

EDUCATION IS

Everything

Impact Report 2023



A LETTER FROM Leadership



At the Education Foundation of Collier County – Champions For Learning, we believe that education is everything. We see how education changes the lives of our students and how generations of poverty are forever changed through academic achievement.

This past year, our organization underwent a change in leadership. We began the year with an interim CEO while our search committee conducted an extensive nationwide search. We were fortunate to have had considerable interest with over 120 worthy candidates. In August 2022, Barbara Evans was selected as our new President and CEO. She brings a deep understanding of the importance of education having moved to the United States as a toddler with a parent who didn't speak English. Her teachers were instrumental in ensuring she received the help she needed while in school.

In September 2022, Hurricane Ian wreaked havoc in our region. Our organization responded in an innovative way. As we began to understand the challenges that Collier County Public Schools were experiencing with their workforce, we jumped into action. On Friday, January 20, 2023, we allocated more than \$1.2 million for our Hurricane Ian response that addressed our educators housing and transportation issues.

In October 2022, Champions For Learning distributed over \$200,000 in educator and classroom grants to educators across Collier County. At the same time, we announced our 60 Teachers of Distinction to begin the process of selecting our Golden Apple recipients.

Night of Champions, our signature fundraising event, was a phenomenal success, bringing in over \$630,000 for our student and educator programs. Through *Give Where You Live Collier*, a one-day online fundraiser hosted by the Collier Community Foundation, we raised \$178,000. We successfully completed a \$50,000 challenge match from the Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation for Technical Pathways.

In February 2023, we strengthened our commitment to Future Ready Collier by hiring its first ever full-time director, Emily Budd-Schepperly. In April 2023, we inducted 36 rising 9th grade students into Take Stock in Children and matched them with mentors. At the end of May, 100 percent of our 81 seniors graduated from high school. Nine seniors also graduated with an AA/AS degree and 59 percent earned college credits while in high school. Collectively, our seniors earned \$1.3 million in scholarships outside of the two-year (60 credit hours) state college scholarship that Champions proudly awards.

The continued success of Champions For Learning's impact on our students and educators is made possible by the commitment of our community. We offer many thanks to the hundreds of changemakers who volunteer in our organization. We are grateful for the thousands of donors that fund our student and educator programs. We give thanks to all who share in our belief that education is everything.

Thank you for your partnership,

William J. Lutz
Board Chair

Barbara E. Evans, CFRE
President and CEO

“Education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world.”

NELSON MANDELA



OUR Mission

To serve as a catalyst for educational success by investing in Collier's students and educators.



2023

Board of Directors

William Lutz, Board Chair
Dr. Bruce Mousa, Immediate Past Chair
Martha Rozman, Chair Elect & Secretary
Roger Lipitz, Treasurer
Stephanie Lucarelli, Vice Chair
Denise Murphy-Blanco, Vice Chair
Dr. Jesse Roberts, Vice Chair
Carol Windfeldt, Vice Chair
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Dr. Della Burt-Bradley
Chuck Carlsen
Serge Ecityan
Yolanda Flores
Dan Lampe
Janet Perna
Gary Personette
Dr. Lesile Ricciardelli

Jaqueline Rodriguez
George Sherwin
Ken Thomas
Yadira Vintimilla

UNDERSTANDING the Need

Education is in a state of crisis.

Recruitment and retention of teachers remains a serious struggle for the state of Florida, reaching record-breaking levels, according to the Florida Education Association. Forbes.com recently conducted a nationwide survey where 48 percent of teachers admitted that they had considered quitting within the last 30 days. Of that number, 34 percent said that they were thinking about leaving the profession entirely. Understaffed schools have reached epic proportions. Teachers and administrators across the country are stressed, underpaid, overworked, and near burnout.

The National Education Association reports that Florida ranked 48th in the nation for teacher salaries. Collier County Public Schools has intentionally implemented strategies to increase educator satisfaction. However, our educators face additional challenges within the classroom. Nearly 64 percent of Collier County Public School students are "economically needy." Of the students enrolled in our Student Programs, 89 percent come from households living at or below poverty level. Poverty presents an additional barrier to education, and with students who are not able to perform at their



full academic potential in the classroom, teachers experience increased feelings of stress and fatigue.

