

LIFE CHANGING RESULTS OF

bjm —————

BECAUSE JUSTICE MATTERS

2023 REPORT FEATURING OUTCOMES FOR YOUTH



“

The thing that impacted me the most was how I was allowed time to find God and listen to His calling in my life.

— Youth Participant

ANALYSIS & REPORT BY



A Letter from our Executive Director, Gabrielle Alzate

Dear BJM Community,

As I reflect on 2023, the verses from John 10:10 come to mind when Jesus said, “I have come so that they may have life and have it abundantly!” Here at BJM, we call that abundant life a bright and hope-filled future. Each person's commitment to our mission and tangible support has been vital in our journey. Together, we have sought to see bright futures illuminated, barriers removed and a pathway opened towards abundant life for each woman and girl, extending into their families and communities.

We sincerely thank you for your ongoing support.

This year was pivotal in many ways:

- We celebrated our **15th Anniversary** as a ministry and were overwhelmed with God's faithfulness. This is a significant milestone in Christian community development. We continue to grow from strength to strength, driven by faith and a firm commitment to justice.
- We identified **three strategic pathways** toward a brighter future: Prevention & Intervention, Resourcing and Training. By defining our principles and best practices, our strategic methods have become clearer and more instrumental in our growth.
- We launched **two new ministries** centered on the needs and assets of system-affected youth: our SHINE Mentorship Program and our Azul Leadership and Creativity Cohort.
- We trained **three student apprentices** this year. Our apprentices are girls who have grown up in our dance classes and are now equipped to lead and teach dance classes to younger girls in our ministries.
- Our **EdenMade Ministry** cheered on two women as they exited the adult entertainment industry for their dream careers, and we walked alongside many others through challenges and triumphs.
- Our **Families Ministry** continued both wrap-around services to families, and in-home family pastoral care. A new weekly group began creating spaces for mothers to pray, study and grow together.
- We published our first book, *Bright Stories: 15 Years of Because Justice Matters*, highlighting a handful of powerful testimonies from women and girls in the BJM community over the years.

The depth of our relationships and a hunger for discipleship especially marked the year. We have seen women, girls, students and families grow in their faith and hope, instilling in us a sense of joy and fulfillment. As we look forward to 2024, we are filled with expectancy and vision.

The impact of your support is tangible in the lives of the women, girls and families we serve. Your generosity provides hope and fosters growth in urban communities. Thank you for your unwavering support and for standing with us as we build together.

Grace and gratitude,



Gabrielle Alzate, Executive Director, Because Justice Matters

Our People, Passion, & Place

Because Justice Matters (BJM) is an extension of Youth with a Mission (YWAM) Bay Area. YWAM is a global movement to know God and make Him known. Here in the Bay Area, the ministry is centered on people, passion and place. At BJM, our people are women and girls. Our passion is a Christ-centered, creative community focused on restoration. Our place is in the Tenderloin and surrounding neighborhoods of San Francisco. YWAM Bay Area is our fiscal sponsor (EIN 94-3218675).

Mission Vision & Results

Because Justice Matters builds pathways to brighter futures for women and girls in urban communities. Pathways are built when women and girls are empowered in their creative and prophetic voices, when they experience holistic healing and freedom and when their leadership is cultivated. Now in our sixteenth year, BJM has identified multiple strategies to reach women and girls in the Tenderloin neighborhood of San Francisco.



2008
BJM founded



AUG. 1, 2009
First Nail Day



AUG. 2011
First Family Fun Fest



FALL 2013
Youth Department



SUMMER 2016
Leadership Development Intensive established to equip leaders to work with women & girls in urban contexts



FALL 2018
EdenMade launched outreaches in clubs



SPRING 2020
Brighter Futures Benevolence Fund established



SPRING 2020
Families Department launches Brave Space groups for moms



2021
New Horizons: New leadership - from the great pivot to pivotal



Fall 2022
Holistic family empowerment

As we reflect on the breadth and depth of our long-term commitment to youth, we see our impact compounded and transformation amplified in the lives of girls and communities.

“

When I joined Because Justice Matters, I didn't know what BJM was about. All I knew was I came to dance and I loved it. I've been with BJM for almost half my life; I've seen youth grow, and they have watched me grow, too. I appreciate them for what they've taught me: to understand the meaning of faith and care for my community.

