



## 2016 Report to Donors

As we approach program maturity and prepare to add a class of eighth graders in summer 2017, we are proud to share 2016 program highlights and successes—as well as news from this past year. We continue to be very encouraged by our results, where students consistently show strong reading and math gains each year. Once again, there were more wonderful firsts:

- We added our first class of seventh graders.
- Project-based learning was implemented across all grades, providing a welcome departure for many students from their school year curriculum format.
- New choice activities were added as elective offerings for middle schoolers, including cooking, coding and robotics.
- Service learning was rolled out across all grades to teach students the value of giving back to their communities.
- New destinations were added to the roster of over 40 field trips, in which many locations supported a project-based learning theme.
- We extended small reading groups to middle schoolers that resulted in considerably higher reading proficiencies.
- Student enrollment was shifted online, adding efficiency and time savings.

We continued our speaker series, offering Horizons students inspiration and exposure to professionals, each eager to share their passion and knowledge of their field. And thanks to generous donors like you, we achieved new fundraising milestones.

I am grateful for the interest and support from local businesses and school partners, as we collaborate to enhance the lives of these low-income children and their families and build stronger communities. Observing our teachers, volunteers and other staff members work together is rewarding, as I witness the difference they make in our students' lives. Most of all, I am inspired by our students, who learn to face their challenges and, through Horizons, forge a path on which they can succeed. With your support, we are proud to share so many program and organizational accomplishments over the last year.

### PROGRAM SUCCESSES

**Project-based learning was implemented across all grades—and it was a tremendous success!** Integrating a theme throughout lessons is a refreshing departure from students' school year curriculums. Projects were tailored to the students' grade levels, increasing in complexity

with each grade level and incorporating innovative math and ELA instruction methods, resulting in a wide diversity of project subjects. Second graders focused on Simple Machines, individually creating arcade games using recycled materials. Third graders experimented building structures such as pyramids, castles and skyscrapers before designing their own buildings; exciting field trips to MIT Science Labs, iRobot and the Prudential Building supplemented their learning. Fourth graders learned about conserving resources and energy as they constructed their solar ovens with pizza boxes, tinfoil, plastic wrap, tape and paper. Seventh graders focused on financial literacy, with the goal of helping students achieve a better understanding of how prudent financial management can lead to a more successful future.



**We piloted a new fifth and sixth grade math program that yielded strong improvement in test scores!** The program, called “Hands-On Equations” utilizes hands-on, concrete manipulatives to help students quickly learn algebraic concepts.

**We started a breakfast club to serve students with high needs.** Students who needed reading assistance used their breakfast time for tutoring, adding to the support they also received from our reading specialists. Without taking time from the program day, two fifth graders helped kids regularly before the program began each day, along with specialists who developed a tailored program for students behind in their reading skills.

**Students gave back to their community** with the addition of service learning to the curriculum. Students made a difference for someone else through a class-initiated service project. Second graders worked side-by-side in the fields with farm workers at Powisset Farm in Dover. Fourth graders weeded and planted in the Butterfly Garden at Hale Reservation and sixth graders assumed full control of the weekly recycling collection at DCD. Seventh graders put in a hard morning of digging, picking, and spreading on a hot summer’s day at



ReVisionUrban Farm, which provides fresh produce to Boston low-income families.

**Coding, cooking and arts and crafts became new CHOICE activities for middle schoolers.** Students had the option to attend basketball, coding, cooking, arts and crafts and weaving for an elective module held twice a week. Arts and Crafts substituted for the more traditional Art Choice of 2015. Students learned coding basics and dabbled in donated animation software to create their own animations!

**Our speaker series grew, as Horizons enjoyed visits from over ten presenters.** Some notable speakers included Ed Walker of the Boston Public Schools, two Brookline Police officers and a Thayer Academy teacher who grew up in a disadvantaged environment. For the first time, DCD campers and Horizons students joined together in an activity as 11 torch-bearing Peace Runners addressed students and DCD campers on why they run around the world. Students also listened to speakers from universities and banks and participated in a skit where they acted as a bank donating to a community project. A bank employee shared the importance of checking and savings accounts and explained the basics of banking; students improved their math skills and their knowledge of finances were reinforced with real world connections.





**Students visited more local companies on field trips, supported by new and returning funders.** Dedham residents and owners of Fablevision donated learning software, allowing students in Grades 3-7 to try creating animation during their computer time. For the second year, sixth graders toured Diversified Biotech, owned by funder and Horizons Kumon supporter Mark Fins. Third graders visited the iRobot company in Bedford and enjoyed the robot museum. MIT visited Horizons to share a presentation on hydroponics, where fifth graders were witness to the wonder of growing plants in water, not soil.

**We rolled out a streamlined online enrollment process, allowing us to more efficiently enroll new and returning students.** Saving over fifty hours of administrative processing and adding operational efficiency, parents now enroll students online, supporting a database that serves as a repository for all student data.

#### YEAR-ROUND PROGRAM ADDITIONS

**A local funder supported four underperforming Horizons students in a renowned school year program.** Local business owner and Horizons benefactor Mark Fins sponsored the enrollment of several students in KUMON, a math and reading program which requires a significant commitment by students and families. All participating students have demonstrated good progress in math or reading test results with one of the students reaching grade level and no longer in need of the scholarship. The program has been a wonderful success, leading to renewed KUMON funding. Currently we have 5 students benefitting from the KUMON program.

