



# Annual Report 2023-24

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Two Languages, Many Cultures, and One Amazing Place!



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At BLC, our goal is to create a safe, welcoming and caring space where every child feels seen, valued, and empowered. Through programs that blend culture, language, and creativity, we encourage children to grow with open hearts and minds, recognize the beauty in our differences, embrace their identities, and build confidence.

## Letter from the director

Dear Friends,

Each year, BLC grows in ways that remind us why we do this work—because every child deserves a place where they feel valued, supported, and inspired. This year was no exception. We were honored to welcome more bilingual staff from five different countries, each bringing unique experiences and backgrounds that enrich our programs, our team and the lives of our students. Our home at Nokomis Heights Lutheran Church has remained a steady foundation for our community, and for the third year we proudly provided scholarships to 12 families for summer camp, thanks to the ESSER Summer Learning Grant.

Our reach has expanded as well. We continued our partnerships with Windom Community School, Minnehaha Academy, and Risen Christ Catholic School, while also launching cultural and Spanish after-school programming at Richfield Dual Language School. This year, our Nokomis location served families from **five different schools**, growing our Hale Elementary student enrollment by 80% and welcoming students from four new schools we had not worked with before.

These milestones are more than numbers—they represent real children, real families, and real impact. We've seen kids grow from Kindergartners to confident 5th grade graduates, carrying with them not just language skills but also a strong sense of identity, character, and belonging. And what touches us most is that so many of them continue to stay connected to BLC. Many of our graduates return as volunteers, eager to give back to the same community that helped shape them. Some have even asked to work with us, wanting to pass on the same sense of belonging and support they once received.

None of this would be possible without you—our parents, partners, donors, and community members. Your belief in our mission allows us to create a space where every child is welcomed, supported, and encouraged to become a well-rounded individual. We are here for them. We are here for families. And together, we are building something truly special.

Thank you for being a part of this journey with us.

Blanca Raniolo, Msc, MAed

Executive Director and Founder of BLC



## Why our work matters

At BLC, we believe that every child—regardless of background—deserves the opportunity to thrive in a supportive, enriching environment. Our mission is rooted in the belief that every child deserves access to enriching experiences that ignite curiosity and foster creativity. Our vision is to prepare children from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds for lifelong success, ensuring that language and culture are not barriers but bridges to opportunity.

For many families, especially those from low-income and immigrant backgrounds, access to high-quality enrichment programs is limited. Parents work long hours, leaving few opportunities for their children to engage in creative exploration, teamwork, and academic and personal growth outside of school. At BLC, we fill that gap, providing a safe and nurturing space where children can **learn, grow, and connect**—where they are surrounded by role models who understand their backgrounds, speak their languages, and honor their cultures.

Through our bilingual programs, we foster a love for learning by integrating **language exploration, cultural appreciation, science, arts, storytelling and active play**. Students develop skills in creativity, collaboration, listening, and communicating—things that for some families are out of reach due to financial or time constraints. By bringing together native and non-native Spanish speakers, we create a space where children **learn from one another, develop empathy, and gain a deeper understanding of different cultures and perspectives**.

Beyond supporting children, we are here for families. We welcome all regardless of their background. For Spanish-speaking families, our team is able to use our expertise and knowledge to provide guidance, referrals, and advocacy, helping navigate challenges related to their children's education or family challenges. We believe that every family deserves to feel supported, no matter their language or experience.

At BLC, we are more than an enrichment program—we are a place where children **discover their strengths, embrace diversity, and build a foundation for success** in school and in life. Together, with the support of our families, donors, and partners, we are shaping a future where every child has the opportunity to shine!

## Partners in 2023-24

### Schools we partner with

- ❖ Windom Community School
- ❖ Richfield Dual Language School
- ❖ Risen Christ Catholic School
- ❖ Minnehaha Academy
- ❖ Emerson Dual Language School
- ❖ Green Central Dual Language Elementary School
- ❖ Hale Elementary School

### Other partners

- ❖ Phantom Chorus Theatre
- ❖ Richfield Community Education
- ❖ CreateMPLS
- ❖ Nokomis Heights Lutheran Church
- ❖ Westwood Nature Center
- ❖ Minneapolis Public Schools
- ❖ Minneapolis Parks and Recreation
- ❖ University of Minnesota Center for Community-Engaged Learning
- ❖ Macalester College Community Engagement Center
- ❖ Global Biz
- ❖ City Connects
- ❖ LK Arts Academy

### Financial support

- ❖ Nokomis Heights Lutheran Church
- ❖ MN Department of Education
- ❖ Richfield Foundation

### Individual donors

- ❖ Kacee & Kristopher Huisinga
- ❖ Thorne Brustad Family
- ❖ Monisha Walter

## **Our Team**

### **Board of Directors**

Kirstin Buckley - Chair  
Angela Barrera - Secretary  
Terrell Webb  
Alicia Juarez  
Monica Pinto-Moe  
Rodolfo Gutierrez

