

JULY 2021

# SY21 END OF YEAR REPORT

HANDS ON ATLANTA  
EDUCATION PROGRAMS TEAM  
AUGUST 2020-JULY 2021



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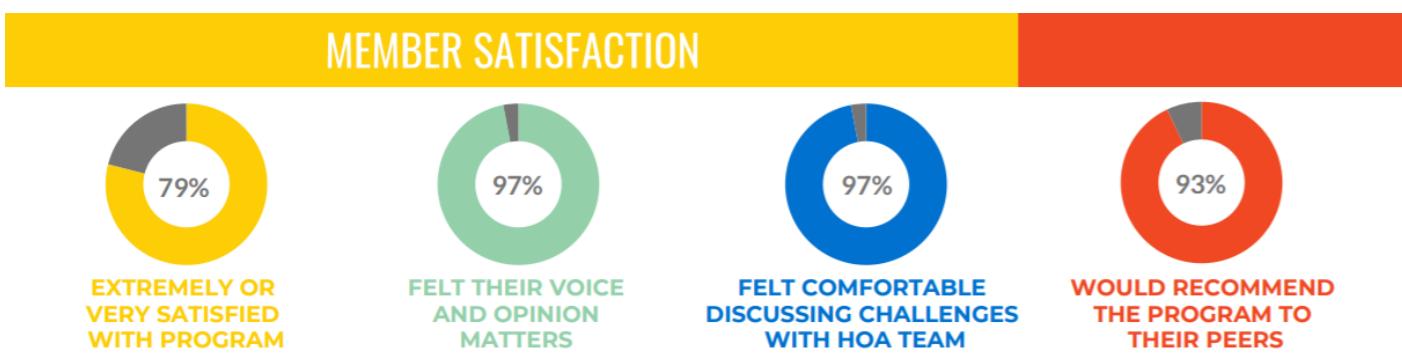
## AMERICORPS PARTNERS

- 10 Partner Sites + HOA
- 175 Touchpoints between Site Supervisors & HOA Staff
  - 2 Fulton County Schools
  - 8 APS Schools
- **Partner Satisfaction:** 93.3% of partners were satisfied with the performance of their AmeriCorps members; 100% of partners were satisfied with HOA management, partnership, & overall program.



## AMERICORPS MEMBERS

- 38 Members (24 full-time; 14 half-time)
  - 24 ELA/math tutors
  - 14 SEL coaches
- 387 Students Served
  - 173 received tutoring
  - 214 received SEL coaching
- 1,417 Touchpoints between Members & HOA Staff
- **Member Satisfaction:** 93.1% of members would recommend the HOA AmeriCorps program to their peers



## CENTERS OF HOPE



**C.T. Martin Natatorium & Recreation Center,**  
City of Atlanta



**Grove Park Recreation Center,**  
City of Atlanta

HOA was contacted about learning pod facilitation in September for students receiving virtual instruction from their APS home school; the program started on October 5th and lasted until the end of SY21 on May 28, 2021.

- 5 learning pod facilitators
- 2 locations
- 26 site visits conducted
- 2,266 hours of facilitation provided

## DISCO/DISCOVERY



**Brookview Elementary,**  
Fulton

Discovery was rebranded to Disco, a virtual Saturday enrichment program, because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Students in grades 3-5 participated beginning in October through April 2021.



**Clay Harmony Leland Elementary,** Cobb



**Harper-Archer Elementary,** APS



**Kindezi Old Fourth Ward,**  
APS



**Kindezi West,** APS



**Usher-Collier Elementary,**  
APS

- 6 schools
- 3 school districts: APS, Cobb, and Fulton
- 13 virtual sessions + 4 in-person pop-up events
- 98 students enrolled with **51.36% average attendance**
- Overall percentage of students who met learning objectives across all sessions: **83.45%**
- Overall student satisfaction score across all sessions: **4.58/5**
  - The student satisfaction surveys utilized a scale of 1-5 with 1 representing "very unenjoyable," and 5, "very enjoyable."
- 13 CLP members engaged + 26 additional volunteers engaged
- Overall **700+ hours** of service from volunteers and **560+ hours** of enrichment experiences
- Volunteers reported **100% satisfaction** with programmatic communication and support, curriculum and materials, and volunteer recognition.
- Parents/guardians reported **100% satisfaction** with the quality of the Disco program and HOA communication.
  - 100% also felt Disco was a safe space for their student on Saturday morning & expressed interest in enrolling their student in SY22!

