



para los niños
for the children

Working Together to Address Housing Instability And Student Success

Thursday, October 1, 2026



WHO WE ARE

Para Los Niños partners with children, youth, and families through integrated education, wellness, community supports and advocacy, addressing individual and systemic barriers to create pathways to success.

Founded in 1980 as the first children's social services agency in Skid Row, Para Los Niños started with one converted warehouse and 50 children enrolled. Now, we are a network that serves thousands of children, youth, families and community members in 16 locations across Los Angeles County.



WHAT WE DO

In addition to operating early education centers, charter elementary and middle schools and youth workforce development sites, and family services, PLN is the only children's mental health provider in the Skid Row neighborhood. PLN's community transformation work also brings together community members, community-based organizations, city and county agencies, elected officials, and businesses to tackle issues that impact PLN families.

93% of PLN families live in areas with the highest levels of food insecurity and homelessness in L.A. County.



2025 IMPACT ON FAMILIES

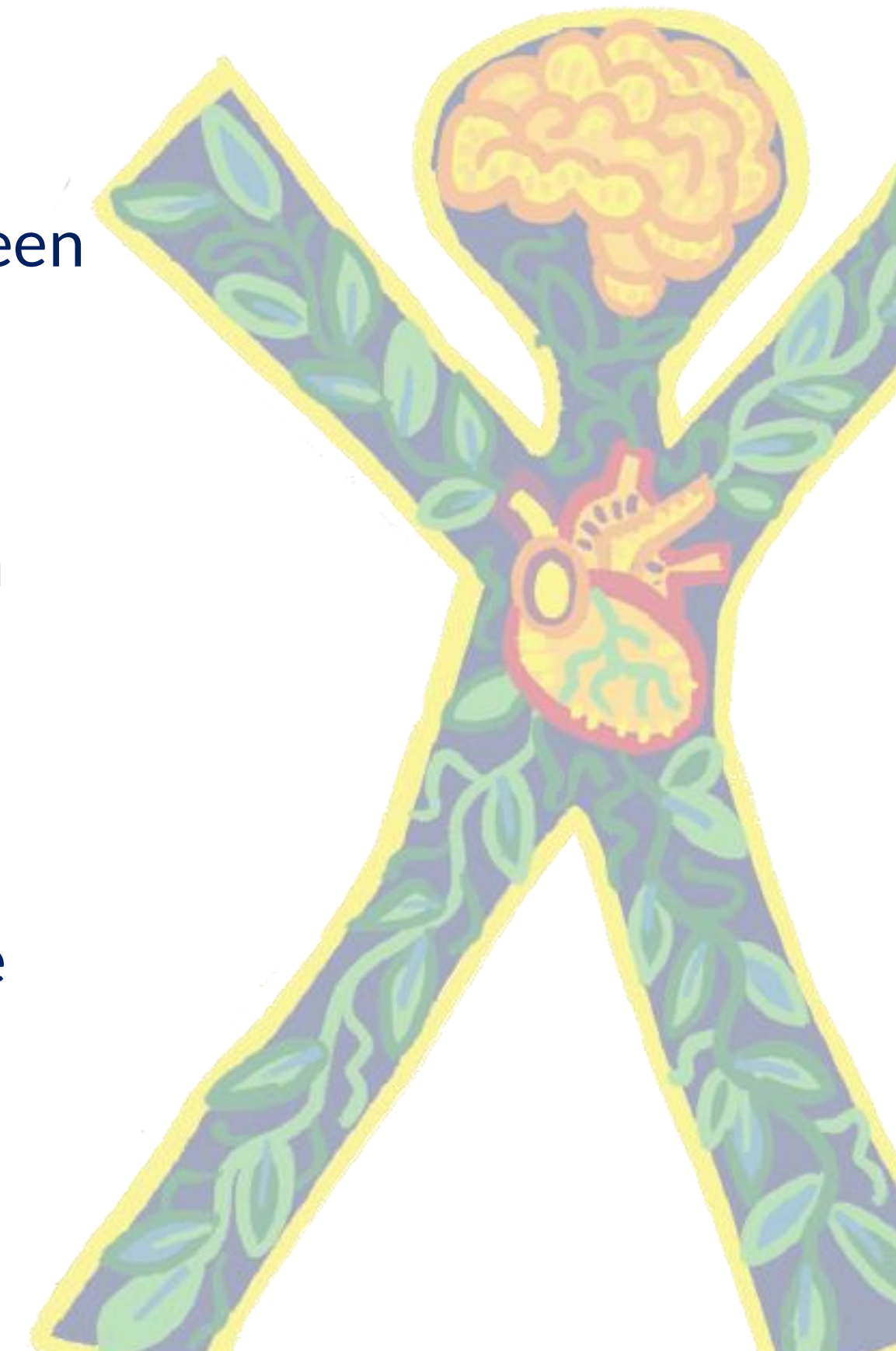
The number of unsheltered families in LA County has increased for the 2nd year in a row. PLN's community is disproportionately impacted.

