



HAPPY VALLEY FOUNDATION

A photograph of a field of yellow wildflowers in the foreground, with a range of mountains in the background under a clear sky. The text is overlaid on the center of the image.

**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**2024**

Happy Valley Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization  
tax ID #95-080-9370





# HAPPY VALLEY FOUNDATION

Happy Valley Foundation | PO Box 804, Ojai, CA 93024 | (805) 646-9951 | [HappyValleyFdn.org](http://HappyValleyFdn.org)

As the Executive Director of Happy Valley Foundation, I am pleased and honored to present Happy Valley Foundation's 2024 Annual Report. The report reflects the board's renewed energy and desire to embrace the best practices of not-for-profit organizations. Good governance is not a one-time achievement but rather an ongoing practice. The Annual Report will serve to provide a partial summary of the good work of the Foundation and its activities over the prior year. We have timed the publishing of an annual report to provide audited financials for the prior fiscal year. This report is issued with gratitude towards all of those who came before and are here now supporting our founder's vision. To quote Annie Besant, *"there is no failure save the abandonment of effort."*

With Gratitude,  
Alex Smith  
Executive Director

## Our Mission

Foster educational centers that nurture individual intellectual and artistic growth, positioned on preserved California land, where all forms of life are respected.

## Our Vision

Continuing to globally serve our community by fostering a lifelong commitment to learning, inspired by our inclusive legacy in Education, the Arts, and Land stewardship of 500+ acres.





## Our Land

Happy Valley Foundation continues to preserve and protect over 500 acres of native California land. Our land consists of native plant and animal species and a rare Vernal Pool. Some of our recent land initiatives include:

- Thomas Fire Restoration project including the planting of native trees to replace those lost by the Thomas Fire.
- Planting a butterfly pollination corridor.
- Partnering with VCRCDD (Ventura County Resource Conservation District) and Ojai Valley Land Conservancy to remove *Arundo* from Lion Creek.
- Prescribed Grazing supporting fire abatement and sustainable land management practices.
- Farming initiative installing greenhouses operating off the grid and supporting sustainable agriculture while providing fresh vegetables for consumption by the school community.



*Prescribed Grazing on HVF Land*



*Vernal Pool by Moonlight*





*New Green Houses - Sustainable Agriculture classroom and supplier to school kitchen*



*Thomas Fire Restoration Planting*





“ One of the beauty spots of the world is the Ojai Valley in California. Mountains ring it round; it has remained secluded till recent times, and is still but sparsely inhabited. In winter snow lies on the high mountain-tops, but does not reach the Valley. The climate is superb; orange-trees laden with golden fruit grows [sic] in parts of it, apricots and other fruit trees in other parts. The sun shines out from a sky of deepest blue, and as it sets behind the mountain peaks, it paints the mountain sides in various purples and violets, and when clouds float in the clear air, and stream across the blue, it paints them in deepest crimson and glowing orange, and through the gaps we see lakes and rivulets of greenish blue, a panorama of gorgeous splendor that I have only seen rivalled in Egypt or, in the rainy season, in India. ”



**Annie Besant, D.L.**  
*Ojai, CA*  
*11th January, 1927*





## Besant Hill School

Besant Hill School is a small college preparatory boarding and day school. Besant Hill honors individuality, critical thinking, creative and artistic passions, global citizenship, and environmental activism. Our small size, committed faculty and staff, and beautiful location in the Ojai Valley make Besant Hill School a one-of-a-kind place to study for students from around the globe.



## Mission Statement

Besant Hill School positions each individual to develop their intellectual and artistic abilities, to pursue integrity and excellence, and to embody the school's motto, *Aún Aprendo* - "I am still learning."

## Value Statement

At Besant Hill, the shared values of inquiry, honesty, respect, compassion, and responsibility guide our daily interactions.





## *Portrait of a Graduate*

Our graduates will:

- Honor their individual strengths and be resilient.
- Embody the ideals of environmental activism.
- Model global citizenship.
- Think critically and synthesize knowledge.
- Engage in their creative and artistic passions.







## Milestones

- With a maximum enrollment of 100 students, our globally diverse community has on average students from 20 countries.
- Besant Hill Graduates are accepted to an average of 5 different colleges located all over the world.
- In addition to robust college preparatory class offerings, the school provides students the choice of taking over 20 different art classes.
- Each senior completes an intensive two-week Capstone project where they are able to intern and learn from professionals in their area of interest.







