



HORIZONS[®]
GREATER WASHINGTON



2022 - 2023

ANNUAL REPORT



HORIZONS

GREATER WASHINGTON

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A Message From Our Executive Director



Dear Horizons Community,

As 2023 comes to a close, I sit here beaming with pride at the enormous success that Horizons has had this year. Over the past year, we:

- Broke our record for student enrollment (for the second year in a row) and served our largest roster of students ever with 422 Horizons students enrolled across our three sites!
- Established new partnerships with the Bishop Walker School for Boys and Simon Elementary School to serve more Ward 8 students at our St. Patrick's site.
- Leaned into health equity by partnering with Shepherd's Table to provide hot, nutrient dense breakfasts and lunches for our students every day.
- Provided counseling and mental health supports on-site during the summer.
- Revamped our Swim Program to have our youngest students focus on water safety and a learn to swim curriculum, our middle school students focused on swim team training, and our rising 9th grade students focused on lifeguard training— all culminating in a boisterous and fun Swim Olympics hosted at Howard University.
- Launched a Saturday Academy, filled with field trips and hands-on learning experiences, that will provide an additional 108 hours of programming for our students. This is a nearly 50% increase over our Summer Academy.

But what I'm most proud of is the success that this fostered for all of our students. In 2023, Horizons students saw incredible gains in their math and reading skills as a result of the program. In fact, this past year, **70% of students made improvements or were above grade level in their math skills by the end of the program (69% for reading)**. And for those students who made gains, they made tremendous gains— improving their math skills, on average, by **8 MONTHS** and their reading skills by **7.4 MONTHS** over the course of our summer program.

All of this is only made possible through the incredible work and support from our staff, funders, and partners, many of whom are highlighted in this annual report. We know that no one can do this work alone and we are so grateful for the support of this community in helping provide our students the opportunities to make transformative gains in our program.

With gratitude,

Mike Di Marco
Executive Director



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Our Mission and Model

For over 23 years, Horizons Greater Washington has provided an award-winning academic and enrichment program for students residing in underserved communities in Washington, DC and Maryland. At Horizons, we focus on serving the whole child through a robust combination of academics (with a heavy focus on STEAM and project-based learning), swim instruction, field trip experiences, and guest speaker events during our summer and school year programming. At our heart, we operate on the belief that every kid deserves educational and enriching experiences that bring joy and help them THRIVE!

Our families and school partners are at the heart of our success. We work side by side with our families to remove barriers to participation by providing reliable transportation to and from the program, daily meals, and all curriculum supplies needed. Our program features a 5:1 student/teacher ratio and is entirely cost-free for our families. We work closely with our school partners to select and support our students year-round for nine years.

Horizons is unique for our long-term commitment to our students. Young people enter our summer program as rising first graders and return each summer up until they begin high school. Over those nine years, that amounts to over a year's worth of high-quality, intensive, and engaging learning experiences on top of a typical public school education. Our 80% year-to-year retention rate demonstrates how much our families value this.

Our students make gains in reading and math, but they also learn how to swim, work together in teams, and build their confidence – supported by a community and professional Horizons teachers. Thank you for making this possible and for supporting our mission of advancing educational equity.



Saturday Academy

In the fall of 2022, Horizons Greater Washington launched a revamped Saturday Academy to provide greater support to our families throughout the year. Co-designed with students and caregivers, the 2022-2023 Saturday Academy consisted of two intensive six-week sessions in the Fall and Spring. Throughout the inaugural year, students took part in high-quality academic and enrichment activities led by highly experienced and qualified Lead Teachers, support staff, and volunteers.

The Fall session included our oldest students in grades 5-8 and continued to build upon their academic and STEAM skills, provided exposure to career opportunities and offered guidance on high school options and high school and scholarship applications.

The Spring session included our youngest students in grades 1-4 and focused on building their critical, foundational reading and math skills as well as self-regulation, emotional processes, and social skills.

In total, 91 students and alumni were served throughout the Fall and Spring Sessions of the revamped Saturday Academy. The Fall session included 36 students in grades 5-8 and the Spring session included 46 students in grades 1-4.

