

“If independent schools have traditionally developed leaders to become contributors to society, this is an additional approach that is broader, and it adds meaning to our impact in our local community. There is no way we can lose with that; Horizons is a fuller realization of why we exist, which is to enrich lives.”

– Steve Lisk, Head of School, Lancaster Country Day School, Lancaster, PA

[horizonsnational.org](https://horizonsnational.org)



## Partner with Horizons

Expand learning opportunities  
for more students in your community





*Horizons Atlanta includes more than 10 program sites throughout the region. Kevin Glass, Head of School at Atlanta International School and Dr. J. Turner Fidel at Clark Atlanta University share their insights on the power of Horizons in their community.*

Dear colleagues,

As educators, we are in the exceptional position to provide students opportunities to learn, grow, and thrive. In fact, this is the very bedrock of our existence. However, we also recognize there are educational inequities in our communities that we need to continue to address, and our efforts in this area have never been needed more. Now is the time for all of us to work together to ensure every child can reach their full potential.

You may be asking yourself, what can we do? For us, the answer was Horizons.

When we began to pursue programs and nonprofits that would allow us to expand our missions and positive impact beyond our own walls, we explored a number of options. We were looking for something that had evidence of real impact and created deeper partnerships with families in the broader community. Horizons stood out for its high-quality, long-term approach combined with support and flexibility from a central office. For us, this was by far the best option.

Here in Atlanta, Horizons provides an opportunity for children from across our region to experience our campuses, deeply explore subjects they're most interested in, make new friends, connect with caring adults, learn to swim, and have fun. Our teachers are also energized by Horizons, where they get to experiment with new instructional strategies and rethink learning environments alongside peers from our schools and Atlanta Public Schools. And, families and teachers return to Horizons year after year, forming long-term bonds and support systems that often last well beyond program participation. It's truly a win-win.

With Horizons, we're carrying out our mission well beyond the students we serve 9 months a year. Horizons Atlanta is a sustainable model that provides learning opportunities for more than 1,250 children across the metro area, and that number is growing every year.

Horizons has been transformative for our schools, our community, our students, and our region. We hope you'll join us on the journey to support educational equity for all students.

