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# Annual Report To The Network



“

I value that Horizons helped us stay positive even through all the negative things that are happening in the world.”

– Horizons 8th Grade Student

“Despite, and in many cases because of, the many crises of 2020, the Horizons Network made great progress.”

Looking back on 2020 is both daunting and gratifying. After a great start to the year, including our best-attended-ever Annual Conference in February, everything changed as our Network was faced with the new reality of serving students during a global pandemic.

Despite, and in many cases *because of*, the many crises of 2020, the Horizons Network made great progress. Positive, long-lasting changes like strong affiliate collaboration, program model flexibility, and our reaffirmed commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion will continue to strengthen our organization post-pandemic. Affiliates discovered new and important ways to connect with and support families, re-imagined teaching on virtual platforms, and worked tirelessly to ensure that every student had opportunities to learn.

The year's *Report to the Network* tells a different story than previous years - it's a story of resilience, innovation, commitment, and passion. None of this would have happened without the dedication of our affiliate leaders, teachers, host schools, and students and families. Our Network learned valuable lessons from 2020, and we will continue to work with affiliate leaders everywhere to capture the activities and insights that will guide the future of Horizons.

Together, the Horizons Network rose to the challenges of 2020, and as a community, from coast to coast, we became stronger and better prepared for opportunities that lie ahead in 2021.



Lorna Smith, CEO  
Horizons National





## A Network Responds

As the scope of the COVID-19 pandemic became apparent, every Horizons affiliate faced an overwhelming amount of information to process. Throughout the spring and into the summer, Horizons National listened and served as the clearinghouse for useful practices, curated a Resource Library, convened Network leadership to harness the power of the community, and provided crisis management resources.

The challenges of 2020 were often immediate and tactical, from the “what and how” of program delivery, to the need for new resources (including guidance, funding, and training) and how these would work in the many different communities served by Horizons affiliates.

This is where the combination of affiliate expertise and centralized resources proved powerful. Centralized national organizations were challenged by an environment where local realities were extremely different. Similarly, many local organizations that were not part of a larger network struggled to access the level of resources, guidance, funding, support, and community available in the Horizons Network.

The combination of local autonomy with deep roots in the community and flexible central resources ensured the Network could survive and thrive -- and be better prepared for 2021.

With a great deal of uncertainty in front of them, Horizons leaders rapidly evolved their programming, meeting the immediate needs of families such as food security, access to remote learning technology, and resources to support emotional and social well-being, while also building new models for virtual programming, at-home learning, and family involvement.

“

Horizons never gave up on us. Even when COVID-19 stopped us from being on campus physically, we still had the opportunity to be there mentally.”



## The Power of a Network Model

In a time of crisis and uncertainty, Horizons' flexible model allowed each affiliate to build a program tailored to the unique needs of their students and communities. Research shows that strong, caring relationships, like those fostered at Horizons, can buffer the effects of trauma. To ensure affiliates could remain focused on these relationships and develop the best possible programming for their families, Horizons National took immediate action in response to COVID-19. While affiliates focused on supporting families' needs like food and connectivity, Horizons National prioritized the immediate needs of affiliates, like alternatives to canceled Spring fundraising events, and exploring ways to support the long-term challenges the Network would face as a result of a global pandemic.

We also recognized that if programming looked different, so should measurement, and adapted data collection to fit this uniquely challenging environment.

Understanding the variation in circumstances across the Network, and committed to individualized support, Horizons National:

- Encouraged flexibility by modifying 2020 reporting requirements - suspending all but student enrollment, staff data, and survey administration
- Partnered with the American Institutes for Research (AIR) and Project Evident to develop a plan for data collection and analysis
- Prioritized information gathering to help us understand how participants, families, and staff experienced Horizons in this challenging year

## Knowledge and Resource Sharing

When it became clear that Summer 2020 would look very different, Horizons National worked with leaders across the Network to help affiliates develop contingency plans, prioritizing the social and emotional well-being of students and families.

Throughout 2020, Horizons National remained committed to leveraging our expertise in out-of-school time learning, our strong sense of community, and our long-term commitment to support the success of all students. At the onset of the pandemic in March, the Horizons National team:

- Began regular communications with each Affiliate Director to understand individual concerns and needs.
- Convened Network leadership weekly to harness the power of community. These virtual meetings brought together more than 100 staff and board members from around the country to discuss pressing issues including contingencies for Spring and Summer programming, options for teacher contracts, and supporting families' immediate needs.
- Developed strategies to leverage Horizons Giving Day 2020. With so many affiliates forced to replace canceled Spring fundraisers, our Network's proven virtual fundraiser was even more important this year – not just as a way to raise funds, but to demonstrate that support for the Horizons mission is stronger than ever.
- Served as a clearinghouse for information and practices that were most useful to our Network during these unprecedented times. With an abundance of resources being created throughout the field, Horizons National curated external materials and resources to support affiliate operations. A newly-created COVID-19 section of the Affiliate Resource Library was populated weekly with new resources, templates, and materials, and a resource-rich email was sent weekly to all affiliate leaders.
- Created messaging to help affiliates communicate to their stakeholders throughout the pandemic.
- Hosted a series of fundraising calls to support affiliate outreach to their funders.
- Shared resources centered around the CARES Act and relief funding.
- Shared best practices for managing an organization through a crisis including HR needs, communications planning tools, and financial and strategic planning.



# Re-Imagining the Horizons Summer

## Horizons at Home 2020

Adapting quickly and working with families, Horizons affiliates created *Horizons at Home*, a safe, at-home learning experience that blended hands-on activities with online classrooms. Through *Horizons at Home*, affiliates offered activities that were synchronous (live, teacher-led sessions), asynchronous (students engaged on their own pace), or when safe enough, outside in-person activities.



