

Annual Report 2025



Mission 
Graduates



A Message From Our CEO

In times when federal policies threaten to strip our students and families of educational resources and civil rights protections, community partnerships become more than a strategy—they become essential. This year proved that when pathways narrow, our community comes together to build bridges.

Consider what happened during the FAFSA (Federal Application for Free Student Aid) crisis. California saw a 24% drop in applications, with a 44% decline among families with undocumented parents. Students across the state were losing access to financial aid and, with it, their pathway to college. But our students at John O'Connell and Mission High achieved completion rates of 82% and 98%, respectively. How? Teachers, counselors, and Mission Graduates staff worked side by side, holding office hours during Thanksgiving break, making phone calls, and ensuring no student fell through the cracks.

That's community in action.

This responsive spirit defines our work across all programs. The Room to Breathe Project partnered with us to expand Wellness Coordinators to five school campuses to meet students' needs for mental health support. Every partner at Mission High showed up when 102 seniors needed help applying for the new Crankstart Scholarship. Our Parent Partner Program equipped parents to make policy recommendations at ELAC (English Learners Advisory Committee) meetings, giving families a real voice in school decisions. And when we recognized that staying connected through college made the difference, we redesigned our scholarship structure to maintain engagement through graduation.

We measure the impact of everything we do, and we adjust quickly when we see gaps. That nimbleness, rooted in data and driven by our community's needs, is what allows us to respond effectively when challenges emerge.

After more than 50 years in the Mission, we've stayed rooted on 16th Street. Last fall, we invested in our space and opened our doors to celebrate with the community. Neighbors, partners, and supporters—including District 9 Supervisor Jackie Fielder—showed up. Together, we collected enough book donations to stock shelves across all nine of our Extended Day and Beacon sites, a tangible expression of community investment in our students.

The results of this collective effort are clear. All 25 of our College Connect seniors applied to college this year, and 96% enrolled in four-year institutions. Alumni like Esme return to lead in our community. As Beacon Director at Sanchez Elementary, she creates the same family-centered support she once received. Writing partners spend hours each week helping students find their voice. Teachers stay late to review applications. Parents learn alongside their children. Donors rally friends to support our work.

In uncertain times, Mission Graduates remains a constant, adapting to meet changing needs while staying unwavering in our commitment to students and families. The stories in this report show what becomes possible when the community rises together.

Thank you for being part of this essential work.

In Community,



A blue ink handwritten signature of Eddie Kaufman.

Eddie Kaufman, LCSW
Chief Executive Officer

Our Community, Our Mission



OUR MISSION

Mission Graduates empowers youth and their families on the path to higher education, equipping them for fulfilling careers that will strengthen future generations.



THE OPPORTUNITY GAP

San Francisco is one of the most educated cities in the United States. Yet, significant opportunity gaps persist for low-income, first-generation students—particularly immigrant families and students learning English as a second language. These inequities limit educational options for the students who need them most.



HOW WE WORK

Mission Graduates is the catalyst that transforms potential into achievement. We don't replace what schools and families do—we amplify it.

We provide Extended Day and Beacon after-school programs at nine elementary schools, College Access & Career Services at three high schools, our cohort-based College Connect program for high school juniors through college graduation and into careers, and the Parent Partner Program at partnering schools. Together, these create comprehensive support from kindergarten through college graduation and careers.

Research confirms that higher education is vital for breaking generational cycles of poverty. By working alongside schools and families, we help students pursue educational paths that lead to fulfilling careers and economic opportunity.

