



# IMPACT REPORT 2023

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*Mission*

Building long term, life changing relationships with New England's urban youth, equipping them to thrive and contribute to their communities.

*Vision*

Generations of thriving urban leaders

*Team*





# GENERATIONS OF *Thriving* LEADERS

“

*We are called to build a movement to mend the social fabric of our nation. It will take all of us—individuals and families, schools and workplaces, health care and public health systems, technology companies, governments, faith organizations, and communities ... It will require reimagining the structures, policies, and programs that shape a community to best support the development of healthy relationships.*

”

— U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy



Dear Friends of Elevate,

It is with great joy that I present to you this 2023 Impact Report. Our confidence in the transformative power of the Elevate program just continues to grow as we see, in student after student, measurable life change coming out of the long-term, positive relationships they establish with their Teacher-Mentors.



We've structured this report around what we're calling "the ripple effect" of Elevate. What I mean is this: there is a compounding element to the positive youth development that our individual students are experiencing – and it is felt in their homes, in their classrooms at school, and in their workplaces. Plainly speaking, they are making their surroundings better places to be! Thriving kids lead to thriving communities, and this is how our cities change. In the pages that follow I want to show you why this is true, and just how these ripples are spreading ... but it all starts when a young person first steps into an Elevate classroom.

Thanks for being part of our Elevate New England team this year, and helping us really live out our 2023 theme, Thrive and Shine. And I can tell you already, 2024 promises to be even brighter.

With Appreciation and Respect,

*Rhea Gordon*

Rhea Gordon  
Executive Director



# THE CHALLENGE: *Relational Insecurity*

In economically disadvantaged neighborhoods, children are negatively impacted by higher levels of trauma, violence, negative peer pressure, and relational insecurity. As a result of these economic and relational instabilities, youth in underserved communities often exhibit higher levels of social and emotional illness and struggle academically, dramatically impacting their ability to thrive as children and, ultimately, as adults.

**61%** of young people agree with the statement...

*“The adults in my life don’t truly know how much I am struggling with my mental health.”*

## Our Students...

**58%** don't live with their biological father

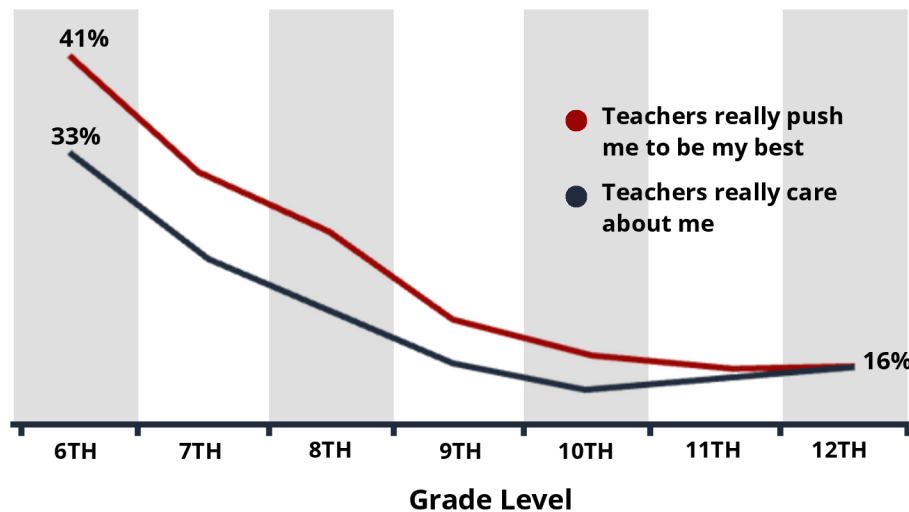
**25%** moved homes during the last 12 months

**23%** did not go to school 1+ times per month because they felt unsafe

## THE GAP IN *Adult Support*

As students progress from 6th to 12th grade, there is a significant decline in young people reporting that their teachers care about them and challenge them.

