

YMCA OF SAN DIEGO COUNTY

YMCA YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

2021-2022 IMPACT REPORT



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DEAREST FRIENDS OF YFS,

Despite another extremely difficult year, we have accomplished so much alongside our clients and community. I'm incredibly proud that our teams worked diligently on finding workplace wellness; taking care of ourselves and one another so that we can show up as our best, most authentic selves. We dedicated our time and energy to our respective areas of work, in turn contributing to tremendous impact across our community. The passion, expertise, lived experience, and confidence our staff exhibit is why we continue to scale our reach and deliver services with the highest quality.

Our commitment to our community – to children, youth, individuals, and families – is unwavering. This past year has been an exceptionally exciting one as we continue to evolve our services and approach. From creating dignified housing opportunities for 44 young people and their children with the opening of our newest apartment complex to intentionally partnering with service providers across the region to leverage the best of every agency for every young person experiencing homelessness, we are paving the way as a national model for addressing our system's housing challenges – all in partnership with young people.

In April, we had the honor of hosting the U.S. Surgeon General, Dr. Vivek H. Murthy, for a special visit to discuss the [youth mental health crisis](#) with staff, partners, and young people. He was impressed by our dedication, our ingenuity, and our recommendations to transform and expand our community's continuum of mental and behavioral health services. Our commitment to increased access, evidence-informed practices, and the continuous evolution of our service approach will take us farther, faster.

As part of our [Theory of Change](#), we remain committed to “doing the work AND changing the work” and have made significant contributions to policy developments over this past year. We shared our knowledge and best practices with key decision-makers, resulting in increased funding and access to services not just for our clients, but for individuals across systems and communities.

This upcoming year will be one of transition and advancement. We will continue to learn and evolve, take care of ourselves and one another, align with our [Y's Drive to Thrive Strategic Plan](#), engage more people more meaningfully, and diversify our funding so we can do so flexibly and efficiently.

Thank you to our community of youth, families, staff, board members, donors, volunteers, and partners for your commitment, compassion, and contribution – we are beyond grateful. With your support, we can keep innovating services, cultivating relationships, sustaining funding, and building a healthier, more equitable, more resilient, and more fulfilled future.

Warmly,



Krysta Esquivel, MSW (she/her/hers)
Vice President of Social Services
YMCA of San Diego County,
Youth & Family Services

TO LEARN MORE, VISIT:

www.ymcasd.org/yfs

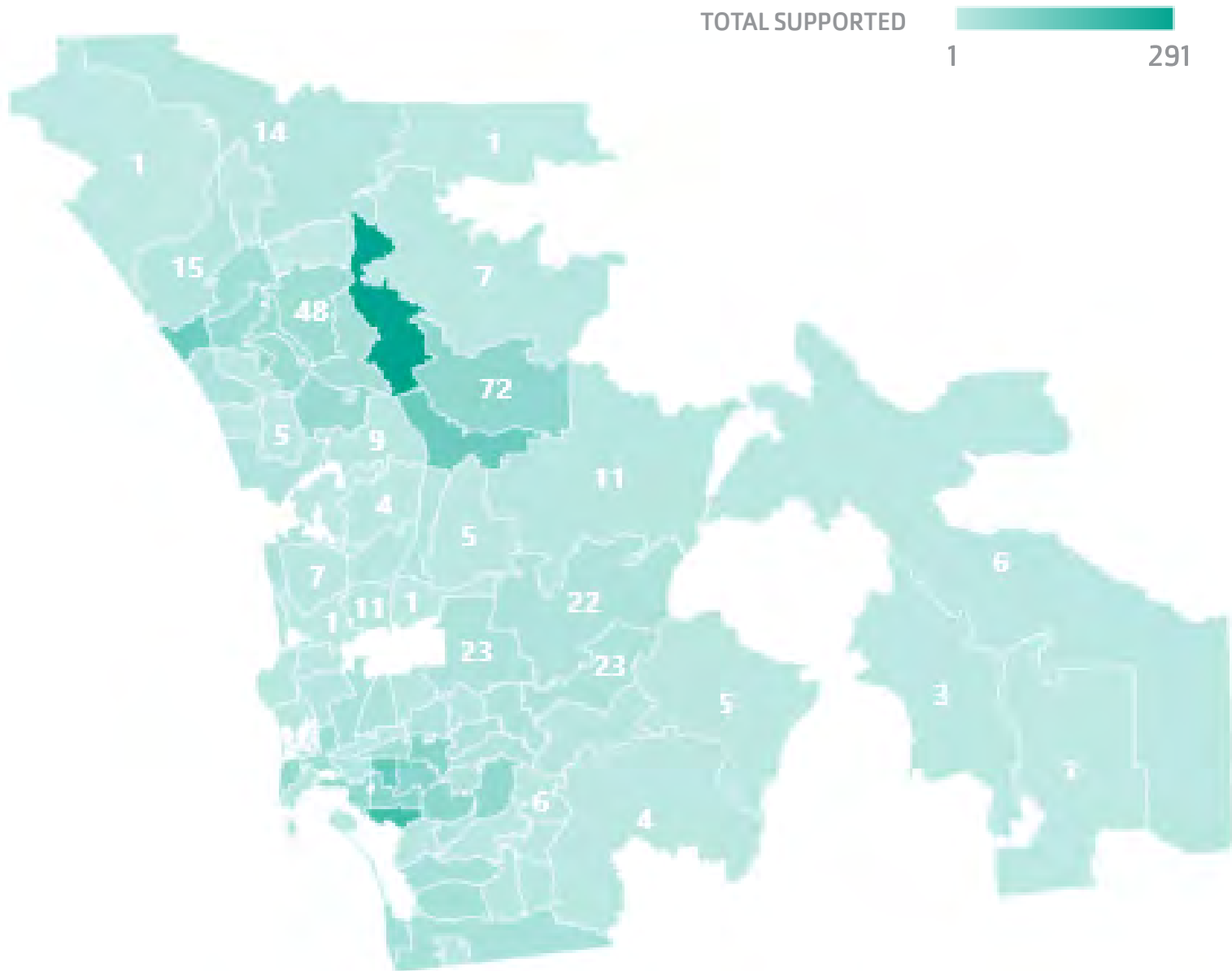
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OUR REACH

YFS delivered services to **2,618 individuals** and impacted an additional **971 family members** during the 2021-2022 fiscal year. We connected participants with **2,676 referrals** to programs and resources, and engaged **6,640 collaborators**, community members, and organizational leaders for a **total of 12,905 supported, connected, impacted, or engaged**. YFS operates county-wide and over the course of the year, we supported individuals from 89 San Diego County zip codes. The most represented zip codes were 92026 (n=291), 92113 (n=184), and 92104 (n=126).

12,905 SUPPORTED, CONNECTED, IMPACTED, AND ENGAGED



AN INTENTIONAL FOCUS ON EQUITY

In our commitment to advance equity, YFS compliments the YMCA's core programs through structural supports and interventions that have deep impact on under-resourced communities in our region. With an intentional focus to support young people between the ages of 18-24 in their transition to adulthood, we offer specialized services for young people experiencing homelessness, youth with experience in the child welfare or justice system, BIPOC youth, LGBTQ+ youth, kinship caregivers, and families in crisis.

