Minds Matter 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.
A Message from Executive Director Reed Harrison

2022-2023 was a great year for Minds Matter Portland and our students. I want to offer a tremendous thank you to our students for bringing their ambition, enthusiasm and commitment to Minds Matter each Saturday. I also want to thank our volunteers and donors for their generosity in the myriad ways they contribute to our students' academic and professional success. Below are a few highlights from the year:

- We were able to put the pandemic largely in our rear-view mirror and had all of this year’s sessions in person, except for one snow day!
- We are sending 27 students to on-campus summer programs, the most since before the pandemic.
- Our graduating Seniors are receiving a combined $850,000 in scholarship aid, covering more than 92% of their tuition costs on average. This includes three Seniors who received Ford Family Foundation scholarships of up to $40,000 per year to attend Oregon Colleges.
- Danielle and I completed our first ten months as Minds Matter employees, which affords us the ability to make our students, volunteers, and programming our top priorities.
- We hosted five panel discussions with professionals sharing their experiences within the fields of education, medicine, engineering and business.
- We welcomed three Minds Matter alums, who are helping with mentoring, grant-writing, website design and more!

We are excited to get back to our Saturday sessions starting in September, when we have a group of 18 new Sophomores starting their Minds Matter journeys.

Have a terrific summer!

-Reed Harrison, Executive Director
**Summer Programs**

Minds Matter Sophomores and Juniors are heading out across the country to attend summer programs where they will experience life on a college campus and study a broad range of topics. Here’s where they’re headed and what they will be studying.

**2023 Summer Program Destinations**

- Boston University - Boston, MA
  - Computer Science
- Brandeis University - Waltham, MA
  - An Inside Look at Civil Lawsuits (Virtual)
- Brown University – Providence, RI
  - Therapeutic Innovation: From Discovery to Commercialization
- California College of the Arts - San Francisco, CA
  - Graphic Design
- Emory University - Atlanta, GA
  - Introduction to Artificial Intelligence and Computational Decision Making
- Georgetown University - Washington, D.C.
  - NSLC: Law & Advocacy
- Harvard Secondary School Program - Cambridge, MA
  - Intensive Introduction to Computer Science (Virtual)
- Marist College - Poughkeepsie, NY
  - Pre-Health Program
- Michigan Technological University - Houghton, MI
  - Medical Physiology
- Notre Dame/Holy Cross College - Notre Dame, IN
  - Vision Saints and Scholars
- School of the Art Institute of Chicago - Chicago, IL
  - Alternative Comics and Graphic Novels
- Stanford Jazz Workshop - Stanford, CA
  - Jazz Institute
- Syracuse University - Syracuse, NY
  - Pre-Med and Health Professions
- The School of the New York Times - New York, NY
  - Public Policy and Activism
- UCLA Summer Discovery - Los Angeles, CA
  - Leadership and Entrepreneurship
- University of Chicago - Chicago, IL
  - Life in the Universe and the Laws of Physics
- University of Michigan - Ann Arbor, MI
  - Math and Science Scholars
- University of Oregon - Eugene, OR
  - SAIL program
- Wake Forest University - Winston-Salem, NC
  - Business Institute
- Yale University - New Haven, CT
  - Young Global Scholars: Literature, Philosophy and Culture
Minds Matter Field Trips

City Hall and Oregon Historical Society
Students and volunteers visited the Oregon Historical Society and City Hall, where we were welcomed with a message from Ted Wheeler and over 30 city employees who shared their stories and insights.

Ropes Course
In June, a group of students and volunteers spent some time outside their comfort zones up in the trees on a local high ropes course.

PLU Visit
A group of Juniors and Seniors visited Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, WA, where they toured campus, met with admissions officers, and had lunch with six Minds Matter alums currently enrolled at PLU. One piece of advice offered by an alum - "Always at least open and look at each assignment as soon as you receive it. Even for just one minute."
Business Panel Visits
Minds Matter Portland

Four business professionals visited a Minds Matter Portland session in April to talk about their academic and career paths. Students asked questions about college and the day-to-day of their careers. One student posed the following: "Sometimes we think of finance as an industry that isn't totally moral. Have you had a situation when you had a chance to do something immoral that would make you lots of money, and you decided not to?" In response, panelists shared the challenges of finding what you truly enjoy without being drawn into something that might only make you a lot of money.

