

## Impact Report



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San José Spotlight is an award-winning nonprofit newsroom dedicated to fearless journalism that disrupts the status quo, uplifts marginalized voices, holds power to account, and paves the way for change.



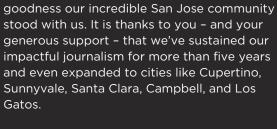
## Letter from the Co-Founders

It is hard to believe it has been five years since we started San José Spotlight -- with just an idea in our living room and a modest savings account.

What began as a dream is now a nationallyrecognized newsroom with 11 full-time employees, a \$1.1 million budget and more than two dozen prestigious journalism awards. San José Spotlight has not only staked its place in Silicon Valley, it has become a national leader in the nonprofit news industry on the forefront of a movement to rebuild local news.

For years, as San Jose locals, we heard neighbors, friends, colleagues - pretty much anyone we met - complain about a lack of local news in San Jose. This city of a million residents saw its legacy newspaper fall victim to a vulture hedge fund that's gutted American newspapers around the country and here at home.

We decided to do something about the local news crisis in our hometown. We quit our full-time jobs in Las Vegas and moved back to the Bay Area to launch San José Spotlight. We lived off savings for six months. We heard whispers from detractors about how we'd never make it.



Thank goodness we did not listen. And thank

Does that mean you will like everything we write? No. You are not supposed to.

But it does mean we will ask tough questions, expose wrongdoing and injustice, fight for public records and government transparency, demand solutions to the region's problems and ensure everyone has a seat at the table when it comes to local policymaking.

People tell us they voted for the first time, learned how to watch a government meeting and voice their concerns, or how to follow the money in campaigns because of our reporting.

So what is next? We are working on an ambitious plan to expand our newsroom and hire additional reporters to deepen our reporting in San Jose and the greater South Bay. Here's to five years - we could not do it without you. Now, we hope you will stand with us for the next five years and beyond.

Yours in Community,

## Ramona Giwargis

Ramona Giwargis CEO & Co-Founder



**Josh Barousse** 

**Executive Director & Co-Founder** 



# Centered around Community



Silicon Valley is empowered, educated and inspired by our civic-minded journalism and community events. Our work ignites civic engagement, fills information needs, and demands solutions to the region's biggest problems.

#### **Forums and Discussions**

From policy discussions to candidate forums, we have hosted more than 40 live events to date that inform and engage our community on policy issues that impact their everyday lives.



## **PolitiBeat**

We hosted Silicon Valley's first all-day political festival featuring eight panel discussions with nearly 30 elected leaders and decisionmakers on topics such as education, economic development and legislative priorities.

#### **Local Pride**

We uplift the stories of marginalized communities --- including local restaurants and small, minority-owned businesses --- to celebrate our region's rich culture and fuel economic development.

# Inspiring Community Action



We are igniting civic engagement in our community, empowering readers to advocate for themselves, to participate at the ballot box, and to demand policy solutions. Silicon Valley leaders have cited our stories as a catalyst for change.

## A Voice for the Voiceless

Our reporting on a blind, homeless 93year-old man led to an outpouring of support from the community, and raised tens of thousands of dollars to keep a roof over his head.



## **Sparking Change**

We exclusively highlighted safety concerns related to gun violence at San Jose's largest public schools, resulting in action from administrators and updated safety plans.

#### **Public Awareness**

Our series of stories highlighting long wait times, broken medical equipment, and overworked healthcare professionals at a South Bay medical center led to county intervention.

# Holding Power to Account





Studies show communities without a reliable source for local news experience more government corruption, misinformation and polarization. Our fearless reporting exposes injustice, sheds light on wrongdoing, and holds powerful people and institutions accountable.

Investigative Work

Our reporting on accusations of sexual harassment against a tech mogul and elected official led to dozens of additional complaints, and an investigation that ended his political career.





Responsibility

We exposed accusations of misconduct and a toxic work environment at a prominent Silicon Valley nonprofit, resulting in a loss of its public contracts and the resignation of its CEO. Transparency

We won a lawsuit against a former San Jose mayor for violating state transparency laws. This led to the release of hundreds of secret emails on city business, and became a catalyst for changes to state laws.

## Our Team

While some news outlets shrink, our nonprofit newsroom is growing. Our reporters are diverse and come from the BIPOC communities that we serve. Our newsroom is led by an immigrant, woman of color and we have prioritized hiring local reporters who speak Spanish and Vietnamese to build strong connections in communities of color and serve our culturally rich region.

Readers see San José Spotlight as a newsroom powered by the people it serves; a newsroom that relentlessly searches for truth, asks the tough questions and responds to their information needs with deeply reported, public service journalism.



