



RYAN BANKS
ACADEMY

2020

ANNUAL REPORT



A NOTE FROM OUR FOUNDER AND CEO

Dear Ryan Banks Academy Supporters,

The 2019-2020 school year will go down in the record books for so many reasons. Though the COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted the lives of many of our families and it also impeded our ability to serve our students in the classroom, it also highlighted the resiliency and ingenuity of our incredible faculty members. During the pandemic our teachers rose to the occasion and continued to provide an exceptional education environment for our students who were not only receiving a full day of academic support, but they also continued to have access to counseling, mentoring, tutoring, and even extra-curricular classes like art, chess, and theatre via our online platform.

We also pulled together an emergency fund that allowed us to provide all of our families with deliveries of food, Chromebooks, school supplies, art supplies, a cash stipend to support with rent payments and access to the internet – and we even hand delivered a birthday cake!

Due to our unique course offerings during the pandemic, we've been honored to receive a great deal of media attention for our efforts ranging from features in the Chicago Tribune to Reader's Digest to the Dell Technologies website. We will even be featured in an upcoming national Clorox campaign!

Please take a moment to read through the rest of this report to learn about some of the other highlights from our year. We truly could not have done this without each and every one of our countless supporters, and we are so thankful for everyone who has given their time, energy, resources, and love to this important cause. Our community has enabled RBA to become the successful institution we are today, and we look forward, with your support, to continuing to grow our mission over the coming school year.

With gratitude,

– **Val Groth** ★ ★ ★ ★

Though the coronavirus pandemic has been top of mind for so many of us over the past few months, we would also be remiss to not touch on notable accomplishments that have occurred throughout the school year. Here are some recent highlights:



- We've received multiple other media features (both in print and via television) for our innovative programming as a day school, as well as for our visionary goal to soon become our city's first boarding school.
- We've obtained sponsorship of a Senate Bill and House Bill that, if passed by the Illinois General Assembly, will fund RBA as a pilot program. We're backed by 15+ legislators including leaders from the Black Caucus and we have achieved bipartisan support for this bill from local legislators and also from others down state.
- We officially passed the process to become recognized by the Illinois State Board of Education.
- Though like all Chicago schools we were not able to take our end of year NWEA MAP due to the pandemic, we continue to outpace expected grade level growth in both math and reading and 100% of our 8th graders doubled the national NWEA growth average in reading during our first semester alone.



A NOTE FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR

This past year has been Ryan Banks Academy's most successful year. It would not have been possible without the incredible hard work, commitment, imagination and passion of our staff, Board and donors. We are so grateful. But there is more work to be done.

Given recent racial and economic divisions plaguing our country, the enduring systemic oppression and inequities minority communities have suffered for hundreds of years has come into stark relief. We are failing our inner-city youth by viewing education as an expense rather than an investment. RBA seeks to change that paradigm through a holistic, wrap-around environment that delivers safety, structure and opportunity. RBA is perfectly positioned to change the outcomes for at-risk youth by investing 'early' in order to change the trajectory of hopelessness to one of hope for future success.

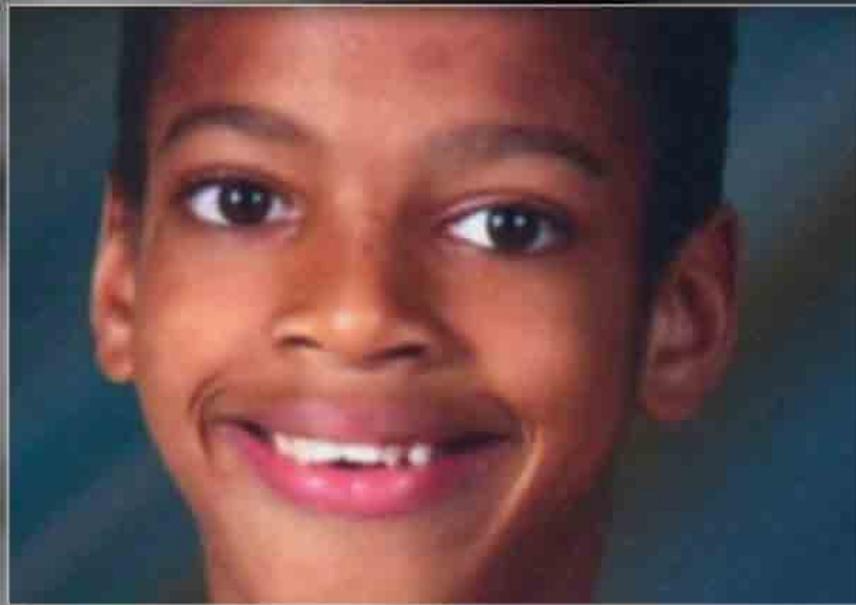
While we have much to be proud of, we are filled with resolve to realize RBA's primary goal – to be Chicago's first urban boarding school. Thank you for being such an important part of our mission!