Here are a few other comments shared by the panelists:

"Any job you ever have can be valuable. Ask yourself what you can learn from it."

"Failure actually is an option in business. And I've had lots of them. You need to constantly be asking how to manage your failures."

"The top question on my mind as a business leader is, how will I be able to keep my best people?"

From left:
Greg (current volunteer)
Mike (Board member)
Ted (longtime supporter)
Briana (former volunteer)
Year-End Events

Graduation
We hosted our largest Senior graduation ever, with 150 people present to celebrate the past and future accomplishments of this year’s 16 graduates. Mentors and students shared stories and reflected on the three years they’d spent together to build a path to college.

Soiree
We hosted our 15th Minds Matter Portland Jazz Soiree in May. It was our largest and most successful soiree to date, with over 85 attendees and more than $89,000 raised to support our students. We had a fun evening of food, music, drinks, and getting the chance to hear inspiring words from four Minds Matter students and alums. We are so appreciative of the generosity of our community and for the many people who have been contributing to our organization since it started in 2006. If you weren’t able to join but still want to contribute, see the details on the last page of this newsletter.
My name is Amaya, and I was a part of the Minds Matter class of the 2019 cohort. Three weeks ago, I graduated from Pitzer College with an honors degree in Organizational Studies with a Spanish minor. Being a first-generation, low-income student was one of the most difficult, yet most rewarding things I have ever done. There are so many barriers put into place that hold us back from achieving a college education from navigating the application process, financial aid, understanding what it's like to live and care for yourself away from home while studying, and taking in the dynamics and expectations of higher education. But what is so special, is that as Minds Matter students, we did not have to go through that process alone. Minds Matter empowers resilient, intelligent, and passionate students to overcome these access barriers through intentional mentorship, opportunity, and guidance. Every Saturday for three years I was surrounded by other driven, high-achieving students who were bound to do amazing things and supported by my mentors, college counselors, program directors, and more volunteers. Sometimes it takes others to see the potential in you, to help you plant and water your seed, reinforcing that it is going to grow, and blossom so big and so brightly. That's what Minds Matter did for me. It's what Minds Matter Portland does for their students. I think that one of the hardest parts about approaching and navigating the higher education system as a first gen student is the impostor syndrome. Questioning if you deserve to be there, if you're worthy, if you're really qualified. Minds Matter bridged that access gap for me, I was able to study at UC Davis and Brown's pre-college programs at 16 and 17, understand what a college campus and coursework felt like for the first time, what it was like to be away from home, strengthen my critical thinking and financial literacy skills, receive help with test prep, getting to hear the journeys and experiences of other professionals from various industries, and learn how to swim! Overall, I was uplifted by a community that wanted to see me succeed. Who believed in me. There were so many times when I thought I wasn't good enough, or I wouldn't be able to achieve or even imagine a life where I'd be able to go to college. But when a community like Minds Matter Portland believes in you, invests in you, you understand and you know that you are more than qualified, more than worthy of achieving your dreams. Throughout my years in undergrad, I served as the vice president of diversity through my school's student senate, I was a resident assistant, I sat on the executive board of our Black student union, I was a study abroad fellow, I spent five months doing research and teaching in Ecuador, and was awarded a Fulbright grant to Mexico. Having access to higher education completely changed my life. I was able to lead research studies, discover ample career opportunities, and learn from the most amazing professors, organizers, and leaders. Tonight we celebrate the tremendous impact of the Minds Matter Portland program. This is a very strong and connected community that champions our success. Thank you to all of you for showing up tonight, and for supporting the life-changing mission of Minds Matter Portland. And to the class of 2023, we are all so proud of you, and you deserve to celebrate yourself. Don't ever let anything, or anyone try to convince you that you aren't worthy or deserving of the spaces you occupy. Be intentional about surrounding yourself with community, go after what you want with the same drive and determination that it took you to complete this program, and don't forget to ask for help when you need it. Thank you!

