

School on Wheels, Inc.  
ANNUAL REPORT 2016





# OUR MISSION

Since 1993, our mission has never wavered: to enhance educational opportunities for homeless children from kindergarten through twelfth grade. Our students live in shelters, motels, group foster homes, cars or on the street. We work hard to shrink the gaps in their learning and remove the barriers that stand between them and the education they will need to succeed. Our program serves as a consistent support system to homeless students at a time of great stress and fear. We bring the message to our students that they are cared about and important.

Thanks to your essential support, School on Wheels tutored over 3,400 homeless children in Southern California in 2016.

Your investment comes at a critical time - Los Angeles reported the largest number of chronically homeless people in the nation for the second year in a row. The dark side of our local economic growth is a spike in housing costs, deeply affecting our families. The population with the largest increase in homelessness this year is school-aged children - our kids.

Your continued partnership makes it possible to keep our students successfully in school, giving them much needed hope and the prospect of a brighter future.



With much gratitude,  
  
 Josh Fein  
 President of the Board

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Roger Poirier read about School on Wheels in a magazine and wanted to find out more. After meeting Executive Director, Catherine Meek, he quickly decided that we were the right vessel for his uncle and aunt's estate ... the J. and B. Willensky Living Trust.

Betty Barron was a preoccupied college student in 1951 when she was cajoled to become pen-pals with Joe Willensky, a lonely soldier bound for Korea. Betty reluctantly agreed, and so began a correspondence which led to friendship and then marriage.

Settling in Santa Ana, Joe worked for California's EDD, then as a psychiatric nurse, while Betty pursued writing, painting, musical performance, and volunteer work. They lived simply, even frugally, but always found ways to enjoy pastimes such as theater and folk dancing, and loved to travel. When Joe retired, they traveled even more, and Joe was finally able to indulge his interests in mathematics, dogs, and big working ships.

Always deeply compassionate to friends and strangers alike, it was no surprise that Betty and Joe would leave a significant part of their estate to benefit homeless children as a parting gift to the world.

We are deeply grateful to Betty, Joe and Roger.



“We are the only organization in our area focusing on the educational needs of homeless children.”



In a world of alternative truths, it becomes harder to have confidence in the future. During moments of uncertainty, we cling to elements of stability – a home, food on the table, a job or school to go to every day, and supportive family and friends.

Yet more than half a million children in California don't have a home, and even more are hungry. Twenty-five percent don't go to school, and many have no one to encourage them. With many support and education services at risk of elimination, the future of our most disadvantaged children is precarious. School on Wheels is needed more than ever to help the most vulnerable and fragile members of our society: **homeless children**. If we don't focus on these children, who will?

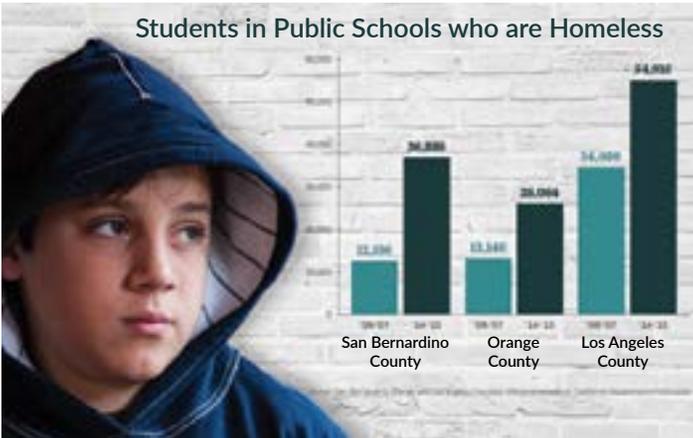
We are honored to be supported by so many long-time donors, new friends and champions, volunteers and all our partners who believe in our mission and invest in our homeless students. Thanks to all of you, we achieved key objectives in 2016. We tutored 3,450 homeless kids; increased our volunteer force to more than 2,200; raised over \$2,200,000; re-designed and updated our volunteer training; expanded our Digital Learning program; relocated our resource centers; and, remodeled our Skid Row Learning Center. You can read about these and other results in this report.

