

Horizons Colorado

Annual Report 2022-2023



Horizons Colorado

Celebrating 25 Years of Transformational Programming

When looking at the breadth and depth of the positive impact that Horizons Colorado has had on our students and families over the past 25 years, there is so much to be thankful for and to celebrate! Through the years, hundreds of students have been given access to opportunities they might not otherwise have. We have also trained hundreds of teachers, become fully integrated into the Colorado Academy community, provided Horizons parent and family engagement, collaborated with numerous partners throughout the Denver Metro Area, and have been an active member of the ever-growing Horizons National network of affiliates serving over 7,000 students across the country. In recent years, we have expanded our year-round offerings to include in-person tutoring twice a week at Knapp Elementary, and we recalibrated our high school program to be a one-on-one mentorship program that has gone from serving 12 students when we

launched it in 2020 to currently serving 45 students.

While our accomplishments are many, it is important to remember that behind the scenes, many selfless and forward-thinking individuals have given years of their expertise, time, and treasure to ensure that Horizons Colorado continues to be a premier out-of-school time program for students and their families, a program that parents know and rely on to provide their children with the skills they need to lead choice-filled lives.

Within this context, we celebrate the legacy of two outstanding prior Executive Directors, Jenny Leger and Ingrid Moore. I was fortunate to forge a special relationship with Jenny from my first days at Horizons in the fall of 2018. Jenny was my mentor and helped me in countless ways to make sure that Horizons maintained its high standards and focused on the well-being of the students. Jenny always made herself available and was a guiding light, full of joy and wonder. Her long-lasting legacy and

influence can be seen in the beautiful notes of gratitude that the community left for her before she passed away.

While I never got to know Ingrid personally, I heard from many of our board and community members that she was a kind, caring, and compassionate person who worked tirelessly to make Horizons the best that it could be for the students. While their passing leaves a big hole in our community, we are humbled and grateful that their hard work continues to shine on and will forever be interwoven in the fabric of Horizons Colorado and Colorado Academy.

As we celebrate our achievements and look toward the future, we acknowledge that Horizons Colorado programming would not be possible without the steadfast and benevolent support of our incredibly generous donors. Horizons is a beacon of hope and possibility for a more equitable future for every student. Together with our circle of supporters and friends, we are working toward a brighter future for all. □

“Horizons was such a huge part of my life that I would be more than happy to give back.”

Alexis Perez-Guillen, Class of 2014





SUMMER 2023

8-14

On average, weeks of math and ELA growth after participating in Horizons for six weeks

210

Students enrolled

30

Helpful
volunteers/
interns

37

Teachers, staff,
and enrichment
specialists

14,217

Free, nutritious
meals provided

831

Enrichment hours offered
across all grades

29

Horizons alumni
staff/volunteers

95%

Average summer
attendance rate

24

Exciting
field trips

626

Hours of
academic
instruction

14

8th grade
graduates

652

Hours of social emotional
learning



**"I love Horizons
because I get to
learn new fun things
like swimming!"**
- Dominic Cruz, 4th grade

**"Everyone at
Horizons is so
nice, we're all
one big family."**
*- Kristy A. Reyes, 5th
Grade*



**"Horizons is a place where you
can be the person you want to
be and learn. Most importantly,
we have fun while learning.
That's why I like it."**
- Santiago Reyes Hernandez, 6th grade

The Evolution of Horizons Colorado at Colorado Academy

Note: The following article is an excerpt from an article written by Bill Fisher in the summer of 2023. It is with great sadness that we inform our readers on the passing of Ms. Jenny Leger, a visionary Executive Director who was with Horizons since its inception. Bill was fortunate enough to interview Jenny prior to her passing.

The Early Days

In 1998, Jenny Leger's background as an educator made it immediately clear to her that the first cohort of Horizons kindergarten students from Knapp Elementary, many of whom didn't yet know the alphabet, needed direct literacy instruction along with the enrichment activities such as arts and crafts, swimming, and sports. She built a hands-on, project-based classroom curriculum that gave children the fundamentals they'd need to succeed when they went to first grade in the fall.

