



IMPACT REPORT

FY 2022-2023



Inspiring Students. Developing Teachers. Together, we are Breakthrough.

OUR MISSION & PROGRAM



Striving to reach educational equity and diversity—this is our mission at Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia.

Through tuition-free academic and co-curricular enrichment, we prepare middle schoolers who have limited educational opportunities to attend and succeed at competitive, top-choice high schools. We serve motivated students in Philadelphia public, charter and parochial schools to help set the foundation for high school, postsecondary and career success.

We also build the next generation of diverse, talented educators. We provide college students with pre-professional training as lead teachers in Breakthrough's classrooms.

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

As we commence the '23/24 School Year Program, I am humbled by Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia's growing impact and community of supporters. I am also excited about our future and overjoyed by the continued successes of Breakthrough Scholars and Teaching Fellows.

We recently completed a memorable Summer Program, with over 200 Scholars and Teaching Fellows on the campus of Germantown Friends School for a fun session of teaching and learning. Breakthrough's enrollment has increased +95% since I assumed leadership three years ago (back in 2020, 110 Scholars and Teaching Fellows were enrolled). We continue to provide our Scholars with rigorous academic and co-curricular enrichment to help reach their educational and career aspirations. And, we remain steadfast in our commitment to bolster a diverse, talented teacher workforce. I am grateful to say that we are realizing this mission at the highest levels since before the pandemic.

Our students have thoroughly enjoyed Breakthrough's program, which has flourished over the past year. We recently implemented a new initiative to better prepare Scholars for high school applications (especially in light of the SDP's evolving admissions process) and help parents understand the full range of high school options. Staff members Sue Chen and Sakina Parks organized a high school fair for parents and Scholars, as well as a series of summer presentations delivered by various admissions officers. Many students commented about the positive energy, ongoing mentorship and supportive, collaborative culture that permeated the program this summer, which I believe is distinctive to Breakthrough and our students-teaching-students model.

Field trips have resumed in earnest – Scholars visited the University of Pennsylvania twice this summer to learn about life in college, careers in education and the admissions process. Scholars took field trips to the Penn Museum, Boston Consulting Group's (BCG) Philadelphia Office (where they worked on a consulting case) and to the Curtis Center for Biotechnology Day (where they learned about innovative cancer treatments, lab funding and construction). Scholars were exposed to careers in zoology on a trip to the Philadelphia Zoo and ran STEM experiments with engineers from the Naval Surface Warfare Center. A few Scholars applied to Seeds of Change's [Costa Rica research program](#) and

spent a week working with scientists at sea turtle hatcheries and butterfly research labs, in addition to learning about local culture and traditions. It's an exciting time for Breakthrough students and I encourage you to keep abreast of program happenings through our social media channels – [Instagram](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter/X](#) | [TikTok](#) | [LinkedIn](#).

We remain steadfast in our mission to achieve educational equity for our Scholars and bolster a diverse, talented Teaching Fellow workforce.

With Breakthrough's program, metrics, operations and team on track, my focus turns to reaching three goals over the next five years:

- Reach more students by thoughtfully and responsibly establishing a sustainable second program site in addition to the Germantown Friends School location
- Improve outcomes for Scholars and ensure Teaching Fellows are better prepared to enter the profession and consider teaching jobs in Philadelphia. We know that 91% of our most recent 8th graders surveyed attend top choice/competitive high schools. I would like to expand our impact to provide Breakthrough Alumni with high school success and postsecondary inspiration, where they can return to Breakthrough every quarter from 9-12th grades. Here, they will experience a unique curriculum designed to acclimatize to the demands and rigor of high school, develop 21st century tech/digital skills, explore career interests and receive guidance to prepare for postsecondary education
- Find more sustainable and diversified funding sources to support both the base program at GFS, as well as the two new aforementioned initiatives. We are grateful for the countless individuals, foundations, public funders, and corporations who have supported Breakthrough as we regained our financial footing over the past two years.

Once again, we ended the fiscal year in a solid financial position, with approximately \$970,000 in revenue received to cover our expenses totalling the same amount. BCG continues to generously lend their social impact, management and strategy expertise to help shape our strategic plans and roadmap, in which Advisory Board, Committees and Staff have all taken active leadership roles.

Thank you for your continued confidence in our students, and for supporting Breakthrough. As always, we invite you to visit the program, get involved and provide your valuable support and ideas. I look forward to seeing you at the [Breakfast of Champions on October 26th at 8:15am](#). Until then, enjoy reading this year's Impact Report and please join me in launching Breakthrough into a successful future.

With deep gratitude,



Michelle Palmer
Executive Director,
Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia





BREAKTHROUGH'S IMPACT CONTINUES TO GROW!

We are so proud of what Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia is doing on behalf of talented middle schoolers and emerging educators. Under GFS' umbrella, Breakthrough is now serving 175 Scholars and 34 Teaching Fellows, diversified its supporters, and solidified operations and finances. We have a strong base for additional growth over the next several years.

To all who have partnered with Breakthrough this year, from staff to volunteers to funders and partners around the country – we send our deepest gratitude.

Has there been a more critical time for Breakthrough? The pressing issues facing youth and education in our city can seem so overwhelming, but to close the education opportunity gap and to rebuild the ranks of educators, our city and nation need organizations like Breakthrough.

In the pages that follow, you will learn about our program's growth and see what is possible when we come together in support of young people and future educators.



Jason Duckworth
Chair, Advisory Board
Breakthrough of
Greater Philadelphia

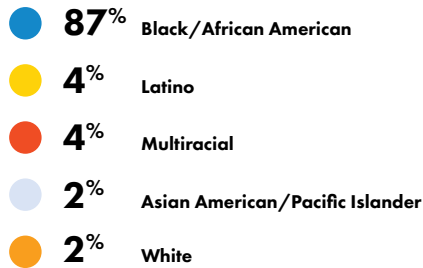


Dana Weeks
Head of School
Germantown Friends
School

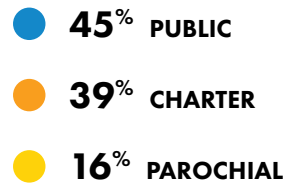
BREAKTHROUGH AT A GLANCE

2022
2023

Race/Ethnicity



Middle Schools represented by Summer 2023 Scholar cohort



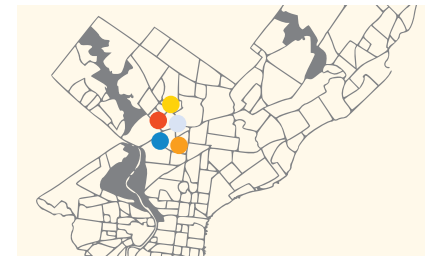
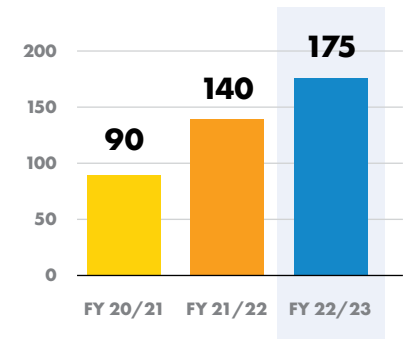
Top 5 Schools represented at Breakthrough