In 2025, our early education program saw a **30% increase** in unhoused families, and in the past three years, our middle school has seen a nearly **300% increase** in unhoused students.



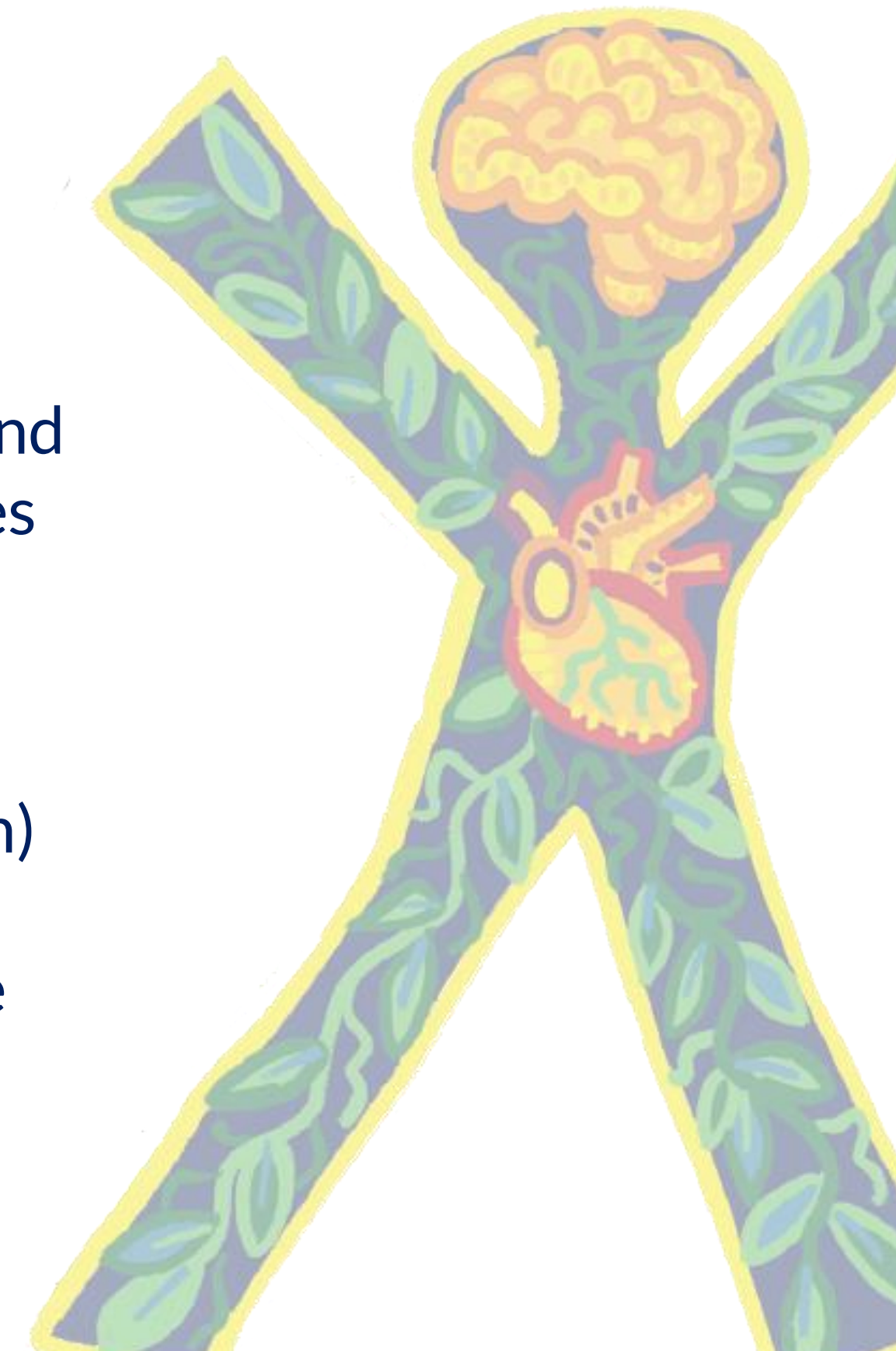
Why This Matters: History and Timeline

- Given PLN's location and work, we have always worked with students, youth, and families struggling with housing. This has been more focused in our Family Services program.
- **In 2017**, PLN founded the Skid Row Collaborative, a committed group of agencies and providers based in Skid Row working with children and families. Partners include LAUSD, Union Rescue Mission, School on Wheels, PATH, and The Whole Child.
- **Dec 2021**: PLN received our first donation from an individual donor to help support families who are close to eviction – create PLN Housing Fund.