This year, we are looking forward to building upon this success and expanding the programming that is offered to both our students and families throughout the school year. In the 2023-2024 academic year, Horizons Greater Washington will offer three six-week sessions to students in grades K-8 in the Fall, Winter, and Spring. Students will explore the community and world outside the school walls, by taking four field trips each session-- filled with engaging, interactive hands-on learning that drive home the key themes of each session. In total, this will provide our students with an additional 108 hours of programming throughout the school year.

Horizons Greater Washington By the Numbers

Who We Serve

At Horizons, we make a 9-year commitment to our students and families. We serve K-8 students throughout DC and Montgomery County. Over 70 local schools help with recommending, promoting, and placing students in our summer program.

Outcomes

During the summer months, when students in our communities are experiencing summer learning loss (losing up to 3 months of learning), our students are experiencing summer learning GAIN with 70% of Horizons students making gains or being above grade level in math by the end of the 2023 Summer Program (69% in reading). Those students who made gains, made tremendous gains - gaining up to 8 months in math skills and 7.4 months in reading skills by the end of the program. Back in school, they have better attendance, higher GPAs, and higher promotion rates.

Building a Sense of Belonging in School

These increased academic skills build confidence and a sense of belonging in the classroom— which reduces absenteeism and encourages students to be present in school every day. Through data provided by District of Columbia Public Schools, we learned that 87% of Horizons students consistently attended school during the 2021-22 school year compared to 57.5% of non-participating students in DCPS.

This makes a large impact as research shows that chronically absent students are less likely to read on grade level, more likely to be suspended in middle school, and more likely to drop out of high school (Attendance Works, 2023). That is not the case for Horizons students.



Enrollment

We saw unprecedented demand for our Summer Program with 422 students enrolled across our three sites. This represented a 9% increase from the previous year.

- 132 students were enrolled at Maret
- 155 students were enrolled at St. Patrick's
- 135 students were enrolled at Norwood



Instruction

Our students receive individualized instruction with a 5:1 student to teacher ratio. Each site has a dedicated Reading Specialist, Art Teacher, STEM Teacher, and Certified Swim Instructors. In Summer 2023, we hired 124 highly qualified teachers and support staff.

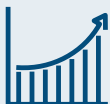
- 51% of teachers return year after year
- 70% of teachers have advanced degrees
- The average teaching experience is over 6 years



Hands-on Learning

Throughout the Summer Program students are provided with hands-on learning opportunities in the classroom, in the community, and in the pool to expand their horizons and build their confidence.

- Students were provided with 175 hours of summer instruction from dedicated teachers in the classroom. In addition, students have the opportunity to attend 108 hours of school year programming centered around interactive classroom instruction, engaging field trips, and thematic projects
- 360 STEAM projects were constructed by grades H1-H6
- 58 field trips were taken to explore self-expression at the Phillips Collection, compete in Swim Olympics at Howard University, take part in whitewater rafting and ropes courses with Calleva, explore Tregaron, and gain first-hand insight into different industries including law and hospitality through visits to Allen & Overy LLC and HMSHost.
- 10 guest speakers visited our program sites in person and virtually to help students build robots, code apps, and learn about gun violence prevention
- 202 hours were spent in the pool learning how to swim



Key Partnerships

The 2023 Summer Program included many exciting new changes including increasing our reach to serve students in DC's Ward 8 through newly established partnerships with the Bishop Walker School for Boys and Simon Elementary School; leaning into health equity by ensuring more nutrient-dense meals through an innovative meal service partnership with fellow nonprofit Shepherd's Table; offering counseling and mental health services for our students through a partnership with the WISE Center and MECCA Group; and building a more intentional and impactful swim experience for our students.

- 32 students from Ward 8 took part in Horizons at our St. Patrick's site
- 10,750 hot lunches and 21,500 snacks were served across all three sites by Shepherd's Table
- 210 hours of counseling services were provided by the WISE Center and MECCA Group across all three sites

Parent Spotlight: Ivelina Benitez



I am Ivelina Benitez, and I am proud of being AfroLatina, a native Washingtonian, 1st generation everything, and a parent of many! I grew up in Adams Morgan and attended H.D. Cooke Elementary School, ironically, one of the schools that is a feeder school and partner to Horizons, today. I was raised by a single father, who was serious about discipline and education—so behaving and doing what I was supposed to do was not an option.

