



**EPAAF**

**EAST PALO ALTO  
ACADEMY FOUNDATION**



Sequoia Union High  
School District

37°27'46"N, 122°07'55"W  
East Palo Alto, CA

**Annual Report – 2019**

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*(Cover) “Dreams bigger than your borders.”*

*The young people that we serve know—all too well—about the effects of inequality in our society. EPAA’s inclusive approach supports our belief that every person deserves a life of choice and opportunity, a message echoed by our student’s graduation cap.*

# A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear EPAAF Friends and Supporters,

What a year! I write this letter with enthusiasm and gratitude. Your investment in our students has allowed them to access a quality education with the best possible opportunities for growth. When I look back on this year, I think about our largest graduating class and our college persistence rate. I think about students like Maria, Benjamin, and Ericka, who came to this country as children—and on their own—to pursue their dream of attending college. I'm truly inspired by our students, and driven by my belief that every one of them has the potential to be successful. By working to diversify the culture of power, we are changing the lives of our students.

This year, we've continued to focus on Exhibitions to promote the critical thinking and communication skills that students will need in the future. We watched our largest graduating class of 60+ students cross the stage, and we increased the number of college-attending students by 26%. I'm most proud of the number of students persisting in college. While it's not 100% yet, our first-generation, low-income students of color are persisting at a rate of 70%, which is above the national average of 42% (National Average: Low SES, FG, SOC).

By providing wraparound services and individualized support, EPAA and EPAAF helped students to reach for their goals and overcome the significant challenges in their way. We consider this work to be of the utmost importance because we know that our students have the insights and desire to change the lives of their families, the community, and the global society for the better - they just need the support and resources to get there.

*I'm truly inspired by our students, and driven by my belief that each and every student has the potential to be successful.*

It's because of our deep belief in our students' strength, wisdom, and potential that we made a big promise to our hardworking Class of 2019 community college students: when they are ready to transfer to a 4-year university, there is \$5,000 waiting for them. We are excited to award those scholarship dollars and are hopeful that this will motivate students during the challenges ahead.

In our annual report, you will see powerful stories about our students and graduates, impact data, and programming—I do hope that you will enjoy reading.

With gratitude,  
**Elisabeth Landa**

# A LETTER FROM THE PRINCIPAL



**Amika Guillaume,**  
Principal, East Palo Alto Academy

## Welcome from East Palo Alto Academy (EPAA).

With the help of our dedicated staff, our Bulldogs make us proud every day by striving to positively impact their lives, community, and the global society. I am happy to share some of our students' highlights from the past year:

- Winning the Design for America Award at Stanford University's Design for Social Good Showcase for UltraDot, a device that alerts people not to encroach on accessible parking spots.
- Launching the student-led local Club Interact Chapter in partnership with the Rotary Club of Palo Alto.
- Introducing an AP Calculus and Engineering course, both of which students themselves requested—they were seeking more academic challenges!

I'm also excited to share that Lucia Gonzalez, our first homegrown credentialed maestra (teacher), joined us this year! A Loyola Marymount University and Stanford Teacher Education Program (STEP) alum, Lucia is an inspiration to our students in pursuing a college education and giving back to their community. We believe in the influence that educators can make in the lives of our students, a message we share far beyond our school community.

*Moments, both big and small, drive our passion to make an impact on our students' lives.*

Our students play a large part in solidifying this belief. Just months ago, EPAA summer school students

met online with a University of Virginia Masters in Education class and shared how support from their teachers outweigh significant challenges. These include lack of access to education, low expectations set by others on them, and balancing academics with caring for their family and holding part-time jobs, among others. I was deeply touched to witness how future teachers on the other side of the country were motivated by our students' determination to succeed.

Moments, both big and small, drive our passion to make an impact on our students' lives. I recall the thrill of a volleyball game in a packed gym, where the bench outnumbered the players on the court four times over, instilling the values of unity, respect, and discipline in all of us. Bookending our year is our seniors' College Signing Day, when our students announce their post high school plans onstage and write their college's names on my office window. These are testaments to what our community can achieve when we come together.

