POWER, SUSTAINABILITY, AND EVOLUTIONS IN STRATEGY

Dear Community,

It is with great pride and deep gratitude that I present the Pal Center's Annual Impact Report. This report not only reflects our work over the past year, but also illustrates the commitment of our staff, the trust we have earned in the community, and the shared vision that continues to guide us as we execute our mission.

During the past year, we focused on improving the effectiveness of our organization and optimizing the efficiency of our operations to ensure every resource is maximized and every process refined to better meet the needs of those we serve. This pursuit of operational excellence helped us deliver services more efficiently and effectively, paving the way for greater impact on residents of Redwood City and North Fair Oaks.

At the heart of our success is our incredible team. Their talents, dedication, and commitment to the mission are the foundation upon which all of our achievements stand. We worked hard over the past year to support our team through expanded professional development opportunities and improved support systems that encourage growth and build upon their many strengths. This year's report highlights their invaluable contributions and the profound difference they continue to make in the community, including special recognition of Jade Martinez on page 6.

Our staff is also integral to our effort to elevate sustainability as a cornerstone of our approach, not only in preserving resources but also in fostering resilience and adaptability throughout the organization and the broader community.





Our combined efforts have led to tangible, positive improvements in the lives of those we serve, and the stories in this annual report bear witness to that impact. Consider the story on page 16 about Camila, the shy elementary school student who blossomed under the Pal Center’s mentorship program to the extent that she now feels confident mentoring some of our younger students. Her story is just one of many that demonstrate how our strategies and our everyday actions bear fruit in the community.

Our motto at the Pal Center is to move at the pace of trust. We strive to build genuine relationships in the community and among our many stakeholders and to earn trust by listening and demonstrating that we understand their ever-evolving needs. Moreover, we seek to challenge systems that no longer support the outcomes our community expects and deserves, so that our work will make a lasting difference.

We look to the future with a deep sense of responsibility and excitement. We are grateful for how far we have come, and we are ready to do more to elevate our community to new heights. Together, with your continued support and partnership, we will create an even brighter and more prosperous future for all.

With sincere appreciation to you for being an integral part of our journey



*Ivan Martinez*

**Ivan Martinez**  
*Executive Director*  
Pal Center

## JADE MARTINEZ: THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND EXCELLENCE

Jade Martinez is a dynamic leader, innovator, and advocate for youth development as the Associate Director of Pal Center. Bringing a wealth of experience as a program manager, youth development leader, and behavioral specialist, Jade has been an integral part of Pal Center's growth and impact since 2019.

Before joining the team, Jade dedicated a decade to The Edgewood Center for Children and Families in San Mateo County, where she honed her expertise in managing programs for at-risk youth. Her journey with Pal Center began as a volunteer for its art classes, driven by her passion for working alongside elementary students.

Though initially unpaid, Jade found fulfillment in contributing to the community. Recognizing her immense value, Pal Center Executive Director Ivan Martinez told her, "You are way too essential for our activities. I would feel much better about paying you and knowing you are a part of our team."

Jade accepted the role of arts instructor, and her impact quickly transcended expectations. She demonstrated exceptional skills in developing trauma-informed curricula, streamlining operations, organizing family engagement events, and fostering staff development. Within just over a year, her contributions earned her the title of Operations Manager, as she seamlessly stepped into a leadership role that enhanced the organization's efficiency and culture.

In 2022, Jade became Pal Center's Associate Director, working closely with Ivan to lead the organization's mission. "I can always trust that the job will get done right when Jade is around," said Ivan Martinez. "There's no better feeling for an ED. Her reliability allows me to approach my tasks with great ease and determination."

Jade's love for art remains central to her work, sparking creativity and inspiring others in the process. She is deeply committed to creating environments where young people can develop critical life skills, explore their passions, and build meaningful connections. Her dedication to youth and family-centered programs has elevated Pal Center's impact within the community.

We should refer to her as the "queen of optimization," but she likes Jade Star! Jade thrives in moments of change and challenge. Her ability to lead with grace, ambition, and innovation has solidified her reputation as a trusted figure within the organization and beyond.

Whether designing groundbreaking programs or empowering her team, Jade's contributions consistently drive progress and transformation. Jade Martinez exemplifies leadership, compassion, and vision. Her contributions to Pal Center continue to leave a lasting legacy, creating brighter futures for youth and inspiring those around her to aim higher every day.



