

HORIZONS AT DEDHAM COUNTRY DAY

9/30/15

Report To Our Donors

The 2015 Program Season was a tremendous success. We added another class of students and served 118 students in Prekindergarten – Grade Six. We adjusted curriculum and programming based on learnings from previous summers, adding breadth and depth. We established a presence on social media to share our stories. We added new fundraising events to our repertoire. And we achieved new fundraising milestones.





HORIZONS at Dedham Country Day

REPORT TO OUR DONORS

PROGRAM SUCCESSES

We successfully completed our summer program and are thrilled to have increased its size. A talented and dedicated group of teachers—many whom are returning teachers—collaborated with our Academic Coordinator to make essential curriculum adjustments to the program. We added a new testing dimension to the program to improve the measurement of our impact. Our most noteworthy accomplishments follow:

We increased the size of the middle school program and expanded student enrollment. Our first class of sixth graders, most of whom started the program as kindergarteners, is representative of our commitment to our long-term investment in our students. Student enrollment totaled 118 in summer 2015. With your help, we continue to grow our program through the middle school years, strive to maintain high student retention year after year, and invest in high quality programming to ensure a positive, long-term outcome for every student.

We successfully completed a six-week program despite lengthened public school schedules. Our goal is to prevent the academic decline that occurs during summer months, which requires careful planning and staffing. Horizons' planned start date was delayed by four days due to the

fact that public schools were in session through June 29th (to make up for too many snow days during winter 2015). To compensate, we added 30 minutes of academic time to Horizons' 26 program days: 8:30a - 3:30p daily. We hired talented teachers, completed our summer math and reading curriculum, swim instruction and enrichment activities, and administered testing to measure student progress.

An extensive recruiting process was conducted to identify top teachers who have experience with public school student populations. To attract strong teachers to our middle school program, we were pleased to offer a competitive salary while encouraging them to employ their own techniques to deliver instruction in MA Common Core tested content areas. Our project-based learning approach differs from public school methods and allows teachers to broaden their instructional practices in fun, engaging ways.

Two fifth and sixth grade math and ELA Lead Teachers were hired to enhance program instruction, to allow greater focus on specific content areas and ready students for the public school format. Rather than structuring the classrooms with a lead and assistant teacher (as we do in lower level grades), we hired two lead teachers each for math and English language arts. A primary goal of this program is to strengthen fundamental academic skills, which we achieve by employing strong teachers and an effective teaching model. With two middle school grades, four Lead Teachers taught half of each class simultaneously. Consistent with the model of school year classrooms but with very small class sizes, instruction was tailored to individual student needs. The range of academic abilities in each class was managed effectively by creating small groups. Likewise, swimming—core to the Horizons program—was taught through groups of similarly skilled students, to support abilities at all levels.

We added CHOICE afternoon activities, giving fifth and sixth graders exposure to choosing elective programs based on their interests. Two of our primary program goals are to improve student motivation to learn and raise children's expectations and aspirations. We offered middle school students the option to attend basketball, art or drama for an elective module held twice a week. A teacher commented that the choice periods were positively received, worthwhile and well liked by the students. The drama group performed at our Final Celebration for students and families in front of a very enthusiastic crowd.

We incorporated a themed program: THINK. To improve our students' social-emotional outcomes (which we measured for the first time), teachers used the acronym THINK to teach students responsibility for their words and actions. With a poster in each classroom to serve as a reminder, students were taught to consider that what they say and do impacts those around them. They are encouraged to consider: Is it True, Helpful, Inspiring, Necessary, Kind?

We added tennis to the sixth grade curriculum, offering students exposure to a sport many of them had never had the opportunity to try. Sixth graders embraced the new program addition with zeal and enjoyed lessons twice a week throughout the program.



Every class went on a field trip once a week, resulting in 32 field trips that broadened our students' horizons, literally. Our third graders were skippers for a day, helping to navigate a sailboat on Boston Harbor. Our kindergartners had a ball at Somerville's new Legoland, creating elaborate Lego structures in many shapes and sizes. Our fourth graders tried their hand at computer animation during their trip to the Museum of Science's Pixar Exhibit. Our fifth graders were engineers for a day at a visit to MIT Science Labs. They also conquered fears zipping through a ropes adventure course. Our fourth graders were bakers for a day at a funder's pie company. These are just a few of the fun, enlightening, culturally enriching and physically challenging trips we brought to our students.

