



GIRLS  
GARAGE

# 2025 IMPACT REPORT



12

YEARS IN OPERATION

11

PRO BONO COMMUNITY  
PROJECTS BUILT BY  
STUDENTS THIS YEAR

174

STUDENTS ENROLLED  
IN GIRLS GARAGE  
PROGRAMS THIS YEAR

1500+

PARTICIPANTS SINCE OUR  
INCEPTION IN 2013





# A YEAR OF FEARLESS GROWTH

From building outdoors all year to expressing ourselves publicly, 2025 was a year of proudly stepping into the spotlight with full support from our community.

2025 was a year of stretching and sharing at Girls Garage! We stretched ourselves beyond our comfort zones, taking on big new projects like a full home renovation and our first international build (Canada!). We welcomed new partnerships with organizations and corporations, like ReBuilding Together East Bay Network, helping us cultivate long-term relationships with construction firms far and wide. Our student community grew—and continues to grow—with the official launch of our Alumni Program. Through this program, hundreds of our graduates not only stay connected with the Girls Garage community but also gain access to year-round opportunities that expand their networks of careers and college pathways in the built environment. There were creative fundraising efforts we've never tried before: an online auction full of items made by or from beloved local businesses, a cornhole tournament, and even a t-shirt making happy hour! And we even grew as a team, too, adding new talented instructors to our scrappy staff family.

As always, all this growth is rooted in our North Star: the voices and power of our student community. Their work was shared boldly and publicly, through the construction of a whale playground for thousands of other youth, public bus ads designed by our Protest + Print class, and even a brand new t-shirt design created by one of our middle school students. Our gratitude and admiration for our whole community has grown tenfold. Thank you for putting such trust in us to grow, cultivate joy and experiment, and to set ourselves up for a great 2026!

In service and sawdust,



Emily Pilloton-Lam  
Founder and Executive Director



# 2025 IMPACT

97%

OF YOUTH REPORT INCREASED CONFIDENCE AND INTEREST IN STEM AND BUILDING TRADES BECAUSE OF GIRLS GARAGE



80%

OF PARTICIPATING TEENS IDENTIFY AS YOUTH OF COLOR

68%

OF YOUTH WHO HAVE BEEN ATTENDING GIRLS GARAGE FOR 3 OR MORE YEARS

174

STUDENTS ENROLLED IN AFTER-SCHOOL, SUMMER, WEEKEND, AND ADULT PROGRAMS IN 2025

53%

OF PARTICIPANTS COME FROM LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLDS



289

HOURS OF HANDS-ON INSTRUCTION

\$741K

IN FREE PROGRAMMING PROVIDED TO TEEN PARTICIPANTS

# PROGRAMS

We offer year-round instruction for girls and gender-expansive students to bring their audacious ideas to life.



**AFTER-SCHOOL  
COMMUNITY + CONSTRUCTION**

» 9th to 12th graders

Construction + Community invites girls and gender-expansive youth interested in architecture, construction trades, design, and engineering to learn technical skills in the context of community service.

**PROTEST + PRINT**

» 9th to 12th graders

In this activist art program, we encourage students to explore and express the complex personal and political issues that impact their daily lives. This program is rooted in "art as activism," using art as a tool to amplify students' creative voices in the creation of personal and collective work.

**CARPENTRY + WOOD**

» 5th to 8th graders

Carpentry + Wood program is our entry level class for our youngest builders! This 4-week course integrates a variety of hand and power tools. With a focus on safety, we teach layout and measurement fundamentals and precise cutting, shaping, and assembly techniques.

**YEAR-ROUND  
ADVANCED DESIGN/BUILD**

» 9th to 12th graders

Our Advanced Design/Build program is a year round cohort of our most committed builders. This team of high school participants embarks on our most ambitious and complex design and construction projects!

**SUMMER INTENSIVES  
YOUNG WOMEN'S DESIGN  
BUILDING DESIGN INSTITUTE**

» 9th to 12th graders

In this immersive week-long design/build summer camp, participants work together to construct a project for a local nonprofit client. Students learn and hone creative and vocational STEM skills including carpentry, applied math, and screen printing.

