CAN'T WAIT FOR

OPEN DOORS ACADEMY
2024-2025 ANNUAL REPORT

COLLEGE. MY FUTURE. BEING WITH MY FAMILY. MY GRADES GETTING BETTER. HAVING A GOOD LIFE. SUMMER CAMP. GOING TO THE PARK, BEING MYSELF. LIVING LIFE TO THE FULLEST. STARTING MY CAREER. TEACHING ART CLASSES. BEING ABLE TO BE MYSELF NO MATTER WHAT PEOPLE THINK. MONEY. SEEING MY FRIENDS. THE GYM. PLAYING SOCCER (TRUE STORY). STRAIGHT A'S. LEARNING MY NUMBERS. MY SUMMER INTERN JOB. DOING MY ART. UNDERSTANDING HOW TO GET OUT OF CHALLENGING SITUATIONS. FOOD. 8TH GRADE. WORKING & MAKING MONEY. BEING A TEACHER. RECESS. LEARNING MY TRADE, SUMMER BREAK. BEING AROUND PEOPLE. SCHOOL.

We hear it from our scholars every day after school and all summer long.

It's enthusiasm—an appetite to learn and try new things. It's wonder, it's what's possible, and it's ODA.

This past summer, we spent a week with 14 of our middle school scholars from Northeast Ohio. They explored history, culture, and stories that shape our Cleveland and Mansfield communities. They reflected on what inspires them, what they want to do next, and their role in making it happen.

What they shared helped create this year's annual report.

You'll hear other scholars' voices, too: Sarge in kindergarten is excited to learn his numbers. Fifth grader Jaida is looking forward to having a good life. Eighteen-year-old Carmello is ready to work and make money.

Their perspectives offer a glimpse of what motivates our scholars—what drives them forward.

Yet the futures our scholars are building aren't theirs alone.

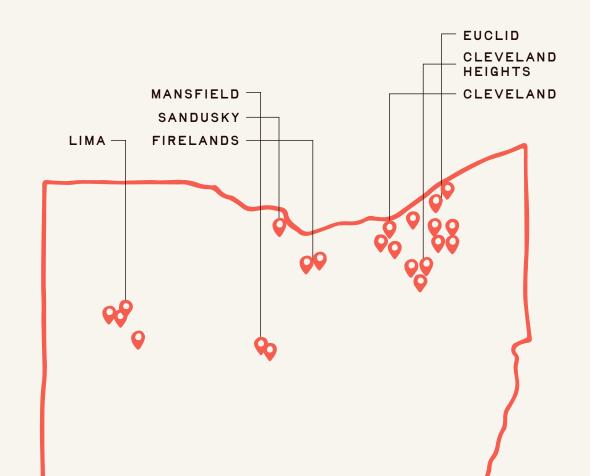
They're yours and ours.

And we can't wait to build them together.

Open Doors Academy is a Cleveland,
Ohio-based nonprofit working to expand
educational opportunity for scholars
throughout the state. We provide highquality afterschool, summer, and family
programs for students in grades K–12 and
at least one year out of high school.

Our mission is to protect, inspire, nurture, and challenge youth to reach their full potential.

We serve students in Cleveland, Cleveland Heights, Euclid, Firelands, Lima, Mansfield, and Sandusky.





OUR VISION:

