



RANCHO CIELO
Building Skills, Transforming Lives.

Impact Report **2024**





Chris Devers, CEO

Dear Friends of Rancho Cielo,

As we reflect on an extraordinary year of growth and achievement at Rancho Cielo, I am filled with gratitude for the support of our community. In 2024, we celebrated many milestones that further strengthened our mission to empower youth and transform lives.

Last fall, we proudly launched our **After School Program**, extending the school day to further support and address the diverse needs of our students. Every building on our 100-acre campus is now powered in part by **solar energy**, thanks to the panels installed in 2023, demonstrating our commitment to sustainability—it's also been used as an educational tool for students to learn about clean energy. All of our academic, vocational, enrichment and work-based programs are operating at full capacity, thanks to the establishment of a robust **Executive Leadership Team** and the support of our **Board** and **Advisory Committees**.

With increased and diversified funding opportunities and partnerships, including **the launch of a new three-year program with the Department of Labor's YouthBuild**, we're able to expand our impact in our students' lives and the community. Meanwhile, the launch of our new bilingual website in February 2024 has enhanced our ability to connect inclusively with our supporters and beyond. Additionally, our **Legal Assistance** and **Equity Committees** have done tremendous work to provide critical resources that remove barriers our students face to success, including the creation of our driver's education program in spring 2023.

Looking ahead, we are excited to grow our dual enrollment opportunities with **Hartnell College** and **Monterey Peninsula College**, introduce more paid internships and integrate "earn as you learn" pathways into all of our programs. In 2025, we will be celebrating Rancho Cielo's 25th anniversary and years of service to the community. We are thankful to each and every one of our dedicated staff, community partners, board members, supporters, donors and friends for helping get us to this moment—your support has and is invaluable to our success.

I'll let the numbers in these pages speak for themselves, and cheers to a monumental year ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Devers".

Chris Devers

Cover: Rancho Cielo's campus in the heart of the Salinas Valley. The Ted Taylor Ag Vocational Center is illuminated in spring 2024 with California poppies. Photo by Adam Joseph. © 2025 Rancho Cielo

Mission

Rancho Cielo invests in all young people facing challenges for success through diploma education, vocational training, counseling and life skills development in a safe and affirming environment.

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Dear Rancho Cielo Donors and Supporters,

It's hard to believe that it has been 25 years since our founder, Judge John Phillips, had an idea to help keep at-promise youth out of jail: Give them a second chance, a safe place, and the opportunity to obtain a high school diploma and hands-on vocational training.

Many advisors and local experts believed this was impossible, but the word **no** just isn't in the Judge's vocabulary. John reached out to local businesses, associates and friends in our community, and they put their resources, energy and support behind his vision, restoring the old Natividad Boys Ranch into the Rancho Cielo campus.

Today, Rancho Cielo is a cornerstone of our community with many successful award-winning programs that are recognized globally. I've seen incredible growth—including a record-breaking increase in graduates over the last three years—and it is directly tied to **you: our loyal and amazing donors!** Your generosity and support have rippled through the region, providing opportunities our youth could not ever have imagined for themselves.

However, even with Rancho Cielo's extraordinary achievements and success, we still have countless local youth who deserve the same second chance that Judge Phillips first dreamed of 25 years ago. We hope you will join us in enhancing and expanding the opportunities we offer this year, and lift as many of our youth up as possible.

Thank you for giving your treasure, time and love to Rancho Cielo and our students. Your commitment is actively shaping these youth into future leaders, and their success is our community's success.

Sincerely,



Pete Scudder



Pete Scudder, Chair

2024 Highlights

- **100% giving by board members**
- **7 committees convened to support the success and sustainability of Rancho Cielo**
- **Updated bylaws, the statement of purpose in our Articles of Incorporation, and operational policies**



JOHN MUIR
CHARTER SCHOOLS

Rancho Cielo provides a pathway to complete high school education and earn a high school diploma or the equivalent via the HiSet® (High School Equivalency Test) or GED® (General Education Development) test, in partnership with WASC (Western Association of Schools and Colleges)-accredited John Muir Charter Schools.

As our community's needs have evolved, Rancho Cielo has responded with its own growth and evolution. We offer special education and have initiated partnerships to support youth facing challenges with literacy and English language learning (ELL and ESL) and neurodivergence.



Rancho Cielo is the largest JMCS site in California

- 8** Fully credentialed Teachers (full-time)
- 3** Credentialed CTE (Career Technical Education) Instructors
- 5** Paraeducators
- 2** Special Education/Resource Specialist Teachers

Monthly professional development days provided for academic staff.

