ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23

BEY ND DIFFERENCES

Inspiring Youth to End Social Isolation

The Other ABCs

Acceptance. Belonging. Connection.

The Other ABCs

Dear Friends,

We are celebrating another year of growth and impact and a future filled with opportunities to do more to end social isolation and build cultures of belonging for our youth.

Thank you for all you do to support Beyond Differences[®].

You will see evidence through this Annual Report that we aren't afraid to tackle this giant issue of ending social isolation. Beyond Differences is developing methodologies with proven outcomes and, in some ironic way, it starts with going back to basics. We call them the other ABCs. Acceptance. Belonging. Connection.

These may not be the same academic ABCs that we learned in our youth, but they have now been proven to be an essential part of raising a healthy and successful generation of adults.

Thanks to you, we can be proud of the work we have accomplished this past year:

• Grew our national footprint to over **10,000 schools in all 50 states** that use our curriculum and participate in student action days, such as No One Eats Alone (NOEA). Centered youth voice in all that we do and further developed the National Teen Board, with nearly 50 high school students from West Virginia to Hawaii.

• Provided outside expert guest speakers and our staff to **empower educators around best practices** to utilize our curriculum and programs.

• Trained the entire Miami Dade Public School administrative staff on how to use our NOEA curriculum, resulting in the recruitment of over 100 middle schools in the county to celebrate NOEA Day.

We are standing at an inflection point. While we continue to deliver on our mission, the problem is growing faster than we can tackle it with the resources we currently have. As we begin the vital effort to create a strategic plan that will set direction for the coming years, we need every single one of you as engaged partners to expand this work.

Together, we are making a positive impact on millions of students' lives. We are incredibly grateful for your leadership, support, and generosity.



Schools

Laura Talmus

Laura Talmus Executive Director and Co-Founder



Wade Rakes

4.8+ Million Students Reached

Wade Rakes Board Chair

Our Impact

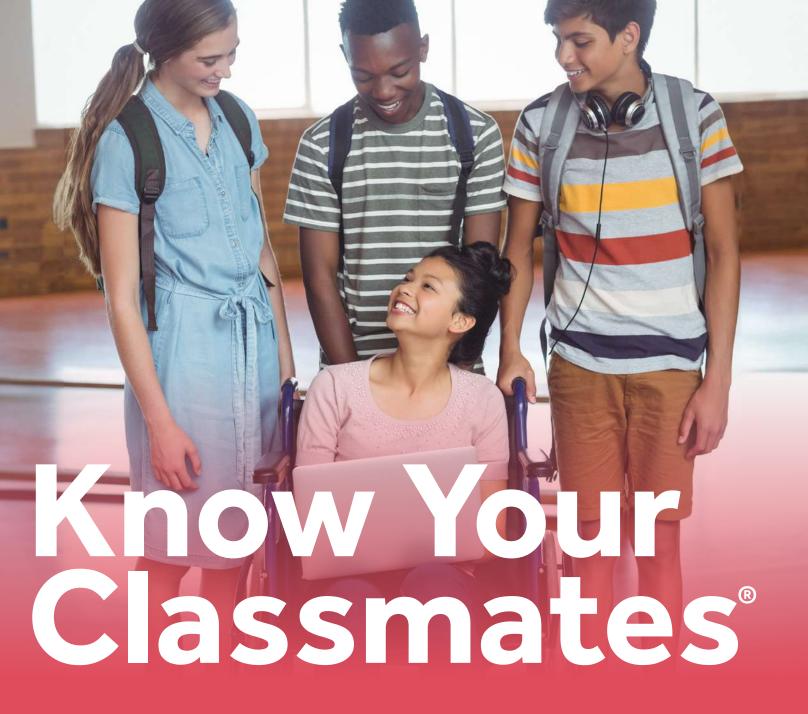


Acceptance



Connection

Acceptance is where we start.







KNOW YWWUR CLASSMATES

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Our National Teen Board produced its first-ever featured curriculum, Disability Visibility. The lessons and resources challenge students around the world to recognize diversity, spot gaps in accessibility, and take action! This approach of providing teachers with content that is for youth by youth has been proven highly successful.
- We developed the What Is Normal? art project for teachers to lead at their respective schools.
- California Governor Gavin Newsom celebrated Know Your Classmates Day in Sacramento at Pacific Elementary School by reading his children's book, *Ben & Emma's Big Hit.* Governor Newsom hosted a powerful discussion with these youth about his challenges with dyslexia and the differences that make each of our children unique. The event was live-streamed across the country and schools from Los Angeles to New York City joined online.
 - We established new educator cohorts in Dallas, New York City, and the San Francisco Bay Area. Our educator cohorts are virtual, and they are places where educators come together to learn practical skills, knowledge, and strategies to empower their students to end social isolation and encourage cultures of belonging.

