

FY 2023 Annual Report (July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023)

THE PALAPA SOCIETY OF TODOS SANTOS, A.C.



THE PALAPA SOCIETY OF TODOS SANTOS - OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

The Palapa Society's Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2023 reflects a year of remarkable growth, transformation, and promise in its educational initiatives. Celebrating its 20th anniversary, The Palapa Society was founded by pioneers Jeanne Cordova, Lynn Ballen, Donna Viglione, Paty Baum, and Erick Ochoa who initiated programs like the Beca (Scholarship) program, Puente al Inglés (Bridge to English) program, the community library, and the Art program.

This report underscores the profound impact of The Palapa Society's educational programs on the community, attributing this success to the dedication of the Board of Directors, Committee members, Program Directors, teachers, students, parents, donors, and volunteers.

President Erick Ochoa's adept handling of complex legal and organizational challenges, Vice President Sharon Morris's invaluable HR expertise, and Committee Director Cindy Higgins' tireless fundraising and Palapa School curriculum guidance are lauded. Treasurer Pam Bumann's multitasking in accounting is acknowledged after the passing of colleagues Hal Butler and Bookkeeper Anita Harris.

Notably, Fund Development & Marketing Committee Director Jamie Sechrist exceeded fundraising goals through a variety of campaigns, including a successful event in Denver, Colorado, while Partnerships & Grants Coordinator Pamela Vazquez expanded collaborations and funding sources.

At The Palapa School, a pivotal restructuring introduced three Co-Directors - Citallli Balbuena, Armando Vázquez, and Diego Carranza, who led remarkable outcomes in tuition payments, parental involvement, graduation rates, and university-bound students.

The Adult English program, led by Kate Lewis, made strides in economic empowerment and community integration with an exceptional group of volunteer teachers.

These achievements are recognized as the fruition of seeds planted years ago.

Noteworthy individuals in the community highlight the programs' impact, and offers proof that these efforts are working. Fernanda Murillo, a former Puente al Inglés para Niños student turned volunteer teacher, exemplifies the program's transformative power. Next year, Fernanda will be attending the Universidad Autónoma in La Paz, BCS to study Education. We are confident she'll bring her skills to a local school, and if we're lucky, she'll choose The Palapa School.

We are proud to welcome Oscar Parra as our Legal Liaison and Facilities Operations Manager. Oscar was also a Puente al Inglés student, and practically lived in the Children's Library. Oscar graduated with a degree in Law from Autónoma University and was most recently working as a Legal Advisor for the City of La Paz. This year, Oscar joined The Palapa Society, playing a pivotal role in legal compliance, human resources, and campus operations, and truly embodies the ethos of The Palapa Society.

These accomplishments pave the way for local families to benefit from ongoing economic changes and eventually drive change themselves. The report captures the essence of The Palapa Society's two decades of impact, characterized by unwavering commitment, strategic leadership, and a vision of a brighter future for the community.



"You'll see what this will be one day. You wait. You'll see!"

- Donna Viglione

Founding Board of Directors member and Program Director

THE PALAPA SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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CINDY HIGGINS



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Fund Dev & Marketing

JIMENA GARCIA - Marketing Asst
SCOTT BOSCH

JAMES MASASCHI

GRANTS & PARTNERSHIPS COMMITTEE

SHARON MORRIS - CHAIR PAMELA VAZQUEZ JAMIE SECHRIST ARDICE FARROW



High School Music Clul

PARTNERS, GRANTS, AND SPONSORS

Through the dedicated efforts of our Partnerships and Grants Committee, we have secured a number of significant partnerships and grants. These propelled us toward making a lasting impact on the community. Some collaborations included expanding our Robotics Club, providing more students with access to STEM education, and fostering interest in technology and innovation.

A dedicated grant allowed us to hire an Art Program director. Our commitment to sustainability was recognized with the prestigious Zero Waste Agent designation, while the upgrade of our technology infrastructure allowed us to introduce digital literacy programs. These accomplishments were only made possible through the resources provided by the following partners and grantors.



