



embarcadero media foundation

Nonprofit community
journalism for the
Peninsula and Tri-Valley.

Annual Report 2024



A BREAKTHROUGH YEAR

Letter from the CEO

Dear Friends,

Thanks to the generous support of our communities, 2024 marked a transformational year for the Embarcadero Media Foundation. Our financial position improved dramatically, and for the first time since 2018, we ended the year with over \$400K in the black after having a nearly \$1.5M operational loss in 2023.

Following our transition to nonprofit status, we focused on building the systems, team, and support base needed for long-term success. From technology and governance to fundraising and editorial coverage, 2024 was a year of laying essential groundwork—all while continuing to deliver in-depth reporting on local issues, including the 2024 elections.

Our community responded with extraordinary generosity. We set an ambitious fundraising goal of \$800,000 for our inaugural year—and by year's end, we had raised more than \$1.2 million. This milestone reflects the deep commitment of our donors and members to local, independent journalism.

In addition to our fundraising success, we achieved several key priorities in 2024:

- Recruited a diverse and engaged board of directors to guide our nonprofit mission.
- Completed the business and administrative steps required to finalize our transition to nonprofit status.
- Relocated our Peninsula office to reduce costs and operate more efficiently.
- Upgraded our digital infrastructure by transitioning to a specialized WordPress platform designed for local publishers and optimized for modern digital publishing.
- Launched the “cultivation” phase of our fundraising program, including personal events with speakers such as New York Times executive editor Dean Baquet, and larger community gatherings like the screenings of the documentary “Stripped for Parts: American Journalism on the Brink.”

Looking ahead, we are eager to expand our editorial coverage and enhance the online experience for our readers. If you have feedback, ideas, or would like to support our mission, I invite you to reach out to me directly at publisher@embarcaderomedia.org.

Thanks to your support, 2024 was a breakthrough year for Embarcadero Media Foundation. In 2025, we're aiming higher—to serve more people, tell more stories, and make a greater impact. We are deeply grateful to you for being part of this journey.



With appreciation,
Adam Dawes
Chief Executive Officer
Embarcadero Media Foundation

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Bill Johnson
EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN
Bruce Gee^{**}
Carol Melamed^{^^^}
Chris Tucher^{*}
Deborah McKeehan^{*}
Esther Wojcicki^{*}
Gina Dalma^{*}
Jeff Klein^{^^^}
John Sensiba^{*}
Kort van Bronkhorst^{*}
Lance Conn^{^^}
Mora Oommen^{***}
Paul Bains^{***}
Sherry Listgarten^{*}
Simone Coxe^{^^}

SENIOR STAFF

Adam Dawes
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Clay Lambert
PENINSULA DIVISION
EDITORIAL DIRECTOR^{**}
Frank A. Bravo
VICE PRESIDENT & CHIEF
TECHNOLOGY OFFICER /
WEBMASTER
Gina Channell Wilcox
PRESIDENT OF
EAST BAY DIVISION
Heidi Hartley
DIRECTOR OF MARKETING
AND AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT
Jeremy Walsh
EAST BAY DIVISION
EDITORIAL DIRECTOR
Jocelyn Dong
PENINSULA DIVISION
EDITORIAL DIRECTOR^{*^}
Mike Naar
TREASURER

^{*^} Departed February, 2024

^{^^} Departed June, 2024

^{^^^} Departed December, 2024

^{*} Arrived February, 2024

^{**} Arrived April, 2024

^{***} Arrived September, 2024

Journalism that Builds Community

At the heart of our mission is a commitment to journalism that informs, strengthens democracy, and improves life in our communities. In 2024, our reporters produced in-depth, award-winning stories that contributed to civic life throughout the region.

We helped residents make informed decisions at the ballot box through careful election coverage. We hosted [public forums](#) and covered key races and ballot measures, including the [candidates competing to replace longtime U.S. Representative Anna Eshoo](#) and [Pleasanton's Measure PP](#). These efforts provided voters with valuable information about the candidates and issues that affect their communities.

We continued our deep reporting on education, bringing transparency to how local schools operate. Our investigation into spending practices by administrators in the [Las Lomas School District](#) uncovered significant misuse of public funds and earned First Place in the *Coverage of Student Government and Campus Administration* category of the California Journalism Awards (CJA). Other coverage explored [budget pressures in districts like Livermore](#), helping families understand the challenges facing their schools.

