



As I reflect on iMentor celebrating its 25th anniversary, I am in awe of how the iMentor community has come together to commemorate the organization's achievements. Our milestone Champions Dinner Benefit welcomed 500 guests to recognize the impact that our 30,500+ mentors have had on 42,000+ students throughout the years – from college graduations, to career launchpads, to corporate boardrooms, and everywhere in between. We heard directly from mentors and mentees – some who met way back in 2002! – about how these relationships created a bridge between diverse worlds, fostering mutual growth and understanding.

This year also witnessed challenges for many of the students iMentor serves and the college landscape as a whole. The fall's incoming first year class saw a dip in enrollment of students of color at some of the country's most recognized institutions, pointing to a possible trend that such schools appear unwelcoming to students of color and leave them discouraged from applying.

Nevertheless, I am optimistic. The work of iMentor is more pressing now than ever, and our mentees, mentors, staff, and supporters will rise to the occasion.

Mentorship provides more than just guidance; it offers a beacon of hope and a roadmap to a future that might otherwise seem out of reach. As first-generation college students face increasing hurdles, our mentors are there to help build confidence and resilience to turn aspirations into achievable goals, making college and career success feel like a tangible reality.

The future of iMentor holds exciting new opportunities as we expand our programming beyond high schools. We are launching two groundbreaking initiatives that will extend our reach and impact and share our expertise in building transformative personal connections through mentoring relationships.

First, we are working with Macy's as part of the brand's social purpose platform Mission Every One to pilot a program that adapts our mentoring technology for use in non-profit youth organizations, fostering personal and professional growth for both the corporate colleagues and the young people they support. This program addresses the need for mentoring beyond the classroom, enriching extracurricular activities and community engagement.

In addition, we will roll out our iMentor College programming in New York City. This new initiative will integrate iMentor's proven recruitment approach, curriculum and technology platform into local colleges. By linking colleges with the corporate world, we aim to bridge the gap between talent and access, providing students with invaluable networking opportunities and career readiness support.

At iMentor, we believe mentorship is a powerful engine for social transformation. As we venture into this bold new chapter for iMentor, our commitment remains steadfast: to guide students, connect them with mentors and resources, and open doors to opportunities that will shape their futures for years to come.

Heather D. Wathington, Ph.D.

Heather D. Wathington, Ph.D. CEO, iMentor



THE NEED

The majority of students that iMentor serves will be the first in their families to attend college. These first-generation students often face barriers when pursuing college – such as gaps in the education system, a scarcity of guidance counselors, or a lack of access to tools and resources to help them plan for their future. These factors increase the odds against them and others from under-resourced backgrounds from earning college degrees.



More than half of iMentor students would be the first in their family to graduate from college

OUR RESPONSE

iMentor pairs every student with a mentor who guides them on their path to college through building life skills, social networking, and emotional support. These personal champions play a critical role in helping students navigate the complex college landscape to ensure they have access to schools that meet their needs and provide pathways to social and economic mobility.



95% of iMentor seniors were accepted into college



OUR PROGRAM



Whole-School Model

iMentor partners with schools in marginalized communities in which a majority of students will be first-generation college students. We match every student in a school with a mentor for a two-year commitment – offering each mentee, regardless of background or GPA, a champion for their success.



Curriculum and Staff Support

Students and mentors use a college success curriculum to guide them through the post-secondary process. A full-time staff member ensures the success of each relationship by providing case management support.



Personal Relationships

Students and mentors build their relationship through weekly online communications and monthly meetings. Mentors can provide a level of personalized support that could not be achieved through traditional school counseling alone.



10,910

Students served across direct service and partner program sites



Partner sites



"iMentor has created a tool and a curriculum and provides the support services that make something that's needed in our communities possible. If someone's looking to meet similar needs in their communities, this has proven to be a great partnership."

Michael O'Teter,
Chief Program Officer,
Big Brothers Big Sisters Lone Star,
iMentor partner since 2012



"The best part about working with iMentor pairs is seeing the development of their relationship from beginning to end. It's fascinating to see the first meeting in 11th grade that is full of nervousness and awkwardness, then to graduation, where pairs are hugging, screaming, and celebrating their hard work."

Kujagie Fisiru,
 Supervising Program Manager,
 College Success, iMentor NYC

Aylin and Manuela

"If it wasn't for Manuela, I wouldn't have done everything that I did. She was one of the biggest supporters I had in high school," she says. "She's one of my best friends."

Aylin recently graduated from high school, where she participated in soccer, volleyball, and flag football. Her mentor Manuela is a Ph.D. student at the University of Chicago. When the two were matched through iMentor in Aylin's junior year, they instantly clicked.

"We connected right off the bat," Aylin says. "[iMentor] helped me create a relationship with somebody that I can trust."



This trust extended to Aylin's family as well. Their shared Latin heritage helped Manuela connect with Aylin's parents and establish her role in Aylin's life. "As a mentor, it's important that both your mentee and their parents trust you to help them make the right decisions," Manuela says.

Aylin echoes the importance of Manuela's connection with her family, who she says plays a significant part of her life and motivations. "Everything I do is to have a better life and to give my family a better life," she remarks. "I want to be the image that they want me to be."

