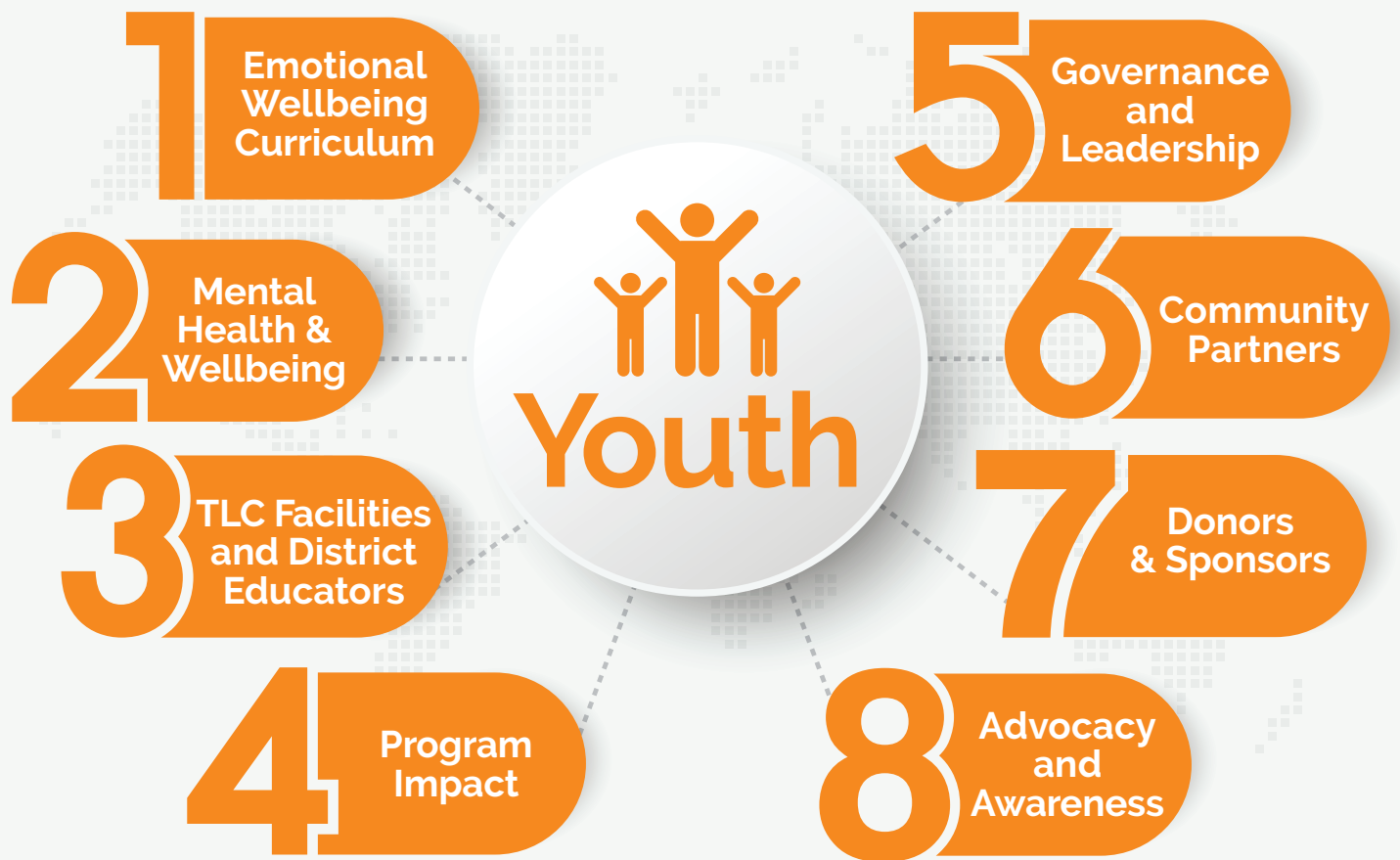




# Annual Report 2023-2024



# Surrounding Youth Our Framework for Impact



## Our Vision

To provide youth with access to critical life skills and coping techniques needed to overcome challenges and succeed in life.

