

+ME PROJECT
Where Every Story Matters

ANNUAL REPORT

2024-25





MISSION

PLUS ME Project activates the art of personal storytelling to increase confidence in youth as they pursue college, career, and life goals.

OUR APPROACH

The personal narrative is the heart of our work. Every workshop series uses the universal art of storytelling to help students reflect, connect, and communicate.

OUR VISION

Where all communities are filled with courageous voices whose stories are heard, valued, and celebrated.

LETTER FROM RICHARD

Stories do more than capture our past—they shape our future.

This year brought moments of resilience and celebration to the communities we serve. When the Eaton Fire forced Pasadena schools to close, we helped educators prepare to welcome students back to safe spaces where they could reflect and process. In the Valley, we worked with fifty high school students to publish *Our Voices*, a collection of their stories about home, identity, and belonging. One truth remained constant: young people need to tell their stories.

The support from our entire community brought us to a milestone this year. **We crossed \$1 million in revenue for the first time.**

As we celebrated this milestone, the world shifted around us and we made hard choices for our future. We will pause Wisdom Week and Motivational March, volunteer programs that have connected community members with students through personal storytelling for many years. While these programs brought joy and connection, they required significant resources without generating the funding needed to sustain them. We are choosing to focus our resources where they matter most—working directly with students in classrooms implementing our 5-hour program model.

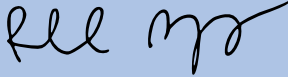
We also heard from educators that our direct-service model did not always align with their schedules. So we built a solution: Bringing Stories To Life. This professional development training puts our work into the hands of educators, helping our mission reach classrooms we could never visit ourselves.

We enter the next chapter knowing the future feels uncertain. But, as we have witnessed this past year and as I have experienced my entire life, Los Angeles is a city that knows how to move forward—through community, courage, and the stories we share. We saw that spirit in every student who picked up a pen this year and discovered their story matters.

When the world feels unstable, this matters more than ever: When young people share their stories, they remind us—and themselves—that they have the power to shape what comes next.

Thank you for believing in that power alongside us.