For Manuela, making connections through iMentor was a valuable way to build roots in the U.S. Originally from Argentina, Manuela grew up in Montreal and moved to Chicago a few years ago. Manuela and her mentee explored different neighborhoods and restaurants beyond her college campus. "She's really opened up my horizons," Manuela says of Aylin's impact on her. "I was living in this little bubble, and Aylin really integrated me into her community."

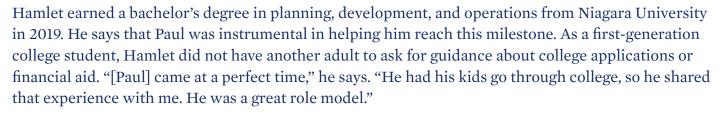
Aylin is enrolled in Northeastern Illinois University. She dreams of becoming a special education teacher and spent the summer as a teaching assistant. Aylin feels fortunate to have Manuela in her life.

Hamlet and Paul

"He's always the one person I don't hide anything from. He's not the person to judge," Hamlet remarks. "He's there for me every time."

When Hamlet first met Paul in 2012, he admits that he did not see Paul as the type of mentor he was looking for; Hamlet wanted a mentor who was interested in sports like him, and Paul worked for decades in the garment business. As it turns out, Paul was a baseball enthusiast. The two quickly bonded over the Yankees and Mets and attended games together. Paul would even watch Hamlet play baseball with his high school team.

Looking back, Hamlet is glad that he was open with Paul from the beginning. "I never thought I would have this relationship with him. Sometimes we judge a book by its cover," Hamlet says.



Years after receiving his degree, Hamlet is still particularly proud of that accomplishment. "I didn't know anybody that went to college," he says. "I never thought I'd have that experience in my life."

With experience in finance, sales, and operations, Hamlet works as a pricing assistant manager for Charles Kendall, a supply chain company. Despite having moved to Florida, Paul looks forward to fostering their mentorship and seeing what Hamlet accomplishes next. "I want to continue mentoring him, as far as him moving up the ladder in the business world," Paul says. "He's really bright."



Nancy New

Nancy New is a mentor from Baltimore who volunteered in the inaugural cohort in 2019. A first-generation college graduate from Michigan, Nancy benefitted greatly from having mentors in her life and seeks to provide the same support to high school students.



Her name is Kazmir. We really gelled on what she needed. She's very smart, and she's a fashionista. It [took] a few months for her to trust me, but she would reach out if she needed something. We are still in touch, too. Every few months or so she'll text me, or I'll text her.

Your current mentee Tayda is a senior. What is your relationship like with her?

Together we are working on her college applications [and] driving clarity for her on where she wants to go to school. We are now working on the potential scholarship applications. I think she also views me as a sounding board for whatever [is] happening in her life.





What made you want to sign up to be a mentor again?

I believe in the program. I realized, based on personal experience, how important it can be to have people who just care about you because they care. I wanted to be able to help someone in the way that someone helped me. There's passion, there's competence, and helpfulness from every single person I've met from iMentor. I'm really impressed with the organization, and that's what led me to say, "This is something I'd like to put my stock into, because I think it's legit."

How have Kazmir and Tayda positively impacted your life?

They each in their own way bring joy to me as I watch them grow, and I watch them ask questions of themselves. They go through the thinking process, and then they figure out what they want. It really makes me smile. I'm so proud of both of them. To feel like I played even a small part in that – it feels great. It's like a virtuous cycle, where you give and it comes back in a really positive way.

Ashley Lam

Ashley Lam is a mentor from NYC who joined iMentor ten years ago. In addition to volunteering as a mentor, Ashley also serves on the Young Executive Board, where she participates in fundraising and ambassador activities for iMentor.

How did you first hear about iMentor? What drew you to the opportunity?

I got involved in iMentor based on a referral from a colleague and a friend. I remember talking to her about my childhood and how I landed a job right out of college, and all the challenges that I had to overcome. A lot of the steps I had to figure out myself as a first-generation American [and the] first person to go to college in my family. Throughout this mentorship opportunity, I really found my purpose, which is to support other students of similar backgrounds going through the same process.

What was your relationship like with your first mentee Rosemary?

Our relationship was pretty special. She really wanted to pursue things like going to beauty school, or [being] a Youtuber, or modeling even. Being able to support her was key and made a world of difference in our relationship. We still keep in touch. She just told me a few months ago that she landed a feature in a fashion magazine.





What is your relationship like with your second mentee Noor?

Noor is an amazing individual. She's got an outgoing personality. It's been inspiring to learn from her. I understood there's not one path to even getting to high school.

What have you learned from being a mentor?

I wish I had a mentor growing up, and that's one of the reasons that I've become a mentor. I've definitely honed those skills of having compassion and empathy for anyone, not just high school students.

What would you say to a potential first-time mentor?

My advice is just do it. There's really no downside. So many people want to make an impact [and] this is their most direct way to do it. You are changing a student's life – who knows if you are inspiring them to go to college, or maybe you're inspiring the next entrepreneur.

