



CHALLENGE SUCCESS



2021 ANNUAL REPORT



Sarah Miles



Lisa Busby

Dear Challenge Success Friends and Supporters,

As we reflect back on 2021, we find ourselves full of gratitude for each individual who was part of the Challenge Success story last year. Our community is made up of educators, students, coaches, donors, staff, board members, advisors, and families across the country who all have something in common: a commitment to reforming schools to have a positive impact on student well-being and engagement with learning. Without each of your contributions, this work would not be possible. Today, we want to celebrate all that we accomplished together in 2021 and share our appreciation for doing your part to advance our mission.

There is so much to pause and be grateful for! Highlights included:

- ▶ A full slate of schools partnered with our talented staff to deepen student engagement with learning, support well-being, and foster a sense of belonging for all community members.
- ▶ We continued to host conferences and workshops virtually, reaching students, parents, and educators far and wide.
- ▶ The temperate Bay Area weather in November allowed us to host a very successful outdoor, in-person fundraiser featuring a panel of experts and the star of the show—high school student, Anisha Gandhi!
- ▶ We navigated a smooth leadership transition with Kathy Koo wrapping up five years as Executive Director and Sarah Miles stepping in as Interim ED to guide the team until Megan Pacheco joined the organization in February 2022.

The new year is already underway, and it is more clear than ever how urgent the need is for this work. When we hear from students in surveys, focus groups, and conferences about the stress they are experiencing, we know our work is greatly needed. Thank you for being part of the solution to these pressing problems our youth are facing, for believing in our mission, and for choosing to share your time, talents, and resources with us to transform the student experience.

With our deepest gratitude,

Sarah Miles, Ph.D., Interim Executive Director

Lisa Busby, Board Chair



IMPACT

BY THE NUMBERS



“The most valuable part of being on this team for me is being able to actually make a positive impact on my school and my fellow peers. I see that there is a lot of potential to make real change in our community.”

—Student

IMPACT

BY THE NUMBERS



4,266

**FACULTY, STAFF, AND
PARENT VOICES HEARD**



42,861

**STUDENT VOICES
HEARD**

“Challenge Success definitely has been a game changer for us. I think mostly because it’s really opened the door to allow our staff and our students, and the parent community to start working together and start identifying what our needs are that are specific to our school. It has also allowed us to bring a voice to our student population into the decisions that we make as a school. The students feel like they are part of the community and that they are listened to.”

—Middle School Principal

SCHOOL PROFILE: CHAMINADE COLLEGE PREPARATORY

“The beauty (of our Challenge Success work) is that the plan developed with CS is streamlined with our strategic plan and also our accreditation plans . . . What CS did, it elevated the work and centrally focused on the areas where we want to make changes, in particular we wanted to cultivate student self-reliance for success, self advocacy and also deal with mental health. Challenge Success especially supported this with all the data.”

—Brother Adam Becerra, Vice President of Mission and Strategic Initiatives



A school focused on educating the whole child, [Chaminade College Preparatory](#), joined the Challenge Success school program in Fall 2020 seeking support to ensure well-being was in partnership, not in competition, with high academic expectations, and to align these important factors with their Strategic Plan. As the pandemic continued to disrupt the rhythm of daily school and its range of enrichment activities, affirming the commitment to values of healthy adolescents became even more important for leaders of this sixth through twelfth grade school.



SCHOOL PROFILE: CHAMINADE COLLEGE PREPARATORY *(continued)*



The team of students, teachers, parents, counselors and administrators embarked on a journey facilitated by a Challenge Success coach to identify root causes of student and faculty stress, increase their knowledge about ways to address it, and begin to plan for short and long term solutions. In the first year, they attended the spring and fall conferences together, administered the student survey, did a deep dive into data analysis to understand what students were saying, and hosted professional development for faculty and parent education sessions. Now in their second year and focusing on changes at the middle and high school level, this remarkable school has put their values into action. They eliminated middle school



final exams, instituted a later start time, initiated a school schedule audit, started middle school advisory groups, administered a “connect survey” to ensure each student is connected to a faculty member, incorporated flexible homework due dates, explored high school curriculum for inclusion of diverse perspectives, created a high school mental health committee; and the list goes on.



LISTENING IN: AMPLIFYING STUDENT VOICES

“One of the biggest takeaways has been to find any possible way to get the students’ perspective. We started earlier in the year with an ‘I Wish’ poll of upper school students. It made a big impact on just sharing what things are like for them in the moment and what they need from their adults in the community. Every chance I get right now is ‘how can I get more feedback from students? How can I hear what it’s like for them?’ A big push for me is trying to help students understand how powerful their voices are here.”

—School Leader



A hallmark component of Challenge Success work is to listen—to students in particular as well as educators and parents. We do this through collecting data in the form of the student, faculty/staff and parent surveys, as well as through several “Listening In” protocols our coaches encourage their school teams to employ. In Spring 2021, we participated in a national [movement](#)—100 Days of Conversation—aimed at elevating the importance of reimagining education. Challenge Success hosted a virtual webinar to witness a facilitated “Fishbowl” discussion among four teens and three school leaders to reflect on their experiences and vision for education. The audience of several hundred shared what they would like to see in a reimagined school, including schools attending better to social-emotional learning, considering community well-being, incorporating wellness into the concept of academic rigor, and reimagining curriculum with the lens of equity and social justice for all.

