

2017 IMPACT REPORT



HORIZONS®

YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE!



This is a special year for Horizons, and the 2017 Program Season was a tremendous success. Some highlights:

- Founding Executive Director returned to lead the program.
- We fulfilled our multiyear commitment to our founding class, graduating our first class of eighth graders.
- We laid the foundation for a high school program.

This first Horizons graduation marked a significant milestone in our journey. The new graduates reminisced about their early days at Horizons and shared heartfelt thoughts about what Horizons means to them. To say that we are proud of these graduates would be an understatement. We're excited to work with our students through their high school years—we know they will achieve so much and can't wait to see what they do next.

We continue to be proud of our results, where students consistently demonstrate strong reading and math gains each year. With your help, we are making a difference because Horizons works.

INVESTING IN HORIZONS = INVESTING IN OUR STUDENTS' SUCCESS.

PROGRAM SUCCESSES

We served 140 students in Prekindergarten to grade eight, with project-based learning taking center stage in our curriculum along with other program improvements. Horizons has a proven model of improving student learning during the summer and continues to employ this successful approach through middle school programming. The summer engages students in math, reading, writing and STEM. Experienced teachers provide instruction with a low student-teacher ratio of 5:1 that facilitates personalized support and instruction for all students. Whether they were on a field trip adventure, trying a new instrument, swimming or tackling a new phase of literacy through project-based learning, our students enjoyed their time at the program.

Project-Based Learning (PBL) has been consistently met with enthusiasm by students and teachers and has become a teaching foundation that Horizons students look forward to each year. Teachers let students help choose the projects, further empowering them in their education. Projects were tailored to the students' grade levels, increasing in complexity with each grade level and incorporating innovative math and ELA (English and Language Arts) instruction methods, resulting in a wide diversity of project subjects. Some PBL highlights include:

- Fifth graders explored the engineering design process through hands-on activities in the Design Squad Global Club, a program sponsored by WGBH. Students communicated online with groups from South Africa and Jordan, asking questions about each other's countries, sharing videos, photos and collaborating about inventions.
- Sixth graders used the book *A Walk to Water* to guide them through their projects, where students problem-solved for characters who faced supply shortages in a fictional village. Working in partnerships, students created and modified their own inventions.
- Seventh and eighth graders simulated engineering and social challenges they encountered reading *City of Ember*, a novel set in a post-apocalyptic future. They solved problems and shared responsibilities while separated into two societies.

Eighth Graders move on—but not without us. Our eighth graders began some modules from our new High School Program, which will engage students through twelfth grade. Students took courses on study skills and participated in an overnight retreat at Outward Bound's Thompson Island, where they engaged in team-building activities and leadership training. This new leadership course encourages students to express their ideas and to take responsibility for their actions, with the objective of empowering them to make appropriate decisions and take pride in their accomplishments. Going forward, eighth graders will take on a peer leadership role, facilitating leadership activities for sixth and seventh graders and managing the weekly community meeting, where students present learnings and original skits that model appropriate behaviors for younger students.

Speakers share their stories. In our speaker series, Horizons students receive inspiration and exposure to professionals and business owners with similar racial and socio-economic backgrounds as our students, each one eager to share their passion and knowledge of their field. This past year, Olympic runner Jorge Torres and Jovanny Tovar spoke to our students about perseverance and dedication to a sport and a goal. Political activist Doug Chavez described how, while growing up, he benefited from a strong mentor and goal setting.



Enrichment adds balance. Along with third and fourth grade music classes, middle school Choice Program activities are among the most popular and include professional tennis instruction, basketball, coding, cooking, yoga, and arts and crafts. Expanding electives is a 2018 program priority, as choices empower our students to discover interests and tackle new challenges.

Field trips continue to be a favorite activity. Each year new destinations are added to the roster of more than 40 field trip destinations. Students visit companies, parks, and cultural attractions, literally broadening their horizons. Many of our students have spent little

or no time in nature or at farms. Students visited local farms to enjoy farm animals and learn about how vegetables are grown and harvested and about the workings of a farm. Visits to Wilson Mountain, the Boston Nature Center, Houghton Pond, Moose Hill Farm, and Blue Hills Reservation offer chances for students to have picnics, enjoy the natural beauty of the area, and exercise outside.

We strive to engage students in science and engineering with field trips as well. Museum trips to Legoland and the Acton Discovery Museum and an on-site presentation



from Museum of Science’s Super Cold Science Show complement STEM and project-based learning topics—and keep science fun. We also make time for field trips to mini golf courses and a splash park, and for the very popular trip to the Patriots Museum, where students try on Super Bowl rings and watch a Patriots practice.