We have been transforming the lives of Bulldogs for 18 years and counting. But we always look forward to even bigger and better things ahead, such as the development of the EPAA graduate profile, the implementation of project-based learning for all students, and further expansion of our course offerings. With the full support of East Palo Alto Academy Foundation (EPAAF), generous contributions from all our donors, and the sustained energy of everyone in our Bulldog family, I am confident that the best is still to come—**thank you!**



## ABOUT EPAAF AND EPAA

*(Above) Class of 2019 Graduates. EPAA's Class of 2019 pose with their proud staff for the traditional picture in between Memorial Auditorium and Hoover Tower on the Stanford University campus.*

East Palo Alto Academy Foundation (EPAAF) advocates for, advances, and raises funds for the students and college-attending graduates of East Palo Alto Academy (EPAA). EPAA is a public charter high school that seeks to prepare students for college and for the 21st-century workplace by enabling them to graduate with the full array of knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed for success, and with the ability to learn independently throughout their lives. Together, EPAAF and EPAA work to empower students to break the cycle of poverty, and to access lives of choice and opportunity through education.

EPAAF believes that all our students, regardless of race, economic background, and academic preparedness, deserve a high-quality education. Every EPAA student benefits from a college- and career-ready curriculum and a support system that take into account the unique

challenges they face. We use a low floor, high ceiling curriculum to make sure that all students are engaged in each class, and we encourage each one to pursue excellence and to take an active part in securing a better future for themselves and their families.

Our support for our students goes beyond high school: EPAAF awards college scholarships to EPAA alumni, so they can pursue their chosen field of study. We currently have 77 scholars in our 2019–2020 cohort at 27 different colleges and universities around the country. In addition to this financial support, we also provide 1:1 mentorship to our students to help them persist through college. This guidance is tailored to their specific needs, from helping them fill out financial aid applications to helping them to find summer internships and discussing their feelings about the transition to college.

# 2018-2019 HIGHLIGHTS

October 2018

## ANNUAL COLLEGE DAY

EPAA loaded up our school buses, and each grade level visited a different university, including UC Santa Cruz and UC Merced. Students participated in tours and panels to learn more about their college options and imagine what it will be like to be a college student. By the end of the end of high school, they will have visited at least four campuses!

## ANNUAL CASH 4 COLLEGE EVENT

With the help of local financial aid experts, EPAA counseling staff, and the EPAAF team, 12th graders and their parents spent their Saturday submitting FAFSA, California Dream Act, and CSS financial aid forms. Not only are we determined for our students to access higher education, we also want to make sure that they can pay for it!

December 2018

## ANNUAL HOLIDAY SOCIAL

During their winter break, EPAAF's college scholars gathered at the high school campus for an opportunity to reconnect with each other and reflect on the challenges and highlights of the past semester.

March 2019

## LAUNCH OF LOCAL CLUB INTERACT CHAPTER

EPAA students founded a chapter of Club Interact through a partnership with the Palo Alto Rotary Club. Club Interact seeks to develop leadership skills through community service. Their motto, "Service Above Self," is a powerful manifestation of our school's mission, and we are excited for students to continue learning soft skills such as communication, problem solving, and teamwork through this new club.

April 2019

## EPAA'S WASC ACCREDITATION

EPAA passed the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) accreditation with flying colors! The evaluation committee praised the strong support system in place for all EPAA students, with one committee member saying, *"Walking in your classrooms, students were on task, relating, making connections in a meaningful way, and engaging. One student almost made me cry. She shared, 'The teachers look at me with potential in their eyes. They look at me for what I can be.' This place is a family. It is safe and familial for everyone."*

May 2019

## DESIGN FOR AMERICA AWARD

For the second year in a row, EPAA students won the top award at Stanford University's Design for Social Good Showcase. The award recognizes innovative design that benefits community members and was given to a team of EPAA students who designed a car-mounted, motion-activated sign that alerts people not to encroach on accessible parking spots. The students created the project through EPAA's Dream Lab and received a \$1000 prize to prototype their design. A Stanford Law School professor also offered to help them obtain a patent for their device for free!

