Annual Report

Horizons of Kent and Queen Anne's is a tuition-free academic and enrichment program serving PreK-8 students in families from underserved communities in Kent and Queen Anne's counties.









Read More

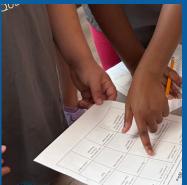






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Message from the Executive Director

Dear Horizons Community,

Horizons is a special place, and this summer on our opening day, June 23, I had the privilege of going to all three sites. As the students got off the buses, I saw them run up to hug the teachers they recognized. They were truly excited to be back for another six weeks of happiness.

Over the course of the summer, our students dove into One School/One Book, learned about foraging and fermentation, built their own pizzas from scratch, played hundreds of games of chess, learned about parts of speech, and mastered multiplication and algebra. They went to the Baltimore Ravens Training Camp, canoeing, sailing on the Chesapeake Bay, riding, on a pirate ship, to the Kent County 4H Fair, and even to iFly to...well...FLY! They coded and learned about automation and 3D scanning at Dixon Valve and how to use AI to create images. Our students made prints and painted a mural on the exterior wall of Washington College's new Innovation Center. They learned about good character, social and emotional self-awareness, how to balance a family budget, and how to brand themselves. And yes, they returned to the pool. Every student progressed through the levels toward swimming proficiency.



continued



continued

We invited our families to join us in the fun on Family Cooking Night with the Chesapeake Culinary Center and on Family Swim Night at Camp Pecometh. There is no question that these opportunities and experiences make a difference and have a lasting impact on our students' lives. Many under-resourced students typically fall behind academically during the summer when school is out. At the end of Horizons 2025 Summer Program, 92% of our students either stayed the same or improved their scores in reading and 76% of our students either stayed the same or improved their scores in math. This is a testament to our amazing and professional teachers who used their creativity and skills to make learning fun! Our 76% attendance rate in 2025 demonstrates how much our families value our program, and we are so proud of our students' achievements and the work of our dedicated staff, who return year after year. All of these impacts are only made possible because of the generous support of our donor community.

Last November, we held our biennial Dance with the Stars event, *A Gatsby Gala*, and Horizons supporters came out in full force and full costume. Our gala exceeded expectations and raised over \$120,000, which will further enable us to serve our students. We know the challenges our students and our communities are facing. Learning loss is unjustly pervasive in underserved communities, so we strive to even the playing field. At Horizons, we enable our students to not only avoid learning loss but also achieve **learning gain**, putting them back on top of their academic game ahead of the school year. No one can do this work alone, and we are so grateful for the support of this community in helping provide our students the opportunities to make transformative gains.



Emily Murphy
Emily Murphy

Executive Director

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Nancy Mugele

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Retired Journalist and Partner at The Hatcher Group Rock Hall, MD m.angiecannon@gmail.com

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Robert Thompson

Chesapeake Bank and Trust Company Chestertown, MD rthompson@chesapeaketrust.com



Staff Leadership Team

Horizons of Kent and Queen Anne's

Emily Murphy

Executive Director

Teresa Dellamura

Supervising Nurse

Mel Skirkanich

Enrichment Director/Aquatics Director

Kristin O'Neil, Site Director

Kent School

Kent County

PreK - 5th grade

Vickie Anderson

Administrative Assistant

Patrick Hopkins, Site Director

Gunston School

Queen Anne's County

Kindergarten - 5th grade

Cheryl Fracassi, Site Director Washington College Kent and Queen Anne's counties 6 - 8 grade



Our Mission. Our Model.

