



Inspiring students. Developing teachers. **Together, we are Breakthrough.**



IMPACT REPORT FY 2023–2024

ONE PROGRAM. DUAL PURPOSE.

Guided by our vision to reach educational equity and diversity, Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia is a single program with a dual mission:



Take a closer look at Breakthrough...
scan here to view our interactive 2023-24 Impact Report!



1

Breakthrough is a seven-year, tuition-free academic accelerator for highly motivated, traditionally underserved middle schoolers in Philadelphia's public, charter, and parochial schools. Breakthrough nurtures a love of learning and helps Scholars reach top-choice high schools, setting the foundation for college/postsecondary and career success.

2

Breakthrough builds the next generation of diverse, talented teachers through its intensive teacher-in-residence program, designed to train and inspire college students to pursue careers in education.

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

OCTOBER 2024

Dear Friends,

Fall is a time of excitement, reflection, and thoughtful planning here at Breakthrough! Now in my fourth year as Executive Director, I would like to take this season as an opportunity to celebrate the academic and personal growth of Breakthrough's Scholars and Teaching Fellows. I'd also like to wish our Alumni well as they embark on their exciting next chapters.



When Breakthrough students departed from GFS' campus last month, our staff and advisory board humbly reflected on the program and the impact it had on students and education in Philadelphia. We transformed these reflections into what we hope will result in stronger programming and operating plans to meet the evolving needs of the students and families we serve. We remain steadfast in our dual-mission to help Breakthrough Scholars reach top-choice high schools and build a diverse, talented teacher workforce. Inspired by our vision to reach educational equity and diversity, I am grateful to say that we are continuing to advance our dual-mission heading into our 30th anniversary year of programming in 2025.

This year, over 200 students participated in Breakthrough's tuition-free program, which has continually flourished since the pandemic. Building upon the high school admissions and preparation curriculum initiated in 2023, a joint Staff-Advisory Board committee launched another new initiative – College Bound. Nearly 20 Breakthrough Scholars enrolled and participated in four workshops, where they explored various careers, created resumes, practiced interviews, toured local colleges, and learned about financial planning and postsecondary options. Special thanks to our dedicated Advisory Board, Staff, and volunteers from Boston Consulting Group, RSM, Sanofi, Equitable Karr Barth Advisors, PHLY, Empower Construction, PA Youth Vote, The Defender Association of Philadelphia, Church & Dwight, and Montage Diversity Consultants, all of whom served as the backbone of this critical program.

With the launch of *College Bound*, Breakthrough now meets the needs of students beyond their middle school years and officially extends our program from a three-year to a seven-year academic accelerator serving highly motivated, high-need students in 6th through 12th grades – all at no cost to students and families.

Career Conversations, Community Connections, and local/[international field trips](#) remain pillars of Breakthrough's program. I am eager for Scholars and Teaching Fellows to dive into these enrichment opportunities, and I encourage you to engage in their experiences on Breakthrough's [website](#) and social media channels — [Instagram](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter/X](#) | [TikTok](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [YouTube](#).

If you would like to volunteer with Breakthrough, please take a moment to complete [this two-minute survey](#). We're eager to hear from you, and we certainly need your help!

The Teaching Fellow (TF) portion of our program has also made good progress this year. In an effort to build the ranks of educators, the University of Pennsylvania's GSE recently announced that they will provide an annual \$20,000 scholarship for each Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia TF Alum who enrolls in Penn GSE's Urban Teaching Program. We are thrilled about this partnership and vote of confidence in our TF Alumni. Our Summer 2024 program saw a record-level of returning TFs, with one-third of the TF cohort returning from 2023. 75% of Summer 2024's TFs were fellows of color, surpassing last year's record high. At the national level, Breakthrough recently reported that 75% of Teaching Fellows pursue careers in education, with over two-thirds of current teachers stating that they plan to teach for 5 or more years. I am hopeful seeing this data, which demonstrates Breakthrough TFs' long-term commitment to the teaching profession.

Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia was incredibly fortunate to receive summer coverage from 6 different media outlets, including Ukee Washington (CBS News) and Nydia Han (6abc), who inspired our Teaching Fellows and Scholars with their personal experiences and words of wisdom. [Visit our website to see Breakthrough's summer media coverage.](#)

As we step into our 30th Anniversary year in 2025, my focus turns to the following goals:

- Improve Scholar outcomes through comprehensive, end-to-end support from 6th through 12th grades. Per a recent survey, 83% of 8th grade Breakthrough Scholars attend a top three choice high school, with 100% attending non-neighborhood Philadelphia high schools. This upcoming fiscal year, we will extend our middle school program and build upon last year's College Bound pilot program to deliver a unique curriculum that meets the demands and rigor of high school, develops 21st century tech/digital skills, helps identify budding career interests, and provides practical guidance for Scholars and their families as they prepare for postsecondary education (e.g., mock interviews, resume preparation, saving for education).
- Ensure Teaching Fellows are prepared – professionally, personally, emotionally, and mentally – to enter the profession and consider placement for teaching jobs, especially in Philadelphia. We had a number of Teaching Fellows in the Summer 2024 cohort who were interested in the School District of Philadelphia, [including one Breakthrough Teaching Fellow who recently shared with Chalkbeat about his experience growing up in Philadelphia public schools, and his goal to return as a teacher after he graduates from UPenn.](#)
- Find additional diversified funding sources to support Breakthrough's long-term sustainability heading into our 30th anniversary year. We are grateful for our Advisory Board, and the countless individuals, foundations, corporations who have supported Breakthrough as we continue to expand our program, reach, and impact.
- As we plug into the city, neighborhoods, and schools more intentionally, I will focus on strengthening community relationships and recruiting new members to our Advisory Board who can help us establish partnerships, identify sustainable funding, and enhance Breakthrough's programming in a meaningful way.

