



**HORIZONS**  
Sacred Heart University

## 2021 ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

Three powerful pillars of support & empowerment:  
persevering through the pandemic



# LETTER FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends, Colleagues, and Supporters of Horizons at Sacred Heart University,

I am truly honored for the opportunity to serve as the Executive Director of Horizons at Sacred Heart University. In my three years as HSHU's Academic Director, I had the privilege to work with highly engaged board members, committed families, brilliant teachers, and exceptional young people.

**The COVID pandemic has widened educational gaps in access, opportunity, achievement and outcomes that existed before the pandemic. These gaps disproportionately impacted students who experienced the pandemic with the greatest educational needs and fewest opportunities—many of them from historically marginalized and underserved groups.**

With renewed momentum and increased urgency, I look forward to leading the organization to advance educational equity and mitigate the multi-layered impacts of the COVID pandemic. Using a robust, values-driven model that we refer to as the "Three Pillars of Support," HSHU has taken close account of the disparities the Bridgeport community faces and will continue to offer programming that is inclusive of teacher, student, and parental voices, is reflective of our collective learnings and is intentionally designed to remind students that learning can be joyful,

mysterious, fun, and uniquely challenging. Our continuum of support will help us ensure that each of the 168 HSHU students have equitable opportunities to participate, connect, learn, and thrive.

This year, in addition to responsive programming, we are focused on collecting a comprehensive mix of quantitative and qualitative data to refine our efforts and showcase our impact; leveraging financial efficiencies of the organization; and refining HSHU's policies and practices to ensure our community is both inclusive and representative of the diverse population we support.

Horizons at SHU has reached an exciting place in its evolution—we have an engaged and committed board, a newly appointed Operations Manager, a powerful development team, a new regional model, and a loyal and inspired group of supporters. The future for the children that HSHU serves is filled with opportunity. Thank you for your essential partnership in this important work.

With sincerity and gratitude,



**Ashley Nechaev**  
Executive Director



## MISSION AND COMMUNITY VALUES

### VISION

*[The future we seek]*

Our vision is a future where every child thrives.

### MISSION

*[How Horizons at SHU works to get there]*

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

### VALUES

*[Core beliefs that guide our community]*

I know I am safe at HSHU because:

- I am heard
- I am responded to
- I am able to make mistakes and see them through
- I am not alone in my hopes, dreams and fears

## HSHU'S PILLARS OF PROGRAMMING

HSHU aims to mitigate opportunity disparities faced by Bridgeport families in a county with the largest opportunity gap in the nation. Our organization provides support and empowerment to 168 Bridgeport students through three powerful pillars of programming. These pillars include a K-8 six-week summer program, a K-8 school year program, and a high school program offered in partnership Horizons Bridgeport. Each pillar provides equitable opportunities that include joyful academic and social-emotional learning, and establishing citizenship within community.

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# HORIZONS AT SHU STAFF

**Ashley Nechaev**

Executive Director

**Amanda Baez**

Operations Manager

**Mary Wanyo**

Academic Coordinator



# LETTER FROM BOARD CHAIRS

Dear Friends,

We cannot think of a better theme than the “three pillars of empowerment” for this year’s Impact Report. As you will see throughout this report, the metaphor represents the three distinct phases of support we provide to the Bridgeport students we serve: our intensive 6-week summer program, our K-8 year-round program, and the high school program administered by Horizons Bridgeport.

In reflecting on 2021, we note that the “three pillars” doesn’t just refer to the way HSHU approaches programming on behalf of the children we serve; it also represents that network of people that make our work possible: the board and Evans Society, the faculty and staff, and EACH OF YOU – our donors, volunteers, and, champions.

Our Board of Directors and the members of the Evans Society, who came before them, provide invaluable leadership and support for all of HSHU’s work. The faculty and staff – led by our newly appointed Executive Director, Ashley Nechaev, and Operations Manager, Amanda Baez – are talented educators who demonstrate their commitment daily to providing the academic and social/emotional support our students need and deserve. And finally, a most essential pillar – YOU! Every donor who contributes to our mission, attends our events, and cares deeply about the future leaders of Bridgeport have made our work possible! We are exceedingly grateful for each of you. Your generosity enables HSHU to empower our students as they develop their skills, intellectual curiosity, and love of learning.

Thank you for supporting Horizons at SHU. We look forward to seeing you in 2022 as we continue to grow and work to provide a brighter futures for our Bridgeport children.

