

—
2019
ANNUAL
REPORT

AND COVID RESPONSE



OUR IMPACT

In-School Tutoring
and Mentoring

SCHOOLS

10

VOLUNTEERS

604

STUDENTS IN TUTORING/
MENTORING PROGRAMS

918

HOURS

14,195

ECONOMIC VALUE

\$283,901



A Letter from Our Director

Inspiring Mind is 57 years strong and I couldn't be more excited about the year ahead. There is so much pride and excitement that our volunteers experience as they head into the community to serve during unprecedented times.

Now more than ever, we are aware of the challenges of access, equity, quality, and inclusion in our public education system. COVID-19, the Black Lives Matter movement, and increasing violence in our community shine a light on the oppression our students and our families face.

Last year, Inspiring Minds created a strategic plan and outlined our approach to ensuring our students have an equal chance at academic success. **A strong foundational education is indeed a path to a brighter future for every one of our children.** This path is made possible when the entire community accepts responsibility for ensuring that all public-school students have genuine opportunities to reach their full potential.

We have excelled in building strong strategic partnerships, and developing and implementing a culturally-competent approach to programs. We are utilizing qualitative and quantitative empirical data to inform our organizational decisions. Most importantly, we ensure that the voices of students and their families are elevated and are always the primary beneficiaries and central focus of our work.

COVID-19 hasn't stopped us. When schools closed on March 13th, volunteers swiftly implemented new programming to meet the changing needs of students and their families. We secured and **delivered books and school supplies to 1,075 students to support their distance learning.** We created a **pen pal program** to ensure students and volunteers could stay connected and **transformed the KidsBridge Summer Learning Program** into an at-home learning experience.

Looking ahead, we will continue to provide meaningful programs and services in consultation with our families. **Virtual tutoring and mentoring, a parent helpline, and continued delivery of materials and supplies** to support in-person and distance learning are all part of our fall 2020 lineup.

Inspiring Minds is well-positioned to make a tremendous difference in the lives of our youngest learners. I am so proud of our staff, our volunteers, and our work. It's an honor and a privilege to serve this community. Our kids do better when the community is behind them; every relationship, every interaction matters.

You can help support our mission work. Tell a friend about us, follow and share our posts on our social media sites, sign up for our newsletter, donate, or sign up to join our volunteer corps.

Sincerely,



Melissa Emidy
Executive Director

IMPACT

124 Providence Teachers requested an Inspiring Minds volunteer from **10 elementary schools**.

September 2019-March 2020:

INSPIRING MINDS VOLUNTEERS
267

STUDENTS SUPPORTED
421

HOURS OF SUPPORT
5,728

OUTCOMES

According to our Teacher Survey (2019) **98.1% of teachers reported** that students matched with Inspiring Minds had made progress because of their volunteer relationship.

Students increased in:

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SKILLS
61.5%

MATH SKILLS
67.3%

LITERACY SKILLS
73.1%



“My students loved working with the Inspiring Minds volunteers. They looked forward to every week to work with them again.”

Tutoring and Mentoring

Volunteers are matched with students 1:1 and in small groups, in their classrooms during the school day, to develop a trusting relationship and to engage in structured activities, often around classroom or homework-related topics. Inspiring Minds views tutoring as the direct and clearly defined work to support the students’ academic skill development. The more indirect work aims to cultivate caring, positive relationships that will boost student confidence and promote academic achievement.

WHAT DOES A VOLUNTEER DO?

HERE’S AN EXAMPLE FROM ONE OF OUR AMAZING VOLUNTEERS,
DR. JAMES CROWLEY

“Well, it was Math day, and the kids were enthusiastic about tackling number problems. First, we talked a bit about what month we are in and why it has the number 12. We reviewed the names of the other months and discussed their assigned numbers. Then we discussed the days of the week and how many there are and which comes first and which last. Then we discussed the year and how 2019 will soon change to 2020 next month! We discussed our ages and birthdays and how they will change next year. The kids love this. So then we tackled our assignment, which was figuring out if boys and girls made 45 snowballs and boys took 14 and girls took 16 how many were left. Initially, the kids had no idea how they could find the answer to this question, and some asked if they could go to the bathroom or get a drink of water. But instead, we drew 45 snowballs and crossed off 14 with forward slashes and 16 with backward slashes to represent the 30 tossed snowballs. We counted what was left and found the answer was 15. Then we solved the problem doing math by subtracting 14 from 45, which left 31 and then 16 from that to get 15. **We did this a few times using different numbers until the kids were confident, and they really understood what was happening.**”

WHAT OUR VOLUNTEERS SAY

“This work is so important! It allows the student to have a relationship with another leader, someone who will cheer them on with their work even when they fail and can’t get it. It allows the student to be able to open up to someone, knowing they feel safe enough to. It allows the student to look forward to something every week, even if they despise school; that one day during the week, someone will be there for them. Someone will greet them with a high five, ask how their day is going, and push them in the right direction.”