During these unprecedented times, School on Wheels will continue to seek out innovative solutions to reduce the gaps in homeless students' education. We will continue to empower them to create a safe, hopeful and productive future. Our community of volunteers, donors, supporters, partners, staff and board members makes us the unique organization we are – the only organization in our area focusing on the educational needs of homeless children.

You give hope, encouragement and comfort to these students, and to me, too. More than ever, our students – our country's children – need caring, wise, and supportive role models. Please stand with our students and stand up for them, as you did in 2016 and as you have always done.

Thank you, from my heart.

Catherine Meek, Executive Director



## In 2016 School on Wheels achieved the following milestones:

Tutored  
**3,450**  
students

Presented  
Presidential  
Volunteer Service  
Awards to  
**250**  
volunteers

Distributed over  
**7,500**  
backpacks, school  
supplies, uniforms  
and bus tokens

Awarded  
**28**  
scholarships

Hosted  
**2,202**  
volunteers

Tutored in  
**six**  
counties  
in California

Reached  
**1,232**  
students through  
digital learning

Our remarkable, dedicated volunteers continue to change the lives of our students, providing them not only with educational help, but also friendship, stability and support during a time of great anxiety and fear. We also:

- ✓ Surpassed **100,000** hours of volunteer tutoring.
- ✓ Reached **1,011** students with computer-based adaptive learning programs and **221** students through online tutoring.
- ✓ Reached **410** homeless children outside the shelter system.
- ✓ Expanded our Skid Row Learning Center, a safe haven for kids in skid row.
- ✓ Relocated our Los Angeles program and administrative team.
- ✓ Re-designed our volunteer training strategy so volunteers can deepen their impact on their students' lives.
- ✓ Had the honor of over **2,000** donors and partners who believe in our mission and invested in our homeless students.

100% of parents said their child is benefitting from tutoring.

**100%**

94% of students say they want to do better in school.

**94%**

92% of parents saw more confidence in either reading or math subjects.

**92%**

87% of students are more successful in school.

**87%**

# PROGRAM RESULTS

Paula Herrera, an occupational therapist with LAUSD, tutors 10-year-old Isaiah at the shelter where he lives with his mom. *“Working with homeless students has given me insight and a different viewpoint. Even though the kids are homeless, they are still just like other kids. Isaiah loves to draw and is very dedicated and motivated to learn. When he has a lot of homework, he likes to ‘put his thinking cap on’ and try his best.”*

Isaiah’s mom, Tanya, says that Paula is awesome with Isaiah and that she has noticed a real difference since he has had a tutor, especially in his understanding of math.

*“I didn’t finish school. I got pregnant in 10th grade and never went back ... I now realize that I can’t help him with his homework, but I always tell him that life is full of stuff that needs explaining and school is gonna help you in the long run. Sometimes it is very hard to ask for help, especially if it’s something you think you should already know, but I say to Isaiah all the time, ‘You’re young, you’re smart, you gotta listen, and if you don’t understand, then ask!’”*

Paula’s parents instilled in her the importance of education from a young age, too. *“My parents are immigrants and had to work very hard. They told me that I needed to get an education, go to college and get a degree. I am 1st generation American born, and even though they were poor and had to clean houses, they knew the importance of having a good education.”*

Thank you, Paula, for being there for Isaiah and helping him and his mom with school.



In 2003, Tony was in 5th grade and struggling to learn a new language as well as understand his math homework. His family had moved to the United States from Vietnam.

Tony was matched with a School on Wheels tutor and remembers breaking down one day because of the stress of it all. His family had been evicted, and they were living in their car. He was struggling with school and was feeling overwhelmed. What his School on Wheels tutor said in that moment stayed with Tony and became his mantra: *“It’s going to get better. You can get past this. It’s not going to be like this forever.”*

Fast-forward to 2017, and Tony is about to graduate from Cal State Fullerton with a bachelor’s degree in Communication Studies. His biggest challenge – learning to speak English – became his biggest achievement!

With gratitude to School on Wheels, Tony is now training to become a volunteer tutor, wanting to pass on some of the positivity he received when he was 10 years-old and homeless.

