BREAKTHROUGH
NEW YORK

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

BTNY.ORG

OUR MISSION

We empower motivated students from low-income backgrounds to graduate from college and pursue a fulfilling career. Our ten-year, tuition-free program provides students with the opportunities, resources, and relationships to succeed in rigorous schools and careers.

OUR MODEL

Our tuition-free 10-year program centers around three educational breakthroughs:

- **ACCESS**
- **ENRICHMENT**
- **RELATIONSHIPS**

A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Breakthrough New York Community,

As we reflect on the accomplishments and impact of the past year, I am filled with gratitude for the unwavering support and dedication of our incredible community. In 2023, Breakthrough New York continued to break barriers and empower young minds, and it is my privilege to share the highlights with you.

This year marked significant strides in our mission to provide equitable educational opportunities to NYC students. The commitment of our talented educators, staff, and volunteers shone through, creating an environment where every student thrives. And by supporting students in navigating academic challenges, fostering a love for learning, and preparing them for future success, our programs ensured that our students could achieve their vast potential.

We know that while talent is equally distributed, opportunity is not. We also know that the sky's the limit for our students and the potential they have to thrive, achieve major milestones for themselves and their families, and to, in turn, impact the world around them.

Together, we make breakthroughs happen.

Looking ahead, we remain steadfast in our dedication to creating positive change. The challenges of tomorrow require innovative solutions, and we are preparing our students to become the leaders and change-makers the world needs. As an organization, we have built upon our strong foundation of support for our students to prepare our program for future growth and innovation. We are poised to endure while also continually evolving, adapting, and growing to serve even more students in the years ahead.

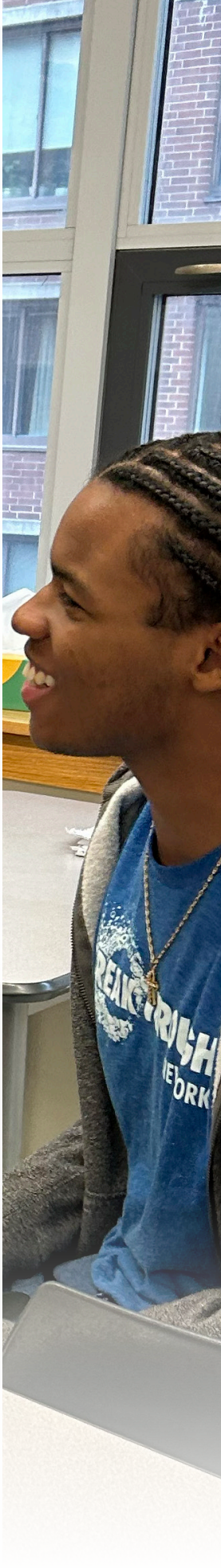
The world needs more students like ours.

Thank you for being an integral part of the Breakthrough New York family and for joining us in our goal to achieve educational equity in NYC. Your support fuels our mission and inspires us to do and serve more students. Together, let's continue breaking barriers and unlocking the boundless potential within every student.

With gratitude,

Beth E. Onofry

Beth E. Onofry
Executive Director, Breakthrough New York



THE BREAKTHROUGH JOURNEY

MIDDLE SCHOOL

The Middle School program includes after-school classes that prepare students to apply to and thrive in high school, and the summer curriculum includes reading, writing, STEM, electives, and community development.

HIGH SCHOOL

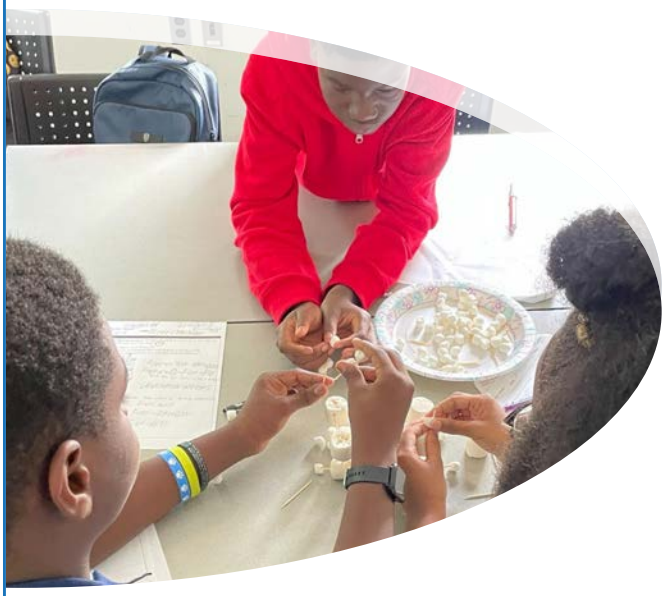
High School programming offers skill development on Saturdays, summer opportunities like study abroad and internships, and guidance on college admissions.

