Dear friends,

This past year has been one of the most challenging of our lifetimes. For the students we serve, the disproportionate and compounded impacts of the health crisis, economic crisis, and educational crisis laid bare by COVID-19 and systemic racism are devastating. When grappling with such huge issues alongside our communities, we have to ask ourselves: how do we show up in this moment and beyond?

Many of our programmatic pillars are even more critical right now. We’ve always developed programs that are tailored to the needs of our communities, yet we never imagined moving all our services to an online environment, or that this would entail helping families navigate enormous obstacles so their kids could simply access their education. I am so proud that within a few weeks of schools shutting down, we were able to pivot all our programs and help mitigate learning loss. Similarly, we’ve always believed in culturally responsive programming, and the pride students feel when they become published authors. As we chart our nation’s course toward a more just future, their voices are more important now than ever.

As an organization, we have also pushed ourselves to deepen our work around diversity, equity, and inclusion. We are taking action to make our internal organizational practices more equitable, make our commitment to anti-racist education more explicit, and ensure that more Black students are accessing our services. We commit to the continual reflection, learning, and growth that is necessary for us to live out our values even further.

Ultimately, we must show up even stronger, with greater resolve, as allies to our young people, their families, and their schools. We must listen to our youth, continue to adapt to meet their needs, and enlist support from all of you to provide free, individualized services that not only support them, but empower them. Thank you for joining us in this essential work.

In community,
826 Valencia is a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting students from under-resourced communities with their creative and expository writing skills and to helping teachers inspire their students to write.

Named for the street address of our first writing center in San Francisco, 826 Valencia was founded in 2002 by educator Nínive Calegari and author Dave Eggers. 826 Valencia now comprises three writing centers—our namesake location in the Mission District, a center in the Tenderloin neighborhood, and our newest center in an affordable housing building in Mission Bay. We also have three satellite classrooms on site at partner schools, and provide in-school programming at nearly a dozen others around the city. In the spring of 2020, as San Francisco enacted a shelter-in-place order and schools transitioned to remote learning, so did we, serving students through remote versions of our most intensive programs. All of our programs are offered free of charge and serve predominantly low-income students of color and English Learners.

Due to the success of 826 Valencia’s model, a separate organization called 826 National was founded in 2008 to help other cities launch their own successful writing and tutoring centers. We are now one of nine official 826 chapters in the United States, inspiring a global community of over 40 like-minded writing organizations around the world.
In a society that systematically devalues the histories and experiences of young people of color, writing empowers youth to express themselves, to voice their perspectives, to succeed in college and career, and to shape our future. This work is essential to a just and democratic society. Today, with our students facing educational inequities exacerbated by COVID-19, having access to individualized support with writing and authentic opportunities to make their voices heard is more important than ever.

“By 2035, every under-resourced student in San Francisco will have the writing skills and publishing platforms they need to use their voice for positive impact.”

SAILA HOLSMAN
AGE 17

WHY WE’RE NEEDED

Nationwide, only 25% of high school seniors are proficient in writing.¹ In California, only half of third graders read and write at grade-level proficiency.² In SFUSD, less than 30% of Black, Latinx, and English Learner students test as proficient in English Language Arts, compared with 80% of their white peers.²

¹ 2018 California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress
² 2018 California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress
OUR APPROACH

All of the programs in our unique and effective model share the following traits, whether in-person or online.

**Responsive.** We develop our programs in collaboration with teachers, families, partner organizations, students, and schools. Through this collaborative process, we create learning opportunities that are tailored to meet community needs and aligned with teachers’ curricular goals.

**Individualized.** All of our programs leverage the power of trained volunteers, who are led by our professional teaching staff to provide individualized tutoring and support, helping students make great leaps in learning. This helps teachers do their difficult jobs more effectively, and gives students the time and attention they need to thrive.

**Project-based.** We publish our students’ writing and give it an audience. We see great increases in students’ skills, confidence and pride when their hard work results in an authentic, tangible end product. And the books, magazines, podcasts, and more that we produce help amplify our students’ voices to the world.

**Wonderful and whimsical.** Everything we do is designed to inspire creativity and foster imagination. To set the tone, each center is fronted by a whimsical store. At the Pirate Supply Store in our Mission Center we purvey, yes, supplies for pirates. King Carl’s Emporium in the Tenderloin offers tools for exploration of real and imaginary worlds. Woodland Creature Outfitters Ltd. in Mission Bay transports visitors to an enchanted forest. Our stores also sell our students’ publications, and all proceeds go right back into our programs.