- Ad Prima Charter — Mount Airy
- John Story Jenks Academy for Arts and Sciences
- Cook-Wissahickon
- Wissahickon Charter — Fernhill
- Ad Prima Charter — Overbrook

Top 5 Zip Codes represented by Summer 2023 Scholar cohort



Number of Scholars Served Past 3 Years



175

Scholars served

58%

Female

42%

Male

3.23

Average GPA of incoming class (6th grade)

85%

were admitted to 1st or 2nd choice high school

91%

plan to attend high schools beyond their neighborhood school

86%

participate in free/reduced lunch

77%

single parent household

32%

first generation college-bound

34

Teaching Fellows enrolled

45%

Fellows of color



PROGRAM UPDATES

Summer 2023 Program

Sakina Parks, Program Manager

Scholars and Teaching Fellows had an impactful experience in the 2023 Summer Program at Breakthrough, with each day bringing new and different learning adventures. 34 Teaching Fellows trained in a nine-week summer residency from June 12 to August 11, where they taught 175 Breakthrough Scholars for six weeks. The energy of college students teaching middle schoolers is unique, and I encourage anyone reading this update to visit Breakthrough while our program is in session. The passion and enthusiasm of our Teaching Fellows (they dance to greet Scholars on campus every morning!) and the mentor-mentee relationships that formed between Fellows and middle school Scholars created a positive, nurturing environment that truly inspired a love of learning and social-emotional growth.

To ensure that Teaching Fellows were well-equipped to lead teach in Breakthrough's classrooms, Fellows received daily professional development and training by Deans of Faculty, Ceora Wearing-Moore and Matt Greenawalt, as well as from experienced teachers in the School District of Philadelphia (SDP) and Germantown Friends School (GFS). Gabby Goodman, Alex Dark, Nichelle Garnett, and Adam Hotek were our dedicated Instructional Coaches, while Stewart Calloway and Sue Chen served as our dynamic Deans of Students. Equitable / Karr Barth Advisors also hosted a three-part financial literacy series for our Fellows, who discussed relevant topics such as budgeting, retirement planning, and managing credit to prepare for life after college.



From Monday to Thursday, Scholars participated in four academic courses daily – math, science, literature and writing through history. Outside of core academics, Scholars attended All School Meeting (ASM) and Small Learning Community (SLC) time, which provided another level of fun. SLCs participated in spirit checks and other community-building activities ([check out a short reel of ASM in action on our YouTube playlist](#)). We had a particularly spirited

and healthy competition around earning “SLC points,” with SLCs earning upwards of 1,000 points this summer! Teaching Fellows also designed 12 different electives for Scholars, ranging from “Ultimate Frisbee” and “Let’s Talk Money” (financial literacy), to “Intro to Film

Studies” and “Mythology and the Ancient World.” Breakthrough art students engaged in classes taught by the Mt. Airy Arts Garage (MAAG) – special thanks to Dan Gordon for making these classes possible. Breakthrough continued our partnership with Walnut Hill Golf/First Tee with Scholars participating in weekly golf lessons.

On Fridays, Scholars moved off-campus for co-curricular enrichment and fun (it was summer, after all!). They visited the University of Pennsylvania, Penn Museum, and Philadelphia Zoo. Scholars also ran science experiments with a team of engineers from the Naval Surface Warfare Center one Friday, while [CBS News Philadelphia created and aired a piece about Breakthrough](#). A huge thank you to Equitable / Karr Barth Advisors for volunteering as chaperones for all of the Fun Friday field trips.



In line with our mission, Breakthrough strives to keep content inspiring and relevant for high school readiness. To this end, several guest speakers joined our program to share about career and life experiences via our year-round Career Conversations series. Several admissions officers also spoke with Scholars about the range of high school options available, and provided critical perspective on the application process and timelines. We hope that visits from local area politicians and representatives from the SDP served as inspiration for our Scholars this summer!

The summer program concluded for our Scholars with Celebration Day on August 4th. We are so proud of our graduating 8th grade Scholars and celebrated their high school selections. Students had the opportunity to participate in a fun-filled morning created by our Arts and Celebration committee and hosted by our Teaching Fellows and volunteers from RSM US LLP. The celebration included a full day of field day activities, play on the giant water slide, karaoke, and plenty of delicious treats. Thank you to our amazing BTGP parents for your donations and support throughout the summer.

We are grateful for our supporters who keep our program running. Special thanks to in-kind donations from Rita’s Italian Ice, Frosted Fox Cake Shop, Famous 4th Street Cookie Co., Walnut Lane Golf Club, and Cradles to Crayons.

The team at Breakthrough eagerly awaits students’ return to School Year Program on September 30th!

High School Readiness

Sue Chen, Recruitment Manager and Dean of Students (Summer Program)

Integral to Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia's mission is to academically prepare our students to gain admission to competitive, top-choice high school programs. After speaking with some of our Breakthrough families, the consensus seemed to be that applying to select admit, city-wide, independent, private or parochial high schools outside of their neighborhood option felt like a daunting task. Most felt unprepared for the often lengthy process that accompanies high school applications. To address these concerns, our staff created programming throughout the year to help prepare families for the application process.

One of the first activities Scholars engaged in was a field trip to the Philadelphia High School Fair, sponsored by Elevate 215. More than 100 high schools were represented at

the fair, which was attended by approximately 6,000 people. Following the fair, Breakthrough hosted our own inaugural high school fair in March 2023. We invited a number of high schools from Greater Philadelphia to share information with families.

Amongst the attending schools were Agnes Irwin School, Church Farms School, Friends Select, Germantown Friends School, The Haverford School, The Shipley School, St. Joseph's Preparatory School, as well as representatives from Mastery Charter School and the School District of Philadelphia. In the Spring of 2023, Rohan Arjun, Director of Enrollment Management and Financial Aid at Friends Select School, moderated a high school interview workshop.