For the third consecutive year, we ended the '23/24 fiscal year in a solid financial position, with approximately \$1.4 million in revenue received to cover our expenses of \$1.2 million. BCG continues to generously lend their social impact, management and strategy expertise to help shape and implement 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 Breakthrough's students, and for supporting our mission. As always, I 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 24th 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

**We remain steadfast
in our dual-mission
to help Breakthrough
Scholars reach top-
choice high schools
and build a diverse,
talented teacher
workforce.**

BREAKTHROUGH

175

Scholars served

57%

Female

43%

Male

74%

participate in
free/reduced lunch

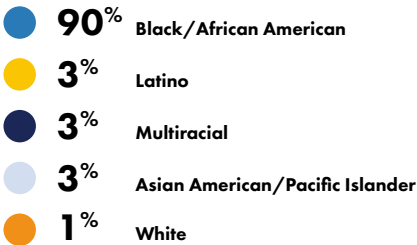
68%

single parent household

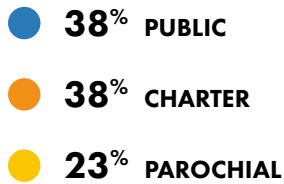
17%

first generation
college-bound

Race/Ethnicity

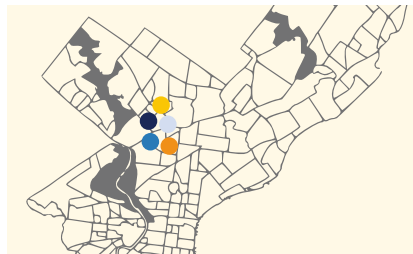


Middle schools represented by
Summer Scholar cohort (2023-2024)



Top 5 Zip Codes

represented by
Summer Scholar
cohort (2024)



AT A GLANCE

2023
2024

45

Teaching Fellows enrolled

75%

Fellows of color

83%

**were admitted
to top choice
high school**

**Top 3 schools, of BTGP 8th grade
class who were surveyed,
Summer 2024*

3.2 to 3.3

Year over year
GPA growth

3.4

Incoming
6th grade GPA

Top schools represented at Breakthrough

► **PUBLIC**

John Story Jenks Academy for Arts & Sciences

Henry H. Houston School

Anna L. Lingelbach Elementary School

Cook-Wissahickon School

► **CHARTER**

Wissahickon Charter School - Fernhill Campus

Wissahickon Charter School - Awbury Campus

Ad Prima Charter School - Mt Airy Campus

Philadelphia Hebrew Public Charter School

► **PAROCHIAL**

The DePaul Catholic School (IMS)

St. Martin of Tours Catholic School (IMS)

St. Helena-Incarnation Catholic School (IMS)

100%

**plan to attend
high schools
beyond their
Philadelphia
neighborhood
school**

**of BTGP 8th grade class who were
surveyed, Summer 2024*

90%

**of Breakthrough
Philadelphia
Teaching Fellows
recommend
BT to a friend**

**BT National Survey, Summer 2023*

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS & UPDATES

Summer 2024 Program

Sakina Parks, Program Manager

Scholars and Teaching Fellows alike had a growth-filled summer at Breakthrough, with each day bringing invigorating and impactful experiences. 34 Teaching Fellows trained in a nine-week summer residency from June 10 to August 9th, where they taught 175 Breakthrough Scholars for six weeks.

Teaching Fellows served as lead teachers in the classroom and received daily professional development and training from Deans of Faculty, Ceora Wearing-Moore, and Matt Greenawalt, as well as from Instructional Coaches from the Philadelphia School District and Germantown Friends School (GFS). Brittani Davis, Gabrielle Goodman, Adam Hotek, Mack Hilton, and LaShundra McCook were our dedicated Instructional Coaches this summer. Stewart Calloway and Sue Chen served as our dynamic Deans of Students and provided tremendous support for Scholars and Fellows. In addition to their teaching roles in the classroom, Teaching Fellows had the opportunity to take on various leadership roles including committee chairs and grade leaders.

Scholars participated in four academic courses per day (math, science, history through writing, and literature) and electives such as crocheting, Bollywood dance, golf, ancient mythology, and gardening. Scholars engaged daily in Breakthrough's unique, high-energy community building activities like Spirit Checks and SLC cheers, which took place during All School Meeting (ASM) and Small Learning Community (SLC) time. Fridays focused on culture and community

building through fun field trips and other shared experiences. Scholars had a blast roller skating and enjoyed their adventures to the Philadelphia Zoo, Camden Aquarium, and The Academy of Natural Sciences. A huge thank you to Equitable Karr Barth Associates for volunteering to serve as chaperones for our field trips. We also continued our partnership with Walnut Hill Golf/First





Tee with Scholars participating in weekly golf lessons. Wacky Wednesdays and ASM provided another level of fun, where SLCs participated in games and other community building activities daily. We had a particularly spirited and healthy competition around earning “SLC points” with SLC’s earning upwards of 5,000 points this summer!

Scholars enjoyed the interactive classroom lessons. Several guest speakers also shared about their careers and life experiences via our year-round Career Conversations series which took place on campus and during our field trips. (For a comprehensive list of speakers, see the “Guest Speaker” writeup later in this report). In-kind donors also kept our program interesting throughout the summer. We are grateful for in-kind donations from Frosted Fox Bakery, Famous 4th Street Cookie Company, Walnut Lane Golf Club, Equitable, and Cradles to Crayons.

Scholars concluded the summer program with Celebration Day on August 2nd. Students had the opportunity to participate in a fun-filled day created by the Arts and Celebration committee and hosted by our Teaching Fellows and enthusiastic volunteers from RSM US LLP. Scholars had the opportunity to showcase their work and talents gained during their elective coursework, and also had a full day of fun activities, including a giant water slide, karaoke, and plenty of delicious treats. Thank you to our amazing BTGP parents for their donations and support throughout the summer!

Launched in 2024...

Breakthrough: College Bound

Sue Chen, Recruitment Manager and College Bound Lead

Earlier this year, a joint staff-advisory board committee designed a new pilot program for high school-aged Scholars called *Breakthrough: College Bound*. Nearly 20 high schoolers participated in the pilot program, which will roll out in earnest in 2024-2025. College Bound's mission is to prepare BTGP Scholars and their families to be successful in the college application process. We offered four Saturday workshops on the campus of Germantown Friends School:

- **A Deep Dive into Career Conversations:** Scholars had in-depth conversations with professionals and learned about their educational and career journeys. They also participated in hands-on projects and discussions about careers in law, tech, healthcare, entrepreneurship, and business, among others. Special thanks to volunteers Francine Boone (ERM), William Bowie (Empower Construction), Sharene Ginyard (Defender Association of Philadelphia), Amala Ifediora (Church & Dwight), Dr. Claire Robinson (Private Practice, OB-GYN), and Fatir Woods (RSM US LLP).
- **Resume Building and Interview Preparation:** Whether Scholars were applying for summer jobs or preparing for college applications, a resume and/or interview is a required part of the process. At this workshop, Scholars heard from experts about the components of a successful resume and interview. They completed their own resumes, and ended the day with a round of mock interviews to hone their speaking and presentation skills. Special thanks to volunteers from Boston Consulting Group (Matt Smith, Sean Thaxter, Sandy Shen, Devu Nair, Mary Shiffer, Eryn Cohen), Sanofi (Poorna Ashok, Elizabeth Magner), RSM US LLP (Kristen B. Cummings and Rajdeep Singh), and Michael Thompson (Montage Diversity) for leading a high-impact, dynamic workshop!



