

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ANNUAL REPORT

2025-2026



PLAYWORKS



REGION OVERVIEW

MISSION

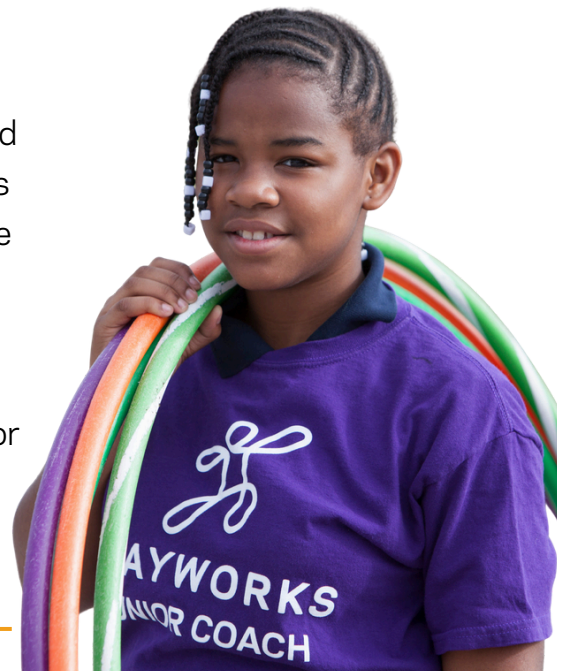
Playworks' mission is to improve the health and well-being of children by increasing opportunities for physical activity and safe, meaningful play.

VISION

Playworks' vision is that one day every child in America will have access to safe, fun, healthy play every day.

GEOGRAPHIC REACH

We are proud to provide our programs and services throughout Southern California. We provide our direct service programming to schools primarily in Los Angeles County and Orange County, where we are deeply embedded in the school communities and work hands-on with students and educators throughout the academic year. Beyond these counties, our capacity-building training services extend across all ten Southern California counties, equipping schools, districts, and youth-serving organizations with the tools and training they need to foster safe, engaging play for every child, regardless of location.



IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

95k



Students
Experiencing the
Power of Play

492



of Youth
Leaders, Junior
Coaches

41



of schools
receiving Coach,
Relay, or TeamUp

159



Schools &
Community Based
Organizations

MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As I reflect on the 2025-26 school year, I feel incredibly proud and deeply grateful. This year brought challenges that required us to adapt as schools and communities navigated changing needs and funding realities. Through it all, we remained focused on what matters most: ensuring kids have safe, healthy, and joyful spaces to play, belong, and thrive. Because of our incredible partners, we continued investing in communities like Watts, strengthened districtwide partnerships, and brought the power of play to more young people across Southern California.

This is also an important moment for our region. With the World Cup and LA28 shining a global spotlight on Los Angeles and the power of sport, we have an opportunity to think beyond these extraordinary events and consider the lasting impact we can create for young people. At Playworks, we believe champions don't just emerge on the world's biggest stages, they start on playgrounds.

None of this happens without people. To our school and community partners, funders, volunteers, and supporters: thank you for believing in this work. And to our incredible Playworks Southern California staff: Thank you for bringing this mission to life every day



with passion and heart. I am so proud of what we accomplished together and grateful for the people who make this work possible.

Your Partnerin Play,

Executive Director, Southern California

CELEBRATING MILESTONES



Evelyn Barraza,
Regional Partnerships Manager



Janelle Matthews,
Regional Partnerships Manager

A YEAR OF IMPACT

Every year, Playworks surveys our partner schools to learn about the impact of our programs and find ways to improve. Here are a few highlights from educators:

96%

of educators agree that Playworks **helps students build positive relationships with peers**

96%

of educators agree that Playworks **increases the number of physically active students.**

97%

of educators agree that Playworks **helps the school build an environment of belonging.**

97%

of educators agree that Playworks **helps students experience joy during the school day.**



"Since partnering with Playworks, we have observed a significant shift in our recess culture, characterized by a substantial decrease in playground conflicts and a noticeable increase in inclusive, student-led play among all grade levels."

