



CATALYZING
UNTAPPED HUMAN
POTENTIAL.



IMPACT REPORT
2022

Helping students fall in love with their capacity for growth, so their passion, intentionality, and ethos of excellence can forge the path to bettering the world around them.



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INTRODUCTION



Letter from our founder

For the last 13 years, Imagine Scholar has taken a truly unconventional approach to rural South African education.

From its inception, Imagine Scholar has been based on two core ideas: the potential to be extraordinary is evenly distributed in every corner of the globe, and extraordinary people change the world. Thirteen years later, our belief in these core ideas is stronger than ever.

Our mission is to find and cultivate a sustainable network of inspired thinkers and doers aimed at solving important problems.

The truth is, most education programs sound the same. We all use the same buzzwords and have the same lofty mission statements. What makes us different is found in the nuance. In the execution. In the culture. In the people.

Our people are the key. We work with a different kind of student, focusing on character, enthusiasm to work hard, and being a bit quirky. Our team is made up of ten incredible alumni staff who have the mission of Imagine Scholar baked into their DNA. We take this powerful combination and direct their efforts at a completely different goal - looking to build extraordinary 30-year-olds, not just great 16-year-olds.

Thirteen years in, the question has shifted away from if this will work, to how big the impact can truly be. As we look ahead to 2023, it is the biggest year of change in our history. When you think about the long-term impacts of where we will be in thirteen more years, there will be thousands of alumni serving as doctors at local hospitals, teachers at local schools, and leading new business ventures in our community. It becomes clear that these types of young people will fundamentally, sustainably, and permanently change the very fabric of their community.

Thank you all for being part of this beautiful journey.

Corey Johnson
Executive Director & Founder

YEAR IN REVIEW

Students Served

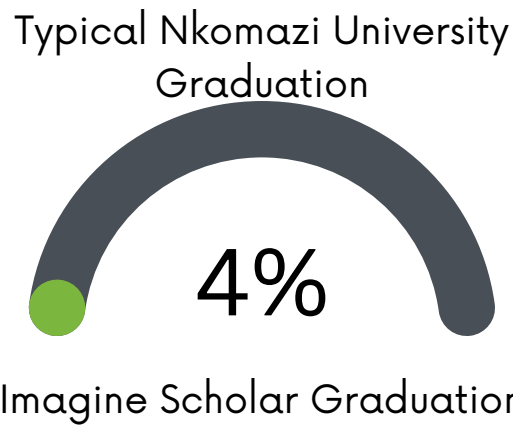
1031

*Including intensive and outreach programs

Alumni on Staff

10

Continuing Education



Annual Budget

\$691,280

*Including capital campaign expenses

THE IMAGINE SCHOLAR DIFFERENCE



The Challenge

For too long, students in South Africa and across the globe have been told the same limiting story: that success is determined by external factors, and that it's out of reach for some and not others.

Our Purpose

We believe differently: that the ingredients of success exist in every young person and that they have the power to make choices that shape their lives and the world around them.

Our work is dedicated to helping young people unlock this infinite capacity and open the door to the rest of their lives on their terms.

Our Promise

Imagine Scholar is transforming how students approach a fulfilling life — defining success from the inside out versus outside-in—and creating community changemakers who inspire the next generation.

The Imagine Scholar Approach

Just like our worldview is unique, so is our approach. We are a free, after-school program with a 16-year commitment to our students that redefines the approach and path to success, so our students can define it for themselves. Through our joyful and rigorous curriculum, Imagine Scholars discover what stokes their passions and tap into new opportunities while learning how to learn and think critically — becoming peer role models who inspire others and drive collective progress.

What makes Imagine Scholar Different?

Not focused on exclusively academics or the matric exam. Instead, we put our energy into building a toolkit of meta-learning skills that allow students to effectively navigate any learning process.

Joyful rigor. We work with the happiest, most passionate students on earth who put in 25+ hrs a week on top of public high school.

Our goal is to build great 30-year-olds, not just great 16 year olds. Keeping the end in mind, we teach durable skills that are relevant for real life including planning, digital communication, empathetic problem solving, and collaboration.

Challenges are opportunities. A key mindset we emphasize so our scholars look forward to setbacks as opportunities to grow.

Feedback culture. Students and staff alike receive and give sincere and direct feedback after every session.

Practiced gratitude. We begin every session by sharing 3 pieces of gratitude. Positivity is a superpower.

Dream big. Imagine Scholar students are pushed to have audacious goals, which has allowed them to accomplish more than anyone thought was possible.

Our long-term mission is impact. Our success will be measured not by university diplomas but by societal change.

