

2025  
HIGHLIGHTS

# Meeting the Moment

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LEADING  
from within



# Our Mission

Leading From Within equips community changemakers to grow their ability to lead, collaborate, and drive solutions.



# Hello, our Leading From Within community!

There's an energy in the air at Leading From Within (LFW), the kind that comes when a team finds its rhythm. The three of us (Rubi, Elizabeth, and Katya) have been diving into the work, meeting incredible leaders, and learning alongside one another. The office feels alive with laughter, ideas, and purpose, a reflection of the growing community of leaders we're so proud to serve.

We both were compelled to shift our professional direction to take on these new roles so we could use our time and talents to do more for our own community. LFW is the nexus of community leaders and given this unique position, we're planning to meet the needs of our Alumni Fellows, our new Fellows, future Fellows, and the entire eco-system.

That is why for our first months, we have intentionally been listening to you. This is helping us re-confirm our existing proven programs but also tailoring them and creating new initiatives to meet new needs. And we want to share this with you today so that you may consider investing with us. We are poised to meet the moment in lifting up community leaders with new services, excited about possibilities.

With gratitude,

*Katya and Elizabeth*

## KEY TAKE-AWAY #1

**Community leaders are facing government budget cuts, ICE raids, and burnout.**

They need a place to convene, be supported, learn and collaborate with their peers.

## How are we meeting this need?

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The future looks uncertain for many of our community leaders right now which is why our two newest programs—**Growing Edge Leaders (GEL)** and **Women of Color Leadership Circle** are essential at this time. This September, 25 seasoned nonprofit leaders graduated as our first **GEL** groups. Over 12 months, LFW Founder Ken Saxon and facilitator Judy Guillermo-Newton guided these leaders to learn, lean on each other, and recharge their leadership so that they in turn advance community well-being and model this kind of leadership to others within their organizations and beyond.

Our newest alumni have asked for a new offering, a **Women of Color Leadership Circle**, and we are starting this in early 2026. We are creating this for Executive Directors and CEOs with significant organizational responsibilities. This is more than a professional development program; it is a community of belonging where leaders can find solidarity, sharpen their leadership, and strengthen their resilience while continuing to drive impact within their organizations and communities.



“There’s no other space in Santa Barbara that invests in leadership like this, Leading From Within recognizes that when you invest in people, that’s how you make long-term change that truly benefits our community.”

**LAUREN TRUJILLO**

Executive Director of the Santa Barbara Library Foundation and new GEL & KHF alum

## KEY TAKE-AWAY #2

**We all need to roll up our sleeves and use our time, treasure, and talent to help our community.**

We can't leave it all to nonprofit leaders.

## How are we meeting this need?

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Welcome back, **Katherine Harvey Fellows (KHF)**! Our KHF program, originally started at the Santa Barbara Foundation in 2000, is specially designed to prepare individuals who want to expand their impact in the community—those working in business, philanthropy, law, faith, education, health, government, and other sectors that strengthen the Central Coast. We also encourage participation from individuals with diverse backgrounds, lived experiences, and from all corners of our counties. Can you imagine the ripple effect if we all put our talent and skills to work for the community? This could be through nonprofit board participation, mentorship, career shifts, effective collaboration/partnerships, and social impact initiatives.

Peter Karoff, one of our most inspiring facilitators and mentors, always wanted to make sure KHF's tent was big enough. That's why we are reaching far and wide in recruiting. And it is why Peter's daughter, Deb Karoff, has kicked off the Peter Karoff Fund in partnership with LFW to provide scholarships for our upcoming KHF cohorts.



“With deep alignment of personal convictions with community purpose, applying one’s knowledge and skills becomes irresistible. There is a sense of acute purpose that stretches far beyond one’s individual interests.”

**PETER KAROFF**



**Choose to  
support  
the Peter  
Karoff Fund**



## KEY TAKE-AWAY #3

**The stress and uncertainty of these times have taken a toll on long-time leaders** and we must support them but also lift up the next generation of leaders.

## How are we meeting this need?

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The 11th cohort of our **Emerging Leaders Program** recently concluded their journey with joy and gratitude, celebrating their growth and shared experiences during the October Changemakers Celebration, where they reflected on being Rooted in Growth and Rising in Leadership. Over the course of a year, they engaged in workshops on emotional intelligence, evaluative thinking, conflict resolution, human resources, board development, and strategic planning, all designed to strengthen their leadership and impact. This built a community of connected leaders who are better able to sustain their social sector commitment and who share a mindset that “we’re all in this together.”