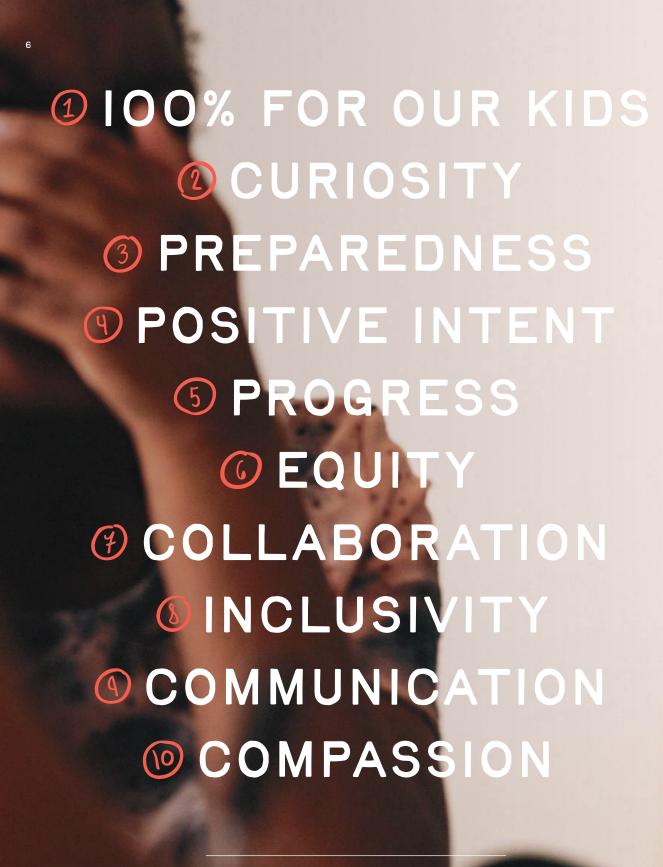
A WORLD WHERE EVERY SCHOLAR HAS

A PLACE
TO belong
THE TOOLS
TO Succeed

A COMMUNITY OF Suffort

AND

THE FREEDOM
TO dream





WHAT THE REAL WORLD IS LIKE WHEN I'M LIVING ON MY OWN.

- Alesha, Grade 11

EVERYTHING.

- SA PRA, Grade 1

THINGS THAT HAPPEN AROUND ME.

- Hendall, Grade 5

DINNER TONIGHT.

- boy | b, Kindergarten



-Anthony, Grade 10





ANOTHER NOTEWORTHY YEAR

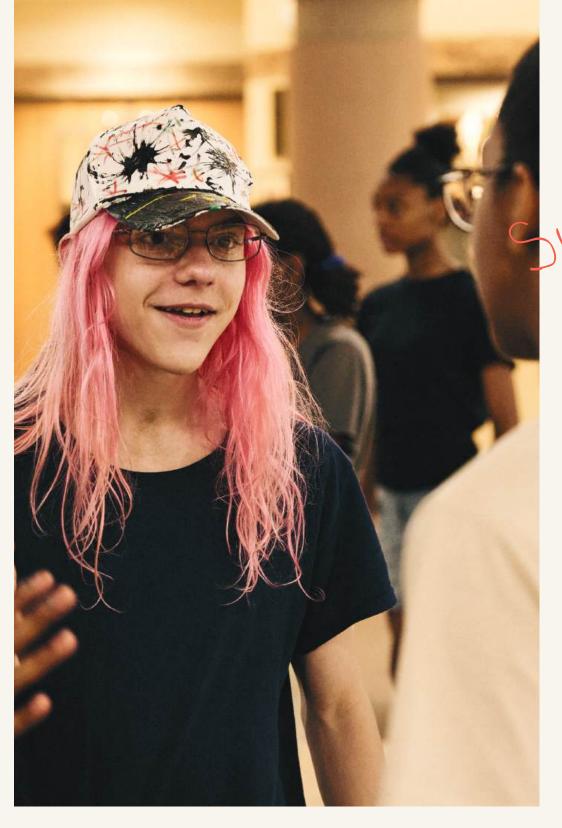
A SUMMER CAMP MILESTONE

2025 marked a major milestone as we launched two summer camps in Mansfield: our first-ever summer programming outside Northeast Ohio.

Deepening our partnership with Mansfield City Schools, the two four-week camps welcomed fourth- through eighth-grade scholars from Malabar Intermediate and Mansfield Middle Schools. Scholars were immersed in literacy skill-building, arts and crafts, career exploration, and nutrition and mental health education, and had plenty of fun!

In addition to helping prevent the academic summer slide, our summer camps address hunger and support families by ensuring scholars receive healthy meals and snacks and by allowing parents to work a full day without worrying about childcare.





I'M OPTIMISTIC FOR

ummer camp

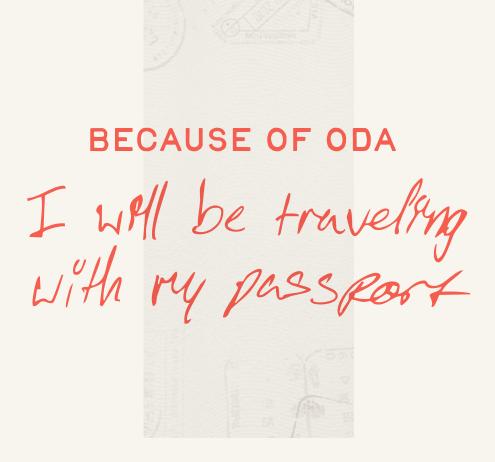
- BELLA
Grade 1

A DECADE OF CELEBRATING GLOBAL CULTURE & COMMUNITY

In November, more than 700 scholars, families, staff, and supporters gathered for our tenth annual International Festival, a celebration of global culture.

Over the course of six weeks, scholars from kindergarten through twelfth grade researched global traditions and customs, selected dishes, and rehearsed performances. Guests navigated their way through scholar-led booths via our Global Passport Challenge, collecting stamps and exploring the vibrant mix of food, customs, and storytelling that shape our community.