## Our Mission

To inspire today's youth to reach their full potential as productive, kind, happy and responsible individuals.

## Our Purpose

To build confidence and emotional wellness and improve the future for all young people.

# A Message From Our Leadership

Dear Friends of Tilly's Life Center,

As we reflect on the past year, we are filled with immense gratitude and pride for the progress and impact we have made together at Tilly's Life Center (TLC). The 2023-2024 year was one of organizational growth, where our shared commitment to quality programming and empowering young people has continued to drive meaningful change.

Throughout the year, we strengthened TLC's foundation by enhancing our organizational capacity, refining our governance framework, and expanding our reach. These efforts have been instrumental in positioning TLC to continue responding to the growing mental health challenges faced by today's youth with greater strength and innovation.

Our proprietary **I Am Me** curriculum remains at the heart of our mission, providing students and educators with the tools they need to build resilience, foster empowerment, and develop a positive mindset. Since its inception, we have proudly delivered this transformational curriculum to over 25,000 students and coached more than 500 educators in the TLC method. These numbers are more than statistics—they represent lives touched, futures brightened, and communities strengthened.

This success would not be possible without the unwavering dedication of our staff, donors, corporate sponsors, partner schools and organizations, and Board of Directors. Their passion, dedication, and expertise have played an integral role in helping TLC remain a reliable resource for youth navigating today's complex world.

As we look ahead, we are excited to embrace new opportunities to deepen our impact, inspire greater resilience in our youth, and expand our programs to reach even more students and educators. Together, we will continue to empower the next generation to discover their best selves and lead purposeful, fulfilling lives.

Thank you for being a part of this incredible journey.

With gratitude,



**Adrienne Matros**  
Board Chair



**Tilly Levine**  
Founder



**Colleen Versteeg**  
Chief Executive Officer



# The Pressures and Stressors of Today's Young People

Teen Behaviors  
as a Result  
of Those Pressures:



## The Reality A Growing Crisis

A Growing Crisis Today's youth face increasingly complex challenges, and the need for mental health support has never been more critical. Essential services remain out of reach for many, with rates of anxiety, depression, and suicide among teens escalating alarmingly. Currently, 42% of high school students report persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness, and nearly one in four have contemplated suicide. These figures are even more concerning for LGBTQ+ youth, with nearly half considering self-harm. Mental health challenges affect nearly every aspect of a teenager's life, from academic performance to decision-making, often leading to heightened risks such as substance abuse and violence. This crisis impacts not only individuals but entire communities. According to the CDC, over 1,000 young people are treated daily for assault-related injuries, and suicide remains one of the leading causes of death among youth aged 10-24. Without adequate support systems and coping mechanisms, many young people face futures clouded by unresolved trauma and lost opportunities for growth. These statistics underscore a pressing truth: today's youth require emotional support and practical tools to navigate adolescence with resilience. At TLC, our mission is to prevent tragedy by providing young people with the foundation they need to lead successful and fulfilling lives.



# About TLC



Tilly's Life Center (TLC) is a transformative nonprofit at the forefront of addressing the urgent mental health crisis faced by today's young people. Through strategic partnerships with educational institutions and community-based organizations, TLC offers its "I Am Me" curriculum, equipping adolescents and young adults with critical life skills to develop a healthy identity and positive mindset, manage emotions, achieve personal and academic goals, foster strong relationships, and make responsible decisions—ultimately setting them on a path toward lasting success and overall well-being.

TLC believes that all teens should have access to easy-to-use wellness techniques that become habits and last a lifetime. Currently, TLC accomplishes this in several ways: (1) by having our facilitators directly teach the "I Am Me" curriculum, (2) by providing training on our curriculum to educators, counselors, and social workers that can be quickly adopted into their classrooms/environments, and (3) by conducting side by side coaching with trainees to implement the curriculum in their classrooms/environments. While this is not an all-inclusive solution to the current crisis, emotional wellbeing and life skills programs are a vital component to empowering our youth with the tools and skills they need to become happier, healthier, and more productive adults.



# Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child Model

## • CDC'S WHOLE SCHOOL, WHOLE COMMUNITY, WHOLE CHILD (WSCC) MODEL

The WSCC Model, which guides CDC's work with schools, emphasizes that educating the whole child includes developing emotional and social competencies alongside academics.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) strongly supports teaching emotional wellness and life skills, especially as part of school-based health and mental health promotion efforts.

### EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

The CDC defines emotional well-being as the ability to:

- Manage emotions
- Cope with stress
- Build strong relationships
- Make healthy choices

The CDC emphasizes that emotional wellness is essential for overall health, academic success, and life satisfaction—especially during childhood and adolescence, when lifelong habits are being formed.

### CDC STATEMENT:

"Teaching students life skills—such as communication, emotion regulation, and decision-making—can help improve their mental health and reduce behaviors that contribute to poor health."

### • IMPACT & PREVENTION

According to the CDC:

- Education in emotional and social skills can prevent anxiety, depression, violence, and substance use
- Teaching these skills leads to better academic performance, school connectedness, and healthier relationships.

*\*The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)*

### TEACHING LIFE SKILLS

The CDC recommends life skills education as a core strategy for promoting mental health and preventing risky behaviors among youth. These include:

- Emotional regulation
- Goal-setting
- Problem-solving
- Conflict resolution
- Decision-making
- Communication and empathy

# Empowering Teens Transforming Futures



5,132 107 167

Adolescents  
Served

Educators  
Trained

Student  
Cohorts



**1,000's** more children's lives touched through  
collaborative Community Events This Program Year!

**Through Tilly's Life Center (TLC) Programs, teens receive:**

**GUIDANCE** – When life feels overwhelming, TLC helps youth find direction and unlock their potential.

**SAFETY** – Amid pressures, harmful influences, and self-doubt, TLC offers safe spaces where youth feel valued and supported.

**SUPPORT** – In life's toughest moments, TLC helps youth navigate challenges, manage emotions, and build resilience.

**STABILITY** – In a world of constant change, TLC provides a steady foundation through lessons and conversations that foster confidence and security.

**PERSEVERANCE** – TLC empowers youth to believe in their goals and surrounds them with unwavering support to achieve them.

**RESPECT** – TLC encourages self-respect and respect for others, fostering kindness, empathy, and meaningful connections.

Serving  
Youth at

**26**

Schools

**11**

School  
Districts

**14**

Non-Profit  
Partners



# Student Spotlight



I am the oldest so it was often my responsibility to care for my younger siblings and make sure they were safe. Don't get me wrong I love my family and I love my brothers, but I didn't like the stress and expectations that were put on me at 13-years-old. My life wasn't the best; I didn't grow up with a family that was "positive."

My mindset kept heading in the wrong direction, it was leaning towards giving up. I ended up with anxiety, depression, and ADHD. I tried to manage my pain by cutting myself, but it only made things worse. I was making poor choices and hanging out with the wrong people in a bad environment. I always wanted to blend in with people so I would do anything my friends did, like lie, sneak out, and hide my relationships from my parents.

During my freshman year I was sexually assaulted; that led to suicidal thoughts, guilt, negativity, disgust, feeling worthless, and so many other sickening moments. I was just a kid that struggled to love myself. Shortly after that, COVID hit and the few things I was doing right fell apart. I lost my passion for track and soccer, lost a lot of friends, start failing classes, and just mentally couldn't handle the stress behind a computer screen.

In my sophomore year, I was still failing my classes and didn't care. When junior year came along my school told me that I had to transfer to Valley Vista Continuation school to make up credits. I didn't know what to feel anymore, on top of everything else, I had to transfer to a whole new school and I honestly didn't want to meet anyone new.