DATA SOURCE: Search Institute surveys from 2012-2015 of 122,269 U.S. youth in grades 6-12



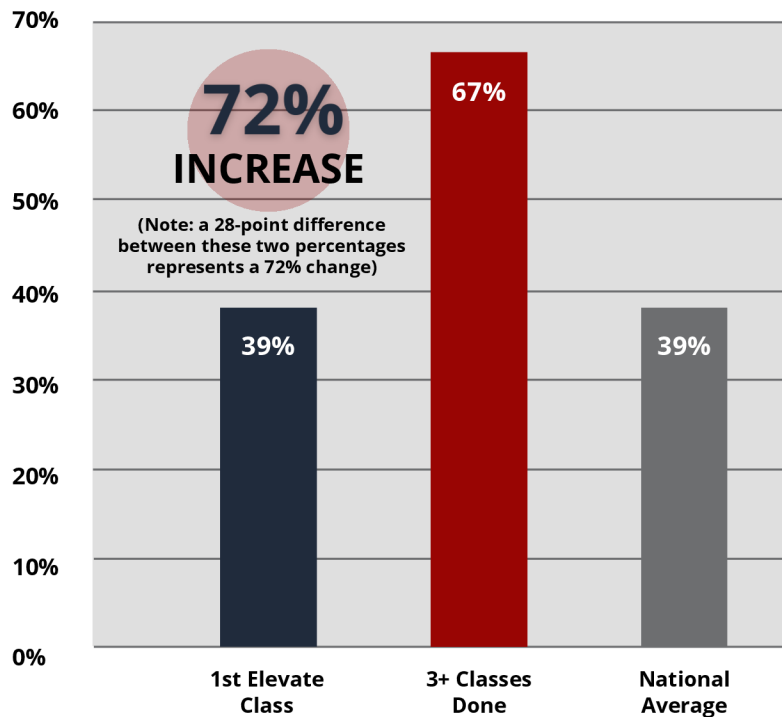
# REVERSING *The Trend*

Studies consistently highlight the tremendous impact relationships can have in the lives of our students. Simply stated, the addition of one positive, long-term adult relationship can transform the lives of our country's youth. The Elevate model is centered on building these life-changing relationships to help kids overcome life obstacles and thrive – both during and after the school years.

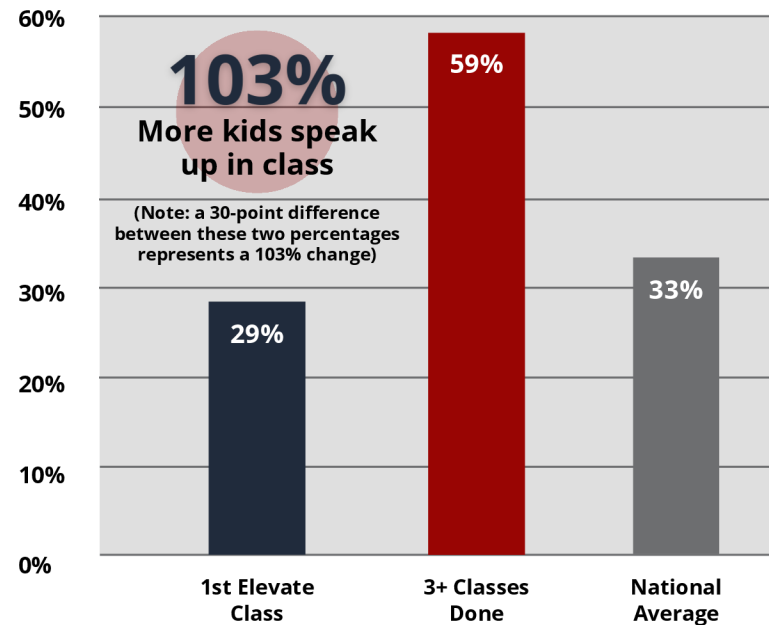


After just **THREE SEMESTERS**, Elevate greatly **out performs** the national trend!

**Students Who Feel They Have Adult Support**



**Engaged in School**





# THE CATALYST:

## *Transformational Relationships*

Elevate New England measures **four key outcomes** that make up positive youth development:

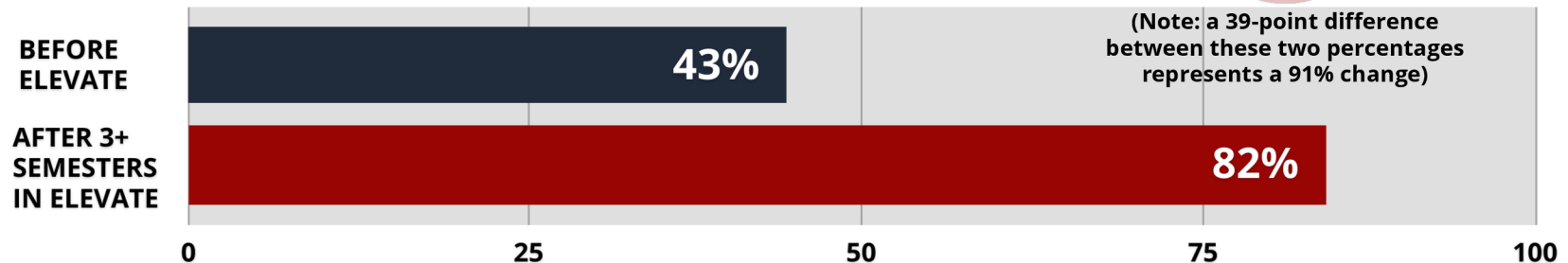
>> **Education** >> **Community** >> **Character** >> **Social Emotional Health**

We track multiple indicators of growth across these four growth domains. Below are some of those indicators, which draw strong correlations to mental health, graduation rates, academic performance, college attendance, and career earnings.



### How Students Improve After 3+ Semesters In Elevate When They Develop Close Relationships With Their Teacher-Mentor

#### Students Who Think About Their Future When Making Decisions



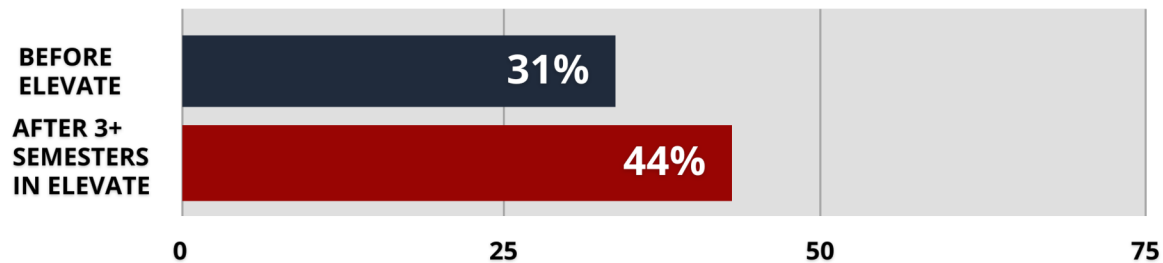
**91%**  
**INCREASE**

#### Why Does This Matter?

>> Research suggests that individuals who think far into the future better invest in their future, and avoid future harms.

(Thorstad R, Wolff P. A big data analysis of the relationship between future thinking and decision-making. Proc Natl Acad Sci. 2018;115:E1740-8.)

## Students Who Ask Others for Forgiveness



**42%**  
**INCREASE**

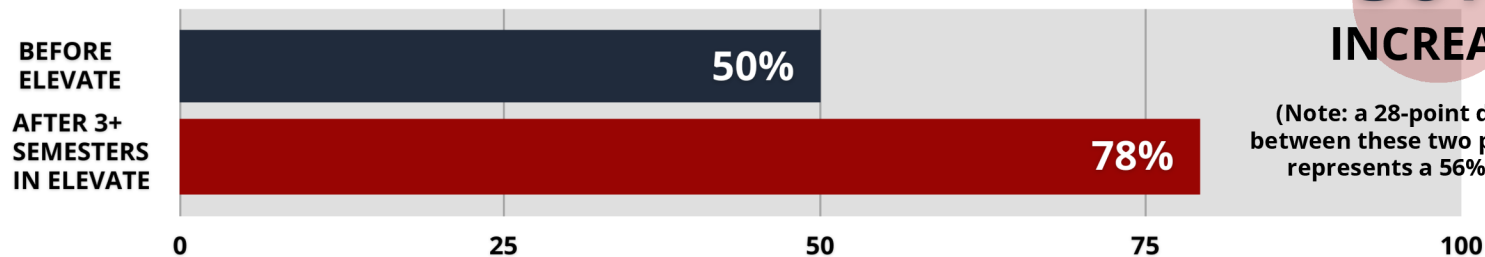
(Note: a 13-point difference between these two percentages represents a 42% change)

### Why Does This Matter?

- >> Studies suggest that forgiveness is associated with decreased levels of depression, anxiety, hostility and substance abuse; plus higher self-esteem and greater life satisfaction.

