Greetings and gratitude from the Partners office, Room N-3 on the College Prep campus! We appreciate you all so much as we celebrate our 33rd year as a mission-aligned, community-facing organization that implements transformative programs to bolster academic achievement and improve access to educational opportunities for hard-working, underserved Oakland students.

Partners coordinates with over 20 Oakland Unified School District middle schools to implement its best-practice mentorship model during the school year and in the summer. Our consistency and reliability are critical in this educational context. In a report for The National Mentoring Partnership entitled, “The Mentoring Effect,” formally-structured mentoring models like that of Partners are highlighted as “an intervention strategy [that met] the needs of youth most at-risk. Structured relationships help young people stay on or return to a successful path when they may falter, and help them achieve key milestones on the path to adulthood, such as high school graduation and college completion.”

Our thematic approach to mentorship amplifies this work as we support our scholars and their families in their journey through middle school and beyond. The 2019 Summer Academy theme was “Student Voices,” which focused our students as they built agency and confidence.

Partners’ model is rooted in helping our high school and college mentors be the best they can be. Mentors receive highly-effective training to infuse their work with culturally-responsive teaching methodology. A touchstone is Zaretta Hammond’s book, Culturally Responsive Teaching and The Brain. Hammond depicts the mentor as “an ally and warm demander [who] moves the student along his/her quest toward independent learning, especially through the hard parts where he/she may have less cognitive stamina and an underdeveloped academic mindset.” And, our mentors do so with enthusiasm!

In this year’s Report on Giving, you are invited to share and celebrate The Partners Program’s successful outcomes. Ours is a recipe and commitment that is tried-and-true: building caring, attentive, and inspiring mentoring relationships at the grassroots level in collaboration with Oakland public schools. It is because of you—your kind generosity and your thoughtfulness—that Partners is transformative in the lives of our young scholars and their families. Thank you for making this all possible!

Let me hear you say… PARTNERS!!!

With gratitude,

Samuel F. Beltran
Director, The Partners Program
Our Programs

SUMMER ACADEMY (SA) 2019

Partners Summer Academy rocked its 33rd consecutive summer at College Prep from June 15 to July 13! 92 students from 20 different public middle schools in Oakland and the East Bay area committed themselves for 4 weeks to the Partners educational mentoring model that is transformative, rigorous, and totally fun! 6 college interns and 18 high school students served as mentor assistant teachers to deliver another summer filled with hard work and pure joy. Our middle school partners (Claremont, KIPP Bridge, Roses in Concrete, and Edna Brewer) were joined by a new slate of middle school partnerships: Roosevelt, Downtown Charter, Coliseum College Prep, and East Bay Innovation Academy. Our Summer Academy 2019 theme was Student Voices. At Partners, our scholars collaborate with their mentors and teachers every day to lift up their voices, empower themselves and build curiosity and grit from within. Summer Academy is a safe, nurturing academic space where scholars use their unique voices to tell their compelling stories and dream big. In 2019, Partners core curriculum included the analysis of texts in Language Arts; understanding complex word problems in Algebra; and developing student voice, self-advocacy and agency in Life Pathways, our social-emotional course. To balance our core classes, Partners scholars continued their STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math) strand: sketching and drawing in Visual Arts, movement and stretching in modern Dance class, and coding, web, and app design through a new collaboration with The Hidden Genius Project (learn more in the Spotlight section). The summer electives and clubs included Arts & Crafts, Science, Athletics, and Yearbook. The field trip destinations were a Science of Food, garden-to-table workshop for 7th graders; an Oakland downtown and uptown mural walk for 8th graders; and a knitting session by the Social Justice Sewing Academy for 9th graders in which the Partners scholars created quilt patches with equity and inclusion themes. As with every summer, the 9th graders visited the UC Berkeley Admissions Office for a campus tour and college information.

CYNTHIA GEDDES SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENT: JESSICA GUTIERREZ

This summer's award recipient represents the Partners triple crown: Partners scholar alum (2011), Partners afterschool and summer mentor (2012-2019) and College Prep alum (Class of 2016). Hailing from Bret Harte Middle School, Jessica Gutierrez began her Partners commitment as a middle school scholar in 2009. While attending College Prep, she served as a mentor tutoring Oakland middle school scholars weekly afterschool and during Partners Summer Academy. Jessica’s experience at Partners as both a scholar and a mentor laid the foundation for academic excellence and for her roadmap to college. Jessica now continues her journey as a senior at Williams College in Massachusetts as a Biology major. She came back to Partners as a college intern in summers 2017 and 2019. She plans to pursue her aspirations for social justice and educational equity in the field of college admissions upon her graduation from Williams in Spring 2020.