- **College 101 and Personal Finance:** This workshop unpacked the college admissions process, led by Sue Chen, and also provided advice regarding financial planning from Matt Johnston and Brian Lake, Equitable Karr Barth. Topics included college affordability, loan types, applying for scholarships, loan forgiveness, and personal finance (budgeting, debt, etc.). We also covered commonly used college terminology, College Fair conduct, SAT/ACT vs. Test Optional schools, testing and application timelines. Scholars even participated in an admission committee simulation! Special thanks to Equitable Karr Barth and Breakthrough Alumna Kamryn Davis (PA Youth Vote) for sharing her journey from BTGP Scholar to college, and her current role as Philadelphia Regional Director, PA Youth Vote.
- **College Tour at St. Joseph's University:** Scholars met with current St. Joe's students, who gave them a bespoke campus tour. They also got a sneak peek of the Field House and experienced on-campus dining. Scholars learned about St. Joe's unique co-op program and various internship opportunities.



Community Connections

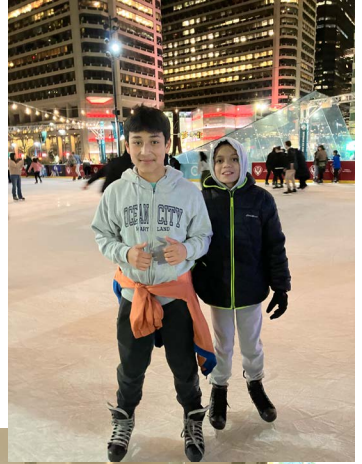
Sakina Parks, Program Manager



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 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.

2023-24 was our third year of the *Community Connections* program, which included math, standardized test prep, literature and vocabulary building skills. Similar to last year, we focused on deepening the connections between GFS mentor-tutors and Breakthrough students through an hour of one-on-one tutoring, reading, writing, and discussion, followed by an hour of dinner, community-building games and activities. We hosted two trips in the Fall and Spring: Ice Skating at Dilworth Park and Tree Top Quest in Fairmount Park.

We are eager to welcome Breakthrough Scholars and GFS students back to class on September 18!



Guest Speakers:

Career Conversations, High School Prep, College Bound

Michelle Reyes Aleti, Communications Manager

Over 40 guest speakers participated in Breakthrough's *Career Conversations*, *High School Prep*, and *College Bound* workshops last fiscal year. Scholars learned about various professions, the ups and downs of starting and maintaining careers, and rationale behind guest speakers' education choices. Scholars also heard from admissions officers representing SDP, Independent, Parochial, Charter, and Boarding high schools. Scholars learned what it takes to apply and be seriously considered for admissions. We hope these opportunities provide inspiration and tangible action steps for Breakthrough Scholars to reach their educational and career goals.



Thanks to Breakthrough's FY 23/24 Guest Speakers!

Career Conversations

ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES

CRAIG ABLIN

Philadelphia Macaroni Company

JEONG ALLEN

Nurse Anesthetist

BRIDGET BATTLES

The BB Experience



KEVIN BELL

Penn State University

MARC DINARDO

NASA/KBR Careers

EARL GORDON

New York Security Solutions

NYDIA HAN

6abc



ERIC HERRENKOHL

AchieveNEXT

JARIAN KEREKES

Equitable Advisors



HONORABLE TARIK KHAN

PA House of Representatives



LAUREN LAVER TANYA SHELLEY

SIG



SUBARNA MALAKAR SHANE NELSON

Sanofi

DR. ELANA MCDONALD DELANA WARDLAW

The Twin Sister Docs

LESLIE PARRA

Clorox



JESSICA PERRONE

Her Financial IQ

THE PHILADELPHIA ZOO



**DAKOTAH RICE
SHABAIG CHATHA
TUSHAR NAIR**

Tatch

UKEE WASHINGTON

CBS News



VANESSA WILLIAMS

*Hospital at the University
of Pennsylvania*



KURT YASENCHAK

Campbell Soup Company



High School Prep

ZACHARIAH DEMUSZ

Director of Admissions and
Communications, Roman Catholic

LAUREN O'GARRO MOORE

Director of Upper School Admissions and
Diversity Recruitment, GFS



HAYDEE L. SUN-ACOSTA

Recruitment & Admissions Manager, A
Better Chance

BEZ WALLACE

Assistant Director of Admission for
Multicultural Recruitment & Outreach,
The George School

College Bound

FRANCINE BOONE

ERM

WILLIAM BOWIE

Empower Construction

SHARENE GINYARD

Defender Association of Philadelphia

AMALA IFEDIORA

Church & Dwight

DR. CLAIRE ROBINSON

Private Practice, OB-GYN

FATIR WOODS

RSM US LLP

MATT SMITH
SEAN THAXTER
SANDY SHEN
DEVU NAIR
MARY SHIFFER
ERYN COHEN

Boston Consulting Group

POORNA ASHOK
ELIZABETH MAGNER
Sanofi

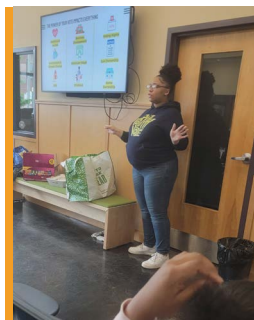
KRISTEN B. CUMMINGS
RAJDEEP SINGH
RSM US LLP

MICHAEL THOMPSON
Montage Diversity



MATT JOHNSTON
BRIAN LAKE
Equitable Karr Barth

KAMRYN DAVIS
PA Youth Vote



Breakthrough Scholars in Costa Rica

Monet Anderson

In Summer 2024, a group of Breakthrough Scholars attended Seeds of Change, a 10-day program in Costa Rica that encourages students to explore science (STEM) careers through immersive research experiences. [View trip videos/photos and read their expedition blog](#), created by Monet Anderson. A snapshot of Scholars' schedules shows just how rigorous and exciting the trip was!

