



IMPACT

REPORT

2025





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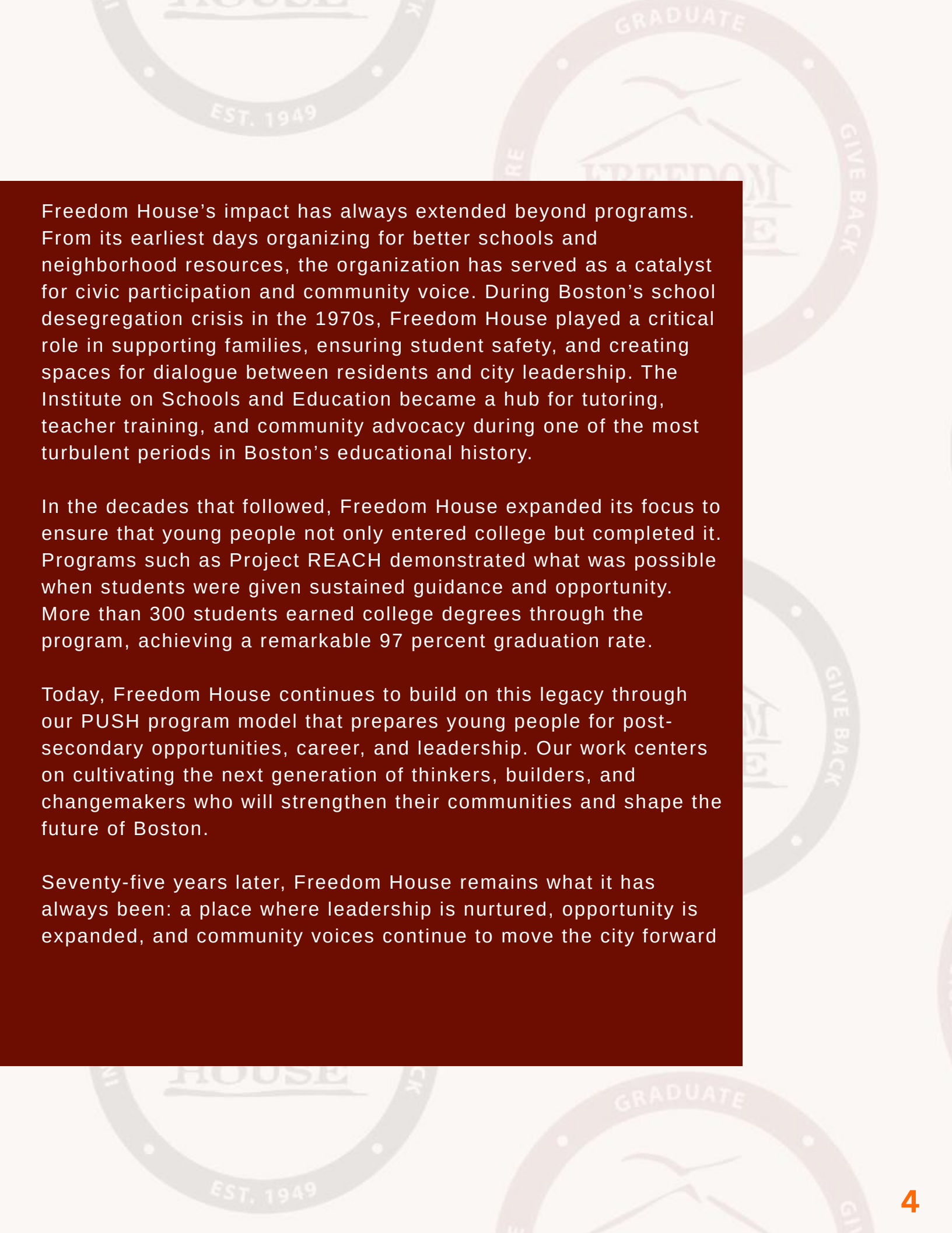
ABOUT FREEDOM HOUSE

Freedom House is a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting young people and families through education, leadership development, and community-based programs. Serving communities across Boston, Freedom House provides youth development opportunities, academic support, and pathways that help young people pursue educational and career success.

Since 1949, the organization has been a cornerstone of community leadership. Founded by Otto and Muriel Snowden in the historic Humboldt Theatre building, Freedom House began as a gathering place for residents committed to organizing, advocating, and shaping the future of their neighborhoods. What started on Humboldt Avenue as a center for civic engagement and racial justice has grown into one of Boston's longest-standing institutions dedicated to leadership, opportunity, and educational advancement.

Freedom House has stood alongside the communities of Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan, responding to the evolving needs of each generation while remaining rooted in a simple belief: young people deserve access, preparation, and support to pursue their ambitions and lead meaningful lives.

Our mission is to advance economic, racial, and social equity through education and leadership development. We work with young people beginning in high school and continuing through college and early career pathways, providing intensive coaching, academic preparation, social emotional support, career exploration, and exposure to college level learning. Through this work, students gain not only the tools to succeed in higher education, but also the confidence and leadership skills needed to shape their own futures and contribute to their communities.



Freedom House's impact has always extended beyond programs. From its earliest days organizing for better schools and neighborhood resources, the organization has served as a catalyst for civic participation and community voice. During Boston's school desegregation crisis in the 1970s, Freedom House played a critical role in supporting families, ensuring student safety, and creating spaces for dialogue between residents and city leadership. The Institute on Schools and Education became a hub for tutoring, teacher training, and community advocacy during one of the most turbulent periods in Boston's educational history.

In the decades that followed, Freedom House expanded its focus to ensure that young people not only entered college but completed it. Programs such as Project REACH demonstrated what was possible when students were given sustained guidance and opportunity. More than 300 students earned college degrees through the program, achieving a remarkable 97 percent graduation rate.

Today, Freedom House continues to build on this legacy through our PUSH program model that prepares young people for post-secondary opportunities, career, and leadership. Our work centers on cultivating the next generation of thinkers, builders, and changemakers who will strengthen their communities and shape the future of Boston.

Seventy-five years later, Freedom House remains what it has always been: a place where leadership is nurtured, opportunity is expanded, and community voices continue to move the city forward

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

This year asked a great deal of Freedom House. It required steadiness during uncertainty, clarity amid growing noise, and a deep commitment to who we are even as the work continued to shift.

If I had to name this year in one word, I would call it grounding. It was not easy. It was not flashy. But it was necessary.

What I am most proud of is not a single program or milestone. I am proud that we stayed. We stayed with our students. We stayed with our families. We stayed with each other. We did not move past the difficult moments or minimize their weight. We paused when we needed to, learned what the moment required of us, and continued forward with care and intention.

