

# BUILDING LEADERS, STRENGTHENING ORGANIZATIONS, MAKING CHANGE



**Bay area**

**PLAN** PARENT LEADERSHIP ACTION NETWORK

**annual REPORT 2008–2009**

# BUILDING LEADERS, STRENGTHENING ORGANIZATIONS, MAKING CHANGE

Dear Friends,

When a small group of parent organizers sketched out a vision for Bay Area Parent Leadership Action Network one rainy January day in 2004, we dreamed of a powerful network of parents from all backgrounds and languages who not only gave voice to the many issues affecting children and families, but had the leadership and organizing know-how to make positive change happen on a systemic level.

While this is a heady dream, five years later we are beginning to see our vision in action. Every day, PLAN is building new parent leaders and strengthening parent organizing efforts to achieve changes, large and small. Through PLAN's leadership development and capacity building programs, and through PLAN's increasing presence as a vehicle for grassroots parent advocacy, more parents are effectively making their voices heard.

2008-09 was a year of tremendous growth for PLAN. We expanded our PLAN to LEAD Training of Trainers program, joined the statewide Campaign for Quality Education, launched three new programs—Parents Ready for School, Parents in Action, and the Peer Mentor Program—and became an independent nonprofit.

As a result of our efforts, 810 parents and parent organization staff received leadership training, 185 parents participated in PLAN actions and legislative visits, and 250 parents helped shape PLAN's organizing efforts by participating in grassroots surveys. And parent action led to specific change: in East Palo Alto, PLAN organized parents to win a commitment for greater collaboration between parents and teachers; in Oakland, PLAN helped parents win increased safety measures at a small high school; and in Sacramento, PLAN parents helped win passage of AB 8, which would make education finance more equitable and transparent.

We couldn't do this work without the support of our dedicated donors, volunteers, partners, leaders, board members, and amazing staff. We look forward to reaching new heights in the year to come!

Warmly,

Melia Franklin  
Executive Director

Laura Valdéz  
Board Chair

## OUR TEAM

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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### STAFF

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**Rhina Ramos**  
TRAINING DIRECTOR

**Patricia Rocha-Fernandez**  
LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY COORDINATOR

**Gulliver Scott**  
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT



## IMPACT: MEMBER ORGANIZATION PROFILE

On June 5, 2009, Visitacion Valley Parents Association (VVPA), a growing group of parent leaders led by member organization Chinese for Affirmative Action (CAA), held its fourth annual parent leader graduation. These new parent leaders are the result of the PLAN to LEAD Training of Trainers (TOT) program.

Since first participating in the TOT in 2005, VVPA leaders have been using the curriculum to train new cohorts of leaders, who in turn pass on these leadership and advocacy skills to their peers and take action using their new abilities. In past years, VVPA parents have successfully advocated for new language access laws and increased funding for interpretation and translation for parents in San Francisco. "What VVPA has been able to achieve is a testament to the effectiveness of the PLAN curriculum," says former CAA Policy Advocate, Christina Wong.

## STRATEGIES: LEADERSHIP

Developing parents as leaders is at the heart of PLAN's mission and parents are involved in every facet of PLAN's work—from participating in trainings and actions, to speaking at hearings and legislative visits, to governing the organization.

Parents' first exposure to leadership skills often happens in PLAN trainings or Parent Action Forums, where they interact with other parents who have become leaders and are moved to get more involved.

The next step along the road to leadership is often becoming a PLAN member. Membership enables parent leaders to represent PLAN at hearings, actions, and legislative visits, and to represent other parents through the PLAN Leadership Council.

The Leadership Council is a regional body of grassroots parent leaders and community members, as well as staff of parent-based organizations, elected by PLAN's membership. Leadership Council members decide on the issues, strategies, and goals for campaigns, actions, and events, and lead events, meetings, and actions themselves. They also nominate other parents to serve on the PLAN Board of Directors. Leadership Council meetings are facilitated by parents and held with interpretation in three languages—English, Spanish, and Cantonese.

