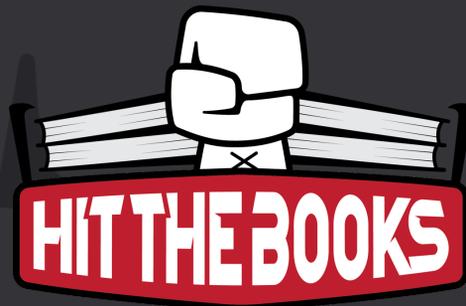


2023 Annual Report



EST. 2019

'Tough Times Don't Last, Tough People Do'

2023 has been a year of immense growth at Hit the Books. We have seen our student count continue to swell, allowing us to serve more students than ever before. At the same time, the impact we have had on each student has continued to grow, a tribute to our team and the intentionality of our programming.

In our organizational leadership, we are beyond excited to welcome Jhae Thompson to Hit the Books as our new Executive Director. Jhae is an experienced leader in the education non-profit space and is already having a visible impact on our organization. We believe she is the perfect person to lead Hit the Books into our next phase of growth. We both remain as committed as ever to Hit the Books' mission and continue to lead our Board, supporting Jhae and our programming team.

Programmatically, 2023 was our best year yet. We were able to positively impact a record number of students academically, physically, and developmentally. This can be seen in our superior academic results, which include remarkable growth in the percent of our students on grade level as well as the highest share of our students showing academic growth in our history. Further, we are now able to see the medium-term impact of our work through data we have collected for multiple years on some of our first students. This data shows sizable growth of 5 to 8 percentile points annually in reading and math. This type of growth, strung across years of programming, can be the difference between a student dropping out of high school or going to college. We could not be more excited by these results. We continue to work to improve programming so we can have an even greater impact in 2024. At Hit the Books, good is never good enough when it comes to what we offer our students.

In July we were able to host our first Open House. This was a culminating night for us, as it was the first opportunity we have had to share our work with so many of our stakeholders in our facility. It was a powerful night with stories told by our Hit the Books families and our staff. It made clear what we have always known to be true: our work is more important than ever.

In terms of fundraising, 2023 was a record year. We were able to raise \$200,000+ more than in 2022, driven largely by growth in foundation and corporate support. We cannot thank our supporters enough for their belief in us. We would not be here without you! As we look ahead to 2024, we have ambitious plans. For us to succeed we will need your help again. It takes a village, and today we are asking for all our stakeholders to join us in making a difference in our students lives. Thank you!

Best,
Zach Levy and Justin Haber
Co-Founders of Hit the Books



Justin Haber
Board Chair



Zach Levy
Board Vice Chair

As I embark on this new journey as the Executive Director of Hit the Books, I am honored and enthusiastic about the opportunity to contribute to HTB's meaningful work for the Harlem community.

My journey to join Hit the Books and New York City has been one of purpose, passion and a sprinkle of persistence and serendipity. My initial experiences with Hit the Books revealed an organization deeply committed to educational equity for youth and leveraging the power of youth development based sports programming, aligning perfectly with my values and aspirations. Witnessing HTB's profound impact on the community inspired me to be part of such transformative efforts.

The decision to relocate to New York City was driven by a profound urge to immerse myself in a vibrant ecosystem of change-makers, innovators, and diverse perspectives. The city's dynamism and rich tapestry of cultures fuel my spirit and reinforce my commitment to positive change within this dynamic city and the community of Harlem.

Joining Hit the Books as the Executive Director signifies an opportunity to channel my skills, experiences, and unwavering dedication toward fostering successful outcomes for youth. My foremost goal is to fortify Hit the Book's foundation while remaining responsive to the evolving needs of our students and families. By leveraging innovative approaches, strategic partnerships, and a relentless pursuit of excellence, I am committed to guiding Hit the Books toward greater heights of continuing to be *exceptional, special, and unique*.

I am eager to continue this transformative journey and am wholeheartedly devoted to realizing our shared aspirations. I am confident that we will create a lasting and profound impact on the lives we touch and the Harlem community that we serve.

All the best,



Jhae Thompson

Executive Director

Hit the Books



Jhae Thompson
Executive Director

Our Mission

Hit the Books (“HTB”) aims to **bring additional educational resources** to underserved communities through a sports-based development approach, with tutoring and mentorship at its core and mixed martial arts as the ‘hook’. HTB **serves as an after-school community center** to facilitate development and help make any and every goal achievable for its students.

