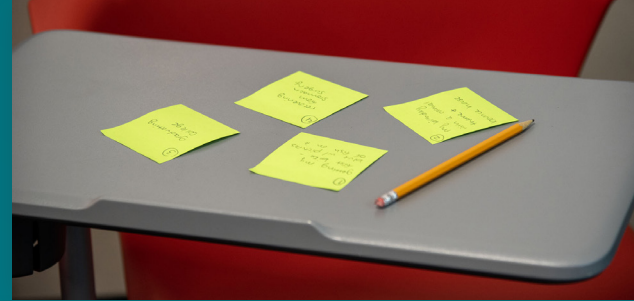




2022-2023

ANNUAL REPORT

A DECADE OF STORYTELLING



+ME PROJECT

Where Every Story Matters



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Where We Started

The PLUS ME Project was established in 2013 by Founder & Executive Director, Richard Reyes. We began as the *10,000 PLUS Project* when Richard set a goal to share his story with over 10,000 students in Los Angeles while earning his undergraduate degree at Occidental College. During that process, he saw that students were in need of opportunities to practice self-awareness, build self-confidence, and connect with each other. He developed the first story-based workshop series to help fulfill this need.

10 years later, PLUS ME now offers eight workshops that serve students, educators, and parents and we continue to provide services within California and beyond. At PLUS ME, we believe everyone has a story that matters and we continue working to ensure that everyone has access to the tools and positive impact that the power of story can bring.



About Us



- ▶ **Our mission:** PLUS ME Project activates the art of personal storytelling to increase confidence in youth as they pursue college, career & life goals.
- ▶ **Our vision:** Where all communities are filled with courageous voices whose stories are heard, valued, and celebrated



+ME PROJECT

A Decade of Storytelling

This was a momentous year for PLUS ME and we celebrated by launching an ambitious, year-long campaign. The Road To A Million was designed to inspire deeper investment and awareness of PLUS ME in anticipation of our 10th anniversary in July 2023. We set 7 goals as a team that would push us to expand our impact and scale our reach. From August 1, 2022 - July 31, 2023, our goals were to:



We are proud that we achieved 6 of the 7 goals. Learn more about the intention behind each goal and the results in this annual report.



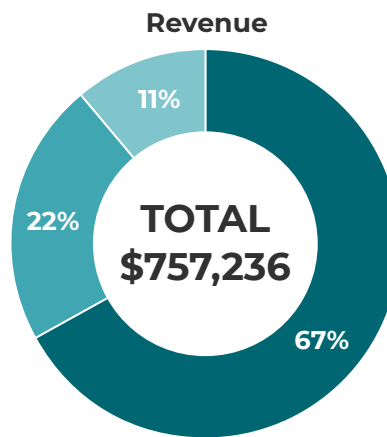
Road To A Million

\$1 Million Goal

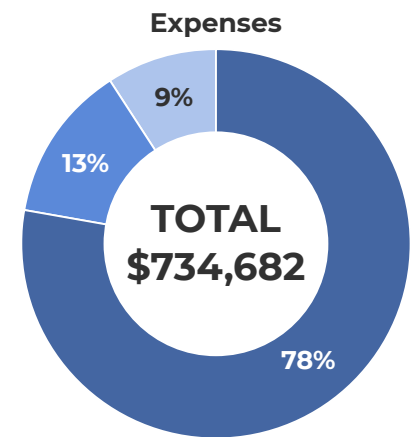
As we entered our 10th year, we stretched ourselves by setting an ambitious revenue goal. Only 9% of nonprofits in LA County reach the \$1 million budget threshold and many foundation funders require this as a benchmark to receive grant or donation dollars.

We grew our earned income revenue and increased our individual giving numbers. **These numbers represent our fiscal year calendar, which does not include revenue from our 10 Year Anniversary Gala that was hosted July 29, 2023 at Occidental College.** Over 120 guests celebrated the end to our Road To A Million campaign, learned a bit about our ten-year journey, and danced the night away! Thanks to ticket sales, a vibrant silent auction, and donations the event helped us get even closer to the **\$1 million goal**.

