



# **BLOSSOMING** **CURIOSITY & JOY**



**ANNUAL REPORT 2024**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS



Our History, Mission and Vision **01**

---

Letter from the Executive Director **02**

---

Academic Achievements **04**

---

Youth Engagement and Empowerment **07**

---

Family Engagement and Leadership **09**

---

The Martha Barrios Mead Scholarship **11**

---

Angel Awards **12**

---

Financial Review **13**

---

2024 Board of Directors **16**

---

Sponsors and Partners **17**





# Our History, Mission and Vision

**FOR 24 YEARS**, we have proudly served as a trusted community resource, offering free programs that nurture academic success, leadership development, and family well-being. Rooted in the educational principles of ethics and collaboration inspired by Finland, our approach creates a supportive and inclusive environment where Latino families thrive.



**2001**

Launched a 2-week, half-day Summer Program, impacting **17 students**



**2010**

Expanded to a 4-week, full-day program, reaching **100 students**



**2017**

Launched the **Fostering Family Leaders** Parent Program

Established **The Martha Barrios Mead Scholarship**



**2024**

**660 students** impacted

**400 parents** engaged

**300 youth** volunteers

**8 sites** across metro Atlanta

## 01. Mission

Our mission is to empower Latino students and their families from early childhood to college through holistic academic, leadership, and community programs.

## 02. Vision

At Los Niños Primero, our vision is to inspire Latino children to become lifelong learners and exemplary members of the community.



# Letter from the Executive Director



**Blossoming Curiosity and Joy** are at the heart of meaningful learning and academic growth. When students are encouraged to explore their passions and embrace new challenges, they develop a love for knowledge. This approach fuels creativity, resilience, and academic success.

**At Los Niños Primero, we nurture this spirit, creating environments where learning is both inspiring and transformative.**

## Dear Friends, Partners, and Supporters,

As we reflect on the past year, we are proud of the progress Los Niños Primero has made in advancing our mission to empower the Latino community through transformative education. **2024 marked significant achievements and growth**, and we are excited to share these milestones with you.

This year, our programs served **660 students** and over **300 youth**, while **400 parents** contributed their time and talents. Many parents took on leadership roles, further strengthening our supportive learning environments. We also integrated educators into the decision-making process, enhancing the impact of our work.

To meet growing needs, we added two part-time positions focused on improving technology and streamlining enrollment, enabling us to better serve the community. Despite financial challenges, including a decrease in grant revenue, we closed the year strong, thanks to our dedicated team and the support of our community.

As we prepare to celebrate **25 years of service** in 2025, we are filled with optimism and ready for the future. With the launch of our new strategic plan and a deeper commitment to Finnish pedagogy, we are poised to continue leading in educational excellence.

Thank you for your unwavering support. Together, we look ahead to a bright and impactful future.

## With gratitude,

Maritza Morelli  
Executive Director & Co-founder

# From Goals to Actions



This year marked a transformative chapter for Los Niños Primero, as we expanded our reach and deepened our impact across academic, youth, and family programs.

Guided by curiosity and joy, we reimagined teaching to foster growth, enriching students, inspiring educators, empowering volunteers, and strengthening parent connections - creating a transformative ripple effect in our community.



## Early Education

Expanded our Summer Educational Program to **Cobb County**.



## Parent Leadership

**400 parents participated** in our Family Leadership & Engagement Opportunities.



## Youth Service & Leadership

Over **300 dedicated young students** joined us in 2024.



