

A safety net for mom becomes a step up for her daughter

For Jenn Paradiso, EVkids was a safety net. When her daughter was born, turning Jenn into a mom at just 17, it was her EVcorps tutor Elena Chavez who visited her and newborn Isabella. When Jenn needed a job and a place to live, it was EVkids co-founder and former director Marie-Claude Thompson who helped her find an apartment and get into JobCorps. Even now, Jenn's memories of EVkids and her enduring connections to the community are a source of peace that she draws on during difficult times.

Since 1980, supporters like you have made sure that low-income kids get the opportunities and guidance they need, no matter what life hands them.

Jenn started with the Tutoring program in 7th grade and continued into high school. For four years, Jenn's tutor Elena not only did her homework with her, but laughed with her, cried with her, and supported her as a true mentor. Jenn was also able to experience EVkids Camp in Vermont. Surrounded by nature, unplugged from television and phones, and bonding with both campers and counselors, Jenn learned how to find peace in her surroundings and truly

become a part of a community. She still remembers waking up early, sing-alongs, performances, and talks with her camp counselors, and she still feels love for all of it — except for the bugs.

Jenn's father, aunt, and uncle all attended EVkids Camp in its earliest years. Jenn, her siblings, and her cousins followed the older generation to the EVkids Camp farmhouse in the Green Mountains, and then joined the Tutoring program. What was once a safe haven from life's turbulence for Jenn is now a place where her daughter Bella, now 14, who became a third-generation camper this summer, can soar.

So much of the spirit of Camp surrounded Bella as she grew up that she quickly felt at home at the beginning of her two-week Camp session. She and her fellow campers sat down around the campfire, and Bella played her ukulele as they sang the familiar songs her mom raised her with. She shot bull's-eyes in archery and won the silver medal in the EVkids Olympics. She even wrote an original song that she performed in front of campers and counselors! She bonded with her fellow campers, and with counselors who became an example and an inspiration for her. They helped her think about college, career, and her future, and how to become the person she wants to be. Now Bella wants to come back as a counselor herself, and support other kids like she and her family have been supported.

Thanks to your investment, EVkids Tutoring and Camp continue to provide opportunities for youth to learn, and to challenge, believe in, and value themselves. Your dedication to Jenn and other youth like her creates a lasting

impact on tutees and campers alike, allowing them to grow, and to help their own kids start a step ahead.

Jenn now describes her life as “organized chaos,” with a 9th grader, a 3rd grader, and a kindergartener at home. One of their favorite family activities is hiking and walking and finding peace in nature. The focus on education and the guiding hands of Elena and Marie-Claude also helped foster in Jenn a respect and fondness for education:

She went back to school and earned her GED after the birth of her daughter. Today, after also earning two Bachelor's degrees, she works for a 9-1-1 dispatching company while pursuing a Master's Degree in Pre-Columbian Mesoamerican History at Southern New Hampshire University. Jenn finds that education fulfills something in her, and is grateful that EVkids helped to create a lifelong love of learning for her whole family.

For Jenn, EVkids was safety and a step away from a difficult life. For her daughter Bella, it is a step up and a chance to explore a whole new world. Thanks to you, EVkids Tutoring and Camp still create a community that supports, protects, inspires, elevates, and lasts a lifetime. And with your help, this community will be available for many more youth and their families in the decades to come.

Jenn still feels love for all parts of Camp — except for the bugs.



Jenn Paradiso with her three kids, including new EVkids camper Bella.

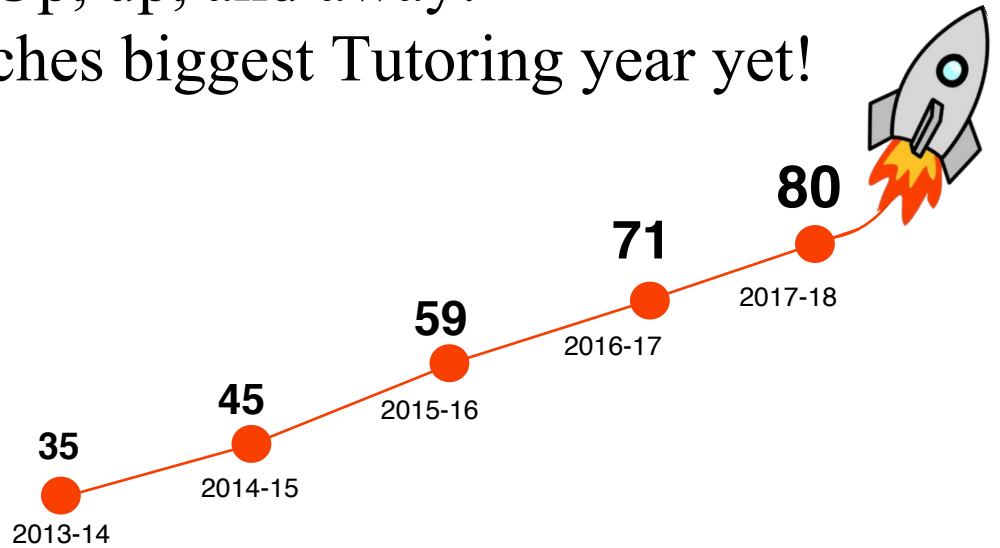
Hear Jenn and Bella talk about what EVkids means to them at the 8th Annual Expanding Horizons Gala!