Horizons of Kent and Queen Anne's is a tuition-free, academic and enrichment program serving PreK-8 students in families from underserved communities in Kent and Queen Anne's counties. Our mission is to advance educational equity and prevent the summer slide (proven to contribute to the cycle of poverty) on the Eastern Shore by building long-term partnerships with students, families. communities, and schools to create experiences that inspire the joy of learning. To accomplish this, we offer an intensive 6-week summer program on the campuses of the Kent School, the Gunston School and Washington College. Kent and Gunston schools generously donate their campuses while we pay a room fee at Washington College. Students build critical skills in reading, math, swimming, and social and emotional development to prepare for successful school years and transitions. Our project-based, hands-on curriculum focuses on the whole child while allowing professional teachers to hone their craft with us each summer. We remove the physical barriers to learning by absorbing the total cost of each student and providing transportation, supplies, and meals. Investing in our students' academic success and social-emotional well-being is more urgent than ever. By the end of each summer session, Horizons students have typically gained 1-3 months of grade equivalence in reading and math - effectively reversing summer learning loss and sending students back to school feeling confident and ready. Over the course of 9 summers, a student will gain an additional 1 year of learning outside the classroom, giving our students a marked advantage.

In the book, *A Path Appears*, authors Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn argue, "Whether a child succeeds in life has nothing to do with genetics or social stature. Rather, it has everything to do with providing opportunities...More important than spending money to treat the results of poverty is focusing on the causes...Money spent to prevent a problem is often far less than what is needed once a problem has set in." Investing in and focusing resources on under-resourced students in PreK – 8th grade is far more cost effective than not to. Horizons of Kent and Queen Anne's is an investment in long-term solutions to pandemic recovery and systemic inequities.













KEY

PARTNERSHIPS

Camp Pecometh

Emmanuel Episcopal Church

Gunston School

Joe Wheeler Transportation

Kent County Public Schools

Kent School

Kent Association of Riding Therapy

Modern Stone Age Kitchen

Open Doors Partners in Education

Queen Anne's County Public Schools

Rock Hall Yacht Club Sailing School

Sultana Education Foundation

Washington College

YMCA









Teacher/Student Ratio

2:15



NEW

PARTNERSHIPS

Responding to the growing number of middle school students, Horizons opened a third site on the campus of Washington College in 2025. The move to Washington College intentionally signifies to our 6th – 8th grade students that college is an option. It also allows them space for greater agency and independence. The expansion presents a unique opportunity to enhance the middle school program and transform its purpose: to prepare our students for high school and beyond.

Kent County's 2025 Teacher-of-the-Year, Cheryl Fracassi, who has been with the Horizons program for many years, agreed to be the new site director. She was awarded the Washington College Innovation Plant Fellows Grant to introduce and motivate students to transform ideas and interests into rigorous skill development and careers. The goal this summer was to have our students develop a better understanding of their own learning preferences and areas of interest that link to potential careers. With Cheryl's curriculum, the middle school students projected a path for their future through goal-setting and exploration. In addition, they participated in The Game of Life, which provided them with the opportunity to explore basic financial decision-making.

Middle School Staff 44
Middle School
Students



We believe that every child deserves educational and enriching experiences that bring joy and help them THRIVE!

2025

By the Numbers







number of enrolled students

number of staff

number of sites

180

learning and enrichment hours per student

Academic Support



60 hours

Academic instructional hours per student over the course of the 6-week program

Stayed the same or improved their scores in reading

Stayed the same or improved their

Swimming

2,640

Hours of swim instruction for all students combined

Number of students who passed the swim proficiency test

Enrollment

96 Number of students enrolled at the Kent School

Number of middle school students enrolled at Washington College

Number of students enrolled at the Gunston School

Retention

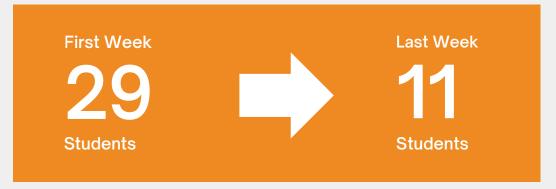
92%

Percentage of parents who will be reenrolling their children next year

Swimming Progress

Beginner

Cannot float independently; hesitant to put their face in the water.



Advanced

Can float on their front and back for at least 5 seconds, can swim the length of the pool only stopping once or twice

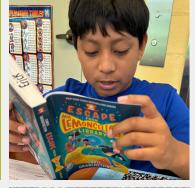




SCOPE OF ACTIVITIES

Horizons of Kent and Queen Anne's strives to make the program engaging and we choose a new theme every summer. All activities are curated to build confidence, overcome fears and align with the theme. This summer the theme was "Bits and Bytes: The Digital Dive," and we focused on coding and artificial intelligence. We maintained and forged new relationships with nonprofits, businesses and individuals in the community that enhanced the enrichment activities. It is important to Horizons not only to offer activities that expand students' ideas of what's possible, but also to deepen their understanding of local industries and their surroundings.











