
NJ LEEP
ANNUAL REPORT

September 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020





NJ LEEP

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NJ LEEP

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Matthew Feinstein



Dear NJ LEEP Supporters,

Our 2019-2020 school year began, like every year at LEEP, with the promise of possibility. We launched our Middle School Program in the summer of 2019 with 40 extraordinary 6th graders, we deepened our relationships with college students through our College Student Success Program, our high school programming felt like a well-oiled machine and we were hiring to grow our team to serve more students.

After weeks of monitoring the spread of COVID-19, we made the decision to suspend in-person programming on Wednesday, March 10th.

We continued to be virtual for summer programming, and now we know that we will not be returning to in-person programming until January 2021 (at the earliest).

2020 has presented new challenges for all of us, but these challenges often pale in comparison to the circumstances NJ LEEP students and their families have had to navigate.

When shelter-in-place began, along with it came a cascade of heightened responsibilities and complications – parents who were essential workers and required to expose themselves to a heightened risk of COVID, students who had to take on additional responsibilities around the house while attempting to maintain their academic engagement, family members falling ill and dying at disproportionate rates.

The journey towards rooting our work in antiracism is one we are just beginning, but it is a path to which we are committed. The NJ LEEP Board of Trustees has established a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, we have begun conducting antiracism training, we have held healing circles for our students, and as a white man leading an organization of Black and Brown constituents, I have made it my priority to seek to listen and learn before anything else.

In the context of this generational moment of social and emotional isolation and increased strain on family units and family expenses, the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Rayshard Brooks and Ahmad Arbery, crystalized for many in our community the very legitimate question of whether their lives and their bodies mattered to those in positions of power. The questions our staff and I heard from our students, our families, our staff and our volunteers – what role does NJ LEEP play in perpetuating or addressing racism? Do Black lives matter to NJ LEEP? To our partners? What we are doing to celebrate and elevate our students and their identities? – has challenged us to look inward.

Over the course of our decade and a half supporting students on their academic and personal journeys, we have seen how challenging it often is for our students to have or create the space to focus on academic growth when they are simultaneously navigating all sorts of additional personal challenges. Stacking on top of one another all existing and new challenges of 2020 has, at times, felt like a burden too great for any teenager (let alone adult) to have to bear. But not our students.

Over the course of 2020, NJ LEEP's students have stepped up in astonishing (and not surprising) ways. From the ways they are supporting their households, to their participation and engagement in our entirely virtual programming, to their thoughtfulness and candor on systemic racism, to their pure and unrelenting persistence. They have been an inspiration to me.

None of our work would be possible without the ecosystem of the NJ LEEP community. We are able to do our work because of you. This year more than ever, thank you.



MATT FEINSTEIN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

NJ LEEP
OVERVIEW

"NJ LEEP is made up of truly committed people who have helped me to feel part of not just a community, but a family."

2020 by the Numbers

- 1** NEW MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM
- 3** POINTS - AVERAGE STUDENT ACT SCORE IMPROVEMENT
- 27** COLLEGE GRADUATES
- 31** HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES
- 85%** OF ALUMNI GRADUATED FROM COLLEGE OR ARE CURRENTLY ENROLLED
- 100%** OF PROGRAM GRADUATES ENROLLED IN COLLEGE



We ensure that more than 600 community members have access to the services they deserve.



- 45** Middle School Students
- 145** High School Students
- 120** College Students
- 300+** Family Members

NJ LEEP is a college access and success program serving low-income and first-generation students in the greater Newark area. Our College Bound Program empowers middle and high school students with both the academic and social-emotional skills necessary to succeed in college and beyond. Our goal is to help students gain admission to, enroll in, and graduate from four-year colleges and universities. Program graduates are attending top schools across the country.

THE 'WHY' BEHIND
WHAT WE DO

“

Because of NJ LEEP, I have hope for my future and where I see myself. I know that I will not be another statistic and that I will overcome the odds.

**-CHANIE DATUS, NJ LEEP CLASS OF '20
NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY CLASS OF '24**

NJ LEEP

Skills || Habits || Exposure

NJ LEEP is a college access and success program serving low-income and first-generation students and families in the greater Newark area. Our programs empower students with both the academic and social-emotional skills necessary to succeed in college and beyond.

OUR MISSION

OUR PROGRAM

Rising freshmen learn criminal law & participate in a mock trial competition.

Summer Law Institute

9th Grade

Life Skills

Freshmen learn study skills, time management, sex & sexuality, conflict resolution, and professionalism.

Middle School Program

Students develop academic, leadership, & soft skills necessary for high school & beyond.

Rising sophomores participate in four week-on-the-job experiences at corporations & government offices in NJ & NYC.

