

LOS ANGELES BUSINESS JOURNAL

# NONPROFIT

*& Corporate Citizenship*

## 2024 AWARDS

# THE 2024 NOMINEES

From the tireless work of nonprofit leaders, teams, and programs, to the efforts of individuals and companies who donate their time, funds and efforts to improve the communities they serve - this panel and awards program will pay tribute to our Community of Business™.

## WEDNESDAY, MAY 15

The Biltmore Los Angeles | 11:30AM - 2:00PM PST

To register, visit [labusinessjournal.com/events/npccawards](http://labusinessjournal.com/events/npccawards)

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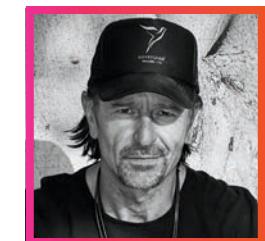
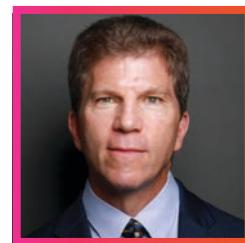
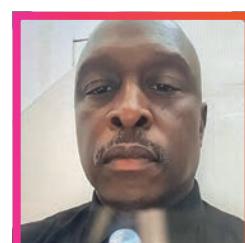
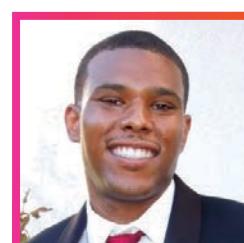
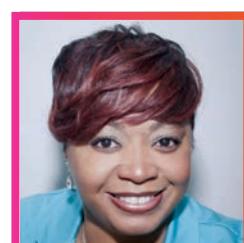
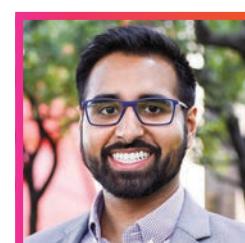
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LOS ANGELES REGIONAL



Fighting Hunger. Giving Hope.



**FIGHTING HUNGER FOR 50 YEARS**

**As prices rise, people continue to face  
hunger. Please help provide food and  
nutrition assistance throughout  
Los Angeles County.**

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# INDIVIDUAL NOMINEES



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**LAURA MCHOLM**  
Co-Founder & Marketing Director  
NorthStar Moving Company



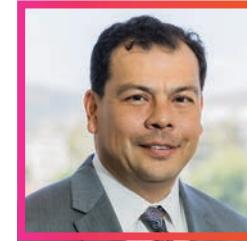
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# Building Brighter *Futures*



**Your Support Towards Early  
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Families Thrive**



For over 45 years, Pathways LA has been a leading resource and referral child care agency and a trusted partner in nurturing children's growth and development. We're dedicated to bridging the gap towards success for families, empowering knowledgeable early educators and being champions for early childhood education.



Pathways LA is a 501 c (3) nonprofit organization



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# INDIVIDUAL NOMINEES



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Director of Development  
The Maria Group



**GEORGIE SMITH**  
Founder & CEO  
A Sense of Home



**MICHAEL STICKA**  
President & CEO  
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**ILIANA TAVERA**  
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Haven Hills



**RICHARD VALENZA**  
CEO  
RaiseAChild



**PAUL WHITE**  
Volunteer  
Los Angeles Regional Food Bank



**JESSICA WIEDERHORN**  
President and Founding Board Member,  
FAT Brands Foundation; President and  
Founding Board Member, SoS



**PAULA WILSON**  
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**LISA YOUNG**  
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The Rescue Train



**JAMES YUKEVICH**  
Partner  
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Think Together's mission to change the odds for kids is possible through dedicated staff and collaborative partners.

Congratulations to our Los Angeles Business Journal Nonprofit and Corporate Citizenship Awards nominees:

Think Together Chief Operating Officer  
**TIA DWYER**  
for her outstanding leadership.

Think Together's  
**SOUTHEAST LOS ANGELES TEAM**  
for their excellence in equitable education.

Think Together corporate partner  
**THE BOEING COMPANY**  
for shaping the next generation of STEM students.

For more information about Think Together, please visit [www.thinktogether.org](http://www.thinktogether.org)



**think**  
TOGETHER



# Join ScholarMatch as we help first-generation students break barriers and build dreams!



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Every year, ScholarMatch helps hundreds of first-generation students pursue their college dreams!

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**6,000+**

First-generation students supported to, through, and beyond college

**1,500+**

Volunteers who served as college and career coaches

**80%**

Graduate college within five years



## Congratulations to our Executive Director!

Karla V. Salazar

Nominated for the Los Angeles Business Journal's 2024 Nonprofit & Citizenship Awards

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# ORGANIZATION NOMINEES



A PLACE CALLED HOME



A SENSE OF HOME



AFTER-SCHOOL ALL-STARS



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ALLEN LUND COMPANY



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EL PROYECTO DEL BARRIO



# Congratulations 2024 Nominees

• • •

**It is our pleasure to support the LABJ Nonprofit and  
Corporate Citizenship Awards and celebrate those who  
are making a difference in Los Angeles.**



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# ORGANIZATION NOMINEES



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# 100+ years

of serving  
Los Angeles youth

**110+**

School Sites in  
Los Angeles

**20K**

Youth Served  
Annually

**40**

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Programs

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Parent  
Satisfaction

**99%**

Student Satisfaction:  
Program Design

**94%**

of Students Grew  
SEL Skills

As SoCal's premier provider of expanded learning programs, Woodcraft Rangers holistic approach ensures every child has access to high-quality enrichment experiences in the arts, STEM, sports, outdoor education and leadership. Our inclusive, culturally responsive programs cultivate connections, advance skills and inspire endless possibilities!

**Together, we can create lasting  
impact. Join us in making a  
difference for the next 100 years!**



## WOODCRAFT RANGERS

SINCE 1922



[woodcraftrangers.org](http://woodcraftrangers.org)



**Nominated for  
Non-Profit Executive  
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Woodcraft Rangers is  
also nominated for:

- Non-Profit Team of the Year
- Non-Profit of the Year

**JULEE BROOKS,**  
CEO of Woodcraft Rangers



# ORGANIZATION NOMINEES



LOS ANGELES  
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MOSTE: MOTIVATING  
OUR STUDENTS THROUGH  
EXPERIENCE

MULTICULTURAL  
BUSINESS ALLIANCE

**Bringing the community together by providing hope and healing.**

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. Join Wellnest in empowering families and young adults with holistic, emotional health and wellness services and housing. Learn more at [wellnestla.org](http://wellnestla.org)

**Congratulations to  
all the winners of  
the 2024 Nonprofit  
& Corporate  
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# MAOF

## **Mexican American Opportunity Foundation**

### **Empowering Families from Child to Senior**

**With the support of our partners, we touch the lives of more than 100,000 individuals each year.**

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Family Childcare Home  
Educational Network  
Resource and Referral

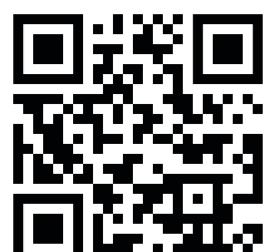
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# ORGANIZATION NOMINEES



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NATIONAL HEALTH FOUNDATION



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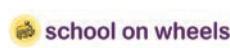


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# ORGANIZATION NOMINEES



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STAND UP TO  
CANCER  
(SU2C)

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THINK TOGETHER

**Congratulations to MATT RINNERT and all the nominees  
for the 2024 Nonprofit & Corporate Citizenship Awards.**

Providence Tarzana Foundation is proudly supporting Providence Cedars-Sinai Tarzana Medical Center.