During our Summer Program, rising 8th grade students were visited by a number of high school representatives for a more in-depth talk about the application process. Admissions representatives from aforementioned schools as well as Cristo Rey Philadelphia visited Breakthrough to speak about their schools. They spoke on various topics related to the high school application process, such as the importance of an interview, how to write a compelling admissions essay and the benefits of various school environments. Our rising 6th and 7th graders discussed the importance of grades and conduct, as this impacts high school applications.

As we enter the School Year Program this Fall, our rising 8th grade families will participate in a number of high school application events including an application completion workshop, individualized high school application counseling sessions, as well as Breakthrough group shadow days at high schools.

We have made great strides this past year, helping our families demystify the high school application process. As we enter our second year of this newly-designed curriculum, we are excited to learn more about what information Scholars and families find most helpful and build upon this feedback.

Breakthrough Scholars in Costa Rica

Alexandra Dark, Dean of Faculty (School Year Program)
and Instructional Coach (Summer Program)

In Summer 2023, a group of Breakthrough Scholars applied for *Seeds of Change*, a program in Costa Rica that encourages students to pursue science (STEM) careers through immersive research experiences. Read an excerpt below from the [expedition blog](#), written by Alexandra Dark, Breakthrough Dean of Faculty (School Year Program) and Instructional Coach (Summer Program).



Day 4

After breakfast, we had the honor of meeting the group of women who run the local Butterfly Research Lab to learn about the life cycle of two species of butterflies. Afterwards, we went to the Pulperia, a small market that supplies the entire village with goods. Students were thrilled to buy the local snacks and drinks! Breakthrough students bought a pint of ice cream and a liter of Pepsi. At lunch, they made ice cream floats with soda!

For the rest of the day, students focused on their group science projects. They spent the afternoon creating their Google Slides proposal and delivered their presentation to the class that evening. It was an intimidating experience for our Breakthrough students because they had to publicly speak in front of 30 people. Most of the adults in the room were experts in the scientific field and provided thoughtful feedback on their experimental design. Each group took notes on the feedback provided in order to make the necessary changes to their planned experiment. This was a valuable opportunity for students to learn that it is important to seek input from others with the goal of improving upon their own work.

Community Connections

Michelle Palmer, Executive Director

In Fall 2021, we started a Thursday night academic enrichment, mentoring, and community-building program between Breakthrough 7th and 8th grade Scholars and GFS Students (Education Justice Club members/Peer Writing Advisors (PWA)). This program met every other week for two hours and included community building, dinner, and engaging reading and writing activities led by GFS mentor tutors.

An essential goal of Community Connections is for Breakthrough to have a stronger presence at GFS, feel part of the school and become integrated into the life of the community. In our over-scheduled and segregated lives, it is important for kids to be able to navigate and build relationships with younger/older students who may have had different lived experiences.

After our pilot year, we realized the most urgent need for Breakthrough Scholars was practice and experience with reading and writing. Our work in the 2022-23 school year included vocabulary building, studying grammar concepts in context, writing analytically and creatively, and building students' exposure to different genres through reading and discussion with their mentor tutors. We have a book cart with various novels at different reading levels, so students read novels with their mentor tutor during each session. We supplemented this work with articles, writing prompts, reflective journal writing, and at times, short creative and analytical assignments.

In our over-scheduled and segregated lives, it is important for kids to be able to navigate and build relationships with younger/older students who may have had different lived experiences.

Another focus this year was deepening the connection between GFS mentor tutors and Breakthrough students through a different structure that included an hour of one-on-one tutoring, reading, writing, and discussion, and an hour of dinner and community-building games and activities. We hosted two community-building trips in the Fall and Spring: Ice Skating at Dilworth Park and a trip to Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History & Culture in Washington, D.C.

We are eager to welcome Breakthrough Scholars and GFS students back to class on September 20!

SHOUT OUT TO BREAKTHROUGH...

We're excited to share new developments about Breakthrough's communications and media coverage over the past fiscal year!

COMMUNICATIONS UPDATES

- Check out Breakthrough's newly-revamped website, launched in January 2023 – breakthroughphilly.org
- Follow our new TikTok account, launched in July 2023 [@breakthroughphilly](https://www.tiktok.com/@breakthroughphilly)
- Returning to Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia... [Summer Yearbooks!](#)



CBS News Philadelphia

July 24, 2023 | By Marcella Boietto

["Local educational nonprofit reaching new heights in paving way for future teachers"](#)



6abc Action News

July 2023

[Watch video](#)



Comcast Newsmakers

June 9, 2023 | By Jill Horner

["Setting a Foundation for College and Career Success"](#)



Women of Color Rise, with Analiza Wolf

July 2023 | Interview with Michelle Palmer

["Negotiate Like a Pro - at Work and at Home with Michelle Palmer"](#)



The Philadelphia Citizen

January 2, 2023 | Guest Commentary by Michelle Palmer

["We can prioritize increasing the teacher pipeline and educating our students"](#)



You Oughta Know on WHYY

October 6, 2022 | Hosted by Regina Mitchell

["Learn how Breakthrough Philadelphia is turning today's students into tomorrow's teachers."](#)



MEET BREAKTHROUGH'S SUMMER 2023 TEACHING FELLOWS



Kayla Banks

Currently attending Howard University

Grade taught in Summer 2023 Program: Rising 6th

Subject Taught: Math

Elective Taught/Designed: Let's Talk Money

"As an education major, you may get opportunities to observe or volunteer with another teacher, but you really don't have a lot of options of getting hands-on practice until after you have graduated and finally have your own classroom. Breakthrough provides a good bridge for what I want to do in life and gives me the perfect exposure, practice, and tools to be successful."



Drew Bukasa

Currently attending University of Pennsylvania

Grade taught in Summer 2023 Program: Rising 9th

Subject Taught: Math

"I joined Breakthrough as a way to pursue my interest in education, and decide if I want to actually be inside the classroom as a profession. My experience at Breakthrough did exactly that — I do want to be in the classroom, but I also learned being in the classroom is not the only way I can have an impact on education."