Poverty and education are intricately linked. Once a family is living below the poverty line, it becomes increasingly more challenging for them to break the cycle of poverty. Children who are born into families with these circumstances typically lack access to opportunities other children may have. Poverty-related factors negatively affect a student's ability to learn and succeed in school. Families with low incomes may lack resources at home, and parents or guardians are less likely to have enough time to assist their children with schoolwork. The dropout rate for students between 16 and 24 years old is seven times higher for families classified as economically needy, and these students are also more likely to drop-out to work or care for family members. This creates a domino effect – a lack of education negatively affects an adult's ability to lift themselves out of poverty, and the cycle repeats.

54% of Collier County Public School students come from homes where English is not the first language



64% of Collier County Public School students are "economically needy"



40% of new teachers in Florida left the classroom within their first five years



150% increase in the number of teacher shortages within the past six years (not including support staff)



90% of all teachers spend their own money on school and classroom supplies for their students



\$500 is the average amount that teachers spend of their own money annually on supplies and classroom needs



HURRICANE Ian

Within the first month after Hurricane Ian destroyed parts of Southwest Florida, Champions For Learning was awarded \$350,000 by Governor and First Lady DeSantis from the Volunteer Florida Foundation's Florida Disaster Fund. These funds were provided to assist our educators with the serious housing and transportation challenges they faced in the wake of Hurricane Ian.

Champions For Learning built an educator grant application in partnership with Collier County Public Schools. The application was open from November 11 through November 30.

Champions For Learning formed an award selection committee that included five dedicated members of the Collier County community. A rubric was designed to identify educators with the greatest needs due to the storm, while removing any opportunity for personal biases. Using the rubric, the committee reviewed 179 applications with a total request of \$1.8 million. We were able to secure additional funding because of our methodology, process, and a deeper understanding of educators' individual needs. Champions For Learning secured \$587,830 from the Collier Community Foundation and an additional \$250,000 from Volunteer Florida Foundation's Florida Disaster Fund.

After an extremely thorough review, the committee developed the final list of award recipients while maintaining the goal of anchoring the Collier County educator workforce with intentionality, consistency, and fairness in their awarding methodology.



On Friday, January 20, 2023, Champions For Learning began distributing funds to educators. This funding provided relief in a variety of ways:



Deductibles for homeowners, flood, and car insurances.



First and last month's rent, and security deposits for those who had to move due to the storm.



Rental increases for those who had to change rentals due to the storm.



Expenses to replace damaged or destroyed household items.



Expenses for home repairs not covered by insurance.



Storage expenses incurred for items that were salvaged.



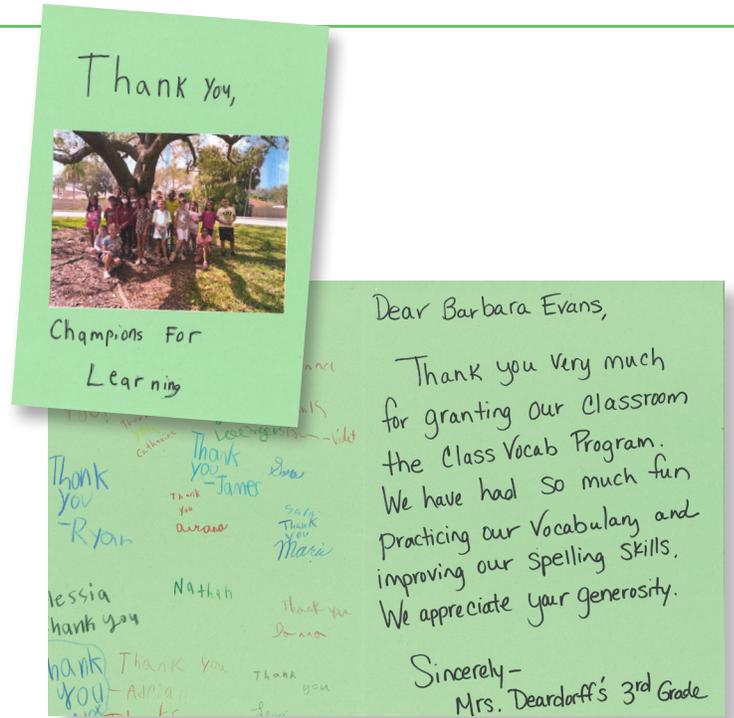
Expenses for those whose houses or mobile homes were not insurable after experiencing a partial or total loss and displacement.