## MEALS 4 KIDS



- Kindezi O4W Elementary, Love T. Nolan, and Brookview Elementary received meal packs this school year.
- **1,470** meals packed for families
- approximately **4,750** pounds of food distributed

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Hands On Atlanta proudly mobilizes the Atlanta community to tackle the city's most pressing needs, with a focus on education and youth development. The catastrophic arrival of the coronavirus did not deter us from our mission; our services, programs, and outreach continued and our efforts intensified to provide much-needed support to our beloved community. As the Education Programs team specifically, we provided direct, holistic, wraparound services to students in Atlanta Public Schools, Fulton County Schools, and Cobb County Schools. Most of our programming shifted to a virtual setting, with the notable exceptions of our Disco pop-ups and Centers of Hope learning pod facilitation. Our AmeriCorps cohort led the charge, but they were joined by community volunteers and civic leaders dedicated to positively contributing to the lives of metro Atlanta youth.

**In SY21, Hands On Atlanta served nearly 2,000 students (1,931 unduplicated) through its wraparound education programs (AmeriCorps, Disco, Centers of Hope, and Meals 4 Kids).**

Even though Hands On Atlanta has been serving local public school students since our inception in 1989, we could not have imagined or predicted what it would take to support students and families during a global pandemic. While most members served virtually throughout the school year, **65.5%** had returned to an in-person setting by March 2021. Our **AmeriCorps** tutors entered virtual and in-person classrooms to provide math and ELA small-group tutoring; our social-emotional learning (SEL) coaches taught lessons on empathy, compassion, emotional regulation, and coping mechanisms to help support character development. Despite the challenges of navigating the virtual space, low overall student attendance at many of our partner schools during the traditional school day, and the necessity of building and maintaining relationships over a screen, members were able to serve **387 students** with 173 receiving tutoring and 214 receiving SEL coaching. All told, members completed **44,449 hours of service** to many of our most vulnerable students and families in the midst of a pandemic.

Our Saturday enrichment program, Discovery, pivoted to a virtual iteration during the pandemic that we rebranded as **Disco** for 3rd-5th grade students at six of our partner schools. Disco was an Olympic-themed, team-based program that aimed to combat isolation in the virtual learning space while providing engaging, interactive, standards-based activities for students. The decision not to offer programming to K-2 students stemmed from our shared belief with school partners that the additional screen time would become an onerous burden for the families of our youngest students who would likely need to remain present with them for the entirety of the hour-long sessions. Our sessions were held over Zoom for students in Atlanta Public Schools and Cobb County Schools; we utilized Microsoft Teams for Fulton County since it was the chosen platform for the district. The sessions focused on a monthly theme (i.e. literacy, STEM, math/financial literacy, Black history, etc.) and a corresponding value (i.e. gratitude, curiosity, responsibility, empowerment, etc.). At the end of each session, students were surveyed to assess their mastery of the day's learning objective and their overall satisfaction with the session. Volunteers used this data along with their own observations to conduct SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analyses after each session to make necessary adjustments and improvements. To supplement virtual programming, we offered four in-person pop-up events where Disco families could drive through and receive school supplies, winter clothing, snack bags, books for pleasure reading, games, and more.

We also responded to the call for learning pod facilitators from our friends at the Department of Parks and Recreation, supporting two of their **Centers of Hope** for Atlanta Public School students. The pandemic caused them to pivot their traditional, in-person, after-school programming and they rose to the challenge. We hired **five part-time staff members** to facilitate virtual learning at two locations: C.T. Martin and Grove Park. The program launched in October and ran through the end of the school year, serving anywhere between 10-25 students each week. Some families opted into virtual learning throughout the year while others participated in the program only when their home schools were temporarily shuttered due to COVID exposure. All told, staff members provided **2,266 hours** of facilitation to maintain a safe environment for primarily K-5 students in need of a physical space conducive for learning.

After relaunching our **Meals 4 Kids** program in SY19, we were proud to continue the work in the midst of the pandemic and served approximately 4,750 pounds of food to 1,370 families during SY21. The three meal packs served two of our schools in Fulton County and one in Atlanta Public Schools. While the numbers reported here reflect meals distributed directly to our school partners, Hands On Atlanta's Hands on Hunger program provided significantly more meals across our communities to address the prevalent rates of food insecurity exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

## MORE ON AMERICORPS & THIS YEAR'S DATA

In SY21, AmeriCorps members tutored K-8 students in ELA and math, particularly students identified as performing below grade level in reading and/or math. Historically, the primary method of monitoring academic progress and achievement has been through pre- and post- MAP, STAR, Georgia Milestones, and/or school-specific assessments. While students and families have always had the ability to opt out of testing, the COVID-19 pandemic led to the highest rates of opting out that many of our metro Atlanta school partners have experienced. As a result, we recognize that this year's data is significant but not comprehensive in many cases.