My two sisters and I checked many boxes that today mark intersectionality and traditionally marginalized. My mother left when I was nine years old, and I became a mother figure to my sisters. After experiencing that, I never imagined myself as a parent. I won't go into the details of what led me to make the decision to become the caregiver for my eldest niece in 2006. However, I was in my second year of law school and was not quite sure how I would navigate the responsibility of working full-time, attending Georgetown Law, and raising an 11-month old. With faith and love, miracles happen. After navigating the legal process, enrolling her at H.D. Cooke, and getting matters in order, a dear friend of mine told me about Horizons.

I couldn't believe all the great things she told me about the program, as her son was enrolled and she raved about transportation, swimming, trips, and reading—ALL FOR FREE. Well, I figured I'd try it, as I did not have many options. Camps were very expensive, I had a lot of unforeseen costs, I faced many barriers due to legal processes and delays, and camps that were low costs or free were filled quickly.

Horizons requested a simple application, a basic application fee (which we have now waived for families) and didn't request that I prove relationship or custody or request any documents that I did not have. Her enrollment at H.D. Cooke sufficed. Today, I can share with confidence that Horizons was the best decision I made.

We returned every year since then, and somehow, in between, my sister kept having children, and we kept raising them. Between my dad, my sister, and I, (yes a complex family affair) we enrolled a total of 5 children to date—4 girls and my son. Please note, there is one

more to go! We continue to come back because it's low barrier, enhances academic performance, and my children love it—well those are my reasons. Unlike my father, I believe in positive youth development and choice. So I ask my children why they want to return to Horizons. They say their friends, the teachers, swimming and the trips are why they love Horizons! Given the impact of COVID, the social emotional reasons they provide are enough for me but as a professional in the field of education and workforce development, the emphasis on learning loss prevention and improved academic achievement are key!

Today, I am happy to report that the little 11 month old that came into my custody when I was in law school, recently graduated with Honors from Banneker High School and is a freshman attending Kent State University, majoring in Neuroscience. The 14 year old is a freshman at Banneker High School, my 12 year old is in 8th grade at Jefferson Middle School, and the little ones are at Tyler Elementary School, performing at or above grade level...well on their way to academic excellence.

What I didn't know before becoming a parent, but know for sure now—consistency is important. Your commitment to quality programming every year is what makes the change in young people. This quality programming is only made possible by amazing partners, donors, and changemakers—YOU! Know that every gift, contribution, and connection you provide to Horizons benefits youth. From building robots and hydraulic claws to pressure rockets, and a host of other cool STEAM projects, my children and all the children enrolled are experiencing learning that goes far beyond a classroom. We are shaping dreamers, affecting career goals, encouraging exploration, creating healthy habits, and building relationships in a safe and nurturing environment for young people. Your support helps make this possible.

Seeing my children grow, explore and continue to seek learning is rewarding in ways I cannot repay and that is why I am dedicated to elevating the work and impact that I know firsthand.

Partner Spotlight: Bishop Walker School for Boys

During the summer of 2023, Horizons Greater Washington experienced unprecedented demand for our summer program for the second year in a row and welcomed 422 students across our three sites (an increase of 9% over the prior summer).

This record enrollment was made possible in part by increasing our reach in DC and expanding the students that we serve through establishing an innovative partnership with the Bishop Walker School for Boys, a tuition-free independent school serving 81 scholars in K-5th grade.

As Dr. Angelina Arrington, Head of School for Bishop Walker School for Boys, describes:

“Partners like Horizons allow us to provide a year-round educational and social summer experience we wouldn’t otherwise be able to offer to our scholars. The academic work helps prevent summer learning loss, and our boys get to make new friends from their school and surrounding community. Swimming is a highlight of the program! We’re grateful to be a part of the Horizons network.”



Through the newly established partnership with BWS and Horizons’ existing partnership with St. Patrick’s Episcopal Day School, 22 rising 2nd and 3rd grade BWS scholars took part in the Summer Program at our St. Patrick’s site.

The additional scholars were incorporated into the classrooms at our St. Patrick’s site and additional teachers, staff, and classroom space were provided to accommodate our proven small groups learning.