Ramona Giwargis CEO



Josh Barousse Executive Director



Thi Tran, J.D. Dir. of Development



Jennifer Morrow Audience Engagement



Moryt Milo Editor



Nick Preciado Editor



Brandon Pho Gov't & Politics



Joyce Chu Homelessness & Equity



Annalise Freimarck West Valley



B. Sakura Cannestra Sunnyvale & Santa Clara



Vicente Vera San Jose City Hall



Lorraine Gabbert Freelance Reporter



Natalie Hanson Freelance Reporter



Kassia Bonesteel Editorial Intern



Jake Kalauokalani Development Intern

## Awards

GREATER BAY AREA
JOURNALISM AWARDS

First place: "Overall Excellence" for uncovering how Santa Clara County politicians secretly appointed a CEO without transparency

First place: "News Story" around disparities and wealth gap in East San Jose

### **CALIFORNIA JOURNALISM AWARDS**

First place: "In-Depth Coverage" for a police office manager hit with drug smuggling charges

First place: "Coverage of Local Government" around a San Jose city employee strike First place: "Coverage of Business and the Economy" around the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank

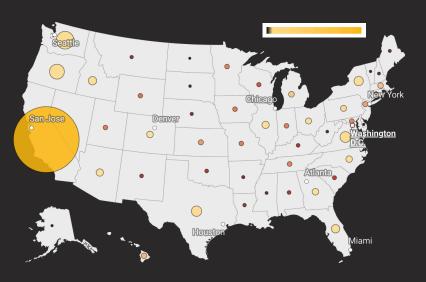
First place: "Public Service Journalism" for reporting on the violation of state transparency laws by the former mayor of San Jose

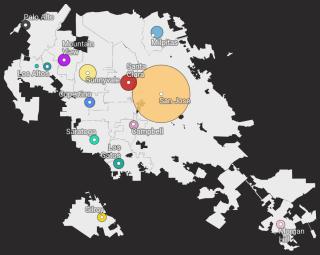
JOURNALISM AWARDS
WON TO DATE

## **Our Audience**

Our newsroom primarily serves more than 1.46 million residents across seven cities in the South Bay: San Jose, Santa Clara, Milpitas, Cupertino, Sunnyvale, Campbell, and Los Gatos.

Our impactful journalism has reached audiences across the country this past year. The maps below show where our reporting has given readers the information they need -- without a paywall or intrusive ads.





PUBLISHED STORIES IN 2023





13,274

**NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIBERS** 

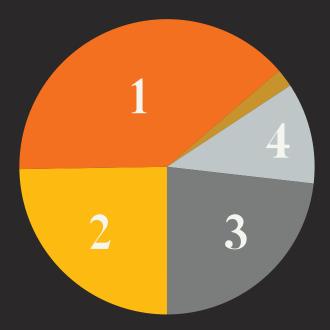
**⊕**⊕

25,881
SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS

PODCAST EPISODES IN 2023

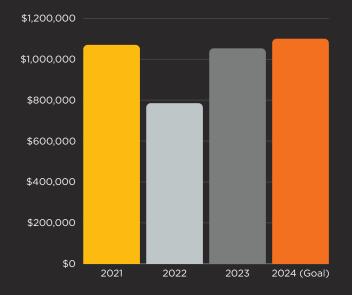
## 2023 Total Revenue

## **\$1.05** million



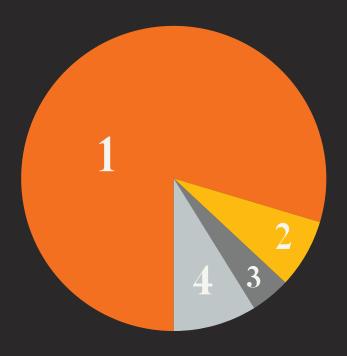
- 1. CORPORATE PARTNERS: 38.5%
- 2. INDIVIDUAL DONORS: 24.5%
- 3. FOUNDATIONS/GRANTS: 22.9%
- 4. EARNED INCOME: 11.0%
- 5. MISCELLANEOUS: 3.1%

## 2021 - 2024 **Revenue**



## Financials

2023 Total Expenses \$1.03 million



- 1. LABOR EXPENDITURES: 79.6%
- 2. OPERATION EXPENDITURES: 7.3%
- 3. OFFICE EXPENDITURES: 4.2%
- 4. OTHER EXPENDITURES: 8.9%

177%
GROWTH SINCE 2019

# Vision for the Future

The work of producing high-quality journalism that's free to consume would not be possible without generous support from readers and institutions who believe in the work of San José Spotlight. As we look to the future, we are inspired by the South Bay's rich history and ignited by the potential of the region that is at the center of our work.

