

2024



ANNUAL REPORT

Message from Executive Director

2024 taught us something profound: perspective is a funny thing.



So often, it feels like we *love* our problems. The more we dissect them, the more we demonstrate our expertise—and the smarter we appear. But here’s the twist: if you really want to stand out, to be an outlier or even a rebel, try offering a solution instead. Just start with, “What if we tried...?” and watch what happens.

This year, the big *a-ha* moment for me—and for all of us at YDN—was this: simply admiring a problem can become a form of oppression. And oppression is sneaky. It convinces you that you must fully understand every aspect of an issue before you’re “allowed” to act. It traps you in analysis and delays action.

But asking powerful, forward-looking questions? That’s liberation.

These kinds of questions spark curiosity instead of certainty. They invite dialogue over debate, exploration over explanation. And most importantly, they help build deeper connections—connections that foster a real sense of *community*.

In 2024, we leaned hard into this mindset. We made it our mission to ask bold questions and to create spaces where people felt safe to dream, explore, and imagine—without fear. And in doing so, we discovered something beautiful: liberation lives in action.

Oppression says, “Pause. Stare. Understand.”

Liberation says, “Try. Collaborate. See what happens.”

I’ve come to believe that solving the world’s riddles doesn’t begin with expertise alone—it begins with imagination, trust, and the courage to move forward together. As John Lennon wrote in *Imagine*:

You may say I’m a dreamer / but I’m not the only one / I hope someday you’ll join us / and the world will be as one.

May this 2024 Yearly Report stand as a testament to the power of shifting our gaze—from admiring problems to embracing solutions. From hesitation to action. From isolation to community.

In community,
Adrian Ruiz, Executive Director
Youth Development Network



A note from YDN Board Vice Chair, Addie Ellis

As Vice President of the Board of Directors, I am honored to share our collective pride in YDN's unwavering commitment to fostering environments where every individual is valued and empowered to reach their fullest potential.

In times of uncertainty, YDN has consistently demonstrated resilience and adaptability. Through customized development solutions, we continue to support educational and business entities in cultivating cultures that encourage personal and collective growth.

Our board is particularly inspired by our latest initiative, Creciente Latinx Leadership Program, which exemplifies our dedication to inclusive leadership

development. Creciente not only addresses the needs of our community, it continues to highlight the importance of equity, belonging, and justice, in all areas of leadership

Looking ahead, we are excited about the opportunities to expand our impact and deepen our partnerships. The board remains committed to supporting YDN's mission and ensuring that our strategies align with the evolving needs of the communities we serve.

Thank you for your continued support and belief in our shared vision.

Dr. Addie L. Ellis
Vice President, Board of Directors
Youth Development Network

2024 Hours & Sessions

925 | Total Number of Hours Facilitated

(Partners: 665 | Youth Philanthropy 40 | Creciente 220)

45 | Virtual Hours

(Partners: 25 | Creciente: 20)

880 | In-Person Hours

(Partners: 640 | Youth Philanthropy 40 | Creciente 200)

210 | Total Number of Sessions Facilitated

(Partners: 150 | Youth Philanthropy 15 | Creciente 45)

45 | Total Stand-Alone Sessions Facilitated

35 | Total Multi-Sessions Series Facilitated

3,055 | Total Number of Attendees

(Partnerships 2,660 | Events 335 | Series 60)

1,835 | Total Number of Unique Participants

60 | Number of Unique Organizations Served

(Partners: 30 | Creciente: 30)

Building Cultures of Growth

The Story of Youth Development Network

Since its founding in 2007, the Youth Development Network (YDN) has been a catalyst for transformation in communities across California. With a clear vision to cultivate environments where individuals can thrive personally, academically, and civically, YDN continues to empower organizations and youth through innovative training, development, and engagement strategies.

Our Vision, Mission & Purpose

At the heart of YDN is a commitment to creating spaces where people are valued and encouraged to become their best selves. The organization's mission—to foster cultures that support personal and professional growth—comes to life through comprehensive training, networking, and development opportunities. These efforts are designed not only to enhance service quality but also to provide tailored solutions for a wide range of partners, including youth-serving organizations, schools, faith-based groups, juvenile justice agencies, government entities, and businesses.