“Writing is a much needed skill for all people and it’s great that our youth are able to get quality writing instruction from people who authentically care....Some of our youth have also built up their confidence through the program, especially when their pieces are published by 826. It’s a beautiful experience to see over time.”

MICHAEL VUONG
DIRECTOR OF BOYS & GIRLS CLUB TENDERLOIN CLUBHOUSE

““For me, the best part of being a volunteer is spending an hour with a few students with no obligations on either the students or me except to help them express their ideas. I truly believe that it is meaningful for the students to have an adult, who is not a teacher or otherwise responsible for the child, care about what they have to say.”

NICOLE HARPER
VOLUNTEER

2019–2020 BY THE NUMBERS

Students, parents, and teachers surveyed reported that our programs led to an increase in:

- **Confidence**: 90%
- **Skills**: 92%
- **Pride**: 85%

- **Students Served**: 6,786
- **Active Volunteers**: 924
- **Program Hours**: 3,292
- **Student: Volunteer Ratio**: 2:1
- **Publications**: 29
CORE PROGRAMS

Field Trips. Field trips to 826 are wild adventures, but we also pack in a lot of learning. Classes visit our writing centers for a morning of high-energy writing, performing, and storytelling. Our Field Trips produce bound, illustrated books and professionally-produced podcasts, infusing creativity, collaboration, and the arts into students’ regular school day.

In-School Projects. We bring teams of volunteers into public schools around the city to support teachers and coach students as they tackle various writing projects, including newspapers, research papers, oral histories, and more. We have permanent, 826-ified spaces—called Writers’ Rooms—at Buena Vista Horace Mann K-8, Everett Middle School, and Mission High School. In other school partnerships, we work directly in classrooms.

After-School Tutoring. During the school year, our trained volunteers provide support with homework in all subject areas for enrolled students ages 6 to 18. Our Mission Center also hosts drop-in tutoring on Sundays, open to all. In the summer, students from after-school and other programs participate in our summer camps and workshops.

Workshops. Our Mission Center offers evening and weekend workshops designed to foster creativity and strengthen writing skills in a variety of areas, from playwriting to personal essays to comics, and everything in between. All workshops, from the playful to the practical, result in a professional end product. At our Tenderloin Center, our After-School Workshops serve a variety of neighborhood organizations and enrich their programming with weekly curriculum to build students’ writing skills in a fun, inspiring environment.

College and Career Readiness. We offer a range of programs designed to help students develop their leadership skills, get into college, and be successful there. We provide scholarships to college-bound seniors, and one-on-one support via the Great San Francisco Personal Statement Weekend and personal statement tutoring in schools. We offer stipends for our youth leaders who serve as mentors to our younger students, participate in workshops to explore careers, and plan ways to contribute to their community.
A DAY AT THE MISSION CENTER

Morning
2nd-5th grade classes from schools all over San Francisco come to us for a Storytelling and Bookmaking or Choose Your Own Adventure Field Trip. They leave with their own book—written, illustrated, and bound within two hours and complete with an “about the author” page.

Afternoon
After-School Tutoring bustles with enrolled students who get help with their homework, respond to the day’s writing prompt, and discuss what they’re reading with a tutor.

Evening
Tutoring continues into the evening for middle and high school students who need a quiet place to work. Workshops are offered on topics ranging from the art of the short story to the craft of journalism.

Weekends
Volunteers and staff lead workshops in all subjects. On Sunday afternoons, our Writing Lab is open to all, with tutors at the ready for drop-in homework help and a daily writing prompt.

2019–2020 HIGHLIGHTS

• This year After-School Tutoring launched the Rainbow Fish initiative, which supports younger students (in grades 1-3) through targeted reading, language, and writing development.

• Staff and volunteers led 33 workshops, on topics ranging from journalism, to feminism, to writing about kindness. 51% of workshop students were enrolled in multiple 826 programs, advancing our goal of serving students more deeply with a variety of opportunities for engagement.

• When tutoring moved online in the spring, After-School Tutoring served 51 unique students and an average of 17 students per day. Students brought their most challenging homework to get 1:1 help from a tutor, and did writing projects such as writing letters to essential workers.

• 96% of workshop students reported that they learned new things about writing, and that the workshop increased their confidence.

