2021 Annual Report
A Note from the Executive Director

An organization reaches its 35th anniversary only with a solid foundation. Throughout the years, our committed community of volunteers and donors have had the foresight to focus on the impact and sustainability of MANA de San Diego (MANASD). MANASD has grown to become a staff team of six full-time employees running four programs, with over 400 paid members, and a budget of one million dollars. This year we’ve focused on our infrastructure -- to build an even stronger team. Thanks to the countless of pro bono hours dedicate by a handful of volunteer leaders, HR experts in their field, we completed Strategic Plan Goal #1 “to improve staff structure and systems...” This work sets us up into the next decade to sustain our deep impact on Latinas, their families, and our community. Though our goal has been accomplished ahead of schedule, our strategic plan is a living document that we will continue to update and work on to strengthen MANASD.

I know we are stronger when we work together. My focus is to grow smart alliances that will increase our impact and influence. I borrow from Martin Luther King’s vision and words when I say that MANA de San Diego is a “beloved community,” one in which people come together to uplift each other.

Thank you for being part of our beloved community.

Thank you to our amazing MANASD staff for making our work possible!

Valerie A. Gómez
Programs Manager

Fernanda Canchola
Membership & Events Coordinator

Johanna Lara
Communications & Programs Coordinator

Christine Roberts
Operations Coordinator / Scheduler

Bianca Arellano
LSLP Fellow
For 35 years MANASD has worked on building a beloved community of support to empower Latinas through education, leadership development, community service, and advocacy.

Volunteers
For 25 years MANASD was an exclusively volunteer run organization. As our programs have grown, so too have the opportunities for volunteers to support MANASD, including on our Board of Directors, our program and event committees, our Advisory Council, and logistical support at our events.

Mentors
MANASD mentors make our programs unique and successful. Through formal one-on-one mentorship for our Hermanitas, ongoing mentorship for our Tias participants, and informal mentorship for our adult members, the MANASD community provides a one-of-a-kind opportunity for Latinas to uplift each other, bringing to life the saying “lift as we climb”.

Donors
Through the steadfast and generous support of our donors, MANASD has the resources to make our impact possible. Whether you contribute through your membership or as a Corporate Sponsor, our donors are an integral part of our MANASD community.
Our 35th year was a banner year!

EMERGENCY FUND

OVER $32K IN EMERGENCY FUNDS DISTRIBUTED TO LATINAS IN NEED

RECORD BREAKING!

$62K IN SCHOLARSHIPS TO LATINAS PURSUING HIGHER EDUCATION

200 LATINAS SUPPORTED THROUGH OUR 4 SIGNATURE PROGRAMS
MANASD supports young Latina students in their life journey by providing them with an exclusive and constant one-to-one Hermanitas Mentor.

MANA de San Diego continues to support our students past the Hermanitas program throughout their time in higher-education.

Investing in the higher education of Latinas, including Hermanitas alumnae, who are pursuing a range of degrees from Bachelors to Doctorates.

Taking aim at the glass ceiling. Continuing the Latina journey to leadership.

MANA de San Diego is a member-led organization with over 500 plus network of members in the community.

MANASD’s beloved community of programs worked together to change lives and uplift Latinas in the following ways:

100% on-time high school graduation rate among Hermanitas Seniors, and 10/12 seniors attending college

62 Latinas in higher education received scholarships - nearly twice the average number of recipients from past years

12 Tias Program Participants graduating from College/ University

30 LSLP graduates
Kimberly Meraz is a MANASD superstar with a long-time connection to several programs within our continuum. Kimberly participated in our Hermanitas and Tias program on her path to completing her Bachelor’s in Chemistry in the midst of the pandemic, the first in her family to earn a college degree. Kimberly credits the Hermanitas program with not only exposing her to careers in STEM and guiding her through the college preparation process but also with helping her develop the confidence she needed to pursue her goals. While in college at U.C. Merced, Kimberly further benefitted from MANASD through the ongoing mentorship she received through the Tias program. The encouragement she received helped her stay focused on completing her degree and the connections she made through Tias helped her obtain a gainful employment as a Chemist after graduation.

To learn more about Kimberly in her own words, click the following media links:

- SD UNION TRIBUNE
- 2021 BRINDIS GALA SPEECH
Andrea Saucedo

Andrea began in the Hermanitas program as a 10th grader in 2014 where she was paired with Sophia Castelo for one-on-one mentorship. When she entered U.C. Irvine in 2017, she felt the support of her MANA community through the care packages and ongoing mentorship from Sophia and other mentors with the Tias program, like Norma Jasso. As her graduation with a degree in Civil Engineering neared, Andrea received invaluable information about such important issues as pay structures, benefits, retirement plans, and employer options that she, like many first generation college students, had not considered. The critical guidance MANA mentors provided Andrea helped her secure her first post-graduation job as an Associate Engineer at SDG&E within months of graduation, a job with pay and benefits that will put her on track for successful career with greater pay equity.

