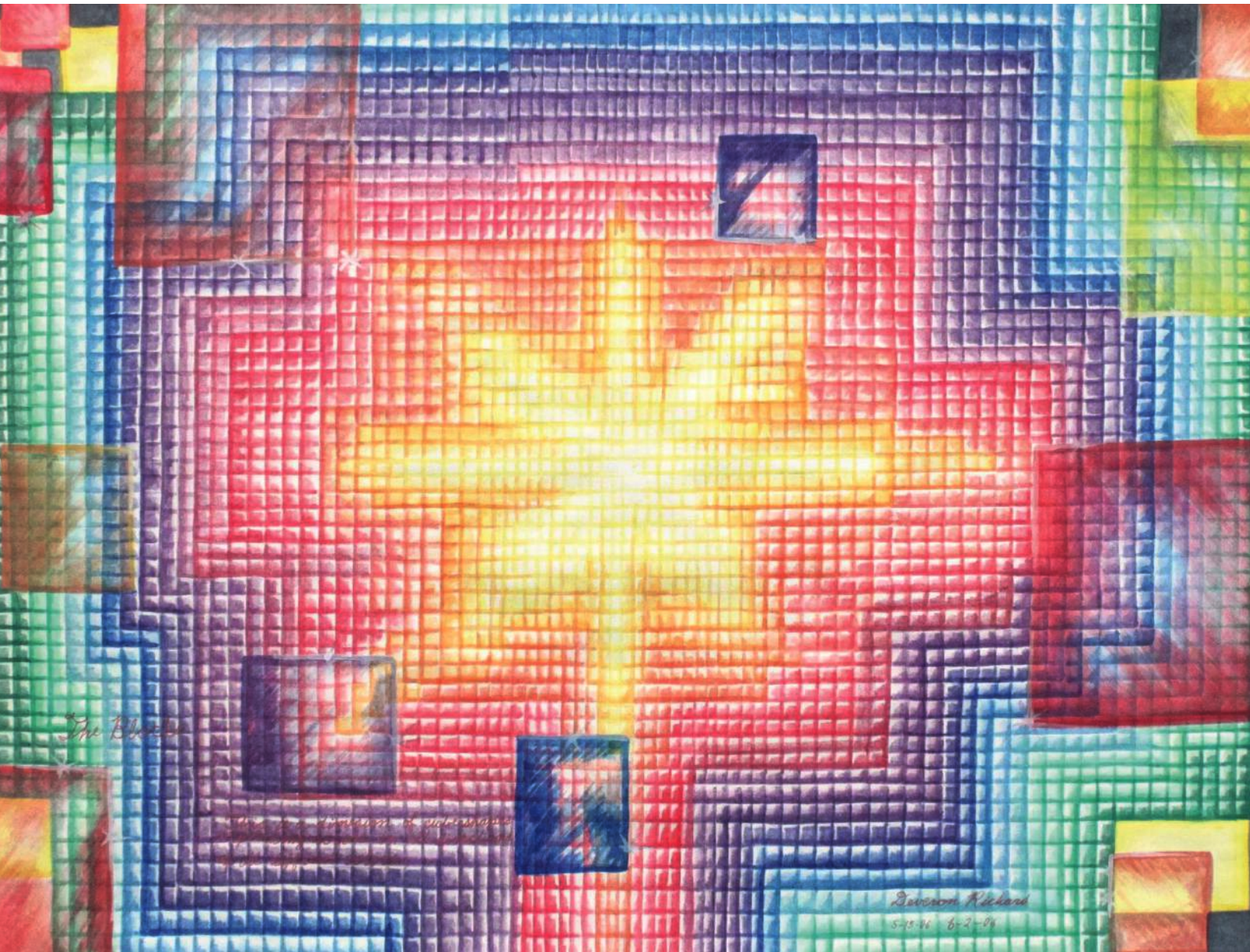


Together **We Shine**



EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN'S FOUNDATION
2024-2025 ANNUAL REPORT



Exceptional Children's Foundation



Together We Shine

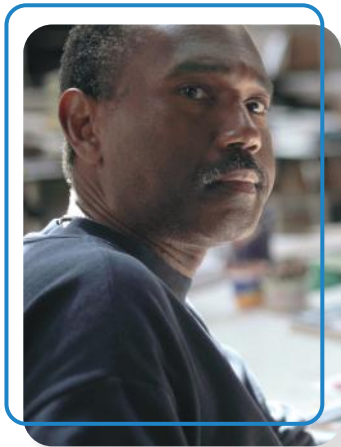
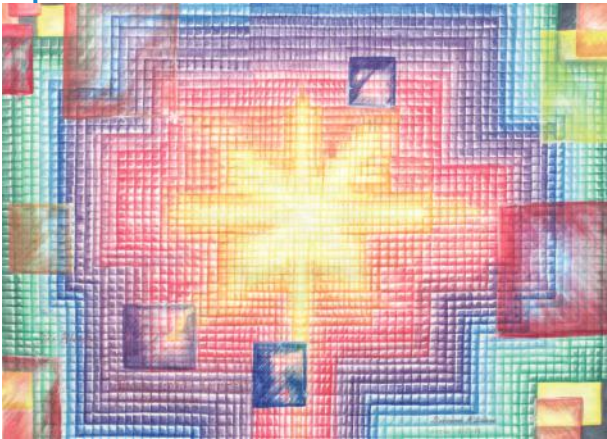
OVER 79 YEARS, ECF has grown from a small group of concerned parents into a vibrant community where children and adults with special needs can thrive. Guided by our theme, *Together We Shine*, we celebrate the countless connections that make our work possible—thousands of business and community partners, supporters, parents, and advocates who join hands with us to create opportunity, independence, and hope. Every spark of effort comes together to light a brighter future.

For 79 years, ECF has proven that when visionary leadership, skilled staff, passionate supporters, partners, and advocates come together, *Together We Shine*—lighting the way for children and adults with special needs to grow, thrive, and achieve their full potential.



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On the Cover

The Blocks by Deveron Richard

Deveron Richard has been working at the ECF Art Centers since 1988, starting at the original site on Martin Luther King Blvd., in South LA; he now works at the studio in San Pedro. Deveron is an artist highly skilled in watercolor and pastel. Deveron sees himself as a student of art, learning from his instructors with an admirable work ethic. He believes art should be “colorful, adventurous, beautiful, silly and historical.” When Deveron’s not creating art, you can find him watching television (anime and sci-fi), listening to smooth jazz or reading his bible. To view more of Deveron’s work, visit www.artecf.org.

Executive Greeting

Dear Exceptional Friends,

At ECF, every achievement begins with a spark—of learning, of growth, of possibility. When we come together as clients and families, staff, donors, and community partners, those sparks turn into something brighter. That's why this year's theme, ***Together We Shine***, perfectly reflects who we are and what we do.

This past year, we celebrated progress at every stage of life: young children reaching vital developmental milestones, students expanding their knowledge and confidence in the classroom and community, adults gaining greater independence through skills training, supported employment, and residential opportunities, and families drawing strength and resilience from the support available to them. Each of these accomplishments reflects not only individual determination but also the collective commitment of a community that believes in every person's potential.

As you read this report, we hope you'll feel the light of those successes and know that your generosity fuels every step forward. Thank you for walking beside us and for helping to ensure that children and adults with special needs can live, learn, and thrive.

Together, we are building a brighter future. **Together We Shine.**

With gratitude,



VERONICA ARTEAGA
President and CEO



SHELLEY I. SMITH
Chair, Board of Directors





Our **Mission**

is to provide the highest quality services for children and adults who are challenged with special needs—empowering them to reach their greatest potential.

ECF Programs – A Lifespan of Services

ECF has spent nearly eight decades helping children and adults with special needs thrive. From early intervention programs for infants and toddlers, to K-12 education for students, on through work, training and residential programs for adults, our programs provide the skilled services, empowerment, care, and community each individual needs to shine.

