

JULY 2022 - JUNE 2023

2022 ANNUAL REPORT

RISE TOGETHER EDUCATION



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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Supporters of Rise Together Education,

After serving in various positions on the Board of Rise Together Education for over four years, I began 2023 as its President. Having returned to live in Palo Alto in 2018 after a 30 year hiatus, I was struck by the wealth gap and wanted to help make a positive difference to the lives of students whose families were struggling financially. Most of these students are first generation college students and need support and resources. I am lucky to have such a dedicated group of volunteers and supporters behind our small all-volunteer nonprofit organization. Now entering our 8th year, RTE in some ways resembles our students - young adults learning and exploring their way towards success. Our board members and supporters are guiding us through our growth with help from our Paly volunteers. We have caring, reliable, and responsible mentors who are the heart of this organization. I feel proud that we have finally reached a moment where we can exhale and congratulate ourselves and our college graduates. With your help, RTE has helped 31 Paly graduates earn bachelor's degrees, with an additional 5 earning associate degrees. Most of this year's students are working part-time and attending school full-time and earning an average of 3.26 GPA. As we look forward, we continue to scale up to support even more deserving students than ever before.

In 2022, we decided that it made more sense to switch our fiscal year to align with the academic year rather than the calendar year. This annual report is the first to move to this new period, and covers July 2022 through June 2023.

We hope that in this annual report, you will learn a little more about RTE, its volunteers, and scholars, and in doing so, make you proud to be a part of our local effort to create more equity in higher education.

Tida Violante

TIDA VIOLANTE, DR.PH., MPH
PRESIDENT
PALY CLASS OF 1989



OUR MISSION

Rise Together Education is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to improving college graduation rates by providing support and financial resources to low-income Palo Alto High School students who have been accepted to 4-year colleges or 2-year community colleges with a direct transfer agreement.

WHAT WE DO

In the affluent city of Palo Alto, the median household income is more than double that of the US. Despite this, 10% of Palo Alto High School students are considered very low-income.*

The average cost of attending college in the US is about \$36,000/year. A college education is instrumental in breaking the cycle of poverty, but it is out of reach for many of these students.

Rise Together Education works to remedy this issue by providing both support and financial resources to low-income Palo Alto High School students who have been accepted to college.

Applicants apply through the Paly Community Scholarship Program, which provides a common application for many need and merit based scholarships.

RTE requires that applicants be in 12th grade at Palo Alto High School, from a low-income family, and plan to attend a 4-year college or a 2-year community college.

RTE selects those students whose Expected Family Contribution (EFC) is at the lowest end of the spectrum, generally \$0-\$1,000 per year based on data provided by the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

*This equates to less than \$55,000 household income per year for a family of 4.

Support

- One-on-one mentorship until graduation from college
- Internship/career networking
- Resources through alumni & workshops

Financial Resources

- 4-year college track: scholarships of up to \$3,000 per year (max 4 years)
- Community college track: scholarships of up to \$1,200 per year (max 2 years). Plus scholarships of \$3,000 per year after transferring to a 4-year college (for 2 additional years)

HISTORY



FY2022 HIGHLIGHTS

July 2022

Welcomed John Fitton and Laura Grant as mentors

Held first annual College 101 Workshop for incoming freshman to provide guidance for college

August 2022

15 RTE scholars matriculated at colleges and universities

December 2022

Tida Violante elected President of RTE

We collaborated with Paly Fiery Arts for a successful and delicious bake sale

March 2023

25 graduating Paly seniors were accepted to our program

April 2023

Awarded \$10,000 by Palo Alto Community Fund

RTE was featured in The Campanile

May 2023

Awarded \$15,000 by Palo Alto Weekly Holiday Fund

We had another successful spring fundraiser via email and raised over \$46,000

May & June 2023

Seven more RTE scholars graduated with a bachelor's degrees. One community college student is transferring to a 4-year university