Day 2

Morning hike near the La Anita Rainforest Ranch, followed by a lesson on cacao (origins, types of cacao plants, tasting) and visit to Seeds of Change Research Lab high in the mountains of the Alajuela Province. End the day with a night hike to identify nocturnal organisms and observe different species of frogs, beetles and other insects.

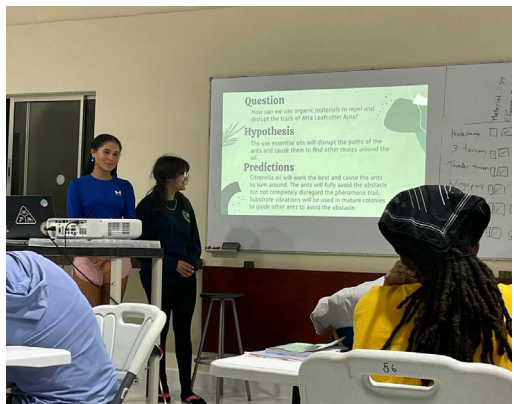




Day 4



Scholars visited the ASOMECOLI Butterfly Research Lab and Garden to learn about different butterfly species. They formulated hypotheses about which area in their newly-formed ant colony would contain *Escovopsis* (a parasitic microfungus) and set up experiments to test their hypotheses. Students began formulating their group research proposals, and presented their project proposals in front of an audience.



VOLUNTEERING AT BREAKTHROUGH

Michelle Reyes Aleti, Communications Manager

Volunteers are critical to our program content and delivery. From chaperones to guest speakers, admissions interviewers to resume coaches, Breakthrough volunteers bring their deep and diverse experiences to inspire and guide Scholars.

Here's a sample of the myriad ways to get involved with Breakthrough throughout the year. If you're interested in donating your time and talent, [please complete this brief two-minute survey](#) and we'll be in touch!



ADMISSIONS INTERVIEWERS

Help us interview and recommend new Scholar applicants and their families in the Breakthrough admissions process. This is a unique volunteer opportunity that plays a critical role in building the Scholar class, shaping Breakthrough's culture and community, and identifying highly motivated students who are passionate about education.



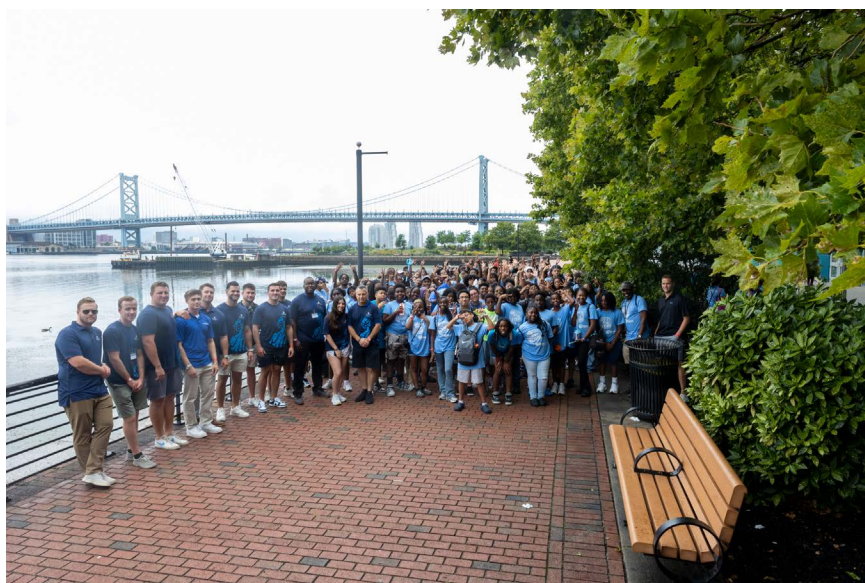
DECK THE (SUMMER!) HALLS

Help Breakthrough's Teaching Fellows decorate the hallways for the incoming class of ~200 Scholars. No need to bring supplies, just your creativity and energy to help create inspiring classrooms and halls for the summer program.



GUEST SPEAKER FOR COLLEGE BOUND

We're seeking volunteers to share about their careers and educational journeys with Breakthrough Scholars in College Bound. Volunteers will have in-depth conversations and possibly share hands-on projects to help bring their jobs to life. We're seeking professionals and skilled workers across a variety of careers/industries – real estate, life sciences, higher ed, law, tech, healthcare, entrepreneurship, and business, among others.



END OF YEAR APPEAL MAILING

Volunteers help assemble and mail our end of calendar and fiscal year appeals, both critical sources of fundraising for Breakthrough. It's a low-key and fun morning, and incredibly high-impact for Breakthrough!



BREAKTHROUGH ALUMNI REUNION & TEACHING FELLOW BBQ

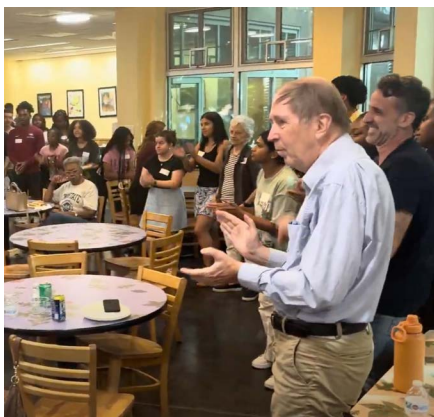
Michelle Reyes Aleti, Communications Manager

Last July, Breakthrough welcomed Teaching Fellow and Scholar Alumni back to GFS for a memorable reunion BBQ. Summer 2024 Teaching Fellows were also celebrated at this special occasion, where Advisory Board member Nanie Flaherty shared moving remarks about the crucial role teachers hold in middle schoolers' lives.



Breakthrough Scholar Alumni (dating back to 2007!) reconnected with SLC mates, friends and BTGP staff members (both current and former) to learn about the latest program happenings. We especially loved hearing about the education and career choices Alumni have made, and the impact they're making along their journeys.