## Beatrice Wood Center for the Arts

*The Center celebrates the life and work of Beatrice Wood, while presenting exhibitions, performances, and educational opportunities.*

### Milestones

For two decades, the Beatrice Wood Center for the Arts has been a beacon of creativity and culture in Southern California. The Center has nurtured talent, provided a home for emerging and accomplished artists in the community, and enriched the lives of countless individuals who have visited or participated in programming.

With a mission to inspire creativity, foster cultural understanding, and enrich lives through the arts, the Center presents exhibitions, workshops and performances that showcase diverse artistic voices to inspire the community.

The Center's programming takes place in the former homes of Beatrice Wood and Rosalind Rajagopal, preserved as a cultural landmark for future generations, with a permanent collection of artwork, photos and memorabilia that shares a rich artistic and cultural history. Visitors can explore the gardens – with stunning views of Happy Valley land and Topa Topa, admire the work of Beatrice Wood and her collection of folk art, peruse her library, and enter her lovingly preserved studio.



**Beatrice Wood, 1987**  
Photo by William Gray Harris







## Announcements

The Beatrice Wood Center for the Arts works with local non-profits to present annual exhibitions featuring artist/members of Ojai Studio Artists, Ventura County Potters' Guild, American Ceramic Society of Southern California, and the Ventura County Handweavers & Spinners Guild and so much more. This allows for an expansive and inclusive number of local artists working in diverse media to present exhibitions at the Center curated by founding director Kevin Wallace.

From its inception, the Center has presented musical performances representing diverse traditions, cultures, and approaches including Jazz, Americana, Brazilian and Hawaiian music, and even Chinese Opera. The Center's Chamber On The Mountain series is celebrating its 12th year of bringing world-class acclaimed classical musicians to Ojai to perform at the Center, as well as for students at Besant Hill School.

Workshop instructors who present annual exhibitions include Professor Jon Keenan - who studied ceramics in Japan and shares Eastern traditions, Caroline Allen - who taught literature and creative writing at the University of California Santa Barbara's College of Creative Studies for three decades, Ukrainian-American artist Natasha Dikareva - who studied under the rigorous Soviet Union arts education programming, and Maryann Cord - who teaches the Center's most popular workshops celebrating the Goddess as explored in diverse ancient cultures.