Who We Serve

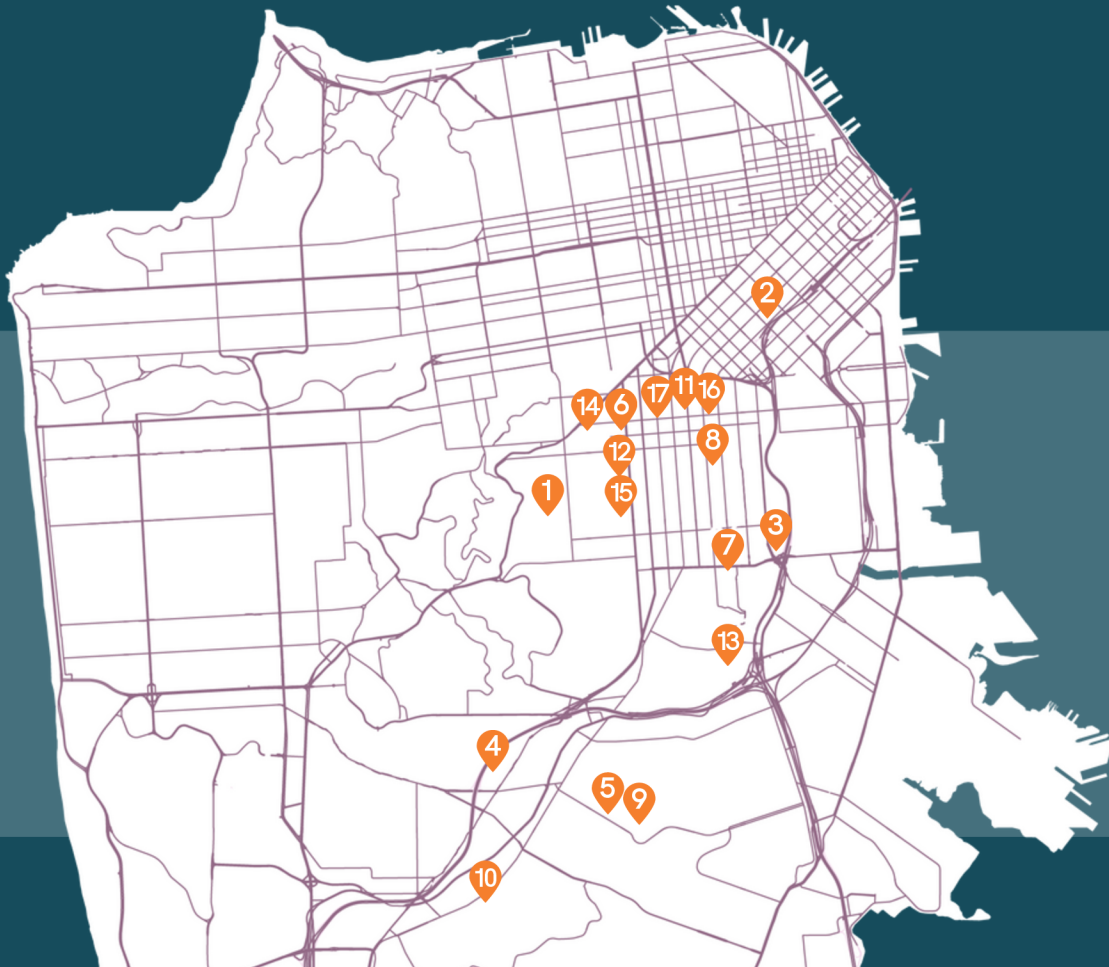
Mission Graduates supports over 3,800 students and families annually across San Francisco:

- 77% Latinx
- 6% African American
- 6% White
- 6% Other backgrounds
- 5% Asian Pacific Islander

This year, 80% of our K-8 students are English Language Learners or qualify for free or reduced lunch. Most will be the first in their families to attend college.



Where We Work



- | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| <p>1 Alvarado Elementary School 625 Douglass St San Francisco, CA 94114</p> | <p>6 Everett Middle School 450 Church St San Francisco, CA 94114</p> | <p>11 Marshall Elementary School 1575 15th St San Francisco, CA 94103</p> | <p>16 College and Career Office 2940 16th St, Ste 301 San Francisco, CA 94103</p> |
| <p>2 Bessie Carmichael School PK-8/FEC 375 7th St San Francisco, CA 94103</p> | <p>7 Leonard R. Flynn Elementary School 3125 Cesar Chavez St San Francisco, CA 94110</p> | <p>12 Mission High School 3750 18th St San Francisco, CA 94114</p> | <p>17 Mission Graduates Headquarters 3040 16th St San Francisco, CA 94103</p> |
| <p>3 Bryant Elementary School 2641 25th St San Francisco, CA 94110</p> | <p>8 John O'Connell High School 2355 Folsom St San Francisco, CA 94110</p> | <p>13 (PPP) Paul Revere Elementary School 555 Tomkins Ave San Francisco, CA 94110</p> | |
| <p>4 (PPP) City Arts & Leadership Academy 350 Seneca Ave San Francisco, CA 94112</p> | <p>9 June Jordan School for Equity 325 La Grande Ave San Francisco, CA 94112</p> | <p>14 Sanchez Elementary School 325 Sanchez St San Francisco, CA 94114</p> | |
| <p>5 Cleveland Elementary School 455 Athens St San Francisco, CA 94112</p> | <p>10 (PPP) Longfellow Elementary School 755 Morse St San Francisco, CA 94112</p> | <p>15 Thomas Edison Charter Academy 3531 22nd St San Francisco, CA 94114</p> | |

Building Foundations Together

Our **Extended Day and Beacon after-school programs** serve over 1,600 students across nine elementary, K-8, and middle schools, focusing on increasing literacy levels among English Language Learners and students below grade level while creating vibrant spaces where learning extends beyond academics. Students participate in everything from project-based learning and science experiments to soccer clubs and cultural celebrations. Families gather for talent shows and community potlucks, strengthening connections between students, families, and schools. When we identify academic needs across our sites, we act—developing targeted interventions and piloting new approaches to accelerate student growth.



