

IVYP

Strategic Plan

Approved 1.24.2020



Supporting children and families
in Goleta and Isla Vista

IVYP Strategic Plan

Message from the Executive Director

Isla Vista Youth Projects was born out of the chaos of the early 1970s in Isla Vista. In the wake of riots and the burning of the Bank of America, the children and families who lived in Isla Vista needed support, strength and resilience. By creating a community that valued children, that enabled families to work and access the social services and support they needed, Isla Vista Youth Projects sowed the seeds for a resilient, creative and thriving community. Over the years, our work has expanded to serve children and families across the Goleta Valley. But, our purpose remains the same. We exist not only to provide direct services to families in need, but also to convene community members and stakeholders for the benefit of all. Together we can mitigate the negative effects of poverty, racism and trauma to support resilient children, families and community.

I became Executive Director of Isla Vista Youth Projects in January 2018. It became clear to me that IVYP was not understood by many in our community. The name of the organization no longer aligned with our actual work – IVYP is not a project, it no longer serves youth – our focus is on children and families, and while we do an excellent job of serving the children and families of Isla Vista, they now make up only a small percentage of our total population.

I quickly learned that IVYP has a special role in the community. Our “secret sauce” is the quality of our relationships. Our history of building deep, long-term, trusted relationships with community members is a strength that we can and should build upon.

For years, IVYP has been the voice for children and families in Isla Vista. As the lead agency of Thrive Isla Vista, IVYP extended its reach and influence beyond the childcare sector to become a trusted community partner of law-enforcement, parks and recreation, Isla Vista Elementary School, and local government. For the past two years, we have intentionally extended our leadership throughout the Goleta Valley. The lessons we’ve learned in Isla Vista have enabled us to establish a strong presence across the Goleta Valley and to assume a leadership role in considering how the Goleta Valley will nurture a resilient community.

Looking at IVYP with fresh eyes, it is clear that we have a role to play in the Goleta Valley. We must continue to deepen and expand our services across Goleta, we must define a new identity which accurately reflects our current work, our mission and our vision, and we must build our capacity in order to achieve excellence in all that we do.

This work will not be easy. But our board, our staff and our community stand with us as we move into the next phase of our organizational growth.

Introduction

In approaching our strategic planning process, we began by identifying our values and our core understanding of our work. We engaged board and staff in a SWOT analysis - identifying organizational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

We then began the work of developing a Theory of Change. Rather than thinking of our organization as a collection of programs, our Theory of Change pulls together all the work we do into one integrated vision for how we advance our social justice goals in our particular community.

Using our values, our core beliefs, our SWOT analysis and our Theory of Change, we articulated two priorities with several ambitious and achievable goals. We shared the goals with senior staff who have begun to pull together work-plans.

Throughout this process, we have engaged board, staff and community members for their insight, opinions and expertise.

We are committed to addressing the root causes of the many issues that negatively impact our community. All children are impacted when some children have been exposed to trauma, violence and poverty. All families are impacted when some in our community are hungry or isolated. Our entire community is impacted by poverty, racism and trauma. We believe that our direct services are part of a solution to these social wounds. And, we believe that by working together we can advance our community to be more just, more equitable, more educated, more engaged and more resilient.

Vision

We envision a community where children are loved, valued, and respected; and families are able to reach their highest potential

Mission

Isla Vista Youth Projects, Inc. strengthens our community through diverse educational, recreational, and social programs for children and families regardless of income.

Values

These values guide and inspire our work with children, families and community partners. We strive to uphold and pursue these values as we work to realize social change both as an organization and as individuals in community:

Collaboration

We believe that no one person, no one agency can address our community's problems, and so we value our work in collaboration with other organizations and community partners.

"You are never strong enough that you don't need help." Cesar Chavez

Integrity

We build trust by engaging in our work responsibly and with accountability. We hold ourselves to the highest ethical standards and take personal responsibility for our actions.

"The time is always right for doing what is right." Martin Luther King, Jr.

Respect

We honor our collective and individual identities and assume positive intent in our interactions. By treating our students, our families, our partners and ourselves with respect, we create the opportunity for authentic relationships and nurture social justice.

"I don't pre-judge." Sonia Sotomayor

Creativity

We are flexible and nimble, leveraging resources in order to pursue opportunities as they arise.

"Action is the antidote to despair." Joan Baez

Curiosity

We commit to being curious about our impact by challenging assumptions through reflection, experimentation, holistic evaluation and adaptation.