## The Martha Barrios Mead Scholarship

**19 scholarships awarded** to students in 2024, a **46% increase when compared to 2023**

# Academic Achievements

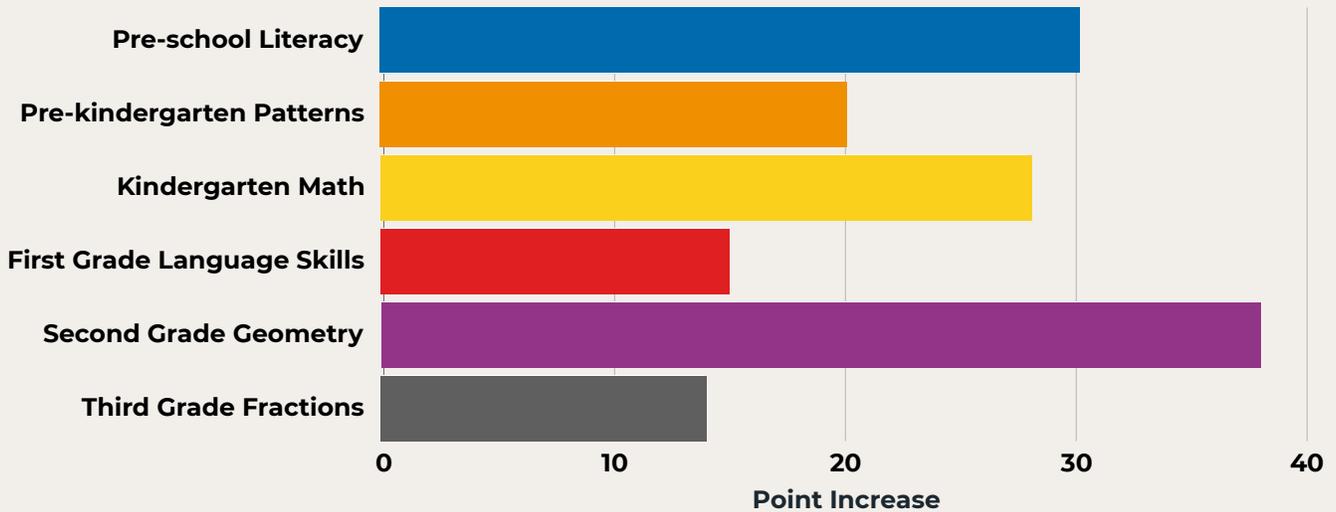


## Expanding Our Reach and Impact

The 2024 academic year at Los Niños Primero has been a period of transformative growth, marked by significant strides in **program expansion**, professional development, and pedagogical alignment.

The 2024 academic year at Los Niños Primero was a time of transformative growth, with expanded programs, enhanced professional development, and aligned teaching strategies, advancing our mission to deliver quality education to Latino students across metro Atlanta.

### Student Academic Growth in 2024 Summer Program:



**15%**

Overall point increase in literacy

**49%**

of summer educators were returning

**22%**

Overall point surge in math

**32%**

increase in Summer Program Enrollment

*We enrolled 568 students for our Summer Educational Program, up from 429 in 2023.*

# Expanding Reach



**660 students**

**benefited from our programs in 2024**

**34% increase**

**in total numbers of students served, up from 484 in 2023.**

This growth reflects the profound impact of our expanded programs, reaching more students and providing them with valuable educational opportunities that **foster long-term success.**

## Advancing Strategic Partnerships



Our partnership with **Marietta City Schools (MCS)** has yielded promising results from the first cohort of Cobb County students served during the summer of 2024. Our MCS served **17 Pre Kindergarteners** and **12 Preschoolers.**

**70 %**

**Demonstrated average to high achievement in math**

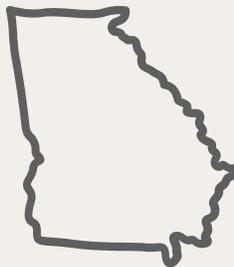
**77 %**

**Demonstrated average to high achievement in reading.**

*Based on Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) testing scores.*

## Strengthening Early Literacy Across Metro Atlanta

**In 2024, 42 students were impacted through our Early Literacy program, reflecting an increase of 45 % compared to 2023.**



**NEW! Forest Park**  
Clayton County



**NEW! Doraville**  
DeKalb County



**Sandy Springs**  
Fulton County



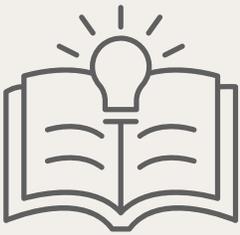
**Hapeville**  
Fulton County

# Empowering Educators



## Growth, Collaboration, and Innovative Learning

This year, Los Niños Primero made significant strides in empowering our educators through professional development, collaboration, and innovative learning experiences. From enriching workshops to intergenerational connections and transformative learning opportunities, **our educators were equipped with the tools, strategies, and support needed to enhance their teaching practices and foster a cohesive, playful learning environment for our students.**



## A New Path to Learning

Core members of our academic leadership team participated in the **“Pedagogy of Play” online mini-course at Harvard University**, gaining innovative strategies to integrate playful learning into our programs. This summer, site coordinators will engage in a book study of Pedagogy of Play to further align our organizational pedagogy across all summer sites.