This year brought real challenges. Ones that were felt deeply in our communities and in our work. As families entered the holiday season, we saw food insecurity increase and witnessed our communities come together to respond to that need. At the same time, our Mass Promise Fellowship program was defunded. We were faced with the difficult responsibility of advocating for its reinstatement while also delivering painful news to fellows who had committed their time, energy, and trust to the program.

Beyond our organizational challenges, we were navigating a national climate that deeply affected the young people we serve. We saw elevated attacks on immigrant communities and supported youth who were living with fear, uncertainty, and concern for their families. These realities did not exist outside of our work. They were present every day in our classrooms, our programs, and our conversations.

We also saw a growing need for mental wellness support among our young people. This year brought an increase in diagnoses including ADHD, ADD, heightened anxiety, bipolar disorder, and other mental health challenges. These experiences reinforced what we already know to be true. Supporting young people requires intentional investment in mental wellness, emotional safety, and access to care. Academic and leadership development cannot happen without attending to the full humanity of the young people in our care.





These moments required patience, not speed. They required us to ask hard questions about alignment, capacity, and responsibility. They shaped us. They demanded honesty about what it takes to do this work well and reinforced the importance of being disciplined and thoughtful in our decisions.

And still, our mission showed up.

It showed up in young people who demonstrated resilience, creativity, and leadership even when their world felt uncertain. It showed up in families who trusted us with their hopes, concerns, and expectations. It showed up in staff who remained present, committed, and deeply invested in the lives of the young people they serve, even when the work felt heavy.



Freedom House has never been about fixing young people. It has always been about recognizing their brilliance, nurturing their potential, and walking alongside them as they grow. Our young people bring insight, strength, and possibility into every space they enter. Our responsibility is to support, guide, and protect that potential.

Equity was not something we discussed in theory this year. It was practiced daily. It shaped how we made decisions, whose voices we centered, and where we focused our energy. Community was not an audience. It was a partner. That partnership mattered.

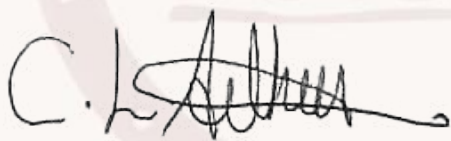
This year positioned Freedom House to move forward with greater clarity. We are more grounded in our purpose, more honest about our limits, and more committed to building work that is sustainable, meaningful, and lasting.

As you read this Impact Report, my hope is that you feel the humanity behind the work. That you see the care, effort, and steady determination that does not always make headlines but changes lives every day. I hope you know that this work matters deeply to us and that we take your trust seriously.

For 75 years, Freedom House has stood in the gap, responding to need, creating opportunity, and believing deeply in the power of young people and community. That legacy continues because people choose to stay engaged, to invest, and to walk alongside us.

My invitation is simple. Stay with us. Support the work. Share the story. Walk alongside Freedom House as we continue building pathways, strengthening community, and preparing young people not just to succeed, but to lead.

In unity and gratitude,



Charmaine L. Arthur
Chief Executive Officer

A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR

As Board Chair of Freedom House, I reflect on the past year with both deep pride and strong confidence in the direction of our organization. Freedom House continues to demonstrate what is possible when vision, leadership, and unwavering commitment come together in service of young people, families, and community.

Over the past year, the Board has remained focused on ensuring that Freedom House is positioned not only to meet present needs, but to sustain and expand its impact for years to come. We have worked closely with executive leadership to strengthen organizational systems, reinforce accountability, and support strategic decision-making that reflects both our mission and our enduring values.

What stands out most is the organization's steady and reliable presence during a time of continued change. As the needs of young people and families evolve, Freedom House has remained responsive, thoughtful, and grounded in purpose. Our programs continue to support academic achievement, leadership development, and personal growth, while also recognizing the essential role of well-being, stability, and trust in shaping meaningful outcomes.

From a governance perspective, this year reaffirmed the importance of clarity, partnership, and shared responsibility. The Board is encouraged by the organization's continued focus on long-term sustainability, its investment in staff and leadership capacity, and its steadfast commitment to serving the community with integrity. These elements are fundamental to ensuring that Freedom House remains strong, relevant, and effective.

As we look ahead, the foundation established this year positions Freedom House to move forward with purpose and confidence.



The work before us will require continued collaboration, thoughtful investment, and a shared belief in the potential of the young people we serve. The Board remains fully committed to supporting this mission and advancing the impact of the organization.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I extend my sincere appreciation to our staff, partners, donors, and community members. Your continued engagement and support make it possible for Freedom House to transform vision into opportunity and opportunity into lasting impact.

With gratitude,
Dr. Andrew Sobers
Board Chair

A MESSAGE FROM OUR COO

Dear Friends and Supporters,

2025 presented significant challenges, including rising illegal activity in our neighborhood, funding instability, and general unease. Through these challenges, my focus as Chief Operating Officer has been clear: supporting our staff so they can continue to show up fully for our young people.

The work our team does is deeply meaningful and often heavy. With the support of our CEO and Board, we took time to examine not just what we do, but how we do it. We asked ourselves pointed questions: Do our policies reflect our values? Do we pause to celebrate wins? Do we see and support each other? Even our language matters – what does it mean to say we're family? Through these conversations, we are building a culture grounded in care, clarity, and mutual respect rather than assumptions.

One change that started in 2024 became permanent in 2025: closing during the last week of August to give staff time to recharge after our intensive summer program. This break significantly improved morale and engagement. In addition, we made changes to better reflect our values, including making sick time immediately available to all employees without accrual or a probationary period. If we expect excellence from our team, we must create conditions that enable them to thrive.



Strong foundations are essential for mission-driven impact. This year, we improved administrative systems, including switching to an HR and payroll platform that automates timecards and approvals. These tools decreased manual work and freed mental bandwidth. When staff spend less time on processes, they can focus more on our scholars. Working with youth requires presence and clarity; our systems should support that, not drain it.

We also invested in safety infrastructure in response to increased activity in Grove Hall, including upgrading cameras, lighting, and access systems. These improvements ensure that staff and students feel secure in the spaces where they learn and grow.

As we focus on growth and sustainability, I keep one guiding principle in mind: a strong foundation enables everything else. We spent time aligning our mission and reaffirming our dedication to strengthening communities through youth development. When alums come back to share their successes, we see that investing in our young people continues to have positive effects outward.

In the nonprofit sector, discussions about investing in staff and infrastructure are often overshadowed by program metrics, but behind every program outcome is unseen labor. Programs cannot succeed without the people and infrastructure that support them. We remain dedicated to investing in fair compensation, comprehensive benefits, and opportunities for professional growth. Staff have participated in workshops and leadership programs, strengthening our collective ability. In a small organization, flexibility and shared development are essential.