BUT, Valley Vista was where TLC was introduced to me! While I was there, I took the program THREE times, yes THREE times! At first, I was like, "who are these people?" but then these "people" became my daily routine on Mondays and I couldn't have been more excited to go to school even on a dang Monday! One of the first activities that we did was create an Empowerment Statement, mine was "I Am Enough". That was a good start.

All the topics were good but one was in every lesson that caught my attention - POSITIVITY. That word "positivity" made my face go from oh to OHH! I knew it was powerful and I didn't have enough of it in my life. I used to think it was just a word, but in reality, it's not just a word it is a state of mind that would take me a lot of time and patience to achieve.

I was never as confident and optimistic as I am now. TLC made me see the bright side of life and they also taught me to forgive others and so much more. As part of TLC's program, we got a journal that we would write in during the classes, in the Forgiveness Lesson I wrote - "Being forgiving is a hard lesson, but to be forgiving means you can let go of what has hurt you and heal too". I still have my TLC journal and have started journaling on my own to help me stay in a positive space.

TLC teaches so many great topics, another one that has made me think more was "Who has inspired you?" and I answered, ME! Thanks to TLC I have truly changed, I now have a better mindset and so much happiness.

*I Am Enough!*  
*Cathy*

Valley Vista High School

# Strength Through Collaboration

Our partnerships with school districts and community organizations are the cornerstone of TLC's impact. Together, we bring the transformative power of our "I Am Me" curriculum to students, participants, and patients across diverse settings. These collaborations allow us to meet young people where they are—whether in classrooms, community centers, or healthcare environments—ensuring they have the tools and resources to overcome challenges and build a strong foundation for success. By aligning our mission with the goals of our partners, we amplify our collective ability to foster emotional wellness, resilience, and personal growth. Together, we are creating a brighter future where every young person has the skills and support to navigate life with confidence and purpose.



## School Partners

- ACCESS Anaheim North Education Center
- ACCESS Harbor Learning Center North
- ACCESS Misson Viejo
- ACCESS San Juan Capistrano
- Beacon Park Middle School
- Century High School
- Fountain Valley High School
- Hare High School
- Hewes Middle School
- Hillview High School
- Huntington Beach High School
- Mount Miguel High School
- Ocean View High School
- Port of Los Angeles High School
- Samueli Academy
- Savanna High School
- Sierra Prep Academy
- Silverado High School
- Stimson Learning Center
- Sunburst Youth Academy
- TeWinkle Middle School
- Tustin Connect High School
- University of California – Irvine, School of Education
- Valley High School
- Valley Vista High School
- Westminster High School

## School Districts Partners

- Anaheim Union
- Grossmont Union
- Hacienda LaPuente Unified
- Huntington Beach Union
- Irvine Unified
- LA Unified
- Newport Mesa Unified
- Orange County Department of Education – ACCESS Program
- Saddleback Valley Unified
- Santa Ana Unified
- Tustin Unified

## Nonprofits/Other Partners

- CHOC
- City of Irvine – Middle School Girls Program
- Elevate Teen Expo – City of Los Alamitos
- Festival of Children
- Higher Ground Youth & Family Services
- Let's Be Kind
- Marked as a Winner
- Mission Viejo Teen Wellness Fair
- Santa Ana Library
- Teen Wellness Fair
- Together 4 Teens
- Tustin Football Camp
- Uchenna Nwosu Football Camp
- Voice of Change Resource Fair





# Partner Spotlight



Sunburst Youth Academy, located in Los Alamitos, California, is a premier residential leadership academy dedicated to assisting at-risk teens aged 15½ to 18. This free program focuses on developing self-confidence, discipline, life skills, and education, enabling students to earn up to 65 high school credits and receive continued support for 12 months beyond graduation.

The academy is designed for students who are at risk of not graduating high school and are willing to enroll voluntarily. Eligibility criteria include being a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident, physically and mentally capable of completing the program, and being drug-free.

