



BRIDGES ACADEMY
EDUCATING THE EXCEPTIONAL²



BRIDGES ACADEMY
ANNUAL REPORT
2022 - 2023



A MESSAGE FROM



Keri Borzello, Head of School
Bridges Los Angeles

Dear Parents and Community Members,

We are pleased to offer you the Bridges Academy Annual Report for 2022–2023.

Annual giving is the lifeblood of the school and a significant source of funding to ensure that Bridges Academy will remain the premier school for gifted children who think differently. Annual Giving also keeps tuition increases at low and predictable levels, thus enabling families to plan ahead.

Bridges would not be the remarkable place it is — where our students learn, innovate, and flourish — without the generosity of our donors. In addition, so much of the Bridges experience is shaped by our parent volunteers, and we are always grateful for those who give their time and energy.

We must remain committed to securing our future. This means continued attention to our aging facilities, assessment of our curricular programs, expanding enrichment opportunities, and providing valuable real-world experiences designed to explore career paths, gain work experience, build life skills, and sustain our commitment to financial aid so that those who desire a specialized education for twice-exceptional children can access it.

THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

Our commitment to the continued research and development of teaching strategies for neurodiverse students has not waned since Bridges' founding in 1994. Between our work with students, outreach opportunities with the 2e Center, development of our Seattle and BAO schools, and fruitful partnership with the Bridges Graduate School of Cognitive Diversity in Education, we look forward to further advancing Bridges Academy and the Bridges Education Group this upcoming year.

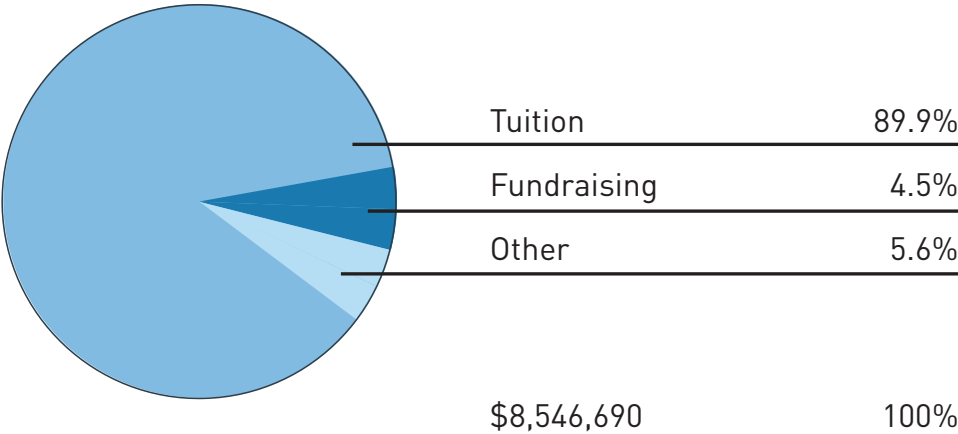
Your choice to support our community makes us better. Your time as a volunteer and your financial contributions are an investment in us. The cumulative effect of our community's investment makes so much possible.

Sincerely,

Keri Borzello

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keri Borzello". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Operating Income, Gifts & Contributions