The International Festival continues to grow as a joyful and inclusive event that builds belonging, strengthens relationships, and inspires scholars to take pride in who they are and where they come from.



- CARMELLO

Grade 12

A RETURN TO INTERNATIONAL SCHOLAR TRAVEL

In March, 38 high school scholars traveled across the Peace Bridge to Canada on Open Doors Academy's first trip beyond the USA since the pandemic.

For many, it was their first time abroad, a moment of both independence and perspective. Taking scholars somewhere truly different, far beyond their daily routines, opened new ways of seeing the world and their place in it.

Over four days, scholars visited the University at Buffalo, Niagara College, York University, and the University of Toronto. At Niagara College, they learned about trade-focused career paths, while the Toronto campuses offered a glimpse into student life at large and urban universities with global reach. Between campus tours, scholars marveled at Niagara Falls and rode to new heights on the SkyWheel.

The trip sparked a deeper sense of possibility, leaving scholars more inspired and better equipped to pursue college and careers with confidence.

MEASURING WHAT MATTERS

15

Open Doors Academy was selected to join a statewide initiative aimed at improving outcomes for Ohio students in federally funded out-of-school time (OST) programs. The effort is focused on ensuring that the state's evaluation process supports programs in achieving and demonstrating meaningful student growth.

As part of a core group led by the
University of Cincinnati Evaluation
Services Center, we are helping shape
new evaluation tools that prioritize data
quality, reduce unnecessary reporting
burdens, and better reflect the diverse
contexts in which OST programs operate.
The result will be a simpler, more effective
framework that helps all 21st Century
Community Learning Center programs in
Ohio tell a clearer story about their impact.

When we understand what works, we can invest in what matters. High-impact programs like ours help students graduate from high school, persist in college, and build the skills that set them up for lifelong success.

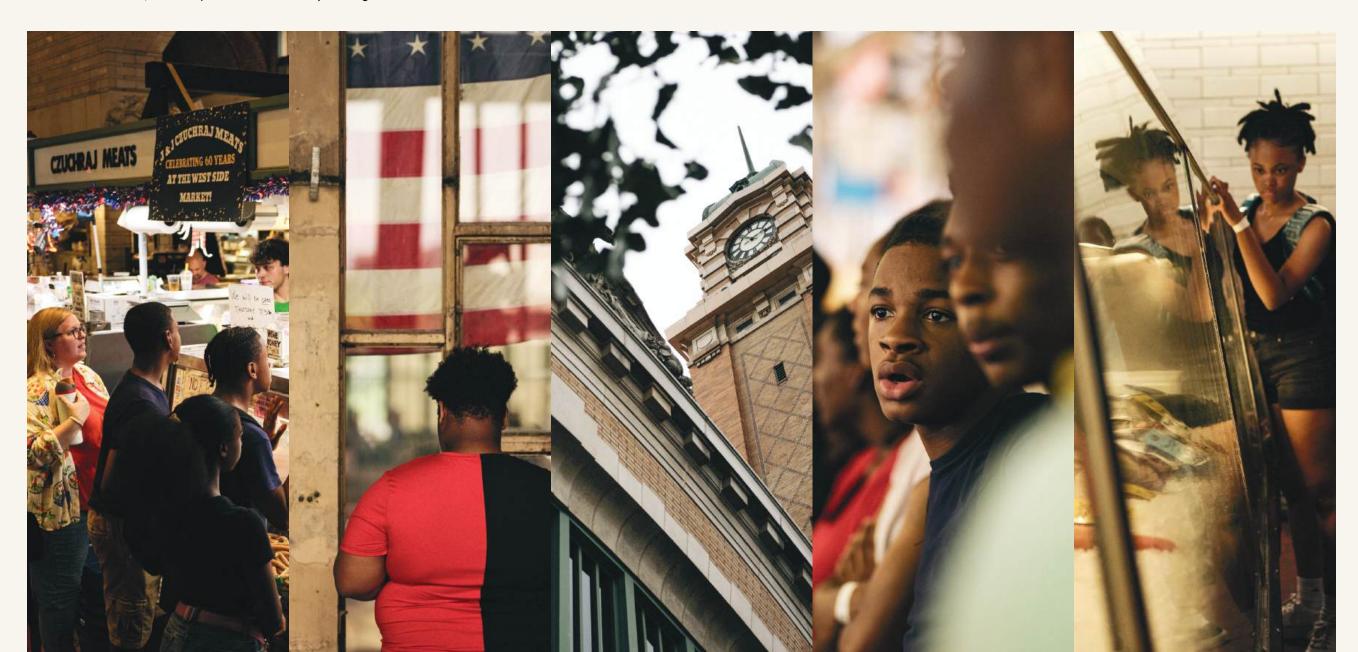




WHAT BRINGS ME JOY?

