

2024 - 2025

# IMPACT REPORT



# Access

Every Student. Every Chance. Every Day.



## 20 YEARS OF IMPACT

Twenty years ago, John Vatterott, Terry Mehan, Tom Nolan, and others championed the idea for a nonprofit organization aimed at propelling historically underserved middle school students into high school and onto college and career success.

Rooted in the belief that education was the most enduring path to economic stability and that a strong school was the bedrock of a vibrant neighborhood, Access launched with 15 eighth graders inside a single South City middle school. In 2024-2025, Access served 391 students in 3 middle schools, 42 area high schools—including 22 private, college-preparatory schools—and 58 colleges and post-secondary institutions across the country.

### OUR MISSION

Access propels middle school students who have been historically underserved through high school and on to college and career success with enrichment, counseling, and scholarships.

### OUR VISION

Access envisions a vibrant St. Louis community where equity in education allows every child to think, dream, and achieve big.

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*Fiscal year for board and staff: September 1, 2024 - August 31, 2025*

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## REFLECTING ON 20 YEARS

As we celebrated our 20th anniversary this year, we reflected not only on how far we've come, but on the bold new steps we've taken to expand our reach and deepen our impact across the St. Louis region.

In 2005, Access launched with just 15 eighth graders in one school. Today, thanks to your generosity, we serve nearly 400 students. Over 20 years, we've guided more than 1,400 scholars on a path to success, invested \$10.7 million in high school tuition, and helped raise high school acceptance rates from 80% to 98%. This year, 92% of our seniors were accepted to college or another post-secondary program—clear proof that your support changes lives.

This year, we embarked on a strategic process to streamline our programming and focus where we saw the greatest impact. A major outcome was the launch of our new Access 2 High School (A2HS) program at Saint Louis University, opening Access to students from any middle school for the first time in our history. Now with two pathways—beginning at Sister Thea Bowman in sixth grade or joining A2HS in eighth grade—we can reach more students and strengthen high school readiness.

We also expanded our Summer Scholars Academy, created new post-secondary scholarships, and helped secure nearly \$1.9 million in financial aid for our seniors. It's been a year of significant results and remarkable momentum.

What remains unchanged, however, is our steadfast commitment: to give every student the tools, support, and confidence they need to succeed. We challenge our youth to dream big—and then walk alongside them with individualized guidance to keep those dreams within reach.

We are proud to share Access Academies' 2024-2025 impact report—a testament to the extraordinary hard work, commitment, and dedication of our students, families, staff, partners, and supporters like you.

And as we look to the next 20 years, thank you for believing in our students and mission. Together, let's make 2026 our most impactful year yet.

With gratitude,

Thomas Wheeland  
Chair, Board of Directors

## 2024-2025 HIGHLIGHTS



### Access Opens Doors to Students From All Schools

For the first time in our history, Access expanded its reach beyond our traditional partner middle schools—inviting students from *any* school across the St. Louis region to apply. The response was overwhelming: 42 rising 8th graders—from schools like St. Frances Cabrini, Whitfield School, and Hazelwood North—completed the new application process and began the program this fall. The historic shift also marks the launch of a new entry point for students: 8th grade. Through our new Access 2 High School (A2HS) program at Saint Louis University, students now begin their Access journey with a full year of high school readiness programming—including high school selection and applications, essay writing, and financial literacy.

### Summer Scholars Expands

Access' Summer Scholars Academy took a major step forward last year by introducing overnight college visits—a first for the program. This summer, we built on that momentum by welcoming rising juniors, doubling the number of student participants and deepening the program's impact. Thanks to a generous grant from the Boniface Foundation and the collaborative efforts of the Graduate Support teams at Access, Loyola Academy, and Marian Middle School, 80 students spent a week living on the campus of Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE). Forty juniors and forty seniors stayed in the dorms, ate in the dining hall, and experienced a full schedule of workshops, panels, college tours, and social events designed to build skills and experience college life firsthand.



### Access Unveils New Scholarships

To ensure our students have the resources they need to persist through college, Access created two new scholarships this year. Thanks to a generous grant from an outside charitable foundation, we launched the Access 'Beca Puente' (Bridge Scholarship) Award to provide critical financial support to our Hispanic students facing gaps between their financial aid awards and the total cost of attending college. We're equally thrilled to announce the Sister Thea Bowman Access Scholarship, a competitive award worth up to \$40,000 over a student's college career, funded by Access and selected by the St. Louis Community Foundation. This scholarship mirrors our Boniface Scholarship but serves students in Illinois, with selection based on academic excellence, active participation in our graduate support program, demonstrated financial need, and positive community impact.

Read more student success stories



## STUDENT SUCCESS

### Sam Miklovic

St. Mary's South Side Catholic High School '26  
St. Cecilia School & Academy '22

Access senior Sam Miklovic continues to excel as a student and emerging leader. A three-time Alumni Legacy Award recipient at St. Mary's for outstanding performance as a student and citizen, Sam was also named a Knights of Columbus 'Youth of the Year,' attended Missouri Boys State, completed the FOCUS St. Louis youth

leadership program, penned a winning essay in the Annual Catholic Appeal's scholarship contest, and was recently nominated for the Archdiocese' MLK Model of Justice Award. An Eagle Scout and thespian, he's also currently performing in the school production of *Orchards*.

