



2021 ANNUAL REPORT



Celebrating students!

From Our CEO and Board Chair...

“To strengthen community by eliminating the race-based opportunity and achievement gaps for students through education.”

After much consideration, and many Zoom meetings, OpenDoors revised our mission statement to include the important word “opportunity.” The impetus for this change was staff’s deep concern regarding barriers, found locally and nationally, impeding equal access to opportunities that limit academic success for students of color. While our organization’s core values and goals remain the same, we feel our mission statement must always effectively state the specific problem we attempt to solve. We believe that effectively serving our students and community means not only being candid about where we aspire to go as an organization, but more importantly, where we currently are. We shifted our mission statement to clarify current impediments to student success, as well as our research-based whole child solution.

In the face of much adversity, a global health crisis and generations of systemic inequities, our students continue to rise, adapt, and demonstrate resiliency and strength that serve as a model for us all. OpenDoors owes it to our families and community of supporters to be every bit as dynamic and unrelenting as the students whom we serve, not to mention the forces that oppose them. To that end, we pledge that we will continue to self examine, strengthen our commitment, educate ourselves, and stand by our kids as they rise to meet their ultimate potential. As they reach higher, so must we, and as their barriers shift and change, so too shall our responses and solutions.

Thank you for standing with OpenDoors as we support students, so that we are able to not only do “good” for our youth and future leaders, but to always do better.



Martin Moore
Board of Directors - Chair



Jen Langdon Ramming
Chief Executive Officer



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Our mission is to strengthen community by eliminating the race-based opportunity and achievement gaps for students through education.

We envision a community in which *all* students thrive!

EDUCATION

We believe that when students are appropriately resourced, inspired and respected, they become active, engaged, lifelong learners who are college and/or career ready.

Students inhibited by systemic barriers can focus on their academic pursuits and overcome challenges when they have year-round academic support and equitable opportunities.

EQUITY AND INCLUSION

We believe that this is the center of our work. We recognize there is deep and wide systemic change that must happen to dismantle social and economic injustices. We believe that racism is one of the most pressing issues of our time, and that by advancing racial equity in education, we are confronting other discrimination-based injustices.

ENGAGED COMMUNITY

We believe that when we invest in students they, in-turn, invest in themselves and strengthen the community. Children thrive when we build connections between diverse individuals, families, neighborhoods, groups, and organizations.

ENRICHMENT

We believe that opportunities beyond the classroom increase students' ability to discover their "spark" and actualize their potential. Providing students access to a broad range of experiences enables them to acquire social, emotional, cognitive, and physical skills necessary for classroom and career-growth.

Q&A with...

Porshia and ZaRaina

Q: *How is Raina's experience different from yours growing up?*

Porshia: *One, it's the education. Two, the opportunities. When I was raised, I spent a lot of my life in Deaverview. But my vacation was going to Malvern Hill swimming pool right here. Girl Scouts was my only way out. I just felt like if I had more opportunities like ZaRaina has had, I might be farther along in life than I am now.*

Q: *Why is it important that Raina is a part of OpenDoors?*

Porshia: *Oh my gosh. A lot. I'm gonna go back to education, the education opportunity that she has, the opportunity that she has to see the world, to experience new things in life, to know that there's more.*

Q: *Raina, why is it important for you to be a part of OpenDoors?*

Raina: *So I can experience different things like going to different types of schools and seeing how they teach you and what activities you do and how you get to create a bond with the teachers.*

Porshia: *And ZaRaina, what about your experience at Hanger Hall?*

Raina: *They're really firm, and they're hard on you, they want you to succeed, because they're getting you college and high school ready. They are really loving, don't play with them. They want the best for you.*

Porshia: *And what does that do for your self confidence?*

Raina: *It makes me stronger and pushes me to the next level, like where I can go to.*

Q: *ZaRaina, what are your goals for your academic career?*

Raina: *I will finish high school, then go to college. I want to go to law school.*

Porshia: *I think that this program has opened up so many doors of opportunity for us. And now ZaRaina has the opportunity to advocate for herself. And, and I feel right there alone, she's going to need those skills to move forward in life. So, OpenDoors to us, is a way that we can advocate for ourselves, or for us to be able to open doors to move forward.*



What Our Students Are Up Against...

