



Celebrating 20 years of limitless opportunity



2024 ANNUAL REPORT



Mission & Vision

In 2024, Limitless Horizons Ixil celebrated 20 years of creating opportunities for the Indigenous youth, women, and families of Chajul, Guatemala, to develop the academic and professional skills needed to effect change in their lives and community.

Our vision is for Guatemala's Ixil region to be a thriving community with gender equality and widely available educational and employment opportunities, while maintaining its Maya cultural identity.

Our Programs



Colegio Horizontes brings culturally responsive, rigorous, and engaging academics to Chajul for the first time, while opening doors for Indigenous girls and boys to attend and thrive in school. Led by local women, our school fosters the skills youth need to effect change in their lives and community.



The **Saber Sin Límites (Limitless Knowledge) Community Library** is the first public library in Chajul. With over 11,000 books, STEM materials, and daily programming—including homework help, story hours, book clubs, radio story hours, and science and math classes—the library promotes academic excellence, curiosity, and creativity, helping to empower future leaders in the community.



The **Emerging Leaders Program** provides continued support, opportunities, and mentorship of each of our students upon their graduation from high school, developing a pipeline of eager young professionals to fill many needed roles in Chajul, transforming the community from within.



Dear Friends,

This year marked a profound milestone for Limitless Horizons Ixil—our 20th anniversary! As we reflect on two decades of intentional, community-based work in the rural, Indigenous town of Chajul, we are filled with immense pride and deep gratitude. The seeds we planted years ago are now bearing fruit in extraordinary ways, from shifting mindsets towards girls' education to seeing our very own middle school students grow into confident changemakers.

Alumni like Josefina Imul, one of Chajul's first female college graduates, are breaking barriers and serving as powerful role models in professional realms dominated by men. And students like Karelyn, who aspires to become a gynecologist and local advocate for gender equity in her community, feel empowered with newfound agency over their futures.

We celebrated two additional milestones this year: our final Youth Development Program graduation and our first *Colegio Horizontes* middle school graduation. These bookends represent a generational shift and attest to the fact that long-term, holistic support works. On our current trajectory, we will reach as many students in the next seven years as we did over the past 20, while simultaneously deepening our programming. Our UNESCO award-winning Community Library also had another landmark year. The library reached more young learners than ever before, broadcast a record number of educational bilingual (Spanish/Ixil) radio programs, significantly increased in-person story hours, and, for the first time, offered English classes for local public school students, taught by one of our graduates.

With the incredibly generous support of our community, this year we successfully completed the final phase of our second capital campaign for our high school expansion. By December, with the expert oversight of Building Goodness Foundation, construction was 85% complete! Meanwhile, behind the scenes, our team worked tirelessly to secure legal status for our new high school, develop our very own culturally sensitive curriculum with girls' specific needs in mind, and expand our teaching staff.

Leadership also evolved in 2024, as we promoted Odilia Cedillo and Zuliana López to Co-Directors to carry on the legacy of Verónica Yat's 15-year tenure. Together, Odilia and Zuliana are ensuring that we remain rooted in the values on which our work is based, while boldly stepping into our next chapter full of new programming and sustainable growth.

Our vision has always extended beyond access to education—we champion equity, dignity, and opportunity. Thanks to your support, we have built far more than a scholarship program, library, or a school. We've helped shift the local narrative around girls' education and continue to actively ensure more and better opportunities based on the belief that every young person can be a force for change in their own lives and in their community. As we celebrate 20 years, we look ahead with hope, ready to invest in the next generation of local leaders.



With deep appreciation,

Katie Morrow  

Katie Morrow, Odilia Cedillo, & Zuliana Lopez
(Limitless Horizons Ixil Directors)



20 Years of Programming

Quality Education

Youth Development Program Then & Colegio Horizontes Now



In 2004, with a budget of \$1,000 from ten donors, we started offering financial support to keep youth in school in Chajul. As of December 2024, ~1500 students and their family members have benefited from our Youth Development Program's (YDP) wraparound support. These scholars graduated middle school at five times the local average and high school at ten times the local average, with many going on to earn bachelor's and master's degrees—far surpassing what was once thought possible in Chajul. In 2022, YDP was absorbed by *Colegio Horizontes*, our very own middle and high school. Led by local women, *Colegio Horizontes* offers local students a culturally responsive, rigorous, full-day education, along with comprehensive socio-emotional support and two nutritious meals each day. The school equips students with the tools to become professionals and changemakers, creating a ripple effect that will positively impact their families for generations.