LEBRON JAMES, FLOWERS, FOOD, MY PHONE. GOD. THE NBA. SOCCER, LOVE, LIFE, MOVIES. TIKTOK, GAMES, SHOES, DOGS, MY GIRLFRIEND. TV. HIKING. TRAVELING. MY PARENTS. MUSIC. KOBE BRYANT, ANIMALS, CHOCOLATE, BIKING. FIELD TRIPS, CATS, CONCERTS, NARUTO, MY MOTHER. FRIENDS. TAKING A SHOWER. FAMILY, BOOKS, VOLLEYBALL, ART, TAKING PICTURES, RAINBOWS, SHOPPING, PLAYING NBA 2K. ROLLER COASTERS. POOLS. SLEEP. HEALTH, MY SIBLINGS, SPORTS, CARS. ANATOMY. LEARNING. HANGING WITH PEOPLE. SINGING. WORKING OUT. MY GRANDMA. WALKING, FOOTBALL, BEING KIND, INSTAGRAM. THINKING. OTHER PEOPLE. TALKING TO MY FAMILY, PLAYING CELLO, GYMNASTICS, BOOKS, SNAPCHAT, FASHION, DECORATING, DUCKS. SWEET TREATS. DRESSING UP. CARNIVALS. KEYSHIA COLE. GETTING MY NAILS DONE. A WARM BED. PLANNING. MY HAIR. RAINY NIGHTS. GARDENING. PARTIES. LONG WALKS ON THE BEACH, BAKING, PLAYING VIOLA, MY GRANDPA. CHEERLEADING, PARKS, GIFTS, REST.

Scholars explored Cleveland's historic West Side Market inside and out on a behind-the-scenes tour from Director of Advancement Camille Rose Dickson, then sampled the vendors' tasty offerings.



OUR MODEL CENTERS ON FOUR KEY AREAS

- 1 AFTER-SCHOOL
- **Q** SUMMER
- FAMILY
 ENGAGEMENT
- 9 SCHOLAR
 TRAVEL

AFTERSCHOOL

Our afterschool program provides fun, comprehensive, evidence-based learning for K–12 scholars that enhances what starts during the school day. Differentiated by grade level to meet the diverse academic needs of our scholars, our structured curriculum emphasizes positive relationships, goal setting, and a love of learning at every turn.

Our program incorporates up to three hours of daily academic learning with a focus on math and literacy development, interpersonal and leadership skills, college and career exposure, and enrichment. Enrichment activities reflect the interests of students and can include entrepreneurship, college and career readiness, STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math), financial literacy, visual and performing arts, robotics, and more.



K-8 SUMMER CAMP

Our K–8 summer camp focuses on core content areas including literacy, arts and culture, STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math), sports and recreation, and health and wellness.

We partner with area museums, parks, and organizations to develop meaningful hands-on learning opportunities both inside the classroom and out in the community.

Examples of partnerships from our most recent summer camp in Cleveland include Teach for America, CAP Academy, America SCORES Cleveland, The Flats Platform Tennis Center, and The Cleveland Rowing Foundation.

HIGH SCHOOL SUMMER PROGRAM

Driven by a desire to navigate and thrive in the world, our summer high school scholars are immersed in a career and college readiness program.

They work as paid interns in our K–8 summer camp, living up to the high expectations of a role model for our younger scholars. They gain hands-on exposure and discover potential careers by connecting with local professionals and their organizations. They also visit colleges to learn about higher education, take other field trips, and end the summer with a weeklong service learning experience.





- BEAUBIEN

Grade 10

BECAUSE OF ODA ILEARNED TO NOT JUST DREAM

– DÉKHI

Grade 7

SCHOLAR TRAVEL

Travel plays a vital role in helping scholars imagine new possibilities for themselves. Visiting a college campus or volunteering in a community beyond their own are among the first stories our alumni share when reflecting on their time with ODA.

This year, our commitment to scholar travel took us to Ontario, Canada,* and Bowling Green, Ohio.

In May, 23 high school scholars spent four days at Bowling Green State University, where they stayed in dorms, ate in dining halls, sorted donations at the BGSU ReStore, and supported sustainability efforts at Carter Historic Farm. Each evening, the scholars came together to reflect on how they contributed to the community.

Throughout the year, many more scholars visited college campuses across Ohio, including Cleveland State University, Central State University, Lakeland Community College, and Lake Erie College. These trips continue to be a key part of how we help scholars explore new places, imagine future possibilities, and prepare for life after graduation.