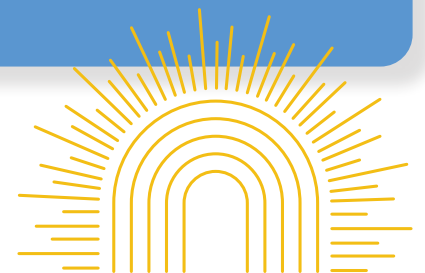
Early Start

CHILD PROGRAMS

100%
of PARENTS OF
CHILDREN IN ECF
EARLY START
reported that the
program made them
**FEEL BETTER
ABOUT THEIR
CHILD'S FUTURE**



ECF'S EARLY START PROGRAM supports children ages 0–3 with developmental delays or disabilities through inclusive learning, therapies, and home-based services. Families receive guidance and advocacy support, ensuring every child has the tools to grow, learn, and thrive.



ECF's Early Start program gives infants and toddlers (birth to age three) with developmental delays or disabilities the best possible start in life—while empowering their families with knowledge, resources, and hope.

Early Start supports children with autism, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, intellectual disabilities, speech and language impairments, traumatic brain injuries, and many other developmental challenges.

Center-Based Services provide an inclusive, enrichment-focused preschool experience at our two licensed centers, where children with and without special needs learn and play side by side. Each child receives individualized support in a nurturing, family-friendly environment that encourages socialization, creativity, and confidence. Much like a traditional preschool, children enjoy outdoor play, field trips, and healthy meals—while those who qualify also receive occupational, physical, and speech therapy. Our licensed therapists work closely with teachers to weave language-rich and functional skill-building activities into the daily classroom experience.

Through **Home-Based Services**, ECF educators visit families weekly or monthly to provide personalized early education and parent coaching in the comfort of their own home. Each family receives a customized service plan that may include therapy services, medical assessments, and connections to community resources.

Speech and Language Therapy is designed for children with language processing disorders, hearing loss, language delays, stuttering and voice or articulation disorders. Licensed Speech Therapists help each student learn to communicate more effectively in all areas of their lives.

Occupational Therapy focuses on supporting development through play-based activities and individual interventions to enhance fine and gross motor skills, sensory processing, and self-regulation, in addition to feeding, play and social interactions.

To ensure every family thrives, **Family Support Services** provide vital guidance, advocacy, and emotional support. Services include parent education groups, social work assistance, legal aid and immigration referrals, crisis counseling, marriage and family therapy, access to medical care, and on-site emergency food pantries.

All Early Start services are provided by **culturally competent and bilingual staff** who can effectively work with families speaking Armenian, Farsi, Russian, and Spanish.



Kayne Eras School (KES)

STUDENT PROGRAM

100%
of ELIGIBLE
STUDENTS
SUCCESSFULLY
GRADUATED



ECF'S KAYNE ERAS SCHOOL (KES) is a fully accredited nonpublic K–12 school that helps students with special needs reach their fullest academic, social, and emotional potential.

Each classroom is led by a credentialed teacher and skilled assistant, creating a structured and nurturing environment where every student can thrive. Our self-contained elementary and middle school classrooms are tailored to meet a wide range of needs, including emotional and behavioral challenges, specific learning disabilities, and autism spectrum disorder—through individualized instruction and therapeutic support.

In high school, students work toward earning their diploma. Classes follow common core standards for academics, with individualized instruction to meet each student's ability level. Homeroom teachers serve as case managers, coordinating each student's educational team of teachers, therapists, administrators, and service providers. Together, they guide students through personalized learning plans, transition planning, and vocational preparation that help pave the way for success beyond graduation.

KES's acclaimed Enrichment Program engages students through activities that build confidence, creativity, and life skills. Offerings include performing and visual arts, technology and financial education, culinary arts, vocational training, self-defense, team sports, and community service—empowering students to discover their strengths both in and out of the classroom.

Through ECF's Therapeutic Services, students and their families receive counseling and specialized interventions that support their academic potential, emotional health, positive relationships, and personal growth. In addition, KES provides speech/language and occupational therapy, as well as mental health services for both KES and non-KES students and families.

Fully accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), Kayne Eras School provides students the tools, confidence, and support they need to succeed—in school and in life.



ECF Celebrates Kayne Eras School Class of 2025 Graduation



ECF Kayne Eras School proudly celebrated the graduation of our Class of 2025 with an exciting and inspiring ceremony.

The Class of 2025 Seniors celebrated with a processional presentation of diplomas and award recognitions before a packed auditorium of proud families, friends, supporters and staff. ECF President & CEO Veronica Arteaga welcomed guests and congratulated the Class on their hard work and success culminating in this milestone moment in their lives.

This year's Class Valedictorian was Jesse Avila, and Kayne Eras School alumnus Anthony Brown delivered the commencement address.

Several awards recognizing student accomplishments were presented to students, and everyone enjoyed lots of hugs, photographs and cake together with families, teachers, staff and friends.

Graduating Senior Keyle Johnson's mother, Antonette, said she was overjoyed and overcome with pride. *"Today my family celebrates a great accomplishment. It's a milestone for my son to go out into the world and become something."*

In the words of commencement speaker Anthony Brown, to all the Class of 2025, *"May you go on to change the world, and never let the world change you!"*

Adult Programs

Employment | Art Centers | Residential

9,654
HOURS of
INDEPENDENT
LIVING TRAINING for
adults with developmental
disabilities living in their
own apartments



ECF empowers adults with special needs to live with greater independence, purpose, and confidence through a wide range of programs that support personal growth, community inclusion, and meaningful employment.

Exceptional Works: Employment Services

Exceptional Works is a continuum of employment programs designed to help adults with special needs prepare for, find, and thrive in community-based jobs.

- **Accelerated Preparation Program**

This program helps adults with lower-than-average work productivity (below 75%) build the work, life, and soft skills needed for future success. Participants complete the program with improved self-motivation and a stronger foundation for advanced training through ECF's **Work Readiness** classes or **Exceptional Training Academy**.

- **Work Readiness Program**

Through guided instruction and group learning, participants gain essential job-seeking and workplace skills—from exploring job options and completing applications to writing résumés, interviewing, and developing professional grooming, communication, and personal growth habits.

- **Exceptional Training Academy**

Participants receive hands-on vocational training in computer literacy, culinary arts, janitorial services, retail sales, and warehouse operations. Graduates leave prepared for meaningful employment in the community. Participants may also gain paid experience through the **Exceptional Packaging Solutions** program, earning minimum wage while refining their skills.

- **College Classroom Program**

In partnership with local educational institutions, ECF staff provide in-class support to adults enrolled in vocational courses, helping them complete their studies and transition successfully into the workforce.



Community Programs

The **Community Fusion Program** gives adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities the opportunity to participate in meaningful community life through volunteerism, skill development, and social engagement. Participants learn self-advocacy, safety, and independence while connecting with community services and activities that reflect their interests and goals.

Exceptional Community Connections offers additional opportunities for adults to volunteer and integrate into the community while developing valuable work habits and social connections.

The **Individual Pathways Program** provides individualized transition planning for adults—particularly young adults—focusing on access to community resources, skill development, and preparation for employment or volunteer engagement.

Residential Services

ECF's **Residential Services Program** provides safe, supportive housing and life skills training for adults with special needs. Services range from independent living with minimal support to fully staffed group homes that provide comprehensive medical care. Each setting is designed to foster independence, dignity, and a true sense of home.

To learn more about ECF programs, visit [ECF.net](https://www.artecf.net).

• CNC Machinist Partnership

Adults can train to become Computer Numerical Control (CNC) Machinists, learning to program, set up, and operate CNC machines to produce precision parts and tools for industries such as aerospace, military, and medical manufacturing.

• Exceptional Packaging Solutions and Employment Solutions

Participants in **Exceptional Packaging Solutions** gain paid work experience through packaging and assembly contracts. ECF's **Exceptional Employment Solutions** program supports participants in securing community-based jobs and provides ongoing job coaching once employment begins.