*"I was motivated to start an action with the youth to empower them about having their voices heard and speaking out loud for those who can't. I committed to speaking to ten people, passing out information to those ten. I felt so empowered myself that I walked away with 10 completed voter registration cards in my hand to mail out! I had so much fun, met a lot of wonderful people, made new friends and before I left I became a member of PLAN!"*

—Oakland parent Edith Torres, after attending a PLAN forum on voter education in October 2008



## OUR TEAM

### LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

**Lourdes Alarcón**  
PARENT VOICES SF

**Patricia Artia**  
NUESTRA CASA

**Jennifer Greppi**  
PARENT LEADER, FREMONT

**Matilde Hollander**  
OAKLAND PARENTS TOGETHER

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PARENT LEADER, OAKLAND

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VISITACION VALLEY PARENTS ASSN.

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PARENT LEADER, SAN FRANCISCO

**Armida Sawan**  
COMMUNITY LEADER, SAN FRANCISCO

**Amy Yuen**  
VISITACION VALLEY PARENTS ASSN.

## IMPACT: PARENT LEADER PROFILE

When Paula Michel came to PLAN in early 2006, she was very shy and quiet. As a participant in the PLAN to LEAD Training of Trainers program, her goal was to learn more about the public school system. From past experience Paula knew there were problems within the East Palo Alto schools her four children attend, but fear of speaking out prevented her from advocating for change.

Three years later, after serving on PLAN's Leadership Council, participating in actions and legislative visits, and serving on her children's school Site Council, Paula is empowered to confront problems. She says, "Now, if I think something is unfair, then I know I can go get justice."

Paula, who was recently elected to the PLAN Board of Directors, feels that she can use her voice with the skills and information that PLAN has given her. She now uses her leadership in many ways, from being a leader at her school and at PLAN, to organizing other parents, and to set a positive example for her children. "I think that being a leader with PLAN helped me to show my kids that they can do it too," she says.



## STRATEGIES: TRAINING

PLAN provides training experiences to promote parents as partners and leaders in schools and communities, directly serving more than 450 low income and immigrant Bay Area parents and parent organizations per year.

**PLAN TO LEAD TRAINING OF TRAINERS (TOT)** is an eight-month program that builds the capacity of Bay Area parent organizations and schools working to engage and organize parents to promote educational equity. Teams of leaders from throughout the Bay Area learn and implement the PLAN to LEAD curriculum in their schools and communities.

*2008-09 TOT graduates include: East Bay Asian Youth Center, San Antonio Even, Start Safe Routes to School,, Manzanita Community School Parent Center, La Clínica de La Raza Proyecto Cambio, EnCompass Academy, Nuestra Casa, Oakland Parents Together, Mexican American Community Services Agency (MACSA), District ELACs (English Learner Advisory Committees) from Redwood City School District and Cabrillo Unified School District in Half Moon Bay, Moonridge Housing in Half Moon Bay, Garfield School Parent Center in Redwood City, and La Manzana Community Resources in Watsonville.*

**PARENTS IN ACTION (PIA)** provides on-site technical assistance to help parent and family support organizations that have graduated from the TOT to build their parent organizing capacity. PIA organizations learn to

organize parents around a specific issue and take collective action to achieve a change.

*2008-09 PIA organizations include: Nuestra Casa, Parents for Public Schools SF, and Oakland International High School Parent Empowerment Program.*

**PARENTS READY FOR SCHOOL (PR4S)** is a six-week training program offered in partnership with schools and early childhood programs to address the limited support for immigrant and low-income parents to successfully navigate public school systems and the need for parents to be engaged in their children's schools.

*2008-09 PR4S partners include: San Antonio Even Start, Hayward Migrant Education Program, De Colores Head Start, and Fruitvale Elementary Child Development Center.*

**LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION (LE)** is a two-day leadership intensive to give parents the necessary skills and information to become effective leaders in their children's schools.

