

Dream
Big

BEST FRIENDS
FOREVER

Learning Bridge
Annual Impact Report
2025-2026
School Year



practice 4pm
hi

ILYSM

$$y = mx + b$$

$$V = \frac{4}{3} \pi r^3$$

Dear Champions for Foster Youth,

In my years working within Texas's child welfare system, I saw the same pattern too often. A bright kid, capable of learning, and hungry to do so too, but falling behind because nobody could stay in their corner long enough to help them catch up. Placements changed, caseworkers changed, schools changed. The gap just kept growing.

We set out this year to match 35 new students with a tutor. And we did... and more! New partnerships opened the door to dozens more kids than expected, and **57 new students got an academic champion in their corner.** That's **131 students total** that had someone show up for them every week, through algebra homework, hard days, and everything in between. I've spent my career watching systems fail to give kids that kind of consistency. Watching our volunteers provide it is why I serve on this board.

You'll meet Ashley later in this report. Four years with the same tutor, and this spring, a high school diploma and college acceptance she once doubted was possible. She's one story among 131 who found something to hold onto this year thanks for their Learning Bridge tutor.

To our volunteers, staff, and donors: I know from decades in this field how rare what you're building here actually is. Thank you for making it possible for these kids!

We're not close to finished, and next year won't get easier. School budgets are being cut and campuses are closing across Central Texas. The state is moving further toward privatized foster care management, a shift that's already caused real disruption elsewhere. Thousands more affected youth across Central Texas still don't have a tutor in their corner. Next year, we're aiming to give 45 more of them what Ashley had: someone showing up, every week.

If one adult showing up consistently can change a child's trajectory, and after a career of watching what happens when they don't, I can tell you it's the whole answer. Become a tutor. Sponsor a student. Either way, you become that adult for someone.

Thank you for standing in this gap with us.

With gratitude,
Carole Wall, Board President



Carole Wall

Our mission is to match tutors with foster and unhoused youth to give them the educational support they need to stay in school, improve academic performance, and achieve greater success later in life.

131

students served
(+28% YoY)

3,695

volunteer
tutoring hours

95%

students felt
motivated by
tutorials

100%

students said
their tutor
helped

Texas kids are facing another year of instability.

School budget cuts are reshaping classrooms across Central Texas. Austin ISD alone has approved \$200M+ in cuts and the closure of 10 campuses will be felt this new school year. For students already navigating foster care or homelessness, support was thin to begin with. Now the instability they've lived with for years is getting worse.

Foster care privatization is adding even more volatility.

Texas is shifting foster care case management to private contractors region by region. Transitions like this can mean new caseworkers, new processes, and new gaps while systems get up to speed, on top of the instability these students already carry.



The result is a deepening academic crisis.

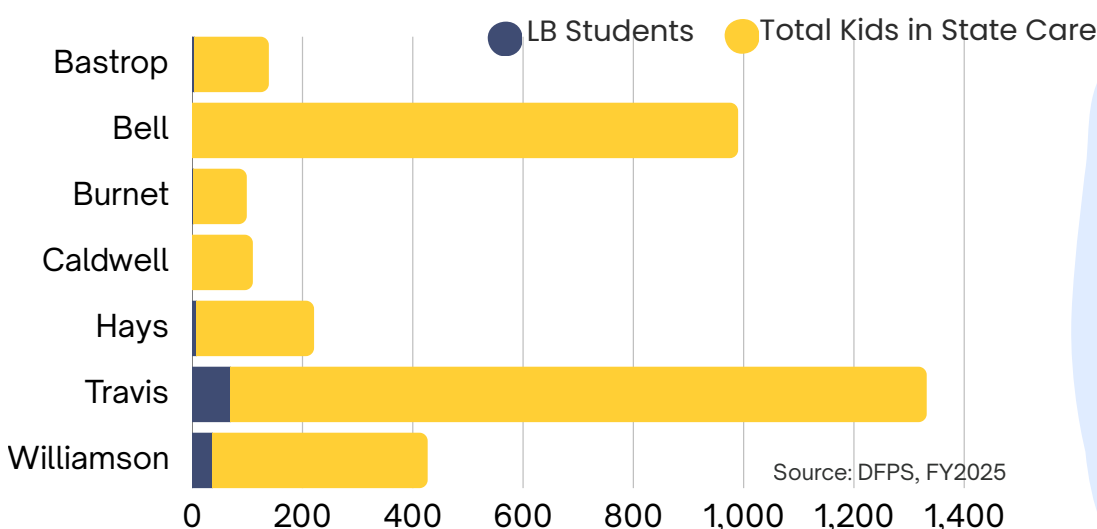
72% of Texas foster students are already a year or more behind grade level, and thousands of CPS-involved youth in Central Texas still go without any academic support at all.

