

2025 ANNUAL REPORT



Building strong youth, families, & communities



MESSAGE FROM THE CEO, JAMES WRIGHT

2025 was a year of meaningful milestones at A Step Beyond. Across dance, academics, and family services, our students continued to thrive – demonstrating what is possible when young people are supported consistently over time.

Both of our annual performances, *Arise!* and *El Alebrije*, were sold out, showcasing the artistry and dedication of our youth. This year also marked our most successful fundraising event to date. Our 5th Annual Wine Tasting Benefit grossed nearly \$320,000, the highest total in the event's history. We are deeply grateful to the sponsors, guests, volunteers, and staff who made this possible.

We are especially proud of our seniors, whose dedication and perseverance resulted in more than \$316,000 in financial aid secured for their postsecondary education. Among them were two students awarded ASB's first-ever A Step Above Donor Pledge Scholarship—a transformational commitment of \$10,000 per year for five years, supporting their college and career goals.

None of this would be possible without our staff, volunteers, board members, donors, and community partners. Your belief in our mission allows A Step Beyond to remain a zero-cost program for families while expanding opportunity for our students.

As we celebrate these accomplishments, we are also looking ahead with excitement. Later this spring, we will unveil A Step Beyond's new three-year strategic plan—a roadmap for deeper impact and sustainable growth. Together, we are not only honoring how far our students have come, but investing in the futures they are building.

James K. Wright

ABOUT A STEP BEYOND

MISSION: To prepare underserved youth for success in college, career, and life through dance education, academic support, and family services.

VISION: Empower youth to step beyond their circumstances and succeed.

HISTORY: In 2014, Frank and Jan Foster founded A Step Beyond to empower underserved youth through dance, academics, and family services. Inspired by The Wooden Floor in Santa Ana, the Board established a 10-year program serving students from 3rd through 12th grade, at no cost to families. Selected from more than 100 applicants, 35 students formed ASB's first class, launching a model that has since proven its effectiveness.



TESTIMONIALS

SHARA C. | ASB STUDENT



Shara joined A Step Beyond as a sixth grader, and her love for dance flourished from the moment she entered the program. Now a high school senior, she earned the lead role in our *El Alebrije* production, an experience she describes as “unforgettable.”

Her favorite classes included floor work with Ms. Nhu and ballet with Ms. Karla, where she danced on pointe for the first time. She also grew academically through our World of Work career education labs, which introduced her to a variety of professional pathways as a soon to be first-generation college student.

“*I’m hoping to become a NICU nurse or go into pediatrics. I want to be someone who helps and nourishes those in need and makes a meaningful impact in my community.*

The teachers at ASB are always there for me. They support my growth and really listen to what I need and what I want to learn more about. Knowing I have someone there for me, especially at A Step Beyond, means a lot.

PARTNERS | SWITCHFOOT BRO-AM FOUNDATION

“*Being able to support A Step Beyond through the Bro-Am Foundation means the world to us. Watching these students express themselves through dance and creativity is a reminder of why we started Bro-Am in the first place: to lift each other up and help every kid find their rhythm.*

 **SWITCHFOOT**



OUR PROGRAM

DANCE EDUCATION

SERVICES:

- Weekly Classes
- Annual Performances
- Professional Mentorship

HIGHLIGHTS:

- A Step Beyond presented two annual performances: *El Alebrije* and the *Arise! Concert*
- **El Alebrije:** 160 student performers ages 8 to 18, took the stage in a vibrant production featuring a student tech crew and guest performances from parents and volunteers
- **Arise! Concert:** Two sold out shows featured 170 student dancers performing nine original works, showcasing a year of artistic growth, discipline, and storytelling
- **Community Engagement:** ASB youth performed at events like TEDxEscondido, alongside Chief Artistic Officer Jenn Oliver, highlighting the power of dance for youth
- **Annual Audition Day:** ASB awarded 36 scholarships to new students, joining the ten-year program and beginning their ASB journey



IMPACT:

92%

of youth participated in a minimum of one major performance

93%

of students identify dance as their spark

95%

say that dance makes them feel good about themselves

2,000+

students served through our Fall into Dance program in North San Diego County

“

Dance has taught me that I'm a very passionate person. I love the arts and I wouldn't have discovered that if I wasn't introduced to dance at A Step Beyond.

