

READY  
TO SUCCEED

READY



# 2023 IMPACT *Report*

GROWING MEANINGFUL CAREERS: SEASONS OF SUCCESS



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# STATEMENT *of* IMPACT

It feels like the world is changing at a faster rate than ever before with exciting advancements in technology, shifting job markets and a growing emphasis on more diverse work experiences. What doesn't change is what students need to be successful: resources, relationships and opportunities. We at Ready to Succeed (RTS) have a responsibility to listen, change and evolve so we can continue to meet these essential needs to prepare our Scholars for future careers. Thanks to your support, we continue to expand, offering individualized support throughout our Scholars' journeys—from joining our program and back-to-school to internships and graduation. The RTS Scholars achieve transformative outcomes, and we're excited to share them with you.

With Gratitude,

*R.L.* + *Patricia S. McCabe*

Pat McCabe and Romi Lassally, Co-Founders



# *By The* **NUMBERS**



**130 SCHOLARS  
ENROLLED**



**35 CAMPUS PARTNERS  
ACROSS CALIFORNIA**



**172 RTS ALUMNI**



**94% OF ELIGIBLE  
SCHOLARS SECURED  
SUMMER INTERNSHIPS**



**92% GRADUATION RATE  
IN UNDER 6 YEARS**



**85% OF STUDENTS  
TRANSITIONED INTO  
A CAREER TRACK JOB  
WITHIN 6 MONTHS OF  
GRADUATION**



**\$704,000 IN TARGETED  
FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO  
RTS SCHOLARS**



**238 PROFESSIONAL  
VOLUNTEERS**



**1,500 HOURS OF  
COACHING**

# *Growing Meaningful CAREERS*

RTS Scholars are full of potential, and are eager to launch meaningful careers. Your generous support has made it possible for them to participate in all phases of RTS' life-changing program. So, without further ado, we invite you to meet Georgette, Ajani, Sherrie, Jae and so many other remarkable Scholars as they prepare for both personal and career success.

## **1. RECRUITMENT**

*Georgette*



Georgette found her voice as an advocate for foster youth and helps connect them to RTS

## **2. BACK TO SCHOOL**

*Ajani*



Ajani forged connections and is excited about the future after Camp Ready

## **3. INTERNSHIPS**

*Sherrie*



Sherrie deepened her career passions and gained invaluable skills during a summer internship

## **4. GRADUATION**

*Jae*



Jae's professional connections made at RTS continue to serve him long after graduation day

# RECRUITMENT

## *Introducing Opportunity*

Meaningful connections are at the heart of everything we do. Think about this: every year in California, over 4,000 former foster youth head off to college, often on their own. Now, 56% of college students are first-generation students, and they face unique challenges. But thanks to you, more and more former foster youth and first-gen college students are able to access career-building resources. And it all starts with our on campus partners.

RTS staff members travel to campuses across Southern California to meet students and build new bridges. Each year our recruitment season starts with outreach during the summer, live applications in the fall, and acceptance into the program the next spring.

## *Student FOCUS*

**99 APPLICATIONS RECEIVED FOR THE 2023-2024 CYCLE**

**9 CAMPUS INFO SESSIONS**



## **RECRUITMENT** Partners

**Guardian Scholars Programs**  
**Make Good Inc.**  
**A Sense of Home**  
**LA Room and Board**  
**Extraordinary Families**  
**Foster Nation**  
**Project Joy**

**EST College Access Program**  
**Social Justice Learning Institute**  
**Cal State Long Beach**  
**UCLA**  
**Cal State Dominguez Hills**  
**Cal State Northridge**  
**Cal Poly Pomona Renaissance Scholars**



## *Georgette's Story*

Georgette S. joined Ready to Succeed in 2022 and will graduate from CSULB next year with a degree in Sociology. Georgette is a non-traditional student and returned to college for her degree in her 50s. Now, she is unstoppable! She is a vocal advocate for foster youth on campus and has helped connect her peers to valuable resources.

Georgette found that her passion is uplifting her community. After her internship this summer with National Center for Youth Law, she sees a future career in nonprofit advocacy work. Georgette says, "Before I joined RTS I felt like I had options, but now that I'm a part of RTS I feel totally prepared. To me, Ready to Succeed is like a path. You take one step, and that leads you to another step, and all those steps lead to success."

# BACK TO SCHOOL

## *Laying the Foundations for Success from Day One*

RTS has two transformative programs for new and prospective Scholars. These two programs, Project Dorm Room and Camp Ready, ensure success from the outset of college. Before the start of the official school year, incoming freshmen can get all the dorm room supplies they need at Project Dorm Room, and accepted RTS Scholars convene and connect at Camp Ready.