^{*}See our Noteworthy section (p. 15) for more information.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

At ODA, we understand that a child's journey of growth and learning starts at home. Our families are not just partners; they're at the heart of our mission to empower our scholars.

Our Family Engagement Program acts as the vital bridge between home, school, and our out-of-school time programs. Through interactive workshops, family events that build our community, specialized resource referrals, and wraparound support, we collaborate closely with our families to understand and meet their unique needs.

I FEEL MOST LIKE MYSELF WHEN

In with

- JANESSA Grade 11

ALUMNI

ODA supports scholars for at least one year following high school graduation. We provide a bridge from high school to their next step and help them achieve their postsecondary goal.



After a tour of Cleveland Public Library's Superman exhibit, scholars worked with poet Chris Webb to learn elements of creative writing and craft poems about their superpowers.





Super speed, super strength, time travel, unlimited energy, casting shadows, healing broken hearts—

We all have superpowers.

I want to be able to fix their pain, the pain that's so deep inside it leaves them harshly bruised and scarred.

It's sad that we live in a world that forces us to hide them.

A whisper hums through the wind aflame, A soul with strength no cage can contain.

But together, we can and will take over the world.

A COLLABORATIVE POEM
WRITTEN BY OUR 14 MIDDLE
SCHOOL SCHOLARS



HOW AMELIA WAS INTRODUCED TO ODA

I started going to Open Doors Academy in sixth grade after my mom put me in it. She trusted me to walk home alone, but she didn't think I'd be productive at home by myself for hours. Honestly, without ODA I probably would've just been at home on the computer or watching TV. The program gave me structure and helped me get my homework done on time. It also gave me time to spend with my friends that I probably wouldn't have had either.

AGE 27

CURRENT ROLE

Youth Development Education Facilitator, Santa Maria Community Services (Cincinnati, OH)

YEARS IN ODA 7

CAMPUS

Cleveland Heights-University Heights High School

MEMORABLE MOMENTS

The trips to Harlan, Kentucky, really stand out—going to the lake, hiking, and working together on projects. My first time there, we worked on a number of service projects for a local church and framing houses. It was really exciting getting to spend time together and work toward a common goal.

Traveling to Honduras was another huge experience. It was so different from Cleveland, and it opened my eyes to what people face in developing countries. For a lot of my friends, it was their first time even being on a plane. I remember taking off from the Cleveland airport, and everyone in the back started screaming. Some people were scared; some were excited. It was just such a special opportunity for us to be on a plane and leave the country for the first time.

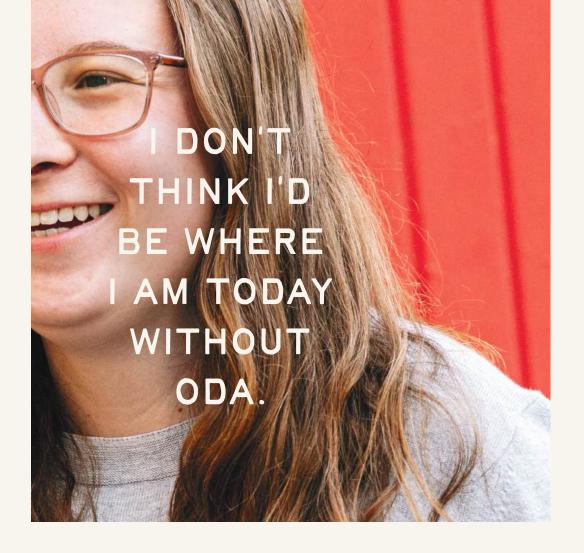
PREPARING FOR LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

I really don't think I would be where I am today without Open Doors Academy.

My parents and grandparents all went to college, so it was always expected that
I would too, but I didn't know where to start. Through ODA's college tours, I saw a variety of schools. On one trip, we visited a smaller college, and it made me realize a smaller school would be a better fit for me. That's how I ended up at Xavier University in Cincinnati following graduation.

I started out as a middle childhood education major because I wanted to be a middle school teacher for math and social studies. Then, in the second semester of freshman year, we started doing classroom observations, and I realized that teaching in a classroom just wasn't for me.

I thought back to all my time in the program—the service projects, our work in the community, and the trips to Kentucky and Honduras. I realized I still wanted to give back to the community and to youth, just not in a classroom setting, so I switched my major to sociology.



After graduation, I went back to my home in Cleveland Heights for a couple months and then moved to Cincinnati, where I got my job at Santa Maria Community Services. It kind of combines everything that led me to this point: youth programming with afterschool and social-emotional learning groups, plus family support to help families get connected to resources when they're going through a challenge.