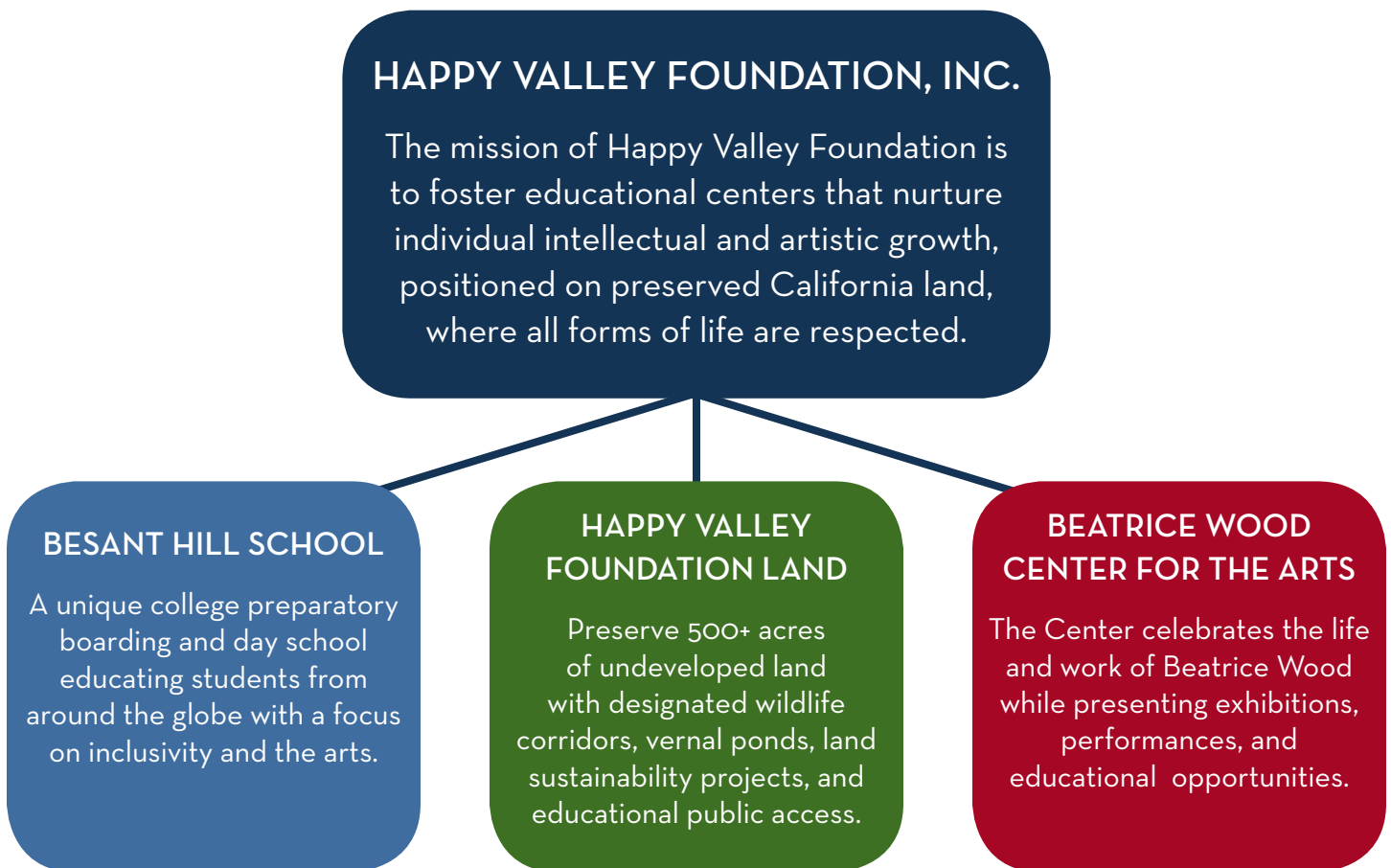


# Happy Valley Foundation's Strategic Plan

*On January 13, 2024, the Happy Valley Foundation board of trustees adopted an in-depth multi-year strategic plan. This plan consists of four primary objectives:*

- Strengthen Happy Valley Foundation's organization and governance structure.
- Build the integration and connections between the Foundation's three entities – Besant Hill School, Beatrice Wood Center for the Arts, and the Land.
- Build financial sustainability for the Foundation.
- Build sustainability through enhanced facilities, continuity of leadership, and celebration of the Foundation's legacy.

## HAPPY VALLEY FOUNDATION ORGANIZATION AND ACTIVITIES





# Happy Valley Foundation

## By the Numbers

### Operating Summary for 2023/2024 Fiscal Year

Financials based on audited fiscal year-end 6/30/24

<b>Revenue:</b>	\$6,789,445
<b>Expenses:</b>	\$6,530,407
<b>Net:</b>	\$259,038*
<b>Total Assets:</b>	\$28,153,923

\*Net or “surplus” represents interest earnings of restricted fund assets.

Besant Hill School is an industry anomaly in using operational revenue to support financial aid. Currently, we have created an endowment account to generate interest earnings to fund student scholarships. Over the last two fiscal years, the Happy Valley Foundation board of trustees has restricted \$2.4 million in funds towards an initial goal of a \$10 million endowment account. Once the fund reaches our principal goal, interest earnings will be utilized to fund student financial aid, freeing up operational revenue for student programming and aligning with industry standards.

Happy Valley Foundation is debt-free and has a mandate to never encumber the land or buildings in any way.

### Legacy Donors

Happy Valley Foundation would like to pay tribute to two recent legacy donors who have made the creation of the endowment account possible. Their generosity will provide an unparalleled educational opportunity for generations to come. We hope you will join them in supporting the school that has made such a profound impact on their lives and the lives of many more young people.



*Marion Weil*



*Helene Zalk Pollock*





## Upcoming Events

### *Spring Arts & Family Weekend*

April 18 & 19, 2025

Contact: Sophi Zara, [szara@besanthill.org](mailto:szara@besanthill.org)

### *Alumni Reunion*

April 19, 2025

Contact: Michaela Peters

### *Amplify Arts in Residence*

Summer 2025

[amplifyrocks.org](http://amplifyrocks.org)



# HAPPY VALLEY FOUNDATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Linda Hardham - President

Derek Woods - Vice President

Tina Leslie - CFO

Kevin Wallace - Secretary, Director, BWCA

Alex Smith - Executive Director

Portia Johnson - Head of School, Besant Hill School

Maryann Cord

William B Kaplan

Sirr Less

Moussa Sy

John Yen



For questions or inquiries, please contact:  
Alex Smith, [asmith@besanthill.org](mailto:asmith@besanthill.org)

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