Education

The Opportunity Gap represents ways in which race, socioeconomic status, systemic racism, and other factors contribute to an inequitable distribution of resources and opportunities. The Opportunity Gap perpetuates the Achievement Gap.

“According to the NC Department of Public Instruction, last year’s test results showed 9.5% of Black students were considered proficient – defined by the state as “demonstrating sufficient understanding” – while 61.7% of white students were. In 2018-19, those numbers were 20.9% for Black students and 80.1% for white students.”

--The Asheville Citizen Times, October 21, 2021

Housing

In Asheville, 3.6% of our population lives in public housing. Out of that group, 71.9% of the residents are Black. With a history of urban renewal, redlining, racial discrimination, a cost of living above the national average, and lack of access to credit, Black homeownership is disproportionately underrepresented.

“In Buncombe County today, 90.2% of all homeowners are white, compared to 3.9% for African-Americans.”

--The Asheville Citizen Times, March 2, 2021

Wealth

There is a significant wealth gap between Black and white Americans created by centuries of institutional inequities and disadvantages. Generational wealth, or the lack thereof, is responsible for disparities in income, assets, health, education, and opportunity.

“Out of all midsize U.S. metros, Asheville is the 2nd worst-paying for minorities. By some estimates, the wealth of the median White family is 41 times greater than their Black counterparts” --Asheville.com, April 27, 2021

2021 Highlights



SUMMER CAMP

- 43 summer camp sessions filled by OpenDoors students
- 898 hours of day camp
- 17 weeks of sleepaway camp

ACADEMIC TUTORING

- 84% of students report feeling a significant increase in confidence
- 22 student-tutor matches
- 288+ hours of one-on-one tutoring



STUDENTS & FAMILIES

- 67 students intensely served
- 107 additional students served in community & with the addition of AVL Rise
- 47+ guardians served

Academics

Best-Fit School Placements

We support students enrolled in kindergarten through college as they work to meet their full academic potential. In partnership with families, we work with schools to employ actionable strategies and policies that best support Black and brown students, prioritizing those with learning differences. We navigate barriers and, when necessary, facilitate transitions for more conducive learning environments, often characterized by smaller class sizes, higher student-teacher ratio, increased diversity among staff and students, rigor, specialized instruction, new peer groups, and other embedded supports.



Our 2021 School Partners

Arthur Morgan School • Asheville Primary School
• Asheville High School • Carolina Day School •
Emma Elementary • Franklin School of Innovation
• Glen Arden Elementary • The Gow School •
Hanger Hall • IC Imagine • Key School at Carolina
Day • Lucy S. Herring Elementary • Montford
North Star Academy • Odyssey School • Omega
Middle School • Rainbow Community School •
Sand Hill-Venable Elementary • TC Roberson High
School • Valley Springs Middle School

Tutoring

OpenDoors engages skilled tutors committed to working with students most impacted by the race-based opportunity and achievement gaps. Tutors specialize in providing homework help, subject-specific assistance, standardized testing prep, and, in many cases, Orton-Gillingham instruction for language based learning differences. Families, schools, and tutors share information and resources to support each student's experience and overall progress. Learning and remediation support, available in-person and virtually, are especially important in the wake of the COVID pandemic that has upended almost every aspect of the school experience and disproportionately affected Black and brown students.



Assessments

Providing access to a Comprehensive Psycho-Educational Assessment is a powerful way for students to learn about their academic and social-emotional strengths, their areas for growth, how they learn best, and why learning may be more challenging in particular areas or settings. The assessment process includes prescriptive recommendations and solutions for students and their teachers to promote academic progress. Early and accurate identification of learning differences is key for students to meet their potential. As more time passes without diagnosis, students fall further behind, lose confidence, and may be thought to have lower ability than their peers.