The operational work of 2025 has prepared Freedom House to advance with greater readiness and resilience. We have strengthened our systems, increased our alignment, and invested in the people who drive our mission. The impact seen in our scholars' achievements is built on these foundations.

Thank you for standing with us, believing in the value of this work, and understanding that sustainable impact needs both heart and infrastructure. Together, we're not just responding to today's challenges; we're building a stronger, more connected community.

With gratitude,
Ji Kim
Chief Operating Officer

A MESSAGE FROM OUR DIGITAL MARKETING AND BRANDING SPECIALIST, ONEVSN

This past year marked a clear shift in how we approach media and storytelling at Freedom House. What once centered on capturing moments has evolved into something far more intentional. Every piece of content is rooted in purpose, with a stronger focus on the story behind each moment and what it represents in a larger context.

That shift has changed how our work is received. The content resonates. It reflects real experiences, real growth, and real moments that people can connect to. At the same time, we have built the structure behind that storytelling, ensuring that each post, video, and feature contributes to a cohesive narrative rather than standing alone.



A major driver of this growth has been alignment. Media is no longer a series of separate efforts, but a connected ecosystem. This has strengthened consistency across platforms, sharpened our visual identity, and allowed us to show up with greater clarity and intention. The focus has not been on doing more, but on being more intentional in how we show up.

As a result, our reach has extended beyond the walls of Freedom House. People can now engage with our work and immediately understand who we are, what we stand for, and the impact taking place. This has created stronger connection, deeper trust, and increased support from those who want to be part of what we are building.

At its core, media serves as a bridge. It connects the work within Freedom House to the broader community, while elevating the voices of those at the center of it. Our students and families are not just part of the story. They are the story.

Looking ahead, we are continuing to build on this foundation through more structured storytelling, series-based content, and opportunities to follow journeys over time. This is not just about content. It is about creating something people can see themselves in and be part of.

With gratitude,
Nicola Webbe
Digital Marketing and Branding Specialist

A MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

This year reaffirmed something we have long known at Freedom House: community is our stabilizer.

As public funding tightened and the broader youth workforce ecosystem contracted, demand from young people did not slow down. It accelerated. In that environment, community and donor support did more than sustain programs. It protected continuity.

Philanthropic partnership allowed us to sustain academic coaching, mental wellness services, and meaningful workforce development opportunities across the PUSH pipeline. Through this support, young people participated in structured experiences that combined career exposure with hands-on skill building, while also receiving financial support that recognized their time and commitment. These opportunities strengthened both professional readiness and essential life skills, ensuring they remained connected to growth, income, and future pathways during a volatile funding cycle.

This year's development work was shaped by both growth and discipline. We strengthened multi-year commitments across corporate, foundation, and public partners. At the same time, we became more intentional about alignment. Not every opportunity was pursued. Sustainable growth required evaluation, stewardship, and long-term thinking.

Philanthropy proved not to be supplemental, but stabilizing.

When public systems shift, philanthropy becomes the bridge. It provides the flexibility to retain staff, strengthen infrastructure, and protect young people's momentum. Long-term impact is not built in one summer or one initiative.



It is built when organizations have the capacity to plan ahead, refine systems, and remain steady when funding cycles fluctuate.

As we look toward 2026, our focus is not simply expansion. It is durability. We are organizing revenue strategies with greater clarity, strengthening board engagement, and aligning development with program leadership and financial forecasting. Growth that is anchored in stewardship creates credibility and resilience.

To our partners and supporters: your role in this work is foundational.

You are helping sustain the spaces where young people discover who they are and who they can become. At Freedom House, we often say that spaces save relationships, and relationships save lives. Your partnership strengthens those spaces. It keeps structure steady when systems shift.

The work ahead will require endurance, collaboration, and shared responsibility. We invite you to continue walking alongside Freedom House with the same spirit that has sustained this organization for decades, through trust, accountability, and belief in young people.

We move forward not alone, but together.

With gratitude,
Jarek Morgan
Director of Development

CELEBRATING 76 YEARS CHAMPIONS COFFEE HOUR

Freedom House's Champions Coffee Hour brought together a powerful community of supporters, continuing a long-standing tradition rooted in dialogue, connection, and collective action. Originally established in 1950 by Otto and Muriel Snowden, Community Coffee Hour has been a cornerstone of Freedom House's work, creating space for people to come together, engage in critical conversations, and advance solutions for racial and economic equity across Boston.

This year's Champions Coffee Hour reimagined that legacy by blending the spirit of Community Coffee Hour with the recognition of our Champions of Freedom. The event brought together civic leaders, partners, scholars, and community members for an evening grounded in reflection, connection, and a shared commitment to the next generation of scholars and leaders.

A highlight of the evening was the recognition of three outstanding leaders whose work reflects a deep commitment to community and impact:

- **The Legacy Builder Award** – Susan O'Connor
- **The Youth Catalyst Award** – Carrie Mays
- **The Impact Leadership Award** – Karilyn Crockett

The program also featured powerful reflections from scholars and community voices, followed by "Champions Connect," a networking experience designed to foster meaningful relationships between supporters and Freedom House scholars creating pathways for mentorship, opportunity, and continued engagement.

Thank you to our sponsors and special contributors:

Eversource

Eastern Bank Foundation

JPMorgan Chase

Liberty Mutual Foundation

State Street Corporation

Dedham Savings

Patriots Foundation

Nutter McClennen & Fish

CELEBRATING 76 YEARS CHAMPIONS COFFEE HOUR





A MESSAGE FROM OUR MANAGER OF DATA & IMPACT



This year, the data tells a story that is both expansive and grounded. It reflects not only how many young people we reached, but how consistently and intentionally we showed up for them over time.

Across 2025, Freedom House delivered 12,955 hours of programming and support, signaling both expanded reach and sustained engagement. That number represents far more than activity. It reflects sustained relationships, consistent coaching, and a level of presence that allows real change to take place.

At the same time, our understanding of reach has matured. As we looked closer at the data, we identified overlaps across academic years that initially inflated student counts. Rather than overlook this, we addressed it directly.

This allowed us to more accurately represent our impact while acknowledging that our work spans multiple years in a student's journey. Even with this refinement, more than 2,800 students were engaged across overlapping program cycles, reinforcing both the breadth and continuity of our reach.

This year also marked a shift in how we approach data internally. We moved beyond collection and focused on strengthening how data is used. Our priority has been building systems that support consistent tracking, clearer insights, and stronger alignment between our work and what we measure. Data is becoming embedded in daily decision-making, not just something we revisit at the end of a reporting cycle.