Our journalism also helped hold other institutions accountable. We investigated how the [Palo Alto Police Department handled a violent 2018 arrest](#) and described [troubling gaps in oversight](#). This series earned Fourth Place in the CJA *Investigative Reporting* category and gave the public insight into the

internal workings of local law enforcement.

Additionally we covered urgent community needs, including hunger, housing, and economic development. Our reporting tracked the rising demand for food assistance heading into the holiday season and how [local food distribution services struggled](#) to keep up with requests. We also tracked the progress of [affordable housing developments](#) and neighborhood [revitalization projects in underserved areas such as East Palo Alto](#).

When severe weather and disasters hit the region, we delivered timely, practical information. Our updates on [power outages](#) helped residents navigate disruptions, while our report detailing [how Big Basin State Park is recovering](#) and adapting after the devastating CZU fire earned First Place in the CJA *Environmental Reporting* category, and provided hope and context for rebuilding efforts to our readers.

Our coverage also explored how communities are responding to the climate crisis. We reported on bold new policies like [Danville San Ramon Services District's updated energy strategy](#) and [Atherton's consideration of all-electric building codes](#), showing how local governments are adapting to protect the environment and prepare for the future.

Together, these stories demonstrate how impactful local journalism empowers civic engagement, fosters transparency, and ensures our residents are informed and resilient. We are proud to deliver trusted news coverage that reflects the needs and aspirations of our communities.

Impactful Articles

1. "Pleasanton Election Forums", Pleasanton Weekly, 2024
2. "Candidates delve into issues in bid for Eshoo's seat, contend with protesters", Palo Alto Weekly, February 1, 2024
3. "Paying for Pleasanton with Measure PP", Pleasanton Weekly, September 27, 2024
4. "Records show Las Lomas district administrators spent taxpayer money on stays at luxury hotels, Michelin-starred restaurants", The Almanac, November 13, 2024
5. "Big budget decisions loom for new Livermore school district leaders", The Livermore Vine, August 25, 2024
6. "The Reckoning, part 1: How a violent arrest forced out two veteran Palo Alto cops", Palo Alto Weekly, January 23, 2024
7. "The Reckoning, part 2: How Palo Alto police investigated their own following a violent 2018 arrest", Palo Alto Weekly, January 23, 2024
8. "Demand for food assistance has skyrocketed, food distribution services say they need more help heading into holidays", The Almanac, November 22, 2024 (2nd Place, Public Service Journalism)
9. "Planning Commission greenlights affordable housing near San Antonio with reduced parking", Mountain View Voice, November 25, 2024
10. "East Palo Alto council approves new area plan, making way for millions of square feet of development", The Almanac, December 19, 2024
11. "Some residents still without power on the Midpeninsula", Redwood City Pulse, February 6, 2024
12. "The CZU Fire burned more than 24K acres across Big Basin and nearby state parks. Here's how they're recovering — and building resilience for the future", Palo Alto Weekly, November 21, 2024
13. "DSRSD adopts new energy policy", DanvilleSanRamon.com, April 8, 2024
14. "Atherton council considers all-electric regulations", The Almanac, March 4, 2024

AWARDS

2024 California Journalism Awards

Our papers won twelve 1st Place awards:

- 1ST PLACE** Coverage of Business and the Economy
(*Palo Alto Weekly*)
- 1ST PLACE** Coverage of Local Government
(*Palo Alto Weekly*)
- 1ST PLACE** Environment Reporting
(*Palo Alto Weekly*)
- 1ST PLACE** Food Writing / Reporting
(*Palo Alto Weekly*)
- 1ST PLACE** Illustration
(*Palo Alto Weekly*)
- 1ST PLACE** Photo Story / Essay
(*Palo Alto Weekly*)
- 1ST PLACE** Transportation Reporting
(*Palo Alto Weekly*)
- 1ST PLACE** Coverage of Student Government and Campus Administration
(*Almanac*)
- 1ST PLACE** Print Inside Page Layout & Design
(*Almanac*)
- 1ST PLACE** Audience/Community Engagement
(*Pleasanton Weekly*)
- 1ST PLACE** Editorial Comment
(*Pleasanton Weekly*)
- 1ST PLACE** Print Front Page Layout & Design
(*Pleasanton Weekly*)

We also won twenty 2nd place awards, eleven 3rd place awards, seven 4th place awards, and seven 5th place awards.