**BUILDER BOOTCAMP**

» 5th to 8th graders

Our Builder Bootcamp program is a week-long, half-day summer camp for girls and gender-expansive youth entering 5th-8th grades! Students will learn and apply skills in carpentry, art and design, collaboration, and teamwork.

**SPECIAL WORKSHOPS  
WOMXN IN THE WOODSHOP**

» post high-school graduates

This adults-only program invites womxn and gender-expansive individuals to learn the basic carpentry and woodworking techniques and tools in a supportive, creative, and fun environment. Just like with our youth classes, we prioritize safety, a supportive class culture, and bringing together diverse cohorts of individuals who can bond while building!

**25**

PROGRAMS COMPLETED  
INCLUDING AFTER-  
SCHOOL, WEEKEND  
WORKSHOPS, SUMMER  
INTENSIVES, AND ADULT  
PROGRAMS

**11**

PRO BONO COMMUNITY  
PROJECTS BUILT BY  
STUDENTS THIS YEAR



TOOLS IN THE SHOP

**34**

GIRLS GARAGE GRADUATES  
IN THE CLASS OF 2025

# ALUMNI PROGRAM

For 12 years, Girls Garage has provided free and low-cost programs in carpentry, welding, and more to girls and gender-expansive youth. In that time, we have welcomed over 1,500 students, completed 200+ projects, and watched more than 50% of graduates go on to college programs and careers in the trades. With two-thirds of students staying for 5+ years, our community doesn't end at graduation. It grows.

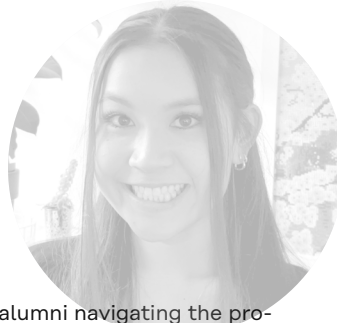
Announced in 2025, our Alumni Program, made possible through the support of U.S. Bank, formalizes that ongoing commitment keeping graduates connected, supported, and moving forward. Led entirely by alumni themselves, the program is co-coordinated by Erica Chu and Charlene Din (class of 2020). Together, they've built a year-round calendar of virtual workshops, professional panels, social gatherings, and networking events with trusted construction and trades partners. This past year included a corporate mixer, a resume review workshop, and a summer creative social event. The program also offers professional development stipends to remove financial barriers to tuition, conferences, and memberships empowering alumni to keep growing long after they leave our shop floor.

By investing in our graduates, we're deepening our impact and building a future where girls and gender-expansive youth don't just enter the trades, they lead them.



"From kindergarten to college, there is a general path that young people can follow, with support along the way. Beyond this, it often feels like we're expected to figure it out on our own. The Alumni Program provides the building blocks of communal and professional support needed for anyone to thrive."

— Charlene Din



"As an alumni navigating the professional world, the tangible and intangible skills I learned at Girls Garage have shaped how I approach my career. Working on building the Alumni Program opened my eyes to all the new possibilities as a young woman."

—Erica Chu

## PROGRAM STATS (2024-2025) \*

# 159

GIRLS GARAGE ALUMNI



# 5

WORKSHOPS AND  
SOCIAL EVENTS HOSTED  
IN FROM 2024-2025, IN-  
PERSON AND VIRTUAL

MORE THAN

# \$2K

WORTH OF STIPENDS  
PROVIDED TO ACTIVE  
ALUMNI

\*The Alumni Program year runs June to May thus stats reflect 2024-2025.

# PROJECTS

In 2025, our builders took on some of our most audacious builds to date with the support of our all female and non-binary instructors.





## HOME RENOVATION

### » Advanced Design/Build, Year-Long Project

Our most skilled cohort of young builders endeavored into our first year-long project: a home renovation. In partnership with Rebuilding Together East Bay Network, students in our Advanced Design/Build program renovated a home for an aging couple in West Berkeley. Together, they gained real-world construction experience while completing critical improvements including framing, flooring, insulation, and drywall. Along the way, this project fostered meaningful collaborations with local contractors, female-led construction companies, and generous material donors, highlighting the collective effort required to create lasting housing solutions.