“Hace un año, cuando llevé a Lili al programa ella iba 2 letras atrasada en lo que es la lectura. Ahí le ayudaron a que se pusiera al día. La maestra de Lili ha visto como ha mejorado. El programa de 826 ha sido muy bueno y también el único recurso que he encontrado para ella.”

MARIA FIGUERA
AFTER-SCHOOL TUTORING PARENT AND 826 ALUM
JASON NIEVES
AGE 9 | MISSION CENTER AFTER-SCHOOL TUTORING

I was 7 years old when I started at 826 Valencia and now I’m 9 years old. I felt nervous when I first started coming to 826 because I didn’t know anyone. I feel good coming to 826 now because I’ve met every single tutor and I feel grateful because I’m not alone. Before coming to 826, I was struggling to finish my writing, but now when I do my writing projects I’m great and I feel proud of my hard work. Sometimes when I get homework it can be easy but sometimes it can be hard, but now I work on the hard parts with my tutors and don’t have to spend the whole day on homework.

I finish my homework and I get more A’s and less C’s and B’s. I understand more math. In 2019, I got picked to go on the Young Writers’ Wall because I was focusing a ton on my writing and my reading. I’m proud of this because two years ago I couldn’t pronounce any words, but now I’ve been practicing a lot of reading over the summer. I want to thank my sister Katrina, because when me and my mom don’t understand a homework question, she helps me with my homework.

I think 826 really helps me a lot during distance learning, especially when I really want help on my homework. I miss going to 826 programs in person. I miss having our parties where we eat a lot of good food and I would read my writing projects out loud to everyone.

I think people should know that at 826, everybody is nice and everyone is special and the students are really focused. Some advice I would give to other kids my age, who need extra help with reading and writing, is that at first it’s kind of hard but once you get the hang of it it’s actually kind of easy. You have to practice every single day, and if you get more practice, more practice and more practice, then you can get better, just like I did.
Our Tenderloin Center welcomes students from the neighborhood and beyond to share their stories and amplify their voices—sometimes literally, through the student podcast recordings that we broadcast on to the street. Students arrive through an interactive wall of doors and venture into the shade of an indoor treehouse to work with tutors on poetry, personal narratives, short stories, and more. Through strong partnerships with neighboring organizations and schools, students fill the space nearly every day to write, learn, and, as King Carl (our traveling pufferfish mascot) says, "set forth and explore!"

**Morning**
Classes come to our center from all over the city for a four-hour field trip experience in which they write and record professional podcasts, learning how to craft an engaging story and read it with confidence. The final products are posted on SoundCloud so students can share them with their families and the world. We also host field trips in which we help students polish personal statements, write poetry, or complete other classroom writing projects.

**Afternoon**
Neighborhood partner organizations bring their students to the center for after-school writing workshops. Students build their skills and explore the writing process with a fun, creative curriculum and the support of 826 tutors.

**Throughout the day**
Our tutors and staff provide in-school writing support at Bessie Carmichael K-8 and Tenderloin Community School.

**2019–2020 HIGHLIGHTS**

- Our elementary school students learned about the concept of community and reflected on the different communities to which they belong. Students then created odes to important community members (teachers, family members, sports coaches, friends, etc.) and wrote superhero tales about a hero that addresses a community challenge in a unique way.

- Student podcasts shared powerful ideas on social issues, including racial discrimination, global climate change, and homelessness. Their work was shared through KQIQ, the *Alta* Podcast, and KQED.

- Podcasting field trip student Tiarri Washington was one of the winners of *The New York Times*’ annual Student Podcast Contest for “The Secret of the Fenced Castle,” a powerful reflection on visiting her father in prison.

- After moving programs online, we focused largely on supporting students with their new and immediate digital learning needs, from getting connected to WiFi to navigating Google Classroom. With this responsive model and deepened communication with families, the daily attendance rate for online tutoring was 95%.
I felt really frustrated about writing, but when I came to 826 I felt like I was in a different place than school. 826 is all about writing and expressing words. Writing was really hard back then, like “9 out of 10” hard, because we had to write a lot of sentences and paragraphs, and we had to do so much work. 826 made it easier and more understandable. 826 taught me more words and personality and I’m starting to like it.

Getting help from 826 staff has made my writing way better than before. Something that helped me grow is how they taught me to put stronger words in my writing. One of the staff, Martin, helped me with one of my stories called Ninja Kid. He helped me feel good by telling me, “Keep on adding stronger words.” Before I added stronger words, it felt unreadable and plain, but now it feels more useful.