Teaching Fellow Alumni were also well represented at the BBQ. I had a thrilling conversation with TF Alumni Rex Yin (2013) and Miles Borowsky (2021), who exchanged stories about their Breakthrough



TF residencies. Though separated by 8 years, it was evident that their experiences with Breakthrough's unique culture, community, and training, and their passion for educational equity were strikingly similar! We gleaned valuable perspectives on teaching and the education landscape, as Rex shared his post-Breakthrough experiences as a classroom teacher and founder of a preschool in Philadelphia. His wisdom was timely, as Miles was a couple of weeks away from embarking on his teaching

career in the District of Columbia public school system.



The BBQ wouldn't have been a Breakthrough event without Dean Stewart Calloway calling for

a "SPIRIT CHECK!" and, just like it was yesterday, over 50 individuals transported themselves back to the days of All School Meeting... [captured here in this short video!](#)

PERSPECTIVE FROM BREAKTHROUGH SCHOLAR AND PARENT



AUBREY TOLBERT Breakthrough Scholar

8th Grader, John Story Jenks Academy for Arts & Sciences

Remarks from Breakthrough Visiting Day, July 2024

MY NAME IS AUBREY TOLBERT, and I am a Scholar at Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia. I am very excited to welcome you all to our educational summer program. It's an honor to represent such a diverse and enthusiastic group of learners. Over the past few weeks, us Breakthrough Scholars have been on a journey of discovery, growth, and transformation that will leave a lasting impact on each of us.

This program is designed to challenge our minds, expand our horizons, and to join a learning community of other curious and passionate students. At Breakthrough, there are a lot of fun activities and guest speakers who share their knowledge and experiences with us. From all of our interactive classes to all the fun games we play, every bit of this program is made to increase your passion for learning and inspire you to make new goals and achieve greater opportunities.

I encourage every Scholar to embrace this opportunity with an open mind and positive attitude. Step out of your comfort zones, ask questions and try to engage with the material and each other. Remember, this program is not just about academic learning. It's about building friendships, developing new skills and helping us to better understand the world around us.

Also, Breakthrough provides resources and support to every single student in the program. The dedicated group of Teaching Fellows and other instructors help guide us through both the program and other programs that we may have. You don't have to hesitate to seek their advice and share your ideas. Collaboration and teamwork are major components of this program and together we can achieve great things. Breakthrough helps us to challenge ourselves, support one another and strive for excellence in everything we do. I hope you enjoy this amazing journey you are about to begin by applying for this program.

Thank you for your time and remember, We are Breakthrough!



DANIELLE TOLBERT

Breakthrough Parent

Remarks from Breakthrough Visiting Day, July 2024

MY NAME IS DANIELLE TOLBERT and I am the mother of Aubrey Tolbert, a rising 8th grade Scholar. When Aubrey brought the Breakthrough program to my attention 2 years ago, I have to admit that I was a little apprehensive; not because of the workload that the program entails (because I know she could handle that), but because I knew her to be a bit shy and timid with a small circle of friends and classmates. But in watching Aubrey participate in this program, it has been fulfilling to see her growth throughout the years. It has actually pulled me out of my comfort zone as well (as I am not big on public speaking, but here I am).

As parents, we always want the best for our children. We dream about their futures, hoping they will seize every opportunity to grow, learn, and succeed. This program represents a crucial step in that journey. It's more than just a bridge between elementary, high school and college; it's a foundation for their future, equipping them with the skills, knowledge, and confidence they need to thrive.

Every day, I see Aubrey tackling new challenges, embracing unfamiliar subjects, and stepping out of her comfort zone. Watching her evolve, I am filled with immense pride. I see a young woman who is not just preparing for high school

but is also preparing for life. Her eyes sparkle with the excitement of new discoveries, and her confidence grows with every task she completes.

This program is helping her understand that learning is a lifelong journey. It's teaching her resilience, time management, and the importance of asking questions and seeking help when needed. These are lessons that will serve her well beyond her school years.

We often worry about our children's readiness for the next big step. Will they cope with the pressures of high school? Will they find their way in a world that is so different from the one we grew up in? Watching Aubrey in this program has alleviated many of those fears. I see her surrounded

[Breakthrough is] more than just a bridge between elementary, high school and college; it's a foundation for their future, equipping them with the skills, knowledge, and confidence they need to thrive.

by passionate educators, mentors, and peers who are all committed to her success. She is learning to navigate this new world with grace and determination.

This experience is not just about academic preparation. It's about personal growth. It's about seeing her develop a sense of responsibility and independence. It's about watching her build friendships that will support her through her school years and beyond. And it's about knowing that she is stepping into the next phase of her life with a strong sense of self and a clear vision of her goals.



I want to take a moment to thank the dedicated individuals who have made this program possible. Your commitment to our children's education and well-being is truly inspiring. You are shaping their futures and, by extension, shaping the future of our communities and our world.

To my daughter, and to all the incredible young people in this program: I am in awe of your courage, your curiosity, and your hard work. You are the architects of your future, and you are building something extraordinary. Embrace every moment of this journey. Learn as much as you can, not just from books, but from each other. Take risks, make mistakes, and know that each step you take brings you closer to your dreams.

I am grateful for this opportunity to see my daughter grow and flourish. This summer program is more than just a preparatory course; it's a transformative experience that is shaping her into the person she is meant to be.

Thank you.

SHOUT OUT TO BREAKTHROUGH...

Here's a summary of Breakthrough's media coverage over the past fiscal year!



