



History San José



Preserving Our Heritage

Annual Report 2023-2024

Preserving our Heritage

Dear Friends,

History San José is about to embark on two new adventures to strengthen the organization for the next five years: a new five-year operating agreement with the City of San Jose and a new five-year Strategic Plan that will give us a road map to follow for the future.

I hope you will enjoy the enclosed 2023-2024 Annual Report illustrating how we continue our journey to become one of the largest and most comprehensive historical organizations in Northern California. We would like to acknowledge and thank our generous donors and members who help us continue our work preserving valuable artifacts and documents, presenting unique programs and events, and offering educational opportunities about our local history.

We hope you will consider joining with us on our five year journey by increased engagement to History San José, through joining our Board of Directors, financial donations, or volunteering. Your involvement is an investment in the future, ensuring that the diverse cultural heritage of San Jose and Santa Clara County are preserved and not forgotten.

For more information on future engagement, please contact Director of Operations Michelle Duncan at 408.918.1053 or mduncan@historysanjose.org.

I look forward to seeing you at our programs and events in the upcoming year!

Bill Schroh, Jr.
President & CEO
History San José



Collection Center

History San José's Collections and Exhibitions team curates and cares for the over 130,000 pieces in its collection, including the Research Library & Archives, most housed in the 45,000+ sq ft warehouse located across from History Park. This year, we accepted over 50 new donations, including the personal papers of LeRoy Brant, the Restaurant Tsgaru neon sign, and San Jose Earthquakes collectibles.

Did you know... you can experience almost 90,000 items from History San José's collection online? These include photographs, home movies, vintage postcards, one-of-a-kind objects, and more.

Collection Highlight: Farmall Tractor



Volunteers in History San José's Restoration Shop restored a 1951 International Harvester Company Model F-Cub tractor this year. The tractor was donated to the museum in 1990 by Jim Wasano. Now in working condition, it is used as part of HSJ's public programming.

The newest building to arrive at History Park is the Southern Pacific Coyote Train Depot, which was moved to the park in May from its location south of San José. The depot was built in 1869 as part of Southern Pacific Railroad's initial line between San Jose and Gilroy, and supported the extensive farming population in the Coyote Valley.



Coyote Train Depot

Membership

History San José continues to add new experiences for our over 200 members. Along with our annual events like the afternoon teas, Cars in the Park, and Children's Holiday programs, we continue to create new activities, including the Bay Area Glass Institute workshop and specialized walking tours of History Park, enabling members to find new ways to explore History San José.

The most popular member exclusive event remains the Red, White, and Blue Member's Picnic. This year saw over 100 members and their guests visit, take part in our crafts, enjoy ice cream, play family activities, have a relaxing picnic on the quiet grounds, and watch the fireworks show courtesy of the San Jose Giants.



Education

History San José catalyzes curiosity for thousands of young learners each year through our nine immersive field trip programs. In the 2023-2024 school year, our Education team engaged over 10,000 students, including 511 virtual field trip attendees.

Our *Title I School Fund*, launched in 2020, offers neighboring low-income schools free access to these interactive learning opportunities, and reimburses schools \$300 for transportation costs. In the 2023-24 school year, we hosted over 1,800 Title I participants -- 18% of the total number of student attendees.



Photo Credit: Sam Ricci

Summer Camp



Photo Credit: Angel Castro

In June of 2023, HSJ hosted the first ever Time Travelers Summer Camp! Our team of Museum Educators designed and facilitated two weeks of fun-filled activities, leading participants through themes of Historic Innovation and Museum Mysteries. With funding from San Jose's Safe Summer Initiative Grant, all 23 participants attended free of cost.

Public Programs

History San José hosts our own public programs: book talks, gatherings, cultural celebrations, and festivals. These are in addition to the many third-party special events and rentals held at History Park,



Photo Credit: Tasi Alabastro

This year, we were proud to partner with the Chinese Historical and Cultural Project, the Japanese American Museum of San Jose, the Friends of the Japanese Friendship Garden, the Viet Museum, and Mosaic America, to present the first ever South Bay Asian American and Pacific Islander Festival. The inaugural festival welcomed over 800 visitors, and we can't wait to see how it grows!

In addition to our newest festival, we continued to expand and improve our existing annual programs with the help of growing partnerships, adding a women-owned lowrider show and poetry lounge to our Women's Heritage Day, community booths to San José Roots, and children's activities to Spirit of '45.

Unique public programs this past fiscal year included a live demonstration of wet plate photography, and a book talk with a historical romance author.



