



**HORIZONS
FOR YOUTH**
Support. Educate. Transform.

Annual Report 2023-2024



2023-2024

Dear Friends,

It is with great pride that we reflect on the past year. This year has been a landmark for us as we continue our commitment to empowering underserved communities through expanded educational opportunities and deepened community connections.

Our programs have continued to evolve this year to meet the changing needs of our students. We broadened our post-secondary programming to increase access to non-traditional collegiate pathways, opening doors for students who envision a unique educational journey. By providing resources and encouragement earlier in their high school years, we're helping students explore and pursue paths aligned with their unique goals and aspirations. One of our programmatic highlights was our inaugural Post-Secondary Career Fair, an event that brought various vocational, technical, and alternative career options directly to our students.

Another first for us this year was the formation of our alumni network program. In 31 years, this marks the beginning of a concerted effort to reconnect and track the journeys of our former students. Through this network, we aim

to strengthen our community, create mentorship opportunities, and provide ongoing support for both our alumni and current students. We look forward to expanding this initiative over the next years, ensuring our alumni stay connected and that our current and future students have access to this growing network of mentors and role models.

Significantly, we relocated our offices after over two decades in our West Loop home. This move was a tremendous team effort. Thanks to our staff, volunteers, and supporters who came together to make this transition a smooth one, setting us up for future successes. You can find us just on the other side of the West Loop!

Our achievements over the past year are a testament to the dedication of our donors, volunteers, board members, staff, school and community partners, and so many other key stakeholders. Your unwavering support has been essential to our success, and we are deeply grateful for the trust you place in our mission.

Sincerely,

Greg Borkowski
Executive Director

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How Do We Help Our Students Succeed?

Strong Academics, Family Partnerships, and Community Networks

VITAL COMMUNITY NETWORKS

In recognizing the diversity and breadth of our students' needs, we have created an expansive network throughout Chicago and beyond to add support for our students' goals. Our collaborative approach ensures that, year over year, we are equipped to help provide the necessary opportunities for individual and collective growth.

Cultivating strategic corporate engagement and community opportunities, we tap into a network of resources to address the evolving needs of our families. By leveraging external partnerships, we empower our students to explore their interests.

Thanks to the vast network of volunteers and other stakeholders, students receive vital career exploration and skill-building opportunities, as well as mentorship.

These connections extend beyond a child's present, laying the foundation for a lifetime of support, guidance, and shared experiences that contribute to their holistic development and sustained success.

INTENSE ACADEMIC SUPPORT

At the core of our commitment to our students are our academic support programs. These supports begin with meticulous attention to the school selection process, emphasizing the importance of finding the best fit for each student. When necessary, Horizons helps families access schools that would otherwise not be an option due to financial barriers.

Our dedicated program managers ensure that students not only stay on track but often surpass grade-level expectations through a personalized approach. Thanks to this attention to detail, students receive interventions before they fall behind. Supports include services such as tutoring and diverse learning resources like diagnostic testing and IEP advocacy. Through a distinctive blend of academic monitoring and targeted interventions, we tailor our approach to address individual needs comprehensively.

This commitment extends seamlessly from kindergarten through a student's postsecondary education. Our dedication to understanding and meeting the evolving needs of our students at every step of their educational trajectory is fundamental to our model. We strive to empower students to achieve their full potential and flourish academically.

STRONG FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS

We acknowledge that fostering academic success cannot be accomplished in a vacuum. At the heart of our organizational model is the belief that the whole family plays a pivotal role in shaping a student's educational journey.

We actively partner with families, offering support in ways that empower families to succeed. This approach involves coaching families to become effective advocates for their children and empowering them to actively participate in and contribute to their child's educational experience.

Recognizing that impact extends beyond the classroom, we strive to provide families with a network that can address their broader needs.

Through partnership, we create a collaborative and supportive ecosystem that nurtures not only the academic growth of the students but their overall opportunity for success.