Looking ahead, Sam aspires to enroll in the Philosophy-Neuroscience-Psychology (PNP) program at Washington University in St. Louis and explore a future career in psychiatry.



### Cindi Frazier

Savannah College of Art and Design '28  
Incarnate Word Academy '24  
Most Holy Trinity '20

After studying remotely her freshman year, Cindi Frazier is now fully immersed in life at the Savannah College of Art and Design's (SCAD) Atlanta campus. She's majoring in dramatic writing with a minor in film/TV and is in the early stages of producing and directing her first short film. She's also preparing to publish her second book of poetry.

Outside the classroom, Cindi has stepped into leadership roles and serves as president of the Black Film Club and a member of the Black Student Association. With long-term ambitions to launch her own screenwriting and production company—and dreams of writing a play and at least one musical—Cindi is energized by being on campus and the momentum she's building. "I've met so many great people and have been able to hone my creative skills further in such a supportive and unique environment."



### Access High School Class of 2025

**100% FAFSA completion rate** compared to 54% statewide

**100% attended a college visit last fall**, as did 89% of our juniors

**90% earned the Access College Scholarship** by completing all required college-readiness milestones during their final year of high school



### Unlocking More Financial Aid

**\$1,889,182 in financial aid was secured** by our high school graduates with the support of Access' College & Career Counselors.

**85 collegians were awarded the Access College & Career Counseling Scholarship**—worth up to \$6,500 per student over their college career. Access has provided over \$257,094 in college scholarships since 2020.

**\$243,902 was awarded to 17 collegians** through the Access at Saint Louis University Scholarship. Access had 24 students attend Saint Louis University last year.

## OUR GOAL

To give students the tools, support, and confidence they need to succeed, including our three pillars: enrichment, counseling, and scholarships.



### ENRICHMENT

#### Challenging Our Youth to Think and Dream Big

Access provides a comprehensive lineup of high-quality high school and college-prep enrichment programming each year, a support that bolsters academic achievement, encourages positive behavior, and expands their horizons and definition of success. With 92% of our seniors accepted to a college or a post-secondary institution last year, our donors can be confident that their gifts are making a lasting difference.



### COUNSELING

#### Individualized Support Increases Academic Success

Research proves that strong relationships are the foundation for student success. At Access, every student is embraced by a dedicated community of trusted, caring adults who help them excel and persist in school, work, and life. Our 11+ years of individualized counseling ensures every student's academic, social, financial, and emotional needs are attended to.



### SCHOLARSHIPS

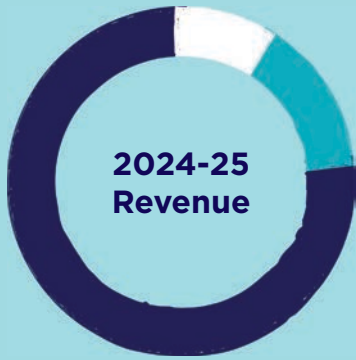
#### Illuminating a Path by Reducing Financial Barriers

At Access, we believe in equity: every student should have every chance to thrive every day. Since our founding in 2005, Access has contributed more than \$10.7 million in scholarships to high school students. It's an investment that reduces financial barriers for our families and uplifts the entire St. Louis region.



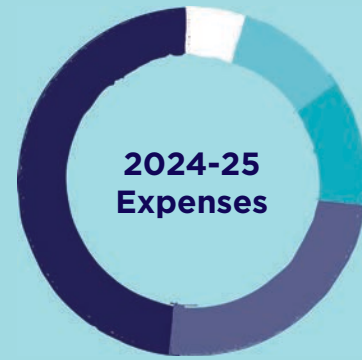
# YOUR DOLLARS AT WORK

Fiscal Year: September 1, 2024 - August 31, 2025



2024-25 Revenue

- General Contributions & Grants: \$1,857,021
- Annual Celebration Dinner: \$350,701
- Interest/Other: \$212,206



2024-25 Expenses

- Tuition Scholarships & Fees: \$1,022,707
- Enrichment & Graduate Support: \$530,944
- Fundraising & Outreach: \$249,350
- Additional Programs & Support: \$228,352
- Administrative: \$94,731

## WHO WE SERVE

We support students across the St. Louis region who are:

- From families with a demonstrated financial need
- The first in their families to attend college



# ACCESS PATH TO COLLEGE STARTS HERE



## MIDDLE SCHOOL

Access begins in middle school and continues through college. **Students can join the program in two ways:**

1.

### ACCESS @ SISTER THEA BOWMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOL (STB)

Students enroll at Sister Thea Bowman Catholic School in East St. Louis and are automatically registered in the Access program starting in 6th grade.

- Based in East St. Louis
- Requires enrollment at STB
- Includes after-school enrichment programs four days a week during the academic year



2.

### ACCESS 2 HIGH SCHOOL @ SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY (SLU)

Students from any middle school apply in 7th grade and begin the Access 2 High School (A2HS) program in the 8th grade.

