



# Elevating Education 2024 - 2025 IMPACT REPORT



# About Us

For more than 40 years, the **Carlsbad Educational Foundation** (CEF) has partnered with the **Carlsbad Unified School District** (CUSD) to ensure every student has access to enriching, educational experiences, regardless of school, background, or circumstance.

In today's educational landscape, public funding alone is not enough to meet rising expectations, evolving workforce demands, and the need for hands-on, student-centered learning. CEF exists to bridge that gap, strategically investing in people, programs, and pathways that elevate learning across the entire district.

From STEAM and music, to career exploration, and innovative programming, CEF doesn't fund isolated initiatives. We build systems that allow students to grow, explore, and realize their potential, today and for years to come.

# Our Vision

Every student in the Carlsbad Unified School District will realize their potential and pursue their dreams.

Cover students are Ms. Sommer's Kindergarten music class at Aviara Oaks Elementary school.

# Our Mission

We invest in our children's future success by developing and funding impactful educational programs for all students in the Carlsbad Unified School District.

# Table of Contents

- 1** About Us
- 4** Letter from Our CEO & Board Chair
- 5** School Year Achievements
- 7** Our Programs
- 11** Mission Moments
  - Yamaha Service Day
  - Senior Scholarships
  - Crow Force Robotics
- 17** Annual Gala to Benefit Students
- 19** Donors
- 26** Corporate Contributions
- 27** Community Partners
- 28** Board of Directors & Staff
- 29** Financial Report



Kirstyn Limsico, a Carlsbad High School student.



TK students take a field trip to Coastal Roots Farm funded by CEF.



5th grade students visit Biztown, a CEF district-wide field trip that gives students the concept of a career and a glimpse into the workforce.



Carlsbad High School students release tagged white sea bass, learning how science comes to life.

# Letter from Our CEO & Board Chair

Dear Friends and Partners,

This year was defined by growth, not just in numbers, but in opportunity.

Across Carlsbad Unified School District (CUSD), students explored new possibilities, educators expanded what was possible in their classrooms, and our community came together with a shared belief: when we invest intentionally in education, students rise.

Thanks to your partnership, CEF continued to elevate learning district-wide, funding the people who inspire students, the programs that spark curiosity, and the pathways that prepare young people for life beyond graduation. From expanded access to music and STEAM learning to strengthened career pathways and real-world experiences, your support helped transform education from something students receive into something they experience.

What makes this work powerful is not just what we fund, but how we fund it — strategically, equitably, and in close partnership with CUSD. Together, we are building a future-focused educational ecosystem that prepares students to think critically, create boldly, and contribute meaningfully.

We are deeply grateful for your trust, generosity, and belief in what's possible for Carlsbad students. This report reflects not just a year of impact, but a community committed to elevating education together.

With appreciation,



**Laura Pitts**  
Chief Executive Officer



**Ian McDaniel**  
Board Chair

# Highlights

## Elevating Learning, District-Wide






In partnership with the **Carlsbad Unified School District**, Carlsbad Educational Foundation's investments reached students at every grade level and every school, strengthening learning today while building momentum for the future.

**This year, together we:**

- Invested in educators and specialists who bring learning to life
- Expanded access to hands-on STEAM, music, and innovative programming
- Connected students to real-world careers and future pathways

These highlights reflect more than accomplishments; they represent a system working as it should: educators empowered, students engaged, and a community invested in long-term success.




### Our district has:

 <p><b>10,770</b> Students</p>	 <p><b>16</b> Schools</p>
 <p><b>97.6%</b> Graduation Rate</p>	
 <p><b>94.4%</b> Attendance Rate</p>	
 <p><b>84%</b> of secondary students enrolled in at least 1 Honors/AP/Community College Course</p>	

### This school year:

 <p><b>\$38,260</b> invested in elementary science supplies, fostering hands-on learning and creativity in classrooms.</p>	 <p><b>\$83,756</b> in teacher grants supported 15 teachers, funding projects like collaborative math classrooms and industry standard journalism equipment.</p>	 <p><b>\$67,500</b> awarded in senior scholarships, helping make college more affordable for 15 outstanding high school seniors.</p>
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### To support students:

 <p><b>4,582</b> Carlsbad elementary students grades TK-5 experienced unforgettable field trips, from Coastal Roots to Biztown.</p>	 <p><b>9</b> full-time music teachers at every elementary funded in partnership with CUSD, ensuring weekly high-quality music instruction.</p>	 <p><b>13x</b> Science Lab Supercharge at every middle school, giving teacher's approximately 13x the state-provided funding and a full year of hands-on science exploration.</p>
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## STUDENT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL: RISING TO MEET THE MOMENT

When communities face crisis, leadership is essential and Carlsbad students stepped forward with purpose and compassion.