Sincerely,

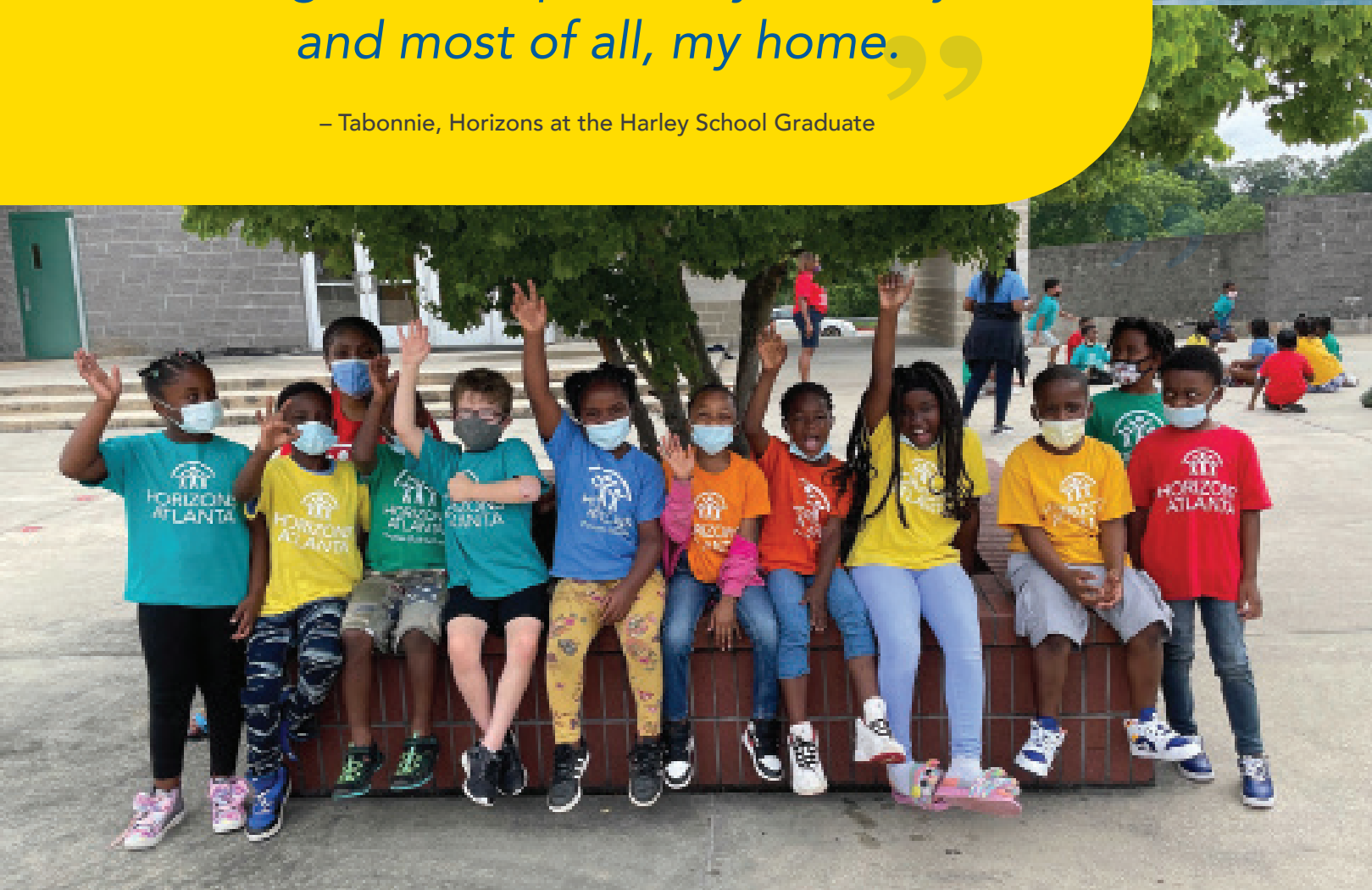
Kevin Glass, Head of School, Atlanta International School  
Dr. J. Turner Fidel, Clark Atlanta University





*“Horizons is opportunities, experiences, lifelong friendships, family, future jobs, and most of all, my home.”*

