



MINDS MATTER
NEW YORK CITY



2019-2020
IMPACT REPORT

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



JESSICA (MIT)

THE PROBLEM

Structural and socioeconomic forces consistently deny students from low-income families the opportunities that allow them to meet their academic and professional potential—depriving the world of talent, leadership, and innovation.

OUR SOLUTION

IDENTIFY

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

UNITE

Unite students with a community of college-bound peers and caring, committed volunteers.

PREPARE

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

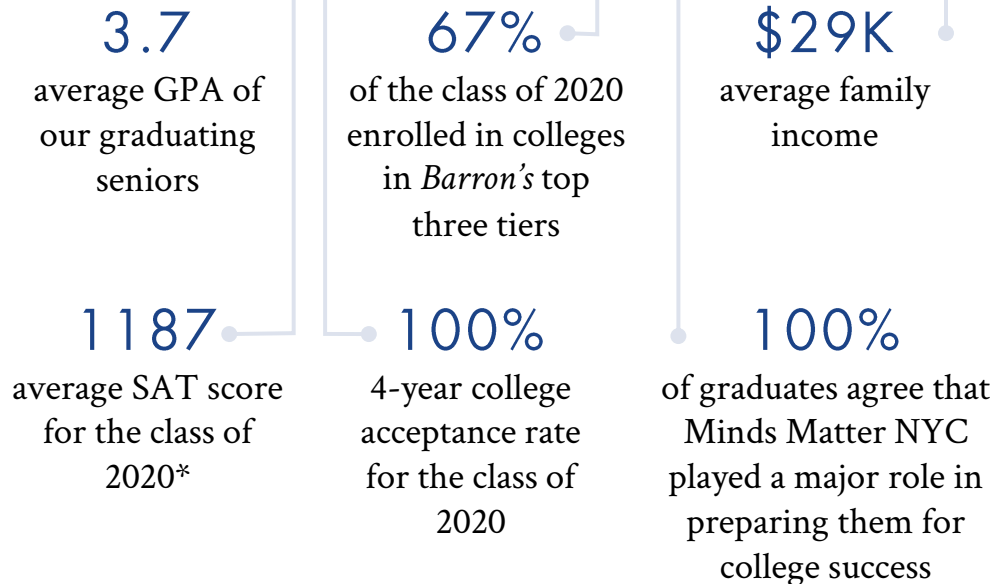
SUPPORT

Support students in college financially, socially, and professionally through stipends, alumni programming, and career preparation.

OUR IMPACT

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

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



* Compared to 987, the national average for low-income students according to the College Board, and 1010, the benchmark for college and career readiness

YEAR IN REVIEW

251
students served across New York City

22,608
student hours at Minds Matter NYC

86%
first-generation college students

99%
students who identify as BIPOC

214
average SAT point increase

657
total college acceptances

48
unique colleges enrolled

\$7,394
average annual college tuition†

† Compared to \$13,081, the national average for low-income students

OUR PROGRAM

Minds Matter NYC is a three-year program that connects high school students with the **support, resources, and networks** they need to get to and through college.

MENTORING

Mentoring is the heart of Minds Matter NYC's vision for change. Each student is paired with two adult mentors who guide, challenge, and celebrate their student through their three-year journey.

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

Co-mentors work together to support their student and offer diverse perspectives about the road to college and career. The triad model is a key part of Minds Matter NYC'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 NYC mentoring curriculum—which focuses on soft skills like goal setting, self-advocacy, time management, and more—provides structure to the mentee-mentor relationship.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

STUDENT RESPONSES

94%
of all students like working with their mentors

96%
say that their mentors encourage them

100%
of seniors felt supported by their mentors during the college application process

97%
feel supported by their mentors

91%
say that their mentors give good advice

100%
of seniors say that working with their mentors was one of the best parts of Minds Matter NYC

MENTOR RESPONSES

97%
of mentors feel that they have a positive rapport with their student

92%
look forward to session each Saturday

82%
feel that they are making a difference in their student's life

95%
would recommend volunteering with Minds Matter NYC



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Jeff Bigner has been a Minds Matter NYC volunteer since 2009. Over the last 11 years, he has been a mentor, Team Leader, Director of Volunteer Engagement, Director of Volunteer Recruitment, and Junior Program Director.