– **Ann Zeiler** ★ ★ ★ ★

Senior Vice President, Global Fund Services, Northern Trust

RYAN BANKS ACADEMY

IN HONOR OF OUR NAMESAKE,
RYAN BANKS



RBA was named in honor of Ryan Banks,
a 12 year old boy who was shot and killed
while playing in front of his house in 2012.



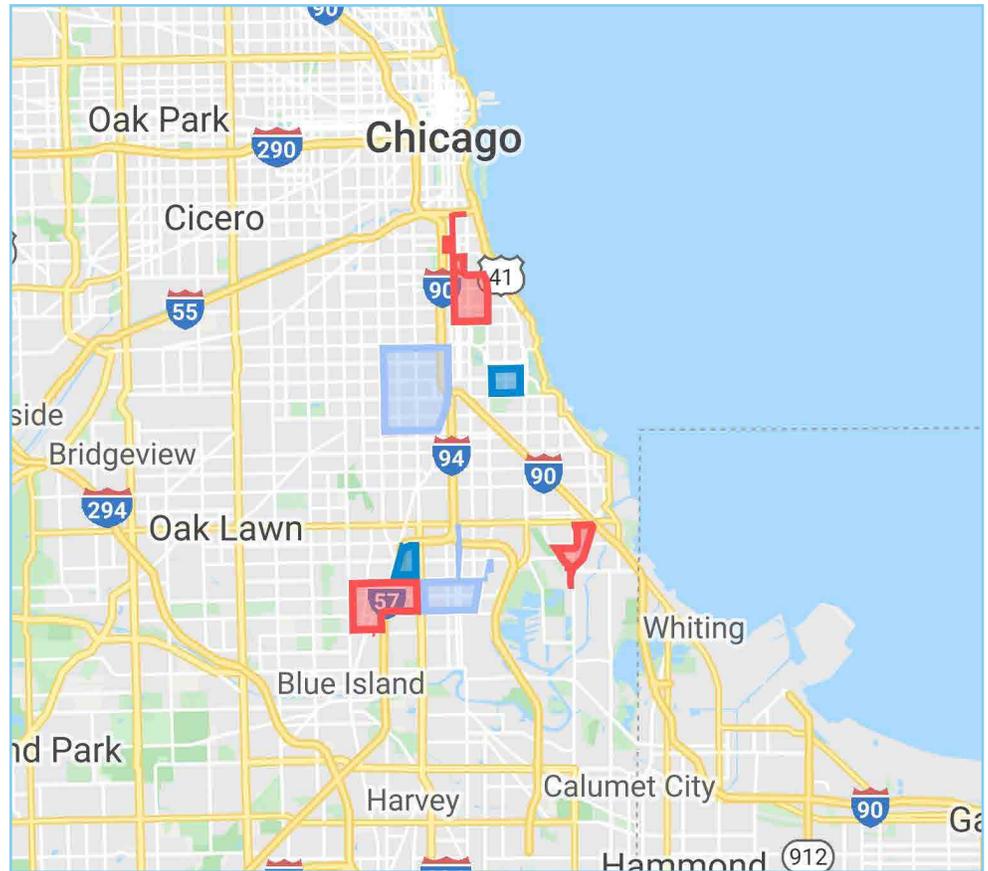
Ryan would have turned 21 this year.

Since Ryan Banks was killed less than a decade ago, well over 4,000 children have been shot in Chicago. This alarming statistic points to the critical need for a safe, supportive model like Ryan Banks Academy. We are working around the clock to ensure that no more Chicago children are impacted by gun violence on our watch.

NEIGHBORHOODS OUR STUDENTS COME FROM



- ★ MORGAN PARK
- ★ SOUTH DEERING
- ★ WASHINGTON HEIGHTS
- ★ ENGLEWOOD
- ★ BRONZEVILLE
- ★ ROSELAND
- ★ WOODLAWN



We also served two RBA families last year who had to move away from Chicago (one to Texas, and one to the western suburbs) whose students will continue to attend RBA via our virtual programming this year.