– Tabonnie, Horizons at the Harley School Graduate



## What is Horizons National?

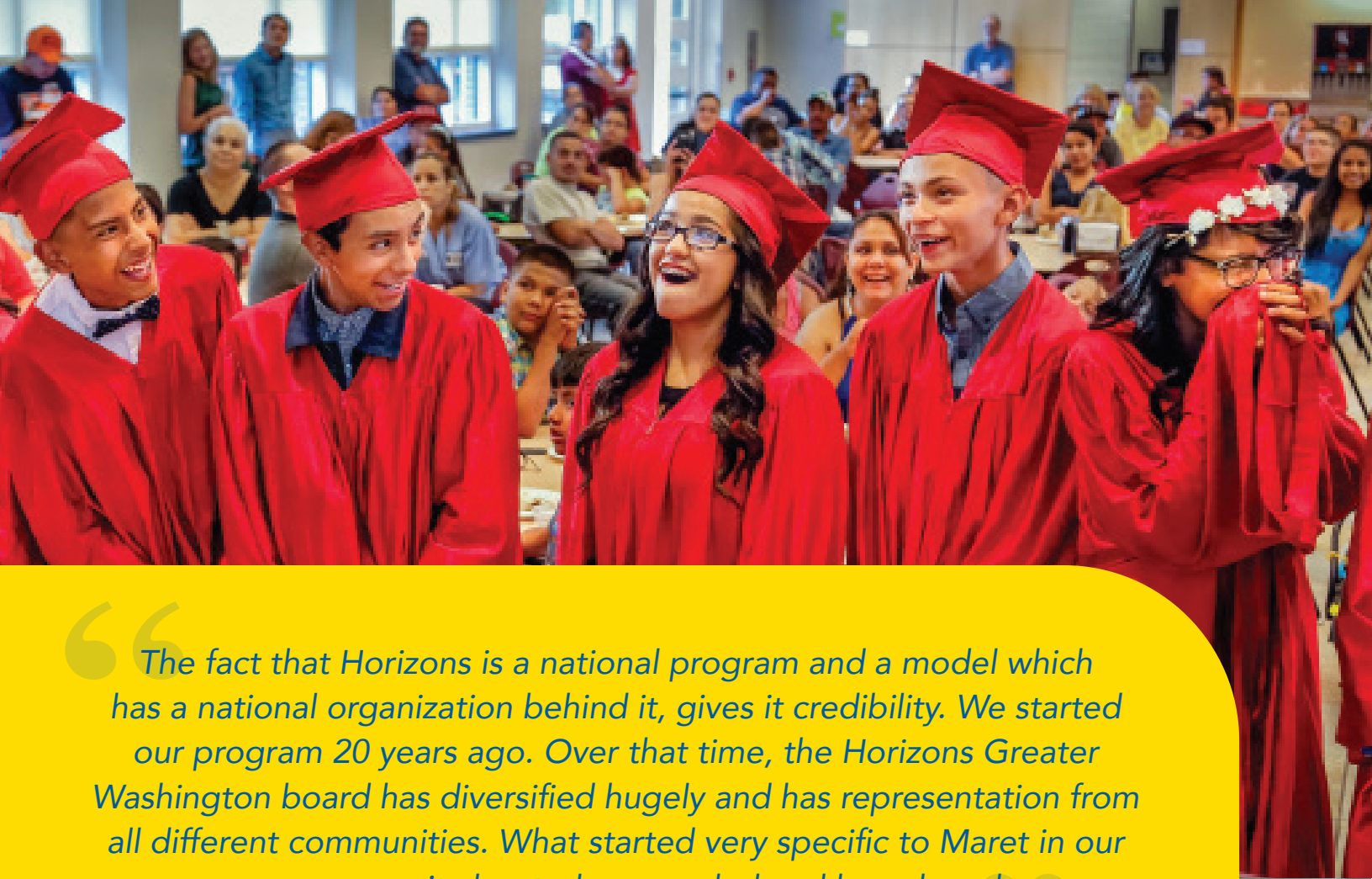
Horizons National is a nonprofit that partners with independent, public, and charter schools, colleges, and universities to support a network of out-of-school academic and youth development programs that bring STEM, art, reading, field trips, swimming, and so much more to students in communities where those experiences are not available or not equally accessible. We focus on long-term solutions and prioritize best practices in positive youth development and social-emotional learning.

Hosting a Horizons program on your campus creates opportunities for students like Tabonnie for years to come and embeds a powerful vehicle for expanding your mission beyond your institution.

*“It’s more important than ever for independent schools to ask ourselves, with the resources that we have, with whom are we not yet working – working together to build stronger communities, creating programmatic possibilities, and making our own communities more diverse and more inclusive than they have been.”*

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





“The fact that Horizons is a national program and a model which has a national organization behind it, gives it credibility. We started our program 20 years ago. Over that time, the Horizons Greater Washington board has diversified hugely and has representation from all different communities. What started very specific to Maret in our own community has truly expanded and broadened.”

– Marjo Talbott, Head of School, Maret School, Washington, DC



## Why are partnerships like Horizons so important, especially now?

By the 5th grade, summer learning loss can leave some students 2.5 to 3 years behind their peers.<sup>1</sup> Summer learning loss is also one of the strongest contributors to the high school dropout rate, as the cumulative erosion of academic skills year after year creates barriers that are challenging to overcome. The effects can reverberate long past high school and impact employment, college attendance, college graduation, and career success.