Champions For Learning allocated more than
\$1.2 million to educators in need
in response to Hurricane Ian.

EDUCATOR & CLASSROOM Grants

Educator and classroom grants allow educators to request funding for supplies, classroom items, and enrichment activities not included in the school's budget. Applications must be approved by principals to assure alignment with school goals and priorities. A volunteer selection committee scores each request against a rubric designed by Champions For Learning for the allocation of funds.

According to the National Education Association, more than 90 percent of teachers spend an average of \$500 of their own money on school supplies and other items their students need to succeed. The unstated expectation that educators will spend their own money on supplies and equipment are factors in teacher attrition.



In 2022-2023, Champions For Learning provided a total of...

Alternative Schools	\$1,999
Avalon Elementary	\$1,628
Barron Collier High	\$1,535
CCPS District Office	\$9,500
Big Cypress Elementary	\$300
BridgePrep Academy	\$1,948
Calusa Park Elementary	\$2,583
Corkscrew Elementary	\$1,821
Corkscrew Middle	\$1,325
East Naples Middle	\$2,027
Eden Park Elementary	\$5,632
Estates Elementary	\$1,382
Everglades City School	\$1,947
Golden Gate Elementary	\$3,739

Golden Gate Middle	\$5,748
Golden Terrace Elementary	\$3,169
Gulf Coast Charter Academy South	\$2,459
Gulf Coast High	\$15,205
Gulfview Middle	\$2,858
Herbert Cambridge Elementary	\$6,912
Highlands Elementary	\$1,000
Immokalee High	\$5,298
Immokalee Middle	\$12,249
Immokalee Technical College	\$1,870
Lake Park Elementary	\$7,279
Lake Trafford Elementary	\$1,119
Laurel Oak Elementary	\$2,113
Lavern Gaynor Elementary	\$14,948



\$216,974
in grants to...



56
schools throughout Collier
County supporting nearly...



200
local educators and
classrooms

Lely Elementary	\$957
Lely High	\$5,658
Lorenzo Walker Technical College	\$2,980
Lorenzo Walker Technical High	\$745
Manatee Elementary	\$650
Manatee Middle	\$2,632
Marco Island Charter Middle	\$2,349
Mike Davis Elementary	\$2,523
Naples Christian Academy	\$52
Naples High	\$3,258
Naples Park Elementary	\$2,075
North Naples Middle	\$5,565
Oakridge Middle	\$11,570
Palmetto Elementary	\$312

Palmetto Ridge High	\$7,504
Parkside Elementary	\$1,540
Pelican Marsh Elementary	\$3,020
Pine Ridge Middle	\$1,597
Pinecrest Elementary	\$8,947
Poinciana Elementary	\$4,260
Sabal Palm Elementary	\$2,477
Sea Gate Elementary	\$1,719
Seacrest Country Day School	\$3,756
Shadowlawn Elementary	\$819
Tommie Barfield Elementary	\$2,543
Veterans Memorial Elementary	\$13,230
Village Oaks Elementary	\$1,401
Vineyards Elementary	\$3,240

Golden APPLE

Since its inception in 1990, the Golden Apple Teacher Recognition Program has shined a light on the best practices of Collier County Public School teachers. Annually, each public and charter school is invited to put forward a Teacher of Distinction who will represent their school and their own best practice in the Golden Apple process. A volunteer committee meets each teacher, learns about the best practices through presentations and classroom site visits, and selects best practices and teachers to highlight each year. Through this program, educators in Collier County are consistently celebrated and supported by their community.

2022-2023 Golden Apple Recipients



Mr. Alfaro created a supportive, relevant, and rigorous learning environment in his classroom, using several habits of mind, such as independent thinking, persistence, applying past knowledge to new situations, and developing innovative thinking.



