



CPM alumni begin their next chapter with the launch of UPLIFT's College and Career Mentorship Program at Rutgers.

HIGHLIGHTS

- 100% College Acceptance for College Path Mentorship (CPM) Students!
- 932+ Students Served Since 2018, building a brighter future for NJ youth.
- Expanding Reach: UPLIFT welcomes new partners in Newark and Paterson.
- New Program Launch: College and Career Mentorship Program begins.
- STEM Education Expands with the launch of our new Summer Robotics Camp.



Summer Math Camp closing ceremonies brought together students, parents, and mentors to celebrate growth and achievement.

BUILDING BRIDGES TO BRIGHTER FUTURES

Without the College Path Mentorship Program, the students may not have been able to realize their potential and succeed. This is a volunteer position for me, however I am well paid when I see them socializing and encouraging each other, when I receive an excited telephone call with the message, "Dr. Schaeffer, I did it. I got accepted". at a school of his/her choice or when a student will ask me to write a letter of recommendation. This is a wonderful program for the students and staff.

Dr. Rozetta Schaeffer
Director, Seminary Baptist Church Youth Ministry

"This is my first year in the College Path Mentorship program. I'm a 9th-grade geometry student, and this program really improved my knowledge. I often felt ahead of my class because I understood the material better, and that helped me throughout the whole school year..."

Fatoumata Jalloh - Student

%100

COLLEGE ACCEPTANCE RATE

200+

POINTS INCREASE IN SAT PRACTICE TEST SCORES

120+

**HOURS OF INSTRUCTION IN
COLLEGE PATH MENTORSHIP PROGRAM**

80+

**HOURS OF INSTRUCTION IN
MATH AND CODING PROGRAM**

%83

RATED PROGRAMS EXCELLENT OR VERY GOOD

182

**STUDENTS BENEFITTED IN
2024-25**

%85

IMPROVED MATH SKILLS

7

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

From the Director

As I reflect on the past year at UPLIFT Academy, I am filled with a deep sense of pride and gratitude. The 2024-2025 academic year has been one of remarkable growth, renewed commitment, and profound impact.

Our mission remains clear: to close the achievement gap resulting from socioeconomic inequities and ensure that Every Student Deserves a Better Education and a Better Future. We saw that mission come to life every single day.

Reflecting on a Year of Achievement

This past year, our students, mentors, and partners worked together to achieve powerful results:

College Path Mentorship (CPM): We kicked off the year with highly engaged orientations, where students and parents signed contracts, signifying a collective commitment to success. This dedication translated into tangible academic gains, including promising results from our recent Spring SAT Camp in Newark, where nine dedicated students used their break to build confidence and sharpen their skills.

Community and Support: Our support extended beyond the classroom. Through successful community initiatives like the Back-to-School Backpack distribution and the Thanksgiving Food Distribution (in partnership with Embrace Relief), we helped prepare and support families for the challenges of the year.

The Power of Partnership: None of this would be possible without our growing network of community partners—the mosques, churches, and community centers that open their doors and allow us to run our programs where they are needed most.

Looking Ahead: The Next Chapter

While we celebrate these successes, UPLIFT Academy is always focused on what's next. For the coming year, we are focused on two major pillars: Depth and Reach.

We will continue enhancing the CPM program by expanding the academic, social, and career-readiness experiences that anchor our pipeline model. From strengthened SAT preparation and college advising to curated college and career exposure opportunities, our goal is to ensure every student is equipped for long-term success.

This year, we extended the pipeline even further by launching our College and Career Mentorship Program, supporting CPM alumni throughout their college journey and into early career pathways.

To our students: Your ambition is our fuel. Keep pushing yourselves and remember that your potential is limitless.

To our donors, partners, and volunteers: You are the bridge that connects potential to opportunity. Thank you for believing in UPLIFT Academy and for making the success stories in this newsletter a reality.

Together, we will continue to empower futures and transform lives.