Through the **Bench to School Initiative, Rancho Cielo, UC Law San Francisco, UCSF Dyslexia Center, UC Los Angeles School of Education** are collaborating to end the **school-to-prison pipeline**, addressing and improving literacy outcomes in school settings.

UCSF & Chartwell School

provide literacy intervention and support our students with phonics and reading instruction. Chartwell is also facilitating teacher training.

65 students with IEPs (Individualized Education Program) in 2023-24 received support services through special education staff to meet their unique learning needs.

We assist students with IEPs in applying for services with the **California Department of Rehabilitation**, so they may secure work-based learning experiences and quality employment post-graduation.

The 2023-24 school year was the first in a three-year plan to roll out and implement **Infinity Learning Maps**, a practical approach for teachers and parents to support, analyze and improve student learning. This approach helps students increase their understanding of how they learn and become active participants in their learning—and self-advocate to resolve challenges impacting it. Learn more at infinitylearn.org.

2 Dual Enrollment Programs

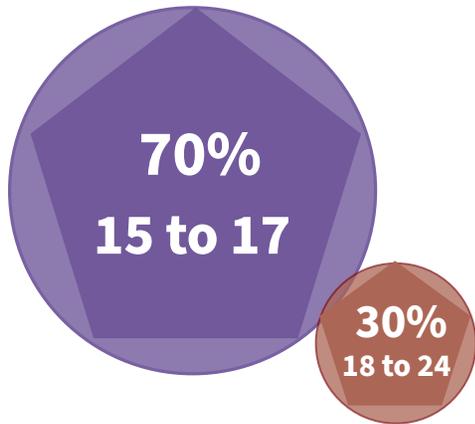
offered in partnership with Hartnell College and Monterey Peninsula College. Students earn college credits while completing their high school diploma.

2 California Climate Action Corps Fellows (Nov. 2023-Aug. 2024)

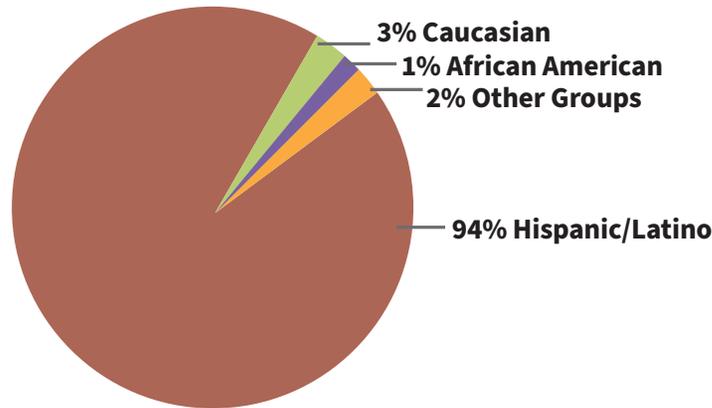
One focused on food waste, helping students and staff divert **2,000 lbs.** of food scraps across the ranch. The other worked with students on science projects in the classroom—and is now a paraprofessional with JMCS at Rancho Cielo.

Who We Serve

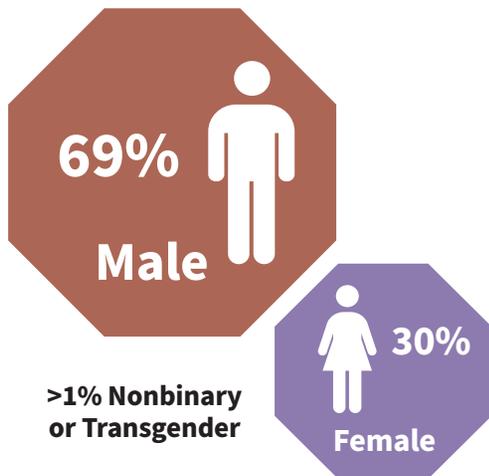
AGE



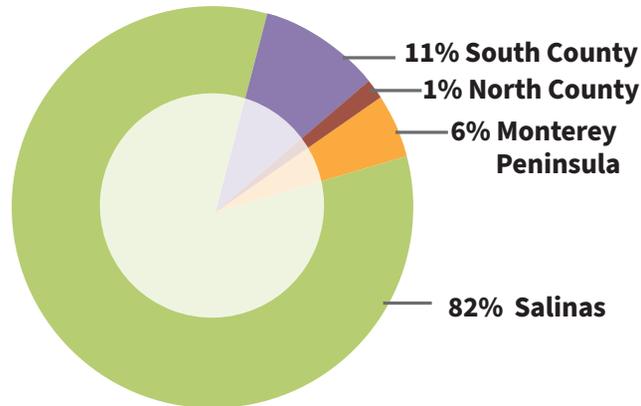
ETHNICITY



GENDER



AREA OF RESIDENCE



“I came to [Rancho Cielo] to learn how to cook for my baby. Now, I want to go to school to be a nurse. I’ve learned that I can do anything I put my mind to.”

