

A photograph of three diverse students sitting at a desk, smiling and studying together. The student on the left is a young man with short dark hair, wearing a light-colored button-down shirt. The student in the middle is a young woman with curly dark hair and glasses, wearing a white shirt. The student on the right is a young woman wearing a dark patterned top and a grey hijab. They are all looking down at papers on the desk, with the woman on the right holding a pen. The background is bright and out of focus, suggesting a classroom or library setting.

# MINDS MATTER

NEW YORK CITY

2018-2019

IMPACT REPORT



## OUR CORE BELIEFS

We believe in the power of a college education and are confident that a college degree can help students reach their professional potential and attain financial stability.

We believe that all students who dedicate themselves to the pursuit of higher education should be **connected to the support, resources, and network** they need to discover their best-fit college—and to enter it ready for the challenge ahead.

We believe our mission can only be fulfilled when we invite and **embrace diverse backgrounds**, when we exercise understanding and empathy in building lasting connections with each other, and when we are all able to honor and value our full identities.

We believe in the necessity of Minds Matter as a space that puts **students' needs first**.

# OUR MISSION

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Minds Matter transforms the lives of accomplished high school students from low-income families by broadening their dreams and preparing them for college success.

Supported by over 600 committed volunteers, Minds Matter is a three-year program that helps students reach their academic potential through intensive mentoring, tutoring, and extracurricular experiences. Students graduate ready to thrive in college, career, and beyond.

## THE PROBLEM

Minds Matter exists to fight two pervasive problems. The dearth of resources directed to low-income communities creates an **opportunity gap** that deprives high potential students of the opportunities to academically advance as quickly as their peers living in more affluent neighborhoods.

The second issue is **undermatching**, in which high-achieving students from low-income families regularly apply to colleges below their academic ability. Part of the cause of undermatching is that few students from under-resourced communities personally know anyone who attended a competitive college.

# OUR STRATEGY

## We are a Community of Opportunity.

Students, volunteers, staff members, and supporters are united by a single purpose: to provide opportunities to deserving and dedicated students to succeed in high school, college, and beyond.

Minds Matter offers students mentors, academic tutors, and access to a range of other adults who expand their awareness with knowledge and experiences beyond students' immediate networks. Minds Matter and its volunteers provide unique perspectives, skills, resources, and connections that bridge the gap and give our students the tools to reach their full potential.

## THE MINDS MATTER ADVANTAGE

- A personalized mentorship model that pairs each student with two volunteer mentors who commit to working with them for their three years in the program
- An interdisciplinary approach to college preparation that develops both hard and soft skills
- A community of caring and committed adults who advocate for students throughout their networks
- A focus on students' individual progress with the goal of enrolling in and graduating from their own "bestfit" college\*

\*Minds Matter defines a "best-fit" college as one whose rigor and reputation match a student's academic potential without causing significant financial hardship. Determining a best fit college is comprised of four major factors: (a) the possibility of the student's admission, (b) the potential for a strong financial aid package, (c) an academic environment conducive to college and professional success, and (d) a cultural environment that supports social, emotional, and overall well-being.

## IDENTIFY

Identify students from under-resourced communities who have the motivation, determination, and academic track record to go to college.

## UNITE

Unite students with college-bound peers as well as caring and committed volunteers who have already been through the college process.

## PREPARE

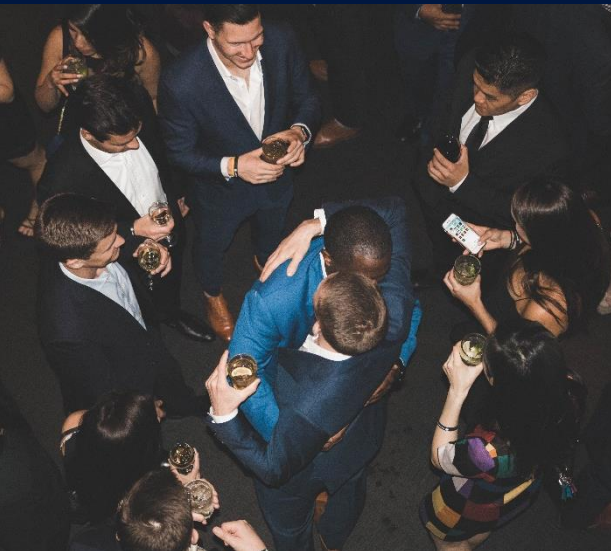
Prepare students for success in college and beyond with a holistic program that develops hard and soft academic, professional, and personal skills.