**64 SITES**

**offered at-home programs or support in 19 states (100% of sites!)**

**4,894 STUDENTS & 3,587 FAMILIES**  
engaged with Horizons at Home



**523 TEACHERS**  
worked to reinvent the traditional Horizons summer and connect with students in an unusual year



**58 SITES**

offered virtual or physically distanced, in-person field trips

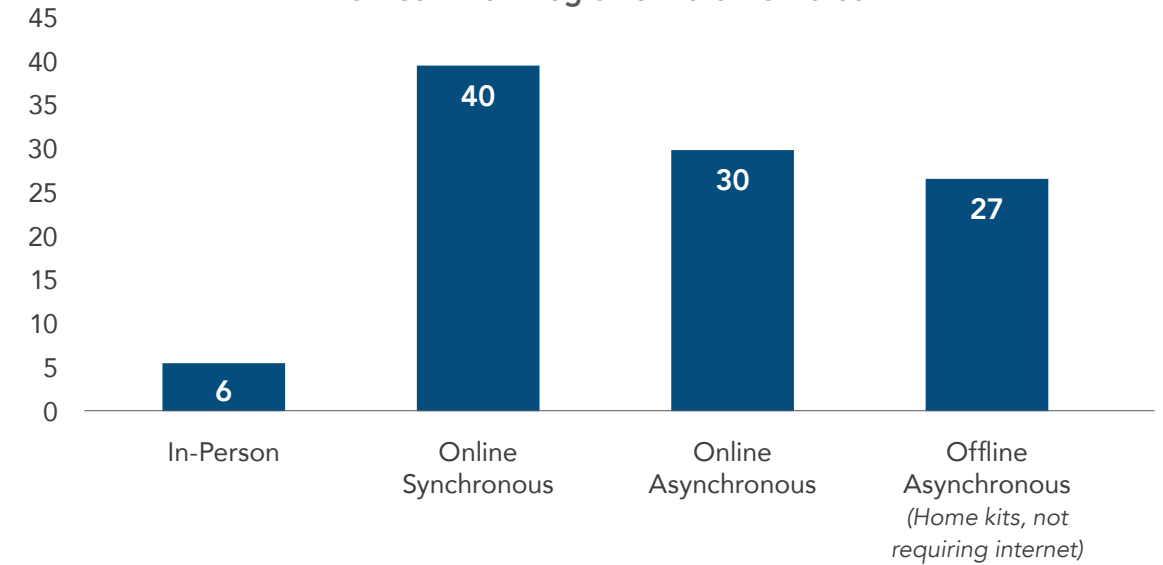


**OVER 1,500 DEVICES**

like laptops, tablets, and wifi hotspots were provided to support virtual learning



How Summer Programs Were Delivered



Affiliates worked hard to make Horizons at Home as close to a typical summer as could be in a remote environment, including a wide variety of learning opportunities and prioritizing time as a community. Every program focused on reading and math instruction, and engaged students in writing activities and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math). Programs also had a special focus on social-emotional learning (SEL), ensuring that students had the safe space and tools they needed to process the events of 2020. Other offerings like meditation, cultural activities, and guest speakers provided more opportunities to learn and socialize together.

Types of Programming Offered





**85%** of students liked or strongly liked their Summer 2020 at Horizons

### Family Engagement and Support

At the start of the pandemic, Horizons affiliates contacted each family to understand what immediate needs had emerged. Most often, families were facing difficulties accessing the technology needed for remote learning, and experiencing food insecurity. Working quickly with their host schools and community partners, Horizons affiliates were able to expand their services to meet these needs. Affiliates made substantial efforts to offer support for food insecurity, creating produce distribution sites with local grocery stores and offering free meals to Horizons families, as well as providing gift cards for groceries. To help with remote learning and ensure that all students could participate, affiliates partnered with local companies and school districts to provide over 1,500 devices across the Horizons Network, like laptops, tablets, and wifi hotspots.