CBS News Philadelphia

June 13, 2024 | By Marcella Baietto

["Next generation of teachers in Philadelphia prepare to teach middle schoolers with educational nonprofit"](#)



Fox29 Philadelphia

June 25, 2024 | By Shaynah Ferreira

["Breakthrough program in Philly helps prepare middle school students while training future teachers"](#)



6abc Action News

June 24, 2024

"Breakthrough Summer Program Opening Day featured on 6abc [morning](#) and [evening](#) segments"



6abc Action News

July 18, 2024

["Nydia Han](#) welcomes Scholars and Teaching Fellows at Breakthrough's morning clap-in"



CBS News Philadelphia

July 2024

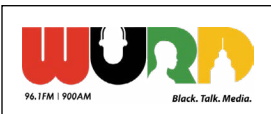
Ukee Washington speaks with Scholars and Teaching Fellows



Philadelphia Magazine

July 2024

Breakthrough Spring Soirée featured in [July 2024 issue](#)



The Evening WURD, Tuesday Teach-In segment

July 2, 2024

[Dr. Peterson speaks with Michelle Palmer about education in Philadelphia on Tuesday's Teach-in segment](#)

MEET BREAKTHROUGH'S SUMMER 2024 TEACHING FELLOWS



Kalea Albenese

Student, La Salle University

Teaching Fellow: Literature, Rising 6th grade

Elective Taught/Designed: Board Games

"I am currently going to school for education and English... being at Breakthrough allows me to have experience in a classroom with middle school students, helps with my program at my university, and I am able to do what I love: teach and build relationships with all of my students. Helping kids with all different backgrounds and from all over Philadelphia is an amazing feeling."



Damia Ballentine

Student, University of Pennsylvania

Teaching Fellow: Science, Rising 9th grade

Elective Taught/Designed: Innovative Culinary Arts

"Teaching is my passion, particularly in urban areas, and Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia was close to home and allowed me to get a sense of teaching for underrepresented minorities. This was my chance at expanding access to educational resources for students who may also look like me."



Kayla Banks

Student, Howard University

Teaching Fellow: Math, Rising 6th grade

Elective Taught/Designed: Got Talent?

"I joined Breakthrough because I wanted the hands-on experience of teaching. I learn all about it in my classes at school, specifically urban education. Breakthrough provides the perfect practice I need to be successful along with meeting incredible people."



Gabriel Bryant

Student, Howard University

Teaching Fellow: History, Rising 9th grade

Elective Taught/Designed: Hip Hop History

"My favorite part of the summer program has been lesson planning and getting to know the Teaching Fellows!"



Jacob Burnett (Germantown Friends School '23)

Student, Middlebury College

Teaching Fellow: Math, Rising 6th grade

Elective Taught/Designed: Soccer

"I think I might want to be a teacher, and I think (Breakthrough) is such a cool program. It's important work to provide a space for students to take ownership of their drive and passion for education, and I really loved the energy in this program. My favorite part of the program is just being in the classroom; it's great to hear from the students about what they're thinking about and how they see the world."



Renia Butts

Student, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University

Teaching Fellow: Math, Rising 8th grade

Elective Taught/Designed: Coloring and Music

"I joined Breakthrough to decide if teaching was the career path for me. After teaching, I would like to take what I have learned to move into educational policy."



Isabella Bynum (Germantown Friends School '25)

Student, Germantown Friends School

Jr. Teaching Fellow: Math, Rising 7th grade

Elective Taught/Designed: Crochet

"I am at Breakthrough to get experience in a classroom and try to help other young students excel in their classes. At Breakthrough, I've learned how to adjust to work with other students in a way that's beneficial to them, and I've enjoyed getting to know my students."



Kenny Chiu

Student, University of Pennsylvania

Teaching Fellow: History, Rising 7th grade

Elective Taught/Designed: Soccer

"I want to be an educator and a leader in my community. I believe education is a necessary tool for people with similar backgrounds and upbringings as me. I learned how hard and fulfilling teaching is, and have enjoyed building community with my students!"



Edward Cruz

Student, Northwestern University

Teaching Fellow: Literature, Rising 8th grade

Elective Taught/Designed: Lights, Camera, Action: Filmmaking and Video Storytelling

"I am at Breakthrough because I believe all of our children deserve a quality educational experience to become thoughtful adult citizens. Even as I seek to pass my love of learning along to younger students, I believe I have even more to learn from both those students and my colleagues. I've enjoyed going on trips with students for Fun Fridays and getting to know them outside the classroom!"



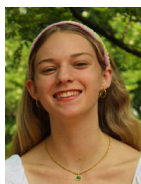
Sassou Djato

Student, University of Pennsylvania

Teaching Fellow: Literature, Rising 7th grade

Elective Taught/Designed: Beats 'N Rhymes (The Remix)

"I joined Breakthrough to gain more experience in education, specifically within the middle years. I really enjoy discussing complex topics with my students!"



Ava Hagee

Student, College of William and Mary

Teaching Fellow: History, Rising 7th grade

Elective Taught/Designed: The Art of Film and Media

"My passion and future lies in teaching, and BT has provided me another amazing opportunity to grow my teaching and classroom management skills through experience and practice. BT's mission statement really speaks to me, as someone who is very passionate about equity and justice within education."



Katherine Johnson

Student, Haverford College

Teaching Fellow: History, Rising 8th grade

Elective Taught/Designed: You be the Teacher

"I joined Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia to gain confidence in the classroom and to be a part of the vibrant community of Teaching Fellows. I've learned how to work through classroom management and how to plan engaging lesson plans for a variety of learners!"



Jene'e Jones

Student, Hampton University

Teaching Fellow: Math, Rising 7th grade

Elective Taught/Designed: Marketing & Persuasion

"I am interested in teaching and thought it would be nice to get the experience. I have learned more about the youth in and out of the classroom, and my favorite part of the program is seeing the students blossom and become more social with others."



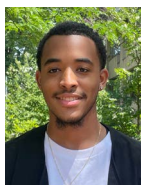
Audrey Litman

Student, Swarthmore College

Teaching Fellow: Science, Rising 6th grade

Elective Taught/Designed: Friendship Bracelets

"I wanted to get hands-on experience teaching in a classroom to prepare for my future career as an elementary school teacher. My favorite part of the summer program has been SLC time, as I really feel like this time has helped me build relationships with my students."



Shamar Long

Student, Villanova University

Teaching Fellow: Literature, Rising 7th grade

Elective Taught/Designed: Got Talent?

"I returned to Breakthrough as a Teaching Fellow again this year because I loved teaching last year. I have learned to be patient, to honor my own commitment, and willingness to thrive in this type of space. I've enjoyed getting to know my students."



Saachi Mehta

Student, University of Maryland, College Park

Teaching Fellow: Science, Rising 7th grade

Elective Taught/Designed: Bollywood Dance

"I joined Breakthrough because I felt aligned with their mission to help underrepresented communities and contribute to their education. Because of this experience, I may choose to continue down the education path. I have learned the importance of not just teaching kids and helping them understand material, but connecting with each student in order to be the best teacher you can be. I learned how to use my voice and tone to control a room full of middle schoolers. I've learned that you also have to compromise a lot – if lessons don't go the way you think, you have to be prepared to pivot your plans and adjust."



