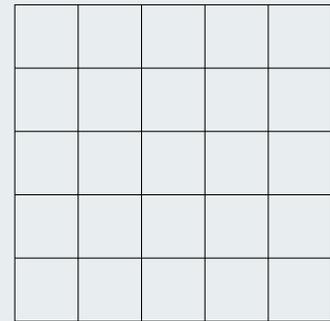


Annual Report 2024-25



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Find out more at
yli.org

A note from us



To the yli community,

We are pleased to share our annual report for the 2024–25 school and fiscal year. This year was a difficult one, marked by violence, exclusion, and relentless attacks on young people and the communities they call home. The antidote is and has always been youth voice and youth power to shift the ground so that our communities have a place to stand.

Ahead of the 2024 election, we surveyed young people in our programs. One of the most striking findings was not fear, though there was plenty of it. It was a call to action: show us what hope looks like when things feel broken. Young people told us they wanted adults who would stand firm, stay engaged, and believe, loudly and publicly, that change is still possible. At yli, we took that charge seriously.

I am deeply grateful to the yli team who showed up every day with that commitment. Staff prepped and facilitated youth meetings, pored over city council agendas late into the night, trained young people to deliver public comment, organized rides and meals, and made sure young people could safely and meaningfully participate in civic life. Our non-program teams brought that same tenacity: paying out stipends to youth, fundraising in an increasingly difficult environment, stewarding budgets for maximum impact, managing the website, social media and messaging for justice, and holding the infrastructure that allows youth leadership to thrive. None of this work is easy. All of it is essential.

Most importantly, young people showed us what hope looks like in practice. They organized when they were told they didn't belong. They spoke when they were expected to stay silent. They built community in moments designed to divide us. Their leadership reminds us that hope is not passive; it is disciplined, collective, and rooted in action.

There is still so much work to be done. The forces aligned against young people, particularly young people of color, immigrant youth, LGBTQ+ youth, and young people in under-resourced communities, are well funded and persistent. But so are we. This report captures not just what we accomplished this year, but what we are building toward: a future where young people are not only protected, but powerful.

Thank you for standing with us, believing in young people, and choosing hope alongside us.

With gratitude,
Patty Barahona, CEO

Our Mission & Core Values



Our Mission

yli builds communities where young people and their adult allies come together to create positive social change. We achieve this in two key ways: providing training, tools and resources for effective youth advocacy, and by leveraging the experience and savvy of adult allies. yli's work is based on the conviction that, if we empower youth to use their voices well, the entire community will prosper as a result.

Our Values

Inclusion

yli builds communities where young people and their adult allies come together to create positive community change that promotes social justice and racial equity.

Innovation

A wellspring of fresh perspectives and ideas, youth can often see a way forward where adults cannot. yli's youth development strategy encourages youth to identify and implement their own solutions to the issues their communities face.

Social Justice

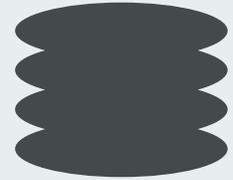
Throughout history, young people have ignited and led social justice movements to create a better world for everyone. yli helps them to focus their attention on the root causes of injustice, and sharpen the skills they need to tackle them.

Community

Nobody can do it alone! Through relationship and coalition-building, yli feeds the connective tissue within our communities to power our movements with the brilliance, resourcefulness, and wisdom of our partners.

"If it wasn't for yli, I wouldn't have become so passionate about city planning and the intersections of the built environment, class, race, gender and life expectancy. I had so much guidance from leaders who truly cared about me and wanted to teach me to become a great writer and advocate for my community." - Karla Martinez, yli Alumni

The yli Model



Leadership

Youth build deep relationships with peers and adult allies, helping them to uncover their gifts, build confidence in their ideas and solutions, and hone the skills they need to make positive community change.

- Public speaking, power mapping, campaign planning, community organizing, healing circles

Research

yli trains young people to conduct research that asks important questions about their experiences, their communities, and the institutions intended to serve them. In the process, youth gain skills in critical thinking, research techniques, and data analysis.

- Surveys, walking audits, key informant interviews, Youth-Participatory Action Research

Storytelling

Through yli's youth-led media and storytelling campaigns, young people learn to share stories that change perceptions, allowing for new possibilities and activating communities to join youth in calling for change.

- Social media content, podcasts, OpEds and reported articles, billboards, video and animation, 'zines

Campaigns

Working alongside elected officials, community leaders, local partners and coalitions, yli youth exercise their organizing, public speaking, budget- and policy-making skills. Over the past 30 years, yli young people and partners have successfully advocated for over 135 policy wins across California.

