FEEST

annual report

2025-2026

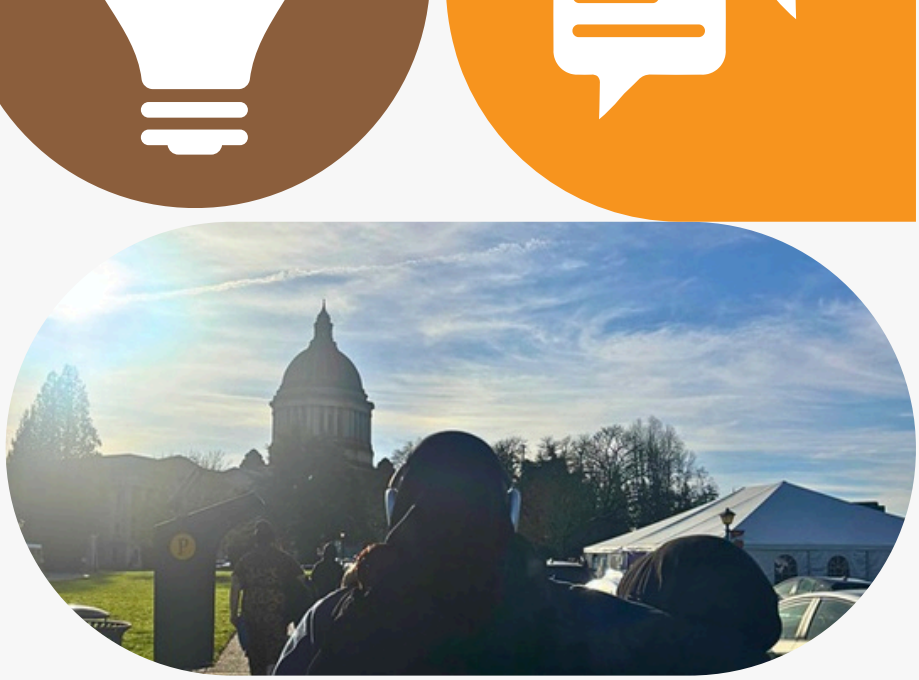




Photo Credit: Kae-Lin Wang

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To our dear FEEST Community,

This year, we have been taking inspiration from the water that surrounds us, especially the ocean and the way it is constantly moving, shifting, and reshaping the world around it.

A tide does more than gently roll in. **It reshapes the shoreline. It shifts the landscape. It moves things that once seemed impossible to move.** That is why our theme this year is *Tides of Change.*

We have to be honest about the waters we are navigating right now. Across our country and around the globe, it can feel like we are living through a relentless storm. We see the heavy undercurrents of political division, the lingering wakes of public health crises, and recurring waves of violence in and around our communities.

In moments like these, it is easy to feel overwhelmed by the scale of what needs to change. But moments of crisis can also reveal where old systems are failing and create openings to build something different.

This year, our Student Organizers showed us what it looks like to move with purpose through those openings.

Students spoke directly to decision-makers about school food and **helped win free universal school meals for Seattle Public Schools students.** They organized alongside their peers for wellness spaces that respond to what students actually need. They distributed healthy snacks, cooked and ate together, built relationships across schools, and continued **pushing for fresh, culturally relevant food and stronger mental health supports in schools.**

These wins did not appear overnight.

They came from students researching the issues affecting their schools, talking with their peers, building relationships, meeting with decision-makers, learning from setbacks, and continuing to organize. They came from **countless conversations and moments that might seem small on their own but, together, became a powerful current.**

That is how tides of change move.

Throughout this report, you will see that movement taking many forms.

You will see it in our fight for food justice and schools where every student can eat without stigma or barriers. You will see it in students organizing for mental health resources shaped by their shared experiences and needs. You will see it in the everyday practice of organizing: relationship-building, political education, outreach, research, cooking, art, joy, and collective decision-making.

Each of these waves is part of the same tide.

