



SUCCEED2GETHER



**ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2020-21**

## OUR MISSION

Succeed2gether is a non-profit organization that addresses unequal access to educational resources by providing free, high-quality enrichment and academic programs to children in need from Montclair and throughout Essex County.



## BACKGROUND

Succeed2gether is a 501(c)(3) that began in 2009 by tutoring fewer than 20 Montclair students after school. The goal was to level the academic playing field by offering individualized mentoring and homework help to children who would not otherwise receive such support. Since then, our tutoring program has flourished, drawing from 11 municipalities throughout Essex County. Along the way, Succeed2gether created a structured summer enrichment program to reverse the so-called 'summer slide' among disadvantaged students. And we added a full array of after-school and weekend workshops in everything from math and language arts to technology. More recently, we expanded our programs by adding college essay writing and launching our newest program, Pathways Forward, which provides educational mentoring from 8th grade through the first year of college or vocational training.

Succeed2gether seeks to close the opportunity gap in order to eliminate the educational disparities that exist right in our own communities. We aim to develop the full human potential of every child or teenager who enters our program. Our guiding principle: all kids deserve what only some kids can afford.

## COVID

Succeed2gether has been all about meeting challenges collaboratively, ever since its start 11 years ago. So, how did we cope in a pandemic? We succeeded, of course – together. It was no simple exercise.

But within two weeks of school closures in March 2020, Succeed2gether's after-school tutoring program and after-school enrichment workshops were operating online. Supported by the determination of tutors, young and not-so-young, and the true grit of students and parents unwilling to let opportunity be torn away, we stuck to our mission.

Intensified need among our students and families meant that we intensified our services. Succeed2gether's after-school program now provides:

- Extra tutoring hours to those at risk of falling permanently behind
- Training for tutors in best practices and useful websites for working online
- Tips on combating 'Zoom fatigue'
- Amplified tutoring for early readers and ESL students
- Extensive mentoring and support for college applicants

The program benefited significantly from a partnership with Montclair State University (MSU). Graduate students from the Speech Pathology Program lent their

expertise and energy to bringing our Early Learners along academically – and bonded with true warmth with their individual tutees.

Some unexpected benefits of our online programs have been:

- Unhampered by transportation challenges, students have improved attendance at S2G sessions
- Now accustomed to communicating with students online, teachers are more accessible for questions on material and assignments
- Our one-on-one sessions offer 'socialization' for students in a way that classroom Zooms often do not

**The one-on-one approach, tried and true for S2G over 10-plus years, has succeeded online beyond our expectations during the pandemic.**

Our professional teacher volunteers and our Succeed2gether Board Curriculum Committee have concluded that we should continue some of our Zoom sessions even after life returns to 'normal.'

## AFTER-SCHOOL TUTORING

We complement the public educational system by providing additional support in the areas of math (algebra / geometry / calculus), science (chemistry / biology / physics), English language arts, social studies, French, Spanish, and subject specific requests. Our program offers free one-on-one

tutoring to students in grades K-12, four days a week. Our team of volunteer tutors is made up of current and retired educators, business professionals, advertising and engineering professionals, honors high school students, as well as students from area colleges and universities. The program runs from September to May. We also have a Book Buddy and Math Buddy Program for students in grades K-3, in which middle school students work with young students on reading and math skills.

Due to the pandemic, we moved our tutoring services online and expanded our tutoring hours, offering sessions Monday through Friday, September - June, from 2:00pm - 7:00pm. We had four to five sessions occurring simultaneously helping over 100 students through a total of 1,933 hours of tutoring. Most students were tutored in one-hour sessions in either English language arts, math, science, or social studies. Some students received multiple sessions a week in various subjects. We maintain rolling admissions to accommodate student schedules and extracurriculars.

We foster success by engaging an impressive all-volunteer army of more than 67 tutors. This year they included dozens of retired teachers and professionals, honor society high-school students, graduate students and Bonner Student Leaders from MSU, and service-learners from area colleges and universities. We have also grown our popular Book Buddy Program of middle-schoolers. The Pathways Forward mentoring team comprises working professionals, teachers and professors, business people, writers, and community leaders.



**S2G has built a model of community engagement for the public good – both friendly and serious, relaxed yet work-driven, multi-aged and multi-cultural, all revolving around academic success.**

Parents consistently report academic successes, with students improving grades and making the honor roll.