# FROM WHAT'S OUR WHY TO HERE IS OUR HOW: INTRODUCING PAL CENTER'S FUTURE FORWARD PROJECT

It's hard to believe, but we are closing in on our 30-year anniversary! Founded as the Redwood City Police Athletic League in 1995, we evolved into the Police Activities League in 2004, and then we transitioned into Pal Center in 2023. Our transition to Pal Center, which involved a comprehensive rebrand, recognizes the moment we are in and our deployment of a comprehensive, systems-level approach to rooting out systemic racism, breaking the school-to-prison pipeline, and reversing the effects of decades of neglect and disinvestment in our community.

Today, our approach includes leveraging the strengths of our community and building upon pre-existing assets to create a model for sustainable change that can be replicated and scaled. Our approach encompasses **social equity**, **economic empowerment**, and **public safety** through a proven, Community Capital Development Framework.

“Community Capitals” are the seven areas of investment every community needs to thrive (natural, cultural, human, social, political, financial, and built). We envision our ongoing strategic investments across these capitals creating greater opportunity for our community members to realize their potential and recognize their power to shape their realities. For example, we invest in our community's political capital by elevating their voice and fostering trusted spaces for them to speak directly to elected officials and policy leaders.

Our Future Forward Project also seeks to address social determinants of physical and mental health: those non-medical factors such as socioeconomic status, community engagement, and geographic location that affect our health. For example, our Community for Wellness and Community as Medicine initiatives are designed not only to improve individual health, but also to address loneliness and isolation, which harms individuals and the overall community.

Investing in and building upon these evidence-based frameworks has the potential to significantly improve the health, safety, economic mobility, and well-being of our community.

## **Objectives of Pal Center's Future Forward Project:**

Strengthen Social Equity: Pal Center promotes cultural wealth by celebrating and integrating diverse cultural backgrounds and interest-based activities into all aspects of our programs, thereby fostering an inclusive environment and increased sense of belonging in the community.

Promote Economic Empowerment: Through financial literacy workshops, workforce development opportunities, and paid internships, we help the community members we serve to build strong economic foundations and develop pathways to generational wealth.

Improve Public Safety: Relying on our ever-strengthening alliances with first responders and our holistic approach to community well-being, we bridge the gap between the community and public safety officials to generate trust and mutual understanding.



## CORE PROGRAM #1: COMMUNITY CARE & ENRICHMENT

This component offers a K-8 after-school program to introduce children to new activities and nurture social-emotional educational development through tutoring, creative arts, hands-on science experiments, and mentorship. We also offer organized sports and recreational activities to expose kids to building their physical and mental health, character, and confidence.

### Goals and Impacts:

- Help kids feel safe and excited about playing and making new friends
- Increase the number of positive relationships kids have with adults
- Equip kids with the emotional and social awareness to tackle life's daily challenges
- Increase number of kids enrolled in after-school programs
- Give kids more strength- and interest-based activities to choose from
- Provide training opportunities for youth mentors
- Create an inclusive community where kids feel safe, supported, and motivated
- Cultivate confidence and lifelong learning



# 650+

*Youth participants per year*

### Program Partners:

- Redwood City School District
- One Life
- College Advising Prep
- Friends for Youth
- Siena Youth Center
- City of Redwood City
- Tina Music Group
- Free Guitars for Kids
- First Tee of Silicon Valley
- Boys & Girls Clubs of the Peninsula.



## CORE PROGRAM #2: COMMUNITY FOR WELLNESS

This component centers on weekly, motivation-based health and wellness coaching in a supportive community to address isolation and other social determinants of health.

### Goals and Impacts:

- Reduce isolation
- Increase activity and exercise
- Encourage healthful eating habits
- Leverage community-based life coaching to reinforce healthy habits and reduce unnecessary hospitalizations
- Create a sustainable, long-term, community wellness ecosystem
- Build a community-powered network of neighborhood health activists
- Increase weekly minutes of exercise and daily servings of healthy food
- Produce measurable improvements in health outcomes (blood pressure, depression, anxiety, etc.)