In response to the devastating Los Angeles fires, students in CEF's **Student Leadership Council** (SLC) mobilized a large-scale donation drive, transforming compassion into action. The results were extraordinary. Donations collected at Carlsbad High School alone filled four cars, with additional supplies gathered at Sage Creek. In total, students delivered 924 pounds of food, toiletries, and baby supplies to the North County Food Bank for the LA fire relief. They also collected eight large bags of pet supplies, assembled a family emergency kit, and raised \$700 in donations plus \$100 in gift cards.

Beyond the numbers, this effort reflects what CEF's Student Leadership Council strives to cultivate: students who lead with empathy, take initiative, and understand the power of collective action. Through SLC, students are not only developing leadership skills; they are learning that their voices, choices, and actions can make a meaningful difference.



Riley Friend and Lexie Han, Carlsbad High School Students and Student Leadership Council members, lead the L.A. fire donation drive.

# Program Highlights

## 40+ DISTRICT-WIDE GRANTS & SECONDARY TEACHER GRANTS

At the heart of every meaningful student experience is an educator with a vision. This year, the Carlsbad Educational Foundation (CEF) took a major step in bringing those visions to life through the launch of its **Secondary Teacher Grant Program**.

As part of a milestone **\$1.6 million investment in CUSD**, CEF awarded **\$83,756 in teacher grants to 15 educators**, funding innovative, classroom-based projects designed to expand hands-on learning and student engagement. The program was created to address the unique needs of secondary classrooms and to support instruction aligned with CEF's core priorities: **music, STEAM, and educational innovation**.

“The Nature Nook gives students the opportunity to experience science, not just learn about it,” said Katie Ohlin, **Science Teacher at Calavera Hills Middle School**.



The Nature Nook at Calavera Hills Middle School, an outdoor learning space created through a CEF Teacher Grant.



A grant provided a much-needed refresh for band instruments and equipment for the competitive Carlsbad High School drumline. Through rehearsals and performances, students are developing technical skills and discovering the impact of collaboration and dedication. “Drumline gives students a place to belong, challenge themselves, and grow as musicians and leaders. Through music, they learn discipline, teamwork, and the confidence to achieve more than they thought possible,” said Peter Manzi, Carlsbad High School Band Director.

New drumline equipment, funded through a CEF Teacher Grant, for Carlsbad High School.

At Calavera Hills Middle School, Science Teacher Katie Ohlin transformed an underutilized outdoor space into the Nature Nook, an immersive learning environment where students can explore environmental science beyond the classroom walls. The space serves as a living laboratory, allowing students to observe ecosystems, investigate natural processes, and engage in hands-on scientific inquiry. By creating opportunities for outdoor exploration and reflection, the Nature Nook encourages curiosity, environmental stewardship, and deeper connections to the natural world.

Together, these projects demonstrate how innovative educators are creating meaningful experiences that inspire students to learn, grow, and thrive.



# District-Wide Programs

## ELEMENTARY

### Grades TK - 5

#### Music Teachers & Supplies

In partnership with Carlsbad Unified School District, full-time, credentialed music teachers are funded at every elementary school. Teachers provide weekly classes, exploring the fundamentals of music, a variety of instruments, cultures, genres, and dances.

### Grades TK - 8

#### Science Days

Students participate in a series of activities throughout the day, led by staff, parent volunteers, community members, and industry partners to engage in hands-on science and career exploration.

### Grades TK - 5

#### STEAM Teachers & Lab Supplies

STEAM lab instructors provide all elementary students with a specials rotation for hands-on learning experiences in science, art, technology, design thinking, problem solving, and collaboration.

### Grades TK/K

#### Coastal Roots Farm Field Trip

A multi-week unit that includes a field trip to Coastal Roots Farm and helps students apply Next Generation Science Standard (NGSS) STEAM lessons in a hands-on and immersive outdoor experience. Students dig into how food is grown and learn more about who grows it.

