Horizons at Greene Street Friends School

2020 Impact Report

HORIZONS®

Greene Street Friends School











Inspiring Minds • Building Communities • Transforming Lives

Collective Work and Responsibility

Dear Friends,

2020 was a pivotal year for Horizons at Greene Street Friends School as we celebrated two milestones: reaching the half-way point to becoming a fully mature site and launching our first-ever fully virtual program: "Horizons@Home".

We began our programs by asking the following:

Can we...



...maintain student engagement online?



...ensure students still make gains in their reading & math skills?



...keep our relationships with families intact?

While the program struggled at times to find its footing in this virtual world, I am pleased to say that we found the answer to each of the questions above to be a resounding YES. Our students, parents/caregivers, and staff faced every obstacle to virtual learning with determination and enthusiasm, laying a solid foundation for growth.

As I celebrated Kwanzaa in December, I reflected on a principle that embodies the Horizons mission, Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility), which encourages us "To build and maintain our community together and to make our Brother's and Sister's problems, our problems and to solve them together." That is what Horizons at Greene Street Friends School achieved during a year of unprecedented challenges. We maintained a sense of community and togetherness, even as we were physically distant from one another.

Together we...

- *Provided a rich educational experience for **54** students in grades K-4*
- *Hosted **28** read alouds with a focus on BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) authors*
- *Delivered **296** produce boxes filled with fresh fruit, vegetables, grains, eggs and milk to Horizons families and Germantown neighbors*
- *Increased school-year support for students through an **8-week** tutoring program*
- *Helped **countless** students cope with racial stress in light of the nation's reckoning with systematic racial injustice*

In the report that follows, I have laid out the highlights of our 2020 programming. I appreciate your partnership and participation, and I look forward to all that we will accomplish collectively over the next year.