*2008-09 LE focused on the broadening parents' understanding of the impact of No Child Left Behind on students of color to challenge the reauthorization of NCLB.*

## IMPACT: 2008-09

**810** parents participated in PLAN training programs, either directly or with a participating Training of Trainers team.

**14** groups and 56 individuals graduated from PLAN's Oakland and San Jose based Training of Trainer (TOT) programs

**369** parents were trained by TOT participants

**167** parents graduated from Parents Ready for School

**191** parents were engaged in 3 Parents in Action (PIA) projects on 3 sites

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Expanded the Training of Trainers to the South Bay
- Expanded Parents in Action from one site to three sites
- Delivered Parents Ready for School at four early childhood sites
- Worked in partnership with five school districts: Oakland, West Contra Costa, Redwood City, Hayward, and Cabrillo.

## IMPACT: PARENTS READY FOR SCHOOL

This spring, PLAN engaged the help of Quinlan Gaston Huey Associates to evaluate PR4S through a focus group study. The findings show that parents that have graduated from PR4S have greater confidence to support, monitor, and advocate for their children's success in school. One parent said: "I can ask questions more clearly and understand the answers better. I am more confident."

Many of the PR4S learning activities involve small group work and engaging closely with other parents. As a result, parents built strong relationships with one another. Simply put, a parent declared, "Learning from each other is a good experience."



## STRATEGIES: ORGANIZING

In addition to leadership development and training, PLAN gives Bay Area parents opportunities to try on their new skills by educating other parents and speaking directly to decision makers about the reality of their lives and changes they would like to see.

### VOTER EDUCATION

In October, PLAN leaders organized a voter education forum focused on ballot issues affecting working class families in the November 2008 election. “We wanted participants to learn tools that would help them to participate in this election and those after,” said Jennifer Freitas-Greppi, a PLAN Leadership Council member. Parents and young people from across the Bay Area broke into multilingual groups to talk about transportation, teen health and parental notification, youth and criminal justice, and marriage equality issues on the ballot. Each participant committed to participate in “get out the vote” (GOTV) actions in their own communities.

### SOCIAL JUSTICE FOR FAMILIES PLATFORM

Throughout the fall and winter, PLAN organized more than 250 parents from all over the Bay Area to participate in building a Social Justice for Families Platform. In February, 60 PLAN members came together to present 2009 Platform to decision-makers, using powerful personal stories to drive their points home.

Members cheered as key decision makers—including State Senator Loni Hancock, members of the Oakland Unified School Board, and a representative from Assembly Member Sandré Swanson’s office, announced commitments of support. PLAN followed up the forum with a series of 10 legislative visits to advocate for the PLAN platform and speak out against devastating state budget cuts.

### ORGANIZING AROUND NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

Preparing for the upcoming reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Law, PLAN organized parents in Oakland and San Francisco to analyze the impact of the law on educational outcomes of students of color and outline an agenda for change. PLAN will organize several additional NCLB parent events in the fall and plans to hold actions to ensure Bay Area parent voices are heard during the reauthorization debates.

Photo by Sawian Images



## IMPACT: 2008–09

**250** parents helped shape the Social Justice for Families Platform

**110** parent leaders participated in Parent Action Forums

**50** parent leaders, teachers and students analyzed No Child Left Behind and began building a action platform around the reauthorization of NCLB

**25** PLAN leaders spoke directly to **19** decision makers in legislative visits, parent speak-outs, and legislative hearings

**20** parent leaders and **5** organizations became PLAN members

**4** languages were spoken by PLAN leaders

## NEW DIRECTION: BUILDING POWER THROUGH GRASSROOTS ORGANIZING

Recognizing the enormous challenges and opportunities that define this chapter of history, PLAN leaders and staff embarked on a series of strategy sessions to more effectively build the power of parent leaders to effect systemic change through grassroots organizing. PLAN worked with Maisie Chin, Co-Founder and Director of an independent, grassroots parent membership organization in South Los Angeles called CADRE—Community Asset Development Re-defining Education, to engage leaders in the formation of our organizing strategy.