Learn more

KnowYourClassmates.org





Belonging is essential to thrive.

Noone Eats Alone®



1,418,500 Students Connected



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Thousands of schools across the country celebrated No One Eats Alone Day. Students sat with classmates they did not know, found new friends, and modeled ways to end social isolation in the lunchroom.
- This year's theme was *My Recipe for Empathy*, which encouraged students to share personal traits that helped them **build a sense of belonging in their school community.**
- Beyond Differences held No One Eats Alone (NOEA) events at **100 Miami-Dade schools to** raise awareness about social isolation.
- New curricula was provided to teachers and student leaders. Some of the activities included asking questions to spark meaningful discussions: *What power does your story hold?* **Student leaders were encouraged to run NOEA activities and start a Beyond Differences club.**

Learn more NoOneEatsAlone.org

"What we're trying to do is to stop [social isolation] from getting progressively worse, and we tend to get to know each other better and to be friendly."

Gaby Enriquez 7th grader, Madison Middle School, Wisconsin







Connection with empathy builds communities.

Be Kind Online®





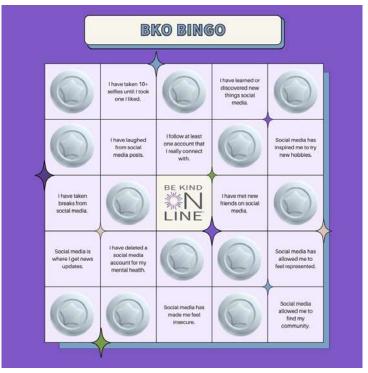


PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- This year's Be Kind Online lessons addressed social media's impact on **body image, setting healthy boundaries, and finding community online.**
- Student leaders were provided a guide on how to run a national action day, including a presentation slide deck and an art activity template.
- Our National Teen Board helped write this year's featured curriculum. The content is designed to create more authentic and welcoming communities at participating schools.
- National Teen Board members, Avery and Ruth, **advised and supported young people** who struggle with beauty standards online.
- Our curriculum for this year's program was *Stand Up for AAPI Youth*, in honor of May's Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month. The aim was to broaden students' understanding of the AAPI experience, history and culture, and to **combat hate and create communities of belonging for AAPI students.**
 - Learn more BeKindOnline.org



Video of Be Kind Online Program: Advice on Navigating Social Media and Body Image Issues





Our National Teen Board

Youth guide and shape everything that we do at Beyond Differences. High school students who have just been through the challenging middle school years serve as subject matter experts on our National Teen Board (NTB).

Recognizing this important youth perspective and its impact on our work, we have expanded the NTB to include more youth from across the country. This approach ensures that the curriculum and programs we develop are relevant and engaging for the youth that we serve in today's classrooms.

The NTB strives to be as diverse as the schools participating in our programs. These passionate activists are thought leaders and tactical guides helping us to create cultures of belonging in many ways, including the effectiveness of our teaching tools and curricula.

Learn more BeyondDifferences.org/national-teen-board



Allie Body Positivity Team

Alondra Art Activity Creator Immigrant+Refugee Team

Alysha Art Activity Creator Stand Up for AAPI Team

Amani Body Positivity Team

Amirtha Disability Visibility Team

Angel Curriculum Coordinator Immigrant+Refugee Team Disability Visibility Team

Angel

Historian Policy Researcher Poverty Visibility Team

Asher Immigrant+Refugee Team

Avery Art Activity Creator Immigrant+Refugee Team

Avery Mental Health Team

Azariah Allyship Representative Body Positivity Team Queer Visibility Team Briggs