We look forward to continuing to celebrate all the things that make the South Bay a special place to live and work, spotlight issues that require change, and serve residents with the trusted journalism we need to thrive as a community. The following strategic priorities will be critical to the success of reaching new audiences and communities within Silicon Valley.



#### **EDITORIAL**

Our priority will be accountability journalism with a focus on tech, education and local government.



#### **INVESTMENT**

In addition to key local media partnerships, we aim to increase our newsroom to 25 reporters.



#### **PROGRAMMATIC**

Quarterly held educational panels, events, and exclusive gatherings will foster community and inform.



## The San José Spotlight Club

The San José Spotlight Club comprises of our most passionate and loyal supporters who believe in our important mission. Their contributions help provide critical financial support to sustain our work and expand coverage across Silicon Valley.

The team at San José Spotlight wishes to extend a big "thank you" to the 1,031 readers who supported us in 2023. Thank you for your trust and faith in our reporting!

### \$1,000 +

Karla Albright Richard Alexander Teresa Alvarado Jean-Marc Blanchard Frederick Brown Dominic Cortese Dustin Derollo Gary Dillabough Rod Diridon Sr. Scott Emmert Jesus Flores Akemi Flynn Erik Hayden Cayce Hill Michael Honda Larry Kuechler Richard Lowenthal Meri Maben John McLemore James Hugh McManis Margaret Nanda Bob Nunez Perla Rodriguez Thomas Saggau

Larry Stone Allan Thompson Carol Watts

How lucky we are to have an invaluable resource for those that want to keep abreast of what is going on in their communities, understand the social and economic issues unfolding around them, and make intelligent voting choices.

**IEAN-MARC BLANCHARD** 



# Thank you to the funders whose contributions made our work possible in 2023 - 2024.

American Journalism Project





































At a time when an average of one newspaper closes down in the United States every week, San José Spotlight has taken its place among the few remaining news outlets in the South Bay.

Independent and curious, San José Spotlight covers issues and events that otherwise might not reach the public's attention.

LARRY GERSTON



### \$ 500 - \$ 999

Dakarai Aarons Blanca Alvarado Charlie Baxter Jasbir and Gunee Bhatia Brett Bymaster Tony Cannestra John Comiskey Dan L Connolly James Cunneen Richard De La Rosa Nancy DellaMattera Susan DeVencenzi Steven Ellenberg Koji Flynn-Do Michael Fox Larry Gerston Dan Gordon

Cvnthia Guerrero Gloria Hoo Ro Khanna James Kuhl Bonnie Lowry Linda Macleod Lara McCabe Mike McCool **Boog Mclight** John Morgridge Evan Ogawa Vijay Sammeta Angela Tiene Jennifer Tonnis Thao Tran Ken Yeager

Belinda Hoose

### \$ 250 - \$ 499

Don Albert Dolores Alvarado Edward Alvarez Susan Baird Kae Bendixen Norvelle Benevento Nancy Bremeau Enrico (Rick) Callender James Carter Anne Cashman Lawrence Jay Castellano Maria Angeles V. Castro Helen Chapman Laura Chmielewski Terry Christensen Jean Cohen Peter Dassenko Linda Davidge Roma Dawson Heather Diggs Nathan Donato-Weinstein Hemeryck Falkenburg Adriana Farkouh John Fensterwald Alerie Flandez Ryan Ford Rosanne Foust Maria Fuentes

Patricia Gardner

Timothy Gill

Victor Gomez

Ron Gonzales

Joseph Head

Rebecca Haggerty

Amanda Hawes

Richard Holden

Norm Hulberg Mary Idso Luther Jackson Sudhanshu (Suds) Jain Alexa Kaskowitz Ruth Kent Cheryl Lander Karen Lattin Leslie Levitt John Lindner Arleen Llanes Jennifer Loving Janet McLaughlin-Pfab **Robert Means** Kjirste Morrell Lillian Mosier Caitlin Neiman Lona Nauven Michael Norris Kathleen Nunes Maureen O'Connor Garrick and Mary Percival Judy Pipkin Sherri Sager Hassan Schroeder Derrick Seaver Linda Silveria Kathleen Thomas Daniel Tran Niranjan Tulpule Eleanor Vade Bon Coeur Patrick Waite Ramsay Westgate Heather Zimmerman

