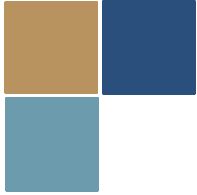




2025 COMMUNITY REPORT





Dear PLATO Friends,

We are proud to present our 2025 Report to the Community, highlighting a year of greater impact on more schools, students, and teachers than ever before. It is because of you – PLATO’s volunteers, donors, teachers, students, and supporters – that this small organization has been able to achieve so much.

This is a moment of great opportunity for PLATO. The rapid proliferation of AI challenges us to clarify what is most important in education. At its heart education should be about the importance of thinking well and the speaking and listening skills needed to engage in collaborative and imaginative conversations, to do what is uniquely human.

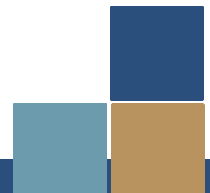
PLATO is poised to meet this moment. There is no better discipline than philosophy for cultivating independent thinking, and no more powerful way to engage students than by addressing the big questions that matter to them.

I believe philosophy could become the core of K-12 education in years to come.

Jana Mohr Lone
Executive Director, PLATO

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PLATO nurtures young people’s curiosity, critical thinking, and desire to explore big questions, through philosophy and ethics programs for students, educators, and families.

STUDENT VOICES

Learning Through Dialogue

Felipe Silva, Vitoria, Brazil

Student in PLATO's Online High School Courses



My interest in philosophy began a few years ago when I read the novel *Sophie's World*. I then discovered PLATO's high school philosophy courses and I enrolled in 2023.

What makes these classes so meaningful to me is how interactive they are. Instead of simply listening to lectures, we participate in discussions and connect philosophical ideas to our own experiences. I've had the opportunity to meet students from different parts of the United States and around the world and hear how they think about the same questions from their own perspectives.

Through philosophy, I've learned the importance of open-mindedness. **Even when we disagree, listening to different perspectives helps us better understand the world—and each other.**

PLATO served approximately 500 teachers and 10,000 students in 2025.

A Space to Share Ideas

Olivia Frederick, Garden City, Missouri

Student in PLATO's Online High School Courses



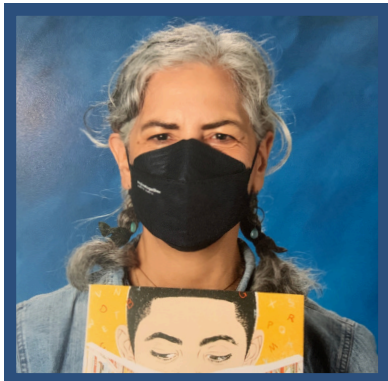
I first joined PLATO through the middle school course program, and when I entered high school I knew I wanted to continue. What keeps me coming back is the environment the classes create. It's a place where you can share your ideas openly, knowing that your peers will listen with respect; even when they see things differently.

One discussion that has stayed with me included the quote, "You are not a drop in the ocean. You are the entire ocean in a drop." Thinking about that idea challenged the way I see myself, other people, and the world around me.

PLATO has helped me learn to look at multiple perspectives and be open to considering new ones.

Philosopher-in-Residence Program

Julie Colando, Seattle, Washington - Fourth-Grade Teacher



In 2017, I attended an evening science professional development workshop at John Muir Elementary in Seattle. On the classroom's whiteboard, one word caught my eye immediately: Philosophy. The host teacher told me her students participated in the University of Washington's Philosophy in Schools Program. I soon contacted Dr. Jana Mohr Lone, and that began a connection that continues to shape my teaching.

Since then, philosophy has become a meaningful part of my classroom. Philosophy allows my fourth graders to think expansively about ethics, literature, time, relationships, engaging students as few other subjects do. It assures them that their ideas, thoughts, and questions are thought-provoking and worthy of discussion.

When schools shifted online during the pandemic, PLATO generously continued philosophy sessions virtually. **During a time when students were isolated from friends and normal routines, philosophy became a lifeline.** Students spoke about how much they valued having a place to wonder, ask questions, and talk with one another.

Philosophy challenges students to think beyond what search engines and artificial intelligence provide. Most importantly, it shows young people that adults are genuinely interested in what they think and believe. In today's world, that kind of intellectual respect and dialogue may be more important than ever.

PLATO's philosophers in residence were in 15 schools across 6 states in 2025.



A PLATO Grantee

Brian Collins, Thousand Oaks, California



My interest in pre-college philosophy grew out of two formative experiences early in my career. After college, I worked as a middle-school math and science teacher. During that time, I came to appreciate how pivotal philosophy had been in my own college experience. I realized that I had missed out by not encountering philosophy earlier in my education and I wanted high school students to have that opportunity.

