



HAPPY VALLEY FOUNDATION

A wide-angle photograph of a natural landscape. In the foreground, there is a body of water with reeds and grasses. The middle ground shows a green valley with scattered trees. In the background, there are rolling hills and mountains under a clear blue sky with some light clouds.

ANNUAL REPORT
2025

Happy Valley Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization
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HAPPY VALLEY FOUNDATION

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

I am pleased to present the Happy Valley Foundation's 2025 Annual Report. The report reflects the Board's dedication to adopting and upholding best practices in not-for-profit governance, as we work to fully express our mission and vision across all areas of the Foundation's work. It offers a summary of the Foundation's activities and accomplishments over the previous year.

This report is shared with gratitude for the land, our founders, and all those who continue to support and advance the vision of The Happy Valley.

"What, after all, is the object of education? To train the body in health, vigor, and grace, so that it may express the emotions in beauty and the mind with accuracy and strength." — Annie Besant

Tina Leslie
Chairperson, Happy Valley Foundation Board of Trustees

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.



Activity Updates

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.





Announcements

Besant Hill School is launching a new initiative to create a dual enrollment program to support our students in receiving college credits while they complete the school's robust high school offerings.

In April, the school will host an official TEDx conference with both student and local community members giving a series of short talks about areas of importance for the emerging world in the Ojai Valley.





Student Testimonial

“Besant Hill manifests itself in the form of a safe haven where students of all backgrounds can witness firsthand what it means to be listened to without judgment, to be cared for despite flaws, and to be lifted up earnestly.”

– Nyasia Cooper, Class of 2023



Raised by her grandmother, an artist who served in the U.S Army instead of pursuing her dreams, Nyasia was taught the importance of education early on. Upon arriving at Besant Hill she was several grade levels behind her peers due to the underfunded school districts she attended before. However, with determination and hard work, she quickly rose to the top of her class at Besant Hill, becoming one of the most insightful and well-prepared students. Nyasia’s ability to connect with others, show interest in alternative perspectives, and build up her classmates has made her a natural leader and a valued member of the community. Nyasia’s time at Besant Hill has not only shaped her academic interests and achievements but has also strengthened our community and given her a path to college that she never thought possible. Thanks to her dedication and the support of the financial aid program at Besant Hill School, Nyasia has earned a full scholarship to NYU, as well as full scholarships to three highly selective national liberal arts colleges: Vassar College, Occidental College, and Barnard College.



BEATRICE WOOD CENTER FOR THE ARTS

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

Mission Statement

The Beatrice Wood Center for the Arts maintains an educational center devoted to the arts and cultural studies that serves the community with exhibitions of contemporary art, performances and educational programming. The Center cares for the legacy of Beatrice Wood with a permanent collection that celebrates her life and work within the context of art history, as well as the history of the Happy Valley Foundation.

Vision Statement

At the Beatrice Wood Center for the Arts, we believe that **Life is an Art**. We celebrate the individual within the larger expanse of humanity and utilize the arts to develop creativity, curiosity and compassion.



Beatrice Wood
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 13th 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.

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.





Comments from Beneficiaries of our Activities

“I had the absolute pleasure of interning at the Beatrice Wood Center for the Arts, where I was able to work and create under the guidance of Kevin Wallace and Maryann Cord, who were always supportive, encouraging, and helpful. The Center is not only an educational and inspirational space, but also a welcoming community that supports artists of all kinds and levels. They truly are an uplifting presence for the community.” – **Darci Lucas**

“My residency was a deeply formative experience. Working in Beato’s personal studio with her tools, wheel, and kiln connected me to her legacy in a tangible way. The staff provided invaluable support, from professional development to advanced ceramic techniques. I had access to her personal library, which enriched my creative process and deepened my understanding of her life and work... The impact of the residency continues to shape my practice, and I remain grateful for the lasting mentorship and inspiration it provided.” – **Olena Ellis**

“The center is truly unique in California; functioning as a gallery, museum, and learning center. It possesses an incredible geographical separation from the daily routine that is almost perfectly designed to elevate visitors to an unmatched art refuge, surrounded with all the natural elements, at a timeless, hilltop utopia.” – **David Orr**

“For several years the Beatrice Wood Center for the Arts & Happy Valley Cultural Center has been my favorite escape for art instruction, concerts, and talks – and for just existing for a time in that beautiful open space. When I have wanted to gift someone a lovely and peaceful experience, the Center and its infinitely varied hands-on classes and presentations – along with the opportunity to be served, and welcomed – is an obvious choice.” – **Julie White**

“As an intern several years ago, I was able to assist with the installation of exhibitions, organize and digitize archival materials, assist with the editing of publications, and lead online programming including interviews with art historians on Beatrice Wood’s art and life. This was an incredibly enriching experience which helped me to later pursue museum work internationally as well as my doctorate in art history. It was my time at the center that sparked the initial questions I am now pursuing in my research and I am forever grateful.” – **Rachel Denniston**

“The Center is truly a cultural treasure — a magical destination where the arts, education, and history are not only preserved but actively shared with the community. The staff’s friendly dedication to fostering creativity and honoring Beatrice Wood’s legacy is felt in every program and exhibit.” – **Valerie Freeman**

Happy Valley Foundation

By the Numbers

Operating Summary for 2024/2024 Fiscal Year

Revenue:	\$5,712,938
Expenses:	\$5,668,664
Net:	\$117,405*
Total Assets:	\$28,113,764

*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 three fiscal years, the Happy Valley Foundation board of trustees has restricted \$2.7 million in funds towards an initial goal of a \$10 million endowment account. Once the fund reaches the 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 a recent legacy donor, **John Brown**. John's generosity will have a profound impact on our ability to provide an unparalleled educational opportunity for generations to come. We hope you will join Marion Weil, Helene Zalk Pollock, and John Brown in supporting the school that has made such a profound impact on our lives.



John Brown



2026 – 2027 Upcoming Events

Spring Arts & Family Weekend

April 17 & 18, 2026

Contact: Sophi Zara, szara@besanthill.org

Annual Alumni Reunion

April 17 & 18, 2026

Contact: Sophi Zara, szara@besanthill.org

Amplify Arts in Residence

Summer 2026

amplifyrocks.org

ABOUT US

Happy Valley Foundation Board of Trustees

Tina Leslie – Chairperson, Happy Valley Foundation
Derek Woods – Vice-Chairperson, Happy Valley Foundation
Moussa Sy – Treasurer, Happy Valley Foundation
Linda Hardham – Secretary, Happy Valley Foundation
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Alex Smith – Executive Director, Happy Valley Foundation
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Maryann Cord
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Ex Officio

Nina de Creeft Ward
Martha Doornink
Anne Friend-Thacher
Ken Tennen
James Sloss
Radha Sloss



Platinum
Transparency
2025

Candid.



Please contact Alex Smith or Portia Johnson with questions or inquiries.

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Besant Hill School – Portia Johnson pjohnson@besanthill.org

Beatrice Wood Center for the Arts – Kevin Wallace beatricewoodcenter@gmail.com

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HappyValleyFdn.org • BesantHill.org • BeatriceWood.com