—Catalina Perez, student
Drummond Culinary Academy

- **26%** are English language learners
- **14%** unhoused/homeless
- **18%** on probation or parole
- **96%** who are socioeconomically challenged

A Message from Founder John Phillips

Rancho Cielo was born out of the frustration I experienced during my tenure as a Monterey County Superior Court Judge and having to send 18-year-old kids to prison for life. If only we could reach these kids earlier, they might have been going to college or into the workforce. I felt I had no choice.

In 2000, I formed a nonprofit, acquired 100 acres and developed a relationship with the construction industry to build and open Rancho Cielo. We had no idea how great the need was. I was surprised by the phenomenal support from the private sector and the local business community, not just monetary, but hands-on, coming to campus to work and mentor our kids.

The response was overwhelming. The private sector and local business community stepped up, not just with funding but with direct involvement, mentoring and support. What began as a dream of a few classrooms has grown into a thriving campus.

Thank you to all our supporters who made this possible and the new supporters along the way. It's because of you that we continue to be so effective. Kids leave us with a diploma, self-confidence and enthusiasm as they move out into the world.

With Gratitude,

John Phillips



John Phillips and his wife Patti built Rancho Cielo from the ground up; he ran the property and programs himself in the first years, with Patti doing the bookkeeping. Above: The Phillips at the Ted Balestreri Monterey Wine & Lifestyle Auction at Spanish Bay in 2023.



Donor Spotlight

Bill Hayward, Executive Chairman, Hayward Lumber, and Founder, Hayward Score, is a long-time supporter and Board Member of Rancho Cielo. Hayward sponsored and mentored Construction Academy students in building a net-zero healthy home—and helping them compete and win the Orange County Sustainability Decathlon in 2023.

“I worked one-on-one with the students, watching them go from barely being able to look me in the eye to learning how to tell complex scientific stories about how buildings work. And it transformed how these kids see themselves. They went from, ‘We don’t belong here,’ to, ‘I’m gonna start my own business.’ I can’t imagine anything better to be involved in.”



Milestones

- 2000** Visionary and former judge, John Phillips, founds Rancho Cielo
- 2004** Rancho Cielo opens its “gates of opportunity”
- 2005** First five students graduate from Silver Star program
- 2008** Youth Corps program starts
- 2010** Drummond Culinary Academy starts
- 2011** Three-year, DOL YouthBuild program for Construction & Sustainable Design Academy begins
- 2015** Transitional Housing Village built by Construction students opens



Thank You to Our Donors and Supporters!

We are grateful to all who have helped nurture Rancho Cielo throughout the years and those who continue to support our growth today. We are thankful for your incredible generosity and commitment to supporting our mission to serve the youth in our community. **Let's make it another 25 years!**



Top 10 Donors in 25 Years

1. Monterey Peninsula Foundation
2. DeWitt Fund of the Community Foundation for Monterey County
3. Nancy Eccles & Homer M Hayward Family Foundation
4. Taylor Farms
5. Harden Foundation
6. Mary Jane Drummond
7. Sal Gutierrez & Mary Anderson
8. Joanne Taylor
9. Richard & Janet Cotter Foundation
10. Community Foundation for Monterey County

For a full list of donors in fiscal year 2023-2024, scan the QR code here.



2017 Groundbreaking for the Ted Taylor Ag Vocational Center

2019 Ag Technology & Mechatronics program starts

2022 Welding & Fabrication program starts

2024 Rancho Cielo joins CA Rise—the nation's first-ever statewide investment in employment social enterprises

2019 30,000-square-foot Ted Taylor Ag Vocational Center opens

2021 Auto & Diesel Repair program starts

2023 Classic Car Restoration track is incorporated into Auto & Diesel Repair program

2024 New three-year program launched through DOL's YouthBuild to support Culinary and Construction Academies



Ag Technology & Mechatronics-

- **26** students earned TRUST (The Recreational UAS Safety Test) certifications required for commercial drone operation.
- Through Rancho Cielo's alignment with Hartnell College, **4** students completed their first college class.
- Western Growers Association assisted **36** students with curriculum development.



Auto & Diesel Repair-

- The Classic Car Restoration track was launched in 2023. The first project was a complete restoration of a 1952 MG in **5** months.
- **32** students worked on the MG.
- **500+** hours were spent restoring the MG.
- **7** unique industry partners assisted with the MG restoration and mentored students.