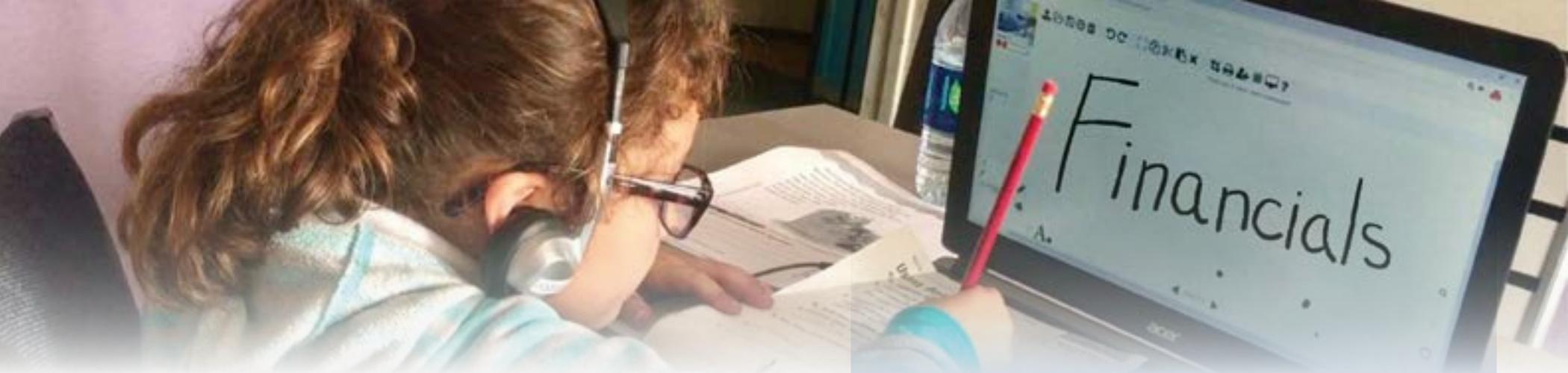


# STORIES

Nick is in 10th grade and meets his tutor, Tomer Gurantz, online! They each log into the School on Wheels system and share a screen with a whiteboard. Using the Khan Academy website, Tomer is teaching Nick how to write computer code. They are working through the exercises and every week continue where they left off. Each session they spend a few minutes talking about school and what’s new. Although it’s sometimes tricky to get Nick to focus, once he blocks out the noise around him at the after school club he does really well.

Tomer has tutored students online before and enjoys the challenge. He especially enjoys when students can relate coding to real world problems. *“A student was having trouble with using a calculator for a math assignment so I suggested we write a program for this ... We worked together on the code and the student was thrilled when it worked.”* Tomer shares in his students’ successes when they realize that they can figure out problems on their own. He encourages others to volunteer: *“Since the election, I have noticed that a lot of people are feeling disjointed and are wondering how they can be part of the solution. School on Wheels is a local way to make a difference. It is huge to see and feel the impact of what you are doing versus signing a petition or throwing money at a problem.”*





## 2016 FINANCIAL RESULTS

Your wonderful generosity means we can continue to invest in the educational lives of our homeless students. In 2016, you helped us raise \$2,204,660 – an increase of 11% over 2015 – which we put to good use, improving our program services and infrastructure. 92 cents of every dollar you donated was used to improve and expand our programs.

### Revenue and Support

Foundations	\$960,910	44%
Individuals	\$484,657	22%
Corporations/ Corporate foundations	\$239,805	11%
Special events	\$160,213	7%
Organizations	\$84,641	4%
Material donations	\$272,438	12%
Interest/Other income	\$1,996	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,204,660</b>	<b>100%</b>