2022 - 2023

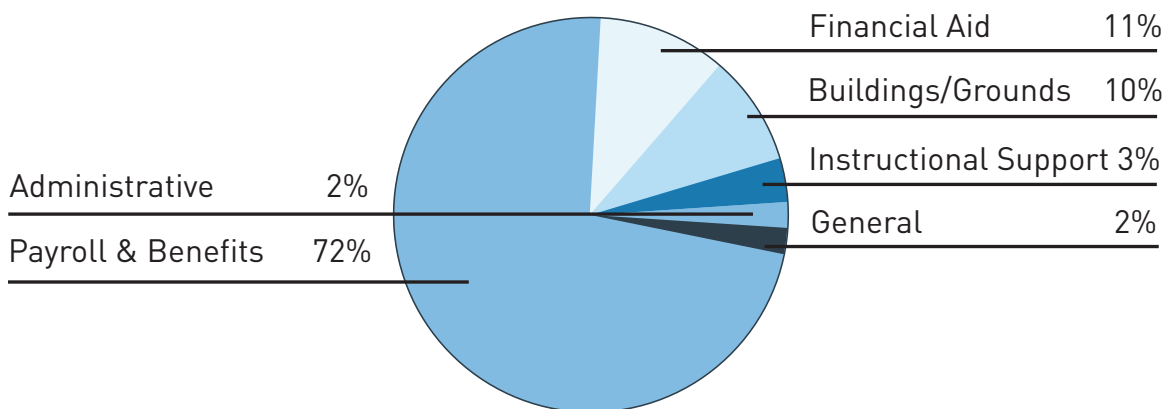
FINANCIAL STATEMENT LOS ANGELES

ANNUAL GIVING BY CONSTITUENCY

Board:	93%
Faculty:	43%
Parents:	78%

Annual Giving total: \$280,814

Operating Expenses



PHOENIX PROGRAM

GROWING TOGETHER

Throughout the 2022-2023 school year, the Phoenix program was a learning community defined by growing together and committed to meeting the varied and extraordinary needs of nearly 40 twice-exceptional children.

As the school year began, students spent most of their time in advisory groups, where advisors emphasized themes of identity and community, supporting students in seeing themselves as unique individuals who are also members of a shared collective. The first week of school was devoted to Starting with Strengths, which in Phoenix includes sharing passions and interests, reflecting on learning preferences, and making initial connections with peers and adults. Later in the year the revamped advisory program, supported by the Phoenix counselor, addressed critical developmental topics such as friendship, communication, boundaries, the safe use of technology, and human growth and healthy living.

At the core of the Phoenix program, teachers provided engaging curricula and activities across the board, creating several exciting new units within math, science, and humanities. Staff also designed and implemented novel project-based learning experiences. These included enrichment clusters such as Bridges Young Entrepreneurs, Digital Music Production, Smorgasbord Food Festival, Horticulture, Filmmaking, Newspaper, Phoenix Gaming Convention, and Phoenix Broadcast News, as well as all-new electives: French, Coding, and Chorus. Through these activities, students experienced authentic ways of solving problems using the same tools and procedures as professionals in the field.

Intensive Intersession projects, which bring all of the Phoenix students together to solve a common problem over two weeks, included designing a full-scale model of a sustainable home and reaching out to people from other generations, cultures, and backgrounds to explore the human experience beyond our immediate surroundings. For the second year in a row, each student aspiring to move on to middle school in the near future completed a year-long *Magnum Opus* project, showcasing their own “great work” and experiencing a deep and engaging way of developing expertise and sharing it with an audience.



The Phoenix intern team also continued to excel, supporting teachers in the classroom, facilitating projects and offering a series of after-school clubs that included Chess, Sports, and Table Tennis.

We welcomed quite a few new students through mid-year enrollments and also added a new staff role: a full-time learning specialist who supports students directly through small group or one-on-one instruction and works with teachers on curriculum development and planning differentiated instruction. It was wonderful to see our rosters grow and to have the contributions of these new individuals and families.

Speaking of Phoenix families, they were invited to more on-campus events than ever before. These included orientations, an informative back-to-school night in September, two enrichment cluster open houses, an intersession public presentation each semester, a *Magnum Opus* symposium, the Bridges Film Festival (which featured numerous films by Phoenix students), and a science fair.

Of course, not all learning can happen on campus, so we traveled throughout the Los Angeles area for a series of field trips to extend the curriculum and encourage curiosity. Destinations included the Getty Villa, NASA's Jet Propulsion Lab, the Discovery Cube museum, STAR Eco Station, Huntington Gardens, and Will Geer's Theatricum Botanicum. Students walked to the Studio Library and Beeman Park for our annual Field Day, collecting library cards on their way to a fun afternoon playing outdoors. We also invited a number of guest speakers and performers to campus, including recycling and sustainability educators from Tree People and performers from Theatricum Botanicum, who led an assembly entitled "A Visit with Great Black Americans."

