

RISE/rewind

Autumn 2022



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TIMOTHY M. O'NEIL SCHOLARSHIP

Timothy O'Neil will always be a beloved member of the RISE Community and on May 12, 2022 received the first ever Lifetime Mentor Achievement Award at our 25th Anniversary event, a surprise he did not expect! Tim and his wife Tricia, a longtime board member, have and continue to support multiple students in our scholarship program in addition to Tim mentoring Lathan for 12 years. Sadly, Tim passed away on May 13, 2022, leaving a hole in all of our hearts. He is sorely missed by all that knew and loved him and we are forever grateful for all that he brought to RISE.

In Tim's memory, RISE has established the Timothy M. O'Neil Scholarship that will support a scholarship student each year going forward. We have also renamed the Lifetime Mentor Achievement award to the Timothy O'Neil Mentor Achievement award in his honor. Tim's relationship with his mentee Lathan set a standard that we hope every mentor-mentee relationship will strive for. A few months before Tim's passing, RISE interviewed Tim regarding his longstanding relationship with Lathan. On the next page, we share his thoughts on mentoring Lathan so that you may get a glimpse of who this amazing individual was and why he meant so much to all of us at RISE.



mentor spotlight:

Tim O'Neil

Tim O'Neil decided to become a RISE mentor twelve years ago because he thought he would be well-suited to positively affect a student, one-on-one. His wife was a RISE board member at the time, so they were already involved, and it made sense for him to lend a helping hand.

“My favorite thing about working with Lathan is that he listens very well. Kids can tune you out very quickly, but Lathan always listened and then asked how he could implement the thing he just learned or how to apply the life lesson I was trying to convey to him. He always wanted to know the full meaning of what I was saying, never lacked for questions, and I really enjoyed answering them together.”

Over the years, Tim and Lathan have enjoyed many activities and outings together. From Mystic Aquarium to cooking classes to fishing and batting cages, and museums and more, they spent their time sharing experiences, while touching upon life lessons. These moments were treasured by the both of them in the years that followed.

“I take what I've learned being a father to three children and applied it directly to Lathan, mentoring him as if he was one of my own, especially when it comes to hardship or failure. There is always something to learn from both. Hardship may be a part of a mentee's life, but we can talk about what we can do when mistakes are made and how to avoid making them again. There is always something to learn, and Lathan is receptive to what we've talked about. And in return, he has taught me how to be patient and listen as well as he does.”

Tim is proud of Lathan's success in graduating from Providence College, landing a great job in his field of interest, planning to move out of his house and buy a car and continuing on to a graduate program. We all share Tim's pride, and are eternally thankful for such a dedicated and cherished mentor.



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

RISE has grown so much since I joined the organization 10 years ago, thanks in great part to our founders, board members, donors, staff, but most importantly, our mentees, families, and mentors. Over the last 5 years, our scholarship program has increased by 29%. Incredibly -- during the height of the pandemic -- we were able to send more students than ever before to private schools. Thanks to generous support from people like you and other donors, we were able to continue supporting our students and families remotely. Last summer, we hosted our first-ever coding camp through The Coder School and we also teamed up with the Tenth Gate Center for Yoga and Meditation to teach our students mindfulness techniques. Those are just a few examples of our growth as an organization.

There is, however, another example of growth, one that is harder to measure. It is the personal growth of our students, families, and mentors over the past 25 years. It is growth that is not accomplished easily. It all starts with a choice. RISE mentees and scholars make a choice to embrace environments and people that will create new pathways for them. RISE parents make a choice to send their children to the best schools in the state, even though at times they may struggle with tuition and other variables. RISE mentors and donors make a choice to support a child's future, knowing that assistance at a crucial time can make a difference for decades to come. Here at RISE, we have also made a choice: to continue growing our scholarship and mentorship programs while evolving to add more empowerment programs in finance, health, and wellness.

Our entire RISE family has a lot to look forward to and each of you is part of this journey. Without all of you, none of this would be possible.

Thank You,

Kaitlin Della Grotta
Executive Director
RISE



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Johnnie Chace



It is with tremendous gratitude that the RISE Board, Executive Director, and extended RISE community wish Johnnie Chace all the best as she steps off the RISE board. Johnnie has served on the RISE Board of Directors periodically for almost three decades, was head of the Development Committee and has sponsored a RISE student for 25 years.

A stalwart supporter of RISE from its inception, Johnnie has been actively involved in numerous ways ensuring that RISE thrived. In her various capacities with us, she has touched many lives. We will miss her smile, her wisdom, and her wit, but she will remain a sponsor in our organization as she pursues her new business venture. With thanks, Johnnie, and very best wishes to you in your next chapter.



