

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.



MINDS MATTER

PORTLAND

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A Message from Executive Director Reed Harrison



Welcome to the start of the 2023-2024 Minds Matter year!

It has been wonderful to welcome new students, volunteers, and donors to our community and to reconnect for Saturday sessions after the summer break. The classrooms are full of diverse and high energy conversations, including student-led discussions on controversial topics such as the Portland teachers' strike and the Israel/Palestine conflict.

As always, our 50 students and 70 volunteers travel to our NE Portland meeting site each Saturday to work on professional skills, college/career exploration, and college admissions. Sophomores and Juniors also spend time researching and applying to on-campus college summer programs. Minds Matter funds these transformative experiences and students attend two programs during their time at Minds Matter.

Our students put in this time and focus for an impressive three years. Since our inception in 2006, 100% of our program graduates have earned admission to four-year colleges or universities with substantial financial aid support.

The work we do at Minds Matter is as important today as it has ever been and we are proud to be here to help our talented and ambitious students navigate a dynamic college access landscape. It is exciting to be in the middle of the National dialog around college access, legacy admissions, and race that has been rekindled by the Supreme Court's June decision to overturn affirmative action in college admissions. We work closely with every student to personalize their college lists and applications to find their best fit colleges.

Keep reading to learn more about several exciting initiatives underway, including an alumni connection program and plans to open a second Minds Matter Portland site next year!

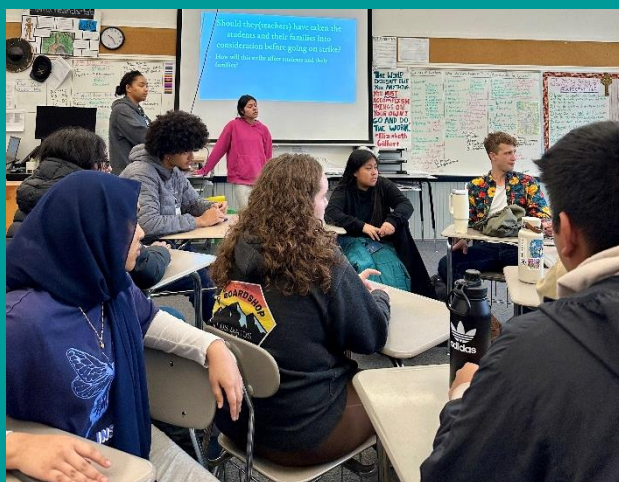
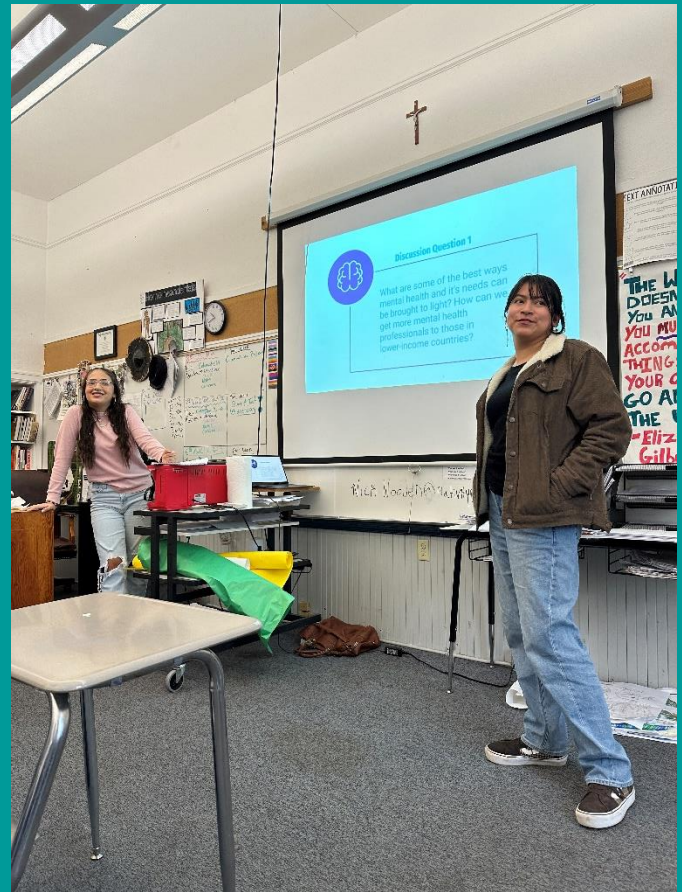
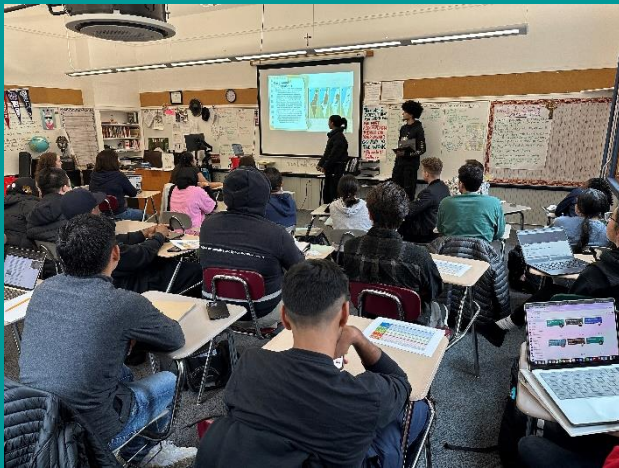
We want to thank the team at the St. Andrew Community Center and Nativity School, who hosts our Saturday mentoring and tutoring sessions at their facilities in NE Portland.

