

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

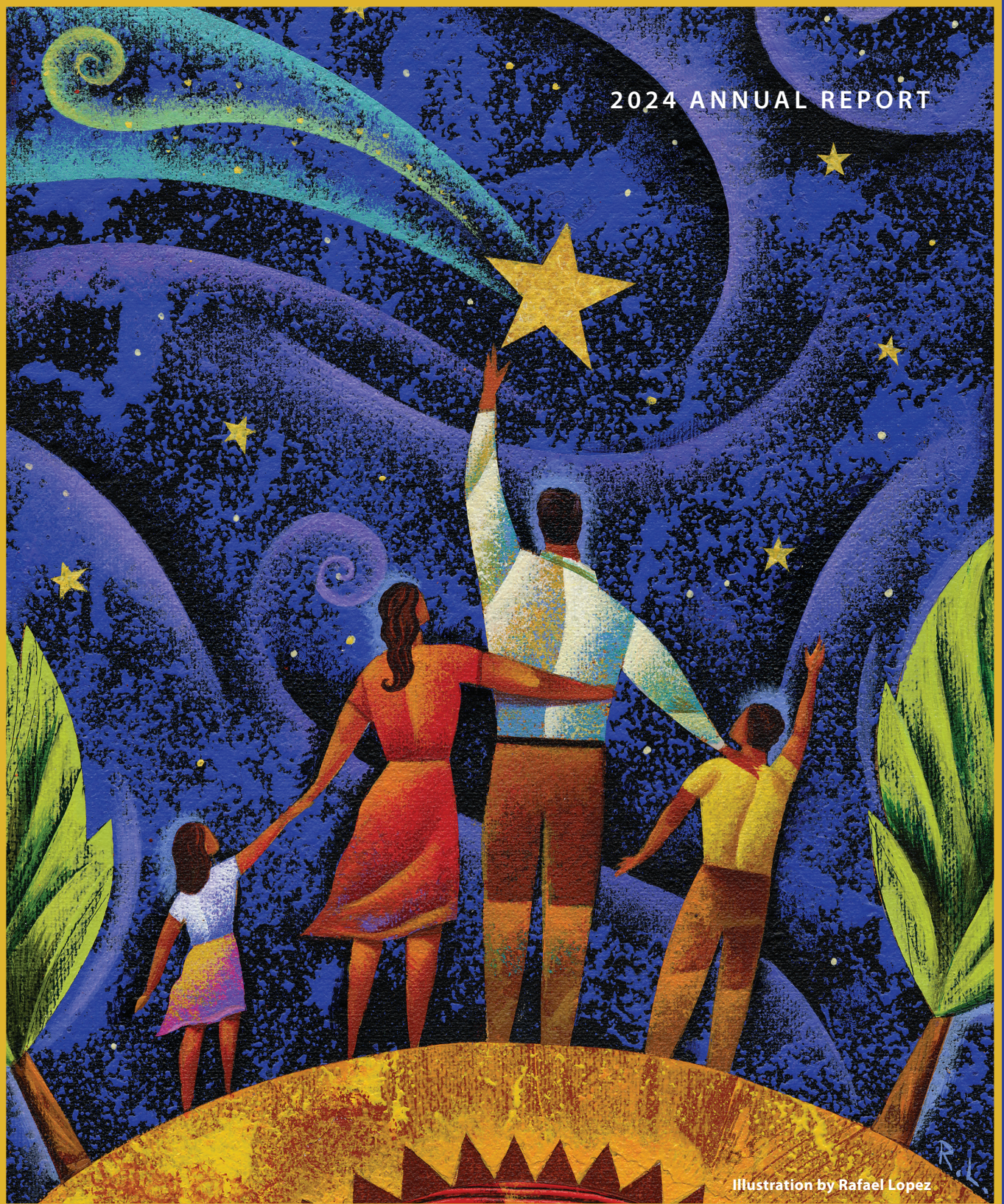


Illustration by Rafael Lopez

GGSC From the Executive Director

Like many of you, I often feel overwhelmed these days by heartbreaking stories of suffering from around the globe. In the United States, political and cultural leaders have declared war on empathy. It's easy to succumb to despair.

