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# ANNUAL REPORT

20  
23



**PREPARED BY: MALLY CHAKOLA & CAMERON GRAY**

[www.musfoundation.com](http://www.musfoundation.com)

PO Box 5561, Santa Barbara, CA 93150

# WITH GRATITUDE

Dear Families,

Our children have an unparalleled experience here at MUS not only because of the school's comparatively high level of public funding, but because of your contributions of time and resources to the Montecito Union School Foundation ("MUSF"). This partnership between public dollars and MUSF empowers investing in state-of-the-art, cutting edge facilities and supporting enriching experiences that would not be possible without you! Because of your support we were able to fund and implement incredible programs and projects in the 2022-23 school year, including the Outdoor Learning Pavilion- which was concept to use in one year!

I am hopeful that you will participate this year to, among other things, improve the quality of both the library and iLab to inspire and enrich students for years to come. Every gift, of any size, improves the MUS experience. We thank you in advance for your generosity.

With gratitude,



Tara Fergusson, MUSF President



# MUSF

*The Montecito Union School Foundation (MUSF) was founded in 2018 as a 501(c)3 merging two separate predecessor organizations, the MUS PTA and the Montecito Education Foundation.*

Our vision is that your donations, partnered with public dollars, maximize Montecito Union School's ability to launch inspired thinkers who positively impact the world.



## MISSION

**MUSF's mission is to enrich the student experience by:**

- ☒ enhancing academic, athletic and arts programs, and
- ☒ expanding technology, curriculum, and classroom resources.

**MUSF Board of Directors works to allocated funds and achieve successful outcomes by applying the following guiding principles:**

- **Impact for all.** MUSF strives to approve projects with impact to a large portion of the student population.
- **Enrich student learning.** MUSF considers how each project or grant proposed will improve the holistic educational experience of our children.
- **Exercise fiscal responsibility and oversight from budgeting to project completion.** The MUSF Board reviews and approves proposals for projects and grants. The President generally meets with Anthony Ranii and other stakeholders weekly during the school year to oversee scope, budget, and execution of projects. MUSF also works with the the District to firm up each partners contributions.

# LOOKING BACK

## FINANCIAL OVERVIEW 2022-23

2022-2023 was an outstanding year for MUSF. Our financial results show two takeaways that you should feel proud of:

1. A strong increase in total revenue for the year, largely driven by Gala proceeds and the Mustang Fund campaign; and
2. Effective management of the Carnival, Move-a-thon, and Community Building events to generate moderate revenue while delivering robust community engagement and school spirit.

In particular, Gala far exceeded revenue expectations by 214%, and the Mustang Fund modestly exceeded expectations by 111% to budget. We should all feel proud of the participation rates Mustang Fund was able to achieve as set forth on the following page.

Beyond the financial results, we celebrate the impact your volunteerism produced. Through the stewardship of MUSF's Board, who carefully evaluates eligible grants, projects, and programs, and the numerous parent volunteers helping to make it all happen, the impact and enrichment intended for all students can be clearly seen across our funded initiatives (See pages 6-8).

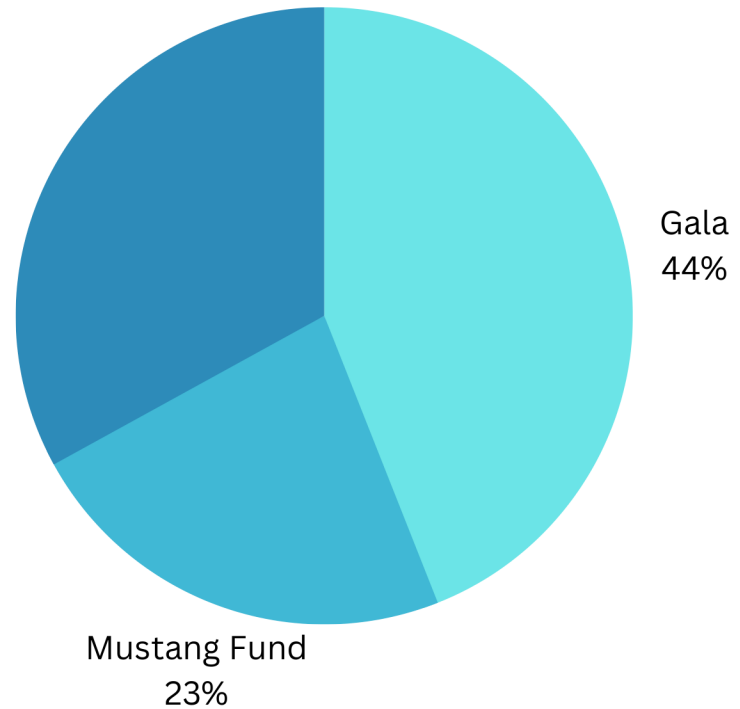
We are grateful to all our parent volunteers and donors for making these financial results possible!



