



SANTA BARBARA  
EDUCATION  
FOUNDATION

# Education Matters

SPRING 2022

## KEEP MUSIC IN THE HANDS OF STUDENTS



KEEP THE BEAT  
WE CARE  
HOPE AWARDS

# KEEP THE BEAT INSTRUMENT DRIVE BRINGS IN 140 INSTRUMENTS

Last month, 99.9 KTYD dedicated all of February to the Santa Barbara Education Foundation's Keep the Beat Instrument Drive. The on-air event appealed to the community for donations to Santa Barbara Unified music programs and yielded 140 musical instruments and over \$10,000 in support.



**SBEF Boardmember Elke Kane and Programs Manager Katie Szopa at an instrument drop-off event.**

The month-long radio event celebrated the power of music education with interviews with SB Unified music teachers and local professional musicians like Glen Phillips to young aspiring musicians like Dos Pueblos High School Drum Major Andrew Ji. All joined forces to send the message of the importance of school music programs and ask for donations of used instruments collected at weekly drop-off events.

According to Santa Barbara Junior High Music Teacher Brett Larsen, "It means a lot to me to be on the Keep the Beat radiothon. It helps the music lovers in our community

make the connection between their favorite artists and the potential future artists that I have in my music class.”

The efforts resulted in the Keep the Beat’s largest instrument drive yet and yielded everything from more common donations such as guitars and violins to the obscure, like an electric ukulele and a didgeridoo from Australia. Although the donations are diverse, the common thread is that they will go into the hands of students in SB Unified music programs.

Larsen sees first-hand how donated instruments elevate musical learning opportunities for his students. “And the instruments that people donate! To upgrade a promising young musician from a rental quality instrument to a professional quality instrument is priceless. It brings them that much closer to achieving their dreams.”

Special thanks to the Johnson Ohana Foundation, Pacific Premier Bank, and Nick Rail Music for supporting the Keep the Beat Instrument Drive.



**Donated instruments from the Keep the Beat Instrument Drive fill the SBEF office.**

# WE SHOULD ALL CARE

By Sara Miller McCune

Two years ago, COVID-19 was simply an outlier, something that seemed to be impacting “others” and not destined to alter life as we all know it. Some 24 months ago, life did change. For business owners. For politicians. For children. And it put our teachers to the test.



SB Unified staff enjoy lunch courtesy of Jersey Mike's.

But this wasn't one they could study for; this was a fly-by-the-seat-of-your-pants situation. And time and time again, through one variant after another, they've aced this endless quiz. Even though they are exhausted, they keep showing up – refusing to give up on our youth. And I'm here to say something quite simple: **We care.**

It's such a simple phrase, but it's one that we hope becomes a communal rallying cry to shower our educators with a little bit of love.

There are some 1,500 staff members with the Santa Barbara Unified School District that continue to show resolve that has never been required of a school district. Which is why it

warms my heart to see SBUSD partner with the Santa Barbara Education Foundation (SBEF) to start the “We Care” campaign, one that will kick off a series of support actions under the same campaign name.

But today I want to focus our collective hearts on supporting our teachers. SBEF and SBUSD are already putting bold actions into play — every staff member has received a “We Care” card, where they can ask for literally anything they want up to \$25.

Want a gift card to Renaud’s? Done. Want movie tickets? Done. Want an Amazon gift card? Done. I’ve never seen something like this — personalized gifts on a mass scale. It’s unheard of, and I’m grateful for the effort. And no, these



(Left) La Cuesta staff pose with Mary Kay gift bags with lotions donated by Cathy Calabro. (Right) Staff at Cleveland Elementary enjoy lunch courtesy of Jersey Mike's.



are not gifts for their classrooms, they are for personal use. Going beyond the gift, SBEF also worked with Jersey Mike's to cater a teacher appreciation luncheon at every school — free of charge.

That's what this community is all about: banding together in tough times and in good times, but always having each other's proverbial backs. Jersey Mike's didn't have to do this, they chose to do it. And I know the SBEF could use more donors, whether it is worldwide companies or the mom-and-pop shops that are the spine of Santa Barbara. The SBUSD staff has not wavered in the face of one of the worst health crises of any generation, willing to adjust with little notice to continue to put our children first. For the next few months, let's make sure we do the same for them.

Thank you for all that you do, teachers, support staff, and administrators; we are in your debt.



Superintendent Maldonado joins staff at McKinley Elementary School for lunch.

