



**school on wheels inc.**  
Tutoring Homeless Children Since 1993

## Our History

School on Wheels, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) organization founded in 1993 by Agnes Stevens, a retired teacher. After Agnes read a book in 1985, Jonathan Kozol's *Rachel and Her Children*, a study of homeless families in New York City, she realized the extent of homelessness in the U.S. After she retired in 1989, Agnes found her way to the Connection Project at Coeur d'Alene Elementary School in Venice and started working with homeless children from the nearby Bible Tabernacle shelter. However, she wanted to do more and started the process of becoming a nonprofit organization. While waiting for the completion of the necessary paper work, Agnes started tutoring homeless children in Memorial Park in Santa Monica. When School on Wheels officially became a nonprofit organization in August of 1993, other people slowly joined as volunteers. As word spread about Agnes and School on Wheels, more people came to help and more homeless families asked for help.

Today, hundreds of volunteers work one-on-one with children whose homelessness prevents them from getting the academic stability and help they desperately need. The heart of the School on Wheels' programs is the volunteer tutors who come from all backgrounds and professions, with a shared goal - to reach out to a child, to teach, mentor, and assist in their educational life.

## Our Mission

The mission of School on Wheels is to enhance educational opportunities for homeless children from kindergarten through twelfth grade. Our goal is to shrink the gaps in their education and provide them with the highest level of education possible.

## Our Services

School on Wheels gives extra time and attention to homeless students so that they can be successful in school. Our program serves as a consistent support system to homeless students at a time of great stress and fear. We bring the message to our students that they are cared about and important. We do this by offering:

- 🚌 One-on-one weekly tutoring with a volunteer
- 🚌 Backpacks, school supplies and school uniforms
- 🚌 A toll-free number for students to keep in touch with us
- 🚌 Assistance in entering school
- 🚌 Help in locating lost records
- 🚌 Guidance for parents in educational matters
- 🚌 Two Learning Centers, one located in the heart of Skid Row and the other in South Los Angeles
- 🚌 Tutoring in six major counties in Southern California, including Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, Riverside, Santa Barbara and Ventura counties
- 🚌 Scholarships for educational opportunities and enrichment





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## The Need for School on Wheels

Families with young children now account for 40% of the nation's homeless population over the course of a year, more than **1.6 million children are homeless**. The number of homeless children who are in the U.S. is greater today than at any point since the Great Depression.

Every child needs an education to have hope and a chance for success. The homeless child is no exception. School on Wheels' goal is to close the gap for these kids. Our program has the potential to help stop the cycle of homelessness and to support schools in serving homeless students.

## Homeless Statistics

Accurate statistics regarding the number of homeless children are difficult to obtain. The homeless population is constantly in flux. The statistics are the most recent and admittedly under-estimated. Most counts do not specifically identify children, do not include families staying in motels or children living in group foster homes.

### United States

- 🚌 **1 out of every 45 American children** go to sleep without a home of their own each year. (1)
- 🚌 Approximately **1.6 million** children are homeless annually in the United States. (1)
- 🚌 Over **65% of foster youth change schools between 2-6 times**. Each time they move schools, they fall further behind. (2)
- 🚌 With each school change, a student is set back academically on average of four to six months. (3)
- 🚌 Less than one-fourth of children from homeless families graduate from high school. (3)
- 🚌 Public schools enrolled nearly 1 million homeless children and youth in 2009-2010 – a 38% increase since 2006-2007. (4)

### California

- 🚌 California ranks 49 out of 50 in number of homeless children. (5)
- 🚌 **334,131 California children** experience homelessness each year.(5)
- 🚌 State minimum wage \$8.00 per hour; income needed for 2-BR apartment: \$25.52 per hour. (5)
- 🚌 Families with young children now account for **40%** of the homeless population.(6)
- 🚌 School on Wheels estimates there are over **56,000 homeless students** in the counties that we serve.