(VanderWeele, T.J. 2018. "Is forgiveness a public health issue?" American Journal of Public Health, 108:189-190.)

## Students Who End Unhealthy Relationships



**56%**  
**INCREASE**

(Note: a 28-point difference between these two percentages represents a 56% change)

### Why Does This Matter?

- >> Individuals in toxic relationships have a higher risk of developing anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, PTSD and substance abuse disorders.

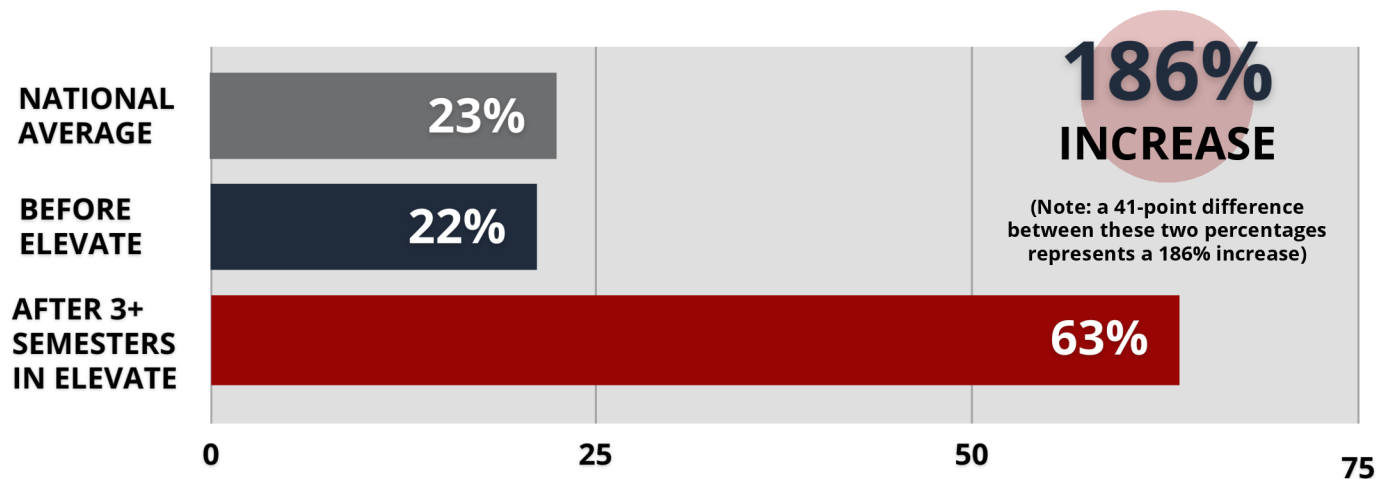
(Forth, A., Sezlik, S., Lee, S., Ritchie, M., Logan, J., & Ellingwood, H. (2022). Toxic relationships: The experiences and effects of psychopathy in romantic relationships.)



# THE *Ripple* EFFECT

As a result of introducing a positive, caring, long-term relationship with a Teacher-Mentor, Elevate students are not only thriving and improving their own behavior and mental health, they are turning around and leading the people around them. They are actively taking part in restoring their communities.

## Students Who Serve Their Community Regularly Because Of Their Teacher-Mentor



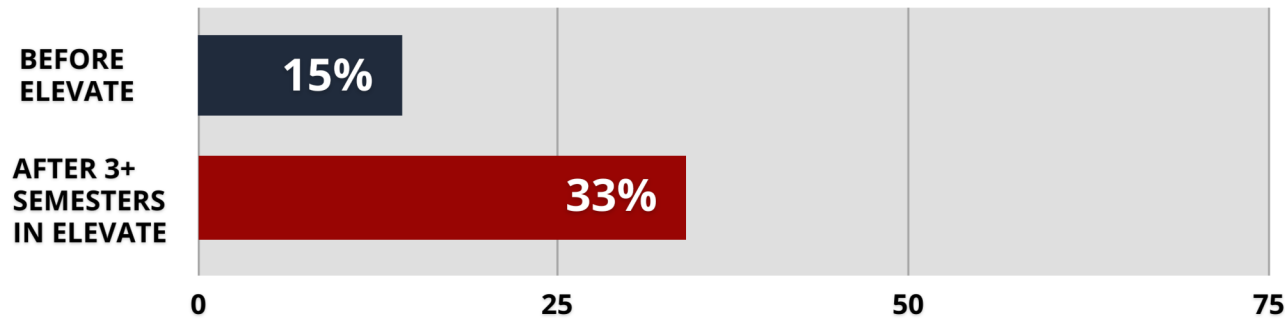
## Why Does This Matter?