## SUPPORT

Support students in college financially, socially, and professionally through stipends, alumni programming, and internship opportunities.

## THE POWER OF VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are critical to Minds Matter's success. Not only do they serve in tactical roles as mentors, writing and critical thinking advisors, test prep instructors, team leaders, and program directors, their experiences help students tackle new opportunities from college to career. By leveraging volunteers, Minds Matter keeps costs low while creating a valuable support network for students. Thousands of volunteer alumni continue to champion the organization as donors, Board members, and supporters.



Volunteers at the 2019 Spring Soiree.

# VOLUNTEERS

Minds Matter volunteers are passionate and committed college graduates who dedicate their time to helping students achieve their dreams of college success. This year, 638 volunteers across New York City worked with students every Saturday to help Minds Matter accomplish its mission.

Minds Matter volunteers come from diverse career backgrounds including engineering, banking, consulting, education, finance, law, marketing, and others. The Minds Matter volunteer experience offers individuals the opportunity to join a community of service-minded individuals, gain leadership skills, and grow their networks. Minds Matter volunteers are the front-line workers of the organization and are the students' strongest advocates.



Andres (center) with his mentors.



Zaynab (right), celebrating her college choice with one of her mentors at graduation.



# THE MINDS MATTER COMMUNITY

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Every Minds Matter student works with at least 23 different volunteers over their three years in the program, expanding their network and giving them new perspectives on college and career.

## **ONE COLLEGE ADVISER**

who guides students through their college applications

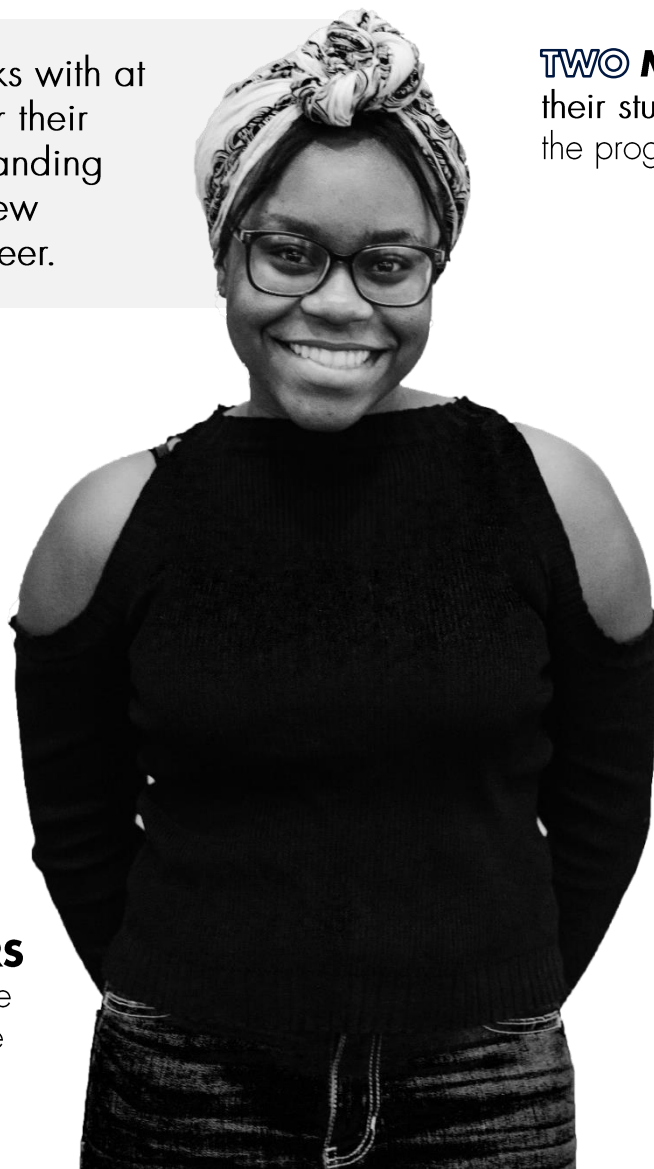
**THREE SENIOR PROGRAM DIRECTORS** who lead the 12th grade mentoring and writing curricula

