I’m grateful and humbled to say that Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia’s (BTGP) impact has grown exponentially since our staff and instructional team joined the organization in 2021. Scholar and Teaching Fellow (TF) enrollments are at record-breaking levels at Germantown Friends School, program content has flourished significantly, and student and community morale is high. The excitement here at Breakthrough is palpable and contagious!

As you may have observed in our 2022-2023 Impact Report, BTGP served over 200 students in 2023, an increase of 95% since 2021. Not only has enrollment increased, but Scholars AND Teaching Fellows are also rating their BTGP experiences positively and returning at higher rates. The 2023 Summer TF cohort rated their BTGP experience 9.1 out of 10 (+17% higher than BT National average across 25 sites), and over the past two years, approximately 25% of TFs returned to BTGP to teach the following summer.

We are so proud of BTGP’s 2023 8th grade Scholars, 85% of whom were admitted to their 1st or 2nd choice high schools, with 91% attending select-admit, city-wide, independent/private or parochial high schools. Not only are Scholars reaching their educational goals, but they are also dreaming BIG about potential career paths, college and other postsecondary opportunities.

We will continue to upgrade Breakthrough’s program to help highly-motivated, traditionally underserved middle schoolers in Philadelphia reach top-choice high schools. Last year, we launched BTGP’s very own High School Fair, organized presentations from area high schools and admissions officers, and brought Scholars to the Philadelphia High School Fair at the Convention Center. In 2024, we’re building upon our high school readiness initiative to more thoroughly support Scholars and their families by demystifying the admissions process, supporting 8th grade Scholar applications/yield, and preparing for success both to and through high school. We are continuing Breakthrough’s Community Connections mentorship program with GFS Upper Schoolers, and also augmenting our Career Conversations series to provide broader postsecondary and career exposure for Scholars, with trips to Equitable Karr Barth’s HBCU College Day in February, as well as a career exploration day and tour at Campbell Soup Company Headquarters in Camden, NJ this spring.

Returning to BTGP after a long hiatus is College Bound, a four-year program for BTGP Scholar Alumni currently in high school. In Winter/Spring 2024, we’ll host a four-part workshop series with 18 Alumni from 9th and 10th grades. Workshops will focus on educating Scholars about college and other postsecondary options, along with career exposure and readiness. Over 15 volunteers representing various career paths in the Philadelphia area will share their wisdom and skills during the workshops.

Breakthrough’s impact is lasting, unique and transformative, and we rejoice with all the stories of inspiring trajectories by students who attend the program. A couple of Alumni spotlights are included in this newsletter, but we’d love to hear
more stories about BTGP Alumni journeys. We’re also excited to host our first BTGP Alumni Reunion this summer, reminding us of the vibrancy, strength and dedication of the BTGP community. Visit our website at breakthroughphilly.org for updates about the program, Alumni, Scholars and Fellows.

We hope that those who attended the Breakfast of Champions fundraiser last October learned how Scholars and Teaching Fellows have benefitted from Breakthrough. We enjoyed the energizing and candid speeches of Scholar Khayli McKinney, Parent Destiny McKinney, and Teaching Fellow William Han. Khayli and William, know that Breakthrough is always here to support and cheer you on as you pursue your ambitious educational goals!

Student stories will be told during our Annual Spring Soirée on Wednesday, May 1 at 6pm – RSVP here. Join us for an unforgettable evening at the University of the Arts (Center City) to raise funds that will enable Scholars to attend Breakthrough tuition-free and also support fair stipends for our Teaching Fellows. The Soirée features a trivia game with our students, silent auction, paddle raise, and cocktails. Together, let’s celebrate resilience and the power of education with our emcee for the evening, Bill Anderson – Executive Producer, Fox29 and Weekend Co-Anchor, Good Day Philadelphia.

There is no need to wait until spring. If you are curious about Breakthrough’s work and would like to share ideas, volunteer, or RSVP to see the program in action at Visiting Day on Saturday, February 24, please reach out at any time.