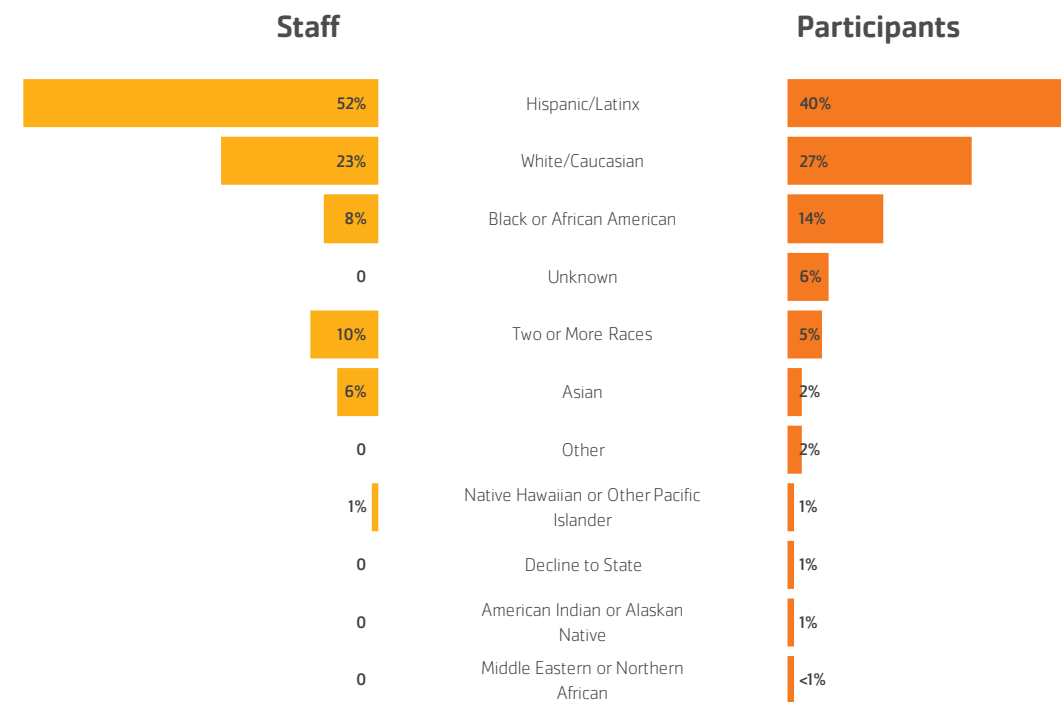
44% of program participants were between the ages of 18-24

68% of participants identify as a person of color

11% of participants identified as LGBTQ+ and 4% identified as Transgender

These statistics more than reflect the demographic makeup of our community and are reflected in our own Y staff. At YFS, we make an intentional effort to hire and support people with lived experiences that mirror those of our clients and participants. Because of this, our clients and participants report a greater sense of connection with staff who share their experiences and understand them on a personal level. **76% of YFS staff who responded to a recent survey indicated that they have lived experience reflective of our clients and participants.**

STAFF AND PARTICIPANT RACE/ETHNICITIES



OUR APPROACH

YFS is committed to providing equitable access to the opportunities, connections, and support people need to learn, grow, and prosper.

Over fifty years of working with youth and families in San Diego County has taught us that no single path leads to a successful and healthy existence. What is required is a continuum of interrelated supports that build on one another to meet the unique needs of each individual and family. We create programs and interventions by applying the best and latest evidence in our respective departments, honoring tried and true modalities, and working to address systemic issues that impact our clients and participants while focusing on five areas of service:



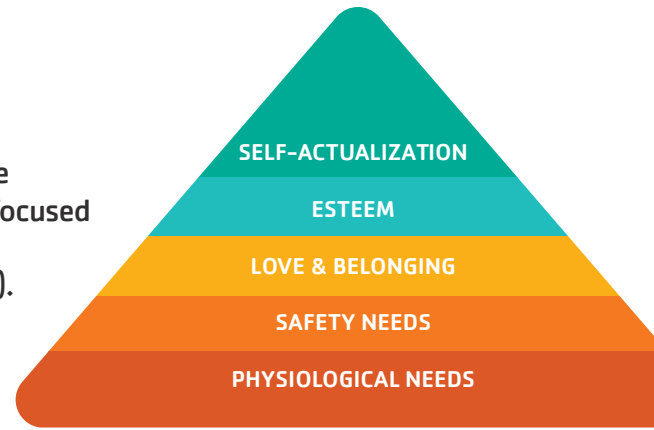
Our approach includes applying the **CAAVE** Model, which offers Compassion, Awareness, Acceptance, Validation, and Empowerment as a means for staff to connect with clients and one another. These qualities allow our staff to become part of a client's process in developing self-regulation skills by offering a level of safety and trust. This co-regulatory approach helps clients to feel a sense of calm when interacting with our teams and in our spaces allowing them to fully experience our service and intervention, and making room for them to explore their options within the scope of our programs. This approach also allows our staff to conserve their energy, become more mindful of their interactions and interdependence, and better support others while taking care of themselves, protecting them from stress and exhaustion.