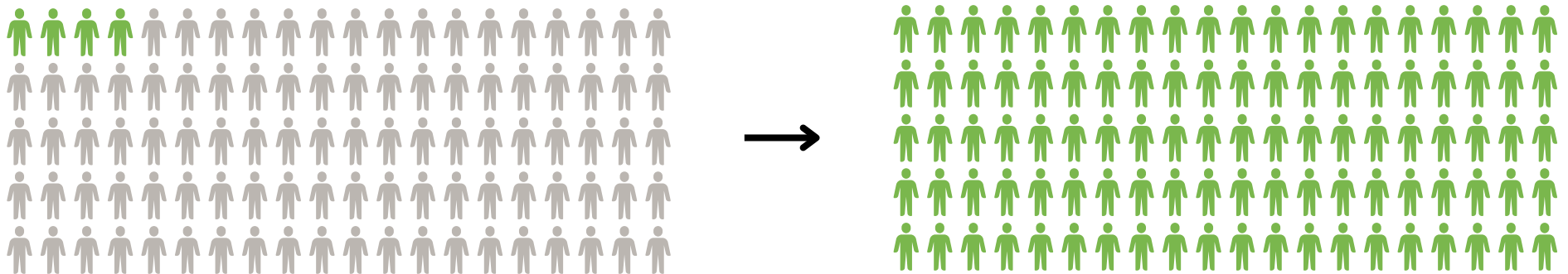
THE IMPACT



The Imagine Scholar Impact

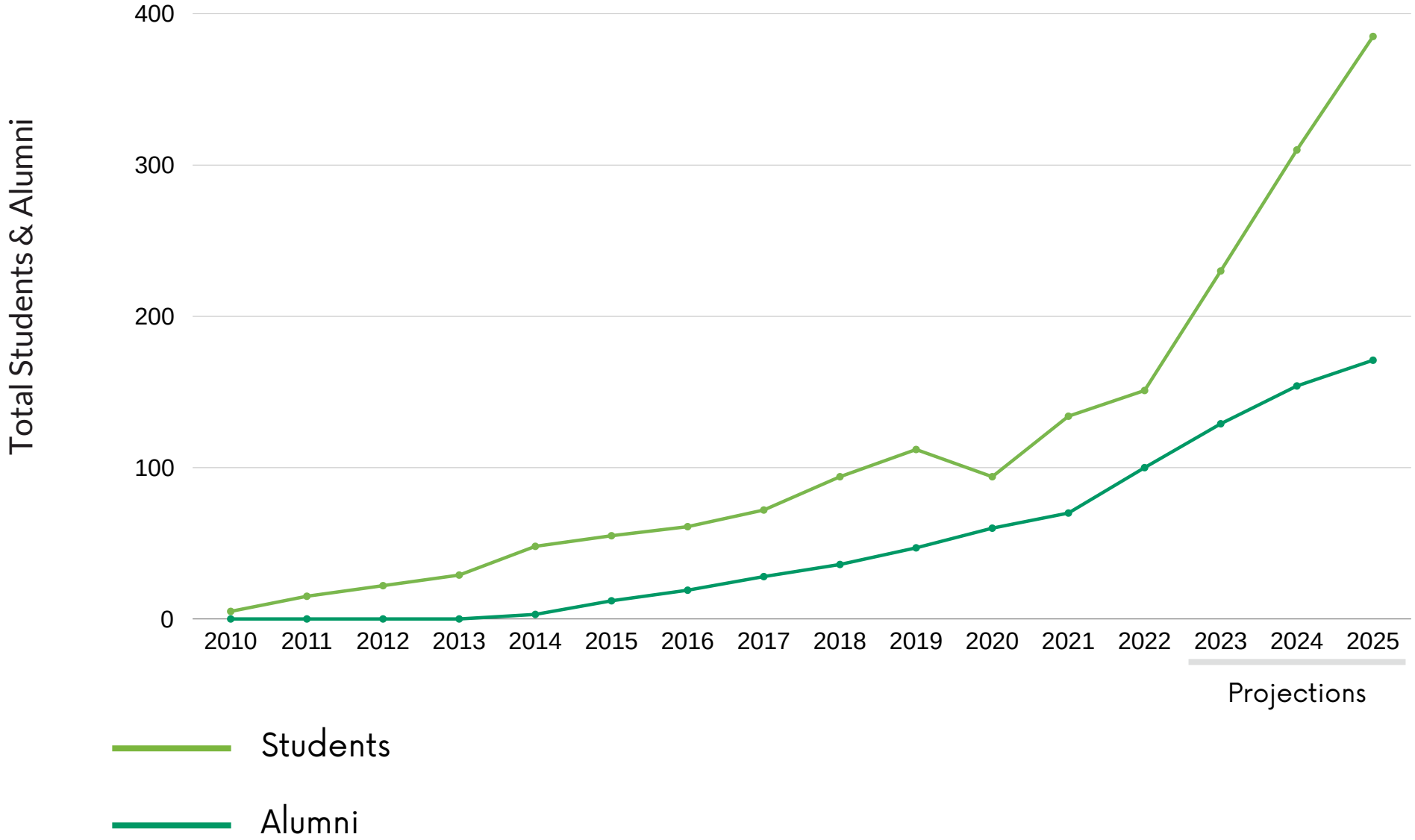
Our work is seeding the momentum for not just local change but global change, putting our students, alumni, and donors at the center of a greater story. Through our campus-based high-intensity programs, we serve over 150 students annually, and through our wider net, over 1000 students. Over the next two years, these numbers will grow to 300+ in campus-based programs and over 6000 in outreach programs.

In a typical rural government high school classroom of 100, only 4 will graduate from university. On Imagine Scholar's campus, that number is 100 out of 100.