YDN's approach is rooted in the belief that sustainable change begins with recognizing individual talents and nurturing positive relationships. By emphasizing the importance of role models and supportive environments, YDN helps individuals and teams envision a brighter future and work toward becoming healthy, productive, and civic-minded adults.



Guided by Core Values

YDN's work is driven by a set of core values that reflect its internal culture and the principles it promotes in the broader community:



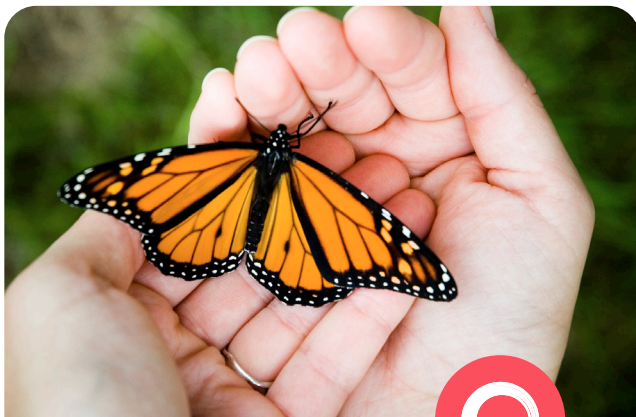
Relationships:

We build open and honest relationships that foster knowledge and trust. In this way everyone's unique ideas are brought to bear, and the results are awesome.



Fun:

We bring a positive team and family spirit to our work. We create ways to enjoy the work and engage the heart and soul.



Change:

We embrace and drive change. To do this, we must be more curious than certain. Continuous improvement often means doing things differently.



Social Justice:

To promote inclusion, our work honors diversity, equal voice, and equal choice for all.

Programs That Make a Difference

YDN offers a suite of programs and services designed to motivate participants, facilitate meaningful change, and build capacity within organizations. These include:

Strength-Based Development

YDN helps organizations and youth programs build well-rounded teams by focusing on strengths, fostering collaboration, and promoting personal growth. This approach lays the foundation for effective leadership and long-term success.

Youth Engagement

YDN creates transformative experiences for youth, encouraging leadership and active participation. Through training and organizational support, YDN helps youth-serving entities evolve into high-functioning organizations that treat young people as valuable contributors.

Organizational Development

YDN supports cultural relevancy and inclusion by integrating asset-based principles into organizational practices. Workshops and sessions help shift mindsets and align values with mission-driven goals.



Direct Youth Leadership Programs

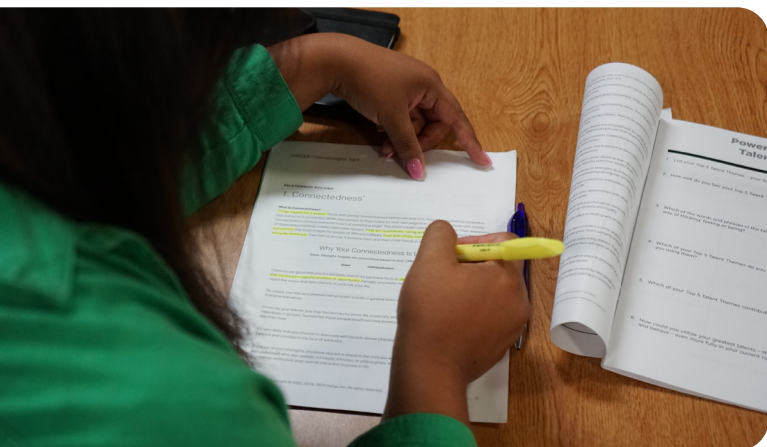
YDN is proud of the leadership camps, engagement circles, peer mediation, and skill-building initiatives that empower youth.