COLLEGE & CAREER

Breakthrough's college program offers personalized coaching for academic and career planning, access to diverse internship and job opportunities, and community connections among peers and alumni through professional and social events.

A YEAR IN REVIEW

ACCESS



MIDDLE SCHOOL

Our students work on an engineering project as they engage in a variety of learning experiences.

HIGH SCHOOL

Students practice at mock interview day.

COLLEGE

College Graduation at Pace Gallery celebrates a major milestone for our students.

A YEAR IN REVIEW

ENRICHMENT

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Throughout the year our students have the opportunity to learn in a variety of ways. Here our students are participating in a career day explanation from Shorenstein.

HIGH SCHOOL

At Breakthrough we provide our students with a variety of enrichment opportunities. This is from our field trip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

COLLEGE

The Breakthrough Journey continues through college! These students are participating in a leadership series hosted by one of our partners.

A YEAR IN REVIEW

RELATIONSHIPS

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Breakthrough students work with mentors that can provide insight and support through their educational journey.

HIGH SCHOOL

Our students work close together to allow for near-peer learning.

COLLEGE

We were very excited to host our College Coach Social to celebrate all the hard work our coaches do. These coaches provide valuable career mentorship, allowing our college students to make the most of their university experience.

OUTCOMES

APPLICANTS

437
applications

137
interviews

72
in the new class

TOTAL STUDENTS IN 2023

498

BOROUGH BREAKDOWN OF ALL CURRENT BTNY STUDENTS

33%
Bronx

33%
Brooklyn

15%
Manhattan

19%
Queens

2%
live outside of NYC

ETHNIC BACKGROUND OF ALL CURRENT BTNY STUDENTS

36%
Black or African American

33%
Latinx

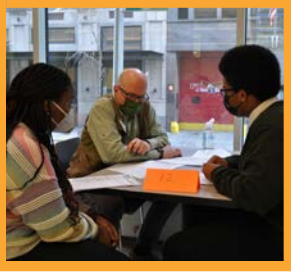
21%
Asian

8%
Multiracial

2%
Other

2%
White

1%
Native American or Alaska Native



PROGRAM LEVEL BREAKDOWN OF ALL STUDENTS

27%
(130)
MIDDLE SCHOOL
Bronx – 38
Brooklyn – 46
Manhattan – 46

38%
(188)
HIGH SCHOOL

37%
(180)
COLLEGE

FIRST-IN-FAMILY OF ALL CURRENT BTNY STUDENTS

56%
First in Family to pursue college

(definition: parents had not graduated from an American college at the time of BTNY student's birth)

SINGLE-PARENT HOUSEHOLD

39%
come from a single-parent household

ECONOMIC THRESHOLD

100%
of student households meet income criteria of no more than $38,200/person

PERCENT OF BTNY STUDENTS GOING TO COLLEGE PREP HIGH SCHOOLS THIS ACADEMIC YEAR

96%
for the entire HS cohort. It is 89% for the incoming 9th grade

PERCENT OF BTNY STUDENTS ATTENDING A 4-YEAR COLLEGE THIS ACADEMIC YEAR

94%
for the entire college cohort. It is 98% for the incoming first years (98% of incoming first-year students were accepted to 4-year colleges)

TOTAL NUMBER OF TEACHING ASSISTANTS

26

GENDER IDENTITY OF TEACHING ASSISTANTS

66%
Female

31%
Male

4%
Gender Non-Conforming

ETHNIC BACKGROUND OF ALL TEACHING ASSISTANTS

20%
Asian

16%
Black or African American

24%
Latinx

4%
Multi-Racial

39%
White

4
TFs are current BTNY college students

JANELY CRUZ
BREAKTHROUGH 2027

BREAKTHROUGH NEW YORK provides our students with mentorship from volunteers, staff, and coaches. Students are positioned for greater success when they are paired with mentors who are of a similar age and background. Breakthrough New York employs a students-teaching-students approach to assist students on their Breakthrough journey.

At the start of High School, Janely was paired with a mentor she stayed with for four years, Sofia. Sofia's guidance and support, particularly during the challenging college application phase, provided Janely with invaluable insights and encouragement, reinforcing our program's ethos of mentorship and empowerment. The consistency of this relationship allowed the two to develop a strong mentor-mentee relationship. Sofia says, "The thing about Janely is she always made it look so easy, she was so on top of academics, extracurricular activities, being there for her family, it took a lot more work than it seemed but she has such a good attitude and kindness. I never doubted how much she loved her community because that seeming effortlessness can only come from a place of deep and sincere love."