## **TWO TEST PREP INSTRUCTORS**

who teach SAT test-taking strategies in 10th and 11th grades

## **THREE WRITING ADVISERS**

who work with students to refine their writing skills through three years of the program



**TWO MENTORS** who guide their student for all three years in the program

**ONE TEAM LEADER** who leads a group of mentee-mentor "triads" throughout their three-year journey

**SIX SOPHOMORE PROGRAM DIRECTORS** who lead the 10th grade mentoring, writing and test prep curricula

**FOUR JUNIOR PROGRAM DIRECTORS** who lead the 11th grade mentoring and writing curricula

**ONE SUMMER PROGRAM DIRECTOR** who guides students through the summer program application process



**23,467**

the number of hours volunteers dedicated to Minds Matter in 2018-19

Jiselle (center, with her mentors), Posse STEM Scholar, Smith College Class of 2023

# MENTORING

Each student in Minds Matter is paired with two adult mentors who guide, challenge, and celebrate their student through their three years in the program.

Mentors act as caring adults in their student's life, providing emotional and consistent support while sharing insights from their own journey to college and beyond.

Minds Matter utilizes a 2:1 mentor-mentee model: mentors work with their mentees alongside one other adult mentor to form a "triad." Co-mentors work together to support their student and offer diverse perspectives about the road to college and career. The co-mentor model is a key part of Minds Matter's success—it gives students a wider range of experiences to draw from and gives mentors a trusted partner in the work.

During Saturday sessions, the Minds Matter curriculum—which focuses on soft skills like goal-setting, self-advocacy, time-management, and more—provides structure to the mentee-mentor relationship.

## 98%

of mentors say that working with students is their favorite part of Minds Matter

## 94%

of mentors would recommend volunteering with Minds Matter

## 95%

of mentors say they have a positive relationship with their co-mentor and their student

## TESTIMONIALS

"Over three years together, I had the opportunity to watch my mentee mature into a confident, passionate, and well-rounded young adult. The joy of seeing this was second only to the knowledge that I had played a small part in her development. This is what has made my time with Minds Matter so rewarding."

– Dylan Andres, mentor

"I spend two hours almost every Saturday during the school year meeting with my mentee, Joyce, and I must say I've never had a better reason to not sleep in on the weekends. From successfully helping her get accepted to a program at Columbia University last summer to guiding her throughout her college admissions and selection process, the mentor-mentee commitment to the Minds Matter program has been mutually rewarding. Beyond the unique mentoring relationship, the part of Minds Matter that resonates with me the most is the efficacy of the program in getting students to and through college. It works!"

– Jon Dutton, mentor





**212**

the SAT average point increase of a Minds Matter student during the program

Shelley, Minds Matter Class of 2020



# ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Students receive three years of **writing instruction** led by professional writers who volunteer their expertise to develop students' grammar, structure and voice.

In their sophomore year, students attend a full year of **tutoring in math** led by volunteers in finance, computer science, and related STEM fields. The following year, Minds Matter offers a 10-week **SAT prep course**, where students work with best-in-class instructors who teach them the skills necessary to improve their scores.



Kayleea, Sabiha, and Ramon learn test-taking strategies during SAT prep.



Emely discusses mass incarceration during ALDA.

## MOVING FORWARD: TEST PREP

In 2018-19, Minds Matter piloted a new SAT prep program to further improve students' test scores. Funded in part by ConEdison and BlackRock, Minds Matter hired four professional test prep instructors who facilitated a 10-week program for juniors.

- Students take an SAT practice exam during the first week of Minds Matter.
- Sophomores work with volunteers with strong math backgrounds to improve basic skills in algebra and geometry.
- Between sophomore and junior year, students work on SAT math skills with certified teachers during ALDA.
- As juniors, students are placed into classes with professional SAT instructors who focus on test-taking strategies and improving their scores.
- Students take the SAT at the end of junior year and again, if necessary, at the beginning of senior year.



**41,780**

the number of out-of-school hours students spent on Minds Matter in 2018-19

Ciara (left), SUNY Oswego Class of 2023, and Erick, Syracuse University Class of 2023



# SUMMER PROGRAMS

Students have the opportunity to explore their academic and professional interests through summer programs and unique experiences that build confidence and resilience.

The summer after their first year in *Minds Matter*, rising juniors attend a three-week intensive in math and writing—the **Academic & Leadership Development Academy (ALDA)**—that expands classroom learning and dramatically increases students' test scores.