**To learn more about how you can support We Care, please visit [sbefoundation.org/we-care](https://sbefoundation.org/we-care).**

# AFTER 12 YEARS OF LEADERSHIP, MARGIE YAHYAVI WILL STEP ASIDE

After stewarding the Santa Barbara Education Foundation's steady growth for more than a decade, Executive Director Margie Yahyavi plans to step down to spend more time with family and explore new endeavors.

"I've loved every minute of working with this organization, the program directors, the donors, the community, all of it," said Yahyavi.



SBEF Executive Director Margie Yahyavi at the Tiny Libraries opening.

Yahyavi joined the Foundation in 2010 as its only part-time employee with annual revenues of \$300,000. During her tenure, SBEF's staff grew to five positions and an annual budget of \$2.5 million, supporting 10 SBEF programs and serving as a fiscal sponsor for 14 other education programs. SBEF hosts long-running summer music programs for local students, including the much-loved Nick Rail Summer Band Camp. Yahyavi created the Get Ahead Program, a passion project that enabled high school students to earn academic credits during the summer.

While SBEF operates independently of Santa Barbara Unified, it often supports District initiatives and works closely with its leadership. During Yahyavi's tenure, she secured funding to pilot and launch Santa Barbara Unified's literacy intervention program for struggling readers, a grant program for teachers awarding more than \$100,000 annually, and an emergency fund that provided wi-fi access for students and their families during the pandemic.

In addition to growing SBEF's funding and programs, Yahyavi led advocacy for three bond and parcel tax measures resulting in \$193 million in support of improved student learning and infrastructure investment for the Santa Barbara Unified School District.

"I have appreciated working with so many wonderful people in our community," said Yahyavi, "and I value the relationships I've been privileged to develop with our many donors who understand the value of investing in education."

Yahyavi leaves the Foundation in an improved financial position, with a recent \$4 million bequest that will provide long-term sustainability and support. She will remain with the organization during its search for a new executive director and facilitate the transition to new leadership.

"We are immensely grateful," said SBEF Board Chair Mat Gradias, "for Margie's steady leadership of this organization and her contributions to the Santa Barbara education community."





**The Hope Awards honors individuals and programs helping Santa Barbara's students reach their full potential. The evening will begin with a reception featuring fine food and beverages from local restaurants, wineries, and breweries.**

## HONORING



In recognition of her longtime partnership with the Santa Barbara Education Foundation in support of literacy and the performing arts in public schools.



In recognition of his more than 60 years of service as an educator and advocate for local public schools.

**For tickets, visit [sbefoundation.org/hope-awards](https://sbefoundation.org/hope-awards)**

# ON BOARD WITH SBEF

**Get to know the newest member of SBEF's Board of Directors.**



## **VERONICA BINKLEY**

Binkley is the principal of the Harding University Partnership, which serves around 400 students and gains its name by its partnership with UC Santa Barbara's Gevirtz School of Education.

Before her recent position at Harding, Binkley was Assistant Principal at Juan Lagunas Soria Elementary School in Oxnard School District. She holds a B.A. in Child Development and later in her career pursued an M.A. in Educational Administration from Cal State Northridge.

**"I have witnessed life-changing moments that empower; like when a child learns to read, or when a child really understands how to use their voice and choice to own their learning. These moments are pivotal and possible in all public schools."**



## **MELISSA WHITE**

White is currently the Project Director in Innovation Studies at WestEd, where she leads research, evaluation, and technical assistance projects focused on teachers and teaching.

Before joining WestEd in 2006, White worked at California Legislative Analyst's Office, advising on fiscal and policy issues related to childcare, preschool, and K-12 teachers.

White holds a B.A. in Political Science from the University of California, Berkeley, an M.A. in Policy Analysis and Evaluation, and a Ph.D. in Administration and Policy Analysis from Stanford University's Graduate School of Education.



### **JESSE ROSENBERG**

Rosenberg currently leads the bike share program, BCycle, a fully owned subsidiary of Trek Bicycle, which has brought electric bike-share to Santa Barbara. Prior to BCycle, Rosenberg was a Senior Leader at Zagster, a micro-

mobility start-up based in Boston, and spent her formative years in the Advertising industry at Centro and NBCUniversal in New York City.

In addition to creating sustainable transportation solutions for communities, Rosenberg has worked with many non-profits as a volunteer with organizations including Homeless Children International, Music for Tomorrow, and the Entrepreneurship Empowerment Program in South Africa.

Rosenberg holds an undergraduate degree from Syracuse University's S.I. Newhouse, School of Public Communications, in advertising and entrepreneurship and an MBA from Boston College.



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**JOIN US FOR THE  
HOPE AWARDS  
ON THURSDAY,  
APRIL 28!**