STUDENT ADVENTURES

OUR STUDENTS TOOK PART IN THESE FIELD TRIPS

 CHICAGO HISTORY MUSEUM	 HAMILTON, THE MUSICAL	 SAGGEZZA'S CODING DAY
 THE COURT THEATER	 THE NUTCRACKER	

We also had various other trips scheduled for the latter half of the year – a Spring Break camping trip, a field trip to Notre Dame, a visit to a DNA lab, and more – that were all cancelled due to the pandemic.

AND THESE EXTRA CURRICULAR CLASSES

 CODING	 3D PRINTING	 FINANCIAL LITERACY
 SCRIPT WRITING	 VISUAL ARTS	 12 LEARNING/STEM MONTH
 T. LAB ACT ADMISSIONS TEST PREPARATION		

FUNDRAISING SUCCESSES



We exceeded our holiday campaign goal and raised over \$150,000



We've activated numerous multi-millionaire donors who are recognized leaders in Chicago



Our virtual gala, against all odds, raised over \$70,000 and brought numerous new donors to RBA



We've received funding from new foundations and corporations including Brookfield Properties, Susan Crown Exchange, Nadex/IG, Skender Foundation, the NFL Association, the Gochnauer Family Foundation, and more



We raised over \$500,000 during the 2019-2020 school year from over 500 unique donors

IN-KIND DONATIONS OF SERVICES

It is impossible to calculate how many total hours of in-kind services we have received, given we are so lucky to be able to work with so many amazing individuals and firms who have given us pro bono support over the years.

To name just a few highlights:

current global

During the 2019-2020 school year, we received over \$255,000 and 1,000+ hours of time spent in marketing and PR services from Current Global.

KIRKLAND & ELLIS

Since 2017, Kirkland & Ellis has billed over 500 pro bono hours to RBA totaling over \$477,000.

RYAN BANKS ACADEMY

During the 2019-2020 school year, our Board of Directors members have donated well over 1,000 hours amounting to over \$250,000 in pro bono time.

We are also thankful for the chance to work with other firms who have given us pro bono consulting: Turing Strategies, Clune Construction, BKL Architecture.

IT TAKES A VILLAGE



From our donors to our volunteers to everyone who has signed up on our email list to our legislative supporters and more, we have over 2,000 dedicated supporters in the RBA family – showcasing what a much-needed solution RBA brings to the educational landscape of Chicago!

VOLUNTEER HOURS

During the 2019-2020 school year we had over 20 volunteers who came to our school to teach classes, mentor, or tutor our students. For just tutoring alone, we clocked over 2,000 hours of volunteer support this year!



A NOTE FROM ONE OF OUR TEACHERS

Within the last year at Ryan Banks Academy we have been able to see students dynamically grow in their understanding of the world around them. For me, I have always lived my life through the words of Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed - Education is Liberation. This year signifies what we are trying to accomplish for our students - a new world full of endless possibilities for their relationships, careers, and college readiness.

I am grateful for my experience to work at such a radically transformative school where the student is grown holistically and not seen as a number. The best part of the work we do is the fact that we work with our community to enrich the lives of our students through multiple means that target social and emotional learning as well as preparing them for a competitive future. As the Lead Humanities Teacher and Academic Coordinator my fondest memories are those spent with our children, seeing them grow and gain confidence within themselves, and seeing them practice restorative justice conversations leveraging that power into their everyday lives.

During the beginning of the pandemic there was a lot of fear and worry about what the future would hold. One thing was certain though, which was the commitment we had to each other and we all came out of this experience closer and more appreciative of the work ahead of us. This work wouldn't be possible without those involved who have donated, given time, showed up, and were our cheerleaders, and ultimately who have partnered with us because they believed in our commitment to a more equitable future for our students.

As the new school year is approaching, I am excited for a new year of growth, a new year of dynamic curriculum for our students, and a new year of built friendship - because at the end of the day it takes a village to raise a child and that same village is helping our institution shine like never before.

— **Adam Mogilevsky** ★ ★ ★ ★

Academic Coordinator & Lead Humanities Teacher

NEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEMBERS

WE WELCOMED 5 NEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEMBERS DURING THE 2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR



Jim Gagnard, MBA

Jim Gagnard has over 30 years of executive management experience leading enterprise software companies. He has lead several companies from early product development to revenue growth and profitability. As a result of his commitment to software innovation he has worked closely with the venture capital community and strategic investors to raise over \$80 million for his companies.