The following summer, students attend competitive summer programs at top-tier colleges across the country and immersion programs around the world. Summer program applications imitate the college admissions process and the programs themselves put students into rigorous new environments where they expand their horizons and preview the college experience.

Rising seniors will spend their summers at academic and immersion programs across the country and around the world.

Barnard College  
Blue Stamp Engineering  
Boston University  
Brown University  
Carnegie Mellon University  
Choate Rosemary Hall  
CIEE – Italy  
CIEE – Japan  
CIEE – Morocco  
CIEE – Senegal  
CIEE – South Africa  
Columbia University  
Cornell University  
CUNY Baruch College Leadership Institute  
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Global Works  
Harvard University  
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John Hopkins University  
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National Student Leadership Conference  
New York University  
Phillips Exeter Academy  
Skidmore College  
Stanford University  
Syracuse University  
University of Chicago  
University of Maryland  
Yale University



Rising juniors at ALDA, summer 2018.





**57%**

of Minds Matter students are first generation college students, and 52% are first generation Americans

Andy, Georgetown University Class of 2023, at the 2019 Career Incubator, sponsored by Deloitte

# SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES

Minds Matter works with a number of corporate and university partners to offer students a wide range of professional preparation, including internships, corporate visits, interview practice, and other opportunities to develop their career interests.

**CAREER INCUBATOR:** Structured as a day-long conference, students attend engaging, small group sessions led by professionals who share their expertise and career advice in various fields. **Lead sponsor: Deloitte.**

**FELLOWSHIPS:** Students attend a 4-day career exposure program focused on case studies that introduce them to the inner workings of a job. **Lead sponsors: NBCUniversal, Permira**

**SCIENCE MATTERS Research Internship:** A unique partnership with **Columbia University Medical Center**, students work in biomedical laboratories alongside graduate-level scientists.

In 2018-19, Minds Matter partnered with the following companies:

BetterCloud	MediaMath
BlackRock	Mediaocean
Columbia University Medical Center	NBCUniversal
FactSet	The New York Times
FreeWheel	Northwell Health
Goldman Sachs	Palantir
Kirkland & Ellis	Permira
Macmillan	Rothschild & Co.
Marathon Ventures	The Wall Street Journal



Long-time volunteer, Jeremy Carrine, tells alumni about working at Deloitte during the 2019 Career Incubator.

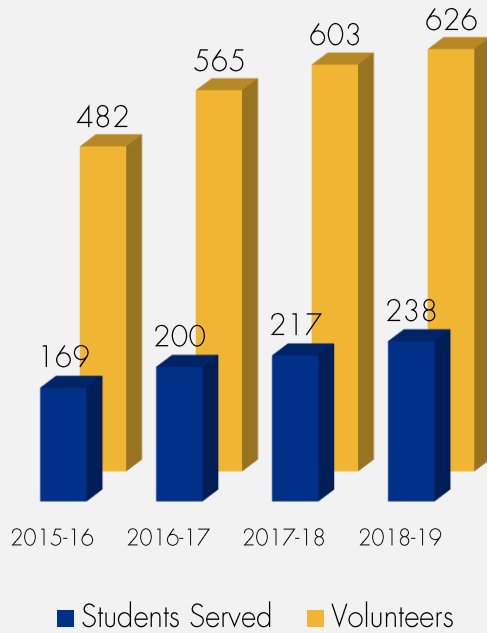


Students dine with employees at 30 Rockefeller Center during the inaugural NBCUniversal/Media Fellows program in February 2019.

“Summer Fellows left **BetterCloud** with so much more than we expected. The kids we encountered were, to put it very simply, brilliant, but there was also a sense of maturity that I rarely get from fellow adults, let alone 16-year-olds. They opened my eyes to their worlds, and in turn I feel like we showed them ours, and that there is a place for them in it. I wouldn’t be surprised if half of my team is working for them one day!”