Math

Sailing

The Rock Hall Yacht Club Sailing School taught students about water safety and to sail on the Chesapeake Bay.

Riding

Students learned to care for and ride horses with the Kent Association of Riding Therapy. Getting on a horse took a lot of courage, but the sense of accomplishment afterward was well worth it!





Etiquette

Led by actress, Presilah Davis, and tailored specifically for 8th grade, the 5 "Playfully Polite" sessions prepared students to transition into high school by emphasizing leadership, personal responsibility, and real-world social skills.

Game of Life

Members of the community and local businesses were invited to the Innovation Center to participate in the "Game of LIFE." Students had real world opportunities to make financial decisions in hypothetical scenarios.



Students visited iFly in Baltimore and learned about speed, velocity, and acceleration and got to fly with a certified instructor.



STEM







Cooking and Nutrition

Horizons 6st grade learned about ancestral diets, foraging and fermenting vegetables at Modern Stone Age Kitchen.

They spent four sessions in the kitchen that culminated with making their own pizzas from the ingredients they made themselves. They learned that cooking nutritious meals is easy, simple, inexpensive and can be made from readily available ingredients.

Chess

For the 3rd year, Horizons students played chess, which instills focus and discipline, improves self-confidence and self-esteem, teaches planning and patience, builds unity and improves social interaction.

Coding

Dixon Valve

Students visited the local valve production facility and saw how robots are used in real-world industries.



Swimming

Swim instruction is integral to the Horizons program. It's a life-saving, confidence-building skill. Some students arrive as non-swimmers afraid of the water. We've found that when their teachers and peers join them in the pool, they build trust and self-esteem - and those qualities spill over into the classroom.



Foundation

Every year, our students visit the Lawrence Wetlands Preserve where they catch tadpoles and learn about pond life and the Eastern Shore ecosystem.



Lunch & Limo

directors.

In honor of Horizons biggest

champion, LT Goodall, three

students were chosen for their exemplary character and

kindness throughout the 6

weeks. They were rewarded with a limo ride and lunch at the Kitchen with the site

Character Counts

Character education is an

program to prepare our

essential component of the

students for leadership roles in school and beyond. **Character Counts volunteers** led weekly lessons that emphasized the importance of the six pillars of character.

Kent County Cultural Alliance

Students worked with two visiting artists and learned to generate imagery using AI and translate bits into rhythmic beats.



For the 3rd year, Horizons

students attended Ravens training at the Under Armour Mills, MD.



Ravens Training

Performance Center in Owings



Open Doors Partners in Education

Horizons partners with Open Doors to provide targeted students with added support in reading. Students work one-on-one with Open Doors' Orten-Gillingham trained specialists.



Pirates

Students traveled across the Chesapeake Bay Bridge to Annapolis for an experience of a lifetime.



Kent County Fair

On July 17th, PreK - 1st grade visited the Kent County 4H Fair where they interacted with rabbits, goats, pigs and cows.

















Confidence

Swimming, riding and sailing are integral to the program and provide opportunities to overcome fears and build confidence.



Opportunity

Field trips to Annapolis, state parks and Ravens Training Camp, provided once-in-alifetime experiences that students will never forget.

Visit from Horizons National



On June 25, Lorna Smith, Chief Executive Officer of Horizons National, visited all three of our sites.

Showcasing the program is always a highlight of the summer. It's when we can shine a spotlight on all of the wonderful things going on in the classrooms. Mrs. Smith toured each and every grade and site and found that the 3rd grade could recite the definitions of "bits" and "bytes" and the meaning of the word "copyright." In 2nd grade, the students listed the four basic types of sentences, and in middle school they showed off their skills in the pool.

In Mrs. Smith's words, our Horizons program is "next level" when it comes to providing a sense of family and belonging.



All in the Family

Something very unique to Horizons of Kent and Queen Anne's is the fact that multiple people from the same family are part of the staff. Not only are they staff, they come back year after year and set the tone of the program.

