

CHANGING NORMS 2023 IMPACT REPORT

Changing Norms, Inc. is a nonprofit organization committed to facilitating collaboration among schools, communities, and organizations, bridging the realms of private, public, and legislative sectors. We offer distinctive opportunities and pathways to reshape what has often become the norms of young individuals in urban areas, effectively narrowing the gap in urban education. Our mission extends beyond education, aiming to empower communities and catalyze transformative changes in the lives of those we serve.

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR LEADERS

Changing Norms is committed to strengthening marginalized communities by igniting inspiration, providing empowerment, and equipping the next generation workforce with strategies for college and career readiness. Our vision and mission gained urgency in 2021, as the digital divide heightened educational and economic inequalities for youth in low-income areas. In response, Changing Norms has set forth objectives to support young individuals in New York City, facilitating exposure to potential careers and opportunities in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM).



VISION & MISSION



VISION

Our vision is to employ a holistic approach, addressing the academic, social, and emotional needs of youth. With a steadfast commitment, we aspire to provide comprehensive support, access, and opportunities with a STEM focus, aiming to bridge academic and opportunity gaps and transform lives.

MISSION

Our mission is grounded in delivering educational programming and equitable justice to underserved youth in traditionally marginalized urban communities. Through these efforts, we are dedicated to enhancing learning experiences and elevating student achievement, as well as fostering a future of empowerment, growth, and success for all.

PHILOSOPHY

Our philosophy puts youth first approaching them with empathy and respect.



Aquinnah Wampanoag Council



THE BOARD



Crystal Bonds

Founder & President

Dr. Crystal Bonds is a 25-year esteemed educator within the New York City public school system, emerging as a nationally recognized luminary in the realm of K-12 STEM education. Throughout her distinguished career, she has assumed various leadership roles, including principal, master principal, and her current position as superintendent. Dr. Bonds has led national STEM organizations with a focus on narrowing equity gaps for underserved youth in the STEM domain. Also, she has served as keynoter and panelists nationally and internationally on the early introduction and advancement of STEM education in K-12 education.

In her capacity as district superintendent overseeing 17,000 students, Dr. Bonds has demonstrated an exceptional ability to drive academic advancements. Within the first year of her tenure, overall student achievement surged by an impressive 10%. As principal, her transformative leadership catapulted the High School for Math, Science, and Engineering to the coveted #1 ranking in 2022 in NYC, as duly acknowledged by US News and World Reports.

The genesis of Changing Norms, Inc. emanates from Dr. Bonds' profound observation of individuals within her familial and communal sphere who, despite possessing intellectual acumen, found themselves entangled in lives marked by unfulfilled potential due to a lack of access and opportunity. Driven by an unwavering passion for supporting societal transformation, she established Changing Norms, Inc.



Michelle Cheney Donaldson

Vice President

Has over thirty years of experience within city and state governments and Corporate America. Over the last decade, Mrs. Donaldson has worked in the education sector while focusing on students with special needs, she also serves as an adjunct professor at the City University of New York (CUNY) Higher Education System. Prior to joining the education sector, Mrs. Donaldson served as Commissioner of the New York State Division of Human Rights, and as a National Director of Diversity and Inclusion for a Fortune 300 company. Mrs. Donaldson is also President of MCD Consulting, LLC., which provides bridges to solutions for matters related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.



Bernice Brown

Secretary

Retired - United States Air Force
Retired Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselor/LCDC, TAIP
Assessor with Bexar County Adult Probation Department.



Bernadette Wright

Treasurer

Bernadette holds a Master's degree in Human Resource Administration from Central Michigan University. She is an adjunct professor and recently retired after working in higher education for 40 years, the last eight as Associate Dean of Liberal Arts at Rowan College at Burlington County. She remains passionate about helping young people discover and realize their academic and career goals. Bernadette is honored to pursue this with Changing Norms, Inc.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE



The enrollment of Black and Brown males in colleges and universities, particularly in STEM fields, is experiencing a decline. This downward trend in male college enrollment has been ongoing for the past decade, and the impact of COVID-19 has only intensified this decline. Black men encounter discrimination and barriers that hinder their ability to enroll and persist in college, with systemic factors historically contributing to these challenges (Graham, 2022).