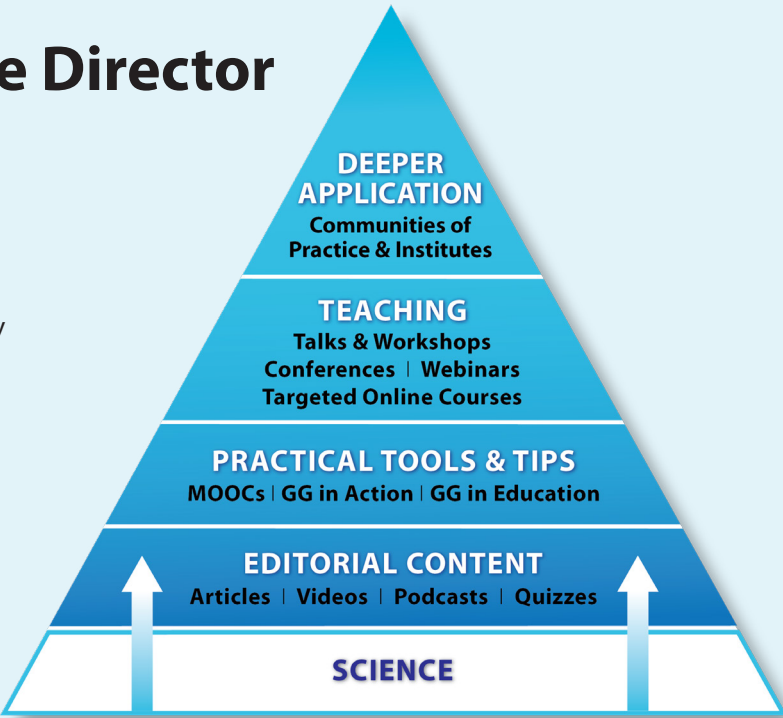
But I'm lucky: Through my work at the GGSC, I receive daily reminders that another way is possible. Looking back at the past year, our accomplishments give me that same boost of hope, on a bigger scale:

- We published hundreds of uplifting articles and podcast episodes on love, forgiveness, empathy, and more.
- We trained educators from six continents to foster compassion and belonging in schools.
- We helped tens of thousands of college students learn to bridge their differences.
- We launched an ambitious new initiative to develop kind leaders and workplaces.

This is how we see our work today: as an antidote to despair, with reasons for optimism based on actual science, not wishful thinking.

That's the heart of the GGSC's mission. Our work follows a simple but powerful model:

- We turn cutting-edge research on well-being into practical resources—articles, podcasts, workshops, online courses, playbooks, and more.
- We share those resources with millions of people worldwide, particularly with those who support others' well-being.



- We teach people how to apply those resources in their daily lives—in families, classrooms, workplaces, and beyond.

This annual report illustrates how we translate science into practice—through projects on love, connection, kind leadership, and bridging differences. It presents the goodness that you and the rest of the GGSC community helped bring into the world last year. And it demonstrates our commitment to meeting today's challenges with courage, compassion, and evidence-based hope.

Jason Marsh

 Executive Director & Editor in Chief

Scan to learn more.



OUR TEAM AND CULTURE are what make the GGSC special. We are hard-working, invested, and truly “walk the talk.” We care deeply about each other and the communities we serve, and that spirit shows up in the quality of everything we do.

GGSC in the News!



“The Science of Disagreeing Well”



NPR’s *Up First* spotlights the Greater Good Science Center’s Bridging Differences program, with GGSC experts **Allison Briscoe-Smith** and **Juliana Tafur** sharing science-based strategies for navigating disagreement, fostering empathy, and finding common ground across divides.

Scan to read the full article.