Thank you for your involvement with Minds Matter and your contributions to our community. I have been a part of Minds Matter Portland since 2011 and remain humbled by levels of determination, care, and generosity from our students, volunteers, and donors.

-Reed Harrison, Executive Director

Class Photos Fall 2023

Every Saturday morning, students work with tutors on writing and math. In the afternoon students work with mentors to discuss college, careers, and current events as seen here.



Minds Matter Summer Field Trips

This summer, Minds Matter students and volunteers went on a hike for the first time together, exploring Latourell falls and getting some sunny views of the Columbia Gorge.



27 Sophomores and Juniors toured the University of Portland campus on a recent sunny October Saturday. They spoke with a group of current students, met with an admissions officer, and heard advice about how to approach the college selection and application process.



Summer Program Testimonials

Minds Matter funds two on-campus, multi-week, academic summer program experiences for each student. Students attend the programs after their Sophomore and Junior year, giving them a taste of life at college.

Tracy - Yale Young Global Scholars

"Academically, the experience was amazing. I enjoyed participating in seminars, lectures, and symposiums that genuinely interested me and that were taught by Yale professors and alumni."



Pictured: Tracy with her summer program professor and outside her dorm room.

Jocelyn - School of The New York Times Summer Academy

"I took a public policy and activism course. We learned about the ties between public policy, activism, government, and journalism. I really enjoyed the trips we took during the course. We visited the New York Times building, went to interview people in the subways, and went to Town Hall. Overall the program was super fun and we were given many opportunities to explore the city and do fun things outside of our program."



Aleen - Wake Forest

"I attended Wake Forest's summer program "Making the Rounds: An Insider's Guide to Becoming a Doctor." What I liked most about the experience was the insightful curriculum taught by the dynamic former Wake Forest University professor, Megan Rudock, PhD. The focus on infectious diseases and their spread was fascinating and allowed me to explore my interest in this field. At the end, we did a cool research project which was about medications. Overall, I learned a lot about hospitals and about the human body."

Saaleha - Brown University

"I took a pharmacy class which was really cool. I got to learn more about the business and corporate side of medicine, which definitely expanded my interests career wise. I loved the environment and the weather was very similar to Portland!"