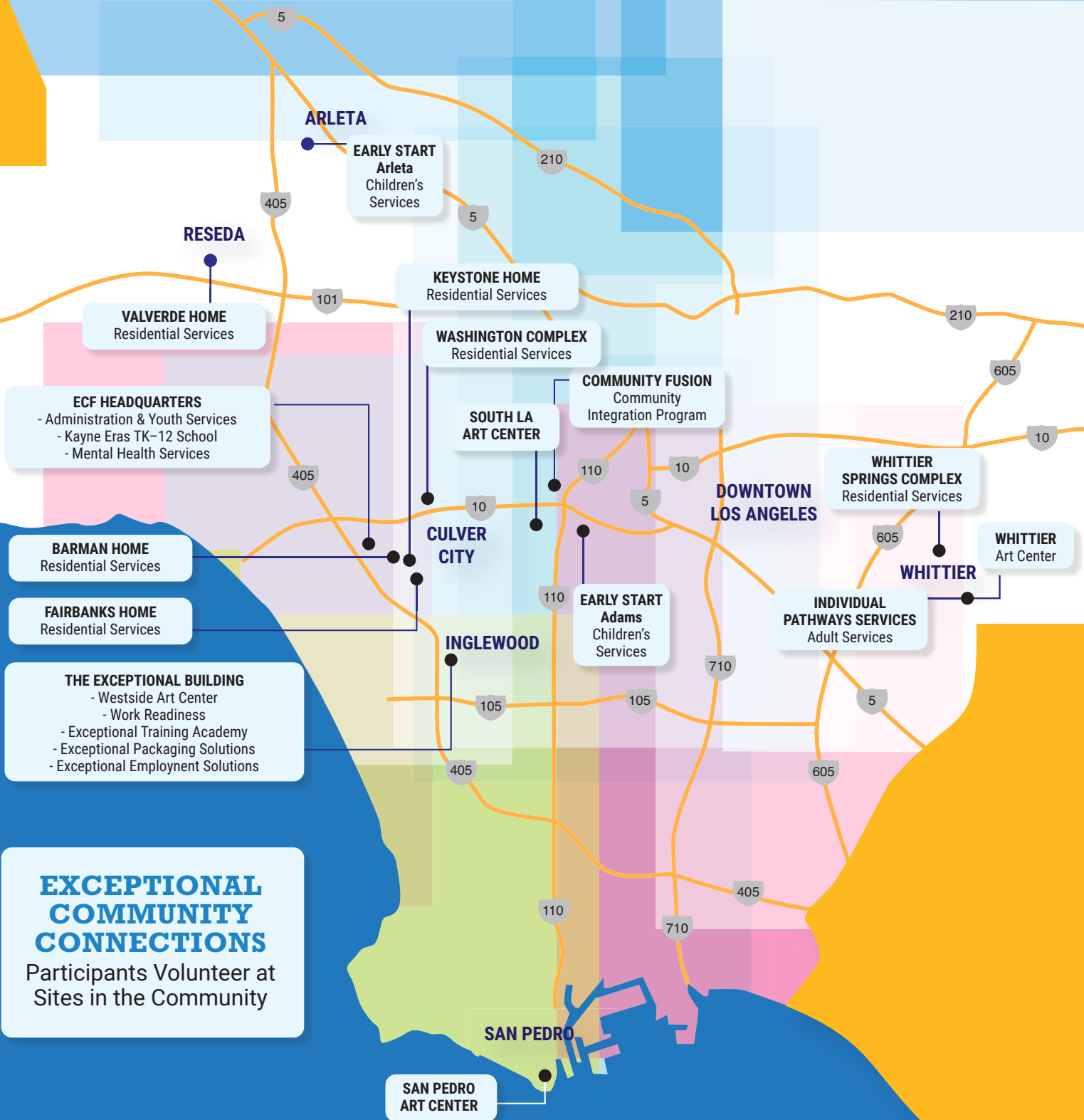
ECF proudly partners with more than 70 local businesses across industries including retail, software testing, clerical, culinary services, janitorial, and warehouse operations.

Art Centers

ECF's renowned **Art Centers Program** offers professional fine arts training at four studios throughout Los Angeles, where adult artists explore a wide range of mediums and techniques. Artwork created by ECF artists is exhibited at juried shows and available for purchase at www.artecf.org, helping artists earn income and recognition for their creative achievements.



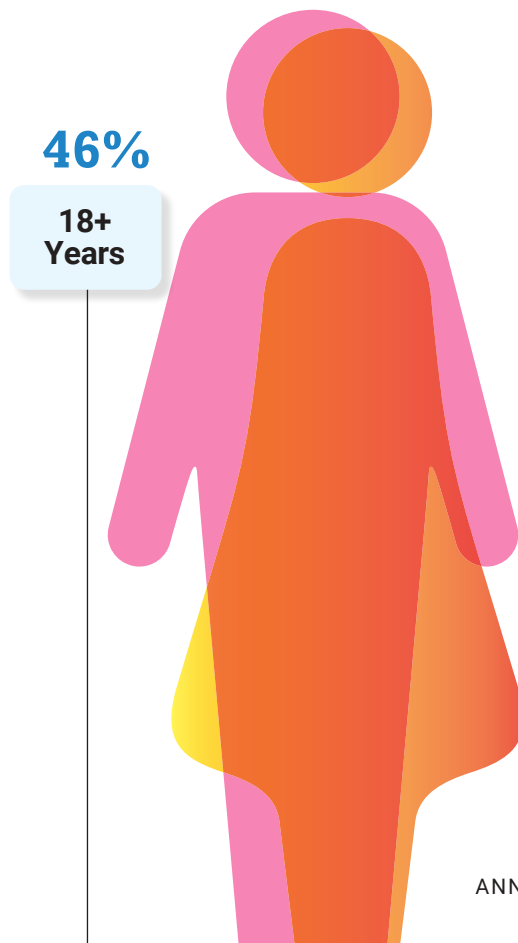
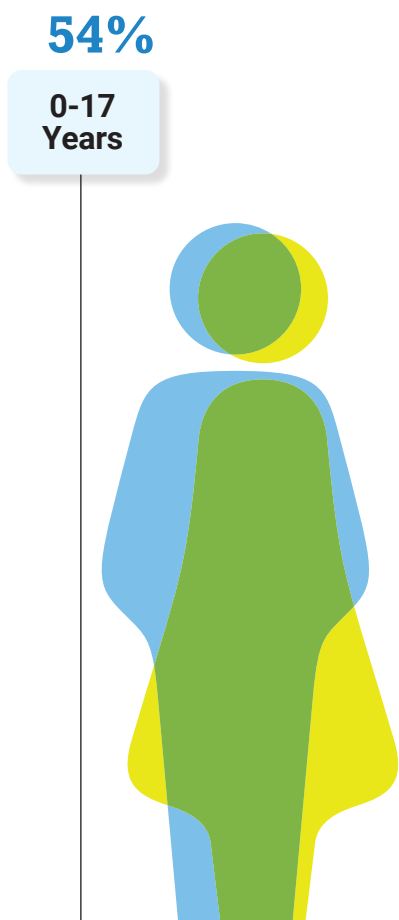
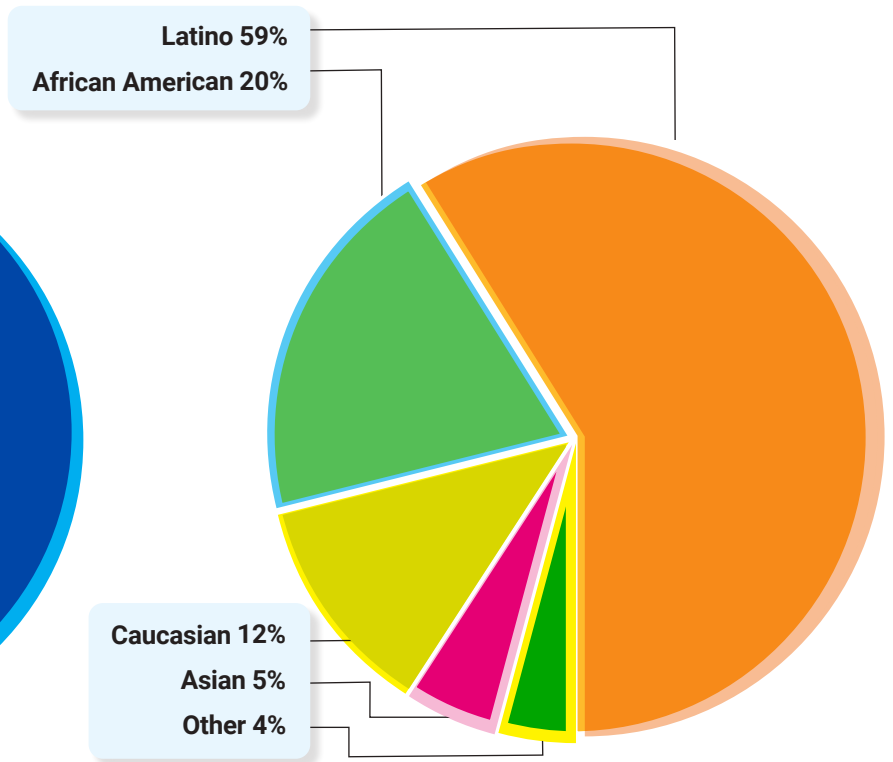
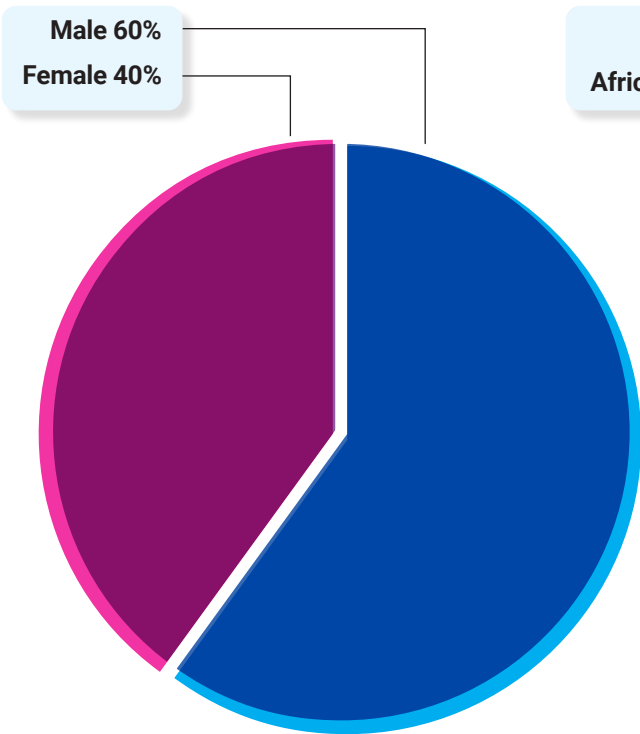
Where We Work