On a typical Minds Matter NYC Saturday, what's the thing that you've most looked forward to?

The thing I look forward to every Saturday is seeing the students and volunteers and hearing about everyone's week. Watching our students' transformations over the three years—entering the program as timid sophomores who graduate as confident young adults ready to take on college—is really incredible.

What has kept you volunteering over the years?

There are so many reasons. The first is why so many volunteers get involved to begin with: to make a difference to our students. What has kept me coming back is all the close friendships I've developed with other volunteers over the years. Seeing everyone consistently on Saturdays is something we look forward to.

How has volunteering expanded your community?

Minds Matter NYC hasn't just expanded my community in NYC, it has *become* my community. I have met countless interesting, driven, diverse, and genuinely good people who volunteer with Minds Matter NYC over the years. I've gone to Minds

Matter NYC birthday parties and vacations, and even officiated a Minds Matter NYC wedding.

Of all the different volunteer roles you've held, which has been your favorite?

My favorite was being a Team Leader. It's the best role in Minds Matter NYC because you get to know each of the 8 students and 16 mentors really well. We were basically a tight knit family for three years. Being a TL gives you the ability to set the tone for the team every week, and I tried to balance fun, learning, and serious topics with my Minds Matter NYC fam.

How have you seen Minds Matter NYC evolve in your time as a volunteer?

Minds Matter NYC has evolved quite a bit over the years as technology and the college application processes have changed. Minds Matter NYC has also done a great job of improving year-over-year continuity that was sometimes lost when long-time volunteers stepped away. The curriculum has also evolved and improved as Minds Matter NYC staff continues to maintain it with input from the Program Directors.

Minds Matter NYC is _____?

Community.



WRITING & CRITICAL THINKING

The Writing & Critical Thinking program helps students master the essentials of grammar and structure and shows them how to articulate their unique voices.

Students receive three years of Writing & Critical Thinking instruction from strong writers who volunteer their knowledge, skills, and insight to students throughout the year.

The first two years of writing instruction provide foundational skills that build toward constructing powerful and persuasive college application and scholarship essays in their senior year.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

STUDENT RESPONSES

95%
of seniors say that their writing skills improved due to Minds Matter NYC

71%
feel their academic writing has improved

ADVISER RESPONSES

100%
of writing advisers feel that they have a positive rapport with their student

93%
look forward to session each Saturday



KARLA (AMHERST) WITH HER MENTORS

TEST PREP

Test Prep strengthens and extends classroom learning in algebra and geometry and teaches students sophisticated test-taking strategies to help them achieve competitive SAT scores.

In their sophomore year, students receive a full year of math instruction led by volunteers from finance, computer science, and other STEM fields.

The following year, Minds Matter NYC offers a 10-week SAT prep course, where students work with professional instructors who teach them the skills necessary to improve their scores.

Higher SAT scores allow students to apply to a broader pool of competitive colleges, which historically offer larger financial aid packages. The Test Prep program helps students enter college with lower debt loads, which dramatically increases college graduation rates.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

STUDENT RESPONSES

95%

of seniors say that their math skills improved due to Minds Matter NYC

100%

increased their SAT scores and 48% improved more than 200 points

INSTRUCTOR RESPONSES

100%

of volunteer Test Prep instructors feel that they have a positive rapport with their student

100%

say that their volunteer experience has matched their expectations



KARLAS (WESLEYAN) WITH HER MENTORS

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Avaneque was the 2019 Brilliant Minds Benefit student speaker and is a member of Princeton University's class of 2024.

What have you learned as a Minds Matter NYC student?

I have learned the importance of seizing every opportunity. Minds Matter NYC made it possible for me to learn about different industries and take advantage of unique opportunities.

What has been your favorite Minds Matter NYC moment?

In junior year Writing & Critical Thinking, we did a program-wide activity to shoot a commercial. It was helping to build our persuasive-writing skills but was also so wonderful to participate in something silly and fun with our entire class.

How has Minds Matter NYC impacted you?

Minds Matter NYC was a space

where I felt unconditionally welcomed. I wasn't expected to be anything other than my authentic self. I'm going to hold that feeling with me in every space I walk into.

Where are you going to college and what are you planning to study?

I am going to Princeton University to study Political Science. I am working towards becoming a civil rights attorney!

What are you most looking forward to in college?