“One day, one of the third-grade students I was working with came up and hugged me. She said, “I’ve been waiting for you to come back! I keep asking when’s she coming back, when’s she coming back?” Seeing her so excited to see me again just gave me the warm fuzzies inside.”

Kindergarten Project

Kindergartners need intensive support as they learn about school norms and routines. College students need to demonstrate they've had useful and valuable experiences working with youth that informed their decision to apply to a local school of education. Inspiring Minds brings them together.

Students navigate several small group learning experiences in a centers model, where they rotate from table to table to experience different curriculum elements. In addition to the teacher and teacher assistant, our volunteers staff those tables and provide individual support to small groups of students.

WHAT OUR VOLUNTEERS SAY

"This experience has been the only one since I started attending college in 2016 that truly made me learn and change all of my preconceived notions of kids in urban schools. I changed my original biased thoughts and felt like I actually made a change in a student's life. Even if that change was very minor, helping student "A" with her reading and writing made me feel like I was really making a positive change in her life. So I can say I'm very glad that I was given the opportunity."

"Being part of Inspiring Minds, Kindergarten Project, was an amazing and fun experience. I knew that I wanted to be a Kindergarten teacher before, but now I am positive that I want to be a teacher. To have the chance to make personal connections and help the little kids when they had trouble was so amazing, also to see how much they have already learned since the beginning of the semester was great to see."

Power Lunch

In Power Lunch, mentors from local businesses and nonprofits meet with students during their lunch period to build strong relationships that lead to a growth mindset and better school attendance. These 30-minute weekly sessions expose students to different people from all aspects of the business world, from IT, to nursing, customer service, and engineering.

WHAT OUR VOLUNTEERS SAY

"The children seemed both excited and nervous to meet us all at once. Looking forward to getting to know them and see them grow and develop over the next 4 years."

"My student and I spent the majority of the time talking more than playing games. He ate the majority of his lunch and enjoyed learning more about me and what I do."

"I was provided with a wealth of knowledge regarding the program, the extent of our involvement, our history with the program, and what to expect. I am very excited to be able to volunteer with this program!"

Interested in learning more about corporate volunteering opportunities, contact us at inspire@inspiringmindsri.org.



IMPACT

In the **Kindergarten Project**, up to three college volunteers at a time, give 2 hours per week, four days per week, to support a kindergarten classroom.

In 2019-2020:

SUPPORTED CLASSROOMS

10

STUDENTS

171

**ASPIRING RHODE ISLAND
TEACHERS**

179

In **Power Lunch**, mentors from local businesses and nonprofits meet with students during their lunch period.

STUDENTS

29

**CORPORATE VOLUNTEERS
FROM BANKRI, GILBANE,
AND LIFESPAN COMMUNITY
HEALTH**

37



Explorers

Did you know that one barrier to pursuing a degree in education as a low-income student is the practical experience? Many young people struggle with finding the time to do unpaid practicums and internships when they have to work to pay for college. With support from the Governor's Workforce Board, Department of Labor and Training, and Real Skills For Youth funding, Inspiring Minds supports 30 youth on their career path.

Explorers are multilingual and multiethnic youth ages 16-24 who participate in a mentoring program and are provided a paid internship in Providence classrooms gaining experience on their journey to becoming teachers in Providence. Explorers participate in monthly professional development activities. Each receives five hours of 1:1 mentoring with our program director to celebrate successes and address barriers to reach their goal to become a teacher in Providence Public Schools.

WHAT OUR VOLUNTEERS SAY

"The class was very good today. When they were doing stations, they listened well and that was really nice. I'm glad to say that most of them are getting comfortable with me. Every time I have to roam around the room to check up on different kids, some of them always ask me to sit with them or ask me not to leave. I find it really cute when they randomly give me hugs too."

