



# school on wheels



## 2018 ANNUAL REPORT





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## A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD PRESIDENT

# JOSHUA FEIN

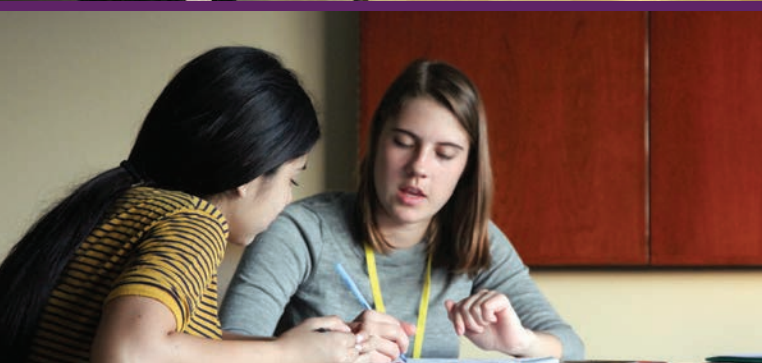


Through your participation with School on Wheels, you are continuing to impact the lives of so many school-aged children and their families. These children experience fear, shame, and hopelessness every day. They deal with challenges that are beyond what many of us can ever imagine. Through your support, you are providing them with hope, stability, and encouragement during a dark and troubling time in their lives. Thanks to you, School on Wheels tutored over 3,600

children experiencing homelessness in six counties in Southern California in 2018. We also raised almost \$2,700,000 in funding and recruited over 2,300 volunteers. That is quite an accomplishment.

We are so fortunate to have you as our volunteers, our partners, our donors, our staff, and our board members. I thank each and every one of you for your involvement with School on Wheels. You are the reason for our success. We look forward to working with more of the many thousands of unfortunate children experiencing homelessness throughout our cities and communities.

Since 1993 our mission has never wavered: to enhance educational opportunities for children from kindergarten through twelfth grade who are experiencing homelessness. Our goal is to shrink the gaps in their education and provide them with the highest level of education possible. Our program serves as a consistent support system for our students at a time of great stress and fear.



The children we serve are among the most invisible and neglected individuals in our nation. We must, and will, continue to invest in them.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# CATHERINE MEEK



All kids have dreams and hopes and ambitions. If you are homeless, achieving those dreams can seem insurmountable. One of my first students, Maria, was so fragile and scared when I met her. Her young life had been filled with trauma and loss. She had missed many years of school, but she loved to read and libraries were her favorite place. Students like Maria need an education to have a chance to succeed and to break this terrible cycle of poverty and homelessness.

Losing a home has a devastating impact on children's educational opportunities and influences their social, behavioral and intellectual well-being. Maria struggled for many years, but her resilience and strength won out—she now works in a library, has two cats and a dog, and reading inspires her life. School on Wheels exists so that children like Maria have an opportunity for success. In the areas we serve, we are the only organization exclusively focused on the educational needs of these children. So how are we doing?

In 2018, we celebrated several major accomplishments. We commemorated our 25th anniversary, served more students than ever before, enlisted more amazing volunteers than ever, and exceeded our funding goals, thanks to our generous donors. We had our challenges too. Child and family homelessness continues to increase at shocking levels, straining our resources to serve all the kids who need us. We had too few volunteers to help as many students as we wanted!

The children we serve are among the most invisible and neglected individuals in our nation. We must, and will, continue to invest in them. We are in the second year of our three-year strategic plan that will deepen our programmatic quality and demonstrate the impact on our students. We will:

- Tutor 4,000 students by continuing our intensive outreach to children living in shelters, motels, vehicles, campgrounds, group foster homes or on the street.
- Expand our digital programming and the academic improvements it delivers.
- Focus on literacy, one of the most significant predictors of future success, for students in grades K-3.
- Help our students develop a growth mindset to enhance their social and emotional learning and well-being.
- Strengthen volunteer retention and recruitment through the use of volunteer ambassadors and enhanced training.

We can only pursue these ambitious goals (and dreams) because of you: our supporters, friends, partners, and volunteers. We are grateful for your trust, humbled by your generosity and kindness. We are committed to continuing to build the type of organization that treats all constituencies—our students, volunteers, donors, employees, partners, and communities—with dignity, honor, and respect. You have made us the organization we are today. We look forward to continuing our work together as we strive to educate the most vulnerable children in our communities. Together, through acts big and small, we are changing lives.





