



school on wheels inc.

Our Mission

The mission of School on Wheels is the enhancement of educational opportunities for homeless children from kindergarten through twelfth grade. Our goal is to shrink the gaps in their education and provide them with the highest education possible. We do this by offering:

- One-on-one weekly tutoring with a volunteer
- Backpacks, school supplies and school uniforms
- A toll-free number for kids to keep in touch with us (800-923-1100)
- Assistance in entering school
- Help in locating lost records
- Parent guidance in educational matters for their children.

We reach out and provide services to all homeless children. School on Wheels has not, does not, and will not discriminate with respect to gender, race, color, religion, age, national origin, disability, sexual orientation or any or all classifications protected by applicable state or federal discrimination laws, whether in regard to employment or to those to whom we provide services.

Our History

School on Wheels, Inc. is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization founded in 1993 by Agnes Stevens, a retired teacher, after she read a book called *Rachel and her Children* by Jonathan Kozol and realized that there were homeless children in the USA. She began teaching homeless kids in a park in Santa Monica, encouraging them to stay in school and keep up with their grades and school activities.

Today, hundreds of volunteers work one-on-one with children whose homelessness prevents them from getting the academic stability and help they so desperately need. The heart of the School on Wheels' programs are the volunteer tutors who come from all backgrounds and professions, with one agenda only - to reach out to a child, to teach, to mentor, and assist in their educational life.



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Our Services

Homeless children need extra time and attention if the educational system is to do its job, but because of their circumstances, they often have no one in their lives who can give it to them. That's where School on Wheels comes in. We bring the message to our students that they are cared about and important, and our programs serve as a consistent support system at a time of great stress and fear. We currently work in seven major regions in Southern California, including Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, Santa Barbara and Ventura counties.

- **One-on-One Tutoring.** The heart of School on Wheels program is the hundreds of volunteer tutors who come from all backgrounds and professions to tutor, mentor, and assist in the education of a homeless child. Tutors meet once a week with a child and help her learn to read and write, complete homework, or work on special projects. Tutors also arrange field-trips, arts fairs, and other extra-curricular activities for the children. Most of all, tutors help their students believe in themselves and their potential to succeed.
- **Backpacks and School Supplies.** For a homeless child, a backpack and school supplies are like gold. They have no desk to call their own, no quiet place to study, but with a backpack and supplies they have their own place to keep their own supplies. The potential of clean paper and colored pencils is a powerful talisman for a child with so little else in his life.
- **Uniforms.** Although illegal, some public schools in Southern California still deny entry to students not in uniform or place them in detention. Homeless children frequently don't have the necessary clothing; uniforms allow them to blend in and not stand out as homeless.
- **Toll-free Number.** We give each of our students a toll-free number so that they can keep in touch with us no matter where they are or how often they move.
- **School Enrollment.** We help hundreds of children enroll in school. In the extreme mobility characteristic of being homeless, children move from school to school – and each move requires a re-enrollment process that can take weeks without the help of an organization like School on Wheels. To speed this process, we assist parents with necessary paperwork and with gathering needed records like birth certificates, immunization records, and transfer papers from previous schools.
- **Guidance.** We counsel parents on an as-needed basis by providing guidance and advice on the educational opportunities open to their children, making them aware of special requirements they may need to fulfill and of special programs they should investigate.



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The Need for School on Wheels

There are currently 200,000 homeless children in California over the course of a year. Homeless mothers and children are now the fastest-growing segment of the homeless population, and the percentage of kids who are homeless in the U.S. is greater today than at any point since the Great Depression. In Los Angeles alone, there are almost 14,000 homeless kids from Kindergarten through Grade 12 enrolled in the Los Angeles Unified School District (2), one of over 80 different school districts, and we know that this under-represents significantly the size of the school-aged homeless population in Los Angeles.

Every child needs an education to have hope and a chance for success, and the homeless child is no exception. If School on Wheels can close the gap for these kids, our program has the potential to help stop the cycle of homelessness and to relieve school districts of a tremendous capacity and resource burden.

Homeless Statistics

Finding accurate statistics regarding the number of homeless children is very difficult. Most counts do not specifically identify numbers of children. Most homeless counts do not include families staying in motels or children in group foster homes. Some statistics are point in time and do not fully capture the number of people who experience homelessness over the course of a year. Many studies are dated or based on dated information. For all of these reasons, no one estimate is the definitive representation of the number of homeless people. We provide some of them below to show the magnitude of the problem.