Ms. Bullen used topics that are relative to students’ experiences, such as occupations, sports, and other real-world applications, to help them uncover how math is used in their daily lives.



In order to “mine” the young minds of her students, Ms. Certa never gives a straight answer, but challenges students to think critically and to openly discuss the merits of various ideas in order to come to a good solution to the problem.



“

One child, one teacher, one pen and one book can **change the world.**

MALALA YOUSAFZAI

”



Anne Coots
Osceola Elementary

Ms. Coots developed a system of recording daily instructional and homework solution videos, accessible to all of her students via the class webpage, as a means of strengthening independent problem-solving abilities.



Ashley Crosby
Golden Gate Middle

A best practice Ms. Crosby incorporated daily was using challenges to empower success and build resilience in her students, providing them with the tools to meet those challenges and work through them until that "failure" becomes a success.



Michael Gonzalez
RCMA Immokalee
Community Academy

To increase math achievement, Mr. Gonzalez implemented a math program designed to provide students with supports that build upon previous content, helping them easily recall and use information.

2022-2023 Teachers of Distinction

Suzanne Alden
Maria Baquerizo Altuve
Sandie Alviar
Eric Baylor
Chuck Bullock
Victoria Cannizzaro
Emily Costello
Daisy Duran
Rachel Elliott
Jeffrey Faeder
Yara Ferrer
Shannon Foley
Kaitlin Francisco
Clarissa Gayle

Ashley Corina Giannone
Maribel Gonzales
Kelly Gracey
Lisa Guerra
Paul Holimon
Jason Jones
Shawn Kelly
Christina Kingston
Gayelle Lahoud
Sheli Lowrie
Victoria Lincoln
Krista Maddox
Nicholas Martinez
Lani Mastrangelo

Jason Mayberry
Ryan McQuade
Eleanor Morse
MacKenzie Nehring
Nikita Obidiegwu
Rachel Patterson
Darah Perini
Amy Pike
Romi Rameau
Tim Rayburn
Marissa Rockwell
Anthony Rudnicki
Stephanie Scalise
Kelly Schlesinger

Kathy Schroeder
Jose Sierra
Corey Stewart
Terrie Thompson
Bridgette Toombs
Kendra Verborn
Adriana Villanueva
Aileen Volkers
Katherine Wagner
Milenes Reyes Walters
Kara Weigle
Laura Yanich

College & CAREER PREPARATION

The College & Career Preparation Program is designed to equip and prepare 11th and 12th grade students for their future learning and career goals. Through the program, students learn about various options that are available to them post-graduation, including college programs and career opportunities. They gain valuable knowledge in how to make informed life decisions regarding their educational and vocational pursuits. The program

incorporates relevant skills and components that are proven to be highly effective for students seeking college readiness or career preparation: academic support, college and career planning, leadership development, college access, coaching, service learning, financial literacy, and work experience.

CLASS OF 2023 GRADUATES. Take Stock in Children and College & Career Preparation combined class photo.





100%

program graduation rate



\$409k

of scholarships awarded*

*not including Bright Futures, Federal Aid or Florida Prepaid Scholarships



\$152k

earned in scholarships awarded from Champions For Learning



75%

of students took dual enrollment courses

Where 2023 College & Career Preparation Graduates are Attending

- Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (4)
- Florida Gulf Coast University (9)
- Florida International University (2)
- Florida SouthWestern State College (11)
- Florida State University (1)
- Full Sail University (1)
- Miami-Dade State College (1)
- Palm Beach State College (1)
- New College of Florida (1)
- United States Army (1)
- University of Central Florida (3)
- University of Florida (3)
- University of North Carolina Chapel Hill (1)
- University of South Florida (5)



Take Stock IN CHILDREN



8th Grade Program Induction CLASS OF 2023

Take Stock in Children is a statewide, academically focused mentoring program that guides students toward successful completion of high school and college enrollment. Take Stock in Children empowers students to overcome the barriers to higher education. Many are on track to be the first in their families to graduate from high school. Champions For Learning has been an affiliate of the Take Stock in Children program since 2000.