How We Will Achieve Our Mission

- We provide after-school educational programs, mentorship, and mixed martial arts classes to children in Harlem aged 6-13 to help students progress intellectually, emotionally, and physically.
- We expose our students to educational opportunities that may otherwise pass them by, enhancing the educational resources available to children in our targeted communities and fostering an environment of educational equality.
- We serve as a community within a community, where children feel safe and view the facility as a second home.

Our Core Values

- Our members believe in a **commitment** to their academic goals and put the value of education first.
- Our members believe that they are capable, **resilient** and can bounce back from anything.
- Our members are **ambitious**, and they believe every opportunity can be achieved with a positive attitude, hard work and tenacity.
- Our members are **self-disciplined**. Focus and consistent practice lead to success—in the ring, and in all corners of life.
- Finally, HTB members are **compassionate**. They believe in being empathetic toward each other, their families, and other HTB members. They are champions for their communities and strive to make the world a better place.

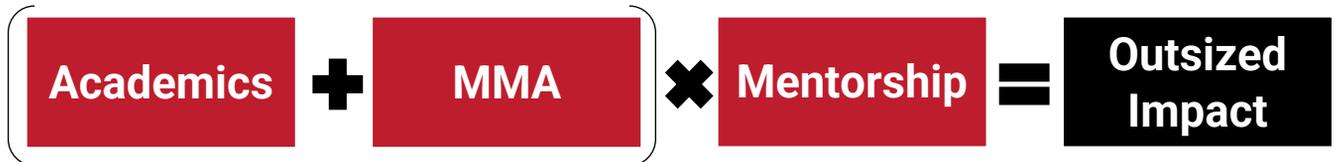
The Hit the Books Model



Hit The Books focuses on three Key pillars intended to shape our students' development: (i) Academics, (ii) Mentorship, and (iii) Mixed Martial Arts

Academics	Mentorship	Mixed Martial Arts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ HTB has a full-time staff focused on creating a positive learning environment and a tutoring curriculum, leveraging the iReady educational learning platform ✓ HTB has recruited talented local high school students and graduate school interns to provide individualized instruction to students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ HTB employs passive mentorship, whereby the staff and tutors act as role models through their daily interactions with our students ✓ HTB provides daily dinner for students to foster a communal experience and bonding amongst the students, tutors, and HTB staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Mixed Martial Arts encompasses Muay-Thai Kickboxing, Boxing, Wrestling, and Brazilian Jiu Jitsu ✓ The benefits of martial arts include improvements in focus, discipline, self control, and coordination. At HTB, we have blended those benefits with mentorship that focuses on camaraderie, goal setting, compassion and work ethic

Every facet of our program is intentional. It is designed based on extensive research on effective academic strategies and the benefits of an interdisciplinary (sports + academics) approach



Academic Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students feel neglected by their academic institutions ▪ Students arrive at Hit the Books intimidated or disinterested in academics ▪ The 'work' starts by motivating students to give academics another chance. ▪ The lack of 'one size fits all' answers means progress takes time

MMA Benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MMA is a fun way to be active, making it intrinsically motivating ▪ Unlike other sports, size doesn't matter in MMA. Proficiency is driven by hard work. ▪ The ability to clearly see cause and effect (hard work = growth) translates to hard work elsewhere (i.e. academics)

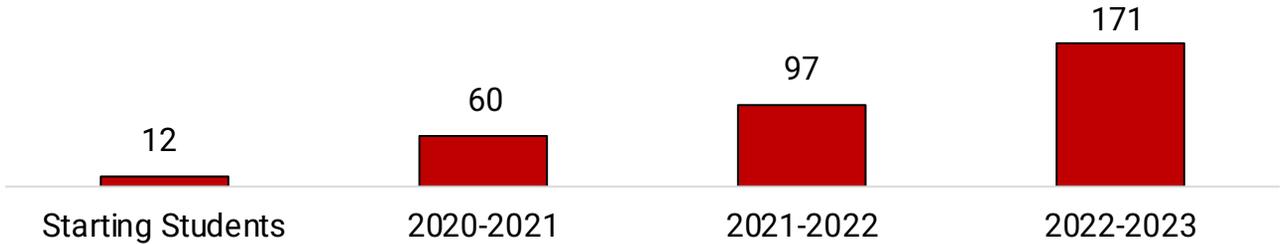
SEL Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Our core values are Commitment, Resilience, Ambition, Self-Discipline and Compassion ▪ We weave these values into our programming at every level ▪ This creates a culture within our facility that puts students in a position to succeed and is easily transferable to other areas of life