With sincere appreciation,

Michelle Palmer
Executive Director
Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia
mpalmer@breakthroughphilly.org
267-255-9651

DID YOU KNOW…
BTGP is an approved Educational Improvement Organization in Pennsylvania and has EITC Tax Credits available in Spring 2024. Interested? Email us at development@breakthroughphilly.org to add yourself to the queue!

DID YOU KNOW…
the 2023 Summer TF cohort rated their BTGP experience 9.1 out of 10? That’s +17% higher than Breakthrough’s national average across 25 sites!

I aspire to be a teacher and role model after I graduate. Breakthrough is helping me learn things that I need to experience as a future educator.

– Chandler S., BTGP Teaching Fellow

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.

– Kayla B., BTGP Teaching Fellow
In late September 2023, Breakthrough welcomed over 85 students from middle schools across the city of Philadelphia to our School Year Program (SYP)! Our SYP takes place on Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Students in grades 6-8 returned to the campus of Germantown Friends School to begin their journeys and spent their Saturdays with fellow Breakthrough Scholars and 16 Teaching Fellows.

Our Fall curriculum included math, literature, and writing through the humanities. Each weekend, Scholars were engaged in hands-on, interactive lessons based on national standards. In addition to the core curriculum, Scholars had the opportunity to explore various interests and activities in extracurricular elective courses such as speedminton, music, art, and chess. Beyond academics, Scholars also engaged with their peers, many from the Summer program, forming the foundation of lifelong friendships. When we connect with Breakthrough Alumni from as far back as 15-20 years ago, we often hear that lifelong friendships and networks of support are key themes of what makes Breakthrough special. We’re glad to see this still rings true today!

This Fall, learning was not just limited to the classroom. In line with our mission to have Scholars identify and apply to their top high school choices, we took a field trip to the Philadelphia High School Fair, where Breakthrough students had fruitful conversations and Q&A at various information booths. We continued our Career Conversations series, welcoming professionals from a plethora of fields to speak with Scholars about their educational journeys and career paths. Career Conversations speakers this Fall included college professors, nurses, tech CEOs, entrepreneurs, sales directors, and Pennsylvania legislators, to name a few. Sanofi also joined our program one Saturday in a roundtable discussion with Scholars and their parents about careers in pharma and dispelling myths in
healthcare among communities of color; this discussion was part of Sanofi’s “A Million Conversations” initiative. Of course, Breakthrough Scholars had plenty of engaging questions and meaningful takeaways from each session.

The Community Connections program between Breakthrough Scholars and GFS Upper Schoolers also continued in Fall 2023. Community Connections is a bi-weekly 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)). 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. To celebrate the holidays, Breakthrough and GFS students went to Dilworth Park for their annual ice skating trip in December 2023.

We look forward to seeing Breakthrough Scholars return for the Spring School Year Program to continue having fun, building friendships, and learning!

DID YOU KNOW…

85% of BTGP’s 8th Grade Scholars were admitted to their 1st or 2nd choice high schools, with 91% attending select-admit, city-wide, independent/private or parochial high schools

“[Breakthrough’s Teaching Fellows] were really nice, they actually explained things well, and they were always there to help. The Breakthrough Teaching Fellows have been some of the best teachers that I’ve had.”

– Anna D., BTGP Scholar
Breakthrough: High School Ready

Last summer, Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia (BTGP) launched our High School Ready program. The goal of the program is to ensure that Scholars and families are receiving the support and information needed to apply and enroll at their top choice high schools. Last spring and summer, a number of schools came to campus to speak to our students and parents about their schools and the application process. As a continuation of these efforts, all of our Scholars attended the Philadelphia High School Fair hosted by Elevate 215. Families received as-needed updates on the high school application process, in addition to check-in emails throughout Fall 2023. Join us in wishing BTGP Scholars the best of luck as they begin to hear from high schools in the coming months!