MEETING BASIC NEEDS AND BREAKING BARRIERS

THE ISSUE: The challenges today's generation of young people face are unprecedented and uniquely hard to navigate. When young people are focused on survival, it is difficult to work towards meeting higher-level needs for belonging, esteem, and self-actualization (Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs). **Youth and families must feel safe and have basic physiological needs met (food, water, shelter) before they can wholly engage in services and take steps towards their future.**

OUR IMPACT: YFS quickly responds to housing crises with critical supports that prevent and divert young people from experiencing housing instability and homelessness. We aim to provide immediate access to low-barrier housing resources and wraparound services such as drop-in centers, housing navigation, rental and deposit assistance, case management, aftercare, and follow-up support.



MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs was informed by the Blackfoot Nation's way of life: <https://www.resilience.org/stories/2021-06-18/the-blackfoot-wisdom-that-inspired-maslows-hierarchy/>



Provided **2,238 gateway supports** such as hygiene kits, blankets, clothing, bus passes, and backpacks to youth experiencing homelessness



Provided **1,153 groceries, meals, and snacks** to young people at the TAY drop-in centers



Provided **190 vouchers** for young people experiencing homelessness to stay in hotels overnight

I was in the foster system from age 9 through 18, and I still am in extended foster care. I was kicked out of my home. I was struggling. I was about to be homeless. I reached out and asked for help. Housing Our Youth helped me out a lot... Because of them, I was able to stay in a hotel for a couple of months. If it wasn't for them, I'd literally be on the street. Thankfully there were people who could help me out and put me back on my feet now.
– Housing Our Youth Participant



99% of Independent Living Skills participants can access the physical, mental, and dental health care they require



Provided **47 young people** with rental and deposit assistance for housing

YOUTH WHO SUCCESSFULLY TRANSITIONED TO SAFE & STABLE HOUSING:



- **100%** of current and former foster youth
- **77%** of TAY Housing participants
- **86%** of Turning Point participants

274 young people received individualized support through Housing Our Youth

INCREASING PROTECTIVE FACTORS TO SUPPORT MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

THE ISSUE: Mental and behavioral health care is equally important as physical health care, particularly for those who have had Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). ACEs are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood that can impact mental and physical health, increase stress, interfere with skill development, and complicate development trajectories and outcomes in adulthood. <https://www.acesaware.org/ace-fundamentals/>

OUR IMPACT: YFS supports the well-being of our clients and participants by providing a continuum of interventions and supports designed to meet their unique social, emotional, behavioral, and mental health needs. We offer a range of services, including support groups, psycho-education, coaching, case management, and clinical therapy, all of which help buffer the effects of toxic stress and allow space for developing healthy self-regulation and coping skills.



Provided mental and behavioral health care to **744 community members** through counseling services and on-site school-based counseling services



98% of Our Safe Place participants demonstrated an increase in protective skills and positive coping skills



Placed **43 clinical students into internships** within YFS and across 9 partnering universities to support the workforce and meet community needs



82% of Turning Point participants improved their emotion regulation, emotional self-awareness, and situational responsiveness



80% of Youth Resiliency Center participants reported a decrease in traumatic stress



Provided **1,761 counseling sessions** at the Well-Being Annex

This past year, our clinical programs experienced longer waitlists than ever before. Our staff worked diligently to build capacity and now we can proudly share we no longer have a waitlist!

