



LIGHTHOUSE

HOLYOKE

impact

REPORT

2022-2023

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1

Hello

2

Mission

3

Always Learning

4

Goals

5

Numbers

6

Stories

7

Ahead

8

Impact

9

Staff and Board

10

Alumni
Fellowship

11

Thank You

HELLO



Catherine Gobron, Executive Director

Thank you! for joining us in this grand endeavor. Together we aim to unlock our collective brilliance.

The challenges of our time demand that we imagine new systems and structures to support one another as we build new futures, both in our individual lives and in the larger world.

LightHouse offers a very different way to live and learn, one which aims to disrupt current power structures and systemic injustices. We envision a world where all people can live meaningful lives of both independence and positive human connection, with access to honest work and joy, free from violence and exploitation. We believe that transformative education is key to that future.

LightHouse aims to embody the theory of liberatory education and put it into practice, for the benefit of our individual students, and for the collective benefit of our global society and shared future.

Key Features of Liberatory Education as Defined by Rapheal Randall

Liberatory Education:

- Is rooted in self-determination and the right to participate in shaping the world
- Pushes against notions of scarcity and opts for an approach to education situated in collective potential
- Challenges one-dimensionality and the fear of difference
- Uses project-based and competency-based learning to re-immense people in the ecology of the physical world as partners of all living things and to rectify the social and economic problems confronting our neighborhoods and communities
- Prioritizes human potential and promise and reconnects people to our creative natures.

(Thank you to KnowledgeWorks for the above outline of Liberatory Education.)

With Hope and Gratitude,

Catherine

OUR STORY SO FAR

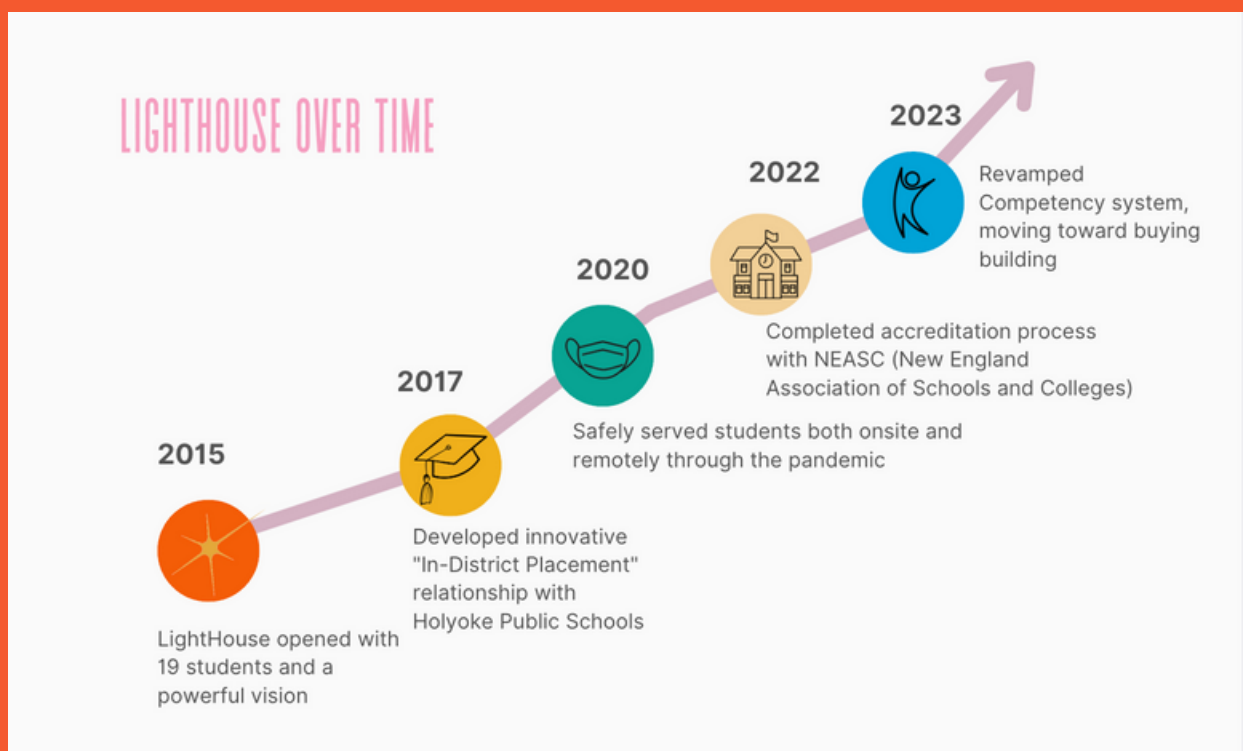
MISSION

LightHouse is changing what school can be. We are a collaborative learning environment for students in grades 6-12, structured around respect and compassion. We partner with students to cultivate the personal resources and academic skills to create the futures of their choice.

