



# REALITY CHANGERS

BUILDING FIRST GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS

[www.realitychangers.org](http://www.realitychangers.org)

Reality Changers  
began in 2001  
with just \$300



Now the program's  
inner-city students  
have earned  
over \$5,000,000



Read  
our  
stories  
INSIDE!

**The mission of Reality Changers  
is to provide inner-city youth from disadvantaged backgrounds  
with the resources to become first generation college students  
by providing academic support, financial assistance,  
and faith-based leadership training.**



# Celebrating 10 Years of Building First Generation College Students

There is a sense of urgency when you hear the stories of our students. Earlier this year, Carlos decided to throw away his bullets; during ten years of homelessness, Michael's ambition leaked through his eyes; and after her brother was slain, Stephanie now hopes to earn a scholarship to honor his memory.

At Reality Changers, low-income, inner-city high school students learn to use adverse circumstances as the fuel for their success. They have earned full-ride scholarships to Ivy League schools, inspired their peers to volunteer over 20,000 hours of community service, and become award-winning young engineers honored on the floor of the United States Congress.

These students, along with the rest of this publication, demonstrate how Reality Changers' proven formula has produced measurable results for the past ten years. Yet as school dropout rates remain inconceivably high and prison incarceration rates continue to skyrocket, there are nonetheless more students on Reality Changers' waiting list than students who are currently in the program. Can you feel the urgency to change this reality?

To support Reality Changers, you can come visit us, become a tutor, or make a donation. I promise that when you do, students like Carlos, Michael, and Stephanie will be forever grateful.

Sincerely,



Christopher Yanov  
Founder & Executive Director



Christopher Yanov with President Barack Obama, and  
U.S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan.



## HISTORY

After working with gang members for five years, Reality Changers Founder Christopher Yanov felt that it was just not right that most inner-city teenagers today know more people who have been shot or killed in the street than people who are on the road to college.

As a response, Reality Changers began in May 2001 with four 8th grade students at the Hispanic Presbyterian Church near downtown San Diego with the hope of building first generation college students.

Starting with just \$300 to its name, Reality Changers has given more scholarship awards to college-bound students than any other single organization in San Diego County since 2006.

Reality Changers continued to grow by opening two more chapters in Solana Beach (2004) and in the San Diego neighborhood of City Heights (2006), with both new sites led by program graduates.

Reality Changers moved to a new headquarters in City Heights in April 2008 and became California's leading tutoring program for scholarships in June 2009.

"If we truly want to cleanse the generations of gang-related bloodshed spilled onto our sidewalks," Yanov says, "then we must flood our inner-city streets with options and opportunities so that urban youth can become caught up in the rising current of high expectations, newfound leadership, and previously unimaginable realities."

## Reality Changers

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[www.realitychangers.org](http://www.realitychangers.org)

## FOUNDING BOARD MEMBERS

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## STAFF

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**Site Director, Solana Beach**  
Pedro Enriquez

**Senior Academy Coordinators, Solana Beach**  
Dan and Gayle Grider

**Executive Assistant**  
Norma Ruiz-Murphy

**Program Assistant**  
Ariana Torres (RC Grad '07)

**Video Director**  
Carlos Solorio

Pictured: Assistant Director Grace Chaidez with Reality Changers students at a community service event.

# Cover Stories

Read how these graduates have changed their realities! (From left to right)

**Jesse** had an annual family income of \$7,000, yet earned a full-ride scholarship of \$215,000 to attend Harvard.

**Jonathan** earned a \$131,000 scholarship to Point Loma Nazarene University and became Reality Changers' first Dean of Students.

**Salina** overcame a speech impediment to major in Communications and Rhetoric at UC Berkeley and now wants to become an on-air radio or television personality.

**Miguel** was an hour away from death in 11th grade, but made a full recovery and earned a \$200,000 full-ride scholarship to Harvard.

