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# IMPACT

REPORT 2017-2018

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## LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD



Dear Friends of The Neighborhood Academy,



To have a great organization, you have to have great leadership, and we are proud to announce that as of this writing, Gary Niels has begun his

work as president of TNA. Gary is one of the most respected educators in the independent-school world, who brings great educational experience to TNA. He served as head of school at Winchester Thurston.

Mark Kurtzrock, our previous president, continues to work with Gary, our development office, and on special projects. Mark was instrumental in the completion of Middle School building and the capital campaign for that project. Under his leadership, we also increased efforts in student recruiting, admission, and retention which more than doubled student enrollment to record levels and strengthened our school's sustainability

through his work with the Milton Hershey School (MHS). We want to thank Mark for his service to our students and for the great strides we've made as an institution under his leadership.

The Reverend Tom Johnson, co-founder and headmaster, continues to set the standard for structure and ensures that our students are well equipped to learn in a safe and supportive environment, while placing great value on well-crafted curricula and ongoing professional development for faculty. In addition, we are pleased to announce that our dean of student affairs, Anthony Williams, has been appointed assistant head of school. Anthony has been with us almost from the beginning and has made an increasing contribution every year. Finally, we want to congratulate Brent Jernigan, who has been doing a great job as head of our new Middle School.

The first year of the Middle School has had outstanding results. Not only is the Middle School full, but we also have a waiting list of young men eager to enroll. There is no question that the addition of the sixth and seventh grades will have an impact on retention and outcomes. It is clear that having the opportunity to work with kids at a younger age has profound impact on their ultimate achievement of their academic goals.

We started the school year with 150 students, the highest number in our history, and we believe that as result of reputation, performance, and the hard work of TNA staff and board members, there is no reason we cannot maintain a student body of 150 moving forward. This is very exciting news because we believe we are at capacity for the institution we have built and are excited about helping so many kids.

Finally, this year we began an affiliation with the Milton Hershey School in Hershey, PA. MHS provides a residential and academic program for more than 2,000 disadvantaged young people ranging from age 5 through high school. This affiliation has included a few professional exchanges that have been enriching to our staff and programs. We will keep you posted on future developments with MHS.

So friends, you can see this has been a momentous year for TNA. We can confidently tell you that we are helping more students in a better way, which was made possible by the commitment of donors such as you. We cannot thank you enough for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Charles Ferrara, *chair*

Aside from our institutional growth, we also experienced tremendous student activity and accomplishment over the year.

*(look for our Student Highlights throughout the Impact Report)*



Our football players were once again league champions, with senior Desmond taking home the league MVP award for the second time.



## Board members for 2017-2018

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Brenda L. Frazier  
H. Edwin Haller, IV  
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John Robinson III  
Jill B. Ruppel  
Madelyn E. Toliver  
Winthrop Watson  
Mark A. Weis  
Blair William

*The Neighborhood Academy thanks **Sandra A.B. Levis** for her service on the board. We also welcome the board members who joined this year.*



# OUR FOUNDERS VISION



Rooted in their belief that “all children can learn”, Jodie Moore and Tom Johnson set out to create a school environment where students could not only learn but also truly thrive both personally and academically. In order to accomplish their goal, they knew they would need to address the challenging backgrounds that plagued their students. The Neighborhood Academy was founded in 2001 serving 8th and 9th grade students from under-served communities to provide them with the educational, spiritual, and emotional resources to succeed. The year-round school was established based on a feasibility study funded by the R.K. Mellon

Foundation, and opened its doors in a renovated warehouse on Penn Avenue.

Over the next few years, the new school began to thrive, and in 2005, the first class of The Neighborhood Academy graduated with a 100% college acceptance rate, which is a feat that stands to this day. In 2007, TNA earned five-year accreditation from the Pennsylvania Association of Independent Schools (PAIS), and the school began plans for a new facility. Construction began in the summer of 2010. The Neighborhood Academy moved to its current campus on North Aiken Avenue in 2011.

In 2014, The Neighborhood Academy achieved 10-year accreditation from PAIS. The need to attract students at a younger age led to thoughts of expansion. A feasibility study was undertaken to investigate the possibility of adding the 6th and 7th grades. In 2017, The Neighborhood Academy opened its middle school program, and began to admit 6th & 7th grade boys.

The belief that immersing young students in year-round, caring environments with high expectations can lead to fully-productive members of society is a model that The Neighborhood Academy has followed and will continue to use in its work with its students.