– Tyler Lares,  
BetterCloud People & Culture Manager

## GROWTH 2015–2019



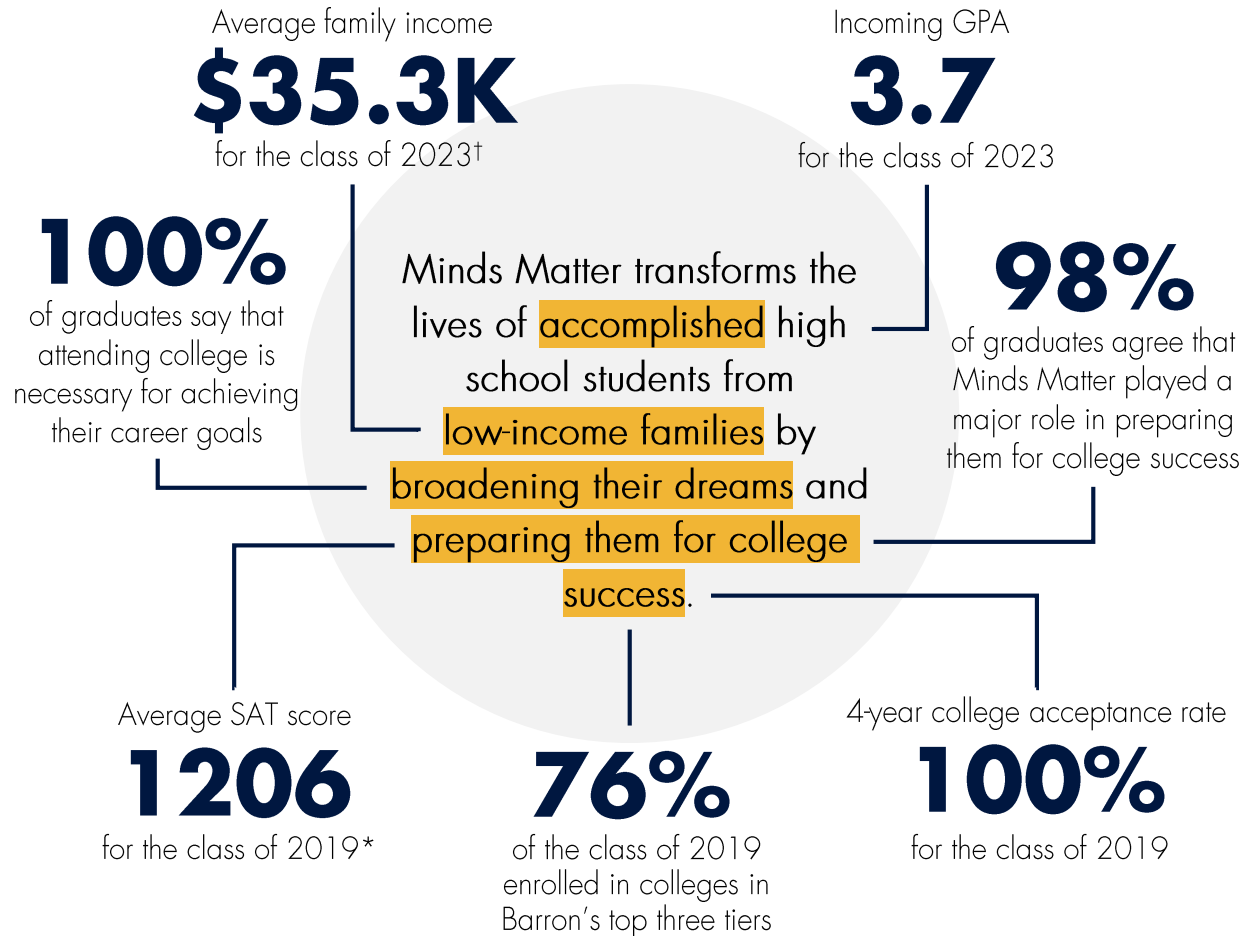
Minds Matter receives more than 300 applications a year from qualified students with the drive and determination to go to college.

To meet this demand, Minds Matter embarked on a steady growth plan that increased our incoming class in 2016 from 65 to 80 students in each sophomore class, resulting in a 41% increase in students served and a 30% increase in volunteers.

In 2019, Minds Matter NYC graduated its largest class ever—75 students who are now on their way to college!

# PERFORMANCE METRICS

Minds Matter defines success along a number of key performance indicators related to our mission.



\*Compared to 990, the national average for low-income students according to the College Board, and 1010, the benchmark for college and career readiness  
† For an average household size of 4.1



# STUDENT IMPACT

In addition to quantitative measures, Minds Matter also seeks student input on the success of its programs.