To be sure, it was an active and exciting year for the Phoenix program, as we returned to many traditions in the post-pandemic setting and took advantage of new opportunities to start engaging with the broader community. Responses from students, parents, and staff were overwhelmingly positive, and through it all we stayed true to our driving mission to see and develop the unique strengths in each and every 2e child.

PHOENIX

Enrichment Clusters: Digital Music & Film



Enrichment Clusters: Horticulture, Gaming, and Food.



NASA: JPL Field Trip



Huntington Library Field Trip



NASA: JPL Field Trip



Getty Field Trip



Getty Field Trip



MIDDLE SCHOOL

IN THE MIDDLE OF IT ALL


The Bridges middle school continues to impress the community with its innovative ideas and projects that demonstrate a willingness to push creativity and academic complexity beyond the expert definition. The connections from our engaging curriculum throughout the year began with focus on flexibility and adaptability while acclimating students to the academic environment.

Faculty were excited to greet the students as they entered the campus for the first day of school, with everyone eager to discover what type of curiosity drives our students both in and outside of the classroom. Students immediately immersed themselves in getting reacquainted with friends and meeting new peers during our Starting with Strengths Days, in which students highlighted strengths they would want to build and use throughout the academic year and how to approach learning through a strength-based lens.

As the year progressed students focused on diversity and inclusion, a natural part of middle school themes and topics, in their Health & Social Living and Experiential Wellness classes and their advisory. The topics of identity, decision making, perspective taking, health and wellness, relationships, and character were naturally woven into the curriculum and highlighted through discussion and activities. These themes help to prompt the self-discovery that will lead to growth, as well as developing the perspective-taking skills that come from reciprocal conversations. To both support these topics and student cultural awareness, we highlighted a plethora of holidays and observances, including but not limited to: the Jewish New Year Rosh Hashanah, Hispanic Heritage Month, Día de los Muertos, all winter holidays, Lunar New Year, Black History Month, Women's History Month, Asian Pacific Heritage Month, LGBTQIA+, and Autism Awareness.

Students went in depth with experimentation to present their scientific findings in our inaugural year of Science Symposiums. The purpose of these symposiums is to ensure the accessibility of science knowledge to members of the community. Students modeled and presented utilizing skills of a scientist. By conducting experiments and analyzing data, they formed and publicly shared discoveries that expanded their understanding of the scientific world.

Winter intersession allowed for students to express their rebellious nature and transform the middle school space into the marvel of art installations, with the unifying theme of *revolution*. Each team created an immersive 4D experience for parents, family, and friends in under two weeks. Project-based skills such as planning, budgeting, adjusting, and implementing group



project goals were vital to the success of each team. Installations stemmed from interest-based groupings and demonstrated revolutionary products, events, and ideas in architecture and 3D modeling, math & money, social-political movements, music history, medicine, and aerospace. Students successfully captured the essence of revolution in artistic ways that gave visitors the opportunity to experience art installations through the use of all five senses.

The outdoor learning experiences at The Academy Museum of Motion Pictures and a tour of L.A. Valley College helped students interact pragmatically through dialogue and brainstorming while challenging them to enter their adventure zones to explore the community and reach a destination utilizing the public METRO and LADOT routes.

Students turned their talents and strengths towards the big idea of *Adaptation* to create an authentic and in-depth spring intersession performance of Shakespeare Shorts, no caps! The performance consisted of a short series of vignettes using Shakespearean language, adapted to contemporary pop culture. As a kickoff activity for our spring intersession, students eagerly listened to and interacted with visiting experts Candi Milo (voice actor and X Hill (stage and film costuming, who provided real-world guidance regarding their field and professionalism.

Middle school students chose their workshop group in Props, Costumes and Makeup, Set Design, Acting, Stage Management, and Marketing and Hospitality. They applied their strengths and talents to create a show that was performed at the beautiful and spacious Colony Theatre in Burbank. From the reworking of the script to the marketing of the play, faculty and students worked together to give a fantastic performance highlighting the importance of storytelling to the modern generation.