### Grade 1

#### San Diego Children's Discovery Museum Mobile Lab

Students receive a guided, hands-on workshop with the San Diego Children's Discovery Museum Mobile Lab, engaging our first-grade students in NGSS-aligned challenges, specifically targeting engineering practices.

### Grade 2

#### LEGO® Robotics

An introduction into robotics utilizing LEGO Education's Spike Essential robot, engaging students in hands-on investigation of STEAM concepts while contributing to literacy, math, and social-emotional development.

### Grade 3

#### Agua Hedionda Lagoon Foundation Field Trip

Students take two onsite visits to the AHLF Discovery Center with hands-on instruction that emphasize responsible interaction with our natural surroundings and develop an awareness of the environmental impact of day-to-day human activities.

### Grade 4

#### Coastal Roots Farm Field Trip

A multi-week unit that concludes with a field trip to Coastal Roots Farm and helps students apply NGSS STEAM lessons in a hands-on and immersive outdoor experience. Students discover different organisms' adaptations and how we can work with nature to grow our food.

### Grade 5

#### Junior Achievement BizTown Field Trip

Students engage in a 6-week curriculum culminating in a trip to a simulated town to get a glimpse into the workforce. They select a profession, work shifts, write and cash checks, and vote for mayor. The program introduces students to the concept of career and connects the dots between what they learn in school and what they observe in real life.

## SECONDARY

### Grades 4 - 8

#### FIRST LEGO® League Robotics

Friendly competition is at the heart of this international, after-school program. FIRST LEGO® League teams engage in research, problem-solving, coding, and engineering - building and programming a LEGO® Education robot that navigates the missions of a robot game. Teams also participate in a research project to identify and solve a relevant real-world problem.

### Grades 5 - 8

#### Middle School Music Recruitment

Music students in grades 6 - 8 visit 5th grade classes to showcase and promote the music electives that are available in middle and high school.

### Grades 6 - 12

#### Art Studio Supercharge

This program provides additional art supplies for secondary art and ceramic classes, enabling teachers to introduce new techniques and projects. Students gain opportunities to explore diverse mediums, enhance their skills, and expand their creative expression.

### Grades 6 - 12

#### Science Lab Supercharge

This program equips classrooms with high-quality science lab materials, enabling students to engage in hands-on activities and projects. With additional funding for science supplies, students experience a more immersive and interactive science education.

### Grades 6 - 12

#### Music Coaches, Instruments, & Repairs

Provides students access to new instruments and funds repairs to the current instrument inventory. Students are also exposed to small-group instrument coaching to give students meaningful and timely feedback.

### Grades 6 - 12

#### Musicals & Show Choir

Engaging students through the participation of their school's annual musical and/or show choir performances with opportunities in singing, acting, set design, and theater tech.

### Grades 6 - 12

#### Science Olympiad

An afterschool STEAM program that allows students to explore various scientific topics beyond the classroom in a mentor-led, collaborative, and competitive forum.

### Grade 8

#### College Exploration Field Trip

A visit to a local college campus, exposing students to a broader range of academic disciplines, extracurricular activities, and possible career paths before students select their high school and enroll in their freshman year courses.

### Grades 9 - 12

#### Student Leadership Council

This empowering program for high school students provides members the opportunity to develop life-long leadership skills. Students develop their leadership skills through monthly meetings, philanthropic opportunities, and student ambassador roles.

### Grades 9 - 12

#### FIRST Tech Challenge Robotics

Guided by adult mentors, FIRST Tech Challenge (FTC) teams design, build, program, and operate robots to compete in head-to-head challenges in an alliance format. This international, after-school program allows students to develop their engineering skills, encourages innovation, and fosters collaboration. Teams also create their own team brand, fundraise, and engage in community outreach.

### Grades 9 - 12

#### Voices (Un)Muted

A student-driven, collaborative project within the VAPA department that addresses the trials and tribulations experienced by marginalized individuals and gives a voice to those communities.

### Grades 9 - 12

#### Science Lab Teaching Assistants

Assistants support our high school science teachers with lab preparations and in-class science experiments to ensure students are provided exceptional hands-on labs.

### Grade 12

#### Senior Scholarships

Senior scholarships support students who are furthering their education. The Foundation awards scholarships to students who have achieved academic milestones and are passionate about learning.

### Grades 9 - 12

#### College & Career Readiness

Guidance Tech position to support career education for high school students through employability workshops, career chats, and early college credit.