The program Leger designed incorporated small-group instruction, led by volunteers, interns, and assistant teachers who could

offer one-on-one attention. A handful of high-achieving students, specially chosen to participate in the program, would work alongside their peers who needed more support, modeling success in the classroom. Leger's program offered breakfast and lunch, vitally important for students who often were experiencing food insecurity at home.

"We did a lot of talking in the beginning," she remembers. "We had to assure parents that we'd take good care of their children. We had to let them know that CA was a place their child would be safe, nurtured, taught, fed, and provided enriching experiences like swimming. I'm so proud of the work we did with Katherine Adolph at Knapp—a fluent Spanish-speaker—to make this such an authentic opportunity for that community." From initial skepticism, Horizons ended up with a waiting list.

By the early 2000s, the program had expanded all the way to the eighth grade, and the national organization was looking to CA's implementation as a model as it

continued to launch new sites throughout the country.

According to Lorna Smith, the CEO of Horizons National, organic local innovation like that taking place at CA was key to shaping the organization's national vision. "Jenny Leger and Chris Babbs played a large role in helping us to co-create the future of Horizons," she says.

Diving In

At the more than 70 affiliate sites in 20 states that today comprise the national network, serving over 7,000 students annually, perhaps nothing is more central to the Horizons experience than swimming lessons, a signature element of all Horizons programs. Jose Martinez, an alumnus of Horizons at CA and currently Dean of Students at Knapp Elementary, believes that learning to swim in CA's pool helped to change the trajectory of his life. Now the summer Director of Operations, Henning Health & Wellness Director, and Restorative Justice Counselor with Horizons in addition to his role supporting students during the school year at Knapp, Martinez says that when he first was enrolled in Horizons as a kindergartner in the program's second year at CA, he was timid and shy.

"As a student, I wondered why teachers were making me do all these things that I didn't want to do or didn't understand," he says. But learning to swim during the summer at Horizons, he explains, opened him up to taking risks and facing challenges that might seem intimidating.

"Being able to jump in the pool sets you up to be an advocate for yourself, to cope with obstacles, to find the belief that you can overcome whatever you might encounter in life," says Martinez. "And now in my role at Knapp, I have a natural connection to those kids who are struggling. I can tell them, here are the things I struggled with before Horizons, and I overcame them. Having that confidence in yourself affects your



Jenny Leger with students

“So many have gotten so much out of the program, and they want to give that to the next generation. What’s even more profound is when those younger students see that the leaders, teachers, interns, and volunteers in the program were once just like them—they can start to envision themselves one day doing the same thing. It makes a huge difference for them to see models of success.”

Daniela Meltzer, Horizons Colorado Executive Director



academics—everything. That’s why I love what I do, and why I’m excited to do that every summer at Horizons.”

Martinez’s path—from Horizons to his role at Knapp and now back to Horizons—is far from atypical, according to the current Executive Director at CA, Daniela Meltzer. In her five years with the program, she’s seen numerous alumni, like Martinez, return to campus to pass on the lessons they learned.

“So many have gotten so much out of the program,” according to Meltzer, “and they want to give that to the next generation. What’s even more profound is when those younger students see that the leaders, teachers, interns, and volunteers in the program were once just like them—they can start to envision themselves one day doing the same thing. It makes a huge difference for them to see models of success.”

Indeed, the Horizons program at CA is staffed predominantly by its graduates. Another longtime volunteer and staff member, Jessica Nuñez-Hernandez, is an alumna of the program who started in third grade after being diagnosed with dyslexia. She went on to intern and assistant-teach with Horizons, and after earning her teaching certificate, returned as the lead pre-K instructor. She is now the Program Director, working side by side with Meltzer.

“My Horizons third grade teacher really

pushed us to conquer challenges like the swimming pool,” she says. “I did the same thing when I was a teacher—it gives students a sense of confidence that, if they can do this one thing that scares them, they can do anything. They can conquer bigger fears, like reading or math.”

That growth—the confidence inspired by constant support and encouragement from a close-knit community—is often described as “Horizons magic,” says Meltzer.

“The relationships that Horizons creates—and they are year-round, because so many of our teachers and volunteers are also involved at Knapp and live in the community—give our students the tools they need to surpass the challenges they face and to do whatever it is that is meaningful to them.”