Learning Bridge is the only one that provides the academic stability these students have ever had.

Weekly one-on-one tutoring gives them a steady adult, consistent academic help, and a chance to rebuild confidence and skills. Without this stability, kids will continue slipping through the cracks created by budget cuts, placement changes, and a foster care landscape that has never been able to support their education.



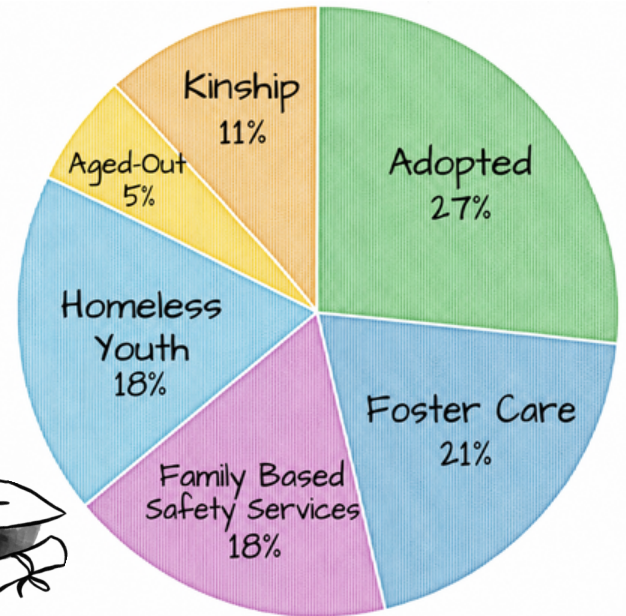
Core Service Area vs. Where the Need Is (SY 2025-2026)



Across just 7 Central Texas counties, 3,000+ children are in state care. Learning Bridge reaches a fraction of them, and this year we also served 9 students in 5 additional counties beyond our core service area, further proof the need and demand for academic support keeps growing.

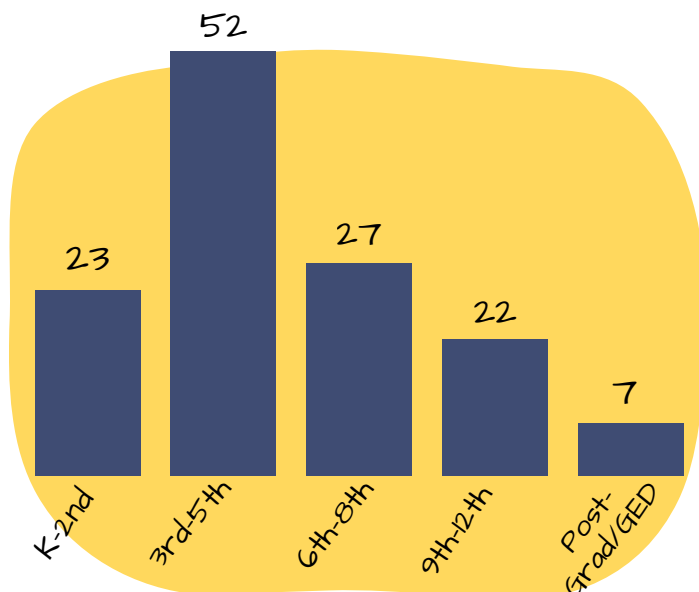
Our students have missed a lot of school. Many have moved homes, schools, and districts, and those disruptions show up in the classroom. Most Texas foster care youth are one to **two grade levels behind**, and we see the same thing. Our students work hard, but they often face learning gaps, disabilities, and the frustration of feeling behind their peers. What they need most is steady support and someone who shows up every week believing in them.

PLACEMENT TYPES OF STUDENTS WE SERVE



- 80% are students of color
 - 33% African American
 - 47% Hispanic
 - 20% Caucasian
- 39% have learning disabilities
- Avg. student tenure = 15 months
- 53% say they're happy with their year-end grades, though the deeper shift is seeing their confidence rise

LB STUDENT GRADE LEVELS



Our students are navigating dyslexia, ADHD, math learning disabilities, PTSD from early childhood experiences, and years of interrupted schooling. Some are rebuilding basic reading and math skills; others are adopted teens working through trauma; others are new to foster care and reading at a kindergarten level.