In 2017, as a faculty member at California Lutheran University, I founded the SoCal Philosophy Academy and hosted the inaugural Summer Philosophy Institute for local high school students. The program has continued since then, growing in both reach and impact with the support of PLATO. Students consistently leave the Institute with a new enthusiasm for philosophy.

Programs like the Summer Philosophy Institute would not exist without PLATO's support. **In many ways, PLATO is the backbone of precollege philosophy in the United States.**



In 2025 PLATO grants funded programs in 9 states.

Donor Voices

Anne Barker, Seattle, Washington



As a volunteer in schools for nearly twenty years, I have seen firsthand how classrooms often operate: large class sizes, limited opportunities for students to speak, and a focus on arriving at one correct answer. PLATO offers something very different.

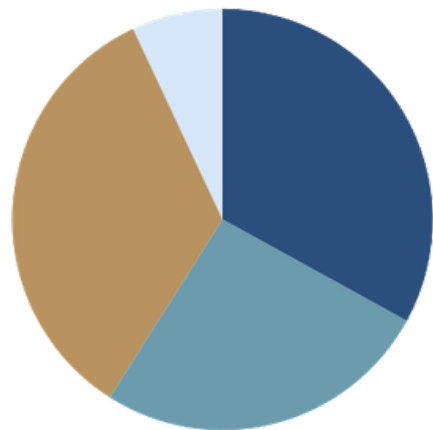
Through discussions centered on life's big questions, every student has the chance to be heard. Students are encouraged to explore ideas, listen to one another, and learn through dialogue rather than simply searching for the right answer. I support PLATO's work because I've seen how effective it can

be across many different school settings. PLATO's approach centers curiosity, thoughtful discussion, and respect for different perspectives.

To me, this approach represents an ideal model for the future of education.

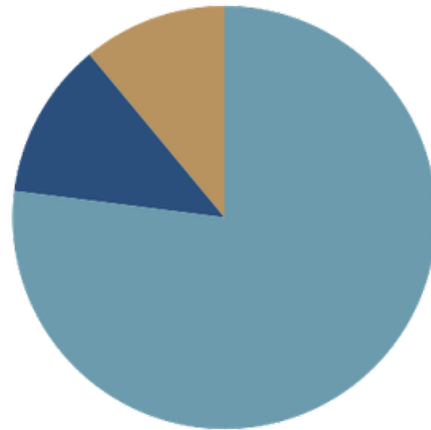
2025 Financials

SOURCES OF REVENUE



- General Donations: 33%
- Earned Income: 26%
- Grants: 34%
- Sponsorships & Institutional Giving: 7%

EXPENSES



- Program: 77%
- Administrative: 12%
- Fundraising: 11%

Gerler Fellowship Reflection

Shoshana McIntosh, Denton, Texas

The Gerler Fellowship Program supports graduate students bringing philosophy into K-12 classrooms.



I am a fourth-year PhD student at the University of North Texas. My connection with PLATO began in 2019 when I was working with a group of UNT students to lead a summer camp that explored art, philosophy, and the environment. That camp received a PLATO grant and introduced me to the powerful possibilities of philosophy with children.

After that experience, I worked as an elementary school teacher and integrated philosophy into my curriculum whenever possible. When I began my PhD program, I knew I wanted to continue facilitating philosophy with children. Becoming a PLATO Gerler Fellow in 2024 made that possible.

The financial support has been important, but the mentorship and community have been just as meaningful. As a single parent and PhD student, I would not have been able to continue this work in the same capacity without the fellowship. **This experience has shaped me as a parent, scholar, and educator.**



Philosophy Across the Ages

Scott MacLeod, PLATO Board Member



As a former philosophy major, I've always loved discussing meaningful philosophical questions with a diverse group of people. I recently retired as a high school English teacher, where I incorporated philosophical inquiry throughout my curriculum. Some of my greatest joys in teaching came from learning alongside my students and seeing issues through their perspectives.

That same spirit drew me to Philosophy Across the Ages. The program reflects something central to PLATO's mission: valuing young people's voices. By bringing young people and adults together in dialogue, it creates space for participants to learn from one another.

In a time when meaningful intellectual community can feel rare, opportunities like this matter. People from across the country—and sometimes internationally—share perspectives on issues that have no simple answers. For me, the experience helps restore faith in our ability to listen to one another.

Philosophy is not simply a set of ideas found in textbooks. It is an ongoing conversation among real people whose voices matter.



In 2025, more than 300 volunteers contributed over 1,600 hours to PLATO, valued at more than \$55,000.

