breakthrough san juan capistrano
IMPACT REPORT 2019-2020
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our mission

Breakthrough San Juan Capistrano supports local motivated students whose backgrounds are underrepresented in higher education by providing tuition-free academic programming and guidance from middle school through college graduation.
As I near the end of my undergraduate studies, I wallow in a fog of anxiety and uncertainty for what is to come next. I’ve been a Breakthrough (BT) student since 7th grade, and while BT succeeded in getting me to college, they continue to walk alongside me on my journey with their new college program. It was reassuring knowing that BT didn’t just dump me in the middle of nowhere (aka UC Merced) and bid me good luck. Instead, BT extended their guidance to be with countless other BT students and me until the end of college. Though I was 334 miles away from home, BT closed those gaps. Monthly check-in meetings with Sam consisted of making sure that I was doing well academically and creating an action plan to visit an on-campus tutor or to attend my professors’ office hours if I ever found myself struggling. Sam also made sure to check in with me emotionally if I ever felt too overwhelmed or homesick; BT was ready to cover any of my travel fees to get back home. Care packages with tide pods and Kraft Mac and cheese were also delightful to open when feeling homesick.

To younger BT students, this journey to college and onto our future careers may feel like the equivalent of walking a tightrope while blindfolded, with the tightrope set aflame, but BT will always be there to subdue the flames.

So keep on walking without any fear of the future that is to come.

Monika
Over our virtual summer program, according to findings from our research partnership with the UCI School of Education, we found a statistically significant:

- **decrease in student loneliness**
- **increase in student academic self-efficacy**
- **increase in student's self-esteem**
Test With an Experiment

Create an experiment to test your question hypothesis.

In the chat, write down a basic experiment to test your question. Write down at least 3 steps (1 min).
Despite having a different environment this year, every class still had a sense of community.

-BT middle school student
middle school program

14,000hrs of virtual learning occurred over the course of the program, an effort to slow pandemic learning loss.

95% average student attendance over the four-week program.

100% of teaching fellows would recommend BTSJC to a friend.
college admissions

90
college acceptances

72
hours of mentoring and counseling

96%
four-year college acceptance rate

222
college applications submitted

100%
fafsa/ca dream act completion rate

100%
college attendance rate
“BT has taught me how to advocate for myself.

It’s not just about how BT provides us with access to valuable resources but about how the team creates a sense of belonging and empowerment that I think is absolutely necessary for when the day of navigating higher education comes.”

-Angela, Freshman at USC
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>College Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cal Poly Pomona</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cal Poly Pomona Aerospace Engineering</td>
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<td>Cal Poly San Luis Obispo</td>
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<td>Cal State University (CSU), San Marcos</td>
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<td>Wake Forest University</td>
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<td>Whittier College</td>
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colleges and universities where BT student attend

100% of students completed a year of college and remained on track to graduating amidst the pandemic
"I am honestly beyond blessed to be part of Breakthrough. Without this program, I'm not sure where I would be today. With all their help and support I am pushing through college to have a better future for myself and my family."

-Rey, Freshman at USC
college program

75 college students will be supported in 20-21 school year
student growth

2017-2018
2018-2019
2019-2020
2020-2021
2021-2022
2022-2023

500
400
300
200
100
0

projected growth

total program
middle school
high school
college

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COVID-19 response

$35,000
raised in monetary and in-kind support to provide laptops to students

$101,367
raised in 72hrs for the family emergency fund to distribute grocery cards to BT families

160 families supported

900 individual family members
Breakthrough SJC is centered in the work of advancing justice and equity every day as we guide our students from middle school through college graduation— a vision to break the cycle of poverty forever. As such, Breakthrough SJC stands in solidarity with members of the African American and Black communities, in addition to the many peaceful protestors around the nation responding to the killing of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and countless other lives.

Historical injustices, inequities, and institutionalized racism have culminated in this moment of justifiable despair, sorrow, and anger. This moment is further shaped by the recent pandemic and economic crisis that has disproportionately impacted communities of color.

