

SAN JOSÉ spotlight

Your search for truth starts here.



Annual Impact Report

2025



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Dear friends and supporters,

At San José Spotlight, we believe a healthy democracy depends on a well-informed community. As Silicon Valley's first and only nonprofit news organization, we are proud to continue providing independent, nonprofit journalism that holds powerful institutions accountable, elevates community voices, and helps our neighbors understand the issues shaping their lives.

This past year, our newsroom continued to dig deeper, ask tough questions and shine a light on the people and decisions that shape our region. From housing and homelessness to education, local government, public health and the environment, our journalists worked every day to bring you reporting that is rigorous, accessible and rooted in the public interest.

But our impact extends beyond the stories we publish. Through community engagement, events, partnerships and civic education, we are working to build a more informed and connected Silicon Valley. One where everyone has access to the information they need to participate, advocate and make their voices heard.

None of this would be possible without you. Your readership, support and belief in the power of local journalism make our work possible and help ensure that San José and Silicon Valley have a trusted, independent news source for years to come. We invite you to explore this report and see what, together, we have accomplished. And what we can achieve next.



Yours in Community,

Ramona Giwargis

Ramona Giwargis
Co-Founder

Josh Barousse

Josh Barousse
Co-Founder



WHO WE ARE

Our Vision

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.

Our Mission

Our organization seeks to change the face of local journalism by building a community-supported newsroom that ignites civic engagement, educates residents, and strengthens our democracy.

Our Readership Model

The reporting we produce is free for everyone. Our team turns complex government decisions, public policies and civic issues into clear, approachable journalism that helps residents stay informed, participate in civic life, and make their voices heard.

A photograph of an office interior. In the background, a large black banner reads "SAN JOSE spotlight" with the tagline "Your search for truth starts here." below it. The office has a mix of modern and rustic decor, including a wicker chair, exposed brick walls, and wooden desks. Several people are working: a woman sits in the wicker chair with a laptop, another woman stands at a desk, and a man sits at a desk on the right. A yellow banner with the text "Reporting and Impact" is overlaid across the middle of the image.

SAN JOSE
spotlight
Your search for truth starts here.

Reporting and Impact



Local Reporting



From the deliberations at City Hall to transformative initiatives shaping local school districts, our team delivers timely, accessible reporting that connects residents to the decisions shaping their communities and everyday lives.



GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

The relentless pursuit for facts is our commitment to the public that they deserve to know the true colors of their public servants. This protects the trust between residents and the people elected to represent them.

When a group of local politicians allegedly participated in an inflammatory text thread that included racial slurs and derogatory remarks, we fought vigorously for the release of those exchanges.



HYPERLOCAL ISSUES & TOPICS

Dollars allocated, dollars (wisely) spent. We informed Santa Clara readers on how their hard-earned dollars were being spent by their City Council on projects such as road resurfacing and emergency service repairs.

By continually following this story beyond the council chamber vote, our journalists give residents the information they need to understand whether government decisions are translating into tangible changes in their own neighborhoods.



In addition to our local, in-depth reporting on government decisions and policies: we connect readers with the people and places shaping everyday life across Santa Clara County, fostering a stronger sense of community and connection throughout the region.



SMALL BUSINESS & CULTURE

Every restaurant, café, and small business has a history to tell. One of family, resilience, innovation, or cultural heritage that contributes to the identity of our region.

These stories are covered through our “Biz Beat” section. In telling them, we are sharing the vibrancy that makes our area uniquely Silicon Valley, while supporting the entrepreneurs who contribute to the region’s economic and cultural vitality.



The Unsung Heroes of Silicon Valley

Our “In the Spotlight” focus takes the time to learn more about our own community members, and share the incredible work they are doing that has a profound impact on Silicon Valley.

The story of a Campbell dry cleaner who provides complimentary services to unemployed residents preparing for job interviews is one of many articles throughout the year that connected readers with a tangible community resource, while celebrating the values of generosity and neighborly support that help strengthen our region.