Compound Benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Our holistic approach ensures impacts are wide-ranging and lasting ▪ Students are often initially motivated during MMA, which translates to increased engagement academically ▪ 10% growth in a 5th grader's ELA score causes a 25% drop in their chances of imprisonment¹

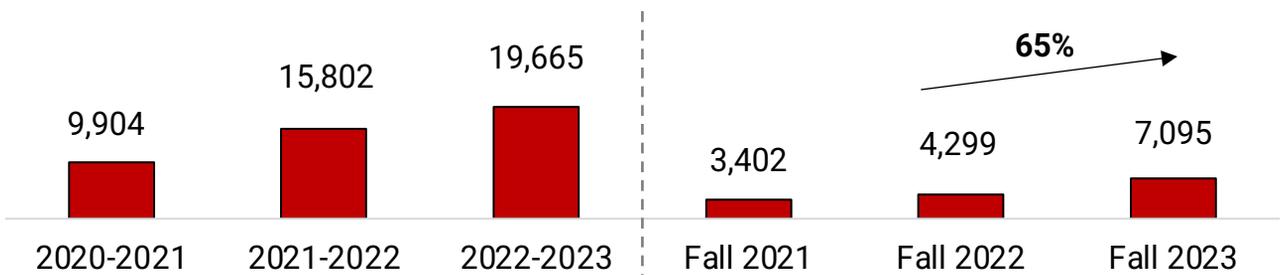
¹ <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/origin/ny/report.html>

In 2023, we experienced continued growth in students served, as we have consistently done since our inception, increasing our impact on the Harlem Community

Student Count Over Time



Hours of Programming Over Time



We continue to update the organizational schedule to optimize our programming, as well as identify adjustments / additions to existing programming to maximize impact

- Below is an example of our Fall 2023 Weekday Schedule, which has been optimized to serve 150+ students weekly
- We are also launching or have launched several new learning initiatives, including:
 - New learning platform for Saturday programming (Star Reading) that is best fit for Saturday needs
 - High-Impact Tutoring: research-based practice of supplementing classroom instruction in small groups
 - New curricula: align with students' needs and provide supplemental activities for building reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills

DAILY SCHEDULE FOR EACH WEEKDAY @ HTB			
Hit the Books facility opens at 2:00 PM daily. Students in Grades 2-6 should arrive by 3:45 pm on assigned days to participate.			
Time	Schedule A Activity (Location)	Schedule B Activity (Location)	Schedule C Activity (Location)
2:00pm – 3:25pm	Snack, Homework Help (Learning Center)	Snack, Homework Help (Learning Center)	
3:30pm – 4:30pm	MMA Session (Gym)	Tutoring / Academic Session (Learning Center)	
4:35pm – 5:35pm	Tutoring / Academic Session (Learning Center)	MMA Session (Gym)	
5:40pm – 6:15pm	Supper - Dismissal @ 6:15	Supper - Dismissal @ 6:15	Arrival @ 5:50pm – snack (Gym)
5:40pm – 6:40pm			MMA Session/Academic Session (Gym/Learning Center)
6:45pm – 7:45pm			Tutoring / Academic Session (Learning Center)
7:25pm – 7:45pm			Supper (Learning Center) and dismissal @ 7:45

Go to our [Website](#) to see our program in action!



HTB partnered with the UFC for a special day of after school programming featuring UFC Welterweight, Randy Brown



Students hard at work in the learning center!



