FALL 2024 MINDS MATTER NEWSLETTER

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.



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A Message From Executive Director Reed Harrison

Welcome to the start of the 2024-25 Minds Matter year!



This year we are celebrating our 19th year supporting amazing students and also the launch of our second location in Hillsboro! Read on for more information about the generous partnership offered by Portland Community College in Hillsboro, as well as stories and reactions from our students during their recent college summer program experiences.

In September we welcomed 22 new Sophomores (our largest number ever), where they joined our Juniors and Seniors to embark on their three-year journey to college preparedness and matriculation. Students meet with tutors, mentors, and college counselors each Saturday to work on academics, professional skills, college/career exploration, and college applications. It has been terrific to see the energy and enthusiasm of our students and volunteers during these first several weeks, including visits from multiple college admissions representatives and student-led classroom conversations on topics like the ongoing societal disruption of Artificial Intelligence technology.

As we've done since 2006, we focus on ensuring every Minds Matter student matriculates to a four-year college or university with significant financial aid. Students, counselors, and mentors partner to identify and apply to "best-fit" colleges that meet the academic, geographic, and affordability criteria that can change the socioeconomic trajectories of the lives of our students and families.

This work takes an incredible commitment from our 100+ volunteers and our generous community of donors who collectively fund our budget of almost \$500,000. Students attend 25 Saturday sessions each year (for three years) because of a fierce desire to learn and to take control of their academic and professional futures.

We also want to thank the team at the St. Andrew Nativity School and Church, who share their NE Portland facilities and also a passion for educational access and equity.

Thank you for being a part of the Minds Matter Portland community! Please don't hesitate to reach out with questions or talk about how you can get involved. We are always looking for more volunteers and supporters!

-Reed Harrison, Minds Matter Portland Executive Director

Exciting News: Minds Matter Portland Expands to Hillsboro!

We're thrilled to announce the launch of our second Minds Matter Portland site in Hillsboro! This new location will support 7 Sophomores in its inaugural year, with plans to grow to 30 students by the third year. Additionally, we aim to expand our NE Portland site, increasing our total student capacity from 50 to 90 across both locations by 2026.

Thanks to a partnership with Portland Community College, we are delighted to share that they are generously donating space at the Hillsboro Center Campus for our programming. This collaboration will help us bring our college access initiatives closer to local schools, where we've seen a steady interest from students.



Portland Community College Hillsboro Center

This is a remarkable time for Minds Matter Portland, and we owe this expansion to our incredible team of dedicated volunteers and donors. Your support has been invaluable, and we will rely on your continued commitment to make this new initiative a success!

We're also excited to introduce Nancy Vidal Martinez, our Program Associate, who will be instrumental in launching and managing the Hillsboro site, along with other responsibilities.

Thank you for being part of our journey!



Students and mentors at the Hillsboro site



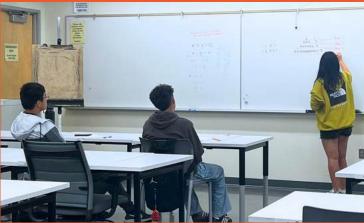
Nancy Vidal Martinez -Program Associate and Minds Matter Portland's newest staff member

Class Photos Fall 2024

Saturday Sessions have offically begun! Saturday morning, students work with tutors on writing and math. In the afternoon students work with mentors to discuss college, careers, and summer programs as seen here!













Alumni - Updates from the Class of 2024 on the transition to college

Rose Cholula Rios - Pacific Lutheran University



Moving 3 hours away from home was scary to just think about for me. This time, I wasn't going to a summer program for a week or on a spring break trip to Spain for a week and coming back home. This time I would be gone for months! Totally independent. I was scared, but college has been much better than I expected. It took me about 2 weeks to get adjusted and college now feels like home! College is not like high school. High school is more cliquey and it's hard to be yourself because we all want to fit in. In college, I have felt myself more than ever. I have found true friends that I connect with. I've been much more productive with my overall well-being.I actually find it easier to eat healthy and exercise more often on campus than at home. The only challenge for me is finding a study schedule. In college, you have no one to tell you to sit down and do your

homework. It's so tempting to sit in the library and scroll on my phone instead of studying. But I've been learning to take care of myself more and continuing to be independent!

<u>Tracy Zhen - Washington University in St. Louis</u>

Before coming to college I always thought that I would be able to transition into college perfectly fine, considering the experiences I had with attending pre-college programs on the opposite side of the coast for weeks. I wouldn't say I was completely wrong as I have had experiences and expectations of what it would be like to be away from my family but I was not completely right too. When I arrived here at WashU, I knew that the next time I would be back home wouldn't be until a few months. Knowing that and still choosing to attend a school far away from home, I knew that there would be a mixture of sadness, stress, and intimidation while transitioning. I will say my experience since the first day of being at WashU vs. now is going more smoothly than I thought. I feel like I have finally settled down, have close friends, and created a place that feels like a second home. Some challenges are the rigor of the



classes I am taking and trying to balance my habits of studying while also making time to relax. WashU offers an abundant amount of resources especially for science and math courses. I was able to get a personal tutor for chemistry and also be a part of what WashU has, "Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL)" - an evidence-based model of collaborative learning. PLTL groups of students (typically 6-10) work together on a problem set specifically designed for each session that aims to develop students' course-relevant problem-solving skills. They are facilitated by a Peer Leader, a trained upperclass student who excelled in the course.