EXCEPTIONAL COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Participants Volunteer at Sites in the Community

Who We Serve



Our Impact

236,093

Overall HOURS of SERVICE Provided



Number of HOME VISITS
for families with
infants and toddlers
with developmental delays

17,064

18,692

HOURS OF CLASSROOM-BASED
EARLY INTERVENTION



11,081

HOURS OF SPEECH, OCCUPATIONAL
AND PHYSICAL THERAPY FOR
INFANTS AND TODDLERS



100%

of PARENTS of
CHILDREN
in ECF EARLY START
RATE THEIR CHILD'S
PROGRESS from
participating VERY
GOOD TO EXCELLENT

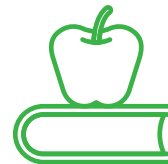


100%

of ELIGIBLE
STUDENTS
SUCCESSFULLY
GRADUATED

100%

of KAYNE ERAS
GRADUATES
are attending two- or four-year
colleges, trade schools or
pursuing employment
opportunities
within the community





7,913

HOURS OF INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY THERAPY IN MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES



1,258

Pieces of artwork sold by Art Centers program client artists

20,472

HOURS of job coaching for adults with developmental disabilities working in community jobs

83%

Exceptional Employment Solutions participants placed in jobs at 20 hours or more per week



79,876

HOURS of paid work training for adults with developmental disabilities

20,745

Hours of life skills training and community outings provided to adults in Community Fusion program



96%

of ADULTS PARTICIPATING in Community Fusion made progress on their individual goals

100%

of FAMILIES RATE OUR RESIDENTIAL SERVICES GOOD TO EXCELLENT



Exceptional Works and Residential Services

ADULT PROGRAMS



Finding Strength, Stability, and Pride: Willie's Story

For Willie, life began with unimaginable hardship. Shortly after his birth, Willie's mother passed away, leaving his father to care for six young children. Unable to cope, his father lost custody, and all six siblings were placed in separate foster homes—never to see each other again.

Diagnosed with dyslexia as a child, Willie pushed through every challenge. As a teen, he graduated high school, earned his driver's license, and began working as a custodian for the Los Angeles Unified School District through a government-sponsored employment program. He proudly served for 12 years, mastering every aspect of his job—until funding for the program ended.

That setback led Willie to a new beginning. When he heard that **Exceptional Children's Foundation (ECF)** was hosting a job fair, he decided to attend—and as he puts it, *"the rest is history."* Willie joined ECF's **Exceptional Works** program and has been a valued member of the ECF family for more than 33 years.

His first placement was at Vons Supermarket in Hawthorne, where his upbeat attitude and commitment to service earned him praise from both customers and coworkers. A year later, he joined an ECF contracted janitorial crew at the Ronald Reagan Federal Building in downtown Los Angeles. After five years, he transferred to ECF's team at the West Los Angeles Federal

Building, where he continues to work today—serving proudly on a secure custodial crew for the FBI.

Willie provides custodial services to the FBI's Human Resources and Legal Departments. His professionalism and reliability have earned him deep respect within the agency, as well as an official Certificate of Recognition from the FBI in 2019 for exceptional service.

When life presented another challenge—his marriage ending in 2008—Willie again found support through ECF. With the help of ECF's Residential Services he moved into Westington, one of ECF's independent living apartment communities. There, Willie regained his stability and confidence, continuing to thrive both at home and at work.

Today, Willie manages supply operations for his custodial team, trains new workers, and drives a daily carpool with three coworkers to help them get to and from their shifts. A former ECF Employee of the Quarter, Willie is known for his perfect attendance, steady leadership, and unshakable optimism.

After decades of perseverance, Willie's story embodies what ECF makes possible: a life of independence, dignity, and purpose.

Through the opportunities provided by ECF's Exceptional Works employment program and Residential Services, Willie has built not just a career—but a home, a community, and a life he loves.

Art Centers

ADULT PROGRAMS

Maria Finds Her Light

Maria Del Mar Pereda sees things from a different perspective, literally as well as artistically. As a child, Maria was diagnosed with a very rare condition called Alice in Wonderland Syndrome (AWIS). AWIS is a neurological condition that causes temporary distortions in depth perception; things seem bigger or smaller than they really are. She also has temporal lobe epilepsy—which she notes, her favorite artist, Vincent Van Gogh, also had.

“I definitely see things from a unique perspective. When I was younger, I was very withdrawn and quiet. I realized that it made other people uncomfortable, and I learned how to socialize, but I found this exhausting. I was odd and different, and I would observe, instead of interacting. I was more comfortable in my own mind. I can make worlds out of nothing in my mind,” Maria says.

Art was always a refuge and an outlet for Maria. “I went to a Montessori school, and I learned about Georgia O’Keefe. Then in elementary school we did oil paintings of master works. I especially loved Monet and Van Gogh.”

When she started practicing art, Maria began doing a personal form of automatic drawing. “I let my mind go, and my hand just goes. I let stories come from it. This feels good to me; it feels like my subconscious is my home.”

Now, she’s creating her art at ECF’s Art Center San Pedro, and her artwork is getting a lot of attention. Her paintings are steep with color and story and symbolism, and her ceramics as intricately detailed as the underwater life of the sea she often envisions. “I love anything blue and feel very connected to it. My name means ‘of the sea,’” says Maria. “When I was younger, I would see blue in my mind because I didn’t speak much. I didn’t use words, I used visualizations. I would picture the color blue to create a safe space.”