Our work at FEEST begins with the belief that young people already understand deeply what is happening in their schools and communities. When students have the space, resources, relationships, and organizing tools to act on that knowledge together, they can shift what feels immovable.

This year is proof.

And none of this movement happens alone.

To our Student Organizers, families, staff, board members, partners, supporters, funders, alumni, and everyone who has cooked with us, organized alongside us, shared our work, opened a door, offered a resource, or invested in youth leadership: **thank you for being part of this current.**

The pages ahead celebrate what our community moved this year while reminding us that the shoreline is still changing.

There is more work ahead. More students to organize with. More meals to transform. More spaces for care to create. More decisions where young people deserve real power.

The tide is already moving.

Together, we will keep pushing it forward.

With gratitude,

Jaimée

jaimée marsh

executive director



at a glance

This year, FEEST Student Organizers built community, strengthened their organizing skills, shared food, and brought more people into their campaigns for food justice, mental health resources, and student well-being. These numbers offer a snapshot of the people, resources, and relationships that helped move our work forward.

$128,654 distributed to Student Organizers in stipends, compensating them for their time, wisdom, and leadership.

76 Student Organizers engaged

90% of FEEST Student Organizers, staff, board members, and facilitators identify as BIPOC

673 community members engaged through events, workshops, presentations, and meetings to build relationships and strengthen our youth-led campaigns.

2,595 meals provided for students, ensuring access to fresh, culturally relevant food.

$6,450 invested in local BIPOC facilitators and artists sharing their expertise with youth to strengthen young people's organizing, social-emotional, and community-building skills.

free school meals for all!

FEEST began around shared meals, and for years Student Organizers have organized toward a clear vision for school food: **fresh, free, culturally relevant meals for every student.** This year brought one of the biggest victories in that campaign.

WE WON FREE SCHOOL MEALS FOR ALL SEATTLE STUDENTS!

In April 2026, Seattle Mayor Katie Wilson announced that the City's FEPP Levy plan would fund **free breakfast and lunch for every Seattle Public Schools student beginning in fall 2026.** FEEST joined the Mayor, students, school leaders, and community partners for the announcement.

This win was years in the making. In 2019, FEEST youth released the Healthy Food Round Table report, calling for fresh, culturally relevant food without barriers to access. Since then, Student Organizers have conducted research, built relationships with school and district leaders, and brought student priorities directly to decision-makers. This work also helped FEEST become a founding member of the **Seattle School Meals & Food Education Working Group,** where students continued advocating for universal free meals and more food justice priorities.

In July 2026, the Seattle victory was suddenly at risk when a Seattle City Council committee voted to delay universal meals by a year. FEEST responded immediately, bringing youth and community voices to City Hall, organizing public comment, and gathering community support. The decision was reversed, preserving universal meals for the 2026–27 school year!

Seattle builds on a win Student Organizers helped achieve several years earlier in the **Highline School District, where students continue to receive breakfast and lunch at no cost.**

For Student Organizers, this experience reinforced a lesson at the center of organizing: **change can take years to win, and sometimes a win still has to be defended.**



and we're still cooking

Universal free meals are an important foundation, and students have been equally clear that **what is on the plate matters:** food should taste good, reflect students' cultures, and be prepared with care.

This year, **FEEST piloted monthly Meal Kits and virtual cooking nights,** beginning with our Butternut Squash Curry, a recipe shaped by earlier generations of Student Organizers. Students also cooked at **Rainier Beach Action Coalition's Kitchen**, learned about food waste and cooking at **Seattle Tilth's Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetlands**, gathered to make a meal at **the White Center HUB**, and planned and prepared an entire meal during Summer Camp.

These experiences reflect an idea FEEST has carried since our earliest days: **food creates room for connection and organizing.** Cooking and eating together gives students space to build trust, talk about what is happening in their schools, and recognize shared experiences with their peers.

The kitchen also gives students a place to practice organizing skills: making plans, dividing responsibilities, communicating across differences, adapting together, and making decisions with the whole group in mind.

part of a bigger movement

Our food justice organizing reaches beyond individual schools and districts.