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# ORGANIZATION NOMINEES



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WOMEN'S GUILD CEDARS-SINAI



WOODCRAFT RANGERS



WORTHY BEYOND PURPOSE



For more than 40 years, The Chicago School has been a leading nonprofit university dedicated to training professionals for careers that improve the health of individuals, organizations, and communities.

#### Our Mission

The Chicago School educates the next generation of change-makers in innovative theory and culturally competent practice to strengthen the integrated health of individuals, organizations, and communities.

#### Our Vision

The Chicago School seeks to be a global leader in increasing accessibility to expert, integrated, culturally competent care within all communities and organizations.

#### The Chicago School Approach

The Chicago School Approach is an immersive, applied learning model focused on developing professionals who can address present challenges and anticipate future needs. What matters to The Chicago School is equipping graduates with the theory, practice, and cultural competence to have a positive impact on individuals, organizations, and communities throughout the world.



2024 Nonprofit Executive of the Year Award Nominee

Dr. Michele Nealon

Congratulations to The Chicago School President Michele Nealon, Psy.D., on the '2024 Nonprofit Executive of the Year Award' Nomination!

As a graduate of The Chicago School, Dr. Nealon was inspired to lead the nonprofit university to new heights, empowering more agents of change to improve the health of individuals, organizations, and communities. Under her leadership, The Chicago School has grown to include six campus locations and a robust online presence, more than 40 academic programs, and an average of one million service hours each year.

Dr. Nealon was integral in opening our Los Angeles Campus in DTLA in 2008, and today The Chicago School has three campuses in Southern California - DTLA, Anaheim and San Diego.



Psychology | Health | Business | Counseling | Behavioral Sciences

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# Demand for Food Assistance Increases: Your Community Needs You

By MICHAEL FLOOD

**A**ccording to the 2024 Quality of Life Index, prepared by UCLA's Luskin School of Public Affairs, 24% of the people living in LA County fear going hungry due to food affordability. When asked if food prices have impacted their lives, 94% say it has made a major or minor impact, and nearly 40% of renters have worried about losing their homes and becoming homeless.

A recent USDA report illustrates that, since 2019, U.S. food prices have surged by a staggering 25%. This translates into the average American household dedicating a staggering 11.3% of their disposable income to groceries – a 30-year high. Here in Los Angeles, the situation is even more dire. Californians spend the most on groceries nationwide, further squeezing household budgets in an expensive city.

This financial strain coincides with the expiration of critical COVID-19 provisions in several programs such as the CalFresh Program. It's no surprise that, according to USC Dornsife, a staggering 30% of Los Angeles County residents now grapple with food insecurity, a significant increase from 24% in 2022 and nearly as high as the worst part of the pandemic. These numbers represent people facing critical choices – putting food on the table, paying rent, buying medication, or feeding their children.

## THE LA REGIONAL FOOD BANK: FIGHTING HUNGER ON THE FRONTLINES

At the LA Regional Food Bank, we witness the human cost of hunger on a daily basis. Thankfully, we're not alone. We are a beacon of hope in these challenging times in partnership with hundreds of dedicated agencies. Food distribution continues to increase for the Food Bank as we respond to the continued elevated level of demand for food assistance throughout Los Angeles County.

We prioritize acquiring and distributing healthy food options, recognizing that nutrition security is as important as food security.



Our programs specifically address the needs of children, seniors, families and individuals, fighting so that no vulnerable population is left behind. Since 1973, the Food Bank has distributed nearly two billion pounds of food, the equivalent of more than 1.6 billion meals.

However, the fight against hunger requires more than just our dedicated team. We rely on the incredible generosity of the Los Angeles community. During the pandemic, the generous people of Los Angeles County stepped up in a big way, demonstrating their compassion and commitment to their neighbors, and we

urge you to continue your support.

## ONE PERSON CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Last year was the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank's 50th Anniversary, where we reflected upon the outstanding contributions of our history that have made significant differences in the lives of people who may have otherwise gone hungry. Our founder, Tony Collier, started the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank with just a pickup truck and a garage. He is a shining example of how one person can

make a difference, and just like Tony, you, too, can make a significant difference in the lives of people who face food or nutrition insecurity. Donate to provide meals for families in need at [LAFoodBank.org/donate](http://LAFoodBank.org/donate), volunteer your time and skills, or raise awareness by following us on social media and amplifying our messages. Together, we can pursue a future where no one in LA County goes hungry.

Michael Flood is president and CEO of the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank. Learn more at [lafoodbank.org](http://lafoodbank.org).





# From Isolation to Inclusion: Cultivating Connections in Afterschool to Combat Chronic Absenteeism

By JULEE BROOKS

In the wake of unprecedented disruptions in education over the past few years, afterschool programs have emerged as a safe refuge to help youth rediscover their place, purpose and presence amidst a drastically altered school landscape. By nurturing a sense of belonging through inclusive program design, Woodcraft Rangers ensures that all youth feel heard, valued and connected to their personal and educational journeys.

Through intentional and collaborative partnerships that leverage local and statewide resources, a holistic system of support is the key to reigniting student interest in learning and facilitating a confident return to the classroom.

According to EdSource, a study of 30 districts statewide conducted in 2023 highlighted a concerning trend of rising chronic absenteeism among public school students. Prior to the pandemic, only 13.5% of students were classified as chronically absent. However, by March 2023, this figure had surged to nearly a third – meaning that as of late March, nearly 33% of students had already missed 10% or more of the school year.

Moreover, the Public Policy Institute of California has reported that “Students with disabilities, those from low-income families, and English Learners had higher rates of chronic absenteeism — 41%, 37% and 35%, respectively — than the statewide average.”

Addressing this challenge through isolated efforts is not enough. It demands comprehensive, holistic systems of support that caters to diverse needs to generate true impact in communities, and this is precisely where Woodcraft Rangers excels.

Established in 1922 in Los Angeles on principles of access and inclusion, Woodcraft Rangers has been committed to providing five generations of Angeleno young people with safe places to explore, learn and connect, regardless of their background or beliefs. For over a century, our tailored programs have served schools across LA County, offering youth opportunities for personal growth, academic success and positive development through attentive community listening and continuous innovation.