Community Library Then & Now

In 2010, we opened Chajul's first public library to address a clear need: the absence of books in schools and homes and the lack of space for learning outside of structured classrooms. Fourteen years later, our community library continues to inspire lifelong learning and literacy, now featuring: 500+ annual visitors; 11,000+ books; weekly story hours; literacy, English, and STEM classes; homework resources and support; radio story hours for the whole community; school vacation programming; and more. In 2021, we were awarded the UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize in honor of our innovative approach to literacy programming during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Supporting Young Learners



Post-Secondary Support

Emerging Leaders Then & Now



In 2011, we created our Emerging Leaders Program because though our students left high school full of promise and determination, they still needed guidance to bridge the gap to higher education and employment. We now provide continued support and mentorship to our 105 high school graduates, developing a pipeline of eager young professionals, transforming the community from within by supporting our graduates to fill roles that have historically been occupied by those from outside the community.



Colegio Horizontes

In 2024 *Colegio Horizontes* served 72 students (50 of whom were girls) across 7th-9th grades. Their rigorous curriculum included classes in technology, life skills, math, social studies, science, entrepreneurship, languages (Spanish, English, and Ixil), and more. Students excelled with an average GPA of 84%, compared to other Chajul middle schoolers with 60-70% grade point averages. Our students' success is admirable, particularly coming off of significant academic interruptions during the pandemic and given that their parents on average have just 3.3 years of schooling.



99.6%

attendance throughout the 2024 school year.



27,432

meals served to support learning and improve food security.



40%

increase in teaching staff in 2024 in preparation for high school. In addition, we hired a 4th mentor and a receptionist.



This year, our final two Youth Development Program scholars graduated from high school! Staff surprised them with a celebration in honor of their achievement. Graduates María and Mariela will now join the Emerging Leaders Program with access to professional development workshops; career mentorship; work experience fellowships; college scholarships; and support applying for jobs, university, or vocational school.



New Organizational Leadership

Odilia Cedillo and Zuliana López stepped into new roles as Co-Directors following the departure of Program Director Verónica Yat after her 15 remarkable years with Limitless Horizons Ixil. Since taking the reins, they have both flourished as leaders, carrying forward Verónica's legacy. Odilia brings experience in education, academics, and teacher training, while Zuliana contributes expertise in law, operations, and alumni support.

Preparing for High School

In addition to securing legal status for our new high school from Guatemala's Ministry of Education, we collaborated with 16 specialists to develop our own culturally sensitive high school curriculum, which is focused on STEM and the humanities and includes several unique classes such as Career Pathways, Entrepreneurship, and Community Projects. In addition to a high school degree, *Colegio Horizontes* will provide graduates with certificates in community leadership, financial literacy, and technology. In preparation, we hired and trained six new teachers and a Career Pathways Specialist who will provide mentorship and real-world preparation to high schoolers to ensure they have a strong foundation and solid plan for their futures upon graduating from *Colegio Horizontes*.



First Middle School Graduation

In November, we celebrated our first middle school graduation for our 23 ninth graders—17 of whom were girls. Seventy percent of graduates were the first in their immediate families to continue their education beyond sixth grade.

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We grew up in an environment where access to education was limited, especially for girls. But here, at Colegio Horizontes, that barrier is being torn down. The story of Maya Ixil girls is being rewritten. Leadership is being exercised. Our cultural identity is being embraced. Futures are being built, because when a community has access to education, everything changes.