The Hopkins Family

Patrick Hopkins has been the site director at Horizons at the Gunston School for over 7 years. Patrick is a high school teacher at Kent Island High School with dual certification in Technology and Business Administration. He teaches three subjects: Personal Finance, Business Management and Entrepreneurship, and Computer Science Discovery.

Patrick's wife, Ronnie, teaches 4th grade at Horizons at the Gunston School during the summer. She has a calming effect on her students and her classroom is by far the most tranquil. During the school year, Ronnie is a Health and Physical Education teacher at Annapolis High School.

Ronnie and Patrick's son, Malik, has been a Teacher's Assistant at Horizons for many years. Malik is a Film major studying Electronic Film & Media at Towson University.









I enjoy working at Horizons because it keeps me active, and I love having fun with the students.

—Malik Hopkins

I love working at Horizons because the children's excitement and enthusiasm are truly infectious. Their energy reassures me that Horizons is making a meaningful difference in our community.

—Patrick Hopkins

I love working at Horizons, where I get to interact with and mentor young children. The students are like sponges—eager to learn and explore. I especially enjoy giving them the opportunity to try new things and watching them grow and develop!

—Ronnie Hopkin**s**





The Kendall Family

Madison Kendall joined Horizons as the 2^{nd} grade teacher this year. She is a teacher at H. H. Garnet Elementary School during the school year. Her sister, **Morgan Kendall**, acted as her TA. They were a dynamic duo.

The Hebb Family

Hope Hebb has been the 3rd grade teacher at Horizons at the Gunston site for three years. She is a seasoned teacher in the Baltimore City School System during the school year. This summer, Hope brought her niece, **Ifeoma Onwuli**, with her. Ifeoma served as the Assistant to the Site Director. She is a trained actor at Baltimore County Community College and is transferring to University of Maryland.

The Crooks Family

Kristin (Crooks) O'Neil has been the site director at Horizons at the Kent School for over 11 years. During the school year, she teaches 4th grade at Sudlersville Elementary School. She grew up in Kent County and knows most of the parents of her Horizons students, whom she treats as her own. Kristin's mother, Sue Crooks, has been a teacher at H. H. Garnet Elementary School for many years. She has spent her summers teaching at Horizons for 11 years and is deeply committed to the program and her students. Sue's grand-daughter, Addyson Crooks, was a TA at Horizons this summer. She has a passion for teaching and started brainstorming ideas for lessons months before the program began. Finally, Bhody O'Neil, Kristin's son, was in 4th grade at Horizons this summer. He came in early and stayed late, helping his mother, aunt and grandmother set up and cleanup every day during the program.











Horizons of Kent and Queen Anne's is quite a family experience. My daughter is the site director, I am a teacher, my grandaughter is my aide, and my grandson attends, as well. The love my daughter has for her Horizons students is infectious. We call Horizons our "six weeks of happiness." I look forward to teaching there every summer. I love the freedom I have to design my own curriculum and enrichment activities.

-Sue Crooks



Family Engagement

It is important to Horizons to cultivate an inviting atmosphere and to get families involved in their children's education. Every year, we invite our families to Family Swim Night at Camp Pecometh, where they are treated to grilled hotdogs and a chance to cool off in the pool together.

New this year, we offered Family Cooking Night with the Chesapeake Culinary Center. It was so popular that we had to schedule a second session so everyone could eat a meal, learn about food and prepare another meal to take home, together.



What Our Parents Say

When asked what they valued most about Horizons of Kent and Queen Anne's

66

That my child was able to participate and get additional educational support with a summer camp experience. The field trip to the pirate ship was awesome for her.

I value the social and emotional support. [My child] has come home everyday always excited to share her day and all the things she learned and challenges she overcame. So proud of her!

The exposure to new things. The positive, supportive environment.

That she got to experience things that she normally would not.

She was able to meet new friends and learn through the summer.