Levent Koch, Ph.D.
Director, UPLIFT Academy

College Path Mentorship



UPLIFT Academy's College Path Mentorship (CPM) program empowers underserved high school students through free **SAT prep, personalized mentorship, and comprehensive college readiness training**. Through weekly four-hours sessions, students receive support in **SAT preparation, essay writing, resume building, and college exploration**, while also **developing leadership, confidence, and a strong growth mindset**.

Serving as a bridge to opportunity, CPM helps students overcome barriers to higher education through mentorship, community, and individualized guidance.



CPM Impact Snapshot

- CPM Mentees achieves **100% college acceptance rate**
- Students experienced an average **200-point increase** in their SAT practice test scores.
- **More than 80% of participants stated that the program helped them improve their SAT scores and gain a better understanding of the college application process.**

"One of the things I liked most about CPM is that they truly go out of their way to support students who may not have the same opportunities as others. Many students don't have the privilege of attending a school where teachers genuinely care, but in CPM the mentors really show that they care. That support meant a lot to me.

Throughout the program, I also made great friends, had fun experiences, and enjoyed the college trips. Overall, it was a really good experience and a chance to try something new. When I first came here as a freshman, CPM helped me grow by creating a real sense of community. It's not just about teaching math or English—it's about coming together, engaging with each other, and making learning enjoyable. That's what I appreciate the most."

Uthman Ayantola, Student

This rigorous program combines **120 hours of study** with expert instruction in **SAT Math and English**, alongside **College Readiness Seminars** designed to equip students with essential skills for their educational journey. Importantly, CPM offers students direct guidance from a **Dedicated College Counselor**—a critical resource often unavailable to underserved students. Beyond academics, CPM fosters a supportive learning environment where students build confidence, develop critical thinking skills, and form lasting mentor relationships.



CPM Starts with Orientations

The new program began the year with a series of orientation meetings for the College Path Mentorship program across partner locations.

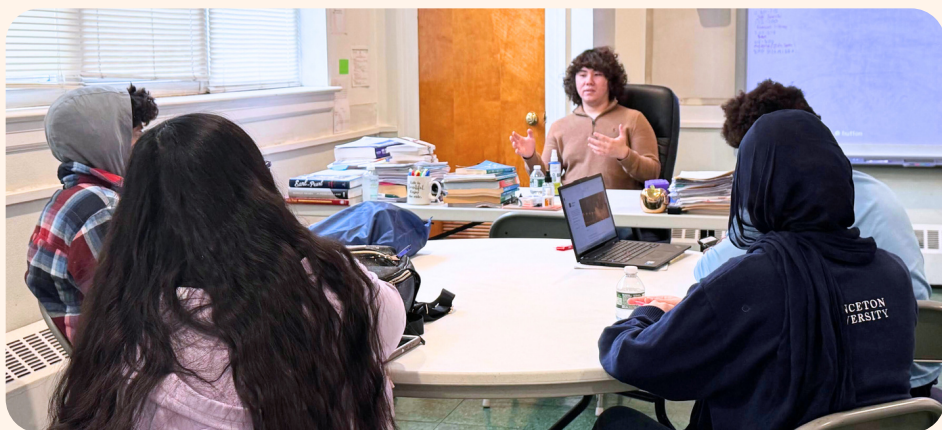
During these sessions, UPLIFT SAT Coordinator, Mr. Vedat Veziroglu, introduced the program and outlined the roles and responsibilities of students and parents, emphasizing the importance of shared commitment and collaboration. To affirm their dedication, participants signed contracts, marking a united and purposeful beginning. The enthusiasm and support shown by our CPM families set a positive tone for the year ahead—one filled with growth, learning, and achievement.



CPM Hosts Guest Speakers

As part of UPLIFT Academy's College Path Mentorship (CPM) program, we invite accomplished **guest speakers** to inspire and guide high school students preparing for college. These sessions offer firsthand perspectives on academic success, personal growth, and navigating the path to higher education.