Stronger words will make your writing more understandable and easier to read. If you just plop down random words it will be really hard to read and it will take a really long time to write. For example: Adam feels awesome when he wins a Roblox game, vs. Adam feels good when he wins a Roblox game. “Awesome” is a stronger word than “good.” Awesome makes me feel really powerful, like a superhero. It helps readers picture Superman flying in the sky saying “Awesome!” to his superhero friends.

What I accomplished at 826 is to invest and make my writing stronger. I’m really proud that people read my writing. I will use my stronger words to make future stories and help teach my brother how to write. This is important because I want to teach my brother so he can use it for his future.
MISSION BAY CENTER

Our newest location for writing, tutoring, wonder, and whimsy, the 826 Valencia Mission Bay center opened in the spring of 2019. Mission Bay is an intentionally diverse neighborhood, where our partners at the Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation invited us to be the anchor educational support in their new low-income housing complex. This center is a space where students access our unique model of individualized tutoring and share their stories with their communities, and serves as a springboard for us to serve schools in the city’s Southeast Corridor. Who knew you could get to an enchanted forest on the T Line?

MISSION BAY CENTER

A DAY AT THE MISSION BAY CENTER

Morning
This year we launched our first Mission Bay Field Trips, with different curriculum based on grade level. Third graders come to the enchanted forest to write recipes for things other than food, such as How to be a Good Friend or Recipe for Kindness. Fourth graders write and illustrate their own comic strip. Fifth graders explore and describe mythical creatures.

Throughout the day
Our education staff and trained volunteers provide consistent support to third graders at Starr King Elementary, Bret Harte Elementary, and Malcolm X Academy.

Afternoon
After-school Tutoring serves students from our building and other affordable family housing nearby, with many students coming four days a week to get help with their homework and write, all with the support of volunteer tutors. This year’s writing curriculum focused on social justice.

2019–2020 HIGHLIGHTS

• 100% of students in Mission Bay After-School Tutoring reported that they liked working with their tutors, and 95% reported that they became better writers.

• In our in-school program at Malcolm X, “Students have created incredible bonds with our writing tutors,” says Timothy Puranen, third grade teacher. “They looked forward to every Thursday writing with 826 with so much enthusiasm that it’s amazing.”

• The third graders in our in-school programs, many of whom were reluctant or struggling writers at the beginning of the year, wrote personal narratives, biographies, odes, and fiction, including stories about a wizard knocking on your door and a catapult of any shape or size that could save the day.

“IT IS VERY FUN TO WORK WITH 826 VALENCIA. THEY TREAT ME WITH LOTS OF CARE AND LOVE. I WOULD DESCRIBE THEM AS KIND, HELPFUL, AND ENCOURAGING.”
AMIR SOHAN
3RD GRADE STUDENT, BRET HARTE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
I like this program because it helps me with my homework, and I get to socialize with other people and make friends. Also, I sometimes get to be published, do a lot of writing, talk on stages, and make videos. At 826 Valencia I have grown a lot and I have had exciting experiences.

My experiences at 826 were awesome because I got to perform my writing in front of a lot of people, and I also got published. Some experiences I have had were being in a video with the Warriors, being published in two books in 2019, and I was also in two videos. My experiences in those videos were awesome because I got to visit a lot of places I hadn’t been before and meet a lot of new people.

I am proud of myself because I’ve been published and my mom thinks I’m famous. I’m proud of my school scores, because now I can read higher level books. Since I love writing, I write a lot and it’s so easy to write an essay and finish it on time. I love 826 Valencia because it makes me feel happy and excited to do a lot of things—to write, to read, to do everything, and explore every place!

826 Valencia helped me be more confident, and helped me solve the hard assignments that they gave in school. A future plan I have is to be a vet, but I would also like to be famous and do a lot of business jobs. I feel confident about what I want to do in the future. And since my mom and dad are from Mexico I would like to dance in every Mexican Independence Day celebration, and eat pozole which is my favorite Mexican food.
I am thankful for water, soap, masks, gloves, and hand sanitizer because they keep us safe. I am also thankful for 826 Valencia.