Sam Butler GFS '22

Currently attending Pomona College

Grade taught in Summer 2023 Program: Rising 8th

Subject Taught: Math

Elective Taught/Designed: Ultimate Frisbee & Golf

"I only really discovered my love for math when I got to college, and though I'm largely unsure about what my career will be, I am sure that I want to have a positive impact on the world around me. If I get to use math as a way to do that, I would be a happy guy. I'm not sure if teaching will be my ultimate path, but I knew Breakthrough would be a great way to continue exploring math and sharing its wonder with others!"



Katie Cusick

Currently attending University of Pennsylvania

Grade taught in Summer 2023 Program: Rising 9th

Subject Taught: History

Elective Taught/Designed: Art

"This is my second year as a Teaching Fellow at Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia. Summer 2022 was full of learning moments; throughout all of my trials and successes, I realized how much I genuinely enjoyed teaching middle school and making connections with my students. It inspired me to return for Breakthrough's '22/23 School Year Program as well as the 2023 Summer Program. These experiences have been invaluable in helping me prepare to teach 6th grade in the School District of Philadelphia this fall!"



Abby Gardner

Currently attending Georgetown University

Grade taught in Summer 2023 Program: Rising 6th

Subject Taught: History

Elective Taught/Designed: Yoga / Mindfulness

"I am passionate about helping to combat educational inequity and using education as a tool for social change. I joined Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia to help create better opportunities for my students, so that they will have the tools to succeed on any path they choose."

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Hanif Goins GFS '22

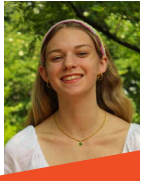
Currently attending Morehouse College

Grade taught in Summer 2023 Program: Rising 9th

Subject Taught: Science

Elective Taught/Designed: Drawing and Music

"Breakthrough has helped me realize that I want to be a mentor to students rather than a teacher in a school system. I really love the kids, which made me enjoy Breakthrough the most. I aspire to be a pediatrician and have my own practice and community center around free quality healthcare and mentorship. I plan to attend medical school and return to Philly to fulfill the needs of my community."



Ava Hagee

Currently attending College of William and Mary

Grade taught in Summer 2023 Program: Rising 7th

Subject Taught: History

Elective Taught/Designed: Introduction to Film Studies

"For the past few years, I have always known that my passions lie with teaching history. I joined Breakthrough because I heavily believe in equity, diversity, and improving the education system. Breakthrough has been an incredible experience, and I've learned so much. My respect and admiration for the hard work teachers put into their careers has increased tenfold."



Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia has been a supportive and welcoming space to try out being a teacher and figure out which aspects speak to me.



William "Will" Han

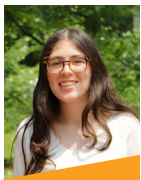
Currently attending University of Pennsylvania

Grade taught in Summer 2023 Program: Rising 8th

Subject Taught: Science

Elective Taught/Designed: Ultimate Frisbee & Golf

"I spent a lot of time preparing for medical school and doing research over the summers, but Breakthrough has given me a fresh perspective on the impact that I can make with kids. It has given me a sense of purpose to come in each morning, interact with my students and spread a joy for learning. In the near future, I want to teach and continue making this impact, improving my ability as a teacher and mentor."



Sydney Hankin

Currently attending Swarthmore College

Grade taught in Summer 2023 Program: Rising 6th

Subject Taught: Science

Elective Taught/Designed: Music Exploration

"Going into my freshman year of college, I'm still uncertain of what I want to study - let alone what career I'll pursue - but teaching has always been a passion of mine. I absolutely love school and learning, and I've always enjoyed working with younger kids, so teaching is truly a convergence of some of my favorite things! Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia has been a supportive and welcoming space to try out being a teacher and figure out which aspects speak to me."



Rachel Hecht

Currently attending Brown University

Grade taught in Summer 2023 Program: Rising 9th

Subject Taught: Math

Elective Taught/Designed: Dance & Current Events

"I joined Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia to better understand what it is like to be a teacher. I wanted to learn about the challenging and rewarding parts of teaching that you could not know without actually spending time teaching in the classroom."



Dariana Alvarez Herrera

Currently attending New College of Florida

Grade taught in Summer 2023 Program: Rising 7th

Subject Taught: Literature

Elective Taught/Designed: Journalism

"I joined Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia because I realized that I wanted to be a teacher, and I wanted to gain more classroom experience. I found out about Breakthrough and loved their mission of reaching disadvantaged students, and I wanted to use my time this summer to contribute to positive change. Being a Teaching Fellow has really shown me just how difficult (but enjoyable) teaching can be, and it has only increased my passion and aspirations to become a teacher."



Larry Huang

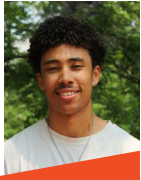
Currently attending Masterman High School

Grade taught in Summer 2023 Program: Rising 7th

Subject Taught: Math

Elective Taught/Designed: Sketching

"I joined Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia after a friend told me about it. I didn't think much of it; I've mentored and tutored in the past, but in a much less formal environment, and I've always enjoyed teaching, so figured - why not? In the future, I hope to be a doctor of some sorts so I can help others, and I think being a teacher, although a very different career path, achieves a similar result: the betterment of people's lives."



Jonathan "Jon" Irvine

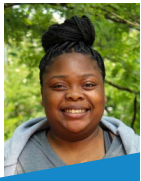
Currently attending Temple University

Grade taught in Summer 2023 Program: Rising 8th

Subject Taught: Science

Elective Taught/Designed: The Art of Acting

"I came back for my second summer at Breakthrough because of the bond and impact you can have on your students and other Teaching Fellows. Breakthrough is a wonderful place where you can see motivated middle schoolers flourish while you grow as an individual. To see scholars go from point A to point B in a span of six weeks is amazing. Additionally, being a part of this program and the development of someone's life is an honor and a privilege."



Jene'e Jones

Currently attending Hampton University

Grade taught in Summer 2023 Program: Rising 6th

Subject Taught: Math

Elective Taught/Designed: Let's Talk Money

"I'm in college to become a counseling psychologist for the youth. I joined Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia to experience a child-filled environment. Now that I've started here, I've been able to understand and relate to students better."



Gabbie Marcuccio

Currently attending Trinity College

Grade taught in Summer 2023 Program: Rising 7th

Subject Taught: History

Elective Taught/Designed: Street Art

"There have been many instances over the last few years when I considered abandoning educational studies, and even activism altogether, because it felt like my actions were insignificant in a world built on oppression. At the end of one of my recent classes, however, I was touched by a reading that asserted the value of every small action in movements for change, because you never know what impact you are ultimately contributing to, and what minuscule moment will finally tip the scales into revolution. I decided to join Breakthrough as a Teaching Fellow because I believe that my actions and ideals are not futile. And because while I felt alienated in educational spaces growing up as a young disabled girl, I want to set an example that girls like me are capable, valuable and deserve to be here."