PLAN leaders adopted key proposals to move the organizing agenda forward, including narrowing the focus of PLAN to racial justice in education, holding monthly membership meetings led by the PLAN Leadership Council, and developing campaigns to bring about systemic change in education for low-income students and parents.

## STRATEGIES: ACTION

PLAN parent leaders affect systemic policy change by participating in campaigns and actions, both statewide and at their school sites.

### MASS ACTION: DON'T PINK SLIP OUR EDUCATION!

On Wednesday, May 13, PLAN joined more than one thousand students, parents, teachers, and education activists in a march on the state capitol in Sacramento. The action was part of PLAN's work with Campaign for Quality Education, a three-year campaign to ensure all students are "100% Prepared for College and Career."



*"It is appalling that children with disabilities do not have access to quality education. My two daughters with special needs were denied services due to lack of funding. With the support of PLAN, I have gotten the tools I need to advocate for my children."*

—Longtime PLAN member Kido  
testifying before the Assembly  
Education Committee

In the months following the action, PLAN leaders continued to pressure key legislators to pass Assembly Bill 8, sponsored by Assemblywoman Julia Brownley (D-Santa Monica), which aims to equalize school funding by convening a working group to study the formulas that are used to allocate education money.

AB 8 was passed by both houses in early September and now awaits the Governor's signature.

### CHOOSE ME! PLAN FIGHTS FOR A FAIR BUDGET

On Wednesday, June 24, PLAN members partnered up with California Partnership, a statewide antipoverty coalition of which PLAN is a member, in response to proposed \$11 billion in state budget cuts, which would devastate services for low income families, children, the elderly, and disabled.

Representatives from the offices of Senator Hancock and Assemblymembers Skinner and Swanson showed up to support the action. After the press conference, protesters marched to the Department of Social Services, where they continued to chant. Drivers honked in support and reporters snapped pictures and interviewed protesters.

While grassroots action didn't stop the budget cuts, PLAN contributed to a united effort to eliminate some of the worst proposals including cutting off aid to all children whose parents have been timed off or sanctioned off welfare.

## IMPACT: 2008–09

- PLAN's participation in Campaign for Quality Education helped win passage of Assembly Bill 8, which aims to equalize school funding.
- PLAN's participation in California Partnership's Fair Budget Campaign helped beat back proposals to cut hundreds of thousands of low-income children off CalWORKs.
- A parent-led campaign facilitated by PLAN at Oakland International High School resulted in the Oakland Unified School District committing to installing security cameras at the school and funding a school security guard.
- Parent organizing at Constaño Elementary in Ravenswood School District, facilitated by PLAN, resulted in the first parent-teacher dialogue about barriers to parent engagement and the formation of a Parent Teacher Association.

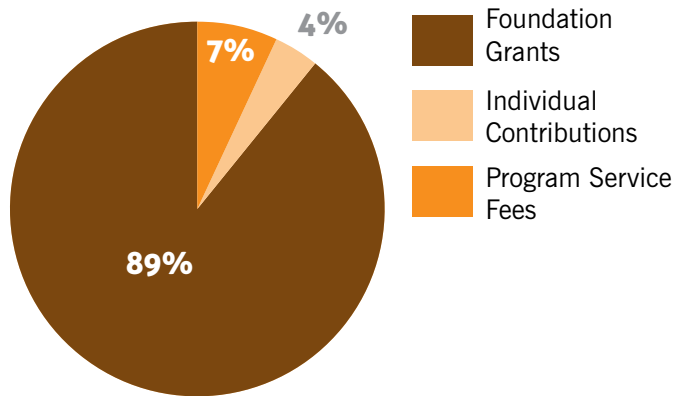
## IMPACT: CAMPAIGN FOR QUALITY EDUCATION

The Campaign for Quality Education (CQE) is a statewide coalition of grassroots, civil rights, policy and research organizations committed to educational equity for all communities in California's public schools. The CQE engages communities of color and low-income communities to actively develop state and local education policy agendas and advance the movement for racial, social and economic justice.