# 125+

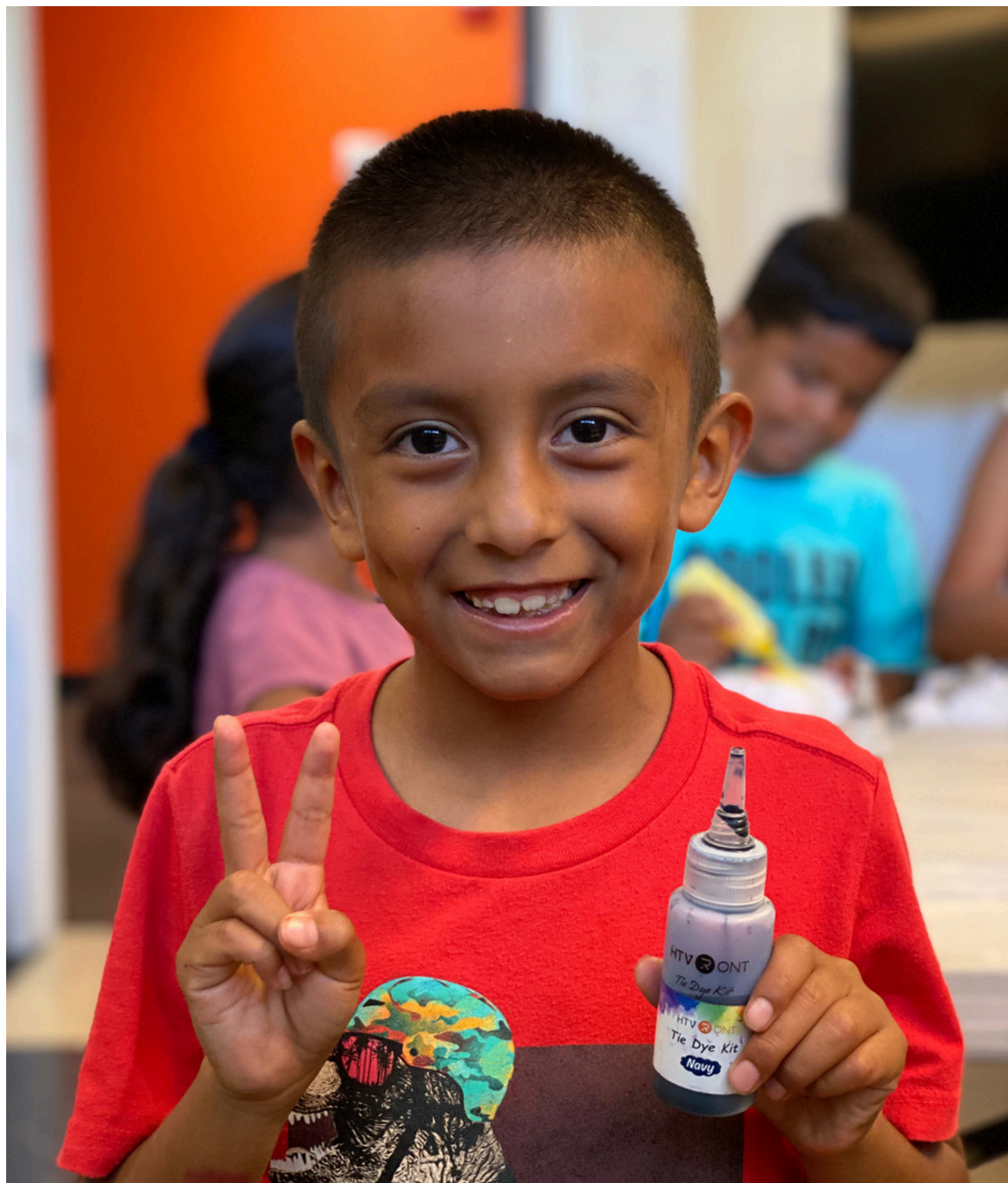
*Adult participants per year*

### Program Partners:

- Open Source Wellness (OSW)
- Community-based Life Coaches



## THE POWER OF OUR PROGRAMS



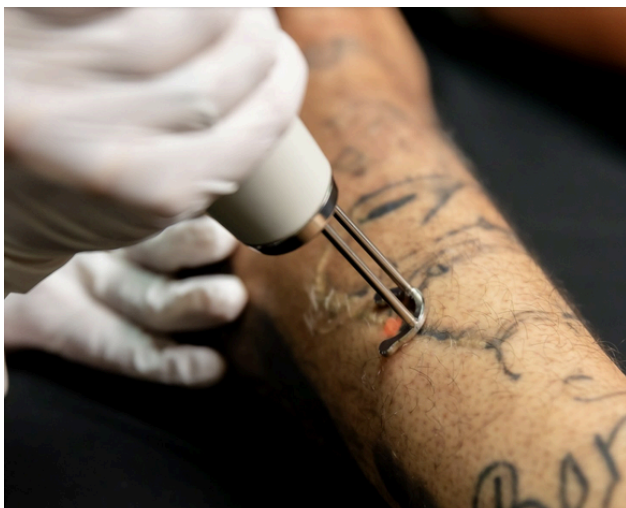
Pal Center programs are the primary way we serve our community day-in, day-out, day after day. Community members of all walks of life benefit from those programs. Here are capsules describing some of our programs followed by a series of stories about how Pal Center programs impact individuals.

## TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH COMMUNITY AND COLLABORATION

Each holiday season, Pal Center and RCPD bring joy to hundreds of families in Redwood City and North Fair Oaks through a Toy Drive in collaboration with the Fair Oaks Community Center, RWC Fire, Sheriffs, and a corps of community volunteers. The hustle and bustle that brings together all these partners in the effort to collect toys, gift wrapping and delivery is true testament to the power of community and key agencies pulling together to delight our youth. Beyond the gifts of the toys themselves, our joint effort gives kids the comfort of knowing they are seen, cared for, and valued.



Pal Center collaborates with RCPD and the San Mateo County Probation Office to offer a free Tattoo Removal service. Removing tattoos that stigmatize their bearers due to their past life circumstances gives those individuals increased opportunities for a balanced life as well as educational and employment opportunities. In turn, recipients of the tattoo removal services are more likely than before to fully re-integrate into the community and contribute to its advancement.





# COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS AND EVENTS



In addition to the day-to-day programs Pal Center runs, frequent special events bring our community together whether for information, inspiration, or just plain fun! Here are the highlights from 2023-2024 events.

## College Career and Community Fair

We provide teens and young adults with invaluable opportunities to connect with local colleges, explore career paths, and engage with community leaders. The event was a vibrant platform for empowerment, with participants leaving inspired and equipped for their future endeavors. A special thanks to College Prep, Cañada College, and the City of Redwood City.



## 4th of July Parade

Our staff led the community in the downtown Redwood City 4th of July Parade, debuting our first float and showcasing our mascot – Promise, The Polar Bear. The vibrant display and enthusiastic participation ignited pride and joy, making it a memorable event for everyone who attended.

