# 2024-25 School Safety Transformation (SST) Final Report

This report provides an overview of the Trauma Prevention Partnerships – SST pilot program and its strategic approach, successes, lessons learned, and next steps. The SST pilot program was developed to create systems change by holistically addressing violence and promoting a positive school climate through partnership with community-based organizations and school sites/school districts.

Los Angeles County
Department of Public
Health, Office of
Violence Prevention

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#### Introduction

Too many students across Los Angeles County are impacted by violence and trauma on campus, in their homes, and in their communities. On July 12, 2022, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors approved the motion "Enhancing School District Capacity to Protect Student Safety" (July 2022 Board Motion), instructing the Office of Violence Prevention (OVP), in collaboration with the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE), county departments, school districts, community service providers, community organizations, and other relevant stakeholders to help schools develop more robust and comprehensive approaches to school safety, foster positive school climates, and provide students with necessary supports.

In 2021, 13% of Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) high school students reported not going to school because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to or from school. From 2021-2023, 24% of 7th graders in Los Angeles County (County) reported fear of being beaten up at school, and 15% of 9th graders reported suicidal ideation. In September 2022, First 5 LA published findings from a survey of parents of children aged 5 or younger. Amongst other findings, the survey found that, two years after the onset of Covid-19, 79% of parents surveyed believed their child's emotions or behavior had been affected by the pandemic, and 25% said their child was more scared. Additionally, increased violence in the County, along with the COVID-19 pandemic, has resulted in the loss of social and school connectedness. Ongoing violence continues to plague communities within South Los Angeles and other areas of the County, making it difficult for youth to thrive. These forms of violence are interconnected and require a holistic approach that includes sustained prevention and intervention strategies.

### School Safety Transformation (SST) Initiative Background Defining School Safety for Los Angeles County

The SST Initiative was an opportunity to utilize OVP's public health approach to violence prevention to support school districts. Schools are a critical community hub that foster protective factors for youth and family well-being. OVP, together with county partners and with input from community stakeholders across the county, developed a proposed plan to work on systems change to support school district efforts to holistically address violence and promote a positive climate, and to work closely with a cohort of five (5) school districts to provide technical assistance and grant support. For the purpose of this project, school safety is defined as:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). 1991-2021 High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data. Available at <a href="http://nccd.cdc.gov/youthonline/">http://nccd.cdc.gov/youthonline/</a>. Accessed on July 16, 2025.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Austin, G., Hanson, T., Zhang, G., & Zheng, C. (2020). School climate and student engagement and well-being in California, 2017/19. Results of the Seventeenth Biennial State California Healthy Kids Survey, Grades 7, 9, and 11. WestEd. Accessed on July 16, 2025.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Schnaufer, J., Rykaczewska, A., & Dieterle, K. (2021, September 16). First 5 LA survey finds COVID-19 pandemic affected learning, health, and behavior of L.A. County's youngest children. First 5 LA. Available at <a href="https://www.first5la.org/article/first-5-la-survey-finds-covid-19-pandemic-affected-learning-health-and-behavior-of-l-a-countys-youngest-children/">https://www.first5la.org/article/first-5-la-survey-finds-covid-19-pandemic-affected-learning-health-and-behavior-of-l-a-countys-youngest-children/</a>. Accessed on July 16, 2025.

School safety reflects a climate where students, families, and staff feel safe from violence, bullying and harassment including the influence of substance use, and violence perpetrated by individuals and systems. Enhancing school safety requires addressing the root causes of violence and trauma that occur in schools, in school-related activities, and in the surrounding communities, through policies and practices that strengthen the network of prevention and response services using an equity and healing-centered lens.

#### Overall SST Goal and Mission

In partnership with LACOE, the pilot facilitated partnerships between CBOs and school districts to:

- 1. Support a shift to a care first, restorative, community-driven approach that enhances partnerships with community organizations.
- 2. Assure alignment with current effective programs and safety mandates and lift-up best practices.
- 3. Coordinate county partners to provide added value to support schools to address community safety.
- 4. Center youth and families in transformative school safety efforts and ensure they have a leadership role in implementation.

The primary goal of this pilot was to foster collaboration between school districts and CBOs to provide supportive services on campus and in the surrounding community and transform systems to improve school climate, build a culture of safety and wellbeing, and promote healing for young people who have experienced or been exposed to community or school violence. SST prioritized proposed programs that focus on addressing concentrated need or an increased need for student support and development tools as well as best practices to prevent further violence.

Outside of the school environment, the organizations also promote a culture shift to disrupt the school-to-prison pipeline, investing in healing and trauma informed supportive care for students, families, and school personnel. The engagement of family support is also a major factor in connecting with struggling and disconnected families to link them with resources to address basic needs, training programs that build family capacity for conflict resolution and positive relationships, and opportunities for families to play a leadership role in school safety initiatives.

Prioritizing School Districts in Communities Disproportionately Impacted by Violence
The July 2022 Board Motion requested a list of school districts in communities experiencing the
highest rates of violence in Los Angeles County, both on campus and in nearby areas. The schoolbased data utilized were violence- and weapon-related suspensions and expulsions from the
California Department of Education, while data providing insight about violence around the schools
were from hospitals and emergency departments. Zip code-level data within the district's
boundaries were ranked based on both assault and suicide attempts rates.

# **SST Funded Community-based Organizations (CBOs)**

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), Trauma Prevention Partnerships (TPP), provided funding to community-based organizations to promote peace and healing in communities disproportionately impacted by violence across Los Angeles County. The Los Angeles County Department of Public

Health (DPH) OVP received this one-time funding of \$20 Million, as part of the County's COVID-19 recovery plan, to implement Trauma Prevention Partnerships. The Biden administration allocated ARPA funds to state and local governments, to support communities that have been historically disadvantaged and have experienced disproportionate impacts from the pandemic.

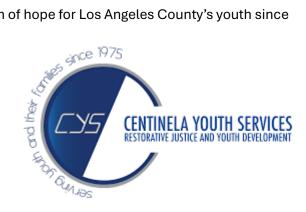
A total of \$5,000,000 of this ARPA funding was utilized for the SST pilot through June 30, 2025. Through a Request for Proposals (RFP) process, grants were awarded to 5 CBOs, receiving \$1,000,000 each. SST awarded organizations that prioritize supporting and further expanding upon student-centered programs that work within the identified school districts, either districtwide or with individual school sites within school districts, to prevent violence and intervene in instances of violence.