### Because youth who volunteer...

- >> Are more likely to feel connected to their communities, do better in school, and are less likely to engage in risky behavior.<sup>1</sup>
- >> Are 19% more likely to graduate from college than those who did not volunteer.<sup>2</sup>
- >> Have 27% higher odds of employment.<sup>3</sup>

\*Data Source: AmeriCorps' Volunteering and Civic Life in America report; percentage represents those 16 and older who formally volunteer.

## Students Who Say Peers Select Them to Lead



**120%  
INCREASE**

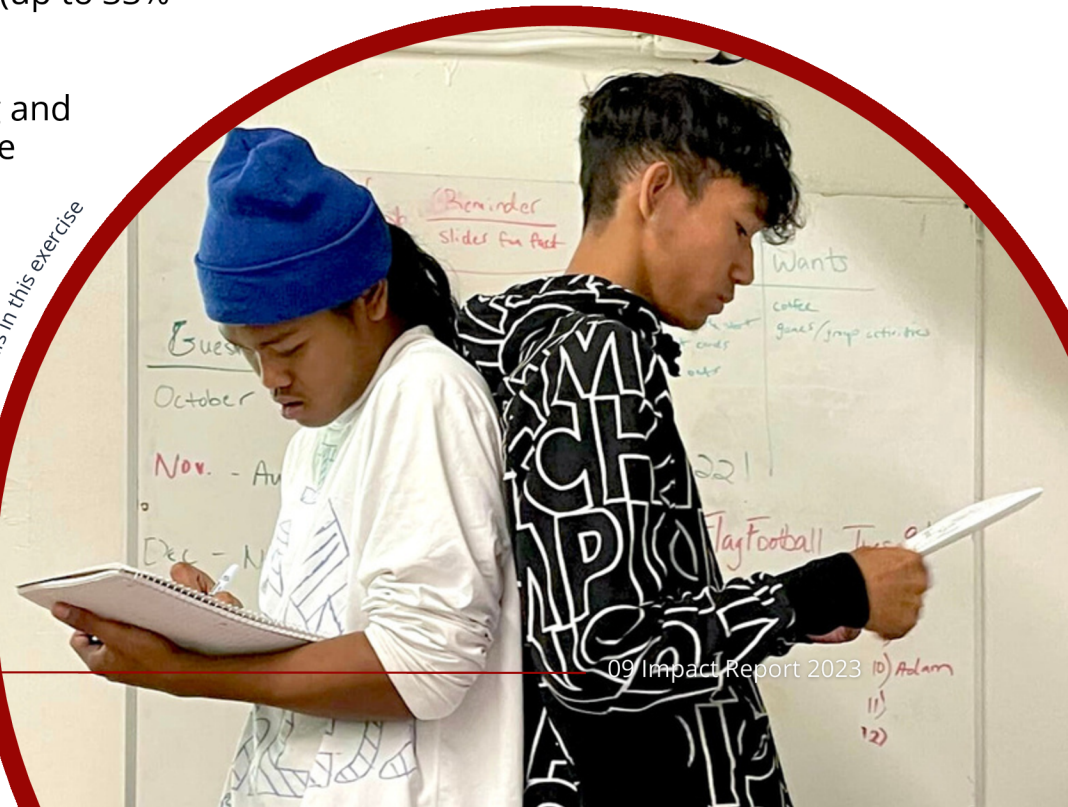
(Note: a 18-point difference between these two percentages represents a 121% change)

### Why Does This Matter?

- >> Exhibit increased self-esteem, teamwork and communication skills, and obtain higher pay after graduation (up to 33% more!).<sup>4</sup>
- >> Show increased self-efficacy, decision-making and interpersonal skills that support success in the workforce and in adulthood.<sup>5</sup>
- >> Have lower dropout rates than their peers.<sup>6</sup>
- >> Have 27% higher odds of employment.<sup>7</sup>