As Jalene Spain Thomas, Head of School at St. Patrick’s Episcopal Day School explains:

“St. Patrick’s high esteem for fellow Episcopal School BWS is longstanding. Our belief in Horizons’ dynamic enrichment programs to advance educational equity is unwavering. The intersection of the partnership between our three institutions supports St. Patrick’s mission to recognize the infinite value of every individual. We are incredibly pleased that BWS scholars joined the Horizons site at St. Patrick’s this summer.”

As we look ahead to the coming summer, we are looking forward to continuing our work and partnership with the Bishop Walker School for the Boys and St. Patrick’s Episcopal Day School to expand our reach to serve even more Bishop Walker scholars and to provide all of our students with an impactful and meaningful learning experience.

Leaning into Health Equity

The Summer of 2023 was an exciting time at Horizons as we welcomed our largest roster yet, expanded key partnerships, and leaned into advancing health equity for the Summer of 2023 and beyond by: revamping our swim program, improving our meals service, and launching counseling support. These changes allowed us to better serve our students and their families while continuing to provide an impactful and meaningful learning experience.

Building an Intentional Swim Program

Swimming is an integral part of Horizons Summer Program and a unique aspect of the learning strategy. In learning to swim, students do more than master an important skill; they also learn strategies for tackling fears and overcoming challenges. The resulting self-confidence and resilience foster success in and outside of school.



During each summer, students swim three to four days per week. Each student swims for at least 90 minutes per week in a combination of structured lessons and free swim.

During the Summer of 2023, Horizons built upon this foundation to create a more intentional and impactful swim experience by continuing the Learn to Swim program for our youngest swimmers, building in swim training for our middle school students, and offering lifeguard training for our H9 students.

Led by Coach Fogan, the swim program culminated with a robust Swim Olympics on August 3 in which our students were able to showcase the skills that they learned over the course of the summer and their time in the program.

Healthy & Nutrient Dense Meals

At Horizons, we know that our students learn best when they are well-nourished and able to focus on learning. Access to nutrient-dense meals for all youth, but particularly for the students who participate in Horizons, is critical to moving short-term and long-term outcomes that address equity in education and health—an intersection of Horizons' main values.

Research shows that poor nutrition increases stress on our physical and psychological systems, and actually can contribute to acting out. Carla Hannaford in *Smart Moves: Why Learning is Not All In Your Head* says that, "without sufficient water, amino acids, complex carbohydrates and sugars, and good fats, our frontal lobes do not function properly. We are unable to self talk, control our own behaviors, plan ahead, speak articulately, display integrated motor skills, or think before acting."



In response, our Board approved partnering with Shepherd's Table, a community-based organization specializing in food service for unhoused populations and expanding to serving youth, to be our main meals provider for all three of our program sites in summer of 2023 to create a more equitable and high-quality program experience for our students and families. As Manny Hidalgo, Executive Director of Shepherd's Table, describes:

Last year we provided lunch meals to Horizons as a pilot project and it was such a success that we're tripling our efforts this year and looking into the possibility of developing a catering venture to provide meals to other nonprofits like Horizons. The profits of this social enterprise would be used to offset the costs of the 135,000 free meals we provide to people experiencing homelessness every year.

Through the newly established partnership, our three sites and 422 students were provided with access to delicious, nutritious, and hot lunches every day; correct portions based on the age of each student; and input in the menu selection. Throughout the course of the summer program, 10,750 hot lunches and 21,500 snacks were served. As we are looking ahead to 2024, we are thrilled to continue our partnership with Shepherd's Table for not only our Summer Program but our Saturday Academy Program as well.

Counseling Support

At Horizons, we are concerned about the child and adolescent mental health crisis – declared to be a national emergency by the American Academy of Pediatrics in December 2022 – and recognize the role we can have in doing more to support our students while they are with us.



Following up on this challenge, Horizons partnered with the MECCA Group and WISE Center to provide counseling and mental health supports for our students over the course of the 2023 Summer Program. Thanks to this partnership, counseling was provided on-site two times per week at each of our sites accounting for a total of 210 hours of counseling services.

We look forward to continuing this partnership during the school year and for the 2024 Summer Program.