Breakthrough SJC believes in equity, justice, inclusion, community, and love. Our existence’s very fabric is founded on the belief that all students should have equitable access to pursue their education regardless of their background.

We exist because students from historically underrepresented backgrounds have not had a fair opportunity to pursue their education. We exist to overcome those injustices and inequities every single day. Likewise, we stand together with those who are committed to interrupting racial injustices and inequities. We stand with those calling for meaningful change. Our direct commitment is to increase educational opportunities. Still, our core values implore us to reflect, acknowledge, and act against the structural and institutionalized racism that shapes the lives of our hundreds of students, families, wider community, and countless other communities elsewhere.

Lastly, we also believe in growth and learning. We consistently strive to deepen our understanding and learnings in our efforts towards racial justice and equity. One piece of moving forward is to listen and learn. Most importantly, to move forward is to embark on these efforts together. Thank you all for standing with us; we wish you and yours well.

With love,

Alex Serna, Executive Director
community engagement

Non-Profit Accelerator Graduate 2020
in partnership with Edwards Lifesciences Foundation

Best of San Juan
2019

Dispatch People’s Choice Horseshoe Awards

SOCAL CAN Member

octane
Foundation for Innovation
BREAKTHROUGH SJC DIRECTOR ALEX SERNA HONORED WITH EMERGING LEADER AWARD BY OC GRANTMAKERS

12/2/2020

Breakthrough SJC Director Alex Serna Honored With Emerging Leader Award by OC Grantmakers
St. Margaret’s Breakthrough SJC Executive Director Alex Serna was recently honored with the Emerging Leader Award by the Orange County Grantmakers, a recognition of his work leading Breakthrough's efforts to assist students underrepresented in higher education through academic programming and guidance.

OC Grantmakers is an organization with the mission of advancing social impact by supporting, strengthening and building adaptive leadership across nonprofit and philanthropic communities. The Emerging Leader Award, presented during the organization’s annual summit, seeks to honor an up-and-coming nonprofit or philanthropic professional who has made significant contributions to their field, and who has demonstrated their potential for leadership and continuing service.

Mr. Serna has been Breakthrough's executive director since 2018.
community engagement

Reata Glen Helps Breakthrough San Juan Capistrano

check here to read the full story
Advancing Breakthrough San Juan Capistrano through the Non Profit Accelerator

The welcome meeting for Octane’s Nonprofit Accelerator Program (NPA) was two days before our nonprofit, Breakthrough San Juan Capistrano (BSC), had to move all programming online after several local schools closed in response to the spread of COVID-19. I started to second-guess whether, amidst the immense uncertainty of the pandemic and our organization’s need to pivot quickly to address the changing environment that it was the right time to participate in the program.

I had jubilantly applied to NPA a few months earlier, knowing that it would be an invaluable experience for our organization. We support students, mostly from low-income backgrounds who will be the first in their families to
TOMORROW’S Leaders

LOCAL EDUCATORS BUILD COMMUNITY TO ENGAGE AND INSPIRE SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO’S STUDENTS.

San Juan Capistrano is home to the Capistrano Unified School District’s headquarters and seven of its over 60 public school campuses serving local students from early-childhood education through 12th-grade. A

almost two decades ago after her daughter was diagnosed with dyslexia in kindergarten. There were no schools at the time that could fit her needs to remediate her reading problem and learning disability.

“'How can I help these students?' Johnson asked, before switching her area of expertise to child language and neurological disorders, while going on to start The Johnson Academy—it’s the only school in the south county offering state-adopted curriculum in tandem with evidence-based reading, auditory and language therapies and individualized interventions for students with language-based learning disabilities.

“Dyslexia is very misunderstood,” Johnson said of the learning disorder that impacts 1 out of 5 children but remains severely underdiagnosed. Adding, that being amid a “sea of dyslexics, and not having to be scared of reading or misspelling or of their teacher marking up their page,” the students are blooming.

“The fact that they are really with their people, the pressure is off,” Johnson said.