In addition, our reporters won merit-based financial awards, including funding to pursue an investigative journalism project around groundwater contamination in East Palo from the Annenberg Center for Health Journalism at USC.

Awards

cnpa.com/california-journalism-awards/2024-cja-winners/

Meet Clay Lambert

PENINSULA EDITORIAL DIRECTOR



Clay Lambert joined Embarcadero Media Foundation in March 2024 as Peninsula Editorial Director, overseeing the *Palo Alto Weekly*, *Menlo Park Almanac*, *Mountain View Voice* and *Redwood City Pulse*. A Palo Alto resident for more than 20 years, he brings deep familiarity with the city and the greater Midpeninsula community.

Previously, Clay was editor and publisher of the Coastside News Group, which publishes the *Half Moon Bay Review* and *Pacifica Tribune*. Under his leadership, the Review was named best small weekly in the nation by the Inland Press Foundation in 2006, and he was named national Small Weekly Editor of the Year by the Suburban Newspaper Association in 2010.

With more than four decades in journalism, Clay has worked as both editor and reporter. His sports writing appeared in *USA Today*, and his reporting has covered topics from senior issues and local government to the Florida recount in 2000 and the pursuit of terrorists after September 11, 2001.

He holds a journalism degree from Colorado State University, where he was editor-in-chief of the student newspaper, is a member of the university's Media Hall of Fame, and has an endowed scholarship in his name awarded annually to the paper's editor.

Clay is enthusiastic about Embarcadero's transition to a nonprofit model and its increased focus on digital journalism, and is committed to delivering meaningful, community-focused coverage.

Meet Gina Channell Wilcox

PRESIDENT & PUBLISHER OF EAST BAY DIVISION



Gina Channell Wilcox has served as President and Publisher of Embarcadero Media's East Bay Division since 2006, overseeing the *Pleasanton Weekly*, *PleasantonWeekly.com*, *DanvilleSanRamon.com*, and *LivermoreVine.com*.

A 35-year journalism veteran, Gina began her career as a reporter and editor at a suburban Chicago daily while earning her bachelor's degree in communication and an

MBA. She later became executive editor and associate publisher at a division of the *Chicago Sun-Times*, managing a daily, 14 weeklies, and their online platforms. Her work has earned numerous state and national awards for investigative reporting, in-depth coverage, and editorial writing.

A strong advocate for fact-based, explanatory journalism that serves the public good, Gina is dedicated to ensuring the Tri-Valley continues to have a vibrant, independent local press.

THE HOLIDAY FUND

A Community Effort to Support our Neighbors

One of the Embarcadero Media Foundation’s major annual programs is the Holiday Fund, an annual three-month campaign dedicated to raising funds for nonprofit organizations that support individuals, families and children in our communities.

