

Science is Elementary

ANNUAL REPORT

2026

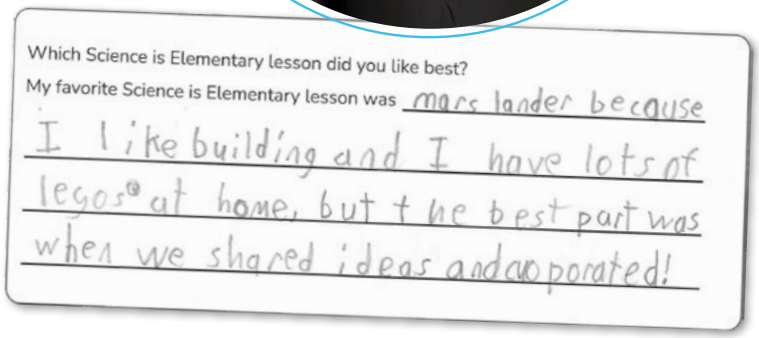
A message from CEO & Founder, Tzipor Ulman



Dear Friends,

At the end of every year, we ask children to tell us about their favorite experiment.

This child wrote about an engineering lesson, where third graders design and build a Mars lander under specific constraints. I'm thrilled he loved the lesson and made the connection to toys he has at home - that's exactly what we want. Without even thinking about it, he's internalized one of our core pillars: ***Science is Everywhere***.


Which Science is Elementary lesson did you like best?
My favorite Science is Elementary lesson was mars lander because I like building and I have lots of legos® at home, but the best part was when we shared ideas and cooporated!

"The best part was when we shared ideas and cuoportaed," he says. Even as he's learning science concepts and the engineering process, what stuck with him is collaborating with his classmates. Science teaches children foundational skills that go beyond the classroom. As AI reshapes work, our ability to collaborate and communicate with each other will become ever more important.

This year, Science is Elementary reached more than 62,000 children.
That's 20% more than we did last year.

That means there are more children, in more places, who are getting exciting hands-on science and engineering experiences for the first time. They're learning real science concepts, they're learning how to formulate questions, analyze data, and craft well-reasoned arguments.

None of this happens without the people who fund it, the educators who deliver it, and the partner organizations who open their doors to us. On behalf of every child who gets to build a Mars lander, and more importantly, gets to share the idea that made it fly: thank you.

With gratitude,

Tzipor Ulman, PhD
Founder & CEO

FY26 Board Members

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Our Impact

children reached:

62,342

science hours:

88,494

increase in children's science confidence:

28%



FY26 Highlights

A year of growth

Thanks to increased demand, our reach grew by 20% this year. We are proud to have over 50 partners that bring our programs to their communities. These include libraries big and small, YMCAs, Boys' and Girls' Clubs, schools, and several hyperlocal community based organizations.

A New Preschool Curriculum

Science is for Me! Preschool transforms foundational physics, chemistry, and engineering concepts into playful, age-appropriate discovery. By encouraging questions and celebrating curiosity, this new offering gives 3- and 4-year-olds early confidence in STEM, proving that science is accessible to young learners.

In this inaugural year, 614 preschoolers have engineered tunnels, learned that air makes things move, and that whether an object sinks or floats is determined by the material it's made of, not its size.

Jasmine and José and the Busy Bees

In this new addition to our partnership with RAFT (Resource Area for Teachers), Jasmine and José learn that as bees fly, a static charge builds up which attracts pollen grains. Children explored this mechanism by rubbing a small balloon to build up a static charge, and using it to pick up black pepper. After testing different materials to move the pepper, students used their newfound scientific knowledge to design and build a pollinator tool.



Science is Elementary's mission is to provide inspiring, innovative, high-quality science experiences to the preschool and elementary school children who need them most.

Our philosophy is based on three pillars

Science is **Awesome**

Science should be awe-inspiring. Children explore how the world works by asking questions, making observations, and testing ideas that might not pan out. Every kit pairs a story with real materials, so wonder comes first and the explanation comes second.