Madeline McGrath GFS '20

Currently attending McGill University

Grade taught in Summer 2023 Program: Rising 6th

Subject Taught: History

Elective Taught/Designed: Mythology and the Ancient World

"I loved my history classes as a Classics and Political Science double major and during my junior year, I began to consider teaching to share this love for learning about history with middle and high school students. I'm hoping to one day teach History and Latin at the high school level. I was really excited to join Breakthrough to get hands-on experience teaching. It has solidified my aspiration to become a teacher after college, particularly because of the incredible conversations I've had with my students here."



Mary Clare Michael

Currently attending Smith College

Grade taught in Summer 2023 Program: Rising 9th

Subject Taught: Literature

Elective Taught/Designed: Dance

"I was initially drawn to Breakthrough because I have a deep passion for education and wanted real-world experience in the classroom. I intend to pursue a career in educational law and policy reform, so growing rapport with students and understanding their educational backgrounds this summer has given me a unique perspective which will help me foster a more meaningful career."

“

I want to set an example that girls like me are capable, valuable and deserve to be here.

”



Rhea Malakar GFS '25 / Junior Teaching Fellow

Currently attending Germantown Friends School

Grade taught in Summer 2023 Program: Rising 6th

Elective Taught/Designed: Sketching

"I joined Breakthrough because I thought it would be a really good experience. I worked with Breakthrough's Community Connections program before and really enjoyed it. I liked seeing kids feel excited about learning and becoming more comfortable. I wanted to take that experience into the summer this year as a Junior Teaching Fellow — it feels great to help out and get to know the kids."



Abigail Page

Currently attending University of Georgia

Grade taught in Summer 2023 Program: Rising 8th

Subject Taught: Literature

Elective Taught/Designed: Dungeons & Dragons

"As someone who wishes to become a high school teacher in the future, it is incredibly important to me that I work through reframing how I view education holistically, and Breakthrough has pushed me to view education through a more equitable lens. It feels genuinely incredible to be able to actually work with students – I can talk pedagogical theories and what needs to change in our education system all day, but having the chance to actually take concrete steps towards making those changes is rewarding."



Joseph "Joe" Park

Currently attending Bowdoin College

Grade taught in Summer 2023 Program: Rising 9th

Subject Taught: History

Elective Taught/Designed: Singing

"I joined Breakthrough because I wanted to get hands-on teaching experience in order to see a future for myself as an educator. While I have previous experience working with middle/high school-aged students, I wanted to try teaching and Breakthrough's dual mission of training future teachers and serving students from underprivileged backgrounds with academic enrichment piqued my interests. While I am still figuring out what my next steps after college will be, teaching/education is definitely a place I could see myself."



Justin Selkow

Currently attending Dartmouth College

Grade taught in Summer 2023 Program: Rising 8th

Subject Taught: History

Elective Taught/Designed: Knitting & Crocheting

"For me, teaching wasn't up for debate. It's just something I want to do. This goes hand-in-hand with my aspiration to build community. Even in a classroom with 12 students, I feel myself more tethered to the Philadelphia education system than I could ever have expected, and by extension, I feel extremely connected to the city of Philadelphia. This is why I want to teach. It's not enough, in my opinion, to teach my students, but to forge a lasting connection with them."



Manav Singh

Currently attending Yale University

Grade taught in Summer 2023 Program: Rising 9th

Subject Taught: Science

Elective Taught/Designed: Personal Finance

"I'm a junior in college majoring in economics, and I'm still super unsure about what to do with my life! I loved school, so the idea of teaching was always in the back of my mind. Breakthrough was an amazing opportunity to finally try teaching while surrounded by amazing instructors and coaches. After talking to a friend who taught at BTGP last summer, I applied, and I'm so glad I did!"

“

I can talk pedagogical theories and what needs to change in our education system all day, but having the chance to actually take concrete steps towards making those changes is rewarding.

”



Chandler Smith

Currently attending Tennessee State University

Grade taught in Summer 2023 Program: Rising 8th

Subject Taught: History

Elective Taught/Designed: Poetry

"I joined Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia to get experience in the field of education. I aspire to be a teacher and a role model after I graduate. Breakthrough is helping me learn things that I need to experience as a future educator."



Libby Stafford

Currently attending University of California, Los Angeles

Grade taught in Summer 2023 Program: Rising 6th

Subject Taught: Science

Elective Taught/Designed: Singing

"I joined Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia not only because I'm passionate about improving access to good education, but I also want to help young people directly whatever my career ends up being (I am a Psychobiology student at UCLA, aspiring to go into Pediatric medicine, either as a physician or a clinical research scientist). I think that the summer program involves really valuable experience actually working with children and learning how best to communicate with them and prioritize their needs, as well as being a way to directly help students in their educational careers."



Katie Turk GFS '21

Currently attending Kenyon College

Grade taught in Summer 2023 Program: Rising 6th

Subject Taught: Literature

Elective Taught/Designed: Poetry

"As an English major who loves to read and write, but is often disappointed by literature curricula and the canon of books deemed as "important" and "must-read," one of my goals for my future career is to help change that canon in schools and engage more kids in literature. I joined Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia as a Teaching Fellow so I could learn more about teaching literature and the education system in Philadelphia, the city I grew up in."



Joshua "Josh" Wang

Currently attending Texas A&M

Grade taught in Summer 2023 Program: Rising 7th

Subject Taught: Science

Elective Taught/Designed: Soccer

"Howdy! I'm currently a Texas A&M student pursuing a major in Math and a minor in Secondary Education. I'm thrilled to be a part of Breakthrough because it gives me the chance to immerse myself in a new city and culture. My goal is to become a teacher, and being involved with Breakthrough has been a fantastic opportunity to gain valuable experience and prepare for my future career."



My goal is to become a teacher, and being involved with Breakthrough has been a fantastic opportunity to gain valuable experience and prepare for my future career.



Sylvia Young

Currently attending Bryn Mawr College

Grade taught in Summer 2023 Program: Rising 8th

Subject Taught: Math

Elective Taught/Designed: Mythology and the Ancient World

"I am still trying to fully determine my career goals. I joined Breakthrough because I have always felt fulfilled when doing tutoring work, so I wanted to see how I felt teaching in a classroom. Breakthrough has been a great chance for me to get a clearer sense of what a career as a teacher would look like and has further motivated me to apply for a graduate school program in education."



