

# HWA HUCKLEBERRY WELLNESS ACADEMIES

CELEBRATING  
**10 YEARS**  
of Supporting  
First-Generation  
College Students



HUCKLEBERRY



YOUTH  
PROGRAMS

SAFETY • HEALTH • JUSTICE • EDUCATION

# THE VISION FOR HWA

At the height of the AIDS epidemic in the late '80s, Huckleberry Youth Programs pioneered a nationally recognized Peer Health Education (PHE) program to deliver medically accurate sexual health information via teen peers. Peer health educators were sent into classrooms, community-based organizations and juvenile hall to spread the word about HIV prevention. After gaining leadership skills and important health knowledge, these bright young students became motivated to consider their postsecondary options, but soon recognized how limited these options were due to their lack of college preparedness. Inspired by the commitment and potential of generations of PHEs, Huckleberry staff and leadership worked together in a strategic planning process in 2006 to create the vision for what would become the **Huckleberry Wellness Academy (HWA)**.

**Early years:** Piloted in San Francisco in 2007, HWA began as a college access and health career pipeline program aimed at supporting low-income, academically underperforming, first-generation youth. The original model emphasized meaningful internships and workforce experience as a strategy to reinforce the importance of school persistence. To assist in this endeavor, Huckleberry reached out to its network of educators and health professionals. These early supporters came to be known as the **HWA Advisory Board**, a source of critical insight into health career pathways and curriculum development. HWA targeted juniors for recruitment who had already expressed interest in health careers. While greatly benefiting from the exposure to internships and college access guidance, by fall of their junior year, many participants were ineligible for four year universities, and in many cases would require remediation at community college. Critical college preparedness guidance was missing from their early high school years.

## About Our Students

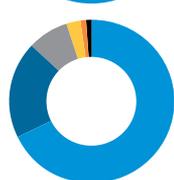


**337 STUDENTS**  
from Marin & San Francisco  
Counties have participated  
in HWA over the last 10 years



### GENDER

- 70% Female
- 30% Male



### ETHNICITY

- 68% Latino
- 19% Asian/Pacific Islander
- 8% African American
- 3% Multiracial
- 1% Middle Eastern
- 1% White

**100%** are from low to moderate-income households (qualifying for free or reduced lunch) and are from underresourced schools and communities.

**100%** will be among the first generation in their families to attend college.

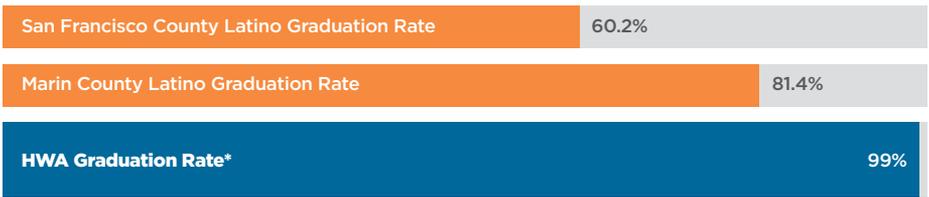
**Over 90%** have parents who require translation to participate in HWA events or family meetings.

**21%** of HWA students are DREAMers.

# A DECADE OF SUPPORTING FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS

In 2008, HWA was replicated in Marin. From the earlier lessons learned in SF, both counties recognized that recruitment needed to target younger students in order to significantly impact their college options, and realistically set them on a path toward health career success. Modifying the program in this way has allowed for HWA to more effectively intervene in the lives of students who disproportionately face systemic educational inequities. For example, **Marin and San Francisco counties rank among the highest achievement gaps between Latino and white youth in the state.**

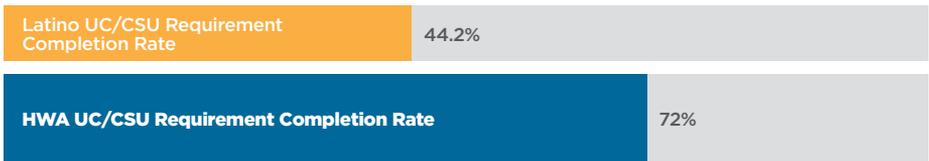
## Local High School Graduation Rates



\*3 HWA Alumni earned a GED or passed the CA High School Proficiency Exam.

## UC/CSU Requirement Completion Rate

In San Francisco and Marin, there is a significant discrepancy across race/ethnicity in completion of UC/CSU requirements. Latino students are significantly underrepresented at UCs and CSUs, which are designed to be more affordable, accessible postsecondary institutions.



HWA's diverse and multilingual staff worked diligently to create program components that would appeal to and effectively support historically underserved youth. After testing out several different models, staff settled on recruiting students at the end of their freshman year, engaging them first in a fun and academic summer intensive experience and supporting them through the remainder of high school.