I'm most looking forward to choosing my classes. I'm excited for the independence to dive into coursework that I'm passionate about and pass over some subjects that were required in high school.



AVANEQUE (PRINCETON)
2019 BRILLIANT MINDS BENEFIT

COLLEGE ENROLLMENT

Students in the class of 2020 will be attending almost 50 different colleges and universities across the country.

Amherst College	New York Institute of Technology
Bard College	New York University (2)
Boston University	Northwestern University
Brandeis University	Pace University
Case Western Reserve University	Pomona College
Clark University	Princeton University
Connecticut College (2)	Smith College (3)
CUNY Baruch College (2)	St Johns University
CUNY City College (3)	SUNY at Albany (2)
CUNY College of Staten Island	SUNY at Binghamton (2)
CUNY Hunter College (10)	SUNY at Fredonia
CUNY Lehman College (3)	SUNY Buffalo State
Emory University	SUNY College at Old Westbury
Fordham University (4)	SUNY College at Oswego
Hobart & William Smith Colleges	SUNY Oneonta (2)
Howard University	Syracuse University
Ithaca College	Temple University
Lawrence University	University at Buffalo (2)
Manhattan College	University of Michigan-Ann Arbor
Marist College	Wells College
Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts	Wesleyan University
Massachusetts Institute of Technology (2)	Wheaton College
Mercy College	Williams College
Muhlenberg College	

SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

QUESTBRIDGE SCHOLARS

Karla, *Amherst College*
Wensy, *Emory University*
Xi Hui, *Williams College*

POSSE SCHOLARS

Brett, *Lawrence University*
Celines, *Wheaton College*
Mariam, *Smith College*
Ramon, *Connecticut College*

MARSHALL WACE SCHOLARS

Aichatou, *New York University*
Ashiyha, *SUNY Oneonta*
Doreen, *Massachusetts Institute of Technology*
Emely, *SUNY Oneonta*
Faith, *Temple University*
Mariam, *Smith College*
Melannie, *Manhattan College*
Nishat, *CUNY Hunter College*
Shayan, *Fordham University*
Shelley, *Brandeis University*

CUNY SCHOLARSHIPS

Angelina, SEEK Scholar, *Lehman College*
Hannia, DREAM.US Scholar, *City College*
Judy, Nursing Honors Scholar, *Hunter College*
Massiata, SEEK Scholar, *Baruch College*

MINDS MATTER ACHIEVEMENT SCHOLAR

Mia, *Clark University*

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Bianka Jeannot has been a Minds Matter NYC volunteer since 2019. She is also an alumna from the class of 2014 and attended the University of Virginia.

Why did you choose to come back to Minds Matter NYC as a volunteer?

I loved the program as a mentee and I wanted to be the type of mentor to another student that my mentors were to me. Moving back to New York, I was also seeking a comfortable community.

How was your first year volunteering?

My first year volunteering has definitely been unexpected given the amount of virtual interaction we've had to do. It's been interesting being on the opposite side of the program as a mentor and makes me appreciate my past mentors more. I especially loved meeting my mentee's sister during the family day. I got to see her open up. It was also nice to build a relationship with her sister who was also a Minds Matter NYC alumna. I felt like I could really relate to my mentee on home dynamics.

How has the program changed since you were a mentee?

The sheer size of the program! I was one out of 50 kids in the 2014 class and it's amazing to see that there are now two separate buildings for Sophomore Program alone. I'm glad that Minds Matter NYC is able to help more students. When I did the program, the Academic & Leadership Development Academy, our in-house program for rising juniors, did not exist.

What are you most looking forward to in the Junior Program this year?

I'm really looking forward to seeing my mentee and co-mentor. We FaceTime often, but it will be nice to start up again formally. My Team Leader has organized monthly catch ups with the team, so it won't feel like much time has passed. I'm also waiting for the time when we can meet in-person and go out to dinner or lunch together!

How has Minds Matter NYC impacted your life?

As a student, Minds Matter NYC opened my horizons tremendously. I would not have gotten into the competitive schools that I did without the educational, financial, and emotional support that Minds Matter NYC and my mentors gave me. I saw one of my mentors a couple weeks before the pandemic began and we were reflecting on how we've known each other for almost 10 years now. I'm so grateful to Minds Matter NYC for putting him in my life. As a mentor, it's given me perspective and a different form of community. It keeps me grounded in my roots, as I see myself in a lot of our mentees and can put myself in their shoes even though my life looks different now.