**\$100,000**  
Affiliate-Provided Support For Groceries

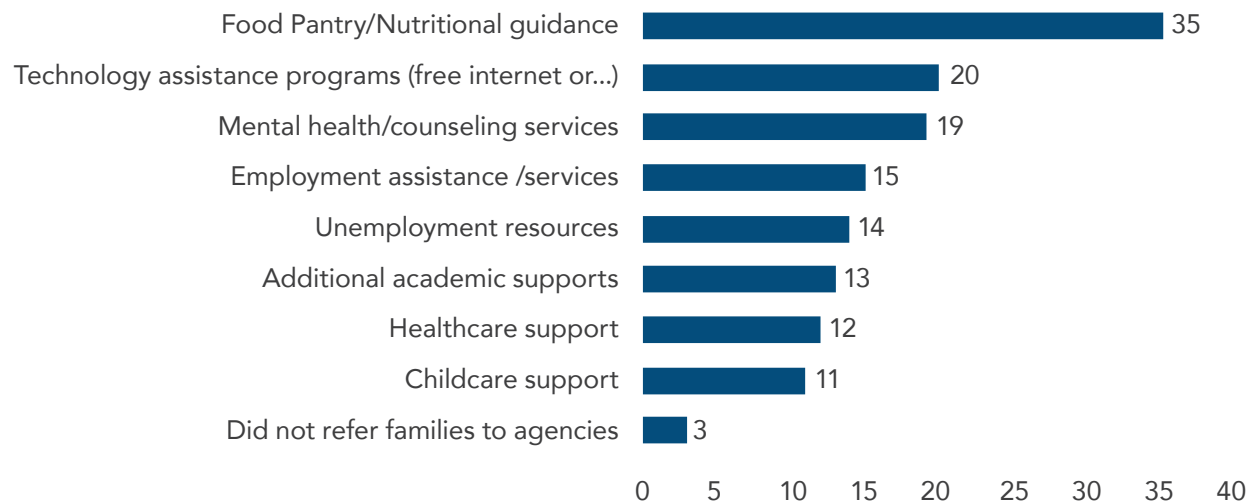


**38,000**  
Meals Provided



**100%**  
Affiliates Addressed Food Access

#### Referrals Offered to Families



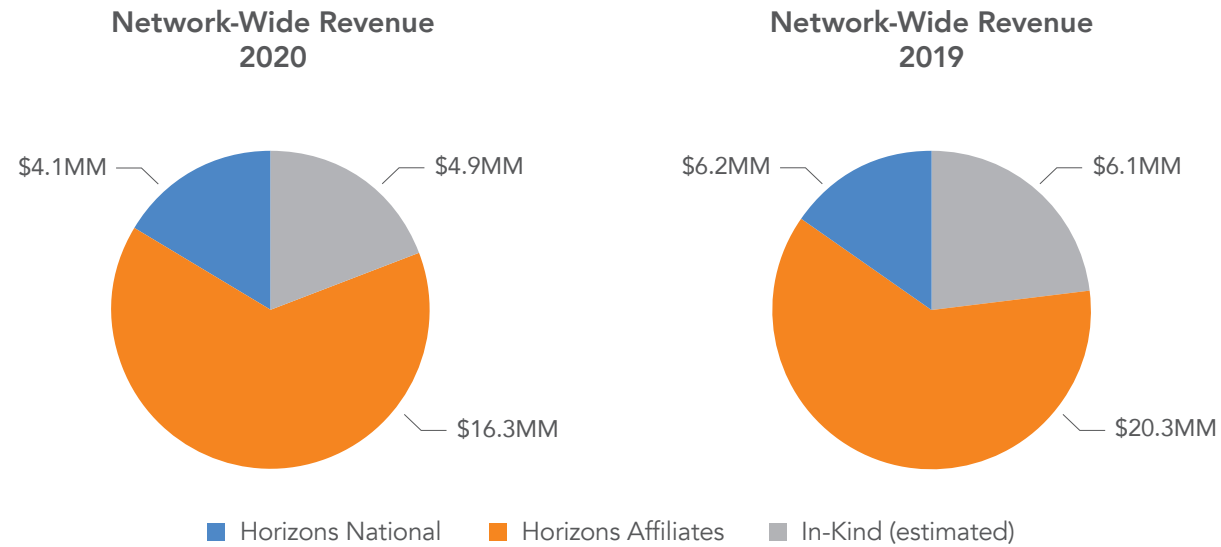
*This chart shows the number of Horizons sites that made each type of reference in a variety of ways, including sharing information via newsletters to direct referrals.*





# Network Financials

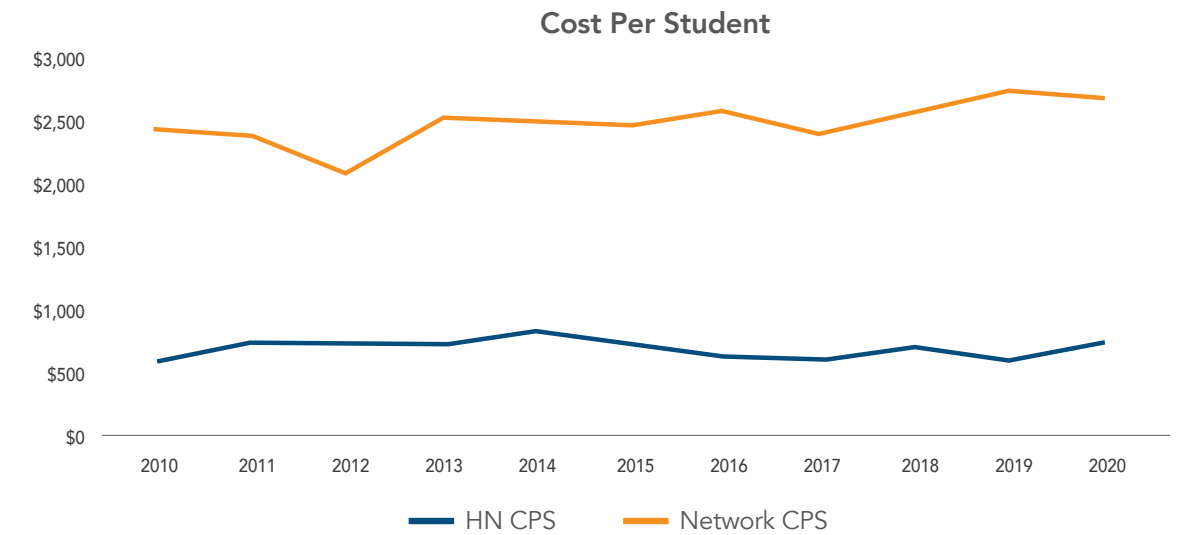
In spite of challenges presented this year to fundraising, including canceled events and redirected giving, the Horizons Network remained financially strong, raising more than \$20 million across the Network and estimated to have received \$6.1 million of in-kind support in 2020.



