

**our minds  
matter**

## **2021-2022 IMPACT REPORT**

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a student-led movement  
to change school culture  
around mental health





10 years ago, the organization that is now Our Minds Matter began in five high schools in Fairfax County, VA. At that time, one employee—our Executive Director Lauren Anderson—started the organization and named it the Josh Anderson Foundation for her brother Josh, who died by suicide at the age of 17.

This report looks back at the past school year (2021-22), but to begin, we want to pause and reflect on our humble beginnings—and how far we’ve come.

**We couldn’t have done it without our dedicated staff, donors, and partners, who are the driving force behind our work to end teen suicide every day.**

- a look back -

# ten years

It's been an exciting ten years for us.  
Here's what we've been up to.

2012

**1**

STAFF MEMBER

**\$20K**

ORGANIZATIONAL BUDGET

**5**

SCHOOL PARTNERS

**8,243**

STUDENTS SERVED DIRECTLY  
& INDIRECTLY

2022

**9**

FULL-TIME STAFF MEMBERS

**\$1.09M**

ORGANIZATIONAL BUDGET

**189**

SCHOOL PARTNERS

**156,381**

STUDENTS SERVED DIRECTLY  
& INDIRECTLY

# FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Ten years ago, my parents and I started the Josh Anderson Foundation, named after my brother Josh, who died by suicide at the age of 17. At that time, I was struggling with my own anxiety, depression, and grief that ensued shortly after experiencing the trauma of losing my brother at such a young age, so suddenly. I began a long healing journey that I'm still on today—and I also channeled some of my grief into action through the efforts of the Foundation. My parents and I felt strongly that if we saved just one person's life from suicide, our efforts would be warranted and Josh's death would not have been in vain.

We've come so far as an organization. In 2016, we launched our proprietary and innovative club-model, Our Minds Matter, and in 2020, we changed our name to unify our efforts. I'm incredibly grateful for all the help we've had to get to where we are today. I'm proud of our staff, who are dedicated to impact and who work closely with teens and school leaders to make mental health a priority in schools. And I'm thankful for every single volunteer, donor, and funding partner who has supported our mission to end teen suicide.

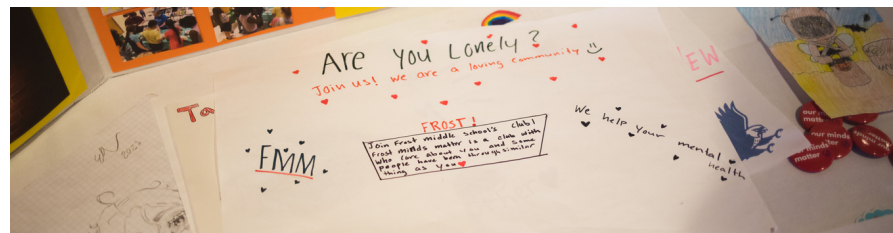
But there's still so much to do. In December 2021, the Surgeon General issued a rare public health advisory to call attention to the youth mental health crisis. Following two years of a devastating pandemic, teens today need safe spaces where they feel supported in their mental health journeys—and they need to know they're not alone.

As you'll see in the pages that follow, Our Minds Matter strives every day to make that difference in the lives of teens. This year, we reached more than 2,400 students in 127 schools directly. And we have ambitious plans for the future. In another 10 years, our aim is to reach tens of thousands of teens directly and significantly close the mental health gap that exists for so many adolescents and families today.

Today, we know that many lives have been saved because of our efforts. Josh's death was not in vain, and his memory lives on through all the work we do to help teens—who are just like him—get the help they need to get better and live fulfilling lives. We thank you for joining us over the past 10 years in this critical mission and we hope we can count on your support for the next 10!

With deep gratitude,

*Lauren*  
Lauren Anderson





# HOW WE WORK

## We help teens support teens.

Through our innovative and grassroots approach, students run their own school-based clubs centered on mental wellness.

We train OMM student leaders to promote school-wide social connectedness and to develop coping skills that increase mental wellness and decrease the risk of suicide. Students who participate in OMM clubs show proven gains in help-seeking behaviors—and they report encouraging their peers to seek help when they need it, too.