In Andrea’s own words “Sophia was there for every part of the journey: since high school with college applications, throughout college by helping me choose a major, and even now with my current career. I would like to emphasize that Sophia also played a major role in the interview and resume process for SDGE after connecting me with someone who previously worked for Sempra. MANA de San Diego has amazing volunteers that did an amazing job helping me create such a strong and supportive networking system that I am forever grateful for.”
Amanda Corona

Amanda is a woman with a vision and the drive to achieve it. Amanda harnesses her experiences as a non-traditional; first-generation, Latinx/Chicanx, woman to help others achieve excellence in academia. Driven to increase representation of Latinas in higher education and serve as a model for others, as well as her own children, Amanda pushes herself to further develop her skills and knowledge. In 2020, she participated in the Latina Success Leadership Program (LSLP). Benefitting from new relationships forged with LSLP peers, Amanda decided to take her learning and service to new levels. She began a joint Ed.D program through UCSD and CSU San Marcos and took on a board seat with USD’s Alumni Association as the Chair of the Inaugural Diversity, Equity and Inclusion task force. Despite the hardships of the pandemic, she persevered to complete the LSLP, is currently in her second year of the doctorate and is thriving both personally and professionally. Amanda took on new responsibilities at work and in 2021 was promoted to Director of Development at UCSD, a position from which she can continue to increase her impact.

For more on Amanda’s story, click these links:

BLINK UCSD

MANA PROMO
Latina STEM Pathways Initiative

Our decades of work to move youth into professional careers has become an all the more pressing priority for us as we witnessed the high number of Latinas in the service industry contribute to disproportionately high rates of COVID-19 deaths and high unemployment rates among Latinas. This year, MANASD created the Latina STEM Pathways Initiative (STEM Initiative) to addresses both the overrepresentation of Latinas in low-wage jobs and the underrepresentation of Latinas in STEM careers that can provide them increased economic and social mobility.

Through the leadership of our Programs Manager, Valerie Gomez, our STEM Initiative provides STEM career awareness and access to Latinas, building in strong STEM components within our existing continuum of successful programs.

As we reflect on yet another year impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges of this past year, it’s important to celebrate our successes. Together with the support of our staff, members, volunteers, community partners, and donors, MANA de San Diego expanded our services to meet the needs of our participants and broader community.

While we continued to provide our flagship programs and events, including Hermanitas, Tias, and LSLP, we launched an emergency grant program to provide direct relief to students and their families in need. We also set a record-breaking scholarship year in which we awarded over $60,000 in scholarship funds.

As we emerge from the pandemic, we hope to continue enacting meaningful change in the lives of our participants and their families by providing vital resources and supports that enable their wellbeing and success.”

Hermanitas
Our initiative provides STEM focused career exploration activities, as well as skill development through a partnership with the Girl Scouts in which Hermanitas can earn STEM badges.

Tias and Scholarships
The STEM Initiative offers career relevant work opportunities, such as internships, to help Latinas gain the experience they need to leverage their degrees for successful careers STEM.

Latina Success Leadership Program
The STEM Initiative supports the career advancement of Latinas in STEM, increasing not only their representation in STEM careers but also in leadership roles within their fields.
Advocacy has always been at the heart of MANA de San Diego. Since our founding in 1986, we have strived to create systemic change to support the success and well-being of Latinas through relationships with community partners and elected officials. This year, our Advocacy efforts, lead by our Executive Director’s vision, focused on supporting Latina economic well-being as critical strategy for improving the overall well-being of Latinas.

Kim Center Partnership

In the Spring of 2021, MANA de San Diego (MANASD) and the Kim Center for Social Balance (Kim Center) joined forces to provide San Diego with a unique opportunity to measure workplace status for Latina employees and model standardized accountability for the rest of the nation. Through a survey of MANASD members regarding workplace policies and the impact of COVID, MANASD’s partnership with the Kim Center provided one-of-a-kind local data on valuable metrics to spur local action from both employers and elected officials. For more on the data from this study, look at the Snapshot MANASD Summary.
On October 21, MANASD joined other community leaders in the effort organized by Assemblywoman Lorena Gonzalez to mark the day on which Latinas symbolically earn what their white male counterparts earned by 12/31 of the previous year. The press conference and other efforts to raise awareness of the Latina Pay Gap are critical to highlight the pressing need for Pay Equity, particularly since that gap has only grown since the COVID-19 pandemic has pushed many Latinas out of the workforce entirely.
Our programs would not be possible without the support of our community partners. A special thank you to:

- MAAC for hosting our Hermanitas seminars this year
- Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) for their world-class leadership training program for our 6th LSLP cohort.
- Girl Scouts of San Diego and Imperial Counties for providing our Hermanitas with an opportunity to earn their STEM Badges.
A Note from our Outgoing President

As President of MANA de San Diego for the past five years, I’ve had the opportunity to see this organization grow to be the premier organization for Latinas. During my tenure, I have worked to expand our infrastructure to include more staff to provide more support for our programs and committees. Together we have increased this organization’s budget to over a million dollars. We have voted in our first Hermanita representative to the board. We have expanded our programs to provide leadership training to nearly 300 Latina professionals. We have guided and supported hundreds of Latina youth to begin and complete higher education. I am grateful to my amazing board members, staff, and volunteers that have made it all happen, proving that from the classroom to the boardroom, anything is possible.

Thank you to our Outgoing Board Members

Meybol Guerrero
Patricia Alvarez
Norma Colunga
Adriana Mendoza
Sandra Villareal
Fernando Tafoya
Thank you to our large community of supporters that invested in Latina success! MANASD is grateful to the hundreds of volunteers that contribute their time and skill to allow us to leverage the funds we receive.
Our work could not be possible without the financial contributions of a variety of sources.

Thank You!

To Our 2021 Community Partners for Supporting our Mana de San Diego Community.