## COLLEGE SIGNING DAY

During this successful event, EPAA seniors announced their post-high school plans onstage and proudly wrote them on the principal's office window.



June 2019

## CLASS OF 2019 GRADUATION

In SY 2018–2019, EPAA had a 95% graduation rate with 57 graduates, 93% of whom are now first year college students. This year also marked a new record for EPAAF as we welcomed the highest number of students to our College Success Program. We are now supporting a total of 77 scholars!

July 2019

## ANTI-SUMMER MELT CAMPAIGN

After graduation, we kicked off our Anti-Summer Melt campaign. Our College Success Counselor, Amy Wong, hosted Summer Meetings with every incoming college freshmen to help them prepare for their first semester. We also held our second College Send-Off event, where we bring together scholars headed to the same colleges and pair them with older EPAAF scholars to talk about their experiences, struggles, and learnings from the transition to college.

*"The summer meeting with Amy was very helpful because she helped me to be ready for college and get all the support that [the college] has for us, like EOP (Educational Opportunity Program) and financial aid. We also talked about how I was feeling about my new school and all the emotions that come up with this transition. For me, it is difficult to be in college because I am the first generation in my family to go to college, and Amy helps me to be strong and never give up."*

— 1st Year Student, Foothill College

*"Sharing with other UC students felt like a relief...Everyone's challenges were pretty relatable since we did transition from the same community. In a way, it made me feel confident about continuing my college journey, knowing that a group of us from home is out there learning together."*

— 3rd Year Student, UC Davis

August 2019

## NEW ONE-ON-ONE MENTORSHIP PROGRAM FOR 1ST YEAR SCHOLARS

We launched a one-on-one mentorship program that pairs first-year students with experienced mentors who can help them make it to the next year of college. This mentorship will also help our scholars gain insight into and access to their chosen career fields after graduation.

## ASSEMBLING CARE PACKAGES FOR EPAAF SCHOLARS

Our Family College Access Liaison, Nancy Alvarez, worked with community members to solicit donations (pens, notebooks, shampoo, etc.) that will help students start college off on the right foot. Parents and younger siblings participated in the event by assembling care packages and writing notes of encouragement.

# EPAAF SERVICES

## EPAAF SCHOLARSHIP

In addition to funding EPAA's College-Going and wraparound support programs, EPAAF awards scholarships to EPAA graduates to help them overcome the financial hurdles that hinder them from attending college. EPAAF has a total of 77 scholars for the 2019-2020 school year. The Foundation has awarded over \$3 million in scholarships—\$400K during the 2018-2019 school year alone—to EPAA graduates.

## COLLEGE SUCCESS PROGRAM

According to the Pell Institute for the Study of Higher Education, first-generation, low-income students are nearly four times more likely to leave college after their first year compared to their continuing-generation, middle-class peers. To address this issue, EPAAF provides EPAA's college-going students with a series of support mechanisms under the College Success Program.

The **College Success Counselor** monitors students' academic performance, connects them to support services and resources on their college campuses, and gives advice on how to maximize financial aid and outside scholarships. EPAAF's College Success Counselor also assists in the Senior Seminar course, enabling her to develop critical rapport with high school seniors so that they are more likely to reach out to her for support once they begin college.

EPAAF holds **Anti-Summer Melt Meetings**, wherein first-generation, low-income college-going students who struggle with bureaucracy and paperwork get assistance during the summer. EPAAF helps ensure that incoming first-year college students are meeting all required deadlines for their schools and are prepared to start college with confidence.