When Math Clicks

When fifth-grader **Damian** walks into **TECA's** (Thomas Edison Charter Academy) after-school program each day, he knows exactly what comes first: chilling with his twin brother **Hector** and their friends. But lately, something's shifted. Homework—especially math—has stopped feeling like a chore. "I started listening to the teacher more," Damian explains. "And then I was like, yeah, this is kind of getting easy now."

The numbers tell the story. On a recent math assessment, Damian's score jumped from 197 to 204—a leap that brings a proud grin to his face.

His father, **Edilberto**, has watched the transformation unfold at home. "He was struggling a little bit," he remembers. "Now I see that he has fun doing his homework, especially math. He knows how to do it. He'll finish it fast. He doesn't need help anymore."

The shift happened gradually. At TECA, where all three of his sons have participated in Mission Graduates' after-school program, Damian works with his favorite teacher, **Ms. Annika**, who helps him tackle everything from division problems to multiplication flashcards. His twin brother Hector pitches in too, and together they've turned homework time into something manageable—even enjoyable.

Edilberto and his wife, **Rosalia**, wanted their sons to have the support they could rely on. "We felt like having teachers help them with their homework would help them improve," he says. "And it has."

Director **Priscila Trejo-Martinez** started as a student in our Extended Day program. Now, after 16 years on Mission Graduates' staff, watching students like Damian build confidence is exactly what she knows the program is designed to do. The support extends beyond academics—Damian plays soccer with Hector after school, practices boxing several times a week, and draws encouragement from his older brother Andrew, a high school student who went through the same program.

"This year something shifted," says Edilberto. "They started taking the initiative—making sure homework was finished by Friday, asking for help when they needed it. They've been using Mission Graduates as a tool to help them improve."

Research shows that early academic interventions help students build both skills and confidence—and Damian's experience proves exactly that. When asked what advice he'd give younger students who think something is too hard, his answer is immediate: "Always listen to the teacher, and if you do, it will be easier."

The progress Damian has made isn't an accident—it's the result of consistent, targeted support in a space where he feels safe to try, fail, and try again. Communication among school-day teachers, Mission Graduates after-school staff, and parents keeps everyone aligned—when Damian and Hector occasionally interrupt class because they're together, a quick conversation gets them back on track.

"I know they're in good hands," says Edilberto. "I know they're learning and growing."

For the family, the program has become essential. They even plan their summer vacation around Mission Graduates' summer program, waiting until it ends to travel. "They have a lot of fun," Edilberto says. And the results speak for themselves—the twins are thriving, Andrew is excelling at Lowell High School, and Damian's confidence continues to grow.



MAKING PROGRESS THE NORM: THE MATH JAM PILOT

Damian's success at TECA reflects what our data tells us works. There's a strong correlation between hours of direct academic instruction and student math improvement.

Building on this evidence, Mission Graduates launched the **Math Jam pilot** at Marshall Elementary and Flynn Elementary in fall 2025. The pilot provides twice-weekly targeted math interventions for four classes, with additional coaching for teachers to interpret student data and design interventions based on individual needs. Using assessment tools like Prodigy and STAR, instruction is tailored to each student's skill level. We'll compare test score data between pilot students and their peers to determine the impact and consider scaling options.

The goal is simple: make Damian's progress the norm, not the exception.

100%

100% of principals said that Mission Graduates' programming and events contributed to **a sense of community and belonging** within their schools.

80%

80% of parents said that MG has helped their child **develop new socioemotional skills** this year.

69%

69% of families said that Mission Graduates programming helped **accelerate their children's learning** in math, and 70% said the same for reading.

Parent Partner Program: Amplifying Voices

Our **Parent Partner Program** empowers Latinx families to advocate for their children’s education through workshops, civic engagement, and resource support. Using the Promotora (peer educator) model, we train parent promotoras to lead workshops, facilitate meetings, and support other parents. Parent leaders take on ELAC executive board roles and serve on advisory committees, such as the School Site Council, working alongside promotoras to strengthen their own leadership skills while empowering other parents to become active partners in their children’s academic success.