— Marlene, Student Apprentice Dance Teacher

“

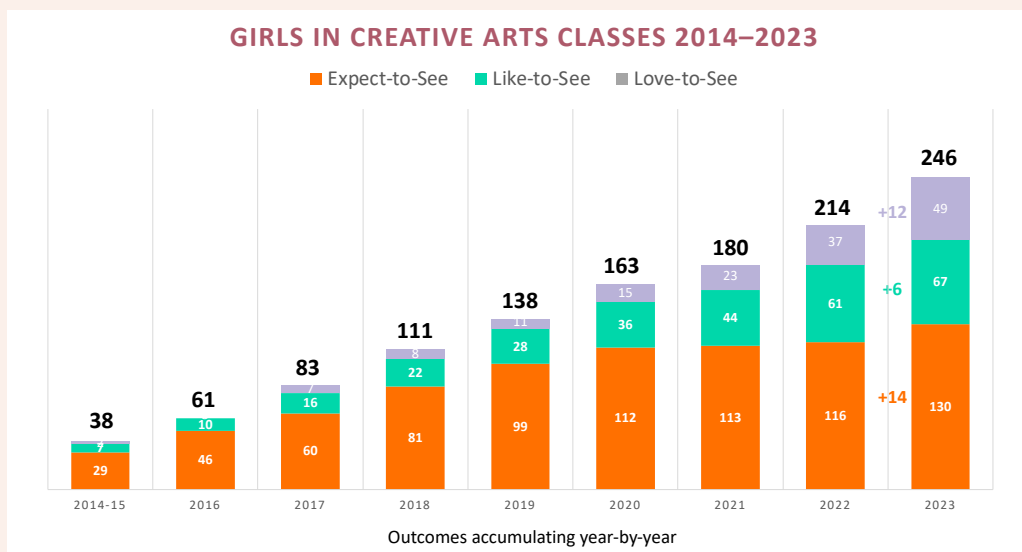
Our team served one day at BJM and learned about the deep work in the community... They go where others will not dare go. It is so exciting to hear the stories of transformed lives... as BJM meets the need in tangible ways.

— Jamie Gaines, Donor

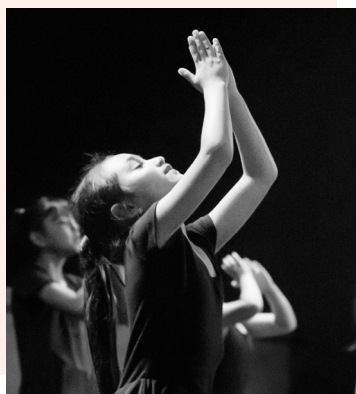
Social Impact of Four Core Programs

1. CREATIVE ARTS CLASSES

In 2023, 32 girls (ages 5-18) participated in Creative Arts classes. They developed artistic voice and confidence through choreography, leadership skills, peer support and relationships with a mentor.



In addition to this growth over the past two years, we have seen a steady increase in cumulative impact since the program's 2014 inception, as shown on the left.



Creative Arts Goals & Vision. Among the 32 participants in 2023, 14 girls reached the expect-to-see level, shown in orange, participating in weekly Creative Arts classes and a showcase recital. Six girls achieved the like-to-see level, shown in green, engaging for consecutive seasons, developing a sense of timeliness and preparedness, taking on leadership characteristics and assisting teachers. Twelve girls reached love-to-see, shown in lavender, serving as assistants or becoming lead teachers, having cultivated an artistic voice in praise and worship. They benefited from a consistent transformational relationship with their coach or mentor and used their creative expression to convey their spiritual truth effectively.

“

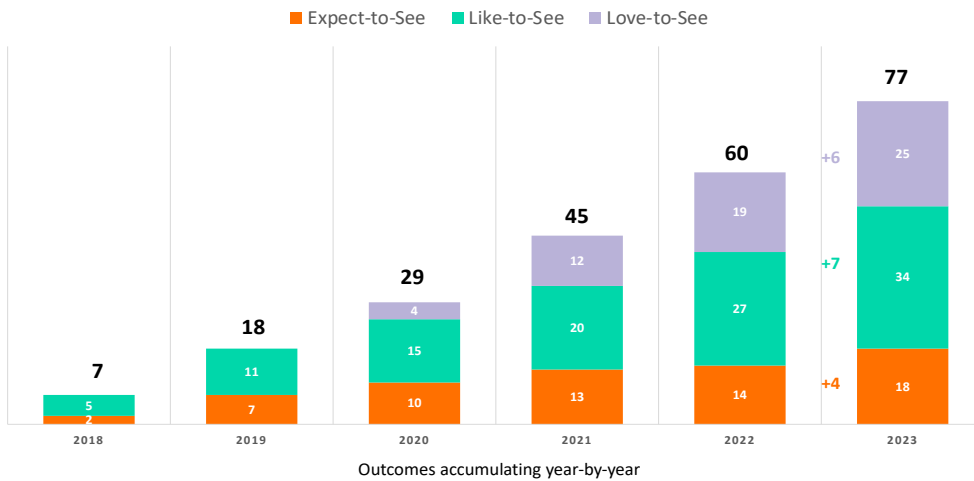
Feeling the love and presence of my Because Justice Matters community made me feel like I'm not alone and will never be alone because I can always come back to them, and God will never leave my side as well.