# Cost Per Student

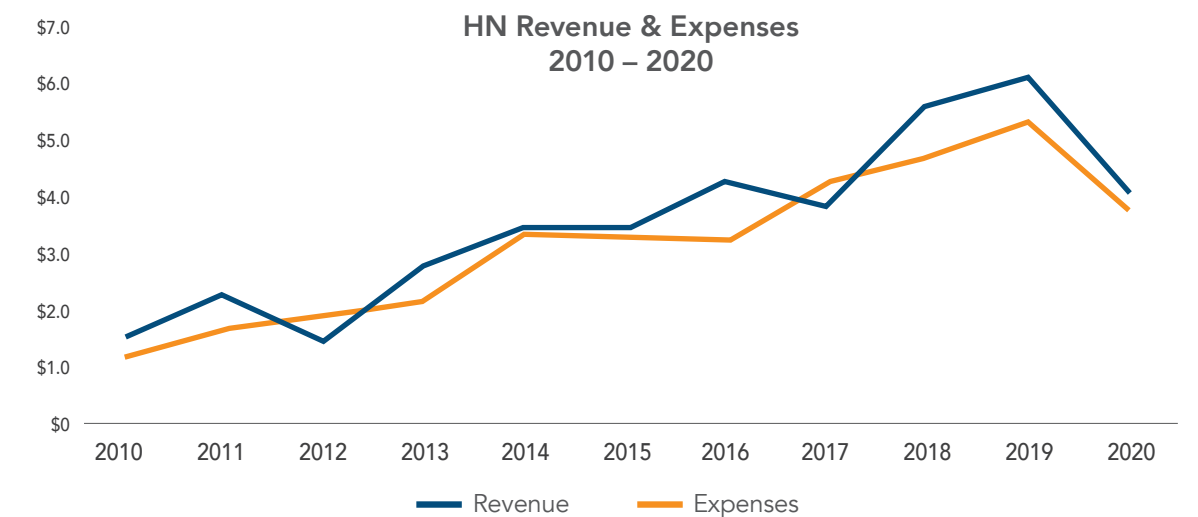
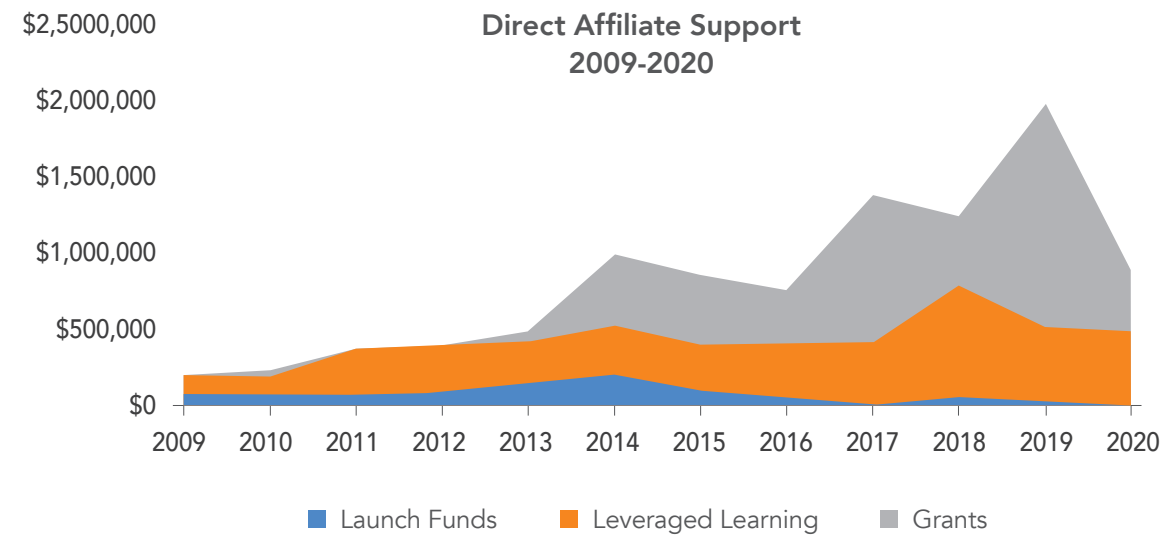
The average cost per student in 2020 was \$2,707, which remained relatively consistent with average cost per student since 2010.

We are incredibly grateful that many of our current funders showed up in unexpected ways to support HN in this time of multiple crises. Several relaxed their restrictions on funding, allowing us to direct funds to general operating expenses. Others provided additional, unexpected gifts.



## Horizons National Financials

Horizons National is funded through private philanthropy, with an increasing operating budget to support a rapidly growing network. In 2020, Horizons National directed resources to provide the Affiliate Network with funding, training, consulting, and community convening to endure the effects of the pandemic. Horizons National does not collect annual dues from Network affiliates and must raise funds, including pass-through and programmatic supportive funding, from a variety of private sources.