## AFTER-SCHOOL ENRICHMENT

We offer free workshops for parents, families, and students on topics ranging from core academics to art and technology classes from October to April. Classes are offered in small groups in the fall, winter, and spring and are taught by qualified teachers and instructors. During the pandemic, we moved these classes online. A total of 183 students attended after-school enrichment workshops on topics ranging from science, poetry, voice, coding, math, reading, violin, drumming, as well as visual and performing arts. For these classes we hired certified teachers and, when possible, partnered with

the Rutgers 4-H program, the Montclair Art Museum and Konnekt Global. We offered 34 different classes for a total of 1,029 instructional hours and also provided five family programs attended by 110 families. Some workshop students attended several enrichment classes or also participated in our tutoring program.

## PARENT WORKSHOPS AND ACTIVITIES

Workshops are provided for parents to ensure their child is getting the help he/she needs both at school and at home. Succeed2gether offered a number of family workshops during 2020-21. We held online training sessions for parents to help cope with virtual at home learning and also provided family educational activities to do at home such as multi-activity STEM kits prepared by the Rutgers 4-H program. As COVID lingered, we hosted an important presentation by Mountainside resident doctors on supporting emotional health and wellbeing and then in the fall we held an SAT Prep Information Session as part of the Pathways Forward Program. Our parents also enjoyed an inspirational art project aimed at visualizing family members' goals and dreams. In total, 50 families participated in S2G's parent workshops over the last year.

## SUMMER ENRICHMENT

In July 2021, Succeed2gether completed its 12th, four-week Summer Enrichment Program. The program is offered at little to no cost to area students to help prevent the 'summer slide' and to ensure S2G students enter the new school year ready to achieve.

Academic classes are taught by certified master teachers in small-group sessions.



This summer, S2G provided 12 hours of academic enrichment in English language arts for rising 3rd-5th graders and 6th-8th graders. In addition, enrichment was provided in math for rising 3rd-5th graders, pre-algebra for 5th-7th graders, and algebra for 7th-9th graders. The summer academic classes were well attended and received excellent reviews.

S2G summer enrichment also included classes that ranged from origami (origami and geometry), Mandarin, debate, and chess to creative writing, dance, drawing, two different levels of coding, and violin. Our youth partners were Konnekt Global which provided a week of art, science, theater, dance, yoga, and Code Tekkers which provided the coding classes. Half of the summer classes were provided by volunteer instructors, which allowed S2G to provide all of our summer classes at no cost to families that are struggling to make ends meet. In all, S2G offered 19 classes for a total of 898 instructional hours.

## PATHWAYS FORWARD

Succeed2gether launched its new Pathways Forward mentoring program on June 30th, drawing more than 40 people out on a sweltering evening, excited to hear about academic and family coaching for students during the six-year journey from 8th grade through that important transition year following high school graduation.

The program emerged after S2G directors discovered an unfortunate truth. Even though the tutoring program is highly successful at helping students maintain their work at grade level and supporting those who exceed grade level studies, some students still reach the end of high school without a plan for the future.

Pathways Forward was conceived to begin coaching students in 8th grade to look ahead and consider how to navigate their way to college and a successful career. The mentoring program is aimed at developing a long-term relationship that will last through high school and even the first year of college.

**Mentors work with students to provide tips on how to keep eyes on the future, while accomplishing what needs to be done today.**

The program includes quarterly group meetings and information sessions, as well as workshops and hands-on, one-to-one mentoring and instruction for students and

their families. Services offered include: study and time management skills, subject tutoring, career information and requirements, information on setting and achieving goals, SAT and test prep workshops, college-essay workshops, help with college applications and the financial aid process, guidance on class and school selection, a timetable for completing extracurriculars and community paperwork, and instruction on how to develop important life skills such as self-advocacy. Pathways Forward parents express great relief and appreciation that their children are gaining the needed assistance to plan for college and career.



## AFTER CARE TUTORING

S2G is collaborating with the Montclair YMCA to provide free, one-on-one tutoring to children taking part in the YMCA's After Care Program. Many of these students are from income-constrained families that would benefit from S2G's tutoring program, but because of their parents' work schedule, they have been unable to participate. This new pilot program will remove that barrier. Unfortunately, continued COVID concerns this fall have delayed the implementation of this important collaboration.

## LITERARY FESTIVAL

In 2017, Succeed2gether launched the first Montclair Literary Festival with author/celebrity Trevor Noah in order to engage the entire community in a celebration of reading, books, and Montclair's vibrant and diverse literary scene. The festival features a full program of free book talks, panel discussions, author signings, workshops, and children's activities, including a poetry slam.