## NEW PLEDGE FOR TWO-YEAR COLLEGE STUDENTS!

This year, EPAAF launched a \$5,000 pledge for all two-year college students in the scholarship program when they transfer to a four-year college or university. This pledge will help our scholars with their financial needs as they make this transition and hopefully encourage more community college students to continue their higher education.

A **One-on-One Mentorship Program** is offered to first-year college students so they can receive more personalized encouragement, individualized academic support, and connections to relevant internships in their career fields of interest. We are providing an extra advocate-cheerleader-resource for our hardworking students as they begin this new journey!

The **College Success Parent Committee** aims to help first-generation families understand the American college system and empower them to support their children. The Family College Access Liaison holds educational workshops for parents to discuss the challenges of transitioning into college and what they can expect during this time in their children's lives. The committee also serves as a support network for parents where they can share experiences and strategies for supporting their children in navigating college.





# EPAA PROGRAMS SUPPORTED BY EPAAF

EPAA offers its students a wide array of services to help them build lives of choice and opportunity through education. These programs encourage hands-on application of the concepts students learn in class, which not only helps them understand academic concepts better and flourish in a supportive high school environment, but also contributes to EPAA's goal of preparing students for success in college and their careers.

## DREAM LAB MAKERSPACE

Since 2015, EPAA has operated its Dream Lab with support from the Stanford Graduate School of Education and Google. A collaborative workspace equipped with high-tech tools, including a 3D printer and a laser cutter, the Dream Lab is a place where students can work on their own projects and create innovative products. Creating their own projects helps students improve their skills in communication, teamwork, leadership, and creative problem-solving, and enhances their growth mindset and technological fluency.

## EARLY COLLEGE PROGRAM

Our Early College Program facilitates students' transition from high school to college, providing 10th to 12th graders with the chance to experience the academic rigor of higher education, explore potential career pathways, and receive mentorship from college professors while still in high school. Students earn transferable college credit through tuition-free courses facilitated by professors from Foothill College.

## SUMMER BRIDGE PROGRAM

Through its Summer Bridge Program, EPAA provides vital support to incoming 9th grade students during a key transition in their lives. The two-week program allows students to build warm relationships with their teachers and peers, all while examining themes of grit, mindset, community service, and the value of education through project-based learning. The program also includes hot meals and mental health evaluations with EPAA's Manager of Social Services.

## COLLEGE GOING PROGRAM

The **College Going Program** supports students as they think about and prepare for their future. From the students' first day at EPAA, school counselors monitor academic progress to best assess the students' needs. It is through the work of EPAA's College Going Team that students are regularly coached in all of the practices that lead to a more focused high school experience. High school is the first step towards building a life of choice and opportunities.

The **Advisory Program** is at the heart of what makes EPAA's approach so effective.

Three times a week, EPAA students meet with trusted and caring teacher-advisors who monitor their academic progress, social-emotional learning, and college readiness to help them succeed and find the right path forward.

The **College Information Specialist** organizes college campus tours for students and their families, in addition to connecting students to community service opportunities, internships, and summer enrichment programs that help them build meaningful skills and explore potential careers.

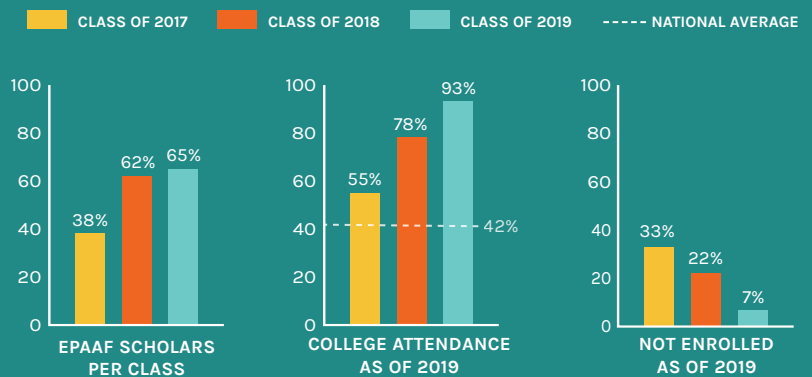
The **Senior Seminar**, available to all 12th graders, takes students step-by-step through college and financial aid applications, and helps them develop a concrete plan for life after high school.

