

OUR MISSION

Minds Matter NYC connects driven and determined students from low-income families with the people, preparation, and possibilities to succeed in college, create their future, and **change the world.**

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If I'm being honest, I don't know where I would be right now without Minds Matter NYC. Minds Matter NYC has transformed me into the best me, into someone I am proud of by seeing how far I've grown as an individual.

—**Leila**, Class of 2021 Stony Brook University, Class of 2025



A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND BOARD CHAIR

This year has not been easy for our students. As we entered our second year of the pandemic and another year of online instruction, we were constantly reminded of the stress, pain, and loss that has followed our students over the last two years.

Despite overwhelming odds, Minds Matter NYC students continue to excel. Though the program was fully virtual for the 2020-21 school year, we found new ways to adjust and adapt. Students were able to attend summer programs—albeit from home—at some of the top universities in the country. Our career fellowship programs took place online but still helped students build their resumes and expand their networks. Most importantly, every student earned admission to a 4-year college and a record number of prestigious scholarships. Our students' stories are ones of determination and resilience that defy expectations.

Our students are not alone in their journeys. Your investment in their success means that they have even greater access to the opportunities that will shape their lives through high school, college, and beyond. And through your continued support, Minds Matter NYC was able to serve more students in our high school program than ever before.

We say high school program deliberately: after years of research, planning, and student input, we are excited to announce our expansion from a 3-year college access program to a 7-year college and career success program. Our goal has always been to halt intergenerational poverty through higher education. With the launch of our 2025 Strategic Plan, we hope that we can deepen the impact that Minds Matter NYC has on our students and their families.

Thank you for joining us as we build the future together.

In gratitude and solidarity,

Erika HalsteadExecutive Director



Deborah Beckmann
Chair, Board of Directors

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT | LIZBETH

Where do you plan to go to college?

I got accepted into Northwestern University through the QuestBridge scholarship. I plan to pursue pre-med, but I am open to studying other fields, at least in my first year.

What was one important resource Minds Matter NYC provided during the college application phase?

My writing and critical thinking adviser was very helpful, and she was so enthusiastic about doing the work. I can't thank her enough for her help in keeping me on my toes.

What essential skills have you developed during your three years at Minds Matter NYC?

I remember Erika [Halstead] saying that "adults are just as scared to talk to you as you are to talk to them." It made me more confident to talk and communicate myself, as long as I am true to what I say. One of my fears has been contradicting myself, but if what I am saying is what I believe to be genuine, then there is nothing to be scared of.

How has Minds Matter NYC supported you despite meeting virtually?

Meeting on Saturdays and Wednesdays with my mentor has kept me on track. It was nice to know that there is someone who cares and wants me to succeed.

What does your family think about Minds Matter NYC's impact?

They've been super grateful for what Minds Matter NYC has done for me because they understand that they're not the best resources for making a college decision or navigating the financial aid process. I'm very grateful for the knowledge Minds Matter NYC has given me.

What is your favorite accomplishment as a Minds Matter NYC student?

I was so proud when I got into the Columbia Science Matters Research internship. My junior year was packed, and I was proud that I could manage my time as an EMT, the Columbia internship, volleyball, and Minds Matter NYC. It was a hectic year, but I was able to get through it.





Serving students through the PANDEMIC

In the second year of the Covid-19 pandemic—our first full year of remote programming—Minds Matter NYC continued to guide students toward their college dreams.

Though the context has changed, our strategy has remained the same. **Identify** motivated students who have the grades and determination to go to college. **Unite** them with other college-going peers and volunteer mentors to create a community of high expectations where students can be successful. **Prepare** them for college admissions with mentoring, SAT prep, writing instruction, and summer programs.

Like all organizations these past two years, Minds Matter NYC has had to adjust programming to meet our students' changing circumstances. Not only did we make the decision to remain virtual for the entirety of the school year and send the majority of students to virtual summer programs, we also made the difficult choice to postpone the start of our sophomore program. To combat learning loss caused by irregular instruction during Covid, we expanded our junior SAT prep course (facilitated by professional SAT tutors) to 15 weeks to give our students an edge in their college applications.