Meeting New Needs

As the number of Horizons alumni making a difference has continued to multiply over the past two decades, so, too, have the needs of those children Horizons serves both nationally and locally. The COVID-19 pandemic brought this into stark relief, as it became clear that students living near the poverty line were profoundly affected by learning loss.

Head of School Dr. Mike Davis saw that time as an opportunity for CA to deepen its collaboration with Horizons, and worked with Meltzer to implement a year-round tutoring program. Starting with online



Leger, center, surrounded by Horizons staff, 2010

sessions, the initiative went in-person in 2021, with Upper Schoolers traveling to Knapp Elementary twice a week for one-on-one tutoring with young students.

The tutoring program now brings help with homework, fun and games, and meaningful connections to more than 30 elementary students each year. It's an initiative that has had almost as many benefits for CA as it has for the Horizons students.

With the addition of the tutoring program, Horizons now serves well over 200 students a year both on and off campus. From an offering that began with a single class of kindergartners and a fundraising approach that relied on Leger and the generosity of a handful of CA parents, Horizons at CA has grown into an \$800,000 annual operation serving children from pre-K to twelfth grade, with more than 60 summer staff

members and volunteers and the support of hundreds of CA families.

"The success of this program has really shown how much the CA community is invested in making an impact more broadly in Denver," Meltzer observes. "Virtually all of our funding comes from CA families. They're volunteering during the summer or during the school year on our 'Super Saturdays,' when we invite Horizons students and their families to campus just to stay connected with them. Some are tutoring, or attending our annual Wine & Dine fundraiser, or serving on our board."

With that kind of buy-in, Meltzer has been advocating for further growth, starting with a 2023 name change to Horizons Colorado. The new moniker points to her ambitions, along with Davis's, of reaching even more students.

"How amazing would it be if we could get five or ten percent of all Denver Public Schools students enrolled in Horizons?" she wonders. In part, that work has already begun, with Meltzer reimagining the small Horizons high school-age program to connect older students with mentors—most of them Horizons graduates—who can offer support through college and beyond.

"Schools like Colorado Academy need to do our part to make our community better," adds Davis. "We care deeply about society; we care deeply about creating leaders who are going to make change. We wish we had unlimited resources to educate more kids. But through Horizons, we have a chance to make a start."

Horizons Colorado, argues Davis, is one answer to the fundamental question that guides CA forward: how can we do more? □

Horizons Colorado Donors 2022-2023

\$20,000 or More

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Horizons Colorado Operating Budget Fiscal Year 2022-2023

Revenue

	Amount	Percentage
Special Events	\$286,792.04	36%
Individual Contributions	\$252,717.00	32%
Henning Health & Wellness Program	\$20,000.00	2.6%
Community Foundation Grants	\$152,393.75	19%
Endowment Earnings	\$62,160	7.9%
Horizons National Program Contributions	1500	0.2%
Corporate Matching Gifts	\$10,785.65	1.5%
Program Fees	\$6,352.15	0.8%
	\$792,700.59	100%

Expenses

	Amount	Percentage
Summer Staff and Administrative Salaries	\$439,322.71	61%
Summer Program Costs (include Henning Health & Wellness Program)	\$148,883.47	21%
Year Round Program Costs	\$54,720.60	7.6%
Alumni College Scholarships	\$5,525.00	0.7%
Community Outreach	\$938.55	0.13%
Advancement and Administrative Costs	\$68,017.38	9.57%
	\$717,407.71	100%

Bruce Smith & Beth Robischon
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\$3,500 to \$4,999