### Across the Horizons Network:



**94%**

daily attendance rate among students



**85%**

year-to-year student retention rate



**8-12 weeks**

gained of grade equivalence in reading and math over each 6-week summer session



**97%**

of Horizons high school students graduate on time



**91%**

go on to college or other post-secondary education

<sup>1</sup> Source: Cooper, H., Borman, G., & Fairchild, R. (2010). "School Calendars and Academic Achievement." In J. Meece & J. Eccles (Eds.), Handbook of Research on Schools, Schooling, and Human Development (pp. 342-355). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum

# What host schools share about their experience with Horizons

In a recent survey of Horizons host institutions:

100%

feel their Horizons program is improving their school’s connection to the community. Horizons programs are also a meaningful way to strengthen partnerships with local public schools and districts

100%

feel their Horizons program is a meaningful expression of their mission

100%

feel Horizons is beneficial to the school and a worthwhile investment of time and energy

95%

of all Horizons programs opened over the last 25 years continue today

92%

report that the net effect on their school’s fundraising has been positive or neutral

90%

said Horizons provides meaningful employment or volunteer opportunities for their faculty and staff

86%

said Horizons offers a way for their school’s participants to connect with the larger community in a way not offered by their other outreach or service learning

80%

feel their Horizons program gave their alumni an additional reason to stay close to their school

Additionally, 70% said their Horizons program provides meaningful employment or volunteer opportunities for their students. And, more than half of host institutions feel that Horizons is broadening their school’s donor base and increasing their access to corporations and foundations, improving institutional sustainability to serve the community for years to come.





# Making Horizons your own

Each Horizons program is a reflection of its host institution. Horizons programs are an extension of the institution’s mission and can support equity, diversity, and inclusion goals and activities as well as provide meaningful engagement in student leadership and community involvement.

**Host schools experience many benefits when they join the Horizons Network, including:**

- Expanded role and visibility in their community
- Opportunities for alumni, donor, parent, and student engagement
- Opportunities for educators from host schools and public schools to work together
- Teacher training opportunities, and creative freedom to build and customize curriculum
- Support for long-term sustainability of the Horizons program

Horizons National works with your school to customize the way the Horizons program is integrated into your learning community. Horizons programs often adopt school traditions and create their own “homes” on campus. While we provide support and resources along the way, Horizons programs are meant to be locally owned and operated to best serve the unique needs of your students, school, and community.



**Horizons National builds in a great deal of flexibility to ensure each Horizons program can become a one-of-a-kind reflection of its community.**

For example, Horizons Newark at Philip’s Academy Charter School and Horizons at Carolina Day School have started community gardens at their host schools, increasing their local visibility and establishing a special place for Horizons students to learn year after year. Others, like Horizons at Lancaster Country Day School, do an exceptional job recruiting high school student volunteers from their host institutions, helping to bring the school and Horizons communities together and offering valuable experiences for both Horizons students and host school youth volunteers.



## Teachers benefit, too:

Teachers from local schools who spend their summers with Horizons access professional development in areas like social-emotional learning, project-based lessons, and trauma-informed teaching, gaining unique skills to bring back to their school-year classrooms. Horizons National does not have a standard curriculum, and teachers love the flexibility to design and create their own student-centered lessons, often in partnership with their students. Horizons teachers report feeling refreshed and energized after their Horizons summer.

“Horizons has definitely helped me grow into a better person, as well as a better teacher, with the resources and the hands-on experience that I’ve been given.”

– Ruthie, 5th Grade Teacher, Horizons at Sacred Heart University



## Supporting your program's launch and sustainability

When considering Horizons for your school, Horizons National is with you every step of the way, leveraging our 25+ years of experience to help you determine whether Horizons will meet the goals for your community.

