

**SPRING 2025**  
**NEWSLETTER**  
Digital Edition





## A CONVERSATION WITH BREAKTHROUGH'S FOUNDING AND CURRENT EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS, JULIE FRIEDBERG (GFS '89) AND MICHELLE PALMER

By Mara Lemos-Stein

### *Under Breakthrough's Spell*

Breakthrough's goal is to infuse a true love of learning and passion for education that will ripple through its students' communities and impact their futures decisively. A testament to that ripple effect is the launch of the program 30 years ago.

"I had such an incredible experience – an absolutely transformative experience – working with the program during college that I thought: Why isn't this in Germantown?," said Julie Friedberg, who spearheaded the opening of the Philadelphia site in 1995.

Julie had worked at three different Breakthrough programs (then called Summerbridge) around the country, even though education was not part of her career plan at the time; she was studying History, with a minor in Music.

An alumna of Germantown Friends School, she was intimately familiar with the school's values and community dynamics in the area. "I thought Breakthrough would be great for Germantown and for the school, a win-win situation," she said.

She reached out to Dick Wade, who was then stepping into his role as GFS' Head of School, with a proposal to bring the program to Philadelphia. Wade convened a committee of volunteers to assess the project's viability, and Julie was tapped to head Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia after graduating from college.

Now she needed to get the word out to the community at large and public schools to recruit students – it was time to build a shared vision.

"I had no idea if there would be interest, or how students would respond," she said. "But they were incredibly excited about it, and that was thrilling."



**Julie Friedberg**  
Founding Executive Director,  
Breakthrough of Greater  
Philadelphia (formerly known  
as Summerbridge)



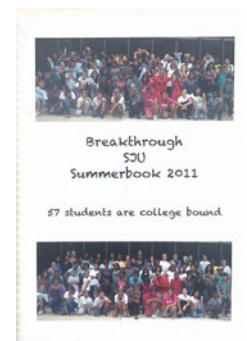
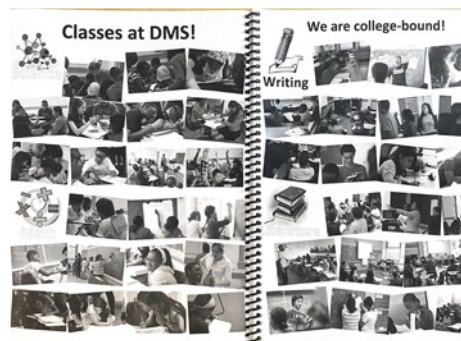
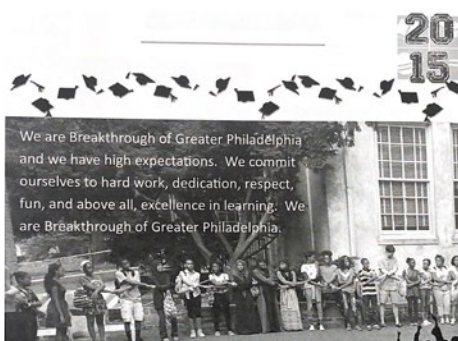
**Michelle Palmer**  
Executive Director  
Breakthrough of Greater  
Philadelphia (2020–present)

Working out of a desk with no computer, Julie was surprised when three students from Clarence E. Pickett Middle School, now a Mastery Charter school, walked onto the GFS campus to deliver their applications for the summer program.

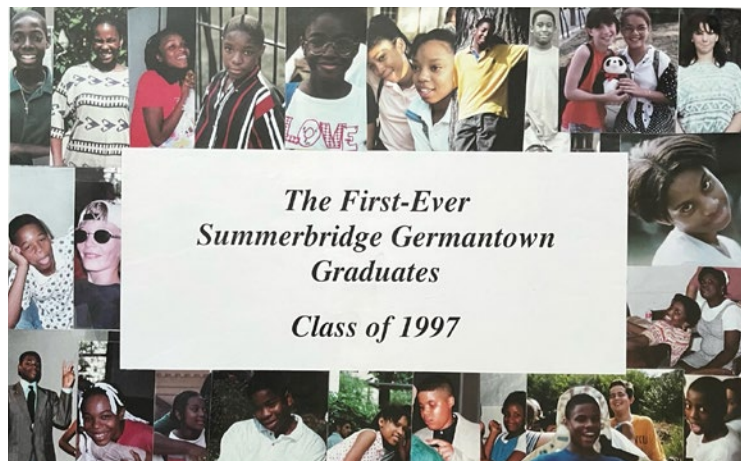
"These kids had never been on campus before, but they wanted to come in and hand deliver [their applications]," she said. "I was really moved by that...and that was the beginning." That first class welcomed 24 sixth-grade students.