- Narrative change, social norms, School policies, city/county budget allocations, systems change

"yli has given me my dream. It's made me want to advocate for my community and has showed me all the places where work needs to be done. It has showed me that I have the ability to change the disparities I see in the world."

- Ashens Limón, yli Alumni & former Board Member

Our youth



At yli we served 2882 youth across the state

25% of yli youth identify as LGBTQ+

95% of yli youth identify as BIPOC

82.5% report that their program prepares them to take action in their community

94.8% feel that youth and adults can work together to make change

When asked what keeps them coming back to yli programs, youth said: the environment, caring adults, and creating community.



"yli has impacted my life by allowing me to be myself without feeling weird or discouraged. It allowed me to be more confident and not scared of who I am." - Sienna Lee, yli young person

Our programs

85 programs | 40 Campaigns | 30 Publications



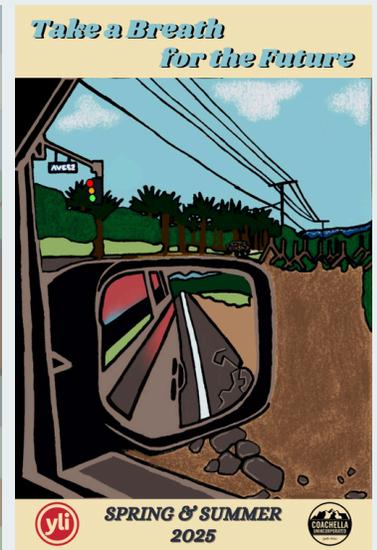
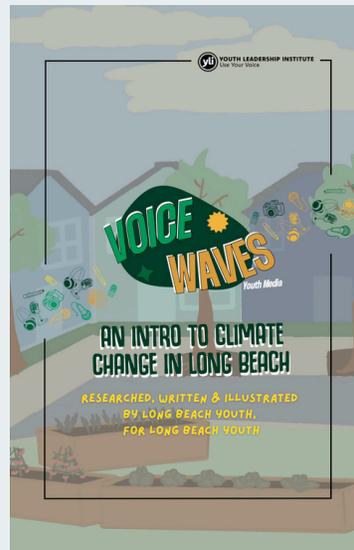
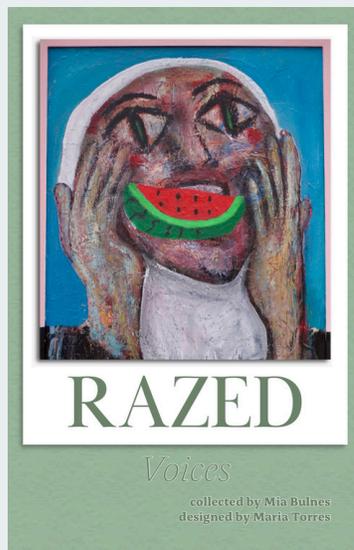
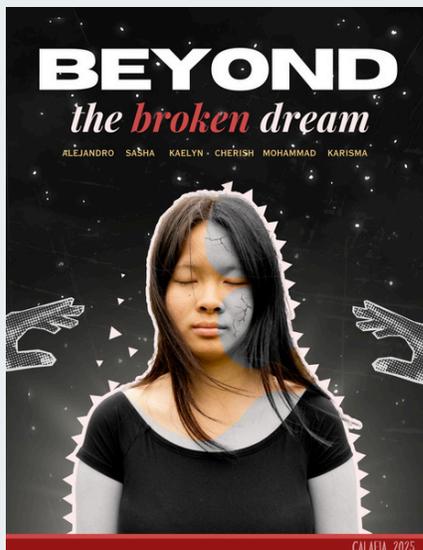
Our Offices:

- Marin
- San Francisco
- San Mateo
- Merced
- Madera
- Fresno
- Long Beach
- Eastern Coachella Valley

05 unincorporated areas

32 cities

142 community partners



View more at yli.org/publications

24/25 highlights

The HGC opens

In 2024, yli Merced opened the Healing Generations Center. The HGC is a youth wellness hub dedicated to providing critical resources and services for the most vulnerable young people in Merced county. It offers a comprehensive range of services, including suicide prevention programs, housing navigation assistance, connections to vocational training and educational support, peer support services, and referrals for substance use disorder treatment, ensuring that vulnerable youth receive the holistic care and guidance they need to thrive.

