



Impact Report 2024



We advance educational equity by building long-term partnerships with students, families, communities, and schools to create experiences outside of school that inspire the joy of learning.

The Horizons Model

Horizons Greater Philadelphia (HGP) partners with four sites to offer a six-week, tuition-free summer program designed to address educational disparities. Through a dynamic and engaging learning environment, Horizons nurtures students’ curiosity and passion for learning. Each site provides a supportive space where students participate in a wide range of academic, artistic, and STEM-based activities that build confidence and promote growth during their critical early years.

Beyond the summer, students have the opportunity to engage in year-round programming that ranges from weekly after-school sessions to quarterly family engagement events. This continuity strengthens their connection with Horizons teachers, who support them from kindergarten through 8th grade.

Core Program Components

- Rigorous academic instruction in literacy, math, project-based learning, and social-emotional learning
- A minimum of 90 minutes of swim instruction per week
- Enrichment activities in subjects like art, music, STEM, karate, and yoga
- Nutritious meals, including free breakfast, lunch, and snacks
- Field trips, guest speakers, and special events to expand students’ learning experiences
- A long-term commitment to student success

Our Host Site and Partner Schools

Each Horizons host site collaborates with 2-3 local public or charter schools that recommend students for enrollment beginning in kindergarten. This partnership fosters strong connections between school leadership and the Horizons program, ensuring continuous support for students and their families throughout the year. Host sites are listed in blue, while their partner schools appear in green.

The Episcopal Academy (1)

- Ardmore Avenue Elementary (2)
- Frederick Douglass Mastery Charter School (3)
- Overbrook Educational Center (4)

Cristo Rey Philadelphia High School (5)

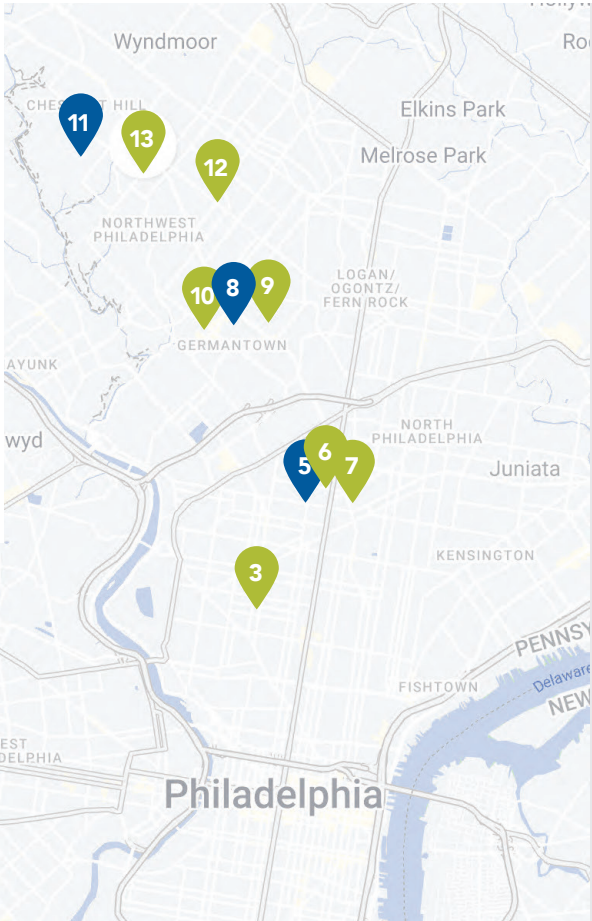
- Kenderton Elementary School (6)
- Mary McLeod Bethune Elementary School (7)

Greene Street Friends School (8)

- John Wister Elementary
- Mastery Charter School (9)
- Mastery Charter School Pickett Campus (10)

Springside Chestnut Hill Academy (11)

- Eleanor C. Emlen Elementary School (12)
- Henry H. Houston Elementary School (13)



Letter from our Board Chair and Executive Director

To Our Generous Community,

2024 was an incredible year for Horizons Greater Philadelphia, and it was all possible because of you. Your generosity and partnership helped us launch new initiatives and make a real impact in the lives of 392 students from kindergarten through 8th grade.