Teacher Spotlight: Matt Azarro



..it was apparent to me from the very first moment that the buses dropped off our students that the entire Horizons staff lived the mission of our organization - we were there to joyfully provide equitable education to our students.

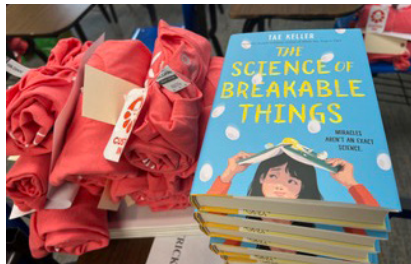
In the spring of 2019, I was finishing my final semester of graduate school with my sights set on beginning my teaching career. As one can imagine, this time was filled with a plethora of job applications, with the hope of eventually landing a job at one of my local schools. As a Baltimore native, I had my mind set on remaining close to Baltimore. However, this mindset slipped ever so slightly when I read an advertisement for a summer teaching position in Bethesda, Maryland. After going through the interview process, I was eventually offered a position teaching reading to rising sixth graders. At the time, while Bethesda would be a bit of a drive from Baltimore, I felt that I could make it work, mainly because the experience I would gain in the classroom during the summer months would prove valuable as I prepared to enter the workforce for the first time that fall. Little did I know that this summer teaching position, which I mainly viewed as a step into the proverbial door of education, would eventually become one of the most impactful steps I would ever take.

Almost immediately upon joining the Horizons team, I was overwhelmed with the welcoming and determined attitude of my coworkers, administrators, and support staff. I was immediately surrounded by people who wanted to enrich the lives of our students, both academically and socio emotionally. While this determination had the potential to simply be "teacher talk" prior to the students arriving, it was apparent to me from the very first moment that the buses dropped off our students that the entire Horizons staff lived the mission of our organization - we were there to **joyfully provide equitable education to our students.**

While a welcoming and determined workplace always makes teaching more manageable, no teaching position is complete without the students. During my time at Horizons, I have had the privilege of working with sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth grade students. Despite a fairly large range of ages, I am constantly mesmerized by the wonder, compassion, and joy that all of our students bring to Horizons each and every day. A teacher might consider themselves lucky to have one or two instances of a student joyfully shouting, "I got it!" in one school year; at Horizons, instances like these happen daily. While the summer program is only five weeks long, the impact that these students have on each other, as well as on their teachers, stretches well beyond that of a short five week period.

I began my Horizons journey in 2019. Although the timespan between 2019 and 2023 is not particularly long, a lot has happened in those five years. Collectively, we have survived a global pandemic. Personally, I have shifted between various jobs and schools during the school year. However, the one constant throughout my young professional career has been Horizons. Horizons is, and always will be, one of the most important job applications I ever submitted.

HGW in the Community



2023 Supply Drive

In March 2023, Horizons Greater Washington kicked off its Second Annual Supply Drive to help provide all Horizons students with the supplies needed to create a memorable and enriching learning experience.

Over the course of the spring drive, 113 families from Norwood, Maret, and St. Patrick's Episcopal Day School participated helping to raise over \$12,327. The purchased supplies were sorted, packed, and delivered to each of our three sites on June 21 with the help of volunteers from our Horizons community.

Little Falls Penguin Plunge

Thank you, Little Falls Swimming Club!

For a second year, HGW was honored to be the beneficiary of the Club's Penguin Plunge! Thank you to all of this year's athletes and the community at the Little Falls Swimming Club in Bethesda, MD. On July 13, the Club's swimmers pledged to swim as many laps as they could and requested donations from family and friends. Prior to the Plunge on July 10, our H4 class at our Norwood program site actually got to visit the Club, join in on their swim practice, and meet new friends. We continue to be so grateful for and amazed by the support we have received from the Club. Thank you, all, for helping young people feel safe and confident in and out of the water.

Horizons Giving Day

Wednesday, May 17 marked Horizons Giving Day. Thanks to a generous donor, all gifts made within the 24 hour period were matched dollar for dollar up to \$15,000.