### Horizons is a good fit for your school or university if you have:

- Open campus space over the summer
- A school community interested in supporting out-of-school and extended learning
- An institutional Board of Directors (or equivalent body) interested in supporting the greater community
- An advocate within the host school to lead the exploratory process
- Stakeholders and donors who would like to see the school reach beyond its walls



### Horizons National provides the tools you need to get started, including:

- Training and support for the Executive Director, specialized staff, and Board
- Consulting, including implementation and strategic planning
- Guidance on developing key relationships in target schools and communities
- Assistance with identifying and cultivating prospective affiliate partners
- Evaluation, student assessment, and marketing tools
- Ongoing training, consulting, centralized data collection and analysis, professional development, and formal and informal opportunities for knowledge-sharing and peer-to-peer connections with others in the Horizons Network

*To find a program that had been developed thoughtfully, that had core structures in place, and has a growth dynamic built into it, gave us confidence that we're starting with smaller steps, and we'll get our sea legs underneath us as we go forward.*

— Steve Lisk, Head of School,  
Lancaster Country Day School, Lancaster, PA





“Kids who are learning and excited to learn and are craving knowledge and gaining more skills – that’s real, that’s just the kind of stuff that we as educators get into these jobs for. It’s inspiring, and I can’t imagine us not having that injection of inspiration all the time. Our students overwhelmingly want to be part of it...And this is part of who we are...”

– T.J. Locke, Head of School, The Episcopal Academy, Newtown Square, PA



## Expanding learning with proven outcomes

With Horizons, you’re expanding learning opportunities for children from pre-kindergarten through high school, not just over the summer, but year-round, using **evidence-based models**. Horizons students come back year after year, developing close relationships with Horizons teachers, mentors and friends, and growing up in a supportive learning community.

Students are introduced to academic enrichment, STEM, experiential learning, field trips, swimming, and more using **a whole-learner approach rooted in social-emotional learning**. These activities are proven to support students’ academic performance, improve mental well-being, and strengthen social skills. Over the 6-week summer session, Horizons students achieve an average 8-12 week improvement in their reading and math skills and a daily attendance rate of over 94%.

**The data shows our programs work.** Horizons National recently engaged Concentric Research & Evaluation (CRE) to determine whether students who participate in the Horizons program for at least 4 summers achieve better academic outcomes than similar students who do not participate. The study looked at 15 Horizons program sites in 7 states, and each Horizons student in the study was paired with a student who did not participate in Horizons but attended the same school or a school with similar demographics and achievement scores. Researchers used a variety of characteristics to match students including gender, race, and ethnicity.

Results show Horizons students achieve higher elementary math and science standardized assessment scores, higher GPAs in the 9th and 10th grade, and higher graduation rates.<sup>2</sup> **Horizons students are graduating from high school at rates that far exceed the national average** for all youth and rates that are substantially higher than those for young people in communities most affected by summer learning loss. Horizons students also achieve higher school-year attendance rates, and lower rates of chronic absenteeism.



<sup>2</sup> Source: <https://www.horizonsnational.org/transform/research/>





*“We knew there were opportunities to support more students in our area. We felt Horizons was a way for us as a school to partner with our community. A lot of times, many in the community might not step foot on our campus. But this has really given us an opportunity to have some outreach, right here in our own backyard.”*

– Chris Harmon, Head of School, Savannah Christian Preparatory School, Savannah, GA





When we work together to expand Horizons, your school also expands positive impact, learning, and equity in your community.

Interested in exploring whether Horizons is right for your school or university?

Reach out to Horizons National at [info@horizonsnational.org](mailto:info@horizonsnational.org) to start the conversation

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“Looking at the role of independent schools in our communities, we should not only be the rudder, but also be willing to lead in terms of what education and community looks like. And that means all of the community.”

– Jill Muti, Head of School, Ashley Hall, Charleston, SC

Learn more at  
[www.horizonsnational.org](http://www.horizonsnational.org)