Our volunteers are the heart of our program. We take the time to appreciate and celebrate their dedication and hard work at our annual brunch. Thank you for your commitment to our students.



Working with my student—and getting to know other residents at the shelter—has brought such joy to my life. Thank you for all you do to make all of this possible.

BETSY, VOLUNTEER TUTOR

School on Wheels is a safe haven for learning in Skid Row. It's the only center in our neighborhood where children devastated by homelessness can go after school to do their homework and meet with their tutors. We appreciate your diligent efforts to help our children catch up with their housed peers.

REV. ANDY BALES,  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
UNION RESCUE MISSION







What I love most about my tutor is that she helps me believe I will achieve my goal of becoming a nurse.

MARIA, AGE 12



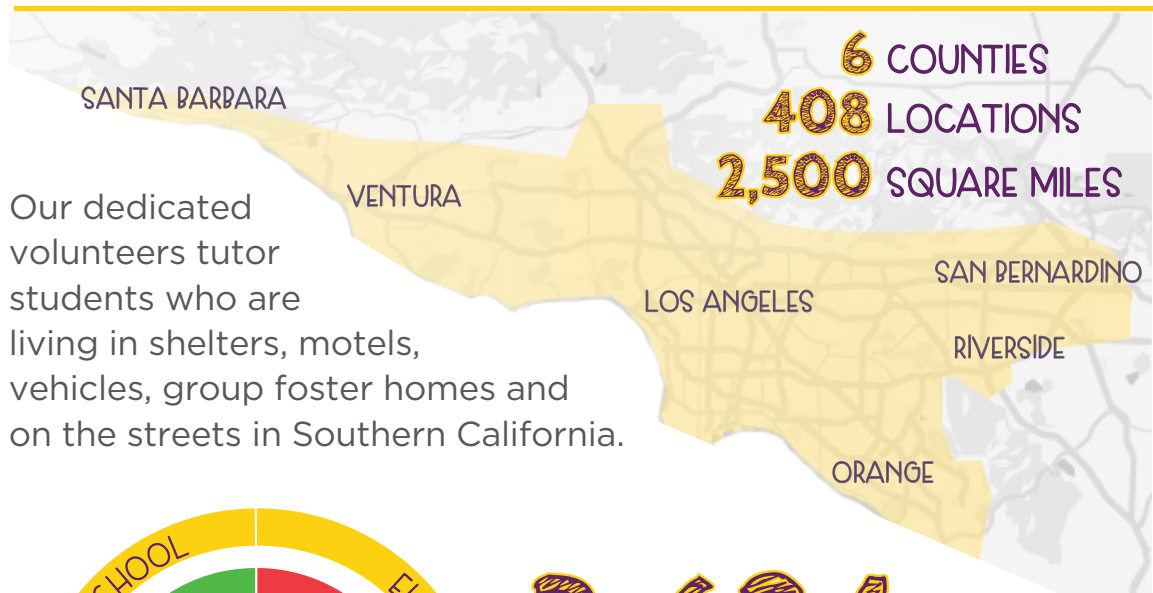
Students who attend our year-round after-school program at the Skid Row Learning Center 'trick or treat' with the support of the LAPD. Thank you to our partners for donating costumes, candy, and for giving our kids the opportunity to join in the festivities of Halloween like any other child.



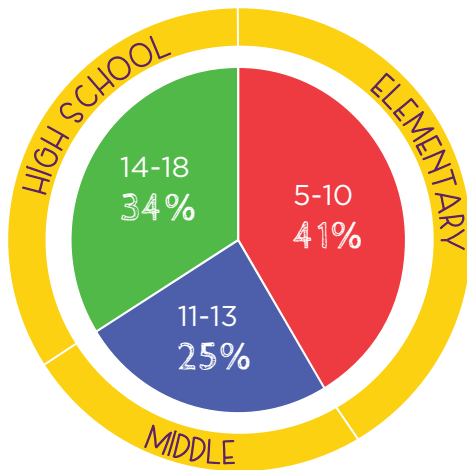
Throughout the years, the Los Angeles County Office of Education's Homeless Youth Education Program has worked in close partnership with School on Wheels. During the 2017-18 school year, 70,525 youth were identified as experiencing homelessness across 80 school districts and over 300 charter schools in Los Angeles County. School on Wheels has been an amazing partner to districts and charters across the county, enriching the lives of students while helping them excel on their educational journey and discover their pathway to a brighter future.