LightHouse Holyoke was cofounded in 2015 by Catherine Gobron and Josiah Litant. Catherine and Josiah co-directed the program until 2018 when Josiah moved west with his family and changed his role to supporter and consultant.

From the start we've been doing the near-impossible, offering transformative education in a high-need community rich in diversity but low in financial resources.

Our challenges are great, but we have thrived thanks to the support and vision of our community; students, parents, staff, donors, and friends, who hold us accountable to truly walking our talk.



2022-2023 IN REVIEW

ALWAYS LEARNING



New Director of DEI, Molly Brown-Hill, and
Assistant Director, Dr. Shanda Lazare

LightHouse was honored this year to receive a substantial grant from the State of Massachusetts to further develop our practices in Transformative Justice. We brought in our friends at Pa'lante Transformative Justice to train both staff and students in circle practice, and we added daily Advisory group meetings to build deeper connections and improve our communication skills.

Our state grant also enabled us to consult with José Bou of ABC Equity. LightHouse has always been a highly diverse community, proud of our values of anti-racism and social justice. Through our collaborative work with José, however, we confronted the reality that the common practices of our white dominant culture can easily become our norms, too. The focused work of uplifting marginalized voices is an ongoing need, without which we can perpetuate bias, do harm, and limit our collective creativity by inadvertently excluding many.

Confronting discriminatory practices lurking in both our individual and community actions requires ongoing effort, strategic training, and regularly scheduled analysis. To help keep ourselves accountable to this goal we have created a new position, Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. We are thrilled to share that returning staff, Molly Brown-Hill, is stepping into this new role.

Perfection will remain out of reach, to be sure, but we are excited about starting the new year with increased focus on supporting our diverse community and improving all of our skills. Thank you for helping to hold us accountable to this shared vision.

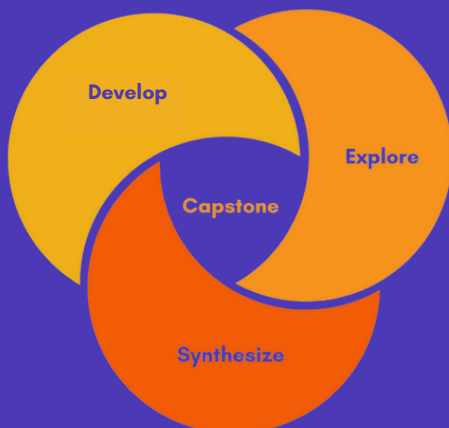
GOALS

22-23

1

Improve our CBE system (Competency Based Education)

LightHouse has been competency-based from the start and has never used traditional grades. We felt we needed more clarity around our graduation requirements, however, but didn't want to detract from student agency. Learning happens everywhere, not just in classrooms, and takes many, many forms. LightHouse students are supported to become active learners everywhere in their lives, and to see the whole world as a resource for learning and personal development. An overly specific set of course requirements would interfere with our values and approach. But then, how to build a tangible structure to guide students and track progress?



A major goal this year was to build out the competencies in a more clear and robust way, complete with guiding attainments and a visible tracking system.

Success! Staff collaborated for many months, researching, learning, rebuilding, and fine tuning our CBE program. We are quite proud of our results. Learn more at lighthouseholYOke.org/cbe

2

Buy a Building

LightHouse opened in 2015 as the first tenants in the beautiful STEAM Building at 208 Race St. in Holyoke. After a 100 year lifetime as a pipe factory, the STEAM Building was renovated as a commercial space and we have been honored to be part of the transformation.

As the years have passed the building has grown up around us, and while our students are almost always well behaved, even joyful exuberance can be taxing to our adult neighbor tenants who are just trying to work.