ASIYA ARMSTRONG, AGE 8

This spring we all adapted to the unprecedented challenge of remote learning while sheltered-in-place. Read on for our students’ perspectives on life during a pandemic, and the story of how we quickly and responsively pivoted our programs online.
I hope that the experience is one to be proud of. I hope to be able to do it again and to help people stop dying from this virus. I have learned that I do not like long hours. I have been attacked by bugs at home. I also learned I really enjoy painting. I enjoy being around other people. Once school is back in place, I will go to a physical school. I love them. I miss the sound of their voices. I miss the smile that came across my face from them. I miss playing ridiculous jokes without glitches. I miss checking my full inbox, scrolling through endless workflows in Google Sheets. I miss the speed. Temporärely School Closure: a student's perspective from the viewpoint of a support worker. This patient did not want school to close. No school meant no getting up early for the day and no seeing my classmates. The next day, the principal informed us that we were taking mandatory online classes. I thought to myself, “As long as I don’t have to go to physical school, I’m fine.”

I typed Across the room: no lapsing trying to wake up my family. I opened my silver laptop to start studying. That began shaking my full inbox, scrolling through endless workflows in Google Sheets. I closed, locked, felt. I was made, “Temporærely School Closure: a student’s perspective from the viewpoint of a support worker. This patient did not want school to close. No school meant no getting up early for the day and no seeing my classmates. The next day, the principal informed us that we were taking mandatory online classes. I thought to myself, “As long as I don’t have to go to physical school, I’m fine.”
From the start, one of 826 Valencia’s primary goals was to support teachers by providing individualized attention in classrooms. To do this, we bring our education staff and trained volunteer tutors into schools throughout San Francisco. Our Writers’ Rooms—special 826-designed spaces in three local schools—serve students in small groups for greater individualized attention, allowing teachers to provide targeted instruction. This has a transformative effect on the school day; the average teacher-to-student ratio in SFUSD is 22:1; and in some schools the ratio is as high as 35:1. With the support of 826 Valencia education staff and our trained volunteer tutors, that ratio becomes 2:1. When SFUSD moved to distance learning in the spring, we provided support with new learning tools and writing tutoring.

Our Young Authors’ Book Project is an annual publication written by a different group of high school students each year. The 2020 YABP was a partnership with two Ethnic Studies classes at Mission High School. Students started by reading and discussing Nikky Finney’s poem, “The Battle of and for the Black Face Boy.” Finney visited the classes to kick off the project and talk about writing, share more of her work, and inspire us all. Then, with the support of a consistent group of tutors who worked one-on-one with the students from brainstorming to editing, the young authors wrote essays, poems, fiction, letters, and more in response to the prompt, “What is your truth, what makes you feel free?” The result was The Freedom to Live Without Fear, which was published in May with a virtual release party for the students and their tutors, families, and school community. We couldn’t be prouder of the young authors and this timely, important project.

The 826 Writers’ Rooms

Buena Vista
Horace Mann K-8
A transformed locker room houses our after-school writing program at BVHM, where 3rd-5th graders who need extra support receive individualized attention as they build their writing skills. We also support 6th-8th grade classes during the school day with intensive writing projects.

Everett Middle School
Here in our first Writers’ Room, 6th-8th grade students produce the Straight Up News, pen poetry chapbooks, and learn to write across a variety of genres, from argumentative essays to haikus, with the support of our tutors.

Mission High School
In this Writers’ Room, students learn to research and write pieces for Mission Magazine, get help with college application essays, and publish chapbooks, monologues, and more.

Sixteen shots in the darkness . . .
another man erased.

“Say their names . . .
it’s important to say their names.”

We pledge allegiance to the red, white and blue,
“The land of the free and the home of the brave”
This country represents freedom, but to whom?
Are we really free?

OUR AMERICA WAS NEVER GREAT

BY LAJAIYAH WATKINS

AN EXCERPT

“The book arrived yesterday and I can’t put it down. I cry a little. I laugh. I fell asleep with it last night. I feel the deep connection...it’s one of the most important projects I’ve ever—in my whole life—been a part of. I can’t wait to talk about it wherever I go! The Freedom to Live Without Fear!”

NIKKY FINNEY
NATIONAL BOOK AWARD WINNER AND FOREWORD WRITER FOR THE 2020 YOUNG AUTHORS’ BOOK PROJECT
Writing has always been a part of me. I have always faced some problems expressing my thoughts through spoken words. I felt that everything I wanted to say was in my head but I couldn’t emit a word, and I struggled to free all my ideas and emotions. After a while, I realized that writing could be the key to finally being myself. I started working on my writing skills in Spanish because I felt comfortable with my first language. When I started learning English at age 14, the idea of expressing my thoughts in another language was overwhelming. But I had the need to improve my writing in English because I wanted to succeed in my classes at high school.