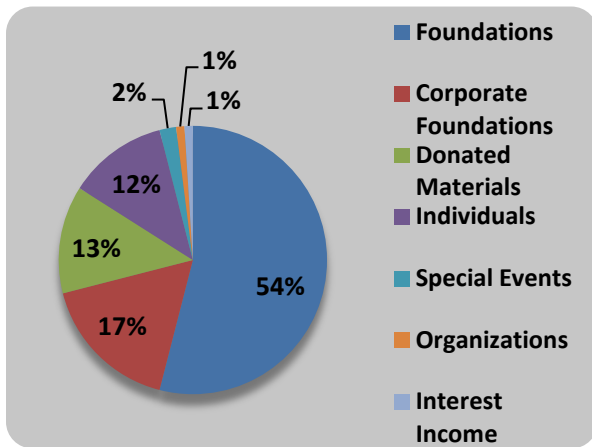
1 The National Center on Family Homelessness: America's Youngest Outcasts 2010 - <http://www.homelesschildrenamerica.org/index.php>  
2 American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law - [http://www.americanbar.org/groups/child\\_law/projects\\_initiatives/education.html](http://www.americanbar.org/groups/child_law/projects_initiatives/education.html)  
3 [Los Angeles Unified School District Homeless Student Fact Sheet](#)  
4 National Association for the education of homeless children and youth - <http://www.naehcy.org/welcome.html>  
5 America's Youngest Outcasts: State Report Card on Child Homelessness - [http://www.homelesschildrenamerica.org/pdfs/CA\\_032812.pdf](http://www.homelesschildrenamerica.org/pdfs/CA_032812.pdf)  
6 National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty - <http://nlchp.org/program.cfm?prog=2>



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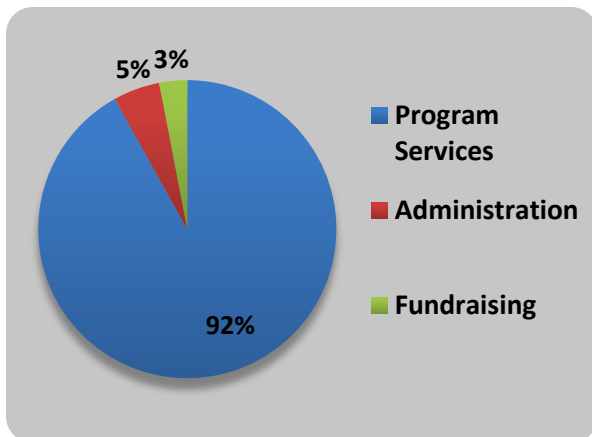
## School on Wheels 2012 Financial Results

### 2012 Revenue and Support – Where the Money Comes From



Foundations	\$756,769	54%
Corporate Foundations	\$237,057	17%
Donated Materials	\$190,441	13%
Individuals	\$176,223	12%
Special Events	\$25,498	2%
Organizations	\$12,498	1%
Interest Income	\$7,965	1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,406,828</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 2012 Expenses – Where the Money Goes



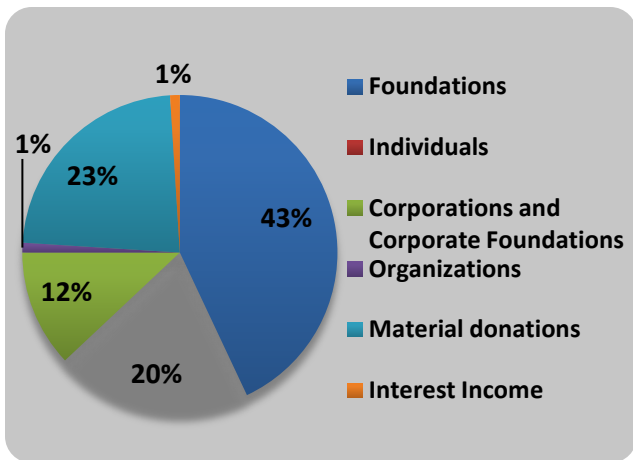
Program Services	\$1,117,141	92%
Administration	\$68,394	5%
Fundraising	\$30,509	3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,216,509</b>	<b>100%</b>



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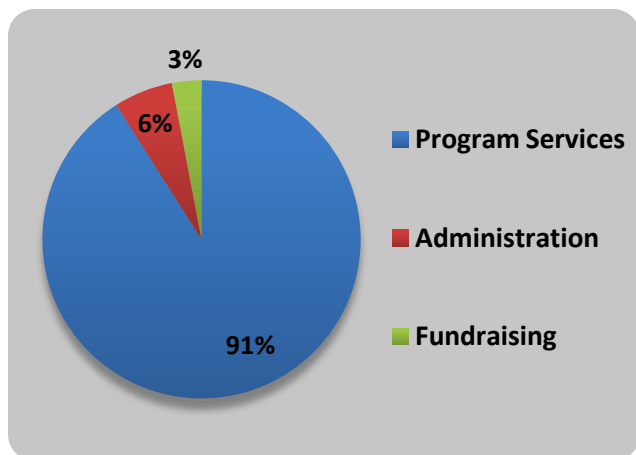
## School on Wheels 2011 Financial Results