“OpenDoors has provided a life changing opportunity for my daughter to attend Carolina Day School. During her time there I have seen exceptional growth in her confidence, her independence, and her self awareness.”

--OpenDoors Parent



To & Through Scholarship

Each year, OpenDoors selects two college scholarship recipients. This competitive award provides \$6,500 a year, for each of the four years the student is in school. This award can be applied toward tuition, fees, books, housing, transportation, food or other expenses related to living on campus and thriving. Along with financial support, students receive coaching, job search and/or internship placement, financial mentorship, crisis support, and post-college career counseling.

In the spring of 2021, as students were required to attend school virtually, single and working parents were faced with the costly challenge of either finding childcare to supervise their children at home for online learning or cut back on their own working hours. Fortunately, with the implementation of OpenDoors Learning Pod, parents didn't have to make those sacrifices. Eleven students attended our daily learning pod ranging from grades 2-8. 435 healthy lunches were provided by generous local partners at Benne, Early Girl Eatery, and Bargello.



Enrichment

Summer Camp

We fund day camps and sleep-away camps each summer to support social-emotional learning (SEL) and provide STEAM based enrichments. These engaging summer opportunities relieve the burden of cost or reliance on friends and family for childcare support. In a Harvard study titled, *Lessons from Camp*, scholars note that most experts agree that a child with strong SEL skills is successful in five core areas: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making (Shafer, 2016). It is increasingly understood that these skills are central to success in school and professional life.

“I got to know my friends more. Since they took my phone for the day, I got to know new people. So that was cool.”

--7th grader

LEAF Global Arts

LEAF hosted 3 enrichment summer camps where 16 OpenDoors students attended Hip Hop, Songwriting, and Global Arts, for a total of 1,920 hours of summer camp at LEAF Global alone. After participating in camp, students were invited to perform at LEAF Global's Downtown Festival showcasing their dancing, song writing, and performance talents.

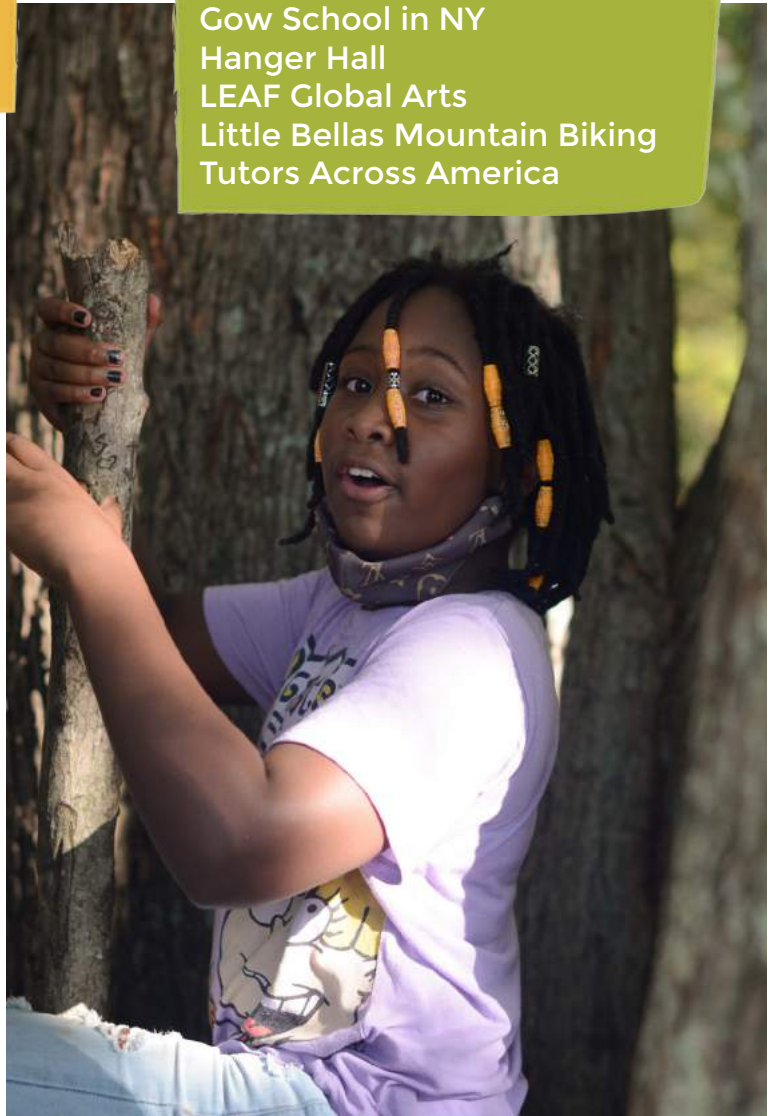
“I learned about the planets and learned what equipment astronauts use when collecting information about different planets, what this information means and how it helps scientists.”