# FUNDRAISING RESULTS

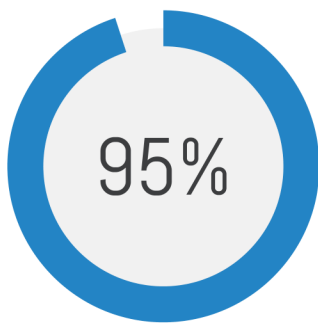
2022-23  
TOTAL REVENUE  
**\$663,531.32**

Other Income  
33%



In 2022-23 over **80% of families** participated in Mustang Fund  
100% of MUS teachers and administration did too!

## Your Dollars = Impact



95% of the revenue generated in 2022-2023 funded grants, projects, programs, and events for the benefit of our MUS community. Whereas, administrative, professional, and miscellaneous expenses accounted for only about 5% of total revenue.

We sincerely thank our parent volunteers who give their time to execute MUSF's goals and make fiscally responsible decisions to keep overhead costs as low as possible.

# POSITIVE OUTCOMES

*Your donations and volunteerism brought to life these programs and projects!*



**You made more than 24 types of enriching experiences for families, kids, teachers, and staff possible this past year!**

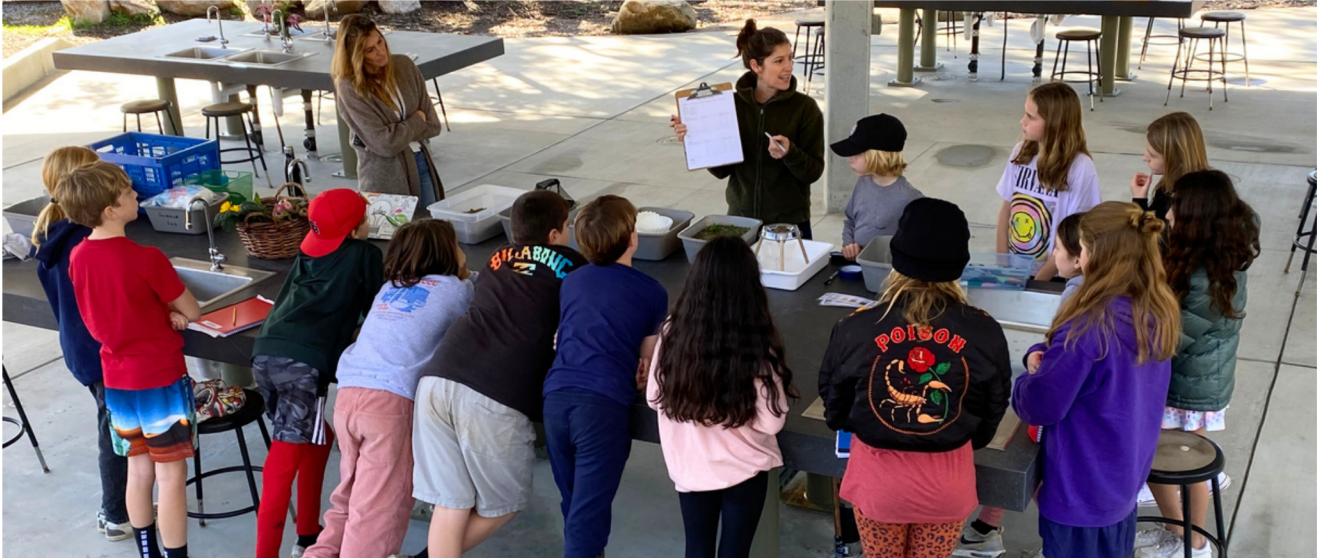
## Gala 2023

The nearly sold out gala was a phenomenal success. It included a cocktail hour, delicious sit down dinner, live auction, silent auction, dancing under the stars, exceptional decor and incredible gift bags. Donations by parents, community partners, and businesses made it all possible. One parent commented, "I was a bit apprehensive to go to gala, but I remember at one point during the night looking around the lawn at all the faces and was overcome with gratitude for how welcoming and warm our MUS community is."

## Umbrellas, Adirondack Chairs, Tables

About a year ago, Mr. Ranii asked the teachers what we could add to Nature Lab to make it even more accessible to classrooms during the day. The answer was surprisingly simple: add shade and seating throughout the property! With your help, high quality seating elements and umbrellas were added throughout the property. This makes it even easier for classes to head to Nature Lab for silent reading, small group work, and classroom discussions. One sixth grader shared, "It's really nice to read in nature. All the sounds around us help me concentrate on my book."