Ron Zraick

#### <u>\$1 - \$249</u>

Nancy Abinanti Joanna Acevedo Stayton Addison Patrick Ahrens Leslie Albert Vicki Alexander Janice Allen Linda Allen Peter Allen Tamara Alvarado Jaime Alvarado Sylvia Alvarez Tim Anderson Randall Anderson Walter Antoku James Araby Keith Archer William Armaline Rebeca Armendariz Marie Arnold Ernie Arranaga Chris Arriola Charmon Ashby Curtis Asplund Vicki Atherton Louise Auerhahn Carol Austen Kristine Austin JIII Avis Adriana Ayala Nadia Aziz Leyla Azizova Anita Badger Stefan Baeurle Robert Baines Sukhdev Bainiwal John Baird Jason Baker Milan Balinton Bonnie Bamburg Lucina Barousse Margaret Barr Helene Barsky Amity Bateman Katharine Bauman Martha Beattie Virginia Beaulieu Virginia Beck Jean Bedord Linda Belba Matt Bell Annie Belt Richard Berg Gregory Bergman Marimo Berk

Patrick Bernhardt

Craig Betts Achyutram Bhamidipaty Frank Biehl Steve Bielak Kevin Biggers Keith Bishop Brenda Bley Kolumban Boe Paul Boehm Arnold Boiorauez Maia Bookoff Timm Borden Carol Bower Shari Boxer Baker Annette Boyer Margaret Brady Carmen Brammer Ray Bramson C.J. Brasiel Shane Brennan Michelle Brenot **Thurston Brevett** Alison Bridger John Briere Jon Britton Zelda Bronstein **Ed Brooks** Stephanie Brown Alison Brunner Charles Buchanan Jeffrey Buchanan Robert Buckles Dana Bunnett Laura Burchard Janet Burchinal Kathleen Burkhard Mark Burkhardt Eugene Burns Marie Burns Judith Burt David Busse Salvador Bustamante Michele Butler Amelia Butterick Otis Bynum Myron & Felissa Cagan **Duane Caldwell** Jacquelyn Caldwell Sara Calkins Lara Calvert-York Elisa Camahort Page Cole Cameron Catherine Cameron

Tony & Yoko Cannestra

Barbara Canup

Stephen Caplan

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Gay Crawford

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Dustin Harber

Terry Gasca

Gina Gates

**Greg Gates** 

Steven Geier

Shannon Harder Ronald Sparky Harlan Auros Harman John Haroskiewicz Susan Hartt

Emma Humphries Jerry Hung Justice Hunter Sylvie Hurat Michael Hurley

San José Spotlight's exceptional coverage of local and regional issues and its commitment to investigative journalism provides insight for not only the local community, but also for outside observers.

SUSAN HARTT

99

Susan Hayase Kathleen Haydel Maureen Heath Kathryn Hedges Jacquie Heffner **Bruce Heister** Richard Henderson Frances Herbert Scott Herhold Anne Herrera Denise Herrera J. Manuel Herrera Sonva Herrera Marc Hershman Peter Hertan Lisa Hettler-Smith Jane Hiatt Christopher Hickstein Jenny Higgins Bradanini Sam Ho Adia Hoag **Gregory Hobbs** Sandra Hocker John Hogan Judith Holt Janet Holt Syed Hosain Charles Howard Laura Howard Rebecca Howarth Kim Hubbard Kent Hudson Joshua Hugg

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Ellen Middaugh
Melinda Miller
Gregory Miller



A robust and free press helps safeguard America's democratic ideals. In fact, it's one of the bedrocks of our country's founding principles. Knowledge is power and informed decisions matter, so I will always support quality, honest journalism.

**REP. ZOE LOFGREN (CA-18)** 

John Mathias



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Mary O'Meara Chris O'Meara Dietrich Dan Ondrasek

Simon Oh

Julia O'Keefe

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Freddie Park Wheeler Johnathon Passmann

Smita Patel

Chris Patterson-Simmons

Craig Peasley
Steven Peck
James Peckham
Gail Pellerin
Jennah Pendleton
Raul Peralez
Ludi Peralta
Frances Perren
Andrea Perry

Sandy Perry
Mary Perry
Maureen Peters
Eric Petersen
David Peterson
Margaret Petros
Norma Pezzini
Bill Pfahnl
Minh Pham
Vuong Pham
Karen Philbrick
Quency Phillips

Bill Pfahnl
Minh Pham
Vuong Pham
Karen Philbrick
Quency Phillips
Tom Picraux
David Pogue
MariJo Pokriots
David Pollak
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Chris Roth

Barbara Shev Katie Shilton Alex Shoor Alexandra Shwarzstein

Eileen Shydlowski Erna Siegel Eileen Silva

Eileen Silva Larry Silva

With the amount of dollars being overseen by government entities, someone has to hold the decision makers accountable. I feel grateful that Spotlight's reporters are persistent in asking the specific questions for us to know.

**BILL ROTH** 

Bill Roth
Christina Rude
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Cynthia Ryan Francis
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\$10,000+













\$5,000 - \$9,999

























\$1,000 - \$4,999











































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#### San José Spotlight

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