## **BUILDING TOGETHER MURAL**

### **» Protest + Print, Spring 2025**

A few blocks from the Girls Garage workshop, Protest + Print students transformed the back wall of Truitt & White Lumber Co. into a larger-than-life celebration of tradeswomxn! Students designed and painted nine figures, each wielding tools, building, and creating.

The mural radiates bold color and energy into this industrial neighborhood. It's a love letter to craft, community, and the power of youth voices in public space. See it for yourself at 640 Hearst Ave, on the west side of Warehouse 2.





### WHALE PLAY STRUCTURE

» Young Women's Design + Building Institute and Builder Bootcamp, Summer 2025

Humphrey the Whale is a vibrant, interactive play structure built by a dedicated group of 73 campers aged 9 to 18, supported by staff, instructors, and community partners, at Berkeley's Adventure Playground.

The design includes a baleen mouth filled with sea creatures, crawlable ribcages, a tail ramp, and a towering spout. Campers from *Girls in Engineering* crafted and installed playful handholds modeled in papier-mâché and 3D printed, along with an iris diaphragm mechanisms as the whale's eyes.



# PROJECTS CONTINUED



## MURPHY BEDS WITH DESKS

### » Construction + Community, Winter 2025

Over the course of eight weeks, twelve students constructed not one, not two, but SEVEN Murphy beds for Tiny Village Spirit, a housing initiative aimed at providing shelter for unhoused and transitional youth. The project required 180 cuts before we could even move on to assembly. The project involved so many moving parts that utilized the chop saw, drill press, hand router, hand drill, and impact driver.



## POSTERS FOR HOPE

### » Protest + Print, Winter 2025

Beginning just a couple of days after Trump's inauguration, Protest + Print students were provided a safe space to process and make art. With topics ranging from LGBTQ rights to environmental justice, racism and xenophobia to genocide, we saw students channel these feelings of despondency into messages of hope. Their art was translated into 11"x17" risograph posters and later printed into bus ads placed throughout the City of Berkeley.



## MID-CENTURY MODERN BIRDHOUSES

### » Carpentry + Wood, Winter 2025

With a mix of hand and power tools, our youngest students constructed their very own mid-century modern birdhouses! Running wild with their imaginations, we saw the development of full living room sets, balconies galore, and enough vegetation to make a home garden. Needless to say, whatever calls this house a home—be it a bird, a bee, or a Barbie—will find great comfort in the joyous spaces our students built.

# PROJECTS CONTINUED



## MULTI-PURPOSE TABLES

### » Construction + Community, Spring 2025

Crafted for Sogorea Te' Land Trust, these multi-purpose redwood tables were designed to handle everything from washing vegetables to sorting seeds. Each table features removable surfaces, seed-sorting mesh stations, and custom-fit bins for washing vegetables, which are not only functional but also durable and built to last.



## PERFORMANCE STAGE BOXES

### » Womxn in the Woodshop, Spring 2025

With this diverse group of adult womxn, participants of all experience levels worked together to build six functional wood cube modules for Youth Speaks. What stood out most was the supportive energy in the shop: participants cheered each other on, celebrated every new accomplishment, and shared stories of healing and growth through hands-on work.



## KILN SHED + BREEZEWAY ROOF

### » Advanced Design/Build, Summer 2025

For our first ever international build, the Advanced Design/Build team traveled to Salt Spring Island, Canada, working with Mudgirls Collective, a network of women builders specializing in natural materials. Through this collaboration, we applied traditional and experimental building methods to create a durable breezeway roof and plastered exterior surfaces using clay-based materials.

# PROJECTS CONTINUED



## POLLINATOR BEE MANSIONS

### » Construction + Community, Fall 2025

We revisited a project we completed in 2021! Our high school builders constructed and designed six colorful pollinator bee boxes for Garden to Table Silicon Valley that stand about 3 1/2 feet tall. These pollinator bee mansions simulate natural nesting sites like hollow stems or holes in wood providing nesting and shelter for solitary bees. We put a call out to our community for bamboo, and in less than 24 hours, we acquired enough to create “rooms” for the introverted bee.