Building Parent Leadership, One Family at a Time



Luz Maria’s journey with Mission Graduates began 10 years ago when her children were in elementary school at Longfellow Elementary. She attended a principal chat where the principal recommended she join the Parent Partner Program (PPP) and attend the Summer Leadership Institute. “They just threw me into the water,” she recalls. After just one year as a parent leader, staff recognized her potential and encouraged her to become a promotora. She hasn’t looked back.

Now a Promotora Principal serving both **Cleveland Elementary** and **Longfellow Elementary**—even though her own children have long since moved on—Luz Maria has grown from a parent seeking ways to support her own children into a leader who empowers entire communities.

As the K2C (Kindergarten to College) coordinator, she ensures that all promotoras have up-to-date materials and presentations, connects with partners, and supports her colleagues throughout the process of setting up city-funded college savings accounts for SF students. She prefers to think of her role as collaborative rather than hierarchical. “I support all my colleagues in making sure every promotora can help families understand that even saving a small amount for college can make a real difference.”

What drives Luz Maria to take on challenges like representing Mission Graduates at SFUSD’s Latinx Community Council in front of 50 families and the PEDAL substance abuse training initiative? “I like a good challenge, and I know that learning about different initiatives is very important,” she says.

“Even though we’re mainly focused on academics, parents always bring different questions: about technology, about their rights, about resources. I want to support families however I can.”

Her work creates ripples throughout the community. When she teaches parents how to access their K2C accounts during Citibank visits, many don’t realize they have this resource available to them. During ELAC meetings, she guides parents in understanding Title I and Title III funding, helping them recommend how their schools invest in multilingual learners. During the pandemic, she taught parents technology skills to help them navigate virtual learning. “Parents trust me to come to them for things they wouldn’t feel comfortable asking anybody else,” she reflects. This kind of parent-to-parent support creates lasting change. Studies show that family involvement increases the likelihood of enrollment and completion of higher education for first-generation students, even when parents lack college experience themselves.

The most rewarding part? Hearing appreciation from families she’s supported. “It’s confirmation that I’m doing my job well, and they keep coming back with questions.”

Luz Maria’s growth as a public speaker shows the power of the Parent Partner Program’s training. “The processes and tools we get really empower me to practice public speaking,” she says. When she represented Mission Graduates at community events, she built relationships with district officials—connections that help when families need support in navigating the system.

Her advice to other parents? “Don’t feel scared to try new things. There will always be people to support you in your growth. You become a role model for your children.”

“As parents, we’re like the captain of the boat,” Luz Maria says. “With knowledge, resources, and leadership skills, actual change happens—in our families and in our community.”

“Mission Graduates’ promotoras build the kind of trust that makes families comfortable asking questions about college savings—questions they might not ask anyone else.

That peer-to-peer connection has been invaluable in helping more San Francisco families access and use their Kindergarten to College accounts.”



Mohan Kanungo
Program Manager, Kindergarten to College
Office of the Treasurer and Tax Collector



95%

95% of MG ELAC participants reported that being part of their ELAC has given them tools to **advocate for their child’s educational needs**.

100%

100% of principals say that PPP supports their families in being **active partners in their children’s education**.

93%

93% of promotoras grew in at least **five job-skill categories**.

Pathways to College

Mission Graduates offers comprehensive **College Access & Career Services** at the **Future Center at Mission High School, John O'Connell High School, and June Jordan School for Equity**. Our team coordinates services across all three schools, ensuring consistent quality while adapting to each community's unique needs.

Working directly with students from 9th-12th grade, our staff provides personalized support, in-class programming, and college exploration opportunities—from college representative visits and campus tours to hands-on assistance with applications, essays, and financial aid forms.

Future Center: Where Direction Becomes Determination



Diego's high school journey didn't start with clarity. When he began at Leadership High School, his priorities weren't in place. Phone calls home worried his parents. Halfway through sophomore year, he transferred to **Mission High School**, ready for a fresh start—but still uncertain about his future.

That uncertainty began to shift when Diego discovered Mission High's Future Center. He started showing up almost daily during lunch break, taking advantage of everything offered. Scholarship information. Internship opportunities. College application support. Writing partners for his essays. Field trips to campuses. One-on-one help from Mission Graduates staff and partner organizations like UCSF EOP (Early Academic Outreach Program), and JCYC. "Once you join the programs, they give you so many resources," Diego explains. "If you're going to show up to school, you might as well do the work."

