

A photograph of a school hallway with students. In the foreground, a group of students are gathered around a wooden table, some holding hands. A young man in a grey t-shirt is smiling and looking towards the camera. Behind him, a young man in a dark blue t-shirt is also smiling. To the right, a young woman in a blue sweatshirt is smiling and looking towards the camera. In the background, other students are visible, some standing and some sitting at tables. The hallway has blue-framed windows and a tiled floor.

# 2019-20 PROGRAM REPORT

2019 - 2020 SCHOOL YEAR

**OUR MINDS MATTER**

Formerly the Josh Anderson Foundation

---

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

[@our.minds.matter](https://www.instagram.com/our.minds.matter)



# DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

our minds  
matter

In 2012 we established the Josh Anderson Foundation (JAF) to honor my brother Josh whom we lost to suicide. Since that time, JAF has had a clear vision in mind: to work toward the day when no more teens die by suicide. In line with that vision was the establishment of the Our Minds Matter (OMM) program in 2016 - a platform for teens to lead efforts in their school communities around mental health and wellness.

The Our Minds Matter movement has taken root and is growing fast. To better align this movement and the umbrella organization, we have merged JAF and OMM into one unified voice - Our Minds Matter. Even with this change in nomenclature, Josh will always be in our hearts as we continue to work diligently toward that vision when no more teens die by suicide. 2020 has been a challenging year - to say the least. Amidst a double pandemic of COVID-19 and racial injustice, students are vulnerable to experiencing high levels of trauma and emotional distress. Prioritizing self-care, mental health and wellness among students is absolutely critical right now.

Our Minds Matter has supported students virtually since mid-March with weekly wellness meetings, office hours with OMM staff and social media campaigns on Pride and BIPOC Mental Health. This summer, our staff and student interns have worked hard to adapt the OMM curriculum to a virtual setting.

As we start the 2020-21 school year, we are thrilled to share that we have never had a more robust network of student-led clubs poised to make a difference among their peers!

Wishing you hope and safety this school year,



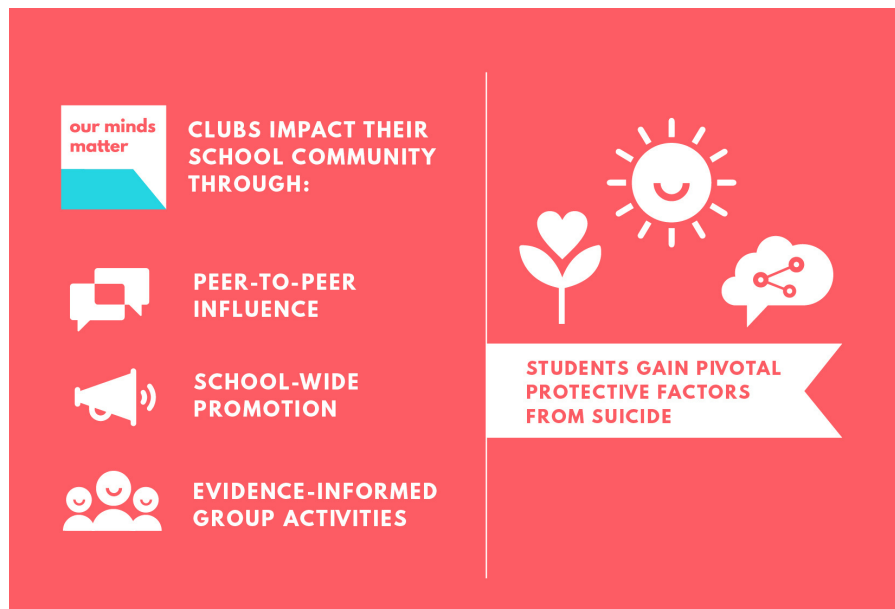
Lauren Anderson, Executive Director





**Our Minds Matter is a student-led movement designed to change school culture around mental health**

## Program Goals



The goals of OMM clubs are to build the following protective factors in teens:



**self-care**



**prosocial skills**



**social  
connectedness**



**help-seeking  
behavior**

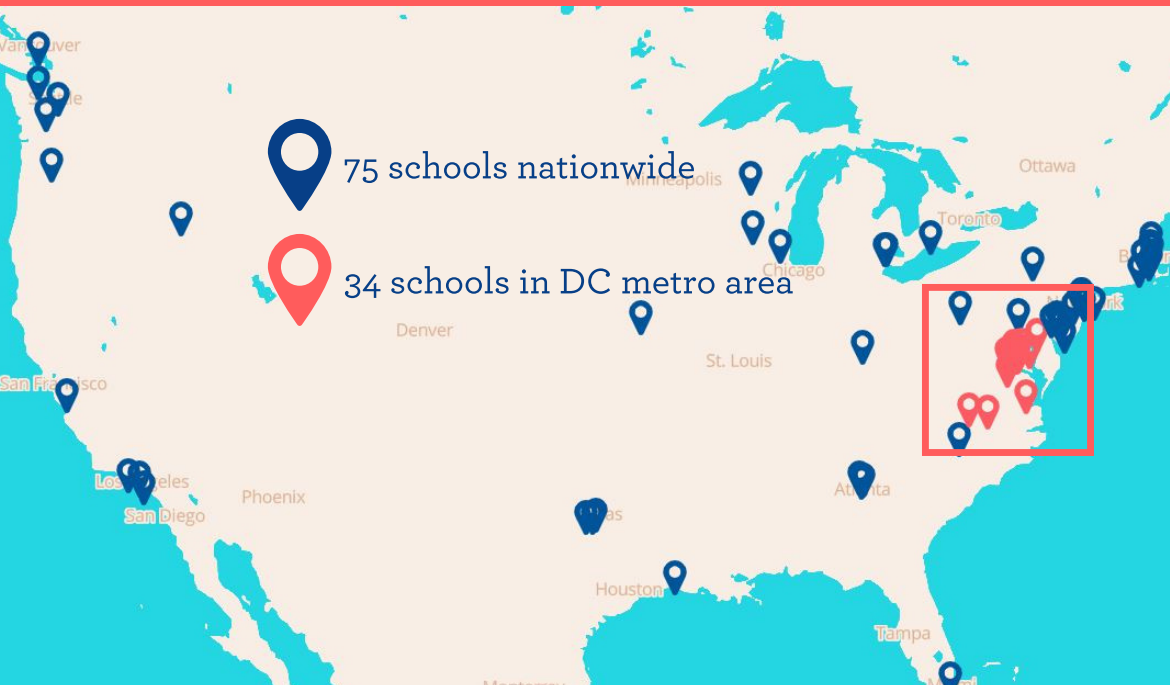
"The OMM program has helped me feel better in a very organic way and doesn't feel forced."

"I really appreciate the sense of community created by the OMM team, it helps me feel less alienated."





# We have a global vision with a local impact in the DC Metro Area



**75**

**schools**  
**2019-20**

**16**  
**schools**  
**2017-18**

**2019-20 school year**



**"I feel stronger and  
happier because of  
[OMM] and the people  
involved."**



**326**

**student-led meetings**



**1,309**

**students served directly**





# COVID-19 RESPONSE

During a time of uncertainty and distance learning, OMM students took part in weekly Wellness Wednesday (WW) meetings to foster connection with peers, practice self-care, hear from guest speakers, and learn relevant coping strategies and skills.



MEETINGS

19



SCHOOLS

31



ATTENDEES

417



# COVID-19 RESPONSE

**A note from OMM's Program Manager, Laura Beth:**

**"When we launched Wellness Wednesday on March 18th, we didn't really know what to expect. However, week after week students and club sponsors would share how much it was helping them during the pandemic."**



## **student perspective**

"I think that in the beginning when this all started what helped me so much is the support that OMM was giving through Wellness Wednesday. I don't think I've expressed this before but having that hour or so to talk about mental health and other things helped me understand myself better, it helped me in ways I can't even describe. It was the best part of my week and I'm just so grateful that OMM offers those services."

**-Jimmy, high school senior**

## **sponsor perspective**

"From a school based professional, OMM made it seem so effortless and they didn't skip a beat. It was like the pandemic hit and school shut down and before I knew it they were holding virtual meetings, Wellness Wednesdays. I was really impressed with how quickly they facilitated that. Being a co-sponsor and seeing how OMM works in person it still felt like it met the same goals. Students were still engaged, communicating, and sharing and even though it was online, it was still very meaningful."

**-Diane Ross, school psychologist**





# PROGRAM PARTNERS

Thank you to our program partners, who make the work we do possible!



Maryland's Largest School District

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

*Expanding Opportunity and Unleashing Potential*



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

[@our.minds.matter](https://www.instagram.com/our.minds.matter)