The Palapa School's Robotics Club



Materials Recycling Activities











































CELEBRATING A YEAR OF GRATITUDE AND COMPASSION

We extend our deepest appreciation to each member of our generous Palapa family who shared our passion and vision, making this year a resounding success.

Your contributions have extended beyond mere financial figures. Countless individuals experienced the profound impact of our initiatives. They gained access to knowledge, skills, and opportunities once beyond reach. Your generosity nurtures hope and instills a belief in a brighter future for our community.

As we look to the future, we are grateful for the commitment of our Palapa family of donors. Your support has made a lasting impact on the community, touching the lives of individuals from all walks of life. The journey continues, and we firmly believe that steady giving is vital in sustaining our initiatives and nurturing a better future for everyone in the community.

Once again, thank you for your unwavering support. Together, we are changing lives and transforming communities.

"Thank you very much to the donors for making it possible for many of us to have the opportunity to study at a high-quality school."

- Mateo V (9th Grade)

My son is delighted with surfing now, and I know it's something that will remain forever in his life. It is something beautiful. Thank you for taking care of them and putting effort into making the children connect with nature and with their cultural development. I hope all the teachers were like you. Thank you very much for everything you are contributing to Liam's development. Thank you for your time, which is the most valuable thing anyone can give.

- Palapa Parent

THANK YOU!

My 3 girls loved the summer workshops that the Palapa They were educational and Jacki was very kind and the girls with her for the snacks and water for the shacks and water for the future workshops.

- Jenah Ross

BECA SCHOLARSHIPS

The Palapa Society underscores its dedication to equal educational opportunities for all students, regardless of financial situation. This report highlights the "BECA" scholarship program, launched by Jeanne Cordova and Lynn Ballen 19 years ago, supporting public high school and university-bound students. The BECA program quickly spread to include students in the Bridge to English program. In the last six years the BECA program has grown to include middle and high school students at The Palapa School, ensuring no financial limitations impede education.

A holistic approach ensures a seamless academic journey, empowering students to excel. Scholarships have impact beyond academics. Recipients serve as community role models, exemplifying education's transformative power. The Palapa Society remains dedicated to educational access.





Some of the many Palapa Beca recipients.

DID YOU KNOW?

26 public high school scholarships given in FY23
16 public university scholarships given in FY23
75 Palapa School scholarships given in FY23
78% of Palapa School students are on a full or partial scholarship

PALAPA SOCIETY PROGRAMS: PUENTE AL INGLÉS FOR CHILDREN

Started in 2003, the Bridge to English program for children ages 6 - 17, runs October through June, offering beginner, intermediate, and advanced classes 3 days a week for each level.

This program experienced a successful resurgence this year, operating at full capacity and welcoming a number of new students. Our dedicated team of 3 teachers and 3 enthusiastic volunteers created an enriching and supportive learning environment post-pandemic. There is a focus on increased class participation using interactive activities to stimulate verbal skills, including word games and singing exercises.

Of the 100 students registered this year, 85 contributed to the registration fee of \$120mx/month, and 15 were beneficiaries of the Beca scholarship program. Approximately 20 students remained on the waiting list. Pending future donations, we hope to add an additional teacher to meet the increasing demand for English language courses in our community. Once classes end in June, the summer program begins, starting with a Water Safety course and workshops focused on Environmental education.



Bridge to English is one of the longestrunning educational Palapa programs.

Scholarships are available to families who are unable to afford registration fees.

90% of our supplies are donated each year to keep costs down.

A majority of our students use the Children's Library and apply to become students at The Palapa School.

Several former students go on to become successful members of our community and use English in their careers on a daily basis.







PUENTE AL INGLÉS FOR ADULTS



The Bridge to English program for Adults, established in 2006, is designed for graduates of the children's English program and working adults in the community. By adjusting the learning cycles and expanding the available hours, we have been able to accommodate a larger number of individuals in this program. An increased enrollment to approximately 75 students reflects this positive change.

