

FUELING  
COLLEGE  
DREAMS



**FUEL**  
Education



ANNUAL REPORT **2013**

*FUEL Education believes that higher education is attainable for all, regardless of income, and that family engagement is crucial to students' educational achievement. Working with community partners, FUEL provides knowledge, resources, connections, and financial incentives that empower parents to propel their children into higher education.*

Dear friends,

The past year has been one of great growth, learning, and planning for FUEL Education. With some changes in our partner line-up, we served 23 percent more parents in 2013 than in 2012. Collectively, FUEL families have opened over 700 accounts, saved over half a million dollars toward higher education, and are well on their way to placing their children in college.

We completed the first year of our three-year study on the efficacy of parent engagement. Some early findings of the study are that FUEL demonstrably gives parents and students important information about how to prepare for college academically and financially, and that families are actively using that information to do specific college-bound tasks like visit campuses. We are delighted that this outside review suggests the importance and impact of parent engagement, which has been FUEL's emphasis from the beginning.

In another kind of self-study, FUEL Education worked with two consultants last summer who analyzed our programming and our demographic and outcomes data. The resulting program refinements, such as community-based facilitators and a "low-touch" version of our model, position FUEL for tremendous development.

In short, our results are showing that FUEL works. Parents are more educated about college access, more involved in the process, and saving more money; our young students are excelling in high school, and entering and staying in college. So the year ahead promises to be even more exciting than the last. We are exploring ways to get more families into the FUEL pipeline by approaching parents of younger children in our gateway cities and we are expanding our network of board leadership and other supporters to reflect our development as an organization.

None of this would be possible without you, our most ardent supporters, and I am incredibly grateful for your attention to FUEL Education and its families. We are on a remarkable journey as we inform both low-income families and the broader public about the importance of parent engagement. We are delighted to have you along for the journey. Thank you for all you do.

Sincerely,

Robert Hildreth  
Founder & Executive Director

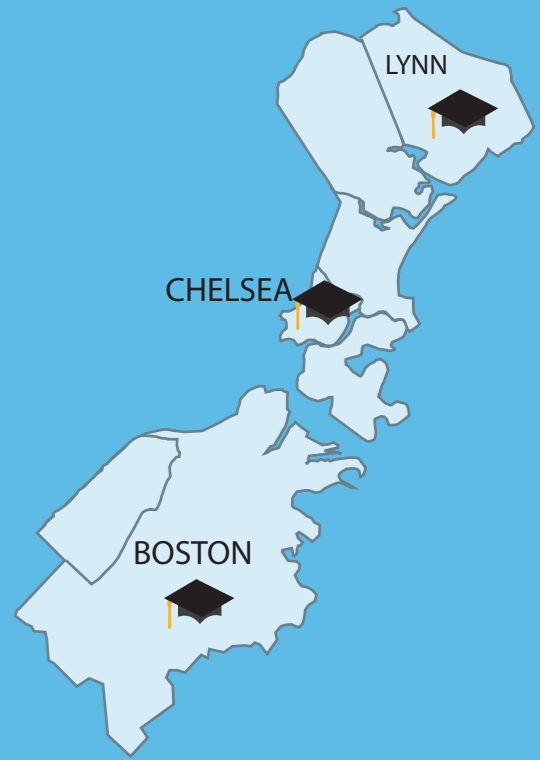
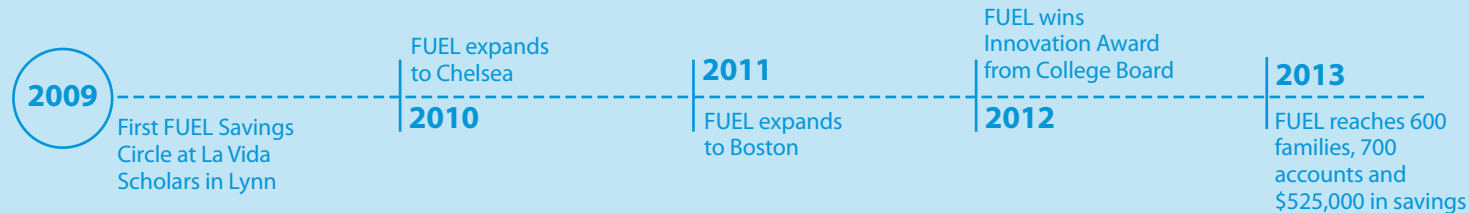
# WHAT WE DO

Working in concert with Greater Boston community agencies, FUEL Education helps low-income families gain the knowledge and skills they need to guide their children into higher education so they can reach their full potential and join the American economic and cultural mainstream.