– YFS Clinical Staff

STRENGTHENING ECONOMIC STABILITY AND MOBILITY

THE ISSUE: Long-term stability depends on financial independence and the ability to obtain and maintain employment and earn a living wage. **Recent studies** suggest that San Diego is home to some of the most cost-burdened people in the country, meaning they spend more than one-third of their income on housing alone. When people are forced to spend a disproportionate portion of their income on necessities like housing or child care, they have less room in their budget to save for emergencies or afford basic necessities.

OUR IMPACT: YFS walks alongside participants to build the skills needed to increase workforce readiness, gain and maintain employment, increase income, and pursue higher education. We aim to connect young people to meaningful career pathways with opportunities for upward mobility by offering internship placements within our Y and with our strategic partners in addition to workforce development programs, relational skill-building trainings, and leadership opportunities.



H.I.R.E. supported **29 Black youth** with mentorship opportunities to find and pursue a career, start school or certificate programs, and enhance overall employability



60% of H.I.R.E. participants obtained employment after participating in the workforce readiness and internship programming



CAREER supported **15 single parents** who have been laid off with counseling, personal goal-setting, educational support, and other supportive services



70% of young people who are currently or formerly involved with child welfare services earned credit for at least 80% of their college course load

We had a youth, who has never held a job and frightful for the whole process, experience work readiness with staff and gain confidence in pursuing employment.
– TAY Staff



82% of Turning Point participants have access to their credit and know how to maintain and build their credit score



100% of Turning Point participants reported improvement in workforce readiness

OF THE FORMER FOSTER YOUTH PARTICIPATING IN INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS:



- 82%** maintained stable income for at least 6 consecutive months
- 56%** maintained stable income for at least 12 consecutive months
- 80%** achieved stable housing for at least 12 consecutive months

BUILDING SOCIAL CAPITAL AND INCREASING ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITIES

THE ISSUE: Youth who have experienced homelessness or involvement in the foster care system often lack a social safety net, connections to positive role models, and support in developing and maintaining healthy relationships. Without a support network and permanent connections to rely on in times of need, they are more likely to feel isolated, face challenges with mental health and substance use, and have no other choice but to rely on public systems for support.

OUR IMPACT: YFS offers opportunities for youth and families to build quality relationships and expand their social networks by focusing on the value of connection and community. By providing meaningful opportunities to connect with peers and supportive adults, young people can create healthy, permanent relationships that can benefit them long after our services end.



100% of Permanent Connections participants established a permanent relationship with at least one caring adult



75% of Permanent Connections participants established relationships with multiple caring adults



100% of Our Safe Place participants increased their social capital and positive identity formation



100% of Turning Point participants reported having at least one adult in their life, other than staff, to whom they can go to for advice and emotional support

At the TAY House, we're starting to see relationships form and frequent visits to the drop-in centers. Our youth are starting to make meaningful connections with their housemates and staff while job searching and working on goals at the drop-in center.
– TAY Staff



INCREASING RESOURCES AND SUPPORT TO KEEP FAMILIES TOGETHER

THE ISSUE: Child welfare departments are prioritizing placement with family wherever possible to keep children out of the child welfare system. However, these family members are often in need of additional supports to prepare their homes and meet a child's ongoing financial, social, emotional, and academic needs. Without a safe and stable placement, children are at risk of entry or re-entry into the child welfare system.

OUR IMPACT: YFS works with kinship caregivers and youth in the foster care system to improve their legal and relational permanency leading to enhanced stability and support. Through resource navigation, family finding services, case management, respite, and support groups, YFS helps strengthen caregiver and family capacity to care for children in a way that reduces the traumatic effects of family separation and promotes placement stability, safety, and well-being.



Distributed **\$298,219 in emergency funds** to kinship caregivers for essential needs



Found and established **68 family connections** for Permanent Connections participants



89% of Turning Point participants increased their ability to navigate conflict and foster family functioning



Offered **232 kinship support groups** with **1,856 interactions** community-wide



Provided case management and navigation assistance to **379 kinship caregivers**



Provided **9,894 hours of respite** to kinship caregivers



I realized that I have a lot of people who care about me.
– TAY Participant

CHANGING THE WORK

We are honored to collaborate with federal, state, and local public partners to ensure community members receive high quality, expedited service that honors their unique needs and experiences. In considering years of historic injustice, the social services field has room for continuous quality improvement.