Quarterly sessions offer beginner, intermediate, and advanced classes, conveniently scheduled in the mornings and evenings. Instructors include a team of 9 volunteer teachers and 2 substitute teachers.

We are proud to report that this year has seen the highest retention rate ever, thanks to the program's restructured schedule. Our students are highly motivated, with the primary goal of improving their English proficiency to enhance their career prospects. The restructuring also enabled us to reach and support a larger number of adults in their English language learning journey.

DID YOU KNOW?

Many students of the children's Bridge to English program choose to continue their English studies by transitioning to the adult program.

No student is denied due to lack of funds. Scholarships are provided to any student in need.

This program runs solely with volunteer teachers.

Students make up the workforce in and around Todos Santos including retail, restaurant, hospitality, construction, and domestic work as well as professional business owners, veterinarians, legal aides, and more.





ELENA PONIATOWSKA COMMUNITY LIBRARY



The Biblioteca Elena Poniatowska (BEP) has experienced an impressive rebound post-COVID, witnessing a surge in membership, outreach programs, literary events, collection reorganization, and acquisitions. Notably, the BEP made significant efforts to feature books in Spanish, aligning its collection and layout with the community's needs. Traveling satellite collections with young adult books in Spanish were established at Pescadero Middle School and Casa de Estudiante in Todos Santos, while a fiction collection of English duplicates found a new home in historic El Triunfo. These outreach initiatives have successfully placed books in the hands of students, youth, and community members who cannot access the library directly.

Monthly literary events have engaged local authors and poets, attracting new members and transforming the BEP into a vibrant hub of community resources and information exchange. For an immersive understanding of happenings in the Todos Santos and Pescadero region, the library serves as the go-to destination.

OUR LIBRARY BY THE NUMBERS:

28 Volunteer Librarians260 Active Members9,500 Titles



DID YOU KNOW?

The BEP houses over 9,000 books and 250 DVD's

The most popular books this year were The Overstory, The Understory, and The Alice Network.

We are the second largest bilingual library in Mexico.

Our Little Free Libraries dispensed over 1,000 books last year to hungry readers

Our literary series hosted twenty poets and writers to read their works at the library

85% of our active members are women; 90% of our volunteers are women



ELENA PONIATOWSKA CHILDREN'S LIBRARY

The Elena Poniatowska's Children's Library had a remarkable year, engaging nearly 100 students who borrowed books from our extensive collection of over 5000 titles. Many young members experienced the joy of reading a non-required, "fun" book for the first time. The library takes pride in maintaining a healthy gender balance among young readers, with 53% females and 47% males, aligning with our commitment to provide equal learning opportunities for all.



Library memberships are free for students and young people $% \left\{ 1,2,\ldots ,n\right\}$

Children are given useful gifts upon returning books.

The Children's Library is staffed daily with volunteers. There is a story and craft session on Saturday mornings. Reading to babies and toddlers promotes lifelong reading and learning. We welcome members of all ages. Every book in the Children's Library has been donated.

AFTER-SCHOOL ART PROGRAM

The After School Art Program, established 15 years ago by professional artist and Palapa Society President Erick Ochoa, continues to foster the creative side of youth. This year, the program was led by Art History graduate Rocío Altamirano, guiding students aged 8-16 through two semester courses. The courses emphasized positive self-expression and emotional well-being, offering lessons in rhythmic painting, artistic drawing, sculpture, and ceramics. By providing a platform for young individuals to explore their creativity, the program plays a vital role in stimulating their artistic talents and nurturing their overall growth and development.



DID YOU KNOW?

Classes are open to youth in the community

Classes are \$150mx per semester

This year, ceramics classes were offered for the first time, with assistance from Barro Sur Ceramics Studio.