Despite these changes, our students continue to persevere and gain admission to their best-fit college. Once again, **Minds Matter NYC students prove they are exceptional**.

IDENTIFY

STRATEGY | Identify students from marginalized communities who have the motivation, determination, and academic track record to go to college.

students served across New York City

average GPA for the class of 2021

average family income for the class of 2021

of students idenfity as BIPOC

of students will be first-generation college students

Minds Matter NYC helped me tremendously

both personally and academically. I was not only able to grow as a person, but with my mentors' help, I was able to survive the college process. If it wasn't for them, I don't think I would have been able to successfully complete this journey. I am forever grateful.

> —Dariana, Class of 2021 New York University, Class of 2025



STUDENT | NATHANIEL

Where do you plan to go to college?

Lawrence University was a great selection for me as a small liberal arts school. Throughout my education, I loved small schools, and Lawrence offered a place where I could major in economics and minor in films.

What was one important resource Minds Matter NYC provided during the college application phase?

Time management skills. During that time, I was doing online learning, had a job, some sports and clubs, and Minds Matter NYC helped me to balance my time to get my tasks done. The writing instructors helped to edit my statements and instructed me how to express powerful ideas, keep them condensed, and have substance.

What are you most looking forward to about going to college?

I am going to be surrounded by people who are driven, and I will have the ability to learn things I want to know more about.

What has been your favorite Minds Matter NYC moment?

My favorite moment was when I had an internship at NBCUniversal. I had to do a case study with other Media Fellows, and we made this video in our presentation about marketing strategy—filming the subway and buses and putting up posters all over. It was very collaborative.

Minds Matter NYC helped me be the best version of myself I could be.

—Nathaniel, Class of 2021 Lawrence University, Class of 2025

Which essential skill have you developed during the last three years at Minds Matter NYC?

No matter what school I go to or what interview I have, I know that people are still people, and I can be my authentic self. And it is ok to make mistakes because I know what I am capable of.

What is one of your favorite accomplishments as a Minds Matter NYC student?

I would say building relationships with Minds Matter NYC staff, volunteers, and students. It made me feel like they were a real community.



UNITE

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

Every Minds Matter NYC student works with at least 23 different volunteers during their three years in the high school program. Our volunteers are passionate and committed college graduates who dedicate their time to helping students achieve their dreams of college success.

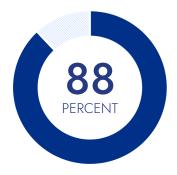
We call ourselves a Community of Opportunity because all of us—volunteers, Board members, staff members, donors, and advocates—are united by a single purpose: to provide opportunities to deserving and dedicated students to succeed in high school, college and beyond.

562

volunteers served with
Minds Matter NYC in 2020–21

36,954

total volunteer hours spent at Minds Matter NYC in 2020–21



of all volunteers felt effective in their roles



of all volunteers had a positive rapport with their student



of mentors felt they had personally grown by mentoring their student

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT | KATHERINE

As a Minds Matter NYC alumna, why did you come back to volunteer?

Minds Matter NYC is life-changing, so I understand the power it can have on someone's life. Being Latina, a First-Gen [college student], and an alumna, my mentees can easily relate to me. It's so empowering for them to see someone who is successful. It's easier for them to create a connection with someone who looks like them.

Tell us about your experience as a mentor and Team Leader.

Mentors are very empowering. We have such a personal connection with our mentees. My mom was an immigrant, and she didn't understand the complexity of education, but my mentors guided me through it. All my mentors were all in business, and that gave me the spark to go into business myself.

I love being a Team Leader. It is the most important role—not only do you have to know each person in the team, but you set the tone. You influence how close they are as a group and get to create positive energy among them. Honestly, it came naturally to me because I used to be a mentee. I care about them. It felt like a joy to do.

What are your memories of being a Minds Matter NYC student?

At the first session as a student, I met one of my still-best friends, Claudia, over a slice of pizza! Minds Matter NYC also sent me to a summer program at Skidmore, and I used the summer credit to complete my Bachelor's degree early.