## Proclamation of Youth Day in Redwood City

On August 28, 2023, we celebrated a historic moment with the Proclamation of Youth Day in Redwood City. Pal Center was the first organization to receive this recognition highlighting the importance of youth empowerment in our community, and the event was a resounding success, marking a new era of opportunities for our young people.



## National Night Out with the Police Department

National Night Out was a tremendous success, bringing together our community and local first responders in a night of camaraderie and fun. The event strengthened bonds, built trust, and reinforced our commitment to creating safer, more connected neighborhoods.

## Copita Soccer Festival

The Copita Soccer Festival in partnership with the American Youth Soccer Organization kicked off with high energy, drawing families and soccer enthusiasts from all around. The day was filled with exciting matches, team spirit, and community togetherness, leaving everyone with smiles and a sense of achievement.



## Pal-O-Ween

Pal-O-Ween was once again a “spooktacular” success, transforming our street into a haunted wonderland with more than 700 people in attendance. The night was filled with frights, delights, and a strong sense of community, making it a Halloween to remember!



## Holly Jolly Fiesta

The Holly Jolly Fiesta brought the festive spirit to life, with more than 200 members gathering to celebrate the joy of the season in our community center. The event was filled with holiday cheer, warm connections, and lasting memories, making it a heartwarming celebration for all.



## Health & Harmony Music Festival

The Health and Harmony Music Festival transformed downtown Redwood City Square into a vibrant celebration of wellness and community, energized by our amazing partners and enthusiastic community members. Live music, dancing, and a lively atmosphere, brought people together to enjoy the rhythms of health and harmony.

## Golf Tournament

This tourney was way over par, just like Ivan's scorecard! Our first-ever partnership with Stanford University made it our best tournament to date. Supporters gathered to tee off for a cause, raising funds to directly benefit our summer programs. Thanks to all our participants for making it such a special day.



## Impact Night

Impact Night was an inspiring celebration of the achievements of local organizations and the youth involved in our programs. The evening highlighted the power of collaboration, showcasing the positive change we create collectively. Attendees left motivated to continue making a difference in our community. Special thanks to SV2 and Redwood City Together.