Two inspirational speakers addressed our students. Olympic champion Dara Torres spoke to our students about her love of swimming and competition; she even shared an inspirational anecdote about how she, too, was once scared of the water. Students seemed delighted by her warm touch and impressed that she was a winning Olympian. Following Dara's presentation, many students stayed to meet and be photographed with her. Mark Fins, a Horizons donor, owner of New England Country Pies and founder of Diversified Biotech, spoke to our students about his childhood ambition of being an entrepreneur. He touched on his fear of failing and shared his passion to one day own his own business. Mark spoke to our students following class tours of his biotech manufacturing company and pie manufacturing plant.



In addition to our orientation sessions, our Family Night brought many families to our campus, where they had the opportunity to meet teachers and other families, and enjoy seeing their children thriving in the Horizons community. On the last day, our Final Concert and Celebration was extremely well attended by families—there was not an empty seat in the auditorium.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

We expanded opportunities for new and prospective funders to deepen their engagement in the program. We hosted a Visitors Day to encourage Board Members and prospective donors to see the program in progress. Visitors observed classroom, art, and swimming instruction, as well as STEM activities. As a result of donor Mark Fins' direct engagement and support, beginning fall 2015 we are able to offer to several Horizons students the opportunity to participate in

KUMON of Dedham, an international math and reading tutoring program. Currently we are in the process of selecting those students.

Communication with parents increased. Horizons at DCD puts an emphasis on parent engagement, which is critical to long-term student success in our program. The use of Constant Contact increased frequency of emails and newsletters to parents to share news of field trips and classroom activities, with the goal of deepening their involvement in our program. We strove to have more in-person contact with our families. As mentioned, we hosted a Family Night mid-program as well as several weekend orientations to introduce parents to our new Executive Director and provide new and returning families a program overview. We also hosted a very well attended, season-end celebration that featured student performances and a photo presentation that captured program highlights.

We hosted a Visitors Day, offering current and prospective funders the opportunity to observe the program in session firsthand and be a part of the community for a day. Going forward, we hope to use Visitors Day as a formal opportunity to introduce more local businesses and other prospective funders to Horizons. This year, a representative from Blue Hills Bank, a generous longtime and multiyear funder, was among the local businesses observing our program in action and offering continued support. Our volunteer partner from Beaver Country Day, enjoyed seeing her students as program staffers. We also welcomed representatives from Wellington Management Foundation, Dedham Public Schools, and Needham Bank.

We increased our social media presence, adding over 200 new Facebook Followers since April, posting daily to Facebook and starting Instagram. In order to educate our community about our program, we have invested in our online communications and social media outreach (including email) with the goals of deepening engagement across our network, creating interest and fundraising opportunity, and showcasing our thought leadership.

PARTNERSHIP BUILDING

Horizons at DCD could not achieve success without the partnership of Boston and Dedham Public Schools. We rely on both to identify students who can benefit most from Horizons. They are strong referral sources and value the contribution our program makes to both students and community. Dedham Public School Superintendent Michael Welch visited the program this summer and witnessed the progressive education environment firsthand. We actively recruit from two Dedham and one Boston area elementary schools.

We established a relationship with Beaver Country Day School as a feeder for our volunteer network. Volunteers are a critical element of our staffing. Identifying an organization that provides us an ongoing referral source of high-caliber volunteers simplifies our somewhat arduous summer recruiting process. In turn, we offer these high school students both the opportunity to learn from and contribute to our high quality program, as well as the ability to earn required academic volunteer service hours. We also standardized our training protocol and held a required training session, led by a skilled board member.

Our volunteer photographer—a first for Horizons—captured the spirit of the program in photos and video.

The Rodman Ride for Kids is not only a program funder, but also a vehicle for identifying new funding sources. In a new partnership, Rodman Ride for Kids will provide a 6% match when Horizons meets our \$25K fundraising goal. (We are pleased to share that we have surpassed our 2015 fundraising goal!)

We became a first-time benefit charity to the Family Gratitude 5K Turkey Trot, an annual Thanksgiving Day event sponsored by Ripples of Hope. This event draws the Dedham community out for a family fun run and offered us new exposure to members of the local community.

We collaborated with Horizons National on Horizons Giving Day, a first-time coordinated online fundraising effort that will provide an annual social media opportunity to drive up donations and foster unity across the organization. Run by our national organization, this annual online giving event is held near the time of our spring fundraiser, which is challenging. Still, going forward we hope to gear this event towards targeted communities of donor prospects who might have not given to Horizons before.