Minds Matter NYC made me more confident as a high school senior and gave me the feeling that I deserve the world. I used that confidence to propel me through college and beyond. I went from a scarcity mindset to one of abundance.

Congratulations on the new scholarship for Minds Matter NYC students! What prompted you to want to do this?

My sister (who was also a Minds Matter NYC alum) and I are in a financial place to give back, and we thought, let's give back to the organization that did so much for us. Financial help is so meaningful to our mentees—even if just paying for textbooks. All these little costs do add up. We look forward to helping a mentee that exemplifies the Minds Matter NYC values and hasn't received full financial aid.

What would you say to former students who want to volunteer?

Don't hesitate and weigh it against the impact you're going to have. Whatever the case may be, do it. You are where you are partly because of Minds Matter NYC. And if you have the time, you can make an impact.



PREPARE

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

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 high school graduation.

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



of seniors said that working with their mentors was one of the best parts of Minds Matter NYC

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 instruction from skilled writers who volunteer their knowledge, skills, and insight throughout the year.



of seniors said that Minds Matter NYC had improved their writing skills

SAT PRFP

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

During the pandemic, Minds Matter NYC extended its test prep program to 15 weeks to supplement learning loss from months of virtual instruction.



of seniors said that Minds Matter NYC had improved their math skills

SUMMER PROGRAMS

During summer programs, students have the opportunity to explore their academic and professional interests through unique opportunities at top-tier colleges and immersion programs.

In 2021, Minds Matter NYC sent students to a mix of virtual and in-person programs across the nation.

VOLUNTEER | COLIN

What has kept you coming back for the last 14 years?

Bottom line, I loved the students and the other volunteers. I also loved coming in; it provided some structure to my Saturdays. Most of all, the students were wonderful. That's what brought me back. Minds Matter NYC makes a difference, and it has a mission I believe in. I know the impact the organization provides in someone's life.

Looking back over the years, what are you most proud of?

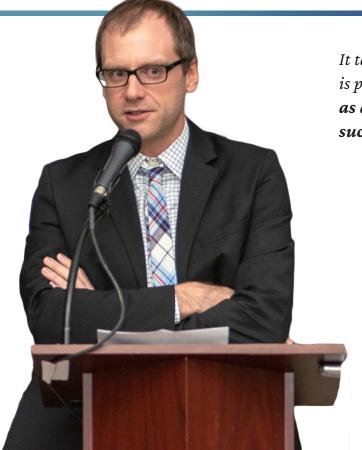
Seeing graduates come back to the organization to volunteer, and it's like wow, [Minds Matter NYC] had so much of an impact that you came back! It is so fulfilling to see that circle complete; they are amazing people. It is a wonderful thing to feel you are a part of their journey and had a (small) role in figuring out who they are. It is the best part, and it doesn't feel strange to talk with graduates and speak with them as adults.

Why have you given up so much of your time to volunteer?

I enjoy it! I enjoyed the community and going to volunteer leadership meetings. It is important to find volunteering that suits you. You are not going to have a broader impact without you enjoying it. I have never been good with downtime. My day job uses different skill sets, so volunteering helped me do something different and refocused my brain at work.

What do you look forward to in the upcoming years?

One of the things I look forward to is getting back to work with people in person. I am also excited about this shift—and I credit Erika [Halstead]—to the in-college portion and focus on having them graduate from college and helping to provide their first job. We have heard a lot of feedback that our work was needed for our graduates in college. So, it is exciting to broaden our mission.



It takes a village, and Minds Matter NYC is part of that village. We are all working as a community to make students successful.

—Colin, Director of College Advising

OUR RESULTS

100%

of graduating seniors were accepted into 4-year colleges and universities

90%

of graduating seniors enrolled in a US News top 100 college

national

3%

than 80% of seniors scored higher than the national average of all test takers

Average SAT score for the class of 2021—more

\$6,566

Median enrolled price of college for Minds Matter NYC seniors (compared to \$14,900, the average cost of college for low-income students) of graduating seniors scored above the College Board benchmark for college and career readiness

94%

of graduating seniors said that Minds Matter NYC inspired them to encourage their friends to go to college

STUDENT FEEDBACK

In addition to quantitative data, Minds Matter NYC collects qualitative student feedback that allows us to keep student experience at the center of our work.