These guest speaker events are a cornerstone of the CPM experience. They connect students—many of whom are the first in their families to attend college—with relatable role models and tangible strategies for success in higher education and beyond.



Abdulaziz Almat, a Yale University student majoring in **Economics and International Relations**, spoke on "Dream Big, Plan Smart: The Path to College Success," motivating students at Masjid Abu Bakr and Seminary Baptist Church to set ambitious goals.

In 2024-25, UPLIFT welcomed three outstanding speakers who shared their experiences and expertise with CPM participants across our partner sites.

Through the College Path Mentorship program, I received one-on-one support from the math teacher, who closely guided me while I prepared for my AP Pre-Calculus final exam. The mentorship really helped me grow as a student, and I felt confident and well-prepared going into the test.

Mariam Mohammed, Student

Mid-Year Parent Meetings Build Strong Partnerships

At UPLIFT Academy, we believe student success flourishes when UPLIFT, our community partners, and families work together in a spirit of shared responsibility and open communication. Recognizing parents as essential partners, UPLIFT hosts orientation sessions, mid-year check-ins, one-on-one calls, and year-end ceremonies to maintain strong family engagement.

In January 2025, parent meetings were held at each partner location—Alaaka Association, Masjid Fallahee, Seminary Baptist Church, and Masjid Abu Bakr—to discuss the College Path Mentorship (CPM) and Math & Coding programs.



These sessions provided updates, aligned expectations, and welcomed parent feedback, with a follow-up Zoom meeting for families unable to attend. These gatherings reaffirmed UPLIFT Academy's commitment to the power of partnership—when UPLIFT, host sites, and parents unite, students don't just learn; they thrive.

CPM Students Visit Montclair University for an Inspiring College Experience



UPLIFT Academy's College Path Mentorship (CPM) students visited Montclair University for a meaningful and motivating college trip on Saturday, April 26.

The group was guided by a Montclair senior, who led students across campus while sharing insights about academic life, extracurricular opportunities, and the overall student experience. Throughout the tour, our students explored key areas of campus—including academic buildings, student spaces, and the university library.

College trips are an essential part of the CPM experience, providing students with firsthand exposure that informs their goals and empowers them to make confident decisions about their academic futures.

Annual Mentor and Teacher Training

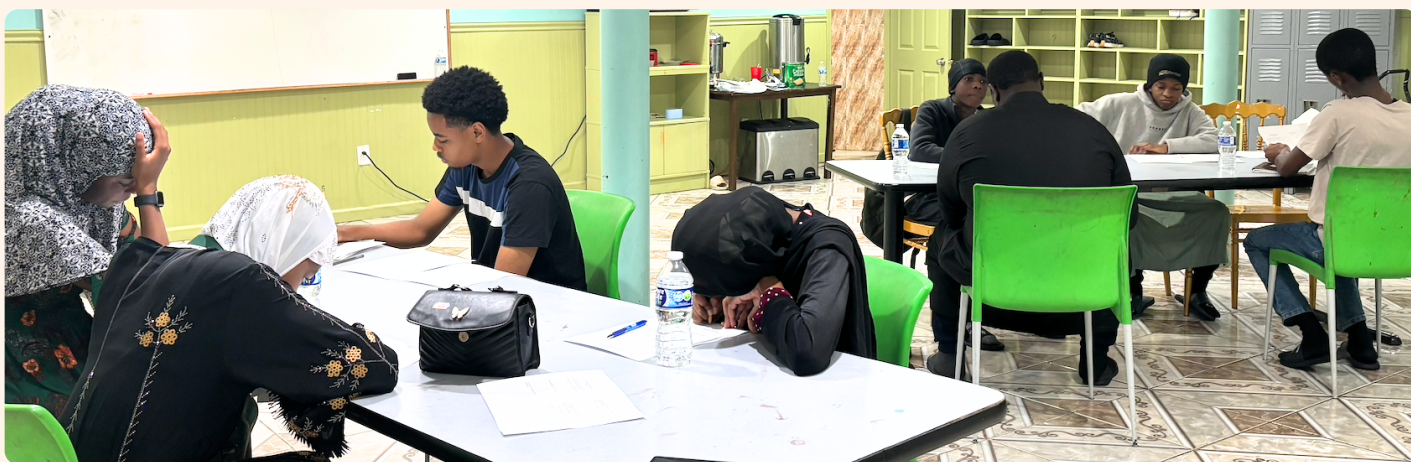
At UPLIFT Academy, we start each year with comprehensive training workshops to equip our mentors and instructors for success.