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT:

Meet Ny

Ny graduated on June 7th from Lincoln School Providence. As a freshman, Ny was admitted to Lincoln School with an impressive financial aid package, but it still wasn't enough for her single mother to be able to afford both tuition and basic human needs. RISE stepped in and awarded Ny a scholarship, allowing her to receive the education she deserved, and it paid off. Ny was accepted to several colleges and will be attending Providence College on a full scholarship!

We are so proud of her achievements and thrilled to watch her take the next steps in her educational journey. Attending an essential school would not have been possible without the help of donors like you. We are so grateful that you are on this journey with us to change the lives of children of incarcerated parents.

RISE



2022 report

CELEBRATING TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

typical student support entails:

TUITION

2021-2022: \$170,100.00

book support

2021-2022: \$3,314.28

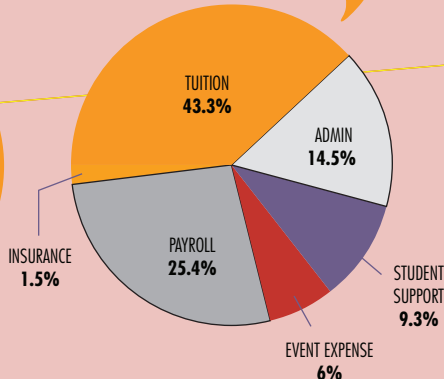
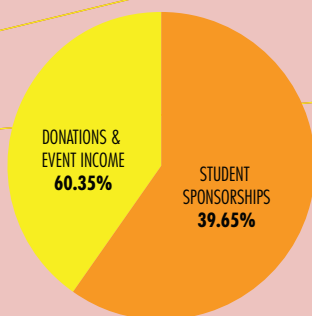
uniform support

2021-2022: \$5,700.00



TOTAL INCOME: \$489,404

TOTAL EXPENSES: \$392,563



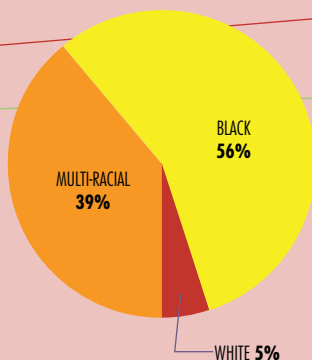
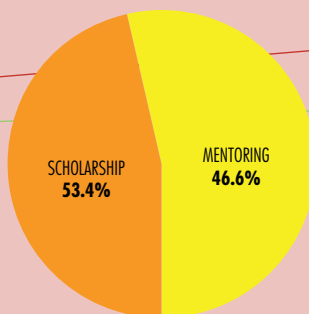
ADDITIONAL STUDENT SUPPORT

2021-2022:

\$27,682.65

TOTAL STUDENTS: 88
2021-2022

POPULATION BREAKDOWN
(self-identified)



\$4.7M

tuition paid since inception
(over the last 26 years)

CELEBRATING TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

RISE at 25



Twenty-five years! That is what the RISE community recently celebrated at our first major event in 3 years. May 12th was a night for reuniting in purpose, friendship, and generosity. Current, future, and former RISE students and families, 35 in all, connected with their sponsors, their mentors, and with the rest of the RISE family for a 140-person turnout!

It felt like family, with generations in attendance. The oldest attendee at *RISE at 25* was 93, and our youngest 9 months. We celebrated the amazing legacy of our founders, Tim Flanigan and Kevin Vigilante, and our founding executive director Kristen Haffenreffer, with lifetime achievement awards. We celebrated 3 amazing mentors, Tim O'Neil, Andrew Goodale, and Laura Laramie, with Lifetime Achievement Awards in Mentoring, and we presented Saint Raphael Academy with the Distinguished Partner School award. We raised scholarship funds that will support six students. This is what we have done since day one, and what RISE's dedicated staff, volunteers and donors work to achieve every day.





This year was one of both change and consistency for RISE. Six seniors graduated from high school after the challenges of learning amidst the pandemic. Thirteen new students just entered essential schools with the tuition assistance provided by RISE. Kaitlin Della Grotta, who has been leading all our efforts for the past two years as Director of Operations, was promoted to Executive Director of RISE. We have a new board member, Jennifer Hyde, who is also a mentor to Chyna, and we will be saying goodbye to long-term (and amazing) board member Johnnie Chace, whose wisdom helped guide RISE during board terms in two different centuries!

