



# Annual Report

# 2022-2023

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# GREETINGS FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear NJ LEEP Community,

The 2022 – 2023 Year at NJ LEEP was another year of incredible growth and evolution. We moved to our new 15,000 square foot program facilities at 12 Lombardy Street, welcomed new team members, saw our first-ever Middle School students enroll in our High School College Bound Program, returned fully to in-person programming and so much more.

NJ LEEP has been serving students from the Greater Newark Area for nearly 17 years. During that time, we have collaborated with extraordinary young people from the Greater Newark Area to support them in achieving their greatest ambitions. 100% of NJ LEEP students have graduated high school, 99% have matriculated on to college, and 74% have obtained four-year degrees – roughly triple the average of Newark students who enroll in college. NJ LEEP graduates are attorneys, teachers, a dentist, med school students and have taken their place across a wide spectrum of careers and graduate schools.

At NJ LEEP, we believe that attaining a four-year degree is the single greatest mechanism towards achieving upward economic mobility. The overwhelming majority of students in Newark do not currently have tangible access to a college degree and a pathway to launch into a meaningful and financially stable first job. This means that the system needs to change (and there has certainly been progress!) or external intervention is necessary in order to create access to the structures and opportunities for students that are yearning for and working towards something more.

That is where NJ LEEP comes in. We have come to an inflection point and recognize that we have the track record of success, as well as the desire and capacity to do more. When you couple an institution that is committed to and capable of doing great work with talented and ambitious young people who don't currently have the types of resources they deserve, magic happens.

In the coming year and years we hope to continue to grow the number of seats in NJ LEEP programs to ensure as many students as possible from the Greater Newark Area have access to the systems from which they have been historically excluded.

At NJ LEEP we believe that the talent and potential of all students in the Greater Newark Community is limitless. We are honored to support and partner with them to accomplish their greatest ambitions.

Sincerely,  
Matt Feinstein  
Executive Director  
NJ LEEP

# 2022-2023

## Our Mission

NJ LEEP partners with students to help them achieve their greatest college-going ambitions. We work with them to develop skills and habits, as well as gain exposure to be successful throughout their academic career and beyond. NJ LEEP provides access to structures and networks that impact educational opportunities and generational wealth.

Over its 17 year history, NJ LEEP has supported and coached over 600 students through their middle school, high school, college years and beyond.



## Our Programs

Starting as early as middle school and lasting through college, NJ LEEP develops a long term relationship with our students to ensure their access to and persistence through college. In the College Bound Program, we work intensively with students to develop their college-going identity, develop critical academic skills, and build a foundation of social/emotional learning to equip them with the tools for success. Students gain career exposure/experience, participate in experiential learning, understand and practice professional skills such as networking, and have extensive support in the entire college application process.

Students in the College Student Success Program receive regular check ins from staff, access to virtual events that focus on mental health and other strategies for well being, connections to on campus resources and support in finding internships and navigating academic, financial and social aspects of college.

## DID YOU KNOW?

**IN 2022-23 100% OF NJ LEEP STUDENTS GRADUATED HIGH SCHOOL  
&  
99% MATRICULATED INTO A FOUR YEAR COLLEGE.**

# 2022-23 Program Updates

## MIDDLE SCHOOL

Our middle school program continues to grow and is the largest it's ever been with approximately 100 students enrolled! 2022 was the first summer of in-person middle school programming. With that came the first ever in-person Game Changers and Genius Showcase where students share their amazing ideas and practice their presentation skills. Students bonded over trips to Project USE, Newark Public Library and the Newark Museum of Art. They had amazing STEM experiential learning experiences with volunteers from Merck and Audible.

## 10th GRADE

The NJ LEEP Constitutional Law Debate Program hosted its Debater of the Year Competition at the Frank R. Lautenberg Federal Courthouse. Four exceptional 10th and 11th grade students competed before three N.J. sitting judges. Students argued the application of Frist Amendment rights in virtual reality and utilized the legal knowledge and oral argument skills they honed this year. Their work also included reading judicial opinions, writing detailed legal briefs and preparing moot court oral arguments.

## 11th GRADE

11th graders are part of the Junior Year Experience that focuses on community building, social justice, standardized test prep and understanding the college application process. In 2022-23, 11th graders had a daily 30 minute reading period to nurture their love for reading! Every student took part and grew the joy of reading for fun!