— Analinda
Colegio Horizontes Class of 2026

Mentorship

Our comprehensive, holistic education provides students with highly trained professional mentors. In safe spaces including life skills classes, one-on-one meetings, and home visits, mentors empower students to build strong emotional, social, and academic skills, and to develop the agency to achieve their dreams. In 2024, 94% of girls at *Colegio Horizontes* reported feeling empowered and that they have agency over their futures.



188

hours of life skills classes taught by mentors at *Colegio Horizontes* on topics including leadership, emotional health and well-being, and sexual and reproductive health.



353

home visits conducted by our mentorship team to build trust and communicate openly about creating positive home support systems and family communication.



500+

one-on-one mentorship sessions conducted to ensure students maintain good attendance, demonstrate healthy emotional regulation, and stay on track for academic success.

67

applications received.

26

rising 7th graders selected.

140 hours

of prep classes taught.

100%

of rising 7th graders are Indigenous.

Expanding Horizons Prep Classes



In 2024, we received a record 67 applications from local 6th graders to attend *Colegio Horizontes* in 2025. Of these applicants, 34 were selected for our prep program for rising 7th graders. From July to November 2024, this cohort participated in 42 hours of intensive spoken Spanish classes and 98 hours of math, language, life skills, and school culture classes in order to hit the ground running in January. In addition to getting students up to speed academically, Expanding Horizons prepares students for an eight-hour school day, versus the four hours they had at their previous schools.



High School Expansion

After breaking ground in late 2023, we began construction on our high school in January. After 12 months of hard work, the building was 85% complete by December! In September, with the incredible support of our generous community, we successfully completed our high school capital campaign, securing all funds needed to complete and furnish the new buildings and science lab.



For this build, we renewed successful partnerships we began when launching *Colegio Horizontes'* middle school. Once again, Building Goodness Foundation expertly oversaw construction, and Design Develop LLC generously donated their time to create the high school's architectural designs and building plans.

Colegio Horizontes' high school includes Chajul's first and only science lab, five new classrooms, additional bathrooms and storage spaces, as well as several multi-purpose spaces and small meeting rooms for mentorship. Our new high school will prepare students to reach their highest potential and use their voice and agency to be civic leaders and advocates for change in an academic environment that is empowering, physically and emotionally safe, and designed with girls' specific needs in mind.



Wilfredo and Manuel

When construction worker Manuel was hired to work on the Limitless Horizons Ixil high school build, he remembers thinking that if he had had access to a school like *Colegio Horizontes*, he would have stayed in school longer. In June, Manuel got the exciting news that his son Wilfredo had been accepted into our Expanding Horizons prep program. By December, Wilfredo had successfully completed the program and was accepted into *Colegio Horizontes*, where he'll benefit from the naturally lit classrooms, solar power, clean and secure bathrooms, covered outdoor spaces, and science lab that his dad Manuel and the crew built for future leaders like him!

Professional and Team Development Spotlight

In 2024, Odilia Cedillo—Country Co-Director and Director of *Colegio Horizontes*—emerged as a powerful advocate for equitable education and Indigenous women’s rights through two prestigious national platforms. As a founding member of the nine-organization coalition *Voices for Education*, she presented Limitless Horizons Ixil’s employment-readiness initiatives to Guatemala’s Vice Minister of Labor. She also completed a professional development certificate course on governance and leadership, where her research on Indigenous beauty queens was selected as one of the top five projects highlighted by the United Nations. The program concluded with a tour fostering dialogue with government entities, including Guatemala’s Supreme Electoral Tribunal, Congress, the Ministry of Culture, and others. Odilia was chosen to address Congress directly on the challenges faced by Indigenous women.



Success Stories Over the Years



As a girl, Eymi dreamed of working in a bank for the promise of stability and opportunity. With support from Limitless Horizons Ixil as part of our very first student cohort, Eymi steadily pursued her middle school, high school, undergraduate, and graduate education. This year, she became the first of our graduates and only the second known woman in Chajul to earn a master’s degree. Today, with her degree and 11 years of professional experience working at Limitless Horizons Ixil, Eymi’s dream of having the skills and degree necessary to work in a formal job has evolved far beyond what she imagined for herself as a child.