He currently serves as the Managing Director of the Rocket Wagon Industrial IoT Studio. Until March, 2011, Jim was Chairman and CEO of SmartSignal Corporation which was acquired by GE in January, 2011. The SmartSignal Advanced Analytics product suite is a key component of the Internet of Things and is used by power generation companies, oil and gas companies, and other industries to

detect, diagnose, predict, and mitigate equipment failure.

Prior to SmartSignal, Jim led several privately-funded software companies including Diffusion, Launchpoint, and Qestra. In addition, he successfully grew Trinzic Corporation as a publicly-traded software company specializing in decision support and data base connectivity. Jim has created over \$480 million of enterprise value for venture capitalists and strategic investors through successful exit transactions.

Prior to leading entrepreneurial companies in Silicon Valley, Jim held senior management positions with Pansophic Systems, Control Data, and IBM. He has lived in Brussels, where he served as the General Manager of Control Data's Remote Computing Service, and in London, where he served as the Vice President of Pansophic System's European Operations. Jim serves on the Board of Directors of Agentis Energy, Vertex Analytics, and A3 Solutions. He also serves as a Venture Partner of Hyde Park Venture Partners and a Life Trustee of Illinois Institute of Technology. Jim is also a Board Member of the Mies van der Rohe Society. Until March, 2017 Jim served as the Chairman of the IllinoisTechnology Association and is currently a Board Member of the 1871/ITA IoT Council.



Anslem Gardner, MBA

Anslem is a mission-driven leader with several years of experience working to close the opportunity gap in the workforce development and non-profit sector. He moved to Chicago 3 years ago after working with adjudicated youth in Denver and a short stint in the finance sector. Upon completion of his MBA from the University of Denver, Anslem relocated to Chicago to

continue working with and for marginalized communities of color. Anslem is a firm believer that talent is everywhere yet opportunity is not. That is why he has spent the vast majority of his career working with underserved youth and adults to ensure that those unfairly affected are exposed to those opportunities and prepared to put their talents on display.

Presently, Anslem serves as the National Director of Programs for Momentum Advisory Collective (MAC), a non-profit responsible for working with criminal justice impacted youth and other at-risk adolescents to create sustainable and meaningful lives. MAC got its start through Café Momentum in Dallas, training the aforementioned youth how to successfully work as Chefs in restaurants and pop-ups. The goal of MAC (of which Anslem is a key part of) is to bring this model across the country, working with CBOs and disconnected youth in several cities.

Anslem is an active member of the National Black MBA Association (NBMBAA) Chicago chapter. He spends his free time traveling, hiking, playing basketball, or hanging out around the home with his family and their 2 cats (Zoey & Ellie) and dog (Jada)

NEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEMBERS (CONTINUED)



Jasmine Porter-Rallins, MEd, PhD candidate

Jasmine Porter-Rallins is a doctoral student at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign studying urban and historically African American boarding school models. Concurrently, she also serves as a Teaching "Art"ivist with Red Clay Dance and as a freelance curriculum writer. Over the last few years, Jasmine Porter-Rallins has worked in education in a variety of capacities including as an educator in both Boston and Atlanta Public Schools, a program director with the federally funded Upward Bound program, and a school consultant in Hyderabad, India.

Jasmine firmly believes in the mission of the Ryan Banks Academy. Having seen first-hand the impact external stressors and trauma can have on the achievement of students, she is excited for the numerous ways RBA can work with and for the community. Looking ahead, she hopes to help RBA become a model that is replicable in other underserved and under-resourced communities across the state of Illinois. Cheers to 100 ground-breaking and impactful years RBA!



Tiffany Sanders-Sostrin

Tiffany is currently the Director of Legislative and Community Affairs for the Chicago Park District.

She also served Mayor Lori Lightfoot as Deputy Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, where she oversaw City Council activity; was an Assistant Director in the City's Department of Finance and as an attorney for the City's Legislative Reference Bureau. Prior to her career with the City of Chicago, Tiffany spent several years as a management consultant for IBM, served U.S. District Judge Sharon Johnson Coleman, and interned for the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation.



Megan Wessels

I have 2 passions... connecting with amazing women and mentoring the youth, our country's future leaders.