Creciente Latinx Leadership Program

Launched in 2021, this YDN flagship initiative has graduated over 93 Latinx leaders in the Sacramento region. These alumni are now shaping the civic and economic landscape with confidence and purpose. In July 2025, YDN will proudly welcome Cohort VII, continuing its legacy of leadership and impact.

Creciente's Inspiración Speaker

The YDN Creciente Latinx Leadership Program Inspiración Speaker Series is a dynamic platform designed to elevate the voices of Latinx leaders, artists, and changemakers. Through powerful conversations on identity, resilience, and leadership, this series brings together community members, students, and professionals—fostering connection, inspiration, and a shared commitment to growth across diverse audiences.



Creciendo con Inspiración: Elevating Latinx Voices Through Storytelling

In 2024, the Youth Development Network's Creciente Latinx Leadership Program proudly launched the Inspiración Speaker Series, a dynamic platform designed to amplify the voices of Latinx leaders, artists, and changemakers. This series brought together community members, students, and professionals to engage in powerful conversations around identity, resilience, and leadership



Sponsored by:



CROCKER
art museum



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“The arts have always been my way of expressing who I am and where I come from. Leadership starts with knowing your story.”

CHEECH MARIN

Cheech Marin—Art, Humor, and Leadership

Closing the series in winter, over 200 participants gathered at the Crocker Art Museum for an unforgettable evening with Cheech Marin, legendary actor, comedian, and art collector. Marin shared reflections on his journey from comedy icon to cultural advocate, emphasizing the transformative power of the arts in shaping identity and leadership. His candid conversation inspired attendees to embrace creativity as a tool for empowerment and community building.



“Our stories matter. Telling them is how we heal, how we connect, and how we lead.”

JAVIER ZAMORA

Javier Zamora—Migration, Memory, and Healing

The series began in the spring when 60 attendees joined acclaimed author Javier Zamora for a moving discussion centered on his memoir *Solito*. Zamora recounted his harrowing nine-week journey from El Salvador to the United States as a child, weaving themes of trauma, hope, and belonging. His story resonated deeply with the audience, many of whom saw reflections of their own experiences in his words.

Julissa Arce—Redefining the American Dream

In the fall, 75 participants gathered at American River College to hear from Julissa Arce, best-selling author and former Wall Street executive. Arce challenged conventional narratives of assimilation and success, urging attendees to embrace their cultural heritage and advocate for equity. Her books, including *My (Underground) American Dream* and *You Sound Like a White Girl*, sparked vibrant dialogue on identity and activism.

“Rejecting assimilation is not about exclusion—it’s about honoring who we are and demanding space for our stories.”

JULISSA ARCE

Impact and Momentum

With nearly 335 participants across three events, the *Inspiración Speaker Series* proved to be a powerful catalyst for dialogue, reflection, and leadership development. Each speaker brought a unique lens to the Latinx experience, inspiring attendees to lead with authenticity and courage.

The series not only celebrated cultural heritage but also reinforced YDN’s commitment to nurturing inclusive leadership pathways. As we look ahead, *Inspiración* will continue to be a cornerstone of the *Creciente* program—elevating voices, building bridges, and shaping the leaders of tomorrow.



Core Services

Training Workshops:

Interactive sessions that energize teams and provide practical tools for asset-based development.

Coaching, Consulting & Technical Assistance:

Customized support to implement new strategies and drive organizational growth.

Networking Events:

Opportunities to connect, share best practices, and build community.

Direct Youth Leadership Programs:

YDN facilitates high-impact programs directly with youth, including leadership camps, youth engagement circles, student philanthropy programs, peer conflict mediation, and 21st-century skill-building programs.

Creciente Latinx Leadership Program:

YDN is dedicated to this transformative initiative designed to empower members of the Latinx community. The program focuses on leadership development, community awareness, and addressing unique challenges faced by the Latinx community. Participants engage in a comprehensive curriculum, learn from representatives in various sectors, and have access to influential mentors. The program aims to empower Latinx leaders, foster community engagement, and drive positive change within the Sacramento Region.