Photo Credit:
Dulce Fernandez

History Park

Special Events & Rentals

Visitor Experience

History San José couldn't accomplish a fraction of what we do without the help of our dedicated volunteers. This past year, volunteers logged over 8,526 donated hours!



Our volunteer docents allow us to welcome visitors into the buildings of History Park. With the help of 13 new docents (and our more experienced ones, of course), at least 10,467 people accessed park buildings on the weekends. This is in addition to the nearly 150,000 guests who visit the park annually for regular visits, public programs or special events.

Our Gift Shop reopened on a permanent basis this year, welcoming 4,300+ people through its doors & bringing in over \$11,000 in sales.

The Neon Courtyard at History Park

Two iconic signs from San Jose's neon sign heritage -- Orchard Supply Hardware, and Stephen's Meats Dancing Pig -- are displayed at History Park, with a third planned for 2025. These signs, once vibrant markers of urban life, are now symbols of the city's history, capturing the imagination of passersby.

Preserving and showcasing them serves as a living testament to San Jose's evolving heritage.

We hope to feature smaller neon signs from local businesses already in our collection in a future "neon courtyard" between the current displays. The courtyard will celebrate the artistic creativity and storytelling represented by neon.



History San José's Special Events department assists outside organizations & our affiliates with hosting events at History San José sites. History Park welcomed over 50 events and drew an impressive 100,000 visitors. This season highlighted the versatility of our spaces, with events ranging from non-profit fundraisers to city employee picnics, car shows, and cultural festivals. Seven cultural festivals showcased the richness of our community, including Vietnamese, Indian, Portuguese, and Chinese celebrations.



Our affiliates played a key role in activating the park year-round by hosting 21 different educational programs, community workshops, and cultural festivals.

Events such as Scout-O-Rama or the Christmas in the Park Drive-Thru highlighted the capacity of History Park to support major community events. This year reaffirmed our mission to serve as a cultural and community hub, bringing people together through history, heritage, and celebration. We are always accepting new event applications; please visit our website if interested in hosting your next event with us!



Facilities

History San José's Facilities Department had a highly productive fiscal year, achieving significant progress on maintenance and operational projects including new roofs on the Empire Firehouse, Zanker House, and Markham House.

HSJ maintained strong collaborations with key partners, including Christmas in the Park, Spirit of '45, Italian Family Festa, the Rotary Club BBQ, and others. Throughout the busy event season, we supported event setups by answering infrastructure-related questions and coordinating the movement of equipment to ensure smooth operations.



We communicated with city departments, contractors, and HSJ staff to address disruptions to activities like educational programs and event preparations, often handling last-minute or after-hours communications.

This year, we oversaw routine maintenance, including gutter cleaning, fire system testing, HVAC servicing, and elevator inspections, while also resolving unexpected issues including termite treatment and beehive removal. Notably, a new park wide wi-fi system was installed, supporting the addition of security cameras at the entrance gates.

History Park

With the help of our dedicated volunteers, we completed minor maintenance projects around the park: replacing rotten boards on steps and building walls, painting small areas, replacing numerous dead light bulbs, and cleaning up after storm damage.

Regular upkeep included leaf and debris cleanup, weed trimming, occasional grass mowing, and hedge and bush pruning. In addition, we updated displays in the Pacific Hotel gallery to refresh the *Valley Memories* exhibit for the new year.



Photo Credit: Roger Lundgren

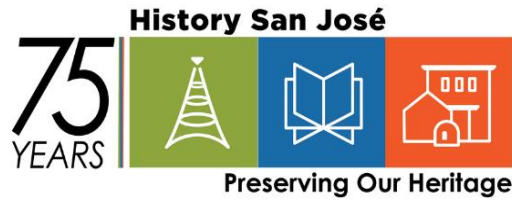
Ongoing projects include updating our Emergency Response Plan, roof repairs, painting projects, HVAC upgrades, and responding to sudden issues such as water pipe failures.



Photo Credit: Michelle Duncan

All these accomplishments were made possible through the tireless efforts of the History San José staff, our volunteers, our partners, and the invaluable support of various City of San Jose employees. Thank you to everyone for your hard work and dedication!

CELEBRATING 75 YEARS OF PRESERVING THE PAST



This year marks a significant milestone for History San José as it celebrates its 75th anniversary. Originating in 1949 as part of the State of California's Centennial celebration, this cherished institution has been a cornerstone in preserving and sharing the rich history of San Jose and the Santa Clara Valley.