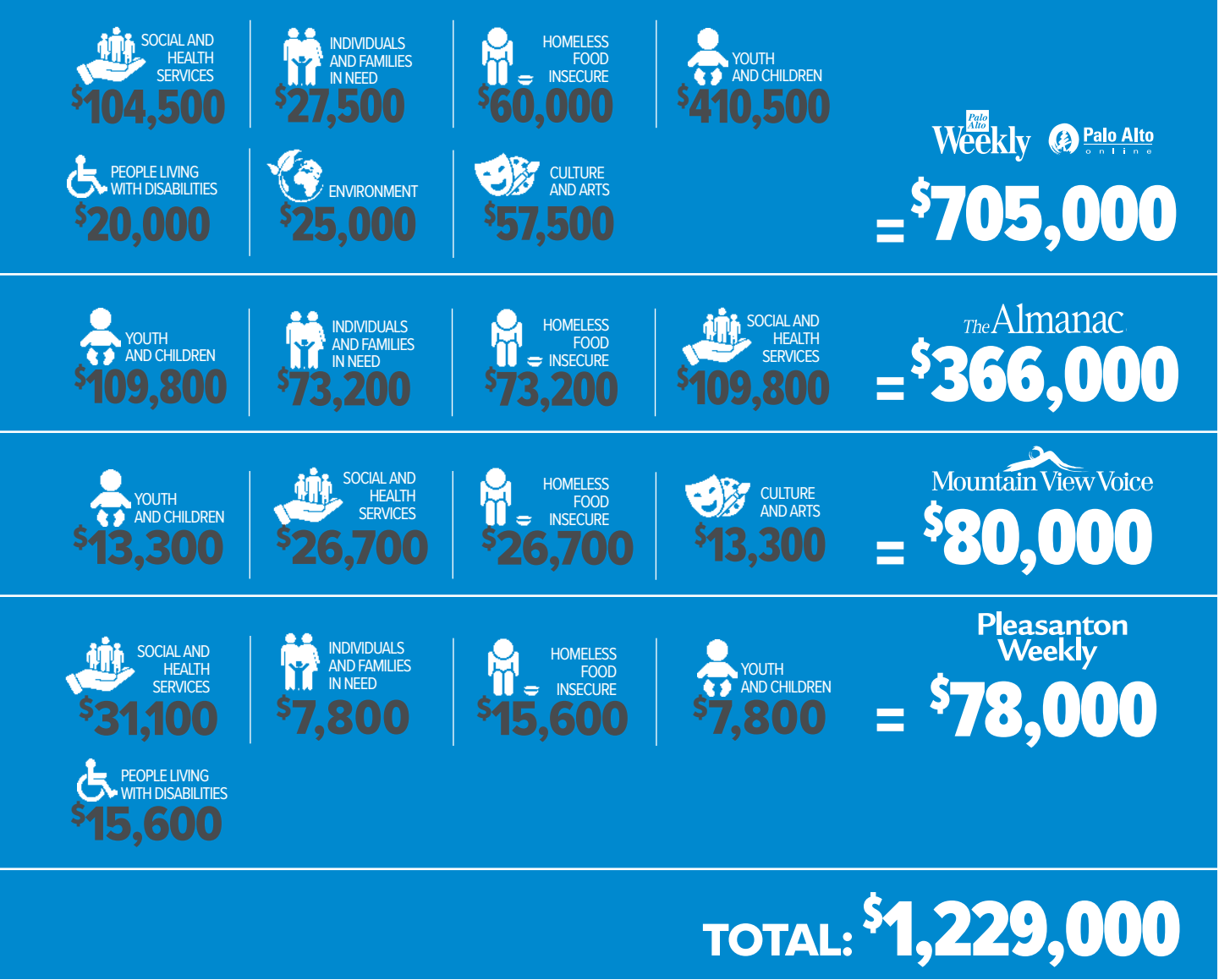
For 2024, the Holiday Fund raised and distributed over \$1.2 million to local nonprofits in the Peninsula and Tri-Valley communities. Nearly 800 donations of all sizes were received from readers, local businesses, and family foundations—including many anonymous gifts. This generous support enabled us to award 110 grants to organizations making a meaningful impact.

A unique feature of the Holiday Fund is that every dollar

raised is given away each year in grants, with no administrative or marketing costs deducted. The Embarcadero Media Foundation covers all operational expenses and donates all advertising. A team of Embarcadero Media Foundation employees and retirees review and evaluate all of the applications.

It is a tribute to the caring people of the communities we serve that this money is raised and distributed through the Holiday Fund — all of it to local nonprofits working hard to serve those most in need in our areas. It gives us great joy to connect donors with grantees so that so much good work can be done to make lives better.

Funds by the Numbers



RECOGNITION

Thank you to our community donors

More than 1,500 individuals and foundations have made donations ranging from \$25 to \$150,000 to support our nonprofit journalism and holiday fund programs. Listed below are those who have donated \$500 or more. Their funding has demonstrated broad public support for our mission of serving our communities with quality nonprofit journalism. Thank you!