FUEL Education's college access innovation is to leverage the single most influential force in a child's life: their family. There are social and financial barriers that stand in the way of so many talented students. Research shows that galvanizing their parents' support improves their higher education outcomes. Students whose parents participate in the FUEL Education program are better positioned for college success because their families have become informed advocates and knowledgeable consumers of higher education.

The heart of our program is a multi-year curriculum of monthly educational workshops (Savings Circles) that explain every aspect of college access. To make it easier for parents to participate, the sessions are taught in multiple languages, are scheduled both morning and evening to accommodate working schedules, and include community meals so parents can support each other and share resources. As part of the curriculum, parents open an educational savings account and are expected to contribute to it regularly. FUEL offers savings bonuses to those who do so.

Our model has had a tremendous impact. Nearly all FUEL Education students enroll in college immediately after they graduate high school and more than 90 percent of them are persisting toward their degrees. For comparison, the national retention rate is about 60 percent, and much lower for this at-risk population. FUEL Education is using the power of family engagement to change lives for the better.



# WHERE WE WORK

- Boston University Upward Bound
- Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston
- City of Chelsea
- KIPP Academy Lynn Collegiate
- La Vida Scholars
- Neighborhood House Charter School
- Trinity Education for Excellence Program



## FUEL FAMILY SPOTLIGHT: TEMI & TAIYE ASHOROBI

Temi Ashorobi and her mother Taiye embody the kind of family teamwork that drives FUEL Education. They have been involved with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston's Yawkey Club for many years and joined FUEL when Temi was in middle school. She is now a senior and looking forward to starting college in the fall.

Taiye's unwavering support includes regularly attending Savings Circles, faithfully saving money toward college costs, and no small amount of warmhearted nagging. As Temi says, "I applaud her. She's been very supportive and reminds me when the deadlines are. I have my own calendar with the deadlines, but she still reminds me. She makes me nervous about submitting things on time!"

But for Taiye, it's all about getting her daughter where she wants to go. "I'm working side by side with her to be there, to be supportive of whatever decisions she makes. I just told her to make a good decision."

Both agree that FUEL has made a tremendous difference in their thinking and helped them through the college process. "FUEL plays a big role because they don't only look at the financial aspect, but they help us learn what to expect when your child applies to college. I'm now seeing the results," says Taiye.

It seems that their entire community will see the results in a few years. Temi reports that she "definitely wants to get into criminal justice and somehow bring those skills back to my community. Like Roxbury district court house, I hope to go back there and work under that roof someday."

Ambition, learning, mutual support, and family teamwork. The Ashorobis have the whole FUEL Education package.

# FUEL BY THE NUMBERS



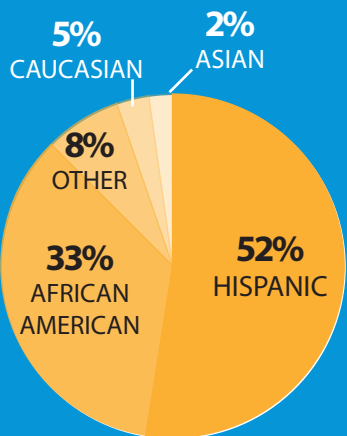
600  
FAMILIES

700  
STUDENTS



\$525,000  
IN SAVINGS

## PARTICIPANT PROFILE



75%  
QUALIFY  
FOR FREE OR  
REDUCED-  
COST LUNCH



151  
STUDENTS  
IN COLLEGE

67%  
OF STUDENTS  
WILL BE THE  
FIRST IN FAMILY TO  
GO TO COLLEGE



113  
SAVINGS  
CIRCLES  
HELD SINCE JANUARY 2013

92%  
of FUEL alumni  
who enrolled in  
higher education  
are **persisting**.

# FUEL's PATHWAY TO COLLEGE

## FUEL EDUCATION's MODEL IS UNIQUE

Parents play a key role in propelling their children toward college. FUEL gives underserved parents the knowledge, skills, and network to advance their children's higher education ambitions.