During the 2024-25 school year, the SST grantee agencies — Centinela Youth Services (CYS), H.E.L.P.E.R. Foundation (HELPER), Just Us for Youth (JU4Y), Inner City Visions (ICV), and Southern California Crossroads (Crossroads) — utilized the funding to deliver a cohesive, cross-dimensional response to the safety needs of students, school staff, and families. They leveraged their existing relationships and established school safety work that predated SST funding. These positive working relationships facilitated expansion of their work and scope through SST funding.

#### Centinela Youth Services (CYS)

Centinela Youth Services (CYS) has been a beacon of hope for Los Angeles County's youth since

1975. Originally formed to address rising youth arrests, CYS has evolved into a leading 501 (c)3 organization offering counseling, intervention, and empowerment programs. Through initiatives like the Everychild Restorative Justice Centers and the Juvenile Arrest Diversions Program, they work to keep youth out of the justice system while promoting community healing. Their services, including mediation, conflict resolution



training, and trauma-informed care, aim to address underlying issues and foster positive change. Recognized nationally for their innovative approaches, CYS remains committed to building a brighter future for all the youth and families they serve.

The SST funding expanded the impact of CYS' ongoing work with Compton Unified School District (CUSD) and Compton School Police for over a decade. Their community knowledge and connections with key players and partners provided a strong foundation and a seamless transition to begin the SST project in CUSD. With the SST grant funding for the 2024-25 academic year, CYS worked with the following schools within CUSD: Centennial High School, Compton High School, Dominguez High School, Enterprise Middle School, Whaley Middle School, Bunche Middle School, Walton Middle School, King Elementary, McNair Elementary School, Longfellow Elementary School, and Roosevelt Elementary School.

#### H.E.L.P.E.R. Foundation

Established in 1999, the <u>H.E.L.P.E.R. Foundation (HELPER)</u>, formerly known as "Venice 2000," began as a non-profit providing gang intervention and prevention services. Since that time, they prioritize community violence intervention (CVI) to combat violence, preserve communities, and empower youth against economic challenges. HELPER is a multi-service, multi-ethnic 501(c)3



organization and has specialized in implementing programs and services to diverse groups with maximum efficiency and impact. This organization serves as a bridge between people with common needs in order to identify and secure resources that may be pooled for the greater good of all.

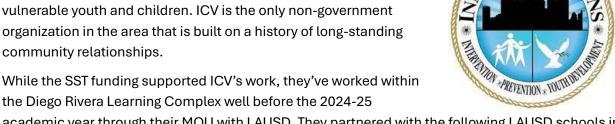
Through SST funding, the HELPER worked in partnership with Antelope Valley Union High School District (AVUHSD), Eastside Union School District (EUSD), and Lancaster Union School District in the

following schools: Eastside High School, Lancaster High School, Antelope Valley High School, Palmdale High School, Cole Middle School, New Vista Middle School, Piute Middle School, Amargosa Middle School, and Endeavor Middle School. With this additional funding, HELPER leveraged pre-existing school relationships to facilitate a smooth expansion and effectively impact the school sites with the greatest need.

#### Inner City Visions (ICV)

Inner City Visions (ICV) is a 501(c)(3) community-based organization founded in 2007 in the Florence-Firestone community of South Los Angeles. ICV engage youth impacted by violence and

trauma by empowering them with tools and training to implement in life. ICV is dedicated to serving the youth with complex needs, as well as providing methods for the prevention of the exploitation of vulnerable youth and children. ICV is the only non-government organization in the area that is built on a history of long-standing community relationships.



the Diego Rivera Learning Complex well before the 2024-25 academic year through their MOU with LAUSD. They partnered with the following LAUSD schools in the Florence-Firestone community area: Communication and Technology School, Performing Arts Community School, Green Design and STEAM Academy, Public Service Community School, Thomas A. Edison Middle School, and Miramonte Elementary School.

#### Just Us 4 Youth (JU4Y)

Founded in 2015, <u>Just Us 4 Youth (JU4Y)</u> is a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to creating a nurturing environment where every young person can thrive. Their vision is to positively impact culture, community, and a region by providing an innovative and holistic approach to quality mentoring for



urban youth and their communities around the world. JU4Y accomplishes their mission by mentoring at-promise communities to develop as people, scholars, and leaders. They also act as a safe passage presence, provide programming and training within the school infrastructure, and offer community support services to engage and empower parents.

With the SST grant funding for the 2024-25 academic year and their existing MOU with PUSD, they worked with the following schools within PUSD: Pomona High School,

Fremont High School, Park West High School, Park West High School, Garey High School, Diamond Ranch High School, Ganesha High School, Simond Middle School, and Kingsley Elementary School.

#### Southern California Crossroads (Crossroads)

Southern California Crossroads (Crossroads) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with over 16 years of proven capacity serving youth and adults in the areas of violence prevention, intervention, hospital-based and school-based services across Los Angeles County and Southern California. Their mission is to provide safety and healing for individuals and communities who have been impacted by trauma caused by violence. Crossroads helps people who are survivors of crime through mentoring students, providing resources through community events held at the parks and public spaces, and operating as a reliable, safe, and trusted source for assistance and support.

While the SST funding supported Crossroads' work, they've worked with Lynwood Unified School

District in the City of Lynwood and surrounding neighborhoods in which LAUSD students reside prior to being awarded SST grant funding. Lynwood Unified School District



recognized a need for a school-based safe passage initiative within their community, streamlined the MOU process with Crossroads, and secured buy-in from the Lynwood Board of Education. As a result, Crossroads has developed a longstanding and strong relationship with Lynwood Unified School District. Through SST funds, the following schools were supported through their continued work: Lynwood High School, Marco Antonio Firebaugh High School, Vista High School, Fred W. Hosler Middle School, Cesar Chavez Middle School, Rosa Parks Elementary, Wilson Elementary, Lindbergh Elementary, Washington Elementary, Will Rogers Elementary, Marshall Elementary, Roosevelt Elementary, Mark Twain Elementary, Lugo Elementary, Abbott Elementary, Lincoln Elementary, and Hellen Keller Elementary.

#### Trauma Prevention Initiative (TPI) Alignment

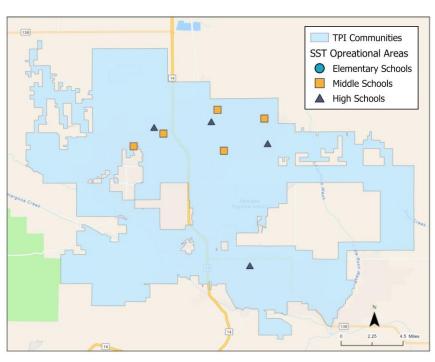
Within Los Angeles County, each contracted SST CBO served designated schools or districts identified as having the greatest need for violence intervention and prevention. Although the program targets school settings, several of these areas also overlap with high-need areas identified by OVP's Trauma Prevention Initiative (TPI). TPI focuses on comprehensive community-driven public safety to reduce violence-related injuries and deaths through innovative programs, policies, and partnerships.

