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Dear Friends,

Drum roll please! As we gear up for an exciting 10th Anniversary year in 2012, we’d like to share with you our first formal annual report, 826-style.

We hope you will take a few minutes to peruse the 2010–2011 timeline and read through the many accomplishments in each of our program areas. A few of our favorites: We served 6,097 students and 183 teachers and published 172 different volumes of student writing. We grew our summer alumni internship program by 200 percent and our college scholarship program by 50 percent. We also unveiled a gorgeous new website.

Of course, most important to us is what the students, teachers, and parents we serve have to say about 826 Valencia. We are proud to share some highlights with you on the facing page.

As we continue to grow and expand our programming in these difficult economic times, it is more crucial than ever to have the support of our community. Thank you, as always, for being at the heart of what we do.

Sincerely,

Leigh Lehman  
Executive Director

Brian Gray  
Board President
History
Named after our street address in the Mission District of San Francisco, 826 Valencia was founded in 2002 by educator Nínive Calegari and author Dave Eggers. They were looking for a way to support overburdened teachers and connect talented working adults with the students who could use their help the most.

Today 826 consists of a writing lab, a student-friendly Pirate Supply Store (which partially funds our programs), and two satellite classrooms in nearby public middle schools. 826 offers programs that reach students at every possible opportunity—in school, after school, in the evenings, and on the weekends. Our innovative program model has been so successful that seven additional 826 chapters (each with its own 501(c)(3) status) have opened in cities across the country, in New York, Chicago, Ann Arbor, Seattle, Los Angeles, Boston, and Washington, D.C.

Programs and People
Our programming includes a full spectrum of free offerings to students in the San Francisco Bay Area, including writing and publishing field trips, evening and weekend creative writing workshops, a program where we send volunteers into high-needs schools to help teachers implement dream projects, and a summer program for students who are reading below grade level. In addition, we offer a range of opportunities for students to publish their work in student newspapers, chapbooks, anthologies, and in local and national media outlets.

Over the last ten years, more than 2,400 volunteers have signed on to help out at 826 Valencia. They range greatly in age, background, and expertise, but they all have a shared passion for our work with young people. Our volunteers are journalists, filmmakers, scientists, lawyers, retirees, and recent high school and college graduates. Their participation is a crucial component of our programs’ success, and we are grateful for their generosity and steadfast dedication.
After-School Tutoring

Mondays through Thursdays during the 2010–2011 school year, students piled into our writing lab to work one-on-one with tutors on their homework in all subjects (not just writing!). After the homework was done, they gathered their post-school, post-homework energy for fun reading and writing activities—like creating stories about imaginary pets or poetry about swords. We enrolled 85 students in the program, half of whom have been attending for over three years. In addition to our regulars, we continued to offer drop-in tutoring on Sundays, serving an additional 219 students. We also welcomed many younger siblings of our regular students into the program. Not only is that really cute, because we have literally known these kids since they were swaddled up like muffins in strollers, but it also further strengthens our connection and commitment to the families we serve. And that’s what we’re all about.

The Ruelas Family

Sigifredo Ruelas, father of Melody, 9, and Karen, 12 (pictured above), and Lilia, 14, used to work 19-hour days, and he worried about how to provide his daughters with academic support. He was referred to 826 Valencia three years ago by the coordinator of a summer program his daughters attended.

What do you appreciate about the after-school tutoring program at 826?

I like that 826 provides support where I feel I have limited capacity. My daughters get help from high-quality tutors. I feel that the organization has proven itself safe and trustworthy. What I like the most is the steadfast follow-through and the personalized attention.

What have you noticed about your daughters’ experience in school since coming to 826?

Karen’s grades have risen, and all the girls have shown more pride in their grades. Another nice thing about the program is that all homework is finished before the girls return home, which lets our family have more time together.