Since his parents never had the chance to attend school, Antonio’s father insisted on a different future for his children. With Limitless Horizons Ixil’s support, Antonio entered middle school in 2009 and eventually earned a college degree in tourism administration while becoming fluent in English. Returning to Chajul, he became a teacher, realizing it was the best way to serve his community. After several years teaching in overcrowded public schools, Antonio appreciates the small classes and interactive teaching style at *Colegio Horizontes*, which allow him to truly connect with students. As an alumnus, he brings both perspective and empathy to his role as a teacher.



With Limitless Horizons Ixil’s support, Regina became the first of her nine siblings to attend college and is now the only person in her family with a professional career. Her love for children led her to study clinical psychology, with the goal of working for our programs. She joined the team as a mentor in 2023 and is excited to use her degree to help students focus on their psychological well-being, which in turn supports their academic success. “If you’re not in a good place mentally, nothing else in your life will fall into place,” Regina says.

Student Spotlight: Karelyn

Learning to lead by example

at *Colegio Horizontes*

Karelyn, a member of the first graduating class at *Colegio Horizontes* and a rising high schooler, has emerged as a leader among her peers. In addition to excelling academically, she is already envisioning how she plans to implement the leadership and communication skills she's learning at school to challenge long-standing gender stereotypes and help reshape what's possible for other young women in Chajul.



When Karelyn walks through the doors of *Colegio Horizontes* each morning, she feels like she is part of something bigger than herself. That's because beyond academics, *Colegio Horizontes* teaches her and her peers how to bring to life their visions for their community's future. With education centered on critical thinking, and an emphasis on public speaking and values-based leadership, Karelyn and her classmates are developing the confidence, communication, and leadership skills to challenge norms and create lasting change. She recalls a moment from her childhood when a boy told a girl

she could never become a community leader, because only boys, he claimed, belonged in school. "If I saw that happen today, I would speak up," Karelyn says. "I'd tell her to believe in herself, because anything is possible."

Karelyn's individual empowerment is further fueled by the other strong local women she is surrounded by at school every day—her technology teacher, Cecy; her mentor, Olga; and Odilia, *Colegio Horizontes'* director. "They've shown me it's possible to overcome challenges and achieve great things," she says.



“—

I would like to be a local example of an empowered female leader in town—to raise my voice for truth and justice and ensure greater gender equity in the future.

Inspired by these role models, Karelyn now dreams of becoming a gynecologist to help address the lack of women in healthcare in Chajul. But her dreams go beyond a profession—she's also thinking about the kind of community she wants to help build. "Over time, I believe we'll see more gender equity here. The way to achieve that is by modeling the values and skills we learn at school in our everyday lives. I want to be a local example of an empowered female leader," she says. "Someone who raises her voice for truth and justice, and shows future students what's possible."



Karelyn's middle school graduation (Nov. 2024)



Community Library

Our UNESCO award-winning *Saber Sin Límites* (Limitless Knowledge) Community Library was bustling with programming throughout the year, with STEM classes, story hours, and reading clubs—plus bilingual (Ixil/Spanish) radio broadcasts reaching the entire region. 2024 saw a record 549 library members, our busiest year yet!



11,450

books available to the community, a 4% increase since 2023.



549

library members, with an average of 45 visitors per day—our busiest year yet!



50

hours of radio story hour—20% more than in 2023 and our all-time high.

“

The values instilled in me during my time as a Limitless Horizons Ixil scholar—like discipline, gender equity, and the courage to use my voice—are the same ones I now strive to pass on to my own children and the youth I work with every day... As our motto states, we’re ‘transforming a community through education.’ I wholeheartedly believe this to be true, because I’ve lived it.

— David Imul, Community Library Director
Youth Development Program 2009-2013

Library Director Spotlight: David



David grew up in Chajul as one of eight children in a family that lost their land and numerous family members during the Guatemalan Civil War. As a result, educational opportunities were scarce and graduating high school felt like an impossible dream. That changed for him in 2007, when he joined our Youth Development Program. With the supplies, resources, and socioemotional support the program provided, David was able to attend middle school, high school, and eventually college, paving the way for his future job at Limitless Horizons Ixil.