Forbes

“How To Build More Connected Work Relationships and Collaborate Better”



GGSC Bridging Differences Director **Juliana Tafur** shares how applying research-based practices—like perspective-taking, moral reframing, and deep listening—can help colleagues bridge differences, reduce conflict, and collaborate more effectively.

Scan to read the full article.



“Practicing gratitude could help you live longer, according to new study”



GGSC Science Director **Emiliana Simon-Thomas** shares three simple, research-backed ways to boost gratitude—from keeping a daily journal to writing thank-you letters and giving more specific thanks—which can improve well-being and even help you live longer.

Scan for more of the GGSC’s media appearances on our *In the Media* webpage!



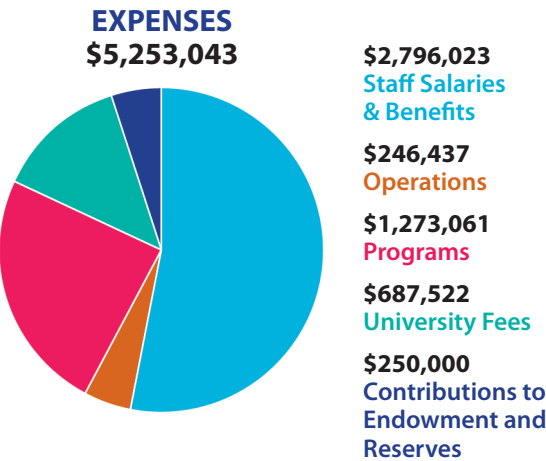
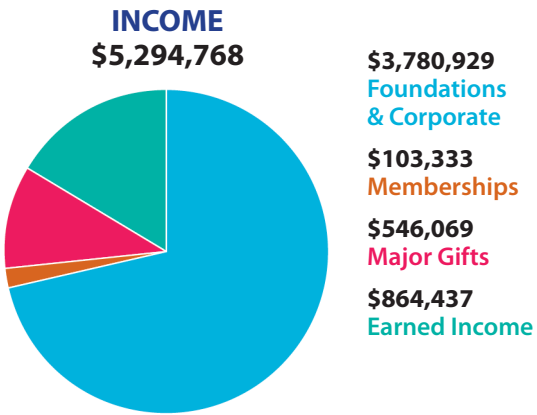
Greater Good by the Numbers

Cumulative through calendar year 2024

Website visitors: **7,385,861** *
 Website pageviews: **14,354,064** *
 Social media followers: **312,642**
 Newsletter subscribers: **542,002**
 Podcast downloads: **60,203,760**
 Online course learners: **1,108,494**

* For 2024 calendar year only

Financials 2023-2024



Fostering Connection at a Time of Conflict



In 2024, social and political divisions in the United States seemed to reach new heights, with a historically combative presidential election, intense conflicts on college campuses, and looming threats of political violence.

In response, the GGSC’s Bridging Differences program expanded its efforts to help people connect, listen to each other, and work together across lines of race, politics, faith, geography, and more.

In 2024, the program deepened its work in one of the most contentious areas of American society—higher education—while launching two new initiatives to support positive connections in Americans’ everyday lives and local communities.



“Together, these efforts show that bridging can be relevant, doable, and impactful for a broad cross-section of Americans,” says Bridging Differences Program Director **Juliana Tafur**. “Embedding it into institutions and communities—not just teaching it as an individual skill—is essential for long-term cultural change.”

The program’s **Higher Education Learning Fellowship** provided in-depth training and ongoing support to leaders across 23 college campuses, helping them develop and implement projects that ranged from new course curricula to campus-wide dialogue initiatives. These projects reached more than 19,000 students and 2,200 faculty and staff. Fellows found the experience invaluable—for instance, when surveyed after the fellowship ended, 100% of respondents said they had gained the skills and strategies to help others engage in constructive dialogue across group lines.