As the needs of our communities evolve, so must our approach. Since schools reopened, Woodcraft has remained at the forefront of innovation, and recognizes that a holistic expanded learning partnership is pivotal in driving enhanced youth participation and re-engagement. Through collaboration and intentional use of local and statewide resources, Woodcraft Rangers have implemented the following strategies that have demonstrated success: offering inclusion support for students with disability, facilitating immersive outdoor education experiences, and prioritizing investments in early learning initiatives.

## INCLUSION

In 2023, Woodcraft initiated a ground-breaking partnership with LA County regional centers to empower youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities including autism. Through funding provided by the CA Department of Developmental Services,



Woodcraft Rangers created a first of its kind Inclusion Team, comprised of a Director and team of Inclusion Specialists. This year alone, Woodcraft has provided essential training in inclusion best practices to almost 1,000 staff members and provided individual supports to dozens of young people, and we work collaboratively with school day staff and families to ensure gains made after school translate to the classroom and home.

## OUTDOOR EDUCATION

Designed in collaboration between Woodcraft's inclusion, outdoor education and learning and development teams, Woodcraft Rangers recently partnered with a local school district to offer a three-day program specifically for students identified as having the greatest need for re-engagement due a variety of reasons including acute trauma, learning loss and behavior challenges.

Students engaged in meaningful, trauma-informed conversations during trail hikes and developed trust through team-building activities such as the low ropes course. These outdoor experiences not only allowed participants to deepen their friendships and challenge themselves but also provided them with a profound sense of belonging and connection.

Following these experiences, school principals have also reported that their students returned from spring break with a revitalized enthusiasm for school, demonstrating improved connections with their peers and increased engagement in classroom activities throughout the school day.

## EARLY LEARNING

Paralleling California's ambitious statewide rollout of Universal Transitional Kindergarten (TK), Woodcraft Rangers acknowledges developmentally appropriate and engaging after school programs are critical to the initiative's success and subsequent enrollment. To address this need, Woodcraft established an early learning team led by an Early Education Manager and Early Learning Associates alongside staff equipped with early childhood education expertise.

Understanding the unique requirements of TK/K students, Woodcraft Rangers prioritizes lower student-to-instructor ratios to facilitate quality interaction and care. Additionally, age-appropriate curriculum and tailored training programs are designed to support the developmental needs and abilities of our youngest participants. Currently, Woodcraft Rangers has 85 specially trained Jr. Rangers staff serving over 800 TK/K students.

While we know that high-quality afterschool programs have a positive impact on attendance and student retention, their effectiveness relies on both dynamic, student-responsive programming and trusted relationships with staff. In addition to prioritizing inclusion and early learning, Woodcraft Rangers boasts an enrichment catalogue of over 100 clubs spanning arts, STEM, sports and leadership. Developed over the past four decades, this extensive offering provides endless possibilities for student engagement and exploration. Furthermore, Woodcraft's industry-leading 4% staffing vacancy, even



having cleared every waitlist at our over 110 LA County partner schools, underscores our commitment to maintaining continuity of mentorship that pays dividends for students in the classroom and beyond.

Julee Babar Brooks is CEO at Woodcraft Rangers. Learn more at [woodcraftrangers.org](http://woodcraftrangers.org).



# Think Together: Helping Students Discover their Greatness Since 1997

For over 25 years, Think Together has partnered with schools to change the odds for kids. As a nonprofit organization, it is driven by a singular mission: to ensure that every student graduates with all life options available to them.

What began as a single neighborhood afterschool site has evolved into an organization that touches the lives of over 200,000 students in more than 675 schools, spanning from San Jose to San Diego. Think Together's journey is not just one of growth; it's a testament to the power of possibility.

Think Together's comprehensive approach encompasses early learning, afterschool programs, school support services and leadership development for educators and administrators. By fostering holistic growth at every stage of a child's educational journey, the organization helps unlock the full potential of each student like Noemi.

Noemi is ready to take on the world of STEM and achieve remarkable things with Think Together's support. She is the Think Together Drone Club co-founder and co-captain of the robotics team at her high school in Compton.

"I never really had the opportunity to do anything in STEM," said Noemi. "So being able to just have my feelings considered and be granted opportunities to do such really big things at my age is amazing. I'm really happy that Think Together can give me that opportunity."

Think Together inspires student curiosity in STEM through our Coding For All initiative, which gives students exposure to visual and text-based code editing, rapid-prototyping, STEM career explorations, Invention Adventures activities and Hack Clubs across California.

Think Together is rapidly growing to benefit ambitious students like Noemi across California. In fiscal year 2023, the nonprofit grew by more than 70%. Since fiscal year 2021, the organization has tripled in size. With this sustained growth, Think Together continues to recruit purpose-driven talent and has since scaled its workforce to more than 6,000 full- and part-time staff members serving in school site and administrative roles.

*Discover more about Think Together's mission and opportunities at [thinktogether.org](http://thinktogether.org).*



**'I never really had the opportunity to do anything in STEM, so being able to just have my feelings considered and be granted opportunities to do such really big things at my age is amazing.'**



**We are proud to congratulate  
U.S.VETS Chief Executive Officer  
Steve Peck as a nominee for  
Nonprofit Executive of the Year!**

U.S.VETS is the largest nonprofit organization with boots on the ground to combat America's veteran homeless crisis head-on. Our holistic approach delivers intervention and prevention services, including housing, mental health and career programs, and wraparound services. With residential and service sites nationwide, U.S.VETS is uniquely positioned to help veterans and their families successfully transition to civilian life.

**To learn more, visit [usvets.org](http://usvets.org).**





# Breaking Barriers for First-Generation Students in Southeast Los Angeles

**M**y parents want my story to be different." Lauryn's words echo the sentiment of the countless students who are first in their family to go to college. Raised in Los Angeles by an immigrant mother and father whose college dreams were sacrificed due to financial hardship, Lauryn's experience is indeed very different from theirs. Today, not only is she a proud college graduate, but she's also working full-time at a high-profile tech company.

Lauryn found the key to changing her story through ScholarMatch, a groundbreaking nonprofit organization dedicated to helping first-generation and low-income students overcome the barriers standing between them and a college degree. With services like college application coaching, scholarships, and college and career advising, ScholarMatch provides students like Lauryn with the support they need to become the first in their family to graduate college and launch a successful career.

Lauryn's story is one of thousands Angelenos. In fact, of the 19 million students enrolled in US colleges, 56% are first-generation students. These students face tremen-

dous challenges every step of the way. Many first-generation college students lack access to the knowledge and previous college experience that family members can pass on to the younger generations, including tips on how to navigate academic and career aspirations, budgeting and financial aid resources, and more. This leaves them on an uneven playing field especially compared to their more affluent peers who can often lean on college educated families, well-resourced schools and even privately hired college admissions counselors.