"The most meaningful part of this experience to me is the experience itself, and everything that comes along with this experience. I like it because now it gives me a chance to figure out what I enjoy and what I can pursue later on as a career."

"I saw progress with one child I work with. He spoke up in front of the class for the time. A very proud moment for me."



Explorers

An interview with Roberto Cabrera, a Youth Development Major (class of 2021) at Rhode Island College and Inspiring Minds Volunteer.

HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED IN WITH INSPIRING MINDS?

In the spring of 2019, my professor, Dr. Rachel Clemons, talked about jobs and internships. She encouraged me to look at Handshake (online career management system for students). I found out that Inspiring Minds was a partner with the Providence Mayor's Office Internship Program. I applied and interviewed with the Mayor's office. The Mayor's Office approved me, I met with the staff at Inspiring Minds and learned about the summer program KidsBridge. I was hired as an intern to work in the KidsBridge Summer Learning program at Charles Fortes.

In the fall of 2019, I took a course that required service learning. I did my service learning as a volunteer with Inspiring Minds. I found out about the Explorers Program and learned I could become a paid intern through the program. I did that through the end of my junior year. This past summer, Inspiring Minds got additional funding from the Governor's Workforce Board to hire Explorers to work with the KidsBridge At-Home Program, and I did that. Now that I'm a senior, I talked to my professor about doing my senior internship with Inspiring Minds, and that's my plan for this year.

WHAT'S IT LIKE TO BE A VOLUNTEER?

I want to support bilingual students. These kids are just like me. I was a bilingual student in Providence. I want to be a role model and help improve their quality of life. It is so important to have good role models. I want to create a space for them to help at least once a week. It is good to have experience being a part of an elementary school. I have worked at Spaziano Annex with kindergartners in Ms. Velazquez and Ms. Tony's class. Kindergarten is the best because the kids are learning how to be good students and have fun in the class, while learning to read and count. I played a lot of learning games with them. Some students needed help when they didn't



win a game. I helped them get through that. I helped them understand how much they're learning when they are not winning. I'm well equipped to do that. I've made mistakes too. Practice makes perfect. In a bilingual classroom, they like having a person who speaks Spanish.

WHAT SURPRISED YOU?

Inspiring Minds could pay me for an internship. Working at Inspiring Minds is the first job I've ever had. I could have worked in fast food or retail, but those jobs don't help you become a youth development professional. As a volunteer, everyone is here to help you, Elisa and Nelli, always help me. I feel like I belong here, and I am a part of the community. This organization has given me experience in my field.

WHAT SHOULD PEOPLE KNOW?

Inspiring Minds is a very awesome organization. If anyone wants to learn more, talk to me, the staff, and the other volunteers. We help kids. We build relationships with them and make them feel supported. We want every student to be successful. Everyone should know that we have a summer learning program. We should tell more parents about our summer program for kindergartners. Everyone needs to learn about what school is like, and we do that over the summer.

COVID RESPONSE

When schools closed on March 13, it seemed like the world was spinning. Providence Schools we're trying to figure out distance learning, get meals to families, and best support their students. Our students and families had Inspiring Minds to turn to for help. We remained open, virtually, and 100% of our staff continued to work through the crisis to ensure they had continued access to our staff and volunteers to navigate the situation, reading materials for distance learning, and provided ongoing academic skill development opportunities.