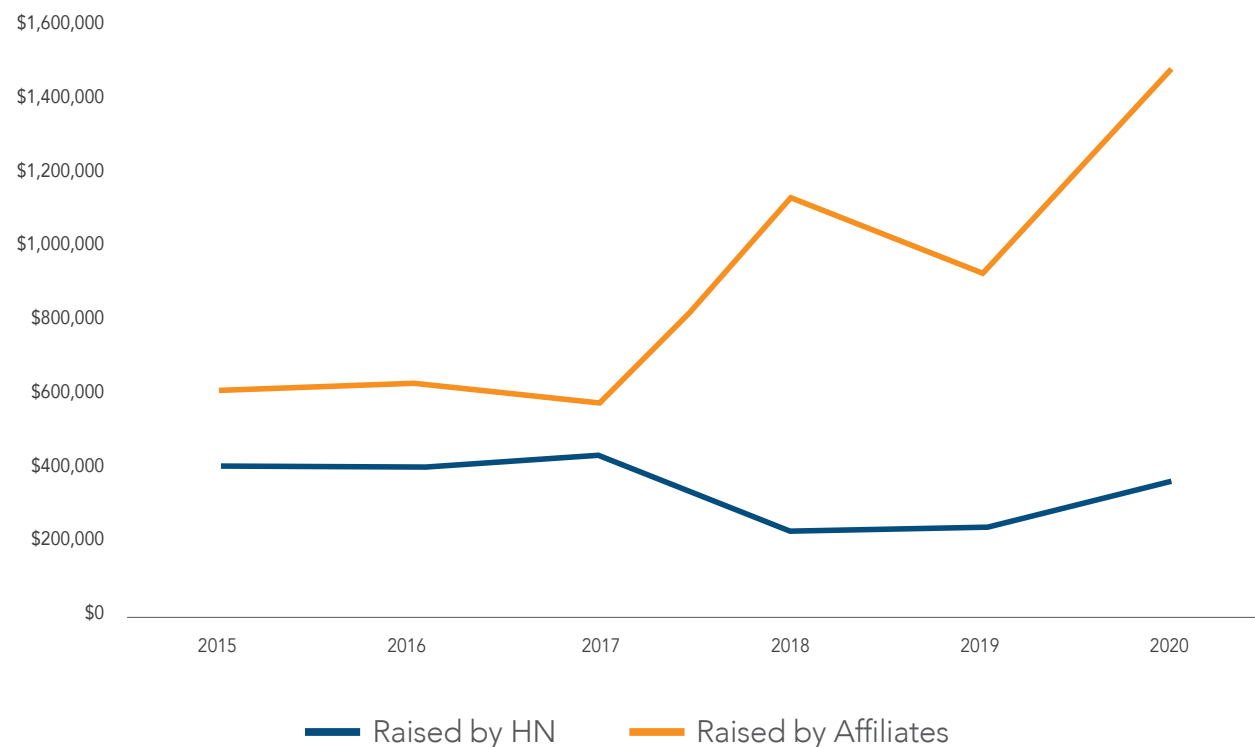


# \$1.8 Million Raised

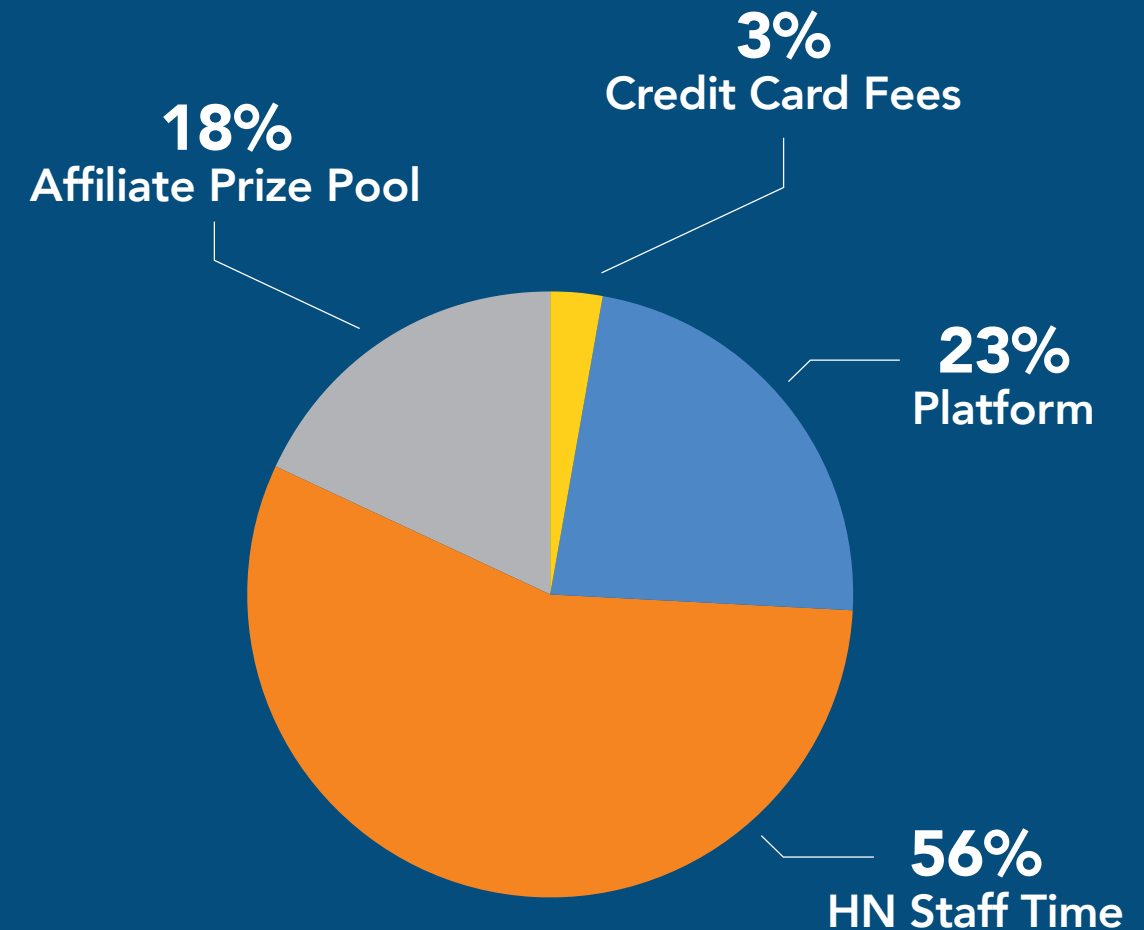
## Horizons Giving Day Breaks Fundraising Records

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many affiliates had to cancel their usual in-person Spring fundraising events. Horizons Giving Day, in its 6th year, was a bright spot in a time of great uncertainty.