She’s found one at the ECF Art Center. Maria no longer feels odd or different. She comes from Long Beach every day without fail because it makes her so happy to work among wonderful instructors, artists and friends.

“Sometimes we have to push through darkness to find the light, but there is always light. Especially here.”

“I love being an artist. I would definitely like to do more ceramics and do really big paintings and drawings to experiment with depth. It is difficult, but not giving up is important,” Maria says. “Sometimes we have to push through darkness to find the light, but there is always light. Especially here.”

Diego

A Brighter Path for Diego's Family

Early Start

CHILD PROGRAMS

When Maria and Gerardo Hernandez discovered they would be having their second “miracle” baby, they were overjoyed. The couple had long wanted children and had tried for many years before their first child, Mia, came along. Now two and a half years old, Mia is a proud big sister to baby Diego.

But both children have had a tough start—and a similar one. Maria has cholestasis which complicated her pregnancies. Both children were born prematurely, with respiratory distress requiring oxygen and multiple weeks of hospitalization in the NICU.

Diego presented breach and was delivered via c-section at 31 weeks. He had assisted ventilation and a tube for feeding, while under observation for sepsis. After two months, Maria and Gerardo were finally able to take Diego home, joyful but fearful, as Diego was at high risk of substantial disability.

At a follow up doctor's visit, Maria expressed concerns that Diego was not lifting his head during tummy time. He didn't track objects when moved from one side to another, and he wouldn't open his hands or show his palms. He cried but made no cooing or other noises.

The doctor referred Diego for evaluation where it was confirmed that he had delays across all developmental areas.

In April, Diego started Occupational Therapy at Early Start. His therapist works with both Diego and Maria in session to encourage Diego's development. Maria says it is making a

huge difference. “When we had Mia, we had been wanting a baby so badly and for so long,” she says. “I coddled her; carried her everywhere and all the time. If she seemed interested in some object, I would jump to bring it to her instead of letting her move to it and explore. Here, I've learned how to encourage the children to best support their development.”

Diego now is growing steadier sitting—he even tries to climb. He opens his hands and grasps objects. He smiles and giggles and has grown very curious and engaged.

“I cannot say thank you enough for all ECF has done for my children and family. We are all learning and growing.”

Seeing Diego developing, Maria began to have concerns about Mia's social and language skills. “I knew Early Start could help Mia, too,” she says. While baby Diego continues in Occupational Therapy, Mia has started attending the Early Start center preschool program. “Now she doesn't want to leave class. They are working on increasing her words and communication.”

Maria says that ECF Early Start has changed their lives. “I cannot say thank you enough for all ECF has done for my children and family. We are all learning and growing. I could not be more grateful.”

Kayne Eras School

STUDENT PROGRAM

Jaden

Thriving at Kayne Eras School



High school senior Jaden calls ECF's Kayne Eras School (KES) a fun place to be. He joined KES two years ago after visiting a variety of schools with his parents in search of a place where he could truly thrive.

With learning challenges that made traditional environments difficult, Jaden needed smaller class sizes, supportive counseling, and opportunities to explore his interests. The moment he stepped into the Kayne Eras School, he knew he had found the right fit.

Since then, Jaden has flourished both academically and personally, engaging in a wide variety of school activities. After its five-year absence, he envisioned and spearheaded the development of the school's yearbook and served as its chief editor and designer. He has delivered Morning Announcements and emceed the monthly Student of the Month assemblies. He helps with school event decor, uses his computer and graphic skills to create student ID cards, and even assists in the culinary classroom as a Teacher's Assistant. This year, he is both the Bulldog News Anchor and Video Editor. After a spirited campaign he was elected Student Council President, a role in which he is admired for his leadership and kindness by students across all grade levels. When he walks down the hallways, Jaden seems to know every student of every age by name—and they know

and admire him. He checks in with them and encourages them to get involved in school activities, try new things, and always do their "Bulldog Best"—according to the school's mascot motto.

Joelene Walker, Director of Student Services and Arts, describes Jaden as "a marvel—sweet-natured, helpful, and extraordinarily talented. You would never know that he's had to work hard to overcome his challenges, or that he once struggled with public speaking. He has embraced every challenge and every time he does, he shines." Jaden credits Ms. Walker's guidance, saying she reminds him of his mom: "She has high expectations and pushes me—but in a loving way."

"Jaden has definitely blossomed and grown at Kayne Eras," says his mom, Shereen. "He loves it. The school has really nurtured his leadership skills. We are very grateful."

Looking ahead, Jaden plans to attend community college after graduation, and then transfer to a 4-year university to study animal genetics, with the goal of protecting endangered species and the environment.

Meanwhile, at KES, Jaden is more than just thriving—he is growing, leading, learning, and discovering his potential, with his eye on the future and the difference he plans to make in the world.

Highlights of the Year



ECF Kayne Eras School Receives Highest Level Accreditation from Western Association of Schools and Colleges

In February, the Exceptional Children's Foundation (ECF) Kayne Eras School received full six-year accreditation by the Accrediting Commission for Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACS WASC).

The six-year accreditation is the highest standard, achieved by less than 10% of WASC accredited schools.

The ACS WASC is a world-renowned accrediting association and one of the six regional accrediting agencies recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. Accreditation through ACS WASC indicates that a school meets the highest standards of academic quality, organizational capacity and educational effectiveness.

“...WHEN OUR STUDENTS GRADUATE AND APPLY FOR COLLEGE OR LOOK FOR A JOB, ACCREDITATION FURTHER VALIDATES THE INTEGRITY OF THE SCHOOL'S PROGRAM AND THE SUCCESSSES OUR STUDENTS ACHIEVE HERE AT ECF KAYNE ERAS CENTER.”

Dr. Caprice Wade, director of Educational Services at ECF Kayne Eras School, said, “For our students and families, what this accreditation means is that they are assured of the school's high-quality education program and a trustworthy educational environment. Many non-public schools meet the basic requirements of the State but do not take the leap to earn WASC accreditation. We meet the A-G requirements for our curriculum to disperse our own diplomas. And, when our students graduate and apply for college or look for a job, accreditation further validates the integrity of the school's program and the successes our students achieve here at ECF Kayne Eras Center.”

ECF President & CEO Veronica Arteaga Champions Autism Advocacy in Los Angeles Times Op-Ed

ECF President & CEO Veronica Arteaga responded to the remarks of Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. on autism, in an OpEd published April 22nd in the *Los Angeles Times*, writing in support of individuals with autism and their families and calling for attention on urgent issues such as proposed Medicaid cuts.

A12 TUESDAY, APRIL 22, 2020 Los Angeles Times LATIMES.COM/OPINION

OPINION VOICES

Voices VERONICA A. ARTEAGA GUEST CONTRIBUTOR

RFK Jr.'s words mask the real tragedy facing those with autism



It's not surprising that the public discourse about autism, autism spectrum disorder is a complex condition. It's not surprising that the public discourse about autism, autism spectrum disorder is a complex condition. It's not surprising that the public discourse about autism, autism spectrum disorder is a complex condition.

Autism spectrum disorder is a complex condition. It's not surprising that the public discourse about autism, autism spectrum disorder is a complex condition. It's not surprising that the public discourse about autism, autism spectrum disorder is a complex condition.

Autism spectrum disorder is a complex condition. It's not surprising that the public discourse about autism, autism spectrum disorder is a complex condition. It's not surprising that the public discourse about autism, autism spectrum disorder is a complex condition.

LOS ANGELES IS A CITY BUILT ON DIVERSITY, INNOVATION, AND HEART. OUR DISABILITY COMMUNITY IS NO DIFFERENT. IT'S TIME WE HONOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS—NOT WITH PITY OR PANIC, BUT WITH PARTNERSHIP AND PROGRESS.”

Los Angeles Times.