**Arlene** sold flowers near a freeway off-ramp in high school to help pay her family's rent, yet earned a \$200,000 scholarship to Northwestern.

**Carlos** had a 1.9 GPA before Reality Changers, but finished high school with a 4.5 GPA and a \$50,000 scholarship to UCLA.

**Robert** was nearly expelled as a sophomore, but became a champion for change and inspired Reality Changers students to give over 20,000 hours of community service.

**Ximena** lived in a neighborhood once described as "the rotting core of America's Finest City," but earned a \$121,000 scholarship to Beloit.

**Jorge** had a 1.9 GPA before Reality Changers, but finished high school with a 4.5 GPA and has earned Provost Honors at UC San Diego.

**Ashly** lived in one of San Diego's most dangerous neighborhoods, yet earned a \$203,000 scholarship to Duke.

**Norberto** earned a \$184,000 scholarship to Dartmouth, became Reality Changers' first college graduate and now plans to attend dental school.

**Cecelia** became the Site Director of Reality Changers' third chapter before graduating high school and earned a \$127,000 scholarship to Point Loma Nazarene University.

**Aracely** became the largest scholarship winner at Reality Changers' second chapter in Solana Beach by earning \$180,000 to the University of Redlands.

**Roberto** was the National Lifeguard Relay Champion and earned a \$200,000 full-ride scholarship to Dartmouth.

**Josh** tripled his GPA from a 1.2 to a 3.6 after joining Reality Changers.

**Fernando** raised his GPA from a 2.0 to a 4.0 after joining Reality Changers, became the lead drummer in his church's band and now attends SDSU.

**Suzy** was thought to be paralyzed in 8th grade, but fully recovered and earned a Gates Millennium Scholarship to pay for her Bachelor's Degree, Master's Degree, and PhD.

**Gerardo** lived on San Diego's deadliest square block, yet earned a \$50,000 scholarship to UC San Diego.

**Aned** was an original graduate of Reality Changers' second chapter in Solana Beach and is now its Interim Site Director.

"Reality Changers proves that with the right role models..."



...our society's most challenged youth can turn their lives around and become leaders in our community!"



-Rep. Susan Davis in the US Congress



# Reality Changers Graduates in the United States



## Comprehensive Weekly Tutoring Programs

All Reality Changers students participate in weekly, three-hour leadership trainings that prepare them for the SAT exam, college and beyond. College students and community volunteers provide tutoring assistance, as well.



## UC San Diego's Academic Connections

All Reality Changers students who achieve a 3.5 GPA or higher earn a \$3,500 scholarship to attend this intensive three-week college residential program offered to high school students from around the world.



THE  
REALITY  
CHANGERS  
EXPERIENCE

## Forest Home Summer Camp

Reality Changers students earn a \$500 scholarship to this week-long camp where they can find a place away from the distractions of the world to strengthen their faith and their commitment to the program.



## Random Drug Testing

All Reality Changers students are randomly tested for drugs at least once a year. Not a single student has ever tested positive for drugs.



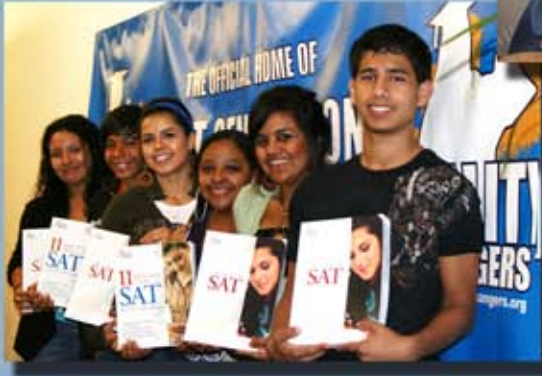


## Princeton Review

All Reality Changers 11th graders receive a \$1,000 scholarship to attend this eight-week SAT preparation course where students learn key test-taking strategies that improve their SAT results.

## Senior Academy

All Reality Changers 12th graders meet weekly with business professionals who guide them through the college application, financial aid, and scholarship process.