LISTENING IN: AMPLIFYING STUDENT VOICES *(continued)*

Fishbowl highlights include:

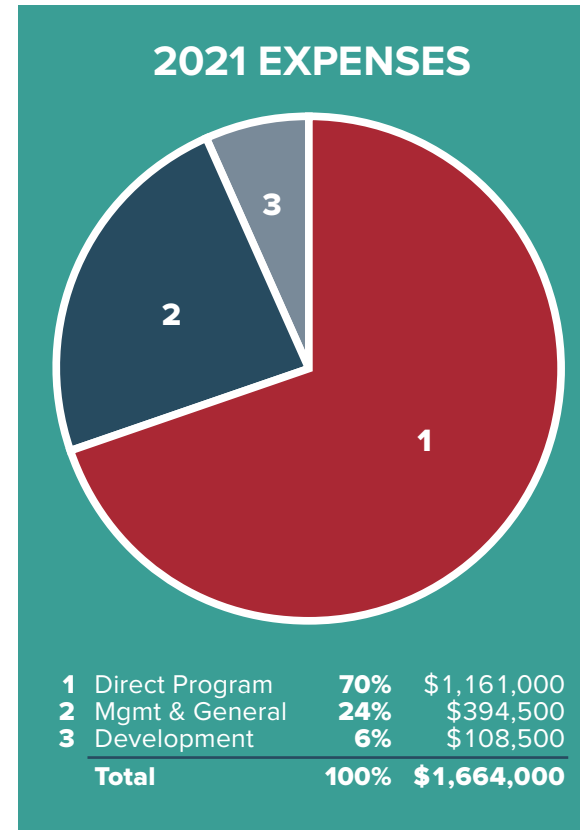
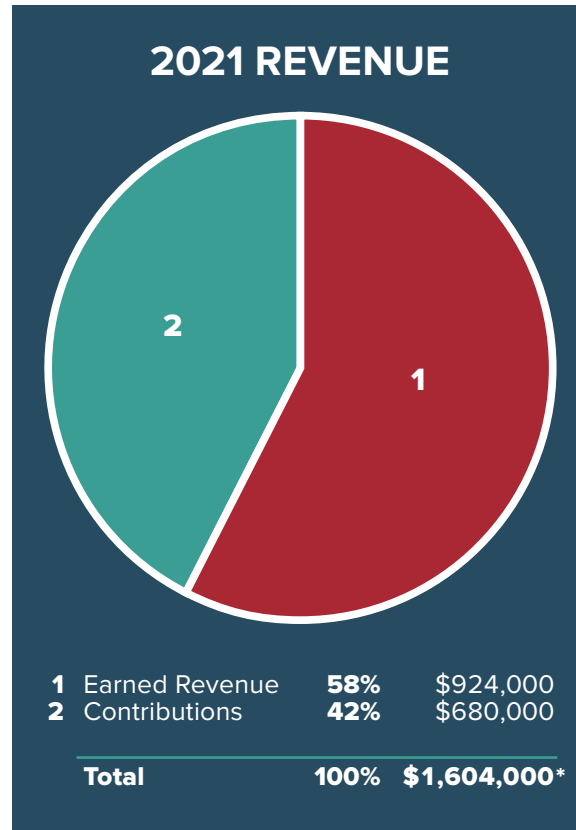
- Defining a “good life”—learning about oneself and what one likes to do, being surrounded by people who support that, and the ability and opportunity to pursue activities that bring in one’s passions.
- Factors that contribute to a thriving community: trust that allows for taking risks, making mistakes and recovering, ability to choose pursuits, and connection and support.
- The role of schools in contributing to a good life and thriving community: ability to be exposed to and try different activities with support in a safe environment.
- How equity or inequity shows up in school communities: whose voices participate in powerful conversations, curriculum and assessments, discipline and social justice, and who makes decisions.



“My work with Challenge Success has really changed me at a personal level. As a school leader, I have so much gratitude for the ability to zoom out and see the power behind leading as a thought partner and as a coach or questioner rather than top down.”

—School Leader

FINANCIALS



*In addition to our earned revenue and charitable contributions, Challenge Success received forgiveness for \$523,000 of PPP loan funding.

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“It’s been a great experience being part of such a positive program, keeping a focus on helping students experience high school in a different way, highlighting more of the things that really do matter in the grand scheme of things.”

—Counselor

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THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS! *(continued)*

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Mary Ann Zetes



“The most valuable part of being on this team has been the ability to advocate for students who are vulnerable. It has also been valuable in learning exactly what vulnerable means and how it is present in our community.”

—Teacher on CS Team

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& Evaluation Associate*

Lisa Westrich,
Special Projects

*“I can put strategies and ideas to work right away.
Thank you all for this important work you are doing.”*

—Conference Attendee

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