WHO WE ARE

Middle Grades Partnership is a rigorous academic program for promising Baltimore City public and private middle school students. Together, students further develop their classroom skills in reading, writing and mathematics while breaking down socio-economic barriers through joint education and social opportunities.

Middle Grades Partnership provides year-round learning opportunities that prepare our students to gain entrance to and excel in the city’s most rigorous public high schools.

Middle Grades Partnership serves as a catalyst in addressing inequities in education. Our program brings teachers, leaders and students from both school communities together in nine distinct partnerships. We work with students throughout their entire middle school experience at a time when they are naturally engaged in trying to understand their role in the world.

We believe in empowering students to change the trajectory of their lives - and of their communities.
Middle Grades Partnership serves nine public and private school partnerships. We provide year-round academic programming for over 450 middle school students each year.

- Afya & Park
- City Springs (boys) & Boys’ Latin
- City Springs (girls) & Garrison Forest
- Cross Country & Bryn Mawr
- Hamilton & Calvert
- Hampstead Hill & Friends
- Lillie May Carroll Jackson & Roland Park Country
- Mount Royal & McDonogh
- Southwest Baltimore Charter & Gilman
FACTS AND FIGURES

Since 2005, Middle Grades Partnership has served more than 2,500 Baltimore City middle school students.

Our attendance rate is 94% – which is remarkable for a voluntary summer program. Even more impressive, most of our students get up very early to catch a public bus to their home school in time to board another bus to the partnership site.

Experience in Middle Grades Partnership makes our students four times more likely to attend competitive, academically rigorous public high schools than their non-Middle Grades Partnership peers.

Last year, 91% of our rising ninth graders were accepted into the top competitive public high schools. Note that the citywide average for student acceptance into these same high schools last year was 22%.

Our three-year student retention rate is 78%.

Of all Middle Grades Partnership students, 74% of the students identified as Black, 13% White, 8% Hispanic, 3% Asian and less than 1% Native American.
## 2016 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

January 1, 2016 - December 31, 2016

### REVENUE

- Contributions from public and private schools: $149,000
- Contributions from individuals, corporations and foundations: $833,156

**TOTAL REVENUE**: $982,156

### EXPENSES

- Programs: $679,248
- Operations: $291,916

**TOTAL EXPENSES**: $971,164

### WHAT IT TAKES...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90 TEACHERS AND STAFF</td>
<td>$504,676</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAILY TRANSPORTATION</td>
<td>$92,871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLLEGE VISITS/FIELD TRIPS</td>
<td>$14,614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATERIALS/SUPPLIES/FOOD</td>
<td>$67,087</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL**: $679,248
Same city; different worlds. The racial and socioeconomic chasm separating students from City Springs, a public charter school, and Boys’ Latin School is bridged each summer when boys from the two schools meet for a Middle Grades Partnership writing class.

“We worked on the writing process from scratch—how to organize your thoughts and get them down on paper, how a journal is an excellent tool when you’re frustrated,” says Kenji Jackson, who teaches writing at City Springs and is co-facilitator for Restorative Practices, a positive approach to discipline. “They wrote their own life stories in an atmosphere where they felt comfortable sharing experiences.”

One story brought Jackson to tears.

“The story was sad. Yet, you could see by this young man’s writing style that he was okay with sharing. And, he was not allowing what happened stop him from being a productive student.”

Being on the Boys’ Latin campus gives City Springs students a different perspective. “Middle Grades Partnership brings the best out of these kids,” Jackson says. “The environment is challenging and rigorous, and they rise to the occasion. They take pride that they’re Middle Grades Partnership boys and most maintain the values and behavior they learn.”

An “intense but empathetic and respectful” discussion occurred after a weekend during which two individuals were killed by police in Baltimore. “The level of transparency in terms of how the boys look at people from other races was amazing,” Jackson recalls. “Our black boys talked about how they feel when they enter unfamiliar environments, and our white students talked about how it feels to be automatically labeled as racist.”

“In addition to academics one of the purposes of Middle Grades Partnership,” he continues, “is to bring these two cultures together to start dispelling stereotypes—and it works. It flat out works.”
According to drama teacher Heather Freas-Kostic, Afya Public Charter and Park School students enter the Middle Grades Partnership Shakespeare class with trepidation. “It feels like a big step,” says Heather Freas-Kostic, chair of language arts at Park. “They assume it’s very intellectual, very complicated. So we gain access through play, get into it with rhythm, and build trust within the group. We speak a line aloud and play with different ways to emphasize words to get across the meaning. They buy in almost immediately because it feels like we’re having fun together—and we are.”

It helps that many students already have some performance experience and know what makes something engaging for an audience. “Each time a student is willing to take a risk and go to a really personal or deep place to connect with characters or analyze something on the page, it’s a gift for everyone in the room,” she says.

By selecting and seeing plays that Chesapeake Shakespeare Company stages, Freas-Kostic builds on her classroom curriculum with attending performances. Students who have gravitated toward a particular character encounter another interpretation. “They are highly attuned to how that character is being embodied by the actor,” she says. “I’ll hear them say, ‘Here comes my part’ or ‘I like how he said that.’ They’re working with a text that people have been reading, enjoying, and sharing with each other for ages—something large and long lasting—and they find meaning in it.”
How does a retired food technologist end up volunteering in a classroom filled with Baltimore City middle school students during the summer?

Dr. James Albrecht is a committed Middle Grades Partnership funder and academic volunteer who first learned about our program through The Baltimore Community Foundation. As a distinguished scientist, he has worked at some of the world’s most famous food companies – including Coca-Cola, Nestle, and Baltimore-based McCormick. While he is now retired, his passions for science, the food industry, and water conversation — and sharing them with young people — remain to this day.

Dr. Albrecht has long helped steer young people into successful careers. He cites his own mentors and
teachers as inspiration. “Somewhere along the way, everyone has a mentor, or attends a class, or has a teacher who made a big difference in their lives,” says Albrecht.

When he came to Baltimore to work at McCormick, Dr. Albrecht found the place he would call home after retirement. “This is just a great place to live. People are hospitable,” he says. “I have a lot of good friends, and I really enjoy being here.”

Dr. Albrecht has been able to support our students through his generous financial support for Middle Grades Partnership. Just as important, he shares his wisdom and 40 years of industry experience. During the 2016 Middle Grades Partnership summer session, he worked with the students in the Hampstead Hill/Friends School partnership by leading a class on global water conservation.

Dr. Albrecht likes that the summer program brings public and private school students together to curb summer learning loss and exposes them to new concepts in the areas of science, technology, engineering, math and art. “This is a great organization,” says Dr. Albrecht, “that is offering kids top notch learning opportunities that they might not normally get to experience.” Through working with Middle Grades Partnership, he has been able to combine his passion for helping students and his love of Baltimore.

“I want to know that I’m making a difference in the lives of young people,” Dr. Albrecht says. “My giving is laser-focused, not amorphous. The Baltimore Community Foundation helped me identify Middle Grades Partnership as an organization that’s working in just this manner, and I’m happy to support it.”
THANK YOU

On behalf of our students, teachers, and board, we thank all those who contributed in 2016 for making a difference in the lives of Baltimore City middle school youth.

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Afya Baltimore, Inc.  
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“Middle Grades Partnership opened my eyes to the fact that school doesn’t have to be boring!”

MAME G., AGE 14
Mt. Royal Elementary/Middle School

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Middle Grades Partnership is an initiative of the Baltimore Community Foundation.

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