First-generation college students must navigate a stark reality: for every one successful college graduate, there are three first-generation students whose dreams of a degree are derailed somewhere along the way. Many of these students leave school due to the type of setback that wouldn't hold back a student with greater support and resources: imposter syndrome, a failed exam, an expensive car repair, or a family emergency can snowball, leaving first-generation students without a degree and often saddled with debt.

Enter an organization like ScholarMatch which is powered by a volunteer force of hun-

dreds of college coaches and mentors that fuel this transformative work. With the right support at this pivotal moment, ScholarMatch students more than beat the odds— an outstanding 80% graduate college within five years or less. Not only is that about four times the average for students from first-generation, low-income backgrounds, but it's actually better than the average for all students nationwide.

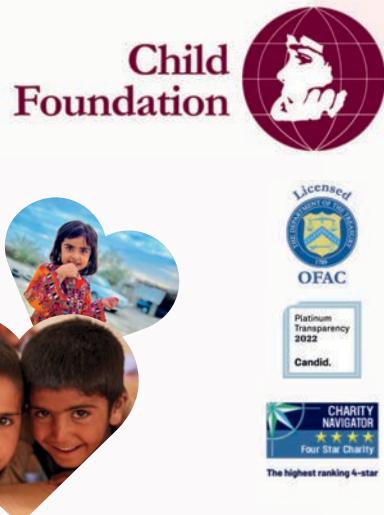
Founded in 2010 by award-winning author and 826LA founder Dave Eggers, ScholarMatch began as a simple online platform connecting donors with students, similar to a Kickstarter or GoFundMe campaign but for college scholarships. Today, it has evolved into a game-changing college access organization providing first-generation students with in-depth support starting in their junior year of high school and spanning all the way to college graduation. In its 12-year history, ScholarMatch has served more than 6,000 first-generation students and awarded more than \$7M in scholarships.

While ScholarMatch serves students nationwide, its two main hubs are Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay Area. Today, they

**Lauryn found the key to changing her story through ScholarMatch, a groundbreaking nonprofit organization dedicated to helping first-generation and low-income students overcome the barriers standing between them and a college degree.**

provide year-round support to about 1,000 students, with a growing initiative to serve students in Southeast LA – a key region that is in dire need of more college access services.

With numerous neighborhoods where just 4-7% of adults age 25+ hold 4-year degrees, Southeast LA is home to bright, caring students who are blazing the trail as the first in



**Three decades of unwavering commitment. Three decades of changing lives. Our charity stands as a beacon of hope for underprivileged children, toward a brighter future. With countless achievements, from providing education to offering essential healthcare. Join us as we continue to make a difference, transforming dreams into realities for the next generation. Together, we can create a world where every child thrives.**

**ONE CHILD AT A TIME!**



**Phone: 503-224-0409**

**Website: [www.childfoundation.org](http://www.childfoundation.org)**



**Celebrating 25 Years!**

Blank Rome's Adopt-A-Center Program annually partners with a Los Angeles nonprofit serving children and families on an event that serves their members and raises awareness of the organization.

Companies are encouraged to host their own Adopt-A-Center initiative. Blank Rome is available to offer assistance to help facilitate these efforts.

To learn more, visit [blankrome.com/adopt-center-program](http://blankrome.com/adopt-center-program).



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PROGRAM

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their family to go to college and they deserve our full support. ScholarMatch is honored to offer these students college access services, including personal coaching, workshops and SAT prep – all free of charge and accessible at the click of a link on their phone or computer. By 2027, ScholarMatch expects to serve more than 600 Southeast LA students each year. They have already received seed funding to extend this support even further by offering eligible LA students free advising and support all the way through college.

The cornerstone of ScholarMatch's success lies in its robust mentorship programs which are powered by a vibrant community of over 500 volunteers from the community. ScholarMatch volunteers and staff offer ongoing mentorship to students at the most critical points in their college journey: applying to college, navigating the ups and downs of college life, and preparing for a career. These caring relationships are pivotal to students' success as ScholarMatch's executive director, Karla V. Salazar, pointed out, "ScholarMatch is able to serve first-generation students and create meaningful impact thanks to the generosity of our volunteer mentors and coaches."

The impact of this mentorship is profound – offering students guidance, encouragement and access to opportunities that might otherwise be untapped. ScholarMatch's community of volunteer coaches have celebrated their students' academic victories, attended college graduations alongside students' family and

friends, and even connected students to their first jobs and professional contacts.

Take Alonzo, a high school student who had no one in his immediate community to lean on for college application help. After being matched with his ScholarMatch college coach, Alonzo's progress took flight – he diligently worked with his coach, Yvonne, on his applications and was ultimately accepted into his top choice schools! Reflecting on his experience, Alonzo shared:

"I wasn't sure if I wanted to attend college. I was stuck and didn't know where to start. But when I found the ScholarMatch program and was paired with a college coach, things got clearer," said Alonzo, a ScholarMatch Student.

Not only is this a victory for students like Alonzo, but it's uplifting for volunteers like Yvonne who receive robust training and support to become the expert guide for the student they mentor. Volunteering with ScholarMatch is a mutually enriching experience. Volunteer coaches and career mentors often express the gratification they feel, witnessing first-hand their student's growth and success.

In a world where education is increasingly synonymous with opportunity, organizations like ScholarMatch are not just helpful - they are essential. They remind us that with the right support and resources, students can transcend barriers and forge a future rich with possibilities.

*Learn more at [scholarmatch.org](http://scholarmatch.org).*

# Advancing Health on the Frontlines

**A Whole-Person, Community-Based Approach to Health**

At AltaMed, a holistic, whole-person approach has long been our strategy for creating a healthier, more equitable world. Born of a social justice movement, AltaMed advances medical care while addressing social factors to close gaps in care.

The AltaMed Foundation is embarking on the H.E.L.P. campaign to uplift our communities, strengthen prevention and early intervention, create more fair environments in which our patients live, help families avoid crises, and find innovative solutions.

We invite you to join us in creating thriving communities.  
[help.altamedfoundation.org](http://help.altamedfoundation.org)



The AltaMed Foundation congratulates Trustee and Board Secretary **Bertha Aguirre**, President and COO of Empire Transportation Inc., and all the Los Angeles Business Journal Nonprofit and Corporate Citizenship 2024 Award nominees.



# The Mexican American Opportunity Foundation: Serving the Community with Passion and Purpose

The Mexican American Opportunity Foundation (MAOF) is one of the largest and most impactful non-profit organizations in the United States dedicated to serving the Latino community. Established in 1963, the foundation's mission is to improve the lives of individuals and families through education, social services, and economic development opportunities. Through its comprehensive programs and community outreach, MAOF has positively impacted countless lives and continues to support many families in need.