Breakthrough: College Bound

February 3rd will mark the launch of Breakthrough: College Bound, a four-year program for BTGP Scholar Alumni currently in high school. In Winter/Spring 2024, we’ll host a four-part workshop series with 18 Alumni from 9th and 10th grades. Workshops will focus on educating Scholars about college and other postsecondary options, along with career exposure and readiness. Over 15 volunteers representing various career paths in the Philadelphia area will share their wisdom and skills during the workshops.

February’s workshop is titled Career Conversations 2.0. This workshop will give our students an opportunity to dive deeper into the careers they may be interested in pursuing. They will also get the chance to participate in a hands-on project related to their chosen career field. In future workshops, students will receive advice on resume and interviewing skills, a college tour, and much more!
It's always a pleasure connecting with Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia alumni, and speaking with Lieutenant Brielle Jordan, Assistant Corps Officer of the Salvation Army was no exception. She joined Breakthrough as a Scholar in the summer before her 6th grade in 2009 and continued throughout high school. Breakthrough even helped Lt. Jordan get accepted and attend Penn State before continuing her education through the Salvation Army. Her current work now includes leading children’s programming in Pottstown, Pennsylvania, running food pantries and soup kitchens, teaching music lessons, organizing, leadership, and project management - among other responsibilities!

She credits Breakthrough with academic preparation, learning life skills, and, above all, a supportive community of peers. “I didn’t realize how much the camaraderie would impact me…[the Teaching Fellows] were so dedicated to helping us learn.” Not only did Teaching Fellows bring the insights of their college majors into the classroom, they helped Brielle and her fellow Scholars learn “how to be people.” And that support didn’t end in high school - from the care packages each Scholar received their freshman year of college to Brielle’s Breakthrough friendships that continue today. We celebrate her next steps in Pennsylvania, and future service from Northeast Kentucky to Maine and Puerto Rico!
Teaching Fellow alum Iliana Correa is an inspiring example of how Breakthrough is helping change STEM education today. Breakthrough provided Iliana with her first classroom experience in the Summer of 2022 and throughout School Year 2022-23, opening up a new career path. Ms. Correa currently teaches Upper School Science at Thayer Academy in Braintree, Massachusetts while completing her Master’s in Education at the University of Pennsylvania.

Ms. Correa was in her sophomore year of college during the early days of the pandemic. “I started tutoring [college] chemistry students in one-on-one sessions. It was my anchor in 2020. I fell in love with teaching them…[I realized] this is what I want to do - I want to teach Chemistry.” But a teaching career would be almost impossible without a pedagogical degree or classroom experience.

Through Breakthrough, Ms. Correa gained that direct experience teaching, creating lesson plans, and receiving both mentorship and community. “Breakthrough taught me flexibility. It allowed me to be in the moment: it’s not working? What can I do?” By following Breakthrough Scholar’s questions and engagement, her teaching became more fun and more effective. Ms. Correa already has plans to improve STEM pedagogy beyond her own exciting classrooms: a PhD in Chemical Education with research experience and curriculum work.
Special thanks to Fall 2023 Career Conversations’ guest speakers, who shared their unique life lessons, educational perspectives, career paths, and industry insights! Speakers covered a wide range of topics this summer and fielded interesting questions from Breakthrough Scholars and Teaching Fellows.