Last year at school, I worked on a poetry project which helped me express more about myself through my writing. I received guidance from my English teacher and volunteers from 826 Valencia. Having their support was great. The feedback of the volunteers helped me to build a better poem, and I could feel comfortable practicing my performance with them. I won the poetry contest of my class with my poem called “A Place Called Home.” After that, I felt that I could express myself through poetry.

I joined the Young Authors’ Workshop at 826 Valencia. Writing during the workshop was amazing because I could discover more about myself through the stories I was developing. The story I chose to publish was the one I felt the proudest of. The story had foundations in some of my strangest emotions, and sharing it with others was something I enjoyed.

For me, writing is an escape gate. I didn’t expect writing to be my way to express my feelings and thoughts. I feel that all the support I had during my transition from one language to another helped me build the confidence that I needed to overcome my fears and understand that there are more ways to raise my voice than just speaking.
SUMMER 2019 AT 826 VALENCIA

School might let out for the summer, but the learning doesn’t stop at 826 Valencia. We offer a variety of programs to reduce summer learning loss and keep students writing and thinking creatively. Here is all the great work that happened in the summer of 2019 (which might feel like ages ago, but served as our strong and fun start to FY20!)

Exploring Words. 826 Valencia’s ninth annual Exploring Words Summer Camp was a three week program for 107 third through fifth-graders, many who participate in our after-school tutoring and writing programs during the school year. Students participated in three weeks of 826 Valencia’s science and creative writing curriculum, as part of a full day of programming in partnership with Jamestown Community Center and Pathways to Education.

Exploring Leadership. This camp focused on developing middle school students as youth leaders. Students learned about college and career pathways and opportunities through field trips to Twitter’s NeighborNest Projector, and the American Conservatory Theater. Students participated in three weeks of 826 Valencia’s science and creative writing curriculum, as part of a full day of programming in partnership with Jamestown Community Center and Pathways to Education.

The Young Authors’ Workshop. Each year, we offer an intensive writing camp for high school students called the Young Authors’ Workshop. Participants spent three weeks writing together, led by guest speakers including poets, journalists, oral historians, and artists. In 2019, we added a resident teaching artist who supported students for a week of the program. Students grew their confidence and skills through peer editing and became a strong community of writers.

Tenderloin Summer Programs. We hosted summer workshops at our Tenderloin Center, serving over 350 students from 11 partner organizations, including GLIDE Youth, Family, and Childcare Center, Up On Top, and the Boys & Girls Club Tenderloin Clubhouse.

HIGHLIGHTS

100% of students in the Young Authors’ Workshop said, “This workshop increased my confidence about writing.”

83% of Exploring Leadership students said they learned new things about writing, leadership, and public speaking.

On the last day of Exploring Words, one of our students, Bryan, received the award for having a “Big, Beautiful, Brain!” His response: “I can’t wait to include this in my application to UC Berkeley!”
826 Valencia offers a variety of programs that support our students on their path to college and whatever career they choose. Our College and Career Readiness programs provide channels for ongoing involvement with 826 Valencia through middle school, high school, and beyond, and train students to serve as tutors for their younger peers. This constellation of programs aims to increase our students’ post-secondary success by offering leadership development, support with writing across the disciplines, and financial aid in the form of stipends and scholarships.

“I learned to not be afraid to speak up. That’s a leadership role I’ll take in all my opportunities when I’m encouraged to speak about my thoughts. I’m a leader in my community by helping out those who need it.”

ITZIEL MACIAS
TENDERLOIN YLAB
AGE 16

2019–2020 HIGHLIGHTS

• This year, we expanded from one Youth Leadership Advisory Board to three, one based out of each center. These groups served as tutors and mentors for younger students in our programs, and took on exciting leadership roles, including contributing ideas to the cover design for Poets in Revolt! (a new national anthology of youth voices), hosting the annual Storytellers’ Showcase, creating their own publications, and more.

• The 2019 Personal Statement Weekend served more than 150 students with 1:1 support for two hours or more as they wrote and edited responses to the Personal Insight Questions for the University of California application.

• 65 interns and youth mentors tutored in our programs, supporting our younger students and building their own leadership skills.

MEET OUR 2020 Scholarship Winners

JESSICA BERRIOS
City Arts and Lectures Scholarship
New York University
A college degree is a privilege that I have longed for since I was 6... As a first generation, Latina woman of color, I have made it a priority to better myself by pursuing a further education.