In successfully closing this unique and exciting school year, eighth-grade students marveled their audience during their Bridging Presentations. These presentations are an opportunity for promoting students to demonstrate they are ready for the rigors of high school. These rigors include demonstrating maturity in various learning environments, understanding of assignment and project processes, the ability to present ideas and knowledge in front of an audience, and responding appropriately to questions from an audience of peers, faculty, and parents.

These essential cross-curricular collaborative projects provide the necessary intellectual freedom our middle school students crave to allow for relevant and authentic experiences that they can look back on in the future and be proud of their accomplishments.



MIDDLE SCHOOL

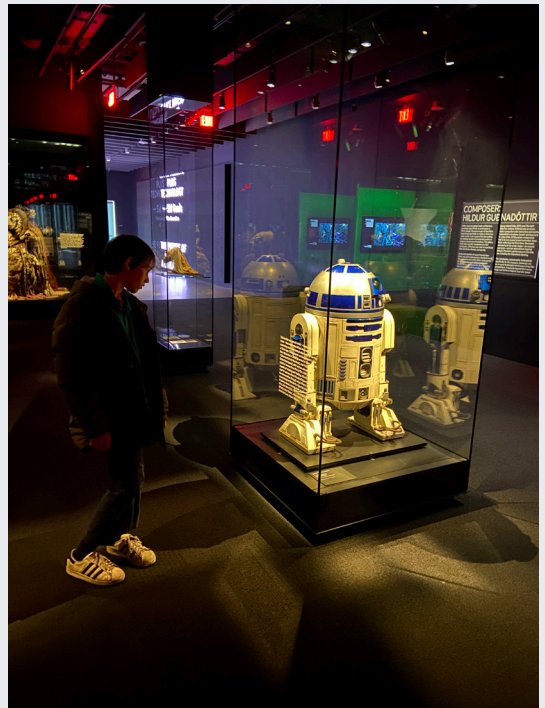
Intersession



Museum of Motion Pictures



Museum of Motion Pictures



Science Symposium



Enrichment Cluster: Film



Science Symposium





HIGH SCHOOL

A YEAR IN REVIEW

Bridges high school students and staff have had a tremendously successful year. We kicked off with in-depth Starting with Strengths days that had students explore our core values as a high school. The high school agreed on four core values by which we want to learn and live: *Respect, Responsibility, Integrity, and Empathy*. Students created artworks, songs, short films, as well as costumes and props for one-act plays. The writers group created works of fiction, non-fiction, and infographics, and one very industrious student created a website which features all the projects. You can view it here: <https://bit.ly/BridgesCoreValues>

In March, all grade levels went on field trips, with the 10th grade doing a three-day, two-night trip to Catalina through the Catalina Environmental Leadership Program, where they hiked, kayaked, learned about sustainable practices, night snorkeled, and star-gazed. The 12th-grade students did a four-day, three-night trip to Palm Desert and the surrounding areas, where they got to play at the top of the Aerial Tramway during an active snow, walked around exhibits at the Air Museum, wandered through the Art Museum and VillageFest, fed giraffes at the Living Desert, and bonded with their classmates during shared meals and exploration time throughout the trip. The 9th and 11th grade students stayed in the Los Angeles area and explored the CA Science Center and Getty Center. Additionally, the 9th grade did a day of team-building at RockNRope in Malibu while the 11th grade had a college essay writing workshop.

2022-2023 was a year that had many firsts for high school. Our first annual showcase of academic, elective, and extracurricular happenings was a huge success. Our art room was transformed into a gallery, our bands played for all attendees, we were given a preview of the drama performance, our robotics team showed off their robot, and our academic classes had readings, labs, and presentations happening throughout the day. Additionally, our young expert candidates showed off their work through presentations and slideshows.