# Youth Service and Leadership Program Impact



## Driving Leadership, Mentorship, and Academic Success

In 2024, Los Niños Primero made significant strides in empowering the next generation of Latino leaders through impactful youth programs and community initiatives. From expanding our volunteer outreach to launching career exploration opportunities, we provided Latino youth with the resources, mentorship, and skills needed to thrive and lead in their communities.

## 31.6% increase

### in outreach

with more than 300 youth leaders engaged

## \$62,000

### awarded in Martha Barrios Mead Scholarships

to 19 students, including 10-first time recipients

## 100 girls

### empowered in Creciendo Juntas

Big Sister Little Sister Program, building confidence and leadership

## 4 internships

### through Investing in Latino Futures Program

partnering with Image Works to host one intern while supporting three interns in our Summer Educational Program.

## Career Exploration

### at Salesforce

15 youth explored career paths with Salesforce employees.

## Youth Conference

### attended by 130 youth

ages 13 and up, who connected with executives from Salesforce, UPS, Invesco, and Checkers & Rally's.

## 43 Youth Ambassadors

### actively represented Los Niños Primero

in various community events and leadership opportunities.

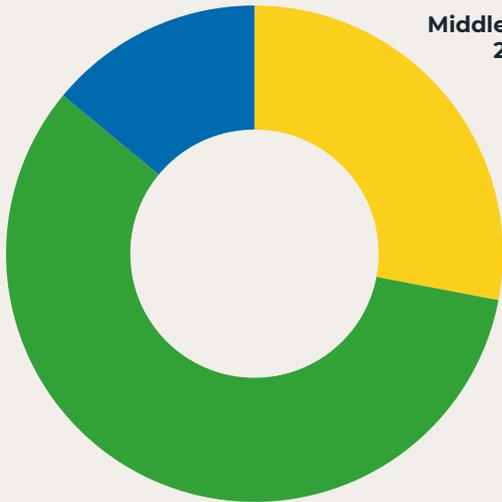


# Youth Volunteer Profile



## Youth Volunteers Came from 100 Educational Institutions

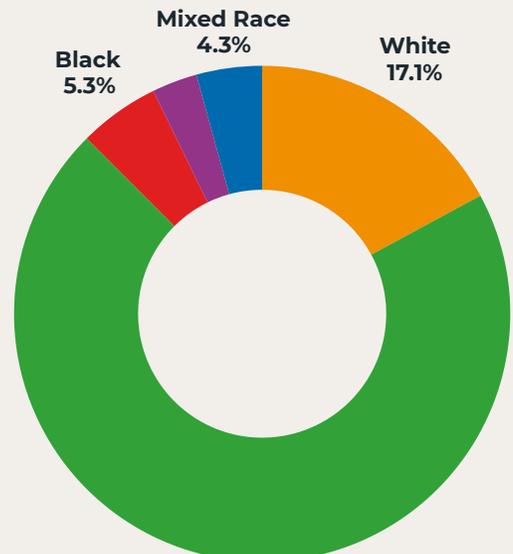
Colleges/Universities  
14%



High Schools  
58%

Middle Schools  
28%

## Youth Volunteer Diversity by Ethnicity



Hispanic  
70.4%

White  
17.1%

Black  
5.3%

Mixed Race  
4.3%

**19,290 hours served**  
in 2024

**41% were returning**  
for at least their second year



**21% of all youth volunteers are alumni**

# Family Engagement and Leadership



# 400

## Parents and Families

impacted in 2024

## Nurturing Growth and Connection

Throughout the year, we empowered the Latino community with diverse and impactful programs for parents: The Financial Achievement Club, Fostering Family Leaders, Healthy Cooking Choices for Every Body, Coach Parents, and LYRIC. These programs have empowered families with the tools and support to thrive, and **fostering a sense of connection** and shared growth within our community.