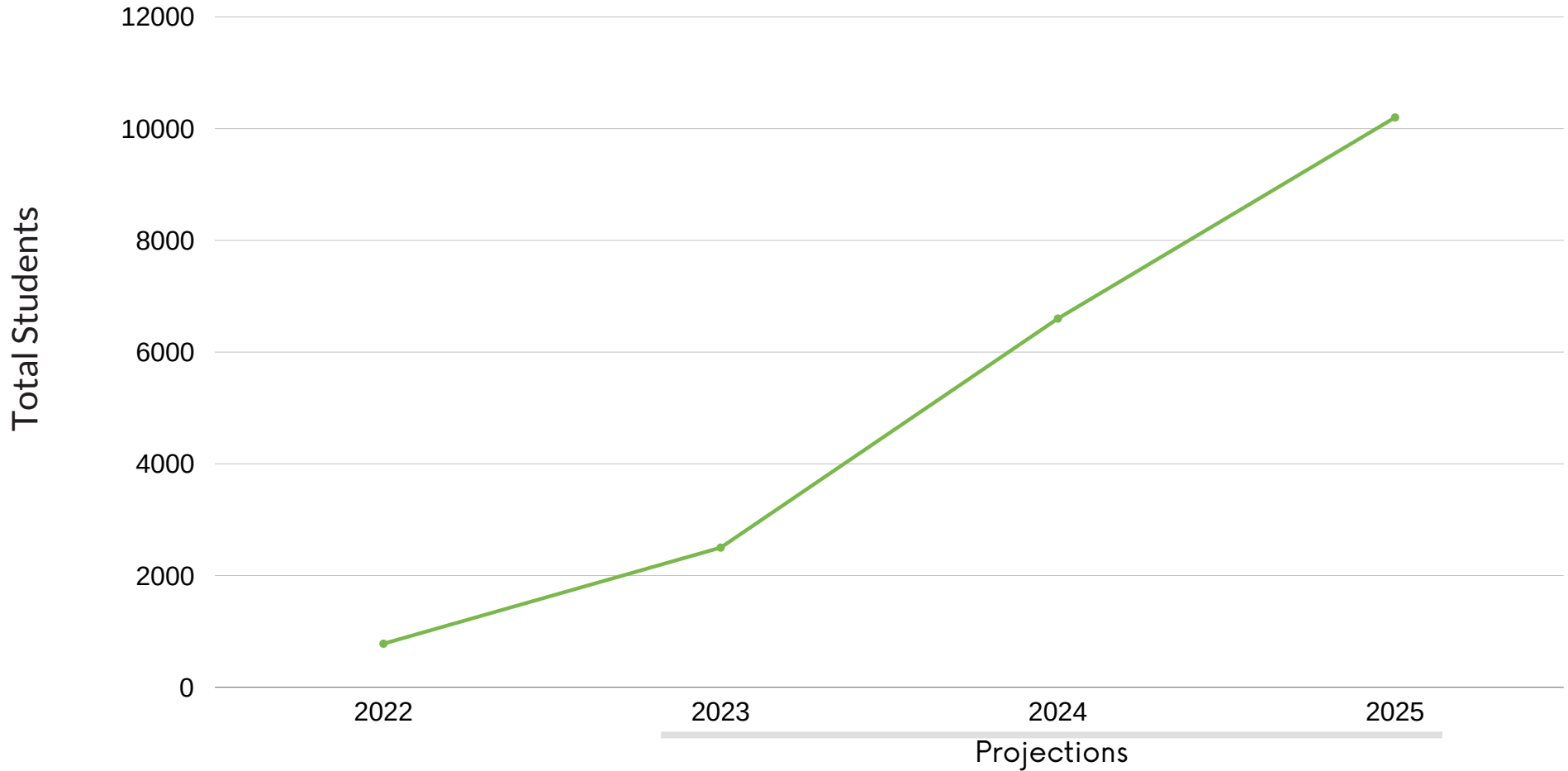


This level of success is unheard of in our community. Our alumni have received over a million dollars in scholarships to attend top institutions around the world and now, are returning to their communities.

ANNUAL STUDENTS AND ALUMNI SERVED IN CAMPUS-BASED INTENSIVE PROGRAMS



ANNUAL STUDENTS SERVED IN CHALLENGER PROGRAMS



*Our Challenger Programs are led by our team of alumni coaches at local secondary schools. Current programs include secondary school-based university strategy and our Grade 12 mindset and learning strategy curriculum. Last year, we piloted our Grade 12 program at one partner secondary school and saw the Grade 12 matriculation rate increase from 60.2% to 86.5%.

IMAGINE SCHOLAR NUMBERS

THE IMPACT

1031 Annual Students Served

33 Employed Post-tertiary
Schooling

65 At University - 50 in South
Africa & 15 Internationally

20 Returned to Nkomazi
Community

35 Graduated from University

10 Alumni Staff employed
full-time

UWC STORY

The United World Colleges (UWC) are an international network of 18 prestigious secondary schools located around the globe. Their mission is to use education as the force to unite people, nations, and cultures for peace and a sustainable future. Each year, around 5 students from South Africa are accepted. Since 2017, Imagine Scholar has had 13 students accepted to attend their schools around the world on full scholarships, totaling over \$800,000.

The area we serve has an approximate population of 300,000, which is about .003% of the population of South Africa. From our small community, we have produced roughly 20% of the students from South Africa accepted to UWC since 2017.