New to the local school fold is Fairmont Schools’ San Juan Capistrano campus. Opened in May, the local campus fulfills the school’s decades-long goal of bringing its ingenuity, diversity and curiosity-driven programing to preschool through high school students throughout South Orange County.
Cox Donates Computers for Breakthrough San Juan Capistrano
new members of the community

COX
Bringing us closer

EDWARDS LIFESCIENCES FOUNDATION

Edwards

GATEWAY SCHOLARS
A COLLABORATION WITH STUDENT SUCCESS INITIATIVES & THE SOAR CENTER

OC COMMUNITY Resilience Fund
Powered by Charitable Ventures, OC Grantmakers, Orange County Community Foundation and St. Joseph Community Partnership Fund

THE ECOLOGY CENTER
finances

**Revenue**
- Total budget: $550,000
- Total fundraised: $574,000
- Reserves: 22 months
- Endowment: $1 million

- **13%** Foundation
- **35%** Individual
- **45%** Smes donation & in-kind

**Expenses**
- **15%** Management
- **5%** Administrative
- **45%** Program

Program expenses include:
- **7%** Corporate
thank you to our institutional supporters!

*19-20 supporters reflected between 7/1/19 - 6/30/20

foundations

Brethren Community Foundation
Connelly Family Foundation
Coutts & Clark Western Foundation, Inc.
Fidelity Foundation Matching Gifts to Education Program
J. Stanley & Mary W. Johnson Family Foundation
The Nicholas Endowment
Orange County's United Way
Orange County Community Foundation
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corporations

Applied Medical Resources Corporation
Bad to the Bone
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Reata Glen Orange County CCRC LLC
Rimrock Capital
Sundried Tomato Bistro
The College Essay Guy
Thinque Prep

organizational

Boys & Girls Club of Capistrano Valley
Breakthrough Collaborative
Capistrano Valley High School
CHEC Family Resource Center
City of San Juan Capistrano
CSULB Shark Lab
Dana Hills High School
Great Opportunities
Marco Forster Middle School
Ocean Institute
San Juan Capistrano Chamber of Commerce
San Juan Hills High School
Southern California College Access Network
St. Margaret’s Episcopal School
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Kia and Jason Weiss
Pengpeng Ye
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Juliana Vazquez  
Leonard Versola

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Ryan Healy  
Carter LaCrosse  
Sergio Sanabria

**college mentors**
Veronica Castillo  
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Marie Houle  
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Jaime Del Rio  
Monika Robles  
Sarah Arce  
Aidan Anderson  
Anika Groover  
Maite Garcia  
Rey Cano  
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Yenda Prado

finally, thank you to all our incredible BT students, parents, and families that are the heart and soul of Breakthrough SJC!
thank you to our staff, smes leadership team, advisory board, and angels!

staff
- Qunsia Daniel, Director of Middle and Early High School
- Sam Geary, Director of College Access and Completion
- Alex Serna, Executive Director
- Traci Townsend-Gieg, Development Consultant

st. margaret’s leadership team
- William Moseley, Head of School
- Ryan Dahlem, Assistant Head of School for Strategic Initiatives
- Victor Cota, Director of Equity & Inclusion
- Anne Dahlem, Director of Communications
- David Bush, Chief Financial and Operating Officer
- Jonathan Tufo, Director of Advancement
- Dr. Jeneen Graham, Upper School Principal

advisory board
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- Jim Reardon, CUSD Board Trustee
- Stacey Nicholas, Community Leader
- Amy Fulford, St. Margaret’s Parent & College Mentor
- Megan Yoo Schneider, Director, Division 7, Municipal Water District of Orange County Board
- Dr. Geeta Grover, UC Irvine Pediatrician & College Mentor
- Greg Silver, President of GMU Geotechnical & College Mentor
- Nicole Watson, Associate Executive Director, Boys and Girls Club of Capistrano Valley
- Enrique Loya, Breakthrough and St. Margaret’s Parent
- Claire Frahm, St. Margaret’s Assistant to the Head of School

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- Peg and James Berens
- Karen and James Murphy
- Anita and Ira Hermann
- Candy and Duraid Antone
- Kia and Paul Westhead

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