### *Project DORM ROOM*

Project Dorm Room started in RTS Board Member Tania Suster's garage in 2017 when she set out to provide dorm room essentials for 60 UCLA students. Fast forward to today,

and Project Dorm Room has grown to 15 campuses and helped a total of 900+ foster youth.

**"I broke into tears when I learned about Project Dorm Room because I couldn't believe that people would want to help students like me,"** she recalls. **"When I went to pick up the supplies an older student who was also in the Bruin Guardian Scholars helped me move into my room. It was like the feeling of love and support that you would get from a family, and it meant so much to me as I was just starting college."**

**- Deborah, UCLA Graduate, RTS Alum**

**NEARLY 30% OF READY TO SUCCEED SCHOLARS PARTICIPATED IN PROJECT DORM ROOM BEFORE JOINING RTS**

### *Project Dorm Room: COMING TO A TOWN NEAR YOU?*

One person has the power to make a significant impact. While helping her children move into Arizona State University, Evelyne Cambron noticed that not all students had their families or the necessary supplies to get a head start. She reached out to Ready to Succeed, and that's how Project Dorm Room: Arizona was created.



RTS Staff member and Project Dorm Room lead Madison helps UCLA student Lily move into her dorm

### *Camp READY*

#### **WHAT IS CAMP READY?**

Camp Ready is a two-day career readiness camp for low-income college students with systems-impacted backgrounds. This year, 43 of the 50 incoming RTS Scholars spent two

days together getting to know each other and building important career skills.



This year Camp Ready ended with a wonderful surprise. Thanks to funds secured by Congressman Ted Lieu and the Department of Education, Scholars going forward will receive a \$5,000 annual basic needs scholarship.

### **THANK YOU**

*to our Camp Ready and Project Dorm Room partners*

**Make Good Inc.  
UCLA Bruin Guardian Scholars  
Cal State University Long Beach  
Arizona State University  
Olipop Soda**



## Ajani's Story

Ready to Succeed Scholar Ajani W. admits that he didn't always think of himself as someone who would go to college. As a former foster youth, he didn't grow up with many positive role models and always wanted to put the needs of others before his own. His uncle's insistence on education inspired him to make a change in his life.

Now a sophomore at UC Santa Barbara, Ajani reflects, "Choosing to attend college was the best decision I've ever made." Despite excelling academically and holding leadership positions on campus, he struggled to find his community until he attended Camp Ready.

"The experience was unlike anything I'd ever encountered. I formed connections with fellow students who shared similar backgrounds and experiences. I got to know them on a deeper level and learned valuable tips for crafting a successful resume. Camp Ready shifted my perspective," Ajani says.

Today, Ajani is enthusiastic about his future, self-assured, and has set ambitious goals to connect with professionals and kickstart his career.

## INTERNSHIPS

### *Building Real-World Experience*

Internships provide hands-on experience that bridges classroom learning to the real world, boosting employability by 15% and earnings by 6%. For foster youth and other first-generation college students, internships are a crucial pathway to meaningful careers, financial independence and stability.

Ready to Succeed Scholars explore various careers and experiential learning opportunities to discover their strengths and passions. Your support ensures every qualified Scholar has access to a minimum of two paid undergraduate internships.