## TEACHER GRANTS

PE Heart Rate Monitors at Sage Creek High

Multimedia Journalism Equipment at Sage Creek High

Project X-Stem at Calavera Hills Middle

Visible Learning and UDL Implementation at Sage Creek High

Nature Nook at Calavera Hills Middle

Genius Project Symposium at Sage Creek High

Calculators for 8th Grade at Calavera Hills Middle

Teaching in the Round at Sage Creek High

Building Thinking Classrooms at Carlsbad High

Project Lead the Way Capstone at Sage Creek High

Marine Science Aquarium Project at Sage Creek High

TI-Nspire Calculator Pilot at Sage Creek High

Drumline Instruments & Equipment at Carlsbad High

Specialty Band Chairs at Aviara Oaks Middle

# Our Impact Areas

## INVESTING IN PEOPLE

Music teachers and coaches, STEAM teachers and science lab teaching assistants ensure high-quality learning experiences everyday.

## IGNITING CURIOSITY

Hands-on STEAM, robotics, science exploration, and experiential learning that spark creativity and deepen understanding.

## BUILDING FUTURE PATHWAYS

Career exploration, leadership development, scholarships, and industry partnerships that prepare students for what comes next.



Students maintain the Nature Nook at Calavera Hills Middle School.

# Yamaha: Elevating Music Education Through Partnership

When education, industry expertise, and community purpose come together, the impact resonates far beyond the classroom.

In partnership with the Carlsbad Educational Foundation, **Yamaha Corporation of America** brought its passion for music education directly to CUSD, investing time, talent, and resources to ensure students have access to high-quality instruments and meaningful real-world experiences.

On a Saturday morning at Sage Creek High School, more than 20 Yamaha team members joined CEF staff, music educators, and students from **Sage Creek High School, Carlsbad High School, and Valley Middle School** for a hands-on instrument repair and refurbishment workshop. The goal was simple yet powerful: restore, strengthen, and elevate the tools that bring music education to life.

Over the course of the morning, Yamaha specialists repaired and refurbished a wide range of instruments, including vibraphones, drum kits, glockenspiels, line bells, timpani, and orchestral equipment, ensuring students and teachers could return to classrooms with instruments ready to perform at their best. Yamaha also surprised Valley Middle School with the donation of an electric bass and

amplifier, expanding opportunities for students to explore new instruments and musical pathways.

But the impact went beyond the instruments themselves. “Experiences like this show students that their education matters, not just to their teachers, but to the broader community,” said Amanda Boer, Band & Orchestra Director at Valley Middle School. “Yamaha didn’t just fix instruments; they invested in our students.”

This partnership reflects CEF’s commitment to **elevating education through collaboration**, connecting students with real-world mentors, strengthening district-wide programs, and ensuring music remains a vibrant and accessible part of every student’s journey.

“Hands-on experiences like this inspire students and remind them that their talents matter,” said Amanda Boer, Band & Orchestra Director at Valley Middle School.



# Empowering Futures: Investing in Students’ Next Chapter

Each year, the Carlsbad Educational Foundation’s **Senior Scholarship Program** represents more than financial support, it reflects a belief in students and the futures they are building.