99









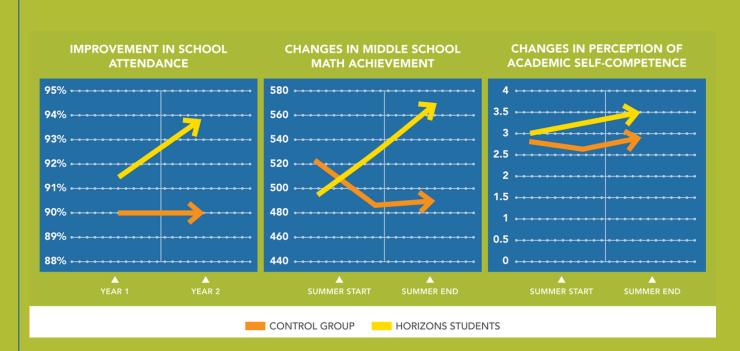
Outcomes

Students' reading and math skills improve significantly each summer, and students return to their schools excited to learn. They build long-term friendships and relationships with peers and teachers that often continue well beyond program graduation. They graduate from high school and go on to college or other post-secondary training. Horizons students develop life skills like commitment, resilience, confidence, and a desire to contribute to their community. With the tools to navigate their world, Horizons students embrace a more expansive view of what's possible, and find a path of success.

Across the Horizons Network, a broad range of information is captured and used for continuous improvement. Since 1995, Horizons National has worked closely with third-party evaluators and education data companies, including Yale University, Amplify, and Renaissance Learning, to assess the effectiveness of the program. Students are tested at the beginning of the program and again at the end to measure growth. This summer, Horizons of Kent and Queen Anne's students showed 92% growth in reading and 74% growth in math, well above Horizons National's average. This is astounding. Our students are not only avoiding the summer slide, they are actually making gains.

Key findings demonstrate that Horizons students achieve success in school and beyond. In a recent study of 5 years of school district data for Horizons students and their peers, Horizons students achieved:

- Consistent gains of 6-10 weeks of grade equivalence in reading and math over each 6-week summer session
- · Higher attendance rates
- Lower rates of chronic absenteeism
- Higher scores on standardized assessments of elementary math and science
- Higher GPAs in 9th grade
- More course credit earned in 9th and 10th grade
- · Fewer incidents of repeating a grade
- Fewer disciplinary referrals



Dance with the Stars

Every other year, Horizons holds its biggest fundraiser, Dance with the Stars. This year the theme was, "A Gatsby Gala." On November 16th at Britland Manor, hundreds of community members showed up in full regalia to support Horizons of Kent and Queen Anne's. Local celebrities were paired with dance professionals to compete for votes and table sales. It was truly a spectacle and a success, which grossed over \$120,000.



Awards

Choptank Electric Cooperative

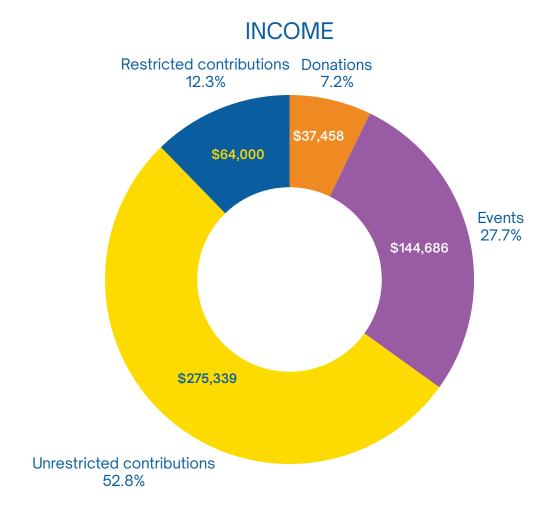
June 28, 2025

Member Services Project Coordinator, Alyssa Tobolski, chose Horizons of Kent and Queen Anne's to receive the \$4,980 donation from the charity raffle she won at Choptank's company picnic. Horizons of Kent and Queen Anne's was so honored to be selected!

