

ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25

# SAFE PLACE FOR YOUTH

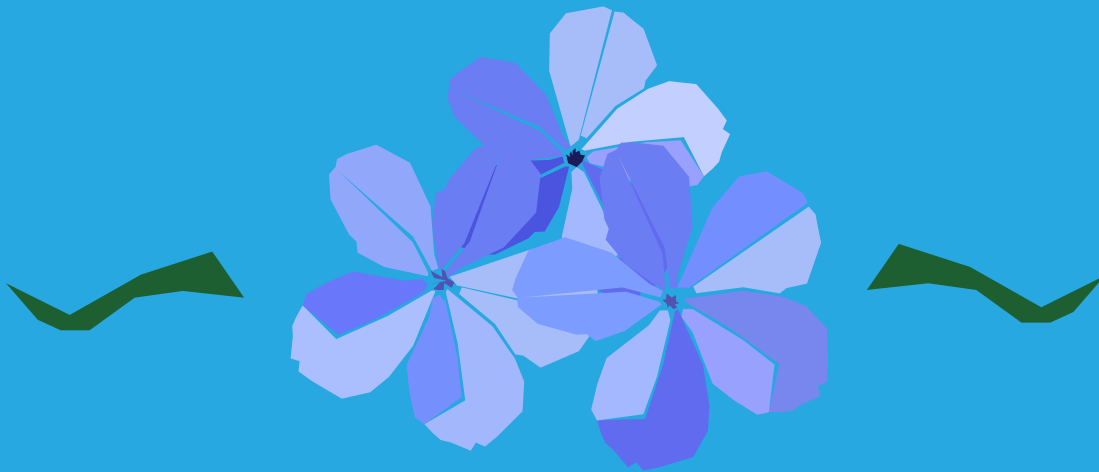


# MISSION

To prevent and end youth homelessness through supportive services, sustainable housing opportunities, community collaboration, and advocacy.

# VISION

Safe Place for Youth envisions a socially just and equitable world where all young people are empowered to thrive in self-directed lives and have a safe place to call home.



## EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

**Erika Hartman,**  
*Chief Executive Officer*

**Jim Burk,**  
*Chief Financial Officer*

**Liz Lee,**  
*Chief Strategy Officer*

**Mary McGuire,**  
*Chief Impact Officer*

**Noelle Stanfield,**  
*Chief Program Officer*

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Judy Friedman,** *President*  
**Emily Parker,** *Vice President*

**Simon Costello,** *Treasurer*

**Jelani Franklin,** *Secretary*

**Dan Estes**

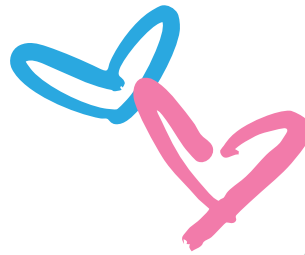
**Alex Goldberger**

**Adeel Jawed**

**Ashleigh Pierce**

**Jose "Che" Ramirez**

**Brandon Sharp**



## LETTER FROM LEADERSHIP

**Thank you for standing with Safe Place for Youth (SPY) this past year. Your partnership makes it possible for us to create welcoming spaces and new opportunities for youth experiencing homelessness. Your belief in our mission uplifts us and, most importantly, uplifts every young person who enters our doors.**

In 2024, SPY supported more than 1,200 youth through our comprehensive programs in housing, health and wellness, education, and employment. We helped 315 young people move into housing and connected hundreds more to critical support: from mental health counseling and case management to workforce training, creative arts programs, and street outreach services.

Our policy and advocacy work continues to strengthen the safety net for youth across Los Angeles County. This year, our advocacy team and our youth leaders in SPY Squad helped secure hundreds of housing vouchers and new resources for transitional-aged youth. When funding for youth homelessness programs was cut from the County's budget, SPY mobilized our community. Through coordinated testimony, coalition-building, and youth-led advocacy, we helped persuade the Board of Supervisors to unanimously restore funding for youth services countywide. With more than 3,000 young people still struggling to find secure housing, we are not only responding to the crisis, we are changing the conditions that create it, ensuring youth voices are heard in every room where decisions are made.