FEEST works alongside the City of Seattle, students, district staff, agencies, and community organizations through the **Seattle School Meals & Food Education Working Group;** participates in the **Burien Collaborative,** connecting nonprofits and service providers working for equity in Burien; and is a member of **United Way of King County's Food Justice Collaborative**, sharing resources and advocating on food policy in Olympia. Through **Front & Centered,** we also connect food justice with statewide environmental and climate justice organizing led by communities of color.

Together, these relationships help FEEST carry what Student Organizers are learning and demanding in their schools into **local, regional, and statewide conversations about food, access, culture, and power.**

The win for universal meals gives us an important foundation for continuing to organize toward school food that is fresh, culturally relevant, student-informed, and rooted in our communities.

food, memory + recipes to feest on

every recipe carries a story.







In July 2026, FEEST published ***Recipes to FEEST On***, our first-ever community cookbook, bringing together recipes, stories, artwork, and memories from across the FEEST Fam.

FEEST has been cooking in community since our inception at Youngstown Cultural Arts Center in 2008. This cookbook carries pieces of that history through recipes from community dinners, Meal Kits, cooking classes, students, staff, alumni, families, and community members.

FEEST's Butternut Squash Curry captures that story particularly well. The recipe grew from Student Organizers working with school nutrition staff to develop youth-designed meals. Years later, a new generation of Student Organizers cooked that same curry through FEEST's first monthly Meal Kit.

Recipes to FEEST On holds what food has meant across generations of FEEST: **a way to care for each other, remember where we come from, gather in community, and organize toward something better.**

mental health organizing

Our Mental Health campaign entered the 2025-2026 school year with years of organizing behind it and three goals still guiding the work:

More therapists of color. Culturally responsive social-emotional learning. Wellness Rooms in schools.

This year, those goals took different forms as Student Organizers responded to changing needs in their schools. **FEEST continued organizing for long-term systems change while also responding to what young people and school communities needed in the shorter term.**

Student Organizers have continued building relationships with school and district leaders, surveying their peers, sharing testimony, and organizing for mental health resources shaped by what students actually need.

We entered 2025–2026 with **11 Wellness Rooms established across Highline** and continued momentum toward expanding Wellness Rooms and stronger mental health supports in Seattle Public Schools.

This year also reminded us that organizing for mental health cannot be separated from what young people are experiencing outside the classroom.

Learn more about our Mental Health Campaign history and progress in ***Our Campaign for Wellness Rooms: A Student Activist Story*** a youth written article by FEEST Student Organizers!

click here to read the article



Illustration by FEEST Student Organizer Eva



FEEST Student Organizers at Programming



Illustration of a Wellness Room by FEEST Student Organizer Eva



FEEST Student Organizer, Addison giving a speech at graduation

making space for grief and care

As students and school staff named immediate needs for additional social-emotional support, FEEST helped bring those resources directly to young people and their peers.

At the beginning of 2026, our community was carrying profound grief after the deaths of two Rainier Beach students.

FEEST responded by holding grief workshops for our students' and school communities over several weeks, creating spaces for students to process, connect, and care for one another while we continue organizing for culturally responsive social-emotional learning in schools.

Students explored grief through grounding exercises, journaling, conversation, art, altars, movement, and other collective practices.

These spaces treated grief as something worthy of attention and care, while giving young people room to participate as much or as little as they needed.

In February and May, FEEST joined with other community partners, parents, educators, former school administrators, former Student Organizers, and other community members for a **Youth Community Safety Circle**. People shared a meal, sat in a circle, and made space for connection and grief.