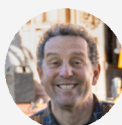
“If you're going to show up to school, you might as well do the work.”

What makes the Future Center so effective is its seamless integration with Mission High's existing programs. AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) teacher Mr. Amadis Velez collaborates closely with Mission Graduates staff to create a system in which classroom instruction and individualized college counseling reinforce one another. Students get support from every direction—no one falls through the cracks.

Six weeks into junior year, Diego received his first honor roll certificate with a 4.0 GPA. “It sparked something inside of me,” he says. Through Future Center connections, he landed a paid internship at the VA Hospital, spending his summer waking up at 5 a.m. to work in the operating room—transporting patients, observing surgeries, and talking with nurses and anesthesiologists about their careers. One conversation about CRNAs (Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists) gave him a clear vision for his future. Evidence shows that early-career exposure through internships helps first-generation students gain career clarity and build confidence—and Diego’s VA Hospital experience proved exactly that.

FUTURE CENTER IMPACT: BUILT ON PARTNERSHIP

“When AVID and the Future Center work together, students get support from every direction. In AVID, we guide students through applications and financial aid as a cohort. In the Future Center, Mission Graduates provides individualized counseling to students and families. Students like Diego always have someone to turn to at every step.”



Amadis Velez
AVID Teacher, Mission High School

98%

98% of Mission High seniors **completed FAFSA applications** this year, compared to a 24% drop statewide.

82%

82% of seniors are **attending four-year colleges**—nearly 3x the statewide rate for Latinx students.

76%

76% of seniors will **receive scholarships or grants**, with 75% saying Mission Graduates helped them secure this funding.

77%

77% of Mission High seniors reported **receiving “a lot of help”** from MG staff in completing college applications, with students visiting the **Future Center** an average of 7 times throughout the year.

Diego is now applying to nursing schools, including the University of Pittsburgh—one of the top-ranked programs in the country. When Mission Graduates staff arranged for a Pitt representative to visit the Future Center, Diego was there with questions informed by his hospital experience.

The natural leadership others see in Diego—leadership he’s still discovering in himself—shows in how he actively brings friends to the Future Center. He doesn’t just benefit from the resources; he wants his peers, especially younger students, to tap into them too. “The resources it provides are amazing,” he says. “I want younger people to get into this. It would have benefited me if I had started earlier.”

That’s what makes Diego’s transformation complete: he went from a student who struggled to find direction to someone who’s now creating pathways for others to follow.

Supporting Students Through Graduation

College Connect commits to each cohort of 25 students for over six years—from junior year of high school through college graduation and into careers. Once in college, students receive individualized coaching and can participate in **Near-Peer Mentoring** for socio-emotional support and the **Career Readiness Series** for career preparation.

Why Staying Engaged Makes the Difference

When **Adam** arrived at **Cal Poly San Luis Obispo**, he knew staying actively involved with Mission Graduates would make a difference. As a **Promise Scholar** recipient—receiving four years of scholarship funding from Mission Graduates along with mentorship and regular check-ins—he also attends Career Readiness workshops on networking and professional skills and stays in touch with staff who continue guiding him through college. “These people helped me get into a really good college and are helping me set my career up,” he reflects. “If you have access to these resources, take advantage of them. They’re going to push you forward.”

As the son of Algerian immigrants who came to this country to build a better future, Adam values having guidance from someone who deeply understands the American college and career system. Regular check-ins with Ana—“How are things going? Are you on top of this?”—keep him accountable. “I do this because I want my parents’ investment in coming to this country to mean something,” he explains.

That commitment has paid off in concrete ways. As a political science major pursuing a blended master’s in public policy with a minor in economics, Adam credits his consistent engagement with keeping him ahead. “I felt like I was ahead, especially first and second year, because I was always on top of things,” he says. His friends are just now starting to think about internships and career planning in their third year—things Adam began working on as a freshman because Mission Graduates kept him focused.

The skills translate directly to professional opportunities. When Adam interviewed for a data analytics internship with the California State Bar—his first professional role—he drew on interview prep from Career Readiness sessions. “Ana always said, ‘Even if you don’t have an answer, sound as confident as you can.’ When I got hired, they told me I had the least experience of any candidate. It was because of how confident and authentic I sounded.”

That internship confirmed his direction: combining data analytics with public policy to create evidence-based solutions. He’s building a professional network through Promise Scholars—including a mentor at the San Francisco District Attorney’s Office—and working with a professor on research, building the multidisciplinary expertise that opens doors in both public service and the private sector.