News Partnerships



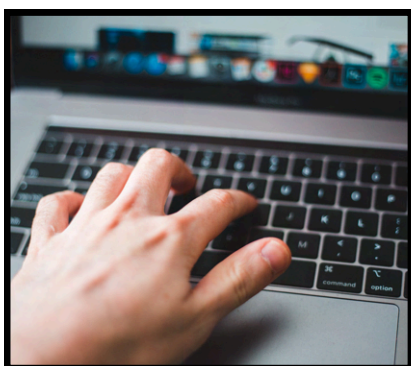
In 2025, San José Spotlight joined two partnerships that brought national context and fact-based clarity to over 2 million residents in Santa Clara County. Both alliances provide us with the ability connect national decisions to local consequences and give residents reliable information to navigate an increasingly complex information ecosystem.



NOTUS REPORTS

San José Spotlight became one of the first newsrooms nationwide to collaborate with NOTUS, connecting Silicon Valley residents with reporting from Washington, D.C. on Congress, federal agencies and policy decisions with direct implications for our region.

The partnership gives readers a clearer view of how their congressional representatives --- and decisions made thousands of miles away --- affect quality of life here at home.



GIGAFACT AND FACT BRIEFS

Our partnership with Gigafact introduced another tool for keeping the South Bay community informed: concise, accessible “Fact Briefs” designed to verify or debunk local claims circulating in the public conversation.

These bite-sized fact checks address questions ranging from existing local policies, ongoing city projects, and commonly used local statements, providing readers with straightforward answers grounded in credible sources.



The Newsroom

The Reporting Passion

Every reporter has a story behind their reporting. In this writeup, I offer a glimpse into the experiences and purpose that fuel my journey into journalism.

BY JOYCE CHU



What drives me the most as a journalist is being able to keep governments and organizations accountable to do the work they are meant to do—to serve the people.

My reporting over the years has spanned multiple divides—from investigating malpractices in homes that older adults live in, to covering the impacts of data centers, to highlighting groups that are solving for a problem in the community.

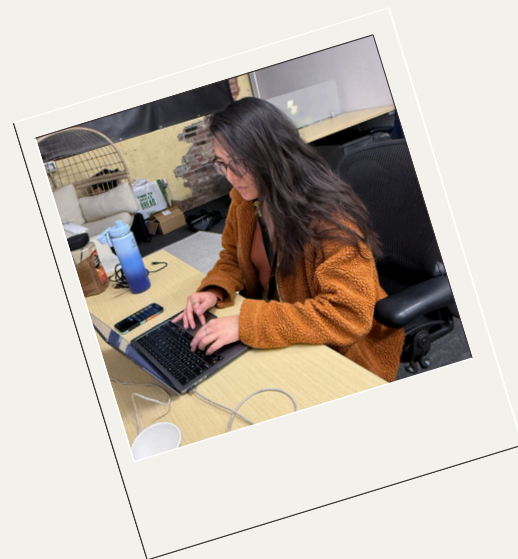
I first discovered my passion to pursue journalism while I was studying abroad in Israel over a decade ago. At that time, Israel and Gaza were engaged in a bombing campaign which lasted for about a week.

That experience showed me I loved being in the center of historic events unfolding, to get first-hand information on what groups were thinking and feeling.

Making an impact through my writing has been my north star. I have worked in multiple magazines in New York City leading research and fact-checking efforts, and I was named the 2022 Journalist of the Year while working for a USA-Today network paper in Virginia.

My insatiable curiosity and passion to highlight the struggles of marginalized communities continues to be my focus as the Homelessness and Equity reporter at San José Spotlight.

From illuminating real-world impacts federal and local policies have on homeless people, immigrants, communities of color, and beyond: I keep my boots to the ground, my eyes peeled on shifting changes and my ears close to heartbeats.