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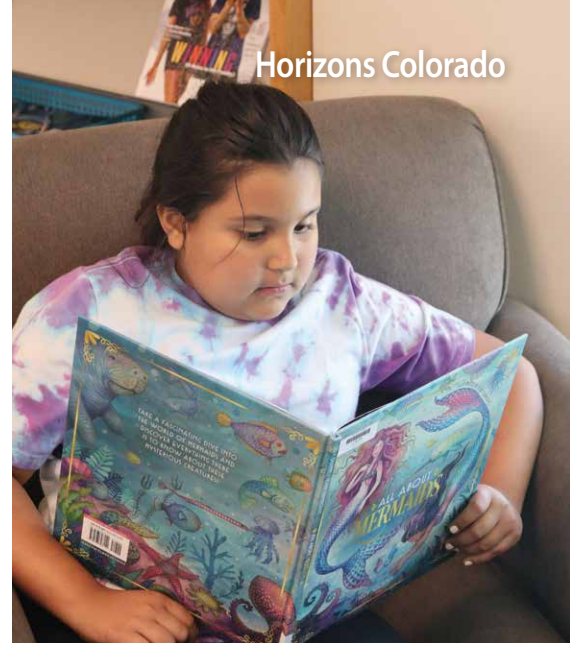
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Dwyer Gunn
Wei Guo and Vicky Chao
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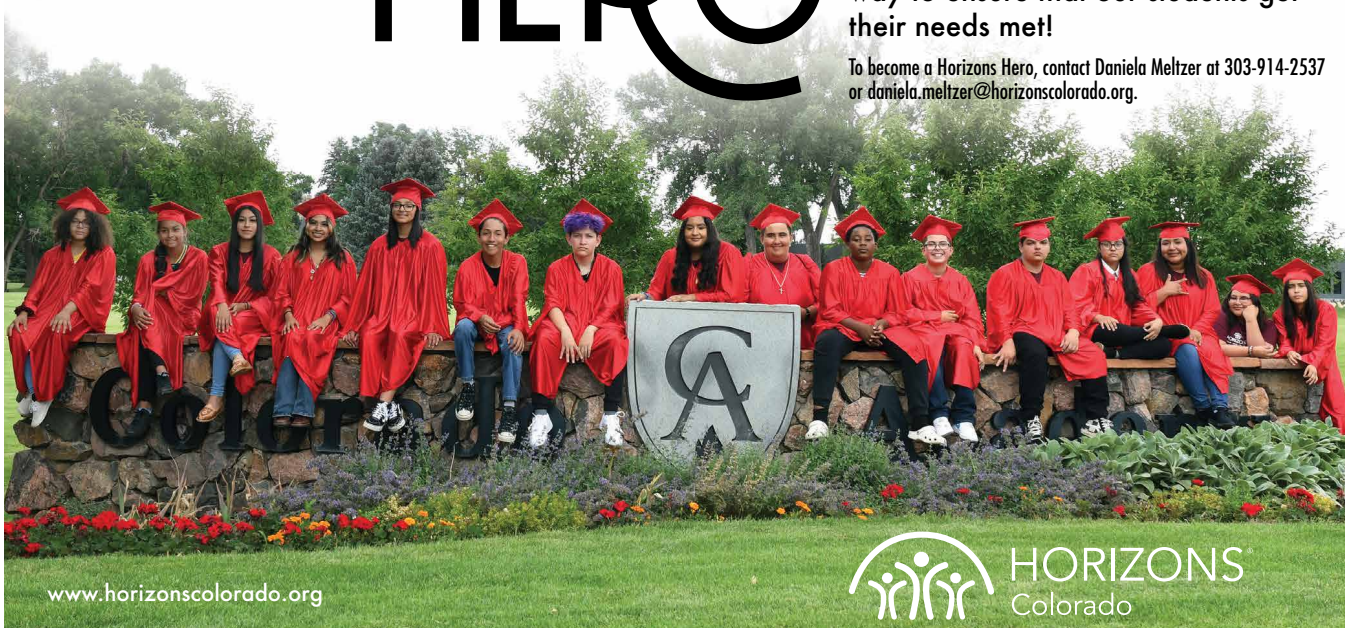
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Thanh Luong
Alecia Maher

Bob & Amy Martin
Matter Family Office
Austin McKenna
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Kevin McManus & Cathy Nabbefeld
Paul & Amy McPheeters
Greg & Jennifer Miller
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Become a HORIZONS HERO

A Horizons Hero is a donor who supports one student for one year of Horizons programming at \$3,500. This level of giving is an excellent way to ensure that our students get their needs met!

To become a Horizons Hero, contact Daniela Meltzer at 303-914-2537 or daniela.meltzer@horizonscolorado.org.



www.horizonscolorado.org



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