It is important to also note that all AmeriCorps members contribute to academic outcomes for students on their caseloads, regardless of whether they serve in an academic tutor or SEL coach capacity. This was highlighted even more strongly during this unprecedented year when SEL coaches were tasked less with focusing on decreasing disciplinary infractions in school and more on building relationships, enhancing school-going mindsets and attitudes, and increasing the likelihood of academic growth despite the limitations faced by many of our students and families due to the pandemic. As such, we are reporting the academic growth of all students on tutoring and SEL caseloads as measured by an increase in MAP scores from pre-test to post-test. Students who opted out of one or both of those assessments do not have data to include in these findings, but we have also included the percentage of students with both tests to add further context and color to this year's data. Below is a breakdown of the key data points:

- **64% of caseload students increased academic performance in math from MAP pre- to post-test**
  - 60% of students are represented in this data (233 out of 386 students across the nine schools staffed with math tutors and/or SEL coaches)
- **57% of caseload students increased academic performance in ELA from MAP pre- to post-test**
  - 70% of students are represented in this data (236 out of 337 students across the seven schools staffed with ELA tutors and/or SEL coaches)

Typically, our data would include the percentage of students who met or exceeded performance goals for the year based on their achievement results at the end of the previous year. With the United States Department of Education's approval of Georgia's request to waive statewide assessment on March 27, 2020, assessment scores are not available from the 2019-2020 school year. As a result, schools do not have end-of-year testing data from SY20 and the state of affairs throughout SY21 led many families to opt their students out of either pre- or post-testing during such a tumultuous year. Our nine schools ran the gamut of participation rates amongst caseload students testing with one Fulton County school reporting complete data for 97% of their students and one school in Atlanta Public Schools reporting complete data for 10% of their students. Again, we understand that the volatile nature of this school year due to COVID-19 was a significant contextual variable that led to families opting out of testing.

At the heart of Hands On Atlanta's AmeriCorps program is relationship-building and increasing the capacity of our schools to support students' development. On end-of-year evaluations conducted by TRE Consulting\*, we were proud that **90% of our school partners reported they believe our AmeriCorps program is making a difference in students' academic performance and 85% believe it impacts student behavior.** Perhaps even more heartening, **100% believe there is an increase in their capacity to support students' development because of the Hands On Atlanta AmeriCorps program.**

\*There were 11 deliverables throughout the year from TRE Consulting asking AmeriCorps members, school partners, and site supervisors to evaluate the quality of Hands On Atlanta's AmeriCorps program. Those reports and infographics may be available upon request.

## MORE ON DISCO & THIS YEAR'S DATA

Disco, the virtual iteration of our long-standing Discovery program, launched in October 2020 to combat isolation in the virtual space while continuing to attend to the academic and social-emotional needs of elementary students in grades 3-5. Traditionally, our Discovery program serves K-5, but in collaboration with our school partners and their expressed needs/concerns, we pivoted to focus on older elementary students. We continued to leverage community volunteers, fellows in Hands On Atlanta's Civic Leadership Program, and select AmeriCorps members to provide this enrichment opportunity to students at six partner schools across Atlanta Public Schools, Fulton County Schools, and Cobb County schools. We also decided to elevate our evaluation metrics this year by actively measuring learning objectives along with stakeholder satisfaction (students, families, and school partners).

Our Disco program was Olympics-themed with students participating on teams; the curriculum centered on a monthly learning focus while incorporating a social-emotional learning tenet. For example, November focused on literacy and gratitude was the social-emotional value incorporated into the session's activities; January focused on the arts/new beginnings and service was incorporated into the session's activities to honor MLK Day which occurred during the month. Each session, students were asked questions to assess their mastery of the session's learning objective and their overall satisfaction. We were proud that the **overall mastery rate of learning objectives was 83.45% over the course of the program.** April, our culminating month, saw our highest mastery percentage at 100% while December, our STEM-focused month, saw our lowest mastery rate at 64%. After asking students to rate their satisfaction on a student-friendly scale of 1 "very unenjoyable" and 5 "very enjoyable," the **overall satisfaction rate was 4.58/5.** The lowest satisfaction rate was in October (4.37); the highest, April (4.82), closely followed by December (4.81).