In Community,



Richard Reyes, Founder + Executive Director

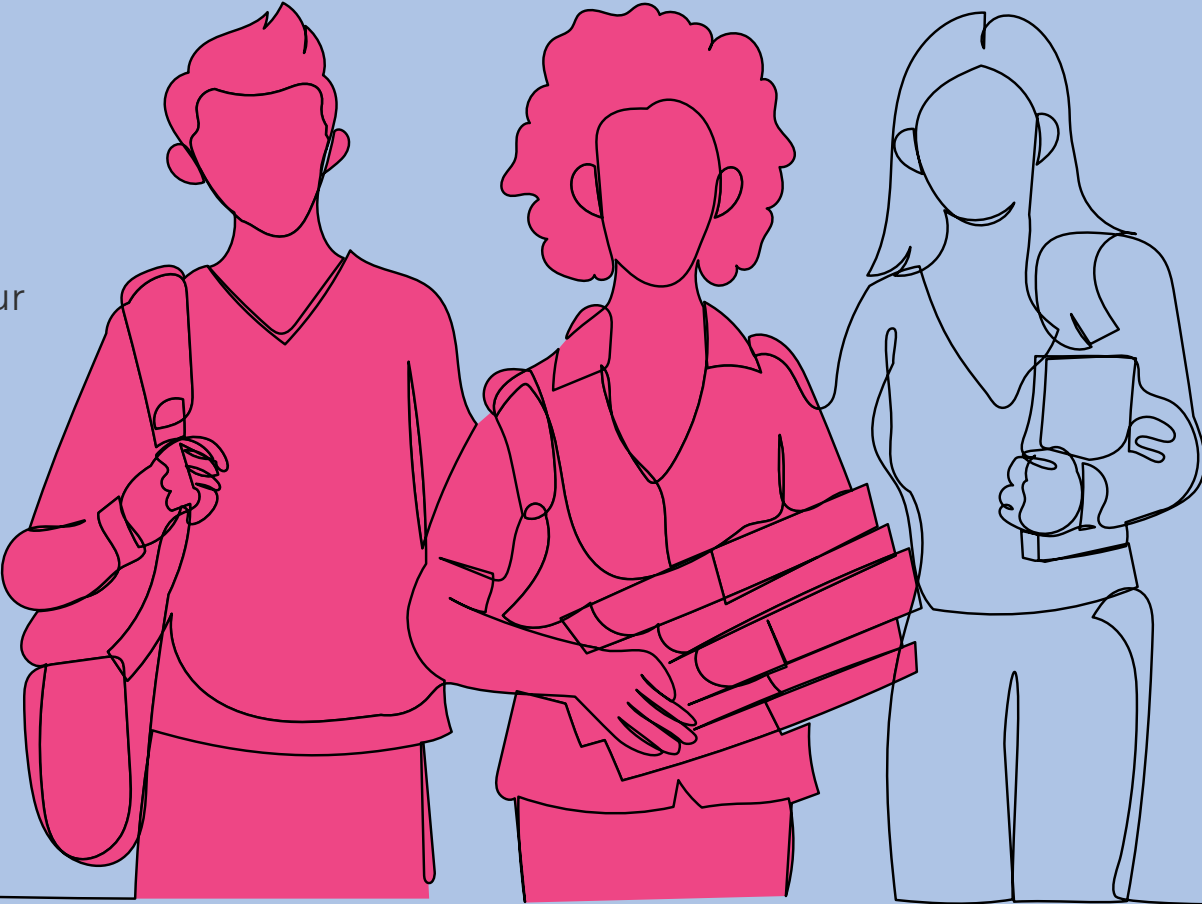


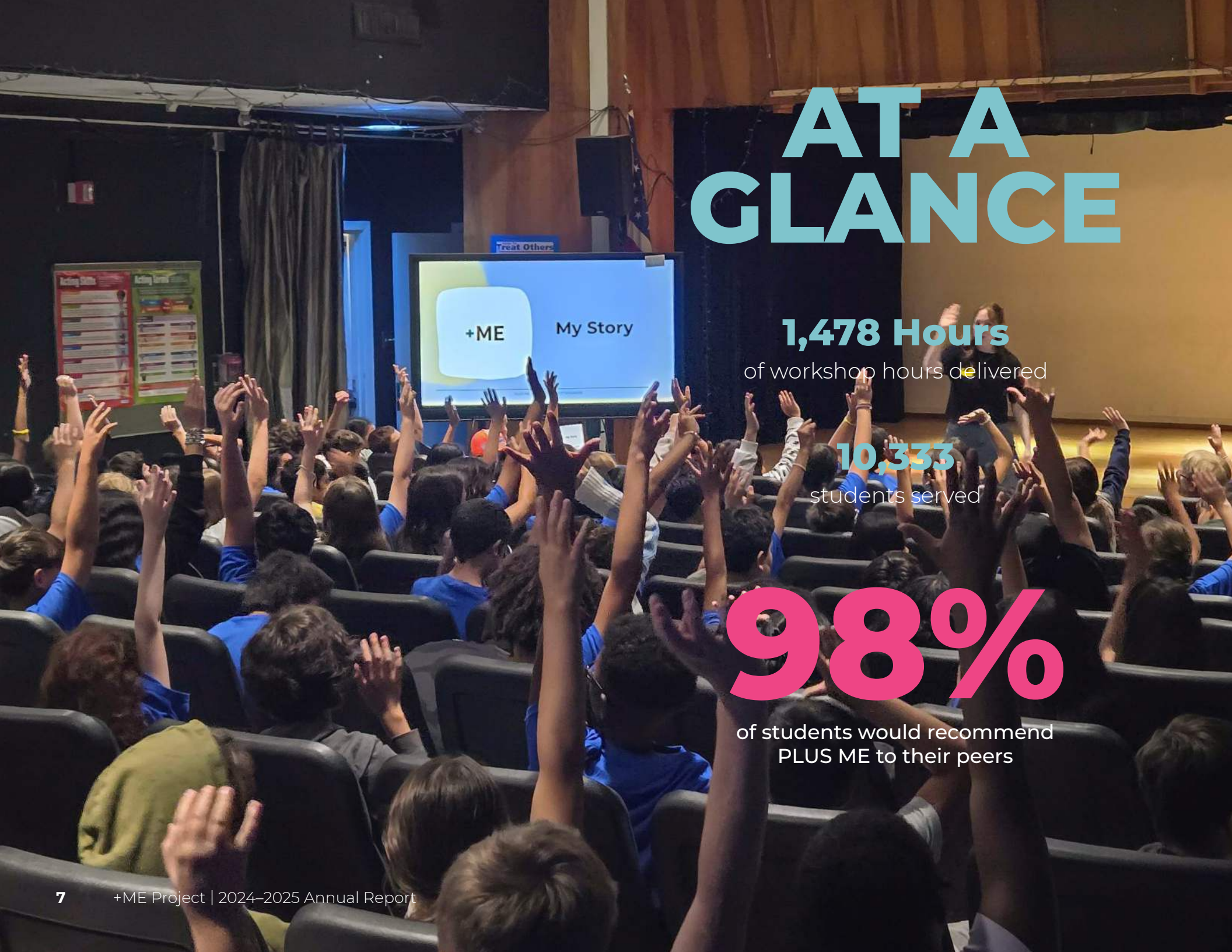
WHO WE SERVE

66%

of Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) students in our programs live in low-income households.*

*71% of our workshops took place at LAUSD schools.