Jessica is the recipient for the 2019 Cynthia Geddes Service Award because she exemplifies the very best that we see in our Mentors:

- Dedication to the ideal of equity in education with a kind heart and thoughtful spirit
- Love and compassion as a path to social justice and a desire to make a difference
- Willingness to jump in at any moment and take on a job, a responsibility, a challenge
- Sound judgment and a strong moral compass to guide her every decision
ACADEMIC YEAR MENTORING (AYM) 2019

In 2018-2019, Partners Academic Year Mentoring (AYM) bolstered its best-practice, 1-to-1 afterschool tutoring model to double its academic impact, working at full capacity with 50 tutorials per semester for a total of 200 scholars annually. AYM also increased the number of mentors who volunteered at two mentoring venues on a weekly basis—the partner middle school site and at College Prep. Mentors traveled by school van weekly to KIPP Bridge in West Oakland and Claremont Middle School in Rockridge. Meanwhile, approximately 25 mentors tutored Partners scholars from 16 partner schools in outdoor spaces, classrooms, and the library on the College Prep campus. AYM mentors and scholars continued to use resources from Freckle Education, an online software platform that “differentiates instruction across Math, Language Arts, Social Studies, and Science.” Mentors built profound relationships and supported their Partners scholars with customized learning plans, as well as with their authentic care and undivided attention!

HIGH SCHOOL ADVISING (HSA) 2019

Starting in 2018-2019, Wednesdays officially became 8th grade program day! Partners 8th graders immersed themselves in high school type electives and standardized test prep. Scholars studied Latin in a unique collaboration with Aequora, an enrichment curriculum from the Paideia Institute, as well as participated in a standardized test prep course with Compass Education Group. Students received individualized tutoring sessions and practice tests to assess and identify their strengths and challenges for ISEE, SSAT, and HSPT. Partners High School Advising engaged each student’s family, including personalized conferences and support throughout the high school search experience. More and more schools now offer equity and inclusion information nights and financial aid resource workshops for 8th grade families of color in the Bay Area. Partners supported our families by joining them at these sessions and providing translation services during these workshops as needed. Partners guided families through the complicated “parent section” of private high school applications, as well as the financial aid application. For our scholars, Partners wrote letters of recommendation to high schools and held interview simulations to prepare our scholars for these unfamiliar scenarios in the high school application process. All along the way, Partners advocated for and supported our scholars. The outstanding news in Spring 2019—our 30 Partners scholars matriculated to these Oakland high schools as well as other top-notch public and independent high schools in the Bay Area: American Indian; Bentley School; Coliseum College Prep Academy; Cristo Rey; De La Salle; Deer Valley; Envision Academy; Moreau Catholic; Oakland Charter; Oakland High; Oakland Tech; Skyline; and St. Joseph Notre Dame. Go Partners!
Jim Gilliland, former chair of The Partners Board of Trustees and a champion of our scholars and mentors, was a thoughtful and caring man. Developed under his leadership, the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan has been our roadmap and inspiration, encouraging a more meaningful curriculum and program. Jim was tragically taken away from all of us much too soon.

With the leadership of current Partners trustee Vickie Gilliland, his wife, Partners has established the Jim Gilliland Legacy Fund to develop STEAM curriculum. STEAM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math, an integrated and interdisciplinary approach that encourages students to think more broadly about real-world technology and science problems. STEAM-related jobs are expected to grow by 16% in the US by 2024, and science and engineering professionals earn almost double the compensation of the median job in the US. Powered by the Legacy Fund in 2018-2019, Partners piloted technology workshops in software coding and design for all students to augment Modern Dance, Visual Arts, Theater Arts, and Digital Media courses. The Fund supported Partners’ collaboration with The Hidden Genius Project, an Oakland-based technology organization that “invest(s) in young black men, gives them access to technology training, and plugs them into an ecosystem of innovation and empowerment.”