THE SPOTLIGHT TEAM



Ramona Giwargis
Co-Founder



Josh Barousse
Co-Founder



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



Keith Menconi
Senior Politics



Vicente Vera
San Jose City Hall



Lorraine Gabbert
Freelance Reporter



Mike Langberg
Freelance Reporter



Robert Eliason
Freelance Reporter



Kassia Bonesteel
Editorial Intern



RECENT RECOGNITION

2025 CA Journalism Awards

2nd Place: "In Depth Reporting" for reporting on health and safety issues at a San Jose homeless housing site

2nd Place: "Homelessness Reporting" on ratio of 1 temporary shelter bed for every 3 homeless people in Santa Clara County

3rd Place: "Investigative Reporting" for a story series about the alleged use of racial slurs by city officials in a group chat

3rd Place: "Coverage of Youth and Education" for reporting on alleged misuse of school funds in East San Jose

5th Place: "Public Service Journalism" for an article on what residents can do if stopped by officers from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

San José Spotlight's Board of Directors holds fiduciary and governance responsibilities, ensuring the organization's financial integrity and alignment with its mission. The eight-member board represents a diverse coalition of thought leaders from across Silicon Valley and convenes quarterly to provide strategic oversight.

Bob Nunez (Chair)

Co-Chair, La Raza Roundtable

Larry Sokoloff (Secretary)

Professor, San José State

Perla Rodriguez

CEO, Voler Strategic Advisors

Ahmad Thomas (Vice Chair)

CEO, Silicon Valley Leadership Group

Akemi Flynn

Managing Director, Amigos de Guadalupe

Meri Maben

Former District Director,
U.S. House, CD-17

Michael Fox Jr. (Treasurer)

Former CEO, Goodwill of Silicon Valley

Michael Dao

Associate Professor, San José State

COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD

San José Spotlight's Community Advisory Board plays a critical role in improving our nonprofit journalism by advising the organization on issues of interest to the community, providing feedback to inform our editorial strategy and helping us reach underserved audiences.

Prabhu Balasubramanian

Product Advisor, Offline Studio

Vanessa Palafox

Live Production Manager Arts and Culture, MHP

Ellina Yin

Founder, Only in San José

Angelica Cortez

Founder & CEO, LEAD Filipino

Garrick Percival

Associate Professor, San José State

Diane Zamora-Marroquin

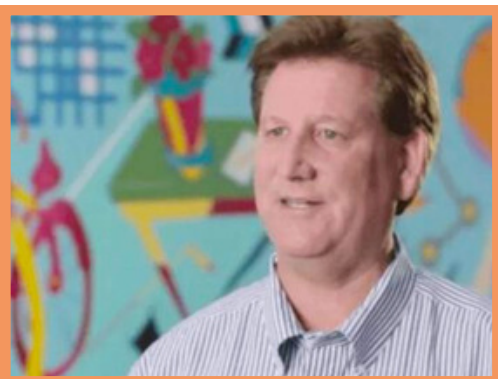
Senior Director, Public Affairs
Planned Parenthood

Patricia Gardner

Senior Consultant, PAG
Leadership Consulting

Jahmal Williams

Director (DEI Partnerships), San José State



MICHAEL FOX JR.

Board of Director Spotlight

Michael Fox Jr. is the former Chief Executive Officer of Goodwill Industries of Silicon Valley. He has more than 35 years of experience in redefining business processes and penetrating new markets for companies in the wholesale, retail, nonprofit and B2B service sectors.

Fox is an entrepreneurial executive with a strong record of revenue and profit growth through analyzing complex business challenges, and developing and executing effective business strategies. As CEO of Goodwill of Silicon Valley, Fox led a team that grew the organization from a combined loss of \$3.5 million in 2007 and 2008 to a profit of \$2.5 million in 2009 and 2010.

Fox is past chairman of the Silicon Valley San Jose Chamber of Commerce (now Silicon Valley Organization); San Jose Chamber PAC, San Jose Mineta Airport Expansion Initiative and West Valley Mission College bond measure.

He has one son, Michael, and a daughter, Megan. Fox received his B.A. at the University of San Diego and a Trans Global MBA at St. Mary's College.