Angelo Family Foundation	Don & Catherine Coluzzi	Grace Hoagland	Phil and Katy Mast	Ann & Don Rothblatt
Arrillaga Foundation	Lance and Emily Conn	Laura Hofstadter & Leonard Shar	Delle Maxwell	Victoria Rundorff
The Emily Benatar Foundation	Janet Cook	Anne Houghteling	Lori & Dennis McBride	Susan Russell
Chan Zuckerberg Initiative	Kathleen & Phil Creger	Carol & Mahlon Hubenthal	Tom & Darlene McCalmont Family	Chris & Anna Saccheri
Dharma 350 Fund	Erika Crowley	Glenda and Gordon Hughes	Jay McClelland and Heidi Feldman	Harry & Carol Saal
Hewlett Foundation	Brian Cutliffe	Tony & Kathleen Hughes	Page McDonald and Tim Millet	Tom & Patricia Sanders
Hohbach Family Foundation	Mary and Chris Deteo	Evan Hughes & Linda Craig	Pat & Nancy McGaraghan	Denise Savoie and Darrell Duffie
Packard Foundation	Marcy Davey	Leannah Hunt	Tim McGuire	Linda Schlein
Peery Foundation	James and Karen Dawes	Lisa Jack	Bob McIntyre	Elisabeth Seaman
Michael and Paula Rantz Foundation	Jean Dawes	Robert Jack	Deborah and James McKeehan	Margo Sensenbrenner
Redwood City Kiwanis Foundation	Adam Dawes and Jess Tan	Kurt & Sue Jaggers	Michele McNellis	Shan-I Judy Severson
Rotary Club of Menlo Park Foundation	Marti DeBenedetti	Mike and Teena James	Margaret Melaney	Martha Shirk
Sborov Family Foundation	Rick and Kerry DeBenedetti	Julie and Jon Jerome	Andrew Mellows	Mark Shull and Rebecca Ward
Silicon Valley Community Foundation	William DeBord	Bill Johnson & Terri Lobdell	Andrew and Judith Mendelsohn	Diane and Brandy Sikic
Skyline Foundation	Dennis Defreitas	Richard Johnsson	Scott & Ange Mirer	Ben Simnacher
Three Valleys Community Foundation	Federico De Giuli	Carl & Lenore Jones	John P. Miller & Randa Mulford	David Simon & Lynn Gordon
Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati Foundation	Mary DeMasters	Clay and Nita Judd	Jaideep Mirchandani	Robert Simpson
Anonymous (164)	Ed & Linda DeMeo	Carl Jukkola & Desmond Lee	The Moley Family	Janet Sloan & Peter Stahl
Cindy Akard	Diana Diamond	Andrea Julian	Diane Moore	Elizabeth Sloss
Barbara Alhouse	Paul & Sarah Donahue	Masako Kanazawa	The Morgenstern Family	Karen Sloss
The Alonso Family	Jesse Dorigusker and Jennifer DiBrienza	Bruce Karney	Betsy Morgenthaler	Rachelle Sloss
Alta Mesa Cemetery & Funeral Home	Mary Ann Dulchich	Larry Kavinoky	Eileen Morgenthaler	Tony Sloss
John Arnold	Gary Dunker	Phyllis Kayten and Steven Weinstein	Tashia Morgridge	Brian & Marilyn Smith
David and Martha Arscott	Art and Tyny Dunkley	Douglas Keare and Jill Morgan	Tessa & David Morley Family	Dennis and Ellen Smith
Melanie Austin	Tom & Ellen Ehrlich	Linda Keegan	Richard Morris	Roger Smith
Anne and Greg Avis	Susan Elgee and Steve Eglash	Arthur Keller	Jerry Morrison	Stephen Smith
Karen & David Backer	Sarah Elkind	Daniel Kelly	Nancy S. Mueller	Wesley D. Smith
Pamela Baird	Jerry and Linda Elkind	Christina Kenrick	Douglas & Leslie Murphy-Chutorian	Lori Souza
Dan Barritt	Bob & Barbara Ells	Dudley Kenworthy	Mike and Diane Naar	Jim and Valerie Stinger
Brigid Barton and Rob Robinson	Leonary Ely Family	Michael & Frannie Kieschnick	Renu Nanda & Sanj Goyle	Kathryn Stivers
Maria Basch	Leif and Sharon Erickson	Adam Kirsch	Maggie MarkdaSilva	Elaine Strickland