EPAA also has a **college-bound curriculum** aligned with the Common Core State Standards and the University of California (UC)/California State Universities (CSU) A-G requirements, which ensures that EPAA students are eligible for college upon high school graduation.

## SUCCESS AND IMPACT

### COLLEGE PERSISTENCE OF EPAAF GRADUATES

There was a steady rise in the number of EPAAF scholars from 2017 (38%) to 2019 (65%). Our college-attending rate consistently exceeds the national average of 42% for low-income, first generation students. We have also seen a decline in the number of EPAA graduates who are not enrolled in college, from 33% in 2017 to 7% in 2019.





# ALUMNI PROFILE

**Rosa Ayala Guillen**  
EPAA (2005)

B.A. in Latin American Studies,  
UC Santa Cruz (2009)

Separated from her family at a young age, Rosa was raised by her grandmother in El Salvador until she was 15, when she immigrated to the US and rejoined her mother. But despite finally being reunited, she struggled to fit in and find her place in this new country. In school, Rosa was challenged by learning English. She felt sad, frustrated, and alone, often crying because she couldn't understand what was going on around her.

Fortunately, Rosa was able to enroll in EPAA, where her advisor Rebecca Altamirano made every effort to ensure that she received the support she needed through tutoring and classes for English language learners. Rosa's

*I'm really proud of everything that I have accomplished, and cherish being an EPAA alumni. Everything that I have achieved in my life so far is because I had the support of people who really cared about me.*

dream of finishing high school and going on to college suddenly became more real, just as her fear of never becoming fluent in English gradually subsided.

Rosa found EPAA to be a very supportive environment where students and teachers share the same goal of getting every student to college, and the community works hard to help students overcome challenges by

providing individual attention and opportunities to grow. Rosa also credits EPAA for instilling a positive work ethic that helped her overcome being placed on academic probation during her first year at UC Santa Cruz.

*"I didn't pass an Intro to Psych class, which put me on academic probation. I had to talk to my college counselor and find resources to help me pass my classes, get back on track, and increase my GPA in order to graduate."*

She powered through to get her grades back on track and eventually graduated with honors and a 3.3 GPA—an accomplishment that she is extremely proud of. Rosa's extended family in El Salvador looks to her as an inspiration and role model, and she continues to be motivated by her desire to give back to the community.

For Rosa, being an EPAA alumna is a unique experience not to be taken for granted. As a current Instructional Aide at EPAA, she encourages current students to stay the course and finish high school, take advantage of the opportunities that come their way, and keep working hard to achieve their dreams—anything is possible when you work for it!

Rosa is always grateful for the support she received, and sees herself in the students that she supports through her previous participation in AmeriCorps and her ongoing involvement with the Aim High summer program. And with her translation and interpretation certificate from the National Hispanic University, Rosa is able to provide specialized support to English Language Learner students.

EPAA is incredibly proud of—and thankful for—Rosa as she continues to inspire and support the next generation of EPAA students!

*(Above) Paying it forward. Rosa, now an Instructional Aide at EPAA, hopes to give students the same encouragement she once received.*