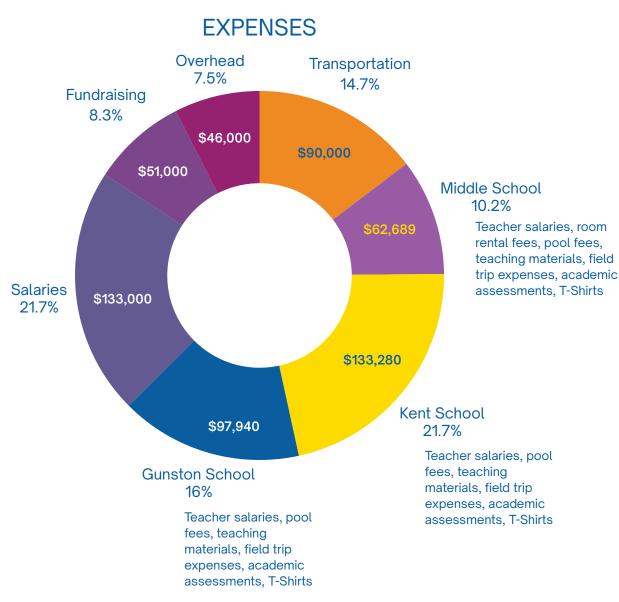


2025 Financials

Every dollar Horizons raises stays in Kent and Queen Anne's counties and goes directly toward supporting Horizons students.



2025 Financials



Individual Giving



We are so grateful to those who give to make this program possible. Thank you!

Mrs. Berkeley Bayne Ake

Margaret Allen Timothy Almany Jeanette Ames

Mr. and Mrs. John H. Anderson Jr.

Eric Anderson
Wynne Anderson
Laura Anderson
Aundra Anderson
Beth A. Andrews
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Becky Yoder

Mr. and Mrs. Karl Zierfuss

Every effort was made to ensure the accuracy of this report. Please email Vickie Anderson with any corrections, updates, comments or questions. vanderson@horizonskqa.org

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B.P.O.E #2474

BSC Group, LLC

Byler Materials Group

Chesapeake Bank and Trust

Chesapeake Physical Therapy

Chester River Monthly Meeting

Chestertown Library, Inc.

Choptank Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Choptank Electric Trust

Clifton Foundation

Common Thread Interiors

Country Telephone and Communications

Cross Street Realtors

David A. Bramble Foundation

David A. Bramble, Inc.

Draper Brothers

Duke Law, LLC

Dukes Moore Insurance Agency

ELB Incorporated

Eve's Cheese

Fidelity Charitable

Fit Flock

Fit with Aundra

Fordi Family Foundation

Gillespie and Son, Inc.

Gray Charitable Trust

Gunther McClary Real Estate

H.A. DeHart & Son, Inc

Hedgelawn Foundation

Horizons National

Washington College, Innovation Fellowship

John Ben Snow Memorial Trust

Kent County Health Department

Kent County Commissioners

Kent School

KRM Development

Liddy Campbell - Realtor

MCC America's Charities

Mid-Shore Community Foundation

Molly's Place

Oceans Lending

Open Doors Partners in Education

Owen Excavation, LLC

Pretty Little Wedding

Shine Pro Cleaning

ShoreRivers, Inc

State of Maryland - Treasurer's Office

Stranahan Foundation

The Blackbaud Giving Fund

The Campbell Foundation, Inc.

The Children's Home Foundation

The Dixon Group, Inc.

The Ed Hatcher-Angie Cannon Giving Fund

The Gladwood Foundation

The Gunston School

The Karma Group

The Peoples Bank

The Philip E. and Carole R. Ratcliffe Foundation

The Schluderberg Foundation, Inc.

Tops'l Hill Warehouse

Tri Gas & Oil/PepUp

Twigs & Teacups, LLC

United Needs & Abilities, Inc.

United Way of Kent County

United Way of Queen Anne's County

Veverka Family Foundation

Women & Girls Fund







Thank You

Horizons of Kent and Queen Anne's works closely with school counselors from every elementary and middle school in Kent and Queen Anne's counties to target the families and students who would most benefit from the program. This summer, counselors referred **300** students more than we could enroll. The need for Horizons has exponentially increased as state and federal dollars for summer programming have dissipated. Your support, whether it be financial or helping us reach more donors, is needed now more than ever.





% +410-778-9903

9 116 S. Lynchburg St., B, Chestertown, MD 21620

www.horizonskentqueenannes.org