At Horizons, we believe in supporting students beyond the classroom. Through our network of community-driven programs in the Philadelphia area, we partner with public or charter schools to provide a well-rounded, nine-year journey that nurtures every student’s academic, emotional, and physical well-being. With the dedication of our teachers, staff, and volunteers, we’ve built something truly special.

In collaboration with our site partners at **The Episcopal Academy, Cristo Rey Philadelphia High School, Greene Street Friends School, and Springside Chestnut Hill Academy**, students once again had the chance to grow academically, socially, and physically—through math, reading, swimming, field trips, and plenty of fun.

This past year, we launched two exciting regional initiatives: our first-ever **Regional Professional Professional Development Day**, which brought together our site teams to strengthen student development, and our **Inaugural Regional Swim Meet**, giving our student swimmers the opportunity to showcase their skills and celebrate their progress.

We are also incredibly honored to share that Horizons Greater Philadelphia was recognized with a **2024 GSK IMPACT Award**, alongside nine other outstanding organizations, for our work in building a stronger Greater Philadelphia region. The GSK IMPACT Awards celebrate nonprofits that demonstrate exceptional achievements and best practices in creating a healthier, more thriving community.

As you read through this report, we hope you’ll feel the same joy and pride we do in seeing these young scholars thrive. We owe so much to our four incredible host schools and their communities, whose support ensures the success of our students. We’re also deeply grateful for the families who trust us with their children’s growth and the dedicated teachers, staff, and volunteers who pour their hearts into this work.

Most importantly, **thank you**. Your generosity fuels every achievement, every milestone, and every dream our students chase. Because of you, we’re not just sustaining this program—we’re looking ahead to an even bigger vision. Our goal? To support **1,000 students across the Philadelphia region** in the coming years.

We can’t do this without you. Whether you’ve been with us since 2020 or just joined our mission, you are part of the Horizons family. Let’s keep building, growing, and expanding together.

With gratitude,

Jen Weikert

Jen Weikert
Executive Director

Beth C. Hanssens

Beth C. Hanssens
Founding Board Chair

Seeing Into the Future at Horizons

At Horizons, we believe that every student's potential is limitless, and their dreams shape the future of our communities. In this section, we spotlight the aspirations of two remarkable Horizons students. Their career goals reflect not only their personal ambitions but also the transformative power of education and opportunity. As they look ahead, their stories serve as an inspiration—a testament to the impact of Horizons in nurturing talent and fostering bright futures.



"Future Teacher"

"When I grow up, I want to be a teacher."

For Mala, a bright and curious Kindergartener with Horizons at Greene Street Friends School, this year has been filled with exciting firsts. Through the support of Horizons, she's not only discovered a love for learning but has also experienced opportunities to shape her future. From learning how to swim, embarking on diverse field trips, and making new friends, Mala has been able to explore her world with wonder and confidence. With her mind made up, we look forward to seeing Mala teach the next generation of young leaders!



"Future Nurse"

"Next year, I plan to go to a high school that focuses on health sciences because it will help me in the future to work in the medical field. I want to be a nurse."

Recent 8th grade graduate Sahiyah has not only grown academically during her summers at Horizons but has also built meaningful connections and discovered the power of perseverance. Through Horizons, she's met new people, expanded her perspective, and gained the confidence to pursue her dreams. We congratulate Sahiyah on her graduation from Horizons at Greene Street Friends School, and wish her all the success in her future medical career and beyond!



Support our work to bring Horizons to more students in Philadelphia by making a gift today!

HGP fosters community across all four Horizons sites, while each site builds local support. Site Director of Horizons at SCH, Dr. Kenyatta Patterson, emphasizes, "Community support is vital—our program wouldn't exist without the generosity and investment of donors. This support extends beyond funding; it's a commitment to our neighborhoods." The SCH community actively engages by educating parents, organizing volunteers, and hosting book and supply drives.