IMPACT

Book Bag and
Supply Delivery

DELIVERED BOOKS

3,000

STUDENTS

1075

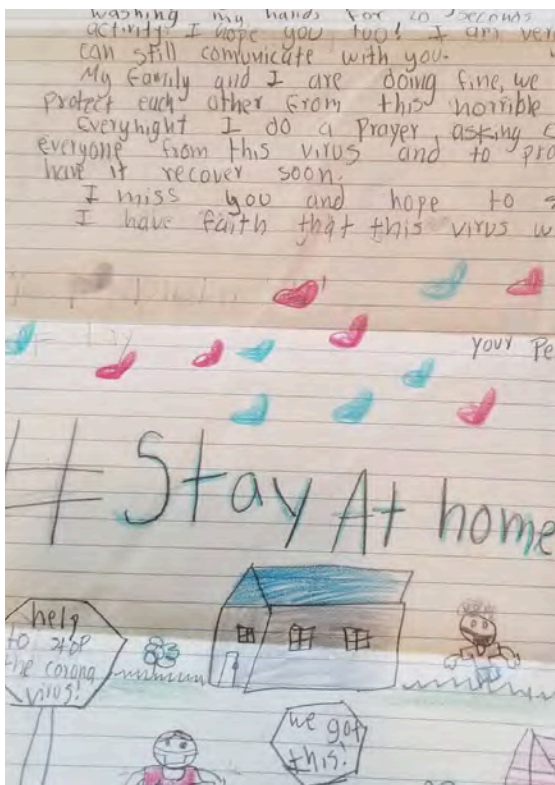
Pen Pals Club

VOLUNTEERS

48

LETTERS WRITTE

106



"The families I delivered books today were so excited and happy when I handed them their book bag. I was so happy to see them happy."

Book Bag and Supply Delivery

Inspiring Minds partnered with *Books Are Wings*, *Lifespan Community Health*, *the Providence Rotary Club*, and *Bank RI* to ensure every student we served (and more) had access to books, Coronavirus information, and materials and supplies to complete their school work.

Our volunteers lined up to with masks, gloves, and hand sanitizer, and picked up bags from our office to deliver the book bags contact free to every student's home. Teachers provided additional materials and supplies for their classes too!

WHAT OUR VOLUNTEERS SAY

"It was such a thrill to see one of my students from last year out in his yard. He was pleased to get books. A mom entering the house when I arrived commented on how much her daughter liked the series."

"Thanks, Inspiring Minds, for making it possible to deliver books and supplies to Providence Public School students. Great way to stay connected with students during this COVID-19 public health emergency."

"Delivering books today to families gave me so much fulfillment and joy. At one house, I was informed that the student had moved but was able to still give the book to that child that lives there. I can't wait to give books to more families."

Pen Pals Club

Some of our volunteers were concerned about venturing out during the stay at home order but wanted to stay engaged with their students. The volunteers came up with the idea of writing to students, and 48 volunteers started writing to 106 students. 26 students wrote back, and the Pen Pal Club began! We added to the experience by delivering a Pen Pal Kit to the students' homes to ensure they had the materials and supplies necessary to write back!

WHAT OUR VOLUNTEERS SAY

"I wrote 3 letters today. I loved writing the letters to each student and affixing stickers to decorate them. It was fun to think about the girls opening up the letter and reading my words! I can't wait to see if they will write back."

"I was so excited to receive a letter back from one of my pen pals, Lyaneliz. I wrote back as soon as I could. I told her how happy I was that she wrote back."

KidsBridge

The KidsBridge Summer Learning Program provides rising kindergartners who have not yet had a high-quality early learning experience with a six-week full-day program to help them learn the norms and routines of school. In 2020, we transformed our program into the KidsBridge-At-Home program.

80 outstanding rising kindergartners and their families participated. We delivered three fully-stocked at-home kits and provided lesson plans in English and Spanish, daily online virtual class, and daily interaction from our team of outstanding teachers, social workers, youth workers, and volunteers. We delivered meals to 67 students, twice a week, to ensure our families had everything they needed to support their child at school. We rounded out the summer with weekly parent information sessions to help them prepare for school and provided field trips for the whole family at no cost to participants. As a send-off, we made 9 videos about what to expect in starting their first school year during COVID and made sure they were accessible to all by producing them in English, K'iche, and Spanish.



YouTube

OUR VIDEOS

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDfJFwKURkFe9x7BkUtLATg/playlists>



COVID-19 VIDEOS ESPAÑOL

Video realizado por Inspiring Minds con ayuda profesional de (add) ventures, para familias de niños de kindergarten en ascenso por nuestros participantes del programa de aprendizaje de verano KidsBridge, basado en la guía disponible para nosotros a principios de agosto.



COVID-19 VIDEOS K'ICHE

R' video de Inspiring Minds kh'nom rug ayuda profesional de (add) ventures, rech families que go aglab k'ug que k'mah parbolito r'malh participantes de KidsBridge Programa de aprendizaje de verano rug orientación disponible a principio de Agosto.



COVID-19 VIDEOS ENGLISH

Video made by Inspiring Minds with professional help from (add) ventures for families of rising kindergartners by our KidsBridge Summer Learning Program participants with guidance available to us in early August.



SUMMER OUTCOMES

50%

of families checked in daily with staff members by attending an online session, communicating directly with the teacher, or completing the Google Attendance Form.