Art Activity Creator Policy Researcher Poverty Visibility Team

Camila Immigrant+Refugee Team

Cesar Historian Immigrant+Refugee Team

Cris Historian Poverty Visibility Team

Dash Historian Stand Up for AAPI Team

Edgar Policy Coordinator Poverty Visibility Team

Ella All Curricular Teams Body Positivity Team

Emily Policy Researcher Body Positivity Team Queer Visibility Team

Fayyaz Historian Social Media Coordinator Immigrant+Refugee Team

Gabi Queer Visibility Team



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Kiki

Art Activity Creator Immigrant+Refugee Team Kuba Mental Health Team

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Paarth

All Curricular Teams Body Positivity Team Queer Visibilitiy Team

Pax

All Curricular Teams Stand Up for AAPI Team

Rei

All Curricular Teams Body Positivity Team Queer Visibility Team

Ruth

Allyship Representative All Curricular Teams

Sahasara

Historian Stand Up for AAPI Team

Sofie

Allyship Representative Historian All Curricular Teams

Sophia

Policy Researcher Queer Visibility Team

Tej Policy Coordinator

Stand Up for AAPI Team

Valentina Queer Visibility Team

Will

Art Activity Creator Historian Social Media Coordinator Disability Visibility Team

HOW OUR TEEN BOARD REPRESENTS THE VIBRANT, DIVERSE WORLD WE SERVE

4.6% Qualify for free/reduced lunch program

21% Attend a Title I School

> **36%** Identify as Queer

> > 21% Are disabled

62% Speak a language other than English at home

69%

Identify as Black, Latinx, Asian American or Pacific Islander, Indigenous, Middle Eastern/ North African, Multiracial





Activist Academy

JULY 19-23, 2023 — SAN RAFAEL, CA

Beyond Differences launched its first Activist Academy that drew dedicated youth activists from East and West coasts, the Midwest, Appalachia, and the island of Hawaii. Together, they actively engaged over 40 hours of programming, intensely focused on creating new curricula to end social isolation and build cultures of belonging.

Over four packed days, the National Teen Board learned from seasoned educators and worked together to formulate a full slate of lessons and activities to be used nationwide in the coming school year.

The highlight of the event was a town hall meeting with Tony Thurmond, State Superintendent of Public Instruction. There, the young activists engaged in deep dialogue about the central issues fueling the crisis of social isolation in young people.

With each young voice that came to the microphone, the power and impact of Beyond Differences Activist Academy was undeniable. Today, the National Teen Board continues to draw upon the skills they gained at Activist Academy to fuel their work. Our youth leaders are speaking out and speaking up—on panels, in the news, and within communities. They are building curricula and working together to spread the Beyond Differences mission.

Learn more

BeyondDifferences.org/national-teen-board/

"Serving as a National **Teen Board Member** is an honor and a profound duty. The mission of creating a culture of belonging resonates deeply with my values in life. **Beyond Differences** provides a platform for us to share our stories and develop initiatives to act on pressing issues like social isolation and loneliness. I am truly grateful and proud to be a National Teen Board Member, amplifying our wonderful work nationwide."

ALYSHA National Teen Board Member



New Initiatives

Central Valley, California

Thanks to the **California Department of Education,** we have launched a new program for middle schools called **Central Valley Cares**.

In its first year, **the program reached 200 teachers and 3,800 students with its Beyond Differences curriculum.** The Central Valley Cohort was formed in February 2023, with **12 middle schools in Bakersfield City School District and 1 middle school in Edison Union School District.**

The innovative program was designed to foster and support a positive culture of belonging for the student body. Planning by the Cohort included professional development, school-wide special events, activities, curriculum, and student leadership training.

The Cohort's commitment includes several programs launching in 2023 through 2024 such as: curriculum lessons, student-led assemblies, faculty advisors for Beyond Differences clubs, participation in National Student Action Days, professional development, Activist Accelerators, and more for school sites.

Bronx, New York

Thanks to **Cerberus Capital Management LP**, **Bloomberg Corporate Philanthropy Americas**, **and RXR Realty Company**, a new program called **Belonging in the Bronx** held its first set of activities.

In its first year, **5 schools and 1,372 students** participated in the Cohort, and plans are underway to recruit 8 more schools for the current year.

The Cohort leadership cites that Beyond Differences has had an extremely positive impact on the climate and culture of its school community. The Activist Accelerator leadership retreat for middle schoolers empowered students to be leaders on their campuses.

There was a decrease of nearly 16% in the reporting of online bullying, bullying in-person, harassment, and physical altercations. There was also an increase in overall collective awareness among students. The Beyond Differences influence includes:

- A culture of nurturing and sharing personal thoughts and ideas in a positive way.
- Students modeling empathy for others, which reduces social isolation and bullying.