AUDIENCE & METRICS



2.4 MILLION
WEBSITE READERS

Through deeper community engagement, expanded coverage, and greater investment in our digital platforms: San José Spotlight is building a broader audience that reflects the diverse communities we serve.

SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWING



10,038
FOLLOWERS



8,362
FOLLOWERS



18,472
FOLLOWERS



27,121
SUBSCRIBERS TO
OUR NEWSLETTERS

1.2K

PUBLISHED ARTICLES
IN 2025

FINANCIALS

2025 Total Revenue

\$1.34 million



1. CORPORATE PARTNERS: 22.5%
2. INDIVIDUAL DONORS: 24.5%
3. FOUNDATIONS/GRANTS: 34.2%
4. EARNED INCOME: 11.8%
5. MISCELLANEOUS: 7.0%

From building on our current reporting coverage of seven cities, to establishing a pipeline programs that trains the next generation of aspiring journalists, 2025 was another year of continued momentum for San José Spotlight.

Our 2025 financials reflect the strength of a community that believes deeply in the value of independent, nonprofit journalism, as well as the importance of building a sustainable foundation for its future.

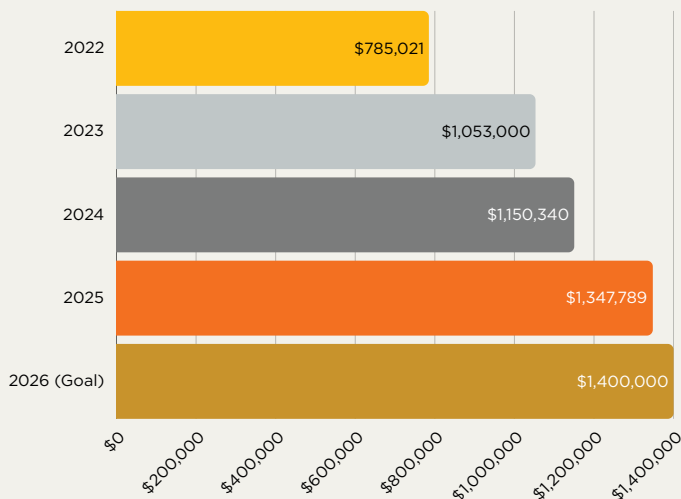
2025 Total Expenses

\$1.15 million



1. LABOR EXPENDITURES: 85.0%
2. OPERATION EXPENDITURES: 5.7%
3. OFFICE EXPENDITURES: 3.7%
4. OTHER EXPENDITURES: 5.6%

2022 - 2026 Revenue



73%

OF READERS WHO
RENEWED THEIR SUPPORT



Priorities in 2026



As San José Spotlight entrenches itself into this current phase of growth, we are focused on transforming successful initiatives into lasting pillars of community service. The support of visionary partners has allowed us to strengthen local municipal reporting, invest in the next generation of journalists, and create deeper connections with the communities we serve. Now, we have an opportunity to build upon that momentum.

Our priorities for the coming year center around expanding the impact of our journalism, cultivating emerging talent, and ensuring that residents throughout Silicon Valley have access to trusted, independent reporting on the issues shaping their daily lives. To achieve this, San José Spotlight seeks to:



Solidify pathways for aspiring journalists through expanded fellowship and mentorship opportunities that develop the next generation of civic-minded reporters.



Deepen reporting that examines the intersection of business, government, and quality of life, providing readers with context and accountability reporting unique to Silicon Valley.



Invest in the newsroom infrastructure, tools, and resources necessary to sustain our award-winning reporting and support continued audience growth across the region.

PHILANTHROPIC IMPACT

\$100

ensures one more article is published

\$500

covers expenses from our events and forums

\$1,000

funds a one (1) month journalism fellowship

The faith and trust of supporters across a wide breadth of methods has enabled San José Spotlight to build a sustainable future for local, in-depth reporting, while keeping our articles freely accessible to over 2 million residents. This generosity from individual donors, community partners, and foundations gives our newsroom the resources to retain talented journalists, pursue consequential stories, and consistently report on the decisions shaping communities across Silicon Valley.