100%

of our families were satisfied or very satisfied with the responsiveness of summer program staff members. Nearly 100% (all but one family) was very satisfied with the quality of the materials provided in the summer learning take-home kit.



5

EXPERIENTIAL FIELD TRIPS

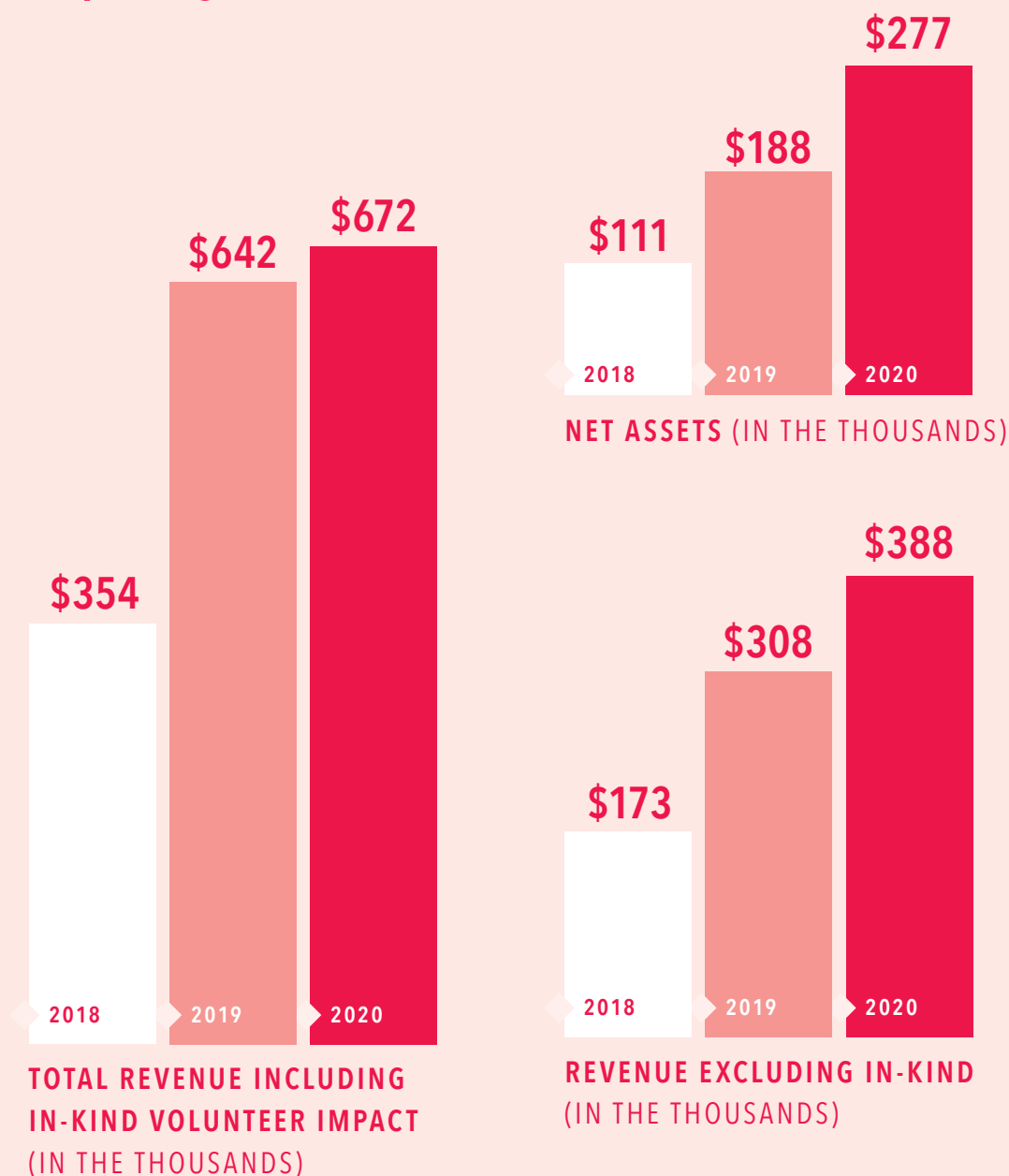
to get students used to wearing masks

8

PARENT WORKSHOPS

to support parent's needs as they transitioned to kindergarten.

Inspiring Minds Financials



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