--Science Camp student

Our Camp Partners

Students attended 14 different camps offered by 9 community partners:

- ABYSA Soccer
- Asheville Museum of Science
- Camp Rockmont
- Camp Watia
- Gow School in NY
- Hanger Hall
- LEAF Global Arts
- Little Bellas Mountain Biking
- Tutors Across America



“I am surprised by the number of ‘aha’ moments that students experience while learning about nutrition, sleep, and exercise. Teaching this class reinforces to me that it is incredibly important to begin with teenagers, teaching them how to effectively care for themselves for the long term.”

--OpenDoors volunteer, Sarah Warren, MD

Lifestyle Medicine

Lifestyle Medicine is all about the little things we can do every day to practice healthier and happier habits with the intention of staying out of doctor’s offices and hospitals. Local physician and volunteer, Dr. Sarah Warren, met with five students for four weeks to introduce how to eat for success, move to win, sleep your grades up, and manage test anxiety. Students learned how everyday choices affect long-term health. Each week they were also provided with the ingredients to make a healthy snack together, while focusing on the nutritious value of the food.



Visual Arts

OpenDoors has a long history of partnering with local teaching artists for experiential learning outside the classroom. This year, Kenn Kotara held eight art sessions with our students who were deeply interested in expanding their skills. Kenn supplied all of the students with sketch pads and drawing materials and focused on line-work, depth perception, and texture each week.

PIVOTPoint WNC

OpenDoors works in partnership with PIVOTPoint WNC to provide outdoor and leadership enrichment programming. Students love being able to explore outside of the classroom while learning more about themselves. PIVOTPoint WNC provides safe and empowering evidence-based models of care to support those seeking healing and a mindful approach to life. During our 6-week series our students trekked 5-mile loops, set up shelters, and dove into the fundamental pillars of personal growth.



Sustainability

NextSteps Driving and Transportation

OpenDoors serves as a support system for students and families to obtain their Permit, Driver's License, and eventually an affordable and reliable vehicle. We recognize that being able to access sustainable transportation is intrinsically linked to educational attainment and employment opportunities. 18 students and parents are currently enrolled in NSD. In addition, through our partnership with Working Wheels, our families continue to receive reliable automobiles and necessary auto repairs, totaling more than \$10,000 this year.

We have provided over **2,200 hours of transportation** for students and parents in 2021 to access school, work, enrichment, and other programming.



“Now I can focus on organizing my time better since I am now in control of my own transportation. I have been doing so much more, and it's changed my mentality about things. It's not “Can I do this?” anymore, it's turned into “When will I do this?”

--17 year old NextSteps Driving student, after receiving a car from Working Wheels

➔ OpenDoors currently has over 40 families seeking housing support or experiencing housing crisis. With the support of volunteers like Mark Shevory and organizations like WNC Superheroes, we provide individualized service plans and financial support.