Stevie Van Zandt, 2021 Montclair Literary Festival, Photo by Bill Solomon

In 2018, more than 90 authors took part in 50 events over our days, including Patti Smith, Tom Perrotta, Anna Quindlen, Meg Wolitzer and Christina Baker Kline. In 2019, the festival expanded to include more than 100 authors and five days of events including Joyce Carol Oates, Nathan Englander, Sigrid Nunez, David Ebershoff, Nell Painter, and George O'Connor.

The festival attracted sell-out in-person crowds to two ticketed events in early 2020, author Isabel Allende speaking about her work, *The Long Petal of the Sea*, and Malcolm Gladwell discussing his *Talking to Strangers*.

In March 2020, due to the pandemic, we moved all festival events online, starting with Erik

Larson's *The Splendid and the Vile* on March 9th, and finishing with Paul Krugman's *Arguing with Zombies* on July 8th. We also added children's and other free online events over those three months.

We presented our rescheduled free, online Festival on Saturday, September 12th and Sunday September 13th, 2020. We also ran a series of writing workshops over the evenings of the following week.

This unprecedented year ended with an event with Jane Fonda and Chelsea Clinton, discussing Jane's latest book *What Can I Do? My Path from Climate Despair to Action*.

All in all, during 2020, we reached just under 9,000 people in 35 events with 50 authors including Jane Fonda, Chelsea Clinton, Paul Krugman, Erik Larson, Malcolm Gladwell, Isabel Allende, Nicholas Kristof, Colum McCann, Emily St. John Mandel, Mo Rocca, John Sayles, Bill Buford, Madeline Miller, Mona Awad, Eduardo Porter, Adrienne Miller, Eilene Zimmerman, as well as children's authors Lori Richmond and Michael Rex.

In March 2021, a special series of author events, *Global Voices*, took place, featuring authors and poets from England, Scotland, Ireland, Korea, Iran, Dubai, Sri Lanka, Ecuador, Spain, and the Caribbean. Authors included Imbolo Mbue, Don Lemon, Douglas Stuart, Billy Collins, Andrew Motion, Avni Doshi, Cherie Jones, and Frances Cha. The 2021 *Global Voices* festival was followed by two outstanding stand-alone virtual events. In April, Elvis Costello interviewed Richard Thompson about his new book, *Beeswing*, and in June the best of the Booker prize winners, Salmon Rushdie, discussed his new essay collection, *Language of Truth*.

The fifth annual Montclair Literary

Festival took place on Saturday, October 2nd, 2021, with a combination of live and online events.

Renowned authors Joyce Carol Oates and Paul Auster returned to the festival, which also featured National Book Award Finalist Katie Kitamura, Henry Winkler, Colm Tóibín, Jonathan Alter, Thad Ziolkowski, Anna Qu, Ly Tran, Qian Julie Wang, Mona Awad, Kai Bird, Rob Reich, Jonathan Santlofer, and Stevie Van Zandt. All net proceeds from the Literary Festival help to fund Succeed2gether's programs.

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS

### Laptop Upcycle

We partner with Laptop Upcycle to offer our students soldering workshops. Laptop Upcycle is a Montclair, NJ based division of non-profit HackNCraftNJ, Inc. committed to obtaining, refreshing, and distributing technology to students who need the tools to succeed in school.

### Montclair Art Museum

Montclair Art Museum led an exciting class, Art Adventures, for eight weeks. Students put their explorer hats on and went on an adventure.

**Our families joined museum educator Raul Barcelona on a creative journey across space and time and into the remote corners of their imagination.**

Every week, students conjured up the realm of colors and textures as they invented and expanded a world of their own making through drawing, painting, collage, and paper sculpting. All supplies (other than glue or scissors) were provided by the Montclair Art Museum.

## Montclair Public Library

For over ten years, from Monday to Thursday each week throughout the school year, the Montclair Public Library has provided a venue for Succeed2gether's after-school tutoring for K-12 grade students.

During the pandemic, one-on-one instruction in the library was not possible. When the library reopened for public reading in September 2021, Succeed2gether immediately resumed in-person tutoring two days a week and expanded the hours in the evening to 7:30pm. Unfortunately, with the spread of the Omicron variant, the library was forced to close temporarily. We plan to resume this critical in-person instruction in our classroom at 11 Pine St. until the library fully reopens.

**The Montclair Public Library has also been a strategic partner for Succeed2gether's Montclair Literary Festival. All of our children's programs as well as many of the adult panels were held at the Library with generous assistance from the library staff.**

And in October 2021, when the pandemic prevented large indoor events, we were able to utilize the Library's front lawn for one of our Festival tents. We thank the entire library staff for their continued support for S2G's programs.

## Montclair Public Schools

Students from Montclair High School's National Honor Society and Key Club are tutors for our program. They offer our students peer-to-peer tutoring and serve as mentors and role models for our students. The students create a strong bond and continue to volunteer with us over their four-year journey.