We were blown away by the outpouring of support that we saw from the Horizons community. Thanks to you, our Horizons community, we not only met our goal but exceeded it by raising \$15,296. That's an extra \$30,296 that impacts every aspect of the Horizons experience. This provided vital funding to expand our summer program, key partnerships with the Bishop Walker School for Boys, Simon Elementary School, and Shepherd's Table, in addition to continuing to provide a meaningful learning experience that prepares Horizons' students for the year ahead.

Swim Olympics

On Wednesday, August 2, 99 Horizons' students spanning from H6-H9 gathered at Howard University to recognize the accomplishments of this year's 29 graduating H9 students and the three inaugural Kiki Sweigart award recipients.

Following the graduation and award ceremony, our students took part in Swim Olympics, an annual event that provides our students with the opportunity to showcase the swimming skills that they learned throughout the course of the program.

The events included a kickboard relay, freestyle individual race, freestyle relay, backstroke relay, medley relay, and a water polo tournament. It was a close race between the sites but the students at our St. Patrick's site were victorious in the end taking home bragging rights and this year's trophy.



Build-A-Book

On Saturday, March 11, over 100 Horizons and Maret students gathered for the 16th Annual Build-A-Book; an annual tradition that brings together Horizons and Maret families to hear from a local author and participate in fun activity stations.

We were thrilled to have Lesley Younge, a Maret faculty member, as the featured author this year. At the event, Horizons and Maret students were offered a sneak preview and reading of Lesley's new children's book, *A-Train Allen*, and the opportunity to build-a-book of their own, create a bookmark, explore under the sea, learn about the speed of sound, and create their own setting for *A-Train Allen* to explore.

We would like to thank Lesley Younge, Carolyn Bottelier, Maret School, and our Horizons Maret Parent Council and wonderful volunteers for making this year's Build-A-Book such a memorable event.



REACH *for the* STARS

Advancing Equity, Engaging Minds

Reach for the Stars, Horizons Greater Washington's annual gala, was held on the evening of September 22, 2023, at the Four Seasons Hotel in Georgetown. The program was led by two emcees, DeMarco, an 8th grade student, and current Horizons student, and Sofia, a 9th grade student and Horizons alumna.

Members of our community, also heard remarks from this year's Inaugural Marjo Talbott Award Recipient Marta Del Cid, and guest speakers Ivelina Benitez, a Horizons parent and member of the Board, and Mary Alas, a Horizons alum and our AmeriCorps VISTA, on the impact that Horizons has on its students, families, and community.

Thanks to the outstanding support from sponsors, donors, attendees, and Raise the Paddle commitments, over \$379,000 was raised! This critical support will play a pivotal role in our ongoing mission to advance educational equity in the DC region by building long-term partnerships with students, families, communities, and schools to create experiences that inspire the joy of learning.

We would also like to recognize the members of our inaugural Reach for the Stars Committee for their tireless efforts and help with making the event a success.

Reach for the Stars Committee Members:

- Maisie Branson
- Andrew Fairbanks
- Daniela Gaither
- Richard Gervase
- Ken Giunta
- Gabriella Goddard
- Diane Mooney
- Leana Katz
- Mary Kwak
- Ann Rakestraw
- Jane Wu Brower





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Partner Spotlight: Mary Alas



My name is Mary Haydee Alas and I'm currently the AmeriCorps VISTA for Alumni Engagement at Horizons Greater Washington. I am honored to be giving you a peek into my journey, thus far. Last year, our alumni speaker at the gala was Maryam Hassan, who shared her path from Horizons to medical school. I know Maryam and am so proud of and inspired by her and her incredible journey. My pathway to post-secondary success has been a bit more circuitous, yet has reinforced my commitment to Horizons as an alum and now as a staff member working to support our alumni in their journeys.

My time at Horizons began prematurely, 15 years ago when I was only 5 years old and my older brother Mario was a part of the founding Horizons kindergarten class and, from there my parents fell in love with the program. They begged Ms. Kiki for a spot for me at the Saturday program— and she obliged.