Sincerely,

**Mary Lou DeRosa**

Co-Chair  
Board of Directors

**R. Bradford Evans**

Co-Chair  
Board of Directors

# EVANS SOCIETY

In honor of HSHU's 10th Anniversary, the Evans Society was established to honor all past members of the HSHU Board of Directors. The Society, named in honor of Brad and Barbara Evans, recognizes the extraordinary amounts of time, resources and expertise that former Board members have shared to ensure the quality and sustainability of the organization. Members of the Evans Society were inducted at the golf outing dinner in June 2021 and were celebrated for their past service to Horizons at SHU.

## MEMBERS

- Michael Alfano
- Jim Carl
- Patrick Carolan
- Sean Dowling
- Victoria Ferrara
- Tom Forget
- Leah Gambal
- Yvonne Hickey
- Jaqueline Kelleher
- Hoby Kreidler
- Sr. Joan Magnetti
- Ellen Massucci
- Rhea Paul
- Thom Pesce
- John Petillo
- Angela Pitcher
- Jacinth Rosa
- Grace Rodriguez
- Nan Ruben



# HORIZONS AT SHU: THREE PILLARS OF SUPPORT

Horizons at SHU provides year round support for the Bridgeport students in our program.

**Equitable  
opportunities for  
Bridgeport students that promote  
academic and SEL growth, and inspire joyful learning**

## K-8 SUMMER PROGRAM

### PILLAR 1

- 6-weeks Monday through Friday during the summer for HSHU K-8 students
- Rigorous project-based academics – literacy and math skills development
- Enrichment activities including swimming, music, physical education, cooking
- Community Service
- Field trips

## K-8 SCHOOL YEAR PROGRAM

### PILLAR 2

- School year support for HSHU K-8 students
- Highly personalized, one-on-one support from an HSHU academic coach/mentor
- Monthly meetings to provide tutoring and support
- Community-building and peer support opportunities and events
- In person after school year programming “Horizons After School Club”

## HB HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM

### PILLAR 3

- One-on-one coaching/mentoring for 9-12th grade students focused on post-secondary planning
- Weekly mentor meetings to support academics, study skills, time management, social/emotional competencies, summer planning
- College and career readiness including college/vocational program research, SAT Prep, essay writing support, and financial aid application support
- Beginning in the fall of 2021 all the eighth grade graduates of HSHU will attend the high school program of Horizons Bridgeport

# WHO WE SERVE

## RACIAL REPRESENTATION

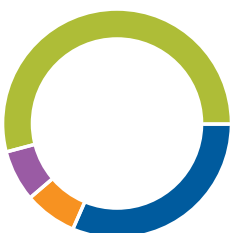


## SCHOOL REPRESENTATION



# HORIZONS AT SHU FINANCIALS

## FY21 – REVENUE BY SOURCE



## FY21 – EXPENSES BY ALLOCATION



## PARTNER SCHOOLS

Barnum School	Read Elementary School
Great Oaks Charter School	Discovery Magnet
New Beginnings Family Academy	Luis Munoz Marin Elementary
Blackham School	Six to Six Magnet School
John Winthrop Elementary	Dunbar Elementary School
Park City Magnet	Madison School
Cesar A. Batalia School	Catholic Academy of Bridgeport
Read School	

## FISCAL YEAR

Because of the timing of our fiscal year (July 1–June 30th) the above chart reflects expenses incurred during the 2020 Virtual Summer Program. The 2021 Summer Program expenses will be shared in the fiscal year 22 Impact Report.

## COVID ACCOMODATIONS

FY21 programming, especially the 2020 Summer Program, was significantly impacted by COVID. Programming was virtual and many enrichment activities (swimming, field trips etc.) were not possible. As such, this allocation is not representative of typical HSHU operating expenses.



## 2021 SUMMER PROGRAM STATS

82%

of parents say they depended on the food and snacks that were provided to their children by HSHU

100%

of Horizons K-8 teachers indicated that students were performing below grade level in reading at the beginning of the summer and indicated that all students made progress in reading over the summer program

80%

of HSHU parents say the summer program helps offset child care costs while giving their children a unique and valuable academic experience

95%

of Horizons teachers in grades K-8 indicated that their students were performing below grade level in mathematics

91%

of parents say HSHU's enrichment activities had a positive impact on their children

80%

of teachers felt their students made growth in math fact fluency and real-world application of math skills