When the City closed SPY's 54-bed bridge home in Venice, we stayed focused on expanding our impact. We secured a new 60-bed youth shelter, The Meadow at Melrose, opening in late 2025, and celebrated the opening of The Jour-

ney, our redeveloped Drop-In Center with 40 units of supportive housing operated by Venice Community Housing. The Journey immediately became a cornerstone for our work - offering permanent housing for youth exiting the bridge home, launching our Substance Use Program, and serving as a disaster relief hub during the recent wildfires, where it served over 700 individuals.

Across every program, from Street Outreach and Engagement, Education and Employment, and Health and Wellness, to our Art Therapy and Peer Mentorship initiatives, SPY continues to build community and amplify youth voices. We are proud to help young people move from crisis to stability, and from stability to independence. Our work is transforming outcomes across our community.

These shared achievements are because of you, our generous supporters, committed board, passionate staff, tireless volunteers, valued partners, and the courageous youth who drive our purpose every day. Together, with your support, we are advancing practical solutions and policy reforms to shape a community where every young person has a safe place to sleep, the opportunities they deserve, and the resources to thrive.

**Thank you for being part of our mission to prevent and end youth homelessness, we could not do this work without you!**

# RACE AND ETHNICITY

- 52% Black/African American
- 16% Latino/Latina/Latinx
- 15% Multi-Racial
- 12% White
- 3% Unknown
- <2% Asian or Asian American
- <1% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- <1% Indigenous



## DEMOGRAPHICS

- 35% Foster youth
- 30% Experienced violence in the home
- 19% Identify as LGBTQ+

# DEMOGRAPHIC AND PROGRAM DATA

## WHO WE SERVE

At Safe Place for Youth (SPY), we serve young people ages 12-25 who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness. Many have faced family rejection, violence, or have aged out of foster care, left without a support system or a safe place to call home. All of them lacked a supportive social network that could have prevented them from becoming homeless.

SPY is a caring community for these young people, and provides immediate help and continued support. From meeting basic needs, to housing, education, employment, mental health support and caring relationships, we offer youth a pathway toward stability, opportunity, hope, and sustainability.



1,245 total youth served

## SPY PROGRAMS

Safe Place for Youth focuses on prevention and early intervention to end youth homelessness. We offer personalized support through outreach, basic needs resources, education, employment, physical and mental health services, family reunification, and housing. Our team meets youth where they are, providing the resources and care needed to build stable, independent lives.

**Street Outreach**  
**Drop-In Center**  
**Education and Employment**  
**Health and Wellness**

**Healing Arts**  
**Community Garden**  
**Case Management**  
**Pregnant and Parenting**

**Housing**  
**Social Enterprise**  
**Family Reunification**  
**Shelter**

## MEETING YOUTH WHERE THEY ARE

Our outreach team provides life-saving support and resources to youth living on the street. Many young people first engage with SPY through outreach, receiving immediate needs like food and clothing, before visiting the Drop-In Center.

At the Drop-In Center, youth access free, critical, and life-affirming services seven days a week. Youth who walk through our doors gain access to a myriad of programs including case management, housing, counseling, and education to help them build safe and stable futures.



**351** Youth engaged through Street Outreach

**898** Youth served at the Drop-In Center



## EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Our Education and Employment (E&E) program empowers youth to reach their academic and career goals through personalized support. The E&E program provides 1:1 consultations to facilitate workforce readiness, work experience, access to employment opportunities, independent living skills, and pathways to post-secondary education and/or vocational training. Support continues beyond school or employment to ensure lasting success and independence.



**326** Youth participated in Education and Employment

**102** Youth employed

**72** Youth enrolled in education

**16** Education and Employment workshops



### MEET SAMANTHA

Samantha found herself homeless during a pivotal time in her life, right as she was pursuing her education and dreaming about her future. When she discovered SPY this past March, she was looking for support, but also a place to feel safe. She first found our SPY Community Garden online and from there, staff connected her to SPY's wraparound services including case management, housing, therapy, and education and employment support. Through our Education and Employment program, Samantha applied and was accepted to Loyola Marymount University!