Several insights challenged us in meaningful ways. One of the most important was recognizing how much of our impact exists outside of what is easily captured. While we recorded over 1,500 one-on-one coaching sessions, this remains a conservative measure, as many critical moments of support happen beyond what systems can track. This pushed us to think more critically about how we capture engagement and ensure the full scope of our work is acknowledged.

Data plays a critical role in advancing equity at Freedom House. It allows us to identify where students are thriving, where gaps exist, and where we must respond more intentionally. It informs how we allocate resources, design programs, and ensure support reaches those who need it most. It also keeps us accountable to the communities we serve by grounding decisions in evidence rather than assumption.

Measuring impact matters because it builds trust. It ensures that the stories we share are not only compelling, but accurate. It allows us to demonstrate whether our work is making a meaningful difference. For students and families, it reinforces that their experiences are seen and valued. For partners and stakeholders, it provides confidence that their investment is contributing to real outcomes.

Looking ahead, this year's learning positions Freedom House to move with greater clarity and precision. We are refining how we track progress and connect data across programs to tell a more complete and in depth story. We are continuing to build systems that support both accountability and learning, ensuring our approach remains responsive as community needs evolve.

Not everything that matters can be measured easily, but that does not absolve us from the responsibility to try. At Freedom House, data is not used to simply prove impact. It is used to improve it. We are committed to transparency, to learning in real time, and to continuously strengthening how we serve our students and families.

With gratitude,
Quenay Joseph
Data and Impact Manager

IMPACT SUMMARY & HIGHLIGHTS



12,955

hours of programming
delivered



2,852

scholars served



325

high school graduates
in the Class of 2025



52

college graduates
since 2021

In 2025, Freedom House continued to expand its reach and deepen its impact across Boston's communities. Through 12,955 hours of programming, we supported 2,852 scholars through a comprehensive model that integrates academic support, leadership development, career exploration, and mental health resources. This sustained investment ensures that students receive the tools, guidance, and opportunities needed to navigate their educational journeys and prepare for future success.

Our scholars continued to demonstrate strong academic achievement. Freedom House proudly celebrated 325 high school graduates in the Class of 2025, many of whom are continuing their education through post-secondary pathways. These milestones reflect the strength of our PUSH pipeline, which provides consistent mentorship, coaching, and academic preparation throughout students' high school years.

Beyond high school graduation, Freedom House remains committed to supporting long-term success. Since 2021, 52 Freedom House scholars have completed their college degrees, representing a growing network of young leaders equipped to contribute to their communities and pursue meaningful careers. Together, these outcomes demonstrate the lasting impact of sustained mentorship, opportunity, and investment in Boston's next generation.



OUR PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Freedom House supports young people through a connected pathway designed to guide students from high school preparation into career exploration, leadership development, and higher education. The PUSH model is built as a continuous pipeline that provides support, exposure, and opportunity at critical transition points in a student's journey.

Students often begin in PUSH High School, where Freedom House staff work directly within partner high schools, collaborating with teachers, guidance counselors, and school administrators to support students' academic progress and post-secondary planning. Students also participate in leadership development through the PUSH Leadership Institute (PLI), an out-of-school time program that builds communication, leadership, and professional skills. Many students extend their learning during the summer through the Summer Learning Institute (SLI), which combines academic enrichment, work-based learning, and career exploration.

After high school graduation, some students continue their development through PUSH to Start, Freedom House's gap year program. This experience allows students to gain employment experience, strengthen professional skills, and explore post-secondary options while developing greater clarity about their next steps.

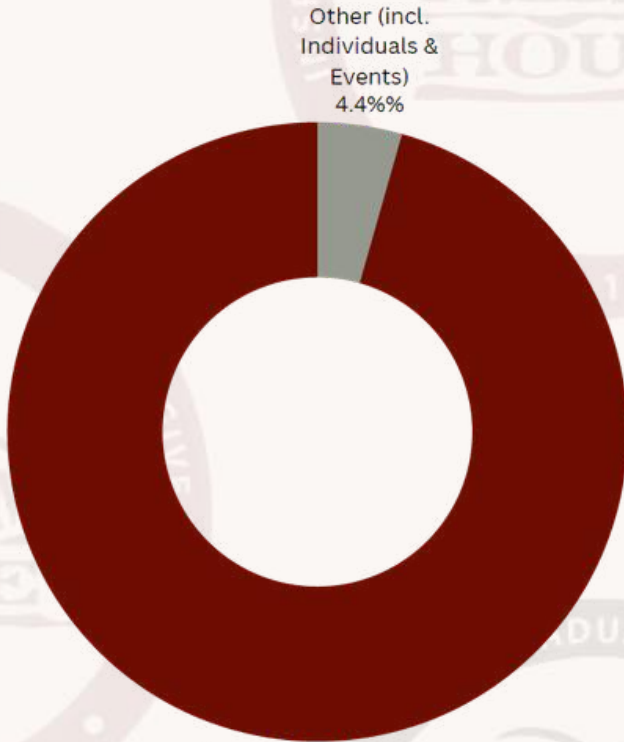
Students then move into PUSH College and the Year 13/14 Communiversy model, where they earn college credits through dual enrollment courses, receive tutoring and wellness supports, and continue developing leadership and professional skills as they transition into higher education.

Together, these programs form a continuous pipeline that helps students move from high school preparation to career exploration and college persistence, ensuring they have the guidance, exposure, and support needed to pursue their goals and contribute meaningfully to their communities.



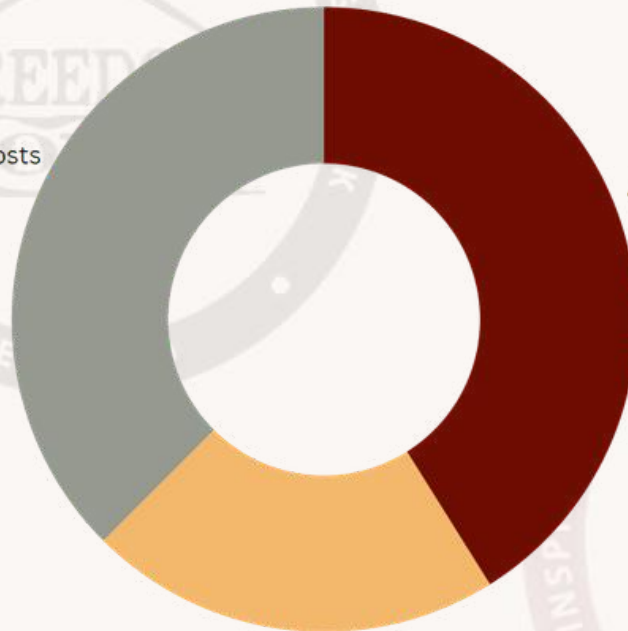


HIGHLIGHTS FINANCIAL



Foundation & Corporate Gifts
95.6%

Indirect Costs
37.5%



Program Administration & Supplies
41.1%

Youth Employment Stipends
21.4%

HIGHLIGHTS PROGRAM & ORGANIZATION

Summer Learning Institute (SLI)

Interest in the Summer Learning Institute continued to grow in 2025, reflecting the strong demand for meaningful academic and leadership opportunities for young people in Boston. More than 340 students applied to participate, with over 120 scholars enrolled in the program. Through a combination of academic enrichment, leadership development, and community-based learning, students engaged in programming designed to build confidence, strengthen critical thinking, and deepen their connection to the issues shaping their communities.