Minds Matter Portland is Expanding and Hiring!

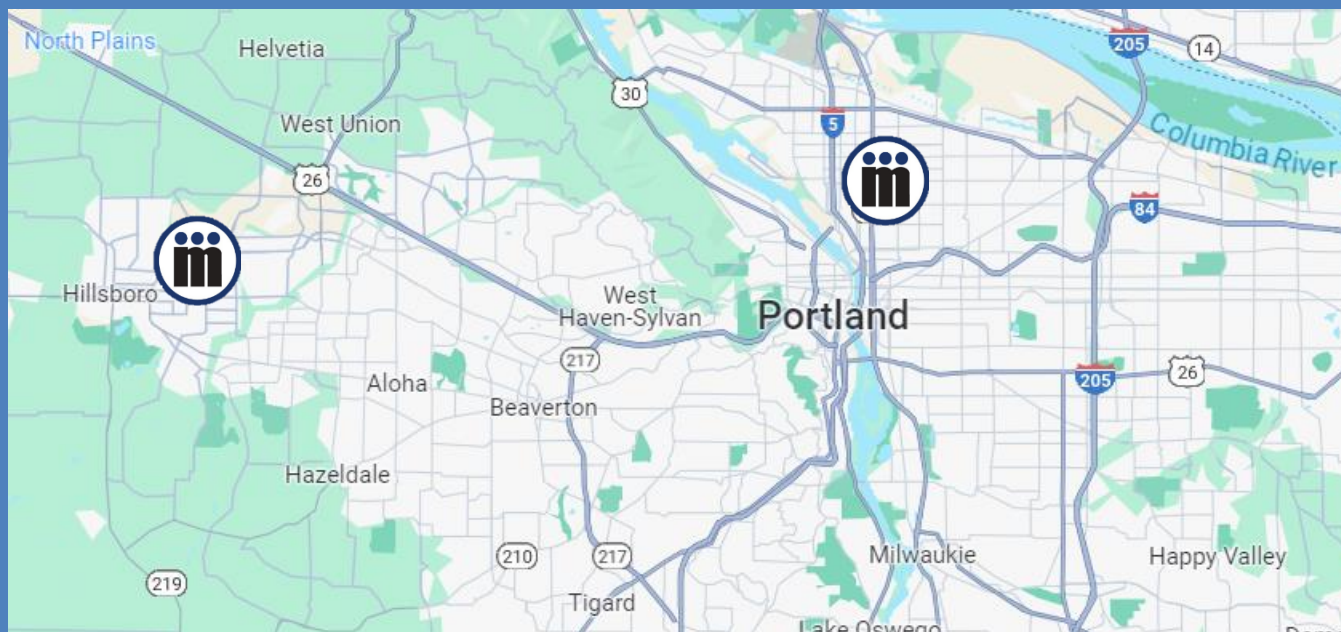
To increase our community impact and to serve more students, we are opening a second Minds Matter Portland site in Hillsboro in the Fall of 2024! The new site will support 10 Sophomores in its first year, and will grow to 30 total students by the third year. We plan to also increase the number of students at our NE Portland site in the next few years. We currently serve 50 students and plan to increase this to a total of 90 students across both sites by 2026.

We have consistently had students from the Hillsboro area and see a clear opportunity to bring our college access programming closer to schools in this area.