**"The fact that someone was investing in me and my future meant so much to me. I never really had people do that. It made me feel special, like someone believed in me and the work that I was doing. I'm also part of SPY's entrepreneurial program. Eventually, I want to start a nonprofit where I do popups in farmer's markets and at churches on Sundays for families in need."** - Samantha

# SUPPORTING THE WHOLE PERSON

## HEALTH AND WELLNESS

SPY's Health and Wellness program offers comprehensive mental and physical health support, including case management, counseling, substance use recovery, health education, family planning, and HIV and COVID-19 testing. Partnering with our medical provider, Venice Family Clinic, and dental provider, UCLA Dental, we ensure youth have access to essential care that supports their holistic well-being and journey toward stability.

**"My case manager understands where I'm coming from. They listen and give me guidance and advice. SPY will always help you one way or the other. They will work to find a solution. If Plan A doesn't work, they will give you Plan B, and keep giving you plans until they get the work done. They never give up on you."** - Lerry

**416** Medical services offered at SPY

**1207** Therapy sessions provided

**506** Youth received case management

**78** Youth received substance use sessions

## PREGNANT AND PARENTING

SPY's Pregnant and Parenting program supports young families experiencing homelessness by providing specialized resources for youth with children. Young parents receive pregnancy support, parenting and child development workshops, pediatric referrals, and baby items at no cost. Additionally, we're proud to offer housing for young families at The Nest, where we provide a nurturing environment and tailored services that help young parents and their children build thriving futures.

**100%** Of Nest residents exited to permanent housing  
**50%** Of Nest residents are attending school  
**36%** Of Nest residents are employed

**101** Youth participated in the Pregnant and Parenting program

**107** Children under 5 served

**29** Residents housed at The Nest



## MEET ARII

Arii, a former foster youth and single mother of a three-year-old child, came to SPY seeking shelter and support. She accessed vital services through SPY's programs including Healing Arts, Therapy, Case Management, and Pregnant and Parenting. With this support, Arii is now housed and employed as a case manager at a partner homeless services organization, helping other young people with similar experiences.

**"When I first came to SPY, I didn't have clothes, diapers, or wipes for my daughter, but the Pregnant and Parenting program helped me with these needs. This program has provided me with parenting skills and allowed me to feel more prepared to parent my child." - Arii**



## HEALING ARTS

SPY's Healing Arts Program plays a vital role in complementing the work of our clinical department by offering alternative pathways to mental health and emotional well-being. By incorporating art, music, and movement, the Healing Arts program allows participants to explore and process trauma in ways that extend beyond talk therapy, while also promoting emotional resilience and community building. Youth can also showcase and sell their work through SPY's Social Enterprise program, the Color of Hope Collective.



**288** Youth participated in Healing Arts

**575** Sessions hosted including Music Production, Guitar 101, Sewing and Mending, Yoga, Creative Writing and Poetry

## MEET ME AMOR

Me Amor was living on the street when SPY's outreach team approached him to let him know about SPY's youth-specific services. Since then, Me Amor has been a regular at our Drop-In Center, building life-skills, learning certifications, and finding mentorship to prepare for his future. Through a collaborative experience with Healing Arts and Education and Employment, Me Amor discovered and felt confident in his creative passion. Me Amor is now housed through SPY's Stepping Stones program. After years of uncertainty, Me Amor is excited to be working with our arts experts to discover how to establish a career in the creative industry.