Hit the Books held its Inaugural Open House event on July 19th, with over 70 attendees



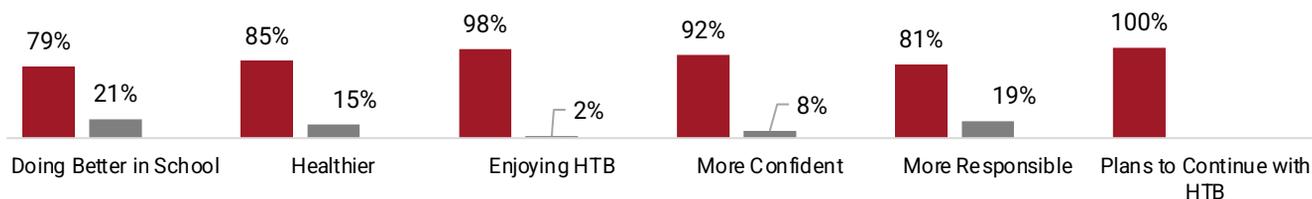
Coach Stan, Coach Joe, and Coach Jesus leading an MMA class

Parent Satisfaction Survey

- The results of our parent satisfaction survey were overwhelmingly positive, and 100% of parents indicated that they plan to continue with HTB!

Since Joining HTB, My Child Is...

■ Positive ■ Neutral ■ Negative



Our most important stakeholders have been and continue to be our students and their parents. Below we highlighted feedback from our stakeholders!

Student Anecdotes



Olivia E.
4th Grader

“ My mom wanted me to come here... and she was really happy about the tutoring. I started liking coming here because it’s fun...even though I haven’t always had good grades, I get better grades now so I am improving ”

“ My favorite part of Hit The Books is how welcoming and understanding everyone is here ”



Adams W.
2nd Grader

“ [The thing I like most is] training martial arts and going downstairs (to the Learning Center) and also eating snacks. I actually like everything ”



Harmony C.
5th Grader

Parent Feedback

Why Did you Choose Hit the Books For Your Child?

“I chose HTB because it emphasizes the academic learning and MMA training... children learn the respect, discipline and equity and I believe that those values will lead to a successful future.”

“The closeness to home, and to provide him with the ability to learn how to defend oneself”

“The only program I have seen that provides challenging curriculum not only [to] strengthen the intellectual but also the physical and mental wellness.”

What Does Your Child Enjoy About Hit the Books?

“The one on ones she gets to help her schoolwork”

“Great exercise, excellent tutoring and healthy food”

“In addition to the the enjoyable learning program that helps my son do well academically, he practically likes learning the kickboxing/MMA which has helped him build confidence and resilience.”

“...a place for him to receive educational help and develop the confidence”

Is There Anything Else You Want To Share?

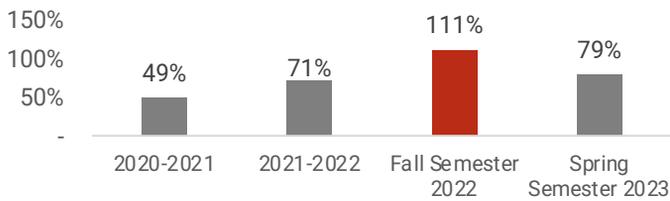
“No, Just Keep Going!”

Our Impact

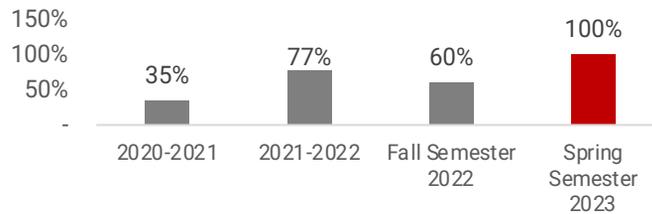


At Hit the Books our focus remains the impact we have on our students. Our students' growth in academics and fitness reached new highs in 2023. This was illustrated by our first multi-year academic dataset, which highlighted our students' immense growth.