PROGRAM OVERVIEW

"I THINK WE NEED TO TEACH KIDS TWO THINGS: 1. HOW TO LEAD, AND 2. HOW TO SOLVE INTERESTING PROBLEMS." - SETH GODIN

Meet our awesome alumni coaches!



Alucia

"If we teach today like we taught yesterday, then we are robbing our children tomorrow."



Banele

"When I am around people, my heart and soul radiate with the awareness that I am in the presence of greatness. Maybe greatness unfound, or greatness underdeveloped, but the potential or existence of greatness nevertheless."



Constance

"Never underestimate the valuable and important difference you make in every life you touch. For the impact you make today has a powerful rippling effect on every tomorrow."



Gladys

"I wasn't born to 'just teach' I was born to inspire others to change people, and to never give up; even when faced with challenges that seem impossible."



Enocentia

"Celebrate what you have accomplished but raise the bar a little higher each time you succeed."



Marcos

"Life is happening for us, not to us."



Noluthando

"Be thankful for what you have; you'll end up having more. If you concentrate on what you don't have, you will never, ever have enough."



Thenjiwe

"Dream more than others think is possible and expect more than others think is practical."



Zinzi

"A reader lives a thousand lives before he dies. The man who never reads lives only one."



Zodwa

"Just Start."

How do we do what we do?

80% REVERENCE, 20% COACHING - we have a bias towards seeing every kid's potential and capacity. We celebrate, cheerlead, nudge and affirm youth as they take risks, try new things, and explore. Because we care about them, we give honest feedback and coaching when they can do something better or change their strategy.

AUDACIOUS DREAMS AND IMPACT - we push students to dream big, apply for experiential learning opportunities off campus, hear about alumni enacting the big picture mission, and ultimately help them find their place in our network of impact.

COACHES WALK THE TALK - coaches get coached, they test and utilize all the same toolkits we teach and bring their personal stories and experiences into the coaching. We aim to make it human - we're works in progress too; we highlight that being extraordinary isn't a destination but rather a process.

PRACTICE - If we want to create leaders who will empathize, solve problems, advocate, make decisions, and learn, then how are we giving them the chances in our activities, organizational culture, and off-site opportunities to practice doing those things now?

TRANSFER/BIG PICTURE - Every activity ends with metacognitive and reflective questions. *So what? What's the next step? How do you apply this in your life? What was the value for you?*

Check out some examples of those ideas in our sessions!

Strategy Day

We teach a critical thinking protocol through board games and chess. Students talk through strategies out loud, pause and analyze, and deconstruct the end game/winners. They end classes with philosophical chats about how or where those strategies can be applied in real life.

Coaching Sessions

Each student works with a coach; someone who is their partner in their growth and goals. A team of 8-12 students and their coach meet weekly to study the IS toolkit, talk through challenges, get advice, and ultimately, work toward a breakthrough. We think of this segment like stopping in at a petrol station - you get fuel, tune-ups, and maintenance so you can get back on the road again with more energy!

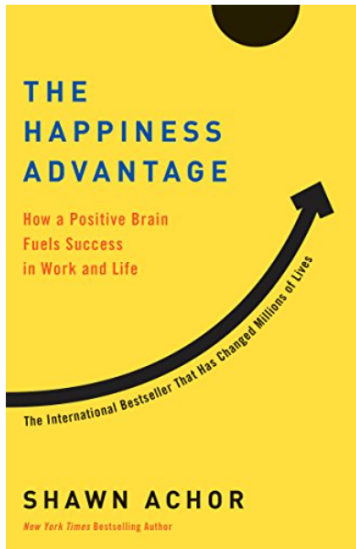
Idea or 'Make it Better' Lab

We practice ideation and challenge the status quo through design thinking classes and segments. Students continually edit the IS curriculum through "Make it Better" feedback and ideation sessions. They see they have power and agency in shaping their growth experiences. They also identify community challenges they want to create solutions to.

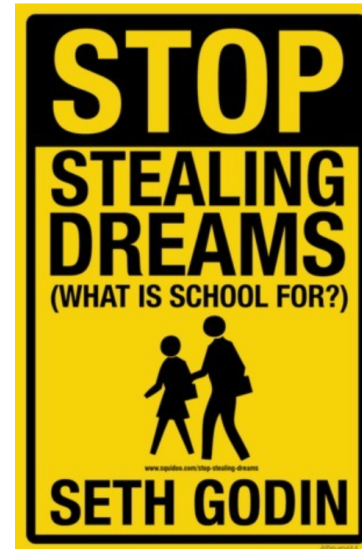
Advocate Day

Students practice pitching and asking for their needs. Each week, in order to attend this extra day, they have to pitch to their coach how they want to use the space and why. We want our young people to ask for what they want! (examples - students might pitch to come work on an application for a camp or competition, get extra 1x1 coaching, utilize study materials, take online courses, do coding lessons, etc).

8 Books that Inspire Imagine Scholar

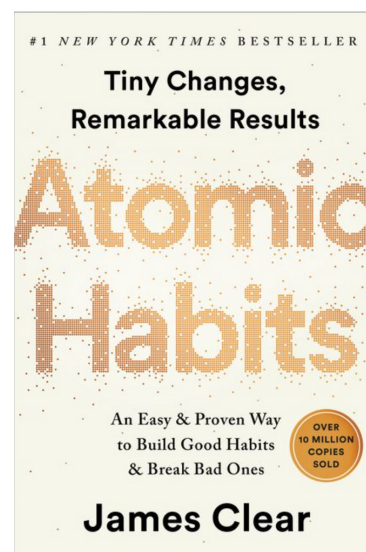


"Happiness is not the belief that we don't need to change; it is the realization that we can."