SKILLS FOR THE WORKING WORLD

The ODA summer internship was actually one of my first jobs. It was through that experience that I was really able to start developing the skills that would carry me forward through college and my life after graduation, such as communication, confidence, and professionalism.

I remember we also had classes every
Friday about managing money, and that's
such an important skill to have when you
graduate high school. Overall, ODA gave
me the social and professional skills to
move into that next step after graduation.

MENTORING MATTERS

Over the seven years, I had so much support during the transitions moving from middle to high school and through graduation.

Even now, almost ten years after graduating, I'm still connected with so many ODA staff members, and I know if I needed anything, they'd be there. Same with my peers. Everyone in the program was always my family, and I still feel that way. Even if we don't talk all the time, I know we're all supporting each other.

THE IMPACT OF AFTERSCHOOL

Clearly, my experience at Open Doors had an impact since I'm now working in afterschool programming myself! For me, it was about accessing new opportunities, like field trips, college tours, service trips, ACT/SAT prep, but also about building relationships with peers and staff.

Afterschool programs give students academic, personal, and social development—not to mention a safe place to go after school. At my job now, we always say, "Do positive activities with positive peers and positive adults." That's what makes a difference. Those positive experiences help kids grow into adults who can make a positive impact.

FINAL THOUGHTS

I'm just so grateful—for everything
Open Doors Academy gave me over
those seven years, for the relationships,
and for the opportunities.

WORKING WITH MY HANDS.

- Devon, Grade 11 HAVING FUN WITH THE PEOPLE I'M MOST COMFORTABLE WITH.

- Carrello, Grade 12

GOING OUTSIDE.

- SKYWY, Grade 1

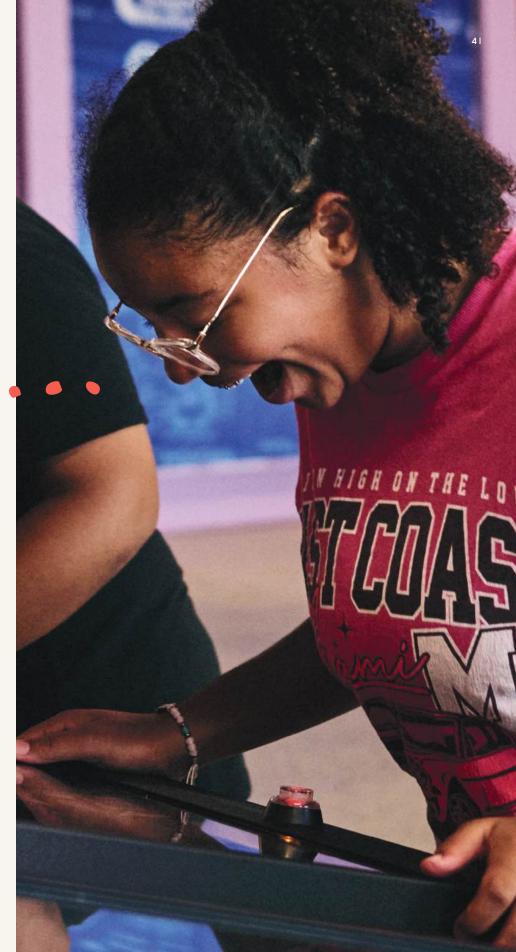
TAKING A DEEP **BREATH AND KNOWING** MY SURROUNDINGS.

- Elizabeth, Grade 9

DRINKING ORANGE JUICE.

-5 org Kindergarten





4.2

DEFINING THE FUTURE OF OUT-OFSCHOOL TIME IN OHIO

Open Doors Academy launched the Center for Out-of-School Advancement (COSA) in 2018 with a clear purpose: to strengthen the quality and visibility of out-of-school time (OST) as a vital part of a young person's education. COSA was created in response to a growing demand for professional development in the OST sector and in pursuit of a broader vision for what high-quality programming could mean for youth across Ohio.

As Ohio's professional development provider for 21st Century Community Learning Center grantees, COSA partnered with the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (ODEW) to support hundreds of youth-serving organizations in improving outcomes and expanding impact.

299

OST PROGRAMS SUPPORTED
BY COSA LAST YEAR



THROUGH THESE PROGRAMS

We led the annual Out-of-School Time
Conference in Columbus, a two-day
convening of nearly 300 educators and
youth development professionals focused
on advancing outcomes, aligning practices,
and elevating the OST field.

While our formal partnership with ODEW concluded in June 2025 as the department redesigned the 21st Century grant structure, COSA's commitment remains unchanged. We continue to believe that high-quality OST programming is essential to a young person's academic, personal, and social development, and that sustainable funding begins with defining and measuring quality and tying investment to impact.