COLLEGE ENROLLMENT

The Minds Matter NYC Class of 2021 received more than 580 acceptances from colleges and universities across the nation. They have chosen to enroll in these 42 institutions.

Babson College

Barnard College

Boston College

Boston University (2)

Brandeis University (2)

Carnegie Mellon University (2)

Columbia University (3)

Connecticut College

CUNY Baruch College (4)

CUNY Brooklyn College

CUNY City College (6)

CUNY Hunter College (3)

CUNY John Jay College of

Criminal Justice

CUNY Lehman College

CUNY Macaulay Honors College at City College

CUNY New York City College of Technology

CUNY Queens College (2)

Fordham University (2)

Franklin & Marshall College

Haverford College

Hobart & William Smith Colleges

Howard University (2)

Johns Hopkins University

Lawrence University

Middlebury College (2)

Mount Holyoke College

New York University (7)

Northeastern University

Northwestern University

Pace University

Rochester Institute of Technology (2)

Saint Louis University

St. John's University

SUNY at Albany

SUNY College of Technology at Canton

SUNY Stony Brook University

Syracuse University (2)

University of Chicago

University of Miami

University of Pennsylvania (2)

University of Southern California

(2)

Villanova University

Wesleyan University

Williams College

SCHOLARSHIPS

POSSE

Alejandra, Connecticut College Elyse, Babson College Justine, Brandeis University Kunga, Brandeis University Nathaniel, Lawrence University Veronika, Middlebury College

QUESTBRIDGE

Haily, University of Pennsylvania Iovanni, University of Chicago Jasmeiry, University of Pennsylvania Lizbeth, Northwestern University

EOP & HEOP

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Technology

Idrissa, Syracuse University
Jamie, Hobart & William Smith

Colleges

Kalmaljit, SUNY at Albany

Nafisa, Barnard College

Riyadh, Hobart & William Smith Colleges

MARSHALL WACE

Alisha, CUNY Macaulay Honors
College at City College
Avril, CUNY City College
Britney, Boston University
Danielle, Haverford College
Haily, University of Pennsylvania
Janet, New York University
Jennifer, Columbia University
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Kevin, Boston College

Labib, CUNY Hunter College
Litzy, Columbia University
Lizbeth, Northwestern University
Lola, Williams College
Nathaniel, Lawrence University
Sanjeev, Boston University
Stefania, New York University
Stephanie, Middlebury College
Talha, CUNY Baruch College
Tasmeya, CUNY Baruch College
Veronika, Middlebury College

OTHER AWARDS

Giovanni, SEEK Scholarship, CUNY Baruch College

Kunga, Morgan Creek Foundation Scholarship, Brandeis University

Mashud, SEEK Scholarship, CUNY City College

NEW DIRECTIONS

After 30 years of getting students into their best-fit college, Minds Matter NYC is ready for the next step.

Minds Matter NYC is committed to ending intergenerational poverty for its students, and we know there is more to do to ensure that each student has the best possible start to their future. That's why in 2021 the Board of Directors passed a bold new plan to extend Minds Matter NYC's program from a 3-year college *access* program to a 7-year college and career *success* program.

Starting in the 2021–22 school year, Minds Matter NYC will expand its **support** for students in college to give them the tools to thrive and graduate on time. We are also developing additional training and resources to **propel** them from first generation college students to first generation professionals.

This is an exciting new direction for Minds Matter NYC. We are thrilled to have you with us.

STUDENT SUCCESS

Minds Matter NYC will continue to invest in our core competency: providing high-quality college access programming to high school students across the five boroughs. Our goal is to maintain strong outcomes that result in high student retention and top-tier college enrollment for each graduating class. Our foundational strategies are:

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

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

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







Measures of Success

Incoming high school GPA
Incoming family income (as
measured by eligibility for
federal meal programs)

Measures of Success

Student retention
Volunteer retention

Measures of Success

SAT scores (in comparison with the College Board's college and career success benchmark)

Admission to 4-year colleges and universities

Enrollment in top-tier colleges and universities

PROGRAM EXPANSION

As we look to the future, we know that more is needed to ensure that our students achieve financial stability. Starting in 2021–22, Minds Matter NYC will become a 7-year college and career success program that stays with students throughout their college journey and as they prepare to enter the workforce as first-generation professionals. The 2025 plan introduces two new strategies to our service model:

Support students throughout college to help them thrive on campus and graduate on time.