The conversations named a shared belief that safer schools require consistent relationships, resources, care, and belonging. Participants pushed back on punishment and policing as solutions to harm and instead talked about **what it means for adults and organizations to show up for young people before a crisis happens.**

This work became another expression of our mental health organizing: **embodying the care we want students to experience every day.**



continuing to organize

Student Organizers continued researching, talking with peers, meeting with decision-makers, and organizing inside their schools. Their work this year reinforced something students have said throughout this campaign: **mental health support has to be visible, accessible, culturally responsive, and rooted in trust.**

In the spring, **spaces were identified for future Wellness Rooms at Chief Sealth and Franklin.** Student Organizers also joined administrators from Tyee and Franklin on a **field trip to Mount Rainier High School to learn from its existing Wellness Room** and explore what implementation could look like in their own schools.

At Mount Rainier, limited staffing and capacity meant the Wellness Room was not widely known among students, with many students accessing it through referrals from counselors or teachers.

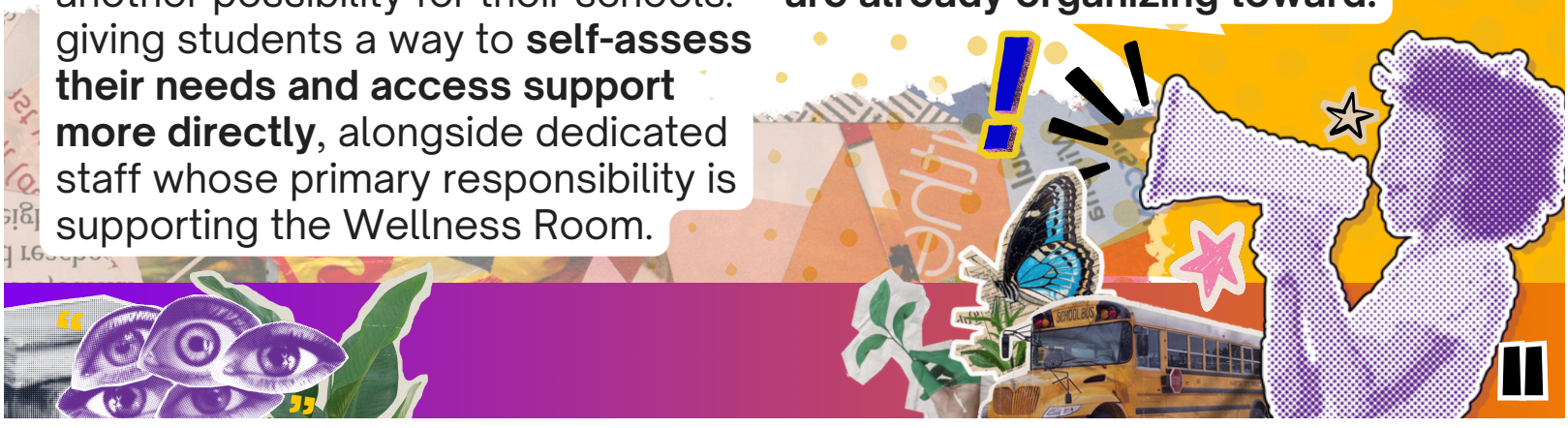
Our Student Organizers identified another possibility for their schools: giving students a way to **self-assess their needs and access support more directly**, alongside dedicated staff whose primary responsibility is supporting the Wellness Room.

Looking ahead, FEEST is beginning a pilot project designed to address one of the biggest challenges schools face when implementing Wellness Rooms: **staffing and capacity**. Through partnerships with the **University of Washington's Education, Communities and Organizations program** and **Seattle University's School of Social Work,** college interns will work alongside FEEST Student Organizers to help design, staff, and implement Wellness Rooms in additional Seattle and Highline schools.

There are still barriers. School budgets remain strained, resources are uneven across school districts, and students continue to encounter systems that move more slowly than their needs.

But Student Organizers continue to shift the tides.

The next phase of this campaign is being **shaped by what students learned through their work and research and by the solutions they are already organizing toward.**



students shaping better schools

Through our **2025–2026 Youth-Led Participatory Research Project,** Student Organizers developed research questions and gathered **student responses.** Each school explored questions rooted in its own community, allowing students to identify both shared concerns and priorities unique to their school.