Janely has remained deeply connected to Breakthrough, assuming the role of a project assistant and actively contributing to the Middle School program's ongoing success. Her dedication to mentoring younger students and fostering a sense of community underscores her commitment to giving back and amplifying Breakthrough New York's legacy of impact. Janely wants to share what Breakthrough

SOFIA ANJUM
COLLEGE COORDINATOR

New York has been to her with other students. "Seeing how much the program has supported me and I always look back at my time since I started and where I am now and just how instrumental they've been and my educational career. [While serving as a Program Assistant, I worked with the] Middle School program. [One thing that was impactful for me was] being that role model for others. [It] has been really nice being able to connect with other grades and the other Breakthrough staff members as well. And just seeing the program from the other side and helping give back some of that joy that I know I felt when I was in the program for the Middle Schoolers." Janely's story exemplifies the enduring impact of Breakthrough, showcasing how our comprehensive support and mentorship can empower students to achieve their full potential.

KAREN LI
BREAKTHROUGH 2023

BREAKTHROUGH NEW YORK

profoundly emphasizes community, viewing it as essential to fostering a sense of belonging and collective empowerment among our students, families, volunteers, and staff. For Karen Li (Yale University, Class of 2023), that sense of community remains the most special part of the program and why she continues to be so involved with Breakthrough.

"Throughout my continuing post-graduate job search for operations and development roles at financial institutions, I have been blown away by how many people involved with Breakthrough have been willing to help me — from people on the Board of Directors to friends that I have known since I was in Breakthrough's Middle School program."

Breakthrough New York also develops that sense of community by pairing students with mentors who relate to their experiences, fostering peer-to-peer learning. Karen credits her High School mentor, Hui Cheng, for guiding her through High School and college.

"Hui and I bonded over shared lived experiences such as being Asian American women from immigrant families. She always took the initiative to check in with me throughout college to catch up and give me advice about topics related to both my personal and professional life," Karen added. "Hui was essentially my older sister at Breakthrough, and I am really grateful to have known her for so many years."

Karen's relationship with her High School mentor inspired her to want to give back as a College Access Mentor to Breakthrough New York students entering the college admissions process.

"Being a college mentor was such a good reminder of the help I received and how much work Breakthrough staff put into making sure I was set up for success," Karen remembered. "Watching students grow, helping them navigate their applications, and being able to celebrate their accomplishments as well as lift them up during challenging times was such a valuable experience."

Karen graduated from Yale in May of 2023 with a degree in Ethnicity, Race, and Migration studies and is currently finishing a fellowship studying Chinese in Taiwan. She remains deeply committed to Breakthrough New York's mission.

"I'm so grateful to Breakthrough for shaping my self-confidence and for giving me resources I would not otherwise have access to," Karen reflected. "I stay so involved because of the friendships I have built and the staff members that are dedicated to helping students. Breakthrough is a special and empowering place that I could not imagine my life without."

IMPACT

TEACHING ASSISTANTS

This year we we had a team of **25** dedicated Teaching Assistants who worked tirelessly to provide personalized guidance and support to our students. Their commitment to excellence ensures that every student receives the attention and resources they need to thrive academically and personally.

SSAT SCORE BOOST

Due to the hard work of our students our students have achieved an average **185**-point score boost on the SSAT, opening doors to prestigious educational opportunities previously beyond their reach. This remarkable improvement not only reflects their hard work but also underscores the effectiveness of our tailored approach to education.

COLLEGE MATRICULATION

An impressive **98%** of our students have successfully matriculated to four-year colleges, a reflection of their perseverance and determination. Your support has empowered them to pursue their higher education goals and embark on a journey of lifelong learning and growth.

GRADUATION SUCCESS

An astounding **96%** of our students are on track to graduate, equipped with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to succeed in the ever-changing world beyond our classrooms.

RECENT GRADUATION CLASS SIZE

The recent graduation of **32** students is a testament to their resilience and the transformative impact of your generosity.