This year, UPLIFT hosted a professional development session for educators involved in the College Path Mentorship (CPM) program and other academic initiatives.

The training covered essential topics such as classroom management, interactive teaching methods, mentorship roles, and overviews of the SAT English and College Readiness curricula. Participants also explored strategies for fostering sustainable youth development within cultural communities.



STEM Education: Summer Math Camps



UPLIFT Academy successfully hosted **Summer Math Camps** for underserved students in *Paterson, Newark, and neighboring communities*. The free program offered middle and high school students engaging math lessons, hands-on activities, and complimentary lunches in a supportive, fun learning environment.

Open to students entering *grades 8–12*, *the camps helped participants strengthen foundational skills*, build confidence, and prepare for the upcoming school year. Sessions were held at *Masjid Fallahee in Newark, the UPLIFT Learning Center in Rochelle Park, Masjid Mubarak in Newark, and the Circle of Care for Families and Children of Passaic County in Paterson*—all marked by enthusiastic participation and strong community support.

Like the College Path Mentorship Program, Summer Math Camps too start with a Parent Orientation Meeting as we emphasize the importance of parental involvement, which is integral to student success.



At UPLIFT Academy, we remain committed to closing **educational gaps** and ensuring every student has the tools to succeed. *The Summer Math Camps* exemplify our mission to deliver impactful, **community-supported educational programs** that make a lasting difference in the lives of our students.

Summer Math Camp Impact In a Snapshot

Primary Motivations for Attendance:

- Improve math skills: 92%
- Prepare for SAT Math sessions: 67%

Overall Satisfaction:

- Students rated the camp 8 or higher over 10.

Confidence Boost:

- Most students (83%) experienced moderate to *significant confidence boosts*

40-hour intensive camp improved their SAT score by an impressive 180 points

The success of the Summer Math Camp was further highlighted by individual achievements. For instance, one **College Path Mentorship (CPM) participant** who attended the 40-hour camp improved their SAT score by an impressive 180 points, demonstrating the program's tangible results.

Parents and students alike expressed their appreciation, noting the camp's role in boosting students' academic readiness and confidence.



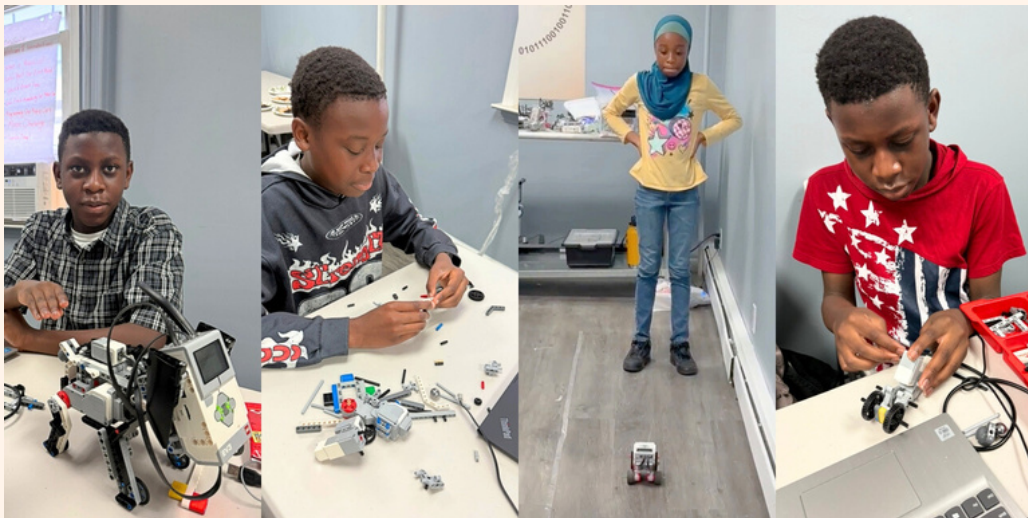
"There's not much to say except thank you—for choosing to help us, even when there's no profit in it. Your dedication means the world, and because of you, we have a future to look forward to. Keep doing what you're doing; it truly makes a difference."