Over the decades, the museum has been operated by the City's Historic Landmarks Commission, the Parks & Recreation Department, and since 1998, a separate non-profit organization. While the name may have changed over the decades, the institution has continued to grow into a dynamic cultural resource, providing education, inspiration, and a sense of community.

History San José has played a vital role in bringing history to life through innovative programming. Annual events, such as Cars in the Park and Spirit of '45, are community favorites, drawing visitors of all ages. Educational programs, workshops, and docent-led tours ensure that the stories of the past remain relevant and engaging for future generations.

We continue to look forward to the future and are committed to expanding our reach and embracing new technologies to make history accessible to even broader audiences.

We invite everyone to join us in honoring the past and envisioning an exciting future. Here's to another 75 years of storytelling and connection!



Photo Credit: David Monley



Photo Credit: Catherine Mills



Photo Credit: San José Historical Museum



Photo Credit: David Monley



Photo Credit: San José Historical Museum



Photo Credit: David Monley



Photo Credit: San José Historical Museum

Donors

History San José is grateful for these individuals, corporations, foundations and government agencies that supported our programs and operation during the 2023-2024 fiscal year:*

\$50,000+

Anonymous
Robert Bettencourt
City of San Jose
Hugh Stuart Charitable Trust

\$2,500-\$5,000

Lyle Merithew & Sandy Swirsky

\$500-\$2,500

Chinese Historical & Cultural Project
Debbie Gong-Guy
Carl & Marianne Salas
Rotary Club of San Jose
Rod Diridon, Sr. & Gloria Duffy
Jimm & Rhonda Vosburgh
John & Carrie Woolley
The Robert S. Kieve Foundation
Daylight Foods
Michelle Covert
Jonathan Wong

\$10,000 - \$50,000

Farrington Historical Foundation, Inc.
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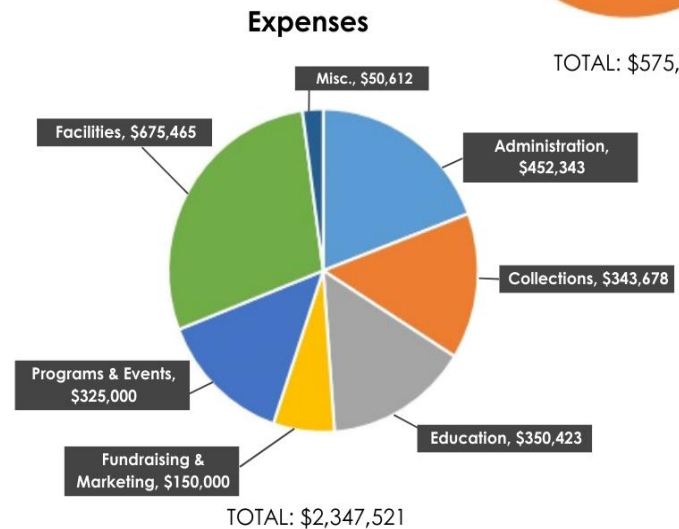
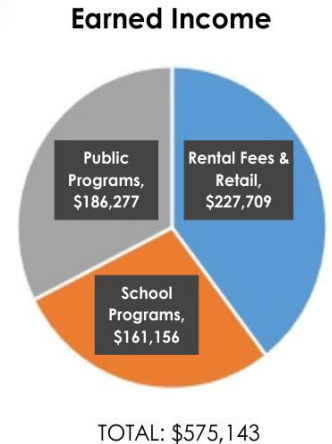
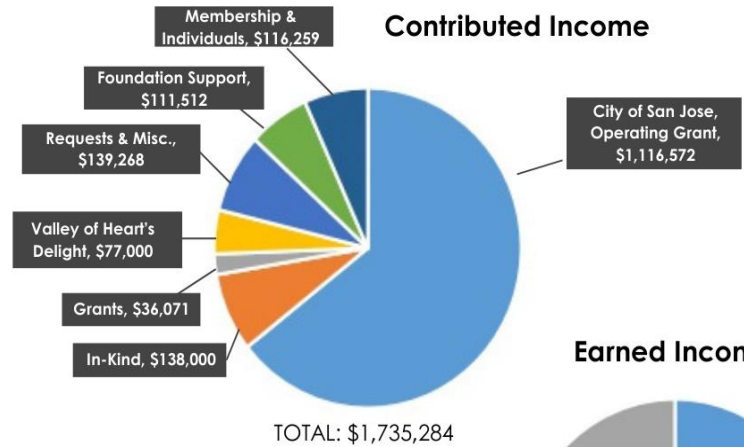
\$5,000 - \$10,000