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Subarna Malakar</td>
<td>Head of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, North America</td>
<td>Sanofi</td>
<td>Careers in Pharmaceutical Industry Discussion: Dispelling Healthcare Myths in Communities of Color</td>
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<td>2 Shane Nelson</td>
<td>DE&amp;I Business Partner</td>
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<td>3 Kevin Bell, Ph.D.</td>
<td>Associate Professor of English</td>
<td>Penn State University</td>
<td>Path to a Ph.D.</td>
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<td>4 Dakotah Rice</td>
<td>Co-Founder and CEO</td>
<td>CaliberX</td>
<td>Finance, Tech &amp; Entrepreneurship</td>
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<td>5 Shabaig Chatha</td>
<td>Founding Team</td>
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<td>6 Tushar Nair</td>
<td>Co-Founder and CTO</td>
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<td>7 Leslie Parra</td>
<td>Associate Sales Planning Manager</td>
<td>Clorox</td>
<td>Consumer Product Marketing and Sales</td>
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<td>8 Honorable Tarik Khan</td>
<td>PA State Representation</td>
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<td>Career Journey from Central High School to PA State Rep</td>
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<td>9 Bridgett Battles</td>
<td>Executive Presence Strategist and Brand Stylist</td>
<td>The Bridgett Battles Experience</td>
<td>Creating Your Executive Presence</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 Vanessa Williams, MSN, RN</td>
<td>Clinical Nurse</td>
<td>Hospital at the University of Pennsylvania</td>
<td>Journey/Career as a L&amp;D Nurse</td>
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BREAKTHROUGH WELCOMES NEW ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER

SUE LEE
Founder and CEO of Lesura Strategies, LLC

Sue is the Founder and CEO of Lesura Strategies, LLC, a consulting firm that advises infrastructure owners and developers on commercial issues related to project planning, procurement, and financial structuring. Her practice is focused on helping public agencies develop complex projects like the Hudson Tunnel Project, Penn Station Reconstruction, the New Jersey Wind Port, and the LAX Automated People Mover. Prior to founding Lesura, Sue was a Senior Managing Director at Ernst & Young Infrastructure Advisors, LLC. She was also a banking and project finance attorney at Allen & Overy LLP and Milbank LLP and a Senior International Attorney at Millennium Challenge Corporation, a US federal corporation that provides economic assistance to developing countries. Sue received her J.D. from the University of Pennsylvania Law School and her B.A. in English from the University of Pennsylvania. She lives in the Fairmount neighborhood of Philadelphia with her husband and two daughters. Motivated by her passion for access to quality education, Sue has been a friend of Breakthrough for the past few years.

“I grew up as a low-income, immigrant kid that was lucky enough to stumble upon a few great teachers who gave me the optimism and self-confidence (in addition to an actual education) to pursue longer-term academic goals. I have such deep gratitude and respect for Breakthrough’s dual missions - educators and creating the right academic, social, and emotional conditions for students to learn – and can’t think of a better organization to support.”

APPLY TODAY!
Know any middle schoolers or college students who’d like to become a Breakthrough Scholar or Teaching Fellow? Apply today at breakthroughphilly.org

DID YOU KNOW...
45% of BTGP’s Teaching Fellows are students of color, compared to 28% of teachers in PHL schools!

SPRING SOIRÉE
Purchase your tickets for Breakthrough’s 2024 Annual Spring Soirée fundraiser on 5/1/24 at 6pm, hosted at the University of the Arts at 320 South Broad Street in Center City Philadelphia.
As winter settles in, we reflect on our past season’s fundraiser, the Breakfast of Champions. In October 2023, over 140 Breakthrough supporters gathered both in-person and virtually, reaching record-breaking fundraising over coffee and light fare at the Philadelphia Cricket Club ballroom.

Brandon Goldner (CBS News Philadelphia) emceed the event, which highlighted the experiences of Khayli McKinney, 8th Grade Scholar at John Story Jenks Academy for the Arts and Sciences. Khayli reflected, “Joining Breakthrough was the best commitment I have ever made. I have met new people, learned new things, stepped out of my comfort zone, and learned about the many high schools Philadelphia has to offer as I prepare for my 9th grade year.” Khayli’s mother Destiny also added her unique perspective, sharing that she participated in a program similar to Breakthrough in her youth. Like Breakthrough, this program opened new doors, and inspired and enabled Destiny to reach her educational and career goals. Because of Destiny’s personal experience, she searched for academic enrichment programs when she relocated to Philadelphia from Texas about three years ago and found Breakthrough through J.S. Jenks.