# THE REALITY CHANGERS EXPERIENCE

## Community Service

All Reality Changers students volunteer a minimum of 50 hours each school year.



Reality Changers offers service opportunities to its students at least 30 weekends per year....



...which serve tens of thousands of San Diegans annually.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Where does Reality Changers receive its funding?

Traditionally, over 50% of the program's support comes from individuals and families that seek to make a direct impact on the lives of inner-city youth. More recently, The California Wellness Foundation's pacesetter grant of \$225,000 represents how an increasing number of community-based foundations are now seeking to expand the program's measurable results, as well. Also, as churches and service organizations continue to provide key support for capacity building, the students' families host monthly fundraisers to cover the costs of the program's annual Scholarship Banquets held each June.

## Why does it take so long for a student to be accepted into the Reality Changers program?

Since 2008, Reality Changers has had a waiting list of more than 100 eager students seeking entry to the program. Therefore, future applicants should clearly demonstrate how Reality Changers will make a significant impact on their lives. However, while Reality Changers hopes to accept every worthy candidate, it relentlessly must seek new funding sources to meet the high demand of students seeking access to the program's proven formula for inner-city success.

## The mission statement of Reality Changers says that the program provides faith-based leadership training... what does that mean exactly?

Reality Changers began as a youth program at a small church in a rough part of town where it was plain to see how strengthening one's faith was an important weapon to help fight the social ills of the inner city. Today, Reality Changers serves as a model program where students, volunteers, and supporters from a variety of faiths can come together and work towards a common goal - building first generation college students.

## How can I make a large donation to Reality Changers?

First of all, thanks for asking! You can measure how your support will impact many generations to come on pages 10-11. Donations can be made by credit card at [www.realitychangers.org](http://www.realitychangers.org) or you can use the enclosed envelope to send a check - try it now!

If you have a personal wealth manager, Reality Changers' FEDERAL TAX IDENTIFICATION NUMBER is 26-3757305. Our goal is to make donating to Reality Changers as easy as possible. Please call (619) 516-2215 if you have any further questions.

## Global Impact



Reality Changers graduates have expanded their horizons by studying abroad in four different continents!

## A 2009 survey of Reality Changers' 173 volunteer tutors found that:

- 65% are current college students or graduate students
- 35% have already completed their college degrees
- 51% are/were first generation college students

## Furthermore, these 173 volunteer tutors have earned:

- 192 college degrees from
- 19 different states and
- 2 different countries

**VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT**  
[www.realitychangers.org](http://www.realitychangers.org)

# Eye-Popping Numbers

**Over \$1,400,000**

Scholarships awarded by Reality Changers since 2001

**Over \$5,000,000**

Scholarships earned by Reality Changers students from all sources

**126 Reality Changers Students**

Have attended UCSD's Academic Connections a total of 204 times

**207 Reality Changers Students**

Have attended Forest Home Summer Camp a total of 441 times

**Top 5**

Reality Changers' ranking among Educational Taglines in the U.S. for "Building First Generation College Students"

**#2**

UCSD's National Impact ranking by Washington Monthly.  
Reality Changers is proud to partner with a world-class university!

**#1**

Reality Changers sends more high school students to summer programs at UCSD and Forest Home than any other organization

**Over 500**

College applications submitted by the 40 seniors of RC's Class of 2010. One of Reality Changers' 12th graders, Michael Gaulden, has shared his college essay with you (at right).

**Michael Gaulden**  
*Reality Changers Class of 2010*

Ever since I can remember, I have been a slave of the world. I have been whipped and punished every time a glimmer of light shone through my horizons. Why? Because from June 1998 through July 2009, my family was oppressed by homelessness.

I've slept next to the people that you see aimlessly wandering the city and I've ate beside the same people you see sleeping on the sidewalk. Yet when I see those people now, I see myself. We were laughed at together. We were persecuted together. We cried together. These tears were my constrained ambition leaking through my eyes.