DETAILS INSIDE

Up, up, and away! EVkids launches biggest Tutoring year yet!

Thanks to you, when Tutoring starts this week, EVkids will hit a new milestone: 80 tutor-tutee pairs will meet every week to work on homework and build mentoring relationships that open a whole new world for the youth. That's 80 children and teens ages 10 to 18, 80 tutors from local colleges, and six program staff guiding them every step of the way, from "hello" to high school graduation.

Just five years ago, EVkids worked with 35 tutoring pairs, and that seemed like a lot, especially when you consider all the individual support every student gets. Each child has his or her own individual story to be listened to, family dynamics to be understood, academic needs to be addressed, teachers to coordinate with, and personal goals to aim towards. Through the dedicated attention of a "near-peer" mentor, plus highly dedicated and knowledgeable Education Advocates, every child has the opportunity to dream big and achieve their goals.



The reason EVkids can now launch 80 young people towards their goals and dreams is YOU! Your support opens the EVkids roster to more and more youth every year. And it's a good thing, too. As soon as spots open up, parents and youth rush in.

Every week, youth will arrive at their Tutoring site in Dorchester and spend an hour and a half working on homework, playing educational games, preparing for tests, or practicing academic skills they need extra help on.

Tutors will check in with staff to get feedback from teachers and from family members. Are those new organizational skills translating into homework turned in more often and higher grades? Is the dedicated attention turning into academic confidence and a willingness to speak up in class?

All students deserve to have a whole team behind them, guiding, pushing, and supporting them along their journeys. Thanks to you, 80 youth will have exactly that this year!

8th Annual Expanding Horizons Gala

November 4, 2017

The Charles Hotel, Cambridge

One kid. One tutor.
Many dreams.

Register now!

[www.evkids.org/
gala](http://www.evkids.org/gala)

Hosted by

Latoya Edwards

NECN and NBC Boston

With Auctioneer

Jenny Johnson

NESN's Dining Playbook

Featuring Youth Champion

Dune Thorne

Founder, Invest in Girls

And Honoring Outstanding EVkids Alumni
Luis Girón-Negrón & Anthony Cruz

Complimentary Parking - Reception - Open Wine Bar - Dinner - Silent and Live Auctions - Afterparty

Backpacked up and ready to go!



Sisters Roshna (left) and Ashna loved their fully stocked, brand-new backpacks.



Erwin and his new backpack headed off to high school this fall!

EVkids jumped back into the swing of things this September with the help of Grand Circle Travel. For the third year in a row, Grand Circle donated backpacks for tutees, filled with everything students might need through the year, from pencils to scientific calculators.

Grand Circle employees each "adopted" a student, and received information on the student's grade, gender, and favorite color. Then they took to the crowded aisles of their favorite local school suppliers, following the lists of recommended supplies for each grade. And if that wasn't enough, many also threw in a lunchbag and a matching waterbottle, or some deodorant for the warm days of early fall.

This year, EVkids staff put together the first annual Back-to-School BBQ, adding a little fun to the regular backpack pickup. With Tutor Director Heather Angell as grillmaster, EVkids and their families munched burgers and pasta salad. Tutees caught up with their tutors, just back from summer adventures, and of course, showed off their brand new backpacks. They talked about the year ahead, and their new schools and teachers, while enjoying beautiful weather and tasty food.

As a supporter of EVkids, you know that every student has the potential to be great, if only they are given the guidance, opportunities, and tools they need to get there. With the dedication of supporters like you and Grand Circle Travel, Boston students are fast on their way to bright futures!



Nick Flowers (right, BC '18) reconnected with his tutee, 11th grader Swahibu, after a summer apart.



New Education Advocate Erin Ginnaty-Moore swung into gear, collecting backpacks donated by Grand Circle Travel.

Count me in! I want to open up whole new worlds for youth!

Here's my gift of \$_____.

Paid by: Check enclosed
Payable to EVkids

Credit card
All fields below required

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Card #: _____ Exp. date: ____/____/____ Security code: _____

EVkids Campers go for the Gold!



At the end of every EVkids Camp session, all campers engage in a friendly competition: the EVkids Olympics. Events include ping-pong, an egg drop, obstacle course, soccer, chess, and volleyball.

During this summer's second session, 9th graders Sam, Amara, and Bella won the gold, bronze, and silver medals, respectively! Here are the champions showing off their medals, certificates of participation, and flower crowns.