Summer Week on the Job

Rising juniors take a 5-week ACT prep course.

Summer ACT

10th Grade

Law-Related Education

Sophomores develop writing & public speaking skills and work with an attorney mentor through a Constitutional Law class and three debates.

11th Grade

ACT Test Prep

Juniors learn test-taking strategies and build math, verbal, and writing skills to improve their ACT score.

College Support

Academic, financial, & social-emotional support in college.

Summer Pre-CAP

Rising seniors explore the college application process (CAP), take a college-level writing course, and visit colleges.

12th Grade

College Access Program

Seniors submit college applications and prepare for their transition to college through senior seminars.

Middle School Program

Students participate in summer and Saturday programming focused on math and reading skills, project-based learning, and STEM to help them develop and grow a college-going identity.



Saturday Writing Class

All of our high school students attend programming on Saturdays during the school year to develop the reading, writing, and critical thinking skills necessary for college-level courses.



"NJ LEEP has helped me grow emotionally and intellectually. Because of NJ LEEP, I am able to go to my #1 school with the confidence that I have made the right choice."

Makayla Harte, NJ LEEP '19
College of the Holy Cross '23

COLLEGE ACCESS

Students work with our staff on all components of the college application process, including:

Drafting and completing personal statements
 Creating a resume

Creating college lists
 Visiting colleges

Conducting research on colleges
 Completing the Common Application

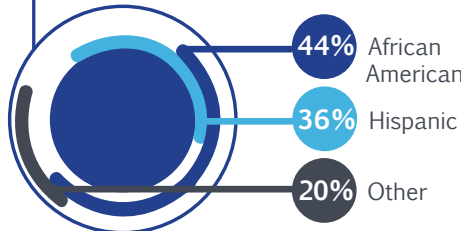
Completing scholarship and financial aid applications

TEST SCORES

Average ACT Score
Improvement: **3 Points**
out of 36



STUDENTS WE SERVE



FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Our goal is to create a seamless path for parents to support their children through college graduation and beyond. Parent workshops and family meetings increase parental involvement, improving educational outcomes for students.

HIGH SCHOOLS

43 Our students come from 43 different high schools in the greater Newark area.

19%

Private

70%

Traditional Public

11%

Charter

NJ LEEP

Skills || Habits || Exposure

CLASS OF 2019 COLLEGES ATTENDING

Allegheny College
 American University
 Bates College
 Boston College
 Caldwell University
 College of the Holy Cross
 Drew University
 Felician University
 Hamilton College
 Harvard University
 Howard University
 Kean University
 New Jersey Institute of Technology
 North Carolina A&T State University
 Providence College
 Rowan University
 Rutgers University Newark
 Seton Hall University
 Smith College
 Stanford University
 The College of New Jersey
 Union County College
 Vassar College
 Wellesley College
 Yale University

COLLEGE SUPPORT

Students receive consistent staff support throughout their college years, including:

- Academic counseling
- Advice on navigating the college environment
- Help with scholarship applications
- Internship placement
- Career and graduate school preparation
- Social-emotional support

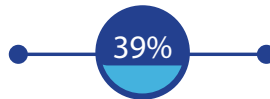
OUR STATS



NJ LEEP College Acceptance & Enrollment



College Graduation compared to



Newark Students earn a B.A. within 6 years

over  4.9 million awarded in scholarships



Most Attended Schools

1. Rutgers University Newark
2. The College of New Jersey
3. Drew University
4. Rutgers University New Brunswick
5. Mount Holyoke College; Ursinus College

OUR MODEL

SKILLS

Building the academic and social-emotional skills necessary to thrive

HABITS

Creating opportunities to develop the habits required to excel

EXPOSURE

Ensuring exposure to the professionalism and maturity needed for college and beyond

CAREER EXPOSURE

Nearly 50 corporate partners offer our students career exposure.



32 Summer Week-on-the-Job Hosts



100 Attorney Mentors assist students in debates



18 Field Trip Hosts & 15 Guest Speakers



400+ Volunteers

Thanks to our partners, our students and families are more connected to each other and to their community.

2019-20

LEADERSHIP

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College Access Coordinator

Kyle Bowman
College Bound Program Coordinator

Onaje Crawford
College Access & Success Coordinator

Claire Dragon
Managing Director of External Engagement

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Executive Director

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College Student Success Manager

Marissa Geraghty
Director of College Access & Success

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\$50,000+

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\$25,000 - \$49,999

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Allen Green

NJ LEEP Class of 2020



Crystal Abade
Rider University

"I made new friends, developed self-confidence, and got a more substantial education. Thanks to NJ LEEP, I was accepted into almost all of the colleges I applied to!"