Mine eyes have seen freedom deprived as childhood friends have been gunned down, both my father and my grandfather were sentenced to life in prison, and my great grandfather was violently murdered. They call us "at risk" youth and with each generation the "risk" becomes even greater. But where does the risk stop? It stops with me.

In fact, as my family traveled across the United States along our own underground railroad, I have discovered that seeking higher education is my Harriet Tubman. I have stayed at her side by always keeping my overall GPA above a 3.0 and interning at the Monarch School and the San Diego Workforce Partnership.

These experiences have been essential for me to learn how to become an entrepreneur and one day help the battle to abolish homelessness. While it may be true that I was born "at risk" under extreme bondage with homelessness as my oppressor, I am determined to march to college next year as a free man.



# Donate Now

You can help us reach our annual goals!



**\$25,000**

Equals  
25,000 hours of  
Community Service  
provided by Reality  
Changers students



**\$50,000**

Equals  
50 students enrolled in  
the Princeton Review



**\$75,000**

Equals  
150 students to  
Forest Home  
Summer Camp



**\$175,000**

Equals  
50 students enrolled in  
UCSD's Academic  
Connections

## Become a member of RC's **CIRCLE OF INFLUENCE**

with any donation of  
**\$10,000** or more  
and receive:

- Two free tickets to Reality Changers' Senior Soiree
- Four free tickets to Reality Changers' Scholarship Banquet
- 50% off the purchase of additional Scholarship Banquet tickets
- Exclusive membership on Reality Changers' Vision Team

## Become a member of RC's **INNER CIRCLE OF INFLUENCE**

with any donation of  
**\$25,000** or more  
and receive:

- Private dinner with two Reality Changers' graduates and Reality Changers Executive Director
- Five free tickets to Reality Changers' Senior Soiree
- Ten free tickets to Reality Changers' Scholarship Banquet
- 50% off the purchase of additional Scholarship Banquet tickets
- Exclusive membership on Reality Changers' Vision Team

**Become a sponsor at Reality Changers' Annual Scholarship Banquet! Call (619) 516-2222**

# Donate Now

Your support makes Reality Changers possible!

## Make An **IMMEDIATE** Impact

With a monthly donation of \$10, \$25, \$50, \$100 or more!

## Make A **LONG-TERM** Impact

**\$250** Provides a bus ride for students to perform 250 hours of community service

**\$500** Provides one Forest Home Scholarship

**\$1,000** Provides one Princeton Review SAT Prep Course

**\$3,500** Provides one UCSD Academic Connections Scholarship

## Make A **LEGACY** Impact

**\$10,500** "Guarantees"

**A Reality Changers College Graduate**

All Reality Changers students who have attended Academic Connections for three summers are on track to graduate from a four-year university (see page 15).



**"The definition of leadership is inspiring people to find their voice."**

- Best-selling author  
Dr. Stephen R. Covey

Best friends growing up, a single decision might have made all the difference for Julio and Miguel in...

## A Tale of Two Students



DATE OF BIRTH	September 21, 1988	September 21, 1988
CHILDHOOD RESIDENCE	29th & A Street	28th & A Street
STYLE OF HOME	One-bedroom apartment	One-bedroom apartment
SIZE OF HOUSEHOLD	5	5
NUMBER OF SIBLINGS	One younger brother, one younger sister	One younger brother, one younger sister
SCHOOLS ATTENDED	All but one the same as Miguel	All but one the same as Julio
MIDDLE SCHOOL MEMORIES	Sitting next to Miguel in 7th & 8th grade	Sitting next to Julio in 7th & 8th grade
TYPICAL MIDDLE SCHOOL GPA	1.17	1.17
DEFINING MOMENT IN LIFE	Joining Reality Changers between 8th & 9th grade	<u>NOT</u> joining Reality Changers between 8th & 9th grade
HIGH SCHOOL MEMORIES	Attending UCSD's Academic Connections and Forest Home three times each	Ditching class, Selling drugs
HIGH SCHOOL PERFORMANCE	Started in ESL classes, Ended in Advanced Placement Classes	Dropped out of the 11th grade
DURING THE SAME WEEK THAT EACH TURNED 18 YEARS OLD...	Left for UC Santa Barbara, All expenses paid	Arrested for 1st-Degree Murder
FACED WITH...	Earning \$1,000,000 more in his lifetime than a high school dropout	\$1,000,000 bail
YEARLY COST OF ATTENDANCE AT EACH INSTITUTION	\$25,000	\$49,000
CHARGED WITH...	The responsibility of becoming the first in his family to graduate college	50 years to life