### *McCabe Service FELLOWSHIP HIGHLIGHT*

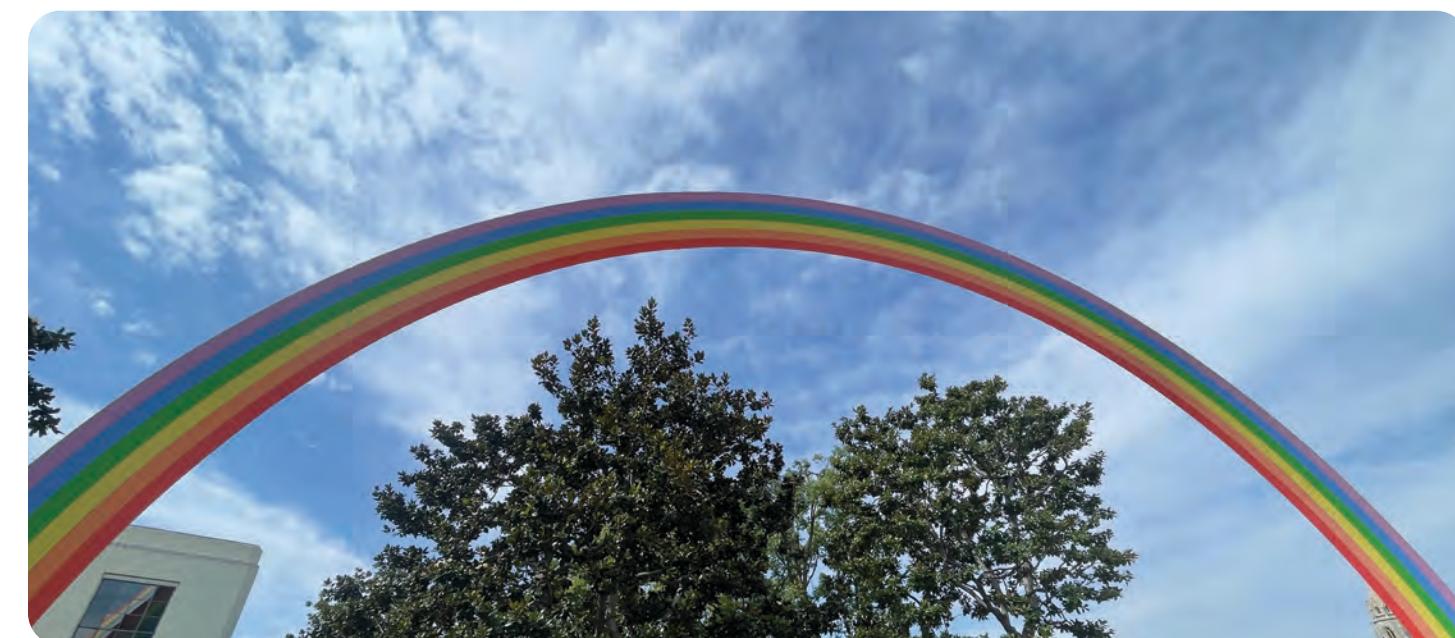
Ready to Succeed's McCabe Service Fellowship program partners with local nonprofit and social benefit organizations. Fellows receive targeted experience and professional mentorship, and the organizations gain outstanding talent to further their missions.

**25 STUDENTS**

**12 NONPROFIT PARTNERS**

**\$88,000 EARNED**

**4,780 HOURS SERVED**





## *Sherrie's Story*

Stepping Forward LA, an organization dedicated to amplifying the voices of young adults who have experienced foster care, has partnered with Ready to Succeed to prepare Scholars for the next phase of their career journey.

RTS Scholar and recent UCLA graduate Sherrie B. has always known that she was destined for greatness and overcame the odds stacked against her. As a former foster youth, Sherrie draws strength from her experiences and tells her story through creative expression. This past summer, she served as one of ten Ready to Succeed Fellows at Stepping Forward LA, where she honed her skills in marketing and communications.

"[At Stepping Forward] I was able to grow so much and do things I never thought I'd be able to do. I've never been in an atmosphere where you're being pushed but you're also growing," Sherrie reflects.

Sherrie's experiences and the connections she forged at Stepping Forward deepened her passion for pursuing a career in empowering and advocating for former foster youth.

"What I love to see is that the fellows really bloom and blossom and step out of their comfort zone. Ready to Succeed Scholars are ready to succeed and put in the hard work." Beth Ryan, Founder and Executive Director of Stepping Forward LA, remarked.

## GRADUATION

### *Beyond the Cap and Gown – A Journey of Continuous Growth*

Graduation, for those foster and first-gen students who achieve it, is often bittersweet. They face unique challenges transitioning to the next phase of life, carrying the burden of financial instability, housing insecurity and limited resources. That's why at Ready to Succeed graduation is not the end of the journey, but another step along the path to a fulfilling career.





## Jae's Story

"Not many people know how difficult it was for me at the time, but I was really stressed out and worried that I was going to be homeless once I graduated with my degree from UCLA," Jae says looking back.

As a former foster youth, Jae faced homelessness and instability growing up. Jae was connected to Ready to Succeed during his last semester in college, and he found mentors and support.

"Coming into RTS from the very beginning they just welcomed me with open arms. They helped me ask myself questions and dig really deep into what I'm good at and what I want to do. I definitely wouldn't be where I am today if I hadn't listened to my advisor, and been connected to so many people," Jae recalls. Today, he's a Senior Administrative Analyst with the LA County Department of Mental Health + UCLA Public Partnership for Wellbeing.

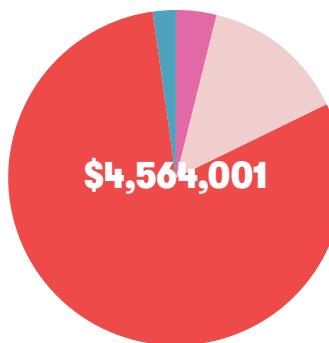
Jae is now a mentor himself, offering the same warmth and respect he received from RTS. "To RTS supporters," Jae says, "Thank you. You're changing worlds by changing one life, and that life continues to impact others."