## COLLEGE PREP

**88%**

of graduates say they feel more academically prepared for college because of Minds Matter

**93%**

of graduates feel that their summer program experiences better prepared them for college

**97%**

of graduates say that Minds Matter has improved their public speaking and presentation skills

## ACADEMIC SUPPORT

**95%**

of graduates agree that working with their writing advisors has improved their writing and critical thinking skills

**81%**

of graduates say that Minds Matter has improved their math skills

**93%**

of graduates say that Minds Matter has been a big help to them academically

## MENTORING

**98%**

of graduates say that they felt supported by their mentors throughout the college application process

**95%**

of graduates agree that working with their mentors was one of the best parts of participating in Minds Matter

**97%**

of graduates say they feel better personally, culturally, and socially prepared for college because of Minds Matter

"I would love to return to Minds Matter as a volunteer to help students see a different perspective of the world and so that they can feel like they have another support system and someone who can empathize, relate to, and be there for them—which was something I really needed."

– Aaliyah,  
Syracuse University Class of 2023

"This past year, Minds Matter was a safe haven for me. In school, everything was going at a really fast pace with college and academics and activities and I was really stressed out. At home, my parents don't really understand things like this. Meanwhile, at Minds Matter I had a very big support system where they encouraged me to do my best, pointed out my hard work, and helped me manage my time wisely. Without Minds Matter, I wouldn't have made it as far as I have now."

– Eni,  
City College Class of 2023

"Minds Matter has motivated me to be the best version of myself possible. Friends and family have noticed that I've taken this action and this has motivated many of my school friends because they understood that the college process was that serious."