ASHLEY KEZIA
MARIE FUMAR
Art Berliner and Marian Lever Scholarship in honor of Sydney Goldstein | UCLA
Now, I write again, without comparing it to others because I know my style and I know what I am capable of producing in my own way—all of which I learned to appreciate during a workshop with 826. I used to always want to be a journalist, and I still do. Through my life experiences, I wish to write about significant events that impact people and communities.

WALTER GARCIA
Tom Savignano Scholarship
San Francisco State University
My mother is a person that influences me to attend college. She is a very hard worker and a very good mother. She has fought to make my two older brothers, my sister and I have a better life here in the United States.

BETZABE HERRERA
Taylor Renfrew Ingham Memorial Scholarship | UC Merced
In the future I hope to become a teacher. I don’t know what kind of teacher I will become. But I know that if it wasn’t for the confidence I have now, I wouldn’t see myself in that role. I know that writing will follow me all of my life. I will continue to express my emotions through a paper and a pencil.

MANSU KUANG
Sydney Goldstein Memorial Scholarship | Wesleyan University
I write to enter a difficult and honest conversation about the unfair distribution of privileges within our society and how that has limited the opportunities for others to thrive. Writing has allowed me to self-reflect on the challenges I go through not only as a person of color and as a woman, but also the challenges I face coming from a low-income, immigrant family.

MARRIANAH MEADORS
City Arts and Lectures Scholarship
CSU - Long Beach
In the future I hope to become a teacher. I don’t know what kind of teacher I will become. But I know that if it wasn’t for the confidence I have now, I wouldn’t see myself in that role. I know that writing will follow me all of my life. I will continue to express my emotions through a paper and a pencil.

ASHLEY KEZIA
MARIE FUMAR
Art Berliner and Marian Lever Scholarship in honor of Sydney Goldstein | UCLA
Now, I write again, without comparing it to others because I know my style and I know what I am capable of producing in my own way—all of which I learned to appreciate during a workshop with 826. I used to always want to be a journalist, and I still do. Through my life experiences, I wish to write about significant events that impact people and communities.
I first got involved with 826 through the Young Authors’ Workshop in the summer after my sophomore year. Last year, I applied to be a part of the Youth Leader Advisory Board at 826 and have tutored, helped coordinate events, and developed my writing through this program.

In early March, just as everything was shutting down, I had the opportunity to write a piece on rampant anti-Asian racism for the 826 YLAB chapter book. It was based in my personal experiences, also weaving in those of my friends, and using a longform news article I was editing for my school’s student-run publication as a jumping off point. Writing it gave me time to reflect on my own identity as an Asian American and having it published in the chapter book brought those experiences to the eyes of the world, giving everyone referenced in it a voice.

Through 826, I also had the opportunity to have that piece published in the June/July issue of The Commonwealth, the news magazine of The Commonwealth Club of California. I’m proud to have had my writing chosen for publication in a news magazine with such a wide circulation and to have my voice, as a writer and Asian American teen, amplified in this way. And I know it would not have been possible without the dedication of 826 to its student writers and all the 826 staff who helped me refine and shape my experiences into my story.

Now, just starting my senior year, I hope to use the various skills I’ve learned at 826 and all the opportunities I’ve had here to help me continue to grow at school, lead as the Editor-in-Chief of my school’s student-run publication, and shape my college essay self-reflection.

Writing Gave Me Time to Reflect

JOELLE CHIEN
AGE 17 | MISSION BAY YOUTH LEADER
Volunteers fuel our organization by providing much-needed individualized attention. Volunteers, it’s thanks to you that this year we were able to support so many students, to keep that support steady when schools closed, and publish and amplify their voices for the world to hear. Our students say it best; here are just a few of the many heartfelt thank you notes they wrote this year!

Thank you
for helping me write well, brainstorm, and invent robots.
I learned from you to spell well. I appreciate your help.
Gabriel, age 9

Thank you
for giving me your friendship, making me laugh, helping me with my brainstorming, drafting and revising. You are the best!
Luana, age 9

Thank you
for really helping me become a better writer...you and all the staff and class made me rethink writing and now it’s a hobby. Thank you for cooling the nerves for me before I presented and thank you for the authentic feedback.
Dominic, age 16

Thank you
for helping me write well, brainstorm, and invent robots. I learned from you to spell well. I appreciate your help.
Gabriel, age 9
This has been an unprecedented year in fundraising. Despite the challenges presented by the pandemic and resulting economic downturn, we were still able to end this year in the black. We canceled our major fundraising event, the Bookeaters’ Bash—but the majority of ticket holders and sponsors generously transitioned their support to outright gifts. Unsure what the future held, we reduced expenses without laying off any staff and asked funders for increased support. They answered the call and not only stood by us, but made new, additional or increased gifts, lifted gift restrictions, and further underscored their commitment to our work. This partnership is essential to our continued viability and mission to serve our students.