Why This Matters: History and Timeline

- **September 2023:** Our program team shared that Union Rescue Mission was at capacity and not accepting any new families.
- We began meeting with elected leaders, advocacy orgs, media, and others to try to understand why there was no solution for families who were struggling with housing.
- **Feb 2024:** Para Los Ninos Family Services won the contract for United Mental Health Promoter contract (LA Dept Mental Health) with a focus on preventing families from becoming unhoused – work will focus on LA County Supervisorial District 2 and Service Provider Area 6 (South Los Angeles).



Why This Matters: History and Timeline



- **August 2024:** Receive \$275,000 from LA County Supervisor Hilda Solis in support of unhoused families
- **September 2024:** Private Foundation contributes to PLN Housing Fund; renews in Dec 2025
- **December 2024:** Second Private Foundation contributes to PLN Housing Fund; renews in April 2026
- **June 2025:** Kick off PLN Policy Agenda Surveys and Listening Sessions



What is PLN Seeing? How do families show up?

Early Education

- Increased enrollment of unhoused children
- Attendance and transportation challenges
- Children experiencing disruptions in daily routines

K-12 Education

- Increased student mobility and school transfers
- Chronic absenteeism and attendance concerns
- Students arriving tired, stressed or distracted

Family Services

- Increased requests for rent assistance and housing navigation
- Families facing eviction, overcrowding, and doubled-up living situations
- Growing demand for flexible cash assistance

Clinical Services

- Increased stress, anxiety and trauma for caregivers and children associated with housing instability
- Behavioral health concerns linked to unmet basic needs
- High need for shelter referrals

What Families Tell Us They Need

- Housing
- Income (Employment Opportunities)
- Childcare
- Case Navigation/Management
- Trusted Relationships

Housing instability is not just a housing issue. It impacts attendance, learning, mental health, family functioning, and long-term student success.





Family Story

A PLN family living in a trailer near Skid Row faced unsafe conditions and no longer felt secure staying there. In response, our Family Support Services team and site leader coordinated temporary hotel accommodations to provide immediate safety and stability. The family also received gift cards for food and basic necessities and was connected to mental health, housing, and other supportive services to help them navigate this challenging situation.



Supports That Create Stability

Housing Stabilization



- Rental Assistance
- Eviction Prevention
- Housing Navigation
- Emergency Financial Assistance

Early Learning and Education



- Stable School Enrollment
- Transportation Support
- Childcare Access
- Consistent Attendance Support

Family Navigation and Case Management



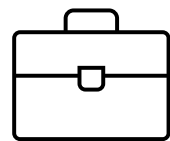
- Trusted Relationships
- One-on-One support
- Connections to Community Resources
- Benefits Enrollment Assistance

Mental Health and Wellness



- Individual and Family Counseling
- Parent Support Groups
- Community Based Mental Health Promotion
- Trauma-Informed Services

Economic Stability



- Workforce Development
- Employment Support
- Financial Coaching
- Income and Benefits Access

Families are most successful when Housing, Education, Health, and Economic supports work together rather than in isolation.





Solutions through Partnerships

Housing stability and educational success are deeply connected

LAUSD

- Early Student Identification
- School-Based Supports
- School-Center Family Resource Hubs

City of Los Angeles/Los Angeles County

- Integration of Services
- Homelessness Prevention Supports
- Family-Centered resources and services

Community Based Organizations

- Family Housing Development
- Coordination of Support
- Technical Assistance





Policy Recommendations

- **Cross-Agency Collaboration and Coordination:** Establish a coordinated and responsive system specifically for students and families
- **Implement Prevention Measures:** Rental assistance programs to support families and prevent eviction
- **Funding Allocation:** Advocate for family-specific funding streams across systems at the City, County, and State levels
- **Convert Surplus And Underutilized Lands:** Create partnerships with developers to transform spaces in to affordable housing
- **Housing Availability:** Increase the number of larger apartments to accommodate families, while also incentivizing landlords to accept housing vouchers, such as Section 8



THANK YOU!