## A BRIEF HISTORY

MAOF was founded by a group of passionate individuals led by founder and visionary Dionicio Morales, who recognized the challenges faced by Mexican Americans in achieving socio-economic equity and accessing educational opportunities. They saw the need for an organization that could support Latino families and empower them to build better futures. Since its inception, MAOF has grown significantly and now operates a wide range of programs across California, impacting over 100,000 lives each year.

## PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

MAOF offers a diverse array of programs and services to address the various needs of the

community, forming the organization's core pillars.

- Early Childhood Education:** MAOF operates over 60 infant, childcare, and Head Start and Early Head Start centers throughout California. They also support more than 275 childcare providers with their services. MAOF provides comprehensive early childhood education, health services and family support to children and families from low-income backgrounds. Children receive a solid educational foundation through high-quality bilingual instruction and are better prepared for academic success.

- Community Development:** The foundation offers job training, career counseling and employment services to help individuals gain valuable skills and find meaningful work. These programs empower community members to achieve economic stability and improve their quality of life. MAOF supports young people through various youth development programs. These initiatives focus on academic success, career readiness, and leadership development. Immigration services are also available, including support with petitions, FBI background checks, and DACA applications.

- Senior Services:** MAOF provides a range of social services to support seniors. This includes housing assistance, food and nutrition

programs, immigration services, etc. By offering these resources, MAOF helps seniors navigate the health care and social services systems to build more vital, healthier lives.

- Partnerships:** MAOF actively engages partners to address issues affecting the Latino community. Its partnerships include the Los Angeles County Office of Education, the National Council on Aging California Department of Social Services, Baby2Baby, UnidosUS, and the Los Angeles Dodgers Foundation. It is also a member of the Childcare Alliance and the STEMM Opportunity Alliance.

## LOOKING FORWARD

MAOF's impact on the community is evident in the countless success stories of individuals and families who have benefited from their programs. By providing access to education, economic opportunities and essential services, MAOF helps break the cycle of poverty and empowers individuals to achieve their goals. The foundation's commitment to cultural and linguistic inclusivity ensures that the programs are accessible and relevant to the community's diverse needs. This approach fosters a sense of belonging and pride among participants, strengthening the bonds within the community.

As MAOF continues to grow and adapt to the community's evolving needs, its dedica-

**MAOF has grown significantly and now operates a wide range of programs across California, impacting over 100,000 lives each year.**

tion to improving lives remains steadfast. The foundation's ongoing efforts to expand access to education, economic opportunities and social services will undoubtedly continue to make a transformational and lasting impact on the lives of countless individuals and families as they continuously improve and expand its services.

The Mexican American Opportunity Foundation is a beacon of hope and support for under-resourced communities, offering programs and services that empower individuals and families to thrive. Through its commitment to education, economic development and advocacy, MAOF continues to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those it serves.

Learn more at [maof.org](http://maof.org).



# Advancing Awareness Into Action: How MHALA is Moving Mental Health Forward

By DR. CHRISTINA MILLER

May is Mental Health Awareness Month, a movement that began in 1949 to raise consciousness around the prevalence and impact of mental illness. Founded in 1924, the mission of Mental Health America of Los Angeles (MHALA) is to help people with mental health needs achieve meaningful, healthy lives in their communities. It has been our life's work to not only inform and advocate but to lean in and activate.

Celebrating our 100th anniversary this year, MHALA has successfully reduced disparities in care for millions of Los Angeles County residents. As the needs of our community have continued to evolve, MHALA has responded with an integrated and comprehensive service model that includes mental and physical healthcare, housing assistance, employment training, banking and financial education, and wellness and resilience initiatives. We provide specialized support for Veterans and transition-age youth, community prevention and intervention programs, and training programs for the mental health and healthcare workforce.

Last year, MHALA assisted nearly double the number of people as we did before the pandemic, supporting over 19,000 "members." Our teams conducted outreach to 16,416 unhoused individuals, enrolled 3,203 members in integrated services, and provided street medicine to 2,790 LA County residents. We connected 6,624 people to medical care, helped 2,258 secure permanent housing, distributed meals to 18,600 individuals and families, and made it possible for 575 members to become newly employed.

In the past, we focused our service provision primarily on the most at-risk individuals in our community. While we remain firmly committed to our most vulnerable members, one of the key lessons of the pandemic is that mental health is not a binary phenomenon where someone either has a mental health issue or doesn't. We all have mental health needs, and we've learned the importance of working upstream to recognize the warning signs early to prevent more severe situations from developing.

We can't emphasize enough how critical early interventions are at both ends of the continuum, from prevention to recovery, ensuring people have access to the tools they need to stay

housed, employed, and remain mentally and physically healthy. Through our trainings and certificate programs, we teach community members to recognize signs of mental health needs in themselves and others. We offer effective response strategies for crisis and non-crisis situations and develop resiliency and coping skills to avoid burnout in a variety of settings.

Conversely, programs like our Wellness Center are available for those who have transitioned out of more intensive services but still need ongoing assistance to prevent situations or setbacks that might jeopardize their employment, housing, or ability to maintain their well-being and support their families.

Equity, diversity and inclusion are embedded in everything we do. MHALA staff are trained to use trauma-informed and evidence-based practices, using a culturally sensitive lens to provide the highest quality of care. We've worked diligently to bridge service gaps for underserved populations, including BIPOC and LGBTQ+ communities, Veterans, and transition-age youth. Nearly 80% of MHALA staff, 70% of our leadership team, and 50% of the board identify as BIPOC, and more than 25% of our staff have lived experience.

MHALA is committed to ensuring representative leadership and decision-making at all levels of the agency and maintaining an organizational culture that values a healthy work-life balance, transparency and fairness. We're doubling down on raising salaries, increasing benefits whenever possible, and making substantial investments in our staff's personal and professional development. These efforts enable our dedicated workforce – who consistently go above and beyond to deliver exceptional care to our members – to remain in the nonprofit sector and still meet their financial obligations.

I think it's fair to say that we've all been changed by COVID-19. The world is definitely more aware of mental health conditions – unfortunately, their prevalence and impact are felt year-round. Our nonprofits are needed now more than ever. Protecting our staff's and our own well-being will be just as important as that of our members. We're going to need a full tank to continue moving mental health forward!

Dr. Christina Miller is president and CEO of Mental Health America of Los Angeles. Learn more at [mhala.org](http://mhala.org).



## BLIND CHILDREN'S CENTER

LIGHTING THE WAY SINCE 1938

The Blind Children's Center (BCC) prepares infants, toddlers, and preschoolers of all abilities to thrive through inclusive, family-focused early childhood education, with a specialized focus on children who are blind or visually impaired. By offering comprehensive programming, mental health support, nutrition, health and coordinated therapeutic services—all at no cost—the Center ensures children and their families receive the tools necessary to build a bright future and thrive.



