LET'S GET READY

STUDENTS HELPING STUDENTS TO AND THROUGH COLLEGE
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TO THE LET’S GET READY COMMUNITY:

As new leadership of LGR, we are honored to share this review of last year, a truly unimaginable time. There is much to reflect on, but we must begin by sharing deep gratitude for the consistent support of our community in this time of uncertainty, and unending admiration for the resilience and creativity of LGR students, coaches, and staff.

Let’s Get Ready has existed for more than 20 years to support students in navigating the complex, inequitable systems that surround higher education through a powerful near-peer coaching model. We have always evolved to respond to the most timely needs of our students and serve them in the most adaptable, flexible way. This spirit of innovation meant we were able to move quickly to ensure continuity for our existing 11,000+ students, while enrolling 2,956 new students into the program.

COVID had a devastating impact on college enrollment nationally, which will have a far-ranging impact on students individually and on our society collectively. LGR students, while not immune to these challenges, enrolled in college at virtually the same rate as in the prior year, compared to a heart-wrenching 12% drop in the national data. This year also saw our first six-year graduation rate for students who have received Success services from LGR. We’re so proud to share that LGR students are graduating from college at double the rate of their closest peers, but we won’t be satisfied until there is no difference in results between LGR students and those coming from the highest-income communities.

We made a deeper commitment to racial equity this year as well, digging into our resources for students, our internal operations, and exploring representation at all levels of the organization through this lens. While this work is very much a process, we have made specific progress on a set of equity priorities collaboratively identified by LGR staff. These included:

- Starting a Student Leadership Council to ensure student voice is elevated in our work
- Formalizing career pathways for staff and establishing a model for salary transparency
- Launching conversations about our role in systems-wide advocacy

There is still a tremendous amount to do to reverse COVID’s debilitating effect on college enrollment and graduation, and to become a more and more values- and justice-driven organization. We move forward into the next phase of work with resolve and optimism to ensure the “new normal” is truly new: in its commitment to equity, in its openness to new ideas and ways of operating, and in its readiness to elevate the talents, wisdom, and experiences of young people.

We hope you will join us as we move into this future!

In partnership,

LENA EBERHART  
Chief Executive Officer

BROOK PAYNER  
Chair, Board of Directors
With colleges closing classrooms and dormitories, high schools suspended for uncertain amounts of time, and college admissions decisions delayed, on top of the overarching health and safety concerns, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on students across the country has been enormous.

For many students, educational institutions offer stability, sustenance, and hopeful visions of the future, and any pause in their educational path has a significant chance of becoming permanent interruptions. LGR’s students have faced unprecedented obstacles to continuing their education and shared some of their concerns:

“*I am worried about missing out on opportunities. I am also worried about not having the funds to continue financing my education since COVID-19 has resulted in me being at home and helping out a great deal financially.*”

“*I can’t concentrate at home and it doesn’t feel the same as learning in person. The financial aid process has been stressful.*”

“*Not feeling like I’m getting a real education, not learning well at home, feeling disconnected, dealing with more profound mental illness.*”

“*I don’t feel that motivated to reach out to professors or use campus resources because I’ve been stuck at my house for a long time. I don’t have the urge to socialize.*”

Because of these risks and because of increased student engagement during the crisis, we know that Let’s Get Ready’s coaching was more critical than ever for our students for continuity, guidance, and motivation. As our students shared:

“*My coach is the best – she constantly checks in on me and always motivates me to keep on going!*”

“The most helpful area of support was in regards to my classes and ways to improve my time management and dealing with all the stress.”

“My coach was very helpful when it came to registering for classes; my advisors didn’t help me at all. My coach, Bricenia, called me and walked me through each step of the way.”

“My coach provided constant reminders and encouragement to keep going – even when things get tough. She showed that someone was cheering me on in my quest to do well in class – so that helped a lot.”
The consequences of this pandemic on college enrollment and graduation will be far-reaching and long-term. We are committed to deepening and broadening our support of students to help mitigate the stress, frustration, uncertainty, and pain experienced in 2020 and beyond.

**SPECIFICALLY, LET’S GET READY:**

- Pivoted to a 100% virtual program model;
- Ensured access to high-quality, virtual mental health counseling for more than 500 students;
- Developed new coaching resources related to many themes, including strategies for successful virtual learning and referrals for meeting urgent needs, such as food pantries, free computers, and financial relief;
- Designed targeted ‘back on track’ curriculum for students who had a COVID-related delay in college enrollment;
- Opened our enrollment process to welcome students from new geographies, including Texas and California; and
- Through webinars, provided best practices to 100 other organizations for high-quality and data-informed virtual programming.
THEORY OF CHANGE & PROGRAM MODEL

ULTIMATE OUTCOME
Let’s Get Ready envisions a future in which students from historically underrepresented backgrounds have the support they need to attain a college education.

THROUGH
• Well-supported and highly-engaged near-peer coaches
• Relevant and student-centered content
• Sustained and collaborative partnerships

WE HELP STUDENTS GAIN
• Meaningful connections to coaches and Let’s Get Ready
• Access to critical information and supports
• Self-efficacy skills to pursue and achieve college goals
• A sense of belonging in a college-going community

LET’S GET READY’S UNIQUE PROGRAM PROVIDES STUDENTS WITH SIX YEARS OF SUPPORT THROUGH THREE PHASES:

ACCESS
HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS
Near-peer led prep for SAT exam, personalized goal-setting and introduction to the college admissions and financial aid process.

OUTCOMES
• Increase SAT score
• Increase college knowledge and application preparedness

TRANSITION: CORE
HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS
College enrollment support through frequent, curriculum-based, two-way texting.