Mimi Agbobi
Rutgers University - New Brunswick

"Joining NJ LEEP is one of the greatest decisions I have ever made. I was able to build a stronger vocabulary and improve my writing skills, which helped me excel in my academic work."



Makya Allison
Rutgers University - Newark

"Thanks to NJ LEEP, I am ready to conquer the world. I have made myself proud, and my parents as well."



Remi Amokomowo
Smith College

"I enjoy debating because I finally have the chance to show off all the hard work and public speaking skills that I developed at NJ LEEP!"



Nikolle Ayala
Monmouth University

"The staff is my favorite part of NJ LEEP. They always ask me how I am doing, and they truly care about me. I owe them a lot!"



Bruno Coelho
Middlebury College

"My favorite thing about NJ LEEP is the support system that we have and how the staff care for the students."



Chanie Datus
Northeastern University

"I have hope for my future. I will not be another statistic. I will overcome the odds."



Maciah Dewitt
Rutgers University - New Brunswick

"NJ LEEP prepared me with skills to help me in college and life, like writing, public speaking, teamwork, and asking for help."



Pamela Diaz
Seton Hall University

"NJ LEEP helped me set goals and make a plan to reach them!"



Brenno Furtado
Caldwell University

"I think I'd like to do something with psychology. I really don't need all of the money in the world, I just want to be happy."



Karla Gonzalez
College of the Holy Cross

"NJ LEEP is a family - the type of family that backs one another up."



Adonai Gordon
Rutgers University - Newark

"NJ LEEP helped me learn about the true value of community, and what it means to help others."



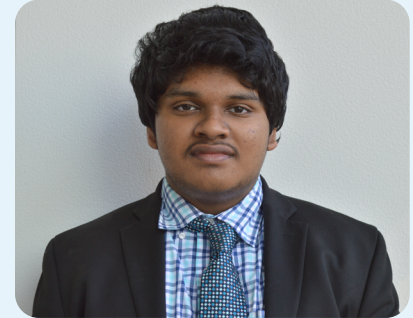
Jazailis Gual
The College of New Jersey

"I never would have thought I could get accepted to 11 universities!"



Kelly Herrerros
Goucher College

"At NJ LEEP, I feel comfortable with the students, and I feel comfortable making mistakes and learning from them."



Migalan Jeevananda
Rutgers University - New Brunswick

"NJ LEEP encourages ambition and personal improvement. Everyone is celebrated for his or her accomplishments."



Ashley Laveriano
Dartmouth College

"Because of NJ LEEP, I am prepared to handle higher education and the professional world with greater confidence."



Geraldine Louis
Mount Holyoke College

"I have a clearer vision of my future. I finally feel like I have everything figured out after being lost for years."



Kennadi Lowe
Rutgers University - Newark

"I'm really glad I have a second family at NJ LEEP"



Brianna Mateo
Smith College

"Throughout my time at NJ LEEP, I won three real trophies (my first-ever)! I am making my mom proud."



Jayvon Melendez
Rider University

"Because of NJ LEEP, I made it to college!"



Jennifer Ortiz
New York University

"I avoided public speaking as much as possible. This changed after I presented in front of a judge"



Sabrina Salam
Middlebury College

"I am now a better writer and communicator. NJ LEEP helped me grow by pushing me beyond my limits."



Jadsika Sivaranshan
Smith College

"Now I have great networking skills that allow me to stay in contact with the professionals that I met through this program."



Germaya Smith
Smith College

"We come together as one community and share different thoughts, ideas, and experiences with each other."



Giselle Tacuri
Montclair State University

"Because of NJ LEEP, I will be the first from my family to go to college."



Jocelyn Tapia
Rutgers University - New Brunswick

"Because of NJ LEEP, I am more prepared as a student and as a person to encounter what is beyond high school."



Anojan Thirukumaron
Boston College

"My favorite thing about NJ LEEP is the community I was able to build amongst the scholars."