Getting the Work Done

A study with nearby Edison Charter Academy

| Homework completed in Fall 2010: | 77% | 90% |
| Homework completed in Spring 2011: | 78% | 93% |

Research has shown that when students understand and complete their homework, their chances for overall academic success strengthen considerably.
A semester with the Straight-Up News (SUN)

Now in its eighth year, the SUN is the bilingual (English-Spanish), professionally printed school newspaper produced by students in the Everett Middle School Writers’ Room. We worked with Mr. Algones’s seventh-graders through the year to produce three issues of the newspaper. A crew of dedicated volunteers met in the Writers’ Room each week to assist students as they researched, wrote, and edited their articles. Eight students also became reporters for Giants Magazine, visiting AT&T Park for press days, sitting in the press booth during games, and interviewing players. Through their trips to see the Giants, they gained invaluable insight into the real world of journalism and honed their writing skills at the same time!

“I was incredibly surprised to see that my fourth-period group, your Straight-Up News group, did fantastic in the CST (California Standardized Tests) this spring. Ten new students are all proficient in language arts. Two others improved. And two more went up from far below basic to basic! That’s a two-band increase! So half my students in that class are proficient! I want to say that you, in part, helped them. Thank you very much!”

— Alex Algones, seventh-grade language arts teacher and SUN partner teacher

“This anthology changed the way we feel about how books are written—the process you go through and all the work behind the scenes.”

— Student Editorial Board from the Young Authors’ Book Project

In-Schools Program

Our connection with teachers in San Francisco public schools grew even stronger last year. More than half of the teachers we partnered with on classroom-based writing projects were ones we’d worked with the year before. Building these relationships with teachers allowed us to deepen our collaborations, publishing chapbooks in English and Spanish, returning to the same classes throughout the year, and taking on longer projects. In our third year at the James Lick Writers’ Room, Ms. Jones’s class created two gorgeous issues of Slick, a new lifestyle magazine for middle-schoolers. And at the Everett Writers’ Room, the seventh-grade journalism team at the Straight-Up News (SUN) kept up the tradition of excellence in print journalism for the sixth year in a row. Print is not dead—in fact, it’s still pretty young. About thirteen or so.

A 7,840 total hours of in-class tutoring

4 9.5 schools

50 Teachers

+ 19 Schools

50 Teachers

+10 teachers

6 28 students

2,372 Students

In-Schools Program

Becoming Young Authors

For the Young Authors’ Book Project, our most intensive publishing endeavor of the year, we partnered with teacher Olive Mitra and 53 juniors and seniors at June Jordan School for Equity. The students worked with 826 Valencia tutors from January through May to write and publish Beyond Stolen Flames, Forbidden Fruit, and Telephone Booths, a 273-page anthology of stories about the power of myth.

After the writing was finished, a group of seven students formed an editorial board that worked alongside professional writers and editors to make important decisions about the publication. In their introduction to the book, they wrote:

“This anthology changed the way we feel about how books are written—the process you go through and all the work behind the scenes. When we first started the class, we thought of myths as make-believe, and we had never thought of family stories as myths. Myths are still alive today when we tell stories about our families and our heroes to current generations and generations to come. We hope that you readers can dive into our minds and take a little piece of our history with you, just as we take past histories with us.”

— Student Editorial Board from the Young Authors’ Book Project
Workshops

The various workshops we offer at 826 Valencia, from college prep to cartooning, allow our talented volunteers the opportunity to share their skills and professional experiences with students through evening and weekend classes. Most workshops are four two-hour sessions. Below are three examples of workshops 826 Valencia hosted during the 2010–2011 school year.

Three class profiles

**THE VALENCIA BAY-FARER**

**WHAT:** 826 Valencia’s in-house journalism class for students ages 8 to 14

**WHO:** Taught by Programs Coordinator Miranda Tsang and fifteen volunteer tutors, including Sean Conroy, a copywriter; Sabrina Eldridge, a writer for Sugar, Inc.; and Connor Buestad, a sports writer

**FINAL PRODUCT:** A newspaper written by and for students, released every five weeks

“I wrote my article about Fashion Week in New York, and it was cool because when I grow up I want to become a fashion designer. Writing my article helped me find new styles and what the colors are for this season. I’m taking the class again right now!”