### **2023 - 24 Volunteers**

Julian Pogemiller  
Nate Revord  
Michelle Lesley  
Leah Lyons  
Jorge Dimas

### **Key Staff**

Blanca Raniolo Olivares, Executive Director  
Alma Sanchez, Program & Marketing Manager  
Elianna Thorne, Grant Writer  
Adriana Morgado, Program Coordinator  
Juan Gonzalez, Program Coordinator



## Our programming this year

Bilingual Learning Center is an enrichment program that is designed to meet the needs of students and families alike through programs that serve students in PreK - 5th grade. We have worked with many students from Minneapolis public and private schools. Our goal is to support language learning outside of the classroom, whether the children are native speakers of Spanish or completely new to the language. Additionally, supporting working families and celebrating the diversity within our community are central to everything we do. We recognize and honor the cultural backgrounds and traditions of all our families, ensuring that each child feels valued and supported. Our core values emphasize creating a welcoming environment where all feel cared for, promoting equity, and fostering responsibility. Our vision is to close the achievement gap within a dual-language immersion setting through tutoring, academic support, recreational activities, enrichment classes, positive role models, and by encouraging the exploration of interests and the development of skills and creativity.



### Windom Community School

We've offered programming at Windom since 2010.

The programs we continue to offer are before and after school care, classes, and release day camps on no school days for Windom students. We've been part of many changes and growth at this school, and we look forward to continuing to grow and meet new students!

**Students served during 2023-24 academic year: 50**

### Windom Classes:

Chess Club	Taekwondo
Ballet	Cooking
Creative Arts	Cultural Dance

## **Nokomis Heights Lutheran Church**

BLC opened our Nokomis site in 2021 at the end of the pandemic, and we are thrilled to continue our partnership. Nokomis Heights serves as a satellite location for students from Emerson, Hale, and other MPS and surrounding schools. This year, we expanded the number of students we walked with from Hale, continued our walks from Our Lady of Peace, and welcomed three different school buses from Emerson, Sullivan, and Green Central. We launched two mini-classes on artisanal soap making and manicures, bringing our staff's passions and skills to our programs.

**Students served during 2023-24 academic year: 37**



### **Nokomis Classes:**

Artisanal Soap Making	Manicure for kids
Chess Club	Theater
Taekwondo	Cooking
Ballet	Creative Art

## **One-on-One Tutoring Program**

This year, we were grateful to receive a \$2,000 grant from the Richfield Foundation, which allowed us to provide free weekly tutoring sessions for 30 first graders at Richfield Dual Language School (RDLS). Conducted entirely in Spanish, these sessions focused on reading, writing, and math, and were aimed at students who speak Spanish as their first language. Teachers at RDLS identified students who were struggling, and our goal was to provide the targeted support needed to help them reach grade-level expectations. By addressing learning delays early, we aimed to prevent students from falling further behind each year, giving them the confidence and skills to succeed long-term.

In addition to our work at RDLS, we continued supporting students at our main program sites, Windom and Nokomis, helping them improve their literacy and math skills while meeting their classroom goals. We also, for the first time, introduced Spanish tutoring aimed at improving fluency and comprehension, providing two families with the opportunity to enhance their children's understanding and proficiency in Spanish.

**Students served during 2023-24 academic year: 38**

## **Summer Camps June- August**

This year, BLC decided to focus on Spanish by offering five weeks of Spanish-centered activities. We combined learning with recreation in a relaxed bilingual environment, introducing weekly cooking activities, trips to the Pearl Park pool, yoga, STEM, and woodworking. Our adventures also took us to St. Louis

Park Aquatic Park, the Bakken Museum, Staring Lake Park, Como Zoo, and Westwood Nature Center. In





addition, we had the privilege of inviting Talia Morena, a street artist, to speak with the students about what it takes to become an artist in Minneapolis. Our Nokomis site hosted the camp and we were able to offer scholarships to 12 families, making the experience accessible to even more children in the community this year. Thank you for making this possible!

Total grant received \$52,081.41

**Students served during 2023-24 academic year: 48**

### **Risen Christ Catholic School**

RCCS serves a student body that is 95% Latinx, and we are proud to offer before-school care to support working families who need an earlier start to their day. By bringing in Latino, Spanish-speaking role models who closely relate to the students, we have been providing a safe and welcoming environment at RCCS for seven years. Our program offers a

balance of recreational activities, creative outlets, and literacy support, all while ensuring the children have fun and feel supported in their learning and development.

