

# LIFE LEARNING ACADEMY WELCOME TO CHANGE

**IMPACT REPORT 2021-22**







## Dear friends

What a pleasure it is to be here—together and in person—reflecting on the 21-22 fiscal year for our annual report. And what a year it was.

Here at LLA we always go the extra mile for all of the youth we serve whether they are students, alumni, or just need support, direction, and a helping hand. We themed the year Community Strong to encapsulate how—after a year plus of uncertainty—we worked in community to navigate new and ever-changing challenges. And we met all of them.

We sent meals home to students' families, obtained a grant for student mental health support, and reinvented our recruitment and outreach function. Through it all our academic programs remained vibrant—students learned physics by sailing on the bay, prepared farm-to-table meals from our garden, increased their participation in concurrent college enrollment, and volunteered in the community.

We were thrilled to close the year with an in-person graduation that featured California State Superintendent of Instruction Tony Thurmond lauding the resilience and accomplishments of our amazing graduates.

Last year our Board approved a new ten-year vision for LLA to reach more young people in the Bay Area and beyond. Our goals are audacious, but necessary and doable. You can expect to hear more in the year to come.

Finally, last year, the two of us were officially named co-Executive Directors, a title that more accurately embodies our long-standing shared leadership model and our friendship. 2023 will mark our 25th anniversary of “welcoming our students to change.” We can't thank you enough for all you've done to get us here. Read on to learn about what your support has made possible.

Always with love from all of us at LLA,

**DR. TERI LYNCH DELANE**  
Co-Founder and Co-Executive Director

**CRAIG MILLER**  
Co-Founder and Co-Executive Director

## ABOUT US

Life Learning Academy (LLA) is a public charter high school on San Francisco's Treasure Island.

We believe that every single young person deserves relentless love, accountability, and the chance to make a good life.

Over the course of our 24-year tenure, LLA has become a national model for engaging disinvested youth through academic support, workforce development, social-emotional learning and life skills, and membership in a loving and supportive community. In the fall of 2019, we opened an on-campus dormitory for students experiencing housing instability. All LLA students receive services within a culture of youth voice and choice, where their perspectives are heard, listened to, and valued.

**LLA is a school where it's okay to be lost.**

**Not only are they going to help you find the light, but also help you find who you really are as a person.**

— PRECIOUS



## WHAT GUIDES US

Our program is rooted in three basic principles

### 1 EACH ONE, TEACH ONE

Students learn from one another, as well as teachers and staff, about positive behaviors and practices.

### 2 STOP, THINK, DECIDE

This simple formula helps students make good choices in even the most stressful moments, choosing the paths that will best advance their goals.

### 3 ACT AS IF

We encourage students to adopt a positive attitude—even on the hardest days—because projecting confidence and optimism can sometimes help you achieve them.



### WHAT DO YOU NEED?

Many of our students have experienced trauma that disrupts their ability to learn and thrive. Our trauma-informed approach provides students with opportunities for choice and collaboration, connection to community resources, and stable relationships with caring adults who ask them regularly, “What’s going on? What do you need?”

## STRENGTH IN COMMUNITY

Our core principle of radical love shows up in how we gather to support one another. We meet every morning for an all-school check in, where we share announcements, gratitude, and how we are doing. At lunch, we gather around communal dining tables, with rotating table assignments to encourage connection in every part of the community. We eat home cooked meals prepared and served by the students themselves, with food from our organic garden.



**At LLA,  
I learned about forgiveness,  
about how everyone makes mistakes.**

— ANGIE

## OUR INNOVATIVE APPROACH

LLA has been recognized by leaders in education and policy nationwide. With almost a quarter century of experience and consistently positive outcomes, there is no doubt about the profound efficacy of the LLA model.

### 2021-22 BY THE NUMBERS

#### LLA students come from cities across the Bay Area

**90%** YOUTH OF COLOR

**38%** UNSTABLY HOUSED

**85%** SOCIOECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED

As measured by the federal standard for free or reduced price lunch

**91** STUDENTS & ALUMNI SERVED

**23%** OF STUDENTS LIVE IN THE DORM

**40** ALUMNI SERVED IN FIRST YEAR OF ALUMNI SUPPORT SERVICES



## OUTCOMES & IMPACT

### IMPROVED SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Enrollment in LLA reduced students' school absences by 62%.