Throughout the summer, scholars participated in workshops focused on wellness, identity development, and social change. These experiences encouraged students to explore their own leadership potential while developing the skills needed to navigate complex social and civic challenges. As the program continues to expand, the Summer Learning Institute remains a cornerstone of Freedom House's commitment to preparing the next generation of leaders.

PUSH Leadership Institute (PLI)

The PUSH Leadership Institute continues to serve as a powerful space for young people to grow as leaders and changemakers. In 2025, the program expanded its internal instructional leadership, with Freedom House staff and fellows taking on greater roles in designing and facilitating workshops for scholars.

Through interactive learning experiences, participants explored topics related to leadership, identity, civic engagement, and community responsibility. Fellows and program staff worked closely with scholars to create engaging spaces for dialogue and reflection, allowing participants to examine the challenges facing their communities while building the skills needed to respond with purpose and vision.

340+

students applied to
Summer Learning
Institute

391

students coached
one-on-one

638

high school seniors
served

HIGHLIGHTS PROGRAM & ORGANIZATION

PUSH College

The PUSH College program marked a significant milestone in 2025, celebrating 12 college graduates and bringing the total number of scholars supported to 52 since 2021. Graduates pursued degrees across a range of fields, including STEM, positioning them for strong and sustainable career pathways.

The program's success is rooted in its intensive coaching model, which provides individualized support to students throughout their college journeys. Through consistent one-on-one advising, scholars receive guidance on academic planning, financial navigation, and personal development. This holistic approach ensures that students not only persist in college but are also prepared to enter the workforce and pursue long-term career goals.

PUSH-to-Start

For many young adults, the transition after high school can be uncertain. The PUSH-to-Start program provides a structured launch point for young people navigating decisions about college, careers, and their future paths.

Participants engage in individualized coaching and group sessions designed to help them explore interests, develop professional skills, and identify meaningful next steps. In 2025, participants used the program as a springboard to a variety of opportunities, including returning to college, entering workforce development programs, and securing employment. PUSH-to-Start continues to serve as a vital bridge connecting high school experiences to college persistence and career pathways.



70%

of college freshman
persisted to sophomore
year



95%

FAFSA completion for
college students

HIGHLIGHTS PROGRAM & ORGANIZATION

Philanthropy and Strategic Partnerships

In 2025, Freedom House expanded opportunities for Boston's young people through philanthropic and public support. Even as youth workforce funding declined, we remained committed to delivering paid opportunities, mentorship, coaching, and leadership development for our scholars.

Partnerships with institutions, including National Grid, the Lloyd G. Balfour Foundation, United Way of Massachusetts Bay, the City of Boston, and SuccessLink, helped ensure that Freedom House could continue delivering high-quality programming while investing in the systems and infrastructure necessary to support long-term impact.

Strengthening Organizational Infrastructure

In addition to programmatic progress, Freedom House made several important investments in operational infrastructure to strengthen internal systems. The organization implemented a new HR and payroll platform designed to streamline administrative processes, including automated timekeeping and approval workflows.

Safety and facility improvements were also prioritized, with upgrades to security cameras, lighting, and building access systems to ensure a safe and welcoming environment for scholars, families, and staff.

Investing in Staff and Organizational Culture

Recognizing that strong programs are built by strong teams, Freedom House continued to invest in policies and practices that support staff well-being and professional growth. Updates to the organization's sick leave policy now allow staff to access leave immediately without accrual, providing greater flexibility and support when it is needed most.

The organization also introduced a dedicated reset week following the conclusion of summer programming, allowing staff time to rest and recharge after an intensive program season. In addition, staff members participated in professional development opportunities and nonprofit leadership training throughout the year.

167

student jobs hosted
by Freedom House

HIGHLIGHTS PROGRAM & ORGANIZATION

Responding to Community Needs

Freedom House continues to operate in a rapidly changing environment where many families face increasing challenges, including rising food insecurity and growing mental health needs among young people. In response, the organization expanded its focus on wellness support and social-emotional programming while continuing to provide academic, leadership, and career development opportunities for scholars.

By remaining grounded in its mission and responsive to community realities, Freedom House continues to serve as a stabilizing force and opportunity hub for young people across Boston.

Governance and Leadership

The Freedom House Board of Directors remains a critical partner in advancing the organization's mission and ensuring strong governance. In 2025, the board continued to focus on strengthening accountability, supporting executive leadership, and guiding the organization through a period of growth and strategic development.

Through their leadership and commitment, board members help ensure that Freedom House remains positioned for long-term sustainability while continuing to expand opportunities for the young people and families it serves.

143

hours of civic
engagement projects
per student

\$70K

in savings provided to
students through early
college classes

52%

of staff are Freedom
House alums



PUSH HIGH SCHOOL

PUSH High School works directly within Boston high schools to support students as they build strong academic foundations, leadership skills, and clear post-secondary pathways. Freedom House staff partner with teachers, guidance counselors, and school administrators to provide consistent support throughout a student's high school experience.

Through this in-school presence, students receive individualized coaching focused on academic progress, grades and GPA monitoring, pathway planning, and overall wellbeing. One-on-one and small group sessions help students stay focused on their goals while developing the habits, confidence, and discipline needed to succeed in high school and prepare for what comes next.

Leadership development continues beyond the school day through the PUSH Leadership Institute (PLI), an out-of-school-time program where students strengthen communication, leadership, and professional skills through workshops, collaborative learning, and hands-on experiences. PLI creates space for students to build community with their peers while growing as leaders within their schools and neighborhoods.



Students are also introduced to college-level learning through dual enrollment opportunities with partner institutions such as Bunker Hill Community College. These experiences allow students to engage directly with college coursework and expectations while beginning to earn college credit.