This multi-year program model integrates elements of highly effective college and career access programming, including mentorship, college and

career access workshops, one-on-one college and career coaching, and scholarships. Recruitment and onboarding for the program begins in the second semester of 8th grade, and students must remain in the program throughout high school until graduation to earn a scholarship award. By setting high expectations for their academic future, Take Stock in Children helps students graduate from high school in strong academic standing and are prepared for post-secondary success.

“

A good education is a foundation for a better future. ELIZABETH WARREN

”



8th Grade Program Induction CLASS OF 2027

 **100%**
program graduation rate

 **\$947k**
of scholarships awarded*
*not including Bright Futures, Federal Aid or Florida Prepaid Scholarships

 **\$296k**
earned in scholarships awarded
from Champions For Learning

 **58**
industry certifications obtained

Where 2023 Take Stock in Children Graduates are Attending

- American University (1)
- Covenant College (1)
- Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (1)
- Florida Atlantic University (1)
- Florida Gulf Coast University (11)
- Florida International University (3)
- Florida SouthWestern State College (3)
- Florida State University (4)
- Lorenzo Walker Technical College (1)
- Tallahassee Community College (1)
- University of Central Florida (1)
- University of Denver (1)
- University of Florida (2)
- University of Miami (1)
- University of North Florida (3)
- University of South Florida (2)

Technical PATHWAYS

Piloted in the fall of 2022, Technical Pathways is a technical career exploration program that provides 9th grade high school students with guidance on how to navigate the academic, technical, and real-world knowledge, skills, and experience they need to be prepared for post-secondary opportunities. Technical Pathways is fully aligned with the enrollment strategy of Lorenzo Walker Technical College – to expand career dual enrollment into the technical college, where students will earn credit towards both high school graduation and a career and technical program certificate. As this program grows, we will add a cohort of new 9th grade students each year so that our enrollment will encapsulate our vision of serving 9th and 10th grade students.



Technical Pathways focuses on the exploration of career opportunities, establishing bridges to future education and improving high school graduation rates. Students enrolled in Technical Pathways learn how Lorenzo Walker Technical College will develop their career skills and gain understanding of the industry credentials and certification processes. The program emphasizes Career and Technical Education (CTE), which prepares students for a wide range of high-wage, high-skill, and high-demand careers.



8

9th grade students enrolled in the piloted program



30

total students participated in the Technical Pathways Spring Break & Summer Camps

Students develop individualized education and career plans with **the goal of becoming dual enrolled** in their 11th grade year at Lorenzo Walker Technical College.



Entrepreneurship

PROGRAM

Collier County Public School's

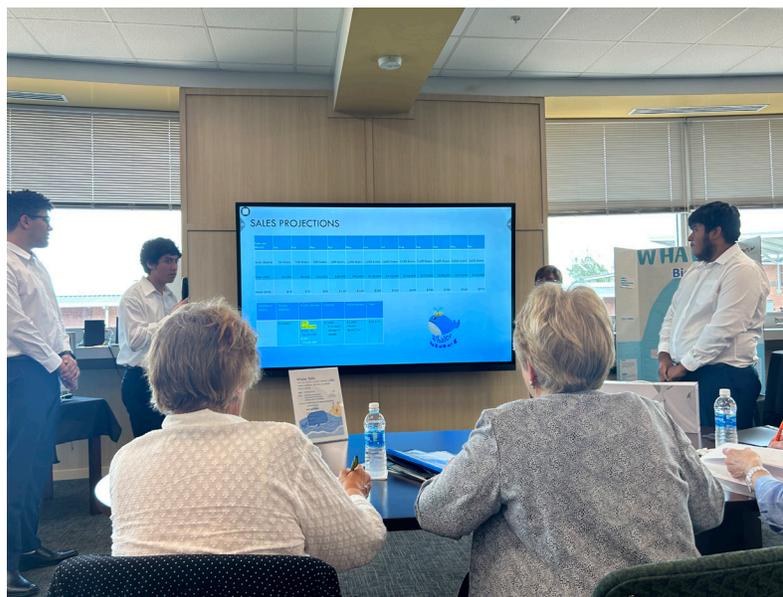
Entrepreneurship Program offers project-based authentic learning in a real-world environment. The entrepreneurship classes are unlike standard classes in that they are very collaborative and hands-on. The CCPS classroom teachers collaborate with volunteers, both retired and business professionals, who mentor student teams, provide real-world context, and champion student efforts. Champions For Learning recruits, trains, and retains the volunteers engaged in this program. Through the Entrepreneurship Program, students embody the spirit of an entrepreneur through their learning and application of business start-up practices and concepts to projects they're passionate about. They build, test, learn, apply, embrace the cycle of experimentation, and make discoveries from their successes and failures. Students work in teams with the support of a dynamic mix of teachers, coaches, and mentors, to foster deeper learning and skill-building.