Julie leaned on her experiences of Breakthrough in Manchester, NH, Providence, RI, and New Orleans, LA, to design the program that would be taught in Philadelphia. Besides drawing from elements in those chapters' curricula, she added some of Germantown's own flavor to the program.

"Service learning was a big driver for me, and that was new to most programs back then," Julie said. "We had something called Build Up Germantown, in which the kids were basically in interdisciplinary projects...the academics were infused with or driven by community projects."







**Peer power**  
 Teaching and learning, learning and teaching — education is a two-way street and a lifelong process. The high school and college students above know this well — they're student instructors at Summerbridge Germantown, the summer enrichment program at Germantown Friends School which gives 6th and 7th grade students from Northwest public schools a leg up in their pursuit of academic excellence. The instructors, who hail from schools all over the United States, are learning as well — what it's like to teach, what it's like to interact with other races, what it's like to give back to the community.  
 Catherine Sayre



Indeed, the dual-mission of providing free academic enrichment for traditionally underserved youth and hands-on teaching experiences for college students creates an alchemy that is very unique in learning environments.

As Michelle put it: "The magic of Breakthrough is when middle schoolers come together with college students. Their eyes open up in a different way. They are eager to learn, and it gives

them a new experience. They're impressed that their teachers are young, energized, and for a lot of them, they have teachers who look like them as well."

This near-peer learning experience breeds a joy of learning. Building cohesion through rituals, songs, special handshakes and "spirit checks," program participants forge deep connections while being offered consistent support to grow academically and socially.

"It is really fun for them, and that is so much a part of Breakthrough — we're not just your average academic enrichment program, we are much more than that," said Michelle.

### The Magic of Breakthrough

Some of the main priorities for Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia in the mid-1990s remain top of mind for current Executive Director Michelle Palmer.

"Educating the community and fundraising are among my top priorities for Breakthrough; we are really trying to take it to the next level," said Michelle. "We've had significant gains in the past few years, but I want us to get to a place where we could have an endowment, and one day maybe even provide scholarships."

Much of the momentum to gather the support and funding to open the Philadelphia chapter stemmed from the program's compelling vision and mission. But what Julie couldn't quite appreciate then was that the so-called "magic of Breakthrough" was already at work before any kid walked into a classroom that summer.

"It's the belief in the power of young people," she said. "I was young, the staff was young, we were all young, and that's the special sauce of this program."

### The Next 30 Years

Since its 1995 launch, Breakthrough has grown despite a few bumps on the road. This year, the program will enroll approximately 200 middle schoolers, 50 high schoolers, and 40 college students hopeful for a career as educators.

All that growth serves as inspiration and affirmation for Breakthrough to continue evolving to accommodate the needs of Scholars and Teaching Fellows, and adapting to trends in education broadly.

“We started our College Bound program back up this year to make sure that our students are prepared for testing and supported as far as resume building and getting ready for college overall...including understanding finances,” said Michelle.

“We will continue to bring in professional development for Teaching Fellows and aim to give them a competitive stipend so they can enjoy the experience, learn about all aspects of teaching, and...get the full grasp of what it’s going to take for them to be in the classroom,” she said.

For Julie, who is now an executive and leadership coach focusing on education, Breakthrough is ripe for positively influencing the education ecosystem.

“[Breakthrough] has the potential to scale and absolutely be infused into how we do school,” said Julie. This is especially true as more people consider alternative ways for career advancement in light of the high cost of college education.

“There is a whole set of teacher apprenticeships around the country and it would be amazing to have [Breakthrough] funnel into the

apprenticeship model, so that this could be a pathway for the Teaching Fellows and the Scholars as well,” she said.

Looking into a crystal ball – or drawing up a strategy plan – Michelle paints the picture for Breakthrough for the next 30 years.

“One day we hope that Breakthrough will not need to be in existence, because we hope to live in a place where educational equity is a reality, education is prioritized for all students, and all students have equal opportunities,” said Michelle. “That may not be the case...so we will continue to flourish and grow, we will stay the course and make sure that we are leveling the playing field for our students.”



## BREAKTHROUGH BY THE NUMBERS

1,600  
STUDENTS | served at Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia since 1995

500  
TEACHING FELLOWS | at Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia since 1995

3 OUT OF 4 | Teaching Fellows pursue teaching careers\*  
(Following BTGP fellowship, BT Collaborative 2024)

83% | Breakthrough 8th grade Scholars are admitted to top choice high schools\*  
(Responses from BTGP 8th grade class surveyed, 2024)



This year, we honor Scholars, Fellows, and other individuals and community partners for their outstanding achievements and unwavering dedication to Breakthrough. We are pleased to announce the following honorees in our 30th Anniversary year.