Sincerely,

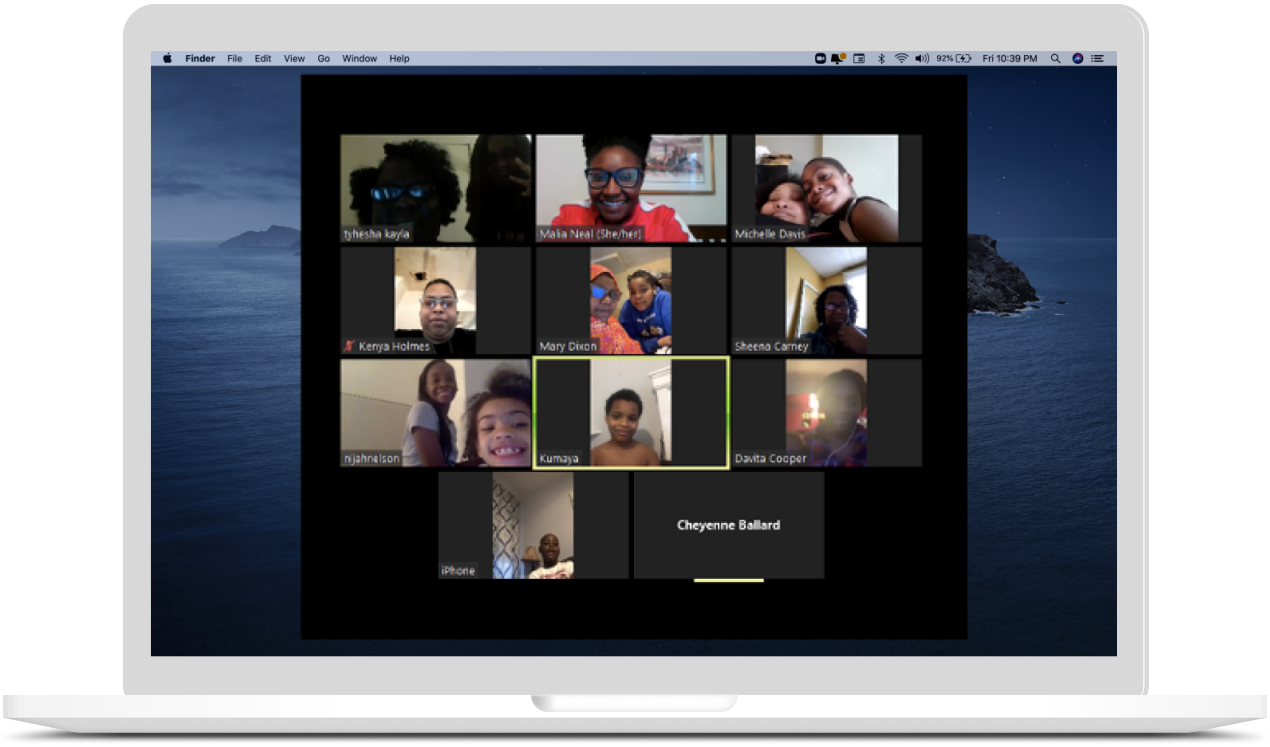


Malia Neal
Executive Director

Our Response

Sudden school closures placed unexpected burdens on many of our families. In an effort to understand the needs of our families and students, we hosted a series of town hall meetings that began in March at which parents/caregivers could vocalize their concerns. In total, three town hall meetings were held from March through July, and parents/caregivers completed two surveys.

In response to needs disclosed in our townhalls and surveys, we coordinated distribution of grocery gift cards for families in need of food assistance and sent academic materials home for all of our students so that they had supplemental learning tools. Our students and parents/caregivers alike were excited and grateful for these additional supports.



Town Hall Meeting May 6th, 2020

Why We Do This

The Need

Gaps in opportunity and access in Philadelphia are growing. The ways in which the pandemic has exacerbated already difficult conditions for students and families from historically underserved communities has been well documented. Lack of access to consistent internet connection, lost wages, and absence of in-person instruction have all contributed to home environments that cannot adequately help students to thrive academically.

In an article published in June 2020, global management consulting firm **McKinsey & Company** released the following data points:

- Economically disadvantaged students fare worse than their more privileged peers, as they are less likely to have access to high-quality remote learning, a conducive learning environment, "such as a quiet space with minimal distractions, devices they do not need to share, high-speed internet, and parental academic supervision".

- Data collected from Curriculum Associates, show that only 60% of economically disadvantaged students are regularly logging into online instruction as compared to 90% of high-income students. Online engagement rates are also lagging behind in schools serving predominantly Black and Hispanic students, as only 60% to 70% percent of students are logging in regularly.

- Due to remote learning, Black students may fall behind by 10.3 months, Hispanic students by 9.2 months, and low-income students by more than a year. We estimate that this would exacerbate existing opportunity gaps by 15 to 20%.

The Philadelphia School District spends...

33%

...less on education than wealthier districts in the state, creating one of the largest spending gaps in the Nation.

Pennsylvania has ***the third highest opportunity gap*** in the country, with Black and Brown students being far less likely to have access to high quality education .

- Research for Action

Opportunity Leads to Acheivement

For a long time, the racial and socio-economic disparities in academic achievement rates, often measured by standardized test scores, was referred to as an achievement gap. However, when the inequitable distribution of academic resources is examined, the achievement gap is better understood as an opportunity gap. Not all students have an equal opportunity to achieve academic success. The spending gap in school districts that disproportionally burdens students of color and economically disadvantaged students, places these students at an inherent deficit that lowers their chances of achieving academic success. The unequal distribution of academic resources results in an education system that systematically deprives marginalized students of the same academic opportunities.

Launching Horizons@Home

Although a day at Horizons looked and felt different this year, the emphasis on learning and engagement was still strong. Our "Around the World" theme took students on a six-week trip around the globe exploring new cultures, cuisines, and traditions.

- Students spent an hour each day in a "morning meeting" with their teachers and classmates reading, practicing math skills, relationship-building, and completing social studies lessons.
- Students spent an average of one hour each week working with a Literacy Specialist. Students were placed in small groups or individual sessions based on skill level. Some students who needed more remediation were able to spend up to two hours a week with the Literacy Specialist, and met four out of the five days per week.

- Students met for half an hour once a week with a Math Specialist.

- On average, students engaged in five and a half hours of instructional time (Morning Meeting, Math, Reading) each week.