• A student body discussing various ways they can be change-makers.

A New Learning Community 725+ Educators

38 States, 2 Canadian Provinces, 6 Countries

Last year we launched our Professional Development Online Learning Community.

It has grown exponentially since then with more than 725 educators committing to creating a culture of belonging by engaging in a community of practice on Transformative Social Emotional Learning.

Knowledge and practitioner insights covered in the past year include vital content such as:

• Discussing disability justice with California Governor Gavin Newsom and members of our National Teen Board.

• Learning how to create welcoming classrooms for newcomer students from Kajal Shahali, the Youth Programs Manager at Refugee & Immigrant Transitions.

• Hosting 50 live professional development sessions featuring more than a dozen subject matter experts.

Learn more

BeyondDifferences.org/professional-development







"No One Eats Alone Day at Madison Middle School created a culture of belonging that was never witnessed before. When I overheard one of the teachers say, 'We needed this today!' I knew it was time well spent interacting with each other on a deep, personal level. We can't wait to do it again next year!"

DR. JENNIFER ANDREU

Assistant Superintendent, Office of Economic Opportunity & Office of Educational Equity, Access & Diversity, Miami-Dade School District



A Sound Investment

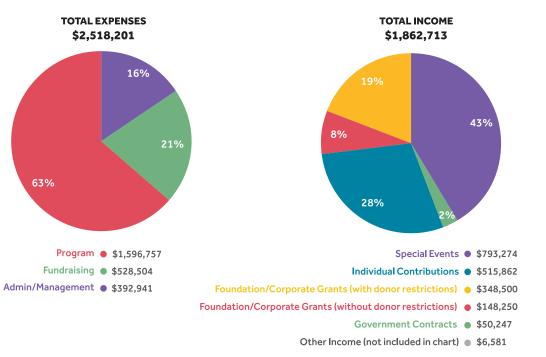
Beyond Differences makes every donated dollar count as we empower youth to build cultures of belonging that end social isolation in their schools and communities.

Thank you to the Centene Charitable Foundation for continuing to sponsor National No One Eats Alone Day for the eighth year in a row. It has grown from a few schools in California to a nationally recognized program celebrated in all 50 states with over 2,837 schools participating in 2023.

Our Professional Development programming for educators has expanded over the past year. The Louis L. Borick Foundation and All Points North Foundation funded a new Educator Cohort in Dallas, TX. The New York City Department of Education renewed and increased its support by 5x in its respected city. We launched two new programs: Belonging in the Bronx in New York and Central Valley Cares in California. Thank you to the California Department of Education, Cerberus Capital Management LP, Bloomberg Corporate Philanthropy Americas, and RXR Realty Company for funding these programs focusing on direct middle school support and student leadership retreats.

This year, we held two spring fundraising events in the San Francisco Bay Area and New York City, that together raised over \$793K.

We welcomed new staff members this year: Casey Mancl, Director of National Fundraising and External Affairs; Regina Rolland, Development Associate; Carly Zdanek, Social Media and Marketing Coordinator; and Accounting Associate, Taylor Fisher. We are also proud of our clean audit for FY 21-22.



AWARD RECOGNITION

Millions of funders utilize the Candid Guidestar platform to review a nonprofit organization's profile. Earning the platinum seal of transparency is a proud achievement, and we are pleased to again earn this recognition. https://www.guidestar.org

Candid.

Platinum Transparency

2023

Leadership

Our Board of Directors give generously of their time to guide Beyond Differences with their expertise from various backgrounds. This amazing group of individuals also donates to the organization and this year there was 100% participation.

Board of Directors 2022-2023

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Madison Torres National Teen Board Fellow

Thank You!

*The list reflects contributions received between July 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023.

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We wish we had room to thank everyone who donated to us!

We are grateful to the following individuals, companies, and foundations who have supported Beyond Differences. They have invested \$250 or more in our student leaders and school programs.*

Learn more

BeyondDifferences.org/funders-friends

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Join the Movement to End Social Isolation!





Inspiring Youth to End Social Isolation

Beyond Differences' mission is to inspire students nationwide to end social isolation and create cultures of belonging for everyone. We envision a world where all youth are accepted, valued, and included no matter their differences.



P.O. Box 9070, San Rafael, CA 94912 • 415.256.9095 • www.BeyondDifferences.org

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