**Awards will be presented at our Spring Soirée on May 1st. Join us... [get your tickets today!](#)**

### Community Champion Award

Recognizes leaders in Philadelphia who serve as supporters and champions to advance Breakthrough’s mission in the community.



**Congressman  
Dwight Evans**



**Representative  
Tarik Khan**

### Philadelphia Insurance Companies Breakthrough Award

Recognizes Teaching Fellow and Scholar Alumni who have dedicated their lives to educational pursuits, community impact, and/or teaching careers.



**Kamryn Davis**



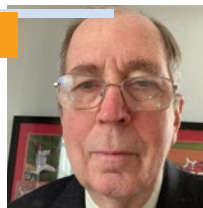
**Matthew Greenawalt**

Sponsored by



### Karr Barth Equitable Force for Good Award

Recognizes long-time supporters who help Breakthrough realize and accelerate its mission.



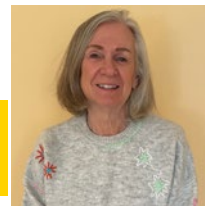
**Jim Degnan**



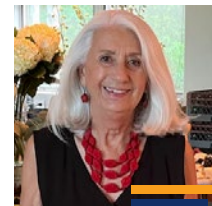
**Jason Duckworth**



**Nanie Flaherty**



**Susan Fleming**



**Peggy Greenawalt**

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## ■ A PATH IN EDUCATION TRACED WITH CURIOSITY, SERVICE AND A NOTECARD

By Mara Lemos-Stein



### Alumni Spotlight

Rex Yin

*BTGP Teaching Fellow, 2013 and 2014*

As a Teaching Fellow at Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia, Rex Yin carried a small card in his folder with a personal reminder: Be the best teacher you can be.

“That was like my daily mantra...and part of that was being authentic to myself,” he said. Whether rejoicing in the best classroom moments or wrestling with the difficult ones, the most important thing is “recognizing that those are the ways that we can grow as educators.”

He was a Teaching Fellow in the summers of 2013 and 2014, and returned to Breakthrough in 2019 as an Instructional Coach for Middle School Science, guiding aspiring educators on their professional paths.

Now an education researcher and practitioner, Rex’s own journey reflects a resiliency and curiosity ignited by growing up in an immigrant community, and a steadfast commitment to engendering the best possible educational outcomes for underserved children.

Born in Thailand to Cambodian war refugee parents, the family moved to the U.S. when Rex was two years old. They moved again when he was 4, this time to Philadelphia, where he attended public schools and immersed himself in the Cambodian community through faith-based voluntary work and activities.

His parents gave him “free rein” to explore his interests, he said, and he studied culinary arts at vocational high school Jules E. Mastbaum. An English teacher recognized his academic potential and guided him to work with an educational non-profit organization to apply to college.

He enrolled at Gettysburg College in 2010. During his sophomore year, he took a course on immigration, culture and education that led to a decisive turn in his path. Rex had to research the education experiences of an ethnic community in the U.S. – he worked on a project on Cambodian Americans in Philadelphia.

“It unraveled so much that I wasn’t aware of,” said Rex. “It even explained my own journey in education...that it wasn’t normal to have outdated textbooks, it wasn’t normal to walk through metal detectors day after day, it wasn’t normal to hear teachers talk about that we just don’t have enough, and we’re going to do what we can with what we have.”

Seeing more clearly the inequities of the education system in minority communities, Rex designed a major in educational research with a focus on education diversity and culture. Next step was to get some “meaningful” hands-on experience, so he became a Teaching Fellow at Breakthrough.



BTGP Teaching Fellow Rex Yin leading a classroom discussion in his first year at Breakthrough

“At Breakthrough is where it really felt personal,” he said. “That first summer revealed so much about the field of education, the professional development opportunities and connecting with current educators, people from other education-focused organizations and the work they are doing.” He returned the following year to deepen the learning of teaching skills and the connections with budding and established educators.

His experience with Breakthrough instilled in him the certainty that middle school years are crucial for children’s futures, and after college,

he earned his Master of Education at Eastern University, and worked as a Middle School Science teacher in Philadelphia for seven years, from 2016 to 2022.

Rex remained involved in the Cambodian community, writing grants for educational programs as a volunteer at the Cambodian Association of Greater Philadelphia, and eventually joined the organization full-time to establish children and youth educational support programs and partnerships, all the while continuing to advocate for equity in education.