**“...The experience taught me determination and resilience through the strenuous art of research.”**

*Joy, Class of 2019*



Juniors Joy, Tamyia, and Aveion made an impressive showing in our annual U.S. History Conference in April. Three finalists from each of several Pittsburgh-area independent schools presented their research to their peers and a panel of judges. Finalist Joy, pictured above, reflecting on her experience, says “At the conference, I presented a 20-minute synopsis of my research on the health disparities in the neighboring community of Wilkinsburg. As a member of a minority population with family in the Wilkinsburg area, I deemed it my duty to call out the recurring issue of obesity. In a room full of intimidating historians, teachers, journalists, and visitors, I had to reassure myself that I was the captain of the microphone and the master of my research. The experience taught me determination and resilience through the strenuous art of research.”

2017-2018

# STUDENT STATISTICS



## Student Challenges

**72%** have a taxable family income of less than **\$25,000**

**60%** live in a single-caregiver household

**88%**

of students would otherwise be enrolled in a school categorized as ‘low-performing’ by the Pennsylvania Department of Education

**15%**

have an incarcerated family member

**43%**

live in families with a history of drug and/or alcohol abuse

**60%**

live in families with a history of domestic violence

**...yet,**

**100%**

**of our graduating seniors are accepted to college**

37,529 meals served for breakfast, lunch, and dinner



32 new middle school students join the TNA family



2 more alumni hired by TNA



# Your Impact



232 hours of on-site counseling



18 Career workshops or speakers



1,800+ hours of community service given back in our community



204 total students served throughout the year, including summer session



**Thank you to our donors who have decided to move up with us this year. The amazing achievements of our students are made possible by you!**

-Sheila Rawlings, Director of Development



Margot Lee Shetterly, author of the bestselling book *Hidden Figures*, based on the experiences of brilliant African American women at NASA during the Space Race, met with our Academy Ambassadors to discuss her research and the opportunities available to the characters in her book.

*Thank you to all our sponsors and donors who made this event possible.*

**“Reading my poem in a group of others who didn’t know about American black history was really cool. It gave me the chance to voice to something I had been thinking about.”**

Bryant, *Class of 2019*



Junior Bryant won a Martin Luther King, Jr. writing award for his three-part poem entitled *My Broken History*. The poem chronicles black history during the era of slavery, the Civil Rights Movement, and the present day. He read the poem at an awards luncheon at Carnegie Mellon University in December, and he says of the experience, “It was really cool to read my poem in front of the group. It gave me the chance to use my voice to talk firsthand about black history.”



## FEATURED STORIES



The 2017-2018 academic year marked the most momentous change in The Neighborhood Academy’s history since our move to the current campus in 2011. The school not only expanded to serve more kids, adding a Middle School and serving more areas of the city than ever, but it also deepened the impact on each young person that enters our doors. In addition, we undertook a strategic planning process, gained a new president, and collaborated with The Milton Hershey School. It has truly been a year of growth at The Neighborhood Academy.



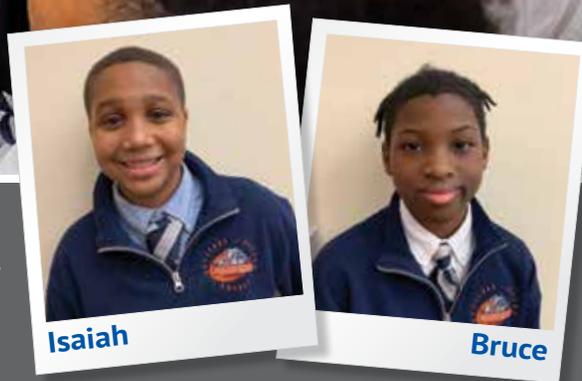
# Expansion

After many years in the making, we opened our Middle School and welcomed the first cohort of 6th and 7th grade male students in September 2017. The addition of eager, energetic younger students breathed new life into the school. Adding the additional grade levels allows our young men to enroll while they are still reading and computing at grade level and affords the opportunity for early exposure to the principles and expectations of the school, which facilitates teaching at higher grade levels and maximizes students' educational experience.

In this new environment our youngest students are able to internalize the expectations of accountability

and teamwork that are important to TNA's dynamic. As current 7th grader Isaiah observes, "When I came here, I gained responsibility, organization, and trust. I trust everyone here. At my old school, I didn't know who was looking out for me, but here we're all family."

A key component of the Middle School is the cross-curricular activity employed in every class. For example, 7th grader Bruce says "I really liked the perimeter project in math because it allowed me to use creativity and business skills." Brent Jernigan, Head of the Middle School, explains, "When I thought about the Middle School program, I wanted it to develop



Isaiah

Bruce

students' skills in conjunction with the needs in our city. Areas like Bakery Square and the Strip are expanding in the areas of technology and business and our curriculum needed to prepare students to be engaged in this city's future." To this end, the Middle School utilizes an integrated STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics) space that allows for more hands-on learning and uses cross-curricular projects to integrate technology and multimedia into the classroom.