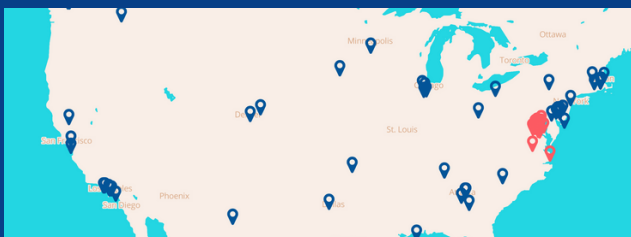
**We're working toward the day  
when no teen dies by suicide.**

# TEENS NEED SUPPORT

## THE NEED

In December 2021, the Surgeon General issued a rare public advisory to call attention to the child and adolescent mental health crisis. The statistics from recent years demand action:

- Suicide is the second leading cause of death for youth ages 10-24.
- 1 in 3 teens reported poor mental health in 2021.
- From 2009 to 2019, the number of high school students reporting persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness grew 40%.
- Suicide attempts by Black youth increased 73% between 1991-2017.
- LGBTQ+ youth are four times as likely to die by suicide as their peers.



## FINDING HOPE

A 2021 CDC study found that teens who feel connected to peers and adults at school have long-lasting positive mental health outcomes. We support student leaders in cultivating school-wide connectedness, and OMM participating students report increased feelings of connection at school as a result of being in an OMM club.

“

**"Our Minds Matter has made me realize how many people there are that might have struggled with mental health at some point and has encouraged me to reach out. It has shown me that I am not alone."**

# JUSTICE, EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

**Our Minds Matter's commitment to justice, equity, diversity and inclusion:**

**A living document created with input from OMM's stakeholders and approved by OMM's board of directors.**

Pursuing justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion is a moral imperative for Our Minds Matter, and integral to our work of empowering students to improve their overall school culture around mental health so that no teen dies by suicide.

Our work affirms the inherent dignity of each person we work with while dismantling any inequities within our organization's policies, programs, and services, creating an environment where all can flourish and become their best selves. We are building a community whose members have diverse cultures, backgrounds, and life experiences. Vital to this is leadership and staff who are representative of the communities we serve, providing culturally competent and accessible curriculum and resources and constantly learning from and adapting to the communities we work with.

As an organization, we are committed to holding ourselves accountable to the lifelong learning and action that is required for effective justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. We are intentional with our official partnerships and act in solidarity with movements for historically marginalized communities, including Black, Indigenous and People of Color, LGBTQ+ people and people with disabilities.



# THE NETWORK



We added 30 OMM clubs to our network this year, for a total of 127 clubs. We are largely based in the DC-area, and this year supported 72 schools in Washington, D.C. and the surrounding Maryland and Virginia counties. We have a presence nationwide, with an additional 55 clubs throughout the country.