Rex’s advocacy work paved the way to the next phase in his career, when he joined Acelero Learning, a provider of equity-centered kindergarten education programs. He worked with the Mayor’s Office for Children and Families on a Pre-K initiative, developing and facilitating training on diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging (DEIB) to more than 200 early education providers in Philadelphia. He is currently the DEIB Manager for Acelero.

From his experience at Breakthrough, Rex still holds some valuable insights.

“I really appreciate the empowered learning culture of Breakthrough, which means that there is autonomy and opportunity,” he said. Although the Fellows have specific roles during the summer program, there is room for creativity and agency in the student-centered teaching experience, said Rex.

For future Teaching Fellows, he hopes they take time to rest, restore and be genuine.

“Many successful educators have always seen rest as an act of recovery but also of active resistance... so for the Teaching Fellows committed to really not just teaching but also fighting for education and justice, prioritizing well-being is a way for us to continue that fight day after day.”

Standing in front of a classroom of young students can be like staring into a mirror, so the way to succeed is to be “your authentic self,” said Rex. “The children you teach have a way in which they can bring the best out of you, and they can also bring the worst out of you...and in those moments is when we can actually think about how we are being the best that we can be.”

Carrying a little note card as a reminder to be the best is always an option.

Read about the journeys of other Breakthrough Scholar and Teaching Fellow Alumni [on our website here.](#)



## AWARDS & PRESS

Breakthrough is grateful for the recognition and media coverage throughout Fall '24–Winter '25!

### Chalkbeat Philadelphia

August 16, 2024 | By Carly Sitrin

["Philadelphia's newest teachers share their hopes and fears for the coming school year"](#)

CHALKBEAT PHILADELPHIA

### Chestnut Hill Local

January 27, 2025 | By Len Lear

["Local program builds students, and future teachers too"](#)



### Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia and Boston Consulting Group honored as Top 25 Partner in Philanthropy by Philadelphia Business Journal (PBJ)

February 6, 2025 | Announcement by Lisa Dukart, PBJ

"Each year, the Philadelphia Business Journal recognizes impactful partnerships between two organizations that are benefiting the Greater Philadelphia community. For 2025, we are recognizing 25 such partnerships that are supporting an array of causes like food and housing insecurity, education, literacy, workforce development and healthcare.

To determine this year's list, we sought nominations from the public, receiving more than four dozen. Our editorial board reviewed each partnership, taking into consideration the scope of the relationship and the impact of the work on the community such as the amount of money donated to a cause, the number of volunteer hours served, as well as the number of people who benefited from the partnership."



## DID YOU KNOW...

that BT Teaching Fellows who are accepted to Penn GSE's Urban Teaching Residency Program receive a \$20,000 annual scholarship to attend? We are grateful for this Breakthrough-Penn GSE partnership which helps build the next generation of teachers!

## FOLLOW US

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"We are grateful that Breakthrough's multi-year partnership with Boston Consulting Group has been recognized by Philadelphia Business Journal. BCG has been instrumental in helping us launch and staff volunteers for Breakthrough's new College Bound program, hosting Scholars on field trips at their Philadelphia HQ, participating as guest speakers in our Career Conversations series, and providing strategic guidance and support as we accelerate Breakthrough's impact in the years to come. Thank you to the Philadelphia Business Journal for this honor. We are humbled to receive this recognition along with CHOP, Philabundance, Greater Philadelphia YMCA, and other nonprofits working towards a better Philadelphia."

Michelle Reyes Aletti  
BTGP Communications Manager



## MARK YOUR CALENDARS: 30TH ANNIVERSARY & PROGRAM EVENTS

EVENT	2025 DATE	LOCATION
Scholar HBCU & Career Day	2/19	Offices of Karr Barth Associates Bala Cynwyd, PA
Scholar College Counseling	2/22	GFS Campus 31 West Coulter Street Philadelphia, PA 19144
New Scholar Admissions Interview Day	4/19, 10am–2pm	GFS Campus
Scholar College Tours	4/26	Washington, D.C.
30th Anniversary Spring Soirée <a href="#">Purchase tables &amp; tickets here</a>	5/1, 6pm–10pm	The Bellevue Hotel 200 South Broad Street Philadelphia, PA
Last Day (School Year Program)	5/17	GFS Campus
Teaching Fellow Training Kickoff (Summer)	6/16	GFS Campus
Scholar Parent Orientation & BBQ	6/25	GFS Campus
Summer Program Kickoff	June 30 @ 8:30am	GFS Campus
<b>NEW!</b> Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast <a href="#">RSVP here</a>	July 9 @ 8:30am	Hargroves Center at GFS
Teaching Fellow & Alumni Reunion BBQ	July 10, 5pm–7pm	GFS Campus
Summer Program Visiting Days - see Breakthrough in action! <a href="#">RSVP for July 9</a> <a href="#">RSVP for July 23</a>	July 9 @ 10am July 23 @ 10am	Sharpless Building at GFS
Celebration Day (Last Day of Summer Program!)	August 8	GFS Campus
<b>NEW!</b> Alliance HP Golf Classic benefiting Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia <a href="#">RSVP here</a>	September 29 @ 11 am	The 1912 Club Plymouth Meeting, PA
Breakfast of Champions	October 16 @ 8am	Philadelphia Cricket Club St. Martin's Clubhouse
<b>NEW!</b> Educational Equity Summit	October 25 @ 1pm	Taulane Auditorium at GFS Campus



## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS + SCHOOL YEAR PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

By Sakina Parks, Program Manager

### Breakthrough School Year Program Overview

We are excited to share updates on our growing and vibrant Scholar program! This year, we have 87 dedicated Scholars in grades 6-8, supported by 9 enthusiastic Teaching Fellows. Our curriculum includes a strong emphasis on Humanities (history, reading/writing, and Social-Emotional Learning), Math, and a diverse range of elective courses. Scholars have the opportunity to explore their passions through engaging electives including: STEM/Robotics, needlework, painting, a capella, improv, Dungeons & Dragons, and Speedminton.

#### Scholar Updates:

The inclusion of summer elements – such as SLC point competitions and cheers – has significantly boosted Scholar morale on Saturday mornings. They have embraced the added fun to our program and are enthusiastic participants in the SLC point competitions!

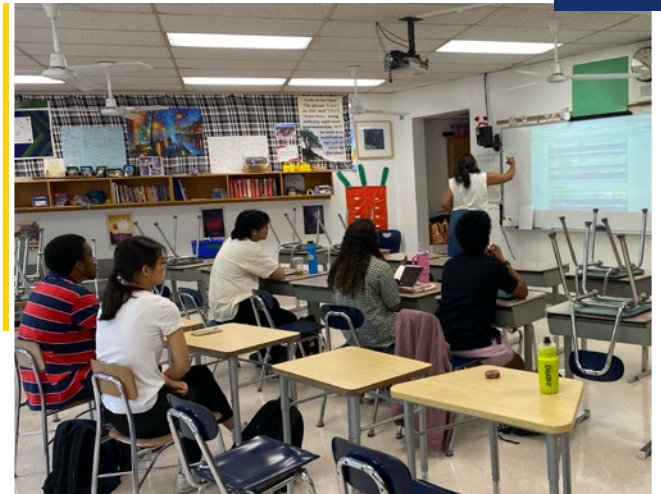
Scholars have fantastic opportunities to learn and bond outside of the classroom with our upcoming trips. This winter, we went bowling with Breakthrough's College Bound Scholars. In the spring, we'll head to BCG's offices for a career-focused field trip.

#### Teaching Fellow Updates:

Our Teaching Fellows continue to grow professionally through impactful development opportunities. We have maintained our valuable partnership with University of Pennsylvania GSE and are excited to announce a new collaboration with Teach for America. Representatives from both organizations visited to discuss employment and graduate program opportunities.

Additionally, KIPP Philadelphia joined our Teaching Fellows for a special professional development session, providing insights into the hiring process and credential requirements for teaching positions.

We are proud of the progress our Scholars and Teaching Fellows are making and look forward to an exciting summer season ahead!



ABOVE: Breakthrough Philly Program Manager Sakina Parks presents with Teach for America at UPenn GSE.





## Community Connections Overview

The Community Connections initiative continues to foster meaningful mentorship and academic growth for 32 Breakthrough Scholars. Each Scholar is paired with a high school student mentor from Germantown Friends School, creating a supportive and enriching learning environment for everyone involved.

Meetings are held every other Wednesday evening for two hours. Breakthrough Scholars receive mentorship and academic enrichment in literature, math, and standardized test preparation. Each session includes dinner, engaging icebreakers, and valuable learning experiences.

This winter, Scholars and their mentors enjoyed a special outing to see *Elf the Musical* at the Walnut Street Theater, strengthening their bonds and creating lasting memories. We are grateful for our dedicated mentors and enthusiastic Scholars who make this program a success.



## DID YOU KNOW...

*College Bound* launched in 2024 as an official program at Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia with over 25 Scholars participating in various activities - field trips, career panels, networking skills, resume prep, and college test prep.



## BREAKTHROUGH BY THE NUMBERS

### 2 OUT OF 3 TEACHING FELLOWS

plan to remain full-time  
K-12 teachers for 5+ years\*  
(BT Collaborative 2024)

75% | of Breakthrough Philly Teaching  
Fellows are teachers of color



## COLLEGE BOUND HIGHLIGHTS

By Sue Chen, Recruitment Manager and College Bound Lead

This year marks the official launch of Breakthrough’s year-round College Bound program. Our high school students have been especially busy this Fall/Winter with activities both on and off campus.