**FUEL OFFERS**

**SAVINGS CIRCLES**  
Monthly workshops where parents learn about every aspect of college access

**FACILITATORS**  
Guide parents to resources, help them open educational savings accounts, and teach the Savings Circles

**SAVINGS BONUSES**  
Seed money that empowers and motivates parents to save toward college expenses

**STRONG COMMUNITY**  
A network of like-minded parents who share ideas and keep each other motivated



**PARENTS CONTRIBUTE**

**12 TIME**  
Parents attend Savings Circles monthly for up to two years

**ENTHUSIASM and AMBITION**  
Parents engage in the college access process and become informed consumers of higher education

**MONEY**  
Parents make regular deposits in their children's educational savings accounts

“They tell us about college access in school, but they don’t tell our parents. Parents are kind of in the dark about it, especially if they’re not used to the system. So FUEL will explain everything to my mom in terms that she gets. She’s on the same page with me.”

## FACILITATORS STEER FAMILIES TO COLLEGE



FUEL Education’s experience has shown that the key to connecting with parents is the presence of a staff member who is dedicated to each community. There is simply no substitute for human contact. Recruiting, enrolling, setting up an educational bank account, walking through the complex systems of college access, and troubleshooting financial, academic, and family issues all require close interaction that only an invested facilitator can provide.

Last summer, FUEL hired two new staff members who are dedicating their time to connecting and reaching out to parents. Rochelly Fajardo in Lynn and Stephanie Chery in Boston are bringing us closer to the community, marketing FUEL to local families, teaching Savings Circles, and giving the parents the level of service they need to propel their children toward higher education.



FUEL facilitators in action: Rochelly Fajardo (top), Stephanie Chery (bottom)

As Rochelly describes it, “My work in Lynn ensures that parents understand that their participation and engagement in the program are crucial in making college attainable for their children. All of them have expressed that one of the expectations they have for their kids is obtaining a college degree. What we do here at FUEL helps these families feel empowered as well as closer to the educational goals they have set for their kids.”

Stephanie agrees, saying, “I am a strong believer that access is gained through knowledge. I strongly believe that success is not single handedly accomplished by one person on their own and I’m proud to be in a position that I can serve as a supportive and constant conduit between the resources of FUEL Education and our families in order for their students to obtain educational achievement.”

FUEL facilitators are the bridge between our theory and practice. They bring our curriculum alive for hundreds of parents and help them realize their dreams of college for their children. Rochelly and Stephanie bring passion, expertise, and enthusiasm to every Savings Circle. The parents take away new knowledge and skills, and the security of knowing they have a steadfast companion on their journey toward higher education.



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## FUEL ALUMNA UPDATE: BAHIYA NASUUNA

We are so proud of all of our graduates and eagerly follow their college careers to the best of our ability. Last year, Bahiya Nasuuna graduated from Chelsea High School and started a pre-med track at the University of Massachusetts Amherst on a full scholarship. We recently caught up with Bahiya to talk about her life as a college freshman.

“My classes first semester were good and I finished with good grades, but second semester got a little harder and I am definitely spending more time in the library,” she said. “One of the things that has made college really fun is the people I’ve met. I live on a floor that specifically has minority students trying to get into the Honors College, so I have made friends with people I can relate to and it has made transitioning to college fun.”

Bahiya and her mother stay in touch with Laura Assade, FUEL’s Chelsea coordinator, and they remain grateful for what they learned while Bahiya was in high school. “FUEL has been helpful getting me where I am because it taught my mom and me things we didn’t know about college. FUEL also helped us save \$3,000 which really reduced our monthly payment for the payment plan I have.”

We plan to keep our eye on Bahiya and expect great things from her. “What I want people to know about me in college is that I am happy being a public health major and have really become involved in organizations and groups on campus. I am working hard to make my parents proud and can’t wait to see what college has in store for me.” Good luck Bahiya. We can’t wait either!

“I want my daughter to be able to get a little further in life than I did. That’s why I’m here, to learn the college process.”



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- Rochelly Fajardo** | Facilitator
- Michelle Murphy** | Senior Manager of Program Facilitation
- Lauren Piette** | Senior Manager of Communications & Administration
- Elizabeth Drew Scholl** | Director of Development
- Yiming Shuang** | Senior Manager of Program Operations

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION**

**ASSETS**

Current Assets	\$57,215
Net Property & Equipment	\$37,395
Prepaid Expenses	\$1,320
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$95,930</b>

**LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS**

Current Liabilities	\$7,356
Net Assets	\$88,574
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$95,930</b>

**STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES**

**REVENUE & SUPPORT**

Contributions	\$975,257
Donated Services	\$71,745
Interest Income	\$54
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$1,047,056</b>

**EXPENSES**

Program Services	\$823,785
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$1,090,030</b>
Change in net assets in 2013	(\$42,974)

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