WHO WE ARE

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



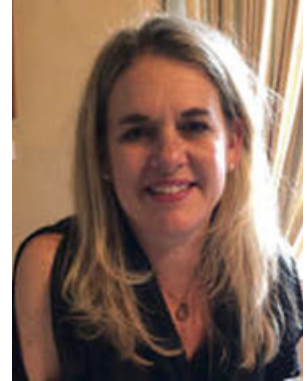
Tida Violante
PRESIDENT



Dawn Billman
VICE PRESIDENT



Nan Kim
TREASURER



Deanna Chute
SECRETARY



Kimberly Schwan
DIRECTOR



Pallavi Homan
DIRECTOR



Brent Kline
DIRECTOR



LaDonna Butler
DIRECTOR



Samuel Vasquez
DIRECTOR



Dami Bolarinwa
DIRECTOR

WHO WE ARE

MENTORS



John Fitton



Amy Friedman



Laura Grant



Grainger Marburg



Melanie Norall

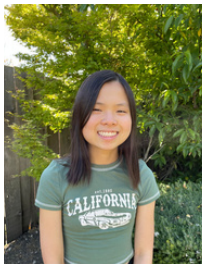


Kimberly Schwan

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES



Kristine Lin



Allison Ma



Anika Raffle



Nadia Soberg



Kelly Tanaka

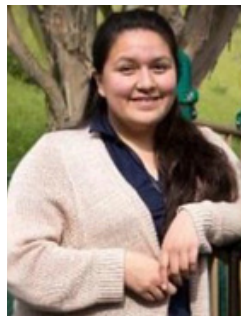


Kiara Yoon

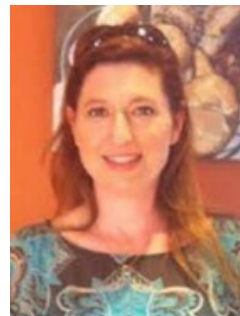
ADVISORS



Kim Diorio



Stephanie Estrada



Danielle Laursen



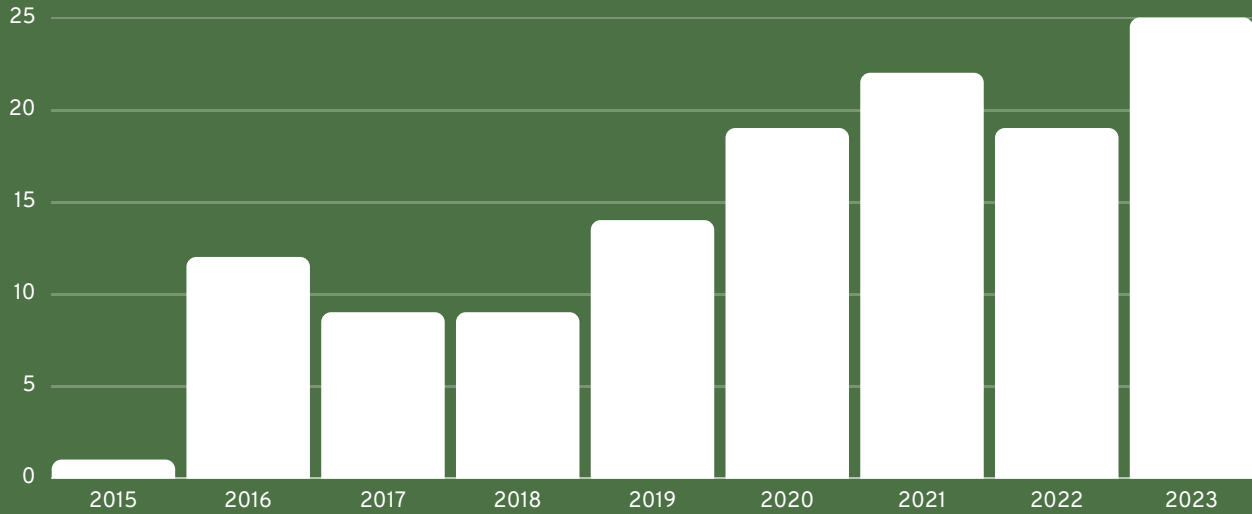