This year, PLAN joined CQE to address an issue near and dear to our members—the gross inequities in California's school financing system which result in a handful of the wealthiest school districts receiving far more money per student than others, in ways that have nothing to do with the needs of the students in those districts.

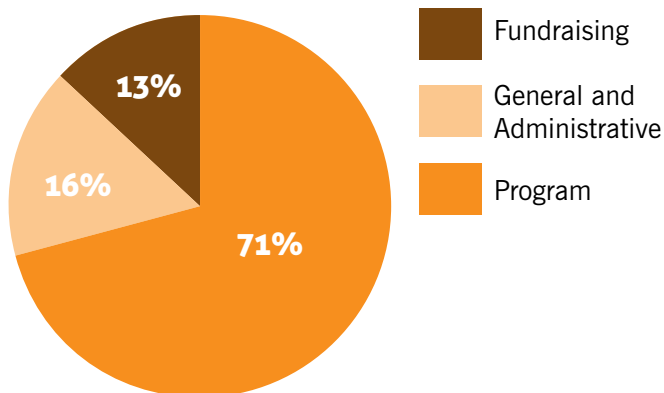
## FINANCIALS

### Income



Total Income \$361,402.28

### expenses



Total Expenses \$376,299

Total Assets \$176,752

## SUPPORTERS

### GRANTS

- Akonadi Foundation
- Common Counsel Foundation
- S.H. Cowell Foundation
- East Bay Community Foundation
- First 5 Alameda County
- Walter and Elise Haas Fund
- Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund
- Edward R. Hazen Foundation
- Lowell Berry Foundation
- Rogers Family Foundation
- San Francisco Foundation
- Zellerbach Family Foundation

## 2008-09 MILESTONE: PLAN BECOMES AN INDEPENDENT NONPROFIT!

After a year of careful planning, Bay Area Parent Leadership Action Network (PLAN) became an independent 501(c)3 nonprofit organization in August 2008. From PLAN's founding in 2004 to fall of 2008, PLAN was a fiscally sponsored project of Community Initiatives, which enables public benefit projects to incubate new projects and ideas without getting nonprofit status right away.

The PLAN board decided that the organization would benefit from having independent status by increasing the commitment and accountability of PLAN leaders and supporters and allowing PLAN greater flexibility. A year after becoming a formal nonprofit, PLAN's board of directors has become more effective and active, and PLAN's finances are healthy.

"We wanted to be sure that PLAN was an idea that was here to stay before going through the process of incorporating," reflects founding Executive Director Melia Franklin. "The transition has made our organization stronger and more accountable."

## SUPPORTERS 2008–09

### DONORS

#### \$1,000 +

California Teachers Association  
San Francisco Health Plan

#### \$500–999

OneCalifornia Bank Foundation  
Neshama Franklin  
Sandra Lee Fewer

#### \$250–499

Action Alliance for Children  
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#### \$25–49

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Amelia Rico/Jose Felipe Perez  
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Brookfield Social committee  
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Vero Salon

#### INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERS

Oakland Small Schools Foundation  
West Contra Costa Unified School District  
Long Beach Unified School District  
First Five Parent ACTION  
Nuestra Casa  
Synchrony of Visalia

#### CREDITS

Design: Y. Day Designs  
Writing and Research Assistance: Bora Lee, Intern

## BAY AREA PARENT LEADERSHIP ACTION NETWORK

*PLAN is a regional network that unites and strengthens diverse parents and organizations to promote education justice through training, leadership development, organizing, and advocacy.*

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