Community volunteers across Central Texas show up every week to help students rebuild skills, gain confidence, and make real academic progress. They turn missed school, learning gaps, and frustration into small wins that add up. Learning Bridge tutors help students feel capable again!

- 169 tutors
- Ages 18-70+
- 39% Caucasian, 35% Asian, 15% Hispanic/Latin, 11% Black/African American
- Tutor backgrounds range from retired teachers, university students, engineering, healthcare, tech, finance, and more
- One-third of tutor applications are from college-aged students wanting to give back.

A common thread among Learning Bridge tutors is simple: they want kids to have support they didn't always have themselves. Many were shaped by mentors; others grew up low-income, in foster care, or without access to academic help. They show up because they believe students deserve someone in their corner.

“Tutoring has given me a greater sense of purpose and meaning outside of my work and social life. I look forward to tutoring every week, and knowing I can make even a small difference in the lives of these kids makes it so worth it!”
-Tutor, James



28% More students helped

Help More Youth Toward Stability


23

High-school/GED
students
matched


36

New post-
adopt students
matched


23

New unhoused
students
matched


65+

Referral
Partners

Grow Volunteer Impact

51

new
tutors trained

95%

volunteer
retention

3,695

volunteer
hours

100%

recommend
volunteering with LB



Scale Sustainable Funding

50%

Growth in New
Funding Partners

98

New Individual
Donors

\$4,352

Raised through our
first-ever Steps for
Students Fundraiser

Ashley came to Learning Bridge as a freshman navigating a new foster placement, gaps in her schooling. Sports were the one place she felt grounded. She needed someone who'd just keep showing up.

Her tutor, Wendy, did. Four years and 160+ hours later, they'd worked through algebra, geometry, and everything between. B's on tests. A's on quizzes. A 93 on a geometry exam. Then a 100.

This spring, Ashley graduated high school!



"There's no way that Ash would have the confidence to conquer college without Wendy's absolutely tireless effort and conviction." - Foster Parent



"Mica" first came to Learning Bridge in 5th grade, in her first foster placement. Since then she experienced multiple placements, but each time came back to Learning Bridge for a tutor. Now entering high school, adopted and settled with a family, she's still with us, and dreaming of a specific college.

Her tutor, Pooja, brought her printed math worksheets from TAMU. Mica lit up.

"That's when her mom smiled, confirming that Texas A&M was in fact Mica's dream college."

- Tutor Pooja



"R" was in Tier 3 reading and math intervention, borderline enough that repeating kindergarten was on the table.

Last summer, his tutor Lyric tried something different: they wrote their own book together, selecting each detail of characters, storylines, and names - all of it!

"It helped build his confidence and love of learning."

- Adoptive Parent



Members of the Austin Young Chamber served as LB Inspiration Ambassadors, crafting encouragement cards for our students.

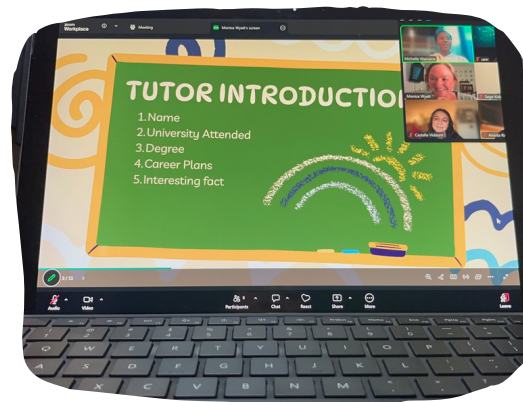


Thrivent sponsored tutor resource kits, equipping our tutors with tools for student success.

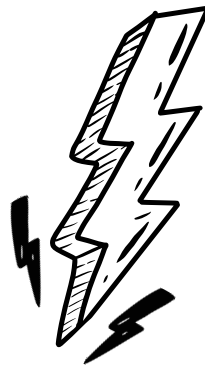


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We hosted our first-ever Ask Me Anything (AMA) for our high school students to get the scoop on life after graduation.



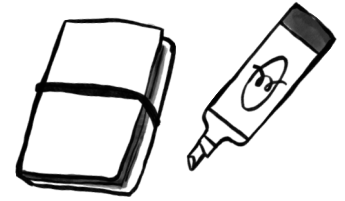
Employees across Dell came together, organized by the Women in Action (WIA) ERG, to make encouragement cards for Learning Bridge students.