– Nagely,  
Binghamton University Class of 2023



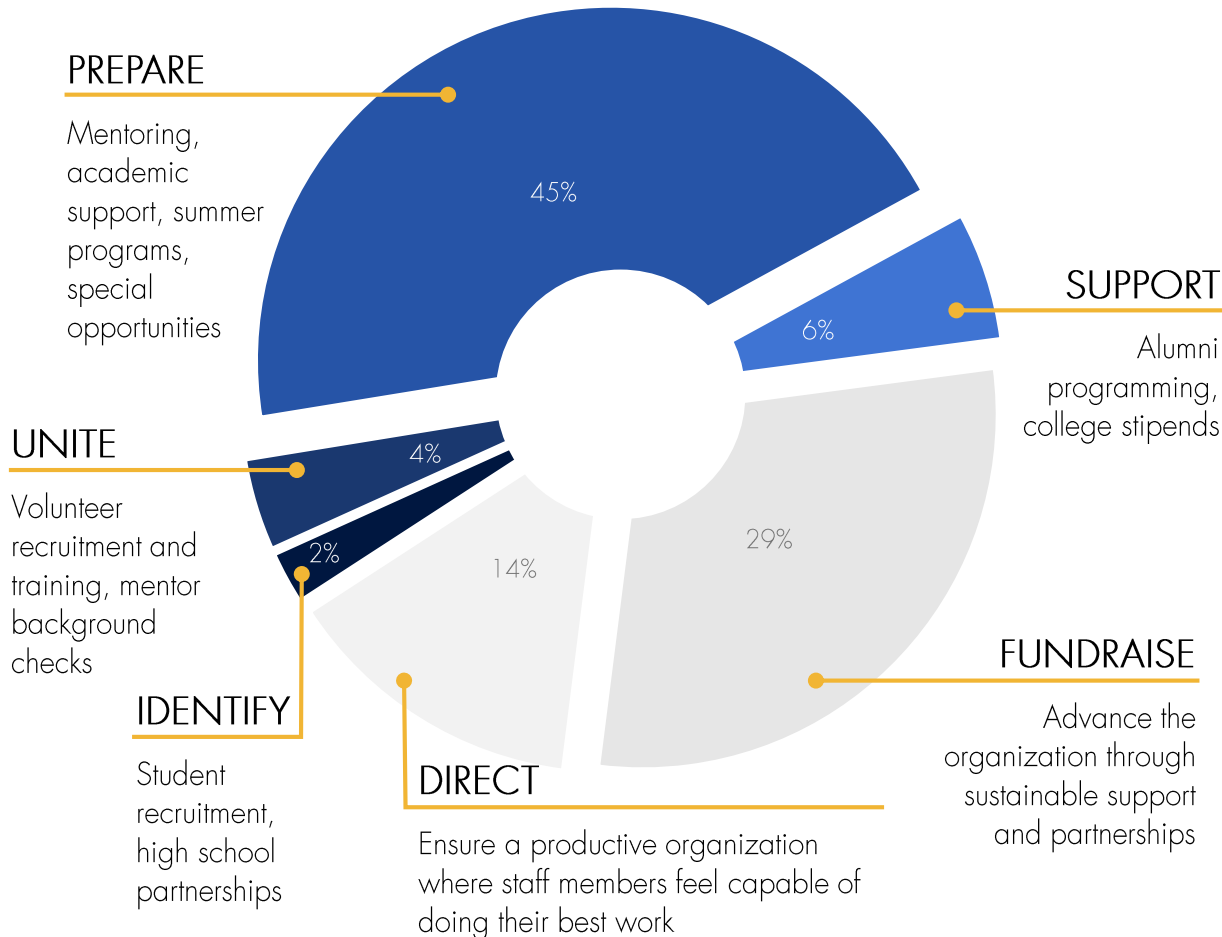
**\$7,817**

average annual net price of college for the class of 2019—  
\$5,264 less than the national average price for low-income students

Shirley, 2019 Graduation Speaker, QuestBridge Scholar, Notre Dame University Class of 2023

# HOW WE SPEND

Minds Matter operates on a lean budget that leverages volunteers and other in-kind services. With a low staff-to-student ratio (1:34) and a high volunteer-to-student ratio (2.6:1), Minds Matter has been able to focus on its strategy while keeping costs low.



## WHERE WE SAVE

# \$708,264

the estimated value of all volunteer hours donated to Minds Matter in 2018-19\*

# \$28,336

the in-kind cost of holding Minds Matter sessions in partner high schools on Saturdays

\*Independent Sector estimates the value of each volunteer hour in New York State as \$30.18 for 2018.

## RETURN ON INVESTMENT

In 2014, Minds Matter commissioned Dr. Clive R. Belfield, Co-Director of the Center for Cost-Benefit Studies at Teachers College, Columbia University. He found that investing in a Minds Matter student during their three years in the program yielded lifetime benefits for each student of more than \$115K.

The economic impact of every dollar invested by our donors is:

# 17:1





**137**

number of 4-year colleges and universities to which the class of 2019 were accepted

Limon (center, with his mentors), Brandeis University Class of 2023

# COLLEGE ENROLLMENT

Students in the class of 2019 will be attending more than 40 different colleges across the country.

Amherst College	Lehigh University (2)
Babson College	Middlebury College
Barnard College (2)	New York University (4)
Bentley University	Pace University
Boston University	Scripps College
Brandeis University	Skidmore College
College of Mount Saint Vincent	Smith College (2)
Columbia University	St. John's University
Cornell University (3)	SUNY at Albany
CUNY Baruch College (2)	SUNY at Binghamton
CUNY City College (3)	SUNY at Binghamton
CUNY Hunter College (10)	SUNY at Buffalo (2)
CUNY John Jay College of Criminal Justice	SUNY at New Paltz
CUNY Lehman College (3)	SUNY at Oswego
CUNY Queens College	SUNY Farmingdale State College
Drexel University	SUNY Fashion Institute of Technology
Fordham University (2)	SUNY Stony Brook University (2)
Franklin and Marshall College	Susquehanna University
Georgetown University	Syracuse University (5)
Hamilton College	University of Notre Dame
Howard University	University of Virginia
Lafayette College	Wesleyan University (2)
Lawrence University	

## SCHOLARSHIPS

Minds Matter students are often recognized for their academic achievements through national and university-based scholarships.

On average, Minds Matter students earn more than **\$2,000,000 in scholarships** for their first year of college alone.

## MARSHALL WACE SCHOLARS

Now in its third year, the innovative Marshall Wace Scholars program provides \$3,000 annual scholarships to Minds Matter students. These scholarships help students close the gap between tuition and other college expenses and what students' can pay out of pocket.

Thirty Minds Matter alumni have been named Marshall Wace Scholars since 2017.

# OUR LEADERSHIP

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Sumiya, the student speaker at the 2018 Brilliant Minds Benefit.



Valerie, 2019 Minds Matter Achievement Scholarship Winner, at graduation.



Alexandra (center) with her mentors.





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