I spent 4 years as the President of the Chicago Chapter for the National Association of Professional Women. Under my leadership, membership grew from 250 to over 1400 and we raised over \$18,000 for local charities, earning her the National Charity Award in 2013.

I am the daughter and granddaughter of entrepreneurs. I spent 11 years developing my skills for sales and connecting with people at my father's plastics manufacturing company. I left in 2015 to fulfill my dream of being a business owner. It's much harder than I ever dreamed, but I love the constant opportunity to learn.

Through my company, Powerful Partners Inc. I provide a curated community of thought leaders who share their expertise to help DIY women entrepreneurs grow their business efficiently and effectively.

WE CREATED AN ASSOCIATE BOARD



Thanks to our friends at Deloitte, Deloitte employees created an Associate Board of young professionals aged 24-29 to support RBA as an Associate (Junior) Board.

We are excited to welcome the following members to join our team:



Drew Williamson

Drew received his Bachelor's degrees in Economics and Political Science Washington University in St. Louis. After graduation, he worked in Kobe, Japan as an elementary and middle school English teacher, which inspired his dedication to education. Drew then joined Deloitte Consulting in Chicago, where he works on operating model transformation and customer strategy engagements for global financial and insurance clients. As a native of Chicago, he seeks to use his talents to better his community through increasing the quality and access to education, and he has a passion for teaching financial literacy.



Jack McNamara

Jack is a driven and hardworking professional with experience and education in Finance and Strategy. After graduating from Indiana University's Kelley School of Business with a degree in Finance, Jack joined Deloitte Consulting where he performed various operating model transformations, strategic projects, and corporate development work for global clients. Jack has since joined Adtalem Global Education, focusing on Strategy and Corporate Development. Jack enjoys philanthropic efforts and has been involved in community service leadership positions since his professional career began.



Kylee Schafroth

Kylee Schafroth received her Bachelor's degrees in Accountancy and Supply Chain Management from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She currently works at Deloitte consulting for Digital Transformation projects, and is also passionately embedded in philanthropic opportunities inside and outside of her workplace such as her involvement with Women in Technology, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Chicago, and the Monitor Institute by Deloitte. Coming from a rural community, she hopes to help young women with limited resources pursue careers in STEM. Feel free to reach out to Kylee to talk all things Tech, the Chicago Foodie Scene, Music and the Future of the Social Sector.

WE CREATED AN ASSOCIATE BOARD (CONTINUED)



Miguel Aguilar

Miguel Aguilar is an Investment Banking Analyst at Macquarie Capital, supporting the execution of M&A transactions within the education and education technology space. Prior to joining Macquarie Capital, Miguel was a summer analyst at Brown Gibbons Lang & Company, a middle market investment bank. A Chicagoland native, Miguel enjoys rooting for the city's sports teams, spending time with his family and friends, volunteering and watching Wes Anderson films. Miguel graduated magna cum laude with a B.S. in Finance from DePaul University.



Julia Keene

After graduating from Indiana University with a Bachelor of Science in Finance, Julia joined Deloitte Consulting where she works as an analyst within the healthcare space. Julia's passion for youth development and education stems from the childhood education that she received while growing up in a smaller, somewhat diverse Indiana town. She always valued the attention, love, and dedication shown by school teachers and leaders to all students, regardless of the students' school performance or path. Julia hopes to reflect this nurture and care through the work at RBA.



Tayler Jennings

Tayler is a recruiter for Citadel Securities, a leading global market maker headquartered in Chicago. Her passion for people is what eventually led to a career in recruiting and also what led her to pursue a degree in Social Work at The University of Iowa. The daughter of a first generation college graduate, she saw firsthand the positive impact education can play at both a micro and macro level. Although she did not decide to pursue Social Work professionally she continues to use the skills and experiences gained throughout her studies to make an impact for her employer and for the Chicagoland community. In addition to serving on the Ryan Banks Academy Associate Board, in her free time, Tayler enjoys traveling, trying new restaurants, curating music playlists, and participating in intramural sports.



Elizabeth Niersbach

Elizabeth Niersbach is an analyst at Deloitte Consulting with experience in a variety of industries. Outside of her client serving roles, she assists with Deloitte's pro-bono consulting services and champions mental health and well being initiatives in the Chicago office.