Our first annual Film Festival earned two thumbs up. High school students presented their short films and then engaged in question-and-answer sessions after the viewing. Our FIRST Robotics Team 4019 (Mechanical Paradise) won its first-ever Team Spirit Award at the Orange County Regional, demonstrating “extraordinary

enthusiasm and spirit through exceptional partnership and teamwork furthering the objectives of FIRST.”

Our first-ever golf team was of great interest to many, and one of our golfers made it to the regional championships. Cross-country, track & field, and basketball athletes were able to compete against other schools in the area and many personal records were achieved across all of our teams.

Mindfulness and social-emotional learning were threaded through our academic support and advisory (ASA) block with new topics to explore every week. Students participated in two spirit weeks, a high school prom at the Burbank Marriott, and a Universal Studios trip. Our high school bands performed in two exciting coffee houses at the Federal Bar and showed off their talent and skills across different genres of music. Our drama department performed *The Play That Goes Wrong* and *Newsies: The Musical* and wowed the audiences with four shows of each play.

YOUNG EXPERTS

2022 - 2023



Charles David Deighton
Applied Sciences



Veronica Groner
Comic book Studies



Hank Ravich
3D Modeling and Design

Catalina Island



The Tempest

Robotics



A Year with Frog and Toad

Basketball



Track and Field



PARENT ASSOCIATION

BUILDING COMMUNITY

The Bridges community-building events were able to resume post-COVID this year. The fall was a busy time for the P.A. with the annual Bridges Halloween Carnival and Halloween assembly in Studio City. Parents organized these events with enthusiasm and vigor. A food donation drive held in November aimed to help the local community replenish its food bank, and it was a huge success.

Monthly P.A. meetings were held either virtually or on campus with scheduled speakers discussing relevant parental topics. The on-campus meetings were well attended as parents could enjoy refreshments and socially connect.

As is tradition, the P.A. spearheaded holiday gifts for Bridges staff by hosting a lunch for faculty and organizing holiday cards and cash gifts for the Bridges faculty.

In February, the P.A. partnered with Step it Up, a company equipped to help with student-led fundraising. Monies were made to purchase new fitness and outdoor equipment for Bridges. A Day of Awesomeness event was held in April to celebrate students' hard work and success.

The P.A. organized the annual Gala and auction, which were held in April. The Gala event was attended by Bridges staff and the parent community.

The spring Bridges alumni panels via Zoom were well received. Parents have enjoyed hearing about journeys from alumni students and alumni parents since graduating from Bridges.

Teacher and Staff Appreciation Week, celebrated at the end of the school year, was well organized and had multiple parent volunteers. Faculty was celebrated with a menu of daily activities/gifts.

We look forward to another great year of partnership in 2023-2024.



Gala: The Silver Screen



Halloween Carnival



Day of Awesomeness





BRIDGES ACADEMY ONLINE

YEAR TWO: EXPANSION

In its second year, Bridges Academy Online thrived as a community of online learners who passionately engaged in their studies and areas of strength. Our enrollment expanded significantly, with the addition of a second cohort, empowering a diverse and talented group of twenty-seven full-time online learners across the United States and internationally.

A standout achievement was our Young Expert Program, where twenty-three BAO students showcased their work in project presentations. Among them, twenty-one students earned full badges encompassing a wide array of disciplines, including sociology, engineering, character design, game design, fashion design, sculpture, world building, narrative arts, political science, architecture, general medicine, and coding.

This year was marked by exceptional academics and exciting additions to our program. With the introduction of electives, our Drama and Visual Art classes provided a platform for students to produce captivating and engaging work, showcasing their artistic talents. Our academic offerings expanded to include Economics & U.S. Government, Biology, and advanced levels of math and Spanish. Many students excelled in honors-level work and participated in hands-on labs in Chemistry and Biology.

Following the success of our inaugural on-campus residency week last year, BAO expanded its offerings to include two residency weeks. These events brought students and their families to our Studio City campus for a week of engaging activities, from community-building exercises and social-emotional learning workshops to on-site classes, field trips, and collaborative projects with our on-campus students. The residencies strengthened bonds between students, faculty, and families, and had a lasting positive impact on the online environment when they returned home.