John Baum	Victoria Evans	Tom Kilduff & Debby Bolding	Armand and Elaine Neukermans	Mei-Hsia Tan and Raymond Lin
Betsy & George Bechtel	Marie Evitt	Scott and Jan Kilner	Barbara Noparstak	Colleen Tate
Jessie and Travis Becker	Joyce Farrell and Brian Wandell	Eddie Kirkwood	Sally & Craig Nordlund	Mr. & Mrs. Mark Teitell
Harriet Benson	Steven Feinberg	Monte and Jan Klein	Boyce & Peggy Nute	John and Susan Thomas
Wendell & Celeste Birkhofer	Kate & Marvin Feinstein	Larry Klein	Gail Nyhan and David Offen	Katherine Thomson
Roy & Carol Blitzler	Kathy & Bob Feldman	Barbara Klein	Scott And Yekaterina O'Neil	Tha Town
John Borcich	Valerie Fenwick	Susie Richardson and Hal Luft	Roger & Wendy Oech	Nancy Tuck
Carolyn Bowsher	Margaret Ann and Donald Fidler	Tim Koopmann	Andrea Olsen	Ellen Turbow
Linda & Steve Boxer	Leigh Flesher and Mark Bailey	John Kriewall	Tilda Orr	Kort and Laurie van Bronkhorst
Eileen and Rick Brooks	Mark Flider	Douglas and Debbie Kundrat	Bonnie Packer	Lisa Van Dusen & John Kelley
Gayle Brugler	Dean and Ellen Forbes	Gary and Yuko Kushner	Bob & Marna Page	Don and Anne Vermeil
Gisela Brugger	Carolyn Foss	Kathy Kwan	Roland Pasternack	Marie Vought
Terri Bullock	David Fung	William Lambert	Jane Paulson	John and Mary Wachtel
Jefferson Burch and Christine Weigen	Greg & Penny Gallo	Greg Landrum	Scott & Sandra Pearson	Alan Wachtel Family
William Cambell	Bruce & Jane Gee	Carol & Leif Langensand	Amanda Peiffer	Tom Wandless
Frank & Muriel Capilla	Xiaopei & Andrew Gelb	Jan Laskowski	Leslie Peterson	Jeanne B. Ware
Debra Cen and Stephen Hmelar	Jay Gellert	Karen Latchford	Sandra and Craig Peterson	Curt & Margaret Weil
Catherine Cerny	George Gleim	Elgin & Elizabeth Lee	Joyce Pharriss	Mark & Karen Weitzel
Sidney Chen & Sandra Lee Chen	Thomas Gracon	Steve & Nancy Levy	Amelia Pickering	Jackie Wheeler
Stan Chism	Maggie Pringle Grauer	Bruce and Claudia Voss Lewenstein	Sharon Piekarski	Bruce & Debbie Whitson
Gavin & Tricia Christensen	Kris Hagerman	Ann and Tom Livermore	Susan & Jack Pines	Steve and Gina Channell Wilcox
Leona Chu	Elaine and Eric Hahn	Robert & Connie Loarie	Joanne and Paul Pinsky	John and Marjan Wilkes
Sarah & Vince Ciccarello	Mark Hastings	Jim Lobdell and Colleen Anderson	Katherine Preston & Lanier Anderson	Bruce & Ann Willard
Steve and Diane Ciesinski	The Havern Family	Carol & Hal Louchheim	Barbara and Charles Preuss	John Woods Family
Tim & Mia Clark	Kevin & Kristen Hayes	Connie & Bob Lurie	Jon Proctor	Esther Wojcicki
David & Deborah Clausen	Bill & Ellie Haynes	Donald & Judith Mac Millan	Virginia Quackenbush	Nancy Wong and Robert Lipshutz
James & Alice Cochran	Bruce Heflinger	Jennifer Mack	Maryka Quik and Chris Toulson	Randy & Emily Yim
Fran Codispoli	Ross & Karen Heitkamp	Margaret & Jamis MacNiven	Stephen Raillard Family	Ruby Zefo
Sandy Cold	Vani and Irvin Henderson	Jonathan MacQuitty and Laurie Hunter	William Reller	Feng Zhou
Rae Cole	Deb Henigson and Ben Levitt	Renee and Shareef Mahdavi	Nancy and Marvin Rensink	Bill Zonner
Chris and Linda Coleman	Jim Hildebrand	Judith Manton	Thomas Rindfleisch	Susan Zweig
	Debbie Hilleary	Andrew and Marina Martin	Teresa Roberts	
	Delphine Kan Ho	Chris & Beth Martin	Susan Rosenberg	
			Deborah Roth	