Photo: Amaya at Pitzer College graduation with her Minds Matter mentor
2023 Minds Matter Portland Graduate Destinations

Allegheny College
Columbia University
Cornell University
Gonzaga University
Lehigh University
Portland State University (2)
Reed College
Skidmore College
University of Nevada Las Vegas
University of Oregon (2)
University of Portland
University of Southern California
Whitman College

2023 Minds Matter Portland Graduates were accepted to an impressive list of colleges and universities as well!

Albright College
Amherst College
Arizona State University
Bates College
Belmont University
Clark Atlanta University (2)
College of the Holy Cross
Drexel University (2)
Franklin and Marshall College
George Fox University
Gettysburg College
Hampton University
Howard University
Immaculata University
Kent State University
Lewis and Clark College
Louisiana State University
Lycoming College
Marist College
Mercy College
Oregon Institute of Technology
Reading, PA
Amherst, MA
Phoenix, AZ
Lewiston, ME
Nashville, TN
Atlanta, GA
Worcester, MA
Philadelphia, PA
Lancaster, PA
Newberg, OR
Gettysburg, PA
Hampton, VA
Washington, D.C.
East Whiteland Township, PA
Kent, OH
Portland, OR
Baton Rouge, LA
Williamsport, PA
Poughkeepsie, NY
Dobs Ferry, NY
Klamath Falls, OR
Oregon State University
Pacific Lutheran University
Rowan University
Seattle University
Southern California Institute of Architecture
Stephens College
Temple University
The University of North Carolina
Tuskegee University
University of Arizona
University of North Carolina
University of Rochester
Ursinus College
Warner Pacific College
Washington College
Washington State University
Washington State University
Woodbury University
Xavier University
Corvallis, OR
Parkland, WA
Glassboro, NJ
Seattle, WA
Los Angeles, CA
Columbia, MO
Philadelphia, PA
Charlotte, NC
Tuskegee, AL
Tucson, AZ
Greensboro, NC
Rochester, NY
Collegeville, PA
Portland, OR
Chestertown, PA
Pullman, WA
Vancouver, WA
Burbank, CA
Cincinnati, OH
We asked Minds Matter Class of 2016 Graduate Karina Paul for an update on her career path.

**MM:** Where are you in your academic and professional journey right now?

**Karina:** I work as an oncology/medical-surgical Registered Nurse at Houston Methodist The Woodlands. As well, I am pursuing a Master of Science in Nursing - Family Nurse Practitioner studies at UTHealth Cizik School of Nursing in the heart of Texas Medical Center. I am anticipating graduating at the end of Summer of 2023.

**MM:** How did Minds Matter and your mentors support or prepare you for this path?

**Karina:** I have received incredible life coaching from my mentors. They encouraged me to stay open-minded, take advantage of opportunities, and reminded me of playtime in between. They were also available to help me write college essays, revise application packets, and reference scholarship applications, especially in last-minute requests. To this day, I stay in touch with one of my mentors, Nancy! I am so thankful to have her in my life. I am also grateful for others who keep Minds Matter going.

**MM:** What are you excited for in the next few years?

**Karina:** I look forward to finishing my master's degree in nursing and starting my new career as a provider. It's going to be a big change!

**MM:** Have you found opportunities for mentoring or tutoring in your communities?

**Karina:** While not in a formal role, I mentor nursing assistants who aspire to become nurses, doctors, and PAs, and nurse practitioners. I emphasize the importance of education and the opportunities it can provide. I also remind them of resources available through employers, communities, or schools.

**MM:** What's one piece of advice you have for the new class of Sophomores starting Minds Matter in September?

**Karina:** Prioritize self-care early and make it a habit. Get 7-8 hours of sleep, limit processed foods, move your body, and manage stress. You will thank yourself later.
Minds Matter Portland Summer event

Minds Matter Portland Community picnic - students, alums, volunteers, and donors - join us for an afternoon of relaxation, catching up, food and games. Saturday, July 23rd, 4-6pm at St. Andrew Nativity School, 4925 NE 9th Ave, Portland OR 97212

Interested in joining our team?

We are always looking for more volunteers! Opportunities on Saturdays include 1:1 mentoring, small group tutoring, or helping with Saturday operations (lunch, etc.). For those interested in helping but not able to commit to Saturdays, we need help with finance/budget work, student recruiting, grant-writing, donor engagement, event planning, marketing, social media, and more.

If you are interested in volunteering or learning more, please reach out to volunteer@mindsmatterportland.org. You can also apply directly on our website.