SUMMER RECAP

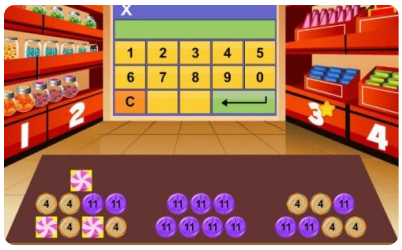


52 STUDENTS ENROLLED

Over the course of six weeks, Horizons scholars participated in 24 morning meetings with their homeroom teachers, engaged in weekly electives and had five virtual assemblies. Special thanks to the Briar Bush Nature Center, Squared Up Fitness, Hip Hop Fundamentals and City Love.

96 MATH & READING LESSONS

Scholars grew in their sight word recognition by an average of 16%, and answered 5, 606 math questions as well as 1, 598 language arts questions in IXL.



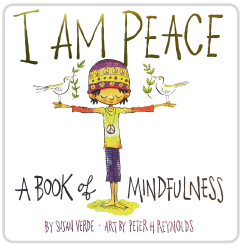


28 READ ALOUDS

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13 LESSONS ON SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

During the Mindfulness and LIfe Skills Weeks, students learned about emotions, coping strategies for stress and ways to handle feeling. We also took time to reflect on the Black Lives Matter movement and the importance of community.



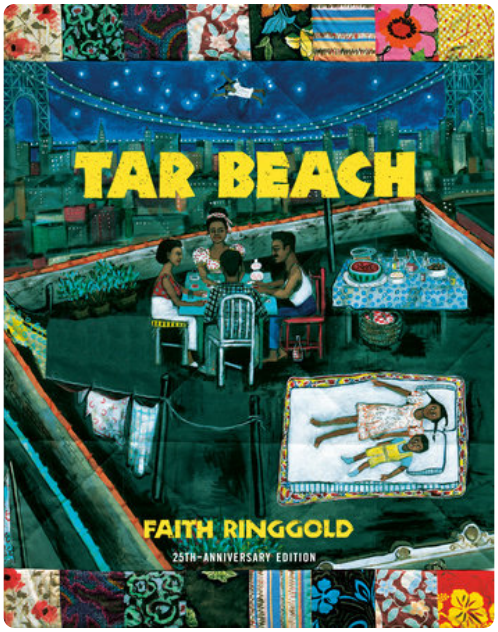


296 PRODUCE BOXES DISTRIBUTED

Farm-fresh fruits and veggies, as well as grains and milk, were delivered to Horizons families every week. In addition, donated boxes were made available for pick up at GSFS.

Daily Read Alouds

Each day at 12:30 p.m., students participated in Storytime led by a Horizons volunteer. In total, 24 volunteers led 28 read alouds. As we did in past years, we maintained a focus on diverse books, highlighting BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) authors and characters.



Tar Beach by Faith Ringgold

Special Asssemblies

We went on four virtual field trips where we were joined by musicians, dancers, and explorers that shared their work, all while looking through the lens of our **Around the World** theme.

Briar Bush Nature Center returned (virtually, of course) for a fifth year in a row! They shared some animals from around the world. The lineup included a Russian tortoise, a tarantula, a bearded dragon, a screech owl (pictured right), and an opossum.



Katie and Raymond the Screech Owl from Briar Bush Nature Center

Lehla Olson, the former Executive Director of Horizons at GSFS, shared her passion for Zumba, dance, and athletics with students by hosting a week-long special that got students moving, including an end-of-week dance party at a Friday assembly. The Around the World theme was again highlighted as she brought songs and dance from different cultures and parts of the globe.

A West Philly social justice music and education group, City Love, joined a Friday assembly and shared songs about empathy, Black joy, self-love and more with students.



The City Love founders

Hip Hop fundamentals shared break dance moves with students at an assembly. They combined social content and the history of hip hop with dance, teaching students how break dancing can be a form of expression.

Focus on Life Skills and Social-Emotional Learning

As usual, Horizons not only focused on addressing academic skills necessary for students to succeed, but also life skills. Students completed 13 different lessons addressing social-emotional learning (SEL). Many of these lessons focused on identifying feelings, reactions, self-care and more, while also addressing the COVID-19 pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement. The goal of Horizons at Greene Street Friends is to give students the necessary tools to not only just be prepared to deal with life challenges, but also be active members of the community.