In addition to our challenge of being good neighbors, we also need a full kitchen, a movement space, and outdoor space, none of which is possible in our current setting.

We need a building! And we found one! It is crucial to our mission to remain located in the downtown area in order to be accessible to students who walk to us. In April we signed a purchase and sale agreement with the Sons of Zion Congregation at 378 Maple St. It's perfect! (Except for the many millions in required renovation costs... more on that soon!)

GOALS

22-23

3 Build partnerships with more public districts

LightHouse is an accredited private school charging tuition. We also contract with Holyoke Public Schools through our In-District Placement initiative, and now nearly half of our students come to us through this partnership. Our HPS students are funded through the district and graduate with a Holyoke diploma.

This year we sought to offer similar relationships to students from other nearby districts, creating win-win-wins for all. LightHouse is increasingly accessible, students who benefit from our approach are well-served, and districts gain graduates at costs much, much lower than most out-of-district placements. We were thrilled this year to begin working with both Westfield Public Schools and Northampton Public Schools, and a new relationship beginning with Belchertown Public School for school year 23-24.



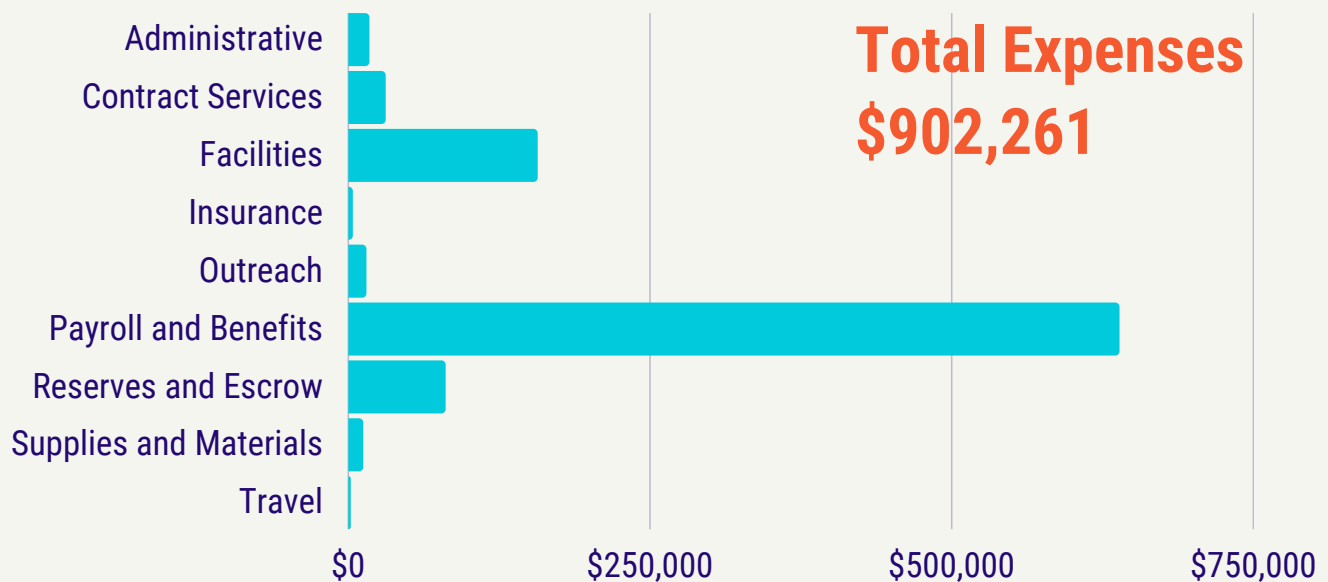
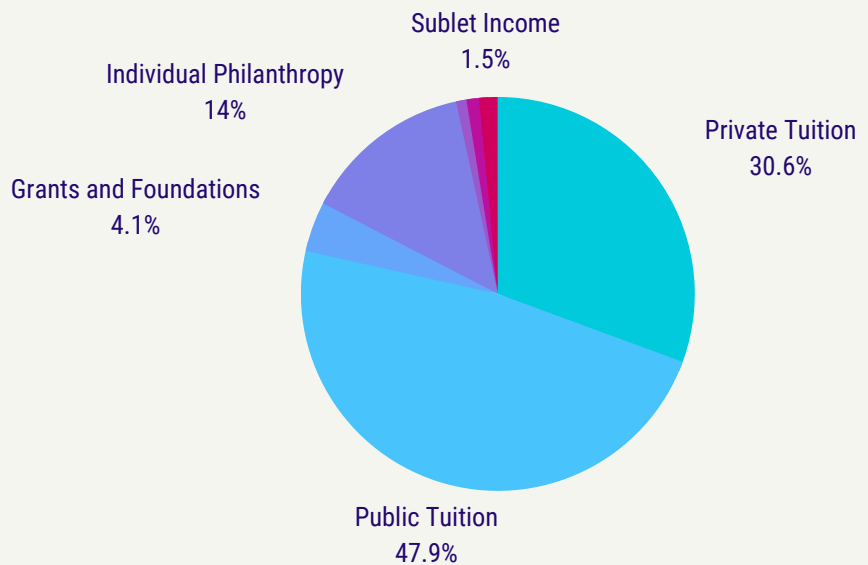
Warm send off to our outgoing Board Chair, Kim Saal. Thank you, Kim!