AT A GLANCE

1,478 Hours

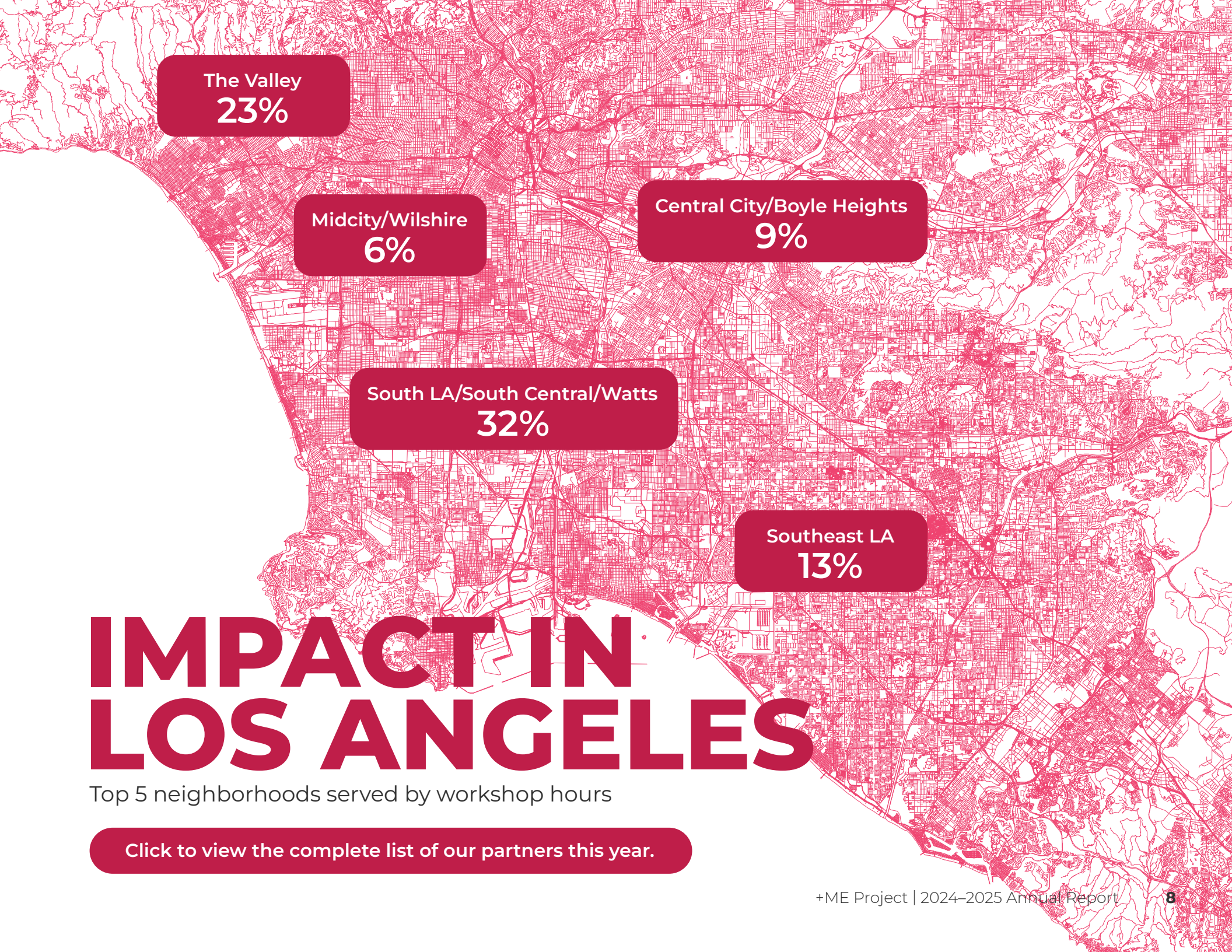
of workshop hours delivered

10,333

students served

98%

of students would recommend
PLUS ME to their peers



IMPACT IN LOS ANGELES

Top 5 neighborhoods served by workshop hours

[Click to view the complete list of our partners this year.](#)

OUR PARTNERS

For 12 years, we have worked alongside educators who understand that every student has a story that matters. Together, we are transforming classrooms into spaces where students build confidence through personal storytelling.

This year, we worked with 133 schools and organizations across California, including...