Our lead kindergarten teacher, Sobeida, leading a lesson on mindfulness, kindness, and the Black Lives Matter Movement.

Focus on Nutrition

Each summer, Horizons makes nutritious meals available to our students daily each day throughout the program, with an explicit intention to curb food insecurity, alleviate financial obstacles for our families, and make healthy eating fun and accessible. This effort was particularly important during a time of added hardship due to the COVID-19.

To continue this effort, this summer we partnered with Mt. Airy Groceries, a local nonprofit with a mission to make wholesome food available to the community. Through this collaboration, produce boxes with farm-fresh fruit, vegetables, grains, milk and eggs were delivered to our families each week at no cost. The buy-one-get-one free model of Mt. Airy groceries also made free produce boxes available for our neighbors in Germantown; Each week, individuals could sign up to pick up a box of produce at our host school, Greene Street Friends School. Altogether, 297 produce boxes were distributed over the course of six weeks.



Weekly deliveries of produce ensured students/families had access to wholesome food.

Our produce box and meal programming was made possible through the generous support of Wellington Management Foundation and the Shoemaker Fund.

HORIZONS@HOME Partners

Horizons@Home would not have been possible without the help of both individual volunteers and community organizations. GSFS students, teachers, alumni, and caregivers as well as other community members helped to create a fun and fruitful summer experience for students, whether that be through organizing food and material bags in the GSFS gym, delivering bags to students' homes, or reading aloud to students during story time.

Special thanks to our host school, Greene Street Friends School, for another wonderful summer, and thanks to the following partners that made our program possible:

- *John Wister Elementary School*
- *Fresh Grocer*
- *Mt. Airy Groceries*
- *Joseph. E. Coleman Northwest Regional Library*

Saturday Academy

Due to COVID-19 and social distancing measures in effect, our Saturday Academy program was redesigned to meet the needs of our students and families virtually.

Starting in October 2020, we piloted an 8-week tutoring program led by our Literacy Specialists Sara and Jeewon. In small group and individual sessions, students worked on a range of reading competencies such as word building, fluency, and decoding.

Recap of Saturday Academy

Ways to Support

Volunteer

It is our hope that we will be back on campus at Greene Street Friends School next summer (2021), when our program will grow to serve 90 students in grades K-5. When we are back together, we will need volunteers in the following capacities:

- Field trip chaperone
- Free swim Friday chaperone (if swimming is feasible)
- Read aloud guest
- Weekly food and snack prep
- Classroom helper

We accept volunteers as early as 8th grade and provide documentation of service hours when needed.

Donate

Your support makes this program possible. Contributions of all sizes are impactful; a gift of $5 buys breakfast and lunch for a student, while $500 covers the cost of a weekly elective like theater or science. Your donation ensures that children in our community are supported in order to reach for their dreams and fulfill their full potential.

Donate Today

Please contact Malia Neal, mneal@greenestreetfriends.org, for more information about our giving program.

About Horizons at Greene Street Friends School

Horizons at GSFS is a six-week enrichment program intended to prevent "summer slide", a term that describes academic regression that occurs over the summer months. Students from historically underserved communities, like Germantown, are at a high risk for summer slide due to a lack of access to quality educational resources and experiences in the summer months.

Specifically designed for underserved youth, our rich curriculum focuses on reading, STEAM, swim instruction, and providing a safe, stimulating environment that helps students develop the academic competencies and life skills they need to succeed. While many students lose two to three months of academic growth during the summer break, students who participate in Horizons at GSFS grow tremendously—in many cases their literacy scores increase by two to three months. Nationally, 91% of Horizons graduates attend college or other post-secondary training.

HGSF became the 51st program nationally in the summer of 2016 with the launch of one Kindergarten cohort of 12 students from John Wister Elementary School, a Title 1 public charter school. Working together to identify and recruit students, Horizons at Greene Street Friends School and John Wister Elementary School have maintained a strong partnership over the last five years in support of student achievement in Germantown and across the City of Philadelphia.

Thank you for your continued support!

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