Creciente's Inspiración Speaker:

The YDN Creciente Latinx Leadership Program Inspiración Speaker Series is a dynamic platform designed to elevate the voices of Latinx leaders, artists, and changemakers. Through powerful conversations on identity, resilience, and leadership, this series brings together community members, students, and professionals—fostering connection, inspiration, and a shared commitment to growth across diverse audiences.

Service Offerings

Training Workshops:

01

YDN's dynamic and customized training workshops cultivate an asset-based development mindset in participants. These workshops ignite passion and focus on excellence, challenging participants while providing support to help them achieve their goals. Participants can expect "a-ha!" moments, practical tools, and renewed energy and purpose in their work and team engagement. YDN collaborates closely with clients to design training programs that meet their specific organizational needs.

Coaching, Consulting & Technical Assistance:

02

YDN offers coaching and consulting services to support the implementation of new strategies and content across various sectors, including communities, schools, businesses, government entities, and organizations. The YDN staff excels in meeting clients where they are and customizing coaching and consulting approaches to address specific organizational needs.

Networking Events—Promoting Best Practices and Connecting Resources:

03

YDN organizes events that promote collaboration, share best practices, and facilitate connections within the community.

Convenings:

YDN facilitates convenings that bring people together, fostering collaboration and a stronger community capable of supporting youth effectively. These events focus on common language and approaches, providing networking opportunities.

Keynote Presentations and Conferences:

YDN delivers inspirational presentations to inspire change, foster staff momentum, and raise awareness. The customizable keynote presentations stimulate ideas, encourage meaningful dialogue, and establish emotional connections to important concepts for program and environment improvement.

Direct Youth Leadership Programs:

04

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Leadership means to me, being able to step up, being able to be there for others when needed, but also giving them the chance to speak up for themselves, giving them the chance to really prepare themselves for whatever is in the future.

ASHTON SMITH, PIONEER HIGH SCHOOL, YOUTH FACILITATOR

YDN facilitates high impact, engaging programs directly with youth, aiming to transform their lives. These programs serve as models of quality settings that provide dynamic opportunities for youth.

Youth Leadership Camp Program:

Engages youth (ages 12-24) who are often considered “at-risk” by society, helping them shift their self-perception to “at promise” individuals. The program focuses on building hope for the future, academic engagement, mentorship opportunities, and positive behaviors.

Youth Engagement Youth Listening Circles:

Establishes effective dialogue forums for youth to share their experiences and perspectives on climate-related topics. Through a listening circle format, key stakeholders gain insights into the realities of the current school climate and collaborate on action plans to improve it.

School Site—Student Philanthropy Programs:

Empowers youth to take an active role in shaping their communities through hands-on grantmaking and leadership development. By supporting community-driven projects and fostering philanthropy, it cultivates impactful youth-led initiatives.

Peer Conflict Mediation and Peer Mentoring:

Equips participants with conflict resolution skills and mediation models to reduce conflicts within classrooms, schools, or programs. Emphasizes peer conflict mediation programs.

Student Leadership 21st Century Youth Skill Building Program:

Enhances student leadership structures, amplifies authentic youth voices, and improves the overall student experience at school. Provides adult leaders with essential skills to facilitate an authentic leadership process with students.



Creciente Latinx Leadership Program

05

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If you're Latinx and dream big—working in competitive fields, standing out, and breaking barriers—these are the types of spaces that are key. The program helps you reconnect with your identity, learn from the journey, and have mentors to intentionally plan your future. Your roots are not an obstacle; they are a competitive advantage.

PATTY GOMEZ, SENIOR FELLOW, COHORT IV

Celebrating its fourth year, the YDN Creciente Latinx Leadership Program continues to ignite a powerful movement of change-makers across the Sacramento Region. What started as a spark of possibility has grown into a thriving network of leaders shaping the future with confidence, purpose, and influence. In 2024, we celebrated another milestone: Cohort V (Class of 2023–2024) graduated 14 Fellows in April, and Cohort VI (Class of 2024–2025) added 19 more Fellows who will graduate in February 2025. Today, more than 90 alumni are actively driving impact—leveraging their knowledge, skills, and voice to influence the economic and civic landscape of our community. This is more than a program—it's a catalyst for growth, resilience, and innovation, building a legacy of leadership for generations to come.