Laura Marcus-Bricca



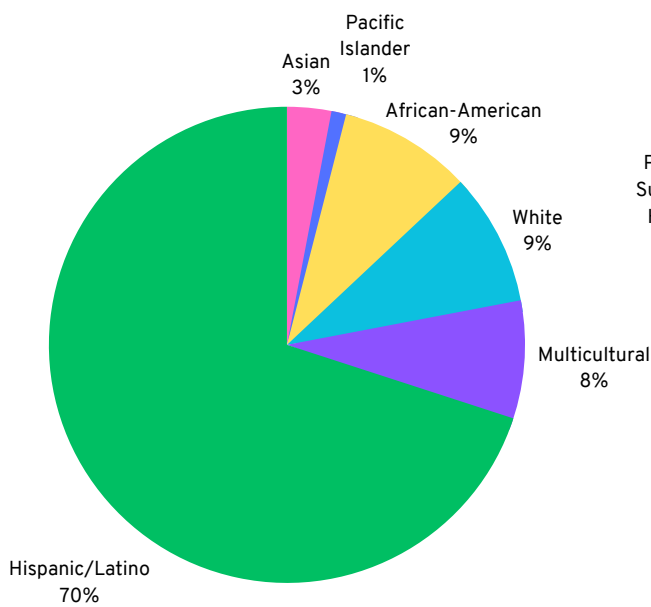
Michael Sullivan

WHO WE SERVE

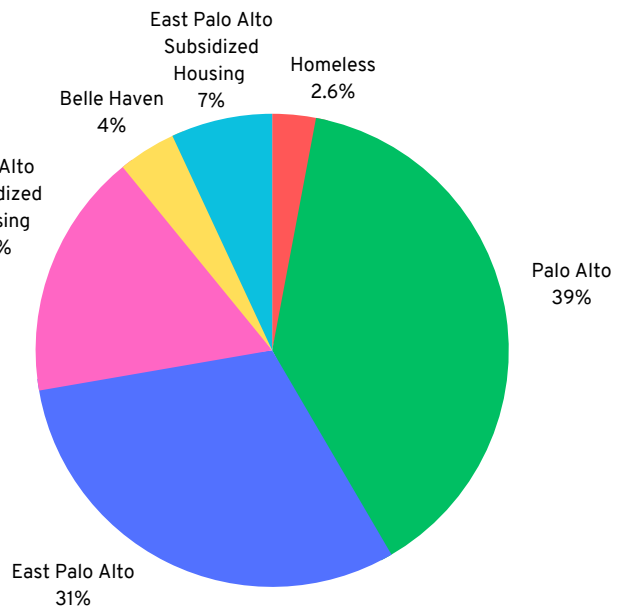
NUMBER OF ACCEPTED SCHOLARS (BY PALY GRADUATION YEAR)



RACE/ETHNICITY

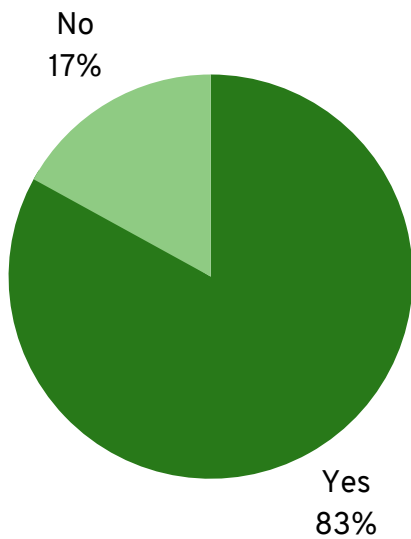


PLACE OF RESIDENCE DURING GRADE 11

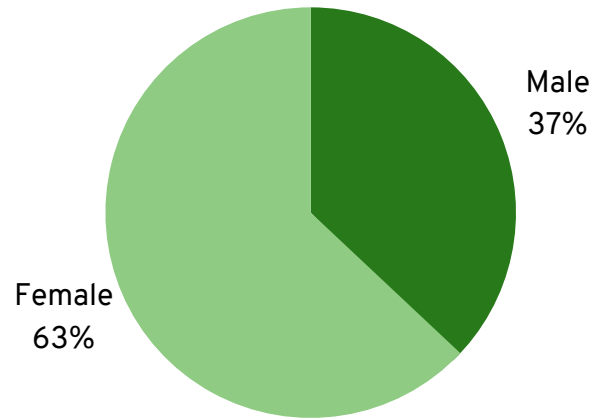


WHO WE SERVE IN FY22

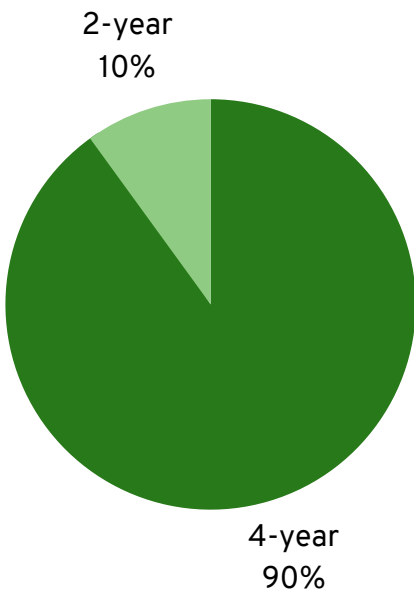
FIRST GENERATION



GENDER



COLLEGE TYPE



FULL-TIME STUDENT AVERAGE GPA



98%

of expenses go directly
to 41 scholarships

66

students are currently
being mentored



31

scholars graduated with
bachelor's degrees

5

scholars graduated with
associate's degrees

STUDENT SPOTLIGHTS

ANDRES JIMENEZ

PALY 2019

FOOTHILL COLLEGE 2021

SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY 2023

What was your experience like in college? Did you feel prepared?