Arlene Bukasa GFS '22

Currently attending La Salle University

Grade taught in Summer 2023 Program: Rising 6th

Subject Taught: Literature



Kennedi Hudson

Currently attending Southern University and A&M College

Grade taught in Summer 2023 Program: Rising 7th

Subject Taught: Science



Equiano Hunter GFS '20

Currently attending Bard College

Grade taught in Summer 2023 Program: Rising 8th

Subject Taught: Science



Arianna Starks

Currently attending Hampton University

Grade taught in Summer 2023 Program: Rising 7th

Subject Taught: Math



Shamar Long

Currently attending Villanova University

Grade taught in Summer 2023 Program: Rising 8th

Subject Taught: Literature



Seth Mooring

Currently attending Morehouse College

Grade taught in Summer 2023 Program: Rising 8th

Subject Taught: Math



Theodore "Teddy" Ryan GFS '21

Currently attending University of Saint Andrews

Grade taught in Summer 2023 Program: Rising 7th

Subject Taught: Literature

Elective Taught/Designed: History of Animation

THROUGH THE EYES OF A SUMMER 2023 TEACHING FELLOW

By Gabrielle Marcuccio, SLC 8 and 7th Grade History Teacher



I spoke extensively in my application to Breakthrough about my desire to help transform a system that I had felt rejected and marginalized by, carving out space for my students to feel like they belonged — especially disabled girls. I am fortunate to have met so many diverse students and Teaching Fellows in my time at Breakthrough, and it has been beautiful and inspiring to see the ways that we have been able to find so many commonalities among one another while also learning from our differences. My students and I came from strikingly different backgrounds in many ways, yet were also able to connect and relate to each other in many other ways.

As my time with them has come to an end, I can say confidently that I love all of my students deeply and have been impacted by each and every one of them. I decided from the very beginning that the most important thing to me as a teacher this summer was to create an environment where my students felt safe, heard, and encouraged to be themselves. I therefore did my best to make my curriculum as accessible as possible, and gave myself the freedom to adapt my lessons in the moment to meet my students' needs

as best as possible. To me, it is more important for them to develop curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking skills than it is to master a large amount of content. If that meant spending our class time talking about something that had really peaked their interest, then that is what we did. This

lunch with our students every day, and took trips with them every Friday. I was able to form relationships with my students where they felt comfortable coming to me for advice, for help mediating conflict, or just to talk about their days. What I will miss more than anything are these relationships

To me, it is more important for them to develop curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking skills than it is to master a large amount of content.

is a feature of Breakthrough that I am so appreciative of, because we had flexibility in how we designed our curricula and taught our classes, allowing us to take a more inclusive and individualized approach with our students.

I also greatly admire Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia not just for their commitment to equitable and accessible education, but also because of their prioritization of mentorship and personal relationships. We had designated times each day to meet with our mentees, ate

and interactions with my students, and I wish the utmost success for all of them as they continue on their journeys, because they have so much potential. Educational institutions have the power to open so many minds and so many doors, yet often fall short especially when it comes to serving students from marginalized backgrounds. I am so fortunate to have been able to contribute to a program like Breakthrough, and to hopefully have been able to foster a love for and safety in learning for my students.



SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT



Julio Rodas

Prior to starting 8th grade at St. Martin of Tours School, Julio sat down with Breakthrough for an interview about his Scholar experiences.

How did you learn about Breakthrough?

My homeroom teacher at school recommended that I go, and my mom was curious so she toured, liked it and applied to the program. I like that Breakthrough is like school and keeps our minds fresh for the next year. It's fun — instead of being home all day, doing nothing!

What were your favorite subjects at Breakthrough this summer?

Science is my favorite subject. At Breakthrough, we built a tower, and had to make it strong at the bottom to make sure it didn't fall over or move. This was our replica of a building, to see if wind would knock it down or flip it over. Social Studies was also really cool because we learned about the Incas, which has a connection to my mom's ethnicity.

I also participated in Community Connections, where we learned about math and read a lot. My mentor Ben was the best; we had so much in common and had fun

talking to each other about soccer and other things. He is going to college in Boston this year, and I have his email address and we email each other once in a while.

What are some highlights from Breakthrough's summer program?

Definitely Fun Fridays, which kept me active while visiting Penn's campus and Philadelphia Zoo. I liked when we went to the Penn Museum and in the auditorium, we watched a dance performance (from India). Breakthrough's summer program definitely helped me, it stuck with me. I enjoyed reading books in the library, which helped with ELA. Breakthrough also helped me feel more prepared than my classmates at school. I also liked the speaker from St. Joe's Prep, who talked to us about how to apply and attend high school. I felt really supported and happy; they also gave us water bottles and key chains!

Any insight on the Teaching Fellows at Breakthrough?

Because they are younger, they like,

understand us more. At Breakthrough we have more freedom! I really liked Teacher Seth, who was chill and understood me. He was a good math teacher; it was challenging, but he helped us all understand. Teacher Justin was my mentor; we always talked about what we liked and didn't about classes, and he was always there to help us anytime we were stuck on something.

Do you laugh at Breakthrough?

Yeah! In the mornings when we walk in, the teachers dance to music, which is funny. I like spending time with my classmates, who are really nice. They are really cool, funny and I enjoy their different personalities. I have made a lot of best friends at Breakthrough.

Perhaps a bit early to ask, but I'm curious if you know what careers interest you?

I want to work in real estate and after a few years, start my own business as an architect or engineer who also builds and sells houses. I got the inspiration from my Dad; it looks really hard, but you have to work hard if you want to earn a good living. He wants me to be a successful person, not just for money, but for family and everything.

► *Breakthrough looks forward to seeing Julio this year in the School Year and Summer Programs!*



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



Azure Lintulahti

Breakthrough staff member Michelle Reyes Aleti reconnected with Teaching Fellow alumna, Azure Lintulahti, to discuss how Breakthrough's teaching residency shaped the start of her teaching career. Azure was a rising senior at Temple University when she taught at Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia in the summer of 2021.

What was the interview process to become a Teaching Fellow at Breakthrough?

At the time, all interviews were still virtual. For the interview, I had to prepare a mock lesson, which I had never done before. I actually had a professor at Temple help me through the process. He was my mock class for all of my practice runs. I wound up doing a virtual lesson, which in hindsight – now that I have more experience – was probably not that good!