— Andrea Ramos, age 9

**HOW TO WRITE LIKE A DEAD PERSON**

**WHAT:** A class in historical fiction for students ages 10 to 12, inspired by the teacher’s newest book *Picture the Dead*, a Civil War-era illustrated ghost story for young adults

**WHO:** Taught by Lisa Brown, the bestselling author and/or illustrator of several books for children, teens, and new parents, including *How to Be, The Latke Who Couldn’t Stop Screaming*, and *Baby Mix Me a Drink*. She has been a volunteer and generous friend of 826 Valencia since the beginning.

**FINAL PRODUCT:** A Page From the Grave, a chapbook of letters, stories, and profiles of characters based on old photographs

“These contemporary preteens effortlessly channeled the spirits of bygone days of old men and orphans, authors and students, and, in one fantastic case, a circus horse. They wrote their stories on parchment with dip pens and ink. I couldn’t have asked for a more enthusiastic and inspired class.”

— Lisa Brown, author/illustrator

**AUDIO FOR TEENS**

**WHAT:** Writing for radio for students ages 15 to 17

**WHO:** Taught by Alex Collins, a radio journalist who has reported and produced for various British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and National Public Radio (NPR) programs

**FINAL PRODUCT:** A podcast of student-written pieces, recorded at Youth Radio in Oakland

“Before the field trip, Alex, the instructor, told us about recording with highly professional equipment, which caused the tech-nerd inside of me to brim with glee. In the soundproof room, the microphones picked up every sound we made, from the phonemes of our words to the slightest lip smacking noise. I felt like Ira Glass. Each and every young person present in the room was going to be able to conquer the world with their voices and stories.”

— Courtney Lee, age 18
Field Trips

During two-hour visits to our center during the 2010-2011 school year, students wrote collaborative stories, published professionally designed and illustrated books, or received individualized attention on personal statements, argumentative essays, or poetry. Through this program we reached out to many different students and teachers all over San Francisco, forging powerful and lasting relationships.

Top 20 book titles of 2010–2011

Each one was published in two hours during a storytelling and bookmaking field trip.

The Amazing Honeymoon of Mr. Vamp and Mrs. Werewolf
Overcoming Freezing to Help People
The Great San Francisco Tiger Rescue of 2011
Croc Hog and the Spectacular Fast Food Race
Pony the Park Strikes Again: A Bowling Alley Tale
Waffle Domination
The Attack of Havilavalala and the Threat to the Bunnies
The Sprinkles are Gone!
Chomper Chases the Ice Cream Dolphins in the Soda Ocean
The Displaced, Misfit Monk
Lee and the Infamous Alien Adoption
Quackers Is No Chicken
The Sweet Friends of Pastry Park Take on Appetitus
Fashion Wars: The Wrath of Dr. Root Beer
Pinkly and Billy Bob Seek the Giant Buffet
The Crazy Pirate and His Splashing Pirates
Where Are the Poems? A Dancing Woolly Mammoth Knows!
The Mystery of Puppy Face the Watermelon Zombie
The Revenge of Supa Ninja and the Mystery of 829 Valencia
Cheese and Garbage on Mars

“[My students] learned that narrative writing can be extremely creative with no limits.” — Alba Akrabawi

Teachers Know Best

“Seeing the story take shape from their ideas, working as a group very much how we do in school, then being able to finish their own stories and endings—these were great things. I have been coming here for a few years now, and adding the bilingual component was great.” — Carlos Castillo, second-grade teacher Cesar Chavez Elementary School

“The collaborative writing was a perfect scaffold for my reluctant writers. They learned that narrative writing can be extremely creative with no limits.” — Alba Akrabawi, fourth-grade teacher Cleveland Elementary School

“I thought the one-on-one element as students were writing the ending with tutors was priceless. It is so valuable for my students to get that individualized attention!” — Madeline Newman, fifth-grade teacher Think College Now Elementary School
Summer

In the summer of 2010, we offered two main programs, one for elementary and one for high school students, to provide a space for writers who might not otherwise pick up a pencil during the three long months between school years.