Across all five schools, several themes rose to the surface:

- **Schoolwork is a major source of stress.**
- **Students need places to pause and reset.**
- **Food shapes the day**
- **Support starts with trust.**
- **Life outside of school follows students into the classroom.**

These findings reinforce what Student Organizers have been organizing around for years: **students need Wellness Rooms where they can rest, regulate, access resources, and connect with trusted adults.**

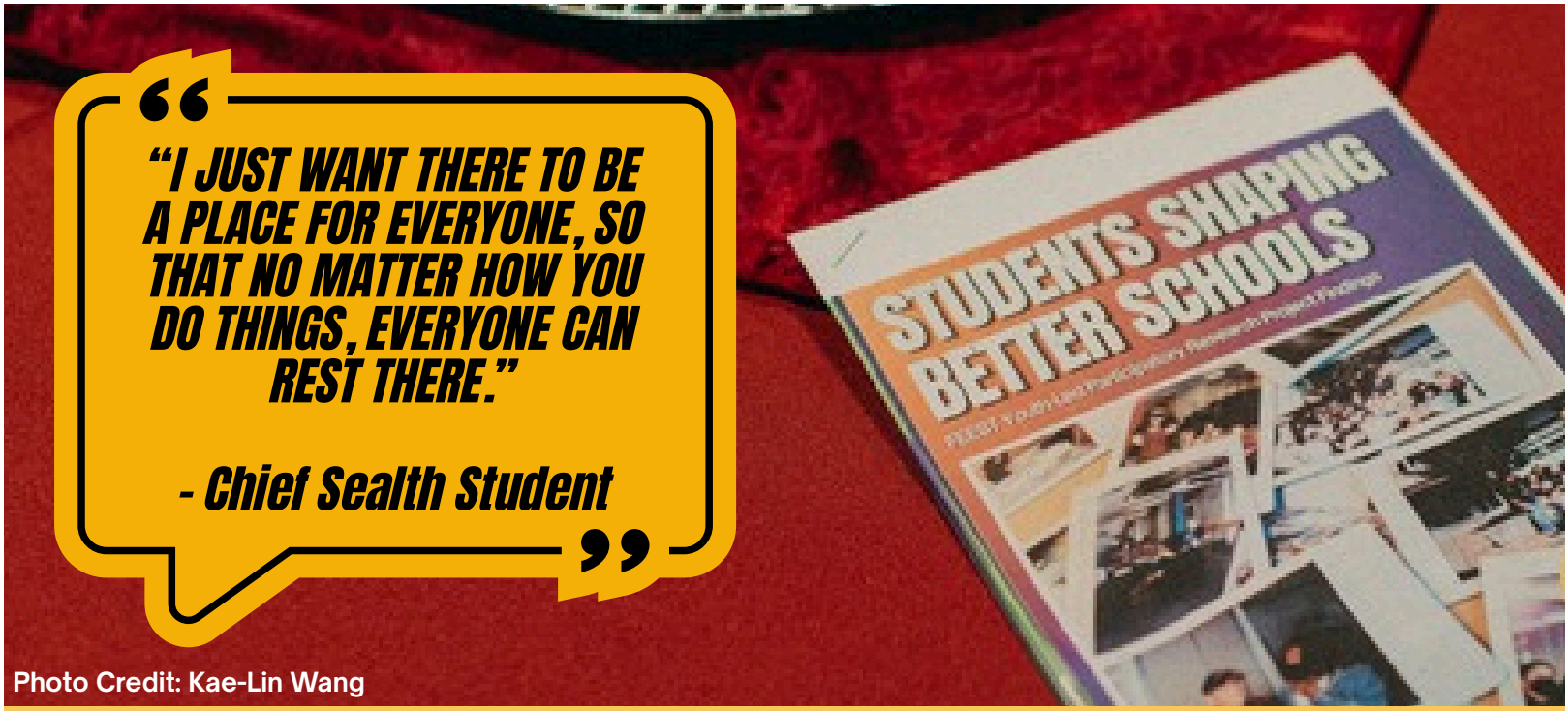


Photo Credit: Kae-Lin Wang

turning research into action

Student Organizers are using what they learned to **refine campaign priorities, build strategies with their peers, share findings with school and district leaders, and organize for changes in policies, practices, and resources.**