ECF Earns Three-Year CARF Accreditation



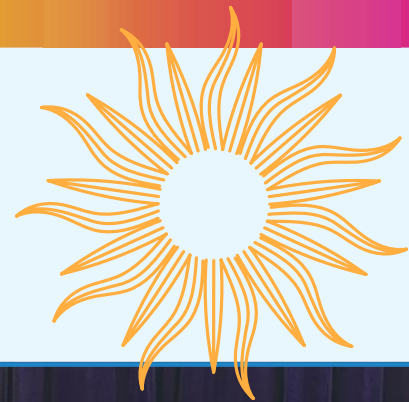
Exceptional Children's Foundation has been issued a Three-Year Accreditation from CARF for its Community Employment Services: Employment Supports; Community Employment Services: Job Development and Organizational Employment Services based on its recent survey. The accreditation will extend through March 31, 2028, and is an indication of the organization's dedication and commitment to improving the quality of the lives of the people served.

CARF is an independent, nonprofit accreditor of health and human services. The accreditation process applies CARF's internationally recognized standards during a site survey conducted by peer surveyors. Accreditation is an ongoing process that distinguishes a provider's service delivery and signals to the public that the provider is committed to continuous performance improvement, responsive to feedback and accountable to the community and its other stakeholders.

CARF accreditation has been the recognized benchmark of quality health and human services for more than 50 years.

ECF's President and CEO, Veronica Arteaga noted that, "The association's determination to grant the three-year status to ECF reflects the excellence and dedication of our staff, and our ongoing commitment to providing the highest quality services for the individuals we serve."

THE CARF ACCREDITATION DECISION STATES, "EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN'S FOUNDATION HAS SHOWN A DEEP COMMITMENT TO THE WELL-BEING OF THE PARTICIPANTS AND THE COMMUNITY THROUGH THE PROVISION OF HIGH-QUALITY, PERSON-CENTERED SERVICES. A CULTURE OF SERVICE EXCELLENCE, INTEGRITY, EMPOWERMENT, INCLUSION, COMMUNITY BUILDING, ADVOCACY, AND LIFELONG LEARNING FOR THE PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS AND STAFF MEMBERS IS EVIDENT ACROSS THE ORGANIZATION."



ECF Forum on Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) Provides Information and Resources for Community Family Members and Dependents with Special Needs

ECF hosted our 2nd Informational Forum in February at the ECF Kayne Eras Center. The Forum provided resources and information on the topic of Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) for family members and dependents with special needs and featured a panel of experts and Q & A moderated by ABC7 Anchor Jory Rand.

Panelists Feben Fantu, Family Empowerment Center Manager, of the Westside Regional Center; Dr. Caprice Wade, ECF Kayne Eras Center Director of Educational Services; Georgiana Junco-Kelman, Esq., Special Needs Attorney; and parent advocate, Darcy Rodriguez, engaged with more than 30 attendees and provided tips, resources and critical information to assist families.

ECF Supporters Tee Off to Make a Difference

ECF friends and supporters hit the greens in style on March 17th for the 3rd Annual ECF Golf Benefit at Oakmont Country Club. The sold-out tournament brought together a record 92 golfers and more than 150 guests for a spirited day of golf, camaraderie, and giving back.

Following the tournament, guests gathered for a lively cocktail reception and dinner featuring a Raise the Paddle, auction, prizes, and plenty of fun—all in support of ECF's life-changing programs for children and adults with developmental disabilities.

Thanks to Co-Chairs Ellen & Brenden Turner and the generosity of all our sponsors—the event raised critical funds and welcomed many new friends into the ECF community.



THESE 2025 HONOREES EACH HAVE A UNIQUE PARTNERSHIP WITH ECF, AND THEY PLAY A KEY ROLE IN HELPING US FILL BUDGET GAPS AND OFFER THE ENHANCED SERVICES THAT IMPACT THE CHILDREN AND ADULTS WE SERVE EVERY DAY... IT IS A PRIVILEGE TO HONOR AND THANK THEM FOR THEIR PARTNERSHIP."

— VERONICA ARTEAGA

9th Annual Exceptional Partners Luncheon & Awards Honors Partners Creating Opportunities for Individuals with Special Needs

Exceptional Children's Foundation (ECF) hosted the 9th Annual Exceptional Partners Luncheon and Awards in June, honoring ECF partners across Los Angeles advancing the education, independence and goals of individuals with special needs through education, employment, training, hiring and philanthropy.

The event was emceed by KCAL News reporter Kristine Lazar, who was also honored for her partnership in emceeding the event for the past six years. Sarah Ali, CEO of the R&S Kayne Foundation, delivered the Keynote Address.

Four partners were recognized and presented with 2024 Exceptional Partner Awards for their exemplary efforts on behalf of the special needs community: Los Angeles Trial Lawyers Charities; Social Justice Learning Institute; Pauline C. Frederick, California Department of Rehabilitation; and Herbert McGurk, USA Dance.

"These 2025 honorees each have a unique partnership with ECF, and they play a key role in helping us fill budget gaps and offer the enhanced services that impact the children and adults we serve every day," said ECF President and CEO Veronica Arteaga. "It is a privilege to honor and thank them for their partnership."

At the luncheon ECF also presented the Annual Steven J. Rose Exceptional Culver City Partner Award to Candance Simmons, CEO, Co-Chair of the Women in Business Council, Culver City Chamber of Commerce. The award recognizes an individual who has helped to shape the future of Culver City and strengthen its business community.



A New ECF Urban Garden Grows from Partnership with Social Justice Learning Institute

In the heart of Inglewood, Exceptional Children's Foundation (ECF) and the Social Justice Learning Institute (SJLI) have been quietly transforming the community through collaboration, compassion, and shared purpose. The partnership, rooted in a mutual commitment to empowerment and inclusion, demonstrates what happens when social equity meets opportunity.

The Social Justice Learning Institute (SJLI), an Inglewood-based nonprofit, is dedicated to improving the education, health, and well-being of youth and communities of color. Through its community programs, SJLI empowers residents to enact social change using research, training, and community mobilization.

Over the past several years, ECF and SJLI have built a strong working relationship centered around community gardening and food security. Every Friday, SJLI operates a food hub and urban garden serving Inglewood and the broader South Los Angeles area—distributing upwards of 15,000 pounds of food. ECF participants and staff have volunteered alongside SJLI's team, assisting with the distribution of foods, harvesting, planting, and maintaining the garden.

Their collaboration not only brings nourishment to local families but also offers ECF clients a sense of purpose and belonging. "Our ECF friends faithfully and eagerly come to help," said SJLI Health Equity Programs Director Nicole Steele, "bringing much-needed support and so much joy as we serve our community together."

At the core of this partnership is ECF's Urban Gardening Initiative, a project that began with minimal funding but boundless ambition. The initiative empowers ECF participants to learn about sustainable food production while contributing to community well-being. Drawing on SJLI's extensive experience in urban agriculture, ECF has received valuable mentorship and guidance, ensuring the project's continued growth and impact.

SJLI leaders express pride in seeing ECF's garden flourish, calling it a "program that truly serves participants in a full and expansive way that allows them to grow and thrive."

The relationship between ECF and SJLI exemplifies how collaboration between community-based organizations can spark meaningful change.

Together, we are cultivating far more than vegetables—we are nurturing hope, dignity, and the shared belief that every person has the power to make their community stronger.