**"When I came here, I gained responsibility, organization, and trust. I trust everyone here. At my old school, I didn't know who was looking out for me, but here we're all family."**

*Isaiah, Class of 2024*

**"I really liked the perimeter project in math because it allowed me to use creativity and business skills."**

*Bruce, Class of 2024*

**"When I thought about the Middle School program, I wanted it to grow in conjunction with the growth in our city. I wanted our students to touch and experience the developments happening in Bakery Square and the Strip. We had to challenge ourselves to get them involved in technology and multimedia. If they're going to be engaged in this city's future, we have to evolve like this city has."**

*Brent Jernigan, Head of the Middle School*



In April, we harvested the first batch of honey from our beehive which lead to a delicious surprise tasting! Thank you to the Robert B. Wentworth Challenge Fund and an Anonymous donor at The Pittsburgh Foundation for providing our FlowHives.



# Direction



In order to ensure that all TNA students are better and more sustainably served, the board of directors led a 360-degree strategic planning process surveying all constituencies of the school, including current students, parents, faculty, staff, alumni, and donors. The board then used this information to determine how best to move forward effectively to ensure long-term sustainability while maintaining the school's integrity, impact, and culture. Outcomes

included building financial sustainability, updating the mission statement to clearly define the school's constituency, increasing our number of graduates, and focusing on TNA's talent.

As board member Sally Ann Bensus states, "This process will ensure a vibrant, growing, and engaging learning environment for our students in the years to come".

**"This process will ensure a vibrant, growing, and engaging learning environment for our students in the years to come"**

*Sally Ann Bensus, Board of Directors*

17-18  
STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

Two of our 2018 graduates had their Senior Seminar papers published. Charles's paper, titled "Sports Are Not Color Blind" and Da'Naesha's paper, "The Effect of Music on Reading Comprehension Tasks" both appeared in the Journal of Emerging Investigators, a peer-reviewed publication run by students in Harvard University's Graduate School of Education. These mark the fifth and sixth published student papers. All of our published student works can be found on our website under the academics tab.



# Gain

Following the strategic planning process, the board determined that a necessary step to accomplish our goals was to have an experienced educator assist the school in the development and implementation of programmatic improvements. We are delighted to have the services of Gary J. Niels, who stepped down this past year as head of Winchester Thurston School.

Before joining Winchester Thurston in 2002, Gary held positions of responsibility at independent schools throughout the country. His accomplishments both at Winchester and throughout his career will greatly benefit TNA and our students. He has also served as a board member of both the Allegheny Conference on Community Development and the Pennsylvania Association of Independent Schools, and acted as president of the Pittsburgh Consortium of Independent Schools. His experience both in the classroom and as an administrator makes him a great asset for The Neighborhood Academy.

This year based on input from the strategic plan, trustees, faculty and administration Gary is working closely with the Board and the school administration to review processes and programs within the school that can be improved.



17-18  
STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

In conjunction with Pittsburgh Youth Leadership, our students took several cycling trips throughout the country, including trips to Alabama, Cleveland, Delaware, and more. Together, our students collectively cycled over 21,000 miles! Here, they are pictures crossing the William Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama.



# Collaboration

Since its inception, TNA has teamed up with foundations, corporations, universities, health and human services, and community organizations to create a tightly-knit blanket of support for our students and alumni. In so doing, we have developed wonderful partnerships throughout this region. From organizations where our students volunteer to corporations who partner with us to shape our future workforce, almost 80 corporations and organizations collaborate with us around the needs of our alumni, students, and their families.

This year, members of TNA faculty and administration traveled to Milton Hershey School, a large, grades K-12 residential school for children from low-income families, as part of an educational summit. There were multiple sessions in which participants discussed admission processes, course offerings, student life, professional development, evaluation systems, and recruiting talented teachers. Professional counterparts swapped best practices. Overall, every attendee reported coming away from the experience with a sense of pride in our organization and new ways to benefit our constituencies and address their needs.