We began this programming year with team building in the trees at TreeTop Quest Philadelphia, where students learned how to trust their instincts and each other to navigate some tricky ropes courses.

We also visited the Share Food Program to spend our morning packing food boxes for senior citizens living at or below the poverty line. Despite it being an early morning, Scholars enjoyed their time and even asked for opportunities to go back!

We also had a day full of career conversations where we learned about careers in the arts, data analytics, packaging engineering, and commercial real estate development. We followed that up with our annual resume writing workshop, and this year, Scholars also worked on elevator pitches with our partners at BCG.

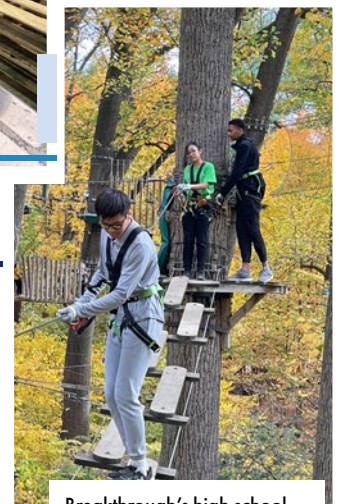
11th grade Scholars have commenced their 12-week SAT prep course. Over the next 12 weeks, they will learn test taking strategies from our test prep instructor at MJ Test Prep. This grueling course will maximize their opportunities during the college application process. We are so excited to see how our students grow along this journey!



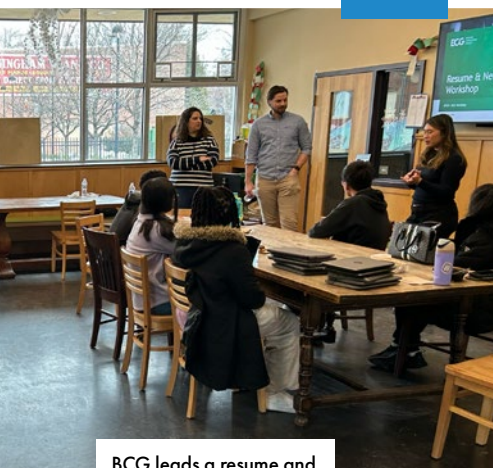
Abe Diallo (BTGP Advisory Board Chair) and Sue Chen (College Bound Lead) chaperone the College Bound Scholars at TreeTop Quest



Breakthrough College Bound Scholars volunteer at Philadelphia Share Food Program



Breakthrough’s high school Scholars experience obstacle courses in the trees at TreeTop Quest–Philadelphia



BCG leads a resume and networking workshop for College Bound Scholars

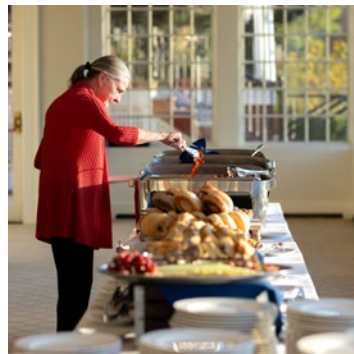


Corporate Partner Karr-Barth Associates / Equitable volunteer alongside College Bound Scholars. Thank you Matt Johnston, Tim Maguire, and team!

## SPECIAL THANKS TO BREAKTHROUGH VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are the lifeblood of Breakthrough, playing vital roles to interview students and families in the admissions process, support program and back office operations, mentor Scholars, speak about careers and educational journeys, organize fundraising events, serve on the advisory board, and more!

If you've volunteered for Breakthrough recently, please join us for an Appreciation Breakfast on Wednesday, July 9 at 8:30am on the campus of Germantown Friends School. We look forward to seeing you again—[RSVP here](#).



Interested in getting involved with Breakthrough?  
[Complete this two-minute survey!](#)

## THANK YOU, FALL 2024 VOLUNTEERS!

- |                 |                       |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| John Barber     | Mara Lemos-Stein      |
| Melissa Benski  | Demetri Lowry         |
| Tanisha Beszue  | Mollie Maglich        |
| Amy Branch      | Colleen Maguire       |
| Cornelius Brown | Tim Maguire           |
| Robin Dagostino | Callie Mattson        |
| Abe Diallo      | Miles Mattson         |
| Avinash Doddi   | Andrew Mele           |
| Sai Doddi       | Rashida Ng            |
| Onome Emore     | Queade Norah          |
| Robyn Ettinger  | Kacie Pisani          |
| Nanie Flaherty  | Tiffany Richardson    |
| Susan Fleming   | Omar Sabir            |
| Sharene Ginyard | Sandy Shen            |
| Ilana Goldfus   | Paul Siragusa         |
| Beth Gonzales   | Matt Smith            |
| Charlette Hardy | Anna Todd             |
| Sandra Jewitt   | Michelle Todd-Coleman |
| Matt Johnston   | Sean Thaxter          |
| Benjamin Jones  | Eboni Walker          |
| Marnie Kerr     | David Zavitz          |
| Kate Kim        |                       |