In 2020, the virtual event collectively raised more than \$1.8M, with \$1,461,467 raised by 42 participating Horizons sites. Also, through Horizons Giving Day, HSBC Bank matched every dollar up to \$50K made to Horizons National on May 20 to support our COVID Response efforts.



## Horizons Giving Day Expense Allocation



Since 2015, Horizons National has fully funded the expenses of **Horizons Giving Day**, with a majority of expenses going to directly support Horizons sites' efforts in fundraising. In 2020, the Horizons National Team increased the number of trainings and resources developed to support affiliate fundraising during the pandemic.





# Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

## Racial Reckoning and a Reaffirmation of our Commitment to EDI

In December 2019, we began an engagement with Thought Partner Solutions to develop staff and board action plans to increase Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) – and the work became even more urgent as 2020 unfolded. While we acknowledge that it will be an ongoing journey, the Horizons National Board and staff EDI action plans are fully activated, and we have begun convening the Horizons Network Task Force for Equity and Access to help us understand how we can best support EDI throughout the Horizons community.

For the foreseeable future, there will be three distinct groups working on further developing the Horizons Network's commitment to EDI:

1. Through the Governance Committee and the Strategy Task Force, the Horizons National Board will work to meet the goals of its Board Equity Action Plan, which includes further diversifying the board's membership, developing a stronger onboarding and mentoring system for new board members, and creating a more inclusive and welcoming culture.
2. The Horizons National Staff Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Working Group will continue to provide opportunities for HN staff development and training in EDI, as well as more conversations that promote understanding, inclusion, and community.
3. The Horizons Network Task Force for Equity and Access, composed of affiliate leaders from more than 16 affiliates, meets regularly to share and support one another's EDI efforts and to inform Horizons National's support of EDI throughout the Network.

In order to realize our organizational EDI goals, Horizons National contracted with an HR consultant who specializes in EDI. We will work with her throughout the year to ensure all HN policies and practices are revisited through an equity lens.

To coordinate the efforts of these groups, Horizons National established an EDI Leadership Team, which includes members of each of the EDI groups. The EDI Leadership Team ensures that there is collaboration between the groups, including combined training, exchanges of ideas, and community.



# Commitment from the Horizons National Board of Directors

Dear Horizons Community,

This year has been a challenging time for our country, our community, and the young people and families Horizons supports. As we reflect back on the last several months and look ahead to the future, we want to share what Horizons National has learned so far, how we have adjusted our approach, and, going forward, where we are placing our focus as an organization.

First, we want to reiterate that our Board and our organization unequivocally denounce and condemn racism in all forms, and we explicitly avow that Black Lives Matter. As an organization, the events of 2020 deepened our conviction that we must do more to contribute to systemic change by centering racial equity and social justice in our work.

The Horizons mission has always been focused on narrowing education and opportunity gaps – gaps that have been widening at an alarming rate due to the global health crisis. COVID-19 has kept students out of the classroom for months, and continues to compromise learning time for many, resulting in significant learning loss. The barriers created by systemic racism mean this learning loss is felt disproportionately in communities of color, which is why we are doubling down on our commitment to provide more students of color with the resources they need to be successful in school and in life.

In 2020, we encouraged creativity in implementing the Horizons summer experience, working with affiliates to support the pivot to virtual programming, with a focus on physical and mental wellbeing.

We are proud to share that every one of the 64 Horizons sites across the country delivered programs to their communities in 2020. Even as they adapted to develop blended virtual and at-home offerings, many affiliates were fully engaged in efforts to fill gaps in food access, mental health services, one-to-one tutoring, and family support. Many of the adjustments made to the Horizons model will become permanent. We will continue to build on this learning and respond to the needs of affiliates and their communities with passion and agility.

The Horizons National Board actively seeks ways to support our staff and affiliates to address systemic racism, gaps of opportunity, and a rapidly changing education landscape. In 2019, we engaged an EDI consultant to help us develop an equity agenda and action plan with clear goals and metrics for our board and staff. Elements of the plan include:

- Visibly and wholly committing to goals for advancing EDI
- Modernizing board governance structures toward systemic racial equity and inclusion
- Improving recruiting strategies to ensure more BIPOC candidates serve on the HN Board
- Developing policies and practices to create a welcoming and inclusive culture that fosters a sense of belonging

Looking forward, we will be carefully examining how the Horizons model should evolve to further advance equity and address systemic racism.

The impacts of education inequity will continue to be felt by students in under-resourced communities and students of color, and disparities in education will continue to be a challenge for the entire country. As the need for programs like Horizons grows, all of us at Horizons National are more committed than ever to do our part to build a more equitable and more just society.

Sincerely,

Mary Brock, Eric Cochran, Gary Cohen, Vicki Craver, Amy Chan Downer, Rick Frazier, Lindsay Galin, Erick Hong, Melissa Hughes, Gita Iyer, Noelle King, Leslie Littlejohn, Ned Mandel, Lyn McNaught, Rebecca Owen, Jon Michael Reese, Melinda Rolfs, Lorna Smith, Roland Smart, Mark Steffensen, Nicholas Thacher, J. Ronald Totaro, Ricky Van Veen, Dennis Williams, Will Young

# Black Voices in Education

Horizons National's Black Voices in Education social media and blog posts began as a celebration of Juneteenth, highlighting the lives and accomplishments of Black educators in history who worked to advance racial and educational equity in the United States. After positive reception from the Network, the Black Voices in Education Blog Series became a way for Horizons to share these important stories. In the fall, the blog was converted into a tangible resource that can be used as an educational tool.





