



# 2024-25

## ANNUAL REPORT

A PROGRAM OF COLORADO ROCKY MOUNTAIN SCHOOL



## DIRECTOR'S LETTER

In a world that is rapidly changing, I feel more strongly than ever about the enduring value of the (HS)<sup>2</sup> opportunity. Artificial intelligence is reshaping everything: how we learn, what our scholars choose to study in college, and the kinds of jobs they may pursue after. These days, it feels like AI can do it all.

But this summer at (HS)<sup>2</sup>, we focused on the intangibles that AI can't replicate. It can't build friendship, feel empathy, or show up for

someone on a hard day. In our rapidly evolving world, the "why" behind (HS)<sup>2</sup> feels more urgent and essential than ever.

(HS)<sup>2</sup> is undoubtedly a rigorous academic program. But more than that, we are committed to developing good humans who show up for others, who care deeply, who are curious about the world, and who hold themselves to high standards. I have immense confidence that instilling these qualities in our students is a worthy and necessary venture. Being part of this community teaches them that their actions matter, to themselves, to their peers, and to the community as a whole.

Lately, I've been captivated by this human component of (HS)<sup>2</sup>. Of course, I'm proud that we offer a challenging biomedical engineering course and that students make measurable academic gains across their five weeks here. But in 2025, as our world feels divided and technology can make us feel small, students come to (HS)<sup>2</sup> for something more profound. They come to belong, to matter, and to be part of a community rooted in love, care, and family. Those spaces are rare for young people today, and I'm proud that we've built one.

One first-year student wrote on her final day:

"(HS)<sup>2</sup> has given me the space to truly be me. No toxic expectations, no judgment - just me. In the outside world, I felt afraid to fail and make errors, but at (HS)<sup>2</sup>, they encourage you to make mistakes so you can learn and not only be a better student, but a better person."

Thank you for helping us create a community where love and care are at the center. As you read through this report, I hope you see that we're doing far more than just that, but when those attributes are at the core of a program, students thrive in all domains. (HS)<sup>2</sup> wouldn't be what it is without you. Thank you for making the magic possible.

With warmth and gratitude,

Annie Oppenheim



## CLASS OF 2024 MATRICULATION

Binghamton University

Boston University

Brown University

Claremont McKenna  
College

Haverford College

Lehigh University

Louisiana State  
University

Princeton University

Rice University (3)

Rochester Institute  
of Technology

Stony Brook University

University of Buffalo

University of  
Pennsylvania

University of  
Southern California

University of Texas  
at Austin

Vassar College

**MISSION:** (HS)<sup>2</sup> prepares a group of first-generation and/or low-income students to succeed in college by empowering them with STEM-based skills, a family of driven peers, and a space to see the light and power in their own voices.



## FROM ARRIVAL TO IMPACT: THE SCHOLAR JOURNEY



### YEAR 1 – BELONGING & DISCOVERY

"I have truly found a family here."  
– Dia R., New Orleans



### YEAR 2 – GROWTH & CONFIDENCE

"This program gave me confidence in my voice, strength in my identity, and a vision for my future."  
– Naomi S., Denver



### YEAR 3 – LEADERSHIP & READINESS

"(HS)<sup>2</sup> didn't just prepare me for college, it helped me believe I belong there."  
– Jami P., Fort Worth



### BEYOND – COLLEGE & FUTURE

"(HS)<sup>2</sup> has changed the trajectory of my life tremendously."  
– Edna A., Denver

## THE POWER OF (HS)<sup>2</sup>

9.58/10

likelihood to recommend

~90%

grew in independence,  
resilience, and leadership

87.5%

of scholars call (HS)<sup>2</sup>  
the most impactful program  
they've ever experienced

Nearly 2/3 rated STEM  
engagement

9.5/10

83%

strongly agree they're  
academically prepared  
for college

"(HS)<sup>2</sup> has helped me believe in my  
potential in ways I never imagined  
before." – Bryan N., New York