In **Leading for Community Impact (LCI)**, we invest in leaders in the Santa Maria, Lompoc, Santa Ynez Valley and surrounding areas who are on the front lines of serving many of the Central Coast’s most vulnerable residents. Currently, 17 leaders are going through a rigorous, relevant, and applied curriculum on leadership skills and management strategies. Together, they are building the capacity and confidence to strengthen their organizations and create lasting change in our community.



“This program is unique and potent education for social sector leaders in our community. Adaptability, Emotional Intelligence, and Growth Mindset fluency will shape the future of our nonprofits. We, are the change makers of tomorrow.”

**SARAH ABRAMS**, new ELP alum



## Evaluative Frameworks

- Identifying Stakeholders
- Supporting Training
- Informing Program Planning or Development
- Informing Strategy Development
- Quality Assurance
- Accountability
- Communication / Reporting
- Informing Learning and Training



# A Slice of Our Impact

**700+ Alumni**

**Addressing more than 10  
different issue areas**

(e.g., environmental protection,  
human services, health,  
education, immigration,  
arts and culture)

from **100+**  
**organizations**

**in the past 5 years**  
including the Foodbank,  
Community Environmental  
Council, Girls Inc.

**82% of leaders**

**from our newest program,**

Growing Edge Leaders,  
feel “a lot” or “extremely  
better” equipped to do  
their job better.

# Investing In People Who Drive & Create Change



## **INDIVIDUALS**

Growing as Leaders

## **PEERS**

Sustaining & Supporting Each Other

## **COLLABORATORS**

Benefiting our Whole Community

# Our Team

## Board Members

### Ashley Costa

Lompoc Valley Community  
Healthcare Organization

### Samuel Duarte

Family Service Agency

### Eder Gaona-Macedo

Fund for Santa Barbara

### Alma Hernández

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Joan Hartman

### Kiah Jordan

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Community  
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### Catherine Brozowski

Audacious Foundation

### Paul Lynch

Cage Free Productions

### Michael Medel

*Board President*  
Santa Barbara City College

### Jennifer Reitz

Executive Coach &  
Consultant

### Ken Saxon

LFW Founder

### Sigrid Wright

Community Environmental  
Council



## Staff

### Katya Armistead

Co-Executive Director

### Elizabeth Scharpf

Co-Executive Director

### Rubi Castellanos

Operations Director



## Instructors, Coordinators & Key Consultants

### Katya Armistead

Miles Ashlock

Lisa Bass

Victoria Colon

Alex Dorsey

Judy Guillermo-Newton

Judy Hawkins

Stephanie Logan

Christa Roth

Danielle Quiñones-Ortega

Ken Saxon

Julie Sorenson



# Thank you to our donors from the past year

*\* Indicates a Leading From Within program alumni*



## Major Givers \$5,000+

|                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Anonymous                           | Natalie Orfalea Foundation               |
| Anonymous                           | Mike and Carrie Randolph*                |
| Mayo Newhall Foundation             | McCune Foundation                        |
| G. A. Fowler Family Foundation      | Ken and Jo Saxon                         |
| Ventura County Community Foundation | Patricia and Paul Bragg Foundation       |
| Ann Jackson Family Foundation       | Towbes Foundation                        |
| Ella Lim                            | Lynda Weinman and Bruce Heavin           |
| John and Patty MacFarlane           | Edwin and Jeanne Woods Family Foundation |
|                                     | Santa Barbara Foundation                 |

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**We thank our many generous in-kind donors for their pro bono and volunteer support!**

## Leaders Fund \$500-\$4,999

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Frederica Saxon  
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Alums of Foodbank of Santa Barbara County\*  
Sigrid Wright\*  
Tristan Zajonc

## Friends up to \$499

Elena Anderson\*  
Debra Arnesen  
Miles Ashlock Burke  
Florene Bednersh\*  
Arnie Brier and Jill Feldman  
Rubi Castellanos\*  
Araceli Centeno\*

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“I’ve learned that being authentic and staying true to your values will help you lead with integrity, heart, and purpose — none of us leads alone. We all need a village — Emerging Leaders has become my new village.”

**EDUARDO CAPRISTO**

Housing Authority of Santa Barbara  
and new ELP alum



**LEADING**  
from within

**Invest in our leaders today**

**Leading-From-Within.org**

PO Box 806, Santa Barbara, CA 93102