FUNDING UPDATES

Fundraising is a priority. Horizons at DCD has a strong track record for raising funds in advance of the summer program, as the Board takes an appropriately conservative approach to the budget. Historically much of the funding has been derived from individuals through events. As the annual fiscal demands increase to meet the needs of an ever-growing program, a diversification of revenues has become critical. More fundraising meetings have been held and many institutional funding requests have been submitted. Additionally, we are developing a corporate donor strategy, with a focus on local area businesses.

We were awarded the following from new and renewed funders:

Blue Hills Bank Foundation - \$16,667 (2nd year of 3-year grant)

City of Boston - \$500

Music Drives Us - \$5,000

Clipper Ship Foundation - \$5,000

The Rands Foundation - \$25,000

Diversified Biotech - \$5,000

Wellington Management Foundation - \$60,000

Horizons National - \$11,000

Events have been a tremendous success for us, thanks to you, our donors, and to those you introduce to the Horizons at DCD community. We participated in two new partner events as a first-time benefit charity: Rodman Ride for Kids and Family Gratitude 5K Turkey Trot.

Reinvented again, this year's spectacular 2014 Winter Classic event was a fun and exciting evening. This Tennis and Poker extravaganza featured a mixed-up doubles competition with random pairing, an exhibition among world-class pros, and wagering for fun.

Horizons Giving Day, a coordinated online giving effort driven by our national office, helped attract new donors and offers us a future opportunity to develop a local fundraising strategy around an online giving event.

Finally, the 2015 Spring Splash Bash, our annual gala, offered an opportunity to educate prospective and current funders about our program over the course of an extraordinarily lovely evening. An enormous undertaking by our Board and Planning Committee, this exciting yearly event is the largest gathering of longtime Horizons at DCD supporters and serves as a lively launch of the upcoming summer program season.

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Capacity-building is key. Horizons at DCD attracted two no-cost opportunities to build the capacity of the organization: 1) 2015 BU Link Day offered a day-long consult with a team of Boston University Nonprofit MBA students to tackle an organizational challenge; 2) BU on Board provided two non-voting MBA student board members for calendar 2015, which offered Horizons access to young minds and perspectives.

We invested in a Development Associate with a marketing background and experience with nonprofits. She has put in place a social media strategy to engage and broaden our donor network and is charged with developing marketing communications tools to reach more individual and institutional donors, build program awareness and showcase program credibility. She is also responsible for growing our marketing and communications efforts and developing corporate and institutional outreach.

In addition to the many resources offered by our dedicated Board, we are continuing to build community partnerships and accessing the resources offered by our corporate interests. For example, our local business and partner program visits produced additional donor engagement and elicited additional funding support.

Teachers shared learnings with the Executive Director through group and one-on-one meetings. Team is valued here at Horizons. Teacher input and feedback was solicited in the planning stages and throughout the program to collaborate on program strategy. Horizons at DCD has a high retention rate for teachers and takes pride in being selective in our educators.

OUTCOMES AND MEASUREMENT

We constantly strive to add quantitative and qualitative measurement to our program and improve our curriculum rigor. We evaluate program success in a handful of key areas and dimensions.

Testing was conducted pre- and post-program to enable proper measurement of skills development. We completed testing in order to measure student progress in: 1) reading; 2) math; 3) swimming; and 4) social-emotional outcomes.

Attendance rates were strong. In Summer 2015 we achieved a 93% daily attendance rate, as well as 88% student retention from the previous summer.

Reading and math testing was conducted pre- and post-program to isolate program impact. Horizons students in grades 3-6 gained an overall average of 2.0 months in math and 2.0 months in reading skills over the summer, while students who performed below grade level at the start of the program gained an average of 3.8 months in math and 2.2 months in reading skills. Students in prekindergarten-grade 2 were evaluated only for language fluencies, and we are pleased to share that, on average, all grades increased their skills and many students surpassed the benchmark. Typically low-income children without Horizons slide back two to three months over the summer.

For the first time, we measured student social-emotional outcomes through the holistic student assessment PEAR. This jointly funded Harvard University and McLane Hospital survey enables us to more effectively assess students' needs and manage behaviors, to maximize learning in the classroom and foster socialization among peers.

To benchmark Horizons' performance, Horizons participated in The Boston After School and Beyond Summer (BASB) Measurement Project for the second year in a row. A full-day observation

by a BASB volunteer allowed Horizons to be compared to other similar Boston-based summer learning programs. In addition, student surveys were administered. Results are pending compilation.