HIGH SCHOOL ENROLLMENTS

As of June 2023, the 8th grade students (Class of 2031) in BTNY had plans to enroll in the following High Schools:

Avenues The World School

Aviation Career and Technical Education High School

Bard High School Early College Manhattan

Bard High School Early College Queens (2)

Beacon High School (4)

Bedford Academy High School

Berkeley Carroll School (2)

Bronx Health Sciences High School

Bronx High School of Science (2)

Brooklyn College Academy

Brooklyn Friends School

Brooklyn Technical High School (4)

Church Farm School

Columbia Grammar & Preparatory School

Cristo Rey New York

DeWitt Clinton High School

Frank Sinatra School of the Arts

Friends Seminary

High School for Health Professions & Human Services

Horace Mann School

Kew-Forest School

Little Red School House/ Elisabeth Irwin High School

Manhattan Center for Science and Mathematics (3)

Manhattan Village Academy

Millennium Brooklyn High School

N.Y.C. Museum School

Nightingale-Bamford School

NYC iSchool

Packer Collegiate Institute (3)

Robert F. Wagner Jr. Secondary School for Arts and Technology

Saint Ann's School

Stuyvesant High School (2)

The Chapin School

Townsend Harris High School

University Heights Secondary School

Young Women's Leadership, Bronx

COLLEGE ENROLLMENTS

By June 2023, BTNY High School seniors (the Class of 2027) had committed to attend the following colleges and universities in the fall:

Barnard College

Barry University

Boston College

Brandeis University

Carnegie Mellon University

Clark University

Cornell University

CUNY Baruch College

CUNY Brooklyn College

CUNY Hunter College

CUNY John Jay College

CUNY Lehman College

CUNY New York City College of Technology

CUNY Queens College

CUNY The City College of New York

Davidson College

Fordham University

Georgetown University

Gettysburg College

Macaulay Honors College – Hunter College

Manhattan College

Mercy College

Morgan State University

Mount Holyoke College

New Jersey Institute of Technology

New York University

Penn State University

Rutgers University

Skidmore College

Spelman College

St. John's University

SUNY Binghamton University

SUNY College of Environmental Science & Forestry

SUNY Stony Brook University

SUNY University at Albany

SUNY University at Buffalo

Union College

Vanderbilt University

Villanova University

2023 GALA

BREAKTHROUGH NEW YORK was joined by over 300 attendees and raised over $1 million to continue providing support to low-income students.

Sonny Kalsi was honored at the event, recognizing his outstanding commitment to philanthropy and educational empowerment. Kalsi's contributions have significantly impacted the organization's ability to provide resources and support to underprivileged students striving for academic success.

Attendees were captivated by the story of Breakthrough New York alumni, Heaven Torres, illustrating the transformative power of education. Torres affirmed the necessity of leadership and advocating on behalf of others. Torres currently uses the skills she gained in Breakthrough at the New Paltz Youth Program where she started two counseling groups, BIPOC Talk and Girl Talk.

Breakthrough New York thanks its sponsors, donors, and partners for supporting our students and providing them with opportunities for growth and career advancement.

VOLUNTEERS & PARTNERS

BREAKTHROUGH NEW YORK volunteers and partners are vital to helping carry out our mission. Volunteers participate in one-day activities like mock job interviews, as well as long-term roles like mentoring as college coaches. In addition to financial support and volunteering, our Corporate and Foundation partners host career exploration opportunities, lead workshops and networking sessions throughout the year.

ONE-DAY VOLUNTEERS
125

YEAR-LONG VOLUNTEERS
91

"It has been a tremendous joy and privilege to work with Breakthrough NY over the past few years; we are continually amazed by the brilliance and curiosity of the students in this program. From exhibition visits to internship programs, Breakthrough continues to indelibly enrich our community."

JUMOKE MCDUFFIE-THURMOND
PACE GALLERY CULTURE & EQUITY PROGRAM MANAGER

"My favorite part of volunteering with Breakthrough is spending time with the students and helping them hone their skills. Each time I volunteer, I feel like I learn so much from them."