Through **Belonging Colorado**, which was launched in June 2024, the Bridging Differences program is partnering with the Denver Foundation to counteract social divides

and expand Coloradans’ understanding of “who belongs” in their state. After the Denver Foundation provided grants to 14 community-based organizations that want to bridge divides—of age, race, faith, and more—across diverse regions of Colorado, the GGSC trained these local efforts in research-informed best practices that they can adapt to their own contexts. Over the next two years, we will provide ongoing support to these projects as they implement and evaluate their ideas. We hope that the model is one that other states can emulate.

During the heated 2024 election season, thousands joined our **Campaign for Connection**. Every day for a week, they received simple, science-based practices to reduce stress, build empathy, and engage more constructively across differences, including ways to listen with compassion and identify common goals with people who might have a different point of view. Participants shared that the campaign helped them feel “more hopeful” and “better equipped to navigate difficult conversations.” One called it “a lifeline in a time of disconnection.”

“Bridging our differences is not just an act of dialogue, it’s an act of democracy-building,” says Juliana. **“In an era of fragmentation, it’s one of the most hopeful practices we can offer—to ourselves, to our communities, and to the future of our country.”**

Scan for more on our Bridging Differences program.



The Power of Love Stories



At a time of widespread loneliness and extreme social division, the GGSC is promoting a powerful antidote: love. In 2024, we launched our **Spreading Love Through the Media** initiative to highlight how love can promote compassion and connection—and to inspire more people to appreciate their own capacity for love.

Over three years, the GGSC will produce research-based multimedia resources that expand the public’s understanding of love—extending well beyond romantic love to include compassionate love, love in friendships, and love across differences.

With generous support from the **John Templeton Foundation**, we are also funding 23 other media producers to create their own stories on love, providing them with grants of between \$5,000 and \$50,000 and pairing them with scientific advisors to guide their work. Grantees range from freelance writers to social media influencers to outlets like the Boston Globe and Tumblr,

a science podcast for kids. The project has received additional funding from **Action Family Giving** and **Unlikely Collaborators**, and it is being led by our new special projects editor, **Katherine Reynolds Lewis** (pictured).



Additional activities will include: **Grantee Convenings and Community:** Two events bringing together grantees and love researchers, with virtual meetings in between.

Public Radio Special: An hour-long program for public radio stations exploring different aspects of the science and experience of love.

Love Summit: A major public event featuring talks by researchers, educators, and other thought leaders.

Scan for more about the “Spreading Love Through the Media” initiative.



GGSC Research Fellows

Each year, the GGSC awards fellowships to UC Berkeley students whose research supports the Center’s mission. Many of these fellows have gone on to top positions at some of the most distinguished universities in the world, creating a new generation of scientific researchers. Here are three of the GGSC’s most recent cohort of graduate fellows.

Lindsey Burnside, a doctoral candidate in psychology is studying well-being, coping with



discrimination, and residential segregation. As a GGSC fellow, Lindsey is investigating contextual factors of discrimination experiences that impact well-being, as well as potential protective factors.

Chris Soria, our Libby Fee Graduate Research Fellow, is a Ph.D. student in demography, focuses on how social interactions



can enhance cognitive health among aging populations. Using causal inference methods to explore Social Network Cognitive Buffers (SNCBs), a concept he developed, he seeks to identify whether diversity in social networks can uniquely impact cognitive aging.

Sophie Regan, a second-year Ph.D. student in psychology, focuses on language development



—how young children learn to articulate their emotions and how their language skills relate to their self-regulation abilities. Her research aims to empower teachers to use evidence-based approaches in their preschool classrooms.

Scan to meet more of the GGSC Research Fellows.



In the Workplace, Kind Leaders Win

A Q&A with Kia Afcari, Director of Greater Good Workplaces



Kia Afcari joined the Greater Good Science Center in November 2024, bringing decades of experience as a leadership, culture, strategy, and diversity consultant. Previously, as a Senior Culture Consultant at UC Berkeley, he won the Chief Learning Officer Silver Innovation Award. His work at the GGSC has focused on promoting kindness and connection in the workplace.

Why is the concept of “kind workplaces” so important today?