NextSteps Housing

Our housing access program provides advocacy, coaching, and financial assistance to families seeking transition from their current living situation and for those in a housing crisis. Working in partnership with corporate sponsors, real estate owners, donors, and local non-profit, WNC Superheroes, OpenDoors families can receive the support they need to close the gap between Housing Choice Vouchers and the current market rate for rental properties. Staff provides one-on-one coaching, educating homeowners about the benefits of renting to our participants, and advocating with landlords. Research shows that safe and reliable housing is a critical resource that can strongly influence positive educational and personal outcomes for students.



← Pictured here, our friends at SoulKu lovingly prepared and shipped thoughtful care packages to all of our tenacious college students this fall!

Collaborative Community

OpenDoors values the community partnerships we have in place with SoulKu, United Way, Working Wheels, WNC Superheroes, PIVOT Point, and more. Sharing resources, expanding social networks, and uplifting families together is imperative to strengthening our community.

Employability

We support students and parents by connecting them with equitable employment opportunities, developing resumes, and preparing for job interviews. In conjunction with our Financial Literacy Program, students and parents are equipped with the tools to find living wage employment suited to their skills and interests and to manage their earnings for a sustainable lifestyle. Employability is one piece of the puzzle that supports families as they grow and thrive. Employability is one piece of the puzzle directly influencing housing opportunities and growth as a financially resourced individual, breaking the cycle of systemic wealth inequality.

Financial Literacy

In collaboration with volunteer Chris Larsen and Next-Level Income, we host a financial literacy curriculum for middle school through high school students and their families. Our shared goal with Next-Level is to help individuals achieve financial independence, specifically understanding budgeting, investing, borrowing, and personal financial management. Twelve students and parents have participated in the pilot program. Financial Literacy will be available in 2022 for all OpenDoors students in grade 8-12, college, and parents.





AVL Rise is our brand new, *fresh to death**, peer tutoring hip-hop literacy program at OpenDoors.

We are thrilled to launch this program in partnership with Buncombe County and Mark Hecker, founder of the wildly successful Reach Inc., based in Washington, DC. In the fall of 2021, we began the recruitment process, aimed at hiring and training 20 Asheville High School students to serve as tutors for 20+ elementary students based at Hall Fletcher Elementary.

High School tutors will master lessons on Mondays and Wednesdays and teach these lessons to younger students on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Lessons specifically target the five core literacy principles: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension, improving literacy for *both* the high schoolers and elementary students. Our paid tutors will also gain leadership and financial literacy skills, employability experience, and some Hip-Hop rhyming skills to boot, so they can drop a few bars along the way.