NUMBERS

22-23

Total Revenue
\$911,883



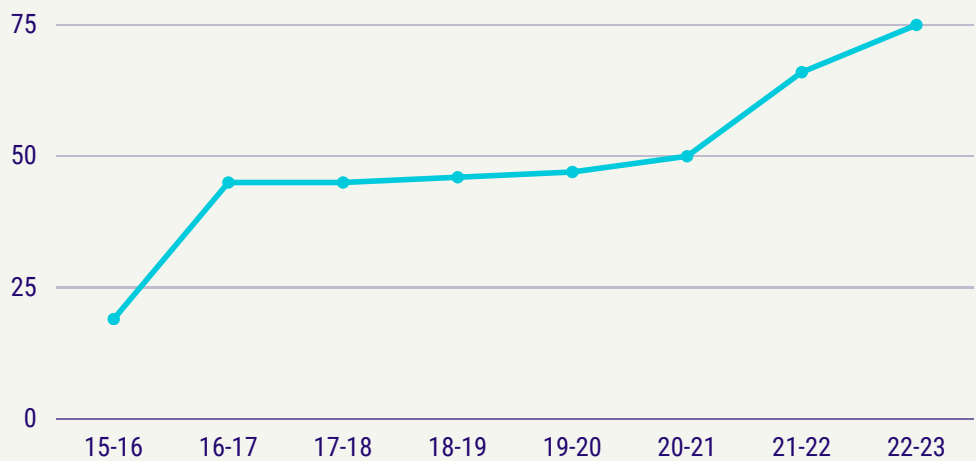
NUMBERS

PAST TO PRESENT

Enrollment

LightHouse opened in 2015 with 19 students.

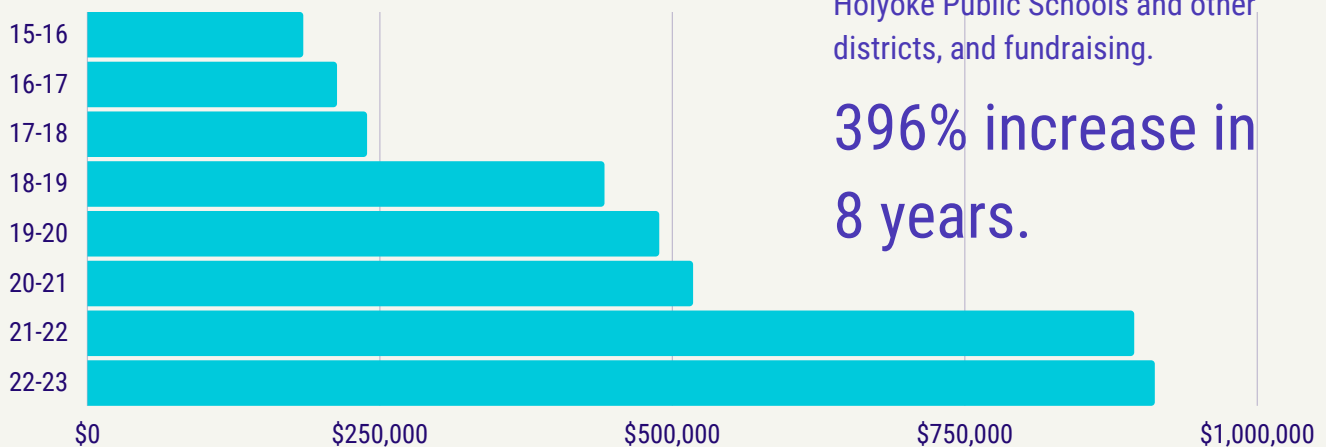
295%
increase in
8 years.