Science is **for Everyone**

Every child should be able to see themselves in science. We build lessons that honor the languages, cultures, and experiences children bring with them, and we go where the need is greatest.

Science is **Everywhere**

Science happens in a kitchen, a puddle, and a shadow on the sidewalk. We use everyday materials on purpose, so children learn that they can be scientists wherever they are, with whatever they have around them.



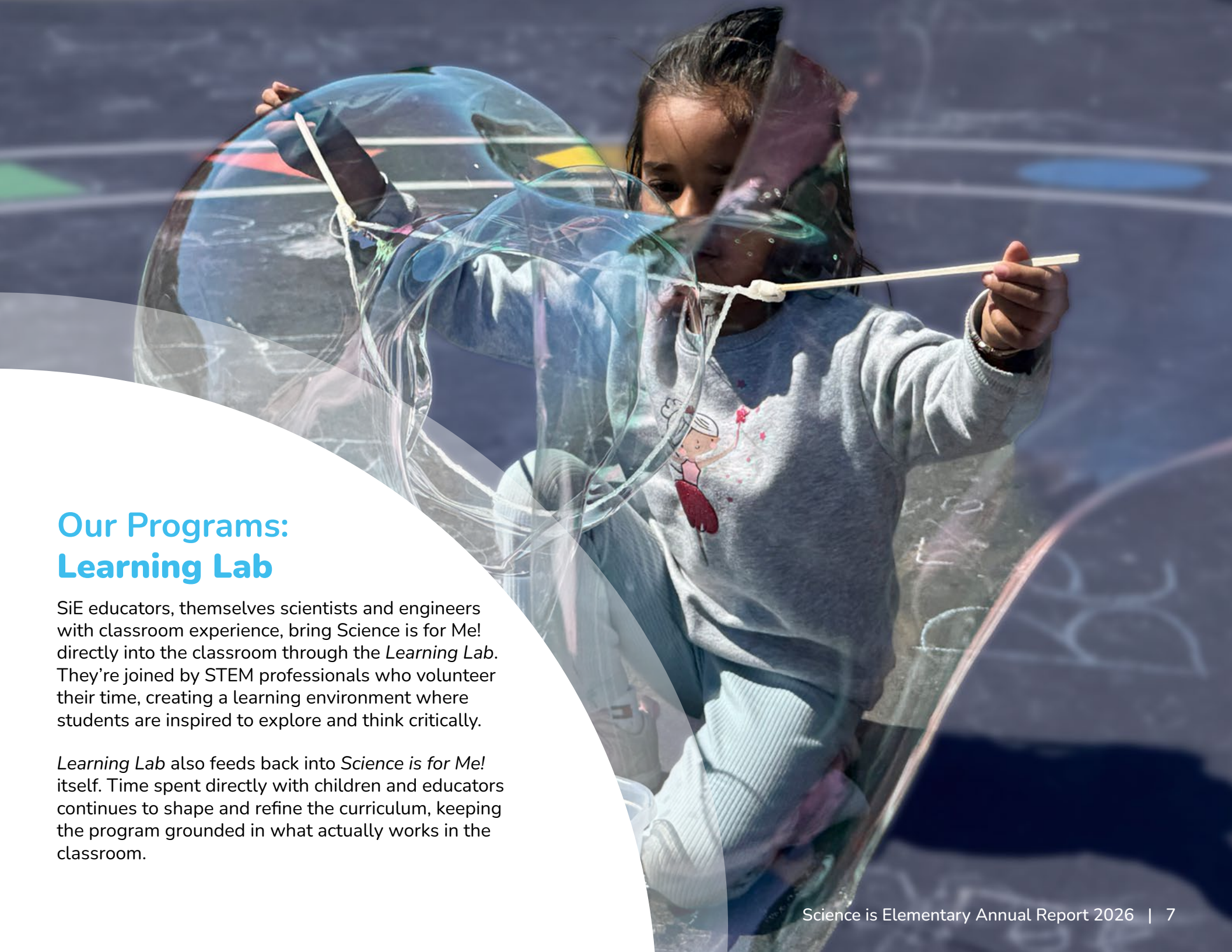
Our Programs: *Science is for Me!*

This year, 20% more children opened a *Science is for Me!* kit for the first time.