- Principal at TeamUp Plus school



Kaiser Permanente:

Sustaining the Power of Play in Watts

For more than three school years, Kaiser Permanente's Community Benefit investment has helped Playworks sustain safe, healthy and meaningful play in Watts, as school communities continue to navigate growing needs and shrinking resources.

Since 2023–24, Kaiser's support has reached Los Angeles Unified schools in Watts, including 99th Street, Florence Griffith Joyner, 96th Street, Weigand Avenue, and 112th Street, funding direct services, professional development, and youth leadership opportunities. Playworks has also been proud to partner with the 99th Street school community for nearly eight years, building a lasting relationship rooted in trust and a shared commitment to students. In 2025–26, Kaiser supported Playworks programming at 99th Street and 112th Street, reaching nearly 900 students and 38 educators. Funding supported consistent opportunities for high-quality play, relationship-building, and student leadership, including the Junior Coach program, which gives students the opportunity to become leaders and role models for their peers through play.

At 99th Street, educators saw the impact firsthand. One educator shared how a student who had struggled to communicate during conflict began to thrive as a Junior Coach: "I was so impressed by the changes in his confidence and communication!" Another described having Playworks coaches on campus as "a gift," helping students build life skills through play while reducing conflicts.

Kaiser's support has done more than keep a program running for another school year. It has helped schools build adult and student capacity to create healthier school communities over time. As school communities continue to face difficult budget decisions, philanthropic partnerships like Kaiser Permanente's help fill critical gaps—ensuring that students do not lose access to the relationships, leadership opportunities, and positive experiences that play can create.

This continued support demonstrates what is possible when philanthropy stays alongside a community: not simply funding a program, but helping schools protect and strengthen something children need every day—the opportunity to play.



Junior Coaches at 99th Street celebrate the start of their program year, alongside their Playworks Coach.



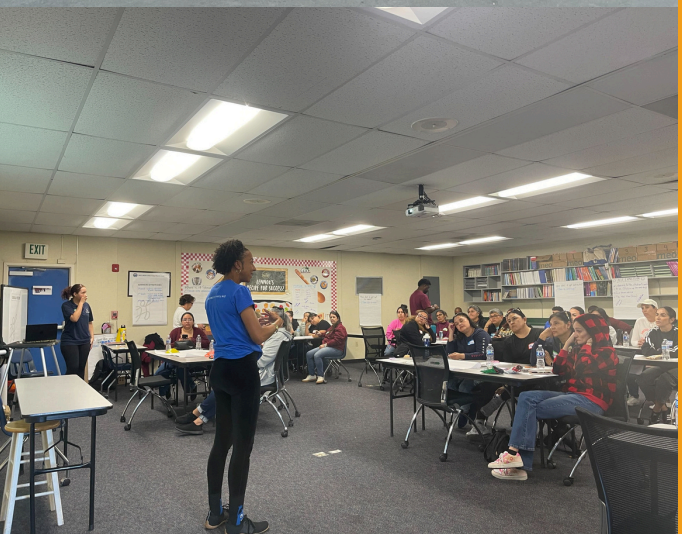
Calvin Hamilton, a former AmeriCorps Coach at 99th Street, is now Playworks' Director of Partnerships and still works closely with Principal Borden and the school community.

Lennox School District: From One School to a District-Wide Movement



What began with one principal looking for a better way to support his students has grown into a district-wide partnership rooted in the power of play.

In 2018-19, Jefferson Elementary Principal Robert Estrada was searching for solutions to persistent student conflicts and bullying on campus when a Playworks flyer landed on his desk. After seeing Playworks in action, Jefferson became a partner, and Mr. Estrada became a champion for the power of play—seeing firsthand its impact on conflict, attendance, belonging and school community.