## Did You Know?

The cost of a 50-year prison sentence in California is **\$2,450,000**

This amount could also pay for:

**277** years of tuition at the University of California

**499** years of tuition at California State University

**3,926** years of tuition at a Community College



Take a closer look

Since 1984, California has built:  
21 new prisons  
4 new universities

## Just how does Reality Changers actually “change reality” for inner-city students?

The next six pages show how Reality Changers has:

- lowered high school dropout rates
- increased college graduation rates
- defied local homicide rates
- broken the cycle of incarceration
- decreased teen pregnancy rates
- outpopularized the use of illegal drugs

# REALITY

**50%** Dropout rate of Latino students in six of California's ten largest school districts

**\$266 million** Yearly economic savings for San Diego County if its dropout rate was cut by 50%

**\$12 billion** Savings for CA if the state dropout rate was reduced by 50%

## Take a closer look

**60%** Reality Changers graduates whose mother and/or father did not finish middle school

**83%** Reality Changers graduates whose mother and/or father did not finish high school

# REALITY CHANGED

**3%** High school dropout rate for Reality Changers students



"A counselor in first grade said that only one out of every one hundred students at my elementary school will attend college. I can't wait to go back and tell them the news."

- Recent college graduate Jonathan Villafuerte (Reality Changers '05)



# REALITY

**56%** of college enrollees in the United States graduate in six years or less



"After earning scholarships from Reality Changers to attend UCSD's Academic Connections three separate times, I was convinced that I'd be a successful first generation college student."

- UCLA student Carlos Gomez (Reality Changers '06)

# REALITY CHANGED

Reality Changers'  
Six-Year College Graduation Rate

**71%** for Reality Changers students who attend UCSD's Academic Connections once

**85%** for Reality Changers students who attend UCSD's Academic Connections twice

**100%** for Reality Changers students who attend UCSD's Academic Connections three times



# REALITY

San Diego is the 6th safest large city in the U.S., yet:

**1 out of 3** Reality Changers students lives within a single square block of a homicide since 2003

**8½ out of 10** Reality Changers students live within four blocks of a homicide since 2003



"In 2005, both of my parents passed away under violent circumstances. I was at UCSD's Academic Connections when I heard the news, and Reality Changers has been a constant source of support ever since."

- Program Assistant Ariana Torres (Reality Changers '07)

# REALITY CHANGED

Of the Reality Changers students that lived within a single square block of a homicide:

**52%** currently attend or have graduated from a 4-year university

**24%** attend a community college

**20%** received some college

**4%** graduated high school but did not attend college

# REALITY

**414 YEARS**

Time Reality Changers parents and older siblings have been sentenced to prison



Take a closer look

Over **65%** of Reality Changers families attend monthly program activities and **100%** of Reality Changers families attend the program's annual events.



Watch Eduardo's U.S. Congress video at [www.realitychangers.org](http://www.realitychangers.org)

# REALITY CHANGED

**3 days**

Time Reality Changers students have spent in jail



"I once faced six years of juvenile incarceration, but Reality Changers showed me how to change my life. Now, I've won first place engineering prizes at UCSD, been honored by the U.S. Congress, and shared my story with thousands of people from around the world."