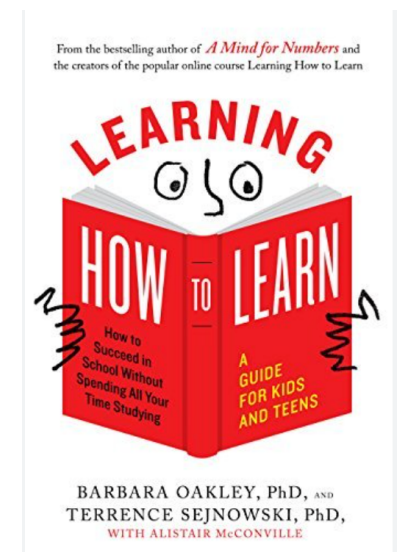


"The universal truth is beyond question - the only people who excel are those who have decided to do so. Great doctors or speakers or skiers or writers or musicians are great because somewhere along the way, they made the choice."

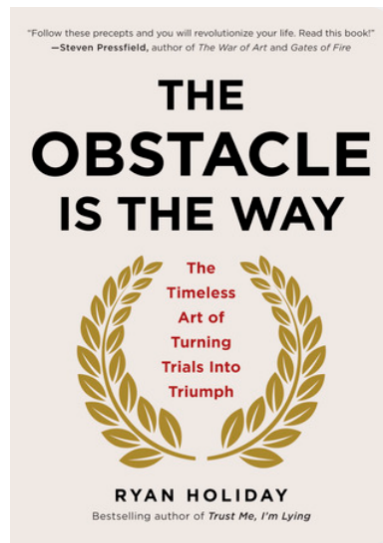
"One of the most effective things you can do to build better habits is to join a culture where your desired behavior is the normal behavior."



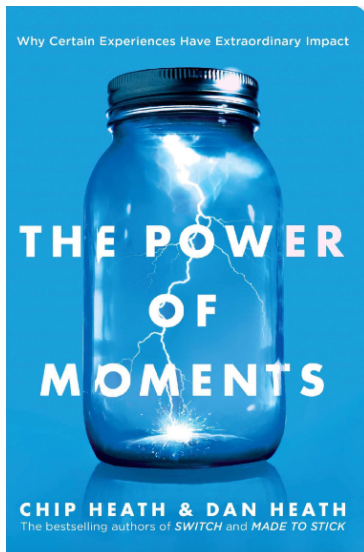
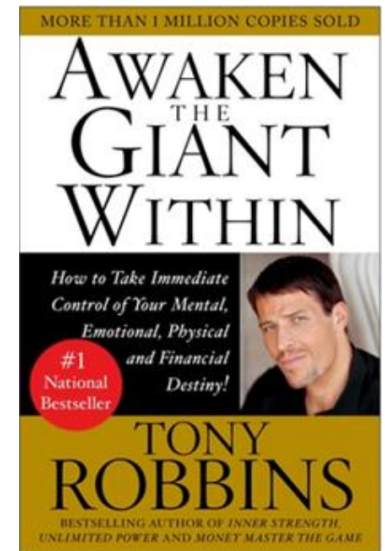
"Pulling the key idea from your own mind, instead of just reading or rereading it on the page, is the critical idea behind active recall."



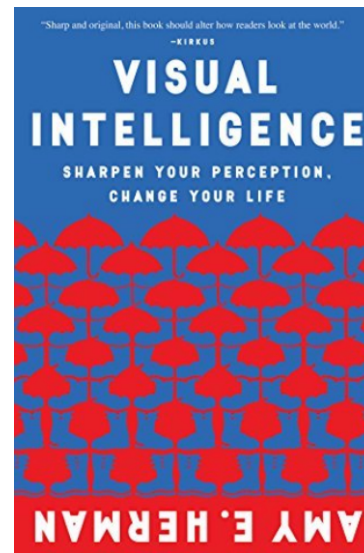
"What matters most is not what these obstacles are but how we see them, how we react to them, and whether we keep our composure."



"Three decisions that we control each moment of our lives: what to focus on, what things mean, and what to do in spite of the challenges that may appear to limit us."