**"The Healing Arts program provides a sense of relief, because even if I am sleeping outside, I know there's a place where I can go and relax to find out how I'm feeling for that day. When you paint or draw it takes a lot of focus, and in between that focus you're able to understand your emotions more. It's very therapeutic.**

**Art supplies aren't cheap. Being able to come to SPY and use the art supplies and instruments like guitars, ukuleles, and pianos, helped inspire me to pursue the arts." - Me Amor**

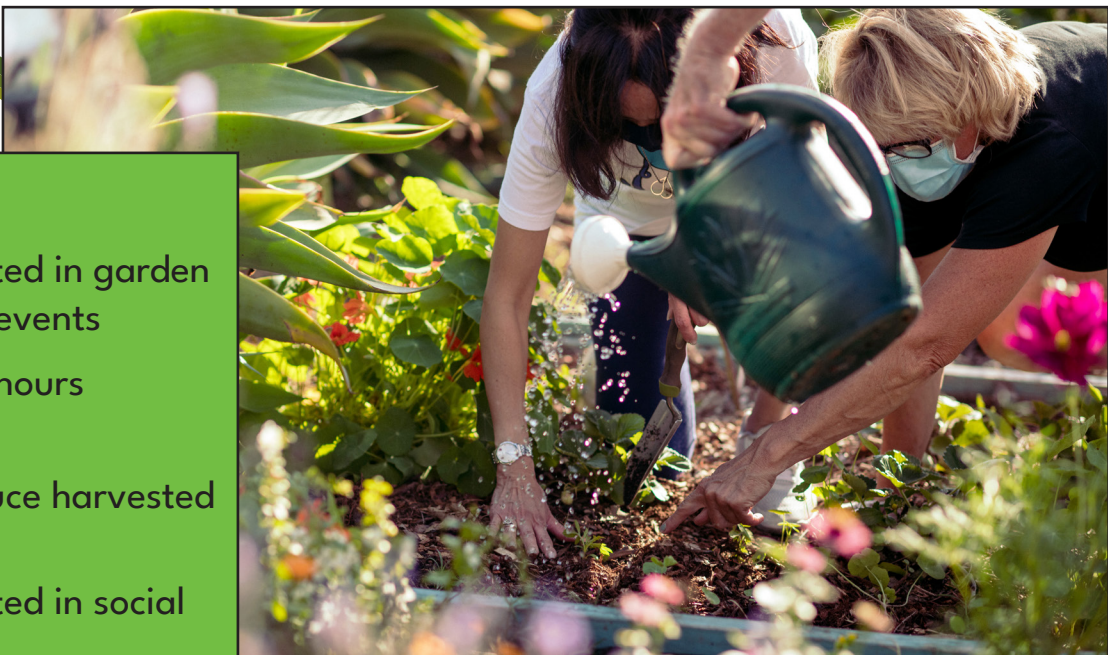


# COMMUNITY IN ACTION

## COMMUNITY GARDEN

The Community Garden offers a trauma-informed space where youth learn horticulture, urban farming, and composting, and are able to participate in paid internships. This hands-on experience helps build their resumes, job skills, confidence, and employment references while producing fresh food for SPY's Drop-In Center and housing sites. SPY's Garden Internship program builds both technical and interpersonal skills for youth starting their careers.

Supported by volunteers and guided by the principles of food equity and environmental sustainability, SPY's Community Garden program emphasizes food security, nature connection, and mindfulness to support the unique needs of at-risk and homeless youth. Through SPY's Social Enterprise program, youth earn income by selling artisan goods made at our garden to local markets and online.



**52** Youth participated in garden workshops and events

**458** Paid internship hours

**271** Pounds of produce harvested

**32** Youth participated in social enterprise

### MEET ANTHONY

Anthony was hired as a paid intern this year to care for the garden and engage with volunteer groups visiting SPY. Throughout his time, he has mentored other unhoused youth in the garden, hosted educational workshops, and prepared dozens of farm-to-table meals for the community.



"I decided to do the garden internship to fill up free time with a productive activity. I enjoy being out in nature and eating fresh foods from the earth. I've learned many ways to use plants outside of just eating them. Comfrey for example is good for healing wounds. Never would I have known this without my internship." - Anthony

## SPY SQUAD

SPY Squad is a compensated youth advisory board empowering members to shape SPY's programs and advocate for the unique needs of young people with policymakers. Through leadership development, learning public speaking skills, and meeting with elected officials, our youth members have influenced policies and services to end youth homelessness. SPY Squad also collaborates with entities countywide to expand housing access for vulnerable youth.