After joining our staff team in 2014, David became Community Library Director in 2017. Since then, he has been instrumental in shaping the Community Library into a cornerstone of education in Chajul.

Under David's leadership, the library is reshaping cultural norms. In Chajul, where traditional gender roles are deeply rooted, the library has become an unexpected catalyst for fostering inclusive ideas about gender and equality.

"We intentionally create mixed-gender groups for activities to encourage collaboration and promote gender equity," explains David. This is unique in public spaces in Chajul, where kids typically don't play or interact with the opposite gender unless it's with their siblings.

He notes that "kids who might hesitate to speak up in other settings feel empowered [at the library], developing the confidence to participate and build friendships across traditional barriers."

Library Member Spotlight: Adriana

Adriana grew up with her father and stepmother, who never had the chance to go to school, but always encouraged her to learn. At age five, she began spending her mornings at the Community Library before her public-school classes in the afternoons. "That's where I learned to read," she beams.

With a love for math and a dream of becoming an accountant—a career reserved for men until recently—Adriana found both inspiration and academic support at the library. So when she learned from library director David about the opportunity to attend *Colegio Horizontes*, she jumped at the chance to apply.

Adriana completed Expanding Horizons prep classes in November, impressing teachers with her strong grades, public speaking, and critical thinking. With her determination and the support of *Colegio Horizontes* as a student starting in 2025, Adriana isn't just excited for her own future; she's also motivated to make her family proud.



Emerging Leaders



In 2024, we awarded 13 university scholarships and supported three Emerging Leaders fellows with work experiences and monthly professional development workshops. Over the year, we hosted three educational and networking events to strengthen our alumni network, providing ongoing support as these young adults navigate employment, entrepreneurship, and higher education.

105

high school graduates as of December 2024, 75 of whom are female.

24%

of Limitless Horizons Ixil's staff are Emerging Leaders.

52%

of Emerging Leaders are employed in the formal economy, compared to <6% of the general population.

75%

of Emerging Leaders have better living conditions and/or socio-economic wellbeing than their parents or other peers their age.

Emerging Leader Spotlight: Gaspar



Gaspar first learned about our Youth Development Program in 2006, just as he was debating whether to continue his education. "When I graduated elementary school, my parents told me there were two paths: to be a farmer or to go to school. They didn't see the value in education, because, in their experience, farming was a more secure way of life," Gaspar remembers. "But Limitless Horizons Ixil gave me the support I needed to stay in school."

Thanks to Gaspar leading by example and paving the way for his younger siblings to continue their education, three are now working in professional roles in Chajul at the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, and a local bank. In 2024, Gaspar supported our high school construction as a full-time employee of Building Goodness Foundation. Thinking of how far he and his siblings have come, and seeing the school take shape, Gaspar reflects: "Colegio Horizontes is a game-changer for the future of Chajul and local youth. They now have the best education around, and there's no need to migrate to the US. Everything is possible right here at home."

“

Limitless Horizons Ixil doesn't just support their scholars, but entire families and the whole community.

— Roselda



Roselda

Since entering middle school in 2013, Roselda and her family have benefited from nearly every aspect of Limitless Horizons Ixil's support. As a Youth Development and Emerging Leaders Program participant, Roselda received support to graduate high school and went on to complete a year-long fellowship with career training that led to a university scholarship. Meanwhile, her parents attended regular workshops, her mother sold weavings for a fair wage through our Artisan Program, and during COVID, her family of nine received monthly food baskets. Now, Roselda remains connected through alumni gatherings and ongoing training. For Roselda's six younger siblings, all following in her footsteps to pursue an education, the Community Library continues to be a haven, and they plan to apply to *Colegio Horizontes*!