## FINANCIAL *Summary*

In fiscal year 2023, RTS's revenue doubled! Total revenue was \$4,564,001 and our total expenses were \$2,871,150.

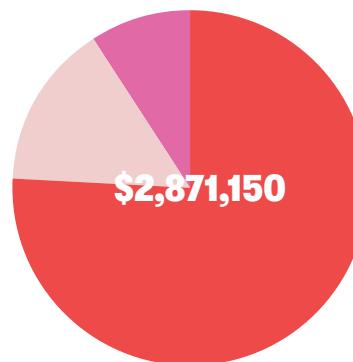
### REVENUE

●	FOUNDATION	\$3,898,324	86%
●	INDIVIDUAL	\$382,471	8%
●	GOVERNMENT	\$147,168	3%
●	IN-KIND	\$130,000	3%



### EXPENSES

●	PROGRAMS	\$2,243,030	78%
●	FUNDRAISING	\$383,982	13%
●	MANAGEMENT	\$245,138	9%



\*Please note, values are from unaudited financial statements. Audited statements will be posted once the annual audit is complete.



## MISSION, BOARD *and staff*

RTS empowers foster and first-generation college students to graduate college, launch successful careers, and reach their full potential.

### STAFF

**Romi Lassally**, Co-Founder, Co-Executive Director  
**Patrick McCabe**, Co-Founder, Co-Executive Director

**Lucy Cherkases**, Director of Opportunities + Volunteers  
**Taos Glickman**, Director of Data Analytics + Scholar Needs  
**Frances Hardy**, Director of Development + Partnerships  
**Gina Ibrahim**, Program Director

**Jacqueline Amezua**, Career Advisor  
**Christian Baer**, Development Manager  
**Madison Braybrooke**, Scholar Needs Advisor + Resource Manager  
**Zoe Fried**, Senior Assistant Director, College Success  
**Adriana Gonzalez**, Assistant Director, Scholar Recruitment  
**Natalie Guevara-Choto**, Opportunities Advisor  
**Kaleema Ishmel**, Operations Manager  
**Briana Lopez**, Opportunities + Volunteer Advisor  
**Yadilena Martinez**, Program Coordinator  
**Jazmin Navato**, Career Advisor  
**Betsy Peña**, Career Advisor

We offer our sincere condolences to our board member Harriet Zaretsky and her family after the loss of her beloved husband, Steve Henry. Together Steve and Harriet founded the Dillon Henry Foundation.

### BOARD

**Emmanuel Benton**  
**Natalie Catalan**  
**Elizabeth Friedman**  
**Jon Gimbel**  
**Todd Kessler**  
**Karen Kehela Sherwood**  
**Tania Suster**  
**Eddie Valcin**  
**Deanne Yamamoto**  
**Harriet Zaretsky**

Special Board Advisor  
**Thomas Lee**

## SUPPORTERS

*Thank you for your continued support! Gifts received  
July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023*

RTS empowers foster and first-generation college students to graduate college, launch successful careers, and reach their full potential.

### HOUSEHOLDS

Rand April  
Antonieta Arango  
Jay and Adriana Balaban  
Melissa Balaban and Adam Wergeles  
Howard Ballon  
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Nadine Bell  
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Jackie Beyer McCabe  
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Todd Kessler and Sharon Hall Kessler  
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Kathy Kloves  
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David Miner  
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Anne Williams  
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Paul Workman  
Deanne Yamamoto Nii  
Cindy Yoon  
Harriet Zaretsky and Steve Henry

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Chuck Lorre Foundation  
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Herbert & Elaine Kendall Charitable Foundation  
Johnny Carson Foundation  
Lehman Hirsch Foundation  
Los Angeles Women's Giving Circle  
Otis Booth Foundation  
The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation  
Reach Higher Foundation  
Ric and Suzanne Kayne Foundation  
SAM Initiative  
The Sam Simon Charitable Giving Foundation  
Segal Family United World Foundation

# THANK YOU

Every effort has been made to include accurate and complete information. If you notice an omission or error, we'd love to hear from you.

Have any feedback regarding this report? Email [christian@readytosucceedla.org](mailto:christian@readytosucceedla.org)

Are you ready to make a difference?

To learn more about our amazing Scholars and ways to get involved, visit [www.readytosucceedla.org](http://www.readytosucceedla.org)

If you know a Scholar who would benefit from our programming please contact [adri@readytosucceedla.org](mailto:adri@readytosucceedla.org)





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