Total Revenue

LightHouse revenue comes through private tuition, our contracts with Holyoke Public Schools and other districts, and fundraising.

396% increase in
8 years.



STUDENT STORIES

Thoughts from Recent Grads



Theanna

During my time at LightHouse I have learned a lot about myself and what I am capable of. I used to not know how to advocate for myself and my needs, but now I know how/when to ask for what I need. When I first came to LightHouse I was super shy and very insecure. Being here has allowed me to be myself and not feel ashamed of my hobbies and interests. I have learned self-confidence, resilience, self accountability, and how to stand up for what I believe in.

One of the most defining moments for me at LightHouse was when I took the Intro to Doulahood class. That class changed my life. I knew I had an interest in working with pregnant people, babies, and families, but this class really showed me the options I have. If it weren't for this class I may have never gotten my birth and postpartum doula certification, and I may have never attended all the births I've now been to.

My plans for after graduation are to take a gap year and start nursing school in the fall of 2024. I'm not 100% sure which university I'll be attending yet, but I'm hoping either Worcester or Westfield State! Once I have my BSN in nursing I will then apply to a Masters Midwifery program to become a certified nurse midwife! I'm super excited to focus on my birth doula business during my gap year and work full time to save money. I'll also be back at LightHouse this fall to teach a class on doulahood!

Advice to new students (and everyone!): Don't be afraid to be yourself. In a generic public school you may not feel like you're accepted as who you are, or you may not be able to express yourself. But at LightHouse everyone is their own person and that's that. There is no this person is better than this person or anything like that, we are all our own person at our own level. Be you!

STUDENT STORIES

Thoughts from Recent Grads



Tyler

In the personal realm, I've grown since coming to LightHouse. My last school was really traumatic, and I don't feel the teachers and staff understood me and the way in which they dealt with my behavior was wrong on all levels. At LightHouse, I learned quickly that no one was going to put their hands on me which was a relief. The LightHouse staff really tried to understand me and respect me. I also built a good relationship with my counselor, and I'm doing good work in that setting. I also feel like I'm a little more social and can speak up for myself more now than I could before.

Starting to meet with a counselor this year at LightHouse was really huge for me because for the first time, I felt like I wasn't being judged and I was accepted for who I am. I started to explore myself and my past and started to set goals for myself to become a better person. I plan to attend Holyoke Community College in the fall, then further my education after HCC at a 4 year college.



Charlie

When I first began my journey at LightHouse I was a shy middle-schooler who was incredibly intimidated by my fellow students. Over the years I have matured quite a bit both academically and emotionally. I grew in confidence and branched out into making friends, even through the pandemic. I have always been a strong thinker and problem solver, but my tangible skills both as an artist and academic have flourished at LightHouse. I'm so grateful to all the wonderful people I have met along the way.

STUDENT STORIES

Thoughts from Recent Grads



Jhaydon

Lighthouse is important to me because it helped me understand my way of learning and how to go about it better. I first went there in 8th grade due to past behavioral problems and needed a different environment to do better in school.

LightHouse has so much freedom, very different from the formalities that I had been taught in my previous schools. Given the option of whether or not to go to class, I often chose not to in my first two years, which hurt me academically, but ultimately taught me to manage my own

time. The people around me tried to help me work through all my challenges, but before anyone could help I needed to accept the fact that I needed help. It was all my decision.

My advisor always helped in the sense that even when I wasn't being the most respectful student she always believed that I could succeed. The main thing the people at LightHouse, both students and staff, helped me with is communication. When I first went there I struggled with vocalizing my academic needs. I wasn't comfortable asking for help even when I didn't understand the material. Now I can express myself with confidence.

The more work I did the easier it became for me to learn new things and I didn't feel like I was unable to learn anymore.