Our Impact

392

Total students served

85%

Student attendance rate

74%

Student retention rate

24

Field trips organized

91

Staff members

6,870

Swimming lessons provided

22,400

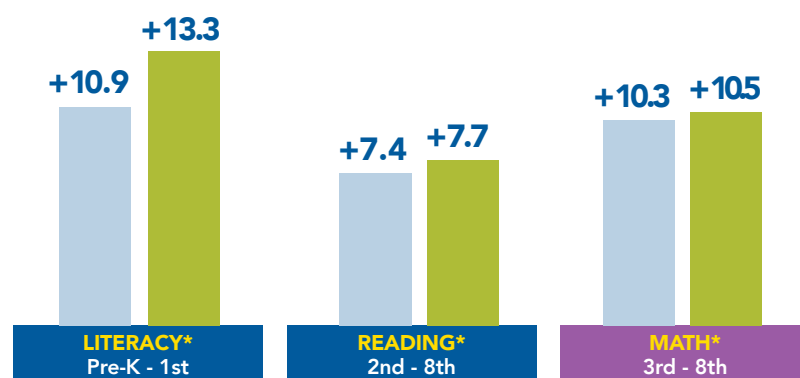
Meals served

Progress in Focus

Horizons students are tested using the STAR assessment at the beginning and end of our six-week program. Across the Horizons Network, we strive for students to grow 6-10 weeks each summer.

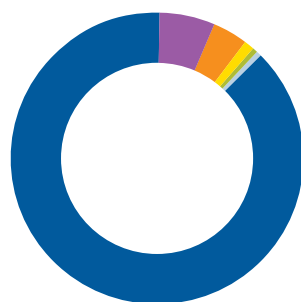
All students growth in weeks

Below-grade level students growth in weeks



*Average growth from 2022-2024

Our Community in Focus



Student Demographics:

88%	Black or African American
6%	Two or more races
4%	Other
1%	White
0.5%	American Indian or Alaska Native
0.5%	Asian

75%

Students starting below grade level

100%

Horizons students eligible for free and reduced lunch

*Horizons Greater Philadelphia students met or exceeded the Horizons National benchmark showing growth from 2022-2024.





Multi-Dimensional Math at Horizons

Recent data indicates that math scores are improving in the Philadelphia area; however, progress is slow.

According to the *PhillyVoice*, in 2023, Philadelphia's fourth-grade students improved their math scores by an average of 7 points since 2022, surpassing the national average gain of 2 points. Despite this progress, their scores remain below the national average.

These statistics underscore the ongoing challenges in math education, particularly in urban districts like Philadelphia, and highlight the need for targeted interventions, like Horizons, to support student achievement.

Horizons Greater Philadelphia is dedicated to ensuring that our sites are equipped with the curricular resources needed for all students to thrive. To accomplish this, we collaborated with site leaders to curate resources that addressed the identified academic and social-emotional learning needs of our students.

We adopted the **Math for Love** curriculum across all sites after witnessing the joy of learning math at one of our locations and the subsequent improvement in math achievement. The gamified approach of this curriculum has captured student interest and has reduced the fear often associated with math learning.

On average, Horizons students grew at least

10.3 weeks

in math skills during the summer program



Zooming In – Reading as a Foundation for Success

Reading proficiency is foundational to academic success, yet recent assessments indicate significant challenges both nationally and in Philadelphia.

National Trends:

The 2024 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) revealed that only 39% of fourth-grade students performed at or above the Proficient level in reading, marking a decline from previous years.

Philadelphia Specifics:

The Philadelphia Tribune published an article in March 2024 reporting that in the winter of 2023-2024, 35% of

third-grade students in Philadelphia scored at or above reading level on benchmark assessments, reflecting a 2% increase from the previous year. While some recovery efforts have been made, proficiency rates remain a concern.