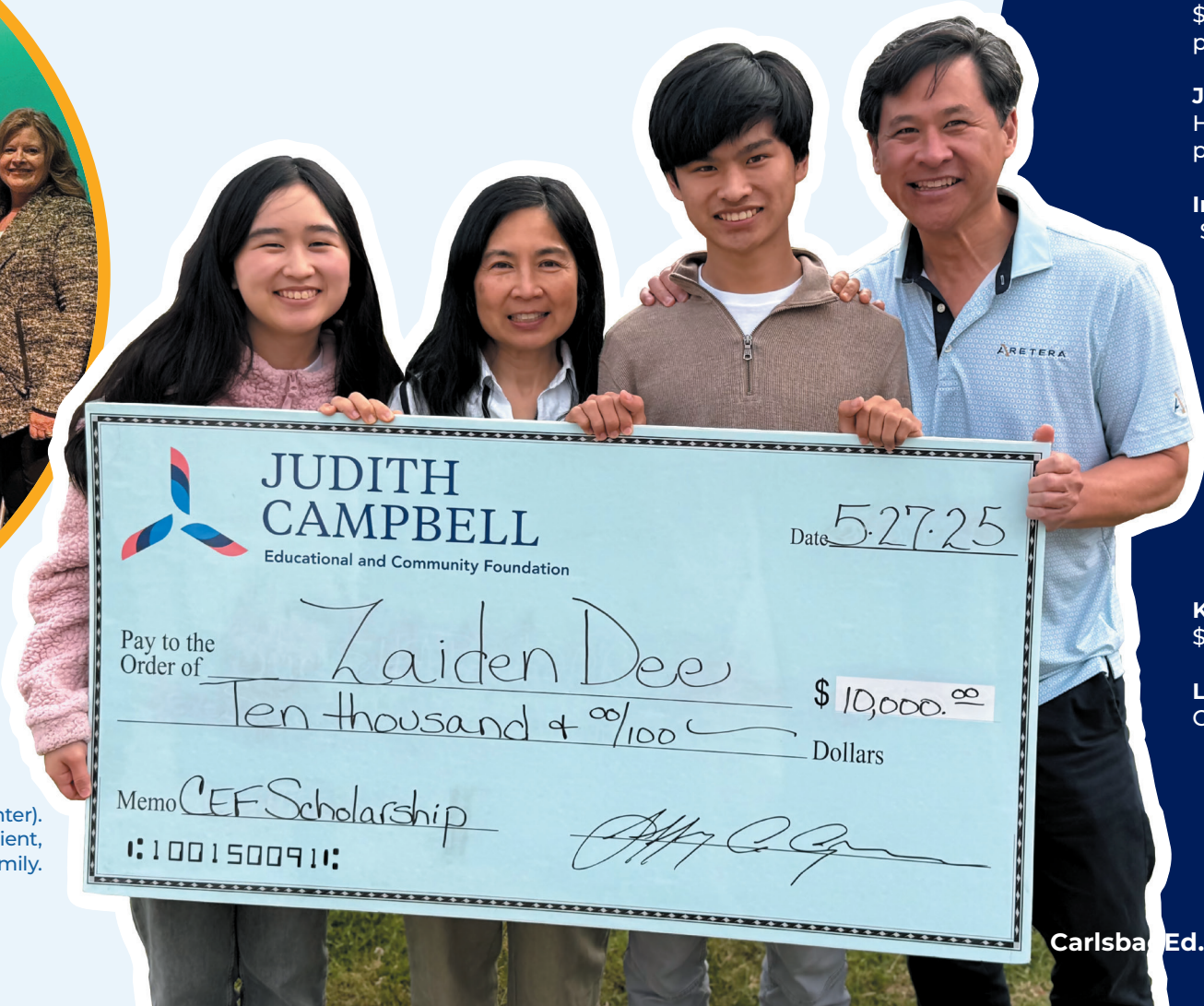
In 2025, 15 outstanding graduating seniors from **Carlsbad Unified School District** were awarded a total of \$67,500 in scholarships, recognizing not only academic achievement, but the role CEF-funded programs played in shaping students’ college and career paths.

Through participation in CEF-funded programs including FTC Robotics, Student Leadership Council, and the Genius Project, Sage Creek High School senior Sophia Gocan discovered her passion for engineering while developing leadership and problem-solving skills. As captain of her robotics team and founder of a statewide robotics parts drive supporting teams in Vietnam, Sophia will carry the skills and confidence she gained through these experiences to Harvard University, where she plans to study engineering.

This year’s scholarship program was the most competitive to date, with 82 applications. Recipients were selected based on academic merit, community involvement, and reflections on how CEF-supported programs influenced their career goals.



Sophia Gocan (center) 2025 Senior Scholarship recipient with CEF and Judith Campbell Educational Foundation.



Zaiden Dee (center), 2025 Scholarship recipient, with his family.

Scholarships were made possible through generous partners including the Judith Campbell Educational and Community Foundation, Tom Laurence Music Scholarship, Viasat, and individual CEF donors.

“At JCEC Foundation, we get to see high school seniors from all over San Diego County and it reminds us of what is possible when talent meets effort. We are proud to invest in the future of so many talented and enthusiastic students. Their future is bright.,” said Judith Campbell Foundation Chairman, Jeffrey Campbell.

Through scholarships, CEF helps ensure students don’t just graduate, they move forward prepared, confident, and inspired to make an impact on their own.