Parent engagement is key. Each year, our orientation sessions bring parents to campus at the start of the program. This year, our Families Open House Day brought many family members to campus, where they had the opportunity to meet teachers and other parents and enjoy seeing the children thriving. As part of our effort to promote healthy eating and supply nutritious food, we held two farmer’s harvest markets. The Dedham Food Pantry coordinated food donations, and families were invited to take food home after they visited Horizons. On the last day, our Final Concert

and Celebration was met with its customary enthusiasm by families, as the Horizons community enjoyed student musical performances, skits, and a slideshow of summer highlights. Strong attendance and retention rates reflect the steady commitment of our families and the strong level of student engagement.



Horizons at DCD could not achieve success without strong partnerships. We rely on our partnership with Boston and Dedham Public Schools to identify students who can benefit most from Horizons. Our school partners serve as strong referral sources and value the contribution our program makes to both students and the community. We actively recruit from two Dedham and two Boston area elementary schools. Dedham Schools Superintendent Michael Welch shared his appreciation for Horizons during his visit.



For the third year Horizons participated in The Boston After School and Beyond Summer (BASB) Measurement Project. Through this collaborative partnership, Horizons received recognition as a leading area summer learning program and a grant award from Boston Public Schools.

Now in our third year of partnership, the Rodman Ride for Kids is not only a program funder, but also a forum for nonprofit best-practices and a vehicle identifying new funding sources. This matching gift charity raises funds for nonprofits that support at-risk children in Massachusetts.

OUTCOMES

Across Horizons nationally, testing was conducted to measure student progress in reading, math and swimming. Typically, low-income children without Horizons slide back two to three months over the summer.

Horizons at DCD provided 140 students with:

- 6.5 hours daily programming for 6 weeks
- 3.5 hours per day minimum of academic programming

Students and families love Horizons:

- 90% average retention rate
- 93% average daily attendance rate
- 100% of students learn to swim

Consistent with National results, and as in the prior eight summers, students showed strong academic gains:

- 8 to 12 weeks improvement in math and reading skills
- Below grade level performers achieved nearly 4 month gains in math and reading

FUNDRAISING

Horizons 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. Horizons is thrilled to receive new and renewed funding from many generous contributors including:

Austin Memorial Foundation
Blue Hills Bank Charitable Foundation
Boston Public Schools
Clipper Ship Foundation
Dedham Savings Charitable Foundation
Diversified Biotech

Ramsey McCluskey Foundation
Needham Bank
Peters Memorial Fund
Rands Foundation
Wellington Management Foundation

Fundraising events have been a tremendous success, thanks to you, our donors, and to those you introduce to the Horizons at DCD community. Horizons Giving Day, a coordinated online giving effort facilitated by the Horizons National office, helps attract new donors as we participate in an organization-wide fundraising competition. An enormous undertaking by our Board and Planning Committee, our yearly fundraising event is the largest local gathering of longtime Horizons supporters and serves as a lively launch of the upcoming program season. Our 2017 Big League Benefit, held at Fenway Park, offered an opportunity to educate prospective and current funders about our program over the course of an exciting evening. We raised over \$425,000 from that event, surpassing our goal—all thanks to you.

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Along with the return of Founding Executive Director Meredith Laban, Wanny Munoz joined Horizons to serve as the point person for the day to day operations of the Summer and Year-Round PreK-Grade 8 Program and is developing and leading the High School Program. Wanny oversaw programming at the leadership development and mentoring nonprofit, Chica Project, and was a High School teacher in the Lawrence Public School system for two years. We also added capacity through the addition of an AmeriCorps volunteer, Morgan Brynes, who supports strategic planning efforts.

Our Board has embarked on a second strategic plan that will take us through the next five years of our program. Since our founding we have made significant progress strengthening funding sources to meet the expenses of steady program growth. As a Board and organization, we have been prudent in establishing aggressive and yet attainable goals, continuing to attract growing support from the community, and maintaining a mutually beneficial and productive relationship with our DCD host facility.

LOOKING AHEAD

The success of Horizons since we founded the program in 2009, results from the talent and drive of key participants, foresight and planning and most of all, persistent dedication to a worthwhile mission. This year Horizons will focus on strengthening middle school programming, increasing funding sources to meet expenses and growth needs, building the High School program and expanding Horizons reach to serve more students.

We are honored to lead this impressive organization. Observing our teachers, volunteers and other staff members work toward the same mission is so rewarding, as we witness the difference they make in our students' lives. We are thankful for the interest and support from local businesses and school partners, as we collaborate to enhance the lives of our low-income students and their families—and build stronger communities. We're grateful for our wonderful supporters and for the dedication of our generous and talented Board members. Most of all, we are inspired by our students, who learn to face their challenges and, through Horizons, forge a path for success.

We cannot do this important work without you. We look to your continued involvement.

With tremendous gratitude,

Meredith Laban, Executive Director
Gita Iyer, Board Chair