Horizons' Approach

At Horizons, students engage in structured, systematic, and individualized literacy instruction throughout the six-week program, resulting in notable improvements in reading skills. Each Horizons site emphasizes literacy through daily English Language Arts (ELA) lessons, small-group Guided Reading sessions, and the integration of literacy skills into project-based learning.

Research indicates that younger students (grades K-2) tend to experience greater reading gains compared to older students. Early exposure to language plays a crucial role in literacy development, while older students who lack this foundation must first build these skills, making it harder to catch up.

To address this, Horizons tailors its literacy instruction by focusing on foundational skills—such as phonemic awareness, phonological awareness, and phonics—for students in grades K-4. For students in grades 5-8, instruction shifts toward enhancing reading comprehension skills, ensuring they develop the tools needed for continued academic success.

Each Horizons site is supported by at least one Reading Specialist who plays a key role in guiding literacy instruction, assessments, and student progress. They oversee all benchmark assessments, ensuring that reading instruction, remediation, and advancement are tailored to meet students' needs. Collaborating closely with classroom teachers, they design and implement a comprehensive summer reading plan that aligns with sitewide goals. Additionally, Reading Specialists provide targeted support by working with students individually and in small groups, prioritizing those who require the most intensive intervention. This year, Horizons had seven reading specialists across the region.

Horizons at Cristo Rey Philadelphia made an intentional investment in social and emotional programming in 2024. As Executive Director Caryn Rivers states, "In light of the epidemic of loneliness and anxiety among youth, social-emotional learning (learning the lexicon and the techniques for mindfulness and self regulation) provides a basis for resilience, trust and self-confidence which benefits everyone."





At Our Core: Swimming & Training for Sustainability

“Before the swim meet, many students felt anxious despite a summer of preparation with our dedicated swim staff. But as the meet began, excitement and confidence grew. By the end, they felt proud and accomplished—it became a true celebration of their hard work. The Horizons Greater Philadelphia swim meet showcases swimming as a core pillar while highlighting students’ progress.”

Ryan Learn, Executive Director, Horizons at The Episcopal Academy

Right: Inaugural Regional Swim Meet held at La Salle University in July 2024.



Spotlight on Swimming

Every Horizons site nationwide incorporates a minimum of 90 minutes of swim instruction per week, aiming to ensure students achieve swimming proficiency by 8th grade. In Philadelphia, Horizons host sites are fortunate to have on-site pools or collaborate with local partners such as the Columbia North YMCA and La Salle University to implement this essential program component.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), drowning is the second leading cause of unintentional injury death for children aged 5–14. These disparities are rooted in historical segregation and systemic disinvestment in public pools and swim education in communities of color following World War II. Access

to swimming facilities and lessons remains limited for many families across the United States, including those in Philadelphia.

Horizons is committed to breaking these barriers by ensuring that every student receives quality swim instruction and essential water safety skills. By providing consistent lessons in a safe and supportive environment, Horizons helps students gain confidence in the water, reduces their risk of drowning, and fosters a lifelong skill that promotes both safety and recreation. Through this program, students not only learn how to swim but also develop critical survival techniques, giving them the knowledge and ability to navigate water safely.

The **Inaugural Regional Swim Meet** embodied the spirit of Horizons, empowering students while building their confidence and skills.

In July 2024, students from all four Horizons Greater Philadelphia sites came together at La Salle University to demonstrate their swimming skills and cheer on their peers!

Training our Teachers for a Sustainable Future

In May 2024, Horizons Greater Philadelphia presented our **Inaugural Regional Professional Development Day**. This event aimed to unite Horizons teachers from all four regional locations for an interactive event focused on community engagement, collaborative learning opportunities and site sustainability.

The day included breakout sessions on Restorative Practices, Math for Love—a new math curricular tool invested in by Horizons Greater Philadelphia—and Teaching Reading Through Storytelling. Each session was carefully crafted to enhance both the academic and social-emotional development of our students while fostering a love for learning.