Students asked. Students listened. Now, they are organizing with what they heard.

click here to read the full report!

organizing in practice

students learn to organize by organizing

At FEEST, leadership grows through practice. Student Organizers plan campaigns and events, build relationships with their peers and adults, speak with decision-makers, adapt when plans change, and work together to turn ideas into action. All of these pieces are essential in community organizing.

FEEST's role is to support youth in their growth edges of leadership so they can discover what role best fits who they are. Some students are all about logistics and want to plan an agenda; and some students want to use their voice and write a speech to give to people in power.

Organizing requires leadership in all these areas to be sustained and effective.



feest staff and community supporters at first we feest

first we feest

Students planned the party. Then they ran it.

Throughout summer 2025, a student party planning committee shaped First We FEEST: A Community Celebration from the ground up.

Students made decisions about the goals and purpose of the event, stepped into various roles, emceed, led games, shared speeches, and created a celebration centered on youth power, joy, and community.

youth day of action

Taking youth power to Olympia.

FEEST joined Washington Youth Alliance to bring **200 young people from the South Sound to Olympia**, joining more than 100 youth from across Washington State.

Students learned about the bills and issues, practiced testimony, met directly with legislators and staff, asked questions, made direct policy asks, and experienced the legislative process firsthand.



feest student organizers walking to the capitol during youth day of action!

"It was really important to me that young people who are often most affected by budget cuts and lack of resources were able to speak to what is happening on the ground to people with decision-making power on the state level.

Young people from the South Sound deserve to be able see the scales of power and engage with them, because the scales of power affect them directly. *The work we do at the school level is preparing young people to organize at different scales."*

-Jude, Former FEEST Youth & Community Organizing Coordinator

organizing in practice

students learn to organize by organizing



the spread from our summer camp meal!

summer camp meal

Student Organizers took ownership of their Summer Camp meal from beginning to end: **planning, grocery shopping, cooking, assigning roles, hosting activities, and adapting when rain changed the plan.**

The result was a hands-on lesson in collaboration, accountability, and the very organizer skill of figuring things out when plans go sideways.



students peeling carrots at one of our feest dinners

organizing for school meals for all

Years of organizing turned a demand into policy.

Student Organizers have pushed for fresh, free, and culturally relevant school meals through research, testimony, meetings with decision-makers, City Hall advocacy, feedback sessions, and participation in the Seattle School Meals & Food Education Working Group.

In 2026, **Seattle committed to providing free school meals for all Seattle Public Schools' students beginning fall 2026.**

and the practice continues...

Across the 2025 - 2026 school year, **Student Organizers also lead outreach and recruitment, basebuilding, school meetings, community events, meetings with decision-makers, strategy development, and celebrations.**

Each experience gives students opportunities to practice building relationships, making collective decisions, communicating their ideas, and bringing people together around a shared vision for more just schools and communities.

student journeys:
spotlight on youth leaders



eva (she/her)
FEEST Student Organizer

*"**FEEST will grow that feeling of wanting to change things in your heart into something real.** And you get to meet people who feel the same way about their community. So don't get discouraged because of being young or not being a "super activist." If you're set on helping your school and your community, that's all you need to start."*

read the full interview here!



aisha (she/her)
FEEST Student Organizer

*"[At FEEST] I felt like I could be myself. I could put my ideas out there, and people could add to them and **make them into something beautiful**."*

read the full interview here!



osman (he/him)
FEEST Student Organizer

*"FEEST is about **helping everybody around the community**."*

read the full interview here!