My time at LightHouse is important to me because it was my first ever real responsibility that had consequences. There were many mistakes that I had made throughout the years at LightHouse but the most important thing was that in the end I came out knowing what I wanted to do with my life and how I wanted to get there, and knowing that I am capable of achieving my goals.

I spent the spring semester at Holyoke Community College and I will continue there this fall as a freshman.

STUDENT STORIES

Thoughts from Recent Grads



Henry

I came to Lighthouse as a socially anxious autistic teen who didn't feel he could be accepted by any community, but LightHouse accepted me. At Lighthouse I learned social skills and made valuable lifelong friendships. LightHouse helped me grow into the outgoing, compassionate, and engaged person I am today. It helped foster my commitment to social change through educating me and helping me understand my role in the paradigm shift our civilization must undergo to build a promising future. Being able to lead my own education freed me up to pursue my passions like Hindu philosophy, Botany and Ecology, Campaign Organizing,

History, Legislative Reform, and International Relations it also helped me grow my passion for philanthropy through nonprofit leadership. Now I serve on the board of a statewide education justice nonprofit where I advocate for free, high-quality, and accessible public higher education in Massachusetts through legislative reform. I hope to expand my advocacy skills as I get older and look forward to seeing how our society changes(hopefully) for the better over time.

For everyone, there is a kind of work that sets them on fire. It's the kind of thing that's more of an obsession than a class or job. I would encourage new students to take this time to recuperate from old learning paradigms that hinder you from being your true self. Once you're ready, search for that thread of passion and follow it, getting to know yourself in the process.

I am attending Hampshire College next year where I will continue to learn about my passions in a free, unrestricted learning environment. Over the summer I am serving as a Crew Leader with Americorps where I will camp in the wilderness of Vermont building hiking trails and purifying the Connecticut River's water from pollution. This river is incredibly meaningful to me since I grew up beside it and I look forward to reaping the benefits of my work downstream at Hampshire College in Amherst, MA. I am not sure what the future holds after Hampshire but I am excited to find out...

LOOKING AHEAD



Next up. ZION.

The Zion Building is located at 378 Maple St., right across from The Lawrence Elementary School and diagonal from the newly renovated and gorgeous Holyoke Public Library.

The property is one full city block and is actually comprised of four lots in total. What will we do with the extra lots? One will be for parking, of course. Open to suggestions and input on the others! The building has been the home to a Jewish congregation for the last near 100 years, and we are honored to be working with the congregation to preserve their history and heritage as much as possible. It's about 19,000 square feet and will require some considerable fundraising to replace the roof, add an elevator, a sprinkler system, and so much more. Capital Campaign ahead!

Despite the challenges, the building is ideal. The central location is perfect, with outdoor space, indoor movement/dance/yoga space as well as many classroom and office spaces, and most exciting of all, a central kitchen where we will teach cooking and nutrition and serve family style lunch. AMAZING. Aiming to open in Zion in September, 2025.

| PROJECTS FOR FY24 | DETAILS | OUTCOME |
|-------------------|--|--|
| ZION | Capital Campaign. Working with architect and city. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Raise \$8M from many sources.• Finalize vision. Begin construction. |
| SHARED GOVERNANCE | Moving toward a decentralized administration and shared responsibility | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Many creative leaders holding shared vision• Greater equity |
| DISTRICT OUTREACH | Build relationships with more nearby districts | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Serving more students• Diversified funding sources |

MEASURING IMPACT

LightHouse does not use traditional metrics like test scores or college acceptance rates to determine success. Of course we care about those things on an individual level, depending on a student's goals for themselves. We don't compare students to each other, however, and we don't have one-size-fits-all metrics for all students.

We pay close attention to each of our students through weekly advising meetings, daily group meetings, frequent conversations with families, student self-evaluations, and robust written evaluations from every teacher, tutor, and advisor for each student at the end of each block. We know our students and their skill levels, needs, strengths, and challenges very well.