While we were pleased with the overall metrics for student achievement and satisfaction, we would have liked stronger student attendance rates throughout the course of Disco programming. We do not undersell the significance of having an **average of 51% student attendance**, however, especially when many of our nonprofit partners in the after-school/enrichment space reported participation rates much lower due overwhelmingly to screen fatigue. After spending the week glued to a computer screen, students and families understandably wanted to opt out of weekend programming that would require them to log into either Zoom or Microsoft Teams. We aimed to combat some of that fatigue by offering **four in-person, socially distanced, drive-through pop-up events** in October, November, January, and April where students received giveaways, including books, school supplies, snack bags, games, clothes, and arts & crafts.

Ultimately, our school partners, students, and families found value in Disco programming, with **100% expressing satisfaction with the quality of the program, 100% expressing interest in enrolling their student(s) in Disco next year, and 100% expressing satisfaction with Hands On Atlanta communication throughout the program**. Of particular interest and noteworthiness, **83% of families reported seeing an increase in their student's interest in school** as a result of their participation in Disco.

*Our Disco Coordinator created an end-of-year report encapsulating all metrics associated with this year's programming. It may be available upon request. We are also grateful to our Disco volunteers from AmeriCorps, Chick-Fil-A, Emory, Georgia Tech, IBM, and NCR along with the kind folks from Boks, the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, Clorox, and the Sant Nirankari Mission who donated resources to the program.*

## MORE ON CENTERS OF HOPE & MEALS 4 KIDS

During SY21, the Department of Parks & Recreation's Centers of Hope pivoted their traditional after-school program to learning pods to help Atlanta Public School families who needed support for their students during daily virtual instruction. Most adults who took advantage of this opportunity were frontline workers with children who required adult supervision during the day. Hands On Atlanta responded to the need by staffing part-time employees as learning pod facilitators for two Centers of Hope locations between October 2020 and May 2021: C.T. Martin and Grove Park. The learning pods were designed to provide a safe distance learning environment where children could progress academically and have social connections with their peers while maintaining social distancing and adhering to CDC guidelines. Five part-time staff members served a total of **2,266 hours** supporting 50+ families over the course of the school year. Some students attended Centers of Hope learning pods consistently while others would drop in temporarily when a COVID exposure shuttered their classroom doors.

Hands On Atlanta continued to provide wraparound support for students and families through our Meals 4 Kids program as well during SY21. Three partner schools received **1,470 meals (approximately 4,750 pounds of food)** to address food insecurity issues exacerbated by the pandemic. In response to the ever-changing landscape, we innovated our program to include a virtual meal pack where community volunteers purchased items from a pre-approved list and packed bags at their respective homes while logging into a virtual platform for camaraderie and fellowship. The bags were then delivered to the partner school on a designated day with Hands On Atlanta staff on-site to supervise drop-offs and ensure quality control.

# LOOKING FORWARD

Building on the success of SY21 and in response to the continued need in the metro Atlanta communities served by Hands On Atlanta, we have set the following ambitious goals for SY22:

- **Education Programs:** almost 10,000 students engaged in one or more of our wraparound educational programs (AmeriCorps, Discovery, Centers of Hope, and Meals 4 Kids)
- **AmeriCorps:** 60 members serving primarily as ELA and math tutors as well as SEL coaches
- **Discovery:** 200+ students attending across 10 school sites, leveraging 150+ community volunteers
- **Centers of Hope:** 10 part-time staff members supporting two Centers of Hope (C.T. Martin & Grove Park) in its after-school iteration
- **Meals 4 Kids:** 8,500+ students and families receive a meal pack across our partner schools

## 2021-2022 School Partners:

- Drew Elementary School, Atlanta Public Schools
- Finch Elementary School, Atlanta Public Schools
- Harper-Archer Elementary School, Atlanta Public Schools
- Hollis Innovation Academy, Atlanta Public Schools
- Kindezi at Gideons, Atlanta Public Schools
- Kindezi Old Fourth Ward, Atlanta Public Schools
- Kindezi West, Atlanta Public Schools
- Ralph J. Bunche Middle School, Atlanta Public Schools
- Scott Elementary School, Atlanta Public Schools
- Sylvan Hills Middle School, Atlanta Public Schools
- Usher-Collier Elementary School, Atlanta Public Schools
- Young Middle School, Atlanta Public Schools
- Clay-Harmony Leland Elementary School, Cobb County Schools
- Belmont Hills Elementary, Cobb County Schools
- Brookview Elementary, Fulton County Schools
- Love T. Nolan Elementary, Fulton County Schools
- Parklane Elementary School, Fulton County Schools
- C.T. Martin Center of Hope, City of Atlanta
- Grove Park Center of Hope, City of Atlanta

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