**Two Horizons teachers provided valuable after school tutoring at their homes.** Four first and second grade students whose reading scores were low received year-round tutoring, along with homework help in math and other subjects. The combination of tutoring, the summer

program and the regular school year program worked to improve skills and test scores.

#### OUTCOMES AND MEASUREMENT

**Once again, our results demonstrate improvement in student academic performance, reinforcing the value of the Horizons model.** On average, all grades increased their skills and many students surpassed the benchmark. (Typically, low-income children without Horizons slide back two to three months over the summer).

- Testing was conducted pre and post program in order to measure student progress in: 1) reading; 2) math; 3) swimming; and 4) social-emotional outcomes (pre program only).
- K-2 shows 65% of students improved literacy skills, and the remainder demonstrated slight progress in their reading skills simply by not sliding back.
- Horizons students in grades 3-7 gained an overall average of 2 months in math and 2.3 months in reading skills over the summer, while students who performed below grade level at the start of the program gained an average of 2.6 months in math and 2.6 months in reading skills.



We also evaluate program success via a handful of other key dimensions.

- We achieved an impressive 93% daily attendance rate as well as 90% student retention from the previous summer!
- Daily swim instruction produced 18 advanced swimmers; passing the deep end swim test is a key component to becoming an advanced swimmer at Horizons.
- For the second year, we measured student social-emotional outcomes through a holistic student assessment to maximize classroom learning and foster socialization among peers.

Our demographic constitution remains relatively consistent from year to year: 28% Caucasian, 30% Hispanic, 33% African American; 52% male and 48% female; 48% Dedham residents and 52% residents of neighboring communities (primarily Boston).



### PARENT ENGAGEMENT

**Horizons deepened parent engagement through increased communication and parent events**, including Saturday pre-program orientation days, registration dinners and our annual Families Day, where parents visit with teachers and students in the classroom. Parents clamored to see their children perform in the season-end celebration, which featured students performing skits, music and readings. Communication with parents become far more efficient—we now use parent email addresses for over 90% of our communications.

### MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

**We continued to enhance our branding and communications**, with the goal of increasing engagement across our network, creating interest and fundraising opportunity and showcasing our thought leadership. We added many Facebook followers by increasing our posting frequency and relevance. We communicated with our donor network more frequently and created collateral and tools to market the program. And we revamped website content to be more engaging, sophisticated and informative, adding a Facebook feed, an email capture, a new look-and-feel and a more prominent news section.

### COMMUNITY OUTREACH

**We expanded networking and fundraising opportunities for new and prospective funders to showcase the program and educate and broaden the community.** A March business breakfast at Dedham Community Theater showcased Horizons to a group of nearly 30 attendees led to new and renewed interest in Horizons from local businesses. Our annual Visitors Day targeted prospective funders to introduce more local businesses and prospective funders to observe the program in action.

### FUNDRAISING EVENTS

**Community events continued to attract new funders and build awareness of Horizons.** Events have been a tremendous success for us, thanks to you, our donors, and to those you connect to the Horizons community. We participated in three partner events as a second-time benefit charity: Rodman Ride for Kids, Family Gratitude 5K Turkey Trot and the Revved Ride.



**The 2016 Bright Lights Big City event, was to date, our largest fundraiser, offering an opportunity to educate prospective and current funders about our program over the course of a wonderful evening.** This enormous undertaking by our Board and Planning Committee is the largest gathering of new and longtime Horizons at DCD supporters and serves as a lively launch of the upcoming summer program season. Our Bright Lights Big City Fundraiser was held in downtown Boston and drew record revenues and attendees. Fifth grader Madison Gordon received the first Nicholas Thacher Horizons Achievement award named in honor of DCD's former head of school. Nick Thacher is credited with bringing the program to Dedham Country Day.





### FUNDING UPDATES

**Along with our focus on attracting corporate donors, we received more institutional funding awards, resulting in new and increased contributions.** Horizons at DCD has a strong track record for raising funds in advance of the summer program, as the Board takes an appropriately conservative approach to the budget. Beyond our established signature spring event, donations from other funding sources exceeded \$100,000. Some of our generous new and returning funders include:

Wellington Management Foundation  
 The Rands Foundation  
 Mifflin Memorial Fund  
 Needham Bank  
 Blue Hills Bank Charitable Foundation  
 Clippership Foundation  
 Dedham Institute for Savings Foundation  
 Diversified Biotech  
 Fablevision  
 Horizons National  
 Peters Memorial Fund  
 OMAM Foundation

### LOOKING AHEAD

Creating transformative and lasting change takes time. Horizons' unique ten year promise to our students and their families creates a tight-knit community between youth and staff. Each year, students return to Horizons to a family that has grown together through the years and connects young people who may not have otherwise known each other, changing our communities one summer at a time.

As always, I am grateful for the longtime commitment of our generous, talented, and most of all, dedicated Board and supporters like you. Your belief in Horizons and what it does to close the opportunity gap is the reason we are here. On a personal note, I am excited by all that Horizons has to look forward to this year; namely, a growing community and a milestone year, as our program reaches maturity. I am truly grateful to you, our supporters, without whom this program would not be possible.

I look forward to your input and continued involvement in Horizons at DCD.

With tremendous gratitude,

**Gita Iyer**

Board President and Acting Executive Director