## Día Del Niño

Día Del Niño was a joyful celebration dedicated to the children of our community. The day was filled with fun activities, games, and laughter, making it a memorable occasion for families and a reminder of the importance of cherishing our young ones.



## Community All Stars

The annual Community All-Stars event brought together community organizers, first responders, and residents for a day of sports and camaraderie. The highlight was the Basketball Classic game, where friendly competition and community spirit took center stage, strengthening bonds among all who participated.

## Bike Rodeo & Bike Clinic

The Bike Rodeo was a hit with youth and families, offering a fun and educational experience focused on bike safety and riding skills. The event combined learning with enjoyment, promoting healthy, active lifestyles in our community. Our Bike Repair Clinic provided essential support to local youth, empowering them with hands-on skills to maintain and repair their bikes.



## Employee and Job Fair

The Employee and Job Fair, hosted in partnership with the Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center, was a valuable event connecting community members with local job opportunities. The fair played a crucial role in supporting job seekers and helping them take the next step in their careers.

## INDIVIDUAL IMPACT STORIES

Pal Center programs impact hundreds of lives. That impact is not necessarily immediate, nor is it likely to occur dramatically in one fell swoop. More often, it results from relationships built over time through consistent caring between our staff and those we serve. So many seemingly small everyday acts add up to a lot in the hearts and minds of our community members as they share here in their own words.



Katherine notes that her daughter's motivation to do her homework has increased since starting the after-school program. Her daughter enjoys coming to the Pal Center and enjoys participating in the sports leagues, which has had a profound impact on helping her focus on tasks.

Said Katherine: “The program has been immensely helpful. It has made her feel more motivated. She likes going to Pal Center to see her friends. All of this has been to her favor. I've considered her more friendly and sociable, and her vocabulary has improved.

Luis has found Pal Center's support groups beneficial as a source of connection to partner organizations, such as Una Vida.

Said Luis: “I have gained a deeper understanding of a wide range of topics through these groups around mental health and family health. I was having a tough time, and it has helped me a lot, especially the organization One Life. Now I go to therapy with them, and they have helped me so much. All of the shared information has helped. I got to meet my therapist at the focus groups at Pal.”

Soila most benefited from a Pal Center Coffee and Community Event, especially for the chance to engage in conversations with others about various topics. “It was a moment where I felt very comfortable and at home with the community,” she said. “The event left a strong impression on me, and I enjoyed it so much that I made sure to mark the date on my calendar to ensure I wouldn't miss any of the sessions.

“I liked all of the chats I had and how Rocio has made us feel as a family, providing breakfast in the morning and then continue with our conversations. I liked how the day started and how space is held for us. I would temporarily forget my problems, and it allowed me to connect with more people.”

## CCE (AFTER-SCHOOL) & SUMMER SUNRISE PROGRAM IMPACTS

Camila was initially quite shy with classmates and mentors. However, over the course of the year, she ended up becoming an assistant to Pal Center's kindergarten mentor. Camila helped by walking the children to the pick-up area and, after finishing her own homework and enrichment activities, made a significant impact by assisting younger students with their reading and homework.



Said Camila's mother: "The program helped Cami, a lot. At the beginning she did not want to participate. But after some time, she began blossoming and shining within. She enjoyed her peers to the point of demonstrating leadership qualities in her class. It was beautiful to watch the process of her personal evolution.

"One day, Camila's mentors showed her class how to build a cardboard radio. She came home excited, told me how she was able to build it, and imitated how the music would come out. Camila is a smart girl, but at the beginning, it was a challenge with her grades. With Pal's support she was able to get help. I come from Mexico, and the education system here is different. It's been so helpful finding Pal because they have put a lot of effort into helping her.

"For Cami, it has been a beautiful experience. She wants to continue going to Pal, and it has motivated her to participate more. She has become a different person since her first day. The program has supported me a lot, and I have also been able to meet personal goals, as a mother, knowing my daughter is in great hands, all thanks to the program."

## COMMUNITY POWER PATH PROGRAM IMPACTS: PACE, YEEE, VOICE

Evelin, newly arrived to the United States, has benefited from the program, despite the difficulty she experienced in comparison with peers who arrived at a younger age. Pal Center has filled gaps that helped prepare her for high school and in the long term.