"I enjoy volunteering with Breakthrough because it has allowed me to reconnect with a cause that I value deeply. As I was transitioning professionally, the opportunity to volunteer helped me to refocus and make decisions that aligned with my values. Breakthrough is bridging the gap of opportunity and success, and is creating generational success through building a community of scholarly and emotionally intelligent humans."

Queade N.  
 BTGP Volunteer



## BREAKTHROUGH BY THE NUMBERS

In the past 12 months, 138 amazing volunteers have provided over 800 total hours of service at Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia?



## BREAKTHROUGH WELCOMES NEW STAFF AND ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS IN FALL 2024



**JESSICA RICHARDSON**

*Director of Donor Engagement*

Jessica brings over 15 years of consulting, business management, and higher education experience to lead Breakthrough's individual and corporate engagement and development outreach. Prior to Breakthrough, Jessica managed business transformation and large-scale software implementation programs for Accenture. Most recently, she was responsible for business and community engagement efforts at Penn State Abington.

Jessica is an advocate for equitable educational opportunities for young people in the Philadelphia area. For the past five years, she has been on the board of directors as chair of the development committee for a literacy non-profit serving Philadelphia's youngest readers.

Jessica has a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration/Marketing and Spanish from Albright College.

### Why Breakthrough?

All students deserve opportunities to reach their fullest potential, and access to quality instruction and support from a broader community of educators and learners can change lives. Breakthrough's mission motivates me, and I am inspired to tell our story in the community.



**MATT JOHNSTON**

*Advisory Board Member*

Matt is a dynamic and results-driven Senior Vice President at Karr-Barth Associates/ Equitable Advisors, a leading financial services and wealth management firm. With over 10 years of experience in the financial industry, Matt has built a reputation for delivering innovative strategies that drive growth, optimize client portfolios, and foster sustainable financial success.

In his current role, Matt oversees key business operations, strategic planning, and client relationship management. He leads a high-performing team dedicated to providing tailored wealth management solutions that align with clients' unique financial goals.

Prior to working in financial services, Matt was a middle school math teacher for eight years. His passion for helping others stems from his experience working with students, and he continues to foster growth in others by mentoring emerging talent in the financial services sector.

Matt attended Penn State University and Temple University and holds a CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER® certification. He lives in Haverford with his wife and son.

### At Breakthrough

Matt has been one of Breakthrough Philly's most active volunteers and guest speakers since 2022. He has coordinated over 50 volunteers to help chaperone our field trips and delivered several highly-engaging financial literacy classes to Breakthrough's Teaching Fellows, Scholars, and families.



### **KIM LEWIS**

*Advisory Board Member*

Kimberly “Kim” Lewis is an experienced, caring and visionary educational leader, curriculum writer, and member of program design teams. Kim has served as a beloved school administrator at Germantown Friends School and Dwight-Englewood School. Currently, she serves as Head of Lower Division at Avenues: The World School in New York City where she leads a dual-language immersion program for over 600 students in grades 1-5. She is also a member of the campus and global leadership teams and works very closely with teachers and families across the school’s global ecosystem.

Kim’s educational background includes a B.S. in Psychology from Howard University, a Master of Science in Special Education from Bank Street College of Education, and an MEd in Organizational Leadership from Teachers College Columbia University. She also completed study with the African American Board Leadership Institute, readying her for philanthropic leadership during these changing times.

In her free time, Kim enjoys spending time with her family and visiting her 3 adult children that live in Washington, D.C and Tempe, AZ.

### **Why Breakthrough?**

Breakthrough’s mission speaks to my heart and soul! I am delighted to work with a team of people who are motivated to support an organization whose mission is to change the life chances of the children and educators that it serves.

## **DONATE TODAY**

[Donate to Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia](#) and utilize your company’s matching gift program to double your impact! [Learn more about doubling your donation here.](#)

## **DID YOU KNOW...**

BTGP is an approved Educational Improvement Organization in Pennsylvania and has EITC Tax Credits available in 2025. Interested? Email Jessica Richardson at [jrichardson@breakthroughphilly.org](mailto:jrichardson@breakthroughphilly.org) to add yourself to the queue!