**Huckleberry has given me the tools to believe in who I am and follow my heart. They were very open with me and accepted and respected me for who I am. Without them, I would not be doing what I really want to do.**

**Huzufa, a graduate of UC Santa Cruz, will pursue a master's degree in Islamic studies at the Graduate Theological Union in fall 2018.**

With this model, HWA built robust tutoring programming for math, science, and writing, an expansion that was not initially planned or budgeted, but was clearly needed. Students continued to receive workforce development exploration and internships, but only during the summer months, to keep the primary focus on remaining college eligible.

## 219 HWA Alumni



17%

Nationally, only 17% of first-generation students obtain a bachelor's degree or higher

**HWA alumni who have earned a bachelor's degree (or higher) or are currently enrolled in college**

80%

**In 2015, HWA staff and leadership were at another crossroads:** the reality of recruiting younger students for a health career focused program meant that our framing sometimes turned away ideal students simply because, as freshmen, many were not yet aware of career interests. To appeal more broadly to low-income, underresourced students, the program began to market itself as a health and wellness focused college access program.

**HWA Today:** Now in its tenth year, what sets HWA apart from other college access programs is the fundamental Huckleberry value that mental and physical health and wellness are crucial to a young person's success. HWA provides a safe, supportive environment in which students attend weekly group meetings, access tutoring and academic case management, and receive intensive one-on-one emotional support. Students can meet with an on-site therapist and receive primary and reproductive health services at Huckleberry clinics. Support extends beyond traditional college counseling; staff advocate with great care, providing consistent guidance and encouragement as students navigate the complex path to postsecondary success.



**Huckleberry was a safe place to go. They helped me with personal issues. Young people could get birth control and also deal with a variety of wellness issues.**

**Saul will graduate in 2019 with a bachelor's degree in psychology from UC Merced.**

## Long-Term Impact

HWA's sustained support guides students through high school graduation, a successful transition to postsecondary education, and college graduation. HWA's college access programming relies on a partnership between each student, their family, and staff that allows all stakeholders to participate meaningfully in the process.

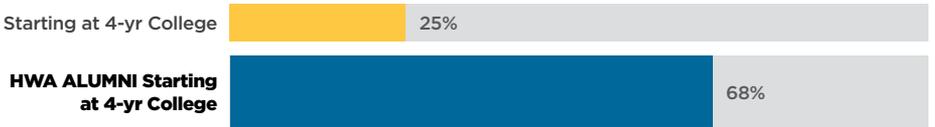
### — HOW DO FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS FARE ONCE IN COLLEGE? —

Only 11% of low-income, first-generation college students will have a college degree within 6 years.



Additionally, 23% of HWA alumni are currently pursuing or have earned a graduate degree!

Low-income, first-generation students are 7x more likely to earn a bachelor's degree if they start at a 4-year institution. Nationally, only 25% start at a 4-year institution.



14% of low-income, first-generation students attending 2-year and for-profit institutions transferred to a four-year institution within six years.



Given that HWA makes great effort to serve youth with moderate GPAs who would be first-generation college students, and demonstrate significant financial and academic need, we are particularly proud of these success rates.



# COLLEGE TOURS AND DESTINATIONS

HWA students, along with their parents, are guided through the college application process, learning how to write effective personal statement essays, apply for financial aid and scholarships, and choose the college that best fits their interests and needs. HWA coordinates college visits for students, and hosts an annual Southern California college tour (visiting 5-8 schools over Spring Break).

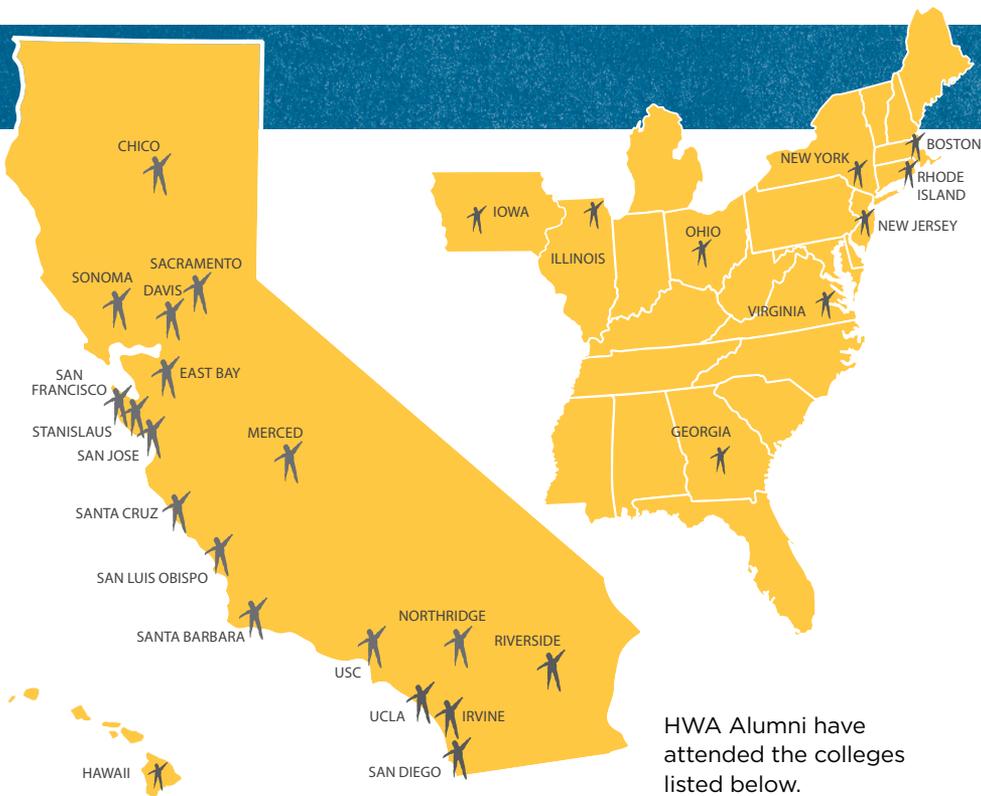
**HWA alumni proudly host many of our college tours.**