While TPI focuses on community violence, which includes schools, the SST project provides supplemental support within the K-12 educational space to directly and positively impact students and communities. This school-specific funding strengthens support for communities most affected by violence, at times even engaging the same contracted agencies advancing TPI and SST goals. By aligning services and interventions, these efforts ensure continuous support from school to home and foster meaningful connections between students, school personnel, families, and contracted agencies. The following maps illustrate how SST enhanced existing TPI work in the overlapping communities of Pomona, Antelope Valley, and South Los Angeles (Florence-Firestone and Compton), while focusing directly on students and their broader network.



Figure 1a. SST Service Coverage Map of TPI Communities in Pomona,
California: This coverage map shows the overlap of Pomona TPI communities and schools partnered with and served by the contracted CBOs through SST funding.

Figure 1b. SST Service
Coverage Map of TPI
Communities in Antelope
Valley: This coverage map
shows the overlap of Antelope
Valley TPI communities and
schools partnered with and
served by the contracted CBOs
through SST funding.



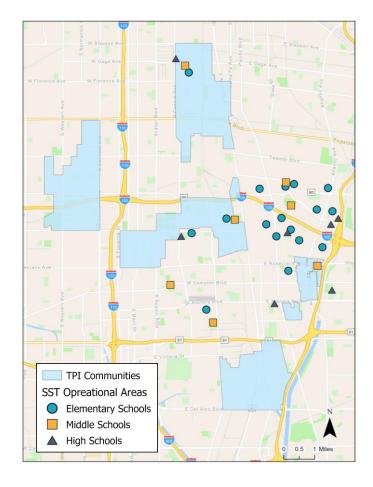


Figure 1c. SST Service Coverage Map of TPI Communities in South Los Angeles: This coverage map shows the overlap of South Los Angeles TPI communities and schools partnered with and served by the contracted CBOs through SST funding.

### **Strategic Approach**

#### Three Core Strategies

The following sections outline the key strategies that made the SST grantees' work effective, replicable, and scalable. In partnership with their school district partners, each CBO implemented up to three strategies from the identified investment areas: school infrastructure, healing and wellbeing, and community support services. Each CBO also secured a letter of commitment from its partner school district confirming support for the proposed services and collaboration with OVP to advance systems change.

#### School Infrastructure Investments

A central focus of the SST Initiative is enhancing school infrastructure and fostering support among students, parents, and school personnel to promote positive youth development. By equipping staff—including security teams, administrators, teachers, and community members—with appropriate tools and frameworks, the initiative reduces reliance on punitive discipline and encourages restorative, relational, and trauma-informed approaches to conflict resolution.

#### CYS Staff at Compton High School:

The CYS team recently toured the new Compton High School campus in preparation for continued collaboration and partnership with CUSD for the upcoming school year.



#### Healing and Wellbeing Investments

Healing and wellbeing investments are a core component of the SST Initiative, aimed at strengthening school climate and fostering healthy relationships. Organizations supported student wellness, mentorship, and leadership, creating safe spaces for dialogue, mental health, and conflict resolution. Across varied approaches, the shared goal was to center student voices and provide consistent opportunities for connection, growth, and empowerment.

Diego Rivera Learning Complex Running Club Post-LA Marathon:

ICV sponsored some running club students to participate in the LA Marathon. They're proudly displaying their marathon medals on campus.



#### Community Support Service Investments

Each SST grantee prioritized using multifaceted school safety interventions. By extending safety beyond school walls, CBO staff provided safe passages at key locations, maintained a constant presence to manage crowd behaviors, assist students crossing streets safely, and serve as a visible deterrent to potential conflict.

# H.E.L.P.E.R. Foundation Safe Passage Initiative Awareness Campaign:

H.E.L.P.E.R. Foundation launched a safe passages media campaign. This image features one of the several billboards displayed throughout the city to promote awareness and visibility of their Safe Passage efforts, highlighting their commitment to community safety and engagement.



Additionally, CBOs engaged families and community members through events that provided both students and adults opportunities for personal and professional growth. By equipping those who regularly interact with youth to offer support, these efforts fostered relationship building, reinforced learning across school and home, and strengthened trust, continuity, and shared responsibility within the broader community and ecosystem that supports students.

#### Crossroads Community Walking Club:

Crossroads' Community Walking Club meets weekly at a local park near the Lynwood Unified School District office to bring together parents, youth, and staff. This initiative provides safe, consistent space for wellness, connection, and access to after school resources, strengthening bonds between families and schools.



#### Levels of Support

Adopting a comprehensive, ecosystem-wide approach made this school safety work transformational. Students experience safety as individuals navigating internal challenges, as members of a school community shaped by adult behaviors and peer dynamics, and as family members influenced by home environments. A sustainable and effective approach to school safety must therefore address the full ecology in which students live and learn.

Level	Centinela Youth Services (CYS)	H.E.L.P.E.R. Foundation	Just Us for Youth (JU4Y)	Inner City Visions (ICV)	Southern California Crossroads (Crossroads)
Student- Level	<ul> <li>Restorative circles</li> <li>Mediation office hours</li> <li>Youth mentoring</li> </ul>	Afterschool programming	<ul> <li>After-school boxing program</li> <li>Open gym nights</li> <li>"Art on Deck"</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Student         leadership         summer         program</li> <li>Extracurricular         programming:         photography,         martial arts,         credit recovery</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Mindfulness workshops</li> <li>Trauma- informed sessions</li> <li>Student leadership academy</li> <li>Sound baths</li> </ul>
School- Level	<ul> <li>School safety personnel and staff training in restorative practices</li> <li>Community mediator training</li> </ul>	Safe passage collaboration	<ul> <li>De-escalation training with school staff</li> <li>Transport support for school referrals</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Single de- escalation training</li> <li>Safety collaboratives</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Trainings         with School         Resource         Officers         (SROs)</li> <li>Safety         conference         planning</li> <li>School         safety         campaigns</li> </ul>
Family- Level	<ul> <li>Parent         coaching         sessions</li> <li>Workshops</li> <li>Family         Assessment         Response         (FARS)</li> </ul>	Referrals to food assistance and family services via partner organizations	<ul> <li>Parent         coaching         program</li> <li>Referrals to         mentoring</li> <li>Behavioral         supports</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Family programming</li> <li>Parent outreach via school events</li> </ul>	Referrals for family supports and food assistance and mental health

**Table 1. School Safety Transformation (SST) Work Organized by CBOs and Levels of Support:** SST CBO activities across the student, school, and community levels, highlighting the multi-tiered approach to advancing school safety within these communities.