The biggest part of mentoring, and the hardest part, is just showing up. That's more than half the battle. You don't realize your presence and your ability to dedicate an hour [or] two hours makes such a huge difference to these students.

Our Partners

BRING YOUR MENTEE TO WORK DAY

This spring, iMentor launched its first nationwide Bring Your Mentee to Work Day in Chicago and NYC. More than 100 high school students spent the day with their mentors in their workplaces to build their social capital – a network of relationships – and map out their next steps in their postsecondary paths.

In Chicago, mentors from companies including Google, Pepsi, Assist Services, Accenture, Cisco, and Ulta invited their mentees to tour offices, conduct informational interviews, and learn about various departments from senior leaders. EY, Morgan Stanley, and Google sponsored Bring Your Mentee to Work Day in NYC and hosted workshops on speed networking, LinkedIn best practices, and more. Mentors from dozens of other companies also brought their mentees to their workplaces for one-on-one visits.

"At EY, we proudly support iMentor and Bring Your Mentee to Work Day, reflecting our belief in the transformative power of mentorship. By inviting young individuals into our professional world, we offer more than a glimpse into potential careers; we foster confidence, impart skills, and empower them to succeed in their futures," said Alysia Steinmann, Metro NY Office Managing Partner at EY.

CAREER-CONNECTED LEARNING

Our corporate partners offer iMentor students a glimpse into their industries through career-connected learning opportunities – events that expose students to real-world workplace environments to learn about careers they otherwise would not have access to.

Top companies, including the Baltimore Tourism Association, Northwestern Medicine, Motorola Solutions, Citi, and Amazon led in-office workshops, speed networking, and career mixers to introduce students to new and diverse industries. Students built their networking skills and social capital – both of which are critical for success in all postsecondary pathways.

"At Amazon, we're committed to supporting students from classroom to career. We are proud to support iMentor's work helping students attend and thrive in college," says Rusik Mundhe, Director at Amazon Web Services. "We were honored to host a group of iMentor students, hear about their journeys, and share our perspectives on navigating the educational journey and transition to the workplace."

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Our Impact



COLLEGE & CAREER PLANNING

Mentors and mentees dedicate significant time to making postsecondary plans, including researching colleges, attending events on campus, and visiting workplaces to learn about career options.



COLLEGE ENROLLMENT AND PERSISTENCE

iMentor's outcomes in college enrollment and persistence demonstrate our impact in supporting students to earn a degree, achieve economic mobility, and lead choice-filled lives.



STRENGTH OF RELATIONSHIPS

Mentorships have the power to transform lives. Our pairs build relationships by listening, coaching, and exploring options for the future.



4 OUT OF 5 **MENTEES SOUGHT** SUPPORT FROM THEIR MENTORS **ABOUT COLLEGE PLANNING**



9 OUT OF 10 MENTEES HAVE THE SKILLS AND MINDSET TO **SUCCESSFULLY** SELECT A **POSTSECONDARY PATHWAY**

OF MENTEES LEARNED ABOUT **NEW CAREER PATHWAYS AND HOW TO WORK** TOWARD CAREER **GOALS**

91%

OF MENTEES WERE **ACCEPTED INTO COLLEGE AND INTEND** TO ENROLL

2222

4 OUT OF 5 HIGH **SCHOOL GRADUATES SUCCESSFULLY** TRANSITIONED TO **COLLEGE AGAINST** "SUMMER MELT"



3 OUT OF 4 MENTEES AT 4-YEAR COLLEGES PERSIST TO THEIR **SECOND YEAR**

OF MENTEES SAY THEIR MENTOR IS A GOOD MATCH FOR THEM

OF MENTEES SAY THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH THEIR MENTOR IS IMPORTANT TO THEM

OF MENTEES ARE **OPEN AND HONEST** WITH THEIR MENTOR

THEIR MENTOR

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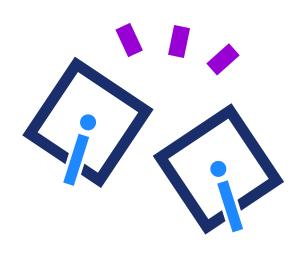
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PUBLIC SUPPORT & REVENUE (2024)	
FOUNDATION	\$8,018,802
CORPORATE	\$2,146,907
BOARD	\$4,408,431
INDIVIDUAL	\$3,478,153
GOVERNMENT	-
STRATEGIC CAPITAL REVENUE & UTILIZATION	-
OTHER INCOME	\$105,550
SCHOOL, DISTRICT, & PARTNER FEES	\$2,000,494
SPECIAL EVENT INCOME (NET EXPENSES WITH A DIRECT BENEFIT TO DONOR)	\$209,393
INVESTMENT RETURN	\$1,732,207
IN-KIND SERVICES AND GOODS	\$48,220
TOTAL PUBLIC SUPPORT & REVENUE	\$22,148,157

EXPENSES (2024)	
PROGRAM	\$16,586,961
NON-PROGRAM	\$5,547,914
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$22,134,875

iMentor is committed to supporting pairs as they build strong, trusting relationships and create special mentoring moments. Our work is made possible by our dedicated community who champions our mission.