His leadership helped spark interest across the district. Playworks partnered with all five Lennox elementary schools, reaching 2,844 students in 2025-26. The partnership has also helped bring additional resources and community experiences to students and families, including corporate Play Days, holiday celebrations and backpack distributions.

District-wide impact is about more than reaching more students—it is about building the capacity of the educators who support them every day.



In 2025-26, Lennox educators participated in a customized Playworks workshop focused on the power of play and building the systems that help sustain high-quality play across their schools. Together, educators explored how shared practices and mindsets can make safe, meaningful play part of the school community—not simply a program.

As Lennox navigates declining resources, rising costs and the closure of Felton Elementary following the 2025-26 school year, this partnership represents an investment in something schools need now more than ever: caring adults, connected communities and opportunities for every child to play.

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS IN PLAY!

Playworks Southern California extends immense gratitude to the generous support of all our partners, donors and volunteers. Our impact is the result of our collective investment and commitment to Playworks' mission to bring safe and healthy play to every kid.

Our School and Community-Based Organization Partners

Abraham Lincoln	Clara J. King Elementary
Academia Moderna	Cleminson Elementary
Alameda Elementary	Columbia Elementary
Almond Elementary	Cortada Elementary
Anaverde Hills	Cottonwood Elementary
Arovista Elementary	Cowan Avenue Elementary
Avondale Elementary	Coyote Canyon Elementary
Bancroft Elementary	Cucamonga Middle
Bandini Elementary	Cypress Elementary
Bear Gulch Elementary	Date Elementary
Beech Avenue Elementary	Del Sur Senior Elementary
Bella Vista Elementary	Diamond Elementary
Belvedere Elementary	Dolores Huerta Elementary
Beyond The Bell	Dolores Huerta International Academy
Birney Elementary	Dona Merced Elementary
Boys & Girls Club Of The Foothills	Downey Foundation For Educational Opportunities
Boys & Girls Club Of The West Valley	Dr. Theodore T. Alexander Jr. Science Center
Boys And Girls Club Of Burbank And GEV	Durfee Elementary
Boys And Girls Club Of Carson	El Dorado Elementary
Brea Country Hills Elementary	Elmhurst Elementary
Brea-Olinda Unified	Enterprise Elementary
Bubbling Wells Elementary	Esperanza Elementary
Buford Elementary	Falcon Academy Of Science And Technology
Cabot Yerxa Elementary	Felton Elementary
Camino Nuevo Charter Academy	Fontana Unified
Canyon Crest Elementary	Gallatin Elementary
Captain Raymond Collins	Garfield Elementary
Carpenter (C. C.) Elementary	Gauldin (A.L.) Elementary
Casa De Oro Elementary	Gerald A. Lawson Acad Of The Arts Math And Sci
Central Elementary	Gidley Elementary
Cesar E. Chavez Elementary	Grape Street Elementary
Cherrylee Elementary	Gregg Anderson Academy
Chula Vista Elementary	Grow Academy Arvin
Citrus Elementary	Grow Academy Shafter



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Our School and Community-Based Organization Partners

Cont'd

Harry Wirtz Elementary
Hemlock Elementary
Highlands Elementary
Hillview Middle
Hollydale
Imperial Elementary
Independence Elementary
Isana Academies
Jack Northrop Elementary
Jefferson Elementary
Joe Walker Middle
John And Jacquelyn Miller Elementary
John B. Monlux Elementary
Justice Street Academy Charter
Kathy Binks Elementary
Keep Youth Doing Something, Inc.
Kempton Street Literacy Academy
Kipp Endeavor College Preparatory Charter
Kipp Illuminar Academy
Kipp Socal
Kornblum
Kwis Elementary
La Merced Academy
La Mesa Dale Elementary
La Mesa-Spring Valley
La Presa Elementary
Laurel Elem Magnet Sch Of Innovation
And Career Exploration
Legore Elementary
Lennox
Lewis (Ed C.) Elementary
Liberty Elementary
Live Oak Elementary
Locust Elementary
Loma Elementary
Longfellow (Henry W.) Elementary
Loren Miller Elementary
Los Cerritos