FULLY CERTIFIED MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL

THE PALAPA SCHOOL

SEP SEGRETARÍA DE EDUCACION PÚBLICA

2022 - 2023 Challenges and Milestones

The 2022-2023 school year started with a unique structure, Co-Directors. Three teachers, who maintained their teaching duties, also assumed the leadership of the school. Challenges were overcome thanks to the support of the School Committee, the Board, students, and community. With clear communication and collaboration, they knew they would be successful for the students and greater community.

We celebrate this year having participated in such important activities at the national level as the Lego First Robotics Contest, Palapa por La Tierra (Palapa for the Land), Ahorra y Emprende (Entrepeneurship Project), the alliance with Cero Basura (Zero Waste), and a collaboration of Palapa students with Animas High School, in Colorado.

It is worth mentioning that the talented team of teachers allowed us to have a remarkable academic advance, qualifying above the national average in the MejorEdu standardized test and contributing to the personal growth of our students. This all culminated in the joy of achieving 100% of high school graduates able to consciously decide their next step. The vast majority decided to continue with university studies while others have a solid plan for their future careers. The challenges were great, but with the push and support of the community, success was inevitable. Forward!





2023 Graduates of the Palapa Middle and High School



Our team of Co-Directors

DID YOU KNOW?

Students achieved above national average on standardized test MejorEdu

Eight Palapa students competed in the regional Robotics Club contest, placing as national finalists in the Lego First contest. Four students advanced to the national contest.

All teachers successfully completed the Nueva Escuela Mexicana training, focused on the new educational model that Mexico deployed and will start using next school year.

Baja Under the Stars fundraising event in Denver, Colorado, sent 2 remarkable students to represent and share inspiring speeches to the international community of The Palapa Society.

A Social Service program supported high school students collaborating with the local community giving service and receiving valuable learning experiences.

Co-Director Diego Carranza was part of the school principal's leadership experience from Teach For All that took him to London for a week with other 26 fellows from 14 different countries.

ESCUELA DE LA PALAPA









PALAPA SCHOOL STAFF

Teaching Staff

Elide Nophal Geography, History, Technology, Literature.

*Xavier Quiroz*Mathematics, Physics, and Physical Education.

Marlon Tuñón Mathematics, Physics, Statistics, Computer Science, Physical Education.

Héctor Vallejo Ethics, Economics, History, Sociology, and Legalization.

Olivia Grijalva English

Carmen Cárdenas Community Development Coordinator and teacher of respective subjects.

Rocío Altamirano Art

Juan Carlos Camacho Spanish, Reading and Writing Workshop, Communication, and Physical Education.

Co-Directors

Citallli Balbuena
Academic Co-Director and
teacher of Technology,
Socioemotional Education, and
Civic and Ethical Formation.

Armando Vázquez Institutional Co-Director and teacher of Biology and Chemistry.

Diego Carranza
Administrative Co-Director,
Coordinator of the English
Department, and teacher of
English and Physical Education.

Support Staff

Maricruz Torres Cadena Administration

Alondra León Maintenance

Gregoria Pérez Cafeteria

THE PALAPA SCHOOL BY THE NUMBERS:

Teachers in Middle & High School: 11 Students in Middle & High School: 97 Paid full tuition: 22%