Teaching Fellow (TF) William Han and Co-Dean of Faculty Ceora Wearing-Moore also shared their instructional perspectives. They beautifully articulated how Breakthrough gives college students the rigorous, hands-on training and lead teaching experience needed to pursue this demanding, essential career (3 out of 4 Teaching Fellows at Breakthrough go on to careers in education). After William’s Summer 2023 TF experience, he decided to return to BTGP to teach in the 2023-2024 School Year Program. We are
thankful for the energy William brings to Saturday’s program, and for helping us spread the word about Breakthrough at the University of Pennsylvania, where he is currently enrolled.

Supporters and friends of Breakthrough raised $104,500 (net $98,500) that will directly fund our program, the most ever from this annual benefit. Thanks to the generosity and enthusiasm of donors, we met a fundraising challenge and unlocked a $25,000 matching gift. We are grateful for the unprecedented level of contributions – from longtime supporters and new friends alike – and hope that this reflects the community’s genuine commitment to help traditionally underserved students in Philadelphia and future teachers reach their educational and career aspirations.

The Breakfast of Champions has been a cornerstone event for the past two decades, and owes its success to the dedication of Susan Fleming, and Co-Chairs Amy Branch and Nanie Flaherty. Crucial roles were played by Breakthrough’s indispensable Planning Committee which also included Cornelius Brown, Kevin Emancipator, Beth Gonzales, Dr. Walter Greason, Michelle Palmer, Kanchan Rai, Michelle Reyes Aleti, Michelle Todd-Coleman, David Wade, and David Zavitz. Special acknowledgment goes to Breakthrough staff members Michelle Reyes Aleti and Kanchan Rai, contributing to program content, corporate and donor engagement, and event logistics. Their combined efforts, alongside day-of volunteers Ilana Goldfus, Michelle Sonsino, and Christine Lee, A/V support by Shawn Hennessy, and photography/videography by Scott Foley and Lilly Dupuis, significantly contributed to the success of the event and its positive outcome.

Lastly, a very special thanks goes out to the Breakfast’s major event sponsors. Gold Level: Germantown Friends School, Boston Consulting Group, and Equitable Karr Barth Associates. Sustaining Level: Newman’s Own Foundation, and Supporting Level: Empower Construction.

As we embrace the winter season, let’s carry the spirit of giving. Stay tuned for upcoming initiatives and join us in making a lasting impact!

"Breakthrough changed me. I learned a lot of new things that helped me going into the school year. With all the knowledge that I was taught over the summer at Breakthrough, it can help me a lot at school. I am definitely coming back to Breakthrough next summer!"

– Tashan X., BTGP Scholar
The Pennsylvania Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program allows individual taxpayers, businesses, or corporations to redirect their state tax liability and support an Educational Improvement Organization (EIO), such as Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia.

Participants in the EITC program make a minimum contribution of $7,500 per year for two consecutive years, which supports innovative academic programs and operational costs at Breakthrough. In turn, participants receive a PA state tax credit for up to 90% of their contribution amount. For example, a contribution of $10,000 has a net cost of $1,000 for the donor; you may even be able to claim a federal charitable deduction on your out-of-pocket cost. This is truly a win-win for the donor and Breakthrough!

In 2022 and 2023, several people stepped forward to take advantage of this great opportunity to support Breakthrough—providing over $400,000 in critical support for our program. At a cost of $4,000 per student, this gift enables 100 students to attend our tuition-free program for one year.

We are actively looking for individuals to participate in the upcoming cycle. Credits are available and allotted on a first-come, first-served basis and must be filled by Spring 2024. Learn how you can participate in this program by contacting Kanchan Rai, Cultivation and Events Associate, at krai@breakthroughphilly.org.

TAX CREDITS ARE AVAILABLE

and allotted on a first-come, first-served basis and must be filled by April 2024.

Contact Kanchan Rai to participate.

krai@breakthroughphilly.org
229-564-6720
INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING OR HELPING BREAKTHROUGH?