“**CEF gave me the opportunities to explore engineering, lead with purpose, and use what I’ve learned to help others succeed,”** said Sophia Gocan, 2025 Scholarship Recipient.

## 2025 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS:

**Sophia Gocan**, Sage Creek High, \$10,000 Judith Campbell Educational & Community Foundation Scholarship

**Marianthe Dresios**, Carlsbad High, \$10,000 Judith Campbell Educational & Community Foundation Scholarship

**Zaiden Dee**, Carlsbad High, \$10,000 Judith Campbell Educational & Community Foundation Scholarship

**Vassilios Dresios**, Carlsbad High, \$6,000 Tom Laurence Music Scholarship

**Demetrios Dresios**, Carlsbad High, \$5,000 CEF Scholarship

**Alex Le Moigne**, Carlsbad High, \$4,000 Tom Laurence Music Scholarship

**Divya Sharma**, Sage Creek High, \$2,500 Viasat Scholarship for participation in Science Olympiad

**Jacob Dougherty**, Sage Creek High, \$2,500 Viasat Scholarship for participation in Science Olympiad

**Imane Elidrissi**, Sage Creek High, \$2,500 CEF Scholarship

**Erin O’Malley**, Sage Creek High, \$2,500 CEF Scholarship

**Meera Mor**, Carlsbad High, \$2,500 CEF Scholarship

**Michela Miracco**, Sage Creek High, \$2,500 CEF Scholarship

**Alessandra Anghera**, Carlsbad High, \$2,500 CEF Scholarship

**Kendra Ammon**, Carlsbad High, \$2,500 CEF Scholarship

**Luke Maland**, Carlsbad High, \$2,500 CEF Scholarship

# From Sage Creek to the World Stage: Crow Force Robotics Rises to the Challenge

In 2025, *FIRST* launched its inaugural Premier Events. These elite invite-only tournaments bring together the highest-performing FTC teams from around the world. Among the select invitees was **Crow Force** (FTC Team 10809), representing Sage Creek and standing shoulder-to-shoulder with 96 of the program's top teams on an international stage.

With tools packed and their robot competition-ready, students and coaches traveled east to South Bend, Indiana, for a tournament filled with high-level judging and intense robot matches. Guided by mentors Bryan

Musson and Jason Coe, the team demonstrated not only technical excellence but confidence, resilience, and teamwork under pressure. Crow Force's dedication and engineering rigor were recognized with the **Design Award**, honoring their innovative solutions and intentional design process. The

event showcased months of hard work, rapid problem-solving, and strong collaboration, proving Crow Force's place among the best in *FIRST* Tech Challenge.



Crow Force FTC Team 10809 from Sage Creek High School.



# A Community United to Elevate Education

Each year, the Carlsbad Educational Foundation's Gala to Benefit Students brings the community together for one powerful purpose: to invest in the future of Carlsbad students.

In May 2025, nearly 500 guests gathered at the Omni La Costa Resort & Spa for an unforgettable evening that raised **\$300,000** in support of district-wide programs across Carlsbad Unified School District. From an elegant outdoor reception to a lively auction and high-energy performance by **The Mighty Untouchables**, the night was a celebration of generosity, connection, and shared commitment.

A defining moment of the evening was the premiere of *Scroll or Swim*, a compelling short film exploring the impact of digital overload on students—and how hands-on learning experiences are helping them reconnect with curiosity, creativity, and the real world. The film powerfully illustrated the importance of programs made possible through community support.

Since its launch in 2022, the Gala has raised more than **\$1.2 million**, supporting over **40 programs** that serve nearly 11,000+ students across CUSD.