The program encompasses four key areas that contribute to the participants' growth and development:

Fellowship Orientation Retreat:

Included in the program curriculum is a three-day, two-night outdoor experience designed to strengthen connections and foster collaboration among Fellows. Thanks to the generous support of James B McClatchy Foundation, participants have the opportunity to step away from their daily routines and immerse themselves in activities that promote trust, teamwork, and personal growth.

From navigating a ropes course to sharing personal stories, Fellows embraced challenges that encouraged vulnerability and authentic connection. These moments not only build confidence but also lay the foundation for a strong, supportive network—an essential ingredient for impactful leadership.

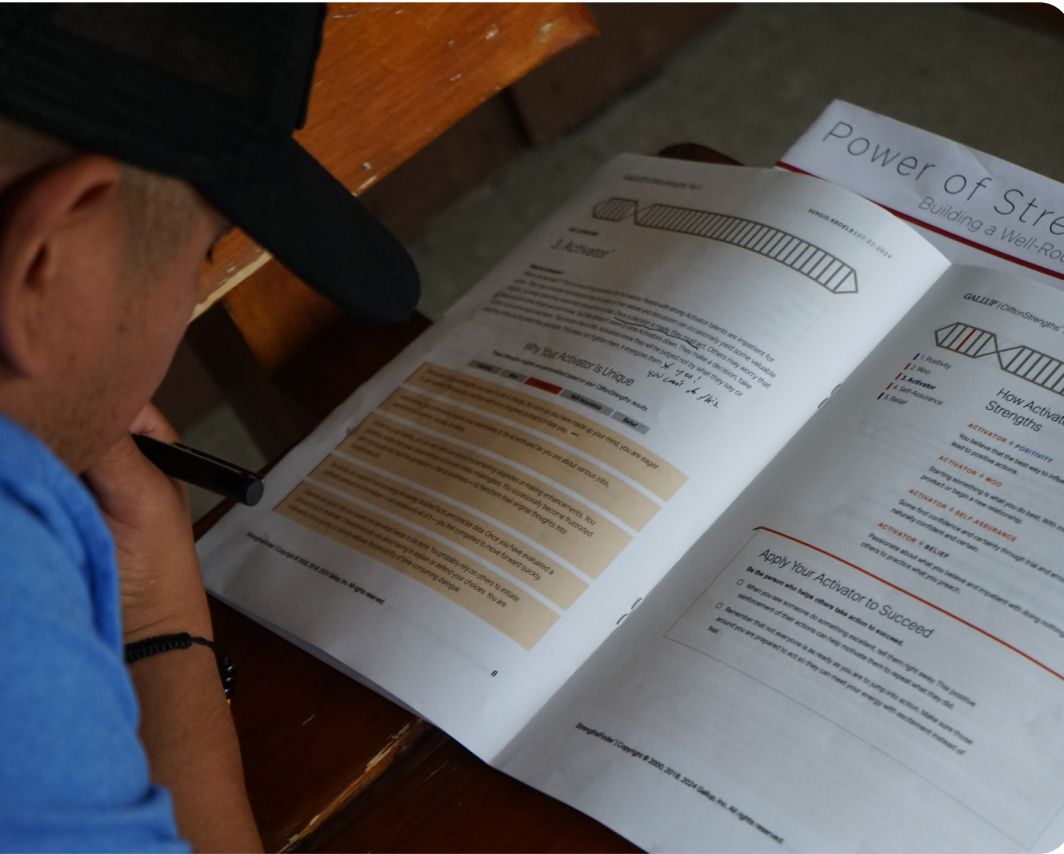
This retreat is more than an event; it's a catalyst for lasting relationships and a vibrant community that will continue to thrive long after the program ends.