Her passion for educational access was fostered when she was a student at Indiana University. Elizabeth served as the Kelley School of Business Student Government President, where her time was focused on ensuring that students of all backgrounds could pursue their passions inside and outside of the classroom. As a Chicago native, she looks forward to continuing this commitment to enabling educational success for all in her community.

WE CREATED AN ASSOCIATE BOARD (CONTINUED)



Aidan Veseling

Aidan is a passionate and driven leader with experience and a focus on early stage technology and finance. Among other ventures, Mr. Veseling's primary focus is running his startup, HowzBout, which focuses on providing accurate group buying recommendations through AI and patented processes. He has deep experience in market research, raising capital, project management (onshore and offshore teams), scaling teams, and architecting tech-centered solutions for complex problems. In his free time, Mr. Veseling is an avid reader, Index investor and loves doing anything by a beach!

For the past 22+ years, the Veseling family has helped lead Side by Side for Christ, a nonprofit organization dedicated to assisting the great people of Haiti through setup of proper schooling, hospitals, an orphanage and more.



JB Stockslager

JB Stockslager is a lifelong student with a passion for helping students reach their full potential. As the son of a former school teacher, JB was taught to believe potential was not tied to background even though many other traits that hindered a student's academic experience were. As a man of faith, he has always had a heart for others with this in mind. JB is currently working for easee, a startup focused on helping people with poor vision get the eyecare they need through remote eye care services, while wrapping up his MBA degree at the Northwestern Kellogg School of Management.

Before beginning his degree at Kellogg, JB graduated from Southern Methodist University with a BBA and worked across industries and business topics as a consultant with A.T. Kearney. JB is still actively involved with the Young Alumni Board at SMU and in the Chicago community with The Olive Branch Mission.



Brad Wattleworth

Brad Wattleworth is a Management Consultant at Deloitte Consulting LLP and spends the majority of his time delivering projects in the Financial Services and Insurance industry. He has experience across a variety of areas within the industry including (but not limited to) customer journey analysis, operating model redesign, payments transformation, and new business process redesign.

Brad, originally from the United Kingdom, earned his bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering at the University of Birmingham (UK). Following this, he made the transatlantic journey to South Bend, IN, where he attended the University of Notre Dame and earned two master's degrees: Tech Entrepreneurship (MSc) and Management (MSM). During his time at Notre Dame, Brad also competed in varsity Track and Cross Country.

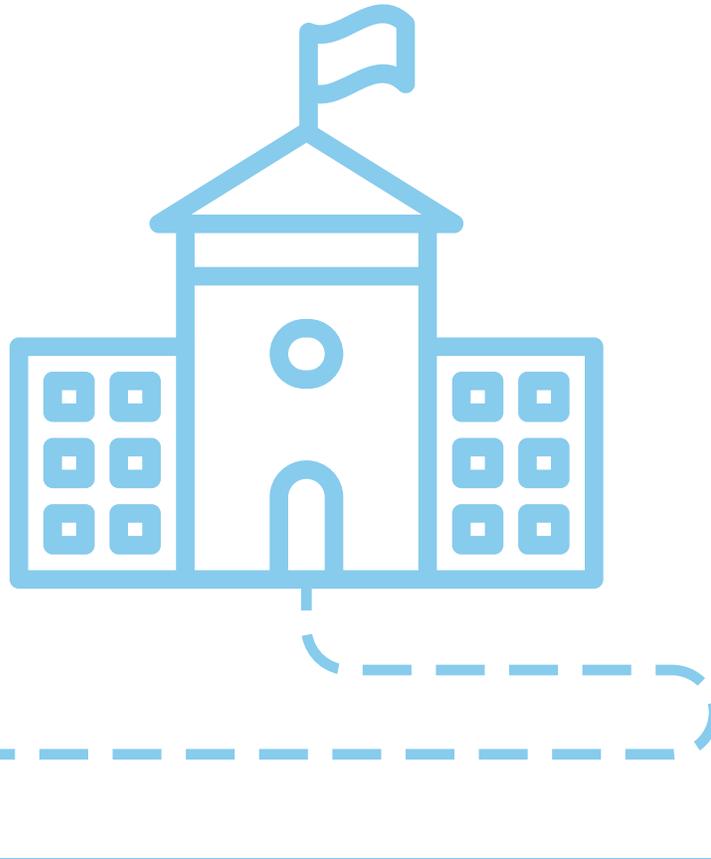
IZZY'S RAINBOW WORLD

MEET CHICAGO'S YOUNGEST PHILANTHROPIST!