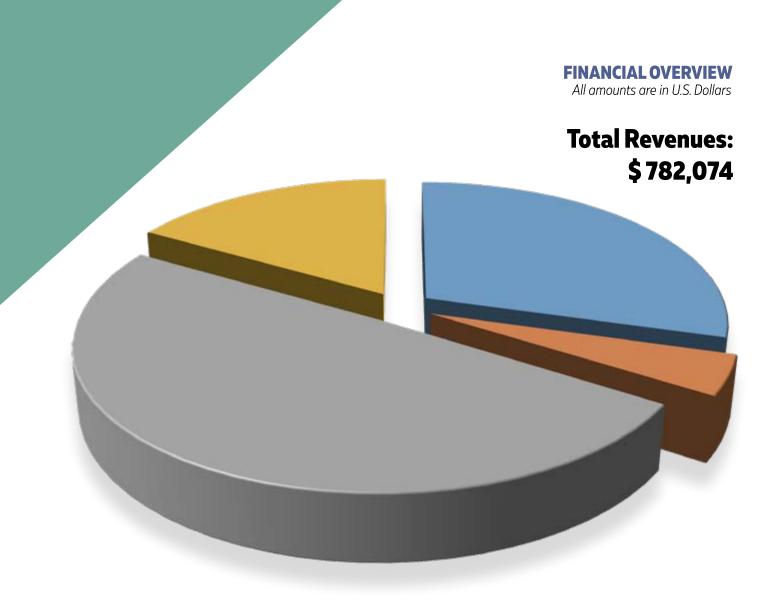
On merit-based scholarships: 78%

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT:

Student Average Grades (out of 10)

7th grade: **7.9** 8th grade: **8.0** 9th grade: **8.4** 10th grade: **9.0** 11th grade: **8.7**

12th grade: **8.8**



\$386,231 (49%)

DONATIONS

Contributions from individual donors.

\$35,200 (5%)

GRANTS

McDonald Grant, SAHM Grant, EDUCA Grant

\$230,499 (29%)

FUNDRAISING EVENTS

Baja Under the Stars, Todos Santos Open Studio Tour and donated proceeds from Gastrovino.

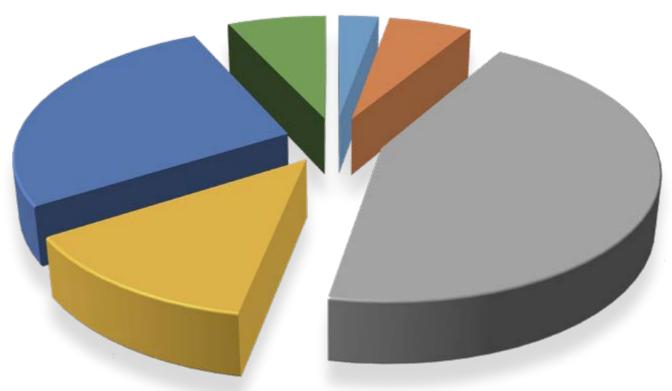
\$130,144 (17%)

EARNED INCOME

Including The Palapa School Tuition and fees from the Biblioteca Elena Poniatowska and English programs.

FY 2022 REVENUES FY2022 EXPENSES EXCESS FROM OPERATIONS \$ 782,074 \$ 691,896 \$ 90,178

Total Expenses: \$ 691,896



\$307,482 (44%)

SCHOOL PAYROLL & EXPENSES

Salaries, Employment Taxes, Training and Education Seminars.

\$89,301 (13%)

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Beca Scholarships, Puente al Inglés, Adult English, Biblioteca Elena Poniatowska and After School Programs.

\$40,061 (6%)

PALAPA SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Equipment, Computers, Furniture, Books, Supplies and Materials.

\$187,956 (27%)

MARKETING & FUNDRAISING

Marketing and Communications, Social Media, Grant Writing and Fundraising Events.

\$47,725 (7%)

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

SEP-certification requirements, Accountant, Taxes, Insurance, Supplies, Equipment and Technology Expenses.

\$19,371 (3%)

BUILDING & PROPERTY MAINTENANCE

Security, Custodial Services, Utilities, Repairs and Maintenance, Groundskeeping.