We understand that creating a more just and equitable system involves participating in policy discussions at the federal, state, and local levels to share our knowledge and evidence in hopes of influencing policy and improving systems of care that will impact the next generation. To learn more about this work, [please visit our Policy Vision](#).

Over the past year, our advocacy efforts have helped influence change not just for our clients and participants, but for individuals across systems and communities.



A ROOF FOR EVERY YOUTH

- YFS worked on local, state, and federal levels to create research-driven strategies proven to reduce youth homelessness. This work directly informed the State Legislature's and Governor Newsom's decision to include \$100 million in set-aside funding for youth homelessness in this year's state budget.
- By convening a network of service providers in a unified regional response, Housing Our Youth has become a nationally recognized model for addressing youth homelessness, as established through the local funding of past year's state allocation.
- YFS helped secure expanded term limits for Transitional Housing Programs for youth transitioning out of foster care, as well as increased financial entitlements for these individuals. Building on the important work of the Permanent Connections program, we also advocated for the \$150 million investment in intensive family finding and engagement.



ADDRESSING THE YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

- In building upon fifty years of community support in the mental and behavioral health field, YFS supported the over \$4.3 billion state budget priority of addressing the youth mental health crisis.



BUILDING CAPACITY AND SYSTEMS ALIGNMENT IN THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM

- Through extensive specialized permanency work and our ongoing research of best practices and evidence-informed approaches, YFS offered guidance to San Diego County Child Welfare Services with a series of recommendations related to intensive child-specific recruitment, family finding and engagement, and support programs for children with complex needs.



YOUTH VOICE MATTERS

- After helping to establish the CA Youth Empowerment Commission in 2021, YFS helped secure \$1.5 million in ongoing funding to implement and administer this critical state commission, which will help create policy for young people, by young people.

ACTIVATING COMMUNITY FOR COLLECTIVE IMPACT

At YFS, we work diligently to create and maintain productive relationships with our donors and philanthropic partners who provide significant resources that allow us to help bring about meaningful change in our community. Together, we create a collective impact based on shared values and a desire to address San Diego's most pressing social issues.

Over the past year, we've had unique opportunities to partner across our Association and with the San Diego community to raise awareness for important social causes.

RUNAWAY AND HOMELESS YOUTH AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Our November [Runaway & Homeless Youth Awareness Campaign](#) allowed us to shed light on young people experiencing homelessness in San Diego and offer ways the community can be a part of the solution. As part of our campaign, YFS staff participated in a Solidarity Journey, a three-day walk from Oceanside to San Ysidro, which provided us a unique opportunity to connect with community members, share our knowledge and experience, and build relationships with key political figures and partners.

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Inspired by the U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on the Youth Mental Health Crisis and his visit to the Jackie Robinson Family YMCA in April 2022, YMCA Community Support Services, in partnership with YMCA of San Diego County, led a county-wide [Mental Health Awareness Campaign](#) to raise awareness for the youth mental health crisis and offer direct support to children, youth, parents, caregivers, and staff across San Diego County. Throughout the month of May, we collaborated with community partners, and fostered new relationships with like-minded businesses and organizations who shared our goal to normalize the conversation around mental health and offer practical ways to improve the overall health, well-being, and resilience of our community.



We can't do this work alone. Addressing these longstanding challenges requires a whole-of-society effort to embrace the opportunities in front of us to uplift all children, youth, and families in San Diego County. We are so thankful to all of our incredible partners in this work. A healthy community is a connected community. When we increase equitable access to resources and to one another, we can increase the overall health, well-being, and resilience of our community.

THANK YOU!



Thank you to our generous donors and supporters:

- Barrio Dogg
- Jerome's Furniture
- Lawrence A. Appley Foundation
- Lucky Duck Foundation
- Tomlinson Family Foundation