summer stories 2026: ancestors and descendants

For one week in July, 25 students gathered at the White Center HUB for **Summer Stories, FEEST's annual youth arts program rooted in creativity, storytelling, and community.**

This year's theme, **Ancestors and Descendants**, invited students to look backward and forward: exploring the people, cultures, stories, and experiences that shaped them while imagining what they want to carry into the future. We chose this theme because **looking back to our past and looking forward to our future is a way to both dream of and organize towards a better world.**

Our ancestors positioned us to be here in this moment, and we have a duty to think of the future just like they did.

creating together

Each day, Teaching Artists brought students into a new creative practice:

- ***Creative writing + Seven Generations*** with Nurhaliza
- ***Photography + perspective*** with Annette
- ***Pattern making + visual art*** with Deycha
- ***Poetry + self-portraits*** with Reagan
- ***Zine-making + celebration*** with Mei'lani

Across these mediums, students experimented with new materials and techniques while creating work rooted in identity, memory, youth power, and visioning.



summer stories students + teaching artist nurhaliza



summer stories students' self potrait mural wall

summer stories 2026: ancestors and descendants

what students carried with them

Young people shared that Summer Stories gave them space to **try new forms of art, build confidence in their creativity, reflect on their identities and ancestors, and make art alongside other young people.** Summer Stories invites participants to imagine and envision a new world in community with each other.

When we practice imagination together, we build our collective hope muscles.

> WE NEED TO LEAVE SOMETHING FOR OUR FUTURE GENERATIONS LIKE OUR ANCESTORS DID.

> ALL THE PROMPTS MADE ME THINK MORE ABOUT MY ANCESTORS AND HOW I VIEW THEM.

> I FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE WITH MY ARTISTIC SKILLS, AND I BELIEVE I CAN EXPRESS MY FEELINGS THROUGH MY ART MORE.

Summer Stories reminded us that **storytelling can hold where we come from, who we are now, and the worlds young people are already envisioning and building for those who come after them.**



read the zine!