Minds Matter NYC is _____?

Where comfort meets growth.



COVID-19

Minds Matter NYC temporarily moved to a fully virtual model in March 2020 as Covid-19 spread across New York City.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

As a vulnerable population, our students and their families have been particularly harmed by the Covid-19 pandemic in ways both immediate and long-term.

The Covid-19 pandemic is not only actively threatening the health and well-being of Minds Matter NYC students, but is also dramatically accelerating the pace of educational and economic inequality.

STUDENT IMPACT

64%

of students know someone who has been hospitalized or died from Covid-19

68%

of students' families have experienced at least some loss of income due to Covid-19

When surveyed about the transition to virtual learning, students reported that the adjustment has been especially difficult and identified the following factors as particular issues.

LACK OF PRIVATE SPACE

to do schoolwork or participate in virtual classes

INCREASED FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

including caring for younger siblings and additional part-time work to supplement family income

DECREASED MOTIVATION

to prioritize schoolwork over so many other urgent demands

TECHNOLOGY LIMITATIONS

including inconsistent access to their own computers, the internet, up-to-date operating systems, and webcams

MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

including ongoing depression and anxiety about the future

PROGRAM ADJUSTMENTS

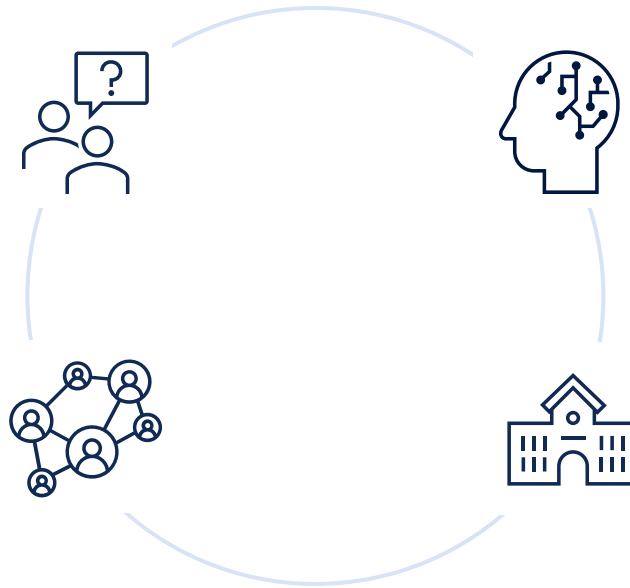
In response to the pandemic, Minds Matter NYC refined the existing programming and included new elements to better serve students during these difficult times.

CONSISTENT COMMUNICATION

Minds Matter NYC surveyed students and volunteers through the spring and summer to assess their needs. Team Leaders held additional sessions throughout the summer.

NEW RESOURCES

Minds Matter NYC created crisis-specific resources for students and volunteers. A corporate partner also supplied computers to students without their own.



SUMMER PROGRAMS

Minds Matter NYC designed new curriculum to support students over the summer, including a partnership with Coursera for juniors who could not attend summer programs.

SUMMER BRIDGE

Minds Matter NYC implemented a new program for graduated seniors to help them prepare for a flexible college experience in the fall.

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

Even in the face of a global pandemic that shut down their city and their schools, Minds Matter NYC students continued to shine.

On May 2, Minds Matter NYC graduated the class of 2020, 100% of whom were accepted into college. This year's graduation, held over Zoom, was very different from previous years', but the most important part—the celebration of our students' tremendous achievements—was unchanged.

At graduation, class speaker, Mariam, said that "[Minds Matter NYC] has taught me what a true support system looks like." A powerful statement and an example of the standard Minds Matter NYC is dedicated to meeting for every student, every year.

Hear more about what Mariam has to say about her experience in Minds Matter NYC by listening to her full speech [here](#).



MARIAM (BOSTON UNIVERSITY)
2020 GRADUATION SPEAKER

SUMMER PROGRAMS

Although students were not able to travel or meet in person over the summer, Minds Matter NYC staff quickly worked to find **summer alternatives** for rising juniors and seniors.