**Joining HWA was the best thing that ever happened to me. It was my second home. My parents knew all of the Huckleberry staff. They were clueless about college, but HWA case managers sat down with them and explained everything about the college process.**

**Marisol graduated from Sonoma State University in 2018.**





HWA Alumni have attended the colleges listed below.

## CALIFORNIA

### California State University

- Cal Poly Pomona
  - Chico
  - East Bay
  - Long Beach
  - Monterey Bay
  - Northridge
  - Sacramento State
  - San Francisco State
  - San Jose State
  - Sonoma State
- Chabot College  
City College of San Francisco

- College of Marin
- Contra Costa College
- CSU Stanislaus
- Diablo Valley College
- Folsom Lake College
- NCP College of Nursing
- National Holistic Institute
- Ohlone College
- Pitzer College
- St. Mary's College
- Samuel Merritt University
- Santa Rosa Junior College
- Skyline College
- UC Berkeley

- UC Davis
- UC Irvine
- UC Merced
- UC Riverside
- UC San Diego
- UC Santa Barbara
- UC Santa Cruz
- UCLA
- University of San Diego
- University of San Francisco
- University of Southern California
- University of the Pacific
- Whittier College

## OUTSIDE CALIFORNIA

- Brown University
- Clark University
- Columbia University
- Mailman - School of Public Health
- Emory University
- Iowa State University

- Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- NYU Silver School of Social Work
- Ohio Wesleyan University
- Princeton University
- Tufts University

- University of British Columbia
- University of Chicago
- University of Hawaii
- Manoa
- Virginia State University

# FINANCING COLLEGE

Nationally, first-generation college students face a variety of financial challenges and after their first year of college, many take out more loans to cover expenses.

Statistics show:

- For first generation students, the median annual household income is \$37,565.
- 75% of first generation students anticipated needing to look for employment during their freshman year while only 56% of non-first generation students expected to do so.
- 54% of first generation students are financially on their own, while only 27% of non-first generation students have full financial responsibility for themselves.



*HWA-Marin staff assisted Eneida in applying for and winning a Sun Life Rising Star Scholarship.*

Financial aid support and guidance is a large component of HWA. Great effort is taken to educate families about college expenses, complete financial aid forms, and apply for scholarships. In the spring of 2018, ten HWA-Marin students earned **over \$250,000 in committed scholarships** from the Making Waves Foundation, Dell Scholars, and Ezrati Family Scholarship. Two HWA DREAMERS won scholarships from The Dream.US.

In 2014, in honor of our former executive director, Huckleberry established the **Bruce Fisher Education Fund** to assist HWA students with unfunded college expenses including books, transportation, housing deposits, meal plans, and tuition gaps. This fund has provided **18 students with over \$6,500** for incidental college expenses and the fund contains over \$50,000 to support future HWA students.

**Being a first-generation student - there are challenges. I want to work with Spanish speaking kids to motivate them and say, Look - if I can get here, it's possible for you! So many students in Marin County need this type of support. I hope Huckleberry can continue to receive funding so that they can expand and reach more students!**



**Keila graduated from Sonoma State University in 2018.**

Low-income, first-generation college students are up against unique obstacles. Many of them lack academic, financial, and socioemotional support that is critical to empowering students of color.