Science is for Me! brings real science, literacy, and belonging, to tens of thousands of 4-7 year olds every year. Each kit pairs an illustrated story featuring diverse characters with hands-on STEM experiences, allowing children to learn and explore on their own. Companion Guides enable families to do and discuss science in their home languages (English, Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese), and Teacher Guides provide additional resources for formal and informal science programs. Together, these remove multiple barriers that lock children out of learning: wealth, language, technology, and belonging.

Our partnership with BANANAS, a nonprofit that supports families and child care providers across Alameda County, brought hands-on science learning to 10,825 children last year. BANANAS distributed kits directly to families for at-home science exploration, as well as to child care providers. The latter gave early educators a turnkey way to bring science into their daily programming.

> “As we strive to create curious, joyful learners, SiE has gone above and beyond to hold our hand, as we hold the community.
>
> Watching children investigate, problem solve, and build confidence is breathtaking. Seeing the light switch on in a child’s eyes is priceless.”
>
> – *Ni McCovery, Provider Services Manager, BANANAS*



Our Programs: Learning Lab

SiE educators, themselves scientists and engineers with classroom experience, bring Science is for Me! directly into the classroom through the *Learning Lab*. They're joined by STEM professionals who volunteer their time, creating a learning environment where students are inspired to explore and think critically.

Learning Lab also feeds back into *Science is for Me!* itself. Time spent directly with children and educators continues to shape and refine the curriculum, keeping the program grounded in what actually works in the classroom.

Our Programs:
Professional Development

This year we trained more than 100 educators, from preschool teachers in California and New York to librarians in one of the country's largest public libraries.

At the San José Public Library, we worked with librarians to deepen their own science knowledge and learn how to weave STEM into literacy. Librarians built tall towers out of small wooden cubes and wired electrical circuits to light mini-lightbulbs in parallel and in series, rediscovering the joy of hands-on learning along the way. Because librarians work with mixed age groups, helping them understand what children can actually do at different preschool and elementary ages was particularly useful.

Average rating 4.5 out of 5.