**127 clubs**



**696 meetings**



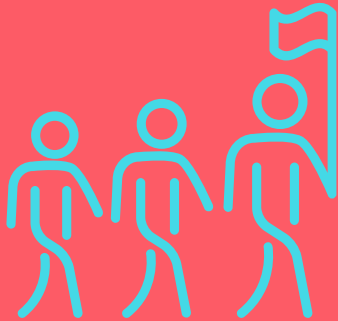
**2,424 students**







4 leadership trainings



200 student leaders



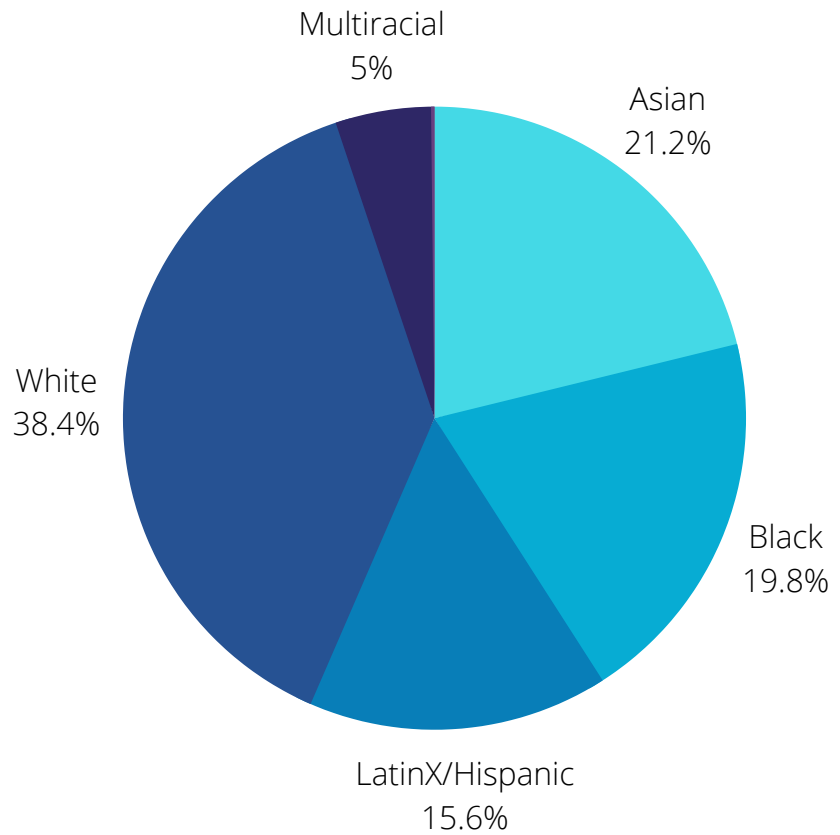
51 school-wide campaigns



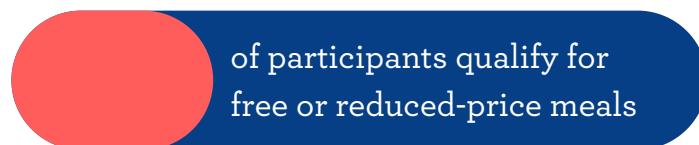
75% feel more connected



### Demographics of OMM Participants\*



### free or reduced-priced meals



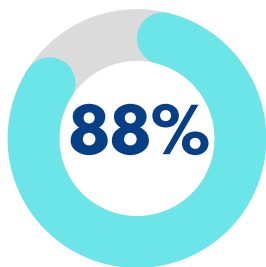
29%

\*21-22 Unique Demographics Reported from OMM School District Partners

# THE IMPACT

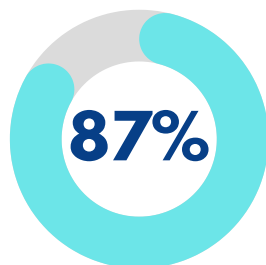


In the 2021-2022 school year, we recorded our greatest impact to date, and exceeded our goal of 75% of participants reporting improvements.



## Improved Teen Mental Health

of participants agreed OMM had a positive impact on their mental health.



## Normalized Mental Health Conversations

of participants said their Our Minds Matter club led to more conversations around mental health at their schools.

# We are dedicated to making an impact that is data-driven and student-centric.

OMM recognizes that there is not a one-size-fits-all approach and that each school we work with is different. Our program team spends time getting to know each school to provide customized support, and closely tracks club health for each school to ensure sustainability and maximum impact.

## Assessing progress

We assess program impact through multiple methods of data collection and survey tools OMM equips each student-led club with evidence-informed strategies for suicide prevention to improve the following four outcome areas:



**87%**

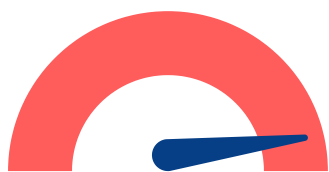
increase in practicing self-care and healthy habits

**82%**

more likely to seek help because of OMM

This school year, we partnered with Dr. Jordan Booker, a developmental psychologist at the University of Missouri, for our first Institutional Review Board Study. This study allowed us to deepen our understanding of student progress and personal change as a result of participation in OMM clubs. The results pointed to benefits in multiple areas of adjustment and mental health, including the following results:

- There was a positive association between the number of attended club meetings and how much social support students perceived from their OMM clubs.
- Students who attended more club activities reported greater adjustment and compassion towards others.
- Student leaders reported high schoolwork confidence, high life purpose levels, and positive relationships with others.



## 93% CLUB RETENTION

of our school district partner clubs have renewed their club memberships for the 2022-23 school year.

# STUDENT VOICES

Because of OMM and the connections it has made with other clubs within my school, I feel mental health has become a priority to discuss with students and staff. The club has successfully spread its influence and worked to promote healthy mental habits and helpful resources for teens. My school now focuses specifically on the mental health of students.

[OMM has made] my mental health much better.

OMM has given me a space to talk about mental health topics while also building a small community at my school. Going to meetings has been one of my favorite things to do every week.



# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

## From Edison Minds Matter to the White House...

In May 2022, Our Minds Matter alumna Kheira Bekkadja was invited to the White House for the first-ever Mental Health Youth Action Forum, an event led by MTV Entertainment.