Sandra Tyson, 2025 Gala to Benefit Students Honoree



# Thank You

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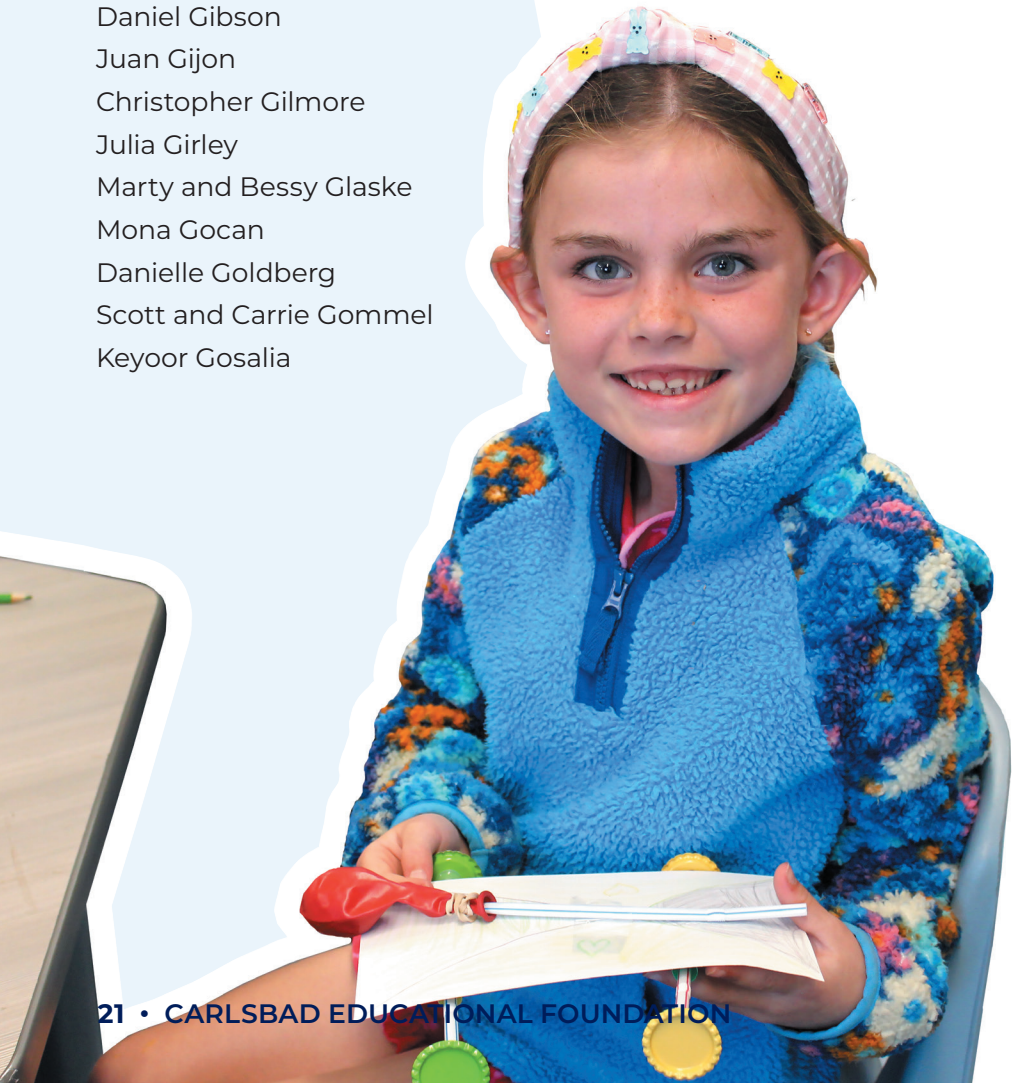
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Ngoc Tram Le  
Phong Le  
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Frank Lechuga  
Carolina Ledger  
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Blake Lopez  
Kenneth Lounsbery  
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Henry Lu

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Michelle Lunqvist  
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Monica Lyon  
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Heba Mahmoud  
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Prasada Martala  
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Omar Martinez  
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Marsha McKnight  
Rhonda Mcleish



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Angela Thill  
Mark Thomas  
Hallie Thompson  
Randal and Adele Thompson  
Stacey Tieger  
Erin Todd



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BNY	Guide My Finances	School Spirit Pays
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Bright Funds Foundation	IngLOURIOUS Bagels	Sempra
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California Bank of Commerce	Jazzercise	Take Two Software
Callaway Golf Company Foundation	JLAB	The Illumina Foundation
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Caterpillar Foundation	Lusardi Construction Company	Venture LLP
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City of Carlsbad	Nordson	VPCS
Classroom of the Future Foundation	Northrop Grumman Foundation	Weis Environmental
Conan Construction	Novartis US	
Downtown Magnets Highschool	Nvidia	
Elect Emery CUSD Trustee 2024	Paypal Giving Fund	

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We are grateful to our **partners who generously support the Foundation** with financial gifts, program sponsorships, and opportunities for students to connect with career professionals.