Lucrecia

Growing up in a family of six, with her father working as a farmer and her mother as a homemaker, Lucrecia believed her education would end after elementary school. But with support from Limitless Horizons Ixil, she entered middle school in 2017. When she was uncertain about whether college was the right step for her, Co-Director Zuliana encouraged Lucrecia to lean into her lifelong love of sewing, introducing her to the opportunity of a vocational degree. In 2024, she proudly completed her dressmaking and tailoring degree. Now, Lucrecia is saving up to buy her own sewing machine and launch a business to turn her childhood love for sewing into an entrepreneurial venture.

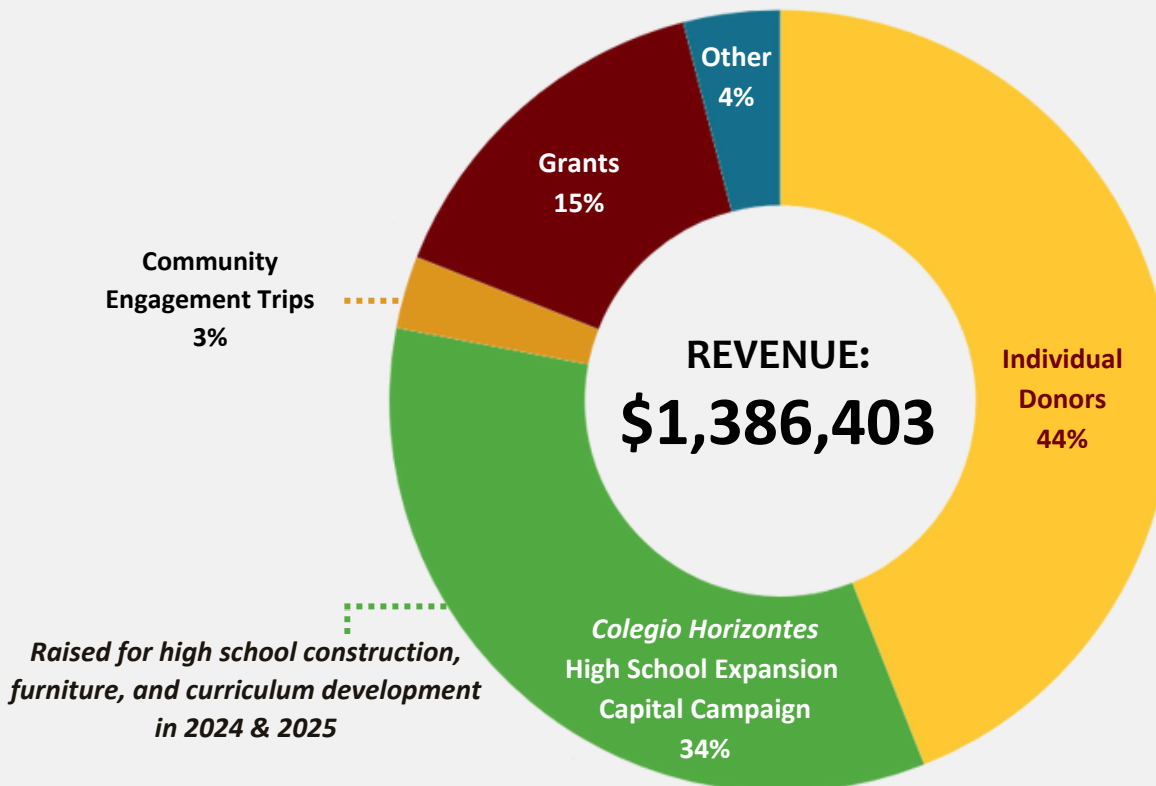
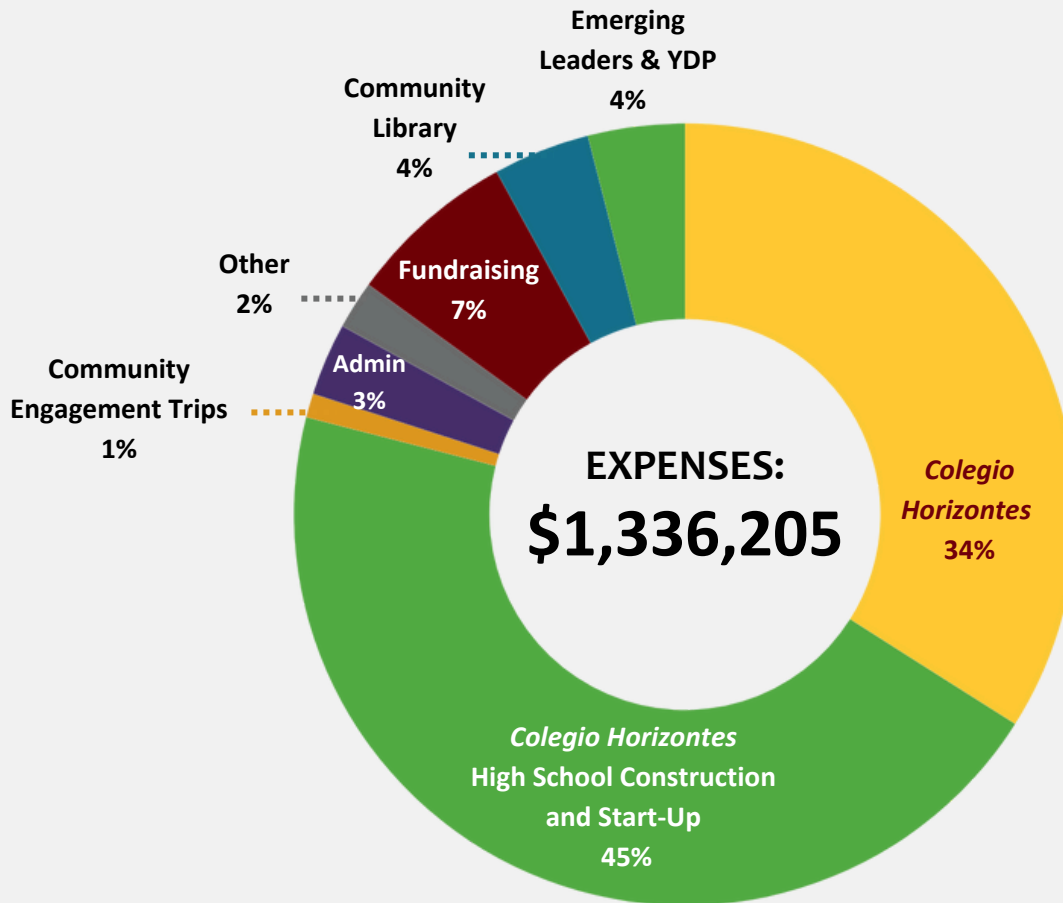