FISCAL YEAR FROM JULY 1, 2022 TO JUNE 30, 2023

THE PALAPA SOCIETY HONOR ROLL

(\$50,000 & UP)

DIAMOND

Cindy & David Higgins

(\$25,000 - \$49,999)

RUBY

- ◆ Nancy & David Lacey
- Pam & Peter McIlroy

(\$10,000 - \$24,999)

EMERALD

- Gail & Scott Bosch
- Peter Buck
- Chip Conley
- Margot & Dick Hampleman HHMR
- Patricia & Jim Kern-Cardillo

J.M. McDonald Foundation SAHM Family Foundation

- Staley Capital The Stewart Family Foundation
- ◆ Kim & Ted Higgins
- Cathryn Williams & Greg Broughton

(\$5,000 - \$9,999)

PLATINUM

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(\$1,000 - \$4,999)

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- Lisa Welsch
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(\$500 - \$999)

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 Elsa Corrigan
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- Colleen Suche Julie Swaggart Sommer Wall
- Kathy Warnert
- ◆ Gina & Geoff Wickwire

THANK YOU TO THE MANY DONORS WHO GAVE GIFTS IN HONOR & IN MEMORIAM.

WE ALSO THANK THOSE WHO DONATED IN-KIND GIFTS AND SUPPLIES FOR OUR PROGRAMS.

WE DEEPLY APPRECIATE
YOUR GENEROSITY.

(\$499 and under)

BRONZE

Joy Abbott
ACTS Baja
Patricia & Eric Adams
Paola Alvarez Molina
David Anderson
Holly Angel
Annebet Muceus
Caleb Arnold
Sylvia Aroth
Christa Assad & Kevin Wickham
Janelle Aubade-Caracas
Baiamonte Terry

Travis Baker
Barbara & James Holman
Jennifer Barber
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Staci Blyth
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Gina Cerda
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Trellton Hubbard
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Rhoda Jacobs
Maxine Jacobson
Blair Jenkins
Joyce Jurgich-Cooper
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Maria Olaisen & Mike Block Kate Oldaker Terra Omni Kimberly Otto Breck Overall

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◆ Janelle & Tony Palma
Jess Flood & Nick Papadopoulos
Alane Susan Pareor
Andrea Park
Sharon Parrague

Taymar Pixleysmith Claire & Sandy Pogue Carolyn Porter Monica Pressley Miriam Puerts

Anne Patterson

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Leslie Timmerman
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Clavs Tjaden
Alejandra Torre
Becca Tremblay
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Marjorie Wurster
 Jill Wyatt-Logan
 Christopher Wyrick
 Robert Yaffe
 Kathy Yamakido
 Dalya Yohai
 Deborah Youngblood
 Sarah Zona

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

ANITA HARRIS





On March 1, 2023, Anita Harris, Palapa Bookkeeper and dear friend passed away in her home, surrounded by her beloved pets and closest friends.

Twenty-three years ago, Anita moved from London, England to La Paz, BCS, working for an import/export company. Six years later she moved to Todos Santos when she fell in love with a horse named Hombre.

During her time in Todos Santos, she wore many hats in the community including working at Etnica and Nomad Chic and volunteering as Treasurer of ACTS, a non-profit organization. She was an amateur actress, model, and artist. In Anita's tenure at The Palapa Society, she was not only vital in ensuring our compliance with the new non-profit laws and government regulations, she was integral in helping create a smooth transition with the passing of Treasurer Hal Butler.

Anita will be remembered for her fashionable style, sharp sense of humor, and brash wit. Most of all everyone will think of her outfits and energy on Mariachi night! She was a one-of-a-kind person who left a mark on everyone she encountered. She will be greatly missed.



VISION OUR MISSION

It is the vision of The Palapa Society of Todos Santos, A.C. to be a sustainable, accessible community-focused organization in which quality educational programs empower choice-filled lives and create positive, transformational change. The Palapa Society of Todos Santos, A.C. exists to make a positive differenc in people's lives. This is accomplished through quality education and community support.









PalapaSociety.org/Donate

The Palapa Society of Todos Santos, A.C. Calle del Huerto entre calles Guayaba y Mango C.P. 23300 Todos Santos, BCS, MX

Email: info@palapasociety.org Website: www.palapasociety.org Facebook: www.facebook.com/palapasociety.org Instagram: www.instagram.com/palapasocietyoftodossantos

Photography by Kenny Viese / Graphic Design by Ricardo Madrazo