Financials (July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023)



■ Services ■ Donations
■ Grants



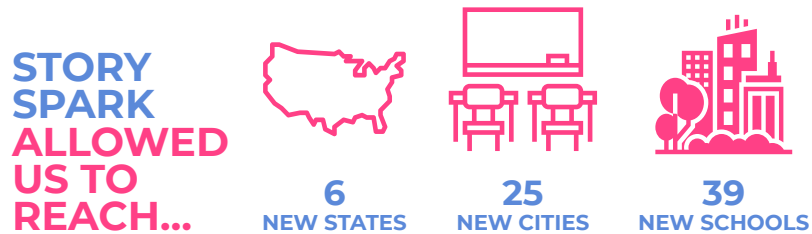
■ Programs ■ Operations
■ Fundraising

100,000 Students + 10,000 Journals

100,000 Students

In our tenth year of activating the art of personal storytelling, PLUS ME set a goal to reach 100,000 students!

To help us reach more than our annual 10,000 students, we created a free virtual storytelling experience known as the Story Spark Series. This new program connects students with relatable role models through short story snippets and provides paired worksheets that invite them to explore the elements of story within the speaker's narrative and reflect on their own experiences.



PLUS ME is incredibly proud to report that we reached **over 100,000 students** through both our in-person program delivery and our Story Spark virtual program.



10,000 Journals

PLUS ME's My Story Matters Journals have been an integral tool for self-reflection and writing since 2017. We set a goal to provide 10,000 journals students, parents, and educators.

Throughout the year, we brought our English and Spanish journals physically into classrooms and shipped journals in bulk to many partners across the country to use in the classrooms. We are pleased to report that we delivered **over 10,000 journals** throughout the year!

**100,000 STUDENTS +
10,000 JOURNALS**

1,000 Supporters + 100 Schools

1,000 Supporters

As we aimed to grow awareness about PLUS ME, our team hosted opportunities for community members to experience our storytelling programming firsthand. The highlight was the annual Adopt A Classroom culminating event during which attendees participated in a shortened version of our storytelling workshop by sharing stories about the characters, settings, events, and lessons in their lives.



We also hosted events to connect the community through an ice cream social, coffee and connections event, fall storytelling workshop, STORIES: an art experience, our LISTEN scholarship awards event, and a 10 year gala.



We are incredibly grateful to the community of **over 1,000 supporters** that surrounded us throughout the year with support and encouragement!



100 Schools

This year, we aimed to bring our programs into at least 100 schools. We created a new workshop program supporting the UC college application process. This new **PIQ Workshop** provides students with story-based tools that help them craft responses to the University of California Personal Insight Questions (PIQ). Students select the prompts that best suit their experiences, build upon their own personal stories to develop their voice, and draft responses that highlight their unique perspective using +ME story structures.

Throughout the year, we completed over 1,500 hours of classroom presentations and successfully visited **over 100 schools!**



10 Scholarships + 1 Story



10 Scholarships

As part of the campaign, PLUS ME doubled the number of scholarships we offered from the previous year and increased our total giving amount to \$10,000!

In addition to the five annual **My Story Matters: LISTEN** awards (where winners share their stories with an audience), we introduced **My Story Matters: IMPACT** for high school seniors who are using their personal story to positively affect their communities. Each student received \$1,000 to use in whatever way will best support their college and career goals.

We are proud to have provided **10 scholarships** to incredible recipients.



1 Story

What better way to share our journey over the past ten years than through the stories of people who have been there along the way? From our first official school partner, to the educator who inspired Richard to begin PLUS ME, we heard from almost one dozen people who were influential to our growth over the last decade.