Revenue

Program and Other Revenue

Regional Centers – Tuition and Fees	\$ 12,101,253
Unified School Districts – Tuition and Fees	2,927,751
DMH Contract	2,655,673
ICF Medi-Cal Fees	2,661,215
Non Public Agency Fees	868,277
Contract Sales	1,639,061
Authorized Endowment Fund (Spending Policy)	1,262,585
HUD Program Revenue	898,880
MISC Income	317,532
Sale of Merchandise	59,928
Total Program and Other Revenue	25,392,156

Community Support

Contributions (Net of Special Event Costs \$92K)	1,530,165
In-Kind Donations – KEC Food	49,756
Total Community Support	1,579,921

TOTAL REVENUE¹	26,972,077
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Expense

Programs

Early Start	4,102,312
KEC School	4,352,756
Residential Services	3,172,302
Art Centers	2,328,582
Exceptional Employment Solutions (SEP)	2,301,404
Mental Health	1,680,778
Exceptional Works (excluding SEP)	1,147,836
Exceptional Community Connections and Community Fusion	778,904
Diagnostic and Therapy (NPA)	875,061
HUD Properties	924,079
TOTAL PROGRAM EXPENSE²	21,664,015

Administrative

Administration	2,650,742
Development and Fundraising	802,556
TOTAL ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSE²	3,453,298

TOTAL EXPENSE²	25,117,313
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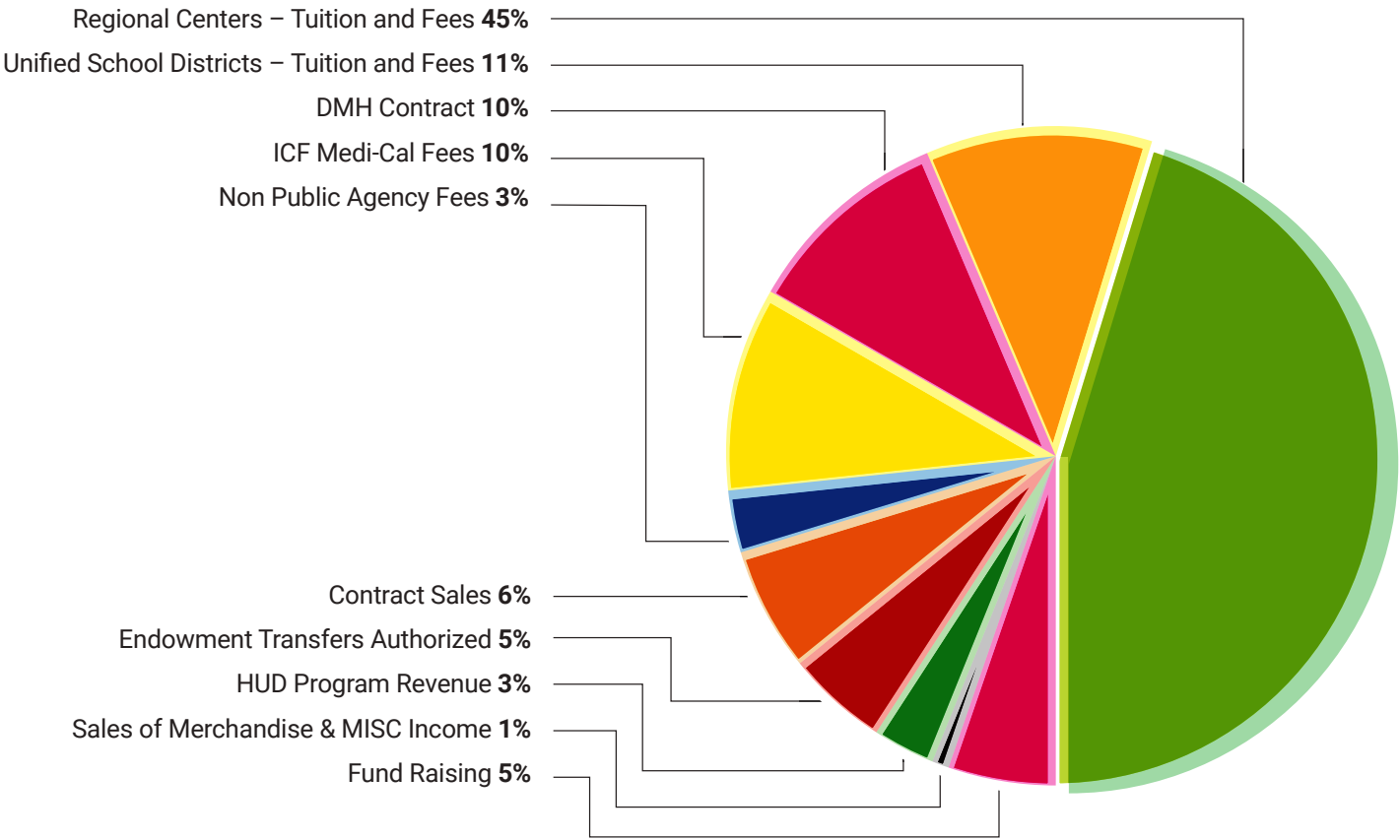
Surplus (Deficit) before Interest & Depreciation Expense	\$ 1,854,764
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* Information in Financial Highlights is Unaudited

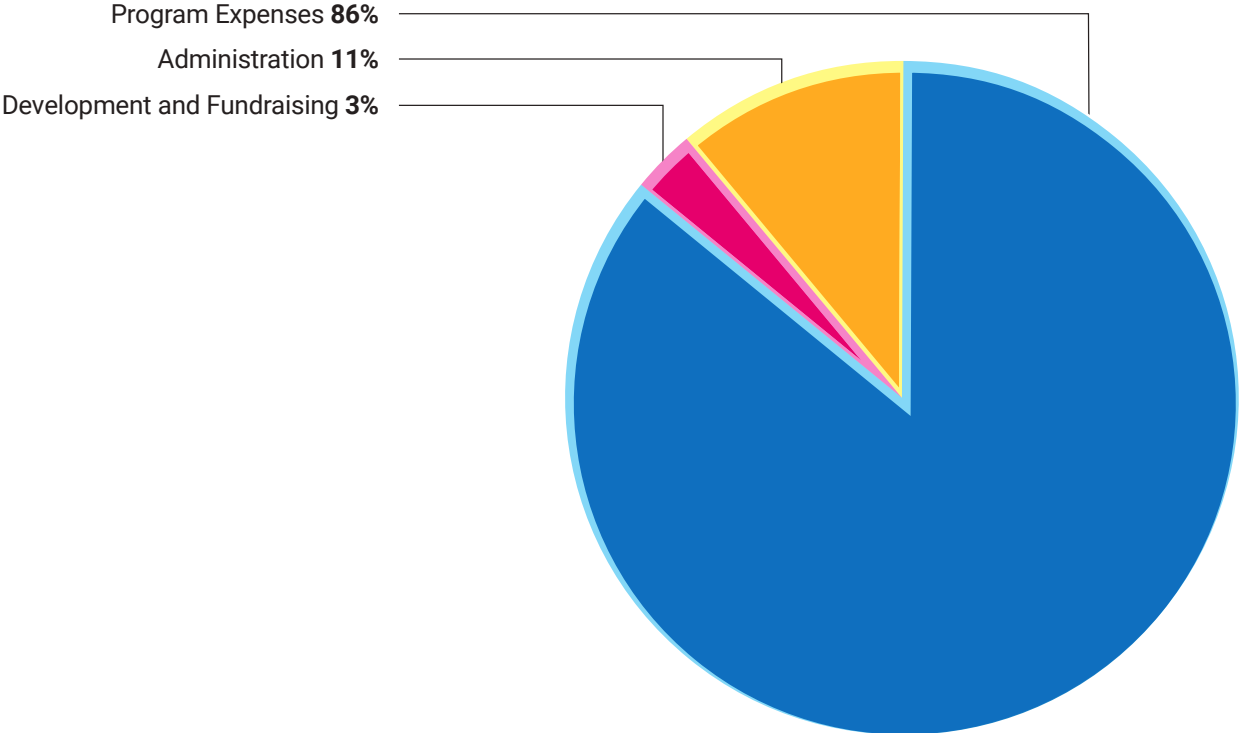
¹ Excludes Appreciation/(Depreciation) from Investment Accounts of \$2,694K (Instead of add Spending Policy amount of \$1,263K).

² Excludes \$283K interest and \$788K depreciation expense

Revenue



Expense





Our Donors

United in purpose, we shine. Your support ensures the sustained excellence and impact of Exceptional Children's Foundation.

Annual Donor Recognition | July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025

\$75,000 AND ABOVE

The Ahmanson Foundation
The Rose Hills Foundation
SHARE, Inc.