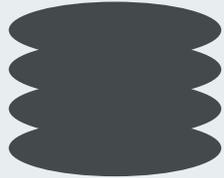


yli goes mobile

In 2025 yli purchased 3 vans to meet the needs of young people. Transportation accessibility has always been a challenge when young people are living in rural parts of our communities or the local transportation is not meeting needs. For three of our offices we're now able to get young people to programming meetings, community events, and beyond — breaking down barriers and making transportation more accessible. This is a huge win for transportation justice!



24/25 highlights



The 2024 TCE Youth Awards

In July of 2024 yli produced and hosted The California Endowment's 2024 Youth Awards! The Youth Awards honor young people and youth serving orgs who take brave action when faced with deep-rooted systemic barriers and injustice and who show up in their communities as powerful agents of change. It was such a joy to celebrate the winners in L.A. with nearly 300 youth and adult allies from across the state in attendance!



Our reach



Platform

Reach

Instagram

199,654

Facebook

43,000

LinkedIn

41,457

TikTok

28,503

Newsletter

7,421

Website Visits (Monthly)

2,800



"Youth Leadership Institute shapes the youth into the best they can be. It has helped me open up to new opportunities and shaped me into a leader that can deal with responsibility."

- Samara Garcia, yli young person

Our staff

yli has 66 staff members across the state

-
- 25% of staff were former young people in yli programs
-
- In FY2425, yli spent \$51,147 on staff professional development
-
- In FY2425, yli spent \$1,313,466 on staff benefits
-
- In FY2425, staff took 414 days of wellness leave and 4,967 hours of PTO
-

41

Programatic
Staff

21

Statewide
Staff

04

TCS
Staff

At the core of yli's Training and Consulting Services is the belief that just, equitable systems, organizations, and programs can only be achieved by actively including everyone's voice – especially those that are most often left out.

In FY2425, our TCS team worked with 51 community partners, led 114 trainings, hosted 450 hours of coaching/consulting, and trained 3,987 people.

Our ylumni

Our ylumni network is made up of 237 former youth, staff, and board members.

They are actively engaged in supporting the current work of yli and engaging those who have been changed by this work as a former student, staff or board member. As our network grows, we will always center the tangible change that is made when young people are working alongside adult allies to create the communities we want to see and thrive in.



San Rafael - May 2025

We brought ylumni together for the first time to create connections, hear updates and have fun. This was the first of many ylumni gatherings to come.



“From middle school through college and beyond, my involvement with yli has been the foundation of my personal and professional growth. I love staying connected as a ylumni and seeing other young people have the same incredible experiences I had as they lead positive change in their communities.”

- Josh Rowe former Marin MCYC young person and former Board Member

Our finances



yli relies on institutional and individual support

⌵ Donations	\$63,316.08
⌵ Fees for Services & Other Incomes	\$760,424
⌵ Foundation Grants	\$3,923,728
⌵ Government Awards	\$4,919,597.65

Operating Expenses

FY2425: \$9,191,977

This includes:

- \$430,000 in youth incentives
- 2,200 transactions
- Sent to over 500 youth



"yli has impacted my life by allowing me to learn, and have a better depth and understanding of my own community. It has taught me to become a better leader and make a change. It has also taught me how to help not only others, but also myself." - Anissa Ellerbee, yli young person

Our promise to our young people after the 2024 election

The time for courage is now.

We know the world looks bleak. We share your grief and rage - not only that Donald Trump will once again take office, but that so many of our fellow citizens chose him and the values he stands for. It is an affront to our humanity and a very real threat to our lives.

But this is not our country's darkest hour. The hard truth is that this nation was founded on imperialism - the stealing of lands, the ravaging of communities, and the enslaving of peoples. Despite all odds, Indigenous peoples, Africans and their descendants, Asian and Latino immigrants, women, queers, laborers, among many others courageously fought for their freedom.

Yesterday's election demonstrates that white supremacy continues to be deeply woven into the fabric of our nation. And there is much to fear: the dismantling of our social safety nets, our reproductive and civil rights, pathways to citizenship for immigrants, our environmental protections. Yes, it feels like an unraveling. But we cannot allow this to be where the story ends. In spite of our deep political divisions, we still have more in common than difference - and we must let this moment catalyze our movements and mobilize us to come together to continue our fight.

It's really hard to not be cynical, especially when somebody who has historically not really cared so much for these issues gets elected. I think it's important to let the youth know that there's still something that they can do, to empower them to act about what they're passionate about even though it might be hard.