I still remember my first day of Horizons, since it pretty much set the tone for the rest of my life. Ms. Kiki was doing a bubble experiment where we took turns standing in a kiddie pool filled with soap while Ms. Kiki pulled a hoola-hoop over us to enclose in a big bubble. I remember another teacher telling us to go into groups by grade, to which a great wave of fear and anxiety rushed over me. I was five years old and my kindergarten brain panicked at the sight of big kids who inevitably seemed smarter and cooler than me. I wanted to cry, I wanted to hide, and I quickly ran to Ms. Kiki. This is one of the earliest times I felt uncomfortable. Instead of isolating me and letting me wallow in worry, Ms. Kiki insisted I join the group of third graders and reassured me that I would be okay. This was the first time I consciously stepped outside of my comfort zone, and it surely wasn't the last time it happened thanks to Horizons.

Year after year, the summer was an opportunity for me to continuously step out of my comfort zone and thrive, fail, and learn in a safe and supportive environment. That was, until I hit high school, since

Horizons only goes up to 9th grade and, at that time, we did not offer programming or resources to students who were no longer in the program (that's changing thanks to the work that I am doing with our alumni at Horizons).

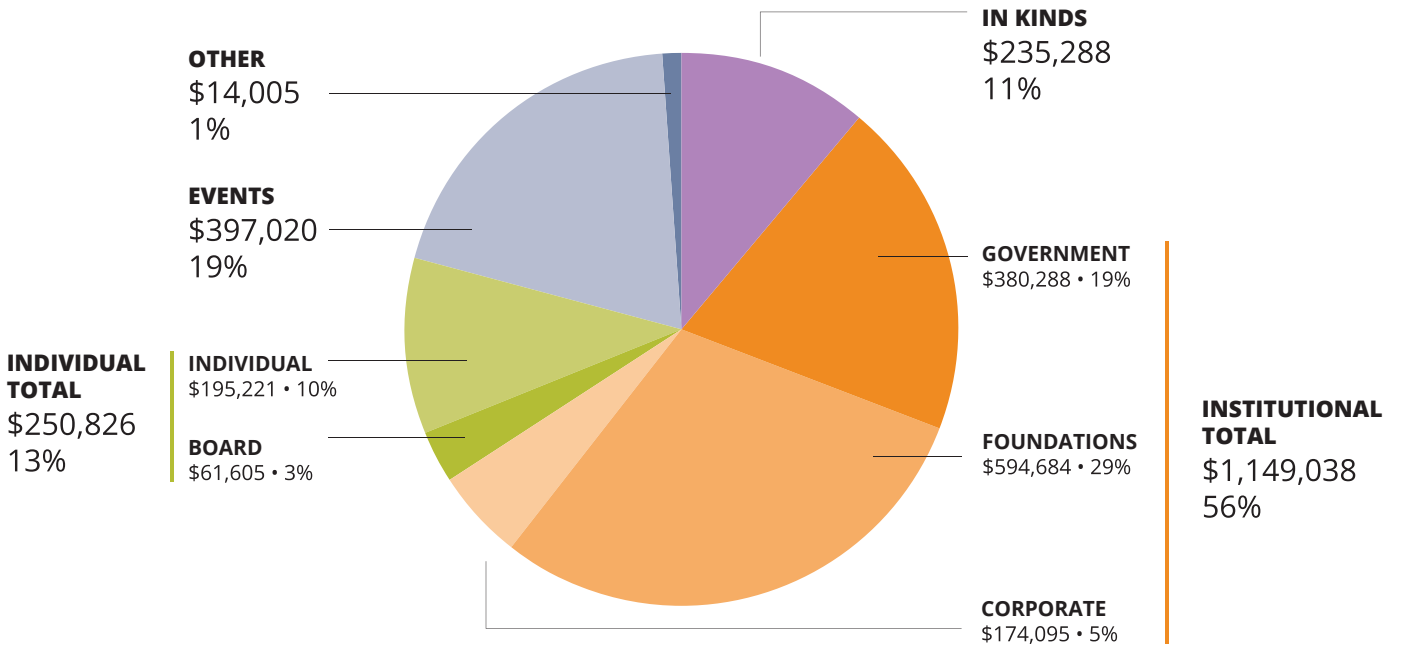
Nevertheless, with all the confidence a 15 year old can muster, and thanks to Horizons, I felt ready to take on high school, inside and outside of the classroom, but this quickly changed once challenges started arising and I did not have the same support system I was used to. For this reason, I reverted into a permanent state of comfort protected by fear. This permanent state in combination with a household of immigrant parents who prioritized manual labor over education led to me not seeing myself worthy of finishing my senior year at Duke Ellington School of the Arts or applying for college. Instead I focused on serving at my family's business and I quickly realized waiting tables wasn't my long term life goal. Coincidentally, this was around the time our executive director decided he just HAD to have the staff holiday party at my family restaurant. Before leaving, Mike asked if I'd be interested in applying for an open Program Assistant position at Maret, and the VISTA role for the following year. I remember telling myself I wasn't qualified for either position, but both Mike and Marta gave me the push I needed to get out of the comfort zone and take on both roles. I meant it when I said my first day of Horizons set the tone for the rest of my life.