Izzy Breslin, whose parents read about RBA in a feature in the Chicago Tribune during the early days of the pandemic, decided to put together a fundraising campaign to support our school. She designed and sold yard signs and car decals, the proceeds going back to RBA.



A DIRECT PATHWAY TO COLLEGE



We formalized our partnership with Illinois Tech to provide full-ride scholarships to any RBA students who meet their admissions criteria, enabling our students to obtain an undergraduate degree from a top 25 ranked STEM school without debilitating student debt.

STUDENT AND PARENT TESTIMONIALS

We recently had the honor of presenting to the Illinois State Board of Education alongside an RBA student and parent who testified about their experiences at RBA. We thought you may enjoy reading the speeches they wrote for that hearing.

Good afternoon to the Illinois State Board of Education. My name is Malyk Hopkins, an 8th grade student at Ryan Banks Academy. I am a part of the founding/ "O.G" class at Ryan Banks Academy. Currently, we are in our second year as a day school. However, it is our mission and we are determined to become Chicago's first college preparatory boarding school!!

Ryan Banks Academy has changed my life, my classmates' and our community, and therefore I am asking for your support of RBA.

For those of you who have not yet visited RBA, I encourage you to do so. What you will find is a school that is safe for kids, helps us to learn coping mechanisms and how to deal with our emotions, and where students actually crave learning. The teachers create an environment that engages us students, which enhances learning to make sure each one of us is growing both academically and emotionally. They do all of this in a fun and collaborative manner. RBA has changed my life. I used to have a hard time focusing, being in the classroom environment, and being committed to learning.

Now, at RBA, everything has changed. I love school. I love to learn. I love my teachers. I love the friends I made...and guess what... I actually love completing my homework! C'mon be honest, when was the last time you heard a student say they love doing homework?

It is because of these reasons that we must take Ryan Banks Academy from a day school to the City's first boarding school. It will bring every student the opportunity to strive towards success, eager to continue learning and growing... all while in a safe and protected environment. It will allow everyone, associated with RBA, to call their school a "second family."

THANK YOU!

— **Malyk Hopkins, 8th grader** ★ ★ ★ ★

RBA Founding Student

STUDENT AND PARENT TESTIMONIALS CONTINUED

Good afternoon, My name is Brei Hopkins and I am the parent of twin boys who are in 8th grade at Ryan Banks Academy. They were a part of the founding class and now are in their second year at RBA. I first heard of the school after following the RBA founder, Valerie Groth, on social media years ago. I knew that a boarding school piece was the missing link that my family needed.

Without hesitation, I can honestly say that Ryan Banks Academy has been life changing for my family, but even more importantly for my children. My boys are diverse learners who struggled in their old schools due to a chaotic learning environment, overcrowding, and most importantly, a lack of focus on social/emotional learning and truly understanding my boys' learning styles.

After just a short amount of time at Ryan Banks Academy I could see immediate changes. Now a year in, my boys have grown so much. Their academics have improved dramatically - I actually look forward to report card day...instead of dreading it! - but most importantly, their confidence has soared. They love school, and they not only believe in themselves, but they believe in their future.

Ryan Banks Academy was built around social emotional learning. This allows students to develop coping mechanisms and learn how to express themselves and their feelings...and in turn...this allows students to truly learn in the classroom. This city has thousands of children who are dealing with significant challenges that no child should have to face. Violence, poverty, and homelessness are a reality for Chicago students, and a boarding school is the critical next step to support those children, and also to support their families. Ryan Banks Academy holistically embraces students but also the entire family, and this model is one that we should be investing in. The academic success they've seen in just a year is unprecedented, and RBA has built a foundation that will allow its students and families to believe that the sky is the limit for everyone at RBA for many years to come!

Our children have the potential to change the world, but we can't expect that to happen while we ask them to carry the weight of the world on their shoulders. Ryan Banks Academy is the solution. I urge you to please consider your support for this incredible and life altering school. As you think about supporting RBA...I will leave you with this quote by Margaret Mead, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." Thank you.

— **Brei Hopkins** ★ ★ ★ ★

RBA Parent

TRANSFORMING URBAN EDUCATION



RYAN BANKS ACADEMY

6620 S MARTIN LUTHER KING DR
CHICAGO, IL 60637
(312) 585-5883

RYANBANKSACADEMY.ORG