Minds Matter NYC hosted the Academic & Leadership Development Academy for rising juniors virtually this year and revised the program to support students during these exceptionally difficult times. Students attended college and career prep panels, participated in health and wellness activities, and had the opportunity to discuss current events. Minds Matter NYC alumni from the classes of 2016 and 2017 (pictured below) served as facilitators, sharing their own experiences and motivating rising juniors to remain focused on college.

For rising seniors, Minds Matter NYC partnered with the online learning platform, Coursera, to offer students free online classes on any topic of their choosing. A few students also attended Girls Who Code, Notre Dame Summer Scholars, Summer at Brown Pre-College programs, and Quarantine Coders.



OUR SUPPORTERS

Minds Matter NYC is inspired by our donors.
Our Community of Opportunity is comprised of more than 2,000 supporters and partners who make it possible to serve students and ensure their path to college.

SUPPORTING MINDS MATTER

INDIVIDUAL GIVING

Private donors are vital to Minds Matter NYC's ongoing success. Our donors continue to amaze us by hosting cooking classes, throwing parties, even putting Minds Matter NYC on their wedding registry.

SUBSCRIBE TO SUCCESS

Our version of Netflix, [Subscribe to Success](#) gives donors the chance to invest in our programs on a monthly basis.

SPONSOR A STUDENT

Each [sponsor](#) is matched with an individual student whom they can follow throughout their time in the program.

EVENT SPONSORSHIPS

Event sponsors generously underwrite Minds Matter NYC's operations by purchasing tables at one of our two events.

BRILLIANT MINDS BENEFIT

Our signature gala, focused on Minds Matter NYC students and the impact our program makes on their lives

SOIRÉE

A vibrant night of drinks and dancing that invites guests to do good while having fun

CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS

Corporate partners support Minds Matter NYC's mission through direct funding, student access, and volunteer opportunities.

FELLOWSHIPS

A multi-day career exposure program for high school students, focused on case studies that introduce the inner workings of the company

Lead partners: NBCUniversal, Permira

CAREER INCUBATOR

A day-long conference where students attend engaging, small group sessions led by professionals who share their expertise and career advice

Lead partner: Deloitte

FOUNDATION INVESTMENT

Minds Matter NYC is supported by a number of private foundations that focus on serving under-resourced youth in New York City. Their investment in the program provides essential services that help maintain Minds Matter NYC's superior outcomes.

Lead partner: Charles Hayden Foundation



PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

For the second year in a row, Minds Matter NYC partnered with **NBCUniversal** for the Media Fellows program, a unique career immersion initiative where students spend four days at NBCU's headquarters in Rockefeller Plaza, working with and learning from NBCU employees.

This year, 45 students participated in the program where they worked on marketing case studies about the 2020 Summer Olympics and the 2020 presidential election.

Students had the opportunity to meet with teams from NBC Sports and News divisions and collaborated with additional volunteers to brainstorm, devise, and present their own marketing plans for both major events to the greater NBCU community.

EVENT SPOTLIGHT

Led by our Board of Directors, the **Brilliant Minds Benefit** is a night of dinner, drinks, and fun celebrating our students' hard work and success. On October 24, 2019, more than 300 guests came together to raise almost \$400,000 for Minds Matter NYC and our students.

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*Minds Matter NYC is also extremely grateful to the many donors who were not included in this report. Your support makes students' dreams come true. **Thank you.***

SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT

Monthly Giving provides reliable income that ensures ongoing operations. When we can count on sustaining support, we can do more for our students.

SUSTAINING DONORS

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THANK YOU

OPERATIONS

Despite unprecedented challenges, Minds Matter NYC served more students with more opportunities than ever before, graduating all seniors into their best-fit college.

OUR LEADERSHIP

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Namrita Puri

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Leeanne Su

Sarah Tanner

ASSOCIATE BOARD

Associate Board members are committed young professionals who help bring Minds Matter NYC forward by raising the visibility and awareness of the organization and its mission, directing critical fundraising initiatives, and broadening its network of supporters, donors, and volunteers.