This is a time of economic uncertainty, widening educational gaps, and deep reckoning with racial injustice in our society. Providing our unique support to students of color from under-resourced communities is truly more essential than ever. We are committed. We need you, our community, to help us remain on strong financial footing so together we can meet students’ needs in the face of this crisis and beyond.

2019-2020 OPERATING BUDGET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contributions from organizations</td>
<td>$2,805,149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributions from individuals</td>
<td>$1,832,433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special events (net)</td>
<td>$197,008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (includes stores)</td>
<td>$219,420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total income (accrual)</td>
<td>$5,054,429</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenses</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programming</td>
<td>$3,106,637</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>$403,031</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administrative</td>
<td>$371,566</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retail Stores</td>
<td>$121,117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total expenses</td>
<td>$4,002,351</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
OUR DONORS

The donors who support our work at 826 Valencia are a special group. From the steadfast support of annual and monthly gifts of all sizes, to corporate and foundation partners, to remarkably generous individuals who make inspiring major gifts—our donor community makes this work possible. We are so thankful for every one of you. Usually, in this space you would find a many-page list of names, each one representing a donor we appreciate beyond words. This year, we have decided to offer a glimpse at who our donors are and why they give. For the list of donors’ names, see our website.

To our donor community: thank you!
We couldn’t serve our students or weather this challenging time without you.

GIFTS OF ALL SIZES

826 Valencia is grateful to receive contributions of all sizes from a broad array of organizations and individuals. While gifts of $50K and up make up a bit more than half of our annual revenue, the vast majority of our contributions are $100 or less. We are proud to bring such a diverse group of donors, all with different experiences and capacities, together in community and support of our work.*

GIFTS OF ALL SIZES

$25K+
$10K–24K
$1K–9K
$101–999
$1–100

* includes institutional and government support

FUN FACTS ABOUT FUNDRAISING

1,509 DONORS
Including government, corporations, and foundations

1,436 individual donors

We received an average of 6 gifts a day

Donations came from 42 states and 9 countries

301 of our donors were also 826 volunteers

WINNERS OF A CONTEST THEY DIDN’T KNOW THEY ENTERED

FIRST DONATION OF FY20
FENDY SOEGIONO

LAST DONATION OF FY20
KENZIE KILB

LONGEST RUNNING MONTHLY DONOR
JACOB FARKAS
(12 YEARS!)
WHY OUR DONORS GIVE

I believe in making education equally accessible to all children.
DOROTHY MARSCHALL
IN MEMORY OF ROBERT WORTHINGTON SPEARMAN

I believe in the power of writing and giving voice to the amazing young people in this city!
ANNE SHULOCK

We know that 826 Valencia programs are among the best to help the youth of San Francisco find and use their voices.
BILL RUSITZKY

As a writer and a resident of the Mission (and a native San Franciscan), how could I NOT donate to 826 Valencia?
GREGORY SCHRAM

826 has been a constant source of hope, inspiration, support, and wonder.
ALYSSA ANINAG

Because this community matters.
SCOTT RUBIN

We need the arts more than ever, to lift people’s spirits. And stories are what connect us. I want to support the next generation of storytellers.
HAGAR SCHER

To keep 826 strong during these trying times!
MICHAEL GAVINO

I wanted to establish a monthly donation which I know can help in regards to forecasting budgets and funds.
KRISTEN HEWITT

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KRISTEN HEWITT
VISIT US
As of this writing, our stores and spaces are mostly closed to the public for safety during COVID-19. Check our website for the most up-to-date information (including limited Pirate Store open hours, when the seas allow) and shop or donate online to support our programs. We hope to see you in person someday soon!

826VALENCIA.ORG

PIRATE SUPPLY STORE
826 Valencia Street
San Francisco, CA 94110

KING CARL’S EMPORIUM
180 Golden Gate Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102

WOODLAND CREATURE OUTFITTERS, LTD.
1310 4th Street
San Francisco, CA 94158

Photo by Denise Kleckner