## Wellness

- **Healthy Choices for Everybody**

20 participants, including one dad, focused on **accessible healthy living and nutrition**, reflecting growing inclusivity of dads in wellness programs.

- **Van Gogh Immersion Experience**

Highly engaged parents were treated to a special field trip to delight in the Van Gogh Immersion Experience. Parents immersed in art, fostering **bonding and cultural enrichment** through an interactive experience.

# Family Engagement and Leadership (cont.)



## Leadership

- **Coach Parents**

We continued to see strong engagement from our parent volunteers, with **41 new Coach Moms** playing a vital role in supporting program activities, facilitating workshops, and helping to make community events successful. Their dedication strengthens our programs and fosters a supportive environment for all families.

- **Fostering Family Leaders Celebration**

In February we celebrated more than **121 parents graduated from the Fostering Family Leaders Program** since its launch in 2017. This marked the 8th year of the program, offered in partnership with United Way, focusing on empowering parents to become leaders in their communities.



## Academics

- **LYRIC (Latino Youth Readiness & Information for College)**

In 2024, the LYRIC program was restructured to include participation for students qualifying for the Martha Barrios Mead Scholarship, with at least one parent attending four workshops to **guide families through the college application process**. 21 parents attended our FAFSA Workshop, showing great interest in financial aid resources.

# Congratulations to our new 2024 Martha Barrios Mead Scholarship Awardees!



**Ashley Reymundo**



**Carolina Marengo Aburto**



**Maria Suastegui Castro**



**Paola Morales**



**Emely Bermudez**



**Cuahutli Santillan**



**Sumirra Dirir**



**Sofia Claypoole**



**Alemania Ayala**



**Litzy Gonzalez**

The Martha Barrios Mead Scholarship recipients are the **embodiment of our commitment to create a long lasting impact** on our early education students and youth volunteers.



# Blossoming Impact



## Educator: *Lauren Dubois*

Lauren DuBois embodies the spirit of community and education at Los Niños Primero. Since joining in 2016, she has brought innovation to her kindergarten classroom, using hands-on experiments, interactive technology, and real-world applications to spark curiosity. Beyond the classroom, she leads an annual holiday shoe drive, rallying schools, businesses, and volunteers to provide new tennis shoes for students in need. Her dedication to fostering a love of learning and giving back makes a lasting impact on her community.

## Volunteer: *Paola Morales*

Paola's journey with Los Niños Primero has shaped her perspective, inspiring her to embrace new opportunities and make a difference. A meaningful connection with Ms. Price, whose dedication to education transforms lives, our Academic Program Specialist, deepened her commitment to LNP's mission. Since 2022, Paola has dedicated over 300 volunteer hours and served as our Mount Vernon Summer Intern. Now a freshman at Georgia State University, she continues to give back.



## Parents: *Miriam & Xavier Maldonado*

For over 8 years Miriam and Xavier have been steadfast in their involvement with Los Niños Primero, going above and beyond in their educational commitment to benefit their children.

## Partners: *Crecer UPS*

Crecer, the Latino/Hispanic BRG at UPS, has been instrumental in empowering our community and making Día del Niño possible since 2021. Their dedication to service, Latino families, and our mission has helped create unforgettable celebrations for our children. We are grateful for our incredible partnership with Crecer and UPS in uplifting and supporting our families.



# Financial Summary



## A Financial Review of Impact and Opportunity

In 2024, **Los Niños Primero embraced significant growth to meet the increasing needs of Latino children and families** in Atlanta. With the introduction of our Summer Program in Cobb County and the addition of ten new classrooms, we expanded to eight locations across five counties: **Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Gwinnett, and Fulton.**

### Financial Overview

Our expansion reflects our commitment to serving more families but also brought a **10% rise in expenses due to investments in staffing and program capacity.** Despite a 2% dip in revenue compared to last year, we remain steadfast in our mission and are focused on sustainable funding to support our continued impact.