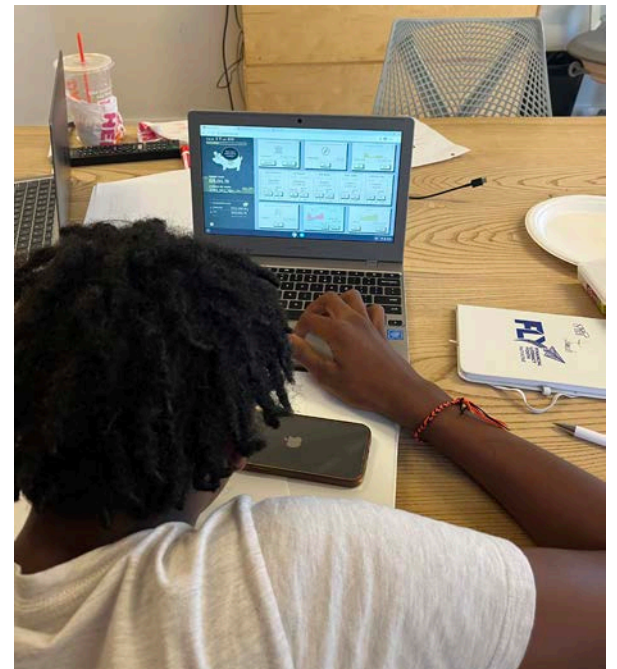
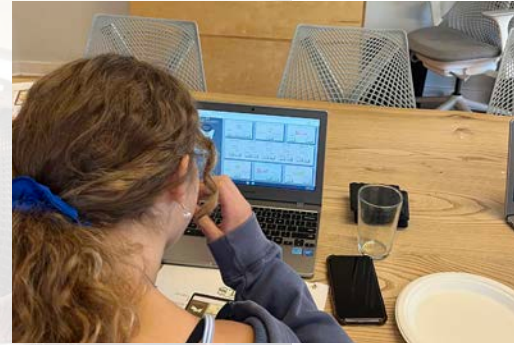
Our students sit at the core of our mission. They are courageous children who say yes to opportunity, and then make results happen. We have increased the number of RISE students supported in essential schools by 29% over the past 3 years, and we want to serve even more. We are grateful every day for the many people who make an essential education possible. Through your help, RISE scholarships have helped our students attend these essential schools, resulting in a 95% high school graduation rate compared to a 73.6% graduation rate for similar students without access to RISE sponsorships and support.

Pictured on this spread are just some of the many donors who stepped up at *RISE at 25* to help us raise money to support six scholarship students.



RISE & FLY

This summer, new students in our scholarship program participated in a week long financial empowerment course through The Fly Initiative. This organization is dedicated to empowering underserved and underrepresented youth with culturally responsive financial education and global experience to end generational poverty. During the week, students learned about taxes, checking and savings accounts, managing credit, budgeting, saving for college and investing. Our students reported walking away with a wealth of knowledge and were excited to put what they learned to use in the real world. We look forward to partnering with The Fly Initiative next summer.



alumni spotlight: Jamelle

From a very young age, Jamelle had a passion for the arts. Joining RISE in just the second grade, she began her journey with Laura, her mentor, and it flourished into two decades of education, creativity, fond memories, and utter fulfillment, as she rounds out her senior year of New York University, Tisch School of the Arts.

“Laura is fundamental to my creative self- a self I am lucky to have fully recognized in my young adult years, a self which I still relate to and explore today, as an occupation. I am so lucky and privileged to have had her help me realize my full potential,” Jamelle says.

This journey started out at age 9, where Jamelle and Laura would collaborate on arts and crafts projects, like jewelry-making, painting, and creating. They’d often go to the movies together as well. From there, the skills and lessons that Jamelle gained from Laura just continued to grow. “I have learned so many artistic skills from Laura, but most importantly, she has taught me all about kindness. She taught me about patience and gratitude, and I don’t know if I can put into words how much it means to me to have had her cheer me on every step of the way, stand by my side, believe in me and, more than anything, be my friend.”





RISE BACK-TO-SCHOOL PARTY!

Thank you to Point32Health, The Law Offices of Ronald J. Resmini, Flynn Surveys and Zach Flynn for sponsoring our Back to School Party in August. We had a great time!

We are so grateful for our partners who help us support the children of incarcerated parents.

Over 100 people joined us over the course of the two hour event for food provided by Gee Gee's Southern Cuisine and free school supplies.



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Questions or comments? email kdellagrotta@riseonline.org



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*Ensuring the Educational Success of
Children with Incarcerated Parents*