Construction & Sustainable Design Academy-

- In 2023, over **8** months, **36** construction students built Nexus_01—an **864**-square-foot ADU (Accessory Dwelling Unit) designed to exist completely off-grid.
- In October, **12** of them traveled to Orange County, where they reconstructed the Nexus_01 and competed in the first-ever Orange County Sustainability Decathlon (OCSA). The home was judged on **10** factors, including sustainability, architecture, engineering and innovation.
- As the sole high school competing, they won first place overall, beating engineering teams from top universities worldwide.
- **8** industry partners assisted with the build and mentored students.
- **100%** of our OCSA team is either pursuing postsecondary education or actively employed in construction trades.



Welding & Fabrication-

- The Welding & Fabrication program is our newest and most successful program (in its number of graduates to date).
- The program is aligned to Hartnell College.
- **8** students built personalized welding booths.
- Students built a sprawling canopy extension over a concrete platform as a workspace for large vehicles and major projects.

Drummond Culinary Academy-

- All **60** of the Drummond Culinary Academy's (DCA) Friday Night Dinners (FND) sold out during the 2023-24 school year.
- Including FNDs, DCA students worked **85** events (DCA students complete **150-200**-internship hours during their program).
- In 2024, DCA launched its Summer Internship Program, sending **14** students to **12** various local restaurants, including the Sardine Factory, Bernardus and The Club at Pasadera.
- **16** DCA students completed a dual enrollment class offered at Rancho Cielo through Monterey Peninsula College.
- **24** students earned their ServSafe certifications.



Silver Star Youth Program/Youth Corps -

- **38** students participated in the Silver Star Youth program.
- **15** students ended probation.
- **5** students transitioned to vocational programs and graduated; **1** Silver Star student graduated.
- **4** Youth Corps students were hired as groundskeepers by the Pebble Beach Company and remain employed today.



Enrichment Programs-

- All students participated in at least one enrichment program, including beekeeping, canine training, bike mechanics/riding, horsemanship and gardening.
- **115** bikes have been given to students, who have gone on **1,700+** instructor-led bike rides on campus.
- In the canine program, 29 students trained foster dogs.
- **3,677** pounds of fruit and vegetables were grown in our Leadership Garden. All the produce is used by DCA or is given to students.
- **210+** pounds of honey were harvested from our apiary.
- **250+** students participated in equine therapy.
- **3** community partners: New Hope Honey Makers; Hope, Horses & Kids; and Unchained provide some of our enrichment activities.





250+
Served/Enrolled*

82+%
Average Daily Attendance

90+%
Graduation Rate

76
Graduates

322%
Increased Number of
Graduates in 3 Years

**Our open-enrollment model allows students to exit and re-enroll as needed, ensuring continuous access to education and support.*



100% of 2024 graduates had clear opportunities to transition to college, careers, postsecondary training or military service

90+% of these graduates are working or continuing education/training (or a combination of these)

In Rancho Cielo's 25-Year History, **705** diplomas have been awarded and **400+** vocational certificates earned in Ag Technology, Auto & Diesel, Culinary, and Construction.



We Remove Barriers to Success

- **100%** of students received holistic case management
- **25,588** healthy lunches served
- **96** students transported daily, **183** days/year, **225** miles/day round trip
- **145** students participated in driver's education, **115** permits and **71** driver's licenses obtained since program started in spring 2023
- **419** direct, 1:1 counseling sessions provided through a partnership with Harmony at Home; **34** students received ongoing counseling services
- **91%** of those who participated in counseling either maintained or improved emotional stability
- **4** hours/week Monterey County Behavioral Health provided additional mental health support through assessments, individual therapy and evaluations

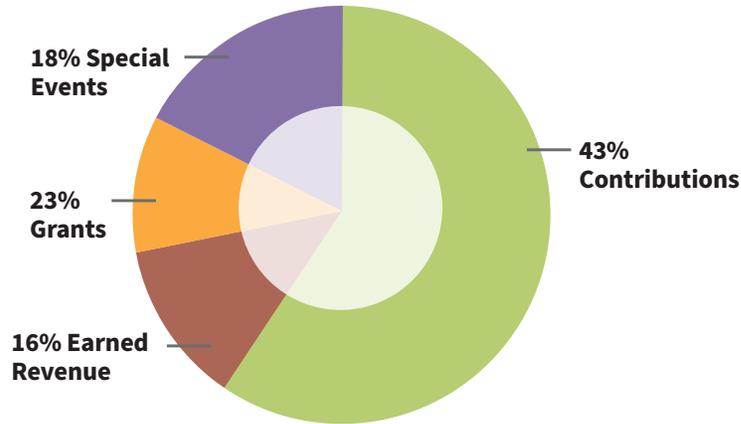
Left: Caleb Baker, 2020 DCA alumnus, is now executive chef at Bayonet Grill at Bayonet & Black Horse golf course in Seaside.