"[We cultivate] a mental attitude about critical thinking and curiosity... by looking at the world in a playful and curious and creative way." Adam Savage

Joy

Everyone deserves to experience joy. We strive to find joy in our work, to inspire joy in our children and families, and to recognize that joy is as necessary as bread to our sustenance and survival.

"Sometimes your joy is the source of your smile, but sometimes your smile can be the source of your joy." Thich Nhat Hanh

Core Beliefs

All children benefit when:

- they have as many loving, responsive, safe (and consistent) adults as possible in their lives, because children become resilient through relationships.
- they have equal access to educational, social, and recreational opportunities.
- they are in diverse economic, social, and cultural environments.
- parents are engaged in their child's school and community, when they know how to navigate and advocate for their children, resulting in positive academic outcomes.

All families benefit when:

- our teachers, family advocates and staff assume that caregivers want the best for their children
- they develop social connections with multiple individuals, organizations and one another
- they are supported to build relationships in diverse economic, social, and cultural environments in which they can feel safe, valued and whole

All communities benefit when:

- the individuals, families and organizations know one another, because communities build resilience through relationships.
- people of diverse cultures, ethnicities, religions and economic capacity are valued and represented.
- we honor diversity, multi-culturalism and respect.
- leaders know one another and can work together toward a common vision.
- the individuals, families and organizations know one another, because communities build resilience through relationships
- education is viewed as a pathway to success, social change, and leadership.

Theory of Change

By building a resilient and connected community, Isla Vista Youth Projects seeks to mitigate the effects of poverty, racism, and trauma so that all children and families can prosper and thrive.

IVYP mitigates the effects of poverty, racism and trauma by providing high-quality, trauma informed child care; comprehensive, culturally sensitive family support; and visionary community leadership.

Strategic Priorities 2020 – 2025

Priority 1: Grow our impact

Challenge/Opportunity:

Access to affordable, safe, high-quality care is has been shown to support workforce development as well as child development. Children who participate in our programs are ready for kindergarten, and are getting the support they need in their elementary schools. When parents feel confident that their children are safe and well-cared for, they are able to work and are reliable employees. When families' basic needs are met, their stress level decreases, allowing them to be present in their children's lives. When care-givers have the skills and resources they need, they are able to care for their children's developmental, social-emotional, and educational needs. We have found that the relationships we build with families in our children's center and in our after-school programs enable families to feel comfortable seeking the other support they might need, whether parenting classes, health care, or food.

There are not enough child care spaces - both early childhood and after school - in our community. IVYP has been providing high quality care for children ages 0 – 12 for almost 50 years and has expertise in relationship building and family strengthening work. We have a track record of positive family engagement. As a local agency, we have the opportunity to engage with the entire family, and to link community organizations to create a network of support.

Additionally, IVYP is currently the only agency that is solely focused on family strengthening and child care in the Goleta Valley. As a result, we are uniquely positioned to bring together community partners to address shared challenges and to build resilience. In November 2018, IVYP launched the Goleta Valley Community Partnership quarterly lunches. The response has shown that there is tremendous interest and need for relationship building among government, business, health care and service providers for addressing community resilience. Additionally, Santa Barbara County is engaging in focused cross-sector work in combating Adverse Childhood Experiences, becoming trauma informed and building a Resilient SB County Network. IVYP can provide leadership and direction in this effort in the Goleta Valley. Finally, IVYP's track record of relationship driven, trust building with our community's most vulnerable families makes us a sought-after community partner.

Why does this matter?

Early engagement and intervention lead to positive health outcomes and positive educational outcomes. As we grow our reach, we expect that we can both expand and

deepen our ability to support children and families directly, and to identify and build systems that support them in our community.

Goals:

1A: Increase the capacity of our Children's Center to be able to serve 250 students, 60% of whom qualify for state funding

Strategies/milestones include:

- Identify space
- Grow our workforce
- Improve quality by investing in teacher training
- Improve systems

1B: Grow and extend the impact of our school aged programming by expanding capacity and deepening quality

Strategies/milestones include:

- Explore and adopt a theoretically based framework for school aged children engagement and success
- Identify and implement options for deeper student engagement and agency involvement (student council?)
- Explore funding model for expansion to La Patera school

1C: Deepen parent engagement and foster leadership across all programs. Ensure that all families are able to gain skills, access resources, and build relationships.