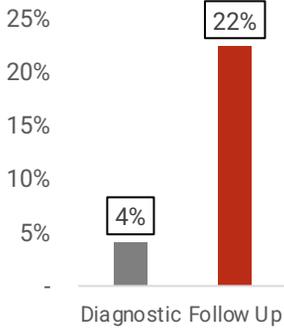
HTB Student Reading Growth vs. Expectation*



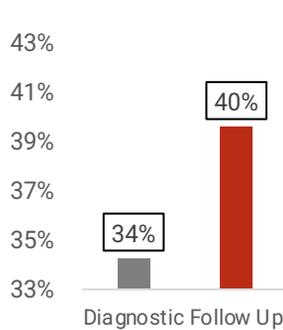
HTB Student Math Growth vs. Expectation*



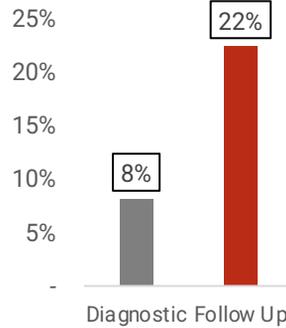
On Grade Level % - Reading



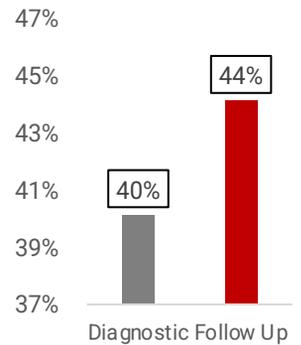
Reading Percentile



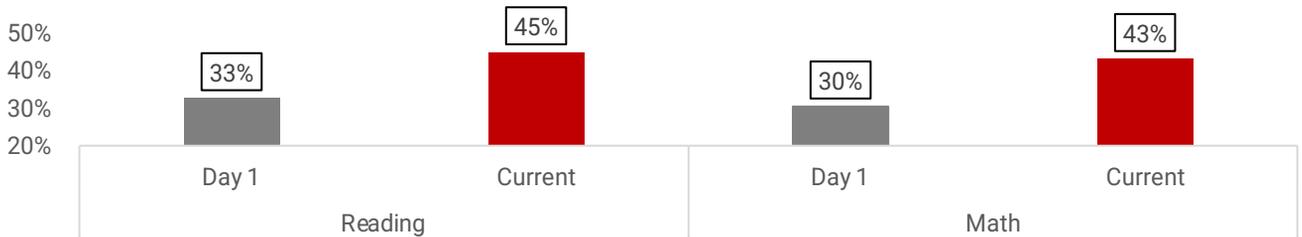
On Grade Level % - Math



Math Percentile



Multi-Year Students Percentile Growth



*Growth is relative to iReady's internal expectations based on millions of student datapoints. Growth is continued 'at expectation' at 100%.

Student Fitness Growth From Day 1

Squats
2,430%

Push Ups
407%

Sit Ups
1,730%

Laps
1,480%

Improved Students
100%

Parent Survey and SEL Pilot Testing

- In 2023 **90% of our parents** responded positively to our parent survey with **no parents responding negatively**
- Our pilot of Hello Insight's SEL testing showed a **34% growth in the number of our students testing 'Advanced'** at the end of our program year compared to the beginning