#### **Common Obstacles Faced by First-Generation College Students:**

- English is not the first language for nearly 20% of first-generation students.
- Financial hardships, i.e., the ability to afford expensive books and housing. First-generation college students are borrowing from the federal government at increasing rates to pay for education (from 15% in '97 to 37% in 2013, according to the Postsecondary National College Institute).
- Responsibilities at home, including cultural expectations that may conflict with pursuing postsecondary education.
- Lack of mentors and mentorship & lack of diversity in higher education.
- “Imposter Syndrome” and a feeling of not belonging.



**Huckleberry was very intentional about working with the undocumented community. HWA really made a difference by connecting us to resources and guiding us through financial aid and college applications. I would not have applied to a four-year college without them.**

**Jessica is pursuing a master's degree in Higher Education, Student Affairs, Iowa State University.**

# ALUMNI SUCCESSES

Over the last decade, a recurring trend amongst our alumni is the desire to give back to their communities, as well as to the program itself. Alumni return as mentors and speakers to current cohorts and frequently host tours on their college campuses.

In 2016, 80% of HWA alumni reported volunteering, interning, or working in a public service setting by their fourth year of college. They are highly engaged, despite the fact that most work to meet school expenses. HWA alumni are interested in careers in public service including the health and medical fields, sociological research, child development, social work and education.

**Majors have included:** Nursing, public health, psychology, poverty studies, neuroscience, pharmacy, child development, nutrition, musical education and environmental science.

## INTERNSHIPS & CAREER TRAINING



Through Huckleberry's strong partnerships with Bay Area clinics, hospitals, and growing partnerships in other sectors, HWA has matched students with high quality placements at the following sites:



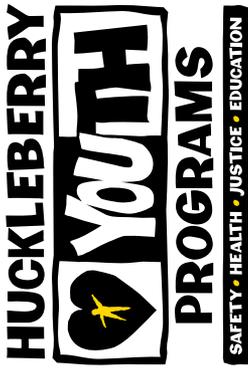
- Aegis Living
- Balboa Teen Health Center
- Blood Centers of the Pacific
- Center for Domestic Peace
- Young Women's Freedom Center
- Circe (Cancer Patient - Nutrition)
- Crossroads Home Health and Hospice
- Curry Senior Center
- Dimensions Youth Clinic
- Haight Ashbury Free Clinic
- Health First Chronic Disease Center at St Luke's/CPMC
- Huckleberry Youth Programs
- Huckleberry Youth Health Center & Research and Evaluation Department
- Kaiser Permanente
- Laguna Honda Rehabilitation Hospital
- LIFT - Levantate (Diabetes Awareness)
- Lyon Martin Health Services
- Marin Brain Injury Network
- Marin Community Clinics
- Marin Pet Hospital
- Mission Neighborhood Resource Center
- Ocean Park Health Center
- Pacific Design Group
- Richmond Area Multi-Services/ Summer Bridge
- Richmond Mental Health
- San Rafael Parks and Recreation
- Stanford Medical Youth Science Program
- Third Street Youth Clinic
- UC Berkeley - Introductory Microbiology
- UCSF - Hematology, Otolaryngology, Breast Care Center, Osher Center for Integrative Medicine, Chemistry Labs, Division of General Internal Medicine at Mt Zion & Pain Management
- Women's Community Clinic

# THANK YOU!

**THANK YOU to these vital HWA funders for their support over the last decade!**

AT&T Foundation	Greenlining Institute	Pacific Service Credit Union
Adobe Systems Inc.	Heffernan Foundation	Pamakid Runners
The Isabel Allende Foundation	Henry Mayo Newhall Foundation	Peter E. Haas Jr. Family Fund
Anonymous Foundation	Kimball Foundation	Piper Jaffray
Bank of Marin	The Stanley S. Langendorf Foundation	Quest Foundation
Blue Shield Foundation	Leo S. Guthman Fund	Ruddie Memorial Youth Foundation
The California Endowment	Alexander M. and June L. Maisin Foundation	S.D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation
California Office of Statewide Health Planning & Development	Marin Charitable Association	Safeway Foundation
The California Wellness Foundation	Marin Community Foundation	San Francisco Department of Children Youth & Their Families
Mitch and Susan Cohen	Marin County Board of Supervisors	Sence Foundation
Comerica Bank	McKesson Foundation	Silicon Valley Bank
Dodge & Cox	Miranda Lux Foundation	Sun Life Financial
EILEEN FISHER	Morris Stulsaft Foundation	Union Bank Foundation
Five Bridges Foundation	Mount Zion Health Fund	US Bank
GGs Foundation	Okta	Wells Fargo Foundation
William G. Gilmore Foundation		Youth Leadership Institute





3310 Geary Boulevard  
San Francisco, CA 94118  
[www.HuckleberryYouth.org](http://www.HuckleberryYouth.org)



**I never thought of college  
until my senior year of  
high school. HWA guided me  
and provided me with a great  
path to where I am today.**

**Kimberly, CSU Monterey Bay,  
Class of 2019**

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