Strategies/milestones include:

- Engage more parents in meaningful roles in family council.
- Embed family advocates in all IVYP sites, as well as in all GUSD schools, City of Goleta events, and partner organizations
- Develop staff training on parent engagement and customer service.
- Focus on developing parent leaders across all programs
- Provide learning opportunities for parents/caregivers across all programs
- Develop family recognition system to honor parent leaders

1D: Provide Greater Community Leadership by positioning IVYP as the convener and anchor organization for family-strengthening through collaborative work throughout the Goleta Valley

Strategies/Milestones include:

- Systematizing GV Community Partnerships
- Set community goals and objectives
- Seek out opportunities for resource sharing, co-location, with the goal of removing barriers

1E: Provide a hub for services and community activities that foster a stronger and more resilient community.

Strategies/Milestones include:

- Refining our work as the program lead for the Isla Vista Community Center
- Seek out opportunities for bringing services and community activities together in one location.

Priority 2: Build our internal capacity

Challenge/Opportunity:

Our goals are ambitious and important. We must insure the health of our own organization in order to be successful. To achieve our five-year goals, we must address issues that cross all of our programs:

1. Culture
2. Systems
3. Assessment
4. Training
5. Funding
6. Identity

Even though IVYP has been operating for almost 50 years, few people outside of Isla Vista know who we are or what we do. When they hear the name Isla Vista Youth Projects, people assume we are a teen program and that we are only providing service in Isla Vista. As a result, we struggle to engage donors, ambassadors and potential board members.

We have the opportunity to tell our story by building a brand that accurately reflects our organization today and into the future. We must develop and nurture a board of trustees that can lead and support moving us in this direction.

Why does this matter?

In order to implement our strategic plan successfully, we must focus on our organizational culture. We have been working on culture change for the past two years and we have made real progress. We must double down on culture. Work on our values will inform this.

We must:

- Move from siloed work to integrated work
- Develop a culture of integrity, responsibility, accountability.
- Continue to push back on a scarcity mindset

When our culture is positive, when everyone at every level of the organization is committed to upholding our core values, our productivity and impact will rise.

Additionally, we must strengthen our internal capacity to assess and track our impact through data. “What gets measured gets managed.” When we understand the metrics and trends in our organization, we are best able to make strategic decisions that support our families and our community. By developing curiosity about how our effectiveness and our impact. How satisfied are our families? How well are our students performing? How can we measure growth and change?

Finally, we will be successful in meeting our impact goals when we have systems that function smoothly. We must have the capacity to fulfill our contracts, perform at a high level, and give our clients, our funders and our community confidence in our ability to execute our goals.

Goals:

2A: Build a board that can support our strategic vision and growth.

Strategies/milestones:

- Expand our board to include individuals with the skills sets needed for success including: fundraising, marketing, governance, finance, legal, technology, and facilities expertise
- Intentionally pursue diversity in board selection so that our board has a cross section of gender, age, and ethnicity as well as diverse relationships and expertise.

2B: Develop an identity that reflects our actual work and our future goals.

Strategy/milestones include:

- Change the name of the organization to reflect our work using a professional marketing firm
- Engage in a marketing/branding campaign to spread our reputation, name and activities
- Redesign agency website

2C: Increase our capacity to do our work by growing all of our income streams.

Strategies/Milestones:

- By 2025: Double the size of our donor base. Double the number of people receiving our e-newsletter, double the amount of funds raised from individuals.
- Explore new income models for our school aged programming.
- Seek out new and expanded contracts for work
- Develop an expertise in advocacy in order to identify and secure government funding.

2D: Improve and streamline systems.

Strategies include:

- Refining and improving the following systems:
 - Enrollment at Children’s Center
 - Attendance at Children’s Center
 - Payment/Billing Children’s center
 - Deposits/Cash management
 - I/T procedures
 - Hiring/onboarding

2E: Focus on organizational culture.

Strategies/milestones:

- Develop organization wide training in parent engagement, behavior management, trauma sensitivity, customer service
- Implement training at organizational level AND at program level.
- Identify opportunities to celebrate together and build relationships across programs.
- (Continue to) invest in school support to “grow our own” in order to create a workforce pipeline.

2F: Develop and strengthen our capacity for using data for assessment and decision making.

Strategies/Milestones:

- All programs using Vertical Change
- Develop and implement meaningful assessments to measure how well our students are performing? How satisfied are our families?
- Identify and implement appropriate program evaluation tools
- Build in opportunities at board, leadership, and staff level to look at and reflect upon our data.