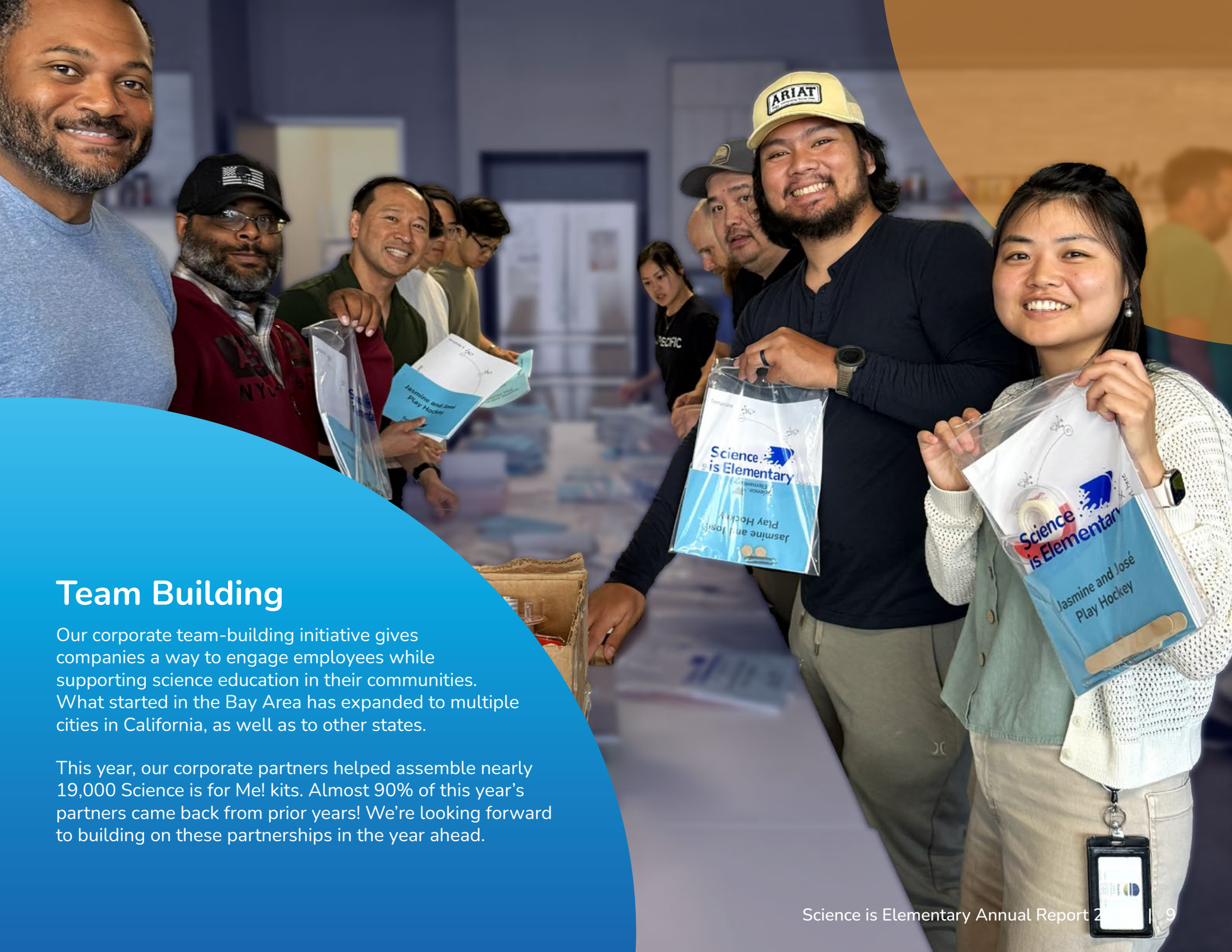


> "Most of our library staff will readily admit: "I did not enter the library space to be a science educator... I'm a reader." Science is Elementary's professional development has helped us develop and execute STEM programs, especially for early elementary age [children]."
>
> – *Lizzie Nolan, Expanded Learning Manager, San Jose Public Library*

Science is Play & Play is Science

We also brought professional development to a preschool in California and to a City University of NY (CUNY) preschool in New York City, helping teachers build confidence and enthusiasm for science.

The training highlights that science and play are natural partners. Teachers discovered how to harness children's curiosity to develop science experiences for them, and how to use scientific inquiry to deepen learning and build skills.



Team Building

Our corporate team-building initiative gives companies a way to engage employees while supporting science education in their communities. What started in the Bay Area has expanded to multiple cities in California, as well as to other states.

This year, our corporate partners helped assemble nearly 19,000 Science is for Me! kits. Almost 90% of this year's partners came back from prior years! We're looking forward to building on these partnerships in the year ahead.