OTHER WAYS TO SUPPORT



DONATE VIA CHECK

San José Spotlight
1900 Camden Avenue, Suite 101
San Jose, CA 95124



DONOR ADVISED FUND

Please direct it to San José News Bureau. Our EIN number is 82-5355128.



RECURRING MONTHLY GIFT

Doing so helps us budget and forecast accordingly throughout the year.

GIVING RECOGNITION

Our upmost gratitude to all of our supporters from 2025. Your belief in a more connected region is what makes the local reporting possible.

\$1,000 +

Anonymous (2)	Frederick Brown	Amanda Hawes	Meri Maben	Perla Rodriguez
Dakarai Aarons	John Comiskey	Erik Hayden	Jamshid Mahdavi	Thomas Saggau
Karla Albright	James Cunneen	Gloria Chun Hoo	John McLemore	Anne Marie Sconberg
Richard Alexander	Dustin Derollo	Aaron Hurst	James Hugh McManis	David Snyder
Dolores Alvarado	Drance Family	Hai Huynh	Sara Wigh McManis	John A. Sobrato
Art Amirkhas	Scott Emmert	Andy Kryder	Kathleen & Peter Muller	Larry Stone
Prabhu Balasubramanian	Akemi Flynn	Kuechler-Montes De	Nanda and Kapil Family	Ahmad Thomas
Mario Banuelos	Omar Habbas	Oca Family Fund	Harrison Nguyen	Allan Thompson
Blanchard Family BTB	Elaine Hahn	Steven Lorenzen	Bob Nunez	Tran Family
Santosh Borra	Susan Hartt	Richard Lowenthal	Robey Pointer	Peggy Wood

”

There is a unique character to the Bay Area which right now has an abundance of occupants and very few residents actively engaged in civics and advocating for their communities. Together with a consolidation of corporate power, this means that the amount of energy required for action and change is at an all time high. San Jose Spotlight helps me find the places where my effort are most needed and most beneficial. Whether a San Jose Spotlight byline is a familiar name, or a recent contributor: their reporting can be trusted because it is community-motivated, not profit-motivated.

– Steven Lorenzen | West Valley Resident

“

\$ 500 - \$ 999

Lisa Adhikari	Jesus Flores	Michael Honda	Kathleen Nunes
Shiloh Ballard	Emiko Flynn	Jane Howard	Walt Oxley
William Barnes	Ryan Ford	Norm Hulberg	Ash Pirayou
Brenna Bolger	Michael Fox	Linda Knepper	Larry Russell
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Marion Dickel	Timothy Henderson	Lara McCabe	Lorraine Yamaguchi
Rod Diridon, Sr.	Sandy Herz	Kjirste Morrell	
Karin Donker	Cayce Hill	Long Nguyen	





\$ 250 - \$ 499

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Jean Bedord
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Arnold Bojorquez
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Nancy Breneau
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Thank you to the funders whose support provided critical reporting infrastructure in 2025-2026.

**American
Journalism
Project**

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FOUNDATION

G i G A F A C T

Google
News Initiative

25
Healthier Kids
Foundation

KF KNIGHT
FOUNDATION

**Law
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**MacArthur
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FOUNDATION

**WALTON FAMILY
FOUNDATION**

\$1 - \$249

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Erin McGauley Hebard
Kathryn Hedges
Jacquie Heffner
Nancy Heinen
Richard Henderson

”

At a time when the freedom of the press is under attack across our nation, and the old business models of American journalism are struggling or have disappeared, San José Spotlight's professionalized, not-for-profit model provides Santa Clara County residents with a vital and independent source of news and information.

– Betty Duong | SCC Board of Supervisors (District 2)

“

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Nationwide, we have been watching the erosion of credible journalism for years. It has led and is still leading to a less informed public and the growing misinformation ecosystem threatens democracy. San José Spotlight is vital backpressure against this dystopia and fosters the civic engagement needed to build and grow our community into one that challenges the status quo, asks hard questions to our local leaders, and continuously strives to learn.

– Michael Norris | San Jose Resident

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