**fresh to death - a term used to describe something that is so good it is unexplainable.*

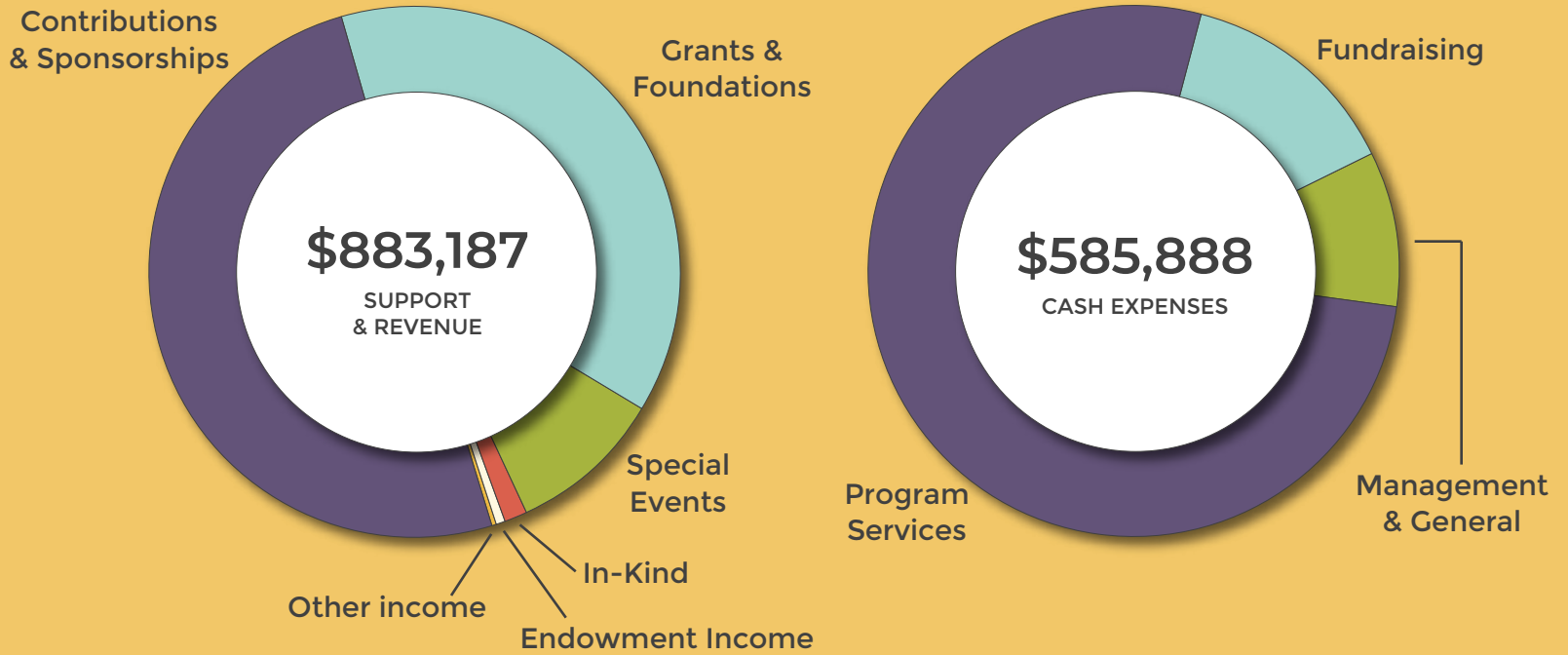


“Over the years, many organizations have contacted me about building on the model we created in DC. Generally, when I explained the investment of effort necessary to build the program, communication quickly went silent. This was not the case with OpenDoors. As we prepare to launch AVL Rise, it is abundantly clear that OpenDoors is willing to do work - hard work - to address the race-based opportunity gap present in Buncombe County and throughout our country.”

-- Mark Hecker, Reach Incorporated Founder and AVL Rise Consultant.

2020 FINANCIALS

$$\begin{array}{rcl}
 \$883,187 & + & \$513,072 & = & \$1,396,259 \\
 \text{Cash} & & \text{*Other Contributions} & & \text{Total Cash Support and Revenue}
 \end{array}$$



SUPPORT/REVENUE	2019	2020
Contributions/Sponsorships	\$256,156	\$446,206
Grants/Foundations	\$131,186	\$335,332
Special Events	\$97,250	\$84,075
In-Kind	\$38,151	\$12,544
Endowment Income	\$5,107	\$4,534
Other Income	\$1,074	\$496
TOTAL REVENUE	\$528,924	\$883,187
CASH EXPENSES	2019	2020
Program Services	\$324,933	\$451,275
Fundraising	\$87,994	\$79,428
Management & General	\$48,701	\$55,185
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$461,628	\$585,888

***Other Contributions**
 Our community partners support our students and families by providing resources at a significantly reduced cost or for free. This type of in-kind support includes scholarships, test and application fee waivers, transportation, Psych-Ed assessments, clothes, outdoor and camp gear, consulting, and so much more. **Although these items do not show up on our 990,** our students and families reap the benefits of these donated resources every day.

Our goal is to have six months of operating expenses in hand, which was even more important during COVID. We were forced to cancel the 2021 Art Affair, which previously generated nearly 40% of our general operating income. Thanks to generous donors like you, and the stewardship of our Board, we were able to keep a balanced budget and minimize the impact of COVID for our students and families.