### Investing in Growth to Broaden Our Impact

**As Los Niños Primero approaches its 25th anniversary, we celebrate our transformation from a single site to an organization spanning eight locations**—a clear reflection of our strong resource management and dedication to meeting community needs.

In 2024, we began the year with \$1.3 million in cash and reserves and **generated \$1.7 million in revenue.** While expenses totaled \$1.8 million, Other Income reduced our 2024 deficit to \$47,000 and our reserves to \$1.2 million. These results underscore **the importance of closing the funding gap to sustain and grow our impact in 2025.**

### Looking Forward

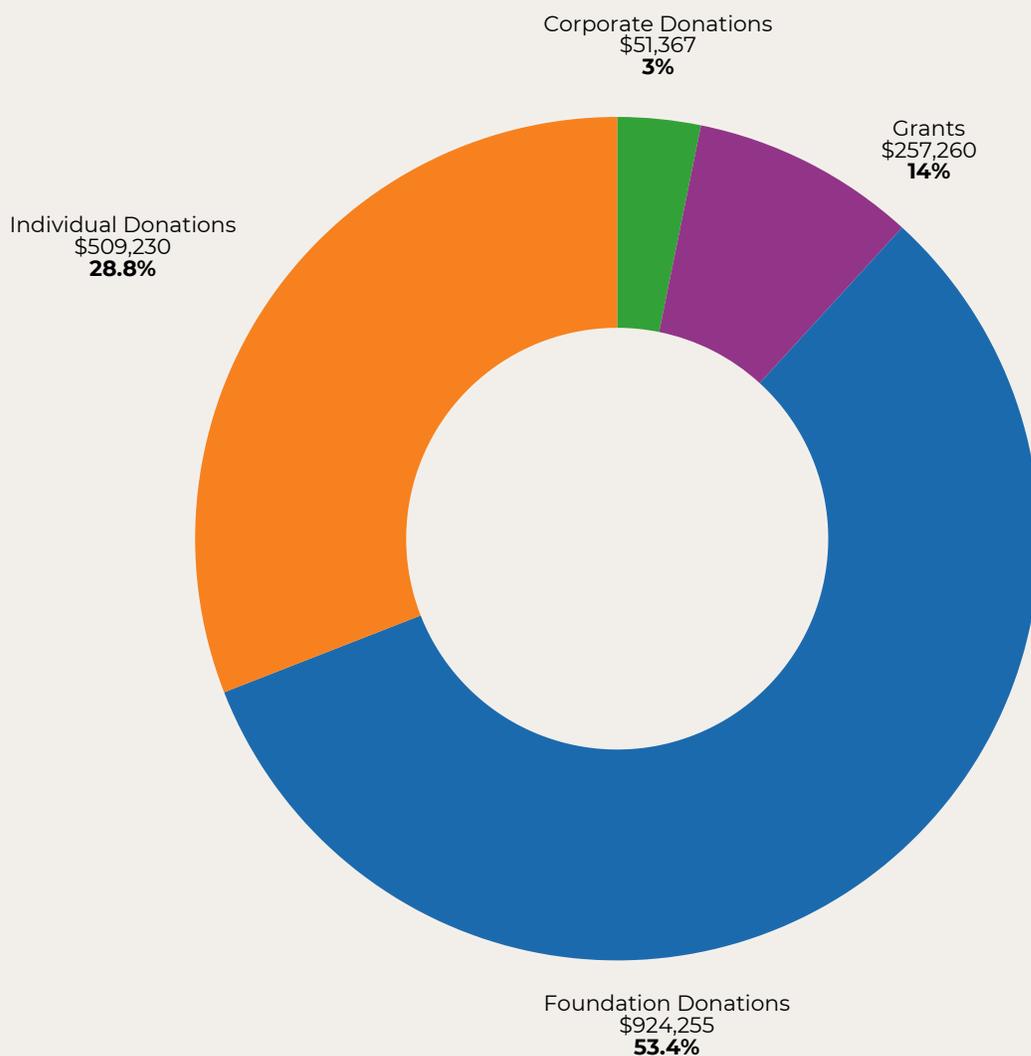
As we approach 2025, Los Niños Primero faces challenges from shifting national policies and increased operational costs. These uncertainties highlight **the need for continued, reliable support to sustain and grow our impact.** While our expansion has allowed us to serve more families, we must close funding gaps to ensure long-term sustainability.