\$50,000 TO \$74,999

The Green Foundation
S. Mark Taper Foundation
Suzanne & Ric Kayne
In Memory of Al Shonk
Paul K. Zimmerman

\$25,000 TO \$49,999

Geeta & Mohan Chandramohan
The Carl & Roberta Deutsch Foundation
Gerald Ducot
L.L. Foundation for Youth
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The Nicholas Family Foundation
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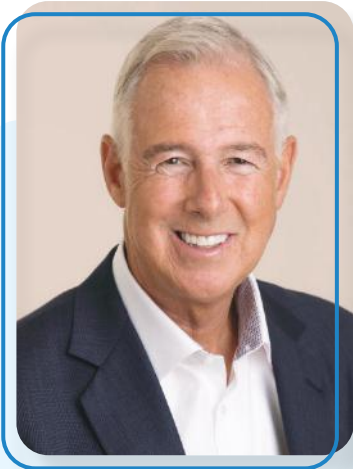
\$10,000 TO \$24,999

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Johnny Carson Foundation
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First Bank Foundation
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\$5,000 TO \$9,999

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Malcolm McNeil



THOMAS (TOM) J. SCHULTE

Partner
Armanino Advisory LLC

“Having served as the organization’s independent auditor for many years, I had the privilege of seeing firsthand their commitment to integrity, transparency, and impact. I’m honored now to contribute as a board member to the mission I’ve long admired.”

Merle Mullin
Miriam Muscarolas & Grant Abramson
Stacy Horth-Neubert & Aaron Neubert
Lan Nguyen
The Albert Parvin Foundation
Lynne & Larry Rabineau
Michelle & Anil Ranavat
Royal & Johnathan Rodgers
Robert Ronus
ServiconCares
Annette & Leonard Shapiro
SoCalGas
Elaine Spierer
Jane & Jim Stern
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Southern California
Weingart Foundation
Winningham Becker & Company
Julia & Monty Zimmerman

\$1,000 TO \$4,999

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BNY Mellon Community Partnerships
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Helen & Jack Nethercutt



MARY KAYNE
Community Volunteer



Our family's connection to ECF and Kayne

Eras spans generations, and it has been one of the most meaningful parts of our community life. Through my close involvement, I'm reminded of the compassion, dedication, and innovation that define this organization. The impact ECF makes—on individuals and on families—is truly transformative, and I'm proud to support work that changes lives so profoundly.'

Patti & Peter Neuwirth
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Laura & William Siart
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 Rosa & Bob Sinnott
 Sony Pictures Entertainment
 Grace Helen Spearman Charitable Foundation
 Spogli Family Foundation
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 Jocelyn Tetel
 Linda Thieben
 Barbera Hale Thornhill
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Stuart Vetterick
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 Terrence White
 Jacqueline Wickser
 David Wiener
 AJ Wilder
 John Winters
 Wendy & Jay Wintrob
 Tracy & John Wiseman
 Susan & Michael Wytyszyn
 Philip & Elaine Yalowitz
 Devon Zopfi

Dancing to Make a Difference

In October, ECF hosted our first Homecoming Sneaker Ball, benefiting students with special needs at ECF Kayne Eras School. The evening was a smashing success, full of flashback fun, food, a photo booth, music by DJ Quantum (Board member Leonard Washington) and dancing, plus raffles for amazing prizes, and a live auction that featured a rare guitar autographed by Green Day, a luxury trip to Vietnam, a custom letterman jacket and more unique items.



VIP Art Preview Showcases the Talent of ECF Artists

Supporters, art lovers, and collectors came together for an inspiring evening at the ECF Art Centers' South Los Angeles studio—housed in the beautifully restored Engine House No. 18 in the West Adams Arts District. The VIP Art Preview offered guests an exclusive first look at a curated collection of hundreds of remarkable works created by ECF's tenured artists.

The event marked the official kickoff of the ECF Art Centers' annual series of art sales, celebrating the diverse talents of artists working across ECF's four progressive art studios throughout Los Angeles County. Together, these studios continue to provide professional pathways and creative independence for artists with developmental and intellectual disabilities.

Our Leadership

THE EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN'S FOUNDATION IS PRIVILEGED to have highly qualified and deeply committed community leaders serving on its Board of Directors and Board of Governors. In partnership with an experienced Executive Management Team, these individuals give generously their time and resources to help fulfill the organization's mission.

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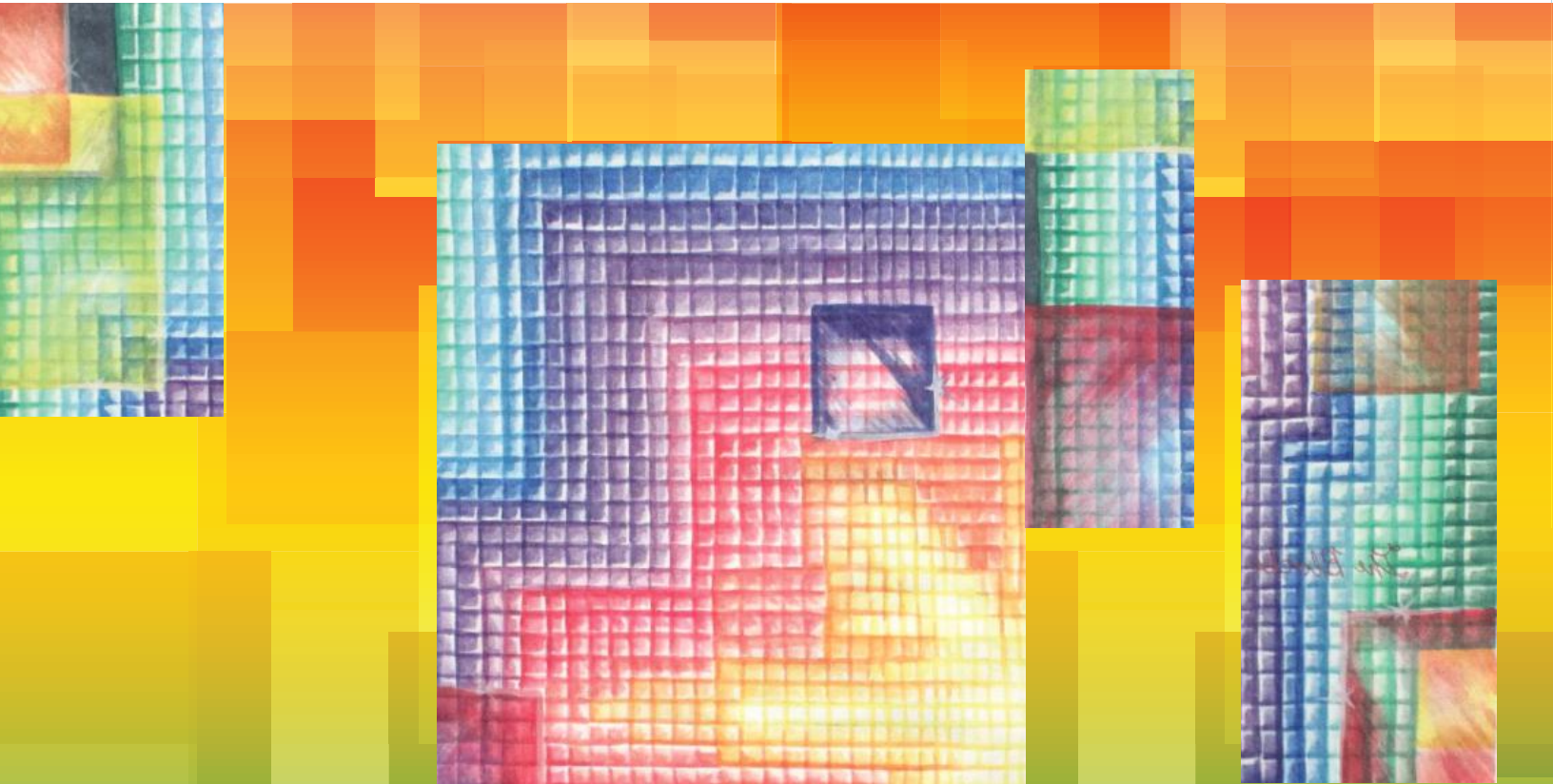
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