Baltazar

Limitless Horizons Ixil graduate Baltazar began working in 2023 as an interpreter for Ixil Bloom, a new program in Chajul that teaches and supports children and youth with special needs. Though he had no formal training in the field, his compassion, curiosity, and deep commitment to serving his community quickly set him apart. Baltazar took on a leadership role in 2024—identifying students with special needs, supporting families who had never received guidance, and helping shape the foundation of Ixil Bloom's programming. Now, he has become a lifeline for families of children with special needs, many of whom were previously hidden from community life due to stigma or lack of services. Baltazar actively helps connect these families to medical care, coordinates behavioral supports, and advocates for children and adults with autism, cerebral palsy, and Down syndrome.



2024 Financials



Limitless Horizons Ixil is a U.S.-registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit with tax ID #26-4296182.
Our growing organization prides itself on financial transparency and accountability to our donors.



THANK YOU

...to the **611 individuals and foundations** around the world
who made contributions to support our work.

...to the **141 recurring donors**
who gave a consistent monthly or annual gift.

...to the **173 new donors**
who joined our diverse and generous community of supporters.

...to the **many volunteers, teachers, coaches, photographers, board members,
and other supporters** who contributed their time and talents to our mission.



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To get involved, visit www.limitlesshorizonsixil.org
or email info@limitlesshorizonsixil.org for more information.

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