R I S E

**A R T
A F F A I R**

**SAVE
THE
DATE!**
MARCH 5, 2022

Since 2009, OpenDoors has hosted our annual art auction and gala, raising critical dollars to support local students most affected by the race-based opportunity and achievement gaps. Having paused last year in the midst of COVID, we are excited to be back around the planning table for March 5, 2022.

**Art Affair 2022: We Rise.
Elevate, Educate, Celebrate!**

In 12 years, OpenDoors Art Affair has raised more than \$1.3 million to uplift local students. Thank you to our donating artists, committee volunteers, corporate and hospitality sponsors, and event patrons! Our students' paths to success begins with support and investment from individuals like you.

Presented by:



To learn more about Art Affair 2022, contact Lindsey Grossman, Event Chair, artaffair@opendoorsasheville.org.



The Brookshire Garside Group
Alan Brookshire, CFP®, QPFC
Julie Garside, QPFC



To all of our donors, volunteers, sponsors, friends, and community,
THANK YOU.



“It is more critical than ever that educational opportunity and attainment be within reach of as diverse a group of young people as possible. OpenDoors works to make that happen. Today, there are young people from historically under-resourced backgrounds who are becoming prepared to lead our community in the broadest and most inclusive sense.”

--Joel Adams, donor

“Education has always been at the heart of what we do -- we are honored to partner with OpenDoors to help provide opportunities for deserving young people of diverse backgrounds. Through education, options are limitless! There is no better investment than seeing young people have access to educational programs and be able to pursue their dream with the guidance and support of the OpenDoors team.”

-- Nancy and Tom Maher, Pisgah Investments Foundation

To see our most up-to-date
and growing list of supporters, visit
OpenDoorsAsheville.org/donors-sponsors-partners/
or scan this code →





2021 Century Run

“I believe that the solution to achieving equity is education, which is why I am partnering with OpenDoors” -Zach Philip, 17

In the early morning hours of June 5, 2021, with his family and friends close by, senior Zach Philip set out on his 100 mile journey to raise critical dollars for OpenDoors students. Beginning at 6:30 a.m. in the parking lot of our title sponsor, Hunter Subaru, Zach made his traverse, mostly on trails, through the North Carolina Mountains. The next afternoon, and ahead of schedule, Zach’s race for equity concluded at his home school, Carolina Day School, a long time best-fit school partner of OpenDoors.

Zach demonstrated discipline, courage, and perseverance to complete his epic 100 mile journey in two days. As our students overcome institutional barriers on their own journeys To & Through college, we are continuously impressed and inspired by their similar fortitude.

2021 Century Run raised \$100,000, helping to support our mission of eliminating the race-based opportunity and achievement gaps for students through education. To Zach and the entire Philip Family, and all those who surrounded him with love and support during this run, we THANK YOU!

Meet Our Staff...



Jen Langdon Ramming
Chief Executive Officer



Keevon Baten
Chief Financial Officer



Megan Martell
Chief Operating Officer



Katherine Fleer
Education Director



Jasmine Middleton
AVL Rise Administrative
Director



Courtney Hamner
Finance Director



Nancy Abernethy
Communications
Director



David Kennedy
AVL Rise Education
Director



Lauren Simms
Director
of Impact



Kristal Woods
Human Resources
Coordinator



Tia Searles
Transportation Coordinator
and AVL Rise Instructor



Melissa Moses
Office Coordinator



Dosty Quarrier
Development Coordinator



Stacey Sharpe
Transportation
Assistant





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Attorney at Law

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Nicki Ingle, Secretary
Community Volunteer

Nicole Cush
Principal of SILSA, Asheville City Schools

Porshia Findley
Teacher Assistant, Ira B. Jones Elementary

Cedric Mansell
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Field Service Specialist*

Sean Vervain
*Director of Student Support Services
and Cultural Equity,
Invest Collegiate Imagine School*



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