~Cherish Lodico

We at yli know that, once again, we must stand together to protect and uplift our communities. We know that this impacts us directly: our young people, our staff, our families, our neighborhoods. As the new president takes office, Youth Leadership Institute commits to scaling up our organizing and policy efforts at the local and state level, and to standing ten toes down behind our youth as they share what our communities need and lead the way to a future where young people can thrive.

Our promise to our young people after the 2024 election

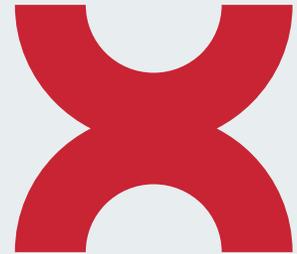
yli's commitments:

Besides voting, there are many ways to be civically engaged. You can attend town hall meetings to voice concerns directly to local leaders, join or support community organizations that focus on important issues, or volunteer for local causes like food drives or neighborhood clean-ups. Participating in protests or advocacy campaigns is another way to raise awareness for specific issues. You can also contact elected officials through letters, phone calls, or social media to express your views. Finally, running for local office or supporting candidates who align with your values helps shape policies in your community directly. -Ashley Barnica

Over the next 4 years and beyond, yli commits to doubling down on the following actions, requested by our youth:

- Providing concrete, material support to youth through:
 - Program stipends
 - Opportunities for employment at yli, and support in pursuing positions at other organizations through our connections, resumé building and letters of reference.
 - Support with post-high school trajectories, including support on college applications, and provision of scholarships, fellowships, and internships.
- Providing counternarratives and storytelling that combats some of the mis and disinformation about immigrants and immigration.
- Supporting youth in navigating the world following the election through:
 - Youth-friendly information about policies and movements on channels where youth can find it, like TikTok and Instagram.
 - Political education for our youth leaders that breaks down the issues and helps them articulate and implement their solutions
- Supporting our youth to organize and participate in protests, while working to ensure their safety
- Amplifying youth voices and acting as a conduit for youth voice to political leaders and movements
- Creating safe spaces for youth to have nuanced conversations about what's happening and how they feel about it
- Creating spaces of celebration, hope and joy, and sharing practices that promote self-care and healing

A special thank you to our funders & supporters



This year there were so many moments of pride and joy. Thank you for reflecting on our shared work in this annual report. We are grateful to the partners who donate their money, time, and resources to make sure youth voices in California are nurtured and amplified. Those who believe in youth power help propel this work forward. Young people will always be the core of yli.

2026 will be a big year for yli as we continue to build youth power! Stay Connected. Our wins are your wins.

A special thank you to our funders & supporters

Alianza Coachella Valley, Alliance for a Better Community, Amalgamated Foundation, Anderson Children's Foundation, Arte Americas, Bothin / Pacific Foundation Services, CA EDD, CA State University, Fresno Foundation, Campbell Foundation, CDPH Office of Health Equity, Central Valley Latino Leadership Academy (CVLLA), CFNLP / County of Marin, Champions Recovery Alternative Programs Inc., City and County of SF DPH, City of Long Beach, City of Oakland, Climate Action LB, Coastside Pride Inc., Corporate Donors, County of LA DPH, County of Merced, Central Valley Community Foundation, CZI DAF Silicon Valley Community Foundation, David & Lucile Packard Foundation, Desert Healthcare District (DHCD), Edison International, Education Leadership Foundation, Enterprise Holdings Foundation, EPA Youth Commission Consultant, Freedom Forward, Fresh Lifelines for Youth (FLY), Fresno Arts Council, Fresno County DBH, Fresno Unified School District, Grove Foundation, Hayward Unified School District, Health Access Foundation, Heluna Health, DHCS, MHSOAC, CIBHS, Hispanas Organized for Political Equality, Huckleberry Youth Programs, Individual Donors, James B. McClatchy Foundation, Jim Joseph Foundation, JUHSD / Daly City Youth Health Center (SMC Schools), Kaiser Permanente, Khmer Girls in Action, Leadership Northern Tulare County, Liberation in a Generation, Marin Community Foundation, Marin County, Marin County BOS, Marin County HHS, Marin County Office of Education (MCOE), Mayor Lee Brand, MCE Clean Energy, Merced County, MHSOAC, OCPSC, Palm Springs Art Museum, Peter E. Haas Jr. Family Fund of the MCF, PG&E, Public Health Advocates, Reading and Beyond, Riverside University Health System-Public Health, San Jose Conservation Corps and Charter School, San Mateo County BHRS, San Mateo County Health, Sarlo Family Foundation, SCCDPH, SFDPH (via SF TFP), SFPUC, Sierra Health Foundation, Silicon Valley Community Foundation, SMC BHRS, SMCOE, SNAP Foundation, Stanislaus Community Foundation, Stone Foundation, The California Endowment, The Children's Partnership, The James Irvine Foundation, The Sobrato Family Foundation, The Social Changery LLC, Tulare County Office of Education, Tuolumne River Trust, Two Feathers, UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center, Urban Habitat, YR Media, Zellerbach Family Foundation