One of the ways we gather additional, quantitative data is through pre and post Holistic Student Assessment (HSA) surveys created by Partnerships in Education and Resilience (PEAR)

Institute, Harvard Medical School, and McLean Hospital. The HSA is a universal social-emotional assessment tool (student survey) that helps us better understand each student's unique strengths and needs, as well as offering quantitative data to measure growth on both individual and programmatic levels. The assessment is based on PEAR's Clover Model of youth development, covering the following 4 domains:

- Active Engagement (engaging with the world physically)
- Assertiveness (expressing voice and choice)
- Belonging (social connection and relationships)
- Reflection (thought and meaning-making)

Within these four domains, the HSA measures Action Orientation, Emotion Control, Assertiveness, Perseverance, Trust, Empathy, Optimism, Reflection, Learning Interest, Critical Thinking, Academic Motivation, School Bonding, Relationships with Peers, Relationships with Adults, Hyperactivity/Inattention, Conduct Problems, Emotional Symptoms, Peer Problems, and Prosocial Behavior.

14

Graduates

9

Graduates going directly to
two or four year schools

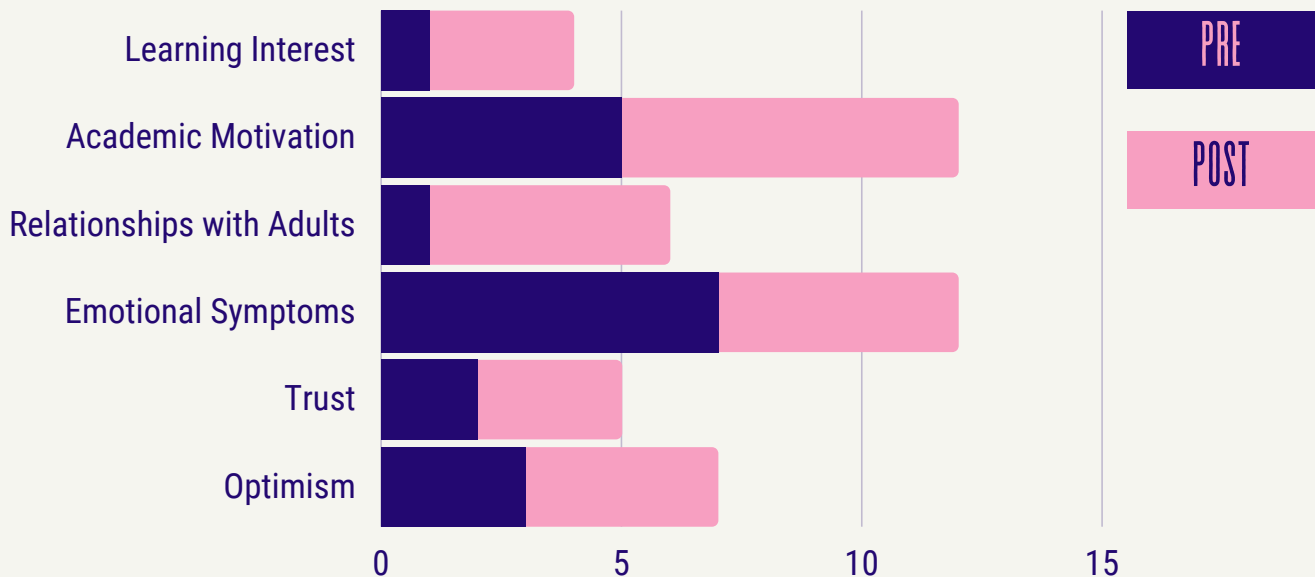
190

Professional Development
hours as a team

MEASURING IMPACT

For the 2022-2023 school year the HSA showed growth in nearly every area for students in the program as a whole, with a few areas (Action Orientation, Perseverance, Hyperactivity) showing no change. All of the other 16 areas showed improvement, with major positive change in several areas.

The HSA allows us to design specific supports and interventions for individual students, and many of our students showed individual growth even greater than what is reflected in the model of the overall program below. The HSA is just one way we track student growth and progress, but it's especially useful in giving us data with numeric values which we can compare over time, both for individuals and for the overall program.