Because our current political leadership is demonstrating the opposite idea—that you must be ruthless to succeed. In fact, studies have shown that kindness and success go hand in hand. A study of 3,500 CEOs of publicly traded companies, with a deep analysis of their profits, found that CEOs who led with kindness consistently outperformed the others.

What is your vision for growing the GGSC’s presence in workplaces?

In December, we’ll be launching the **Kind Leaders Challenge**, through which prominent CEOs will publicly commit to leading with kindness. We want to register

about 1,000 people in the next four years, then increase that number exponentially. We hope to do a study of that program and eventually publish the findings in a book. We’re currently offering workshops and keynote lectures and well-being interventions to companies across a range of sectors, including tech, health care, and education.

What do you hope the long-term impact of this program will be?

We want to raise the level of kindness in whole systems. The most impactful process will be moving beyond the HR department, which already understands the importance of kindness in the workplace, to the CEO, who determines a company’s culture.

Scan for more on our Greater Good Workplaces program.



Summer Institute: Kindness in Schools

In July 2024, the GGSC hosted a three-day institute for educators, **“Kindness in Schools: Compassion, Belonging, and Community.”** More than 60 participants from six continents explored how to infuse more kindness and compassion into their schools and classrooms.

“It’s very inspiring to spend time with people who are just as committed to and excited for this kind of work,” said one participant. **“I feel reinvigorated and ready to return to my school communities with ideas for positive changes.”**

Scan for more on our Greater Good Education program.



Highlights from *Greater Good Magazine*

Greater Good magazine features writers with diverse perspectives on the science of a meaningful life. Recently we asked several of them to share why they value *Greater Good*. Here are excerpts of their responses.



Shanna Brewton-Tiayon, author of “Self-Care Won’t Fix Employee Burnout”: I realized during my last year of grad school that I wanted to apply science to solve real-world problems and translate research to help others do

the same. *Greater Good* has been a wonderful partner in achieving this goal over the past seven years!



Joanne Chen, author of “How Children Think About Their Own Well-Being Online”: *Greater Good* allows me to write about the latest research-backed findings and to provide user-friendly strategies that parents can readily

implement. Parenting advice is everywhere, but I love that this is a place where research is prioritized and where readers can go for advice they can trust.



Gisselle Medina, author of “How Can Immigrants Protect Their Mental Health Right Now?”: I reported a series of articles exploring the well-being of Latino families and communities, particularly at the crossroads of

LGBTQ+, Latino identities, and mental health. To have a platform that not only encourages but values this kind of nuanced reporting was incredibly meaningful—not just for me as a reporter who shares these identities, but for readers who could see themselves reflected in the work.



Sahar Habib Ghazi, author of “Can You Get Emotionally Dependent on ChatGPT?”: *Greater Good* offers a unique platform for me to explore research-based insights on human behavior, relationships, and cultural challenges.

Unlike traditional academic or policy publications, it allows me to translate complex ideas into nuanced stories that engage both experts and everyday readers.



“I read through your emails and very rarely find something that doesn’t apply to my work serving educators, students, and the staff within our education-based non-profit. Thank you for being a reliable, trustworthy, and incredibly insightful resource.”

— A *Greater Good* reader

Our Top 5 Articles of 2024

These pieces received the most pageviews last year.

1. “What *Inside Out 2* Reveals About the Diversity of Emotions,” by Demond Hill Jr.
2. “Feeling Lost? Here Are Four Steps to Finding Your Path,” by Jennifer Belus
3. “Six Misconceptions We Have About Romantic Love,” by Sandra Langeslag
4. “How to Heal Anxious Attachment by Prioritizing Your Own Needs,” by Judy Ho
5. “What’s the Real Reason People Become Homeless?,” by Courtney E. Martin

Check out more articles on *Greater Good*!



You make all of this possible!

The GGSC is not funded by UC Berkeley; our work only continues because of supporters like you.

Learn more at ggsc.berkeley.edu/donate



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