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#### School Infrastructure Investments

SST grantees offered structured or supplemental training for school-based adults, from sustained multi-part curricula to targeted workshops, aiming to influence campus culture. These efforts trained 239 school and community members, fostering various skills and teaching models that promote positive changes in school climate. Identified promising shifts include school staff asking for more restorative tools, security personnel becoming facilitators of peace rather than enforcers of order, and community members stepping into roles as mediators and mentors. Grantees also established in-school collaboratives to engage youth and parents, build rapport with school leadership, and demonstrate how training facilitates system transformation.

#### Centinela Youth Services (CYS)

The initiative enabled CYS to work deeply with seven schools in Compton Unified that had the highest reliance on school policing, suspensions, or expulsions. The core of CYS' programming was training school personnel. Over the course of the grant period, CYS implemented a sustained training program, reaching 121 school staff. From March through May 2024, 33 school safety personnel completed a full Restorative Practices on campus training series, earning certificates of completion. It better equipped trainees with skills to resolve campus conflict without relying on exclusionary discipline. CYS worked with school staff to retool their discipline teams from a focus on discipline documentation to focus more on effective methods to identify student needs earlier and more effectively addressing their needs. This intentional top-down approach aims to restructure the school staff's strategy to address safety concerns, promote student success, and improve relationship building with students.

CYS Success Story: On 2/22/24, CYS held a mediation between a security staff member and a student. The student shared that she felt that she was being treated unfairly regarding bathroom use over the past two years. The staff member was defensive at first, stating that she did not understand why the student was portraying her to be bad/mean. Through mediation, the security staff member learned about the student's health-related reason for why she needs to spend extra time in the bathroom and how she felt embarrassed when the staff member would yell to rush her or mention how long she had been in the bathroom in front of others. Towards the end of mediation, the security staff member tearfully apologized and shared that she sees all the students as her children and that it hurts her to hear she made a student feel this way. She shared her appreciation to the student for bringing this to her attention and that she would be more considerate of the manner that she speaks to students moving forward. The youth accepted her apology and appreciated the security staff member for listening to her. The youth also agreed that when a similar issue arises, she'll try to communicate her concerns before it escalates.

#### H.E.L.P.E.R. Foundation

In collaboration with school staff, HELPER identified areas at high risk for violent incidents, allowing its staff to maintain a strong on- and off-campus presence for timely response and intervention. Following interventions, HELPER staff coordinated with school officials as appropriate. By fostering positive relationships and behaviors with students and staff, they served as trusted mediators and

sources of valuable insights to strengthen safety protocols and preventative measures for the youth they support. Throughout the grant period, HELPER operated a consistent, tech-enabled Safe Passage initiative. In March of 2024, HELPER launched a technology-advanced mobile application for reporting volatile incidences and students in crisis. Community ambassadors filed detailed field reports in real-time, allowing for precision in response, tracking, and analysis. Grounded in steadfast ambassador presence and incident tracking, their model prioritized visibility, accountability, and rapid response, anchoring school safety not only in classrooms, but also across the neighborhoods students traverse daily.

#### Inner City Visions (ICV)

ICV's long-standing relationship with the administrators at the Diego Rivera Learning Complex (DRLC) facilitated increased access to work directly with students and utilize school facilities. Recognizing the need for a space on campus, ICV staff, with DRLC Educare Office's guidance and support, established an environment that fosters healing, youth dialogue, peer mentorship, and leadership development.



Inner City Visions (ICV) Dedicated
Safe Space: Within the Diego Rivera
Learning Complex Educare Office,
students and ICV staff enjoyed creative
activities in a co-developed on-campus
space committed to engage youth and
foster their development and
leadership.

ICV also hosted one de-escalation training that was targeted and intimate: with 30 total participants, including 10 ICV staff and 20 school personnel. This training emphasized nonviolent communication, restorative framing, and youth-centered intervention techniques, helping schools adopt a tone of empathy even in the heat of crisis.

In partnership with Communication and Technology School (CATS) administrators in the DRLC, ICV brought in Los Angeles Institute for Restorative Practices (LAIRP) to conduct a comprehensive two-day "Restorative Practices Training" for staff. This training equipped participants with skills to manage conflict in educational and professional settings. In addition to administrators, CATS' counselors and social workers collaborated in an established Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports/Restorative Practice (PBIS/RP) framework to support students facing academic and attendance challenges. Staff aligned strategies and goals to provide support and targeted interventions, bridging the school ecosystem and students. Leadership and community-aligned

staff invested in this collaboration, leveraging their lived experiences to authentically connect with and serve students and advance ICV's initiatives.

#### Just Us 4 Youth (JU4Y)

JU4Y's existing districtwide MOU with Pomonia Unified School District provided them essential access on school campuses to foster meaningful and lasting impact.

JU4Y Staff with Certificate
of Recognition: JU4Y hosted
a Pop-Up community event
for their Safe Passages
Program in the heart of the
Holt Corridor in Pomona, one
of the most safety concerned
areas in the city of Pomona.
JU4Y staff showcase their
certificate of recognition
from the Los Angeles County
First District. This event
included talks from Pomona
Unified School District Board
Members and the Mayor.



Their intentional approach with various schoolwide introductions to students and staff facilitated administrative trust and support. Before initiating their programming, they discussed the program overview, student after school activities, and services JU4Y staff will provide with the principals of the 7 partnering high schools. During the first quarter of their partnership, they listened in on tier 2 and 3 PBIS school administration meetings to learn about students' needs and possible referrals. This insight informed who JU4Y focused their outreach efforts on and the approach to take. In future quarters, this collaboration continued as monthly school coalition meetings with school administration and support groups to determine the best course of action to support and provide resources for tier 2 and 3 students.

They delivered five de-escalation trainings to partner schools, offering trauma-informed strategies for hallways, lunchrooms, and classrooms, and held a training session on restorative practices and discipline for local middle school staff. Staff consistently reported increased confidence managing conflict, and assistant principals noted improvements in school climate and culture due to JU4Y's work.

#### Southern California Crossroads (Crossroads)

Crossroads leveraged its resources to successfully build a school team supporting its school safety initiatives within the Lynwood Unified School District. Two experienced case managers and a program coordinator counseled and mentored students and managed programming. After onboarding, they engaged with administrators and students to expand Crossroads' campus

presence and introduce upcoming programs through meetings with principals, school assembly presentations, and direct student interactions. These intentional efforts allowed Crossroads staff to communicate their mission, build trust, and establish strong rapport and trust within the school community.