— Youth Participant

2. IGNITE

Our high school-aged participants are encouraged to participate in IGNITE, where they build healthy relationships with peers and mentors, advance their spiritual development, engage in community service and initiate future life trajectories. In 2022, we combined this program with Lily Club, bringing middle school students into the fold and maintaining participation numbers from the prior year.

GIRLS IN IGNITE AND LILY CLUB 2018–2023



In 2023, 17 girls and boys (ages 12-18) participated in this program.

The chart at left shows the cumulative impact of Lily Club and IGNITE since 2018.

Note: IGNITE and Lily Club combined as IGNITE in 2022.

“

One night, after the IGNITE event, two senior students stayed behind to chat. They had recently started dating and were curious about how Gabby and I met and got engaged ... Over years of youth ministry in the Tenderloin, I have noticed a trend of a lack of healthy relationship models in their lives. I have heard comments like ‘You and Gabby are the only married couple we know.’ Moments like that night, when they expressed curiosity about how to be in a relationship, reinforced this observation. I am honored they felt comfortable enough to ask questions.

— Mateo, Youth Staff Member



IGNITE Goals & Mission: Among IGNITE’s 17 participants in 2023, four youth were observed at the expect-to-see level, shown in orange, engaging weekly. Seven youth reached the like-to-see level, shown in green, consistently engaging in “intentional community,” which involves worship, prayer, discipleship, taking on leadership characteristics through community service and actively inviting friends into the BJM community. Six youth reached the love-to-see level, stepping into leadership roles in their communities and developing specific skills leading to tangible roadmaps, including jobs, school and internships. These youth were empowered to be leaders in their communities and spheres of influence. They showed evidence of enjoying thriving relationships with God and each other and exhibited characteristics of health and wholeness.

3. SHINE MENTORSHIP

The SHINE Mentorship program empowers girls aged 9-15 who have been impacted by systems such as child welfare and have experienced familial hardship and instability. The program launched in April 2023 with our first 11-year-old student.

At this early stage of development, we have completed curriculum lessons, visited museums and benefited from meaningful conversations. The intent is to prevent unsafe and exploitative relationships while building confidence, healthy relationships, goal-setting skills, and knowledge. Our holistic approach provides relationship-centered activities, practical skills and a safe space for reflection.



Mentorship time includes doing fun activities, outings and learning together through the SHINE Curriculum's five learning areas:

- **Skill Strengthening:** Girls learn tangible skills that are important for now and beyond
- **Hopeful Future:** Girls discuss their hopes, set goals and develop leadership attributes
- **Imagining Me:** Girls reflect on many parts of themselves to set a strong foundation of identity that will prepare them for life
- **Navigating Relationships:** Girls learn about healthy ways to engage in relationships and the importance of the relationship with oneself
- **Education:** Girls receive anti-trafficking education in which they learn about unsafe and exploitative relationships and how to keep themselves safe in relationships and online



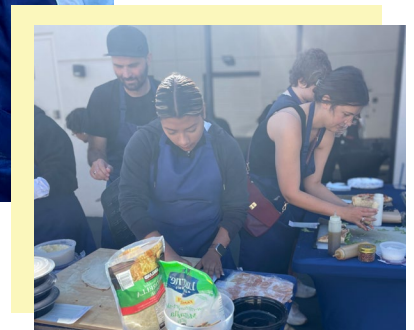
3. AZUL LEADERSHIP AND CREATIVITY COHORT

The Azul Leadership and Creativity Cohort was designed in 2023 to support young people impacted by systems such as child welfare, juvenile justice and immigration. Azul aims to bridge childhood instability with holistic healing and development.

Azul launched near the end of 2023 with a cohort of three students - two young women and one young man. One of the women had been in the BJM dance program for seven years, while the other two were referred by Glad Tidings Church youth group. Participants gained:

- practical resources:
 - » 54 hours of group learning covering personal and cultural stories
 - » life skills and creative expression
- in-depth mentoring to grow, heal, articulate goals and envision their future:
 - » one hour per week of 1:1 mentoring for 14 weeks
- hands-on workforce development through our Wild Flour pizza and calzone pop-up events:
 - » team-building, character, social and practical workplace skills (preparing 300 pizzas at various Bay Area venues)

We look forward to including impact data for SHINE and Azul next year.



BJM Website

Donate

Volunteer

Pathways

Community Partners