### 2011 Revenue and Support- Where the Money Comes From



Foundations	\$576,784	43%
Individuals	\$266,004	20%
Corporate Foundations	\$153,405	12%
Organizations	\$16,121	1%
Material Donations	\$308,263	23%
Interest Income	\$6,893	1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,327,470</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 2011 Expenses – Where the Money Goes



Program Services	\$1,065,421	91%
Administration	\$70,612	6%
Fundraising	\$37,546	3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,173,579</b>	<b>100%</b>



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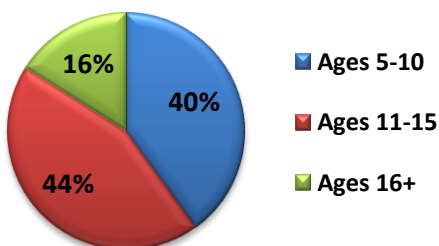
## School on Wheels Program Results

In 2012, 1,527 volunteers tutored 2,028 children in over 150 locations. Not only that, but they spent almost 80,000 hours volunteering every week, going to a shelter or a library or an after-school program to help their students. We had many more accomplishments last year:

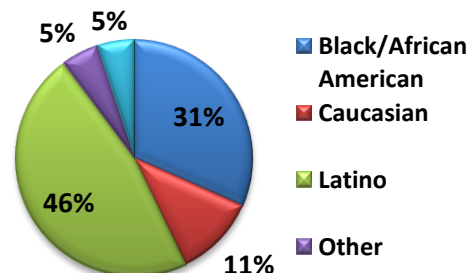
- We distributed 3,385 brand-new backpacks filled with school supplies and funded 261 school uniforms for every student who needed them.
- We awarded four scholarships to wonderful, deserving students in our program.
- Through our Outcome Measurement Project, we asked students and their parents about the impact School on Wheels is having on the students' lives. 86% of students say tutoring has helped their grades and their parents agree with their child's assessments, with over 90% of parents believing their child is performing better in academic areas of math, reading and writing, as well as working harder, handling homework assignments better, and being more confident in school.
- In 2012, we hosted workshops for our high school students and took over 100 students on college campus tours to UCLA, Cal State, USC, CSUCI, UCSB and Pepperdine University.
- We developed partnerships with wonderful organizations who share our belief in the potential of all children, such as: the Boys & Girls Clubs of America and Pacific Youth Foundations, Learn To Be Foundation, which provides expertise and technology for our online tutoring project; and, of course, all the amazing homeless coalitions and shelters we work with every day.
- In addition to doubling the number of students we tutor, one of our major strategic goals is to enhance our core tutoring program to include blended learning- a blend of traditional one-on-one tutoring and new technology. In 2012, we started the blended learning initiative with a small pilot program in our learning centers in Skid Row and South LA. One of those initiatives includes online tutoring. Imagine a professor from Villanova University in Pennsylvania tutoring one of our students in our Skid Row Learning Center! That's what we're doing.

## Student Information

**Age of Students**



**Race of Students**





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## School on Wheels Fast Facts

- Our strategy is to provide one-on-one tutoring to 3,500 homeless students annually by 2014.
- To qualify for our program, children must be in kindergarten through grade twelve, currently reside in a homeless shelter, motel, car, on the street or in a group foster home and have permission from their parent/guardian to work with a School on Wheels' tutor.
- The average age of our students is 8 years old.
- School on Wheels relies on the support of over 2,000 volunteers annually.
- Our volunteer tutors work in over 150 different tutoring locations throughout Southern California.
- Our volunteer tutors work with homeless children 52 weeks each year.
- To become a School on Wheels tutor, a volunteer must complete our application form, attend an online orientation and in person training, complete two reference checks and pass a fingerprint and background check.
- Our students meet with their tutor for an hour each week, either at their place of residence (homeless shelter, group home, etc.) or in a public place, such as an after-school club, library or book store.
- School on Wheels has two Learning Centers in Los Angeles. One is located in the heart of Skid Row and the other is in South Los Angeles.
- School on Wheels awards scholarships annually for educational opportunities related to career, trade and personal enrichment tied to improving educational outcomes.
- We distribute bus tokens to children who would not otherwise get to school.
- We provide school uniforms for students who need them.
- We rely on donations from foundations, corporations and individuals; we do not accept government funding.
- Over 92% of our funding goes directly to our programs.