To increase staff capacity related to youth development, they provided five training sessions with a trauma-informed lens reaching 50 staff and drawing on their lived experience supporting youth recovering from violence. These sessions included somatic tools, emotional regulation strategies, and storytelling practices that helped reframe behavioral incidents as signals of need, rather than signs of defiance. Recognizing staff wellbeing is essential, Crossroads celebrated counselors during National School Counseling Appreciation Week to highlight their collective gratitude for their dedication and their crucial role in fostering a safe, supportive learning environment. Additionally, Crossroads staff partnered with school personnel and mentors to facilitate healing and wellbeing events for students, especially during the school day. This vital support and these efforts strengthened staff morale, ensured accessible and impactful student programming, and demonstrated alignment between Crossroads staff and school personnel.

#### **Healing and Wellbeing Investments**

During the grant period, the SST agencies collectively reported engaging 3,642 students in wellness and leadership activities. Some partnered with schools to establish a constant on-campus presence, creating safe spaces that promoted mediation, youth dialogue, leadership development, and peer mentorship. Others introduced creative wellbeing programs to strengthen students' social-emotional skills and healthy relationship building. Additional initiatives trained youth and families in mental health first aid, conflict resolution, and restorative justice. Across these efforts, staff served as trusted mentors and positive role models, fostering student healing, wellbeing, and leadership within supportive school environments.

#### Centinela Youth Services (CYS)

At the start of the SST program, CYS expanded its MOU partnership to include two additional schools. This approach allowed CYS staff on campus to engage with more youth, parents, and school personnel across the Compton Unified School District (CUSD). CYS focused on student wellness through consistent access to restorative mediation. Over the course of the grant period, they hosted 99 mediation office hours. These sessions allowed students to voluntarily seek support to resolve interpersonal conflict before it escalated. While there was an average 28% utilization rate, there was a notable increase in the use of mediation office hours during quarter 4 (Q4) in comparison to quarter 3 (Q3). The number of cases resolved in Q4 nearly doubled from Q3's number of resolved cases. As a direct result of these efforts, successful mediation cases reinforced peer accountability, emotional safety, and communication skills.

#### CYS Tabling for School Event:

A CYS staff member tabled at a school event. These events provide spaces for CYS staff to connect with students, school personnel, and parents about CYS programming and restorative justice practices.



CYS staff consistently incorporated student voices by creating spaces to solicit their input. They conducted focus groups with 60 students, parents, and staff to gather their feedback and recommendations on school safety priorities. This invaluable insight informed training and presentations for over 244 staff, leading to more effective safety solutions. This proactive approach improved early identification of student needs that, if unaddressed, often led to safety issues. Along with other initiatives, it contributed to a 95% drop in school-based arrests, significant reductions in suspensions, and overall improvements in school safety.

#### H.E.L.P.E.R. Foundation

HELPER developed initiatives to create safer, more supportive environments for youth through consistent outreach and community-building programs. Their visible presence in key areas not only prevented immediate safety threats, but also built lasting trust, relationships, and resilience. Quick, responsive interventions fostered mentorship and relationship-building, encouraging students to view staff as mentors and advocates, rather than authority figures. Their approachable staff cultivated consistent safe spaces and a "circle of care" that extended to school personnel through coordinated follow-up with school officials. Through thousands of positive engagements, HELPER helped students feel seen, heard, and respected while strengthening connections across schools and communities.

#### Inner City Visions (ICV)

Throughout the grant period, ICV prioritized schoolwide culture building, organizing 75 school-based events that collectively reached more than 1,500 youth. They implemented 6 immersive programs, offering a range of educational, creative, economic, mentorship, and behavioral and mental health support. These included lunchtime engagements, healing circles, and wellness-focused assemblies—creating consistent touchpoints that made emotional wellness a visible and normalized part of the school day. ICV noticed a 30% increase in youth participation. The overall impact of ICV staff's presence led to positive academic success and emotional and social behavioral shifts: 85% of youth reported improved academic performance, and 75% of youth reported increased confidence and social skills.

ICV's engagement strategy centered on youth activation and enrichment through immersive programming. In partnership with DRLC and Cal State Los Angeles' School of Social Work interns, they launched a six-week summer program on June 24, 2024, enrolling over 29 students. The program offered a blend of credit recovery, photography, mixed martial arts, and social-emotional learning workshops. Students reported greater confidence and a renewed sense of belonging, with many expressing enthusiasm to return the following year.



Inner City Visions (ICV) Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) Practice: During the ICV Summer Program, one of the physical activities offered was MMA, which promoted physical fitness, enhanced self-confidence and self-discipline, improved emotional regulation, and practical self-defense techniques.

ICV's programming targeted youth needing additional support and mentorship through their Attendance Improvement and Mentoring (AIM) program, which provided a weekly space for students with chronic absences to access tutoring, mentoring, and art workshops from ICV case managers. ICV's various efforts contributed to a significant reduction in chronic absenteeism, with decreases ranging from 5 to 19% across grade levels, demonstrating the program's effectiveness.

ICV Success Story: After an altercation, a youth attended a teacher-student disciplinary meeting, which led to his involvement in the various services ICV offered. Recognizing the student's potential and underlying concerns that contributed to his behavior, ICV staff began checking in on him weekly, offering a consistent source of encouragement and accountability. Through their continued relationship building efforts, they discovered the root cause of the altercation was conflicts with other students. They facilitated dialogue and taught him conflict resolution strategies to help him address these issues and redirect his energy and focus on his personal growth and academic pursuits.

Not only did his grades improve, but he also demonstrated a newfound commitment to exploring his hobbies and interests. He embarked on the journey of starting his own clothing brand and channeled his creativity and entrepreneurial spirit into a tangible project. Leveraging ICV's entrepreneurship resources, he created mock-ups for design. He gained valuable insights and guidance, empowering him to turn his vision into reality, through the various ICV networking and mentorship opportunities. His journey from adversity to achievement underscores the transformative impact of this project and showcases how fostering a culture of empowerment and opportunity for students can facilitate growth, resilience, determination, and a positive

#### Just Us 4 Youth (JU4Y)

JU4Y built an ecosystem of recurring, community-based programming tailored to the specific needs and limitations of school sites across Pomona. JU4Y reached an average of approximately 55 students per quarter using various targeted afterschool programming. Considering there were on campus space constraints, many programs were held in adjacent community settings. Across Park West, Pomona High, Fremont Academy, Garey, and Ganesha High School, JU4Y established:

- Art on Deck: Two 6-week sessions with 10 youth each
- Behavioral Boxing: 5 days/week, averaging 10–15 youth per session
- Parent Boxing Program: 3 days/week, averaging 8 parents per session
- Open Gym Nights: 2 nights/week, averaging 6–15 youth per session

JU4Y estimated over 100 direct student interactions each quarter, including daily conversations, informal check-ins, behavioral interventions, supportive escorts, and afterschool activities. These micro-interventions fostered connection, helping students feel recognized and supported. Several programs promoted physical activity, creativity, and academic growth. In partnership with Conceptual Art Therapy, JU4Y hosted an 8-week Art on Deck series and after-school art program, culminating in a student art show. These initiatives enhanced youth confidence and pride while fostering connections among peers and the broader community.