One of those stories was from Katherine Luna, a former PLUS ME student:

A former PLUS ME student and now Program Coordinator at Heart of Los Angeles, Katherine Luna... invited PLUS ME to bring our Storytellers PLUS ME program to her students. 'It was a full circle moment,' Katherine remembers, 'I was able to see all of the work PLUS ME has been doing and how they have evolved.' More than anything, the sessions helped create a stronger sense of community among her students—something they need now more than ever..."

Thank you to everyone who took the time to reflect and share their stories. We enjoyed sharing the **1 story** of PLUS ME highlighting the impact we made in the community over the past decade. [Click here to read them all!](#)

Looking To The Future

As we look to the future, our team is planning to broaden our local educational partnerships, develop deeper relationships with funders that support general operating costs, and innovate ways to use our new office headquarters to activate the power of story.

Thanks to the incredible generosity of Optimist Youth Homes & Family Services, PLUS ME has opened our very first office! Located at their campus in Highland Park, we were able to beautify this space in preparation for opening thanks to funds from The Ahmanson Foundation. This headquarters will be used for volunteer onboarding, workshop facilitation, and story-based events soon to come.



We hope the next ten years will be filled with more stories and deeper connections all in service of ensuring that all people in Los Angeles (and beyond!) feel empowered to courageously share their own stories.

Team

Staff

Richard Reyes, *Founder & Executive Director*
Bethanee Bryant, *Coach & Trainer*
Morgan Chitty, *Development Manager*
Karol Curiel-Kozycz, *Partnership Coordinator & Facilitator*
Erendina Delgadillo, *Grants Manager*
Christina Dunbar, *Facilitator & Coach*
Beatriz Herman, *Facilitator*
Jordee Kopanski, *Development Associate & Facilitator*
Jeffrey Miller, *Culture & Curriculum Strategist*
Ajia Munns, *Facilitator*
Valeria Sanchez, *Program Coordinator & Facilitator*
Seng So, *Facilitator*

Board

Rosita Medina, *President*
Henry Brandt, *Vice President*
Rosa Castro, *Secretary*
Walter Marlowe, *Treasurer*
Erin Harless
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Jeremy Presser
Laura Oliver-Suos
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Evan Smith
Jawaan Wallace
Lety Sanchez
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Associate Board

Karina Schaake
Madeleine Martin
Bret Silverstein
Linda Su
Hank Sun
James Hood
Diana Yang
Leo Santi
Alexandros Costoulas
Luisa Paredes



Thank You

We would not be here if it were not for the support of the many individuals, educators, foundations, and companies that have invested in the power of story!

Educational Partners

A Place Called Home
Boys & Girls Club of Venice
Children's Institute
College Corps
College Track
Determined To Succeed
Early Academic Outreach Program UCSC
Educational Talent Search
First Star
GEAR UP Long Beach
GEAR UP Vaughn
GEAR UP Wonderful
Heart of LA
I Have A Dream Foundation
Inland Empire Growing Inland Achievement
Magnolia Science Academies
National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

Onward Scholars
Para Los Ninos
Partnership to Uplift Communities
Partnership Scholars Program
School on Wheels
Shields For Families
Social Justice Learning Institute
TRIO American River College
Upward Bound Simpson College
Upward Bound Sonoma State
Upward Bound TELACU
Upward Bound UC Davis
Upward Bound University of Hilo
Upward Bound West LA College
Young Storytellers
Youth Mentoring Action Network



Company Partners

AECOM
Allstate Foundation
Avery Dennison Foundation
Bellwether Financial Group
Capacity
Core Contributors Group
Councilmember Curren D. Price
Councilmember Paul Koretz
Kendra Scott
KPMG
Joy Café
Martyne & Associates
PwC Charitable Foundation, Inc.
RG Taxes
The Cause Connection



As a people-centered organization we are immeasurably grateful for all the individuals who have lent time and the deep emotional investment it takes to build and share your story with young people across LA. You are the essential resource to growing and spreading the kind of story-based culture that helps heal our communities and we thank you all from the bottom of our hearts!

- Thank You!

Engage With Us



theplumeproject.org

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