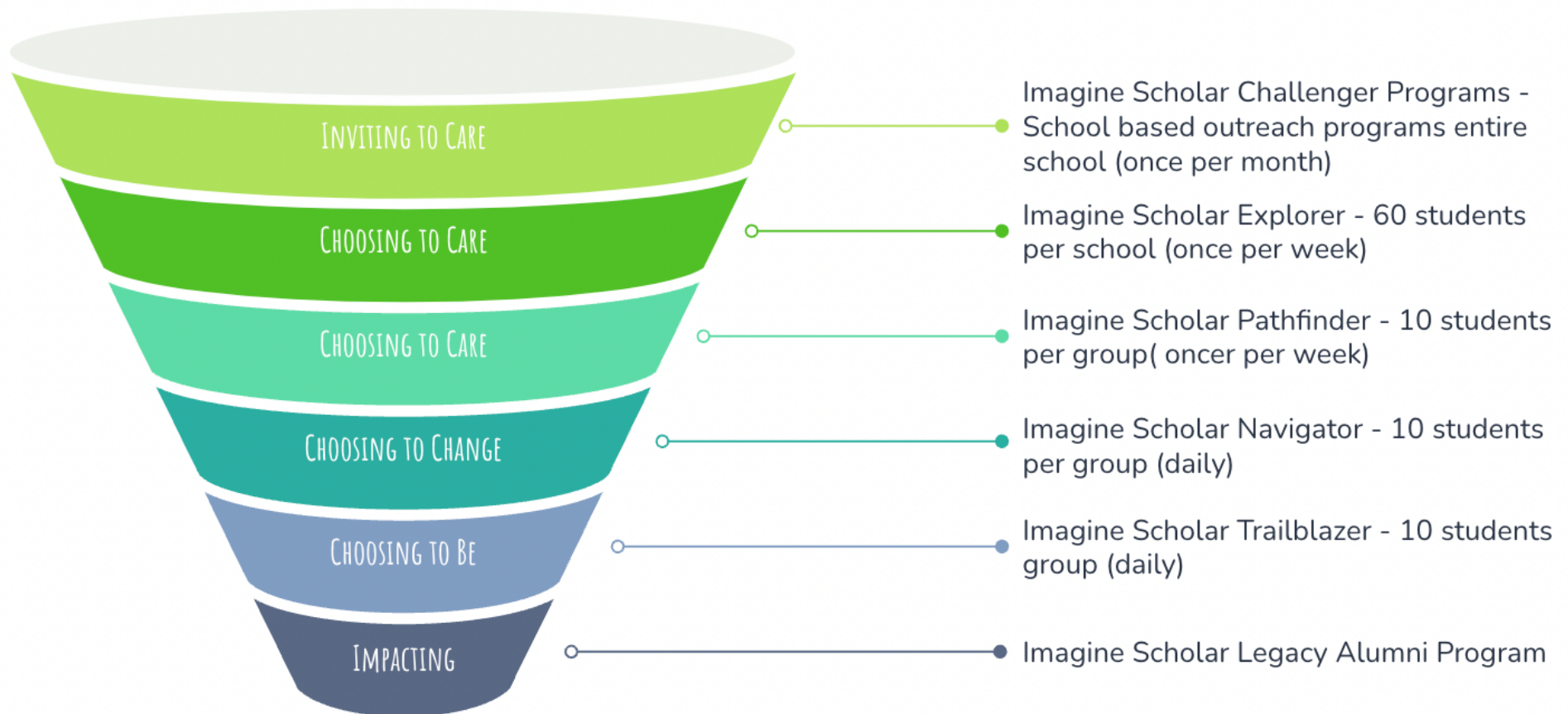
"Our lives are measured in moments, and defining moments can be consciously created. You can be the architect of moments that matter."



"We can survive and thrive today if we know how to see. To see what's there that others don't. To see what's not there that should be. To see the opportunity, the solution, the warning signs, the quickest way, the way out, the win. To see what matters."

Programs Funnel

Imagine Scholar is a program not based on raw ability but on the choices you make. Every student who is willing to work hard has the opportunity to move through this funnel all the way to our full immersion, 25+ hour a week program, and, eventually, our alumni legacy network.



New Education Center

We are thrilled that our new education center is nearly completed and we can't wait to move in and begin using the new space! After so much growth in the program over the last few years, this space is much needed and will facilitate the capacity to better serve our growing network of young people. Thank you so much for all of the generous support in bringing this dream space to life!



ALUMNI & STUDENTS



Zodwa & Isabel Academy

Imagine Scholar Alumni



The true testament to Imagine Scholar's success long-term lies in the hands of the alumni of the program. Our goal is to fundamentally change and uplift the Nkomazi, by empowering young leaders to create and lead initiatives to bring about change. Zodwa, who was part of our first class of Scholars, is doing just that. One year ago, Isabel Academy, her early childhood development center was just an idea. Now, she's brought that idea to life. Here's what she has to say.

"Isabel Academy has been open now for about 8 months. Since opening for enrollment, we have had the privilege of working with 30 incredible kids whose ages range from 3 - 7 years old. We have been able to build a curriculum that encompasses cognitive, social, emotional, and physical class activities. We were also able to register our organization as a PBO in South Africa.

I have been especially proud of the students we work with. For all of our kids, this is the first time they are in class and receiving formal education. However, our students have taken every opportunity to learn and remain excited about school. This makes our work easy. Another thing I am proud of is having the opportunity to work with alumni from Imagine Scholar on this project. I've hired two alumni to facilitate classes with our students, and others serve on my board of directors. Sharing my vision and having them support me in different ways has been a highlight of this journey.

As we look ahead to this year, one goal is to create a second class for Isabel Academy that will focus more on the application of concepts and encourage our students to develop complex thoughts and ideas. We look forward to growing our team and continuing to build new and exciting curriculum for our students.



Meet Ntuthuko!

Imagine Scholar Alumni



“ Last year, Ntuthuko graduated at the top of his class, receiving one of the highest scores on his secondary school matric exam of any student in the region. Ntuthuko attended Sidlamafa Secondary School, where in 2021, just 60% of students passed the matric exam - a statistic which, unfortunately, is not too uncommon in our area.