- **100% of HFY students graduate high school**
- **99% of HFY students pursue post-secondary pathways**
- **30% of HFY students are Diverse Learners receiving diagnostic & ongoing support**
 - **94% of K-12 HFY students test at/above grade level or show trajectory of improvement year over year**

In the 2023-24 School Year:

- Monthly, students spent over a total of 110 hours with their mentors.
- 92 students received over 3,200 hours of tutoring throughout the school months.
 - HFY gave \$469,137 in tuition for best-fit K-12 schools.
- The Class of 2024 submitted 76 college applications with a 68% acceptance rate.

Congratulations to our Class of 2024!

The Class of 2024 is off to a strong start, with our students beginning their first semester of college in the fall of 2024. Over the summer, our annual Senior Shopping Day, in partnership with Fresh Wave and Target, was a huge success. With our partners' generosity, we helped the students gather all the essentials for their new college experiences. Many of the students also took advantage of the transition-to-college workshops provided by our post-secondary partner, UtmostU, which covered important topics like time management and budgeting, preparing them for the challenges ahead.

This year's students are pursuing a wide range of academic fields. Caitlyn is studying Aerospace Engineering at Arizona State University, while Anahi is majoring in Nursing at the University of Iowa. Jovonne is focused on Secondary Education at Illinois State University, Vernon is pursuing Computer Science at Lewis University, and Antonio is studying Food Science at the University of Illinois. Each student is on an exciting path, ready to make their mark in their respective fields. We are excited to continue watching their journeys unfold!

Aaliyah G. & Our Utmost U Partnership

We met Aaliyah in elementary school. Since then, she has been making her way towards post-secondary success. After attending Harold Washington for her freshman year, Aaliyah transferred to Worsham School of Mortuary Science, where she is pursuing a full-time program in mortuary science. With graduation expected in 2026, she is preparing for a career as a funeral director and embalmer.

Our key partner, Utmost U, has been incredibly valuable to her, especially in the early stages of her college journey. She is grateful for the initial Zoom meetings with our team and our partners, which offered guidance on making friends and adjusting to dorm life. Knowing that there was someone in her corner made her transition easier.

Utmost U is a program partner that helps support Horizons' post-secondary activities. Without participation in Horizons, students cannot access Utmost U's platform.

DJ & Alternative Post-Secondary Pathways

DJ joined Horizons in 2009. After graduating from high school, DJ explored a few options to get real-world experience without having to go back to the classroom. With help from Horizons' post-secondary resources, DJ enrolled in the no-cost program with HACIA U to complete an apprenticeship in general construction.

He says, "I would like to thank Horizons for Youth for the tremendous amount of effort and dedication they put into all of their students. I can truly say without Horizons, I do not know what I would be doing. Throughout my 12+ years at Horizons, there has never been a dull moment and there was never anything I was afraid to ask [for]. They have always been there and helped open up new doors that I thought wouldn't open. I am extremely grateful that my family was chosen to be a part of Horizons and can't wait to see what the future holds!"

DJ will be joining ComEd full-time thanks to his apprenticeship! We encourage our students to figure out what makes the most sense to them in their post-secondary years.





Highlighting Our Programs

Each year, our model is made up of programming that helps students holistically inside and outside of the classroom. This past year, elements such as getting our students into their best-fit schools and continuing to expand our post-secondary pathways opportunities stood out.

Best-Fit Schools for All Students

Finding a best-fit school is essential for a student's academic success and personal well-being. It allows them to thrive in an environment that aligns with their needs, learning style, and future goals. Roughly fifty percent of our students are enrolled at private or parochial schools.

Our programming is designed to support students as they navigate the process of finding that perfect fit, whether transitioning from private to public school, or adjusting to high school or college life. We recognize that a student's needs can change over time, and we are committed to providing the guidance and resources necessary to make those transitions seamless.

Whether it's offering public school application assistance, connecting students with tuition aid, or providing access to academic support programs that helps with transitioning, our model's emphasis on best-fit schools for each student ensures they have the support they need.

One of our students recently experienced this firsthand when he transitioned from a private school to a public school within the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) system. After making the move, he found a renewed sense of belonging, fitting in better with his peers and enjoying the classroom structure and resources at his new school.

The academic counseling and tutoring services we provided, along with tailored transition support, played a key role in helping him make a smooth adjustment. This example underscores the importance of recognizing that the best-fit school can take many forms; both private and public school partners can provide the right environment for our students to flourish.