Each site made unique contributions to the event. **Sobeida Soto** and **Barb Bond** from Horizons at Greene Street Friends School opened the morning by sharing their reasons for returning

to Horizons each year and warmly welcoming the new staff into the Horizons team.

Dr. Kenyatta Patterson, the Site Director at Horizons at SCH Academy, led the teachers in a Harambee chant, a tradition performed by students every Friday during the summer.

Bonnie Caton, former Math Specialist at Horizons at The Episcopal Academy, facilitated the Math for Love session, showcasing the implementation and instructional strategies that contributed to their students’ success after piloting the program last summer.

To conclude the event, **Caryn Rivers**, Executive Director at Horizons at Cristo Rey Philadelphia, guided a mindful moment to remind educators of their purpose.

We look forward to building on

this solid foundation at our next professional learning gathering in Spring 2025. We extend our gratitude to our inaugural sponsors, **Philadelphia Insurance Companies and BLBB Charitable**, for their support in this new regional initiative, and their role in fostering a strong community across all four sites.



horizonsphiladelphia.org



At Our Core: Generous Supporters

Our 2022 - 2024 Supporters

AmeriHealth Caritas
BLBB Charitable
Challenger Foundation
Children Can Shape the Future
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Glenmede Trust
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GSK Science in the Summer
Helen's Hope Foundation
Henrietta Tower Wurts Memorial
Independence Blue Cross
Janney Montgomery Scott*
Leo Niessen Foundation
National Arts Program
PA Commission on Crime and Delinquency
PepsiCo Bottling Group*
Philadelphia Insurance Companies
Philadelphia Phillies*
WSFS CARES Foundation

*In Kind

Right: Inaugural Regional Professional Development Day held in May 2024.

Why I Give

Claude Knight, HGP Board Member,
Managing Director, EY



"I give to Horizons because it's an investment in my community and region. Specifically, I see the immediate and tangible impact that my investment makes in the development and enrichment of the students, which ripples into positive outcomes for the individuals, their families and our community as a whole. Giving to Horizons embodies the "Butterfly Effect", where a small action can result in a big impact."



Donor Spotlight

Horizons Greater Philadelphia wins 2024 GSK IMPACT Award



Horizons Greater Philadelphia, along with 9 other organizations, has received a **2024 GSK IMPACT Award** for

building a stronger Greater Philadelphia region. GSK Impact Awards recognize non-profits who demonstrate exceptional achievements, overall excellence and best practices in creating a healthier Greater Philadelphia region.

Thanks to GSK's generous support, Horizons Greater Philadelphia can offer more opportunities for students to learn, grow, and reach their goals. Ensuring access to summer learning is essential, as research from the RAND Corporation shows that students who participate in at least five weeks of summer programs make measurable gains in both reading and math.



Thank you to the committed Board Members, Individuals, and Families who supported Horizons in 2024. We are incredibly grateful for your continued commitment to Horizons Greater Philadelphia.



Learn more about the impact of Horizons here from our sponsor, GSK.



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Brendan Glackin, *Senior Director, Major Giving, Villanova University School of Business*

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Angela Val, *Chief Executive Officer, Visit Philly*

Jen Weikert, *Executive Director, Horizons Greater Philadelphia (non-voting member)*

Taanya Williams, *Managing Director, KPMG US*

Regional and Site Teams*

Sarah Keffer, *Assistant Program Director, Horizons Greater Philadelphia*

Ryan Learn, *Executive Director, Horizons at The Episcopal Academy*

Dr. Kenyatta Patterson, *Site Director, Horizons at Springside Chestnut Hill Academy*

Monica Quarrie, *Executive Director, Horizons at Greene Street Friends School*

Caryn Rivers, *Executive Director, Horizons at Cristo Rey Philadelphia High School*

Shonta Robertson, *Regional Program Director, Horizons Greater Philadelphia*

**List as of January 1, 2025*