Propel students into meaningful professional careers through exposure, experience, expertise, and employment.





Measures of Success

Year-over-year college
enrollment
College GPA
On-time college graduation

Measures of Success

Participation in career fellowships Employment after college

Minds Matter NYC is inspired by its donors.

Our Community of Opportunity is comprised of thousands of supporters and partners who make it possible to serve students and ensure their path to college.

PARTNER | ENDEAVOR

Endeavor, a leading entertainment and media firm, provided 24 Minds Matter NYC students the rare opportunity to learn more about their work through one of our career immersion fellowships. Fellowships allow students to work directly with company employees on case studies during a short externship. These unique opportunities give Minds Matter NYC students the chance to expand their understanding of the profession, while also adding to their personal networks.

At Endeavor, students attended workshops on marketing and branding, and completed projects that taught them how to promote clients across various media platforms. They also learned how Endeavor manages and markets celebrities like Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson and even had the chance to meet Miss USA. Over 50 employees across various departments volunteered to guide the fellows through the complexities of the business and help with their final projects.

By the end of the 4-day fellowship, everyone admired the fellows' poise and maturity. Dakota Ortiz, Director of Social Impact at Endeavor, "was blown away by everything the students had learned" and said the "high level of aptitude in creativity, professionalism, and communication" in their presentations were a testament to Minds Matter NYC.

The fellowship allowed the Endeavor employees to engage with the next generation. Nicholas Griggs-Dane, Senior Manager of Diversity and Inclusion and a Minds Matter NYC mentor, said the fellowships laid the necessary groundwork for the future of media: "We have a group of young people who will change the entertainment world because Endeavor is changing what future leaders can look like in our business."

I think I can do something for my community and myself if I know how to use media properly. By learning more about how media is created, I can help society.

> —**Abdur**, Endeavor Fellow, Class of 2021 Syracuse University, Class of 2025



\$50,000 AND ABOVE

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Despite unprecedented challenges, Minds Matter NYC served more students with more opportunities than ever before, ensuring that every student in the senior class was admitted to their best-fit college.

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Nelson Chikusa

Jaclyn Daily

Julia Drayson

AJ Getter

KJ Gill

Alex Hauer

Mike Jones

Yassine Kaouadji

Karishma Kapoor

Anisha Khosla

Shannon Kinney

Umber Kohli

Royce Kok

Eugin Lee

Jai Madan

Rachel Rahal

Vinay Rao

Mathew Roy

Andrew Saba

Nick Sehlinger

Darren Tan

Kelsey Warkentin

Arabella Watters

Ryan Weathers

Lucas Zheng

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Jay Castillo, Junior Mentoring

Nick Catero, College Advising

Mallory Cochran, Alumni Relations

Alexandra Cox, College Advising

Brittany Crowell, Senior Writing & Critical Thinking

April Daley, College Advising

Ashley Harms, Sophomore Test Prep

Andrew Hedlund, Junior Writing & Critical Thinking

Jennifer Hwang, Sophomore Mentoring

Jennifer Kim, Sophomore Writing & Critical Thinking

Tyler Kimble, Junior Mentoring

Mansi Kothari, Sophomore Mentoring

Julianne Lewis, Sophomore Writing & Critical Thinking

Rebecca Linde, Senior Writing & Critical Thinking

Jerrod MacFarlane, Sophomore Mentoring

Karli McMenamin, College Advising

Bill Miner, Student Recruitment

Mackenzie Murdoch, Junior Mentoring

Emmy Porter, Senior Writing & Critical Thinking

Sushil Raja, Sophomore Mentoring

Srinidhi Rajput, Junior Writing & Critical Thinking

Meenakshi Sharma, Summer Programs

Chris Quinlan, Alumni Relations

Melissa Sepe, Alumni Relations

Sarah Soulen, Junior Writing & Critical Thinking

Selina Sun, Sophomore Test Prep

Richard Thayer, Sophomore Writing & Critical Thinking

Colin Thibadeau, College Advising Karan Vazirani, Junior Mentoring

Mara Weinraub, Sophomore Writing & Critical Thinking

Linda Zhou, Summer Programs

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Jay Castillo, Junior Mentoring