## Montclair State University

Since September 2020, Succeed2gether has partnered with several programs or departments from Montclair State University, including the Bonner Leader Program (BLP) and the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders Graduate Program. In particular, Succeed2gether would like to thank Dr. Lesley Sylvan, Assistant Professor, Communication Sciences and Disorders and also Krystal Woolston, Assistant Director of Center for Community Engagement, Academic Affairs, as well as Bryan Murdock, Director of the Center of Community Engagement, Academic Affairs, for connecting us with MSU faculty and staff.

Krystal Woolston assigned four MSU Bonner Leaders to work with Succeed2gether. These leaders were an invaluable resource. They created organization outreach, lists for partner opportunities, as well as videos to share on social media. They also assisted the tutoring program through monitoring sessions and tutoring extra

sessions as needed. One even taught a voice enrichment class.



In addition to the four Bonner Leaders, Succeed2gether received help from 40 students in Dr. Sylvan's class on Language Disorders in School-Aged Children. These volunteer students made significant contributions to our remote programs during the pandemic. Dr. Sylvan's students not only improved our students' academic foundation through reinforcement of basic math and ELA skills, they also broadened their horizon through virtual trips around the world. Last spring, with Dr. Sylvan's assistance, her students led four well-received professional development workshops titled Early Literacy Development, Tips for Supporting English Language Learners, and Engaging and Motivating Students on Zoom. These MSU student volunteers provided new energy and ideas during a difficult time for classroom learning everywhere. This collaboration continued in fall 2021, as we focused on professional development training for our tutors.

From hosting Trevor Noah at the first festival to annual sponsorships and event partnerships, Montclair State University has stepped up with support for Succeed2gether's Montclair Literary Festival.

In addition a number of faculty members have been invaluable festival participants as authors, moderators, and members of our Festival Advisory Board. We look forward to solidifying and growing this partnership.

## Jewish Family Services of Metro-West New Jersey

We work in partnership with Stephanie Grove, Director, RSVP (Retired & Senior Volunteer) to pair retired professionals with students to tutor.

## Family Support with Toni's Kitchen

Eligible students from our tutoring program may participate in the Healthy Backpack Program run by Toni's Kitchen. Once a week students receive a backpack filled with nutritious mealtime ingredients. Students return empty backpacks and pick up a filled one.

## 4-H Youth Development

In collaboration with Rutgers 4-H, Succeed2gether ran an enrichment workshop focused on the Polar Scientists Program. Students spent five weeks discovering the uniqueness and importance of ice in the Arctic and Antarctic. They learned about polar research, heard from polar scientists, and created a project to help others understand the significance of these remote regions of the world. The goal was to increase STEM identity through relationships with the scientists and hands-on exercises with their data.

## YOUTH PARTNERS

### Code Tekkers

Koome Murungi, Junior at Montclair Kimberley Academy and Founder of Code Tekkers, taught coding to Succeed2gether students in 4th and 5th grade in our after-school enrichment program as well as Python to students in 6th-8th grade in our summer program. These classes demystified the world of artificial intelligence (AI), programming, and coding by providing basic coding skills in a fun, hands-on, relatable way. At the end of the course, each student was able to see their efforts come to fruition by completing and presenting a coding project. The course culminated with each student creating a basic computer game.

### Konnekt Global

Konnekt Global is a youth-run registered non-profit organization with the aim of connecting children with the resources required for academic success. Through Succeed2gether, they taught various forms of the arts such as dance (hip-hop, Bollywood, folk), fine arts (drawing, painting), vocals, yoga, and theater. Each of the volunteers has over five years of training in their respective fields and experience with teaching children.

([konnektglobal.com](http://konnektglobal.com))

## STATS AT A GLANCE 2020-21

### Tutoring

**104** students

**1933** hours

**39** weeks

**4** training sessions

**113** tutors

### Enrichment

**34** classes

**183** students

**1029** hours

**6** family programs

**110** families

Thank you to our donors who enable us to make our programs free to qualifying families.

(973) 746-0553

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## 2020/21 SUCCEED2GETHER'S MAJOR SUPPORTERS

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Montclair Public Library

Montclair State University

YMCA Montclair After care Program

Montclair Art Museum

Toni's Kitchen

Montclair Helps

Montclair Mutual Aid

Montclair Jewish Workshop

Montclair Kimberly Academy

Jewish Family Service of MetroWest  
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The Montclair Literary Festival is a  
program of Succeed2gether.

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Succeed2gether is Grateful for the Support!



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