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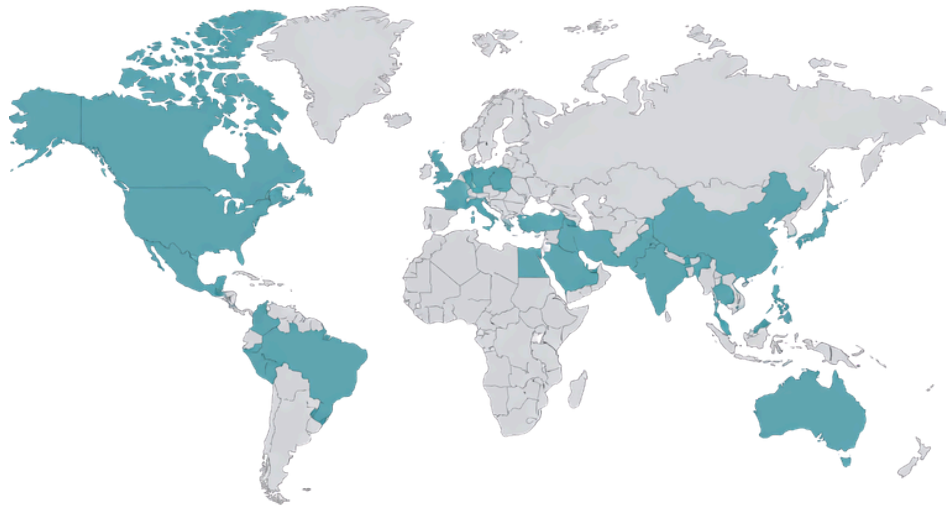
Professional Development Program

Sevinç Çakmak, Teacher, Turkey



“I am incredibly thankful for the scholarship opportunity that this training has afforded me. I see how the education you provide will revolutionize not only my teaching experiences but also my personal encounters. The insights and knowledge gained are shaping me in profound ways, and I am deeply appreciative of this journey of growth.”

In 2025, PLATO’s constituents came from 25 countries.



Australia	Peru
Bangladesh	Philippines
Brazil	Poland
Canada	Saudi Arabia
China	Scotland
England	South Korea
Germany	Turkey
Guyana	UAE
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Japan	
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Peru	

Reflections from the 2025 Biennial Conference

Grey Peters, First-Year Student at the University of Virginia &
PLATO Graduate/Undergraduate Consortium Member



My experience at the PLATO 2025 Conference captured so many of the things that make the PLATO community special. Philosophy is often seen as a purely theoretical discipline reserved for a small group of college students and professors. The PLATO community challenges that assumption.

Sitting in the Interactive Plenary on the first morning of the conference, I was struck by the range of people in the room, educators, students, administrators, librarians, and community members. All committed to bringing philosophical thinking into education and everyday life. **The PLATO 2025 Conference captured so many of the things that make the PLATO community special.**

Nearly 100 people from 6 countries attended PLATO's 2025 Biennial Conference.



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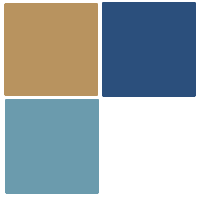
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Dear PLATO Community,

It is my privilege to share the 2025 PLATO Report to the Community with you. Year after year, I am moved by what this remarkable organization accomplishes and am inspired by the thoughtfulness and purpose with which we use every dollar entrusted to us.

As we grow our donor community, we look forward to expanding our programs and reaching even more students and educators. A large percentage of every dollar donated goes directly into innovative programs: into classrooms, the hands of educators, and the curious minds of the students we serve.

In 2025, we continued to expand the number of young people and teachers we reach, deepened our ethics programming, and advanced civic engagement through philosophy, all of it a testament to the extraordinary efficiency and effectiveness of this organization.

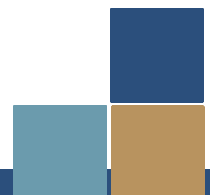
What makes PLATO truly special, though, is not just what we do but who we are together.

Ours is a community bound by a shared belief that every young person deserves the chance to ask big questions, think carefully, and be heard. From our dedicated volunteers and generous donors to our devoted staff, teacher-partners, and student philosophers, this community is defined by warmth, commitment, and genuine care for one another and for our mission.

With gratitude,

Allison

Allison Cohen
President, Board of Directors



PLATO'S CORE VALUES

Community • Respect • Equity • Inclusivity •
Openness • Humility • Curiosity • Playfulness



Philosophy Learning and Teaching Organization (PLATO)

3518 Fremont Ave N #353, Seattle WA 98103

Contact us! info@plato-philosophy.org

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