Swim assessments measured student improvements by conducting pre- and post-swim skills tests. Daily swim instruction produced 3 advanced swimmers. 40 students achieved deep-water skills, 38 ended the season with beginning swim skills...and our hope is that the remaining 37 will build on their confidence and achieve a higher swim skill level next program season!

A Horizons student enrolled at Dedham Country Day. A noteworthy milestone that truly underscores the positive outcomes of our program: Stephanie Abrego Diez, a seventh grader in fall 2015, was accepted as a new scholarship student to Dedham Country Day.

We met our goal of maintaining diversity among our students. As we admit new students to the program, we strive to balance ethnicities and the male/female ratio. Our demographic constitution remains relatively consistent from year to year: 28% Caucasian, 31% Hispanic, 35% African American; 52% male and 48% female; 45% Dedham residents and 55% residents of neighboring communities (primarily Boston).

REFLECTIONS

Some of our most poignant learnings came directly from our students and their families. Teachers, support staff and volunteers provided critical feedback that resulted in real-time programmatic tweaks. Beyond the data, we learned by listening and observing:

We help spur our students' interest and passion in reading. We employed Read Aloud as a strategy to make reading fun and alter student attitudes about reading. At the program start, one teacher conducted a survey to assess student views on reading. The teacher asked, "How do you feel about reading out loud in front of others?" Many students responded that they didn't like it. By the end of the program, four of our fifth grade students consistently volunteered to read aloud and almost all students in the class talked about books they had read in our program. We have many similar anecdotes. We know we make a difference not only in our students' education—but also in fostering a passion for reading. Striving to impact student attitudes towards subjects and activities in which they were not previously engaged is one of the qualitative, untestable components of the program.

Parents and students alike value the Horizons Extended Day Program. Working parents appreciate an additional two hours in childcare supervision of a daily average of 35 enrollees, where students of all program ages enjoyed swimming and playground activities with children from other grades in the program. Teachers noted that they enjoyed interacting with other kids and older students liked serving as role models to their younger counterparts.

Fifth and sixth graders really enjoyed choosing a basketball, art or drama elective twice a week. Our art and drama teachers both recounted various students saying how much they had wanted to try art and theatre. Our basketball teacher reported that several students expressed interest in trying out for a basketball team.

Students were pleased with the abundance and quality of food, which is not always readily available in their everyday lives. When asked about some of their favorite parts of the program, our

economically disadvantaged students often cite the colorful food choices as something they look forward to at Horizons. We provide a healthy breakfast, lunch and a snack in the course of their seven-hour day.

Our program helps students meet their public school summer reading requirements. We offer students some time to do assigned summer reading, working in partnership with their schools to ensure that they complete it. Not only do we improve students' reading competency, we increase their desire to read.

LOOKING AHEAD

This year, Horizons will focus on revenue diversification, solidifying our plan for program expansion into high school, and generating increased public awareness of Horizons' growing community impact.

On a personal note, the past year has been an incredible experience for me, and I am honored to lead this impressive organization. I am grateful for the longtime commitment of our generous, talented, and most of all, dedicated Board members. Observing our teachers, volunteers and other staff members work together seamlessly is powerfully rewarding, as I witness the difference they make in our students' lives. I am thankful for the interest and support from local businesses and school partners, as we collaborate to enhance the lives of these low-income children and their families, and thus build stronger communities. Most of all, I am humbled and inspired by our students, who learn to face their challenges and, through Horizons, forge a path on which they can succeed.

I look forward to your input and continued involvement in Horizons at DCD.

With tremendous gratitude,

Caryl Lattof



TAKE ME BACK.

-- by Alysia, Grade 6

Take me back to before I knew what worry was.

Before I moved to Veterans Road.

*Back when all I cared about was my goldfish and my family, and every day was an
adventure.*

*When I just giggled and tried my best to sing along to my grandparents' Greek songs,
never caring what I sounded like.*

*When I sloppily wrote my name on the wall, never fearing consequences, though I was
usually later scolded.*

When visiting my cousin was a weekly thing, and we were the closest of friends.

Back when I had no school and no homework.

When I never cared about what I wore, or if someone would think I was weird.

Before I had any fears at all, and the world was my personal playground.

*When age didn't matter to me, and my sister gladly hung out with older and younger
kids.*

When every strange area was just a new place waiting to be explored.

When every argument with my sister ended in a tickle fight.

Back when the only other thing I could ever want was a bunny.

When I didn't care about money at all.

*Although I loved my childhood back then, there are still more memories to make, and
more trips to take. And I won't leave those memories unmade!*