For the 2022 academic school year, Imagine Scholar was invited to facilitate weekly classes at Ntuthuko's school with their Grade 12 class. Through our mindset and learning strategies curriculum and the student's dedication, the matric pass rate improved from 60.2% to 86.5%. As a result, roughly 50 more students than last year graduated.

This investment in Ntuthuko and his peers demonstrates the immense problems within the South African education system, but how with just one hour a week, such a significant difference can be made in a young person's life trajectory.

”

We asked a few of our students and alumni about what has been the most transformational education experience they've had with Imagine Scholar. Here's what they had to say!

My most transformational experience has been through participating in Mindful Maniacs (our mindfulness and meditation club) every Saturday morning. Mindful Maniacs helped me realize one of the most important things a person can learn, which is everything starts from the mind. Not only did I evolve in terms of how I process information and how I react to situations but I was given the greatest gift of mindfulness. It has been impactful sharing various ideas on emotional intelligence and implementing strategies that will have us change our habits concerning our mental health. Mindful maniacs has completely changed my mind to a more focused, mindful, and positive one.



Unathi
Student



Portia

Alumni & Chairperson
of SA Board of
Directors

My most transformational education experience at Imagine Scholar was the unit about character traits. Although the IS curriculum has evolved, the concept of character development is still incorporated into the program. I see it in the current scholars when I am on campus. The students treat each other, and the facilitators with the utmost kindness and respect. This unit has allowed me to be always kind and respect other people because the world needs more kind people. It has also made me believe in my goals and dreams by fueling my tenacious spirit to never give up.

My most transformational experience with Imagine Scholar was leading the Sidlamafa school program. This was an ah-ha moment for me in recognizing the extensive impact of education on both the individual and school levels. We wanted to empower the students to drive their education process, which I believe we did successfully. So many students began to really care about learning and took charge of their experience at school and reached out for more support to succeed. I think so often these are the missing links at our schools. We helped over 50 more students graduate from high school than in the year before, which will positively impact them for the rest of their lives.



Banele
Alumni Coach



Precious
Student

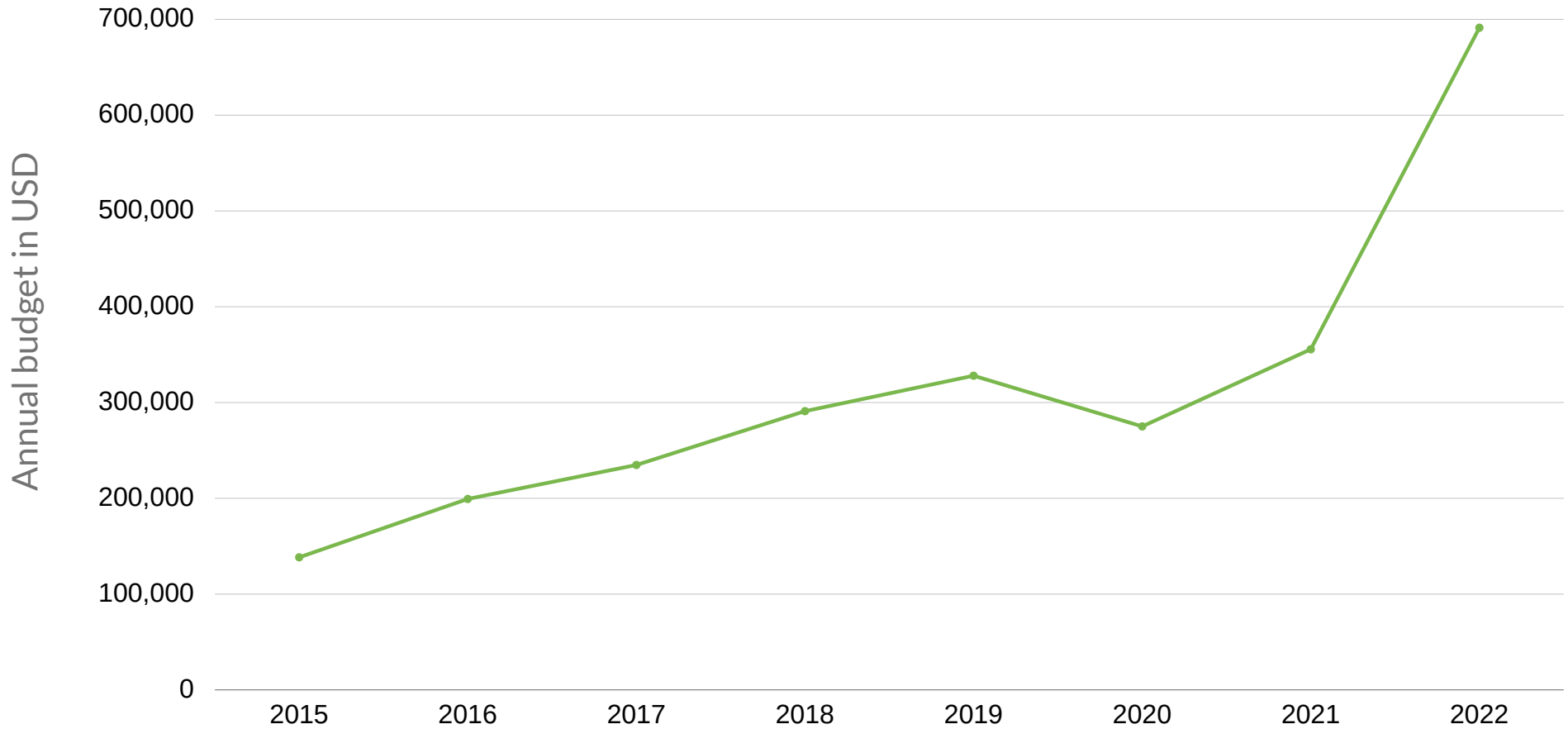
The most transformational experience I've had at Imagine Scholar was getting the opportunity to practice leadership within the community. Getting to lead an environmental club at Imagine Scholar helped me raise awareness of the issue of climate change while also inspiring my peers to be leaders as well. As a leader, I got to grow in asking for and implementing feedback. Imagine Scholar continuously exposes me to opportunities that allow me to grow into a better version of myself. I'm constantly learning about different complex topics that help me to position myself as a leader and understand that I can drive the change I want to see in my community.