United States

- 1.35 million children are likely to experience homelessness in a given year. (1)
- Of the 3.5 million people who will experience homelessness over the course of a year, nearly half is part of a family seeking shelter. (2)
- Over 907,000 homeless students were reported enrolled by Local Education Authorities in 2005-06. (3)

California

- 200,000 of the 3.2 million school age children in California experience homelessness over the course of a year (4). Less than half met or exceeded state proficiency levels for reading and for Math.
- 32,000 children are in foster care in the State of California (5)

Los Angeles County

- 1 in 9 homeless persons in the nation is in Los Angeles County (6)
- 250,000 individuals are homeless over the course of a year in the county (7)
- 32% of homeless school-age children are not attending school. (7)
- 13,521 homeless children are enrolled in Los Angeles Unified School District (Los Angeles County is made up of over 80 different school districts LAUSD is just one of many.) (8)
- The average age of a homeless student is 9 years young. (8)

1 National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (2004) www.nlchp.org

2 National Student Campaign Against Hunger and Homelessness, 2007 www.studentsagainsthunger.org

3 Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program: Analysis of 2005-2006 Federal Data Collection and Three-Year Comparison http://www.serve.org/nche/downloads/data_comp_03-06.pdf

4 www.csba.org/NewsAndMedia/Publications/CASchoolsMagazine/2007/2007Spring/GettingToTheHeart.aspx

5 Data on Foster care in California (2007) http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare/

6 Homelessness in Los Angeles: A summary of recent research. Tepper P. (2004)

7 Los Angeles Coalition to End Hunger and Homelessness (2005) <http://www.lacehh.org/>

8 Los Angeles Unified School District www.lausd.net



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School on Wheels Fast Facts

- School on Wheels, Inc. was founded in 1993 by Agnes Stevens a former elementary school teacher. Since its creation, School on Wheels has touched the lives of thousands of homeless children and is one of the only organizations dedicated to the enhancement of educational opportunities for homeless children K to 12th Grades.
- School on Wheels downtown learning center is located in the heart of Skid Row, Los Angeles, but our volunteer tutors work throughout Southern California, from Santa Ana to Santa Barbara and everywhere in between.
- School on Wheels relies on the grassroots support of over 700 volunteers annually to support the organization's mission. Our volunteer tutors are the heart of School on Wheels and work with homeless children every week, 52 weeks of the year.
- To qualify to become a School on Wheels tutor, a volunteer completes our application form, attends an orientation and training and passes a fingerprint and background check.
- To qualify for our program, children are between the ages of 5-18, are currently residing in a homeless shelter, motel, car, on the street or in a group foster home and have permission from their parent/guardian to work with a School on Wheels' tutor.
- Our students meet with their tutor for an hour a week, every week, either at their place of residence (homeless shelter, group home) or in a public place, such as an after-school club, library or book store.
- In 2006, School on Wheels distributed over 4,000 backpacks filled with school supplies and tutored over 1,500 children.
- For every dollar School on Wheels receives in donations, over 80% goes towards matching children with tutors.



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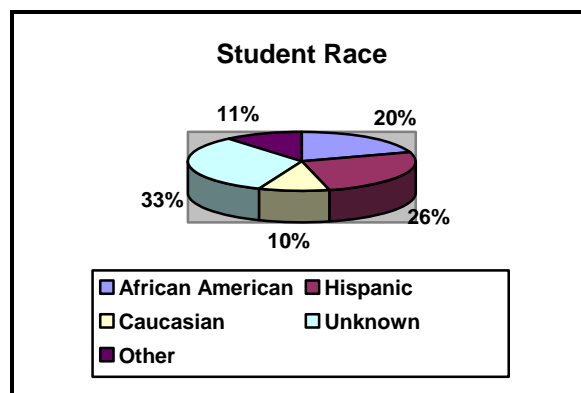
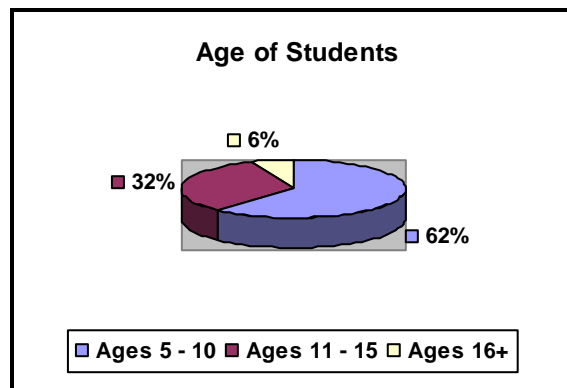
School on Wheels Program Statistics

(May 2006- May 2007)

- Number of volunteers: 740
- Number of students tutored: 1344
- Number of backpacks filled with school supplies: 4,037
- Number of tutoring locations: 103

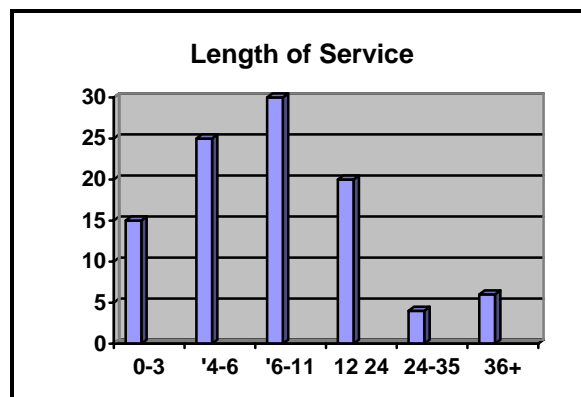
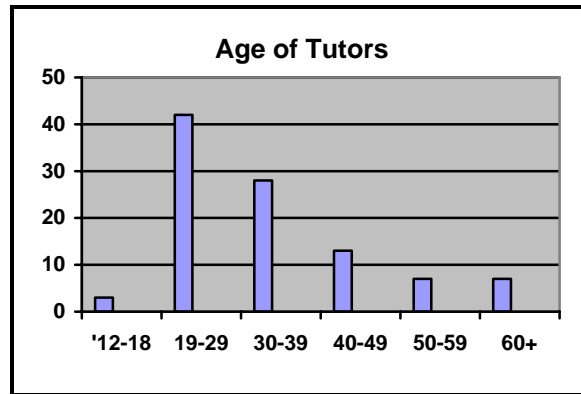
Student Information