Prior to your interview, did you know you wanted to be a teacher?

No, not at all. Breakthrough was my deciding point. In college, I started off studying elementary education, transferred to Temple and explored human development and community engagement. I started doing some teaching and community work with a non-profit, and then Breakthrough came along to help me decide on teaching for

the long run. Breakthrough was my first real teaching experience, where it was just me (leading) a classroom, and I had to make all the decisions.

What about Breakthrough convinced you that teaching was the career for you?

The biggest thing was competency. By the time I was halfway through, maybe even by the end of it, I realized that I could really do this. I formed really, really great connections with the kids – many of whom I'm still in contact with. I also formed strong relationships with my Teaching Fellow peers at Breakthrough; two of the Fellows actually attended grad school with me at University of Pennsylvania this past year.

Many of Breakthrough's Teaching Fellows are first-time lead teachers. How did you get up to speed?

I was nervous going in initially, thinking

that everyone would be so much more experienced than I. Thankfully we have mentors at Breakthrough. Adam Hotek was my Instructional Coach and mentor. He oversaw all of my lesson planning, observed me in the classroom, met with me a couple of times every week to talk about what I wanted to improve on and what I felt was going well. It was extremely helpful and I just think the world of Adam; he effortlessly guided me, knew the right things to say and what I needed to do.

Another critical support was my co-teacher and grade team. We'd have daily and weekly meetings to talk through what we were noticing with certain students, or where we were lacking and might need some extra support.

What skills did you learn from Breakthrough that you apply in your classrooms today?

I learned how to pace my lessons, make room for silly side conversations and then return to focusing on content. Learning how to manage classroom time was really important for me, especially in my student teaching and other experiences I've had since Breakthrough. Also, seeing the same kids every single day helped me form deeper connections, and so I figured out how to create boundaries, how to form student connections and still be a safe person, while letting them know someone is there to help them succeed.

So, what's happened since your residency at Breakthrough?

I graduated from Temple and applied to the University of Pennsylvania for grad school, which offered an urban teaching apprenticeship program. I earned my teaching certificate as well as Master's degree from Penn and graduated last May. While at Penn, I was a student teacher for the entire year at Science Leadership Academy at Beeber. It was the first time that I was putting together entire unit plans and structuring daily lessons, but also making phone calls home and holding parent teacher conferences. I got so much out of it – we also started a book club, soccer club, and even a girls' lunch. I'm off to Science Leadership Academy's Middle School (SLAMS) this Fall, teaching Humanities in the fifth and sixth grades.

Do you stay in touch with your Breakthrough Teaching Fellow cohort?

A fair amount (of Teaching Fellows) went into first-year teaching positions, some here in Philadelphia. It's nice to have a network of people I can text with questions!

► *Azure, Breakthrough wishes you all the best as you embark on your full-time teaching role at SLAMS!*

2022-2023 CAREER CONVERSATIONS

Special thanks to our *Career Conversation* guest speakers, who shared their unique perspectives, education/career paths, and industry insights! They covered a wide range of topics this year and fielded many interesting questions from our Scholars and Teaching Fellows.



Fall 2022



LISETTE ENUMAH

Project Leader, Boston Consulting Group

TOPIC: The path to a Ph.D.



CHRISTINA HUNGSPRUKÉ

Founder, Hungspruke Marketing Consulting

TOPIC: The World of Marketing



SHARON PARKER

Career Educator (retd.) and Global Mission Teacher

TOPIC: Teaching: The Unimaginable Adventure



ALAN TOFIG

Senior Vice President, Truist

TOPIC: Personal Finance



CORNELIUS BROWN & MATTHEW KEARSE

Cornelius: Principal, Regional Manager at Bohler

Matthew: Project Manager at Bohler

TOPIC: Engineering



SHULER CHINA III

Assistant District Attorney, Philadelphia District Attorney's Office

TOPIC: District Attorney / Law



FRANCINE BOONE

North America Regional Managing Counsel, ERM

TOPIC: Careers in Law



ARIANNA DEAN

Registered Nurse, Intensive Care Unit at Virtua

TOPIC: Nursing



NICK FOWLER

Financial Planner, Innovative Partners at Creative Financial Group

TOPIC: Financial Planning



EDWIN EMPAYNADO, MD

Surgeon and Managing Partner, Advocare

TOPIC: Career in Surgery



GREGG LEMOS STEIN

Chief Analytical Officer, S&P Global Ratings

TOPIC: Financial Industry / Credit Ratings

Spring 2023



MATT KATZ

Reporter at WNYC, Gothamist, NPR

TOPIC: Journalism



NANDINI NATRAJAN

Vice President, Food Safety & Quality Assurance — Trident Seafoods

TOPIC: Food Science and Microbiology



PETER CAPOLINO

Founder, Mitchell & Ness

TOPIC: Entrepreneurship



MICHAEL O'HALLORAN

Executive Chef, Stella (New Hope)

TOPIC: A Career in Culinary Arts



SUNIL MULANI

Managing Director at the University of Pennsylvania, Office of Investments

TOPIC: Investing



BRIAN DUGGAN

Senior Software Engineer, Instacart

TOPIC: Gaming and Software Engineering



ABRAHAM GIBBS

Clinical Pharmacist, Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania



JESSICA GRAY (VIA ZOOM)

Co-Director of Player Engagement, Detroit Lions

TOPIC: Finding your interests and passions in high school



ANN NWABUEBO

Physical Therapist

TOPIC: What does a Physical Therapist do?



JANE AHN

Principal, M Design Collaborative

TOPIC: Architecture



JASHIN LIN

Founder & CEO, Growbie

TOPIC: Tech Entrepreneurship



MEERA THOMAS

Principal, Meera Thomas Interiors LLC

TOPIC: Interior Design

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Special thanks to GFS' wonderful nurses, maintenance team, HR, IT, Jenny Mehrotra, and Gabby Rodriguez!



WELCOME TO BREAKTHROUGH!

We are thankful to all who serve as our advisors, supporters, and champions to help guide and realize our mission. Breakthrough welcomes three new Advisory Board members and adds an Associate to our Staff.

William Bowie Advisory Board

William Bowie is the President & CEO of Empower Construction, Founder & President of Bowie Holdings, and the Founder & President of Bowie Construction Management. William started his career in the utility construction industry by joining an apprenticeship program through the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Union (IBEW). He worked his way up the ranks as a journeyman lineman holding various positions at different utility-based construction companies managing over \$2 Billion in projects in his career before starting Empower Construction.