Learning and professional growth continue during the summer through the Summer Learning Institute (SLI). Open to Boston youth ages 14 to 18 who attend Boston Public Schools or reside in the city, SLI combines academic enrichment, career exploration, and work-based learning. Students gain professional experience through community-based job placements with local organizations while developing workplace skills and confidence.

Students may also earn college credits during the summer through partnerships with the Franklin Cummings Institute of Technology and Roxbury Community College, allowing them to deepen their academic exposure while exploring future career pathways.

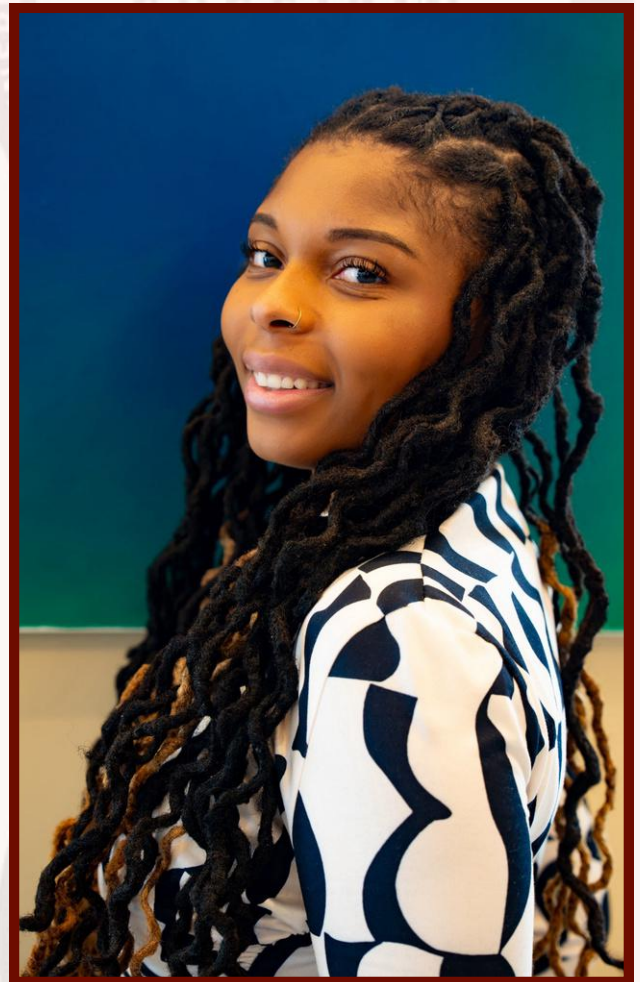
Together, these experiences create a year-round model that connects academic learning, leadership development, and real-world application. PUSH High School reflects Freedom House's belief that when young people are given strong guidance, meaningful opportunities, and space to lead, they develop the confidence and capacity to shape their own futures.



FROM OUR DIRECTOR PUSH HIGH SCHOOL

As I reflect on this year, one defining moment stands out: solidifying the PUSH team at the end of the summer. We welcomed two Mass Promise Fellows, transitioned our coach at Boston Arts Academy into a full-time role, and strengthened our capacity with the addition of our Marketing and Branding Manager. We also transitioned one of our Success Specialists and Mass Promise Fellows from serving within the high schools to directly supporting scholars onsite. That addition expanded our ability to support bilingual students within the Freedom House space.

This stability translated directly into stronger programming, clearer leadership on the floor, and greater impact for our scholars.



Another major achievement was the continued growth of our Summer Learning Institute (SLI). This year, more than 340 students applied to participate. That number has doubled in recent years and continues to grow by roughly 40 to 50 percent annually. The demand reflects how strongly young people and families value this opportunity. We were able to serve more than 120 students from across the city of Boston. Young people from neighborhoods throughout the city chose to spend their summer learning, building community, and developing leadership skills with us. That level of reach matters because it shows that this work is resonating beyond one school or one neighborhood.

Over the course of the year, the PUSH team grew into this strengthened structure. On-site staff stepped into co-leading and, at times, fully leading PUSH Leadership Institute (PLI) programming with confidence. The Mass Promise Fellows showed tremendous growth on the floor and created workshops that genuinely excited and engaged scholars. More importantly, the team demonstrated growth in ownership and leadership identity. Staff began reflecting more intentionally on who they are becoming, not only within Freedom House but beyond it.



As the year progressed, our focus shifted from building structure to refining delivery. We paid closer attention to student feedback, academic pressure points, and social transitions. Programming adjustments were guided by what scholars needed in real time. This meant pacing sessions differently, strengthening accountability, and ensuring students received consistent follow-through. Our approach remained steady, but our responsiveness became sharper.



Our work is a direct reflection of Freedom House's mission of youth development, leadership cultivation, and community impact. Through PLI, scholars gain academic and professional exposure while also developing identity, civic awareness, and leadership skills. They are growing not only as students, but as emerging leaders within their communities. Collaboration across teams continues to strengthen Freedom House as a space where young people are challenged, supported, and prepared for what comes next.



Growth and transformation fuel my passion as a leader. I am driven by seeing young people and staff recognize their full potential. When someone shifts their mindset or steps forward with confidence, it affirms the purpose of this program. That belief shapes how I lead. I set high expectations while also creating space for learning, reflection, and accountability.

Looking ahead to 2026, I am focused on expanding access and opportunity. I plan to increase movement and wellness initiatives for both staff and students to support overall well-being. I am also working toward securing funding for transportation and experiential learning so scholars can engage more fully with the city. Financial barriers and limited exposure often restrict access to meaningful opportunities. Removing those barriers will deepen our impact.

I would like to acknowledge those who contributed significantly to this year's progress. Oza and Nicola embraced and implemented new ideas within PLI with consistency and care. Ji and Ms. Charmaine encouraged thoughtful action and creative direction. The entire PUSH team supported high school initiatives across job fairs, events, and daily programming. Their reliability and commitment continue to move this work forward.

We supported students during critical academic, social, and transitional moments through consistent wellness workshops and social change focused programming. These spaces allowed scholars to process identity, stress, and community issues while strengthening critical thinking and leadership skills. By continuing to create structured and supportive environments, we helped students navigate pressure with greater awareness and resilience.

This year strengthened our foundation and clarified our direction. Our systems are stronger, leadership is growing, and the path ahead feels focused and intentional.

Samantha A. Williams
Director, PUSH High School and Partnerships



AHSAD'S STORY SCHOLAR-TO-STAFF

“There is no universal timeline for success. Your path is yours, and slow progress is still progress.”