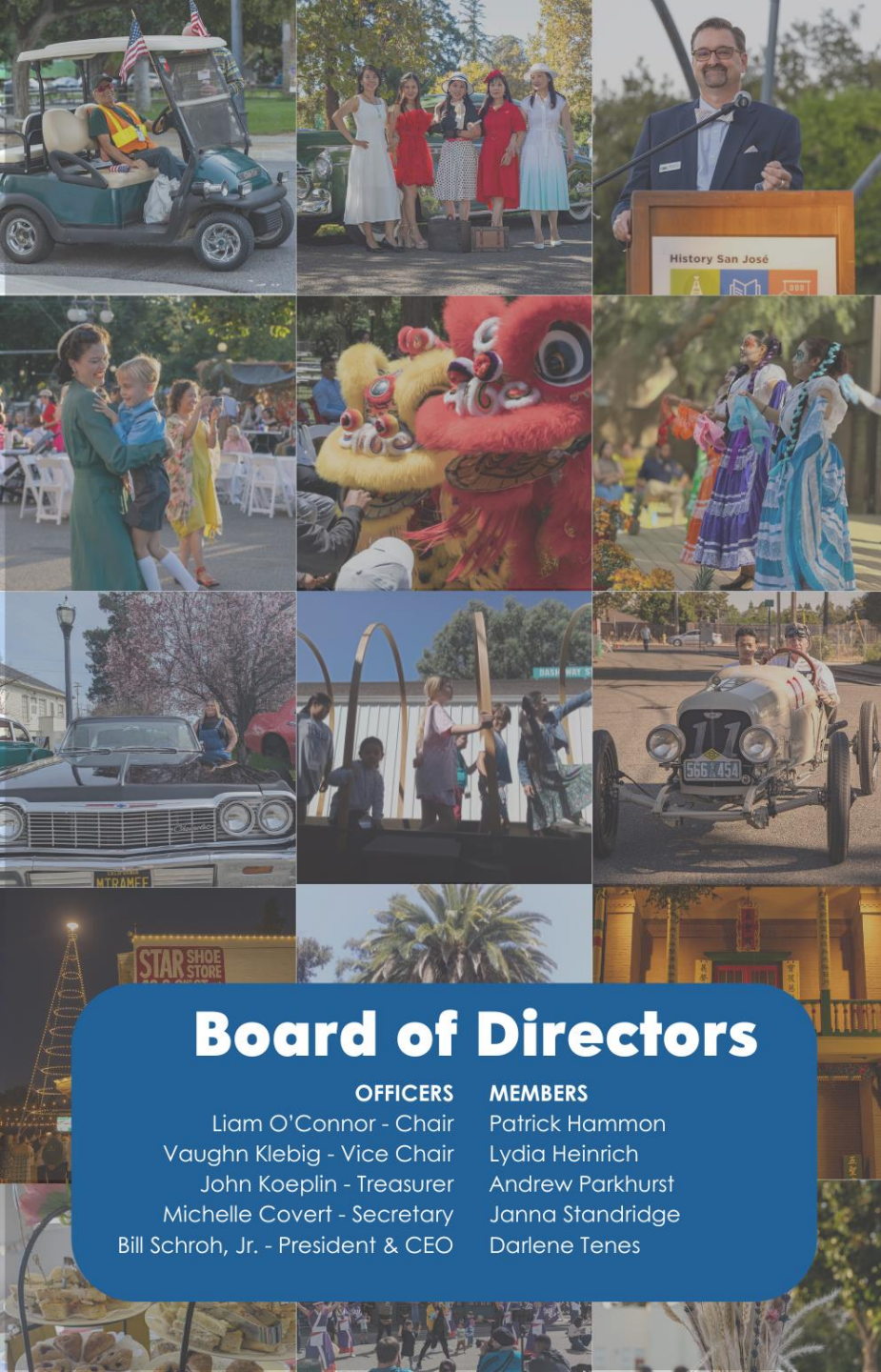
Alcario Castellano
San Jose Downtown Association
Tony & Paulette Ornellas

* Donors of \$500 or greater between July 1, 2023, and June 30, 2024.
Does not include Valley of Heart's Delight support nor membership dues.

Apologies for any omissions! Please contact us if we left you out:
mduncan@historysanjose.org.

Financials





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