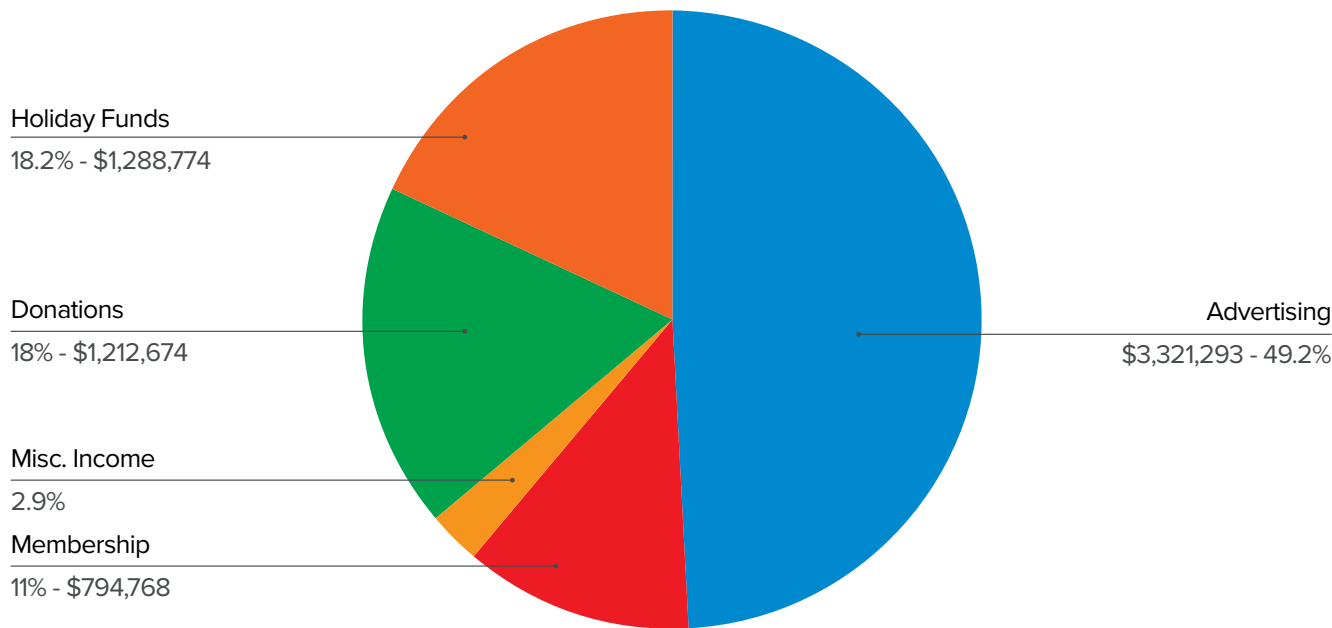
You can add your name to this list by making a donation at <https://embarcaderomediafoundation.org/donate/>