# POSITIVE OUTCOMES CON'T



## Outdoor Learning Pavilion

The Outdoor Learning Pavilion was fully completed during the 2022-2023 school year. Featuring four large teaching and learning stations complete with sinks, outlets, and counter space, this flexible use space has allowed a myriad of student activities and guided lessons to happen at Nature Lab. Students encountered stream tables during science class, made homemade tortillas during STEAM Night, and explored pottery making with pottery wheels. During the summer with the help of MUSF, United Way sent four different groups of students to Nature Lab, and these students used natural materials to design and dye their own nature-inspired handkerchiefs. Through your generous donations to MUSF, the Outdoor Learning Pavilion is fostering science, art, service, and more!

The Kindergarten teachers were so pleased with the Outdoor Learning Pavilion and other enhancements that they moved their end-of-year celebration to Nature Lab.

**Mrs. Stacy Allison gushed, "Our students loved performing for their parents at Nature Lab, and the Outdoor Learning Pavilion was the perfect place to set up the food for the picnic. Students and families loved interacting with the goats, playing on the Miniature Golf Course created by our 6th graders, and sitting in the shade of the new umbrellas. Thank you MUSF!"**

## Boulder Junction

All the purposeful play elements in Boulder Junction were completed during the summer. So, starting this year, students will get to balance on the rope net, climb over rocks with the rope lines, and leap from stump to stump as they explore this new area and put those large muscle groups to work!

# POSITIVE OUTCOMES CON'T

## Living Fence and Microforest

The Living Fence along Nature Lab's western and southern fence line and the Microforest at the eastern edge of the Outdoor Learning Pavilion have increased the biodiversity of Nature Lab, brought new pollinators to the property, and are helping us make use of the natural water runoff while improving the soil over time.

**Nature Lab and STEAM Facilitator Sammy Simon exclaimed, "I've seen Monarch butterflies fluttering around the toyon bushes, native bees feeding on the ceanothus, and ladybugs munching on aphids in the Bird and Bear Orchard. As these plants continue to establish themselves, we'll see even more diverse life in this magical place."**

## Goat Enclosure

Have you met our two Nigerian Dwarf Goats? Nibbles and Buckwheat are superstars at MUS, and are thrilled with their enclosure, designed and built by our 5th graders and Facilities Team. Your donation to MUSF made it possible for us to construct this new addition to Nature Lab.



**One MUS Mom stated, "My kids are super excited to tell their extended family about the goats and chickens at Nature Lab. They help care for them and talk about them as if they were their own pets. My husband and I love seeing the excitement and joy that these animals bring our sons!"**

# WE CAN DO THIS TOGETHER

## THIS YEAR'S MUSTANG FUND

We heard you! We are making fewer asks this year while still enriching our childrens' school experience.

For the 2023-24 year, our goal is to generate sufficient donations for the Mustang Fund, which when added to surplus from last year, will support *two* large upgrades to our kids' learning environments: the library and iLab.

### OBJECTIVE



Create a **modern library** with resources to inspire and support students to explore and practice literary conventions and performing arts.



Improve the **innovation lab** ("iLab") storage, organization capabilities, electrical access and workstations to empower our makers, builders, designers, engineers, creators, and artists!

**Project completion: Before Fall 2024**



# THIS YEAR'S MUSTANG FUND

## THE ASK

**This year, we are streamlining our asks for your support by kindly requesting that you participate in *both*:**

- The Mustang Fund with a donation that is meaningful and significant to your family. Our funding target equates to \$750 per child.
- The 2024 gala by purchasing tickets, sponsorships, bidding in the auction, etc.

**Carnival will be sponsored by  
corporate donations and ticket  
sales this year.  
And, there will be no fundraising  
Move-a-thon.**

**We are sharing with you our 2023-24 fundraising process, so  
that you know what to expect.**



MUSF will run a 6-8 week campaign commencing on or about Tuesday, September 19th.



A volunteer for the Mustang Fund, our annual campaign, will most likely be reaching out to parents.



Near the end of the campaign, we plan to have two (2) Pledge Days, where we will be speaking to families and seeking donations at Drop Off.

# MODERNIZED LIBRARY

Mustang Fund 2023-24 intends to support modernizing the library into a multi-use, interactive, flexible space through a strategic grant of up to \$175,000. The updated library will foster community, curiosity, and collaboration through literary rich and extracurricular library programs.

## YOUR DONATION WILL IMPROVE MATERIALS & RESOURCES

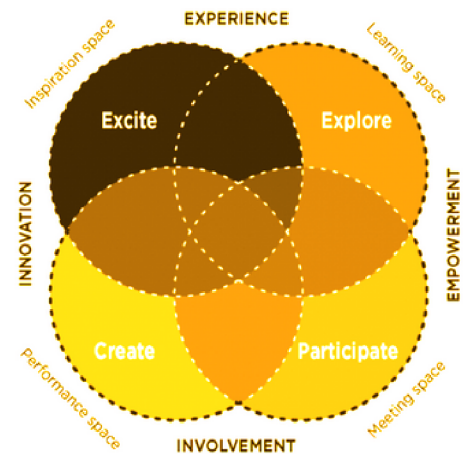
- Update non-fiction resources to support study
- Aesthetic improvements to increase engagement
- Add mini-stage, recording/ filming equipment, puppet/ magnetic theater, etc.