Paly definitely prepared me for college. Because of the work I had done at Paly, it was a pretty easy transition. After Paly, I spent two years at Foothill College, earned an associate's degree, and then transferred to San Diego State. My goal was to stay on the same college timeline, meaning I would graduate with my bachelor's degree in four years. I'm happy to share that I am now on track to graduate in May with a degree in business administration from San Diego State University.

How was the transition from Foothill to San Diego State?

San Diego State has a tougher workload and is more time-consuming for sure. But it has helped that I have a passion for learning about business, and I have really enjoyed all my business classes, especially my accounting and marketing classes. One of my favorite non-business classes was Hispanic culture. I also took a few writing classes. Although I don't always enjoy writing, I think being able to write well will help me in my future career in business.

How did Rise Together Education help you on your path to college?

My main Paly scholarship, which allowed me to pay for college, was my four-year scholarship from Rise Together Education. Kimberly Schwan, a mentor with Rise, checked in with me several times a year while I was at Foothill and San Diego State. I appreciated those phone calls because it just gave me a chance to vent a bit whenever I was feeling any kind of stress about college. It was nice to be able to talk about it with someone.

What are your plans after graduation?

I feel confident that I will be able to find a job in business in the next few months. I'm exploring different options right now and plan to attend the upcoming job fairs at San Diego State. But my main focus for the spring is to keep working hard in class so that I'm ready to graduate in May.



"Kimberly Schwan, a mentor with Rise, checked in with me several times a year while I was at Foothill and San Diego State. I appreciated those phone calls because it just gave me a chance to vent a bit whenever I was feeling any kind of stress about college. It was nice to be able to talk about it with someone."

BRIANA MORENO-ALCOCER

PALY 2019, PITZER COLLEGE 2023

What has been the best part about going to college?

The best part about going to college is being able to exercise my independence, I have the freedom to manage myself as I see fit. However, most importantly, I love being able to make new friends and network with faculty, as I was unable to do so for two years due to Covid-19.

Has RTE made a difference in your decision to pursue a college degree and/or in college?

RTE has made a significant difference in my decision to pursue a college degree because RTE has provided me with the tools necessary to confidently seek higher education. Throughout the college process, I felt very much supported and due to this support, I am on my way to becoming a college graduate. The RTE program has not only supported me with mentors and guidance but it has given me peace of mind. RTE made it clear what path would be best suited for my educational and personal needs. Monthly check-ins with mentors and coordinators made it easy to commit to my college. Last but not least, I am able to truly be a full time student and not stress about finances because of RTE scholarship award.

Did any adults help/support you in the process of getting to college?

Yes, Kimberly Schwan [RTE Mentorship Chairperson] has been very helpful in the process of getting to college. She is very organized and reminds students like me about important updates, conferences, and opportunities. This helped with establishing a reliable network.

Do you have an idea of what you want to do after college?

After college, I intend to take a year to be a part of the Fulbright's English Teacher Assistant Program. It provides college graduates with the opportunity to go abroad and work as an English language teaching assistant for nine months. I will apply to be placed in Spain. This opportunity will push me to become more independent. Upon my return, I would like to look for a job related to use my degree in Political Studies.



"RTE has made a significant difference in my decision to pursue a college degree because RTE has provided me with the tools necessary to confidently seek higher education. Throughout the college process, I felt very much supported and due to this support, I am on my way to becoming a college graduate."

ANTHONY LOPEZ

PALY 2016
SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY 2022

How did you become interested in economics?

After I graduated from Paly, I enrolled at Foothill College. At first, I wasn't sure what to major in, so I met with a counselor at Foothill to discuss my options. After talking with my counselor and my mentors in the community (from scholarship programs like Rise Together and Pursuit of Excellence, and also from my own personal network), I decided on economics. I'm interested in working as a data analyst or a consultant for a Bay Area company, and am currently applying for jobs.

What was your time like at Foothill College?

I enjoyed being a student at Foothill. The class size is small enough that you can get to know your professors, who are always available to help answer questions either after class or during office hours. From the start of my time at Foothill, I always reached out to my teachers to ask for help. Because most of my classes had fewer than 30 students, it was not difficult for me to get to know my classmates and professors.

How was the transition from Foothill to San Jose State?