# OUR FINANCIALS

## REVENUE

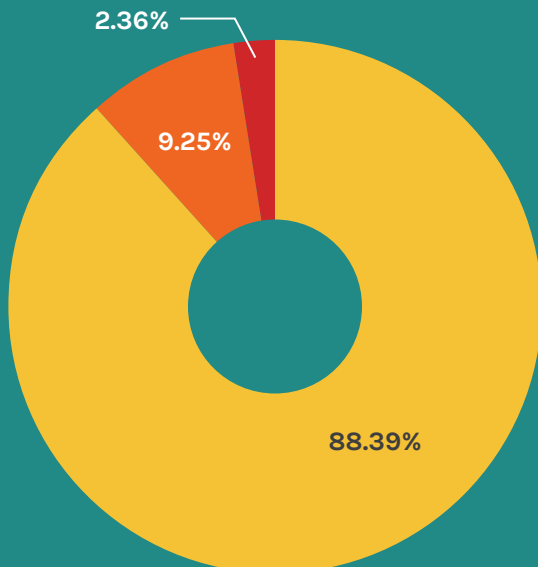
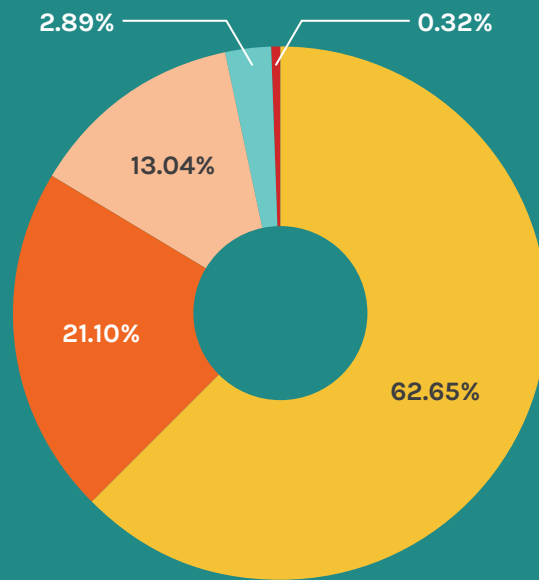
# \$2 million

FYE June 30, 2019

**OVERVIEW:** In 2019, EPAAF had an operating revenue of \$2 million, with the majority (63%) coming from individual donations. More than 88% of the total revenue was used for program services for both EPAAF and EPAA, with the remaining funds used to support our fundraising and management needs.

### OPERATING REVENUE

Donations - Individuals	\$	1,261,938
Scholarship Fund	\$	425,000
Donations - Grants	\$	262,733
Donations - Corporations	\$	58,127
Other	\$	6,391
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>2,014,189</b>



### OPERATING EXPENSES

Program Services	\$	1,780,319
Management & General	\$	186,367
Fundraising	\$	47,503
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>2,014,189</b>



*(Left) Future scholars.*

*EPAA's incoming freshmen get an early chance to bond with their peers and faculty, and experience the Bulldog community during our Summer Bridge program.*

During the 2019-2020 school year, EPAAF is supporting 77 scholars in their academics, social-emotional well-being, and finances in order to help them persist in college. We hope to continue increasing this number in the coming years, as more EPAA graduates transition to college after high school. To improve

our services, we are completing a College Persistence Research Project that will track the impact of our programs and show us what additional support we can offer to our scholars. Additionally, we are working to increase volunteer support at EPAA, particularly for tutoring, which will help more high school students excel academically and prepare to succeed in college as well.

## LOOKING **AHEAD**



# OUR TEAM

## EPAAF STAFF

Elisabeth Landa  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Amy Wong  
COLLEGE SUCCESS COUNSELOR

Nancy Alvarez  
FAMILY COLLEGE ACCESS LIAISON

Co Tran  
VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR  
AND DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATE

## EPAAF BOARD

Mindy Rogers  
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Angela Nomellini

Mudita Jain

Daniel Schwartz

Patrick Dunkley

Laura Aryeh Murawczyk

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Shashank Joshi

## SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

Aaron Cline

Luis Martinez

Beth Harrison

Marnie Marcin

Ed Han

Mindy Rogers

Heather Coleman Trippel

Mudita Jain

Laura Aryeh Murawczyk

Polly Liu

Lauren Koenig

Sarah Lee

Liz Cowie

Tarah Evans

*(Left) A proper send-off.*

*EPAAF Class of 2019 alumnus, Minoneti Tupou, was proudly showered with traditional leis of flowers, money, and treats, by her community.*