**With the unwavering support of our community, we remain hopeful in overcoming these challenges and continuing to transform lives, ensuring that our next chapter is marked by even greater impact.**

# Financial Summary (cont.)

## Total Income **\$1,742,112**

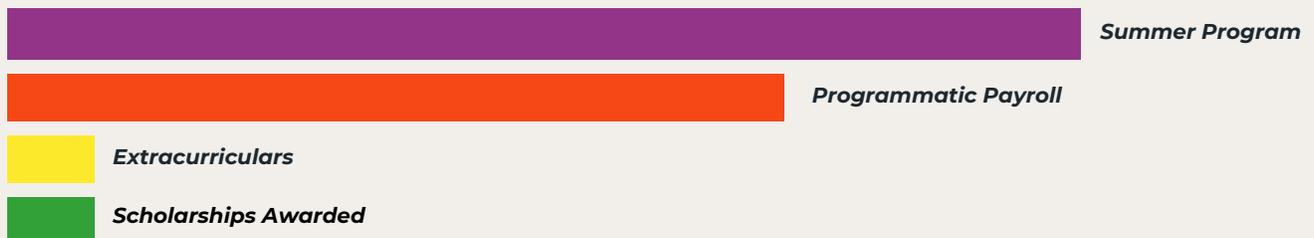
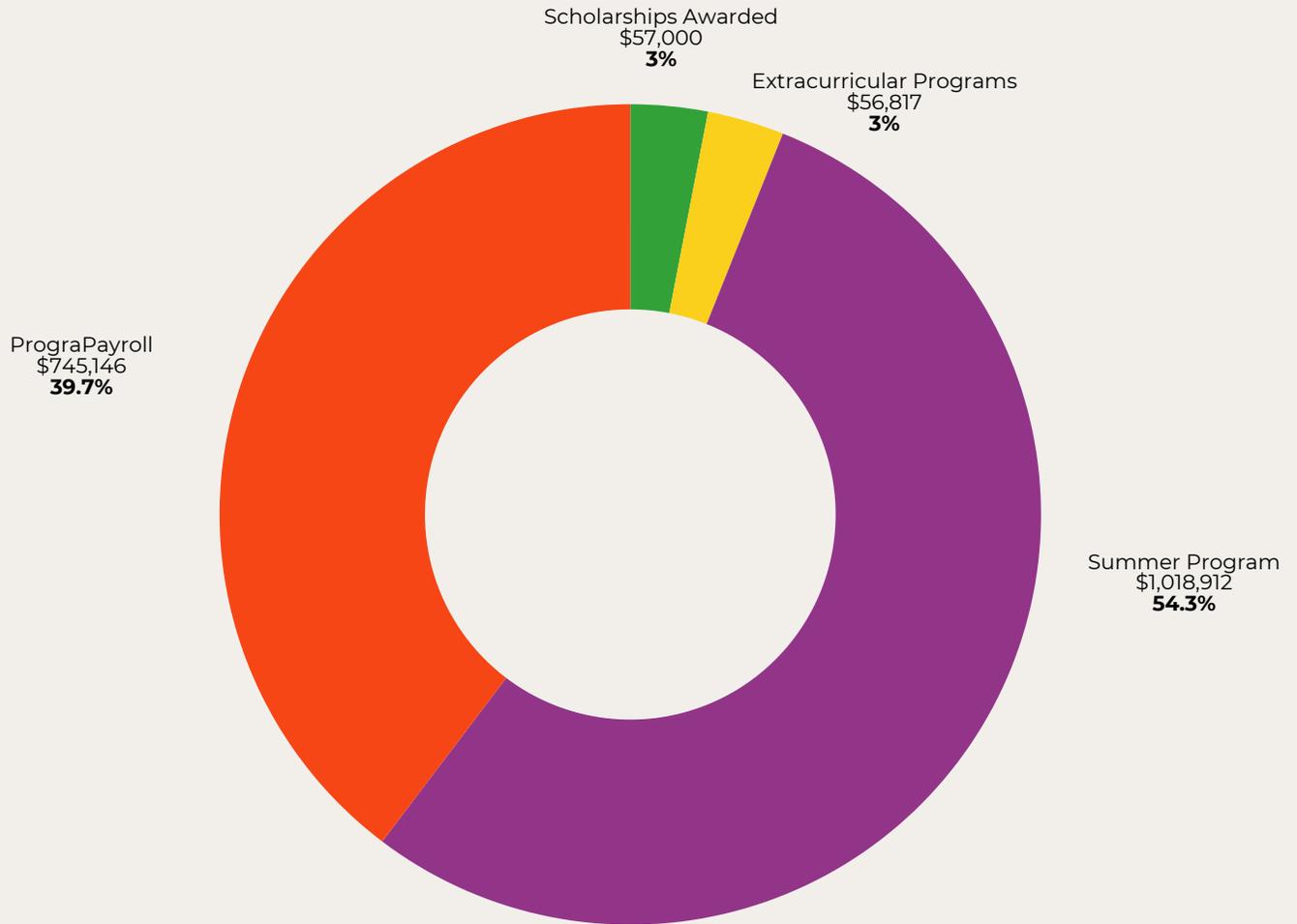
A breakdown of our 2024 support and funds