3 Year Plan

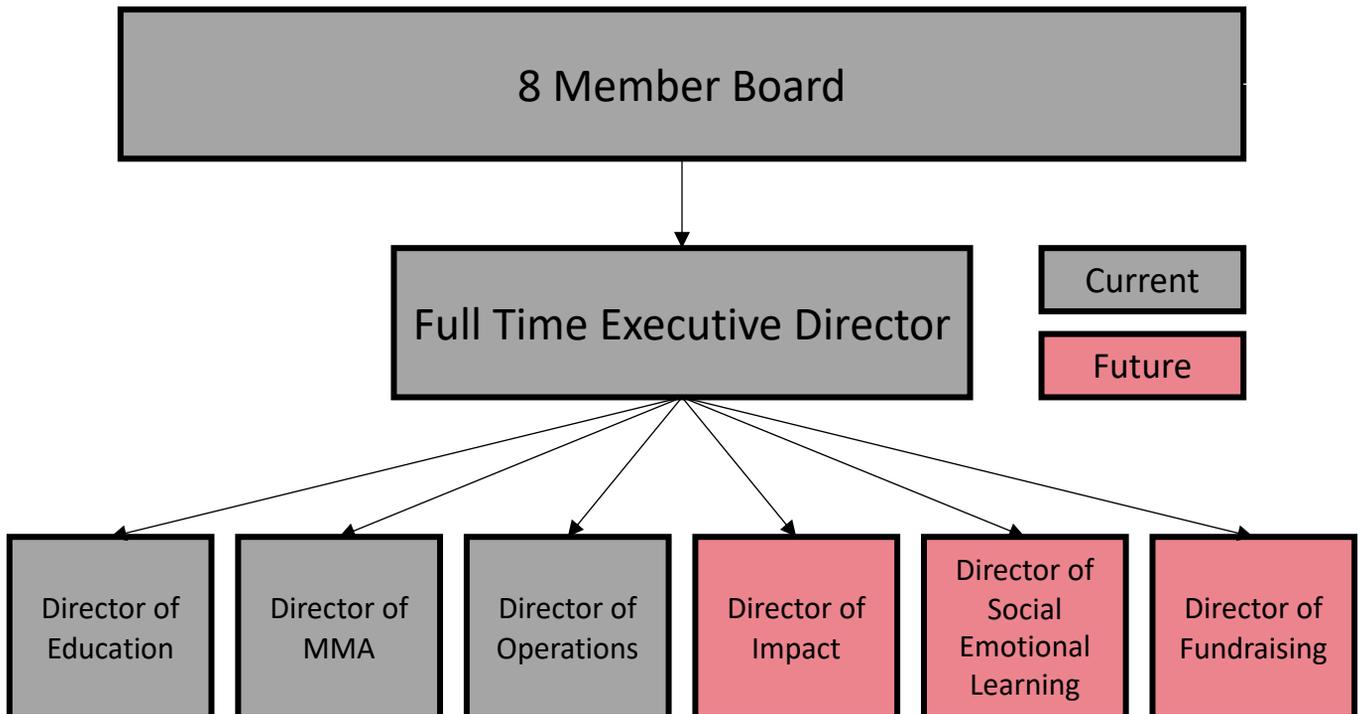
In the summer of 2023, our Board solidified an exciting and ambitious 3-year plan that we believe will position Hit the Books for long term success. The goal of this plan is to build out our organizational infrastructure to ensure our work is sustainable. The completion of this plan will allow us to expand our presence within the Harlem community without jeopardizing what we have already built. This plan has clear objectives across programming, personnel and fundraising.

Completed Objectives

- ✓ Improving Middle School Enrollment
- ✓ Hire a full-time Executive Director
- ✓ Expand Board Membership
- ✓ Re-align Board Committee Structure
- ✓ Raise \$900,000 for a Financial Surplus
- ✓ Corporate Volunteer Program
- ✓ Host our First Event

Future Objectives

- Continue Board Expansion
- Adjust Saturday Programming
- Create a Struggling Students Program
- Pilot External Programming
- Pilot Pick Up Services
- Pilot Space Sharing Partnerships
- Hire a Director of Development
- Hire a Director of SEL
- Hire Director of Impact

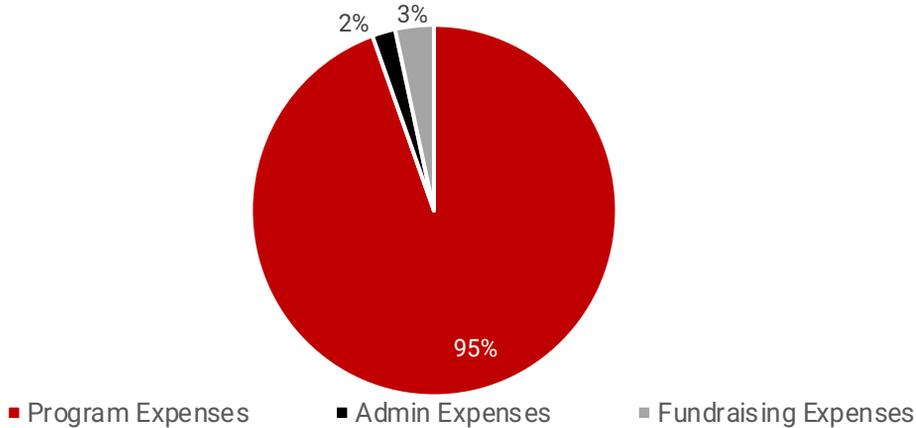


Financial Summary



Hit the Books has spent nearly 100% of its funds on programming in order to maximize impact. We expect this ratio to dip slightly in 2024 due to plans to hire a Director of Development. However, we anticipate it to normalize in 2025 following program growth.