# Expanding Horizons

Even with a reallocation of resources to support existing affiliates in the middle of a crisis, efforts to expand the Horizons Network to serve more students continued. Growth in 2020 included three pilot sites:

- Riverdale Country School in New York City offered virtual synchronous and asynchronous programming to 20 students attending Bronx public and charter schools in July. The pilot was staffed by 4 Riverdale teachers. Attendance for the pilot was strong and the feedback from families, staff, and faculty was very positive. Riverdale hopes to explore becoming a Horizons site in 2021 and launched a full Exploratory Committee in October.
- Horizons Delmarva (formerly Horizons Salisbury) launched their pilot program in Pocomoke City by collaborating closely with the local school district. The result was a hybrid program that offered students access to programs through the district in the morning and Horizons in the afternoon. The district provided transportation and other support.
- Boston Public Schools continued their successful pilot program at the Mattahunt School and their hope is to integrate this program permanently into Horizons Greater Boston going forward.

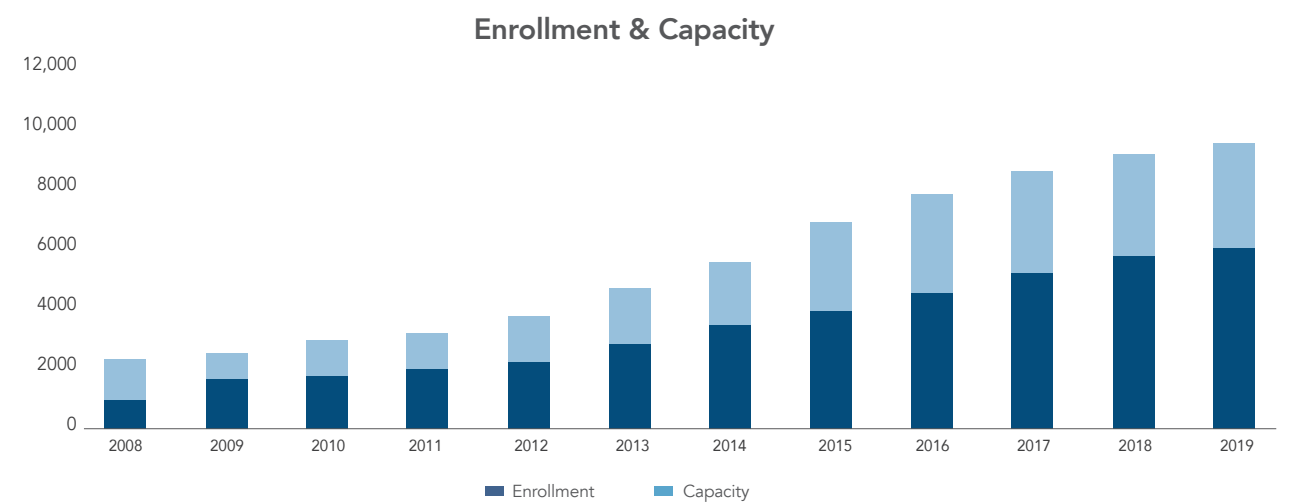
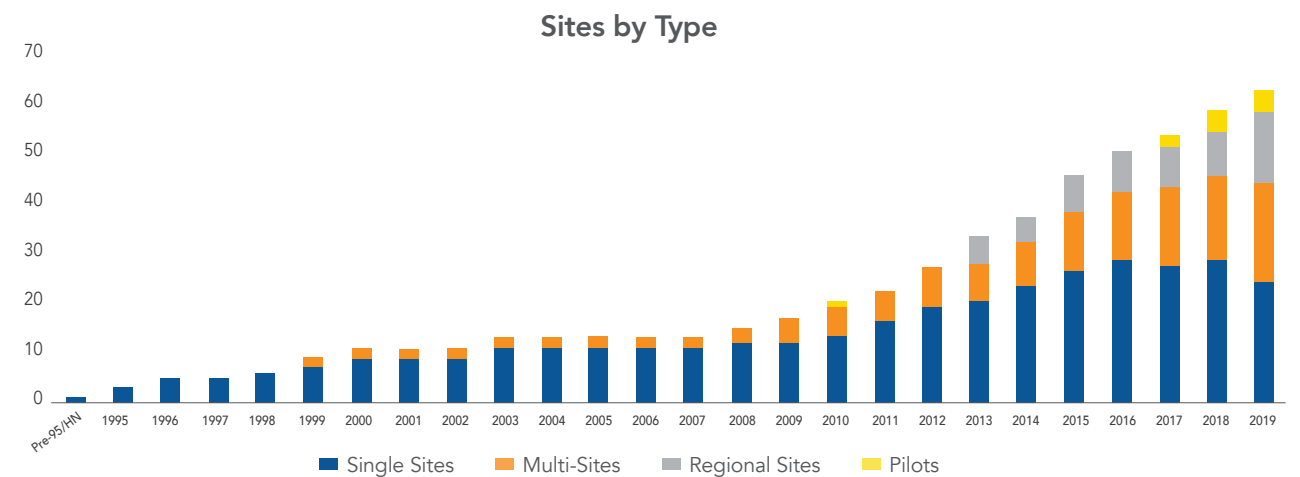
Our strategic commitment to regionalization was confirmed by continued momentum. Horizons Greater Philadelphia, Horizons Greater Boston, and Horizons New York City became official Horizons regions in 2020, bringing the total to 5 regional hubs with the goal of serving a critical mass of local students.