"My time with SPY Squad helped me become a leader. I found my voice to advocate for housing and policy change." - Nate

## VOLUNTEERS

SPY Volunteers are essential to our mission by leading workshops, serving meals, and supporting youth at the Drop-In Center. We're grateful for their time and dedication in helping youth on their pathway home.

**18,550** Meals served at our Drop-In Center



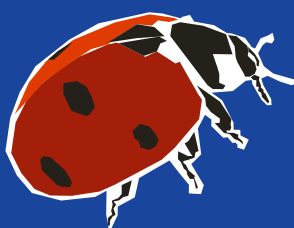
**886** Community members volunteered at SPY



# THE PATHWAY HOME

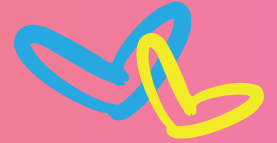
Housing is the final step on the pathway home, providing youth with a safe place and the support they need to build their self-directed future. SPY operates eight housing programs offering emergency shelter, transitional housing, and permanent housing. This year, on any given night, we provided 191 housing resources for the community.

- 315** Youth housed
- 67** Transitional, Light-house + Roots to Grow
- 174** ABH\*, Stepping Stones, The Nest
- 86** Permanent, Host Homes, Housing Navigation, TLS



- TRANSITIONAL HOUSING**
  - Roots to Grow**  
20 beds
  - The Lighthouse**  
15 beds
  - The Nest**  
13 beds
  - Host Homes**  
15 beds
- INTERIM SHELTER**
  - A Bridge Home**  
54 beds
  - Stepping Stones**  
24 beds
- PERMANENT HOUSING**
  - Time-Limited Subsidy**  
50 beds

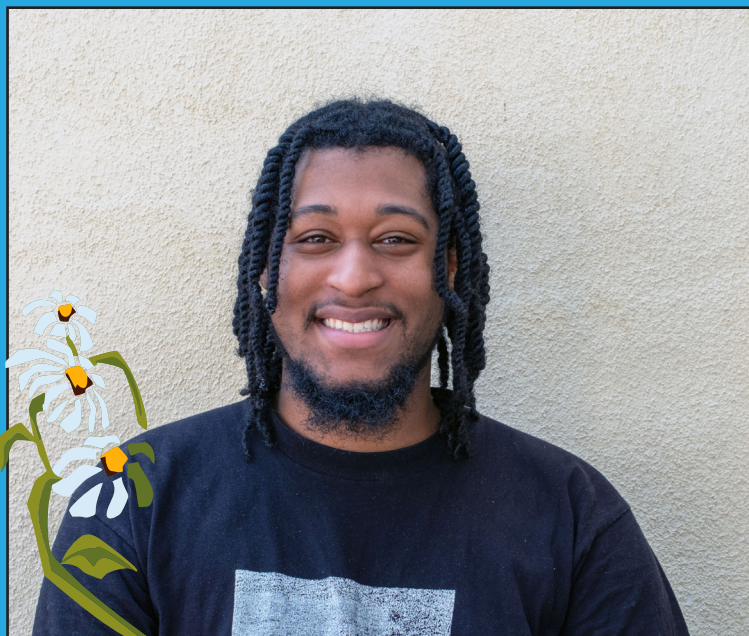
# VENICE



## MEET WILLIAM

William was in college and working toward pursuing a music production degree when his family living situation became unstable. This was followed by six months of housing insecurity and street-based living, forcing William to focus on survival instead of his goals. William found SPY through our partnership with Santa Monica City College, and since then, he has benefited from many of SPY's critical services. He has received basic needs resources and meals, participated in therapy, education and employment, case management, and most importantly housing.

William has been housed through SPY's extensive, youth-focused housing programs for 11 months. He's currently working on completing his associate degree, with dreams of studying abroad in the UK while pursuing a career in the music industry.