The 2022-23 Program Year was extraordinary with the return to full in-person program and continued growth in our middle school, high school and college programs.

## 9th GRADE

9th grade is a year of transition and growth. Students participate in our life skills program, continue to build their writing skills in the Saturday Writing Class and are supported in their transition to high school. In summer 2022, 9th graders participated in a mock trial to get them ready for the Constitutional Law Debate Program in 10th and 11th grade.



## 12th GRADE

12th graders were immersed in the College Access Program in which they receive extensive, hands on support throughout their college application process. In 2022-23, students completed 470 college applications and received a total of 291 acceptances to 92 unique colleges. 12th grade participated in the first ever Summer College Trip Competition to determine where their fall visit would be. (Lehigh University won!)

## COLLEGE STUDENT SUCCESS PROGRAM

CSS staff were able to visit students in person for the first time since the 2018-19 academic year. In total 71 students had on campus college visits from NJ LEEP staff to provide emotional support and connections to resources on campus. Staff doubled 12th grade touchpoints, to incorporate the College Student Success Program Team in instruction. Students attended two classes weekly focused on the transition from high school to college with themes such as academic transition, time management, how to get involved on campus.

# Program Highlights

NJ LEEP continued its annual tradition of hosting our 2nd Annual LEEPing Ahead Ceremony which celebrated the accomplishments of all of our young people in grades 6-12. We took the time to reflect on all that we accomplished throughout the year, highlight our academic and personal achievements, and celebrate the successful closing of another academic year. Students walked away having not only celebrated their own achievements but also the collective excellence of the NJ LEEP community.



The month of November is the home of one of NJ LEEP's signature events, Fall Harvest. Throughout the years Fall Harvest has seen various iterations - the most jarring being the shift to being held via Zoom for the past several years. November 2022 not only marked the return of Fall Harvest being held in person but also the first time it was held at our brand-new programming space. The event was able to provide our families and community members the opportunity to not only get to know our new space but connect with each other as well. Through incorporating various dishes from around the world we celebrated the different cultures that make up the NJ LEEP family and got to share in this beautiful communal experience after so many years apart.

# NJ LEEP by the Numbers



Average increase of 2 points in ACT scores for 11th graders.

291 total college acceptances for 12th graders.

Over 250 volunteers from 27 different companies supported our students.

40 10th - 12th graders visit Lehigh University!

71 students were visited on their college campuses by NJ LEEP staff.

144 Week on the Job Placements for rising 10th graders

33 9th graders learning life skills and social emotional growth

100% of the 10th grade class submitted their final legal brief for the debate program!



# NJ LEEP's Generational Impact

## THE SANCHEZ FAMILY



"NJ LEEP to my family is a better chance. It's opportunity. It's a chance to develop skills that otherwise wouldn't be available to us. My family as a whole is grateful for the opportunities given to us by NJ LEEP."

- Paula Sanchez

**Paula Sanchez**

NJ LEEP Class of 2018

Boston College Class of 2022

Analyst at Morgan Stanley

NJ LEEP Saturday Program Support

**Valeria Sanchez**

NJ LEEP 10th Grader

Likes to row, play volleyball, read and paint.

"To my family, NJ LEEP is a place where my parents can be involved with the staff and where they can communicate with my parents about mine and my siblings achievements and how we have been growing. It allows a relief for them knowing that we are all going to attend college and have our dreams come true because of NJ LEEP's support! - Naomi Cerqueira, NJ LEEP Class of 2023, Seton Hall University Class of 2027



"I joined NJ LEEP because I thought it would be fun to do a mock trial!" - Nicole Cerqueira, 10th Grade,

"I joined NJ LEEP after my sister to help my future, and so I am more prepared for college." - Ester Cerqueira, 9th Grade

"I joined in the footsteps of my cousins so I can be more like them." - Sarah Nunez, 8th Grade