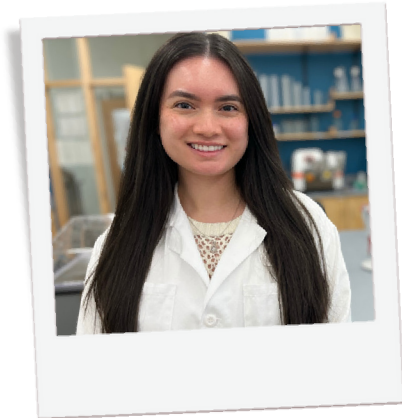
1. Americorps | 2. Davila & Mora, 2007 | 3. Troppe & Michel, 2002 | 4. 2017 Harvard Business Review | 5. National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability, 2005 | 6. Brockman, Tepper & MacNeil, n.d. | 7. Martin, Neal, Kielsmeier & Crossley, 2006

Developing communication skills in this exercise



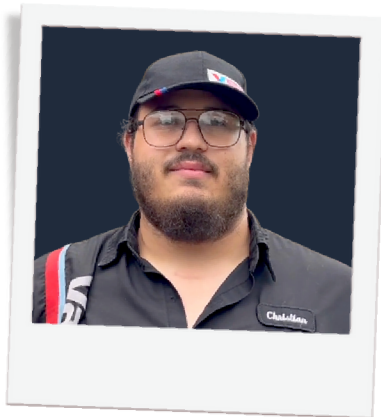


# STUDENT *Stories*



## **MAYLEN**

Maylen, a Lowell High School graduate, has reshaped her path completely. She recently completed a 7-month program with the Gloucester Biotechnical Academy, which trains young urban people for careers in biotech. This resilient young lady did a 90-mile round trip commute to Gloucester every day. She has now mastered DNA extraction and sequencing, has recently completed a 12-week internship in a Cambridge bio-tech company and now is interviewing for full time employment as a biotech lab technician with an aspiration to train further and become a scientist. “My life is forever changed! says Maylen. Her story shows Elevate New England's impact, and she’s also inspired a new wave of students to begin training for careers in STEM fields.



## **CHRISTIAN**

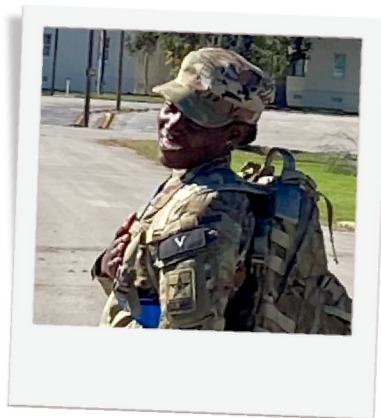
Christian is a 2020 graduate of Lowell's Career Academy. Through his Teacher-Mentor he secured a job with Valvoline Instant Oil Change, where he's been working for the last three years, earning several promotions. He's getting his driver's license next month, saving up for a car, and has his sights set on becoming a store manager. Without Elevate, he said, “I don't even think I'd be working right now. These people showed me how to do it.”

# STUDENT *Stories*



## **JOSEF**

Josef is a 2023 high school graduate who immediately enlisted in the Navy. Over the summer he completed his 10 weeks of basic training and is proud to say “I survived!” He’s now begun training with the goal of becoming a Navy Seal. He regularly communicates with his Elevate Teacher-Mentors and has shared that he’s become a leader among his Navy mates. He especially noted how prepared he was for the military because of the communication and decision-making skills he learned in Elevate. Josef can’t wait until he gets a leave and can come back to Lowell to tell all his school friends what he is learning.

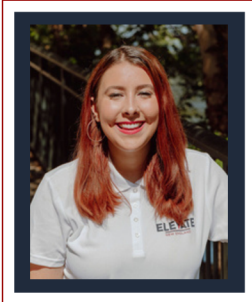


## **PEARL**

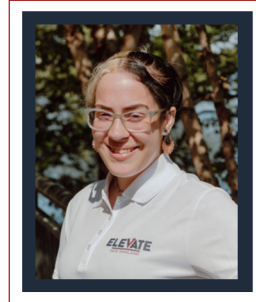
Pearl is a 2024 Lowell High graduate. She was placed in Intro to Elevate her freshmen year, was an intern the summer after sophomore year and has kept connected with our program. After trying out commuting to Boston for college, she decided to enlist in the United States Army. She currently is in Advanced Individual Training to be a radiologist specialist at JBSA-Fort Sam Houston. Pearl credits Elevate with helping her build effective communication and a strong resume.