2023 Budget Breakdown



Despite our budget growing from 2022-2023, our cost per student dropped meaningfully. While our cost per programming hour is roughly flat, this is due to our new Saturday program which is only open once per week. On a like for like basis this metric has also improved.

2022 Financials		2023 Financials
Budget ~\$719,000	+24%	Budget ~\$888,000
\$ per Student⁽¹⁾ ~\$7,400	-30%	\$ per Student⁽¹⁾ ~\$5,200
\$ per Child Served⁽¹⁾ ~\$6,700	-30%	\$ per Child Served⁽¹⁾ ~\$4,900
\$ per Hour per Student⁽¹⁾ ~\$45	-	\$ per Hour per Student⁽¹⁾ ~\$45
\$ per Hour per Child Served⁽¹⁾ ~\$41	-	\$ per Hour per Child Served⁽¹⁾ \$41

*Numbers are approximate due to fiscal year (calendar) and operating year (August end) mismatch. Students + tutors calculated on operating year basis vs. budget calculated on fiscal year basis

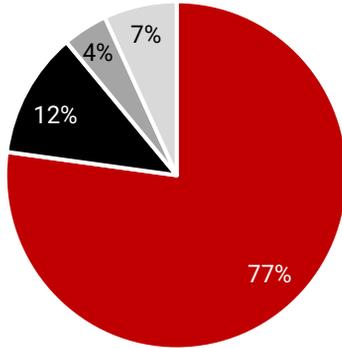
(1) Student count includes children enrolled in the program. Child count includes children enrolled as well as high school tutors.

Donor Summary

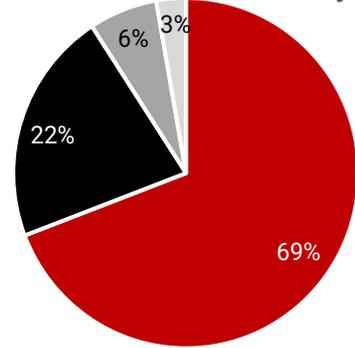


We were able to meaningfully grow fundraising in 2023, driven largely by growth in Foundation and Corporate donors. Additionally, we recently received our largest ever Foundation commitment which will be funded in early 2024. We believe this is a sign of things to come, with plans for meaningful growth in Foundation and Corporate giving in 2024.

2022 Donor Breakdown by Type



2023 Donor Breakdown by Type



■ Individual + Board ■ Foundations ■ Corporate ■ Government ■ Individual + Board ■ Foundations ■ Corporate ■ Government

2023 saw our largest year over year growth in fundraising since our inception. While this growth was driven by several large donations, it was also widespread with ~30 new donors engaging with Hit the Books.

2022 Fundraising		2023 Fundraising
Funds Raised ~\$708,000	+31%	Funds Raised ~\$926,000
# of Donors 168	17%	# of Donors 197
# of Donors \$10,000+ 17	+41%	# of Donors \$10,000+ 24
# of Donors \$25,000+ 5	+60%	# of Donors \$25,000+ 8
Average Donation ~\$4,200	+12%	Average Donation ~\$4,700

Thank You!



- We continue to be ***incredibly grateful for all of the support*** our generous donors provided. We mean it when we say, ***the organization would not function without you!***
- **THANK YOU** to everyone who has contributed, and we hope we will continue to have your support for years to come!

Corporate Donors



JacksonLewis



AMERICAN SECURITIES



Foundation and Government Donors

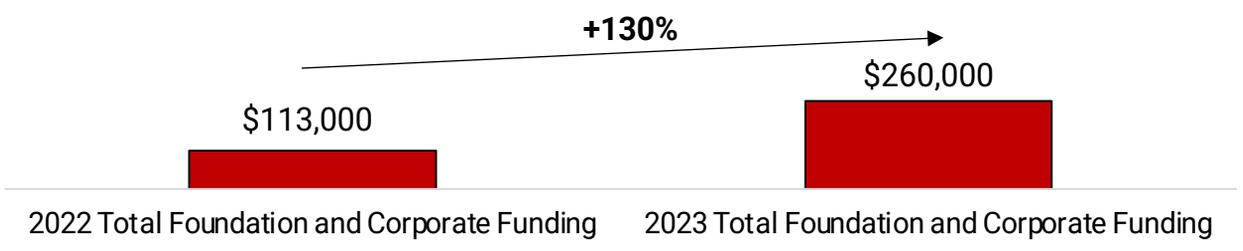


The Charles Hayden Foundation



Repeat Donors

Foundation and Corporate Funding Continues to Grow, with Renewed Support from 2022 Donors!