## DEMOGRAPHICS

73 SCHOLARS | 3 COHORTS



**NEW YORK**  
25 Scholars



**TEXAS**  
20 Scholars



**LOUISIANA**  
6 Scholars



**COLORADO**  
21 Scholars



**MISSISSIPPI**  
1 Scholar

**HISPANIC/  
LATINO**  
48%



**BLACK/  
AFRICAN AMERICAN**  
44%

**ASIAN  
AMERICAN/  
PACIFIC  
ISLANDER**  
8%



**75%** First-Generation



**75%** Poverty-Structured  
Communities



**FEMALE**  
55%



**MALE**  
45%

## PARTNER SCHOOLS

### COLORADO SCHOOLS

DSST Conservatory Green High School  
DSST College View High School  
DSST Green Valley Ranch High School  
Arrupe Jesuit High School  
DSST Aurora Science and Tech School  
Prairie View High School  
DSST Northeast Elevate

### NEW YORK SCHOOLS

Achievement First University Prep High School  
The Academy Charter School - Uniondale  
The Academy Charter School - Hempstead  
Chaminade High School  
KIPP NYC College Prep High School  
New Visions Charter High School

### NEW ORLEANS SCHOOLS

New Orleans Charter Science and Mathematics High School  
The Willow School  
Morris Jeff High School

### MISSISSIPPI SCHOOLS

The Piney Woods Country Life School

### TEXAS SCHOOLS

RL Paschal High School  
Young Men's Leadership Academy  
Western Hills High School  
Young Women's Leadership Academy  
Cristo Rey Fort Worth College Prep  
TCC South Collegiate High School  
Amon Carter Riverside High School  
World Languages Institute  
Texas Academy of Biomedical Sciences  
Dunbar High School



COURSE	SKILLS	STUDENT REPORTED SKILL MASTERY
BIOLOGY	Experimental design, lab methods, environmental systems, critical observation	72%
COMPUTER SCIENCE	Python fundamentals, logic, debugging, teamwork	63%
BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING	Human-centered design, biomedical innovation, collaboration	73%
WRITING 1	Analytical writing and thesis-driven argumentation	79%
WRITING 2	Personal narrative development, authentic voice, college essay composition	92%
COLLEGE COUNSELING	College research and fit, essay strategy, financial literacy, independence	74%
GEOMETRY	Spatial reasoning, geometric proof, logic, visual modeling	66%
ALGEBRA 2	Quadratic functions, data modeling, collaboration, persistence	54%
PRE-CALCULUS	Trigonometry, sequences, introduction to limits, application-based learning	81%
CALCULUS	Derivatives, integrals, problem decomposition, mathematical reasoning	69%
CALC+	Multivariable and applied calculus, peer instruction, independent projects	64%



ACADEMIC  
OVERVIEW

**SPOTLIGHT:**  
**BIOMEDICAL  
ENGINEERING**  
This course prepares students to contribute meaningfully in a research setting through hands-on experimentation and data analysis. Students applied statistical methods and the scientific method to explore college-level engineering concepts, gaining skills that will distinguish them as competitive candidates for undergraduate research and scholarships.



## ARTS + ACTIVE

BLACKSMITHING

CERAMICS

CLIMBING

DANCE

FARMING + FOOD JUSTICE

KAYAKING

MUSIC

SILVERSMITHING

TEAM SPORTS



"I loved how blacksmithing pushed me out of my comfort zone. I am so scared of fire and the fact that I created something out of fire was amazing."

- Juanny R., New York



## ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

(HS)<sup>2</sup> alumni remain the program's greatest source of strength, returning year after year as faculty and mentors. This summer, three alumni served on our teaching team, each helping recruit additional staff through their own networks. Since setting a strategic goal in 2020 to expand alumni involvement, (HS)<sup>2</sup> has employed 13 alumni, 7 of whom have returned for multiple summers. Their continued presence reflects the enduring impact of (HS)<sup>2</sup> and the community it builds.

### (HS)<sup>2</sup> FACULTY ALUMNI

#### CLEMENTE DE HOYOS JR. — (HS)<sup>2</sup> 2017

Emory University Class of 2022, BS Neuroscience

Currently: Lead ESOL Academic Support Specialist at CRMS

#### SHARMELY LOPEZ — (HS)<sup>2</sup> 2017

Colorado College Class of 2023, BA in Romance Languages

Currently: College Success Advisor at KIPP Forward

#### LONDON ZAMBITO — (HS)<sup>2</sup> 2016

University of Houston School of Business, 2022

Currently: Substitute Teaching and Subcontracting

"As an alumnus, it is amazing to see the program continue to evolve each summer to meet the needs of our students. The goals and aspirations of our students give me greater hope for the future as we deal with more uncertainty in the world."