Loyola Village Fine And Performing Arts Magnet
Madison Elementary
Magnolia Avenue Elementary
Major Lynn Mokler
Mango Elementary
Mariposa Elementary
Mark Keppel
Mckinley Avenue Elementary
Moffett Elementary
Monte Vista Elementary
National School District Preschool
New Lexington Elementary
Ninety-Fifth Street Elementary
Ninety-Ninth Street Elementary
North Tamarind Elementary
Norton Science And Language Academy
Oak Park Elementary
Old River Elementary
Oleander Elementary
One Hundred Fifty-Third Street Elementary
One Hundred Twelfth Street Elementary
Opal Robinson Elementary
Palm Elementary
Palm Springs Unified
Palmetto Elementary
Paramount Unified
Park Avenue Elementary
Parmelee Avenue Elementary
Playa Vista Elementary
Potrero Elementary
Price (Maude) Elementary
Purche Avenue Elementary
Quail Summit Elementary
Quartz Hill Elementary
Ramona
Ramona Elementary
Rancho Elementary
Rancho Vista Elementary



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Our School and Community-Based Organization Partners

Cont'd

Randall Pepper Elementary
Rio Hondo Elementary
Rio Lindo Elementary
Rio San Gabriel Elementary
Rio Vista Elementary
Rolando Elementary
Rosewood Park
Ruth Musser Middle
Seventy-Fourth Street Elementary
Shadow Hills Elementary
Shirpser Elementary
Sierra Lakes Elementary
South Tamarind Elementary
Stephen Foster Elementary
Sundown Elementary
Suva Elementary
Sweetwater Springs Elementary
Taft Elementary
Teresa Hughes Elementary
Theodore Roosevelt
Think Together
Thomas Jefferson Elementary
Tierra Bonita Elementary
Tokay Elementary
Towne Avenue Elementary
Unsworth (Edith) Elementary
Valerio Street Elementary
Valle Vista Elementary
Valley Elementary
Valley View Elementary
Veterans Elementary
Virginia Primrose Elementary
Wallace R. Davis Elementary
Ward (E. W.) Elementary

Washington Elementary
Wesley Gaines
West Randall Elementary
Whittier Elementary
Wilcox Elementary
Wilkerson Elementary
William S. Hart Union High
Williams (Spencer V.) Elementary
Willow Elementary
Winter Gardens Elementary
Wright Elementary
YMCA of Greater Long Beach



Our Foundation and Corporate Partners

Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld
Dunn Family Fund
GPSN
Johnny W. Carson Foundation
Jonathan Louis Furniture Company
Kaiser Permanente Community Benefit
Kings Care Foundation
LA Galaxy Foundation
LA84 Foundation
Leonard Hill Charitable Trust
Lilly Endowment, Inc.
Los Angeles Dodgers
Mattel Corp
Pacific Life Foundation
Play Equity Fund
Pricewaterhouse Coopers, LLC
San Manuel Band of Mission Indians
The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation
The Walt Disney Company Foundation
WSS

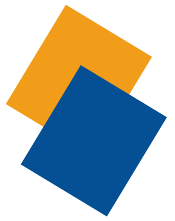


Our Regional Advisory Board Members

Melanie Smith, Board Chair
Katie Ball
Bryce Brown
Sara Gotfredson
Justin Radell
Robert Rayburn
Bransby Whitton
Robert Vartan



Champions Start At Recess



Inspired by the global excitement surrounding the World Cup, Playworks Southern California hosted a Girls Soccer Jamboree in May 2026 to create new opportunities for young athletes in our school communities. As LA prepares to host the Super Bowl LXI and the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games, and the world watches the 2027 Women's World Cup, we're excited about the doors these events will open for our students — and the reminder that long before athletes compete on global stages such as these, Champions Start At Recess.



Join us on our journey



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Get in touch with us!

Executive Director, Celeste Soto
celeste.soto@playworks.org