Through ongoing support and individualized guidance, we strive to help each student find their best path to success.

Progressive Post-Secondary Pathways Expansion

Our post-secondary programming continued to expand this year as we work towards building out more robust options for post-secondary pathways year after year.

For example, this past year, we held a Progressive Pathways Career Fest for high school students. This was a key initiative aimed at expanding career exploration for students, particularly focusing on opportunities that do not require a four-year degree, as that's our biggest area for growth.

During the summer, we included a visit to Malcolm X College as part of our College Visit program, showcasing both transfer options for students aiming for four-year institutions and certification programs for those interested in progressive pathways.

Additionally, we worked with our Public Allies intern to develop a Progressive Pathway catalog, which highlights various post-secondary programs supporting goals that don't involve attending a traditional four-year college.

In the past, we have been able to diversify post-secondary options for our 9th-11th graders, such as a visit to Metropolis Coffee Company where students explored careers in coffee and toured the roastery. Last school year, we attended a workshop at DePaul University's Coleman Center, where students learned about entrepreneurship and how to develop personal skills for starting their own businesses. Looking ahead, we are excited about our recent connection with a mentor from Amazon's Future Engineer Program, an initiative designed to guide students into software engineering without following the traditional four-year college path.

This highlights the variety of options we aim to provide our students. When looking towards their future pathway to success, there's no one-size fits all. Horizons has been working hard to ensure all of our students are supported on their career paths.

Celebrating Our Community

Community Partners of the Year: Brookfield Properties

We are so proud to partner with Brookfield Properties once more this year. Their outstanding support in various parts of our programming helps keep our mission going year to year. This past year, Brookfield Properties provided volunteers for events, including the Back-to-School Picnic, and fully hosted the December Partnership Party, taking charge of organizing all activities, food, and holiday gifts (hats and gloves for every child in our families). During the holiday season, they adopted two families for our Adopt-a-Family initiative. Brookfield Properties sponsored 2024's On Cloud Nine and actively participated by sending staff members to volunteer that evening.

We are so grateful that they have consistently nominated Horizons for their internal fundraisers, including Brookfield Cares Day, which raised approximately \$7,000 for Horizons, and their annual staff holiday raffles this past year! We are excited to continue partnering with Brookfield in 2025 and for years to come.



Tutor of the Year: Olivia LaRocco

Olivia LaRocco has been an integral part of the Horizons for Youth community, tutoring for five years, including the past three years as a dedicated 1:1 paired tutor with our student Quetzali. In his nomination of Olivia, Quetzali's father expressed heartfelt gratitude for the positive impact she has had on their family. He described Olivia as a blessing to his daughter, not only as a tutor, but also as a role model, confidant, and trusted friend. Olivia's support goes beyond academics—her calming presence helps Quetzali navigate the challenges she faces at school, particularly with peer interactions. Their shared love for cats has created a strong bond, and they are always looking forward to tutoring sessions. Olivia's dedication and personal connection with Quetzali have been invaluable, and her commitment to fostering growth and confidence is deeply appreciated by the family.

Mentors of the Year: Mary Beth & Mauricio Rodriguez

Mary Beth and Mauricio (Mo) Rodriguez have been mentors to Horizons student Ajani for the past six years, playing a significant role in his life since he was in the 4th grade. Mo, who is also a former member of the Horizons for Youth Board of Directors, and Mary Beth have consistently shown unwavering dedication to Ajani's growth and future. In her nomination of the couple, Ajani's mother shared how much their support has meant to her family. She described Mo and Mary Beth as a true blessing, noting their deep involvement in Ajani's life and future aspirations. Their mentorship has provided Ajani with guidance, love, and care, and his mother is confident they will continue to be part of his life for many years to come. The impact they've made on Ajani's development has earned them this well-deserved recognition for their outstanding commitment as mentors.



In Support of Our Mission

Our events are vital to our mission by helping raise essential funds that support our programming directly. We are so grateful to the community fostered through both of these incredible evenings. By bringing together supporters, we create a powerful network dedicated to empowering every student to achieve their full potential.