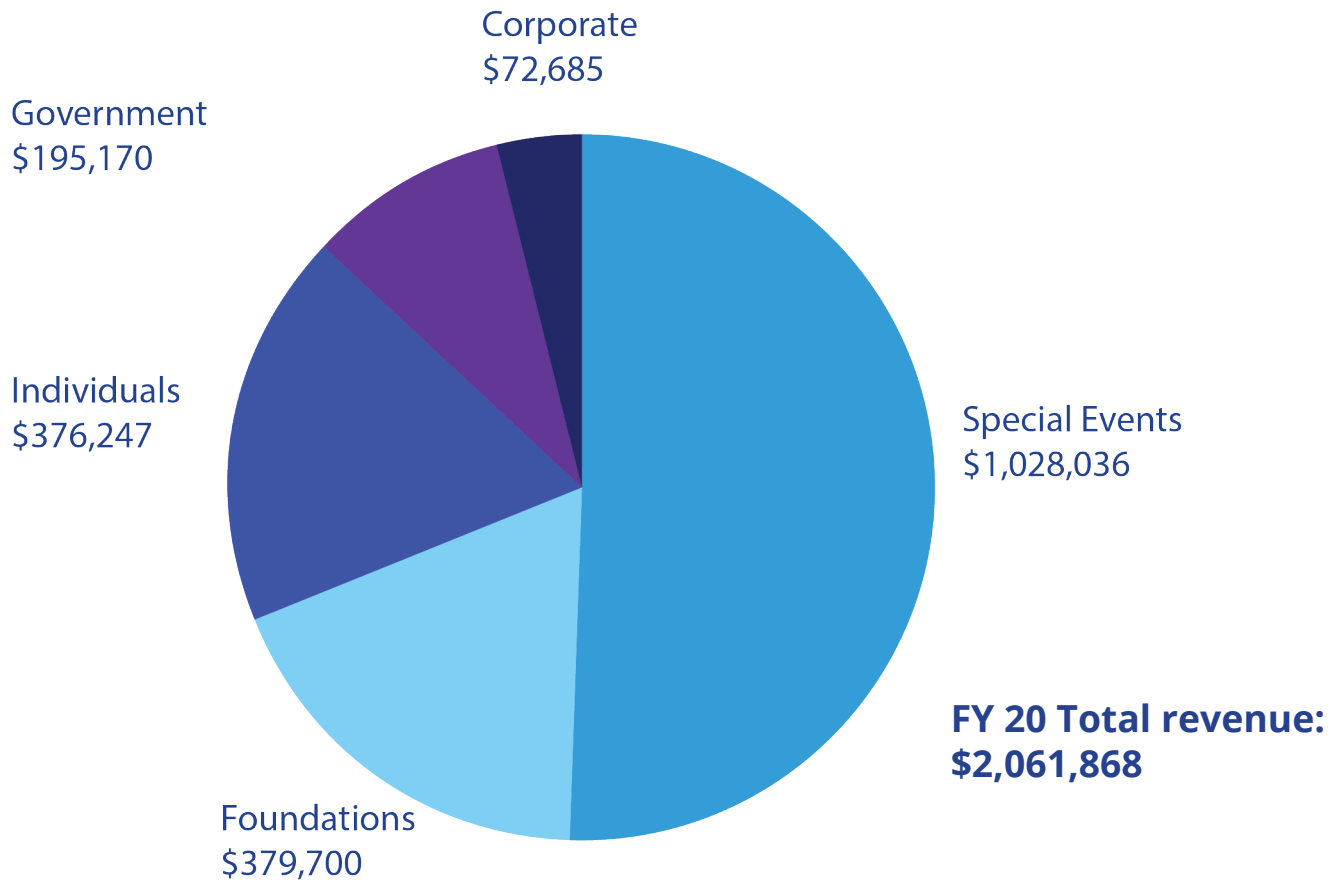


Edilson Torres
Drew University

"When I entered NJ LEEP, I saw many boundaries in the education system. NJ LEEP has challenged how I approach new things. I am not afraid to take risks in the classroom anymore."

FINANCIAL REPORT
BREAKDOWN

NJ LEEP's Fiscal Year 2020 runs from 9/1/19 - 6/30/20. We formally changed our fiscal year for FY 21 from a 9/1 start to a 7/1 start, therefore FY 20 was 10 months.



FUNDRAISERS & EVENTS

Senior Signing Day

On May 6th, more than 120 students, family members, staff, Board Members, Attorney Mentors, and Alumni attended our virtual Senior Signing Day celebration! Day-to-day life changed drastically during the Pandemic, but we stayed committed to celebrating our students. All 31 of our high school seniors committed to college!

Visit NJ LEEP on [YouTube](#) to join the fun! Watch the Senior Signing Day video to see where students are attending, tune in to the full live gala, hear from student voices, and more.



Fall Harvest

On November 25th, we celebrated the Fall season with more than 600 members of our community at our Fall Harvest event! We honored three Attorney Mentors, two families, and our Executive Director, Matt Feinstein, on his 10th anniversary with LEEP.

Leadership in Diversity Gala

Over 200 guests tuned in for our Virtual Gala on Thursday, June 18th. The video featured an interview with Lucy Fato, President & General Counsel, AIG, and several of our students. Thank you to our sponsors and donors, gala committee, silent auction donors, and student speakers. **Together we raised more than \$1,000,000 for our programs!**



2020

NJ LEEP

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