MELISSA SCHOONMAKER, L.C.S.W.  
PROJECT DIRECTOR III,  
CHILD WELFARE AND ATTENDANCE  
LA COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



Our dedicated volunteers tutor students who are living in shelters, motels, vehicles, group foster homes and on the streets in Southern California.



3,624

STUDENTS

(Kindergarten - 12th grade)

RECEIVED ONE-ON-ONE TUTORING INSTRUCTION

AVERAGE AGE OF STUDENTS IS 9 YEARS OLD



We have fun and learn at the same time.

JASON, AGE 8

301

STUDENTS

SERVED AT OUR SKID  
ROW LEARNING CENTER

Located in the neighborhood with the highest concentration of homelessness in the U.S., our Skid Row Learning Center offers a safe and fun learning environment for students experiencing homelessness to access support after school. The center is open six days a week year-round and includes a digital learning center, academic lessons, and a summer program to lessen the documented loss of learning that students suffer during long school breaks.



2,321

VOLUNTEERS  
TRAINED AND MATCHED

School on Wheels runs like a well-oiled machine. I feel appreciated and supported by my coordinator. It has been incredible watching my student's academic progress and building a relationship with her.

MATTHEW, VOLUNTEER TUTOR



71 SCHOLARSHIPS  
AWARDED

15 years ago, the Catherine McAuley scholarship was created to break down the barriers that exist for our students in getting a quality education. Awards are granted for college, trade schools, arts/music/sports programs, educational summer camps, or enrichment classes. In 2018, with your support, we awarded more scholarships than ever before.

5,501

BACKPACKS  
WITH SCHOOL SUPPLIES  
DISTRIBUTED

School on Wheels has the best tutors ever. They are so loving and caring, and they made my children feel like they could do anything. It helped them look beyond their current circumstances and see the possibilities the future can hold.

ANNA, MOTHER

38,673

HOURS  
OF STUDENT ACCESS TO  
DIGITAL LEARNING

In 2018, 418 students benefited from one-on-one online tutoring with the help of volunteer online tutors from over 25 states and territories in the United States.

96%

of parents say their child is benefitting from tutoring.

90%

of parents say their child is putting in more effort into schoolwork.

91%

of parents say their child is more confident with reading.

82%

of parents say their child is earning better grades.

**Two-thirds of our students increased assessment scores by a grade level or more after 10 weeks of one-on-one tutoring.**



**Mya appreciates me being here and is always ready to learn. I really enjoy working with Mya because she is curious, smart, and always has a positive attitude. She seems much older and wiser than her years, and I know she is going to be successful. She already is!**

**MICHAEL  
MYA'S TUTOR**



## MYA'S STORY

Mya's mom heard about School on Wheels from a neighbor in the apartments where she lives. The apartment building looks no different than others on the busy street, but is a domestic violence shelter filled with women and children fleeing abusive relationships.

Every day after school, volunteer tutors come to this safe haven to teach, mentor, and provide one-on-one tutoring and support to children like Mya. But Mya, aged 12 and in 6th grade, is not like other children.

Michael Weiser, her tutor, says she is "an unusually positive and smart kid with a vocabulary way above her years that makes me scratch my head and do a double take, wondering, did she really just say that?" Mya's mom concurs: "she is super smart and helps her sisters all the time with reading, and she even helps me with my studies. I have homework too. I never finished school but am now back studying for my high school diploma."

"My favorite day of the week is Monday because that's when I go to school. I want to be a teacher when I grow up, and I think I will be good at it because I can relate to things I did when I was a child," says Mya.

"I've moved schools six times, but it doesn't matter because I make friends easily... I don't have time for the kids that mess around at school. When I was in 5th grade there were posters all over the school with my name on them for being smart and helpful. My favorite subject is math, and all I want to do when I am at school is math. I'll be in PE thinking about math—I'll count and multiply in my head. I'm in 6th grade now but doing 8th-grade math."

Her mom recommends School on Wheels to other residents. "Where else can you get free tutors that come to you? Her tutor is great, and I can see the improvement she has made with him. They are working on history and learning about the three branches of the government. Her teachers at school say she is doing great, and she makes me feel so proud. Don't tell her, but I think she is way smarter than me!"