"The instructors teach well and provide thorough explanations. They go in-depth to ensure we fully understand the material that we are learning."

"The class was great, the teaching was great, and practically everything offered was exceptional."



STEM Education: Robotics, Math & Coding



UPLIFT Launches Summer Robotics Program

This summer, UPLIFT Academy continued its commitment to expanding access to STEM education by launching its **free Robotics program in Newark for middle school students** from underserved communities.

In partnership with the **New Spring Foundation and Masjid Ashab ul Yameen**, classes were held **Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.** Over the course of two sessions, **15 students explored robotics and hands-on engineering projects** designed to spark creativity and critical thinking.

Following its strong success, the Newark Summer Robotics Program will become an annual part of UPLIFT's academic pipeline — continuing to inspire the next generation of young engineers and innovators each summer.

Math & Coding: Inspiring the Innovators of Tomorrow

UPLIFT Academy **launched its Math & Coding program for 8th- and 9th-grade students at Alaaka**, helping them strengthen foundational math skills while exploring the logic of computer programming.

Through engaging lessons in Python, students develop problem-solving and analytical thinking skills that prepare them for future academic success.

I highly recommend Steam Academies' STEM course for kids, especially if you're looking for a program that includes robotics. It's a fantastic way to introduce children to the exciting world of STEM and set them up for success in the future.

-Sal Brookstone, Parent

Small classes. My kids really like the instructor. The instructor is very interactive with the kids. She is great with kids can't ask for a better instructor.

-Suh Pan, Parent

This is a wonderful robotics course providing great opportunities for little minds to be scientific explorers. My first grade son loves it. The teacher is fantastic. I would highly recommend this program.

-Onur Stevens, Parent

As part of UPLIFT's **Academic Pipeline**, the program connects learning from middle school to high school, guiding students toward the College Path Mentorship (CPM) program, where they receive SAT prep and college guidance.

By linking these experiences, UPLIFT **builds a continuous path of opportunity**—empowering students to grow with confidence and purpose.

College & Career Mentorship Program



UPLIFT Academy launched its **College and Career Mentorship Program** with a kickoff meeting at Rutgers University on January 26, 2025.

Extending **UPLIFT's Academic Pipeline**, the program supports college students—many of them CPM graduates—as they transition from campus to career.

Through **personalized mentor-mentee matching**, participants receive guidance in academics, career exploration, and personal growth. This initiative continues UPLIFT's mission to educate, inspire, and empower students toward lifelong achievement.

News

Closing Ceremonies

As a key part of UPLIFT's educational model, end-of-year celebrations across partner locations recognized the achievements of students in the CPM and STEAM programs. Students received certificates and gift cards of up to \$200 for their dedication, attendance, and academic growth—reflecting UPLIFT's commitment to honoring hard work and excellence.



Expanding Support Through One-on-One Math Tutoring

Last year, UPLIFT Academy introduced one-on-one math tutoring to provide personalized academic support and strengthen students' foundational skills. The initiative helps close learning gaps, boost SAT readiness, and prepare 12th graders for college placement tests. With individualized instruction, students receive the guidance they need to stay on track and make steady progress toward their college goals.