Exploring Words Summer Camp

We expanded this camp (previously called Summer Series for English Language Learners) with a small schedule change that made a big difference for our students. In addition to the intensive six-week reading and writing programs we’ve offered for the last six years in conjunction with Mission Learning Center, we added another program we’re calling Playing Outside in the Sun (or should we say fog? We should probably say fog). Actually, we’re not calling it that, but we did partner with outdoor educators to add some outdoor time to break up the day and keep students fresh and focused. It also allowed us to grow the programs in a variety of ways.

High School Writing Camp

We hosted this annual workshop (now called the Young Authors’ Workshop) during the first week in August. Twenty-three students attended the camp and participated in workshops with local authors including Gene Yang, Joe Loya, Vendela Vida, Genny Lim, Chinaka Hodge, and more.

Day in the Life of Michelle Benitez

9:30 Michelle Benitez arrives at 826 Valencia for her first session of Exploring Words.

10:00 It’s Insect Week, so Michelle is working on her imaginative narrative of a monarch butterfly’s migration to Mexico, which will become the opening story of the summer’s chapbook, This Good Morning the First Thing I Did Was Read.

11:30 Michelle walks to Mission Learning Center with the other second and third-graders in her group for lunch.

12:30 upstairs at Mission Learning Center, the focus turns to reading. Michelle selects a book about monarch butterflies, sticking with the insect theme.

2:30 After a full day of writing and reading, Michelle and her group of twenty-five students head outside to play for the last session of the day.

4:30 Michelle’s mom picks her up at Dolores Park, and we’ll see her again tomorrow morning!

Program Growth in 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of students</td>
<td>50 (2009)</td>
<td>75 (2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours of literacy support per student</td>
<td>150 (2009)</td>
<td>210 (2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of parents delighted by the longer day and more services</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>15 hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Scholarships & Awards

Every year since 2002, 826 Valencia has awarded scholarships to outstanding Bay Area high school seniors—many of whom are 826 program alumni. Last year we awarded six $15,000 scholarships (more than ever before!). We also recognized eight amazing teachers with our $1,500 Teacher of the Month Award for their above-and-beyond commitment to education.

2011 Scholarship Winners

Our six scholarship winners stood out because of how much they have gone out of their way to care—about their education, their communities, and their future. It is an honor to have them as part of the 826 Valencia family.

MARIA TERESA ALFARO
Winner of the Nathan Jillson Memorial Scholarship
Graduate of Mission High School
Freshman at San Francisco State University

ELIZABETH JERONIMO
Winner of the 826 Valencia Scholarship
Graduate of John O’Connell High School
Freshman at University of California, Riverside

JASMINE PETTWAY
Winner of the Taylor Renfrew Ingham Memorial Scholarship
Graduate of Metropolitan Arts & Technology High School
Freshman at University of San Francisco

WINIFER VASQUEZ
Winner of the Irving Hochman Memorial Scholarship
Graduate of Mission High School
Freshman at University of California Santa Cruz

JASMINE PRICE-TILLERY
Winner of the Young Author’s Scholarship
Graduate of June Jordan School for Equity
Freshman at Howard University

ARESS ALMENDARES
Winner of the New Voice Scholarship
Graduate of John O’Connell High School
Freshman at San Francisco State University

2010–2011 Teacher of the Month Winners

SUSANNA BELL
Berkeley High School

SUZY DEBLOIS
John O’Connell High School

TODD HIGASHI
Alameda Science and Tech Institute

JEREMIAH JEFFRIES
Redding Elementary School

OLIVE MITRA
June Jordan School for Equity

RICHARD SILBERG
Martin Luther King Middle School

BETH TREVOR
Jefferson Elementary School

SUZANNE VRADELIS
West Portal Elementary School

“During the reading, my heart was racing, and I saw some people crying. It’s amazing what words can do.”

—Aress Almendares

Student Profile: Aress Almendares

Aress Almendares, winner of the 2011 New Voice Scholarship, participated in our Young Authors’ Book Project in 2010. The topic was the American Dream, and Aress wrote about his life, where he’s been, where he’s going, and the wisdom he has amassed along the way. During the book release party, he read his essay to a room packed with families, teachers, tutors, and authors.