We are a more diverse, more inclusive community as a result of our San Francisco Friends School Horizons program.”

– Mike Hanas, Head of School, San Francisco Friends School

As the Horizons Network grows, so does our capacity to serve students. By 2022, Horizons hopes to have the program capacity to serve 12,000 students across the country.





HORIZONS  
ATLANTA  
GEORGIA STATE

Karmen Walker

Horizons-GSU

Brandon Allen



## Learning and Support

While Horizons National staff worked to support the Network in the new realities of 2020, several projects already in progress continued on pace, including:

### Creating Efficiencies and Data Access: Converting data systems to Salesforce

Beginning in 2018, Horizons National engaged Yurgosky Consulting, a leader in developing technology strategies for nonprofits, to conduct a thorough audit of our technology and student data systems.

After completion of the audit, Horizons National began to convert its systems to the platform recommended by Yurgosky: Salesforce. The overall goals of the new technology ecosystem include:

- Develop a data and technology infrastructure that will support HN's anticipated growth
- Promote efficiency through well-organized, integrated solutions
- Create a single source of truth for all organizational data
- Provide access to necessary systems, regardless of employee's location
- Enable HN to monitor and measure affiliate performance and enforce timely, high-quality program data
- Promote user adoption through modern, user-friendly technology interfaces
- Empower HN with real-time, dynamic reporting on all program and fundraising data

The first phase of the system was built in 2019 and rolled out to affiliates for planned implementation in 2020. Despite numerous adjustments to student enrollment, data collection, and analysis processes, integration of the Salesforce hosted centralized database continued, with plans to use Salesforce for even greater data collection in 2021.

### Upgrading the Resource Library and Affiliate Guidebook

In 2020, Horizons National improved the functionality of the online Affiliate Resource Library, including new sections offering expanded resources centered on COVID-19 and Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. Alongside the recently updated Horizons Resource Library, we have updated the Horizons Affiliate Guidebook. The updated Guidebook is an essential resource for Horizons Directors, Board Chairs, and staff, covering all topics related to launching and sustaining a successful Horizons program. The Guidebook, designed to complement the Resource Library, provides references to materials and further reading to be found on the Resource Library, as well as markers of Horizons' Affiliate Policies and Quality Band Indicators.

### Building out the Lessonly remote learning library of training modules

Horizons National began building our online learning platform, hosted by Lessonly, in Summer 2019. The platform was introduced to the Network in Winter 2020 with more than 12 lessons that are, in part, a response to the Network's increased need to work and serve families virtually.

Horizons National partnered with Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence to develop a series of trainings to assist educators on implementing the elements of RULER into virtual lessons. We also worked with the AmeriCorps VISTA office to create several lessons for Horizons VISTA supervisors on topics like onboarding and reporting.

### AmeriCorps VISTAs

Our Horizons AmeriCorps VISTA cohort nearly doubled in 2020, with 13 Full-Year VISTA members and 7 Summer Associate VISTAs serving at 17 Horizons affiliates and Horizons National. Horizons VISTAs work to build financial capacity, strengthen the sustainability of Horizons, increase the visibility of Horizons in the local community, and increase volunteer participation and engagement at their sites. In 2020, Horizons VISTA members:

- Leveraged \$341,686 in cash resources for their Horizons sites
- Leveraged \$53,203 worth of in-kind resources for their Horizons sites
- Recruited 65 community volunteers, who performed 70 service hours
- Managed 66 community volunteers, who performed 200 service hours
- Developed 32 new or enhanced systems and business processes for their Horizons sites

## 2020 Annual Conference

In late February, just before COVID forced our country into lockdown, leaders from across the Horizons Network convened in person for the 2020 Horizons National Annual Conference and Meeting. Our best-ever-attended Annual Conference, the 3-day event was rich in professional development covering all aspects of Horizons operations. Participants engaged in sessions such as "Bridging Communities with Host Schools" and "Promoting Resilience in Children," and enjoyed incredible presentations from Marc Brackett of the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, and NBC News' Chief Education Correspondent, Rehema Ellis. We also celebrated the winners of our 2020 Lyn McNaught Teacher Award, named for Horizons National Founder and Board member Lyn McNaught, honoring teachers who have provided exemplary learning opportunities for students.



2020 Lyn McNaught Honorees with Horizons National Founder, Lyn McNaught



“

I am so proud to have worked with Horizons this summer. I've honestly never worked somewhere where I felt so supported (especially by the leadership team). I gained confidence and many new skills from this experience. I will definitely never forget about the time I spent here.”

– Horizons Teacher

## Looking Forward

*While we all looked forward to turning the page on 2020, the year also gave us many gifts. We are a much more unified Network, as we had the opportunity to recognize the value of being part of a community that is dedicated to supporting youth and families. We are engaging authentically in the essential work of making Horizons a more equitable, diverse, and welcoming organization, and making strides to ensure the voices and perspectives of those we exist to serve are represented in our strategic decisions. We are building systems that will greatly improve our efficiency as a Network, simultaneously creating powerful tools for our affiliates to access and use on their own.*

*It is likely that 2021 will be no less challenging. There is still much to be done on all of these fronts. But we have a strong foundation on which to build and a Network of talent, heart, and energy to make things happen. Gaps of opportunity and education are wider than ever before – bigger than we could have imagined them becoming – and programs like Horizons will be part of the solution to narrowing them now and in the future.*





**HORIZONS**<sup>®</sup>  
National

*Inspire · Build · Transform*

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