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Office & Kids Care Program Manager

**Editha Becker**  
Staff Accountant

**Karlie Carbone**  
Enrichment Manager

# Total Impact: \$1,610,364

## Music \$495,013

Elementary Music Teachers & Instruments	\$377,405
Musicals & Show Choir	\$41,496
Secondary Music Coaches, Instruments & Repairs	\$44,377
Middle School Music Recruitment	\$5,723
Nobody Knows: Voices (Un)Muted Pilot	\$4,667
Wireless Theater Microphones	\$21,345

## STEAM \$736,901

STEAM Teachers	\$197,209
FIRST LEGO® League Robotics	\$108,602
FIRST Tech Challenge Robotics	\$115,377
Agua Hedionda Lagoon Foundation	\$38,614
Science Olympiad	\$45,004
Science Days	\$57,502
FIRST LEGO® League Explore Robotics	\$16,449
Coastal Roots Farm	\$37,683
Science Lab Supercharge	\$33,245
Science Lab Teaching Assistants	\$33,721
STEAM Lab Supplies & Startup	\$29,279
San Diego Children's Discovery Museum Mobile Lab	\$10,800
Art Studio Supercharge	\$13,415

## Educational Innovation \$182,698

Junior Achievement BizTown	\$44,420
Student Leadership Council	\$6,980
College & Career Readiness	\$39,532
College Exploration	\$11,270
Teacher Grants	\$80,496

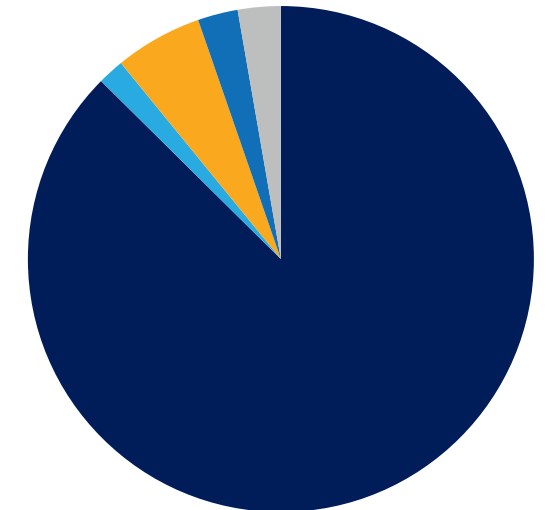
## Other Programs & Grants \$195,752

Facility Fees to CUSD	\$115,201
Senior Scholarships	\$54,000
FAME Aviara Oaks	\$9,401
Kids Care Scholarships	\$17,150

# Audited Financial Profile

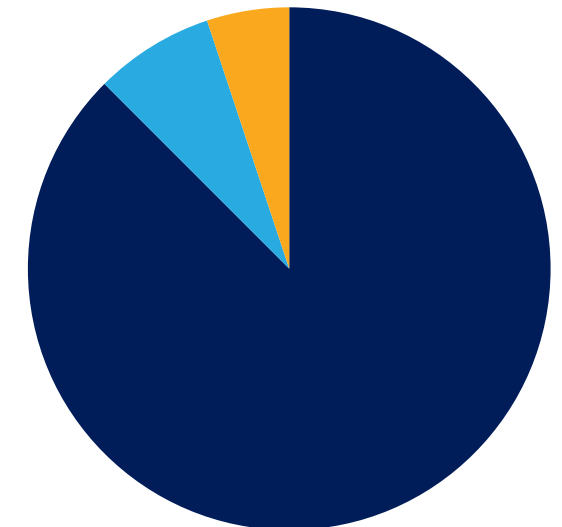
## Revenue & Support \$6,784,007

Tuition & Fees	\$5,930,377	★ 87%
Special Event Revenue	\$289,431	★ 2%
Special Event Expenses	\$(175,030)	★ 6%
Grants	\$379,521	★ 2%
Contributions	\$173,866	★ 3%
Investments & Other	\$185,842	★ 3%



## Expenses \$6,585,072

Program Services	\$5,761,920	★ 88%
Management & General	\$487,883	★ 7%
Fundraising	\$335,269	★ 5%




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Change in Net Assets	\$198,935
Net Assets at Beginning of Year	\$4,476,466
Net Assets at End of Year	\$4,675,401



# Carlsbad Educational Foundation

A 501(c)(3) Organization | EIN # 95-3768448  
5650 El Camino Real, Suite 101, Carlsbad, CA 92008  
(760) 929-1555 | info@carlsbaded.org



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