- Eduardo Corona (Reality Changers '10)

# REALITY

**53%** Latinas who get pregnant at least once before the age of 20

**69%** Latina moms who drop out of high school



"Thanks to Reality Changers, I can be glad that I am not one of the statistics of teen pregnancy."

- San Francisco State student Donna Pineda (Reality Changers '09)

# REALITY CHANGED

**1** out of **107** Reality Changers females has become pregnant while in high school

**0** Reality Changers students have dropped out of high school due to pregnancy



# REALITY

**\$12,000**

Estimated societal cost of drug use per year per user

**\$58 billion**

The cost of underage drinking in the U.S., enough to buy every public school student a new state-of-the-art computer



Take a closer look

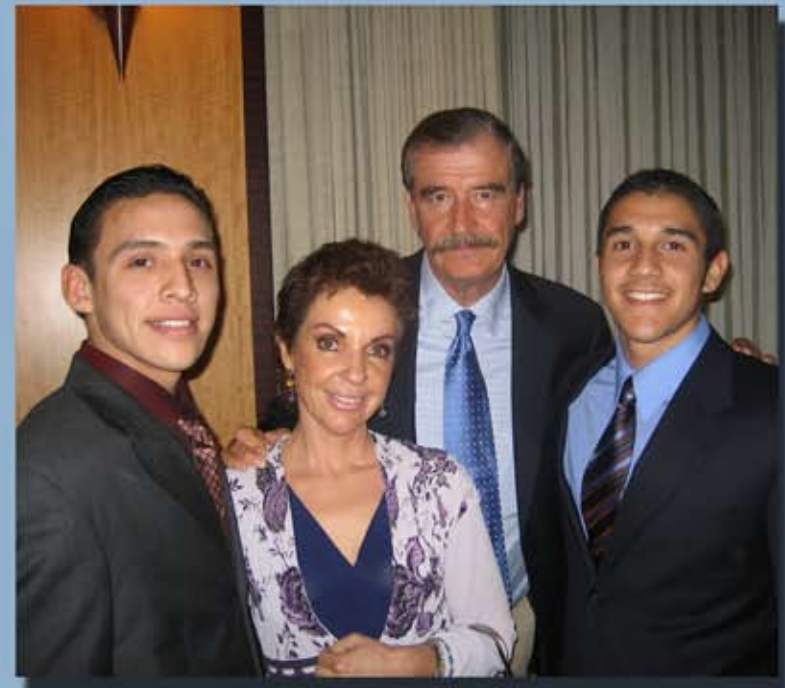
SONY Corporation actually does give a state-of-the-art laptop to every Reality Changers graduate who leaves their family's home to attend a four-year university.



# REALITY CHANGED

**0**

Reality Changers students who have tested positive for drugs after 8 years of random testing



"As both of us seek to become public servants, Reality Changers has shown us how leading healthy lifestyles is the key to being positive role models."

- Harvard student Jesse Sanchez (Reality Changers '09) and CSULA student Robert Silva (Reality Changers '09), with former Mexican President Vicente Fox and his wife, Marta Sahagun

# Reality Changers' Constitution

**Article I** - All members must maintain a 3.0 GPA or above. All members who maintain a 3.5 GPA or above attend the UCSD Academic Connections program to receive college credit. Only the best of the best will go.

**Article II** - All members must attend the weekly Reality Changers program and turn in all progress reports and final grades.

**Article III** - All members must have no involvement with alcohol, drugs, gangs, or sex. These are all problems that teens bring upon themselves. Who needs more problems? We have way too many other things to be concerned about.

**Article IV** - All members must pass a random drug test given at least once every year.

**Article V** - All members must show up with an open mind, work hard, and tell the truth.

**Article VI** - All members must participate with active membership in at least one school activity, such as a club or a sport.

**Article VII** - All members must be role models in their community for 25 hours per year. All members must contribute 25 hours of service to the Reality Changers program each year, as well.