Breakthrough’s program is only as strong as the contributions made by our community. We appreciate gifts of time, talent, ties and treasure – each and every gift goes a long way to help Breakthrough students reach their educational and career goals. Get started here.

**Time**
- Interview students and families in the Breakthrough application process
- Volunteer at on-campus events such as Summer Kickoff and Celebration Day
- Host a career day or office visit at your work site
- Volunteer at student recruitment, development and community engagement events such as fundraisers, Visiting Days, mailings and other school/community events

**Talent**
- Share career & industry experiences as a Guest Speaker in our Career Conversations series
- Lend your expertise during our College Bound mock interview and resume review workshops
- Bring your ideas, skills and expertise to help make our program a success – email us at info@breakthroughphiladelphia.org to start the dialogue

**Ties**
- Follow us:  
  - @BreakthroughPHL
  - @BreakthroughPhilly
  - @BTPhilly
  - breakthrough-of-greater-philadelphia
  - @Breakthroughphiladelphia
- Spread the word about Breakthrough - tell your family, friends and networks about our mission and the impact we’re making in Philadelphia!
- Know a Breakthrough alum? Have them email us as we strengthen our alumni community of Scholars and Teaching fellows info@breakthroughphiladelphia.org
- Know a potential Scholar (middle schooler) or Teaching Fellow (college student) who may be interested in Breakthrough’s program? Visit us at breakthroughphiladelphia.org to start the application process.

**Treasure**
- Donate today and utilize your company’s matching gift program to double your impact!
- Join our Annual Spring Soirée fundraiser on 5/1/24 at 6pm, hosted at the University of the Arts at 320 South Broad St, Philadelphia, PA 19102. RSVP and donate here.
- Become a corporate sponsor of our Annual Spring Soirée fundraiser on 5/1/24. Email Michelle Reyes Aleti at mreyesaleti@breakthroughphiladelphia.org for more information
- In-Kind Donations. From pizza to music lessons for our Scholars, Eagles tickets to restaurant gift cards for a fundraiser, we welcome any and all in-kind gifts. Email us at development@breakthroughphiladelphia.org
## EVENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>2024 Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HBCU College Day at Equitable Karr Barth</td>
<td>2/8</td>
<td>Offices of Karr Barth Associates Bala Cynwyd, PA</td>
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<td>7th &amp; 8th Grade Breakthrough Scholars</td>
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<td>9th &amp; 10th Grade Breakthrough Alumni</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visiting Day at Breakthrough</td>
<td>2/24</td>
<td>GFS Campus</td>
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<tr>
<td>See the School Year Program in action!</td>
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<td>31 West Coulter Street Philadelphia, PA 19144</td>
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<td>RSVP here</td>
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<tr>
<td>High School Fair for Scholars</td>
<td>3/2 @2:30pm</td>
<td>GFS Campus</td>
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<td>Scholar Career Field Trip</td>
<td>April 2024</td>
<td>Campbell Soup Company Headquarters in Camden, NJ</td>
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<td>Scholar Admissions Interview Days</td>
<td>4/27 &amp; 5/11</td>
<td>GFS Campus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annual Spring Soirée Fundraiser</td>
<td>5/1 @6pm</td>
<td>University of the Arts</td>
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<td>Purchase tickets here</td>
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<td>Dorrance Hamilton Hall</td>
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<td>Spring SYP concludes</td>
<td>5/18</td>
<td>320 South Broad Street Philadelphia, PA 19102</td>
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<td>Summer program dates (Teaching Fellows)</td>
<td>6/10 - 8/9</td>
<td>GFS Campus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summer program dates (Scholars)</td>
<td>6/24 - 8/2</td>
<td>GFS Campus</td>
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**DONATE TODAY**

Donate to Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia and utilize your company’s matching gift program to double your impact!
Inspiring Students.

Developing Teachers.

Together, we are Breakthrough.