# Financial Summary (cont.)

## Total Expenses **\$1,877,876**

A breakdown of our 2024 programmatic and administrative spending





# 2024 Board of Directors



**Olivia Rocamora**  
Board Chair



**Sergio Dorransoro**  
Board Vice Chair



**Bruce Morine**  
Treasurer



**Lynn Moore**  
Secretary



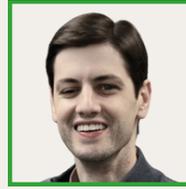
**Samuel McClurg**



**Celia Soriano**



**Thays Morgan**



**Rev. Barrett Abernathy**



**Christian Alvarado**



**Lora Coughlin**



**Marcus Balbed**



**Dr. Michelle  
Yrigollen-Robbins**



**Shanti Gangadharan**





# 2024 Sponsors

## Platinum:

- Charlie and Lisa Gray
- Dan and Margaret Schafer
- Dr. Michelle and Richard Robbins
- Heidi Natkin and Gilson Sirvas
- Sally
- Thays Morgan

## Gold:

- Barbara
- Couchman Noble Foundation
- Gail and Marty
- Global Payments
- Ken Mead
- Kirk Rich
- Lora Coughlin
- Lynn and Phil Moore
- Mary and Sam
- Robbins Ross Alloy Belinfante Littlefield, LLC
- The Conlan Company
- Tom Marlitt-Corbett



## Silver:

- American Pacific Mortgage
- Carlos Corless Attorneys at Law
- Dale and Bruce Morine
- Vernon Woods Dental and Implant Center
- Galicia Construction
- John and Tara Allen
- Marcelo Cedeno
- The Claypoole Family
- Wolf Family



## Bronze:

- Arden Nutt
- Ava Navin
- Gas South
- Mark Summers and Robert Rees
- Martin Martinez Family
- Padron Concrete LLC
- Supermercado Jalisco
- The Cotto Law Group

# 2024 Community Partners

Alliance  
Theatre



globalpayments



HOMESTAR



*John H. and Wilhelmina D. Harland  
Charitable Foundation, Inc.*



paint  
love.



# ¡Gracias!

PREPARED BY:

**Maritza Morelli, Executive Director & Co-founder**

**In Collaboration With:**

Jeannie Myers, Director of Academics & Outreach  
Lizbeth Zamora, Director of Youth Programs  
Gloria Perez, Director of Family Engagement & Leadership  
Ashley Lewman, Development Director

**Edited by:**

Maite Fuertes, Communications & Marketing Coordinator

📞 404-285-6653

✉️ [maritza.morelli@losninosprimerousa.org](mailto:maritza.morelli@losninosprimerousa.org)

👤 @LosNiñosPrimeroUSA

🌐 [losninosprimerousa.org](http://losninosprimerousa.org)