Said Evelin: “The program has helped me meet new people and taught me how to make healthy friendships. It has allowed me to trust more in people and know that I am not alone. Something I learned from the pace program is to always think positively. You are able to overcome anything if you work hard, have a strong community, and are passionate.

“It was nice meeting the leaders like Gustavo from the credit union or Castro because they always looked like they were having fun and were friends with Tito, and that taught me that I can be passionate about my hobbies and still be in community. I want to help people, and it was cool to participate in the financial literacy classes. I love the mentors because they all seem like friends, and they make me feel safe because I know they’ll listen and understand me.”

Osvin has benefited from PACE helping to adjust his point of view and understand that he is not alone. PACE mentors have helped him develop as a young adult, and he has become more confident and open.

Said Osvin: “I already knew Betzy and Tito, and it was cool seeing Alan, Ingrid, and Daniel because they felt more like a friend group, even when they were teaching us something. It’s different from middle school since they taught us real-life skills outside of class, which was better.

“It was great meeting Castro! We got to paint a mural on a rooftop and see all the other murals he’s done. Plus, we got 7/11 slushies, which was my favorite part! I also enjoyed visiting Cañada College and meeting Tito’s friends. They showed us a room with sound bowls, and it was my first time at a college. It’s good to know I have someone I can ask for help now. I would like to see the mentors more often! It doesn’t have to be an event. I like just hanging out with them and visiting new places.”



## STORIES OF IMPACT FROM OUR PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS



### Joel Flores

#### *Siena Youth Center*

“Pal Center is the true friend everyone wants and needs. Our pals at Pal Center are tremendous caretakers of our community, and we at the Siena Youth Center are grateful to know and work with them.”



### Eric Valladares

#### *Family Connections*

“Having the Pal Center as an essential resource for our families has been invaluable. We are excited to deepen our partnership with the Pal Center and are incredibly grateful to their leadership for always keeping the larger community in mind in all of their efforts.”



### Debbi Jones-Thomas

#### *Pal Center Board Member*

“Pal Center’s investment in the community is our vision for the success of Redwood City children and their families.”



### Lt. Villegas

#### *Redwood City Police Department*

“Our teamwork brings kids, officers, and the community closer, making everyone feel more connected and supported. Pal Center’s dedication to guiding and uplifting young people shows how much can be achieved when everyone pitches in for a brighter, stronger future.”



## 2023-24 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW



### Income

Total Income: \$2,577,546.90

### Expenses

Total Expenses: \$2,514,171.50

### Net Gain

Gain: \$63,375.00

Closing out the fiscal year, this overview of our financial performance shows a total income of \$2,577,546.90 and total expenses of \$2,514,171.50, resulting in a net gain. Both our income and expenses were slightly under our projections, reflecting programmatic adjustments we implemented in response to evolving community needs and city dynamics.

### Strategic Reinvestment of Net Gain

The net gain of \$63,375 will be reinvested to support key areas:

#### 1. New Community As Medicine Program

Launching in September 2024, this program will address community health needs, with funds allocated for setup, staffing, outreach, and culturally relevant programming.

#### 2. Staff Retention and Wellness Benefits

To retain our dedicated team amid rising living costs, we are enhancing wellness benefits, including improved health coverage and additional support services.

### Managing Increased Operational Costs

We face rising operational costs, including a 13% increase in health insurance premiums and a \$100,000+ reduction in a school district contract for expanded learning opportunities programs (ELOP) compared with last year. These challenges are significant, but our net gain will help offset these costs.

### Proactive Financial Planning

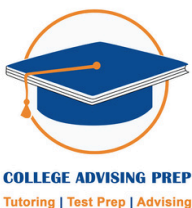
We are conducting a full cost analysis of each of our core programs to mitigate potential funding impacts from external sources, ensuring our ability to sustain successful programs and launch new initiatives. Your continued support is crucial as we navigate these challenges and opportunities, ensuring we continue to enrich the lives of children and families in our community.





# THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

## Community Care and Enrichment Partners



## Community For Wellness Partners



**Community-based  
Life Coaches**

# THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

## Community Power Path Partners



SAN MATEO COUNTY  
OFFICE OF  
EDUCATION



SAN MATEO COUNTY HEALTH  
All together better.



NOVAWORKS

## Capacity Building Partners



Stanford  
HEALTH CARE



OF SAN MATEO COUNTY





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