NO ORDINARY EVENING 2024

In partnership with the Sullivan Family, we hosted the 13th No Ordinary Evening in 2024 honoring Declan Drumm Sullivan's memory and legacy. By honoring the students and programs of Horizons for Youth, this event has become a foundational day each spring for our greater community. For 2024, we took a trip to Hogwarts, transforming our evening into the No Ordinary Evening of Witchcraft and Wizardry!

We celebrated the 2024 high school graduates, of whom there were eleven this year, and all of their accomplishments and plans to come. We are so proud of our graduating class!

Highlighting Horizons' student success speaks to the impact our programs make year after year. Our supplemental academic and socioemotional supports address the diverse needs of all our learners, helping to bridge gaps in their educational experience. Our programs foster resilience, confidence, and well-being, enabling students to navigate challenges both in and out of the classroom.

Thanks to the incredible, dedicated individuals that make up our No Ordinary Evening community, we had a record-breaking Silent Auction this year. Thank you to all who donated their time and resources to make this and all aspects of this event come to life.

ON CLOUD NINE 2024

This year we celebrated the 24th anniversary of On Cloud Nine! Throughout those years, we have honored Paige and Lauren Barnett's legacies through this incredible evening. Championing education and volunteerism, we've built a long-standing community that knows how to show up for our mission.

On Cloud Nine is now our flagship event honoring our volunteer community.

Volunteers are the heart of our mission, providing invaluable support that amplifies our reach and impact within the community. Their diverse skills and perspectives enrich our programs, allowing us to offer more tailored and effective resources for our students.

By engaging with our volunteers, we foster a sense of ownership and connection, building a strong network of advocates for education. Ultimately, their dedication helps us create a more sustainable and vibrant learning environment for every student we serve.

As we approach the twenty-fifth anniversary in 2025, we are honored to continue growing with our volunteer community, and helping our students of all ages thrive in turn.







Thank you to our Board of Directors.

John Skakun- Chair

Partner, Sidley Austin LLP

Anne Carey- Vice Chair

HFY Tutor, Former VP of Industry Advisory Services at Bank of America

Chris Romans- Treasurer

Partner, Ernst & Young

Patrick Collins- Secretary, Operational

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Peter Leonard

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Debbie Ludolph

VP Workday Professional Services- North America, Alight Solutions

John Philbin

Founder & CEO, Happy Work Spectacular Life

Ardis Tabb

Director, Global Investment Banking, Baird

Feyisara Williams

Tax Director, PwC

Jeffrey Wright

Managing Partner, Gold Leaf Capital



Financials

Statement of Activities and Change in Net Assets

Support

Corporation and Foundation	\$599,111
Government	\$0
Individual	\$540,426
No Ordinary Evening	\$486,321
In-Kind Donations	\$337,772
Special Event, Net	\$278,736
Total Support	\$2,242,366

Revenue

Unrealized Gain on Investments	\$85,766
Divident and Interest Income	\$57,398
Total Support and Revenue	\$2,345,530

Expenses

Program Services	\$2,114,024
Administratin and General	\$274,829
Fundraising and Development	\$415,335
Total Expenses	\$2,804,188

Change in Net Assets

	\$458,658
Net Assets- Beginning of the Year (as restated on July 1, 2023)	\$2,499,371
Net Assets- End of the Year (as restated on June 30, 2024)	\$2,040,713

Statement of Financial Position for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2024

AssetsCurrent Assets

Cash and Equivalent	\$488,841
Contributions Receivable, net	\$179,700
Prepaid Expenses	\$6,751
Total Current Assets	\$675,292

Property Equipment

Net Property and Equipment	-
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Other Assets

Cash-Endowment	\$148,559
Investments-Endowment	\$1,254,020
Operating Lease Right-of-Use Asset	\$59,833
Total Other Assets	\$1,462,412
Total Assets	\$2,137,704

Liabilities and Net Assets

Total Current Liabilities	\$96,991
Net Assets, No Restrictions	\$638,134
Net Assets, Purpose Restricted	\$73,079
Net Assets, Perpetual Restricted	\$1,329,500
Total Net Assets	\$2,040,713
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$2,137,704



Dedicated to Brent Hamlet

Brent taught us the most radical act of all—the act of love—and our communities are better because of his love and service.



Horizons for Youth.

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