- Based at SLU
- Requires an application, interview, and academic review
- Includes enrichment programming one Saturday per month throughout the academic year



SAINT LOUIS  
UNIVERSITY  
EST. 1818

No matter when students enter the program, our Graduate Support team partners closely with them and their families—helping with school applications, financial aid paperwork, transitions, goal-setting, and more. They're never on this journey alone.



## BOTH MIDDLE SCHOOL

- ✓ One-on-one advising
- ✓ Enrichment classes
- ✓ Guidance through the high school application and financial aid process
- ✓ High school prep



- ✓ Continued one-on-one advising
- ✓ Scholarships to private high schools
- ✓ ACT prep courses
- ✓ College visits
- ✓ Financial literacy/financial aid workshops
- ✓ Summer Book Club

## Program Requirements & Expectations

- 2.5+ GPA
- Active student and family engagement
- Committed to attending a private high school and continuing on to college or other post-secondary institution

## **PATHS PROVIDE:**

- ✓ High school fair & visits
- ✓ Help identifying a best-fit high school
- ✓ Interviewing skills utilizing local professionals, educators, and SLU staff

## **HIGH SCHOOL**

Students on both Access tracks converge when they enter high school. Our high school programming includes:

- ✓ Access 2 College (A2C) Program (includes college search, application & essay assistance)
- ✓ Summer Scholars (one-week immersive college preparatory program held each year on a college campus)



## **COLLEGE & CAREER SUCCESS**

Access support doesn't end at high school graduation. In college, students receive the following services from our College & Career team:

- ✓ Continued one-on-one advising
- ✓ Scholarships
- ✓ College and financial aid counseling
- ✓ College work-study program
- ✓ Career exposure and exploration
- ✓ Alumni support and networking opportunities



### **Access students are enrolled in colleges and universities across the country, including:**

- Central Michigan University
- Chapman University
- Dominican University
- Greenville University
- Lincoln University
- Prairie View A&M
- Ranken Technical College
- Saint Louis University
- St. Louis Community College
- Tennessee State University
- University of Missouri–St. Louis
- University of Notre Dame



# 20 YEARS OF IMPACT

At Access, we believe in equity: every student should have every chance to thrive every day.

## SINCE 2005, ACCESS ACADEMIES HAS:



Grown our reach and impact from 15 eighth graders in 2005 to more than 390 students this school year.



Increased our students' college acceptance rate from 80% in 2012 to 95% in 2024.



Helped guide 1,437 students on a path to success.



Invested over \$10.7 million in our students' high school tuition.



Increased our students' acceptance rate into private, college-prep high schools from 80% in 2006-2007 to 98% in 2024.



Funded more than \$6.9 million to support high-quality enrichment programs and graduate support services.

**98%**

**Accepted** to college-preparatory high schools

**97%**

**Graduated** high school on time (compared to 87% nationwide)

**94%**

**Accepted** to college or other post-secondary institution

**93%**

**Enrolled** in college or other post-secondary institution upon high school graduation

## MILESTONES

Access Academies is founded with 15 eighth graders at St. Cecilia School and Academy in South City.

Access' first graduating class applies to college.

1st Annual NativityMiguel Scholarship Fund Dinner unites seven middle schools and 21 area college-prep high schools to raise money for high school scholarships.

Launches Summer Scholars, our immersive on-campus college readiness program that equips rising high school seniors for post-secondary success.

2005

2009

2007

Launches 'Succeeding With Reading,' a reading acceleration program for fourth and fifth graders.

2015

In our first 10 years, Access serves over 600 students. 98% of Access eighth grade graduates are being accepted to college-prep high schools; 99% are graduating high school on time.

## THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS

Thank you to everyone who made a gift to Access this year! Scan here to see our complete list of 2024-2025 donors.



John & Margie Simon

LEWIS RICE



Chris Schmidt & Silvia Ledesma Ortiz



Gus & Kelly Gast



Cheryl & Joel Pettus



Bill & Jan Lane



The Weiss Family



Pershing Charitable Trust



Launches College & Career Success Initiative and extends commitment to our students to 11+ years.

Started the Access at SLU Scholarship with two incoming freshmen to Saint Louis University.

Access students secure more than \$1.89 million in college financial aid.



2018



2020

Forms partnership with Saint Louis University.

Access begins awarding college and post-secondary scholarships.



2024



# Access

Every student. Every chance. Every day.

3500 Lindell Boulevard  
Fitzgerald Hall, Suite 200  
Saint Louis, MO 63103



## HELP US MAKE A GREATER IMPACT

A gift to Access helps pay for essential enrichment programs, eases the tuition

burden on our students' families, and ensures that Graduate Support Directors and College & Career Counselors are available at every stage of the 11+ year education journey. Help our students create a brighter future for themselves by giving today.

“ *I am living proof that Access' commitment to - and impact on - its scholars is measured in decades, not just grades or years.* ”

**Damen Alexander**  
Access Academies' Alumnus  
George Washington University '28  
Saint Louis University '22  
St. Louis University High '18  
Most Holy Trinity '14



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