Malachia Nobre

Student, North Carolina State University

Teaching Fellow: Science, Rising 7th grade

Elective Taught/Designed: Filmmaking

"I'm at Breakthrough to gain exposure to education in another state and also refine my teaching skills. I also wanted the opportunity to have my own classroom before student teaching this upcoming fall in my hometown. Getting to know the TFs and seeing my students understand difficult concepts have been my favorite parts of the summer."



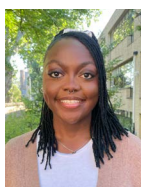
Valeria Perez-Aragon

Student, Trinity Washington University

Teaching Fellow: History, Rising 8th grade

Elective Taught/Designed: Intro to Personal Finance

"I was interested in exploring a new city and learning about the educational system outside of my home city and to explore the unique beauty of Philadelphia. Your journey in education can be whatever you want it to be and the right setting and space is out there for you. This summer, I've enjoyed time in the classroom with my students and the downtime moments where I get to talk to them one on one and get to know them better!"



Sultaana Rapley

Student, University of San Francisco

Teaching Fellow: Science, Rising 8th grade

Elective Taught/Designed: Poetry Expression

"I enjoy teaching and wanted a summer internship targeted toward teaching 6th-12th grade students. I also wanted to teach students who would give me experience in Urban Education and Social Justice. Breakthrough was a perfect fit for me because of their mission statement and opportunity for experience. Children are rewarding just as much as they are tiring!"



Shriya Reddy

Student, UCLA

Teaching Fellow: Science, Rising 8th grade

Elective Taught/Designed: Soccer

"My long-term goal is to become a physician, but I am interested in teaching before and working within the educational space. I have learned so much from how to teach lessons, classroom management, and connecting with students. My favorite part has been getting to know the other Teaching Fellows and students."



Jeremiah Sheppard Baker

Student, Morehouse College

Teaching Fellow: Literature, Rising 7th grade

Elective Taught/Designed: Board Games

"I joined Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia because I wanted to develop my communication skills, and have learned how to show grace and have patience."



Puran Singh (GFS '25)

Student, Germantown Friends School

Jr. Teaching Fellow:: Science, Rising 7th grade

Elective Taught/Designed: Gardening

"I'm here at Breakthrough to hone my teaching skills and gain real experience in a dynamic workplace. I have increased my executive functioning by leading students. My favorite part of the summer has been running my gardening elective, and working with students who unequivocally want to learn what I'm teaching them – it is a gratifying experience."



Chandler Smith

Student, Tennessee State University

Teaching Fellow: History, Rising 7th grade

Elective Taught/Designed: Golf and Poetry

"I've enjoyed working with co-workers on lesson plans this summer. I'm here at Breakthrough to get more experience as a teacher, and I'm learning that kids are unpredictable!"



Maia Solomon

Student, Cornell University

Teaching Fellow: Literature, Rising 9th grade

Elective Taught/Designed: Movie Analysis

"I joined Breakthrough to connect with students and future teachers, and am learning that connection goes a long way in building a good (classroom) environment. It's been fun getting to spend time with the other Teaching Fellows!"



Katie Turk

Student, Kenyon College

Teaching Fellow: Literature, Rising 8th grade

Elective Taught/Designed: Ancient Mythology

"I joined the Teaching Fellow program because I wanted to learn more about what it is like to work in the field of education through firsthand experience. I have learned that I need to take each day and each class one at a time, be flexible, and do my best in each moment. My favorite part of the program has been learning about the passions of my students, what motivates them, and how I can incorporate their passions into my lesson plans."



Connor Vaughn

Student, Elon University

Teaching Fellow: History, Rising 6th grade

Elective Taught/Designed: Minecraft Civilization

"At Breakthrough, I've continued to grow in my planning abilities and want to do better at not waiting until the last minute to plan lessons. The Teaching Fellow experience has built my confidence in the fact that teaching is what I want to do. Having been in this environment and around the kids, I know that a career in education provides me with a rewarding feeling, which is really comforting to find now!"



Arlene Bukasa (Germantown Friends School '22)

Student, La Salle University

Teaching Fellow: Literature, Rising 6th grade

Elective taught/designed: Coloring and Music



Drew Bukasa

Student, University of Pennsylvania

Teaching Fellow: Math, Rising 9th grade

Elective taught/designed: Beats 'N Rhymes (The Remix)

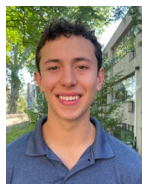


Ben Carr (Germantown Friends School '25)

Student, Germantown Friends School

Jr. Teaching Fellow: Math, Rising 6th grade

Elective taught/designed: Golf and Sports Statistics



Ben Goldberg (Germantown Friends School '23)

Student, Tufts University

Teaching Fellow: Math, Rising 7th grade

Elective taught/designed: Golf and Sports Statistics



Kennedi Hudson

Student, Southern University and A&M College

Teaching Fellow: Science, Rising 6th grade

Elective taught/designed: Innovative Culinary Arts



Dani Kohn

Student, University of Pennsylvania

Teaching Fellow: History, Rising 6th grade

Elective taught/designed: Zine-Making



Arianna Starks

Student, Hampton University

Teaching Fellow: Math, Rising 8th grade

Elective taught/designed: Meditation and Yoga



Ayanna Uppal (Germantown Friends School '25)

Student, Germantown Friends School

Jr. Teaching Fellow: Literature, Rising 8th grade

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 two new Advisory Board members in 2024.

Eric Herrenkohl Advisory Board

Managing Director of Executive Coaching, AchieveNEXT

An innovator in executive coaching and succession planning for middle-market companies, Eric specializes in working with CEOs and senior leadership teams to build and lead the A-player teams that drive top and bottom-line results and shareholder value. Prior, Eric founded, built, and led a successful boutique retained executive search and coaching firm for two decades. He refined his skills in coaching and succession planning, helping many mid-sized company CEOs to build the leadership teams they needed to create the companies they wanted. Eric works with professional service firms, manufacturing companies, and a range of other businesses that must hire, lead, and retain valuable talent to thrive. He has experience working with leaders in CPA firms, management consulting firms, automotive supply chain, consumer packaged goods, environmental remediation, e-commerce, financial consulting, financial services, food & beverage production, higher education, logistics, management consulting, manufacturing, medical devices, and precision-metal manufacturing, among others.