**KINDNESS
BEGINS
WITH ME**

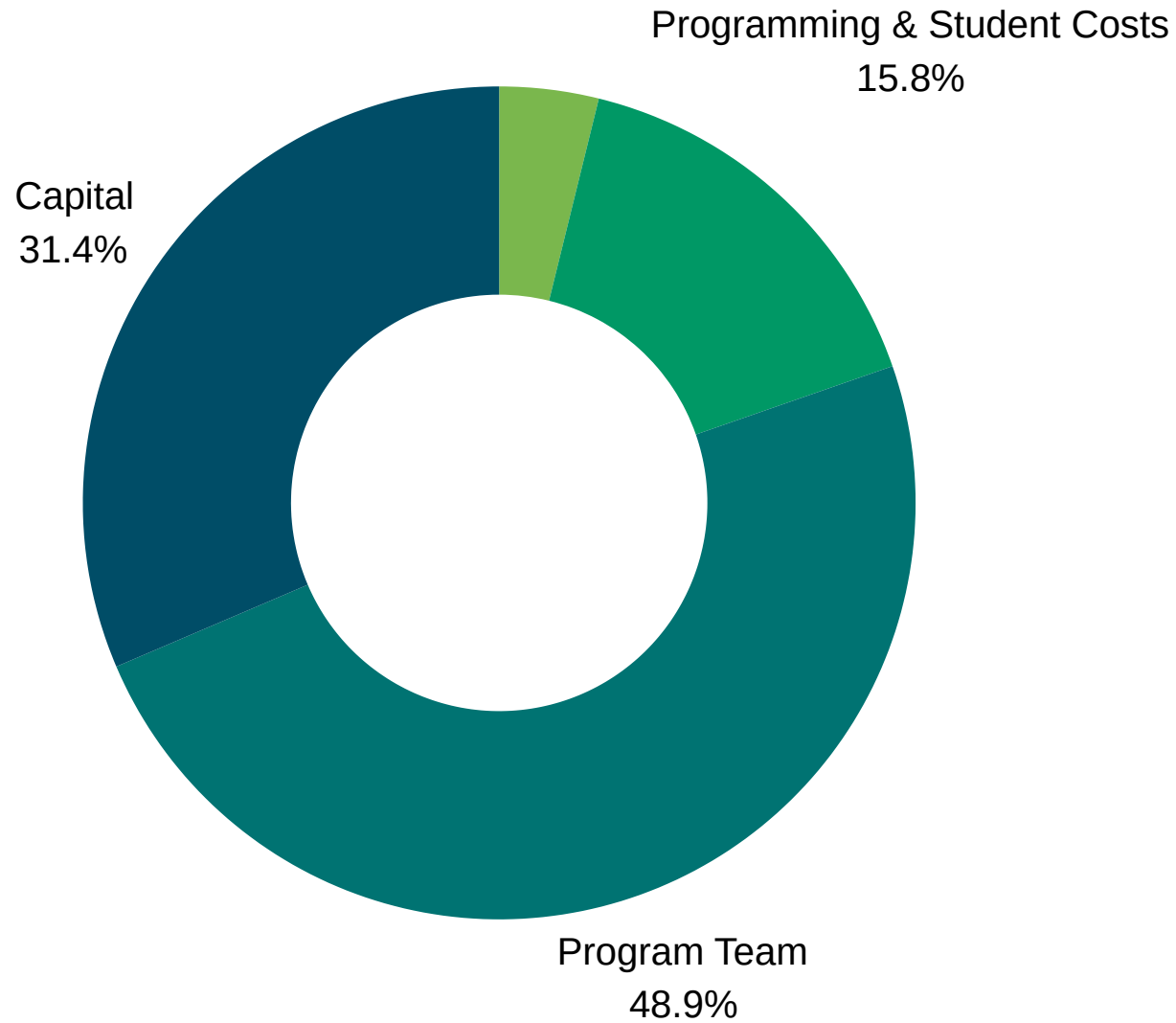
**GROWTH &
FINANCIALS**

BUDGET HISTORY



*2022 includes our capital campaign for the new education center.

DONATION TRANSPARENCY



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