We are thrilled to congratulate Sarah E. Orth, BCC's Chief Executive Officer, for being recognized by the Los Angeles Business Journal as a nominee for 2024 Nonprofit Executive of the Year, Operating Budget \$1M-\$5M!

[www.blindchildrenscenter.org](http://www.blindchildrenscenter.org) 4120 Marathon Street • Los Angeles, CA 90029 • 323.664.2153

Connect with us! @BlindChildrensCenter



# The Blind Children's Center: A Place of Belonging and Access to Full Potential

The Blind Children's Center, a Los Angeles-based nonprofit organization founded in 1938, stands out with its distinctive mission: to prepare infants, toddlers and preschoolers of all abilities to thrive through inclusive, family-focused early childhood education, with a specialized focus on children who are blind or visually impaired. As the sole program of its kind in Los Angeles, the Center provides a nurturing early learning environment in a family-focused setting where every child can experience belonging and reach their full potential.

From its humble beginnings in a volunteer-staffed home classroom, the Center has grown into an esteemed institution. Its historic Hollywood building, designed by renowned architect Paul R. Williams, the first Black member of the American Institute of Architects, was constructed in the 1940s and stands as a testament to the Center's more than 70-year commitment to change-making inclusivity and service.

Throughout its journey, the Blind Children's Center has remained steadfast in its dedication to serving visually impaired children and their families. Children with severe vision loss and

other disabilities learn differently and require personalized learning strategies and accommodations; at the same time, parents and caregivers need resources to effectively advocate for their child's social, emotional, physical and cognitive development. By offering comprehensive programming, mental health support and coordinated therapeutic services like occupational therapy and sensory development—all at no cost—the Center ensures that families receive the tools necessary to flourish.

"At BCC, our belief in cultivating an inclusive and supportive environment drives everything we do. Through our personalized approach and educational curriculum uniquely tailored to the needs of each student, we empower each child to embrace their unique abilities," said Sarah Orth, chief executive officer. "Our mission extends beyond providing intervention and education; it's about creating a strong foundation for every child and family we serve. We are committed to helping children and families dream, learn and grow without limits."

In 2021, the Los Angeles County Board of Education (LACOE) approved BCC as a dele-

gate agency for Head Start and Early Head Start Services for children ages 18 months to 5 years old, as well as infants and toddlers from birth through 36 months and pregnant mothers. As a delegate of LACOE, its programs are funded

in part by the Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services and California Department of Education. BCC also solicits donations from private foundations, businesses and individual donors to support our programs for children and families.

Continuing its legacy of commitment, the

Blind Children's Center remains dedicated to

enhancing its facilities to better serve children

and families. Last June, BCC broke ground on a

renovation project that will improve classrooms

and restrooms, increase capacity, implement sig-

nificant ADA upgrades such as an elevator and

outdoor ramps, redesign a current playground,

develop a toddler play yard and refurbish infra-

structure and shared spaces.

Enrolling your child in BCC's programs

means becoming part of this transformative

journey. Together, BCC and families can build

a brighter future where every child, regardless of

vision, can learn and thrive.



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gate agency for Head Start and Early Head Start Services for children ages 18 months to 5 years old, as well as infants and toddlers from birth through 36 months and pregnant mothers. As a delegate of LACOE, its programs are funded



## Keeping Families Close

Ronald McDonald House Charities of Southern California (RMHCSC) provides family-centered care to critically ill children and their families by providing them a "home away from home" and essential resources at no cost. RMHCSC helps families stay at their child's bedside, which has been shown to improve health outcomes and their overall well-being. RMHCSC reaches where medical treatments cannot.



RMHCSC congratulates our CEO, Fatima Djelmane Rodriguez, and all the honorees and finalists of the Los Angeles Business Journal Nonprofit and Corporate Citizenship 2024 Awards

LEARN MORE - [RMHCSC.ORG](http://RMHCSC.ORG) [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/RMHCSC) [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/RMHCSC) [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/rmhcsc/) @RMHCSC





# Wellnest: Offering Hope, Healing and Opportunity to the Community

Through a holistic approach to emotional well-being, Wellnest offers hope, healing and opportunity to the children, families and young adults in the communities of Los Angeles. As the organization celebrates its 100th year of service this year, the commitment remains steadfast and focused on the future.

Founded in 1924, Wellnest has always been at the leading edge of mental health and supportive services for children and families. Wellnest has helped to pioneer early-intervention programs for ages 0-5, intensive services for at-risk children and their families, skills-based mental health services for young adults ages 16-25, and developed an innovative collaboration with primary care providers, to bring mental health professionals on-site, in community settings.

Wellnest's programs are designed to empower the children and young adults of Los Angeles to get on track to success — to reach goals in school, build healthy relationships and enjoy emotional well-being. Wellnest has been designated a Trauma-Informed Organization through the National Council for Behavioral Health's Adoption of Trauma-Informed Care Practices Learning Community process and



its team of compassionate professionals offer behavioral counseling and support.

Wellnest's Socially Integrated Service Model is designed to address the whole child; from 0-25, their families, and the communities they live in. The organization blends evidence-based clinical practices to address effects

of trauma, along with youth development programs and TAY (transition-aged youth) housing to help young adults develop coping skills and build resilience, self-esteem and create stability so that they can learn, grow and thrive. Today, Wellnest has seven locations and touches more than 200,000 lives annually

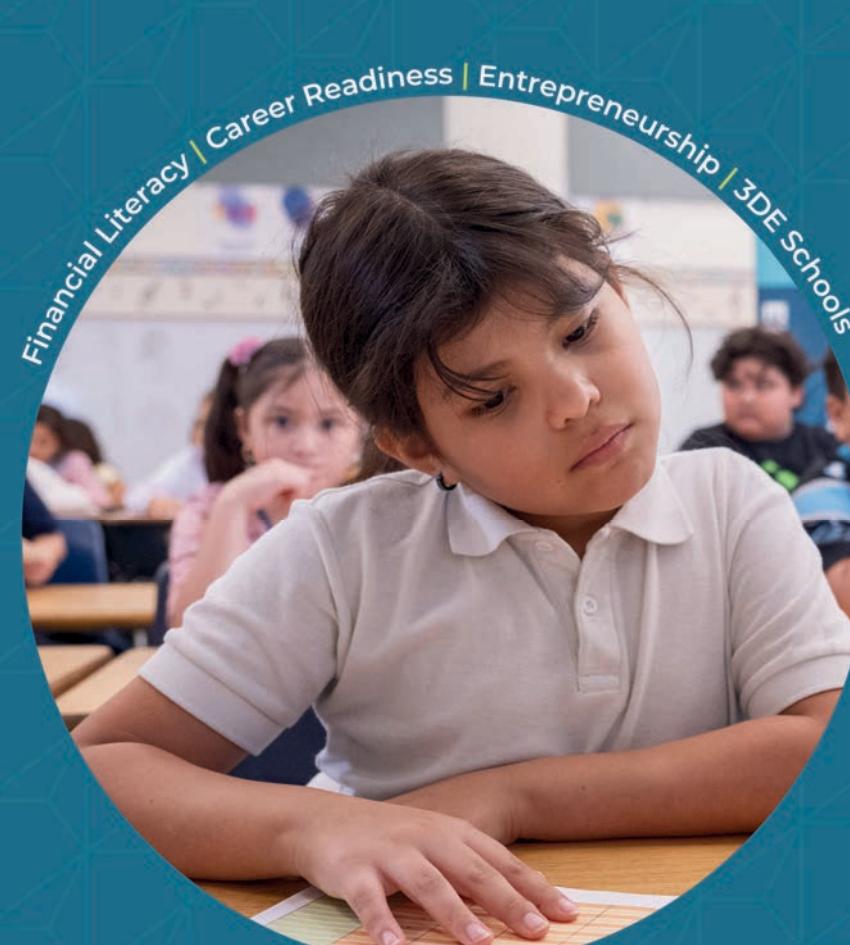
throughout Los Angeles including Metro, South LA, East LA and West LA.