- Clemente D. '17,  
5-Year Program Faculty



20<sup>TH</sup> SUMMER OF (HS)<sup>2</sup>  
**SAVE  
JULY 17-19 THE  
2026 DATE**

In 2026, we will mark the 20th summer of (HS)<sup>2</sup>! We look forward to welcoming alumni and supporters to Carbondale from July 17–19 for a weekend of reconnection, reflection, and celebration. Together, we'll honor two decades of impact and the many ways (HS)<sup>2</sup> has shaped lives and communities. We hope you'll join us in celebrating this remarkable milestone!





**Kamil Abshir**  
Denver, CO



**Takira Adams**  
Jackson, MS



**Oluwadamilola Adebisi**  
Fort Worth, TX



**Abraham Angustia**  
Flushing, NY



**Marely Arguello**  
Haltom City, TX



**Jean Carlos Batista**  
New York, NY



**Anne Brice**  
Uniondale, NY



**Hannah Bui**  
New Orleans, LA



**Keyvon Davis**  
Roosevelt, NY



**Julio Dominguez**  
Commerce City, CO



**Zacnicte Hernandez**  
Bronx, NY



**Janice Jackson**  
Fort Worth, TX



**Cynthia Lamas Gutierrez**  
Morrison, CO



**Hanna Lanham**  
Hempstead, NY



**Chibike Mgbeahuru**  
Uniondale, NY



**Dia Rodriguez**  
New Orleans, LA



**Juanny Rodriguez Acosta**  
Freeport, NY



**Janice Sor**  
Denver, CO



**Tyrrel Tellei**  
Denver, CO



**Dai'Juan Williams**  
Fort Worth, TX



**Brian Zelaya**  
Hempstead, NY

## CLASS OF 2025

As of November 1, **9 of the 21** Class of 2025 scholars were named QuestBridge Finalists, one of the nation's most competitive scholarships.



## RECENT GRADUATE SPOTLIGHTS

### TAKIRA ADAMS MISSISSIPPI



#### GRADUATION SPEAKER

Every year following my summer at (HS)<sup>2</sup>, I was readily prepared for my academic school year. The program is persistently challenging the young minds of tomorrow — and I know because I am an example of what greatness is produced.

“(HS)<sup>2</sup> was the best thing to ever happen to me. I’m a Black girl from Mississippi, who had never even been on a plane before. The program introduced me to life itself outside of my dull borders. It helped me expand in experience, learning, and social tactics. My love will forever be set on this program. Thank you (HS)<sup>2</sup>!!”

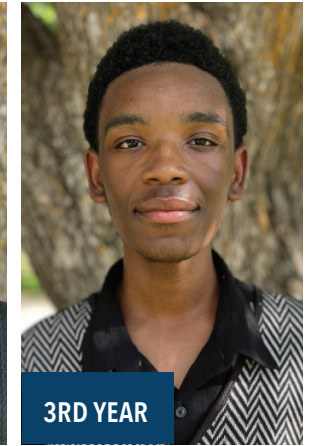
#### LOOKING FORWARD

Dream College: Spelman College, Howard University

Intended Major: Political Science & American History

Dream Career: Attorney, Congresswoman, President of the United States

### DAI’JUAN WILLIAMS TEXAS



#### FOUNDERS’ AWARD RECIPIENT

Selected by staff as the graduate who best embodies (HS)<sup>2</sup> core values of care, curiosity, persistence, and academic excellence, to receive a \$1K scholarship for college life expenses upon matriculation.

“(HS)<sup>2</sup> honestly changed everything for me. I’ve never been in a place where I felt this supported and understood where people actually saw me for who I am and still expected the best from me. It pushed me in ways I didn’t know I needed and I’m better for it. I’m leaving more confident, more driven, and way more sure of what I want to do and who I want to be.”