---

### ACADEMIC SUCCESS

LLA students increased their grade point averages by approximately two points.

---

### HIGHER GRADUATION RATE

100% of LLA students graduated, versus 84% of high school students statewide.

---

### SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION

At the time of graduation, 100% of LLA grads were either employed, enrolled in continuing education, or both.

## CONTINUED SUCCESS

**We survey our graduates at the one, three, and five year marks to see how they are doing.**

**Three years after LLA graduation, 67% of graduates are continuing their education/training, 87% are working, and 87% are stably housed.**

## AGENCY & EMPOWERMENT

Since coming to Life Learning Academy

**87%** OF STUDENTS  
REPORT:

They feel more **confident** because of what they learned and experienced.

They know how to get the **help** they need to succeed.

They are looking forward to their **futures**.

**LLA has made me think so much differently from how I used to. Now I want to go to college and continue a real career, and I'm happy too.**

— KALI





## ACADEMICS

# A SAFE PLACE TO LEARN & GROW

Our academic approach is founded on two principles: small class size and project based learning.

Our youth—like all youth!—want to know the real world application of what they learn. Hands on education is the LLA answer. Ecology is taught in the garden. Students learn physics while sailing on the San Francisco Bay. We use block scheduling so that students can learn without time constraints, cap class sizes at just ten students, and our electives are designed with career potential in mind.

## If you would have told younger me,

back in 2019, that I'm here now thinking about going to college... I would have laughed. Being at LLA, I went from a straight-F student to a straight-A student. A lot of (LLA students) actually know me as a positive influence, and I'm very proud to say that.

— SAVANNAH





**OUR DORM:**

## **NOT A HOUSE BUT A HOME**

As the housing crisis in the Bay Area has escalated, we've watched the options for our students decline. Recognizing the impact that insecure housing had on student success, in 2019 we opened a free on-campus dormitory where students live stably, communally, and learn life skills. Residents are encouraged to maintain positive family relationships, and many go home on weekends. The impact of living in the dorm on attendance, academic performance, confidence, and outcomes has exceeded our expectations, and positioned us to become a national model.

### **Teri helped get me out of foster care and into the dorm.**

I feel confident, I'm making friends, I go home every week and see my parents, and I love it (even though my little sister gets on my nerves.) I feel very proud that I am here.

— SYDNEY



### **#DoMoreLLA**

Last year, dorm residents volunteered monthly at City Hope to distribute meals in the Tenderloin (and occasionally join residents in some rousing karaoke!) The experience of giving back was so impactful that it led to this year's school theme: "Do More"

## A PLACE IN THE WORKFORCE

It is a powerful thing for a teenager who has given up the idea of graduating high school to embrace a future that contains college and a well paid job.

Our college, career, and alumni programs work together closely to open pathways to a bright future.



### SUMMER PROGRAM

For six weeks, students from throughout the Bay participate in our summer program. They work up to 25 hours a week in fields such as culinary training, media production, and bike repair. We even have a paid program for credit recovery.

### ALUMNI SERVICES

In 2021, motivated by the struggles of alumni who graduated during the pandemic, we initiated an official Alumni Services Program to support our graduates with life after LLA. We expanded to meet the needs of the housing crisis with new connections to the SF Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing and with local employment education partners New Door Ventures, Bridges to Work, and One Treasure Island.

**It is a different approach to school, but really is helpful to a lot of students.**

I didn't see myself with goals or even going to college; now I have a job and know what I want to accomplish.

— YUSEF

## COLLEGE PREPARATION

The College Readiness Program supports students as they earn concurrent college credits and prepare for further education. We tour campuses, help them navigate financial aid, and make sure that every college-bound student has a trusted adult on campus. Most of our seniors are taking classes on the Skyline College campus, rooting them in the college experience while still in high school.

## CAREER TRAINING

We help students build resumes and skill sets, and build a practical foundation with training in financial literacy, interview skills, and more. We take them from career preparation, to internship experience, to secure employment with opportunity for advancement and the self confidence to seek it. This year, our placements included the Aquarium of the Bay, LYRIC Center for LGBTQI+ Youth, the Market, and YMCA.



