

PASADENA JAYCEES FOUNDATION

# ANNUAL REPORT

2024



The **PASADENA JAYCEES** are the

**Most  
Outstanding  
Local  
Chapter  
Organization**

for 2024, as awarded by **JCI USA**

# A Message from *Foundation*

It is with immense pride that I present the Pasadena Junior Chamber of Commerce Foundation's annual report for 2024, a year marked by exceptional growth, impactful service, and prestigious recognition for our dedication to the community.

This past year was truly remarkable. Our signature programs—Operation Santa, Operation Gobbler, and the Five Acres Party—not only continued their vital work but expanded their reach. We also celebrated another successful visit from Kasukabe, welcoming 27 guests and strengthening our international bonds. Incredible community support and dedicated fundraising, like our Annual Bowling Tournament and sold-out Rose Bowl Program Sales, significantly increased our impact.

The dedication of our members did not go unnoticed. 2024 brought unprecedented accolades, including **being named Chapter of the Year by JCI California** and receiving the Harold A. Marks Memorial Award for **Most Outstanding Local Chapter Organization** and the Clarence H. Howard Memorial Award for Best Programming **from JCI USA**. We also received JCI National awards for Program Sales, and Drew McWilliams was named Top Outstanding Chapter President, alongside numerous other state-level awards detailed throughout this report.

This level of recognition is a testament to the incredible energy and commitment within our chapter, which **more than doubled its membership in 2024**.

As we reflect on 2024, we cannot overlook the devastating Eaton Fire and the profound impact this tragedy has had on our community. The Pasadena Jaycees is in the process of initiating a fire relief project for the fall and remains steadfast in its commitment to provide ongoing resources throughout the lengthy rebuilding process. Our hearts are with all those affected by the Eaton Fire.

Deepest gratitude goes out to every volunteer, donor, and partner. Your unwavering support is the engine driving our mission forward. We are energized by this momentum and look forward to making 2025 an even greater year of service and leadership development for the Pasadena community.

- **Mike Wehbe**,  
Foundation President

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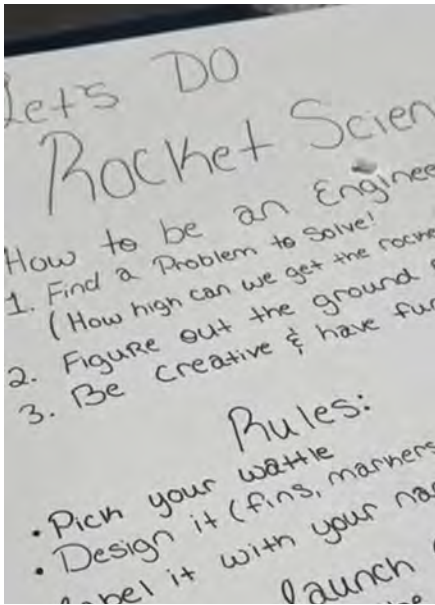
# Five Acres Summer Party

The Pasadena Jaycees partnership with Five Acres, the San Gabriel Valley's oldest non-sectarian child services center, remains a cornerstone of our community service. Five Acres provides critical support, treatment, and education for children facing neglect or abuse.

This past June, the Jaycees once again hosted a party that provided

a day of joy for dozens of foster children. Activities included **water balloons, a slip-and-slide, arts and crafts**, pizza, snow cones, and friendly games. The children at Five Acres benefit greatly by not only having fun but also having the opportunity to see models of success, confidence, and engagement in the Jaycees volunteers.

This project also serves as an **excellent entry point for new Jaycee members**, allowing them to develop project management skills and connect deeply with our service mission. It's a powerful recruitment tool and fosters bonding among volunteers while also providing insight into broader chapter responsibilities and leadership opportunities.



25

foster children  
supported

17

Jaycees volunteers

100%

funded through  
donations

BY THE NUMBERS

"This project is a meaningful reminder of how powerful connection can be—each child lit up when they received individual attention."

- ELIZABETH FRAME, FIVE ACRES CHAIR, 2024



# Kasukabe Homestay Exchange

Since 1985, the Pasadena Jaycees' Kasukabe Homestay Exchange has been building bridges of international understanding and

friendship. Alternating yearly, Jaycees and local students travel to Kasukabe, Japan, or host their Japanese counterparts here in Pasadena, immersing themselves in culture through host families and planned activities.

In the summer of 2024, Pasadena had the honor of hosting **27 members and students from Kasukabe**. We provided them with a whirlwind tour of Southern California, fostering the lifelong bonds and global perspectives this program is known for.

This enduring exchange continues to be a highly sought-after experience. We are proud that the Kasukabe Homestay Exchange was once again recognized by JCI California, receiving the **Top Inter-Chapter Project award for 2024**.



The Kasukabe Homestay Program serves as a transformative cultural exchange that brings together members of both the Pasadena and Kasukabe Jaycees, as well as local high school students. This program goes beyond simple travel or tourism; it is an immersive experience that facilitates language learning, cultural immersion, and personal growth.