# DILAN'S STORY

Motels are often the last resort for families experiencing homelessness. The lack of affordable housing has turned overpriced motels into long-term shelters. Ten years ago, School on Wheels turned the reception area of a run-down motel in Orange County into a tutoring space for the kids living there. One of those kids was an eight-year-old boy named Dilan Oezkan. Sadly, Dilan's story of homelessness is not unusual, but his grit and determination to succeed and excel at school is inspiring to us all—especially to students battling the same issues.

"I looked forward to tutoring every week because my tutor Anson pushed me academically," says Dilan. "He saw that I was smart, and we started working on math grades above what I was learning at school. He taught me about integers, and I had my multiplication tables down by 2nd grade! He taught me the core stuff that I never forgot.

I could always count on my mom to push education as well. We had to do homework first before anything else. By the time I was 9 or 10, I realized that we were homeless and that this was not how 'normal people'

lived. There were six of us living in one room, and we moved all the time. I went to seven elementary schools and six middle schools! All I ever wanted to do was stay at the same school. School was very important to our family, and my mom always made sure to enroll us quickly when we moved. I made friends easily. And making new friends at school helped me create a reality where I had a normal life."

We asked Dilan what he would say to kids experiencing homelessness:

"I'd tell kids that the biggest way to break the cycle is to push yourself through school. The only way you can break the pattern of poverty and homelessness is through education. You have to think beyond the pattern you and your family are in now and see college as your future. Things may suck right now but there is light at the end of the long tunnel: just keep busy, join clubs, be part of what's going on at school, and stay focused on learning."

Dilan will graduate from high school in June with a 4.4 weighted GPA. He will be pursuing a degree in political science and history at UCLA.



We have supported School on Wheels for 25 years—we were engaged since the beginning by Agnes Stevens' dream. The work they do is life-changing for their students, and their volunteers are dedicated and caring. They are one of the few organizations that focuses on the education of children without a home.

BOWEN H. AND JANICE ARTHUR MCCOY CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

Everyone at Calamigos was so happy to host your 25th Friendsversary -- what a great event! School on Wheels is an incredible organization. Your students truly deserve our support, and the magic your team and volunteers work is amazing.

GLEN GERSON, OWNER  
CALAMIGOS RANCH



Universal Studios Hollywood is proud to support the critical work that School on Wheels provides to our local communities. Your volunteers make a huge difference to children experiencing homelessness by encouraging them to be successful in school and supporting them to change their lives through education.

VIRGINIA TANAWONG  
SR. VICE PRESIDENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES  
NBC DISCOVER A STAR FOUNDATION



Homelessness is the greatest moral and humanitarian crisis of our time. Thank you for all you do to help our children learn, grow, and achieve. Congratulations on 25 years of life-changing work.

MAYOR ERIC GARCETTI



The Sunair Children's Foundation is delighted to support this wonderful organization that brings learning, mentoring, and caring to vulnerable children, helping them understand how critical education is to their future success.

EVA GOETZ  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
SUNAIR CHILDREN'S  
FOUNDATION





In January, fundraising group **Joyful Giving** kicked off our 25th anniversary celebrations by hosting Havana Nights, a tropical night in the deep of winter which raised over \$200,000 in donations.



It's an honor and privilege to share Paradise Cove with your kids. It means a lot to us and our crew. Some of these kids have never seen a beach before, and it's our pleasure to host this party. This year the Woolsey Fires nearly devastated Malibu, but we'd do it even if there were only ashes here. This party goes on!

BOB MORRIS, OWNER  
PARADISE BEACH CAFE



If you are considering becoming a volunteer tutor, know that you are becoming part of an organization that is the real thing. Every effort, every penny, and everyone who works there is dedicated to making a difference in these kids' lives. It is an honor to be able to assist this organization to do what it does.

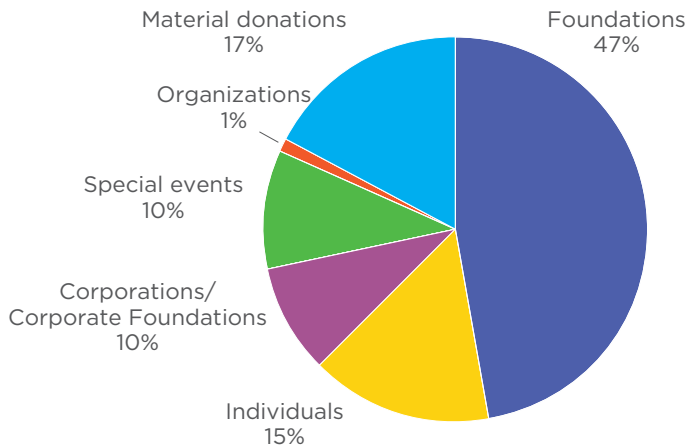
WINNIE STROHMEYER  
VOLUNTEER & DONOR



# FINANCIALS

With your amazing generosity, we increased our support by 36% in 2018 and continue to develop a diversified funding plan. Our expenses increased by 25%, which resulted from growth and improvements to our program services.