Eric's book "How to Hire A-Players," published by Wiley, is an Amazon bestseller named a Top 10 recruiting book of all time by Recruiter.com. The book serves as a tool for CEOs around the globe who believe that A-Player Leadership is a sustainable competitive advantage. A sought-after professional speaker, Eric provides an honest, entertaining perspective on what makes and breaks A-player leadership. He has been featured in Business Week, Fox News Business, Inc.com, and MSNBC.com.

Eric holds an undergraduate degree from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, a master's degree from Covenant Seminary in St. Louis, and executive coach certification from the International Coaching Federation.

Eric has participated in Breakthrough's Career Conversations and has been an active volunteer since 2023.

Jane H. Rosenberg Advisory Board

*Executive Director, British American Business Council
Global Group*

Jane creates engaging and dynamic transatlantic business development programs for international executives operating across industry sectors. She builds connections with regional and global stakeholders who influence trade policy and economic development in the tri-state region and the UK. Jane manages the local chapter's board of directors and is VP of the global network steering committee with operations in 22 cities. She interfaces with counterparts throughout the world as well as with the Chamber of Commerce for Greater Philadelphia management to ensure the Chapter's success.

Previously, Jane worked for Deloitte LLP developing go-to market strategies and drafting business proposals targeting new clients. Jane is a Fulbright Scholar; she lived, worked, and studied in Mexico City. She is fluent in Spanish and spent many years substitute teaching at GFS and tutoring students. Jane graduated from GFS and the University of Pennsylvania. She is a former GFS Parent, and her daughter Gabriela participated in Breakthrough-GFS' Community Connections program during her junior and senior years. Jane learned about Breakthrough and its impact in our community through her daughter's volunteer work. Jane is excited to support Breakthrough students and help the organization meet its mission.



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



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

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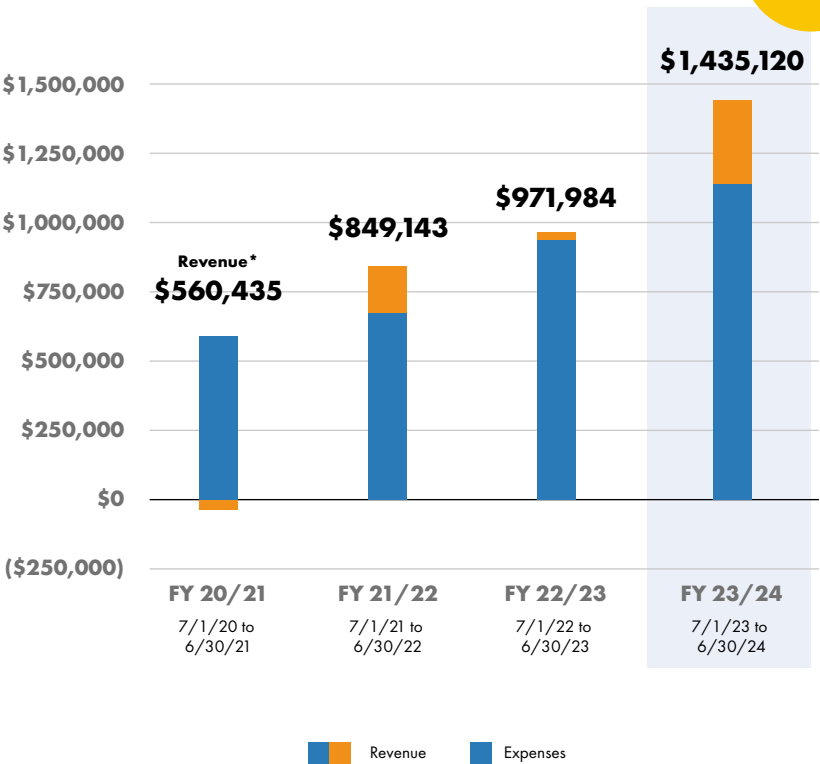
Breakthrough is an independent 501(c)(3) that relies solely upon the generosity of our funders and supporters to realize our mission.

Revenue and Expenses

Last 4 Fiscal Years

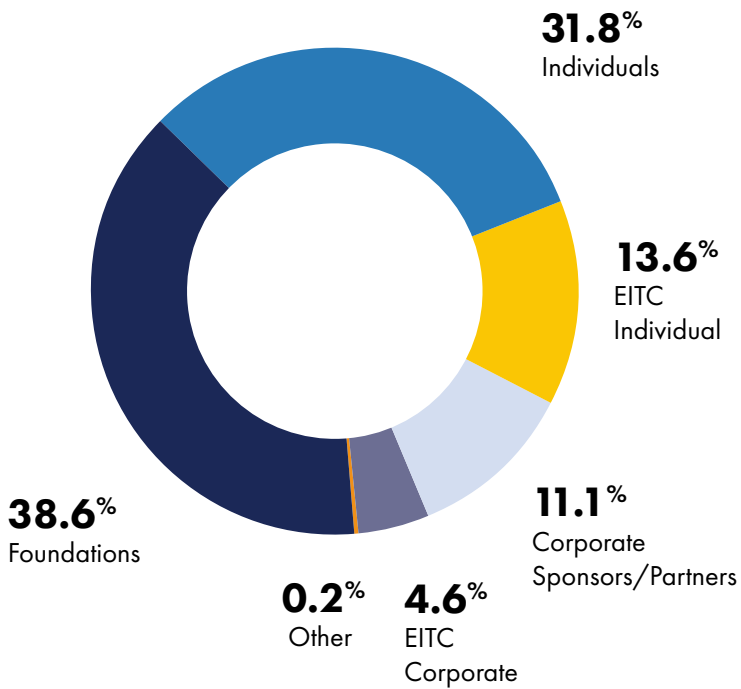
*Without donor restrictions

**47%
GROWTH**
vs. FY 22/23



Fundraising Sources

FY 23/24



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July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024 (listed in alphabetical order)

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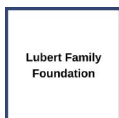


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