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Rita Lebedeva, *Co-Chair*

Andrew Gulla, *Secretary*

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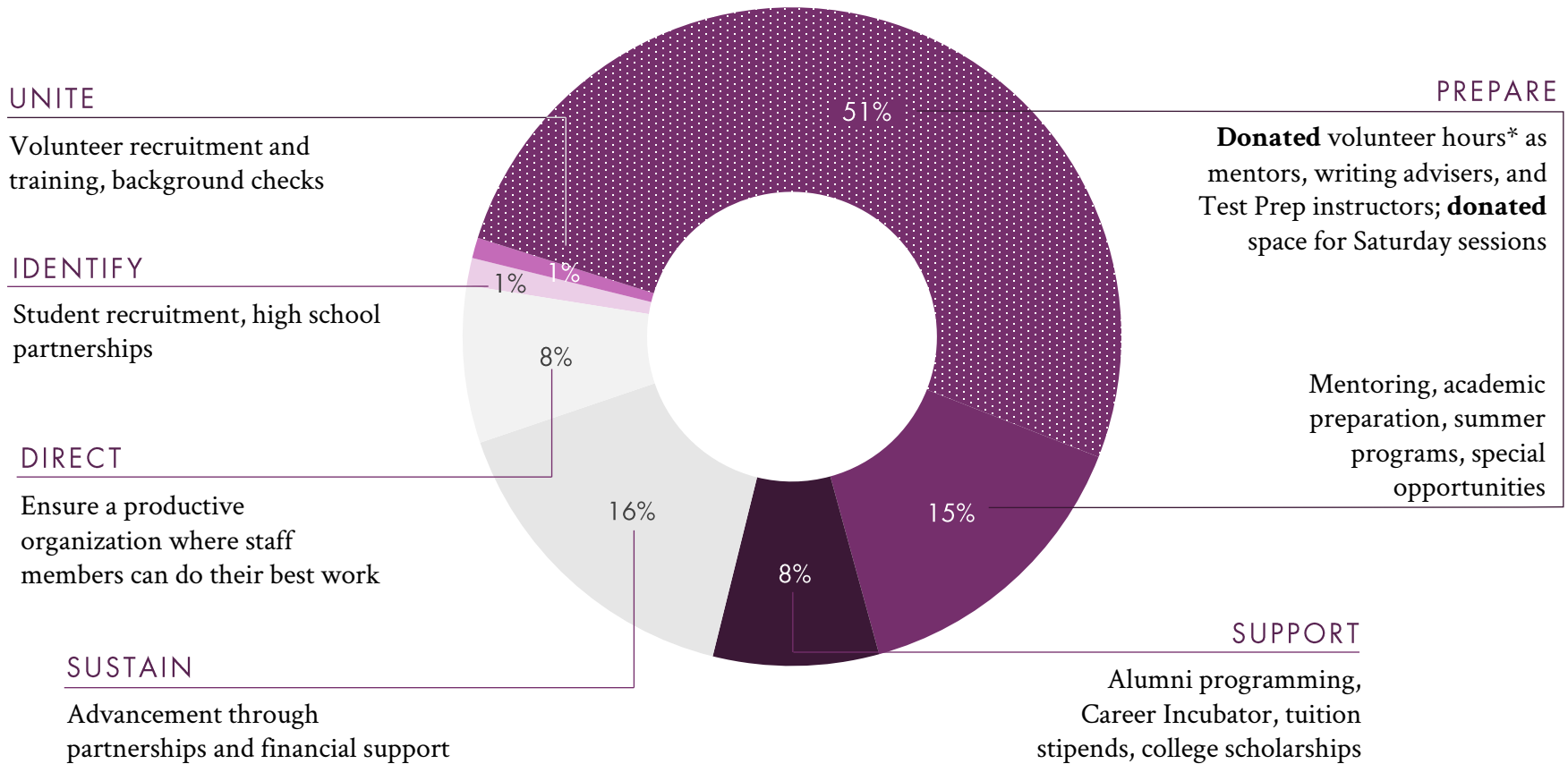
Prama Verma, *Development Associate*

Eva Fall, *Programs Associate*



EXPENSE BREAKDOWN

Minds Matter NYC operates on a lean budget that leverages volunteers and other in-kind services so that we can dedicate almost **80% of resources to programming**. With a low staff to student ratio (1:36) and a high volunteer to student ratio (2.5:1), Minds Matter NYC can focus on strategy while keeping costs low.



* Independent Sector estimates the value of each volunteer hour in New York State as \$31.29 for 2019.

THANK YOU

Since 1991, Minds Matter NYC
has sent **985 students** to
4-year colleges and universities.