#### LOOKING FORWARD

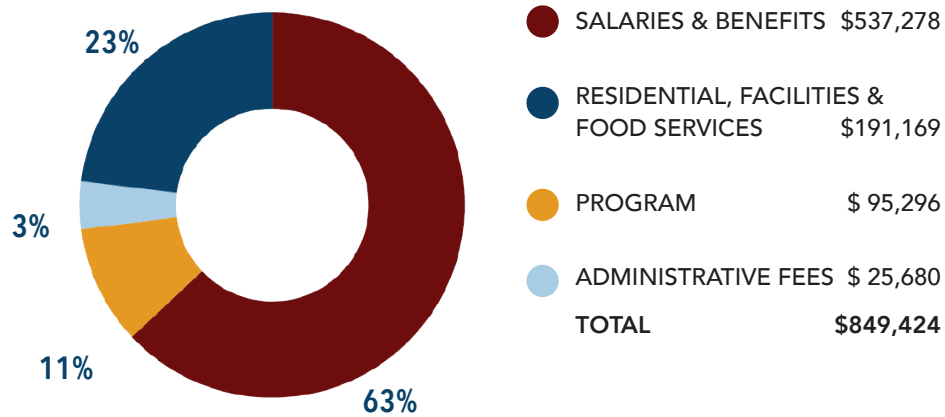
Dream College: Pomona College

Intended Major: Politics, Philosophy, and Economics (PPE)

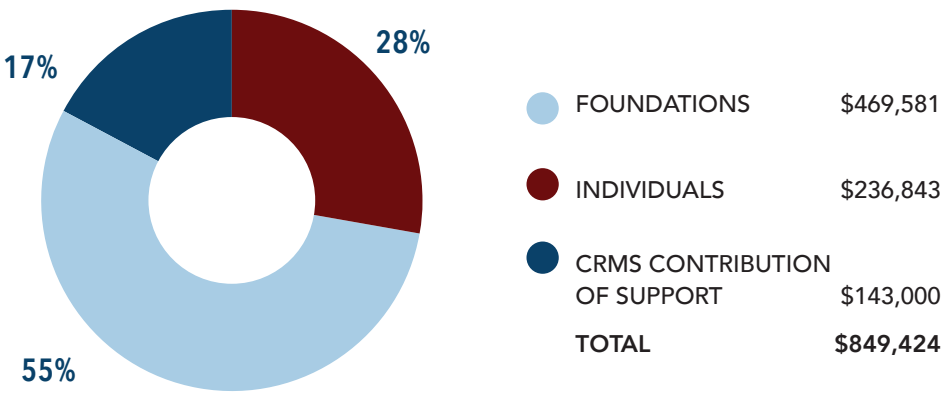
Dream Career: Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court

# FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

## EXPENSES



## CONTRIBUTIONS



“Your support doesn’t just fund a program. It builds confidence, nurtures dreams, and inspires the next generation of changemakers.”  
– Rivana N., Denver

# ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The (HS)<sup>2</sup> Advisory Committee, a standing committee of the CRMS Board of Trustees, brings together trustees, program supporters, and experts in education to guide the program’s vision and impact. Their steadfast partnership ensures the continued growth, innovation, and longevity of (HS)<sup>2</sup> at CRMS.

Ravi Venkateswaran  
Committee Chair

Annie Oppenheim  
Program Director

Garland and Mollie Lasater  
Helen Obermeyer  
Program Founders

Jeff Leahy  
Mags Miller  
Ex Officio

Chris Babbs  
Dr. Whitney Boyd  
Dr. Ellen Brooks  
Chelsea Congdon  
Liliana Diaz (HS)<sup>2</sup> ‘12  
Nick Favaloro  
Nikki Goldstein

Maggie Goldstein  
Molly Lynch  
Alex Moreno (HS)<sup>2</sup> ‘12  
Jonathan Price (HS)<sup>2</sup> ‘11  
Johnny Richardson  
Lisanne Rogers





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### \$50,000 +

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Anonymous (2)

### \$1 - \$999

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Gustavo Alvarez (HS)<sup>2</sup> '09  
Laura Armstrong  
Aspen Skiing Company  
Arielle Attaway (HS)<sup>2</sup> '09  
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Colorado Gives Day  
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Meghan Duff  
Anne Favaloro  
Rafael Garza  
Shawn Gerum  
Morgan Hardy  
Sophie Hasson  
Richard & Carolyn Herb  
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Kenly Khan  
Micki Kibler  
Hannah Lyons  
Emelie Madrigal (HS)<sup>2</sup> '19  
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Jake Marston  
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North Texas  
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Mary Ellen Treadway  
Ravi Venkateswaran CRMS '69  
Christine & Alex Ward  
Joe & Casey White  
Pete Wyman  
Anonymous (4)

Every gift helps sustain  
this transformative work  
and ensures access for  
future generations of  
scholars.

We are so grateful!

# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHTS



## ALEX MORENO, (HS)<sup>2</sup> '12

*B.S. Electrical Engineering, University of Texas at Dallas;  
M.S. & Ph.D. in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science  
at the University of California at Berkeley*

If I could describe (HS)<sup>2</sup> in one word, it would be transformative.

Hi, I'm Alex Moreno from the (HS)<sup>2</sup> Class of 2012. The first time I boarded a plane, I was 14 years old, heading to Colorado for (HS)<sup>2</sup>. Until then, summer programs always felt out of reach, with \$2,000 price tags my family couldn't afford. So when I got into (HS)<sup>2</sup>, I was thrilled. Honestly, I didn't know much about the world back then. I thought I was headed for an igloo surrounded by snow, studying next to a

fire; I genuinely believed I was going to Antarctica.

I grew up in a neighborhood where hearing gunshots while doing homework was normal. I was once jumped for a pizza. It wasn't safe to be outside, and dreaming big didn't feel realistic. (HS)<sup>2</sup> changed that. It became a haven, my first experience of learning in peace, surrounded by kindness, and feeling like I truly belonged in the world.

At (HS)<sup>2</sup>, I dove deep into math, science, and engineering. I still remember conducting a hydro generator feasibility project that later helped me land an interview with ExxonMobil. But (HS)<sup>2</sup> is not just an academic program, it's a community of driven students from underrepresented backgrounds who are given the space, resources, and mentorship to thrive.

How did (HS)<sup>2</sup> change my life? Some things are hard to measure, like the confidence I gained or the sense of purpose I discovered. But others are concrete: I left the program with polished college essays, an understanding of the admissions process, and experiences that made my applications stand out.

I went on to earn my bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering debt-free. Motivated by the lack of representation I saw in tech and academia, I pursued my M.S. and Ph.D. in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science at UC Berkeley. Today, I'm the founder and CEO of eNano Technologies, where we're building the smallest Bluetooth devices in the world, innovations that can help prevent everything from stolen packages to salmonella outbreaks.

(HS)<sup>2</sup> helped me get here. To the donors reading this: what you are supporting is not a typical program. You're investing in talented, curious, and driven students who just need opportunity. You're opening doors to futures they might never have imagined, but are absolutely capable of achieving.

## ESTHER ASSENSO, (HS)<sup>2</sup> '17

*B.S. Neuroscience, Washington and Lee University  
First-Year Medical Student, University of Chicago Pritzker  
School of Medicine*

When I was accepted into (HS)<sup>2</sup>, I had no idea how life-changing it would be. From meals in the Bar Fork to Coffee House performances of "Cabinet Battle #1" from Hamilton, to the tears I shed at graduation in 2017, (HS)<sup>2</sup> was a collection of pure, unforgettable moments.

That sense of possibility continued when I was accepted to Washington and Lee University as a QuestBridge Scholar. With that scholarship came a full ride to a top liberal arts university, an accomplishment that made my first-generation, low-income, immigrant parents incredibly proud. I would be remiss not to thank Betsy Bingham-Johns and especially Nick Favalaro, who guided me through the college process and read my essays countless times before I submitted them. Their dedication and belief in me shaped my future.

Because of the support I received during those summers, I am now a first-year medical student at the University of Chicago Pritzker School of Medicine. Here, I am deepening my passion for medicine while learning to care for a wide range of patients, especially those from low-income and underserved backgrounds. Every day, I build on the lessons (HS)<sup>2</sup> taught me about perseverance, empathy, and community. I am certain that without the people who poured into me and the friendships and experiences I gained through (HS)<sup>2</sup>, I would not be where I am today. Those three summers continue to influence the rest of my life.

When I think back on my time at (HS)<sup>2</sup>, I feel nothing but joy. I remember climbing Mount Sopris for eight hours on my birthday and the quiet nights lying in the grass, staring up at the stars—something I never experienced growing up in the busy streets of the Bronx. (HS)<sup>2</sup> gave me space to breathe, to think, and to dream. That sense of clarity and purpose has carried me all the way to medical school.

As I look ahead, I am excited to see where the path that began at (HS)<sup>2</sup> leads me next. The program gave me confidence, community, and direction, and it continues to guide every step I take toward becoming the physician I aspire to be.







SUPPORT TODAY



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[hs2.crms.org/donate](https://hs2.crms.org/donate)