## **BREAKTHROUGH BY THE NUMBERS**

100% of Breakthrough 8th grade Scholars attend special admit, independent, charter or parochial high schools\*

*(Responses from BTGP 8th grade class surveyed, 2024)*



## INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING FOR OR SUPPORTING BREAKTHROUGH?

Breakthrough’s program is only as strong as the contributions made by our community. We appreciate gifts of time, talent, ties and treasure—each and every gift goes a long way to help Breakthrough students reach their educational and career goals. [Get started here.](#)

### TIME

- Interview students and families in the Breakthrough application process
- Volunteer at on-campus events such as Summer Kickoff and Celebration Day
- Host a career day or office visit at your work site
- Volunteer at student recruitment, development and community engagement events such as fundraisers, Visiting Days, mailings and other school/community events.

### TALENT

- Share career & industry experiences as a Guest Speaker in our Career Conversations series
- Lend your expertise during our College Bound career panel, mock interview and resume development workshops
- Bring your ideas, skills and expertise to help make our program a success – email us at [info@breakthroughphilly.org](mailto:info@breakthroughphilly.org) to start the dialogue.

### TIES

- Spread the word about Breakthrough - tell your family, friends and networks about our mission and the impact we’re making in Philadelphia!
- Know a Breakthrough alum? Have them email us as we strengthen our alumni community of Scholars and Teaching fellows [info@breakthroughphilly.org](mailto:info@breakthroughphilly.org)
- Know a potential Scholar (middle schooler) or Teaching Fellow (college student) who may be interested in Breakthrough’s program? Visit us at [breakthroughphilly.org](http://breakthroughphilly.org) to start the application process.

### TREASURE

- [Donate today](#) and utilize your company’s matching gift program to double your impact!
- Join our 30th Anniversary Spring Soirée fundraiser on May 1, 2025 at The Bellevue Hotel (200 South Broad Street, Philadelphia). [RSVP and donate here.](#)
- Become a corporate sponsor of our Annual Spring Soirée fundraiser on 5/1/25. Email Jessica Richardson at [jrichardson@breakthroughphilly.org](mailto:jrichardson@breakthroughphilly.org) for more information.

### EXAMPLES OF PROGRAM AND STUDENT-RELATED COSTS

\$5,000	\$4,000	\$2,500	\$1,000	\$500	\$250
training/stipend for one Breakthrough Teaching Fellow	Provide full services for a Breakthrough Scholar for one year	Two weeks of SEPTA passes for 150 Breakthrough Scholars	Round-trip transportation for one field trip	Classroom supplies for one grade level	Science supplies for one classroom in our summer program

## TURN YOUR PA TAX DOLLARS INTO SUPPORT FOR BREAKTHROUGH SCHOLARS & TEACHING FELLOWS!

The Pennsylvania Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program allows individual taxpayers, businesses, or corporations to redirect their state tax liability and support an Educational Improvement Organization (EIO), such as Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia.

Participants in the EITC program make a minimum contribution of \$7,500 per year for two consecutive years, which supports innovative academic programs and operational costs at Breakthrough. In turn, participants receive a PA state tax credit for up to 90% of their contribution amount. For example, a contribution of \$10,000 has a net cost of \$1,000 for the donor; you may even be able to claim a federal charitable deduction on your out-of-pocket cost. This is truly a win-win for the donor and Breakthrough!

Over the past three years, several individuals and businesses have stepped forward to take advantage of this great opportunity to support Breakthrough—providing over \$400,000 in critical support for our program. At a cost of \$4,000 per student, this gift enables 100 students to attend our tuition-free program for one year.

We are actively looking for individuals and businesses to participate in the upcoming cycle. Credits are available and allotted on a first-come, first-served basis and must be filled in 2025. Learn how you can participate in this program by contacting Jessica Richardson, Director of Donor Engagement at [jrichardson@breakthroughphilly.org](mailto:jrichardson@breakthroughphilly.org).



## TAX CREDITS ARE AVAILABLE

and allotted on a first-come, first-served basis and must be filled in 2025.

Contact Jessica Richardson to participate.

[jrichardson@breakthroughphilly.org](mailto:jrichardson@breakthroughphilly.org)  
215-261-6711

**Inspiring Students.**

**Developing Teachers.**

**Together, we are Breakthrough.**



34 West Coulter Street, Philadelphia, PA 19144

[breakthroughphilly.org](http://breakthroughphilly.org) (215) 261-6705 [info@breakthroughphilly.org](mailto:info@breakthroughphilly.org)



**DONATE**

**GET INVOLVED**

Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia is an independent

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