MEET

AHSAD J. HARVEY

PUSH HIGH SCHOOL SUCCESS SPECIALIST

My journey with Freedom House began as a scholar from 2014 to 2018, where I participated in dual enrollment, internships, and the PUSH High School Summer Learning Institute. Since then, I have grown through multiple roles including intern, Junior Coach, Senior Coach, and now PUSH High School Success Specialist. Freedom House shaped me far beyond academics. It helped me grow into a student of life.

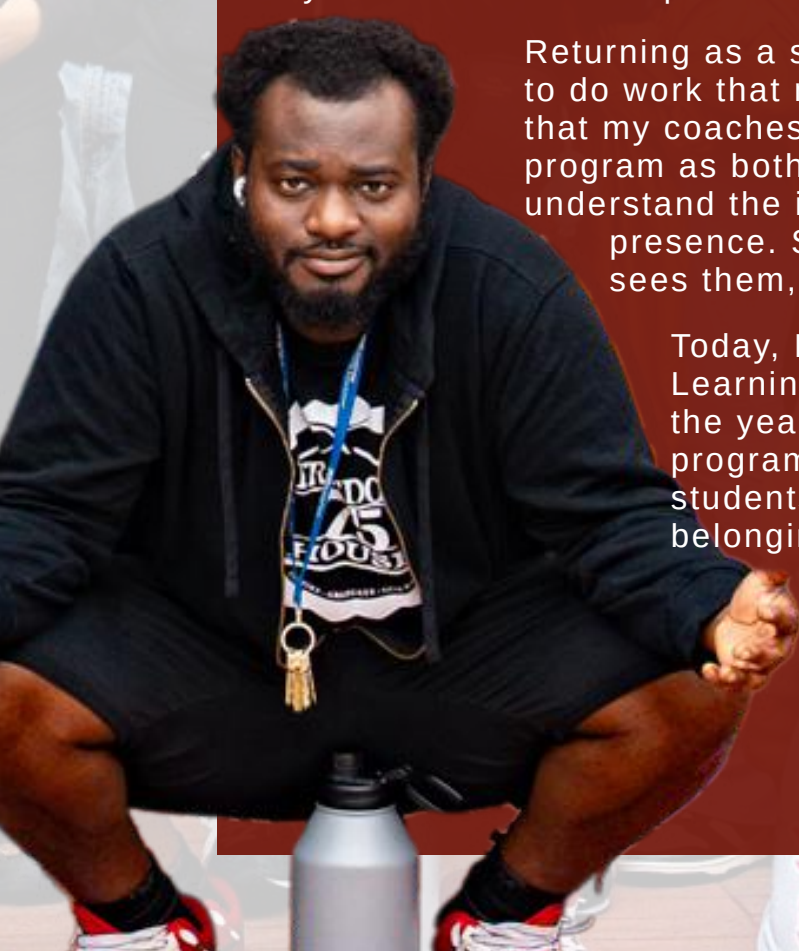
As a scholar, I built relationships with peers and mentors who became family. One of the most pivotal was with Manny Monteiro, who showed up for me at a time when I needed guidance. He modeled leadership, held me accountable, and taught me lessons about discipline, business, and integrity that still guide me today.

The Summer Learning Institute was a defining part of my experience. What started as an opportunity to earn money became something much greater. I gained confidence, learned to step outside of my comfort zone, and developed the communication and accountability skills that prepared me for life beyond high school. Freedom House also supported my academic journey through dual enrollment and college access resources, expanding my vision of what was possible.

Returning as a staff member felt personal. I knew I wanted to do work that mattered, and to be the support for students that my coaches were for me. Having experienced the program as both a student and now a staff member, I understand the importance of consistency, trust, and presence. Students need someone in their corner who sees them, challenges them, and believes in them.

Today, I take pride in contributing to the Summer Learning Institute and supporting students throughout the year. For me, this work is about more than programming. It is about creating spaces where students gain confidence, direction, and a sense of belonging that carries into every part of their lives.

Being part of Freedom House has expanded my vision and clarified my purpose. The same environment that once supported my growth now allows me to help shape the growth of others, and that responsibility continues to shape the leader I am becoming.



PUSH HIGH SCHOOL YASMIM R.

“—
| Freedom House helped me become closer to a stronger future and more sure of becoming a flight attendant. |
—”

My school recommended Freedom House to me, and that is how my journey here began. At first, I was simply looking for a place where I could learn and grow. Over time, Freedom House became much more than that. It became a place where I could practice speaking, build confidence, and feel supported as I continued learning English and developing new skills.

One accomplishment I am proud of this year is gaining more experience having conversations and improving my English. It was not always easy at first, but continuing to practice helped me grow. Through my time here, I have also developed a stronger mentality and more discipline. These changes have helped me believe more in myself and in what I can achieve in the future.

Some of my favorite moments have been the field trips and the time spent talking about the future. I especially remember hanging out with Bery during those trips and having conversations about what comes next. Those moments helped me start thinking more seriously about my goals and what I want for my life.

Being part of Freedom House has helped me feel closer to a stronger future and more sure of the path I want to follow. One of my goals is to become a flight attendant. When I think about Freedom House, the first thing that comes to mind is family.



PUSH HIGH SCHOOL CASSIDEE X.

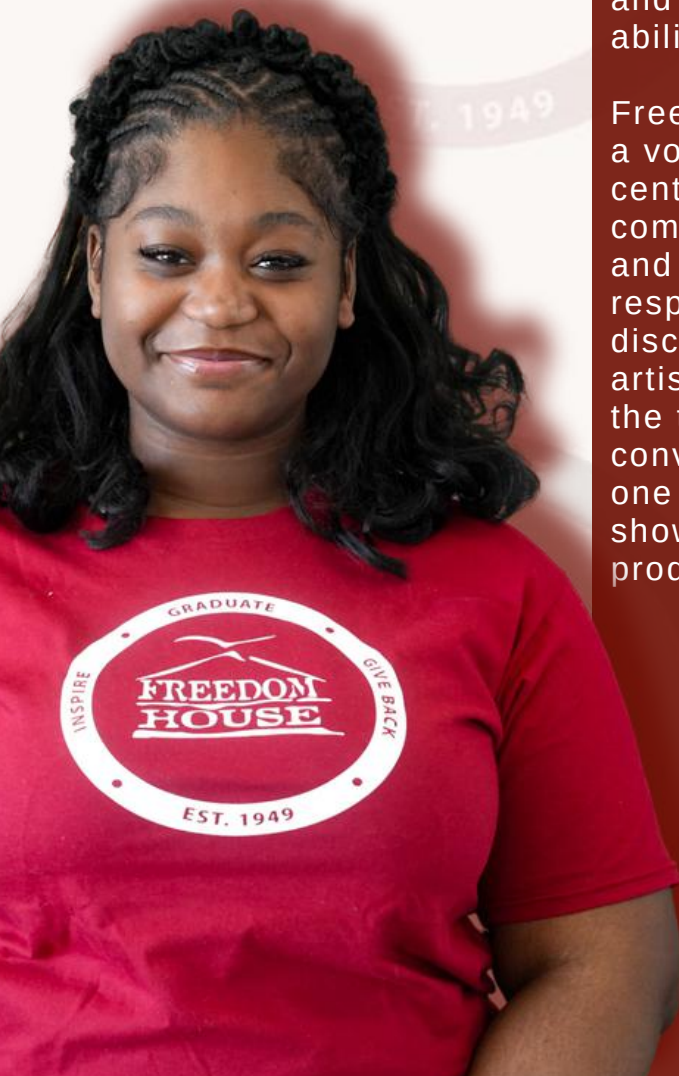
“Freedom House has helped me discover that I have a voice, an opinion, and that both matter.”