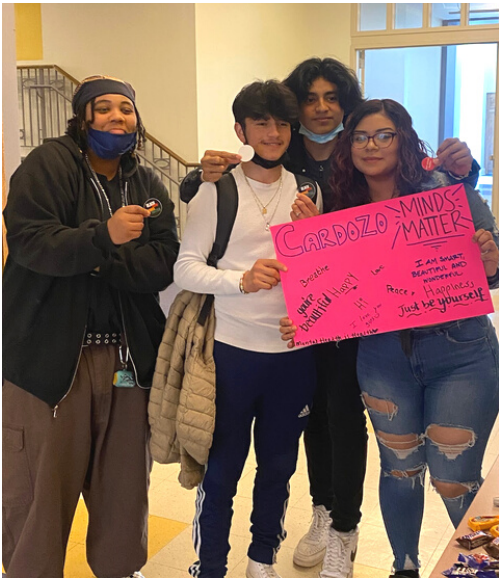
Kheira was one of 30 youth mental health advocates selected to participate in the Forum. She and the other participants presented their original creative campaigns—designed to address the mental health crisis—to members of the Biden-Harris administration.

Kheira attended Edison High School in Fairfax, VA and joined OMM in 2018 as part of Edison Minds Matter. She's now a senior advisor on our Teen Advisory Council.



As a Muslim Algerian American and recent transfer student into the public school system, I was struggling to be comfortable and confident. Through sharing my story in my school's OMM club, I connected with other students, and learned that there were resources and support available to all of us. Creating a safe-space at Edison Minds Matter—where anyone can feel heard, welcomed, and loved—is one of my greatest accomplishments.

# HIGHLIGHTS



## DC Public Schools Partnership

Our Minds Matter launched the first year of its partnership with the DC Public School district in the 2021-22 school year. We supported clubs at 10 of 20 DCPS high schools, and we aim to be in all 20 high schools in DC within the next three years.

## Crisis Text Line

In August 2021, OMM started a partnership with Crisis Text Line, which provides accessible and free 24/7 support for people shouldering anxiety, depression, substance abuse, suicidal ideation. Over 200 texters reached out to Crisis Text Line as a result of this partnership within the first 9 months.



## LGBTQ+ Minds Matter

OMM celebrated Pride Month in June 2022 by releasing a new LGBTQ+ club guidebook and hosting an Instagram Live centered on LGBTQ+ joy.



# HIGHLIGHTS



## A Not So Silent Night

In December 2021, OMM brought supporters together in Washington, D.C. to shine light on mental health. This inspiring event celebrated our student leaders, school sponsors, and our wonderful supporters!

## Move 4 Mental Health

In May 2022, OMM hosted a free community event in partnership with Fairfax County Public Schools at a park in Northern VA. Approximately 100 people joined in to celebrate the healing power of movement by running, walking, biking, and doing yoga together -- and enjoying live performances!



## Visits from Therapy Animals

Several OMM clubs organized school-wide therapy animal events in 2021-22-- from visits with alpacas to goats to dogs! After a therapy dog visit to a Montgomery County School, one club sponsor shared: "I have not seen the students so happy during my two years here."

A map of the Washington DC area, showing various school districts. The map is overlaid with numerous red location pins, indicating the presence of OMM clubs. The pins are concentrated in the central and southern parts of the map, particularly around the areas of Mount Airy, Olney, and Alexandria. The map is partially obscured by a red banner at the top and a white banner at the bottom.

# WE HAVE A VISION

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## and we have a plan.

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In 2022, we finalized a three-year strategic plan. We are meeting this extraordinary moment—when youth mental health has been recognized as a public health crisis—with ambitious goals, because we believe in the power of our peer-to-peer club model to change lives and improve school culture around mental health.

We plan to deepen our presence locally, by expanding to additional school districts in the DC area. We will also continue to support clubs on the national level. Finally, we will begin to deepen our evaluation of school-wide culture change and mental health outcomes for the broader student population at schools with OMM clubs.

**By 2025, we  
will support  
500  
student clubs.**



# PARTNER & DONOR RECOGNITION

Support from corporations, foundations, and individuals allow Our Minds Matter to improve the mental health of thousands of teens. Thank you to these generous donors, and to our partners in this work.