This past year, COSA also contributed to national efforts such as the OST Cost Calculator—led by the Wallace Foundation, Afterschool Alliance, and the American Institutes for Research—and the State Summer Learning Network, helping shape how cost, quality, and sustainability are understood across the country.

Looking ahead, COSA will focus on policy, strategy, and advocacy, supporting ODA's growing footprint across Ohio and helping shape the future of learning beyond the school day.

At The Pivot Center for Art, Dance and Expression in Cleveland, scholars interacted with giant puppets and other art pieces from past Parade the Circle celebrations and learned traditional African drumming and dance with Djapo Cultural Arts Institute.

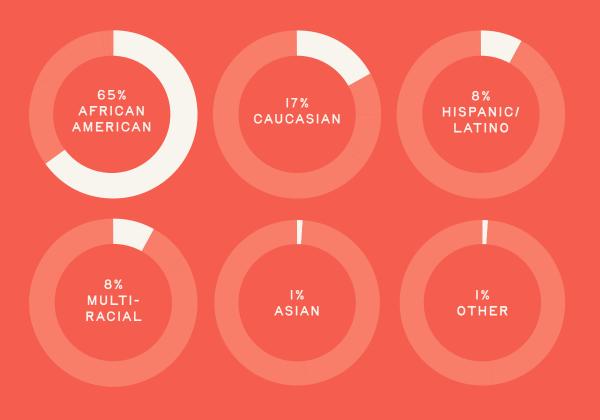


 $_{6}$

SCHOLARS BY THE NUMBERS



GENDER



RACE & ETHNICITY

621	ELEMENTARY
601	MIDDLE SCHOOL
204	HIGH SCHOOL
40	POSTSECONDARY
1,466	SCHOOL YEAR SCHOLARS

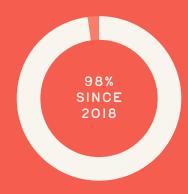






6,525 TOTAL ENGAGED





GRADUATION RATE



*Free and reduced price meal eligibility is a proxy for families living in poverty.





THAN EVERYONE I KNOW.

- SARGE

Kindergarten

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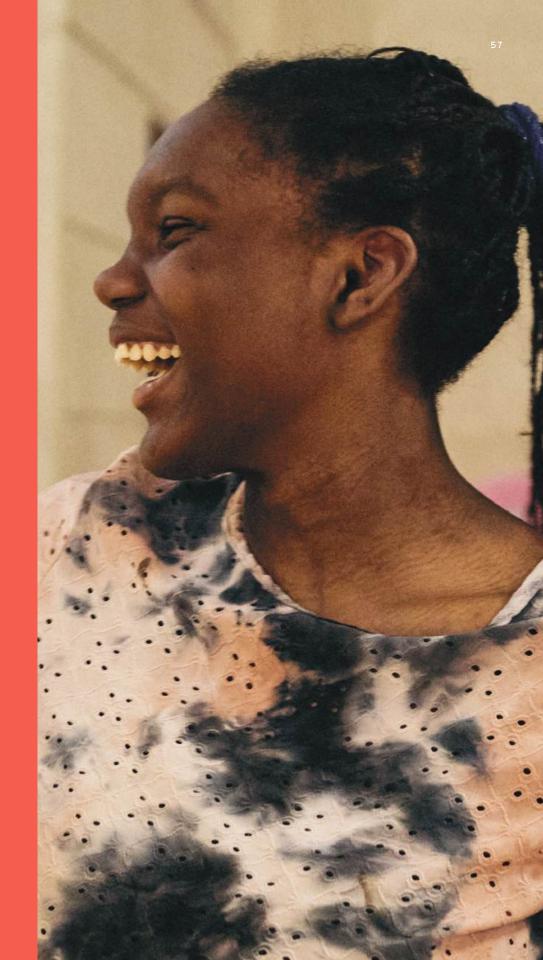
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ODA HELPED ME GRO AS A FRIE AND BECOME ABETTER PERSON - ISAIAH Grade 7

SCHOOL PARTNERS

Breakthrough Public Schools

- Breakthrough Glenville
- Breakthrough Midtown
- Breakthrough Southeast
- Breakthrough Woodland Hills

Cleveland Heights-University Heights School District

- Roxboro Middle School
- Baumgardner Middle School
- Cleveland Heights-University Heights High School

Cleveland Metropolitan School District

- Orchard STEM Elementary School
- Orchard STEM Middle School
- Garrett Morgan High School
- Max S. Hayes High School