In the 2023-2024 school year, Tilly's Life Center (TLC) implemented its "I Am Me" program at Sunburst Youth Academy, reaching 356 students. The "I Am Me" curriculum is a holistic, easy-to-apply program that uses experiential learning and high engagement to provide practical mental wellness solutions to teens.



## The Chiefs' Testimonials...

"I believe TLC allows our cadets to believe in themselves and allow a space for self love. It reinforces that it is okay to treat others with respect and kindness. TLC mirrors what happiness looks like and guides our Cadets back to that path." - Chief Lee

"We are so grateful for Tilly's Life Center (TLC) and the volunteers that come out every week to teach our cadets. We truly appreciate their commitment and the support they give to our academy. The cadets gain so many essential life skills that are needed for their success. The benefit of having them at the academy is amazing and we are truly thankful." - Chief Medina

"I have been truly astounded by the work from Tilly's Life Center (TLC) and the dedication to our kids at Sunburst Youth Academy. I am immensely grateful for their unwavering enthusiasm, diligence, and commitment to equipping our youth with the tools to handle stress and conflict in a healthy manner. TLC has been instrumental in the positive development of our cadets at Sunburst Youth Academy. Their program provides critical life skills and coping mechanisms that have improved our Cadet's ability to navigate life's challenges. We are incredibly grateful for their partnership and the profound difference they make in the lives of our youth." - Chief Santin



TLC has been really great for our cadets. Some cadets get more out of it than others because they are more invested in their own futures. For those who really want change, TLC provides them with the tools and space to be able to be kids, to learn, and to have fun. A lot of our cadets come from backgrounds where they needed to grow up fast and did not have positive role models and/or the opportunity to learn and have fun at the same time that TLC provides them." - Chief Spence





## Group Picture



## Group Picture

To Whom it May Concern:

I can think of no finer candidate to endorse in this election year than Tilly's Life Center. We first shared paths in 2020, when Beth LaVallee first graced my Marina High School classroom. In homage to the presidential conventions, I have closely witnessed since my childhood, I offer this ringing endorsement of the transformational program you deliver to our constituencies: "FOUR MORE YEARS!"

This is my twentieth-seventh consecutive year standing up in a classroom in front of teenage students. The experience has evolved, most notably in two ways: the advent of smartphones and the increase in social-emotional health issues. While our society has shown little conviction for addressing the smartphone tragedy, there are hundreds of competitors in the industrial complex, many of whom are just out to grab a piece of the profit in this trending opportunity. Tilly's Life Center is no such organization. With a generous spirit and altruistic intentions, they have crafted a curriculum that soars, and they have enabled instructors who inspire. Each of the individual mentors who populate our classrooms comes with a unique identity and a transformative story to share. By sharing their personal experiences to our kids, they encourage our students to open up in their journals. They force students to consider other perspectives and to grab the reins of their own personal narrative. The minds-on & hands-on lessons are a brilliant combination of activities and discussions that broaden horizons and instill optimism.

More than just a witness, I have experienced the power of TLC myself. My classes were blessed with a trio of angels who zoomed in weekly to share their insights. Kama, Eric, and Kiki were chosen to facilitate a TLC experience for academic refugees bound to their solitary homes. They delivered more than tender-loving care. They delivered a humanity that transcended a high school classroom experience. The TLC facilitators displayed an uncommon chemistry; two souls with little in common, demographically, created an amazing canvas together, which allowed the students to feel so comfortable to share their fears, hopes, and challenges. What they did not know during the experience was how much they were impacting me, personally. They embedded me and my life story into their lessons so that I could model how to share emotions with our classroom. In so doing, they helped me to exorcise age-old demons. Absent the baggage they helped me unpack, I was able to mend estranged relationships with both my mother and father. They were brilliant in helping the class understand what forgiveness truly means and how powerful a force it can be and cheered on my health journey as I lost one hundred pounds. These unsung heroes remained close with me long after the class ended. The friendship was a pillar for me as I found my soulmate and married her last October.