“Being part of a community of other first-generation students helps me navigate college,” Adam explains. “It reminds me that there are other people out there who don’t have parents guiding them through this. There’s comfort in knowing you’re not alone.”

What would Adam tell incoming College Connect students about staying engaged? “Every year I’ve learned something valuable that helped me get ahead. A lot of people would want this opportunity—don’t let it go to waste.”

Looking toward graduation, Adam hopes to do “work that’s meaningful—work that actually means something to people.” Inspired by Mission Graduates’ model, he’s exploring starting his own nonprofit to support Arab and North African immigrant students. “Mission Graduates was there for me. I want to do the same for others.”



INVESTING IN ENGAGEMENT

Research consistently shows that staying connected makes the difference for first-generation college students. Only 24% of first-generation students graduate within six years, compared to 59% of continuing-generation students. Mission Graduates students receiving persistence support and scholarships achieved on-time graduation at a rate 43% higher than those without the support—and College Connect students who completed our Career Readiness Series graduated at notably higher rates than those who didn't.

Building on this evidence, we launched a new scholarship program this year: all College Connect students receive \$1,000 annually along with regular check-ins with staff, workshop attendance, and participation in career readiness programming. By combining financial support with sustained engagement, we're ensuring every student has what they need to complete their degree.

100%

All 25 College Connect seniors from Cohort 17 **applied to college**, and 96% enrolled in four-year institutions.

95%

95% of College Connect freshmen **persisted into their sophomore year**.

100%

100% of Career Readiness Series participants gained **confidence in negotiating a job offer**.

Alumni: Leading the Next Generation

Mission Graduates alumni return to lead in our community. From Beacon Directors creating family-centered support at elementary schools to professionals mentoring current students through career transitions, our alumni demonstrate the long-term impact of education and perseverance while strengthening our community with their lived experience.

From Student to Catalyst: Building Community from Within



When **Esme** first encountered Mission Graduates at the age of nine, she was simply tagging along with her cousin to College Connect weekend sessions. She didn't know what college was beyond "helping you get a job in the future." Today, as **Beacon Director** at **Sanchez Elementary**, she leads the very programs that once transformed her family's understanding of educational opportunity.

Esme spent years watching her cousin navigate college applications, listening to practice SATs she didn't yet understand, slowly piecing together what higher education could mean. By the time she joined College Connect herself at Galileo High School, she was ready—not just for the workshops and essay support, but for the family partnerships that would prepare both her and her mother for college.

"What I'm really thankful for is how they supported my mom in learning alongside me," Esme reflects. "They didn't have just classes for me. There were workshops for my mom to attend." While Esme learned about applications and financial aid, her mother learned the same, including understanding FAFSA, navigating the process, and preparing for the possibility of attending an out-of-state college. "We were both learning at the same time. My mom was building her own knowledge, and that was powerful for both of us."

BUILDING COMMUNITY SCHOOLS TOGETHER

As the Beacon Director at Sanchez Elementary, Esme is part of the San Francisco Beacon Initiative—a collaborative model in which community-based organizations and public schools implement high-quality community schools with shared leadership and integrated youth and family voices.

The families at Sanchez—many newcomer and immigrant families, many living in shelters, most facing daily challenges—receive comprehensive support that extends beyond academics to wellness, family resources, and community connection.



That experience of family-centered support shapes everything Esme does now. “I feel like I’m more than that title,” she explains about being Beacon Director. “I’m a therapist, a nurse, sometimes I have to be a parent to these kids. Everything that it takes to take care of another human being.”

After graduating from Galileo and completing her bachelor’s in Child Psychology at **Chico State**, Esme had been accepted to the Peace Corps. But when the opportunity arose to work with the same community she’d grown up in, the choice became clear: this was the work she cared about most.

Now at Sanchez Elementary, she’s creating the inclusive spaces and family partnerships she once experienced as a student. She’s pushing to get more families into decision-making meetings where they can influence how school funds are spent. She’s ensuring families feel empowered—“not just here at school, but in general.”

“My parents were immigrant parents too,” Esme shares. “When parents are involved and aware of what’s going on with their child’s education, it creates a foundation that supports them all the way through.”

Mission Graduates doesn’t just help students reach college—it helps them discover careers aligned with their deepest values. For Esme, that meant returning to the community that raised her. “I know I want to work with kids—with youth I can identify with from when I was growing up. And that’s what I’m doing now.”

The Peace Corps would have taken her across the world. Instead, Esme found her mission six blocks from where her journey began.