# 27

Visitors from Japan

# 39

years of exchange

# 50+

American hosts & family members

BY THE NUMBERS



“Kasukabe is more than an exchange. It is 40 years of lifelong friendships, unbreakable bonds, and unforgettable experiences that have enriched the lives of all involved. I am proud to say that after 40 years, the project is as strong as ever.”

- JARED GONZALEZ, KASUKABE CHAIR, 2024

# Operation Gobbler

For 38 years, the Jaycees have helped ensure families in need can enjoy a full Thanksgiving meal in the comfort of their own homes, thanks to our Operation Gobbler project.

In November 2024, we significantly expanded our reach, **providing Thanksgiving meal kits to 400 local families** (approximately 1,000 individuals), up from 300 families the previous year.

Operation Gobbler provides all the ingredients needed for families to prepare and share a traditional holiday meal together. We are incredibly proud that this year, thanks to early fundraising efforts and generous community support, **the project was entirely funded by donations**. This allowed us to include extra side dishes and even provide volunteer t-shirts, increasing community visibility.

This project strengthens community ties, provides valuable canvassing and relationship-building experience for our members, and deepens our vital partnership with Friends In Deed.

We are also grateful for the support from partners like Dog Haus, Trader Joe's, Aldi, Smart and Final, and Yamashiro.



## \$8,500

In monetary  
donations

## 1,000

people received  
meal kits for  
at-home preparation

## 100%

funded through  
donations

BY THE NUMBERS



"I love this program because it affords everyone, including families from low income households, the dignity of being able to celebrate Thanksgiving in their own homes."

- PHILLIP BELLO ARCE,  
PAST PRESIDENT #92



# Operation Santa

Celebrating its 90th year in 2024, Operation Santa delivered holiday magic on an unprecedented scale! The beloved tradition **served 686 families, with 1,888 children getting visited by Santa** on December 24 – a dramatic increase from approximately 1,300 children the prior year and nearly double the number served in 2022.

Significantly, **67% of recipient families self-reported living below the poverty line.**

More than 220 dedicated volunteers joined forces over three days, sorting tens of thousands of toys and forming Santa Teams to make deliveries on Christmas Eve.

The project's success was bolstered by streamlined data systems and a new leadership structure, which successfully engaged many new members—11 out of 24 committee members were new to the chapter!

We are incredibly grateful to: JCI California, Toys for Tots, Sparks of Love, Pasadena Scottish Rite, the Gamble House, Pasadena Chamber of Commerce, Chick-fil-A, Pedal Spin Studio, Stepping Stones to Learning, Target, Altadena Sheriff Department, Indigo Studio Salon, and many alumni donors. Operation Santa's incredible impact was recognized by JCI California, winning the **Top Community Impact Project award for 2024.**



**“I personally grew up in poverty, so I know firsthand how much this event means to families. It’s an honor to help bring a little Christmas magic to thousands of kids.”**

- SANA FAROOQ, OP SANTA CHAIR, 2024

BY THE NUMBERS

**1,888**

Children received toys and a **visit from Santa**

**67%**

of those served were **below the poverty line**

**220+**

**Volunteers & Santa Teams**



# Expanding Our *Impact*

Beyond our cornerstone projects, 2024 was a year of significant expansion, engagement, and achievement for the Pasadena Jaycees.

Our year kicked off with unprecedented success at the Rose Bowl, where we sold out of official game programs for the first time in years, **raising nearly \$30,000**. JCI USA recognized this effort, awarding Program Sales the Top Outstanding Economic Development Program.

We embraced new initiatives like the Memorial Day Senior Center Dance and revived the Bad Weather Shelter partnership. Looking ahead, we are developing

plans to provide significant support to the victims of the Eaton Fire, ensuring our community efforts address this recent challenge. We also volunteered countless hours with partners like Pasadena Showcase House, Masters of Taste, and Pasadena Humane Society.

This surge in activity coincided with remarkable chapter growth. We began 2024 with 30 members and finished with 63 – more than doubling our ranks! As of early 2025, we stand strong with 70 members. This growth earned national recognition, ranking us as the chapter with the 3rd largest growth in the country at the fall JCI National Convention.



The year culminated in **extraordinary state and national recognition**:

**JCI California:** Chapter of the Year, Top Inter-Chapter Project (Kasukabe), Top Community Impact Project (Op Santa), Best Overall Project (Program Sales), Top Membership Recruiter (Sana Farooq), Chapter Board Member of the Year (Shawn Sauerwein), President of the Year (Drew McWilliams).

**JCI USA:** Most Outstanding Local Chapter Organization, Best Programming by Local Chapter, Top Outstanding Economic Development Program (Program Sales), Top Outstanding Chapter President (Drew McWilliams), Top Recruiter (Sana Farooq).

We invite you to join us in making a difference! Please reach out via [pasadenajaycees.org](https://pasadenajaycees.org) or [info@pasadenajaycees.org](mailto:info@pasadenajaycees.org) to learn more, sign up for project updates, or become a member.



PASADENA JAYCEES FOUNDATION  
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PASADENA, CA  
91103-3562

DONATE TO THE  
PASADENA JAYCEES  
FOUNDATION TODAY!



# Thank You to Our 2024 Donors

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DAVE HOTCHKIN

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