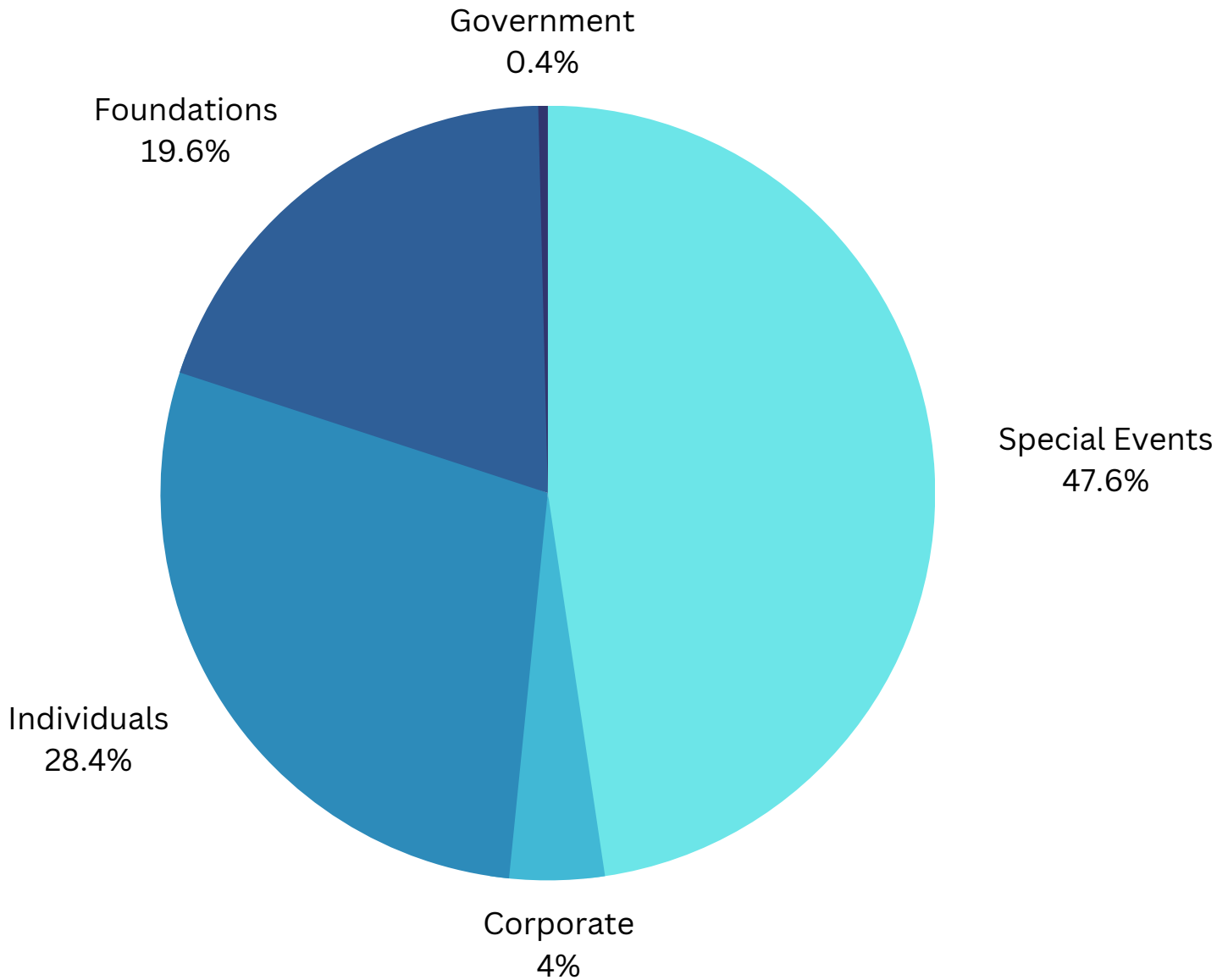
"I joined NJ LEEP so I could be like my sisters! I love that there are new people here that I can meet and be friends with." -

Nathan Cerqueira, 8th Grade





# 2022-23 Finances



NJ LEEP's total revenue for the FY23 fiscal year from July 1, 2022 through June 30th, 2023 was \$2,520,125 from a variety of sources including individuals, foundations, government, corporations and special events. NJ LEEP's total expenses for the same time period were \$2,530,111.