On April 28, 2023, the Entrepreneurship Program held a district-level competition in Collier County and the results were impressive. Twelve teams from all eight high schools competed, each with a unique business idea. A panel of experienced entrepreneurs and business leaders evaluated each team's business plan, marketing strategy, and financial projections. After careful consideration, the panel selected the top two teams: VID and Lockits.

VID, which took first place, is a startup company hoping to improve school security by updating processes and procedures through the incorporation of technology. The team members were praised for their creative and innovative approach. Their financial projections were impressive, showing that VID could save each school over \$16,000 per year.

Lockits, the second-place team, developed a securing clip that keeps users from losing add-on charms (Jibbitz) from popular clog shoes (Crocs).

The judges were impressed by the team's traction, and commended their attention to detail, as well as their ability to identify and address potential challenges. This team perfected their product after over a dozen iterations of Lockits.



 **2,265**
volunteer hours
were served in the
Entrepreneurship Program
by 142 volunteers during
the 2023 school year



Future Ready COLLIER



Launched in 2016, Future Ready Collier is an organized network of partners and collaborators designed to build an educational pipeline for college, career, and life readiness. Future Ready Collier focuses on three main goals.

- 1. Ensuring all children are kindergarten ready.**
- 2. Ensuring all youth are provided support during their elementary and middle school years.**
- 3. Ensuring all young people are career ready by graduating high school on track to obtain a degree or credential.**

The Education Foundation of Collier County – Champions For Learning is the backbone organization facilitating this network of more than 60 organizations, businesses, schools, and community members that have increased the high school graduation rate to more than 90 percent in Collier County.

Early Learning Achievements



Doubled young child screenings, with collaboration among early childhood providers and healthcare operators.



Facilitated a partnership with Fun Time Early Childhood Academy and Collier County Public Schools that led to the opening of three new early learning classes.



Facilitated Healthy Start to connect its Books, Balls, and Blocks program to a network of providers in Immokalee.

School Success Achievements



Increased literacy-focused workshops hosted at and by local organizations to engage parents and students to develop literacy skills and a love for reading.



Increased access to online school registration, leading to higher rates of on-time kindergarten registration.



Facilitated a first-of-its-kind partnership with internationally recognized Room To Read to increase access to literacy instruction and materials.



College and Career Readiness Achievements



Amplified communications to strengthen access to emergency services, information and resources for students and families; leveraging the strengths of Collier CARES and the Salvation Army.



Continued collaboration with schools, organizations, students and families to increase FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) completion rates.



Facilitated first ever *Be Future Ready Day*, with representatives from local colleges and universities, providing instant admission decisions and financial aid application assistance.

Volunteers



Our volunteers are changemakers.

Their efforts change the lives of our students and educators. Our changemakers are an extension of our team. They mentor students. They select classroom grant awards. They provide office and event support. They select the six Golden Apple recipients. They coach students. They spread the word about our important work. They care, and love, and give their valuable time. They are changemakers.

We cannot achieve our mission without our changemakers. Their compassionate hearts and hardworking spirits embody our belief that education is everything. To say that we are grateful is an understatement. Thank you for being a key ingredient in our sound financial management. You are making a difference. Thank you, changemakers.

 **10,408**
volunteer hours
logged this year

 **\$288,093**
the value of volunteer hours
served during this year

“

Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.

HELEN KELLER

”

Financial PROFILE

July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023

We are thrilled to report a year of strong support from our amazing investors. Of every dollar invested at Champions For Learning, 85 cents goes directly into programs that serve as a catalyst for educational success for Collier’s students and educators.