## AND, INCREASE FUNCTION & SPACE USAGE:

- Flexible furniture for multi-use space
- Self checkouts to free up library aid
- Engaging, face-forward book presentation

## PROCESS

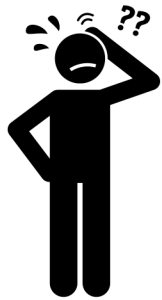
The Librarian, Mrs. Jamie Allison, has been asked to create a detailed concept with attendant budget to present to the Board before March 2024 to crystalize the ideas proposed above. Then, the Board intends to apply its criteria and collaborate to approve a plan. The project is slated to commence in March 2024 and be completed over the summer.



# IMPROVED INNOVATION LAB

The iLab is more than making stuff. It is critical thinking, collaboration, idea growing, problem solving. It is fostering creativity, innovation, & curiosity. Let's support our makers, builders, designers, engineers, creators, and artists! With your help, MUSF intends to make a strategic grant up to \$175,000 to the iLab to solve these issues and invest in supplies and technology to improve innovation.

## The Problem



- Inadequate Materials & Project Storage
- Stunted work flow
- Limited access to laser printers and tools
- Lack of space to expand offerings and invest in new technologies

**By improving the space with storage and creating accessibility for tools, supplies, and power, students will have improved learning outcomes.**



## The Solution

- Installing large scale storage units, rolling furniture, shelving, tool racks, working stations, etc.
- Relocating and installing numerous electrical outlets
- Investing in additional technology and materials



### PROCESS

Mrs. Vanessa Scarlett has been asked to create a detailed concept with attendant budget to present to the Board before March 2024. Then, the Board intends to apply its criteria and collaborate to approve a plan. The project is slated to commence in March 2024 and be completed over the summer.

# CONCLUDING REMARKS

Dear MUS Community,

This summer Tara asked that I consider serving as Mustang Fund Chair. It was an easy decision for me because I am grateful for MUS. My wife Julie and I moved to Montecito a couple of years ago so that our son Connor could enter MUS. He joined Mrs. Trent's 3rd grade class and he immediately fell in love with school. I cannot overstate how important that was to Julie and me! For context we are both Ph.D./J.D.'s, so there's a family history of lots of education and it's a priority to us.



I am privileged to manage Mustang Fund this year. Tara's leadership as MUSF President has been inspiring and I believe the MUSF Board's sophistication is exemplary under her stewardship. As this report demonstrates, the Mustang Fund plays a crucial role in ensuring our kids' continue to benefit from the uniquely exceptional education MUS provides.

Whether you are new to MUS or wish to learn more about MUSF's work and mission, please visit our website [www.musfoundation.com](http://www.musfoundation.com). In the coming weeks a small team of volunteers will be in contact with you. While our goal equates to a gift of \$750 per child, every gift makes a significant impact and I believe it teaches our children an important lesson about giving back. Your participation is fundamental to our success. Please join me in supporting MUS - we have a historic opportunity to preserve a model educational experience for our kids and future students!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cameron".

Cameron Gray

# FAQS

## **Do we have an endowment?**

No, we do not have an indefinitely perpetuating, pool of financial assets. We maintain an account with one year worth of budget in cash or cash equivalents for the purpose of cash flow management and as a reserve in the case of a deficit.

## **What do we do with surpluses?**

In the discretion of the MUSF Board of Directors, surpluses can be maintained and earmarked as committed funds for future approved projects and programs (encumbered and unspent) or saved as unrestricted funds. The intention of MUSF is to raise to fund programs and projects with as quick of a return of value to the students as possible.

## **How do we handle deficits?**

In the event of a deficit, we use the cash in our reserve to cover it which is why we maintain one year of cash reserves. There are years, such as this one, where we operated at a Net Loss due to encumbered and unspent funds from a prior year being spent in a subsequent year. These losses are planned for and expected in these cases.

## **My child is a 6th grader this year, so why should I donate to the Mustang Fund this year?**

Your child(ren) benefited from the generous 6th grade parents that came before, who invested in the school's future even though their child(ren) may never have enjoyed the impact of their donation. Together, we uplift MUSF.

*Note: Some images are stock and inspirational and others are approved school images. All financial information is based upon unaudited financials for the year July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023 dated September 6, 2023. To the knowledge and belief of MUSF, the financials are accurate and complete.*