# MEET OUR NEW *Team Members*

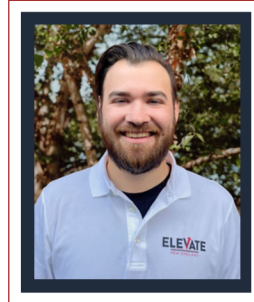
In 2023 we added five new staff members to our rapidly growing program.



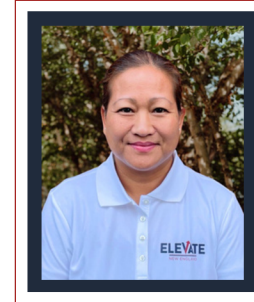
**Hannah Caforio**  
Teacher-Mentor



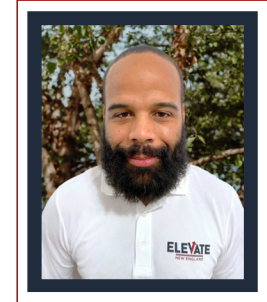
**Stephanie Gonzales**  
Teacher-Mentor



**Jordan Bonville**  
Teacher-Mentor



**Nimol San**  
Family Pathways Coordinator



**Joseph Casado**  
Transportation Coordinator



## **The Elevate New England Advisory Council**

was formed and launched in October – 12 people from area businesses, the academic community, and civic leadership met to discuss and further our efforts in urban workforce development. This powerful group will continue to provide advice and resources, meeting in person at least twice this coming year.



# FROM OUR SCHOOL *Administrators*



*"Empowering our students with wisdom and fostering healthy habits is the cornerstone of what Elevate does at the Butler. Elevate not only mentors but also passionately cultivates a culture of well-being, guiding our students toward success. As we seek to enrich the educational experience, extending the invaluable services of Elevate within our school holds the promise of nurturing resilient minds and shaping a thriving school community."*

-Jaime Moody, Principal, Lowell Middle School



*"I continue to see Elevate's impact in the alumni students who have gone on to reach their goals as young adults. Their mentors have been there every step of the way, challenging them to learn, grow, and make meaningful connections. Once in Elevate, always in Elevate!"*

-Ms. Champion, Director of Student Resource, LPS



# FROM OUR *Students*



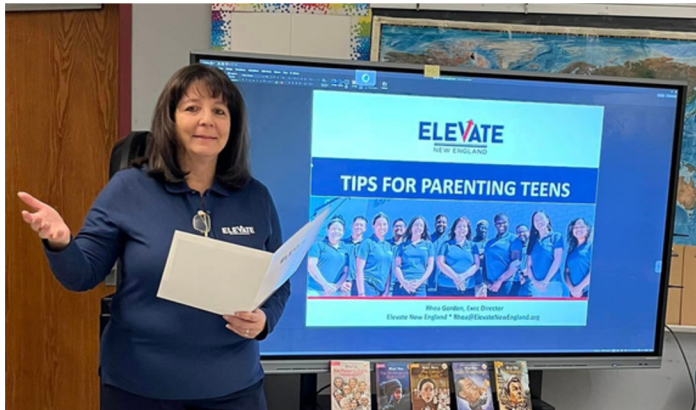
*"Goated Teacher-Mentors for real!"*  
(Goat is acronym for Greatest of All Time)

*"I love talking to my Teacher-Mentor because they talk to me about real world issues."*

-Senior at Lowell High School

**Going Deeper.** This year we will begin work on improving post-secondary success for our graduates. Though 100% of them graduated last year (70 for 70) and we now have almost 200 alums, we feel we can improve on what we call "thriving," and have now begun data collection and analysis in order to adjust our positive youth development efforts to help a greater percentage of them achieve long term, self-sustaining life change.