STAFF

AND BOARD

Catherine Gobron, Executive Director
Dr. Shanda Lazare, Assistant Director
Bea Sullivan, Director of Curriculum
Carlos Peña, Outreach Director
David Lane, Admissions Director
Ashley Ratliff, Lead Operations Specialist

Diana Ortiz, Admin
Nate Maynard, Advisor
Molly Brown-Hill, Advisor
Steph Zello, Advisor
Maghan Baptiste
Lucy Slate

Kim Saal, Outgoing Chair
Tony Scibelli, Incoming Chair
Jacqui DeFelice, Vice Chair
Adam Baker, Treasurer
Mike Stone, Secretary
Kelly Albrecht
Latoya Bosworth
Jill Brevik
Tiffani Curtis
Jordan Hart
Joseph Katz
Alice Ladley
Sita Magnuson
Iohann Vega

In addition to the above Core Staff Leadership Team, LightHouse hosts approximately 15 adjunct teachers, tutors, and work study staff. Our youth to adult ratio is about 3:1.

It has been some years since I've found myself excitedly anticipating a new school year! This year marks a transition for our board of directors, and I am excited to begin.

I was first introduced to LightHouse in 2019 by my friend and our former board chair, Kim Saal. At that time, I didn't know I would be succeeding him as the board chair in three years. Kim has been a great role model and mentor, and my plan is to continue on with the great work he started. I have big shoes to fill.

We are off to a great start. We welcomed four new board members in recent months. On September 24th, the board

will gather for our annual board retreat. This is a time we set aside to set goals, learn from each other, and talk through our strategies.

On behalf of our entire board, we look forward to supporting the great work of our faculty and staff who provide transformative learning experiences for our amazing students.



Tony Scibelli. Incoming Board Chair

ALUMNI FELLOWSHIP

With the support of The Davis Foundation, LightHouse launched our Alumni Fellowship Program in September of 2021 in collaboration with Americorps/Dial Self. The Alumni Fellowship Program has the twofold goal of (1) providing current students with additional support and guidance from a recent graduate, and (2) supporting the continuing development of leadership and life skills for alumni through this paid position.

Fellows are LightHouse alumni who will mentor and teach current students, support community building, conflict resolution, accountability, offer social-emotional support, and guide and support student leaders at LightHouse. In 2022-2023 LightHouse hosted Jasmin Reyes (LH 21) for a second year and Alexis Diaz (LH 17). They were AMAZING. Jasmin is moving on to a full time position with Springfield Public Schools while she also continues her undergraduate work at Baypath University, and Alexis is moving on to focus on his position as the manager of the Holyoke Farmer's Market and continuing work in hydroponics and food justice. **Thanks for your service, Jasmin and Alexis!** So proud of you both.

We are pleased to welcome Liam Russell (LH 23) as our incoming Alumni Fellow for the 23-24 year.



Dr. Shanda, Alexis Diaz, Student



Student, Student, Jasmin Reyes

THANK YOU

FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT AND FOR BELIEVING WITH US.

LightHouse Holyoke

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contact@lighthouseholyokey.org

In FY 23 LightHouse supported just under \$200,000 in tuition reduction. Accessibility is a priority. There are many personalized, private school programs across the country, but tuition can be \$40-\$70k, serving highly resourced families.

LightHouse is changing what school can be with some of the students who need it most. We are building a model of what is possible in education that can be reproduced in districts with challenges similar to Holyoke.

On October 10, 2023, please join us for a single day of giving to raise one full tuition. If you can give \$10 (or more!) together we can support offer a new way to learn for a young person who needs it. You can pledge in advance. Thank you!



\$10 on the 10th!

One day can give one student a whole year of learning! On Tuesday, October 10 help us reach our goal of raising the full tuition for one student in just one day.

Pledge at
lighthouseholyokey.org/give



LIGHTHOUSEHOLYOKEY.ORG/GIVE

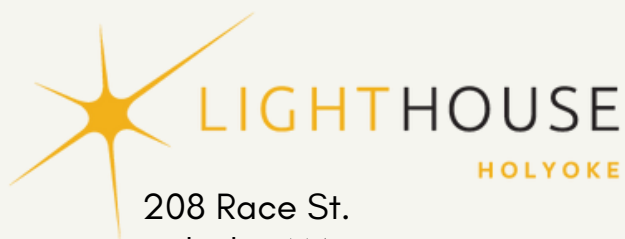


Please consider making a gift to support this transformative work.

One third of our budget comes through individual donations.

This work is made possible through community support.

*We are a model for what is possible in the future of education,
beginning with some of the students who need it most.*



208 Race St.
Holyoke, MA 01040