17-18

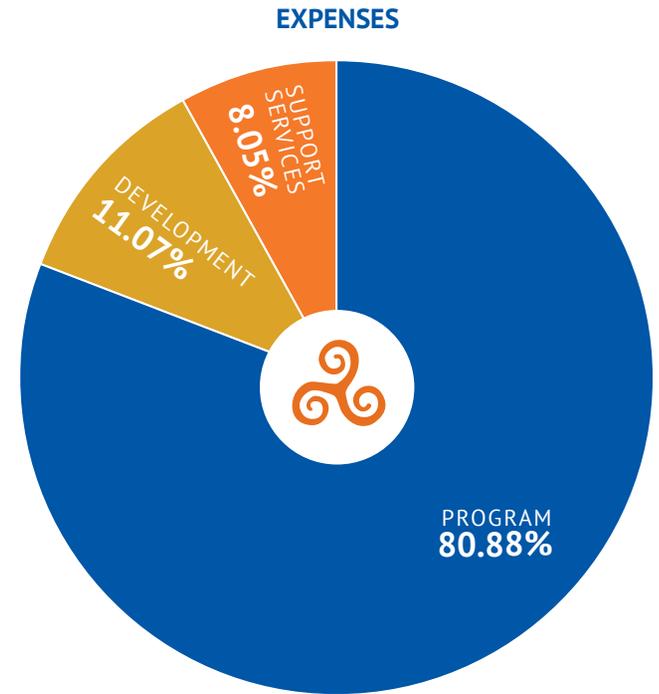
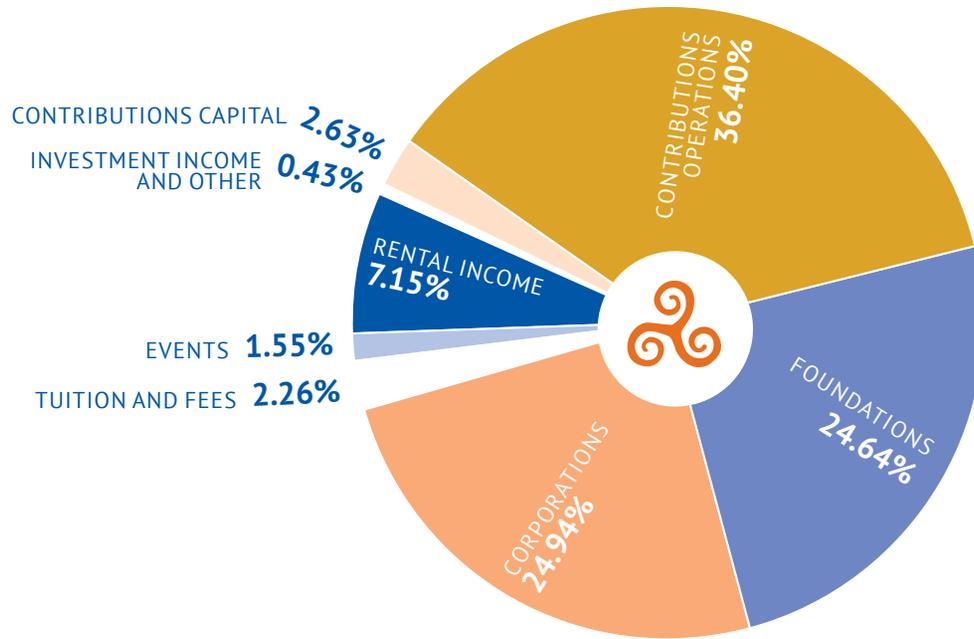
STUDENT  
HIGHLIGHTS

Thanks to **Tickets for Kids**, our students were able to experience some incredible cultural events around the city, including a Taylor Swift concert, a Steelers pre-season game, and more.



*Our students enjoying the Taylor Swift concert*

# FINANCIAL SUMMARY



## SUPPORT AND REVENUE

|                                  |                  |
|----------------------------------|------------------|
| Contributions Capital .....      | 76,000           |
| Contributions Operations.....    | 1,049,996        |
| Foundations.....                 | 710,750          |
| Corporations .....               | 719,450          |
| Tuition and Fees.....            | 65,205           |
| Events .....                     | 44,600           |
| Rental Income .....              | 206,374          |
| Investment Income and other..... | 12,415           |
| <b>TOTAL .....</b>               | <b>2,884,790</b> |

## EXPENSES

|                                  |                    |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Program.....                     | 3,200,235          |
| Support Services .....           | 318,610            |
| Development.....                 | 438,075            |
| <b>TOTAL .....</b>               | <b>3,956,920</b>   |
| <b>CHANGE IN NET ASSETS.....</b> | <b>(1,072,130)</b> |

## NET ASSET

|                                  |                    |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Beginning of the Year.....       | 10,766,219         |
| End of the Year .....            | 9,694,089          |
| <b>CHANGE IN NET ASSETS.....</b> | <b>(1,072,130)</b> |

# — 2017 - 2018 — DONORS

Annual Fund Gifts Received between  
9/1/2017 and 8/31/2018



## OVER THE BRIDGE SOCIETY

Over the Bridge Society members support the cost of educating a student for three years at a cost of \$20,000 per student annually

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