San Jose State is definitely a larger university, but most of my classes were around 40 or 50 students, so they were not that much different than the classes at Foothill. I think it helps, though, to be as assertive as possible and make sure you reach out to your professors and get the help you need. I have always tried to do that. San Jose State was also an easy commute for me. My family now lives in San Jose, and the campus is only about a 10-minute drive from my house.

Did scholarships from Rise Together Education and other organizations make a difference in your years at Foothill and San Jose State?

Absolutely. The scholarship support and mentoring definitely helped me get through college. After I graduated from Paly, Kimberly Schwan from Rise connected with me and checked in with me three or four times a year. It was nice to have that support. The funds I received from Rise and other organizations covered all of my college costs, so that I didn't have to worry.



"After I graduated from Paly, Kimberly Schwan from Rise connected with me and checked in with me three or four times a year. It was nice to have that support. The funds I received from Rise and other organizations covered all of my college costs, so that I didn't have to worry."

PAMELA RIVERA

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, RIVERSIDE, PALY CLASS OF 2019

What is your major?

I am majoring in Political Science with a concentration in Law and Society.

What is one of your favorite classes? Why?

My favorite classes that I have taken have to be my computer science class although I am not majoring in Computer Science coding, computer skills are something that I do value and have had experience in since high school. Freshening up on these skills is always fun aside from taking main core classes.

What has been the best part about going to college?

The best part about going to college has been all of the people that I have met along the way who have helped me with my resume-building skills, and networking and who have served as mentors as I navigate through the hardships of being a first-generation Latina who wants to apply to law school.

Has RTE made a difference in your decision to pursue a college degree?

Yes, it has. Although I always did have plans to go to college and pursue greater education RTE helped me connect with people who have pursued a law degree as well as helped me find other resources that allowed me to be more confident moving forward in pursuing higher education. RTE has supported me financially by helping me pay for my education as well as has helped me to revise my resume and gave me interview and cover letter tips whenever I needed them.

Did any adults support you in the process of getting to college?

With the support of my high school college counselors, my parents, and the staff at RTE I was able to find what was the best fit for me as well as eased any kind of anxiety or doubts I was having about college or being able to pay for college.

Do you have an idea of what you want to do after college?

I have an opportunity to intern in Washington D.C for the winter 2023 quarter and I hope to secure a job position there after I graduate in the spring of 2023. I plan on also working towards getting a Paralegal Certificate and then applying to Law School by 2025.



"RTE helped me connect with people who have pursued a law degree as well as helped me find other resources that allowed me to be more confident moving forward in pursuing higher education."

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

REVENUE

	Amount	Percentage
Donations	\$129,384*	78.7%
Grants	\$25,000	15.2%
Fundraising Events	\$3,041	1.8%
Other Income (Interest, etc.)	\$7,064	4.3%
Total Revenue	\$164,489	100%

*Includes a one-time donation from an anonymous family of \$20,000 that we do not anticipate in subsequent years.

EXPENSES

	Amount	Percentage
Scholarships	\$130,835	97.5%
Operations	\$2,372	1.8%
Fundraising	\$917	0.7%
Total Expenses	\$134,124	100%
Total Profit/(Loss)	\$30,365	

2022 GRANTS AND SPONSORS

GRANTS



\$10,000

Palo Alto Community Fund - April 2023



\$15,000

Palo Alto Weekly Holiday Fund - May 2023

SPONSORS



LOOKING AHEAD

As we look ahead toward 2023-2024, our organization will strengthen and more scholars will graduate from college. We plan to recruit more Board members including another recent college graduate and RTE alumnus. This will make our organization stronger, and facilitate both communication and addressing the needs of our students. We know that recent college graduates provide an important voice to the Board and inspiration to our current college students. We are working to provide more opportunities for recent graduates to connect with current students and to establish a more formal peer mentorship program. Board Members Sammy Vasquez and Dami Bolarinwa who both graduated from college in this decade (as opposed to the rest of the Board!) are leading the way on this effort. We are excited to see this next development unfold.

We are also looking forward to forming new synergies with other groups and organizations within and outside of Paly. This will lead to a more sustainable future for our organization and also provide more connections to financial resources for scholarships.

Finally, several of our Paly Student Representatives will be graduating this year and thus we will have to recruit more. They have provided much technical and administrative support, creative ideas, and extra sets of hands. We could not have accomplished as much without their and their parents' help. We cannot wait to hear from the next group of energetic Paly students.





THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the many families, community members, and companies for their unwavering support, partnership, and generosity.

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