82%

82% of our alumni report feeling passionate about the work in their current career paths.

66%

66% of our alumni found a job in their desired field within six months of graduation.

Weekly Support, Lasting Impact

When **Vaijayanti** moved to San Francisco, she sought a sustainable way to give back to her community. As someone whose first language isn't English, she understood firsthand how challenging it can be to express yourself on paper. The writing partner role felt like a natural fit: a small time commitment with meaningful impact.

"I think most people worry about their time when they're considering volunteering," Vaijayanti reflects. "But honestly, one hour in your week is a very small time commitment. It's one TV show, but it has a lifetime of impact on a student who doesn't have that network."



Mission Graduates relies on dedicated volunteers to enhance our impact across all programs. This year, over 180 volunteers contributed 2,047 hours of support—equivalent to more than \$82,000 in investment.

To learn more about joining our community of volunteers, visit missiongraduates.org/volunteer

In her second year as a writing partner, Vaijayanti has seen how much can be accomplished in those weekly sessions. Last year, she worked with Henry, a shy student who struggled to communicate his strengths. When Henry received an interview opportunity with Stanford, Vaijayanti went beyond essay editing—they practiced mock interviews together, helping him get comfortable talking about himself and his achievements. "Regardless of how the interview went, those are just really important life skills," she says. "Sometimes you just need someone to help you be comfortable in that."

This year, she's applying those lessons with her current student, Denise—planning which essays to tackle first, structuring their time together, learning how to hold teenagers accountable while treating them as partners rather than directing them like a parent would.

At the Writing Partner gathering this fall, Vaijayanti shared her insights with fellow volunteers on working with teenagers and helping students open up beyond simple descriptions. "It's like, 'Yeah, I did this.' Okay, but what more? Getting them to be descriptive takes practice."

What stands out most to Vaijayanti is how much privilege is embedded in the college application process itself—from the extracurricular activities students write about to having family members who can edit essays. For first-generation students whose families didn't attend college, that existing support system isn't there. That's where writing partners come in—sharing knowledge about how the process works that might otherwise stay hidden.

"If I'm going to live in this community," Vaijayanti says, "I want to find a way to give back to it."

Time, Talent, Treasure

When **DeMario** moved to the Bay Area from Atlanta in 2023, he was determined not to let his professional life consume everything. As a first-generation college graduate and Black professional, he wanted to mentor students who shared parts of his identity. Mission Graduates' focus on college access for underrepresented students resonated deeply with his values.

"I look at philanthropy in three ways: time, talent, and treasure," DeMario explains. "I think if volunteers have a good experience through the time and talent part, you eventually motivate them to open their pockets."



“Peer-to-peer fundraising is authentic (...) because you’re saying, ‘I believe in this. Come on that journey with me.’”

For DeMario, that good experience came through facilitating virtual workshops on networking and code-switching—topics deeply personal to him as someone whose career depends on building authentic connections. One memorable moment came when a student reached out on LinkedIn after a workshop, sharing that the session affirmed their experience and gave them confidence to network more effectively. "That message was incredibly rewarding," DeMario reflects. "It confirmed I had made a real difference."

But as his volunteer experience deepened, DeMario felt called to do more. "I knew that to advance the mission, you need all three—time, talent, and treasure. What motivated me to become a donor was that I wanted to make the work more accessible and help Mission Graduates achieve its goals faster."

When staff asked DeMario to lead a Food for Thought peer-to-peer fundraising campaign, he was initially reluctant. "I hadn't tapped into my community in that way before. I've always been the one showing up for my community, not asking them to show up for me." But he said yes, posting on LinkedIn and inviting his professional network to join him in supporting first-generation students.

The response was overwhelming. People who had only crossed paths with DeMario once or twice gave \$100. Others gave \$5. "Every interaction matters," he says. "In this hard time, people are still looking for ways to do good, and peer-to-peer fundraising creates an entryway for people to be able to do that."

Through his campaign, DeMario brought in over 25 new donors to the Mission Graduates community—people who had never heard of the organization but trusted his endorsement. "Peer-to-peer is more authentic because you're not selling someone anything. You're saying, 'I believe in this. Come on that journey with me.'"

Room to Breathe Project: Investing in Student Wellness



The **Room to Breathe Project** is dedicated to growing the mental health and well-being of San Francisco’s young people through strategic partnerships with community-based organizations and schools. This year, they awarded Mission Graduates a two-year grant to expand our proven Wellness Coordinator model from three to five school campuses—a transformative investment in student wellness.