The Toolbox:

Participants engage in skill building sessions that cover a wide range of topics, including self-awareness, leadership strengths, team building, effective communication, navigating differences, successful difficult conversations, public speaking, and feedback. The Toolbox programming is facilitated by the experienced Creciente Leadership Team, subject matter experts, influential Latinx leaders, and other professionals who provide valuable insights and guidance.

Community Awareness:

Through a series of engaging activities, participants gain a deeper understanding of how various systems, such as government, business, social services, health, and the justice system, operate and impact the Latinx community. Speakers, panels, and dialogues are organized by the participants themselves, enabling them to actively explore specific issues within the Latinx community that they are passionate about addressing.



Latinx Issues Discussions:

Program participants and their Apoyados gather for sessions dedicated to discussing topics related to the Latinx experiences. These sessions involve small group dialogues, guest speakers, and panel discussions, focusing on themes such as the diversity of the Latinx population, immigration experiences, the use of power and influence by Latinx business and community leaders, and collaboration strategies for achieving goals. This unique monthly program provides participants with valuable insights into the experiences of the Latinx community and connects them with influential leaders who can contribute to their professional and civic growth.

Unique to the program, participating Fellows are paired with dedicated Apoyados-Mentors who provide personal coaching and mentoring. These mentorship triads meet monthly to support participants' professional and civic career development throughout their time in Creciente and beyond. Graduating fellows are expected to join a nonprofit board or public commission as a key element of program completion.

**Cohort V (Class of 2023-24)
Cohort VI (Class of 2024-25)**

2

Cohorts

33

**Graduating
Fellows**

45

**Sessions Virtual
and in-person**

220

**Hours of
Engagement**

15

**Volunteer Community
Apoyados Mentors**

65

**Facilitators, Keynote
Speakers, and Panelists
Engaged**



Financials

Operating Revenue & Support Statement

January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024

At a glance:	Amount
Program Fees / School / Non Profit Programs	\$648,429
Creciente Latinx Leadership Program /Foundations	\$130,000
Foundation Grants	\$128,408
Creciente Latinx Leadership Program /Tuition	\$82,000
Fee for Service / Foundations	\$69,666
Creciente Latinx Leadership Program / Corporate	\$47,200
Program Fees / Business—Government Programs	\$36,000
Non-Financial Contributions	\$8,772
Creciente Latinx Leadership Program / Individuals	\$6,080
Contributions—Donations	\$3,860
Interest/ Dividends	\$3,612

Total: \$1,164,027

Operating Expenses

Statement

January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024

At a glance:

Program Services	\$480,966
Creciente Latinx Leadership Program	\$247,214
Management & General Admin	\$96,217
Fund Development	\$64,387

Total: **\$888,784**

Operating Expenses

Statement

January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024

Operating expenses	Amount
Salaries, Taxes and Benefits	\$460,046
Consulting	\$166,068
Travel	\$68,811
Marketing	\$39,768
Professional Fees	\$36,650
Meetings	\$27,902
Supplies	\$20,013
Copy & Printing	\$11,849
Facility Costs	\$11,027
Dues & Subscriptions	\$9,808
Insurance	\$9,668
Staff Development	\$9,135
Equipment Lease	\$5,292
Depreciation Expense	\$4,804
Interest Expenses	\$3,945
Telecommunications	\$2,638
Bank Charges	\$1,320
Postage	\$40

Total: **\$888,784**



The camp, specifically this year, has really taught me the importance of taking the first steps. I feel like I've grown more as a person and understanding everyone and how to utilize my strengths to work with them. It was really fun and honestly something I look back to when I make decisions now or in being the first person to step up. Youth Leadership camp brought out things I didn't really know about myself and has helped me be a person others can rely on. I've met incredible people who I consider friends and allowed me to learn more about me as well. Going to a YDN camp is one of the best decisions I've ever made and I'm really grateful for the opportunity and what it has taught me.

JIMENA SANDOVAL 2024 CAMP YOUTH FACILITATOR





Engage
to succeed.

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VALUES



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