JULIA CAMERON
VOLUNTEER

STAFF as of April 2024

Beth E. Onofry
Executive Director

Shawna Rodgers
Chief Development Officer

Paola Hernandez
Middle School Program Manager-Bronx

Destany Martin
High School Placement Manager

Adriana Meza
Senior Director of Middle School Programs

Anita Norman
Middle School Program Manager-Brooklyn

Jonathan Lim
College Guidance Manager

Shatyra Wilkerson
High School Academic Success Coordinator

Scott Gannis
Senior Director of High School Program

Joshua Jordan
College & Career Manager

Sofia Anjum
College Coordinator

Jomar Lopez
Talent Acquisition Director

Lisbeth Valerio
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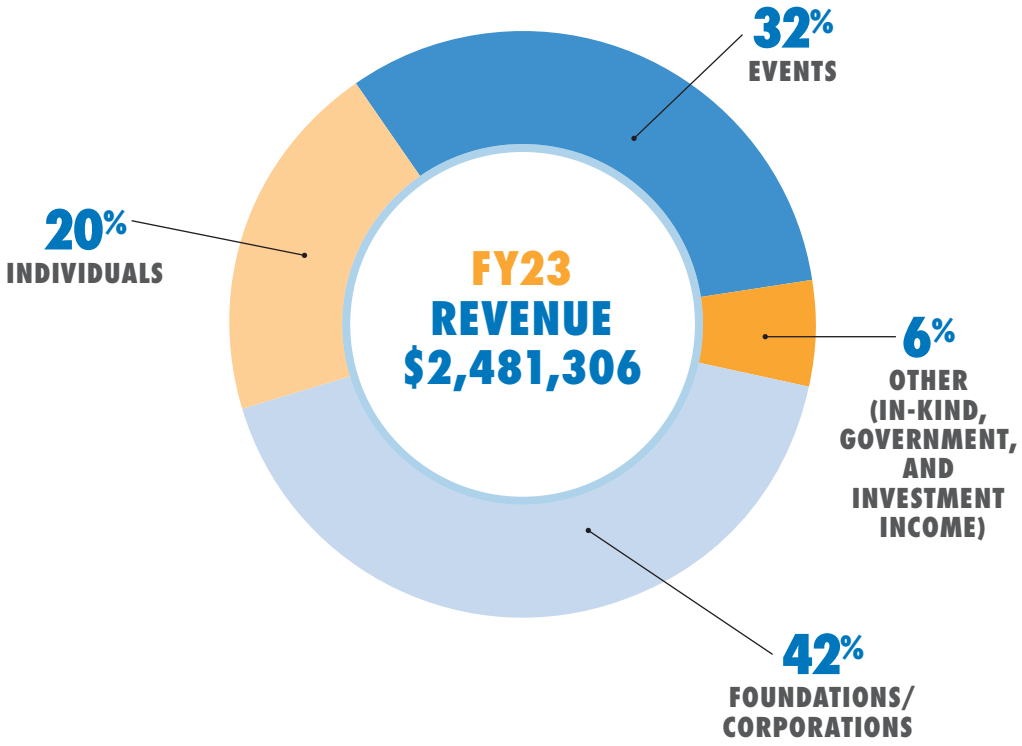
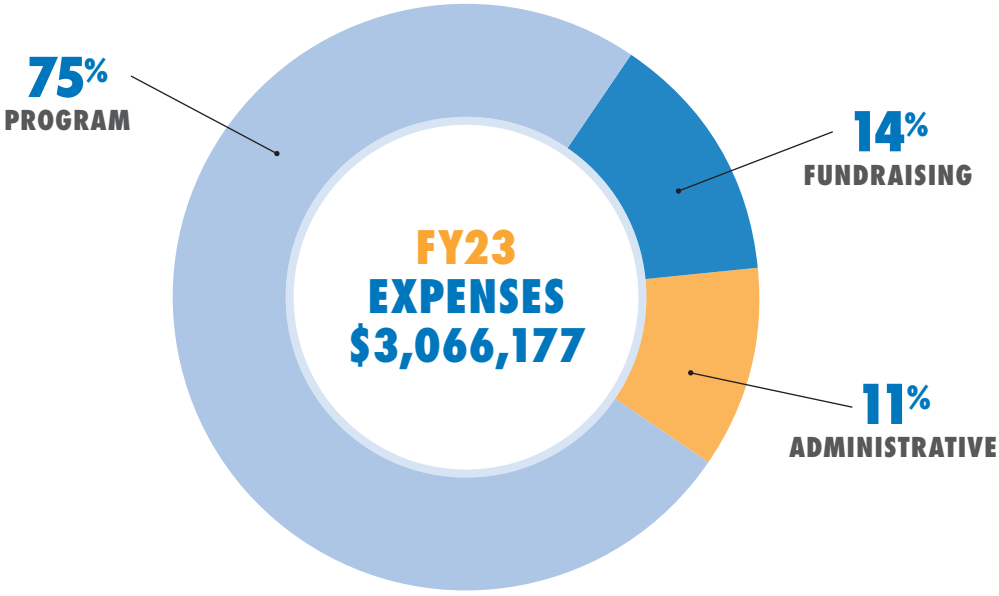
Adron Carter
External Relations Manager

FY23 FINANCIALS*

July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023





*unaudited

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