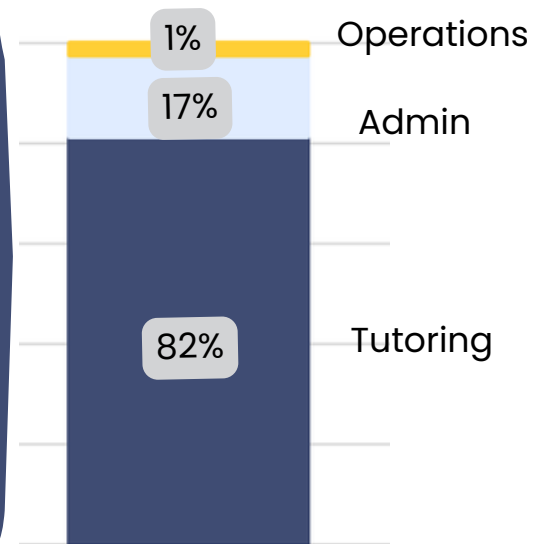
Members of Dell's Women in Action (WIA) group hand-packed and donated summer backpacks filled with games, cards, and more to celebrate our students' end of school year achievement.

Learning Bridge continues to operate with exceptional efficiency, directing more than 80% of all FY resources to tutoring and direct student support. With a remote structure and a single full-time staff member, we keep overhead low while delivering high-touch, relationship-based programming to 131 students this school year.

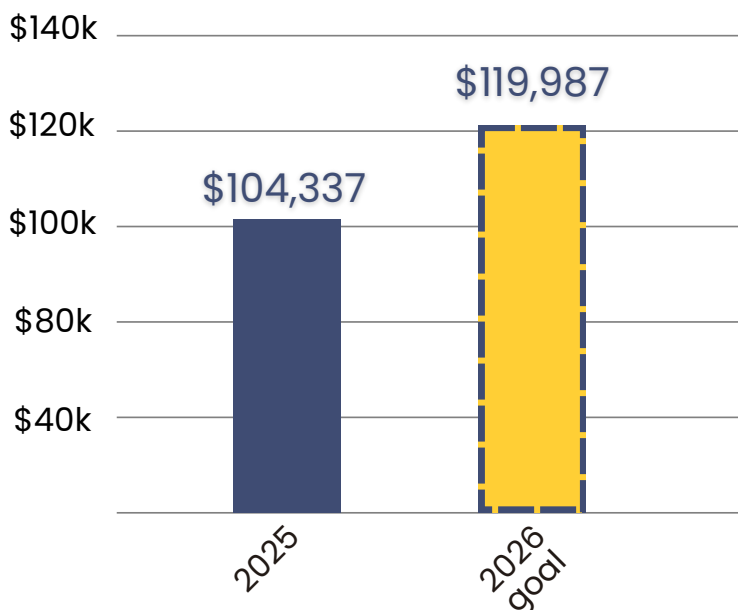
This lean model allows donor dollars to go further, but reaching every student who needs us takes more than a lean model, it takes capacity. Every new partnership, grant relationship, and donor connection is another door open for a student waiting for a tutor. Capacity-building funds to grow our staffing mean fewer students wait and more get matched with someone who shows up for them every week. Your investment doesn't just fund an organization. It funds a kid's shot at stability.