By demonstrating strong financial health and commitment to accountability, the Education Foundation of Collier County – Champions For Learning has earned a 4-star Charity Navigator rating for the 7th year in a row. We have earned a GuideStar Platinum rating, which is the highest level available to nonprofits. These ratings set our organization apart from our peers and demonstrate our trustworthiness and transparency.

As we look ahead, we remain dedicated to fiscal prudence to safeguard our future and ensure our ability to serve generations of Collier’s students and educators.



STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

ASSETS

Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$ 2,407,492
Other Current Assets	\$ 214,606
Prepaid Scholarships	\$ 3,659,547
Endowment Fund	\$ 1,082,887
Property & Equipment, Net	\$ 1,989,583
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 9,354,115

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Total Liabilities	\$ 27,454
Total Net Assets	\$ 9,326,661
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$ 9,354,115

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

REVENUE

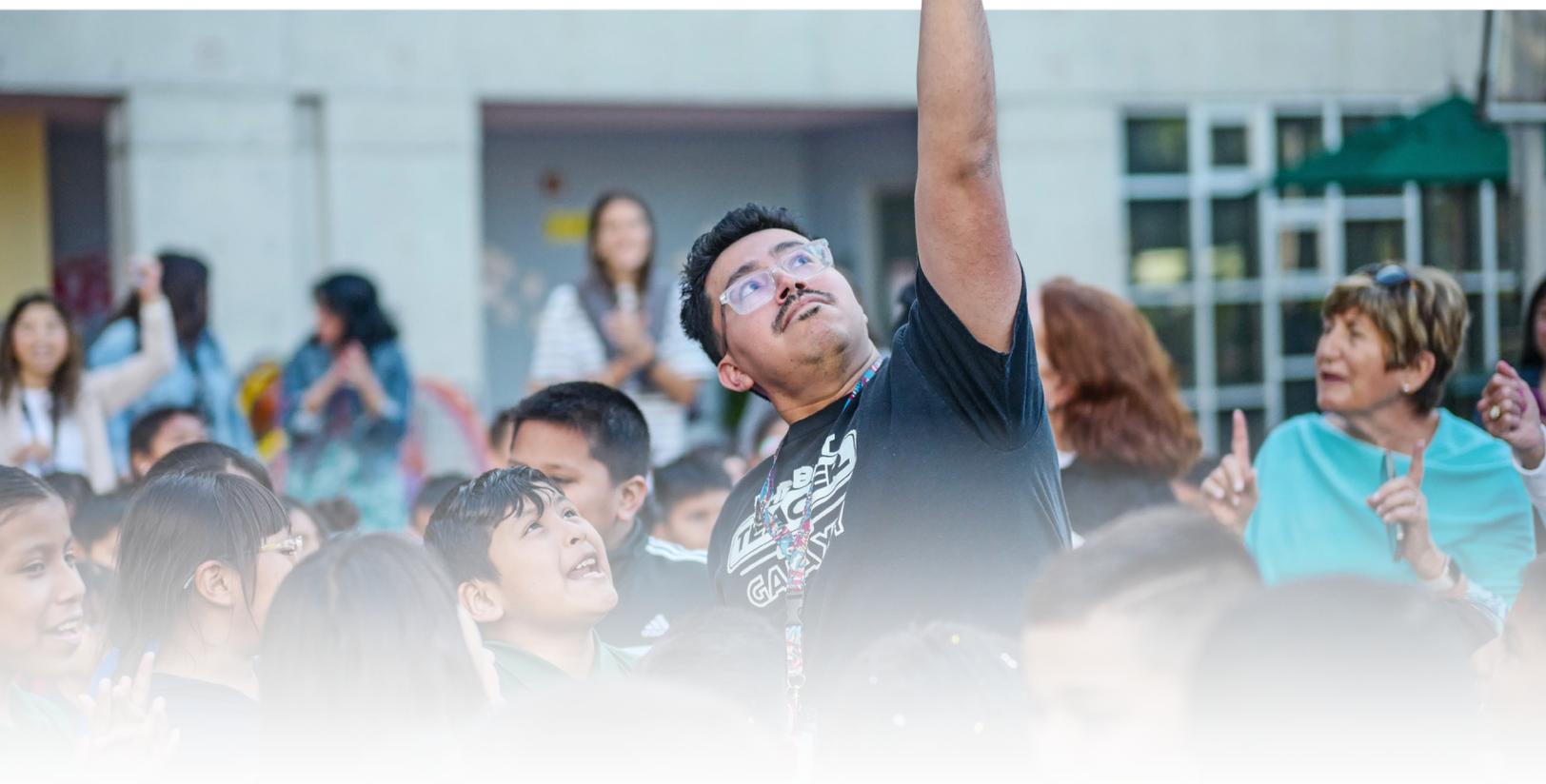
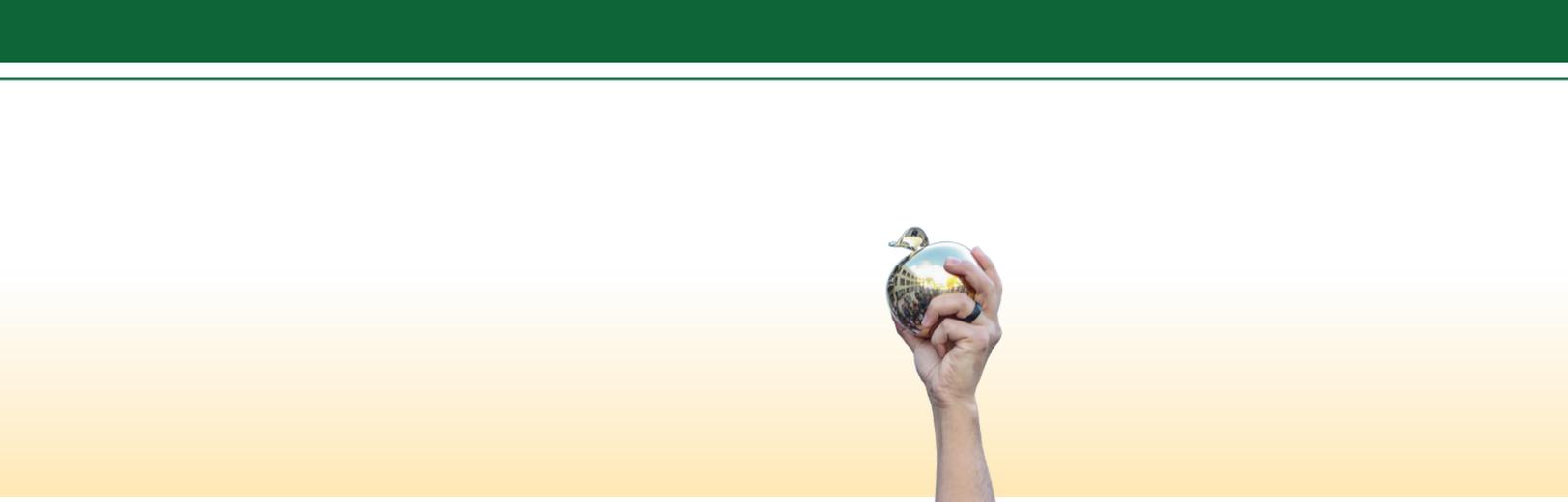
Foundation Revenue & Grants	\$ 2,548,616
Individual Contributions/ Family Foundations	\$ 1,166,438
Corporations/Organizations	\$ 235,943
Government Grants	\$ 12,427
Special Events, Net of Direct Costs	\$ 557,355
Contributions of Nonfinancial Assets (In-Kind Donations)	\$ 272,301
Net Change in Prepaid Scholarships	\$ (297,188)
Other Income (Loss), Net	\$ 143,759
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 4,639,651

EXPENSES

Program Services	\$ 4,183,713
Supporting Services	\$ 722,529
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 4,906,242
Decrease in Net Assets	\$ (266,591)
Net Assets, beginning of year	\$ 9,593,252
Net Assets, end of year	\$ 9,326,661



★★★★
CHARITY NAVIGATOR
Four Star Charity



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