**"Housing has had the most impact on my life by far simply because I didn't have a place to live before I received SPY's help. SPY allows me to have a place to stay and to thrive and do the things that I need to do to uplift myself out of my poverty."**

**A lot of these other homeless services in L.A. have very few resources and they're not prioritizing the youth. At SPY, I have an ample amount of time and an abundant amount of resources if I need them. SPY has been nothing but a positive for me. Everything that I've done here has been exactly what I needed."**

**- William**

# WAYS TO HELP

## DONATE

Support youth on their pathway home by funding essential services like housing, health, education, and employment programs.

## SPONSOR

Sponsor meals, events, or special experiences to create meaningful moments for SPY youth.

## VOLUNTEER

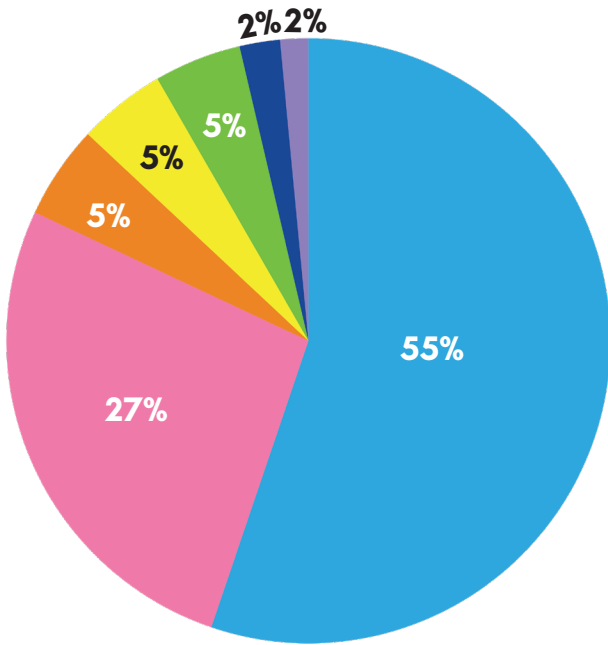
Join us by serving meals, managing the clothing closet, leading Healing Arts workshops, or helping in the Community Garden. Volunteers are key to our work.

## CONNECT

Follow us on social media to stay updated and help spread the word about our mission and impact.

Email [give@safeplaceforyouth.org](mailto:give@safeplaceforyouth.org) to get involved today.

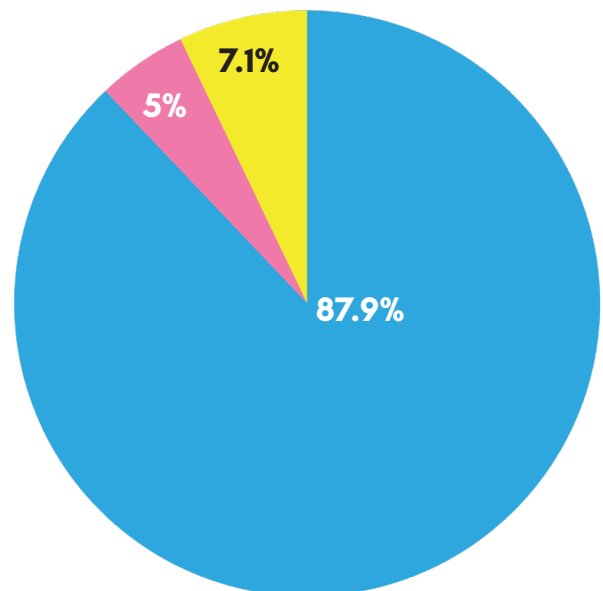
# FINANCIALS



■ Government Support	\$6,499,989
■ Foundation Support	\$3,150,573
■ Subcontractor Support	\$587,556
■ Corporate/Community Contributions	\$553,251
■ Individual Support	\$549,683
■ In-Kind Support	\$254,194
■ Special Events and Misc. Support	\$177,203
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 11,772,449*</b>

# EXPENSES

■ Program Services	\$9,221,421
■ Fundraising	\$522,528
■ Management and General	\$746,396
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$10,490,345</b>



\*Our sizable surplus is due to the receipt of an Employee Retention Credit.

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safe place for youth

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