California youth, particularly Latinx children, are experiencing an escalating mental health crisis. Nearly half of California adolescents report experiencing mental health difficulties, with children of immigrants often facing additional stressors, including fear of deportation, family separation, and adult-like responsibilities such as language brokering for their families. Early intervention makes a difference: research shows that elementary students with access to regular mindfulness practices and supportive adults show significant improvements in both behavior and academic performance.

With Room to Breathe’s support, Mission Graduates is bringing comprehensive social-emotional learning to Sanchez and Flynn Elementary schools. Wellness Coordinators integrate support throughout the full school day and after-school hours—helping de-escalate challenging moments, facilitating restorative conversations, and coaching school staff on trauma-informed practices. They create Peace Corners where students can practice self-regulation, lead daily community circles, and teach practical skills like using “I” Statements to communicate clearly and resolve conflicts.

“We are grateful for the opportunity to partner with Mission Graduates,” says **Rhonnell Sotelo**, Room to Breathe Project’s Executive Director. “Their long history of service and commitment to San Francisco’s children and families demonstrates a clear understanding that the path to academic success begins with engagement, well-being, and youth mental health.”

The grant also supports a learning community across all five sites, where Wellness Coordinators share effective practices and adapt programming to meet students’ evolving needs. This collaborative approach ensures that each campus benefits from the collective wisdom of the entire team.

By investing strategically in positions with demonstrated student outcomes, Room to Breathe is helping Mission Graduates build the case for sustainable wellness infrastructure that the school district, city, and other partners can support over time—creating lasting change that extends far beyond the two-year grant.

Our Financials

Mission Graduates' commitment to students and families is reflected in how we invest every dollar you entrust to us. In the 2024-25 fiscal year, we directed 79.8% of our \$12.9 million budget directly to programs serving youth and families across San Francisco.

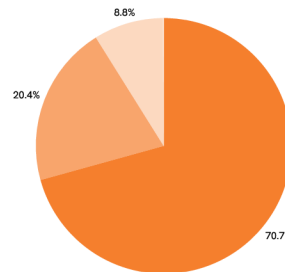
When you invest in Mission Graduates, you're trusting us to use resources wisely and responsibly. We take that trust seriously. Administrative costs (11.9%) and fundraising expenses (8.3%) remain lean, allowing us to maximize direct service while maintaining the infrastructure and partnerships necessary to sustain and grow our impact.

This financial foundation allows us to respond nimbly to our community's evolving needs—from expanding wellness coordinators to redesigning college support—while staying rooted in our 50-year commitment to the Mission District and the families we serve.

Financial Information

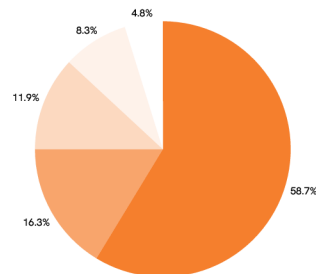
Revenue

| | | |
|---|------------------------|-------------|
| Government Grants | \$9,197,106.00 | 70.7% |
| Individuals, Foundations, Corporations & Special Events | \$2,652,320.00 | 20.4% |
| Program Fees | \$1,138,735.00 | 8.8% |
| Other Income | \$18,061.00 | 0.1% |
| | \$13,006,222.00 | 100% |



Expenses

| | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|-------------|
| EDP & Beacon Sites | \$7,611,949.00 | 58.7% |
| College Access & Persistence | \$2,113,818.00 | 16.3% |
| Administrative | \$1,549,708.00 | 11.9% |
| Fundraising | \$1,077,118.00 | 8.3% |
| Parent Partner Program | \$623,559.00 | 4.8% |
| | \$12,976,152.00 | 100% |



- Financials for the year ended June 30, 2025, excerpted from the audited financial statements.
- For a copy of our audited financial statements, please contact the Development Team at development@missiongraduates.org.

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Chief Executive Officer



Natalie Guandique
Chief Program Officer



Anson Louie
Chief Financial Officer



Suzie Sheedy
Chief Development Officer



Catherine Marroquin
Sr Director, College to Career



Eli Moreno
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Dianna Caracoza-Jacobs
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and Parent Partner Programs



Natalie Bess Picciano
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Suzie Sheedy, Ex-Officio, Chief Development Officer, Mission Graduates

With Gratitude to Our Supporters

Mission Graduates is deeply grateful for every one of our supporters. Our work is possible thanks to the generosity of the people and organizations recognized here. This listing reflects contributions received between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025.

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