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## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Who are your students?**

Our students are homeless children who live in shelters, motels, cars, on the street and in group foster homes. We tutor children from kindergarten through twelfth grade. The average age of our students is 8 years old.

### **Why do homeless children need our help?**

Every time a homeless child changes school, they fall behind in their studies. Our tutors help them fill in the gaps. We believe that education is key to ending homelessness and by helping homeless children succeed at their number one job, doing well at school, we can help break the cycle of homelessness and poverty.

### **Do you have a school bus?**

No, our name suggests that we do, but in fact our volunteers are our 'wheels'. They go to wherever the children are, a homeless shelter, group foster home, a library or after-school club.

### **Are your students with their families or homeless alone?**

Typically, our students are with one or two parents, with the exception of children in group foster homes.

### **Do your students attend public school?**

Yes, although one sad statistic is that over 30% of homeless children are not enrolled in school. One of our services is to help families quickly enroll their children in school.

### **How many students do you tutor?**

In 2012, we provided tutoring services to over 2,000 students and our goal is to serve 3,500 students annually by 2014.

### **When does tutoring take place?**

The majority of tutoring takes place on weekdays between 4pm and 8pm. Additionally, there are some possibilities for tutoring on the weekends, typically Saturday mornings or early afternoons.

### **Where in California do you tutor?**

School on Wheels tutors in over 150 locations throughout Southern California.

### **Is School on Wheels nationwide?**

No, but we have affiliates in Indianapolis and Massachusetts. Our current focus is to provide a tutor to every homeless child in California.

### **Do you have any success stories?**

Yes, we have hundreds. Each time we match a student and a tutor, we consider that a success. By meeting regularly with a positive adult role model, we believe that our students have a greater chance to succeed.





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## Testimonials

We persevered and overcame obstacles. We were helped by having an education and skill sets to fall back on. Your organization was such a help to my family during a dark time in our lives. Never would we have guessed that we would have been homeless. But we were, and your organization was very instrumental in assisting us in getting our children into school, providing school supplies, and tutors. **Carmen and Family**

The most important thing that School on Wheels provided for me were caring, committed, and accomplished adults. Having the same tutor, seeing the same faces. It seems like very little, but it has a huge impact.

**Khadijah— Former School on Wheels Student and recent Harvard University Graduate**

It's great to have people you can talk to, not just for advice, but that listen to you. There have been so many people in my life that have come and gone. You never know who is going to stay. Having someone like Laura (my tutor) is a huge support; she sends me cookies and cards in the mail to let me know that she is thinking of me. It's the small stuff that makes a difference. She is my hero. **Maricela- Former School on Wheels Student and Foster Youth; now attending Humboldt State University**

My proudest moment by far was dropping off my first School on Wheels student at college last summer.

**Laura- School on Wheels tutor**

My tutor Gloria has helped me to read, learn multiplication and division and I like school more because of her. She makes learning fun and puts it into stuff that I can understand. **Kai, age 8**

School on Wheels has proven to be a strong ally by providing tutors to our school-aged children. The tutors build a rapport and healthy relationship with the students and parents. The children like their tutors, look forward to the sessions and have benefited scholastically from their aid. The tutors are faithful and this helps to build stability with the family, often a missing link. **Union Rescue Mission, Skid Row, LA**

The academic and emotional support that School on Wheels provides to very needy students and their families is unparalleled and has no peer. Young people's lives are made better every day because of School on Wheels. **Coeur D'Alene Avenue Elementary School, Venice, California**

School on Wheels is an organization doing great work. You have identified a most underserved group of children, and have effectively helped them for a considerable period of time. **James D. Shepard, Trustee, BCM Foundation**

School on Wheels is exactly the kind of organization Ray wanted to always support. School on Wheels makes it possible for many homeless children to attain an education in spite of the challenges. Their success with so many students is astounding and inspirational. The 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary is a testament to their effectiveness. It is startling to realize that there are 1.6 million homeless youths in the United States. School on Wheels proves that there are ways to help them get an education. **Valerie Ervin, President, Ray Charles Foundation**





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**Student's words to describe their experience with School On Wheels**





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## Parents' words to describe their experience with School On Wheels