# *Parent* ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM



*"Elevate has helped my daughter stay focused and motivated as she continues to work towards her goals. The Teacher-Mentors have not only guided her through the daily challenges in the classroom but they have also extended their time and support after school hours through mentoring. Knowing that she is surrounded by a positive support system that will help her succeed in school and life has given me hope."*

- Mony Keo, Parent of the current 11th grader

# 2022-2023 **IMPACT**

## Elevate New England by the Numbers

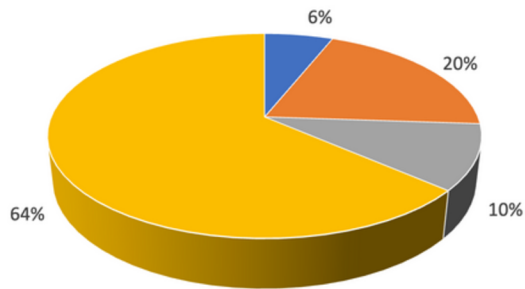
Urban Youth Involved Weekly	1709
Classes Taught Weekly	108
Public Schools Served	16
Mentoring Hours Per School Year	8400+
2023 Graduation Rate	100%

Community & Business Partnership	45
Placement in College, Military, or Vocations	97%
Alumni Still Engaged with Mentors After High School	69%
Elevate Staff	22



# ELEVATE NEW ENGLAND *Financials*

**Elevate Income 2023**  
\$1,396,927.00



■ Corporations (3) ■ Foundations (12) ■ Gov't Sources (2) ■ Individuals

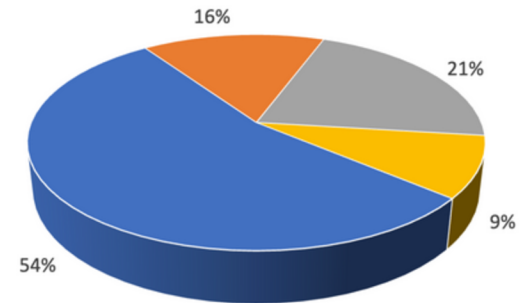
**Budget for 2024:**  
\$1,800,154

**Cost per student:**  
\$1,053

**2023 was Elevate's best fundraising year ever.** We took in \$1.4M, our 8th consecutive year of growth, which is 2½ times the amount we received just 5 years ago. We expect to set a new record in 2024!

**Multi Year Grants landed.** Elevate was thrilled to receive two large matching grants from Merrimack Valley philanthropic sources last year, both of them for over a period of four years: \$500,000 from Thee Mustard Seed Foundation, and \$300,000 from the GEM Group. Given for program expansion, both grants require the match be made with new donations. We've successfully competed Year 1 for both, and are on track to do the same in Year 2.

**Elevate Expenses 2023**  
\$1,217,447.00



■ Personnel - Direct Service ■ Program ■ Administrative ■ Fundraising

Pie chart calculations from FYE 2023 unaudited statement.



## Scholarship Fund Established

Through the generous and visionary leadership of one of our donors, the Rhea Gordon Scholarship fund was established and endowed this year, with scholarship awards made to the first two recipients. Congratulations Joshua Gonzalez and Maryann Mbugua, who are now in their first year of college.

Dear Elevate friend,

I want to add my appreciation to Rhea's for your participation in the life of our youth through Elevate New England. On behalf of our Board and Advisory Council, thanks so much for your support.



At Elevate we are moving the needle for urban youth. That's why I am involved, and I believe that is why you are as well. I think it is telling that once a Teacher-Mentor joins our team, they stay with us. Many of them have been offered other jobs in higher paying fields, but they always say no. They love what they are doing, they love our team and our strategy, and they love seeing their young people blossom like flowers and succeed. Positive youth development does not happen overnight – it is a process – and at Elevate we are doing it, as you have seen in this report.

So, thanks again. I'll repeat the invitation that I often make to you and all our supporters. Please come up to Lowell or Lawrence for a site visit. The spring semester is an ideal time. Rhea and I would love to have you peek into one of our classes and meet a couple of dynamite kids. Just contact me and we can set it up.

My best wishes for a great year.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Pocock". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jim Pocock  
Board Chairman  
[jim@elevatenewengland.org](mailto:jim@elevatenewengland.org)



**TO LEARN MORE:**

[www.elevatenewengland.org](http://www.elevatenewengland.org)

[rhea@elevatenewengland.org](mailto:rhea@elevatenewengland.org)



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## OUR CORPORATE SUPPORTERS