William's passion for entrepreneurship extends outside of his companies to coaching and mentoring young entrepreneurs as they begin their journey. Born and raised in the City of Philadelphia and educated in Philadelphia public schools, William strives to promote the City's minority businesses, advocate for Workforce Development programs, and mentor youth by providing awareness, access, and tools to be successful in the workforce.

William attended Drexel University and Eastern University, and currently serves as a Board Member for Philadelphia Works and the North Penn Valley Boys & Girls Club. William has been married to his lovely wife Demi for over 20 years and has three amazing children Alana, Caleb, and Aubrey.

Walter Greason, Ph.D. Advisory Board

Dr. Walter Greason, Ph.D., DeWitt Wallace Professor in the Department of History at Macalester College is the preeminent historian of Afrofuturism, the Black Speculative Arts, and digital economies in the world today. Named one of "Today's Black History Makers" by The Philadelphia Daily News, Dr. Greason has written more than one hundred academic articles and essays. He is also the author, editor, and contributor to eighteen books, including Suburban Erasure, The Land Speaks, Cities Imagined, Illmatic Consequences, and The Black Reparations Project.



Beth Gonzales Advisory Board

Beth Gonzales is a proud mother, board member of the Johnson House Historic Site, member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc., and a writer. She holds a B.A. from Howard University, and earned a Master's in Counseling Psychology and a Master's in Public and Nonprofit Management & Policy from New York University. Beth loves to blend leadership, education, philanthropy, data, and creativity to address serious and complex societal problems. Passionate about eradicating poverty and homelessness, and achieving equity for girls and women, she has dedicated her career to public service and advocating for the marginalized, underserved and vulnerable. Currently, Beth is the Deputy Director of Policy, Planning, and Performance Management for the Office of Homeless Services in the City of Philadelphia.



Kanchan Rai Breakthrough Staff — Research, Cultivation, and Events Associate

Breakthrough welcomed Kanchan Rai to the team in September 2023. Kanchan currently serves as Research, Cultivation, and Events Associate. In 2022-2023, she volunteered with Breakthrough's Development Committee, helping secure EITC funding and playing leadership roles in Breakthrough's annual appeal and 2023 Spring Soirée.



"There are so many great missions out there, but Breakthrough's focus on changing trajectories so early in a child's life stands out to me. The mission's focus on finding younger, high-potential children that could use support through the multi-year program during their formative years, creates a multiplier effect for long-term impact."

BREAKTHROUGH VOLUNTEERS!

Special thanks to the individuals and companies who volunteered their time this fiscal year to organize field trips, support program logistics and/or serve on fundraising event committees!

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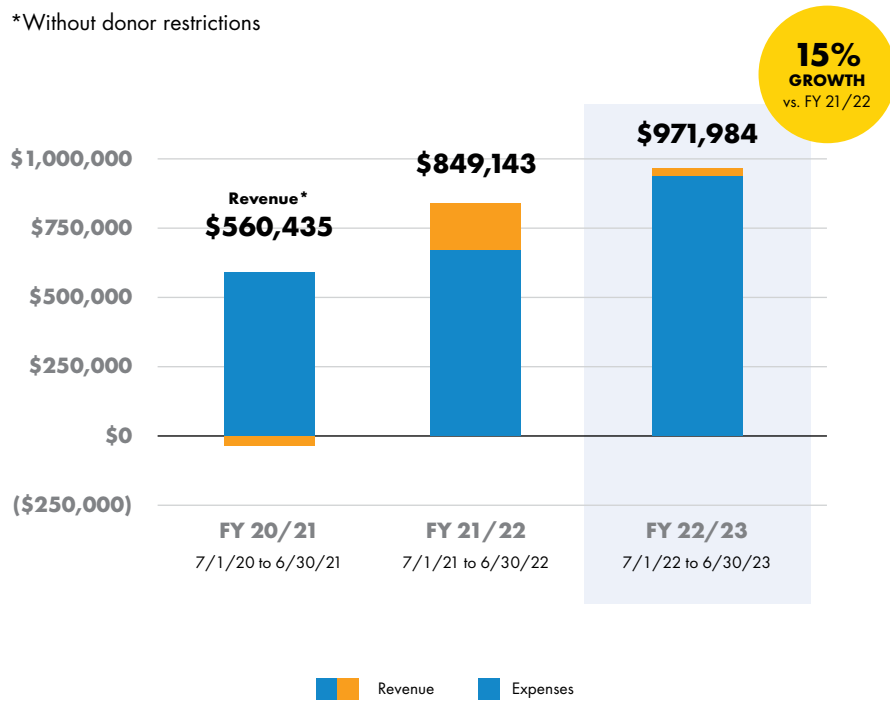
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Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia is an independent 501(c)(3) that relies solely upon the generosity of our funders and supporters to realize our mission.

Revenue and Expenses

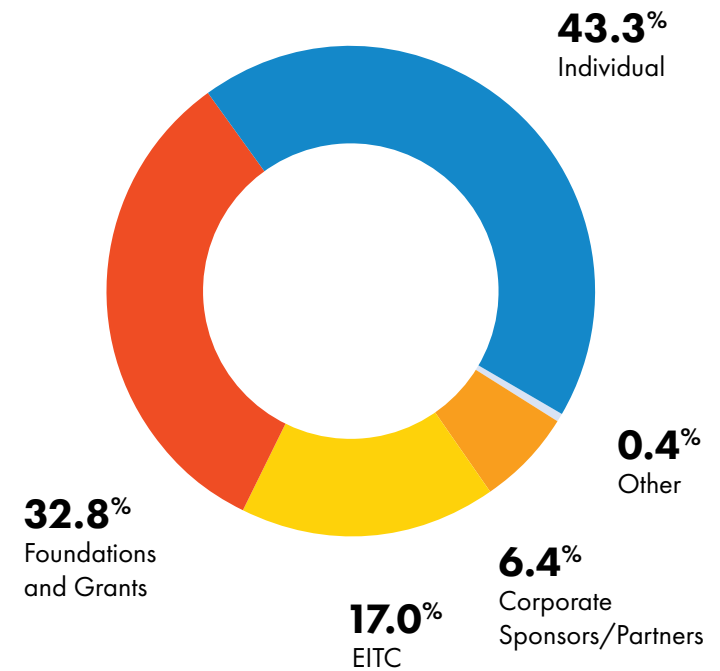
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Fundraising Sources

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