# **Session:** JU4Y brings youth together to creatively reflect, express themselves, and tell their stories through poetry and songwriting. After the recording

JU4Y Rhythm and Flow Studio

songwriting. After the recording sessions, these youth had the opportunity to perform their original songs at an Open Mic night in downtown Pomona.

JU4Y staff hosted "Influence Nights" workshops with Cal Poly Pomona to guide youth on college access, self-growth, and leadership, combining education with opportunities for self-exploration. Curated experience trips, included professional sports events, STEM and cultural hubs, and entertainment venues, offering positive escapism, identity exploration, and social learning for youth facing chronic stressors. Across more than 15 programs and community events, JU4Y engaged students' interests, fostered empowerment, and helped them build skills in discipline, determination, and leadership while strengthening connections with peers and mentors.

JU4Y Success Story: A high school senior and foster youth joined JU4Y's Breaking Barriers program—a six-week, healing-centered series focused on identity, storytelling, and personal transformation. Throughout the program, she emerged as a powerful voice in the group, culminating in her performance of a personal poem at the graduation ceremony held at Cal State LA. Her spoken-word piece, drawn from her lived experience, moved peers and mentors alike, embodying the strength and vulnerability the program seeks to cultivate.

She was later honored at the Just Us 4 Youth Graduation Banquet, where she received a scholarship in recognition of her leadership, growth, and commitment to her future. With continued support from Safe Passages Mentors, she successfully enrolled at Mt. San Antonio College and connected with the Bridge Program. Her journey reflects the transformative power of intentional mentorship in safe spaces, creative expression, and access to higher education pathways.

#### Southern California Crossroads (Crossroads)

Crossroads prioritized trauma recovery and mental wellness through workshop-based engagement, facilitating 15 trauma-informed and 34 mindfulness workshops, including sound baths and healing circles. Through Youth Leadership Academy, they supported 15 students, equipping them with tools for emotional regulation, peer connection, and wellness ambassador leadership opportunities. Their approach emphasized somatic healing and emotional regulation for youth exposed to violence, loss, or chronic stress. By offering 14 types of tailored workshops, Crossroads addressed students' diverse needs and interests, providing valuable skills, knowledge, and resources to navigate challenges and succeed academically and socially, highlighting the importance of varied, responsive programming to support a diverse student body.

Crossroads' Student Entrepreneur Workshop: Students from local high schools connected with entrepreneurs and community leaders who grew up in their neighborhoods. This hands-on workshop helped youth explore pathways to launching their own businesses, while cultivating pride and economic vision for their community.



During the initial quarter, Crossroads expanded its student mentoring program to two high schools, two middle schools, and five elementary schools within Lynwood Unified School District, extending support across grade levels to enable earlier intervention and continuous guidance. Their youth

leadership program strengthened teamwork and transferrable leadership skills that students could apply across academic, social, and career contexts, while empowering participants to utilize these skills in real-time to co-design summer programming for peers. Crossroads' holistic approach combined physical activity, health education, social and emotional learning, arts and crafts, field trips, and other enrichment opportunities—offering youth meaningful experiences that nurtured their mental, emotional, and social wellbeing.

#### **Community Support Service Investments**

A student's ability to succeed in school is shaped as much by conditions outside the school environment as by what happens within it. When families experience instability—such as food insecurity, housing instability, or limited access to transportation, safety and mental health care—those challenges inevitably affect a child's learning, behavior, and ability to self-regulate.

Recognizing these connections, each SST agency adopted a holistic approach to student safety that accounts for the interconnectedness of home, school, and community environments.

Each organization developed referral systems tailored to their strengths, student populations, and the specific needs of the communities they serve. Nearly 85% of referrals addressed basic needs—food, hygiene products, diapers, and emergency supplies—while a significant number of referrals connected students to mental and behavioral health services, including trauma-informed therapy, support for students in crisis, mentoring, academic support, and caregiver development. This network of support ensured that no aspect of a student's wellbeing was overlooked.

Agencies also enhanced safety through safe passage programs, deploying trusted community-based violence intervention staff to accompany students to and from school and community events. These visible, consistent presences provided reassurance, confidence, and protection, while bridge programs eased transitions between grade levels, reinforcing stability and continuity. Collectively, these investments addressed root causes of safety concerns and created safer, more connected communities.

#### Centinela Youth Services (CYS)

CYS extended its training efforts beyond school campuses to engage the broader community. Over the course of the grant, 43 community stakeholders completed the organization's 30-hour Community Mediation Institute (CMI) training, ensuring that the values of accountability, dialogue, and repair extended into the neighborhoods surrounding schools. Trainings varied in depth and format—from short, targeted sessions such as a 1-hour Site Coordinator Orientation or a 3-hour School Safety Plan Working Session, to immersive experiences like the full CMI and the 8-hour "Restorative Practices for Educators" course. To increase accessibility, CYS also introduced virtual, on-demand options through partnerships with institutions like the High Conflict Institute, offering tools like the 3-hour "New Ways for Life" training.

In addition, CYS collaborated with fellow SST grantee Southern California Crossroads to lead a workshop on using focus groups to inform student safety strategies. Participants learned practical methods for designing, collecting, and analyzing qualitative community and student insights.

Together, these varied and accessible learning opportunities equipped school personnel and

community members and partners with the tools to sustain restorative, inclusive practices both in and beyond school settings.

While CYS is best known for its restorative justice work within school communities, its referral and linkage systems demonstrate a broader commitment: supporting students' families and caregivers. Professional development efforts helped lay the groundwork for cultural transformation. In Q3, CYS referred six families to Family Assessment and Referral Services (FARS), connecting them to mental health evaluation and care coordination. By Q4, the program expanded, providing direct support to 49 families in a single quarter. Of those:

- 25 received case management services, supporting everything from housing instability to school-related issues
- 14 participated in one-on-one parent coaching sessions, providing strategies for more effective communication and support at home
- 6 families attended parenting workshops, creating a space for shared learning and connection
- 4 families received restorative justice supports, often in response to ongoing conflict or harm
- While no home visits occurred in Q4, engagement remained high through school-based and virtual platforms

These efforts highlight CYS' holistic approach, ensuring healing and support extend beyond students to strengthen the entire school-community ecosystem. By integrating referrals into the broader mission of fostering partnerships between schools and families, CYS' work evolved from individual student support to full-family care. Incorporating key community stakeholders, the organization created a comprehensive framework for safety, restoration, and wellbeing that engages students, families, and the wider community in sustaining positive outcomes.