The TLC experience has changed the trajectory of my life. Imagine the exponential power it has on each child exposed to the tools they provide. I will spend the rest of my life spreading the gospel of the TLC program. The time I have spent on the shoulders of the TLC program remind me of an ancient proverb that I subscribe to:

"A man carried his friend up a hill. Lo and behold, he scaled the mountain himself."

I stand on the shoulders of giants (TLC Facilitators). We are enjoying the view from atop the peak we climbed together. The view is immaculate.

With gratitude,

*Toby Hess*

Valley Vista High School  
thess@hbuhsd.edu  
562-472-4567



# The Financials

See our Audited Financial Statements and 990 on our website, [tillyslifecenter.org](https://tillyslifecenter.org)

|                                                | JUNE 30, 2024       | JUNE 30, 2023       | Change      |
|------------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| <b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>                            | \$ 3,175,980        | \$ 3,420,352        | - 7%        |
| <b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>                       | \$ 551,727          | \$ 580,014          | - 5%        |
| <b>NET ASSETS</b><br>Without Donor Restriction | \$ 1,969,873        | \$ 2,060,427        | - 4%        |
| <b>NET ASSETS</b><br>With Donor Restriction    | \$ 654,380          | \$ 779,911          | - 16%       |
| <b>TOTAL NET ASSETS</b>                        | <b>\$ 2,624,253</b> | <b>\$ 2,840,338</b> | <b>- 8%</b> |

Source: Audited Financial Statements

## Tillys, Inc. and Their Generous Customers

Through the Round-Up-4-Change Campaign, Tillys' retail customers have contributed nearly \$5.1 million in operating funds for TLC since 2021.

Additionally, Tillys annual corporate pledge provides additional resources for our program. These contributions have:

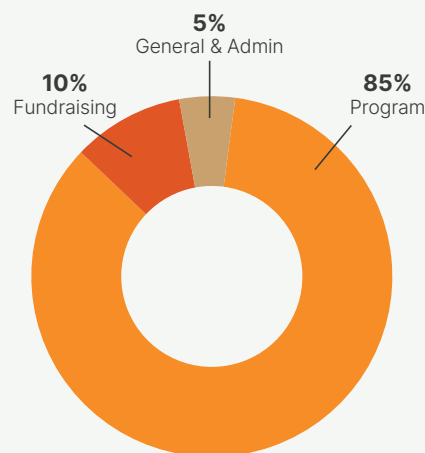
- Fueled TLC's Growth – Expanding programs to serve more teens
- Subsidized Schools – Supporting institutions with budget constraints
- Built an Investment Fund – Strengthening future sustainability

## Golf & Gala Annual Events: Driving Impact, Elevating Support

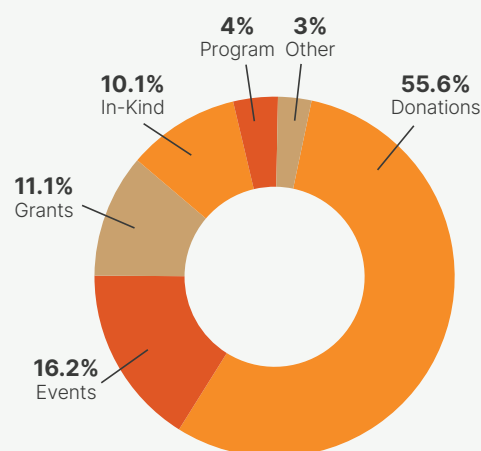
Our annual events exemplify the power of community and generosity in support of youth mental health. The Golf Tournament brought together action sports companies, banks, and corporate partners for a day of fundraising and engagement. Our 9th Annual Gala was a remarkable evening filled with inspiration, donor support, and impactful collaborations with our partners. Our events not only provide critical funding for our programs but also strengthen our network of supporters by fostering meaningful connections with donors, corporate partners, and community leaders.