## SUMMER PROGRAM FEEDBACK

"Horizons means happiness, opportunity, and success. And during my 10 years in Horizons I've been able to accomplish so much."  
- HSHU STUDENT

"I think is important for people to know that Horizons is not just a regular summer program, it is more than that. The program helps and teaches the kids educational things while taking care of them. It is so fortunate that it is a long-term program that the children can grow into and also because it is like another family and school for them since it became a year-round program."  
- HSHU PARENT

"I noticed my students growing as readers when they practiced their phonics skills. Most of these skills they may have missed due to COVID/distance learning. I felt that the HSHU reading block helped close the gaps and focused on below grade level phonics skills for those who really needed it."  
- A HSHU TEACHER ON ACADEMICS

"The social emotional learning at HSHU allowed entire classes to become connected to each other. It showed us all what it means to be a community. Most importantly, it demonstrated how each one of us contributes to a community and is a unique piece of the puzzle. Students asked powerful questions which was amazing to see how the students are already seeing how they can make a difference in the world."  
- A HSHU SOCIAL WORKER ON SEL

"Tauck Family Foundation proudly supports and partners with Horizons at Sacred Heart University. Over the last four years, we have watched the organization expand its efforts to provide holistic support for Bridgeport students and families that is inclusive, trauma-responsive, and culturally relevant. Their student-centered approach meets students where they are and offers engaging learning opportunities in a safe, collaborative, nurturing environment where students can thrive. Horizons at SHU is a valuable asset to the students and families they serve as well as within the Bridgeport community."  
- KIM HEIN, INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



## 2021 EVENTS

Like the children served by HSHU, our Board and supporters gathered virtually to raise funds and celebrate the organization's important work.



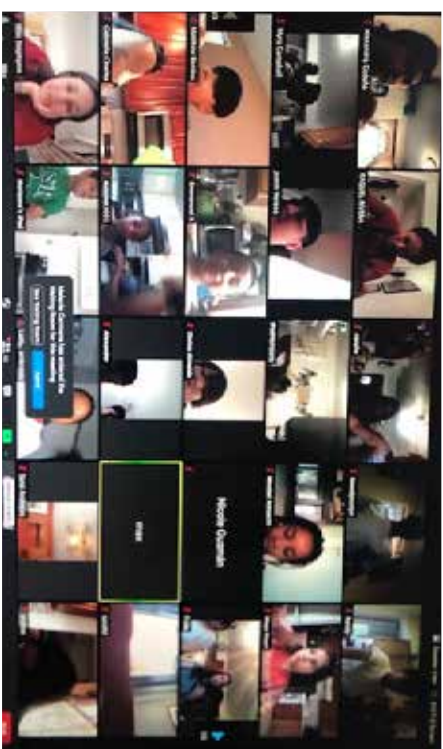
## GOLF OUTING

In June 2021, we welcomed more than 100 golfers for our annual golf outing at Great River Golf Club and more than 175 for our evening reception. Not only was it a wonderful day of golf, it was the first time we were able to gather for an event after all the COVID-induced separations. During the dinner after golf, we launched the Evans Society. The evening concluded with a spirited live auction and paddle raise, which raised a record-breaking \$350,000+ of essential funds for the program.



## ANNUAL LUNCHEON

The annual luncheon was held on Thursday, October 7th, and raised nearly \$80,000 to support HSHU's mission. Despite being virtual, Dr. Ken Pugh, President and Director of Research Haskins Laboratories, Yale University/University of Connecticut, engaged the audience with his compelling presentation on "Literacy, Brain Plasticity, and 'the Covid Slide:'"







## LOOKING FORWARD:

We are very hopeful that Summer 2022 will represent a return to our in-person programming and to the various enrichment activities that distinguish Horizons at SHU. As such, our funding needs will increase over the past two years as we work to provide deep academic, athletic, and social-emotional opportunities for our students.

## WE ARE PLANNING...

- Swim instruction for all HSHU students
- Field trips
- Physical education and athletic skill development
- Healthy, nutritious breakfasts and lunches
- Rigorous and engaging academics
- Impactful SEL instruction
- Community/place based learning



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THERE'S NO  
HORIZONS  
AT HSU  
WITHOUT  
YOU

\*Apologies if we have inadvertently omitted a name in this roster; please contact HSHU to advise if you notice an omission.



# HORIZONS<sup>®</sup>

Sacred Heart University

*Students celebrating HSHU and giving thanks at the HSHU Thanksgiving Community Event*