UPLIFT Adopts Mersys Student Information System for Smarter Student Support



UPLIFT Academy began using Mersys, a Student Information System, to more effectively track student progress and improve communication.

The platform allows staff to monitor attendance, academics, and participation across programs, enabling more personalized support. Mersys strengthens UPLIFT's pipeline by helping students move smoothly from one program to the next.

Welcoming New Community Partners

UPLIFT Academy continues to expand its impact through new partnerships that support accessible, community-based education. In Summer 2025, we partnered with The Circle of Care to launch a Math & Coding Summer Program for Paterson youth, collaborated with Masjid Mubarak in Newark as a new Summer Math Camp site, and welcomed New Birth Church in Paterson as a CPM partner.

These partnerships help us reach students in trusted community spaces and expand meaningful opportunities for youth across New Jersey.

Spring SAT Camp Boosts Student Success

Over spring break, UPLIFT Academy hosted a 4-day SAT Camp in Newark for high school students in the College Path Mentorship (CPM) program. Nine dedicated students participated, using their break to strengthen math skills, sharpen test strategies, and build confidence for the SAT.

Through focused lessons and supportive instruction, students made meaningful progress while enjoying a collaborative learning environment.

UPLIFT Students Travel to Tanzania for Service and Learning

UPLIFT Academy is proud to share that our 11th grade student, *Mariam Sulley* earned the opportunity to travel to Tanzania through a partnership with SKY Academy and Embrace Relief. The trip was designed to build sense of empathy, teamwork, and global responsibility—embodying UPLIFT’s mission to educate and inspire through service.

A much needed *waterwell opened in Dakawa community in Morogoro region in Tanzania.*



As part of our humanitarian mission, our team visited *three orphanages in Morogoro, Tanzania, to convey supplies to children aged 5 to 15.* We told the children that we would support their education by providing notebooks, pencils, erasers, and crayons, as well as age-appropriate toys from the United States.

The team *transported a total of 850 pounds of supplies, including 350 pounds of filler-packed materials.* In collaboration with *Tanzania Missions (TM)* and *the local community in Tanzania,* we also coordinated *the delivery of nutritious food supplies and 500 pounds of meat* to the orphanages.

Community Service Projects



Back to School Backpack Distribution

In partnership with Embrace Relief and the New Spring Foundation, UPLIFT Academy distributed backpacks to students in the communities participating at our partner locations — Alaaka Association, Masjid Fallahee, Masjid Mubarak, Seminary Baptist Church, and Ashab-ul Yameen, helping them start the new school year prepared and confident.



Food Distribution at Partner Locations

UPLIFT Academy held several major food drives this year, during *Thanksgiving 2024* and in *March 2025*, to support families across our partner communities.

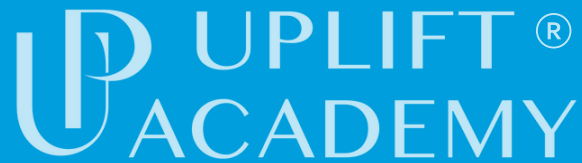
With students volunteering alongside local teams and Embrace Relief, UPLIFT distributed food packages to families in need.



Learning Through Service

As part of the CPM program, UPLIFT Academy high school students identified children aged 7–10 from their communities and, with their families' permission, chaperoned them on a gift-shopping activity. Students guided the children as they chose presents, fostering empathy, leadership, and responsibility. Beyond building character, this community service project provided students with meaningful experience to include in their college applications while raising awareness about the importance of giving back.





“Every Student Deserves a Better Education and a Better Future”

Mission

UPLIFT provides and promotes high-quality educational services to students of New Jersey to close the achievement gap resulting from socioeconomic inequities, and to help students of all backgrounds reach their greatest academic and intellectual potential.

UPLIFT's 10 Values

- Love of learning
- Mentorship
- Social Justice
- Critical Thinking
- Gratitude
- Accountability
- Professionalism
- Partnersshipping
- Community Service and Volunteerism
- Measurable Achievement



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