## Financial Stewardship: Fueling Our Mission

Every dollar raised and spent reflects unwavering commitment to empowering young people with the tools they need for a brighter future. Through strategic financial management, diversified funding efforts, and the generosity of our supporters, we continue to expand our reach and deepen our impact on youth mental health.



Functional Expenses - \$2.8M



Revenues - \$2.865M

## A LOOK AHEAD

We are on the path to diversifying our revenue streams, ensuring the long-term sustainability and growth of Tilly's Life Center. By expanding corporate partnerships, pursuing new grant opportunities, and developing additional innovative fundraising initiatives, we are further strengthening our financial foundation to support our mission and amplify our impact.



*"The meaning of life is to find your gift.  
The purpose of life is to give it away." - Pablo Picasso*

# Our Donors

## Turning Generosity into Growth

We are incredibly thankful for our **DONORS** who are the force behind our mission to empower teens and young adults with essential life skills that foster mental wellness, resilience, and personal growth. Every dollar donated helps expand the reach of our "I Am Me" program, ensuring more students gain access to transformative classes and workshops, curriculum materials, and trained facilitators.

These funds enable us to partner with schools and community organizations and continuously enhance our Emotional Wellbeing and Life Skills curriculum to meet the needs of our students. Additionally, donor support allows TLC to invest in program evaluation, continuous improvement, and innovative outreach efforts that strengthen our impact. Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, TLC is able to serve thousands of young people each year, helping to create a generation of confident, emotionally intelligent individuals who are equipped to navigate life's challenges with strength and purpose.



# Our Corporate Champions

## Unwavering Support

We are deeply grateful for the generosity of our **CORPORATE SPONSORS**, whose monetary and in-kind contributions fuel our mission. Their support enables TLC to expand our reach, enhance our programs, and provide more young people with the resources they need to successfully participate. Whether through financial contributions, donated goods, or valuable services, your partnership makes a lasting impact.

# Partnering for Change

## Tillys, Inc. is Leading the Way

A special thank you to Tillys, Inc., a crucial corporate partner in driving change through its in-store Round-Up-4-Change campaign benefiting TLC. By giving customers the opportunity to round up their purchases at the register, Tillys is helping fund TLC's mission to empower teens with the skills needed to build confidence, resilience, and a positive mindset.

**TILLYS**

## Thank You **DONORS** and **CORPORATE SPONSORS**

for investing in the future of our youth and making a vital impact through your support of TLC!



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TILLY'S LIFE CENTER

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## TLC Team

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**CHRISTINE CAREY**  
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**CHRISTINA MORRISSEY**  
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

**CESAR DEMOREY**  
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EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

**BETH LAVELLE**  
TRAINING MANAGER

**AARON EDWARDS**  
PROGRAM MANAGER

**CHRIS FRENCH**  
PROGRAM MANAGER

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JOSHUA SINGLETON, JOE CAMARGO, BRIANA MANNS, VIVANA MEJIA

ASSISTANT FACILITATOR: ERIK KENNETH PROGRAM ASSISTANT: RALPH RANGEL



# Join Our Women Warriors for Wellness

## Come Be Part of the Solution

Join other amazing women as we help inspire hope, foster resilience, and champion mental wellness for our youth.

Contact Laurén Saunders @ [Lauren@tillyslifecenter.org](mailto:Lauren@tillyslifecenter.org) for more information!

**Member Obligations:** \$50 annual dues + contribution of auction items valued at \$150 or more.



**Invites you**  
...to join our TLC Women's Guild!



**Come Be Part of the Solution!**  
Join other amazing women as we Help TLC inspire hope, foster resilience, and champion mental wellness for our youth.

Contact: Laurén Saunders @ [Lauren@tillyslifecenter.org](mailto:Lauren@tillyslifecenter.org) for more information!

**Member Obligations:**  
\$50 annual dues  
+ contribution of auction item(s) valued at \$150 or more







Don't Miss the  
**Fun** — Join Us  
at Our Next  
**Event!**







# Donate Now

Help Us Bring Hope  
and Happiness to a  
Teen in Need.