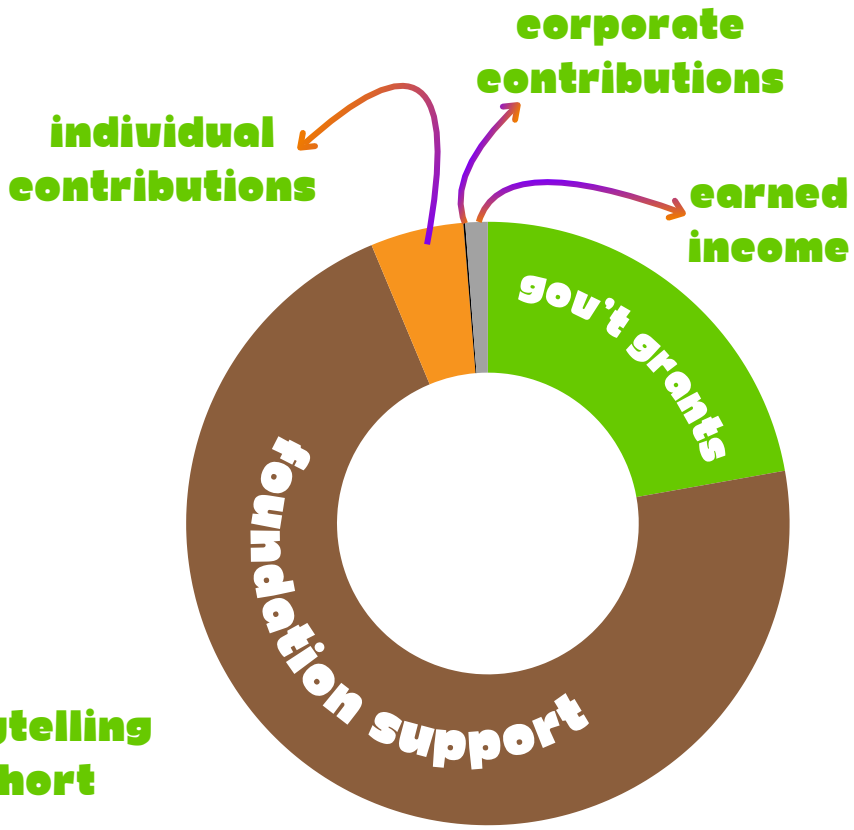
financial health

Amid a challenging funding landscape and rising operating and program costs, **FEEST remains steadfast in our commitment to upholding the quality, care, and impact of our programs while prioritizing the long-term strength and sustainability of our work.** We have continued adapting, **maintaining a mindset of abundance** while recognizing the realities of the funding and economic structures we operate within. Our financial decisions are grounded in our values and our context. The numbers below showcase our financial stewardship this past year. This report as a whole provides a fuller picture of these numbers in action.

income

- **Foundation Support*:** 71.5%
- **Government Grants:** 22.2%
- **Individual Contribution:** 5%
- **Corporate Contribution:** .1%
- **Earned Income:** 1.2%

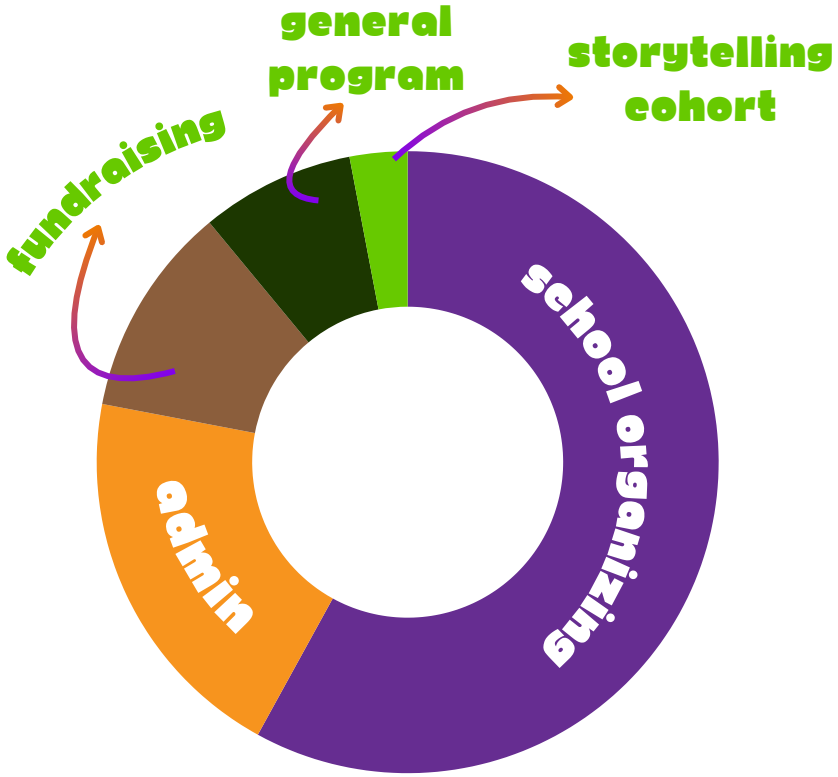
Total Income: $1,677,838



expenses

- **School Organizing:** 58%
- **Admin:** 20%
- **General Program:** 8%
- **Storyteller Cohort:** 3%
- **Fundraising:** 11%

Total Expenses: $1,680,755



**includes family foundations and donor advised funds*

a moment of gratitude

The **Tides of Change** we celebrate in this report are shaped by everyone who flows alongside our young people.

To our **Student Organizers,** thank you for your leadership, creativity, joy, and courage.

To our **alumni, families, staff, board members, partners, teaching artists/facilitators, volunteers, teachers, funders, and community members**, thank you for helping carry this work forward through your time, care, resources, and solidarity.

Every person who joins this work strengthens the current.

Thank you for being part of the tide as we reshape our schools and communities.

FEEST

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