“Somehow when I was writing my story, I started writing about personal struggles and of influences that only I knew,” he says. “The feeling of letting it all spill out on paper felt like heaven. It was like letting go of pain at will. I must have written ten introductions until it felt right. As time got closer to submit my final draft to 826, I felt scared, and I’m the fearless type. It was my mind, body, and soul on paper, so I felt vulnerable. I finally let go and submitted my paper, and my teacher told me I was chosen to read at the publishing celebration. I was shocked. During the reading, my heart was racing, and I saw some people crying. It’s amazing what words can do. Since then, I’m a much more open person. I’m always grateful to have 826 as part of who I am.”
The Bookshelf

Nearly every project we take on at 826 ends with the publication of a professionally designed and bound book. Some of the projects take only two hours, some take several months, but in the end students leave 826 with the excitement of seeing their names in print, having their voices heard and their hard work celebrated. Here is a sampling of some of the 172 different titles published last year.

**Publications**

**CARE OF ONE**
Pet Writing Month workshop, created by students for the literary connoisseur on the move.

**THE 826 QUARTERLY**
This Quarterly is published between two and seventeen times a year, and features some of the best student writing from all our programs. This issue also features bite-sized summaries of student works produced by after-school tutoring students for the literary connoisseur on the move.

**THE VALENCIA BAY-FARER**
The Bay-Farer is our in-house monthly newspaper, created by 8- to 12-year-olds, featuring articles on everything from giant squids and the future to Justin Bieber’s haircut and global warming.

**BEYOND**
Last year we partnered with 53 students from June Jordan School for Equity to produce this gorgeous, nationally distributed collection of writing on myths.

**SLICK MAGAZINE**
Slck is the lifestyle magazine for teens by teens. It comes out of the 826 Writers’ Room at James Lick Middle School twice a year and is sold in fine stores all over the Mission.

**STRAIGHT-UP NEWS (SUN)**
To Shakespeare or not to Shakespeare? That is just one of the questions asked by the intrepid middle-school journalists from the Straight-Up News. For seven years running, the SUN has been the source for the finest bilingual journalism in the Everett community.

**WE ARE NOT MADE UP**
This gorgeous, glossy gem came out of a partnership with the nonprofit Geneva Car Barn and Powerhouse—an organization that provides arts-related job training to underserved youth.

**THIS GOOD MORNING THE FIRST THING I DID WAS READ**
And the second thing the English-language learners in our Exploring Words Summer Camp did was write. How can we be so sure? Because we have this wonderful collection full of poems, letters, short stories, and more to prove it!

“Essentially—and I mean this in the cheesiest, most sentimental way—826 has played an enormous role in my life, and I am eternally grateful.”
—Gina Cargas
**By the Numbers**

We are proud of our financial track record at 826 Valencia, and we’re happy to report that our total assets at the close of the fiscal year* exceeded $2 million. These are tough economic times, but thanks to our many supporters, we were able to maintain the breadth and depth of all our programs and accomplish all of our organizational goals for the year.

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TOTAL ASSETS $1,936,089 $2,037,505