Adam Shwert, Alex McNicoll, Alexandra Chavez, Alheli Cuenca, Alyssa Simpson, Amber Haydock, Amy Fenstermaker, Ana Rodriguez, Aniyah Montoya-Atwood, Arianna Chavez, Arlie Padilla, Ashens Limon, Ashley Mireles-Guerrero, Babak Hemati, Beatriz Lopez, Becky Tucker, Bendita Cynthia Malakia, Berenice Ramirez, Bernadette Omelas, Bill Ligon, Bradley Cleveland, Brandon Brown, Breanna Trejo, Brigitte Moran, Britney Ortiz, Carlos Huerta, Carmel Pryor, Carolina Herrera, Carolyn Flores, Carolyn Tawasha, Cathryn Carkhuff, Daniel Garibay, David Babbitz, David Fernandez, David Lopez, David Simpson, David Sinski, Denise Trevino-Webb, Dr. Sharina Belani, Drew Bennett, Dusty Ansell, Edward Holland, Elishama Goldfarb, Elizabeth Abendroth, Elizabeth Romero, Elvia Olea, Em Hollenstine, Emily Rivas, Eoin Galvin, Eric Rowles, Esther Segall, Ethan Turner, Fahad Qurashi, Fernanda Santiago, Fortunata Davis, George & Nancy Humphreys, Gia Colosi, Gregory Ketchum, Hannah Rahill, Jacob Sussman, Jacob Wolman, Jade Mcabee, Jane & Maureen Sedonaen, Jarrod Gonzalez, Jennifer Olney, Jessie Babiarz, John Gonzalez, Johnsen Del Rosario, Jonathan Ligon, Jonathan Marker, Jonathan Schneller, Joninna Simpson, Jorge Barajas, Josh Rowe, Joy Pascol, Julianna Stocking, Kaitlin Ketchum, Karissa Yee Findley, Kasey Scroggins, Kate Lombino, Katherine Hart, Katy Crossen, Kayla Haydock Garcia, Kenneth Preston, Kenny Coulter, Kimiko Vang, Knud Gotterup, Jr., Kody Stoebig, Kristen Law, Kristin Belden, Kristin Posner, Kristina Bedrossian, Laura Garcia, Laura Harmon, Laurie DeBoer, Lewis Pollis, Lise Olney, Lorena Ramirez, Luke Torres, Lynne Edminster, Macy Pereira, Magali Limeta, Makenzie Dolnick, Margaret Simpson, Mariana Moore, Maritza Uribe, Mary DeVries, Mary Topliff, Matias Bernal, Matt Brockway, Matthew Jendian, Maxwell Blum, Maxx Lopez, Michael Murray, Mike Berry, Montserrat Garcia, Natalie Brown, Nelson and Maureen Layag, Nelson Layag Inc, Nikki Figueroa, Norman Labayen, Pam Martin, Pam Weagraff, Patricia Barahona, Patricia Lowy, Penguin Random House LLC, Peter Robertson, Phil Daubenspeck, Phillip Hall, Phillipa Konstanski, Rachel Reyes, Rahel Smith, Rebecca Sanchez, Ricardo Soto, Richard Lamm, Richard Perez, Rita De Anda, Robert Ligon, Robert Weiner, Robin DeLugan, Rosalie Baptista, Rose Lavandero, Rosemary Booth, Samuel Kendall, Sandra Goodman, Sara Peavy, Savannah Bitto, Shellan Alix, Shirin Vakharia, Stephanie Pass, Stergios Roussos, Steven Rothstein, Steven Sanchez Jr., Steven Takemoto, Susan Lee, Suzanne Oberlin, Terri Feeley, Thomas Raffin, Tim Haydock, Tory Roman, Tracey Hessel, Udit Sood, Veronica Rodriguez, Wendy Bear, William Leitsch, Ysrael Quezon