Several factors contribute to the observed decline in enrollment, including but not limited to:

- Limited access to financial resources for Black men.
- Higher likelihood of suspension for Black youth in secondary school.
- Limited access to role models in the field of education for Black males.

To address these challenges, our program adopts a proactive approach, engaging groups of young people in a year-long initiative exposing them to various STEM career fields. Scholars participate in a series of workshops and seminars, culminating in an intensive week-long field trip. This experiential learning aligns with Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory, emphasizing that behavior is acquired through observational learning from the environment. Our goal is to overcome historical barriers by providing scholars with opportunities to interact with industry professionals, gain insights into career trajectories, access mentors, receive college and career counseling, and much more.





OUR INITIATIVES

Career Pipeline

This initiative offers career guidance with the objective of guiding students on a path for academic success by offering preparation for high school achievement, post high school education, and career development.

To further impact the experience, we hosted synergistic conversations with career professionals from various career fields. All campers participated in experiential learning and networking activities. Each student was matched with a career professional in their intended career field. Throughout the year, students attended career panels to learn more about the trajectory of career professionals. Some students were presented with internship opportunities to further their interests. Each engagement supported a love of learning, increased college applications, increased pursuit of STEM careers, and exposed our future leaders to emerging career fields while broadening their horizons.



Day in the Life Series

This series of events provides students with the chance to engage in conversations with career professionals who describe their typical work-day and the factors that influenced their career choices. This initiative is currently conducted either in person or virtually, and there are plans for Phase II, which will introduce a video series in the near future.

Culminating STEM Camp (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) Experience - Martha's Vineyard

The goal of the STEM Camp is to immerse students in experiential learning with enduring effects, offering a variety of hands-on STEM activities. We prioritize activities crafted to shape campers' ambitions and skills, molding their outlooks and guiding their trajectories for personal development. This impact extends beyond their individual lives, with the potential to create positive ripples in their families, communities, and ultimately, their global contributions.



CULMINATING EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING



Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute
Discovery Center and science
experiments in ocean acidification



Dredging the ocean floor with
Zephyr Educational Institute Science
Cruise



Gleaning with Island Grown Farms
picking 100 pounds of vegetables
for a local pantry

The success of the camp hinged on several key factors:

- Social impact as evidenced by scholars' feedback detailing their experiences.
- Parental feedback aimed at evaluating the program's impact on their children.
- Heightened awareness and interest in majors and careers within the STEM field.
- All participants actively applying to and enrolling in a college or university.

Camp Activities:

- Enhanced resumes, elevated college scholarship and internship opportunities, and a community of like-minded scholars, fostering an experience that leaves a lasting impact on their lives.
- Concrete evidence and experiences that firmly anchor young individuals' commitment to meticulously plan, prepare, and execute both academic and career goals.
- A network comprising peers, faculty, administrative contacts, mentors, role models, and influential figures—essentially, a supportive "village" encouraging and guiding young individuals along their journeys.
- Implementation of year-long programming to engage youngsters, culminating in a transformative camp experience. The camp kicks off with a visit to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), including a tour and information session, aimed at heightening awareness of STEM majors and subsequently increasing STEM major applications.
- Structured quiet time, journaling, group reflections, communication with parents/guardians, and preparation for the upcoming day. Continuous assessment of the STEM Camp's impact will be ensured through periodic surveys and Zoom meetings with campers over the next few months. Occasional feedback from parents/guardians will also be solicited.



OVERALL IMPACT

Social Impact:

The social impact experiences encompassed various aspects, such as a trip to Island Grown Farms. Here, our scholars acquired knowledge on enhancing local food production, minimizing food waste, advocating for climate-friendly farming methods, and broadening access to nutritious and affordable food. In alignment with the food equity network, our scholars actively participated in gleaning over 100 pounds of food for the local food pantry.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:

Scholars, predominantly hailing from low-income families from the five New York City boroughs, consistently demonstrate remarkable intellectual abilities. Many of our scholars experienced significant "firsts" while attending the Changing Norms Martha's Vineyard camp, such as never venturing beyond NYC's five boroughs, never setting foot on a college campus or farm, and never traveling by boat or airplane. Interaction with C-Suite executives was also a novel experience for them. The transformative impact of Changing Norms' programs is evident, as these encounters become catalysts for profound life changes.