Jim loved the arts and its impact on young people’s creative souls; now, The Jim Gilliland Legacy Fund will propel Partners scholars towards a promising future in STEAM areas. We appreciate your support of this important work!

The Jim Gilliland Legacy Fund at Partners

Mentors / Mentees

Student: Jonathan Griffin, 7th grade, Roses in Concrete
Mentor: Amrit Tandon College Prep ‘20

What’s your favorite thing about Partners?
Jonathan: I love coming to Partners because I see a lot of people I like. I have lots of friends at Partners and the mentors are really cool. We do fun activities where I get to see people I have fun with.

Amrit: I keep coming back to Partners because of the interactions I have with students. I love seeing how my mentee grows with my help and I get to meet a lot of people I would have no way of meeting otherwise.

What’s one thing you’ve gained through Partners?
Jonathan: Partners has helped me with my English and Math skills. I’ve also learned how to ask for help and communicate when something is hard.

Amrit: I’ve learned to convey information in multiple ways. I’ve also learned how great it feels to have an impact on someone’s life!

Student: Vashti Alegria, 8th grade, Claremont Middle School
Mentor: Guadalupe Vasquez, College Prep ‘21

What’s your favorite thing about Partners?
Vashti: I get to meet lots of new people and I really enjoy everyone who is around me at Partners. I also get help with whatever I need.

Guadalupe: I have so much fun spending time with Vashti every week! I love supporting her with her academics and life in general, and I see her growth week to week. This is my second year working with her, so I also get to see her growth year to year.

What’s one thing you’ve gained through Partners?
Vashti: I’ve learned to solve problems that are hard and have gained a lot of confidence in my abilities. I also learned how to advocate for myself.

Guadalupe: I’ve gained so much from my time at Partners. I now understand that there are many learning styles and how to adapt my teaching accordingly. Seeing Vashti’s growth showed me what programs like Partners can really do for students.
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Thank you,
Kate Freeland!
The Partners Program sends appreciation to long-time Board member, Kate Freeland, for her 14 years of leadership. Since 2005, Kate’s engagement, strategic thinking, and team-oriented approach have helped Partners grow into today’s dynamic, impactful organization. Kate is the mother of College Prep alumni, Rebecca Freeland ’00 and Julia Freeland Fisher ’03, who is married to Daniel Fisher ’03. With profound gratitude for being a champion for Partners, we wish Kate all the best!

PARTNERS IMPACT

$0  The cost to a family for their child to attend Partners for 3 years
90%  Percentage of Partners scholar retention
80%  Percentage of Partners core faculty retention
33  Number of years that Partners has been serving the Oakland community
75%  Percentage of Partners who qualify for federal free or reduced meals
100%  Percentage of students of color at Partners
24  Number of zip codes from Oakland area represented at Partners
10  Average class size at Partners Summer Academy
6  Number of Partners scholar alumni on Summer Academy 2019 Staff
Dear Friends of Partners,

We live in a time of unique global challenges. Political, economic, and social uncertainty have created worldwide upheaval. The problems are daunting and many feel powerless in the face of these events. This reaction is understandable: we seek to understand the world as we work to change the world. Fortunately, it often turns out that real, lasting change begins locally, within the culture and community in our own backyard.

The Partners Program focuses on a multi-year, in-depth commitment to a cohort of Oakland Unified School District middle school students. Our programs guide, educate, and motivate students to develop the study habits, learning skills, and drive to support their academic and social development. At Partners, our model is to go deep rather than to go big—a craft approach geared to make a lasting impact on 100 students’ lives each year since 1986. Partners’ peer-to-peer mentoring model is the root of our success; energy and engagement are palpable during both the Summer Academy and the Academic Year Mentoring. Year after year, meaningful relationships develop between middle school students, high school mentors, and dedicated teachers.

Thank you for making a gift to The Partners Program. Your generosity ensures that we continue to inspire and support a love of learning in generations of students.

And, you can change the world—starting right here in Oakland!

Sincerely,

Arpad Molnar
Chair, The Partners Program

A Note from Our Chair

The Partners Program at College Prep

The College Preparatory School
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Oakland CA 94618

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partners@college-prep.org

college-prep.org/partners

Throwback to the summer of 2000!