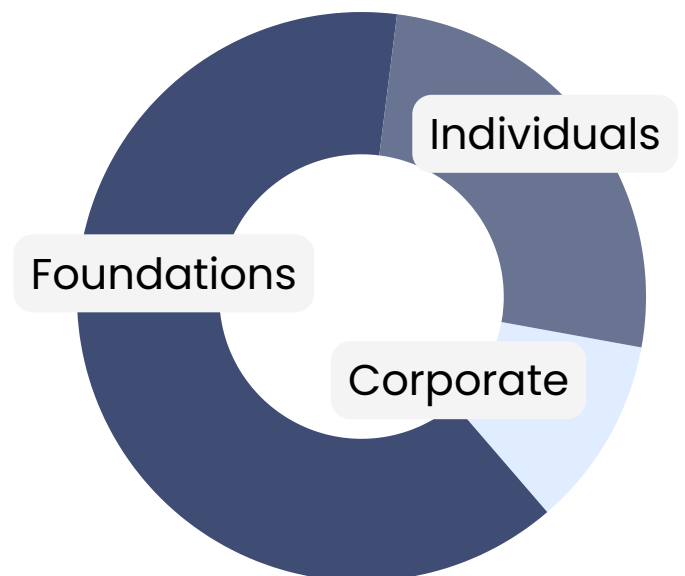
FY 2025 Expenses



FY 2025 Annual Income



Funding Sources



131 students had someone show up for them this year, including our largest-ever group of high schoolers and GED students working toward a diploma. That means this coming school year brings a real chance for major milestones, graduations, GED completions, first steps into work, and sustaining that support matters more than ever. It will take every ounce of community support to meet the need ahead, especially as school budgets shrink and the foster care system itself keeps changing. We're determined to help every student who calls us. To get there, we need capacity-building support.

Our targets this coming school year:

- 40+ new tutors ready to serve
- 45+ new students supported
- Capacity-building funding to sustain our growth rate



Will you impact our students?

SHARE OUR STORY
SPONSOR A STUDENT
VOLUNTEER



Your investment empowers foster students to excel in school, discover college IS attainable, and lead thriving futures in our communities.

Foundations/Business Sponsors



HEART GALLERIES
OF TEXAS

Georgia B. Lucas Foundation



Webber Family Foundation



DOLLAR GENERAL
LITERACY
FOUNDATION



THE ROTHELL CHARITABLE FOUNDATION
OF CENTRAL TEXAS



Pollak Family Charitable Fund



thrivent



Top Individual Donors

Logan Johnson
Erin Hudson
Scott Munro
Kristy Peloquin
Nancy Pollak

Promod Radhakrishnan
Dr. Jeffrey D Lazar
Abhilasha Mittal
Ajay Madgavkar
Bharat Shrestha

Colleen Reppen Shiel
Deborah Gonzalez
Kelsey Sandlin
Kettisha Jones
Thomas Gerardy

Referral Partners



We're also grateful to the organizations who trust us with the students who need us most, especially Round Rock ISD Families in Transition, CASA, Foster Village, the Heart Galleries, and Child Protective Services, our most consistent source of referrals, along with 65+ partners across Central Texas.

Some gifts carry an extra story. Here, we honor the people and volunteers who make Learning Bridge more than an organization, they make it a community.

In Memory & In Honor

Some of our supporters chose to give in honor or memory of someone special to them. We're grateful to hold their names alongside this year's impact.



In Memory of:

Thelma Bonzek - Given by Anuva Bonzek
 Franzi Mullan - Given by Joan Ip
 James Wall - Given by Mary Dillard

In Honor of:

Bernard Nevel - Given by Maura Scherrer
 Janette Skrasek - Given by Joan Bronstad
 Janie Grayson - Given by Jenny Grayson
 Ladelle Jeter - Given by Kimberly Jeter
 Kristy Peloquin - Given by Kimberly Jeter
 James Carroll Wall - Given by Danielle Leggett, Hannah Kapasi
 Dr. Erin Hudson - Given by Jake Kate, Melissa Scheinfeld, Jerry Negrete,
 Bella Mei, Sangeeta Lerma, Kathleen Greer, Cindy Whitesides

Committee Volunteers

These volunteers give their time and expertise to keep Learning Bridge moving forward, serving their community, leading with purpose, and helping more students find stability in school and beyond.

Thank you to:
 Pooja Mandagere
 Giselle Elizondo
 Viren Velacheri
 Sai Tejaswini



To Every Tutor & Volunteer

To everyone who showed up this year, in a session, at an event, behind the scenes, thank you doesn't feel like enough. But it's where we start.



Our board draws from social work, child protective services, technology, law, education, and accounting. Different fields, same north star: helping foster, adopted, and unhoused youth find stability and succeed in school. This year, one of our own volunteer tutors stepped up to join board leadership, proof that this work has a way of pulling people in deeper.

Our staff pairs strategic leadership with frontline experience, anchored by a Program Manager with a decade of AISD classroom expertise and lived insight as a former foster parent, keeping our programs responsive and grounded in what students actually need.

Our Values



Carole Wall
President



Kristy Peloquin
Vice President



Kim Walker
Treasurer



Camille Ip
Secretarty



Erin Hudson
Board Member



Anayeli Jaimes
Board Member



Monica Wyatt
Program Manager

Stay connected with Learning Bridge throughout the year to see more student success stories, learn more about our Central Texas foster youth and see the challenges they overcome.

JOIN OUR
MAILING LIST

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