## Institutional Funders

**\$100,000+**

**Gerald E. Anderson and Mary E. Anderson  
Charitable Foundation**  
**Devon C. Rubenstein Foundation**  
**Fairfax County, Virginia**

**\$50,000-\$99,999**

**Born This Way Foundation's  
Kindness in Community Fund**

**Hollister Confidence Fund**

**Inova Health System**

**\$20,000-\$49,999**

**Harman Family Foundation**  
**Healthcare Initiative Foundation**  
**Philip L. Graham Fund**

**\$5,000-\$10,000**

**CSB & Healthy Minds Fairfax  
Community Foundation for Northern  
VA/Kara Foster-Bey Suicide Prevention  
Memorial Fund**

**Kettering Family Foundation**  
**McLean Community Foundation**  
**Risa Fund**

**W. Russell and Norma Ramsey  
Foundation Inc**

## Partners



Maryland's Largest School District

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
*Expanding Opportunity and Unleashing Potential*



**EVOLVING  
MINDS**



# INDIVIDUAL DONORS

We know there are many important causes to support. We sincerely appreciate our major\* individual and corporate donors who have prioritized teen mental health.

## \$10,000+

Anonymous

## \$5,000-\$9,999

Jonathan Faubell

David Parker & Althea Lee

## \$2,500-\$4,999

Tim & Sue Anderson

Scott H. Forester

Rachel & Todd Kros

Jen Leyton-Armakan

Lila McCain

Social 4 Good

Stonesifer Kinsley Family Fund

Swallowtail Group

## \$1,001-\$2,499

Todd & Lynn Anderson

The Avascent Group

Derek Blain

Anneli & Beau Burns

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Andrew & Jill Davis

Robert Julius

Sharon Kemmerer

David McAnulty

Timothy Royston

## \$1,000

The Alpha and Omega Fund

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Erika Gray

Bill Grossman

## \$1,000 (cont.)

Deborah Kimmel

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Gail Belt

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Richard Harrington

Kenneth Huelskamp

Todd R. Kingsley

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Lance Matthiesen

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Roger Nastou

Robert Olcott III

Leonard Pick

Wayne and Marcy Rehberger

Monica Roncskevitz

Nahid Sabti

Melissa & Jeff Sporn

Steve Stuban

Jean Yoon

\*major individual and corporate donors include those who gave \$500+ during the 2022 fiscal year (July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022). If you believe there was an error in our reporting, please email [info@ourmindsmatter.org](mailto:info@ourmindsmatter.org). Although space does not allow for us to recognize all of our donors here, we appreciate each and every donation.

# THE TEAM

## Staff

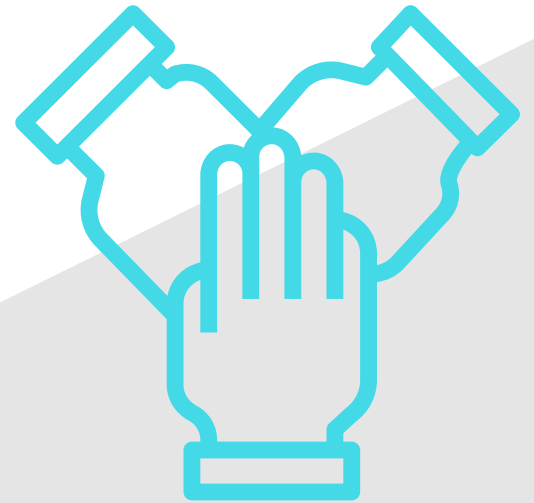
Lauren Anderson, Executive Director  
Sanice Arrington, Operations Coordinator  
Mo Butler, Program Coordinator  
Elizabeth Gutting, Development Director  
Rachel Greenberg, Program Manager  
Julia Klipp, Program Coordinator  
Laura Beth Levitt, Program Director  
Kait Miller, Chief Operating Officer  
G Wei Ng, Director of Impact  
Ramona Plummer, Program Coordinator  
Catherine Royston, Senior Program Coordinator

## Board of Directors

Lauren Anderson  
Sue Anderson, Board Secretary  
Dr. Kristin Carothers  
Andy Davis  
Jonny Faubell  
Aras Jizan  
Todd Kingsley  
Dr. Jen Leyton-Armakan  
Lila McCain, Board Chair  
Trey Olcott, Board Treasurer  
Diane Ross

## Teen Advisory Council

Kheira Bekkadja  
Ava Belmont  
Mayuka Valluri  
Md Alavi Akbar  
María José Garcés  
CJ Crombie  
Sophie Levine



# our minds matter



**Our Minds Matter has been the driving source behind the majority of my motivation to learn more about all aspects of mental health. As someone who knew very little about mental health before joining OMM, I have learned so many invaluable coping skills and other techniques to de-stress that I would have otherwise not have focused on. I now have an important mental health community that has even led me to think about pursuing a career path in psychology.**

-OMM student , 2022



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