

The Jeniam Foundation and Horizons National

The work of Horizons National would not be possible without the support of our committed funders. The Jeniam Foundation is a Horizons National founding funder whose impact extends far beyond its monetary support. This story is one of a unique partnership that has helped shape the work of Horizons National since its inception.

Andrew Clarkson, lead trustee of the Jeniam Foundation, remembers the moment Horizons National took shape. It was 1993, and he had been supporting the 25-year old Horizons summer program at New Canaan Country School (NCCS) in Connecticut for several years. He and NCCS board member, Stephanie Antoszewski, thought, "why shouldn't this incredible program be a national endeavor?"

That year, the Jeniam Foundation, named after Andrew's daughter Jennifer and his son William, provided an anonymous grant to launch Horizons National. Jeniam has been a funder and partner ever since.

Andrew recently recalled how invested he has felt in this work since the beginning. "We don't like just writing checks," he said. "We like to be involved in the work of the organizations we sponsor, and use our funds to leverage more." Though a relatively small foundation, Jeniam's financial support for high-impact projects has been essential to Horizons' expansion.

One of Andrew's favorite "value-added" projects was the development of Horizons' reading program in 2008. Jeniam's grant that year supported equipment and curriculum and provided the funding to incorporate STAR reading assessments for Horizons students. The program measures students' reading skills and the diagnostic results enable teachers to tailor instruction to each student's individual needs. Jeniam's support helped Horizons expand the use of STAR assessments from one site in Washington, D.C. to several affiliate sites around the country.

Another was the introduction of the Lyn McNaught teaching awards in 2004. The awards, named for Horizons at New Canaan's longtime executive director, recognize outstanding, creative teachers who serve as role models for students while encouraging the potential of each child and fostering a life-long love of learning. Three teachers receive this award each year.

"The Jeniam Foundation literally helped get Horizons National off the ground," expresses Horizons National CEO Lorna Smith. "Not just through their unique approach to funding, but with their vision and passion to provide children with opportunities."

Tripp Killin, Jeniam Foundation's current Executive Director, reinforces the organization's belief in Horizons' mission. "The work they do is absolutely essential to addressing the achievement gap and providing opportunities to children less well off in our society."

Under his direction, Jeniam continues to fund projects that yield big results. Most recently, Jeniam provided critical support to jumpstart Horizons' expansion strategy, increase its national visibility, and facilitate outreach to bigger national foundations.

The Jeniam Foundation is enthusiastic about continuing their partnership with Horizons to help us meet our expansion goals. Andrew sums it up sincerely, "Being one of the first funders of Horizons National means a lot to me personally. Having been there in the beginning, I really want to see it through."