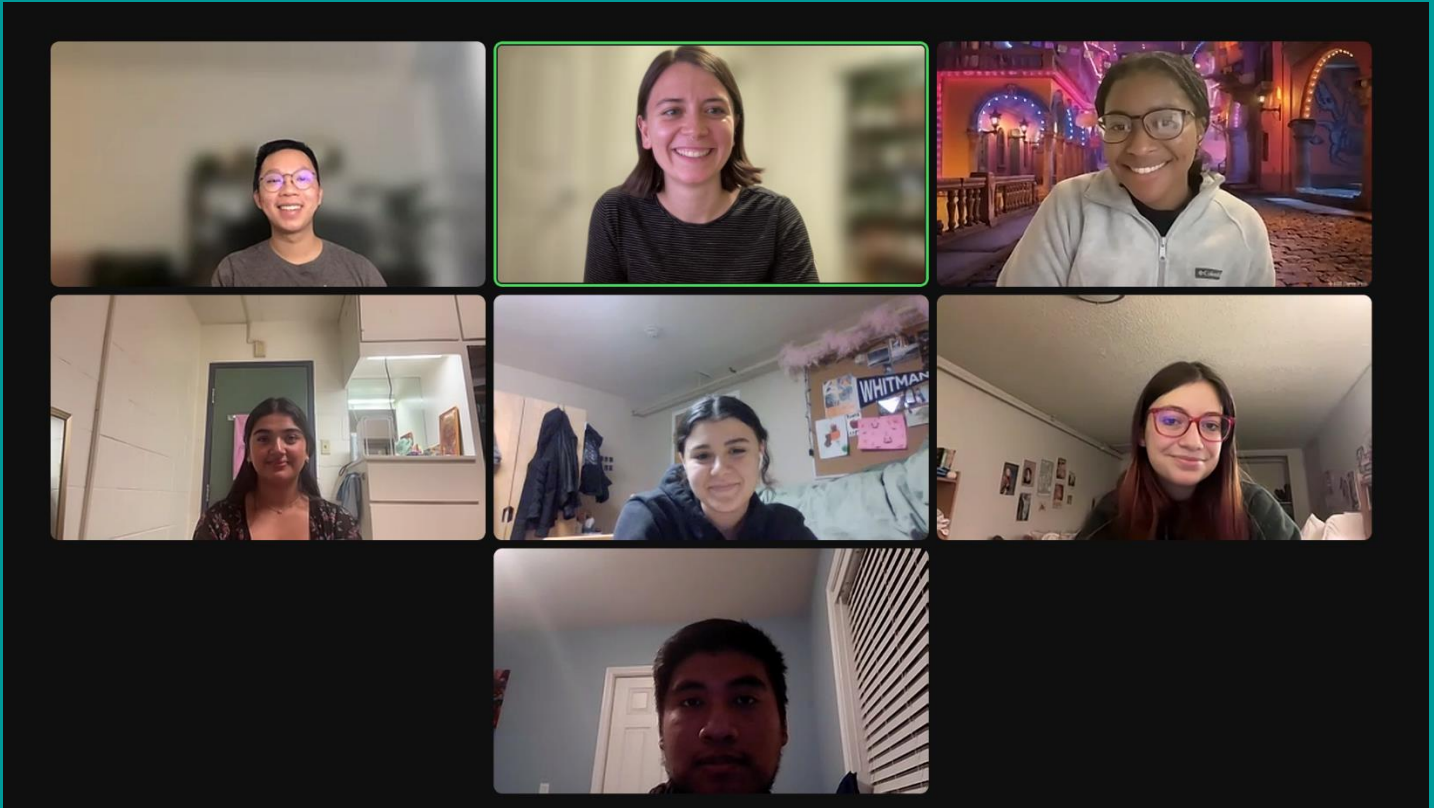
This is a truly exciting time for Minds Matter Portland and we are only able to take on this project because we have such an amazing team of longstanding volunteers and donors. We appreciate your commitment to our students, and we will need your continued support and engagement to make this new adventure successful!

We have posted a position for a **full time Program Associate** who will help to launch and manage this new site, amongst other responsibilities. If you or someone you know might be interested, please reach out to info@mindsmatterportland.org or go ahead and apply online.

We will keep you posted on updates to these plans. Please reach out with any questions or if you would like to support the project to plan and launch our Hillsboro site!