”

Ruby, class of 2024

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

SERVICES:

- Tutoring & Literacy Intervention
- College and Career Readiness
 - College Preparation
 - World of Work Career Education
 - Financial Literacy



HIGHLIGHTS:

- **College Tours:** Students visited Cal State San Marcos, San Diego State University, University of San Diego, University California San Diego, and Palomar College
- **Career Readiness:** Elementary students completed 18 career simulation lessons, while middle and high school students completed eight 10-week labs like engineering and alternative energy
- **Family Engagement:** More than 90 parents participated in spring workshops focused on academic planning, adolescent development, and dual enrollment
- **Literacy Growth:** Students in grades 3rd – 6th strengthened reading skills and confidence through personalized literacy intervention, achieving an average 61-point increase in Lexile scores, alongside homework support and tutoring
- **Alumni to Employee:** Three alumni, Ruby P., Stephanie P., and Heather R., completed ASB's full 10-year program and now serve on staff, giving back as mentors



IMPACT:

- 100%** of ASB seniors were accepted into a college or career program
- 100%** of students say they have shown an increase in homework completion because of ASB
- 90** students participated in 10-week career labs

FAMILY SERVICES

SERVICES:

- Expressive arts and trauma-informed counseling
- Workshops and events
- Mental health and wellness group classes
- Case management and crisis intervention



HIGHLIGHTS:

- **Student Art:** At the *Arise!* Concert, students displayed 80+ artworks, while *Alebrije* featured original pieces from 91 students in grades 3–12
- **Spring Wellness Event:** Nearly 200 youth and families participated in a day dedicated to wellness including dance classes, health screenings, partner resources, and more
- **Community Support:** In partnership with Hope for San Diego, ASB distributed school supplies to 120 students and nutritious groceries to 320 individuals
- **Volunteer Engagement:** Families engaged in 800+ hours of on-site wellness programming, while parent volunteers contributed 792 hours of service



IMPACT:

50

students engaged in one-on-one counseling sessions

32

families received crisis support

155

art and wellness classes offered and 161 students enrolled

99%

say that ASB helps build their self-confidence

Class of 2025 Highlight



Our third class of seniors at A Step Beyond graduated from high school and 100% moved on to the college and career programs of their dreams!

This year's graduates headed to Palomar College, UC San Diego, CSU Fullerton, CSU San Marcos, CSU Long Beach, CSU Los Angeles, Sacramento State, trade schools, and UCLA.

OUR SUPPORTERS

WITH GRATITUDE

Thank you for continuing to believe in the power of dance, education, and community. Your generosity expands opportunity, strengthens youth and families, and moves our work forward. You are a vital part of the A Step Beyond family, and together, we are shaping what's possible.

INDIVIDUAL PARTNERS

▶ 200+ Individual Donors

INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERS



Ruth and Charles Billingsley Foundation



Hope Legacy Foundation



Samuel H. French and Katherine Weaver French Fund



Solar Turbines
A Caterpillar Company



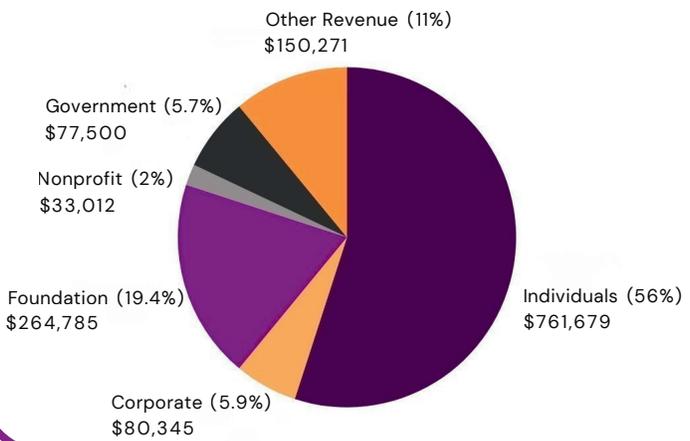
SUSTAINING MAJOR DONORS

- ▶ Anonymous Board Member (6)
- ▶ Vicki and Carl Zeiger
- ▶ The Ginn Family Foundation
- ▶ The Thomas Ohana Foundation
- ▶ The Raymond Family

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Revenue: \$1,368,277

- Individuals
- Corporate
- Foundation
- Nonprofit
- Government
- Other Revenue



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NEWSLETTER

Want to stay connected with us?
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our newsletter.



SAVE THE DATE:

Arise! Concert

When: May 29th and 30th

Where: California Center for the Arts, Escondido
A Creative Youth Development Performance featuring
over 150 youth

SAVE THE DATE:

Creating Bright Futures, Wine Event

When: September 10th

Where: The Westin Carlsbad Resort & Spa
Enjoy a selection of 10 premier wines in blind
tastings, rated 95 points and higher, while
celebrating A Step Beyond's youth at our
signature fundraising event.

If you would like to learn more about A Step Beyond's program or make a donation,
contact James Wright, CEO, at jwright@a-step-beyond.org