Charter Schools



School Districts



Youth Organizations



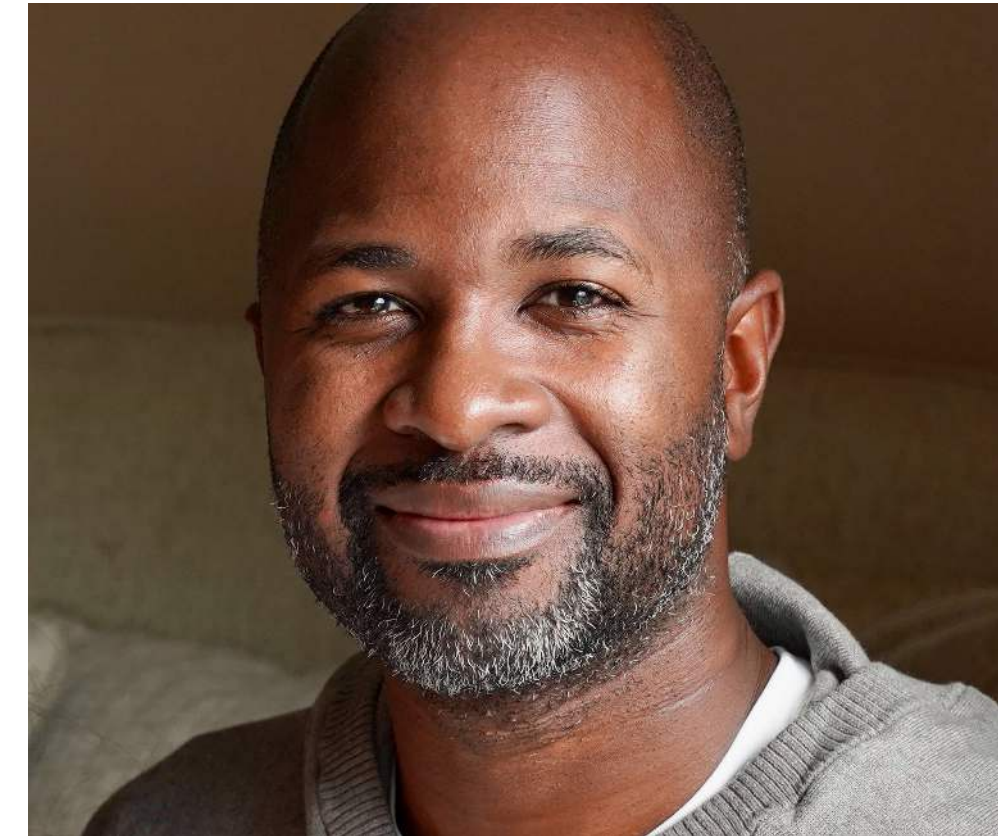
Colleges/Universities



Federal Programs

“A lot of students don’t often get to share their story... Storytelling helps students look at themselves and the assets they have: My story makes me an asset and I am an asset that I bring out into the world.”

– Jason Morgan, Curriculum Specialist,
Compton Unified School District



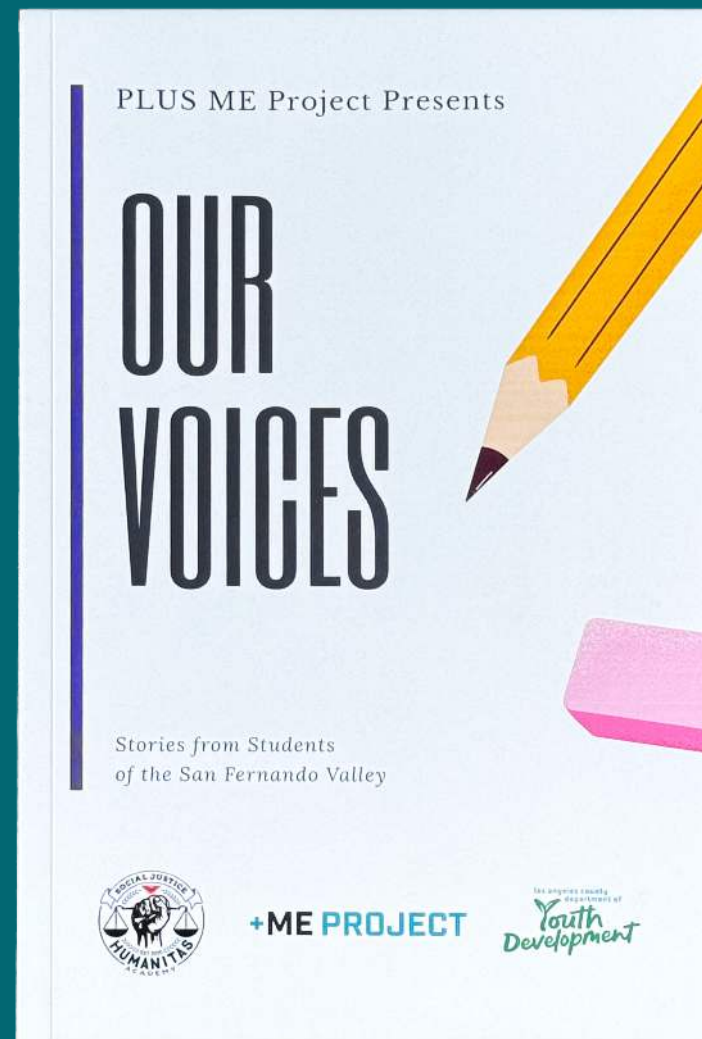
OUR VOICES BOOK LAUNCH

Our partnership with the Los Angeles County Department of Youth Development opened new doors in the Valley this year.

We had the pleasure of deepening our work with students within the Social Justice Humanitas Academy at Cesar Chavez High School. Through our workshops, they discovered how to tell their stories—about the neighborhoods that raised them, the families that shaped them, and the futures they are building.

Those stories became *Our Voices*, a published collection that captures what it means to grow up in the San Fernando Valley. We are especially grateful to Mr. Lopez for inviting us into his classroom and believing in the power of student voices.