Alumni Program Kickoff



Minds Matter is piloting a new College Success Program to offer formal support to alumni. Starting this Fall, monthly virtual check-ins are being offered for the Class of 2023 as they adjust to life at their respective colleges. The goal is to offer a supportive forum for students to connect with each other and also provide helpful guidance on how to navigate their freshman years academically and socially.

Minds Matter Alumni Q&A

We've reached out to interview several Minds Matter Portland graduates to see how things are going a few years down the road, and hear their thoughts on their Minds Matter experience.

What was your overall impression and experience with Minds Matter?

Overall, it was a great experience. It opened up a lot of doors for me. Just going into the program, I didn't have any support when it came to college applications and preparation. The SAT prep and all of that were just foreign ground to me, being a first-generation college student. So, it was wonderful to have that community support with other students who are also going through it. Some of the other students were also the first in their families to attend college. Having the mentors, tutors, and the rest of the team there every Saturday was helpful for the entire college application process.

Another thing that I enjoyed was getting to go to the summer programs and being on a college campus to take classes was what I was interested in. I wouldn't have had that opportunity without Minds Matter.

I had two summer experiences. The first one was at Smith College in Massachusetts and I wanted to do a young woman's writing workshop. When I started high school, I thought I wanted to become an author, and I still might do that one day. I was really excited to write and I chose that program. But then my interest started to shift a little bit throughout high school. So, then I did a summer quantitative reasoning institute at Carleton College.

What was your experience like in college?

There were ups and downs. I think that even though I went to college here in Portland, I think it was still a major transition for me. Just because I was living on campus, suddenly I'm surrounded by a bunch of new people and as an introvert, it was overwhelming. For those first two or three months of college, I was just really trying to figure out where I fit in and get used to the courses that I was taking. I did feel like I was well prepared for college, but I think it was

Jowelle M. graduated from Minds Matter in 2014 and went on to double major in Sociology and Anthropology and also Hispanic Studies at Lewis & Clark College.



mainly just the adjustment of being on the campus and around new people. I went into college already knowing that I wanted to study sociology, so that helped me with transitioning academically and overall, my experience was pretty positive. I got to do a lot of new things and take interest in classes. Yeah, I would say it was overall positive.

What were some of the biggest challenges you encountered in college?

Socially, college was just something that you have to learn on your own. Another challenge was navigating the college system. There are so many offices. I was just like "oh no, where do I go?" If I needed x or y? I had to face my shyness when talking to professors. When I needed help with something in class, they'd just tell me to go to office hours, and that terrified me in the beginning. I would avoid going. What helped me was over time, especially once you choose your major, you start having classes with the same professors. You start getting to know them over time, at least in a small liberal arts college. I eventually felt comfortable and I feel like they're a nice person, they really want to help. It felt very official to go to office hours and just be like, hey can I get some help?

Where do you currently work, and what role?

I am employed as a Teaching Assistant at an elementary school. I also applied to grad school this year and I've been accepted for two programs, and I'm leaning towards one of them. I applied to a program at Rutgers University and another one at Loyola University Maryland and they're both Masters of Arts in Teaching Spanish programs.



Please help support our students!

Between Giving Tuesday (November 28th) and December 31st, Minds Matter Portland needs to raise \$50K to serve our 50 students. Contributions go directly to covering tuition and travel for summer programs, providing stipends for our graduating Seniors, and to support the launch of our new location in Hillsboro!

Your gift today will be the spark that ignites our students' potential to build bigger, brighter futures for themselves, their families, and our city.

You can donate via credit card on our website www.mindsmatterportland.org/donate, or mail a check to: Minds Matter Portland, PO Box 12089, Portland, OR 97212. We can also accept stock donations.

Interested in joining our team? We are always looking for more volunteers to support students on Saturdays or to provide many other types of help throughout the week. If you are interested in volunteering or learning more, please reach out to volunteer@mindsmatterportland.org. You can also apply directly on our website.

Minds Matter Portland

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