FINANCIAL

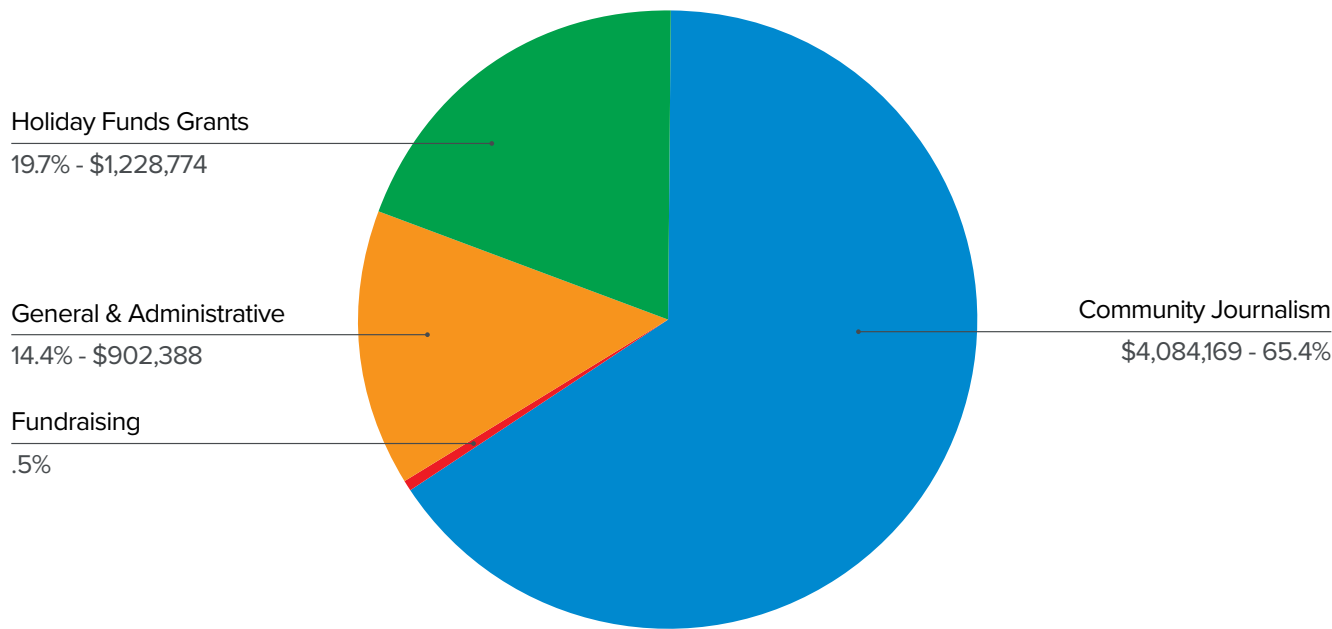
Organizational Health

In our first year as a nonprofit we exceeded our fundraising goals and trimmed our expenses by, among other measures, moving and reducing the size and cost of our office. With these changes, 2024 is the first year since 2018 that we’ve operated in the black. Net assets as of December 31, 2024 were \$2,977,000. We believe this new nonprofit community support model is sustainable and expect to be in even better shape to serve our communities over the long haul by the end of 2025.

Revenues \$6,751,958



Expenses \$6,249,118



INITIATIVES

Priorities and our Path Forward

We're currently focused on several key priorities to better serve our communities and advance our organization's mission:

Refining Our Editorial Strategy

We're reviewing our editorial approach to ensure it aligns with the needs of our communities and the goals of our organization. As part of this process, we're actively seeking input from stakeholders—including the public—through community engagement events.

Enhancing the Reader Experience Online

We're working to improve the usability and presentation of our website, including updates to our homepage, section pages, blogs, and email newsletters. We're also laying the groundwork to build a section dedicated to reader comments.

Strengthening our Fundraising

We're developing a clear fundraising strategy and investing in the tools and processes needed to make our efforts more consistent, scalable, and effective.

Growing and Defining Our Membership

We aim to clarify the value of what membership means and increase awareness of its significance. Simultaneously, we plan to introduce more community members to our print editions, helping them understand the worth of joining our mission.

Additionally, we're exploring opportunities to expand our editorial coverage into new regions and topical beats—provided we can secure the funding to support this growth. If you have thoughts on our editorial direction or are interested in helping us broaden our coverage, we'd love to hear from you. Please contact Adam Dawes at publisher@embarcaderomedia.org.

With your continued support, we're committed to serving our communities for the long term. Thank you for being part of our journey.



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REFLECTIONS

The Role of Embarcadero Media Foundation



Hon. Anna Eshoo

MEMBER OF CONGRESS (RET.)

"We are fortunate to still have a strong, independent – and now nonprofit – news organization on the Peninsula. Many Bay Area communities do not, and suffer greatly from a lack of trustworthy information and effective accountability of public officials. Embarcadero Media is building the model for the future of journalism and deserves our strong support."



Bill Reller

COMMUNITY LEADER & PHILANTHROPIST

"I fear many don't appreciate the importance of the Palo Alto Weekly to our community and how much it needs our support to carry on. It plays a vital part in connecting us to each other, celebrating our uniqueness and shining a light on our needs and shortcomings. Let's each do what we can to help it thrive for another four decades."



Steve Glazer

STATE SENATOR (RET.)

"Local journalism has always been the heartbeat of democracy. The Tri-Valley communities are fortunate to have local, independent, fact-based reporting from the Pleasanton Weekly. Supporting local nonprofit news organizations like Embarcadero Media Foundation is investing in truth, transparency and the public's right to know, all of which are imperative to strong communities and a healthy democracy."



Nicole Taylor

CEO, SILICON VALLEY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

"Fact-based local journalism has never been more important to ensuring our communities are well-informed and serving as essential scaffolding to democracy. That's why we support the work of local nonprofit news organizations like the Embarcadero Media Foundation through our Press Forward Silicon Valley initiative."