TRANSITION: CORE+
HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS
Virtual near-peer coaches provide personalized guidance around college applications, financial aid, college decisions, and combating “summer melt.”

OUTCOMES
• Submit college and financial aid applications
• Enroll in college

SUCCESS: CORE
COLLEGE STUDENTS
College persistence support through frequent, curriculum-based, two-way texting.

SUCCESS: CORE+
COLLEGE STUDENTS
Virtual and on-campus, near-peer coaches provide personalized guidance and support to overcome barriers to college persistence.

OUTCOMES
• Identify and address barriers to ensure persistence
• Semester over semester
• Graduate from college

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Let’s Get Ready envisions a future in which students from historically underrepresented backgrounds have the support they need to attain a college education.

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IMPACT REPORT

WHO WE SERVED IN THE 2019-20 SCHOOL YEAR

13,812 students served

300+ college students served as near-peer mentors to our students

Students served came from 856 zip codes across 22 states

90% of students identify as people of color

91% of students come from low-income backgrounds and/or will be first in their family to go to college

“I AM A PRODUCT OF ALL THE MENTORS BEFORE ME; MY SUCCESS AND MY MOTIVATION TO SEE MY STUDENTS SUCCEED COMES FROM THE ENCOURAGEMENT THAT I RECEIVED FROM MY MENTORS AND ALL THE PEOPLE I’VE WORKED WITH IN THIS ORGANIZATION, AND I HOPE TO HAVE INFLUENCED MY STUDENTS TO PAY FORWARD THE GUIDANCE THAT THEY GOT AND FOSTER THE SUCCESS FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.”

— LGR TRANSITION COACH
MEASURING OUR SUCCESS
At Let’s Get Ready, we measure the success of our programs with both qualitative and quantitative indicators. This report reflects data from high school and college students served in our most recent program year (almost 14,000 students), and it examines college enrollment and graduation for our students who graduated from high school between 2014 and 2020 (close to 22,000 students).

LET’S GET READY STUDENTS ENROLL IN COLLEGE AT SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER RATES THAN PEERS FROM SIMILAR BACKGROUNDs

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<th>Let’s Get Ready Students</th>
<th>Students from Similar Low-Income Backgrounds</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4-year colleges</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-year colleges</td>
<td>19%</td>
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MOST LET’S GET READY STUDENTS ENROLL AT 4-YEAR COLLEGES

LET’S GET READY COLLEGE STUDENTS GRADUATE AT DOUBLE THE RATE OF STUDENTS FROM SIMILAR BACKGROUNDs

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>68</td>
<td>33</td>
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All statistics for Let’s Get Ready students are determined through data from the National Student Clearinghouse and student outreach. Comparative statistics for students from similar backgrounds are determined via data from the National Center for Education Statistics.
WHAT OUR STUDENTS SAY

95% of students would recommend Let’s Get Ready to fellow students

95% of students are confident that they will graduate from college

92% of students report having a positive relationship with their coach

96% of college students report that their coach keeps them informed and on track in college

680,604 text messages exchanged between near-peer coaches and students

“I THINK IT’S SO IMPORTANT FOR STUDENTS RIGHT NOW TO BE GETTING RESOURCES AND HELP FROM LGR BECAUSE OF THE UNIQUE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT THEY’RE IN. IT’S BECOMING SO EASY TO GET CAUGHT UP WITH WHAT’S HAPPENING OUT THERE IN THE WORLD THAT IT’S EASY TO BE DISCOURAGED AND DISMISS YOUR EDUCATION, WHICH IS WHY RIGHT NOW HAVING A MENTOR, AND ESPECIALLY THAT UNIQUE PEER-TO-PEER GUIDANCE IS CRUCIAL TO SO MANY FIRST-GEN STUDENTS.”

— LGR SUCCESS COACH
THANK YOU TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS

We would like to thank everyone who contributed financially to Let’s Get Ready in FY20. Whether it was your first year supporting our students and our programs, your 20th year, or somewhere in between — thank you. If you gave more this year in response to the added challenges created by the pandemic — thank you. If you maintained your donation despite the challenges and uncertainty in your own life — thank you.

We would also like to thank the National Board of Directors, the New England Advisory Board, and the Associates Council for their hard work, guidance, and leadership, and for their contributions of time, talent, and treasure. In this challenging year, LGR’s National Board of Directors stepped up to create a $300,000 matching fund, which was matched by another $300,000 in new and upgraded donations from across our donor community. In total, the board gave and raised more than $1 million!

Let’s Get Ready envisions and is working towards a future in which students from all socioeconomic backgrounds have the support they need to attain a college degree, and we simply could not do the work we do without the support of everyone listed in these pages. We are grateful for your continued support and are looking forward to a successful FY21!

GIVING BY CATEGORY

- 58% Foundations
- 28% Individuals
- 12% Corporations
- 1% Earned Income
- 1% Other

FINANCIALS

- REVENUE $2.9 million
- EXPENSES $2.65 million
CONTRIBUTORS LIST
FY2020: DONATIONS RECEIVED SEPTEMBER 1, 2019 – AUGUST 31, 2020

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Michael & Susan Dell Foundation
The Rosenthal Family Fund +

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Diana O’Keefe
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Martin Ouimet *
Charles Parsow #
Payden & Rygel Investment Management
Terry Perl
David Pesikoff
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Carl and Betty Pforzheimer
Kate Pinto *
The Pond Foundation
Raines International, Inc.

+ Board of Directors * New England Advisory Board # Associates Council
Let’s Get Ready provides free SAT prep, admissions counseling, and post-enrollment mentoring to students from low-income backgrounds and who are first-generation-to-college. Our peer-driven program is administered by highly trained and highly effective college students who mentor younger students to and through college.