And Wellnest's clinical mental health programs also serve as a training site for graduate schools of social work, from major universities in Southern California, with more than a 20-year history of training culturally competent social work practitioners.

## THE FUTURE LOOKS BRIGHT FOR WELLNEST!

As Wellnest looks toward the next 100 years of providing services, the organization is inviting everyone to join them for an evening of magic for the Centennial Celebration on Friday September 27, 2024 at the Skirball Cultural Center. The event promises to be an unforgettable evening of shared stories, live entertainment, an awards dinner and dancing! All the while, the organization will be raising critical funds to support its programs for at-risk children and families.

To learn more about the Centennial Celebration and how you can get involved in Wellnest, visit [wellnestla.org](http://wellnestla.org).



When we  
**ADVOCATE FOR  
THE IMPACT OF  
RELEVANT,  
HANDS-ON  
LEARNING,**  
we create confident children who  
are future ready. Join us.





# Pathways LA Elevates High-Quality Childcare for Children Across Los Angeles

## Bridging the gap towards success

Since its founding in 1978, Pathways LA has been committed to helping families and children succeed by improving the quality and accessibility of early childhood education. Founded in 1978 by activist and educator Bea Gold, its early mission was to help children with special needs prepare for early learning and prepare them for early learning grades. Through its initial years Pathways LA was formerly known as Children, Youth, and Family Services, it became known as one of the first nonprofit organizations to receive public funding to support programs for children with disabilities and special needs. Today, it has been trusted as a leading resource and referral childcare agency serving 4,000 children and families in partnership with 1,000 childcare providers across Los Angeles County, providing access to children regardless of their background and needs. As a childcare agency serving Metro Los Angeles, the organization believes that all children deserve the chance to learn and grow in healthy environments inclusive of families, childcare settings and communities.

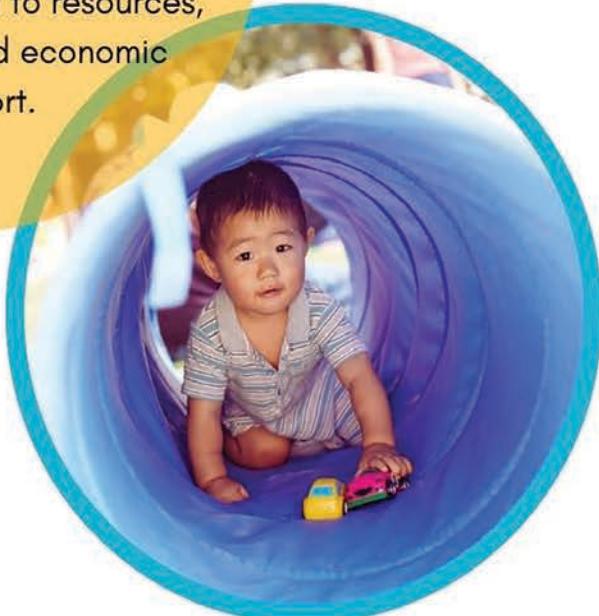
### HELPING FAMILIES GET ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY CHILDCARE

Funded by the Department of Public Social Services, Pathways LA assists over 4,000 families with financial support to get help paying for childcare for families that are working, seeking employment, self-employed and/or going to school. This allows families the opportunity to build a sustainable household for themselves and their children. By providing families with financial assistance, Pathways LA also aims to provide referrals on child care specific to the parent's needs. Through strategic partnerships such as the Department of Children and Family Services and the Emergency Child Care Bridge program, it looks to assist foster children with a time-limited program designed to increase the number of foster children successfully placed in in-home-based family care settings, increase the capacity of child care programs to meet the needs of foster children in their care, and maximizing the funds to support the childcare needs of families that meet these requirements. The organization understands that access to affordable and reliable childcare is essential for families to



## Our Mission

Working to build a stronger future for children, families, and the early care and education community by connecting them to resources, education, and economic support.



**Child Care Referrals**



**Strengthening Families**



**Financial Assistance**



**Professional Development**



5901 W. Century Blvd. Suite 400  
Los Angeles, CA 90045

[Connections for Children](#)

[@connections4children](#)

[Connections for Children](#)



(310)452-3325



[connectionsforchildren.org](#)



thrive. By ensuring that parents have access to quality childcare options, Pathways LA supports their children's healthy development and early education and empower them to pursue opportunities for economic stability.

### BUILDING A BRIDGE OF SUCCESS EARLY ON

Pathways LA believes to support in building brighter futures for children- it begins with having a healthy and strong relationship between parent and child. Studies show that 90% of brain growth happens before kindergarten. Early experiences in a child's life can help establish foundations for cognitive, emotional and social capacities from childhood to adulthood. Through its Family Engagement program, Pathways LA provides holistic support that encompasses early childhood education and development. Pathways LA's family engagement program utilizes an evidence based "Strengthening Families" framework approach and culturally competent programming to work towards better behavioral, emotional, academic and social outcomes for participating families. Families receive one-on-one coaching and have access to parent playgroups, parent cafes and extensive support to build positive family communication and relationships. It's a learning gap that becomes an achievement gap later in life.

### EMPOWERING EARLY EDUCATORS

Pathways LA believes early childcare edu-

cators are the cornerstone of early childhood education. Its network of early child care providers serve as partners to help advance its mission. By recognizing the invaluable contributions and investing in their professional development, we can ensure that every child can access high-quality early education experiences that lay the groundwork foundation for lifelong learning and success. Pathways LA trains over 1,000 childcare providers to increase the quality of their care, establish good business practices, and help contribute to the local economy. Also important is building on the need to create a safe place for children. Through its Trauma-Informed Care approach, it recognizes how various forms of trauma—present and historical, can have an impact on a child's development. Through the trainings, it teaches childcare providers how to understand and respond to behaviors associated with children who have experienced trauma.