Annual Fundraisers & Involvement



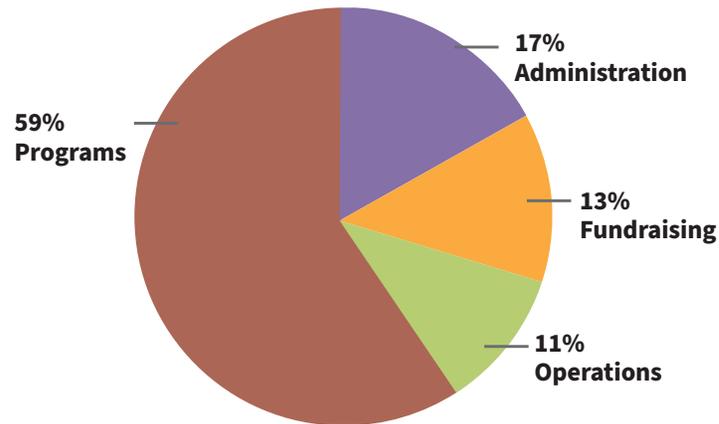
October 2023–September 2024

REVENUE



Rancho Cielo's funding is 90% private sources and 10% public sources.

EXPENSES



Annual Operating Budget: \$5,785,471



Volunteer Spotlight

Joanne Hellwig has been volunteering at Rancho Cielo's Friday Night Dinners for over 12 years. That is where she first met Moses Rincon, '17 DCA alumnus, with whom she developed a special bond. Above: Rincon bestows a gift to Hellwig at Rancho Cielo's 2024 Volunteer Appreciation event.

"These students inspire me to look at things through the lens of possibility. [Volunteerism] is an investment in our youth, and what better way to improve our society as a whole?"

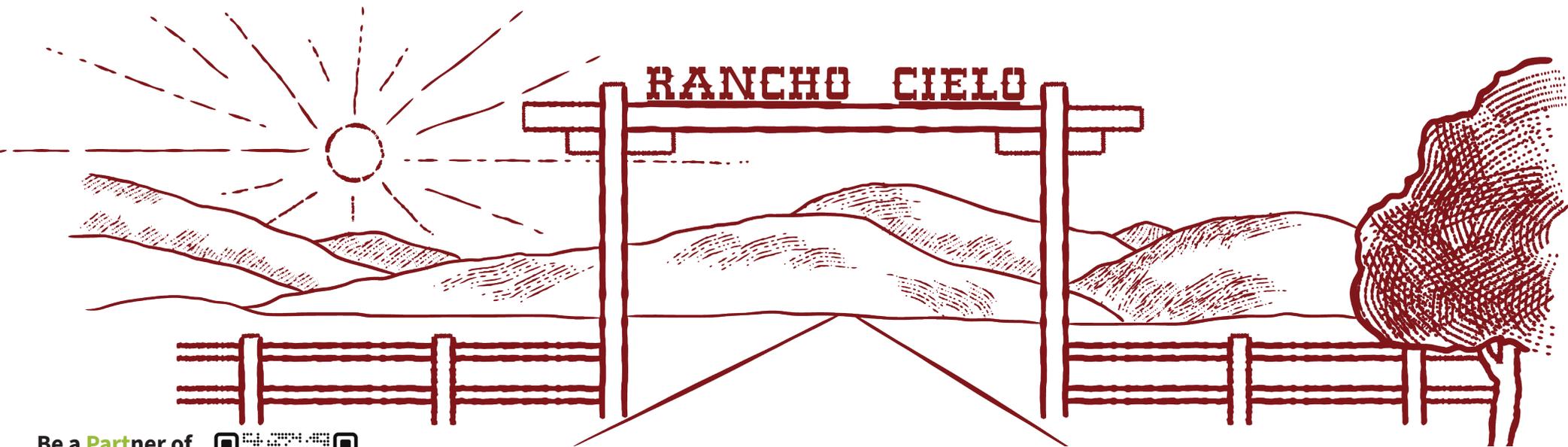
Across these three fundraisers:

\$1,070,000+ million raised • **1,800+** community members engaged • **550+** volunteered their time



RANCHO CIELO

P.O. Box 6948
Salinas, CA 93908



Be a **Partner** of
Rancho Cielo.
Make a gift to
support our
mission today.



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