CYS Staff meeting Compton Mayor: In April 2025, CYS Transformation Team met with Compton Mayor Emma Sharif to discuss restorative justice and trauma-informed efforts within the Compton community.

As part of the district-wide school safety initiative, CYS implemented a specialized, high-impact strategy by embedding community violence intervention (CVI) trained staff directly on school

campuses. During this grant cycle, they hired two additional interventionists, expanding the team to six staff across multiple school sites. These practitioners, using their lived experience and deep community ties, serve as credible messengers and trusted adults, supporting students exposed to violence, gang involvement, or trauma. Their role centers on being credible messengers to aid in prevention, mentorship, and real-time de-escalation to support the school's safety and wellness infrastructure. CVI strategies include conflict de-escalation, rumor control, mediation, relationship-building, and peace building to advance safer, healthier school and community environments.

#### H.E.L.P.E.R. Foundation

HELPER Community Ambassadors were highly active in key locations identified through incident patterns and community need. These sites became the foundation of their safe passage work, where ambassadors walked routes, intervened during moments of risk, and served as visible deterrents to violence. Data-driven insights from these efforts informed more robust safety protocols and preventative measures for youth. Over the course of one year, ambassadors conducted nearly 300 Safe Passage patrols and engaged with over 4676 students, demonstrating the impact of utilized trusted and credible community residents with license to operate (LTO) enhance student safety and community wellbeing.

H.E.L.P.E.R. Foundation Success Story: Guided by the vision and leadership of Ansar "Stan" Muhammad and Dawn Osborne, HELPER set a new standard for innovation in community violence intervention (CVI) reporting. In partnership with Boomer Rose, they developed the "Helper Foundation Reporting App", a digital tool that streamlines reporting, reduces staff workload, captures the depth and frequency of community engagements, and—most importantly—ensures the organization fully owns its data and reporting process.

Since the April 2024 launch, staff have logged more than 8000 field engagements across the area—providing a data-driven view of their daily work that had long gone underrecognized.

As the collaboration evolved, feedback from frontline staff and leadership informed more than 50 app updates and refinements. The next-generation platform, "Clarity," expands on the original system with the addition of case management, data analytics, and community resource referral tools—creating a powerful, scalable digital ecosystem to strengthen services across the Antelope Valley and Los Angeles County.

Their commitment to modernization, collaboration, and community ownership of data demonstrates how local leadership can shape the future of service delivery—offering a model that could become the new standard for community-based organizations. By collecting accurate, real-time data, HELPER can now capture and demonstrate the full scope and impact of its violence intervention work.

H.E.L.P.E.R. Foundation School
Safety Ambassadors: School safety
ambassadors provide a visible, trusted
presence to help protect students,
support safe passage, and foster
peace within the partnering school
communities.



HELPER's strategic community presence underpins the development of supportive and thriving school and community environments. While often working directly on school campuses and surrounding hotspots, they recognize the importance of earning broader community trust and support. They hosted 255 community-building events, engaging 3150 students, and lead informal relationship-building activities to reframe perceptions of authority and foster trust. Community members helped identify hotspot areas where youth congregate with elevated risks, guiding where Safe Passage staff operate. Through consistent outreach, intervention, and preventative services, HELPER addresses violence prevention, facilitate conflict resolution, and promotes positive social behaviors. This holistic approach prevents immediate safety threats while cultivating long-term trust, relationships, and resilience to in turn strengthen partnerships with school administrators, law enforcement, and neighborhood stakeholders.

#### H.E.L.P.E.R. Foundation supporting the Lancaster BLVD Farmers Market:

HELPER provided Safe
Passage support during
this city event to promote
community safety and
engagement. Lancaster
Mayor R. Rex Parris and
Chief of Police, Rodrick
Armalin, were also
present, underscoring the
strong partnership
between local leadership
and their ongoing violence
prevention efforts.



To ensure equitable access to resources and mental health care, HELPER provides \$25 Uber or gas cards when direct transportation is not feasible—for example, assisting families visiting a mental

health facility. These newly developed procedures demonstrate their adaptability and commitment to meeting community needs and supporting them.

#### Inner City Visions (ICV)

Given the history of South Los Angeles, the risk of racialized violence remains high. ICV's safe passage staff employ proven strategies—community mobilization, suppression, rumor control, mentorship, and preventive interventions—to mitigate further violence, particularly in areas surrounding schools. Their work engages students and residents, specifically gang-impacted youth, helping to avert future incidents and build trusted relationships. ICV staff also shared their knowledge of local violence dynamics with school faculty, answered questions, and supported faculty needs, extending their impact beyond direct student engagement.

On February 29, 2024, the LAUSD Wellness Programs hosted a regional safe passage meeting, giving ICV a valuable platform to network with stakeholders, share insights, and support school faculty in neighboring communities. This convening led to its continuation every 6 weeks, fostering sustainable collaboration and long-term support for safe learning environments at DRLC.

Throughout the academic year, ICV staff provided consistent mentorship, including during summer. Their Summer Bridge program supported students transitioning between elementary, middle, and high school, emphasizing social-emotional development, understanding A–G requirements, and fostering community through project-based learning. Foundational relationships with feeder schools, including Drew and Edison Middle Schools, enabled early intervention and continuity of care for transitioning students.

The Florence Firestone Safety Collaborative further strengthened collaboration. A new "Belonging" Work Group focused on the needs of non-Latino and recently immigrated students, integrating workforce development and safe passages discussions and strategies. Active participation by Pupil Services and Attendance (PSA) Counselors, Principals, and School Board Member Tanya Ortiz-Franklin's staff created opportunities for ICV to bring stakeholders together to discuss school safety in an informed, intentional way, ultimately reinforcing an inclusive, supportive ecosystem for students.

#### Just Us 4 Youth (JU4Y)

In the 2023–2024 school year, JU4Y implemented a comprehensive safe passage program across 10 Pomona Unified School District (PUSD) campuses, grounded in the belief that students deserve to feel safe not only within school walls but also while traveling to and from them. JU4Y partnered with school staff to identify and monitor hotspot areas and held three community listening circles at local parks to gather input on community safety concerns. The program created a predictable, affirming safety ecosystem centered on student voice and community connection.