- 48% of our students are male and 42% are female



Tutor Information

- 27% of our tutors are male and 73% are female

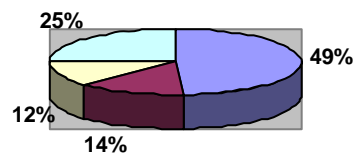




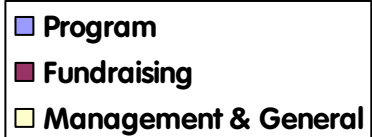
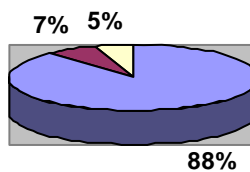
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Financial Summary 2006

Funding Sources - 2006



Functional Expenses - 2006





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Frequently Asked Questions

Who are your students?

School on Wheels works with homeless children living in shelters, motels, cars, on the street and in group foster homes. We tutor children from kindergarten through twelfth grade. The average age of our students is 8 years old.

Why do homeless children need our help?

Every time a homeless child moves school, they fall behind in their studies. Our tutors help them fill in the gaps. We believe that education is one of the keys to ending homelessness and by helping homeless children succeed at their number one job – doing well at school, we can help break the cycle of homelessness and poverty.

Do you have a school bus?

No, our name suggests that we do, but in fact our volunteers are our 'wheels'. They go to wherever the children are: a homeless shelter, group foster home, a library or after-school club.

Are your students with their families or homeless alone?

Typically, our students are with one or two parents, with the exception of children in group foster homes.

As staggering as it sounds, the average age of a homeless person is 9 years old! The fastest growing segment of the homeless population is single women with children. Do your students attend regular public school?

Yes, although one sad statistic is that in Los Angeles, over 30% of homeless children are not enrolled in school. One of our program services is to help families quickly enroll their children in school.

How many students do you tutor?

On any given week, we work with approximately 400 children in over 100 different locations throughout Southern California. Last year, we tutored approximately 1,500 children in total.

Where in California do you tutor?

School on Wheels tutors throughout Southern California, from Santa Ana to Santa Barbara.

Do you have any success stories?

Yes we have hundreds. Every time we match a student and a tutor, we consider that a success. By being with a positive adult role model we believe that our students have a chance to succeed. Please visit our website to meet some of our students and read about their stories.



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Testimonials

Wow! I just walked into our office and saw all the backpacks that you dropped off. Words can hardly express the gratitude we have in our hearts for our partnership with School on Wheels. Your organization is an incredible blessing to our homeless children. Thanks again for all you do for the kids! – **San Fernando Valley Rescue Mission**

The children have made friends with their tutors, and have found many positive role models. Many of our children have had very sad and negative experiences in their short and vulnerable lives. And to be given the gift of the School on Wheels' program, is a blessing that will help to shape their lives forever. – **Euclid Villa Transitional Housing, Pasadena**

School on Wheels has proven to be a strong ally by providing tutors to our school aged children. The tutors build a rapport and healthy relationship with the students and parents. The children like their tutors, look forward to the sessions and have benefited scholastically from their aid. The tutors are faithful and this helps to build stability with the family, often a missing link. – **Union Rescue Mission, Skid Row, LA**

Homeless children typically are behind in school because of their high mobility. School on Wheels is making a positive difference in the lives of homeless children by strengthening their educational skills and connecting families to other needed services. Education may not be the only way to improve the lives of homeless children, but it is the best way. Agnes Stevens and her staff are to be highly commended for all they do for homeless children – **Homeless Education Program Coordinator – LAUSD**

The academic and emotional support that School on Wheels provides to very needy students and their families is unparalleled and has no peer...Young people's lives are made better every day because of School on Wheels. – **Coeur D'Alene Avenue Elementary School, Venice**

It is with heartfelt thanks that I send this letter to you. Your organization was such a help to my family during such a dark time in our lives. Never would have guessed that we would have been homeless. But we were and your organization was very instrumental in assisting us in getting our children in school, providing school supplies and tutors.....With extreme gratitude, **Carmen and family**

Thank you so very much for helping my daughter with her school project. Ariana got a really good grade. She learnt a very important lesson from the last minute type scramble. I'm hoping the lesson will carry over for a lifetime of punctuality.....School on Wheels is Miracle-on-Wheels, Rescue on Wheels and Love on Wheels! God bless all of you! Thank you again, **Ariana's Mom**