The first day of high school, I was homeless. It was me, my siblings, and my mom inside the car. I remember her dropping me off, and just thinking, how is life going to turn out, you know? I dropped out my freshman year, because of what I was going through. I was just messing up in life.

**Teri told me if I wanted to come to the school I would need to change, and I did.**

I am now proudly representing Local 81. I'm a roofer at 18 and my coworkers are all, like, 35. I'm only going up from here.

— JACOB, LLA ALUMNUS

# FINANCES

**Life Learning Academy is proud to be entering the quarter-century mark with a blended financial model that supports our sustainability and vision for growth.**

The 2021-22 fiscal year was an exciting one for us, with an increase in revenue and new funders such as the California Department of Natural Resources, Bay Area Community College Consortium, Gerbode Foundation, Walter S. Johnson Foundation, and Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation.

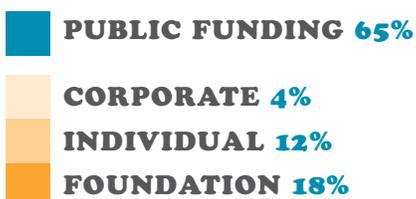
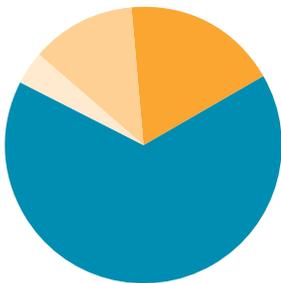
Two thirds of our budget is covered by public funding, and we continue to avail ourselves of new opportunities that are out there for public support. The remaining third of our revenue comes from private dollars, allowing us flexibility to move quickly to respond to new and unanticipated needs.

## We need your support.

Our ambitious goals in our strategic plan include serving more students, influencing youth-serving programs and policies, perpetuating our model, and evolving our organization to meet these goals.

For more information on how you can support Life Learning Academy, please contact Allyson Halpern, Chief Advancement Officer, at [ahalpern@llasf.org](mailto:ahalpern@llasf.org)

### INCOME



### EXPENSES

**80%**  
**OF OUR INCOME GOES  
DIRECTLY TO PROGRAMS**



## STAFF & BOARD

This year saw exciting new faces in our core teaching staff, as well as new positions in recruitment and advancement. We are grateful to these folks for their time, talent, loyalty, generosity, and unwavering belief in the potential of our students.

### STAFF

Teri Lynch Delane, Ph.D.,  
Co-Executive Director  
Craig Miller,  
Co-Executive Director  
Kelly Baker  
Amy Bergstein  
Derrek Brown  
Karla Brundage  
David Burge  
Dana Dominguez  
Selina Flores  
Diana Gradstein  
Allyson Halpern  
Kevin Hicks  
Monica-Raven Hinojosa  
Elizabeth Karn  
Aubria Lamendola  
Sylvia Piatt  
Elena Rosen  
Inez Salazar  
Gal Tabachnik  
Stephany Welch  
Adam Yas

### BOARD

Joanne M. Brown, President  
Keith Brock, Treasurer  
Denise Coleman, Secretary  
Sheetal Bhaskarabhatla  
Patrick Brennan  
Nikki Brighthouse  
Steven J. Carnevale  
Nate Farris  
Amy Kao  
Will Mulcahy  
Randy Seriguchi  
Sue Shalvey

**I want to let you  
know that I'm onto  
better things now.**

I am going to work to become  
a kinesiologist one day.  
I know Grandma is proud  
of me from up there.

— JAY



# COME CELEBRATE

## OUR 25TH ANNIVERSARY IN 2023



### GET INVOLVED!

There is always a place at our table for community members who want to be involved. We mean that literally!

Get in touch, have lunch with us, and let's talk about volunteer and donor opportunities.

### STAY CONNECTED

These days there are so many ways to stay connected with those we care about. Luckily, we don't make you choose!

Engage with us on social media and sign up for the newsletter for regular updates on all things LLA.

IG / Twitter: @llasf | LinkedIn / FB: Life Learning Academy  
Main Office: 415-397-8957 | [connect@lifelearningacademysf.org](mailto:connect@lifelearningacademysf.org)

**LIFE LEARNING ACADEMY**

, San Francisco, CA 94130