Our students' dedication to lifelong learning extended beyond school hours. Many excelled in AP and college courses, participated in community service, and engaged in enriching extracurricular activities, such as choir, orchestra, and studio art. Additionally, several students pursued independent studies in world languages, exploring Japanese, Mandarin, French, and Russian.

Our commitment to promoting lifelong fitness through independent physical education led students to actively participate in various activities, from fencing and dance to rock climbing and curling. BAO after-school enrichment courses provided students with unique experiences in Dungeons and Dragons, Music Appreciation, and the TED Club.

Throughout the year, students actively participated in workshops on diversity, identity, and inclusion. These workshops deepened their understanding of one another and fostered discussions about respect, belonging, and inclusion. Guest speakers shared personal journeys of overcoming adversity and celebrating identity, promoting a more inclusive and understanding community.

As we prepare for the upcoming academic year, we are excited about the continued growth and success of BAO. Welcoming our first senior class, with five students set to graduate, we look forward to supporting college readiness through Junior and Senior Seminar. Additionally, students will have increased opportunities academically and creatively with the introduction of new core and elective courses. Moreover, we are dedicated to enhancing students' social-emotional development and executive functioning through daily homeroom classes and weekly social-emotional programming in ASA.

Throughout the year, our admissions team actively engages with prospective students and parents, presenting the unique opportunity our strength-based, talent-focused program provides. We frequently receive inquiries from families around the world and hold meetings and regular open houses, which will continue into the 2023-24 school year.

BRIDGES ACADEMY ONLINE

Online Lessons

Rubric

	Creativity	Time Management	Craftsmanship	Accuracy	Usability	Artistry	Completeness
1-10	A	T	B	G	B	B	C
What was most successful?	Sketching	Leather jacket	Dyeing	Sleeve jacket	Leather jacket	Sketch painting	Sleeve jacket
What needed improving?	Sketch painting	Planning presentation	Sketch painting	Sewing	Cutting sheets and other jacket	Ironing	Dyeing

Reflection on Process

Learned about the nuance in game creation and development.
 Learned about the level of involvement in game iteration and design.
 Learned many pieces of information that are helpful to know but putting them all together I wish there was more cohesion in the pieces.
 I expected to be able to produce a longer piece of written work but ended up spending more of my time gathering information than writing.
 My research was not super organized - I learned things that I was interested in but the way I went about it was not very conducive to writing and made it difficult to see how much I had done. Probably should have summarized/taken notes on the articles as I went.
 I spent much more time on researching the game design aspect than the strategy and

SAMPLES OF WORK: CHARACTER BREAKDOWN

Character Breakdown:

Name: Matthew Huskinton
Nationality/Citizenship: Finnish, Dutch, Canadian, and American
Born: March 20, 1985
Defeat: Fiction
From: Helsinki, Finland

Background:

- Matt was ditched by his dad (Arvo) and his mom died during childbirth.
- He has a missing older sister.
- He escaped around from orphanage to orphanage until age 7 and was selected for a top secret super soldier program.
- Matt became a government-issued super soldier at age 10.
- He made it to the black ops unit and got together with Matti.
- Matt was forced to work and his government with Matti.
- He got tired of military work and war in general, and went to college and got Ph.D. in mechanical engineering (also had a degree in biology).
- Matt became a tech guru and used his creations to help the world but still kept his weapons intact.
- He was arrested after a bar fight, got out with a slap on the wrist and was sentenced to anger management, where he met some agers.

Personality:
 Matt is a "typical" cold-hearted individual who is border-line sociopathic. His main goal is to get rich and ultimately live a

Samples of Work: Paper Models (photos)

1. Small bodyball model
2. Top bodyball model of an unribbed medium model

Music Enrichment Group

Learning IRL



BBN



Lunch at Carnies



Mini Golf



Rock Climbing Adventure





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