# COLLEGE ACCEPTANCES

Each year NJ LEEP's high school seniors go through the rigorous process of applying to college. This year our students received a total of 290 acceptances to 92 distinct colleges. We proudly share the college destinations of our Class of 2023 Seniors

**Naoshi Aguirre:** Rutgers University Newark

**Muhammad Ajeigbe:** Montclair State University

**Adefolarin Ajibade:** Community College of Allegheny County

**Zora Allison:** The College of New Jersey

**Gregory Arias:** New Jersey Institute of Technology

**Alyce Avila:** Montclair State University

**Seth Azevedo:** New Jersey Institute of Technology

**Sekna Bazzi:** Barnard College

**Noemi Cerqueira:** Seton Hall University

**Christopher Clerveus:** The College of New Jersey

**Mara Coelho:** Rutgers University – New Brunswick

**Tyler De Jesus:** Rutgers University – New Brunswick

**Sthefany Fukagawa:** Pomona College

**Enzo Furtado:** Montclair State or Kean University

**Oswald Garcia:** Rider University

**Alanis Gonzalez:** Brandeis University

**Lizbeth Gonzalez:** Brandeis University

**Melany Gonzalez:** Monmouth University

**Helen Guale:** Mount Holyoke College

**Sahara Heras:** Barnard College

**Melona Johnson:** Loyola University Maryland

**Jacqueline Llivicota:** Davidson College

**Alyssa Luthers:** The College of New Jersey

**Corey Madison:** Georgetown University

**Olivia Martin:** Boston University

**Mahkai Michel:** Rutgers University – Newark

**Nazifa Nazif:** Northern Virginia Community College

**Stephanie Penafiel:** Carnegie Mellon University

**Steven Soza:** Brandeis University

**Araylia Szviatkovszky:** Montclair State University

**Jeff Torres:** Drew University

**Kimberly Torres:** Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico (Ponce)

**Milagros Villalba:** TCNJ or Syracuse

# 2022-23 NJ LEEP Board & Staff

## Staff

**Grace Appiah**, Program Coordinator

**Alexa Chandler**, College Student Success Coordinator

**Briana Dismukes**, Events and Communications  
Coordinator

**Ana Dopazo**, Managing Director of Programs

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**Olivia Felder**, College Access Coordinator

**Marissa Geraghty**, Director of College Access and  
Success

**Meghan Howard-Noveck**, Managing Director of  
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**Alyssa Humeston**, Student Data Coordinator

**Krystal Marte**, Instructional Program Manager

**Razeya Rahman**, Operations and Program Manager

**Silvana Romero**, Recruitment Coordinator

**Sergio Seijas**, Managing Director of Students

**Caryn Tomljanovich**, Managing Director of  
Development

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**Elyssa Wright**, Middle School Program Manager

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**Jerry Webman**, Chief Economist (ret.), OppenheimerFunds

**Elana Wilf Tanzman**, Clinical Fellow / Staff Attorney, Rutgers Law School

# 2022-23 Donor List

## \$50,000 +

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M & T Weiner Foundation  
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**WE THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING OUR PROGRAMS.**

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Lewis Roca Rothgerber Christie LLP  
Lowenstein Sandler LLP  
McCarter & English, LLP  
McGuireWoods LLP  
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## \$5,000 - \$9,999

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New Jersey Women Lawyers Association  
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Wakefern Food Corp.  
Walters and Mason Retail, Inc.  
WeWork

**WE THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING OUR PROGRAMS.**

# Summer 2022 WOTJ & Field Trip Hosts

**Our corporate partners provide career exposure, micro internship experience through Week on the Job and valuable connections for our students. We thank them for their support and for being part of our community.**

## Week on the Job Hosts

- American Express
- Barclays
- Cadwalader
- Chiesa Shahinian & Giantomasi
- Duane Morris
- Endeavor
- Everest
- Faegre Drinker
- Gibbons
- Greenberg Traurig
- Guggenheim Partners
- Hachette
- Horizon
- Intuit
- Merck
- Panasonic
- Prudential
- PSE&G
- Shearman Sterling
- Skidmore, Owens and Merrill
- Sullivan and Cromwell
- Verizon
- Wyndham

## Field Trip Hosts

Audible  
Bank Of America  
Bristol Myers Squibb  
Chainalysis  
KPMG  
Marketsmith  
McKinsey  
Merck  
Pfizer  
Prudential  
Verizon