DOWNLOAD THE BOOK



“Nothing compares to watching young people write with a purpose. There was a feeling in the room that these stories had to be told, not because it was an assignment, but because they mattered. I watched students find a piece of themselves. They talked about themselves differently.”

—Mr. Fernando Lopez, Social Justice Humanitas Academy



LISTEN + IMPACT

Each year, our LISTEN and IMPACT events bring the community together for one thing: to witness courage.

This year, ten students were selected from hundreds of written submissions. They each received \$1,000 scholarships and the opportunity to share their stories on stage.

10 \$10,000

SCHOLARSHIPS

AWARDED





IMPACT Scholarship Recipient Spotlight: Jesus Ayala

Jesus Ayala inspired audience members when he shared his story at IMPACT this year. He graduated from James Monroe High School and is entering UCLA in Fall 2025.



“I never imagined myself to be here in the first place because growing up, I never saw myself speaking in front of a crowd. So when I found out I was granted this opportunity to participate in the PLUS ME IMPACT scholarship, I was so happy. It was my first time public speaking.”

“I realize the importance of sharing stories because representation is really important, especially in my community. I wasn’t really sure about my future, and I know a lot of students aren’t sure about their future as well ... I hope to inspire the next generation of high school students. That’s something that really drives me.”



THE NEXT CHAPTER

Bringing Stories To Life

After educators asked how they could bring our work to their classrooms, we created a solution. Bringing Stories To Life is a professional development training that puts PLUS ME's work directly in the hands of educators, expanding our impact far beyond our usual fee-for-service model.

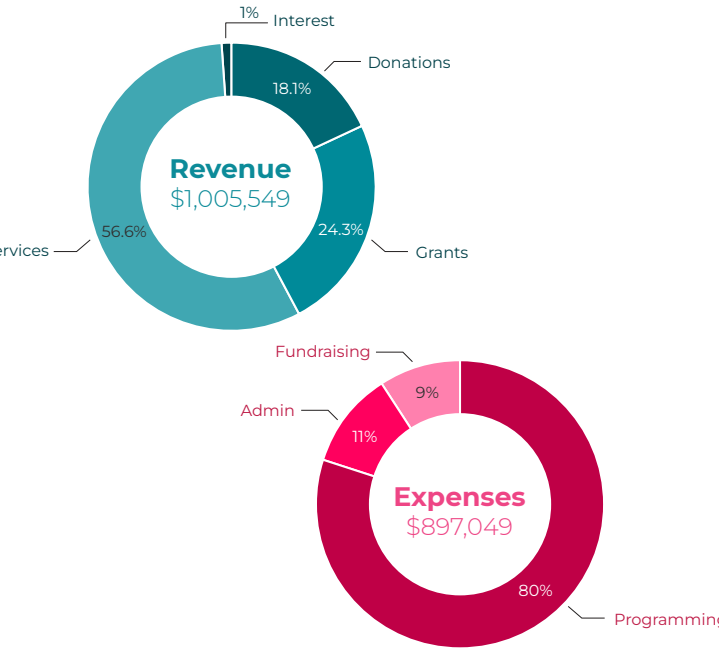
Deepening Our Reach

We will continue focusing where we make the greatest difference: sustained partnerships with schools and organizations across Los Angeles. Our facilitators will work directly with students, parents, and educators, helping them discover their stories matter.



Financials

(July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025)



Throughout the past 12 years, we have delivered consistent programming, grown our revenue, and generated a surplus year after year.

Two years ago, we launched our Road To A Million campaign to join the 9% of LA County nonprofits that operate with budgets exceeding **\$1 million**. We knew reaching this milestone would open doors to new funders, partnerships, and—most importantly—possibilities for the students we serve.

This year, we made it—with your help.

This milestone belongs to the **partners** who provide over half our revenue, investing their own budgets because they see what storytelling does for their students.

It belongs to the **foundations** and **donors** whose support allows us to weather uncertainty while expanding our reach.

The road ahead leads to more classrooms and more students discovering their stories matter. Thank you for making our work possible. We cannot wait to see what we build together next.



SUPPORTERS



TEAM

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