### ADVOCATING FOR EQUITY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Public policy has a tremendous impact on the lives of our children, affecting the cost and quality of family's childcare options. Pathways LA aims to expand quality affordable childcare services for our most vulnerable communities through targeted policy advocacy. Through conversations with providers, families and community members, the organization outlines the specific needs our system must incorporate to ensure that children receive a quality

learning experience. Through targeted policy advocacy efforts, Pathways LA aims to address the pressing challenges facing our communities and ensures that every child has access to the high-quality early education experiences they deserve. Pathways LA's public policy priorities include investment in child care, equitable investment in the child care labor force, increased funding for child care slots, and increased access and services for all under-resourced families. By working closely with policymakers, community leaders, and advocates, the organization strives to amplify the voices of children and families and drive meaningful change at the local, state, and federal levels.

The principles that guided the initial roots of Pathways LA over 45 years ago – inclusion of all children, access to high-quality child care and education, financial support for families,



and model support programs – continue to guide current practice and anticipate the future needs of children throughout Los Angeles.

*Pathways LA is committed to the healthy development and school readiness of young children from disadvantaged communities. Driven by data and innovation, its expertise supports the continuum of care that includes parents, childcare providers, community partners, and policymakers. To learn more, visit [pathwaysla.org](http://pathwaysla.org).*



[www.saahasforcause.org](http://www.saahasforcause.org)  
[info@saahasforcause.org](mailto:info@saahasforcause.org)  
**562-526-2508**

## WHO WE ARE

**Saahas for Cause is a 501(c)(3) non-profit based in Southern California, dedicated to serving the South Asian community. Our services are provided in English and South Asian languages like Hindi, Punjabi, Marathi, Gujarati, Tamil, Bengali, Kannada and Malayalam by clinicians and volunteers . We specialize in serving the community through our 4 chapters :**



### Youth Chapter

**Digital empowerment classes : Free digital classes planned and run by South Asian youth for older adults.**

**Innovation lab : University and high school students gather to research under the supervision of California State University professors.**

**Social Justice Lab : South Asian youth meets to analyze the current social justice issues.**

**Saahas Sit-down : podcast program where South Asian youth discusses their journey of acculturation & acceptance of dual identity.**



### Older Adult Wellness

**Mauj Masti Sehat(MMS) : a free wellness program that runs 4 times a month for older adults.**

**English Hinglish : language empowerment program to educate South Asian immigrant community in day-to-day communication.**

**E-Phone visitor program : weekly phone calls to South Asian older adults for supportive services and counselling during the COVID-19 pandemic.**



### Women Wellness

**Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault : trauma informed care and emotional support.**

**Support Groups : Divorce, Gender Based Violence, Mental Well-being, Women Empowerment.**

**Case Management : Public Benefits, Individual Therapy.**

**Counselling Referral services : Shelter, legal, food**



### Community Outreach & Health

**Collaboration and Partnerships with other organizations.**

**Community Education.**

**Social and Emotional Support.**

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**Founded by women of colors of South Asian descent with lived experience of acculturation. All the services delivered in culturally sensitive manner to overcome challenges of acculturation journey.**

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# Hollywood Grooming: Where Compassion Meets Excellence

In the bustling streets of Los Angeles, where dreams take the spotlight and stars find their stage, Hollywood Grooming stands out as a premier pet grooming service and a passionate advocate for animal welfare. Founded in 2001 by Yael & Chuck, what began as a small idea driven by a love for animals has blossomed into a community cornerstone. Renowned for its outstanding mobile grooming services, Hollywood Grooming has been committed to supporting animals in need from the company's infancy and has increased the commitment as the company has grown.

Cats and dogs, especially in LA, are truly viewed as part of the family, so extra care is necessary to ensure each client has the best experience possible. Hollywood Grooming has built a strong foundation of trust throughout the city due to its transparency, expert care and genuine affection. Hollywood Grooming's commitment to quality and safety is unmatched – from the vans it uses to the way it trains the groomers. With a combined 30 years of grooming experience, Chuck and Yael infuse their expertise and passion throughout the business.

Beyond the day-to-day grooming operation, Hollywood Grooming also runs a rescue foundation, aptly named, "Hollywood Rescue Grooming Foundation." It was important to Chuck and Yael that they expand their impact beyond those who have the ability to pay for grooming services. On a bi-monthly basis, the team volunteers its time at a local animal shelter. There, they groom as many pets as possible in order to increase the chances of the pets finding forever homes. A shelter animal who looks and feels its best has a much greater chance of finding a forever home. Through this foundation, Hollywood Grooming helps change the lives of these animals forever by making them feel accepted, understood and loved. The statistics speak for themselves: on average, 89% of the pets get adopted post-grooming. Hollywood Grooming also has a yearly event called "Santa Paws," where it offers free grooming services to homeless pets.

Additionally, the foundation partners with orphanages, local animal rescue teams, animal advocacy and education programs around the country. As a testament to its incredible work, Hollywood Grooming has been nominated for the Outstanding Social Citizen Award at the prestigious Los Angeles Business Journal's Non-profit Corporate Citizens Awards for the past four years. This acknowledgment reflects their tireless efforts to make a positive impact, not only within the pet community but in society at large.

Hollywood Grooming just launched its 11th mobile grooming van, and opened its first brick-and-mortar store, in downtown Burbank (325 N. First St., Burbank).

This recent expansion allows Hollywood Grooming to offer an even wider range of services and serve not only as a grooming hub but also as a community center for pet owners to learn about pet care and participate in community events and pet products.

Its multitude of testimonials from clients who have had transformative experiences with Hollywood Grooming underscore the company's care. One such client shared how their once-anxious dog returned from grooming sessions with newfound happiness and vitality, a testament to the gentle and expert care provided by the groomers. Numerous clients recount how pets return from sessions not just cleaner and better groomed, but also happier and more energetic. One client mentioned, "After a grooming session with Hollywood Grooming, my senior dog seemed rejuvenated, almost like a puppy again. It's clear they not only care about how pets look but also about how they feel."

Regardless of how you come across it, either via mobile grooming or storefront, grooming at Hollywood Grooming means you are actively giving back to the community. A portion of all proceeds go toward the company's advocacy efforts, giving shelter animals a new lease on life.

"Working as a groomer was supposed to be a short-term commitment," shared Yael and Chuck, "but it became a life-long journey. We are so fortunate to be able to impact the lives of pets, all while partnering with some of the most passionate and driven philanthropists on the globe."

Learn more at [gohollywoodgrooming.com](http://gohollywoodgrooming.com).