The daily Community Building Time (CBT) provides scholars with a platform to exchange ideas and share personal experiences. Through mandatory journaling and discussions, scholars reflect on how camp engagements shape their perspectives on life and contribute to our initiatives supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion.

A pivotal aspect of the camp experience involves connecting with the indigenous people of the Aquinnah Wampanoag Council. Conversations with Elders shed light on the challenges faced by their Native American families and ancestors, fostering discussions among scholars on global issues related to equity and inclusion.

Furthermore, scholars embark on a tour of the African American Heritage Trail, delving into the history and struggles of African Americans on Martha's Vineyard, adding another layer to their understanding of societal issues.

STEM College and Career Preparedness:

Campers actively participate in a diverse range of STEM activities during their camp experience, encompassing activities such as gleaning, sailing, dredging, exploring ocean acidification, and engaging in laboratory experiments. Additionally, scholars embark on visits to prominent venues, including the Marine Biological Lab, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute, Zephyr Educational Institute, and more. The immersive exposure to these STEM activities is profound, significantly expanding the horizons of our campers. Through these experiences, campers begin to recognize their untapped potential and envision themselves pursuing specific professions.

Impact on Students:

Every graduating senior who participated in the camp successfully enrolled in a four-year college.

Three out of the 16 students secured summer internships at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute.

Five of the 16 students who took part in the camp submitted applications to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) with a focus on STEM majors.

Each student established a valuable connection with a mentor in their chosen career field.

QUOTES FROM SCHOLARS



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“I've learned that I am a bigger person than what I originally envisioned myself. New York City is my world and all that I knew. Experiencing learning in a different place and space like Martha's Vineyard gave me the audacity of hope about my future. I believe there is so much more I can do to give back to help my community and to plan for my future despite my financial status.”

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“The networking events during this week-long experience left me speechless. The one thing I kept saying was the people who I met were so willing to share information and resources with me. When I returned home, I kept sharing with friends and family that the professionals I met were giving me roadmaps to success. I am still following-up with some of those folks today, and I will continue to do so in the coming weeks, months, and years to come. I will definitely keep in touch with my mentor. It's the first one I've ever had!”

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“Being able to communicate with successful people has been such an honor. I would have never thought I would be telling my story and history to people who work for Yale's Admissions Team, Disney's Academy, Meta, Brooklyn Community Foundation, etc. This further broadens my idea that I am more than just a low-income Afro-Latino student.”

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“I learned that I need to appreciate every moment I have on this earth and make a lasting impact as well. Meeting chemical engineers and speaking to them about what it is like for a day in their life has solidified me pursuing a career in chemical engineering.”

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“I had questions answered I didn't even know to ask. I didn't know what I didn't know. This experience made me feel like I was catapulted into a new world. I will cherish every moment.”



QUOTES FROM PARENTS

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“The biggest benefit for my son was the experience of traveling away. He got to see MIT, a college he would like to attend, he rode on a boat, he met Barack Obama, visited a farm and gleaned vegetables. There were so many new experiences I never could have provided for him. I feel these experiences and the relationship building will prepare him for life as a young adult and in college.”

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“This program helped my son to grow up and mature. I worried that when he goes to college he will be overwhelmed, but I feel this experience helped to prepare him.”

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“The most significant takeaway was that he had people who truly cared about his future.”

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“The impact that I think this STEM camp had on my son was that it gave him a new perspective on life. He could not stop talking about all of the things that he saw and did. He would love to go back there again.”



Steamship Authority

QUOTES FROM COMMUNITY MEMBERS



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“The African American Heritage Trail of Martha’s Vineyard has been involved with Changing Norms since its inception. We have been impressed with its growth and with the commitment to expose students to the rich and multifaceted African American history of this Island. The students gain a great deal by walking our trails and conversing with our tour leaders, it’s a unique experience of learning authentic and inclusive history. I applaud Changing Norms for recognizing the value of connecting with students from Martha’s Vineyard and engaging in hands-on project based learning.”