## CITATIONS

- p.9 National Tagline. Competition conducted by [www.gettingattention.com](http://www.gettingattention.com); National Impact Rankings from Washington Monthly, Sept/Oct 2009, p.16
- p.12 cost of attendance at UCSD based on 2009-10 estimates at <http://financial.ucsb.edu/Budget.asp>; cost of incarceration at [www.cdcr.ca.gov/Divisions-Boards/Adult\\_Operations/docs/Fourth\\_Quarter\\_2008\\_Facts\\_and\\_Figures.pdf](http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/Divisions-Boards/Adult_Operations/docs/Fourth_Quarter_2008_Facts_and_Figures.pdf)
- p.13 costs of tuition based on 2009-10 estimates; for UCSD - <http://ucsd.edu/current-students/finances/financial-aid/budgeting/undergraduates-20092010.html>; for SDSU - [http://arweb.sdsu.edu/es/admissions/res\\_cost.html](http://arweb.sdsu.edu/es/admissions/res_cost.html); for CACC - [https://admission.sdccd.edu/prospective/financial\\_aid.htm](https://admission.sdccd.edu/prospective/financial_aid.htm)
- p.14 <http://www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/news/pressreleases/dropout05.php> (Los Angeles, San Diego, Fresno, Oakland, Sacramento City, and San Bernardino City)
- p.14 [http://cdp.ucsb.edu/dropouts/pubs\\_cityprofiles.htm](http://cdp.ucsb.edu/dropouts/pubs_cityprofiles.htm) (San Diego)
- p.15 <http://higheredinfo.org/dbrowser/index.php?submeasure=27&year=2007&level=nation&mode=graph&state=0>
- p.16 San Diego's ranking based on FBI's 2008 Crime Statistics
- p. 17 projected life sentences counted as 50 years
- p.18 [http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/espanol/PDF/latino\\_overview.pdf](http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/espanol/PDF/latino_overview.pdf)
- p.19 <http://www.bbbs.org/site/c.1sKPL3PRLVF/b.3440183/k.D4C3/Donating.htm> and <http://www.teendrugabuse.us/teendrugstatistics.html>
- All other statistics were garnered from Reality Changers' internal research and archives.

# Thank You! Thank You! Thank You!



**A million thanks to our hundreds of donors that have given up to \$10,000 and a special thanks to our donors who have given \$10,000 or more:** The Herman Ahlers Family Charitable Foundation, Anonymous, The Biogen Idec Foundation, The Barnabas Group members, The Bravo Foundation, Jeff & Sally Busby, The CHAD Project, The Scott A. and Elizabeth V. Christensen Foundation, The California Wellness Foundation, Dave & Judy Cours, Ruth Dawson, The Deer Run Fund, Stephen & Jennifer Dunn, First Presbyterian Church of El Cajon, The Willis & Jane Fletcher Family Fund II, Fletcher Hills Presbyterian Church, Forest Home Summer Camp, Stephen & Ann Hatch, Bradley & Susan Heinrichs, Help From Above, Bill & Susan Hoehn, The Robert & Nancy Hurr Family, Stephen & Lisa Johnson, The Kaplan Family Foundation, Allan & Peggy Keck, Kendall Family Donor Advised Fund, Kiwanis of San Diego, La Jolla Presbyterian Church, Ira Lechner & Eileen Haag, Mira Mesa Presbyterian Church, Oliphant Family Donor Fund, The Princeton Review, Rancho Bernardo Community Presbyterian Church, Rancho Santa Fe Foundation, Mary Lee Roberts, The San Diego Foundation, Sandy & Dana Saxten, Solana Beach Presbyterian Church, SONY Corporation, Darrell & Jill Shrader, Student Quest, UCSD's Academic Connections, and Village Community Presbyterian Church. **Please join us in building MORE first generation college students!**

Which tutoring program  
is California's leader  
in scholarships?



Which organization gives more  
scholarship awards to  
college-bound students than  
any other in San Diego County?



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