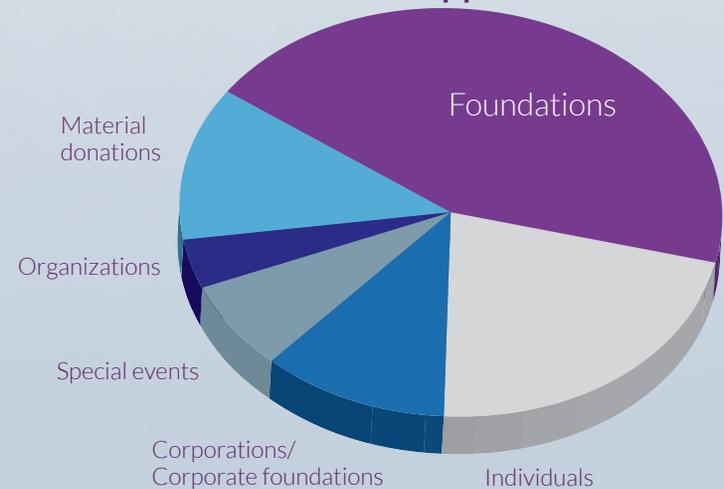
### Expenses

Program services	\$1,921,637	92%
Administration	\$101,913	5%
Fundraising	\$53,897	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,077,447</b>	<b>100%</b>

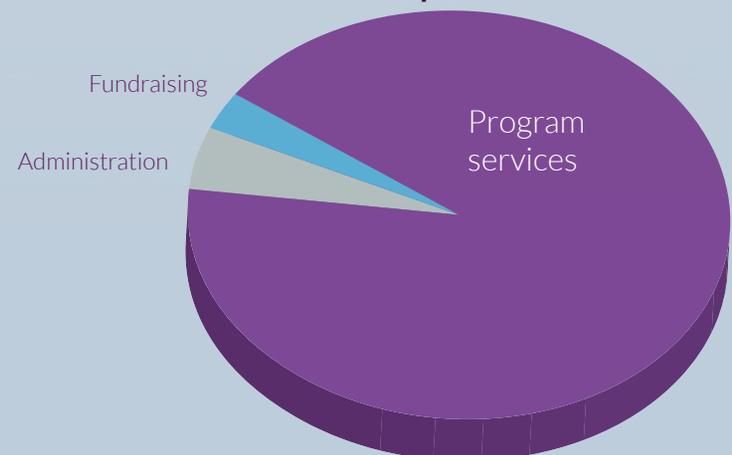
“School on Wheels instills confidence in children by consistently showing up and believing in them. Skylight Foundation is pleased to be able to support their mission.”

– Scott Ehlers, Director and Board member, Skylight Foundation

### Revenue & Support



### Expenses





We are honored to be supported by so many long-time donors, new friends and supporters, and all our partners who believe in our mission and invested in our homeless students. Our ability to serve homeless students relies on generous, committed supporters like you. A complete listing of our donors can be viewed on our web site.

### Gifts of \$100,000+

Dora F. Levit Fund for People  
J. and B. Willensky Living Trust  
Skylight Foundation  
Windsong Trust

### Gifts of \$75,000+

The Ahmanson Foundation  
BCM Foundation  
CBS EcoMedia Inc.

### Gifts of \$50,000+

George Levit  
The Green Foundation  
The Mark Hughes Foundation  
NBC4 Southern California  
The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation  
Universal Studios Hollywood's Discover A Star  
Foundation

### Gifts of \$30,000+

LA5 Rotary Club of Los Angeles  
The Sharon D. Lund Foundation

### Gifts of \$20,000+

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### Gifts of \$2,000+

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Robert A. Waller Foundation  
Santa Monica Bay Woman's Club, Inc.  
St. Aidan's Episcopal Church  
Steven Mynsberge  
Timothy & Rachel White  
University Church of Christ  
Whittier College

I like School on Wheels because they have the best tutors. They accommodate your schedule and thanks to their tutor my girls are getting As. - Rachael, Parent

You can learn and it's fun, plus my tutor is really helpful and supportive and very kind and nice. - James (8), Student

I am honored to be a tutor with a program that offers hope and makes a difference in the lives of so many. - Chris, Volunteer

School on Wheels is making a huge difference in the lives of these children by encouraging and supporting them to go to school, stay in school, and succeed in school. - Dorothea G. Scattaglia, Executive Director, Universal Studios Hollywood's Discover A Star Foundation