With grant support, JU4Y deployed a multi-layered program addressing both physical safety and emotional belonging across campuses and surrounding neighborhoods. A Safe Passage Community Launch event introduced the team to the community, distributed information, and collected survey feedback. The organization's services were activated at 10 school campuses, each

hosting at least one kickoff event—with many hosting both spring and fall activations, totaling 15 events. These activities established staff visibility, trust, and connection with students, families, and school personnel while reinforcing consistent, community-centered safety practices.



JU4Y Safe Passages Program Kick-off: JU4Y kicks off the Safe Passage Programs at local school campuses – uniting youth, families, and community partners to ensure safety and belonging for every student.

From these campuses, JU4Y coordinated nine regularly monitored safe passage routes, ensuring students had safe corridors during arrival and dismissal. Six dedicated safe passage ambassadors patrolled the routes, trained not only in de-escalation and situational awareness but also in trauma-informed engagement and mentorship. These ambassadors were a consistent presence in students' daily routines, serving as protective figures in neighborhoods where external stressors, traffic hazards, and community tensions could otherwise undermine safety.

JU4Y also implemented a youth-centered referral and linkage system, built through direct student engagement and case management. In the first quarter, nine formal referrals were issued, primarily through mentoring and after-school programs. By the end of the grant, over 100 referrals were made, tailored to diverse needs including mentoring, safety and behavioral support, academic and recreational programming, transportation, and workforce development for older youth. To provide these services, JU4Y partnered with local CBOs, religious spaces, and parks, reflecting strong community trust and connections. Staff advocated for youth involved with the legal system, writing court letters and providing guidance and transportation to ensure continued support. Through these targeted efforts, JU4Y removed systemic barriers, helping at-promise youth access opportunities to thrive, develop, and shape a safer, more positive future.

#### Southern California Crossroads (Crossroads)

Crossroads' Student Safety Conference was a collaborative space to convene SST grantees, educators, advocates, and community and youth leaders to focus on school safety, violence prevention, and community-driven solutions. Each year, the conference features plenary sessions, interactive breakouts, networking, and youth-led panels, creating a space that elevates youth perspectives while connecting experts on innovative approaches to safety and violence prevention.

Southern California
Crossroads' 2025 Student
Safety Conference: These flyers
advertise the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Student
Safety Conference, featuring
another SST grantee, Centinela
Youth Services (CYS)'s staff who
led a workshop on "Utilizing
Focus Groups to Inform Student
Safety Decisions."



Crossroads also consistently centered family support and wraparound resource navigation. In the first quarter, they connected 50 families to food drives, addressing basic nutritional needs. By the end of the grant, over 550 families received support through Baby2Baby distributions and local pantries, providing diapers, formula, fresh produce, and hygiene supplies—removing barriers that can impact student learning and household stability.

Over the year, Crossroads made 39 mental health referrals, linking students to trauma-informed care and therapeutic support. These referrals often followed school-based workshops where students shared deeper emotional needs. Thanks to strong relationships with students, clinical providers, and local nonprofits, these referrals were "warm," with follow-up support that increased effectiveness beyond what traditional hotlines or pamphlets could provide.

Crossroads Success Story: A student had become increasingly withdrawn and expressed self-critical thoughts, which raised concerns with her mentor during daily check-ins. Recognizing the need for additional support, a Crossroads mentor facilitated a referral to the school's mental health services, where the student began receiving regular counseling. Through a combination of mentorship and therapeutic support, the student gradually began to build her confidence and develop healthier coping strategies. The mentor continued to reinforce positive self-image during check-ins, while the mental health provider worked with the student to unpack the roots of her self-doubt and manage emotional triggers. One of the biggest successes was watching the student become less reactive to peer pressure and more secure in her identity. By the end of the quarter, she shared that for the first time she was genuinely looking forward to the new school year.

Crossroads' work extended far beyond school walls, recognizing that supporting students requires supporting their entire family system. Student mentors and staff participated in daily safe passage and safety promotion across eight school campuses, engaging approximately 1,500 students. They also curated a range of community events and trainings to extend holistic care to families.

These included free pop-up events with educational and supportive activities, a community walking club at Lynwood Park to promote physical activity, connection, and neighborhood safety, and workshops such as an entrepreneurship panel and CPR training. These initiatives created opportunities for connection, skill-building, and self-development, highlighting relatable and inspiring stories of resilience and hard work. They also taught practical, life-saving skills, fostering

safer home environments and reinforcing a culture of support and encouragement for both students and their families.

## **SST Learning Community, Lessons Learned, and Next Steps**

#### SST Learning Community

Throughout the SST pilot, OVP and LACOE hosted a School Safety Learning Community. These cofacilitated workshop series were offered to school district representatives across all 80 school districts in Los Angeles County. The goal was to enhance district capacity and networks to address campus safety affecting students, staff, and families. This space offered space for school districts to share safety best practices and address challenges. Session topics included:

- Lessons learning and promising practices from SST Grantees' CBOs and school partnerships
- Addressing hate crimes
- Trauma prevention practices for working with youth
- Restorative approaches, youth leadership, and parent engagement
- Streamline processes, such as MOUs with CBOs, threat assessment, youth suicide prevention, and crisis response

#### Lessons Learned

The School Safety Transformation Pilot provided an opportunity to apply a public health approach to violence prevention in Los Angeles County school districts, implementing strategies that extended beyond campuses to support holistic infrastructure change and positive student climates. In partnership with diverse stakeholders, the program broadened the community's understanding of school safety and created opportunities for shared learning and collaboration.

Collaboration was a defining feature of the program's success. Community-based organizations are critical to the school safety ecosystem, offering trusted networks and support for school personnel, students, families, and surrounding communities. Staff's shared lived experiences enhance credibility and inform a peer-based approach, earning community trust. To maximize impact, streamlining MOU processes with districts and fostering clear communication and trust between CBOs and school staff would allow these organizations to fill service gaps more effectively.

Sustained school safety also requires systemic improvements. Aligning county services, offering professional development for teachers, administrators, and classified staff, and promoting restorative justice, trauma-informed care, and youth development support cultural and climate shifts. Creating consistent safe spaces, such as safety collaboratives, centers youth and parent voices, ensuring that community needs guide and shape ongoing safety efforts.

#### **Next Phase**

Additional funding for the 2025-26 fiscal year was secured to continue the School Safety Transformation Initiative through Probation - Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act (JJCPA) funds. Through this funding, the contracted CBOs will continue their partnerships with school districts to holistically address violence and promote a safe and supportive climate. OVP will also continue

partnering with LACOE to convene the SST Learning Community for school districts to share best practices and peer support to address school safety challenges. Additionally, the funding will also be used to solicit a separate SST evaluation to support with data implementation, collection, and analysis.

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