**Students served during 2023-24 academic year: 70**





### **Minnehaha Academy**

We have had the privilege of working with Minnehaha for the past three years. Twice a week, we offer Spanish classes that integrate cultural components such as dance, lessons on Latin American countries and cultures, and engaging art projects. Through these activities, our students have learned the basics of Spanish reading, vowel sounds, comprehension, listening, and speaking—all while exploring different cultures and countries in an enriching manner.

**Students served during 2023-24 academic year: 16**

### **Richfield Dual Language School**

This year at RDLS, BLC celebrated culture and language by offering cultural art and dance classes during the fall, thanks to our valued partnership with Richfield Community Education. These cultural classes had a significant impact on students, as RDLS is a dual immersion program where students deepen their understanding of different countries, cultures, and folklore. By combining recreation with cultural learning, we reinforced students' Spanish skills through engaging activities while highlighting the incredible advantage of being bilingual!

**Students served during 2023-24 academic year: 15**

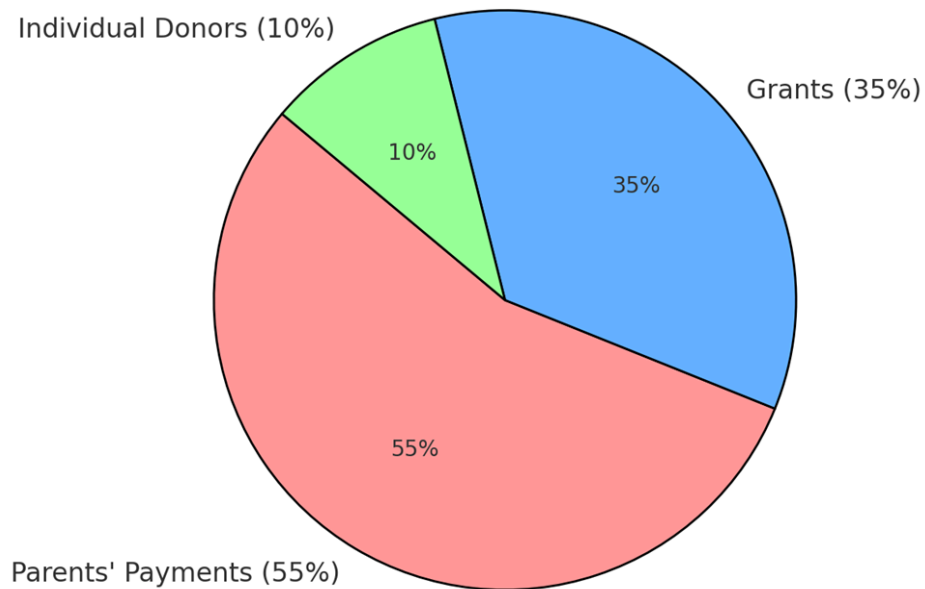


## Scholarships

Through grants, donations, and our Fall Festival Fundraiser, we were able to offer full and partial scholarships to low-income families for our before-school, after-school, and summer programs. Twelve students received full-day, full-week scholarships for summer camp, while four children were awarded scholarships for our after-school program, and one child received a scholarship for before-school care. We envision expanding these opportunities to bring in even more families from diverse backgrounds, ensuring that financial barriers do not limit access to our programs. We believe that enrichment and creativity are for ALL - thank you for supporting our mission.

**Scholarships provided from September 2023 through August 2024: 17**

## Funding Sources for the Program



## Our students at a glance

During the 2023-24 academic year, BLC students attended 9 different Minneapolis schools:

- ❖ Windom Community School
- ❖ Hale Community School
- ❖ Emerson Dual Language School
- ❖ Our Lady of Peace Catholic School
- ❖ Green Central Dual Language School
- ❖ Minnehaha Academy
- ❖ Justice Alan Page Elementary
- ❖ Risen Christ Catholic School
- ❖ Sullivan STEAM School



## Student demographics from primary partner schools

### Windom Community School

Demographics		
Student Race	School	District
Native American	1%	5%
African American	24%	35%
Asian American	6%	5%
Hispanic American	7%	14%
White American	62%	41%
Students	School	District
Receive ELL Services	10%	17%
Qualify for free or reduced lunch	24%	48%
Receive Special Education Services	7%	15%

<https://windom.mpschools.org/> (Check BLC tab)

### Emerson Dual Language School

## Demographics

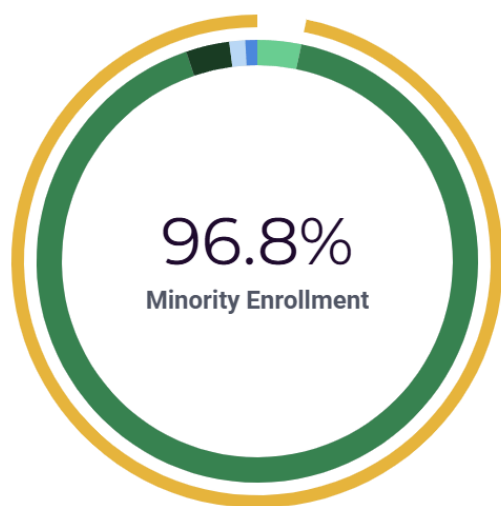
Student Race	School	District
Native American	2%	5%
African American	10%	35%
Asian American	2%	5%
Hispanic American	56%	14%
White American	29%	41%