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Andrew Hedlund, Sophomore Mentoring

Katie Jost, College Advising

Ratna Khanduja, College Advising

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Julianne Lewis, Junior Writing & Critical Thinking

Rebecca Linde, Senior Writing & Critical Thinking

Karli McMenamin, College Advising

Bill Miner, Student Recruitment

Kushal Modi, Junior Writing & Critical Thinking

Hannah Patridge, College Advising

Emmy Porter, Senior Writing & Critical Thinking

Chris Quinlan, Alumni Relations

Srinidhi Rajput, Junior Writing & Critical Thinking

Meenakshi Sharma, Summer Programs

Sarah Soulen, Junior Writing & Critical Thinking

Divya Talwar, Summer Programs

Richard Thayer, Sophomore Writing & Critical Thinking

Karan Vazirani, Junior Mentoring

Mara Weinraub, Sophomore Mentoring

Barry Wu, College Advising

Linda Zhou, Summer Programs

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Director of Programs

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Director of Volunteers & Community Engagement

Ashley Camacho Senior Development Manager

Wanufi Teshome

Community Engagement Manager

Dan Gonzalez

Programs Associate

Leo D. Martinez

Development Assistant

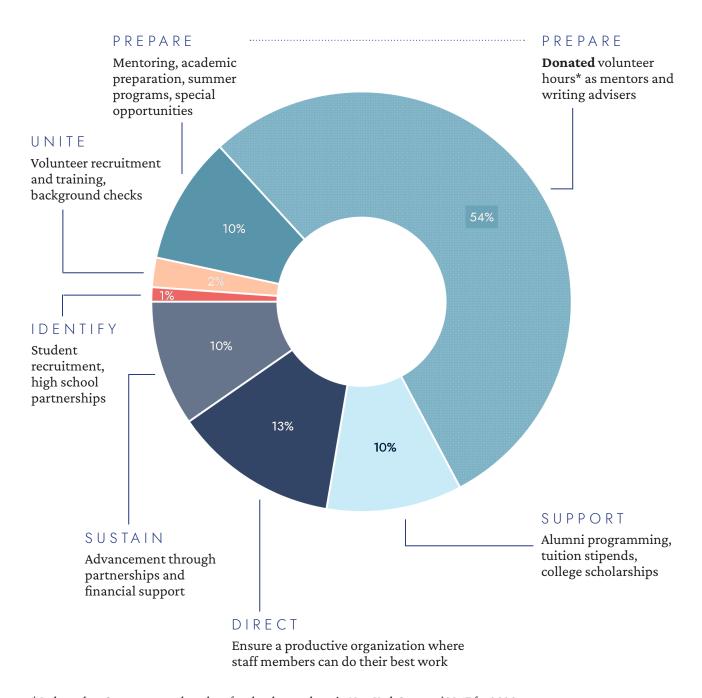
Jia-Ming Tuan

Programs Assistant

Minds Matter NYC would also like to extend its gratitude to former staff members Julia Loonin, Carly Smith, Prama Verma, and Eva Fall for their tireless commitment and dedication to our students and volunteers during the Covid-19 pandemic.

FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

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 (1:31) and a high volunteer to student ratio (2.5:1), Minds Matter NYC can focus on strategy and service while keeping costs low.



^{*} Independent Sector assesses the value of each volunteer hour in New York State as \$33.17 for 2020.



Minds Matter NYC is the founding chapter of Minds Matter, a national nonprofit organization that connects driven and determined students from low-income families with the people, preparation, and possibilities to succeed in college, create their future, and change the world.

Learn more at mindsmatternyc.org.