Summer Program Spotlight **Amore'**

<u>University of the Pacific:</u> <u>Plant Biodiversity</u>

What was your course about and what did you learn?

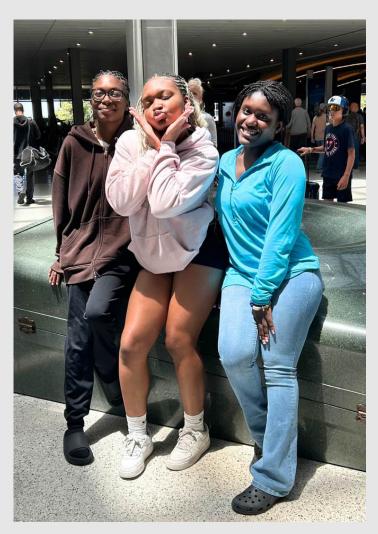
I learned about evolution and ecology of plants, examined different plant species, their habitats, and their roles in ecosystems. We went out and interacted with plants, cooked them, and learned how to make homemade beer and wine from scratch. The best thing about my program academically was how hands-on everything was. My class went out and interacted with plants, we cooked them, and looked at lot of a microorganisms on a microscope.





What was the best thing socially about your summer program?

The amount of things to do after classes. From when the classes ended to around 9:30 pm, they had multiple things to do like bingo, yoga, zumba, sound baths, sports, karaoke, trivia, rock climbing, outside movie night, and more! They never forced you to do anything, It was very free roam since the campus was humongous and you could do whatever you wanted. There were about 900 students or more in the program so I saw new faces every single day and it was an awesome experience.



How did your summer program change your perspective when it comes to college or career?

My program helped me feel more confident in what career I want because I was able to speak with professors and staff to get a better understanding of my future career. One professor was a doctor who helped explain to me the difference between psychology and psychiatry.



What was the biggest challenge for you regarding the summer program process? How did you overcome that challenge?

The biggest challenge for me to overcome during the summer program was getting used to all of the different personalities around me. When I am at home I know what to expect from the people around me because I am always around them, but in my program I met new people everyday. I learned that not everyone wants to be your friend, which is okay. I dealt with this was by taking everything that people did or said with a grain of salt instead of staying hooked on it. By letting it go, I protected my peace.

What was your biggest takeaway or learning experience?

Growing up and gaining independence is really hard! I had a fun time and it taught me to be responsible and how to take care of myself, though sometimes I wished my mom was cooking for me! It also taught me that college can be a lot of fun. Be responsible and be organized because you need to take the initiative to get done what needs to get done.



Minds Matter Portland is in the Willamette Week Give!Guide



Mark your calendars! From November 1st to December 31st, Minds Matter Portland is aiming to raise \$15,000 through the Willamette Week Give!Guide to support our 54 students by funding summer programs, providing stipends for our graduating seniors, and supporting our newly launched location in Hillsboro!

Your gift can be the catalyst for real solutions and real success, helping our students build brighter futures for themselves, their families, and our community. When you donate through the Give!Guide on 'Big Give Days', you are also entered to win prizes through local businesses. Additionally, the first 100 people to donate \$100 to Minds Matter through the Give!Guide will receive a free car wash voucher from our generous longtime sponsor, Kaady Car Washes.



Donate through the Give!Guide



Stay connected with us on social media for the latest updates and reminders about the Give Guide!

Facebook: mindsmatterofportland

Instagram: @mindsmatterofportland

Give Guide Partnership MINDS MATTER PORTLAND

Ukandu Is Our Willamette Week Give!Guide Nonprofit Partner!

We're excited to partner with Ukandu, a local nonprofit dedicated to bringing joy, hope, and connection to communities affected by childhood and adolescent cancer. We understand that cancer touches the entire family, and Ukandu is committed to offering parents and caregivers a much-needed respite from the physical, emotional, and financial challenges they face.

We encourage you to support Ukandu's important mission by donating and helping to make a difference in the lives of these families. Together, we can provide the hope and connection they need during this challenging time. Thank you for your support!

Donate through the Give!Guide



Stay connected with Ukandu!!

Facebook: Officialukandu

Instagram: U.kan.du Linkedin: Ukandu

Join Minds Matter: Make a Lasting Impact!

At Minds Matter, we connect driven and determined students from low-income families with the people, preparation, and possibilities they need to succeed in college and beyond. Together, we can empower the next generation to create their future and change the world!

Become a Volunteer!

We're on the lookout for passionate volunteers to help us with our mission. Whether you can support our students on Saturdays or assist throughout the week, there are countless ways to contribute your time and talents.

Interested in Joining Our Team?

If you're ready to make a difference, we'd love to hear from you! Reach out to us at volunteer@mindsmatterportland.org, or apply directly by scanning the QR Code.

Not sure Where to Start?

We're here to help! Fill out our coffee chat form by scanning the QR code to schedule a 30-minute virtual meeting, and we'll help you find the perfect volunteer position for you.

Together, we can help our students thrive.





VOLUNTEERING MATTERS!