~ Elaine Cawley Weintraub, African American Heritage Trail Educational Consultant

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“Our program is a challenge for the Changing Norms students, none of whom have seen the ocean like this before, nor have done the things they are expected to do on our boat. It is so rewarding to see how they adapt and take ownership of their time on the boat, participating and collaborating in all of the hands-on activities. The pride in accomplishment is so evident in their faces and actions. You can actually see them bond throughout the day.

The Changing Norms program provides a unique platform for these students to learn and thrive in a completely new environment. Hosting them is the highlight of our year.”

~ Robert Reynolds, Director, Zephyr Education Foundation

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“Whenever I have the opportunity to speak to these young men, I never say no. The work that Changing Norms is doing for young people is really changing their norms and changing lives.”

~ Marc Morial, President and CEO of National Urban League



PROGRAM ACTIVITIES



Summer Camp Experiences:

College tour of MIT, Tour of Steamship Authority - ship captain conducts full ship tour including cockpit sonar and screen tracking demonstration; Island Grow Farms Initiative - environmental science experience understanding of farming, composting, green house and poultry care, as well as gleaning for local food pantry; Zephyr Educational Institute Tour - marine biology experience: lobster box detection using wireless technology, dredging, underwater camera and sonic technology, touch and hold sea life; Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute (WHOI) – Discovery Center, science experiments, i.e. water acidification; Aquinnah Wampanoag Council - elder speaker and tour; African American Heritage Tour - Connect with rich African American heritage on Martha's Vineyard; African American Film Festival; Discussions with author Chris Gardner, of the Pursuit of Happyness; Networking receptions

Ongoing/Year-long Activities:

Workshops (Resume Writing; The Art of Networking; Coding; Public Speaking; Financial Literacy); Individualized and group College Advising; College visits; Think Tank Opportunity with Metropolitan Transportation Authority; Obama Democracy Foundation Forum; Youth Leadership Summits; Career Pathways Panels by Cornell University, Networking meetings with C-Suite Executives and Government Leaders; Team building activities (i.e. bowling, movie night).



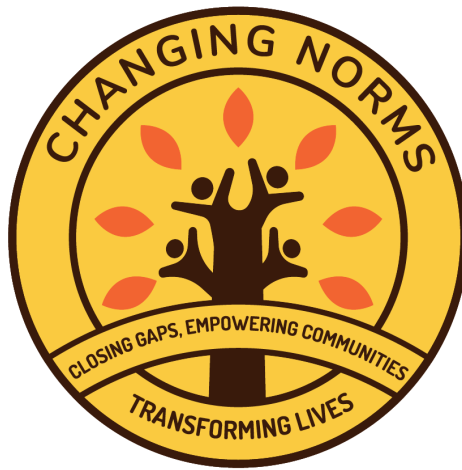
OUR PARTNERS



Partners and Stakeholders:

21st Century STEM Education, American Heritage Trail of Martha's Vineyard, Aquinnah Wampanoag Council, Ben & Bills Chocolate Emporium, Biscuits Restaurant, Black Edfluences-United, Brooklyn Community Foundation, Blueprint Capital Advisors, Chef Deon; the Three-Island Chef, College Bound Consultants, LLC, CWK Network, Inc., Island Grown Farms Initiative, Golden Tree Asset Management, JetBlue, LAMAD Academy, Richard Lounsbery Foundation, Marine Biological Laboratory, Martha's Vineyard C'est La Vie, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, My Brother's Keeper (New York City Chapter), Nancy's Restaurant, National Grid, Silicon Harlem, The Cottagers, Inc. of Martha's Vineyard, The Steamship Authority, Tree Asset Management, Triad Consulting Strategies, The Bank of New York Mellon, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute, Zephyr Educational Institute

Fundraising: Through partnerships and fundraising, over \$100,000 raised and successfully contributed toward STEM camp and year-long activities.



www.changingnorms.org