## PROTEST PENNANTS

### » Protest + Print, Fall 2025

With the guidance of guest teaching artist Cordy Joan and support from seasoned Girls Garage instructor Alex Bowman, our young artists delved into the world of textile arts by crafting pennant banners. They received a crash course in fabric dyeing, sewing, weaving, embroidery, and much more in six weeks. After hand-dyeing natural fabrics using soda ash to help permanently bond colors to the fibers, students cut stencils out of file folders, spray painted text, and added embroidered details, including text, florals, and ornate borders.



## FREE LITTLE LIBRARY + ART GALLERY

### » Carpentry + Wood, Fall 2025

In the fall, we worked on two dual little free library AND little free art gallery that lives in a planter box outside of Mandela Grocery in West Oakland. On the last day of class, we filled teeny canvases with art, packed nail holes, added another layer of exterior paint, and built mini furniture for the gallery. We can't get enough of the delightful elements here: the tiny stained glass window by Kerbi Urbanowski, the hardwood flooring in the art gallery, the roofing and siding, and all the handmade artwork by our students.



# FINANCIALS

In a year of uncertainty, our greatest strength in 2025 was the community of champions that has helped, and continues to help, light the way for Girls Garage.

One of the greatest challenges we faced in 2025 was fundraising during a time of political upheaval and economic uncertainty. Across the philanthropic landscape, many foundations shifted their priorities or paused support for new organizations, while some corporate sponsors were unable to renew their gifts. These changes created significant challenges for nonprofits like ours working to sustain and grow impactful programs for young people.

At the same time, one of our greatest successes has been the strength of our community. We have leaned deeply on relationships with existing supporters who continue to champion our work and connect us to their broader

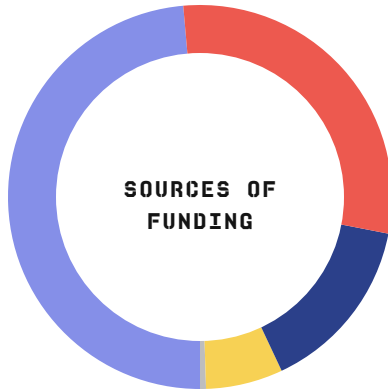
networks. We are incredibly honored to have advocates in philanthropy, corporations, education, and beyond speaking highly of our mission, philosophy, and impact in rooms we have not yet entered.

As we continue building new partnerships and expanding our donor community, we remain humbled by the breadth and depth of support surrounding Girls Garage. When we imagine our community as a constellation, we see countless people helping light the way for our students and our future. Building the world we want to see is truly collective work, and we are deeply grateful for every way YOU continue to show up for Girls Garage.



# \$1,452,029

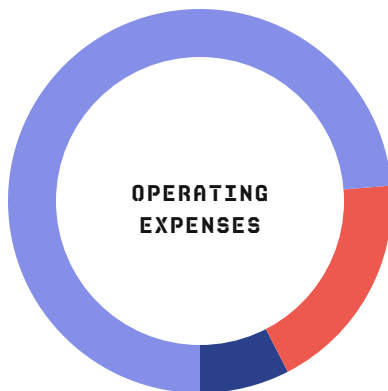
TOTAL REVENUE (2025)



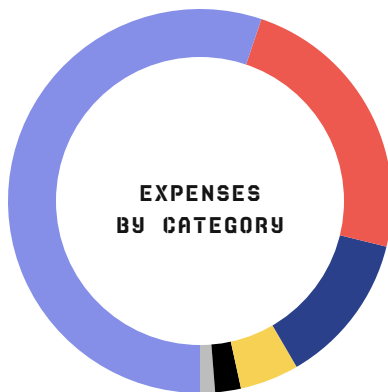
● Grants	\$705,812 (49%)
● Individual Donations	\$427,643 (29%)
● Corporate Sponsorships	\$217,019 (15%)
● Earned Income	\$94,260 (6%)
● Other	\$7,295 (1%)

# \$1,382,218

TOTAL EXPENSES (2025)



● Program Services	\$1,018,964 (74%)
● Overhead	\$258,748 (19%)
● Fundraising	\$104,506 (7%)



● Personnel and Benefits	\$762,710 (55%)
● Occupancy	\$176,633 (24%)
● Building Materials and Project Costs	\$326,772 (13%)
● Admin and Compliance	\$68,686 (5%)
● Office Expenses	\$29,984 (2%)
● Outreach and Promotion	\$17,433 (1%)



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GARAGE



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