Euclid City Schools

- Shoreview Elementary School
- Euclid Middle School
- Euclid High School

Firelands Local Schools

- Firelands Elementary School
- Firelands Middle School

Lima City Schools

- Heritage Elementary School
- Liberty Arts Magnet
- North Middle Schools
- West Middle School

Mansfield City Schools

- Malabar Intermediate School
- Mansfield Middle School

Sandusky City Schools

Sandusky Intermediate School

PARTNERS

7 Mindsets KeyBank **America Scores Cleveland** Kids' Book Bank **American Automobile KMK Promotional Sales** Association Lake Erie College **HVAC Program Bank of America Bowling Green State University** Lake Erie Ink **Lakeland Community College Canalway Partners Center for Arts-Inspired** Lemonade Day Northeast Ohio Learning Little Jacket **Central State University** Niagara College The City Club of Cleveland **Right Direction Cleveland Cavaliers Behavioral Health Services** St. Paul's Episcopal Church **Cleveland Foundation Starting Point Ohio Cleveland Leadership Center Stride Academy Cleveland Museum** of Natural History The FORM Group **Cleveland State University** The Music Settlement Office of Admissions TRG Multimedia **Community Bus Services University of Buffalo** Copy King University of Toronto **Greater Cleveland Food Bank** Willo Transportation Youth Entrepreneurship Institute **Youth Opportunities Unlimited**

York University

SUMMER CAMP **PARTNERS**

Djapo Cultural Arts Institute

Great Lakes Science Center

Greater Cleveland Aquarium

Greater Cleveland Food Bank

Holden Arboretum

IncYOU Resource Foundation, Inc.

America Scores Cleveland Buckeye Imagination Museum Celebrate the Arts **Performance Academy** CentroVilla25 **Cleveland Beauty Academy Cleveland Botanical Garden** Cleveland Children's Museum Cleveland Museum of Art Cleveland Museum of Natural History **Cleveland Metroparks &** Cleveland Metroparks Zoo **Cleveland Public Library Cleveland Rowing Foundation Cleveland Platform Tennis Foundation** Cohen & Co.

MetroHealth Tyler A. Wyche @ **Music Mastery Solutions National Park Service** The Pivot Center for Art, **Dance and Expression** Rise Up Northeast Ohio St. Paul's Episcopal Church **Literacy Program Taft Stettinius & Hollister, LLP Teach for America Tucker Ellis, LLP** The Manufacturing **Advocacy and Growth** Network (MAGNET) Steve Walker @ The United Youth Entity **Chris Webb** West Side Market

Little Jacket

We'd like to give a special thanks to Archbishop Lyke School for providing our K-8 summer camp base in Northeast Ohio and to St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Cleveland Heights for generously allowing us to use their facilities for our high school summer camp. We'd also like to thank Mansfield City Schools and Crossroads City 61

Center for hosting our Mansfield summer camps.

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Breakthrough Public Schools

Cleveland Heights-University Heights School District

Cleveland Metropolitan **School District**

Schubert Center for Child Studies at Case Western **Reserve University**

University of Cincinnati Evaluation Services Center

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I HAVE A JOB. I FEEL HAPPIER. I WILL KEEP MOVING FORWARD. MY GRADES ARE GOOD. I WILL ALWAYS HAVE PEOPLE TO REACH OUT TO. I WILL BE GREAT. I HAVE EXPERIENCED NEW THINGS AND GONE NEW PLACES, I'VE GOT MY EYES OPEN FOR COLLEGE, I GAINED A LOT OF FRIENDSHIPS, I TURN MY HOMEWORK IN ON TIME, I GET TO LEARN NEW THINGS. I AM THE BEST. I HAVE BETTER SOCIAL SKILLS, I CAN PLAY WITH MY FRIENDS, I HAVE OPENED UP MORE, I'M FREE, I WILL HAVE MANY OPPORTUNITIES. I TRUST PEOPLE. I'M MORE BOOK-SMART, I'M NOT AS SHY TO TALK TO NEW PEOPLE. I WILL HAVE FUN. I KNOW HOW TO CALM MYSELF DOWN. I'M SMART. I AM WHO I AM RIGHT NOW. I WILL BE TRAVELING WITH MY PASSPORT, I GET TO BE ME, I'M NOT AFRAID TO SING IN FRONT OF PEOPLE. I LEARNED HOW TO LOVE OTHERS. I FEEL FREE AND MORE TALKATIVE. I'M HAVING FUN. I KNOW MORE ABOUT MY WORK, I'VE HAD JOB OPPORTUNITIES. I'M MORE OPEN. I FEEL HAPPIER, I HAVE FUN LEARNING.



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