*July 1, 2010–June 30, 2011
Thank You*

$50,000 AND ABOVE
Anonymous
The Buehler Foundation
Lisa Brown & Daniel Handler
Our Family Foundation
San Francisco Department of Children, Youth & Family Services
Walker & Elss Assn
$25,000 – $49,999
Farnes Family Foundation
Leo & Patsy Finn
The James Irving Foundation
National Endowment for the Arts
$10,000 – $24,999
Ted & Enid Butkus
David & Diane Buehler Foundation
The Dow Fund
The Flashbuilder Foundation
Brian & Susan Gray
James Caws & Deirdre Kelly
Jennifer Jones Cruz
Jordan Rich
Margaret & Carollin Cargill
The Family of Taylor Revolve Sheehan
The San Francisco Foundation
The Stecker Foundation
Sustainable Asian Art Foundation
Venos Foundation
Peter Tedeschi & Connie Babcock
$5,000 – $9,999
Seth Finkel
Brilliant Star
ENIRA Fund
Gene Finkelnburg & Warren Brown
Tony Fournier
Franklin Brothers, Inc.
Hector Heyman & Michael Moritz Fund
Isidro & Aldo Vélez
Gail & Ted Humen
The Joseph R. McMicking Foundation
Kerry & Vélez Foundation
Mark & Tamara Midalo
Jeffrey & Janis Varghese
$2,500 – $4,999
Anonymous
Boucheron 2010
Casanova Foundation
Coutch, Prin & McCarthy LLP
Dean Delba
Martin Gerson
Linda & Roger Greengrass
Sue & Bill Grey
Karen Green
Helfenbein Foundation
Humbert Bar
Melinda Joseph John
Matt Fena
Morgan, Lewis & Burke
PSD Family Charitable Trust
Regroup
Uros Foundation
Wild Planet Entertainment, Inc.
The Wyser Foundation
$1,000 – $2,499
Alicia Bicker Family
Barbara & Joseph Cohn
Christine Böttger
David & Liza Cassuto
Rosemary & Jon Lebahn
Jason Lee
R. Michael Liebowitz & Deborah Bishop
Amy Love
Mike & Jenny Lovecy
Judith J. Mahoney
Frank Marquard
Brian March
Christopher McNamara & Jill Donelson
Melina & Alan Metz
Maurice Milhollon
Monterey Family Fund
Cortney Merz
Van Nguyen
Van Blues
Brooke Meyers
Joyce Myers
Sue Naughton
David O’Shea
Lori Oreman
Richard & Wendy Yenich
$500 – $999
Ameriprise Financial
Bass-McKown Management
David John Baker
St-Ben Shaker
Alexander Brune
Ernest Cline & Gwinem Huma
David & Alexis Collier
Compassion
Diablo Publications
San Francisco Filmmakers
Mark Finsten
The Gelbord Foundation Family
Michael Ginder & James O’Donnell
David Glaser
Asha Goldsmith & Nita Chavan
Grey Global Group
Pablo/Arts Foundation
Michael Kane
James & Patricia Lester
Aye Ly, Jean-Luc Rittenhouse
David & Lisa Martin
Marcy & Robert Passman
Harley & Deidre Parisi
Jeffrey & Beverly Paul
Celia Sack
Blake Seely
Sherry Sichiro & Clay Scott
Susan E. Simonsen
Mary & David Stahl
Jeffrey & Betsy Tangney
Verge Partners Community Support
Whistle Foods
Yahoo! Matching Gifts Program
$250 – $499
Gary Asbury
Judy Asbury
Kevin Baer
David Baldridge
Linda Baldir
Alex Baldeva
Jocelyn Bax
Mary Beth Beck
Ruth Bell
Ruth Boyer
Alice Boyer
Mark Calhoun
Sue Camp
Alan Cao
Catherine Carpenter
Barbara Casper
Kari Cannon
Jared Carter
Sara Chadwick
Kent Chadwick
Robbie Chappell
Jane Chay
Kari Cheek
Cathy Chen
Katrina Chin
Mie-Chen
Sarah Cleetro
Diana Chu
Amy Cohen
Sean Connery
Jackson Scott Cooper
Murphy D’Amico & Steve Cappo
Emma Capuzzo
Catherine Davis
Agnieszka De Kooncl
Benjamin De Kooncl
Julie DeLucas
Kazuo DeMott
Diane Dillon
Jennifer Dolinowski
William Donahoe
Kerry Donald
Karen Dorn
Wynn Donahue
Elle Charitable Trust 1
Farah E. Awad
Mendy Emerson
Johnny Evans
Marcel Faull
Jason Fay
Mike & Julie Fahn
Amy Faulkner
Jasmine Feldman
Lisa Feldstein & Maxwell Drukman
Jeanne Feldkamp
Jason Espada
Jennifer E. Forst
Kimberly Frisby
Tony Fried
Gail Fried
Carol Fried
Joy Fried
Jay Fried
Geoffrey Fried
Lori Friesen
David Friesen
Carol French
Robert Frederick
Susan French
Rob Ford
Bryan R. Ford
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826 Valencia is a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting students ages 6 to 18 with their creative and expository writing skills and to helping teachers inspire their students to write. Our services are structured around the understanding that great leaps in learning can happen with one-on-one attention and that strong writing skills are fundamental to future success.

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