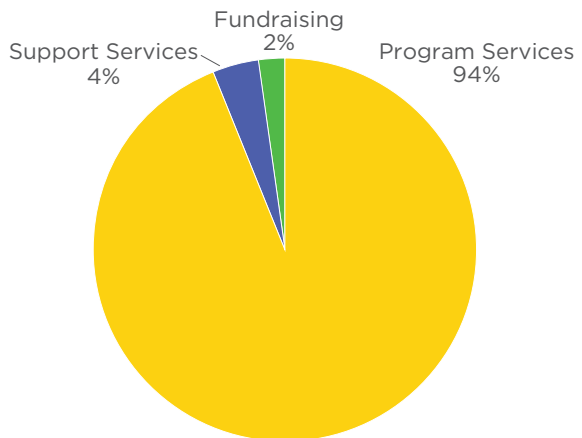
## Revenue & Support



Foundations	\$ 1,245,450	47%
Individuals	\$ 406,997	15%
Corporations/ Corporate Foundations	\$ 252,564	10%
Special events	\$ 273,111	10%
Organizations	\$ 36,158	1%
Material donations	\$ 457,979	17%
Interest/other Income	\$ 5,001	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 2,677,260</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Expenses

Program Services	\$ 2,467,796	94%
Support Services	\$ 116,292	4%
Fundraising	\$ 48,665	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 2,632,753</b>	<b>100%</b>



We are fortunate indeed to have so many loyal and generous donors who care deeply about the education of children experiencing homelessness. In 2018, we were honored to have support from foundations large and small, companies, colleges and organizations, and individual donors from \$5 to \$25,000. Some of our supporters have been with us since 1993, others have been unwavering in their encouragement for many years, and some are new to us in 2018. We are filled with gratitude for all of you.



A complete listing of our generous donors can be viewed on our web site at [schoolonwheels.org/donate/#our-friends](http://schoolonwheels.org/donate/#our-friends).



# OUR DONORS

thank you for your generosity  
and commitment to our students

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Annenberg Foundation  
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Living Legacy Foundation  
Weingart Foundation

## \$50,000+

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Family Foundation  
The Green Foundation  
The Mark Hughes Foundation  
The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation  
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## \$30,000+

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Wonderful Giving

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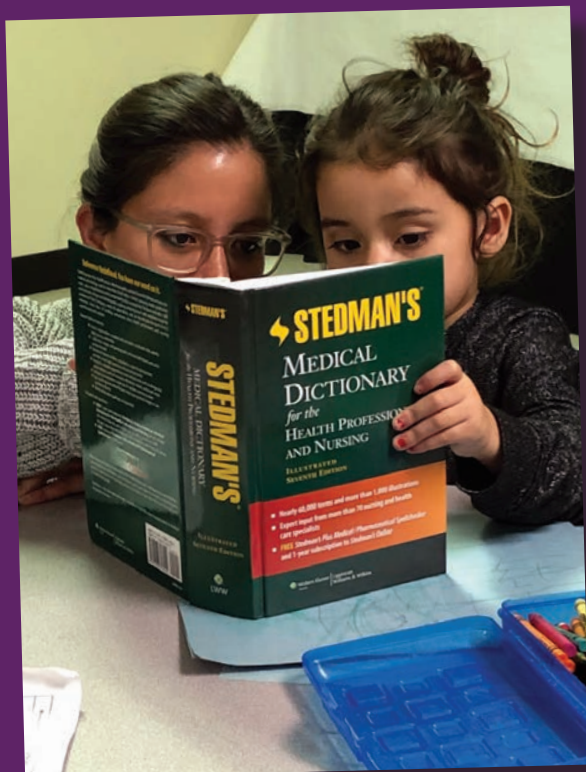


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Read the rest of Catherine's letter inside.