In 2023 we had our first ever surplus. We are proud of this achievement and expect to continue to have surpluses moving forward.

Statements of Financial Activity - Cash Basis

	<u>FY 2023</u>
Starting Cash Balance	\$160,531
<u>Revenue</u>	
Individual + Board Contributions	\$641,093
Foundation Contributions	\$200,376
Corporate Contributions	\$59,325
Government Contributions	\$25,698
Total Contributions	\$926,492
<u>Expenses</u>	
Program Expenses	(\$839,961)
Admin Expenses	(\$18,200)
Fundraising Expenses	(\$30,320)
Contributions	(\$888,481)
Net Income/(Deficit)	\$38,011
Ending Cash Balance	\$198,542

**Does not include committed but not yet funded revenue or expenses. Subject to change following year end audit*

Board Members

HTB's Board has grown significantly, bringing together a group of dedicated leaders with diverse backgrounds and experiences to help optimize the organization and our impact on the community



Justin Haber

Justin co-founded Hit the Books in 2019. Justin currently serves as Chair of the Board of Hit the Books



Zach Levy

Zach co-founded Hit the Books in 2019. Zach currently works as a private equity vice president at New Mountain Capital



Jhae Thompson

Jhae joined the HTB Board in 2023. Jhae currently serves as Executive Director of HTB, and has 15 years of nonprofit leadership experience



Kazz Alexander Pinkard

Kazz Alexander served as Executive Director of HTB from 2020 – 2022. Before joining HTB, he served as the Chief Program Officer at The Boys' Club of New York and as Deputy Director at Ramapo For Children



Victor Lawrence-Boadum

Victor joined the HTB Board in 2022. Victor currently serves as an ESG Manager at Coupa Software. He was previously involved with several charitable organizations in NYC



Phillip Isom

Phillip joined the HTB Board in 2022. Phillip currently works as a senior associate at JP Morgan, in the office of the Global Private Bank Chief Product Officer



Caeli Harr

Caeli joined the HTB Board in 2023. Caeli currently works as an Account Executive for Salesforce, and was previously a volunteer for the Boys & Girls Organization



Mark Bai

Mark joined the HTB Board in 2023. Mark is currently a Partner with True Search, where he focuses on placing senior executives for the world's most innovative technology companies

Please meet our incredible staff, led by Jhae, Keenya, and Stan, and supported by our talented operations, MMA, teaching, and social work team members



Jhae Thompson
Executive Director



Keenya Coke
Director of Education



Stan Dryev
Director of Mixed Martial Arts

Brandon Sosa
Operations
Coordinator

Joseph Weisman
MMA Coach

Jesus Bautista
MMA Coach

Jean Kim
MMA Coach

Anna Garcia
MMA Coach

Joel Torres
Teaching Assistant

Ti-Quel Benjamin
Teaching Assistant

**Philippa Von
Seimans**
Social Work Intern

Sarah Paul
Social Work Intern

Iman Rezki
Social Work Intern

This year would not have been possible without the consistent and unbelievable guidance we have received from our advisory board. Thank you all for your commitment to helping us succeed!



Anne-Williams Isom



Regina Smith



Pat Russo



Christina Celuzza



'Iron' Mike Steadman



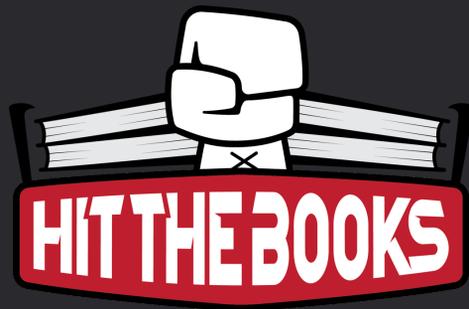
Jimmy Haber



Dan Werther



Andrew Waters



EST. 2019

Thank You