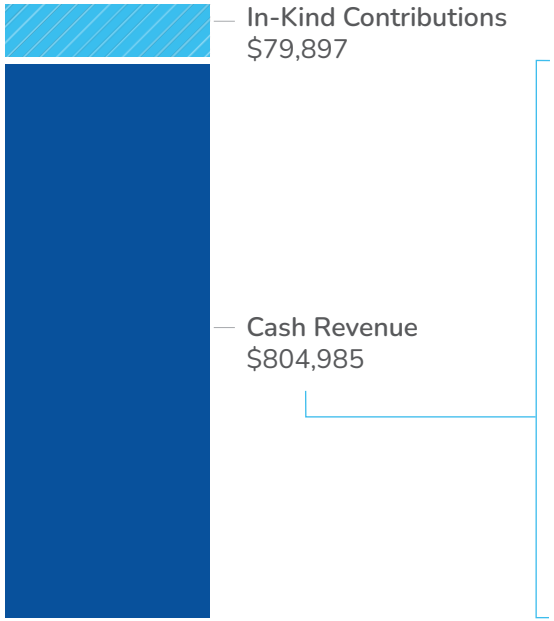
FY26 Financials

Science is Elementary generated $804,985 in cash revenue this year, closing with a healthy $46,469 net operating surplus thanks to a diversified base of grants, corporate partners, earned income, and individual supporters.

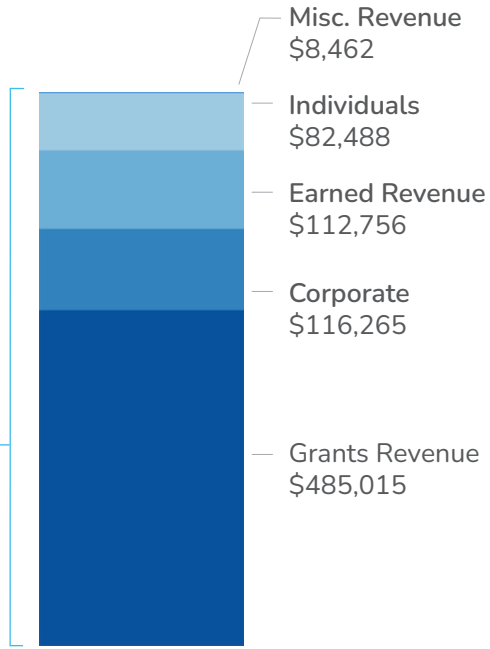
The Power of Volunteers

Every kit handed to a student is built by volunteers. This year, community members contributed $79,897 in assembly labor (valued via Independent Sector guidelines). Unrecorded on standard GAAP filings, this volunteer engine means every $1.00 given by donors is boosted by $0.10 in direct labor, maximizing every dollar invested in our mission.

Total Resources

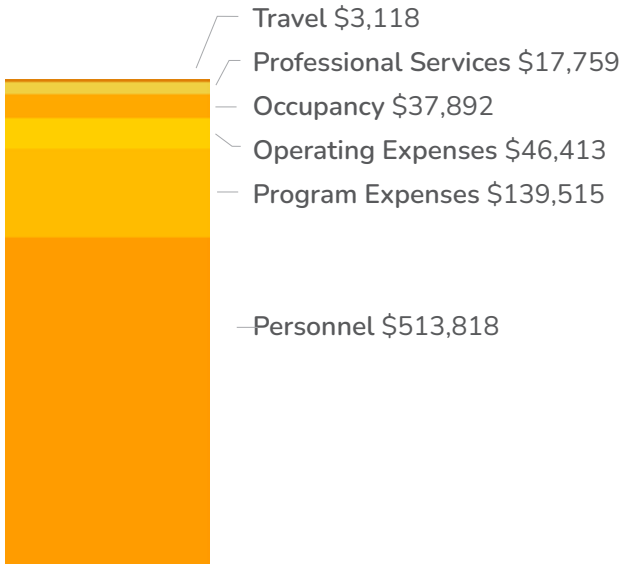


Cash Revenue Breakdown



Total Expenses

$758,516



The personnel category includes both program staff (the educators, curriculum developers, and coordinators) who deliver our programs directly as well as the administrative team that keeps the organization running. Direct Program Expenses cover materials and delivery costs, separate from staffing.



Donors

We are grateful to the supporters who make our work possible.

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SiE is a 501c3 nonprofit organization.
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www.scienceiselementary.org