Students	School	District
Receive ELL Services	44%	17%
Qualify for free or reduced lunch	55%	48%
Receive Special Education Services	10%	15%

<https://emerson.mpschools.org/>

## Risen Christ Catholic School

### Student Diversity ⓘ

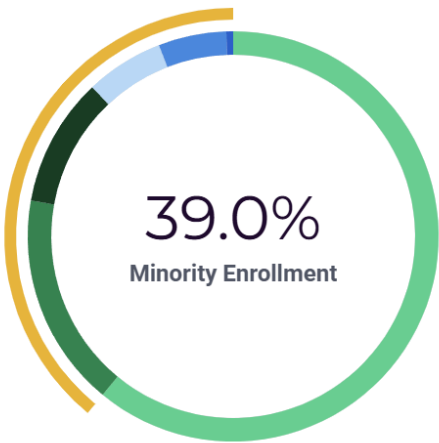


- 96.8% Minority Enrollment
- 3.2% White
- 91.6% Hispanic/Latino
- 3.2% Black or African American
- 1.2% Two or more races
- 0.9% Asian or Asian/Pacific Islander

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander and American Indian or Alaska Native are not included in this breakdown due to an enrollment of 0%.

## Minnehaha Academy

## Student Diversity ⓘ



● 39.0% Minority Enrollment

- 61.0% White
- 16.8% Black or African American
- 10.2% Two or more races
- 6.1% Hispanic/Latino
- 5.3% Asian or Asian/Pacific Islander
- 0.5% American Indian or Alaska Native

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander is not included in this breakdown due to an enrollment of 0%.

## BLC BUDGET 2022 BILINGUAL LEARNING CENTER

REVENUE	SEP-DEC	JAN-FEB	MAR-APR	MAY-JUNE	JULY-AUG	TOTAL
Fundraisers and events	\$3,000	\$0	\$500	\$0	\$0	\$3,500
Grants	\$0	\$0	\$1,150	\$3,450	\$0	\$4,600
Scholarships given	\$1,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,500
Individual donation	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Services	\$50,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$39,924	\$314,924
Total:	\$54,500	\$75,000	\$76,650	\$78,450	\$39,924	\$324,524
EXPENSES						
Employee Salaries and benefit	\$40,000	\$47,000	\$47,000	\$47,000	\$47,000	\$228,000
Employee Payroll Taxes	\$1,718	\$2,778	\$2,778	\$2,779	\$2,770	\$12,823
Contract services ( W-9 form)	\$2,300	\$2,300	\$2,300	\$2,300	\$2,300	\$11,500
Accounting/Audit Services	\$1,230	\$1,230	\$1,230	\$1,230	\$1,230	\$6,150
Lease agreement	\$2,400	\$2,400	\$2,400	\$2,400	\$2,400	\$12,000
Program Supplies (Snack & Materials)	\$1,577	\$1,548	\$1,657	\$1,280	\$750	\$6,812
Field Trip/Activities	\$900	\$0	\$0	\$900	\$450	\$2,250
Telephone/Communications	\$180	\$180	\$180	\$180	\$360	\$1,080
Copying/Printing	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$250
Postage/Shipping	\$38	\$17	\$13	\$17	\$124	\$209
Staff training development	\$352	\$352	\$350	\$300	\$350	\$1,704
Volunteers/Interns (In Kind)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$200	\$0	\$200
Office Supplies	\$247	\$118	\$118	\$118	\$145	\$746
Liability/WC Insurance	\$1,990	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,990
Marketing/Advertising	\$300	\$300	\$300	\$300	\$300	\$1,500
Bank Charges	\$120	\$120	\$120	\$120	\$120	\$600
Miscellaneous	\$450	\$450	\$450	\$450	\$150	\$1,950
Total:	\$53,852	\$58,843	\$58,946	\$59,624	\$58,499	\$289,764
Net Income	\$648	\$16,157	\$17,704	\$18,826	(\$18,575)	\$34,760

This report is accurate as of August 31, 2024. If you have additional questions about our services,  
please contact us.

Thank you for supporting BLC!

### Bilingual Learning Center (BLC)

Website: <https://www.blcenter.org> Email: [info@blcenter.org](mailto:info@blcenter.org) Phone: 612-249-3633

Mailing Address: PO Box 19034, Minneapolis, MN 55419