Since that time, my journey has been on a rocket path. I've used my personal experience to begin building the alumni program and support that I so desperately needed to support our students with individual check-ins, Saturday programming, and summer touchpoints and volunteer opportunities. Over the last year, I've had the honor of identifying and tracking alumni as well as building relationships with alumni currently in high school and preparing our future alumni for their high school transition. My high school experience as a Horizons alum serves as my biggest motivation to continue doing the work I do.

Horizons Greater Washington FY23 Financials

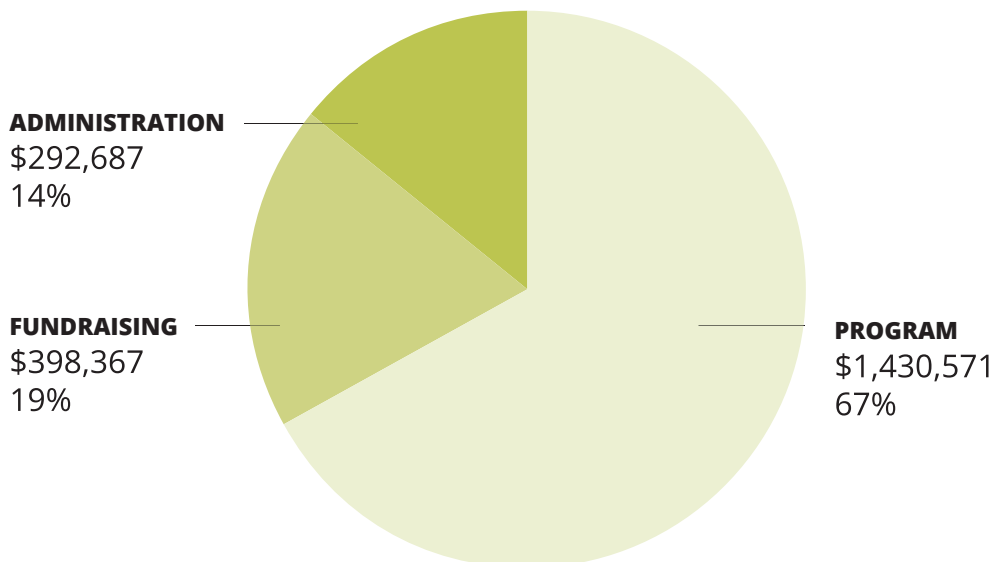
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*NOTE: Figures are unrestricted and unaudited

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Corporate Spotlight: Allen & Overy



Since 2020, Allen & Overy has played an integral role in the success of Horizons Greater Washington and the expansion of our program and the students that we serve. The partnership however extends far beyond Allen & Overy's financial support to Horizons program and Annual Gala.

ALLEN & OVERY

This summer, our middle school students visited Allen & Overy LLP for a hands-on learning experience and had the opportunity to receive expert guidance and feedback on the case statements they wrote during their Humanities class this summer. Working in groups - led by an Allen & Overy staff member - our students honed their case statements with expert support. At the end of the day, each group presented their final argument



The day was also spent learning about the management, finance, and operations of a law firm as well as tips from 9 lawyers on how to craft a compelling argument. The experience made a lasting impact as one of our students in attendance is now interested in pursuing a career in law.

We are truly grateful for our partnership with Allen & Overy and for the opportunity to provide such an enriching hands-on learning experience for our students. We look forward to continuing our partnership with Allen & Overy in 2023 and beyond.





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