# OUR SUPPORTERS

## DONORS

### COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Bring Change 2 Mind  
Chan-Zuckerberg Initiative  
Christiana Foundation  
Franklin and Catherine Johnson Foundation  
K12 Strong Workforce Program  
LIGHT Award  
Live in Peace  
Palo Alto Community Fund  
Palo Alto Weekly Holiday Fund  
Peery Foundation  
Philanthropic Ventures Foundation  
RippleWorks Foundation  
Rosalie Rendu Center  
Yellow Chair Foundation

### INDIVIDUAL DONORS AND FAMILY FOUNDATIONS

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Casey and Chelsea Lynch  
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Dana Emery  
Daniel Schwartz  
David Kennedy  
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Gary and Mary Pinkus  
Geoffrey S. and Laura Rehnert

Google Giving Week  
Grousbeck Family Foundation  
Harman Family Foundation  
Heather Trippel  
Heidi Schley  
Hennessy Family Gift Fund  
Hurlbut-Johnson Charitable Trusts  
Jay and Rose Phillips Family Foundation, John and Terry Levin  
Jeff and Carolyn Hardy  
John and Sylvia Hughes  
John and Amy Underwood  
Jon Duane, Duane Family Trust  
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Keoni and Stephanie Schwartz  
Kristina and Jason Armstrong  
Lauren and Brad Koenig  
Leonard Edwards  
Liz and Jim Cowie  
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Mark and Elizabeth Daschbach  
Mary L. Dahlquist  
Mary Patricia Pence  
Matt and Kathy Avery  
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O'Leary, Thiry Family Fund  
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Pete and Devon Briger  
Priscilla and James Halper, Halper Family Foundation  
R. David Andrews

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Rolfe Williams  
Ruth Porat & Anthony Paduano  
Scott Dailey  
Sonia and Paul Jones  
Terri and Pete Jollymour  
Terry and Barbara Lawson  
The Gaither Revocable Trust  
The VCJ Family Foundation, Diane Flynn and Ron Johnson  
Thomas Baker  
Tina and Trygve Mikkelsen  
Todd and Katie Husak  
Tom Schnaubelt  
Traum Family Trust  
Valerie and Mark Soltau  
Victoria Ang  
Vineet Gupta and Mudita Jain  
Vlad Enache  
William and LuAnn Winchell

### CORPORATIONS

Country Sun Foods  
Dodge & Cox  
Goldman Sachs  
Morgan Stanley  
Safeway  
San Mateo Credit Union  
US Bank

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS

### EPAA PARTNERS

Boys and Girls Club of the Peninsula  
Bring Change 2 Mind  
BUILD  
Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto (CLSEPA)  
Ecumenical Hunger Program (EHP)  
Fresh Lifelines for Youth (FLY)  
Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center (PCRC)

Project Invent  
Rahima Foundation  
Stanford's Institute for Diversity in the Arts (IDA - Harmony House)  
Stanford's Haas Center for Public Service  
StreetCode Academy  
Youth Community Service (YCS)  
Youth United for Community Action (YUCA)

### COLLEGE SUCCESS GROUP PARTNERS

College Track  
Foundation for a College Education  
Mountain View/Los Altos High School Foundation  
Peninsula Bridge  
Peninsula College Fund  
Pursuit of Excellence  
UC Merced STEP Scholars Program



*“[Our students] belong in the same rooms as the rest of the world’s influencers and innovators. Thank you all for helping our students believe in themselves and realize the potential we all see in them.”*

AARON RAGSDALE, DREAM LAB MANAGER, EPAA



East Palo Alto Academy Foundation  
P.O. Box 50803, Palo Alto, CA 94303  
Phone: 650-460-1706  
Email: [elanda@epaaf.org](mailto:elanda@epaaf.org)  
[www.epaaf.org](http://www.epaaf.org)