To be completely honest, my mom and sister were the ones who encouraged me to join Freedom House. My sister used to work here, and she and my mom thought it would be a great way for me to get out of the house over the summer and try something new. Going in, I did not really know what to expect. But once I got a feel for the environment and the people, I found myself really drawn in. Being surrounded by others who share similar experiences made it even more meaningful, and when it came time for PLI, coming back felt like a no-brainer.

One accomplishment I am especially proud of this year is scoring high on my mock exam for AP Language and Composition. English has never been my strongest subject, so seeing that level of improvement meant a lot to me. It showed me that my hard work was paying off and helped me feel much more confident in my writing abilities.

Freedom House has also helped me discover that I have a voice and that my opinion matters. Through discussions centered on issues that directly affect people in our communities, I have been able to share my perspective and hear from others in a space where everyone feels respected. One conversation that stayed with me was a discussion about whether it is possible to separate the artist from the art. Many of us had strong feelings about the topic, but we were still able to have a thoughtful conversation where everyone's voice was heard and no one was shamed for their perspective. That moment showed me that even difficult conversations can be productive when there is mutual respect.

Being part of Freedom House has shaped the way I think about my future. I plan to pursue a career in medicine, and I know that having a strong voice is essential. I will need to advocate for myself, communicate clearly with others, and speak confidently with patients. Freedom House has pushed me in the right direction by giving me opportunities to practice speaking up and taking initiative. When I think about Freedom House, I think about culture, community, and a space where people can truly express who they are.



PUSH HIGH SCHOOL SAUDAH M.

“—
Freedom House has helped me strengthen my professional identity and learn to carry myself with dignity and respect.
—”



When I first joined Freedom House, it was actually by chance. During the summer of 2025, I was part of ABCD's SummerWorks program, and my worksite placement happened to be Freedom House Institute. At the time, I did not have many expectations going in. But over the course of that summer, the experience quickly became something meaningful. I had the opportunity to learn more about Boston, participate in educational workshops, and build positive connections with other scholars. Those experiences encouraged me to apply to Freedom House directly so I could continue receiving the same benefits during the school year. The environment here is positive and unique, and it has given me a work experience unlike any other, which inspires me to stay involved.

One accomplishment that means a great deal to me this year is being accepted into the Boston University Class of 2030. Boston University has been my dream school for several years, so receiving that decision was incredibly meaningful. I did not reach this milestone alone. It took all four years of high school, along with the support of friends, family, college advisors, and mentors from my work experiences. While I was anxious before receiving my decision, I realized that with strong support from the people around me, accomplishments like this are truly within reach.

Freedom House has also helped me strengthen my professional identity. I have learned many important skills, including how to use social media responsibly, how to build and use a resume, and how to carry myself with dignity by treating others and myself with respect. One experience that means a lot to me is how staff and fellow scholars have treated me as a Muslim. I have always felt included, and my religious accommodations have been met with kindness and understanding. That sense of respect is something I do not always experience in other spaces.

Being part of Freedom House has also helped me feel more confident about my future. Seeing how many staff members are continuing their education has made the idea of college feel less intimidating. It has helped me feel more secure and less anxious about the next chapter of my life. To me, Freedom House is a place that prioritizes supporting students, especially those from ethnic backgrounds, as they work toward post-secondary education and careers.



PUSH PUSH TO START

PUSH to Start is Freedom House's gap year program designed for students who are exploring their next step after high school. The program provides structure, guidance, and real world experience as students prepare for college, career pathways, or other post-secondary opportunities.

Participants gain practical tools that support their transition into adulthood and the workforce. Students develop pathway plans, build resumes and LinkedIn profiles, and participate in professional development training that strengthens communication, workplace readiness, and career exploration.

Employment and hands-on experience are central to the program. Through partnerships with local organizations and Freedom House initiatives, students gain work experience while developing professional skills and expanding their networks.

Students in PUSH to Start also remain connected to the broader Freedom House leadership ecosystem. Many participants engage with programs such as the PUSH Leadership Institute (PLI) and the Summer Learning Institute (SLI), contributing to programming while strengthening their leadership and mentoring skills.

PUSH to Start recognizes that students move forward at different paces. Some participants are preparing to enter college, others are exploring career pathways, and some are returning to education after taking time to reassess their goals. The program provides the space, exposure, and support needed for students to move forward with clarity and confidence.

As part of the Freedom House pipeline, PUSH to Start serves as a bridge between high school and higher education, ensuring that students continue to have access to mentorship, coaching, and professional development during this important transition.



FROM OUR MANAGER PUSH TO START

2025 marked a defining turning point for the PUSH-To-START Program. What began as a space where young adults could receive support and explore their options has grown into something more structured and intentional. This year, the program fully stepped into its role as a launch pad for young adults navigating uncertainty after high school or interruptions in college.

While PUSH-To-Start has always centered on guidance and exploration, this year brought a new level of clarity to our purpose. We saw young adults move beyond reflection and into action. Participants returned to college with renewed direction, gained acceptance into workforce development programs, and secured employment opportunities aligned with their goals. Through stronger coaching structures, expanding partnerships, and more intentional engagement, PUSH-To-Start matured into a transitional community where young adults rebuild confidence, develop professional identity, and move forward with realistic momentum.



Over the course of the year, we saw our participants show up differently. Many entered the program uncertain about their capabilities or next steps, often carrying personal doubts or the weight of academic setbacks. As the year progressed, we began to see meaningful shifts in how they engaged with the program and with themselves. Young adults became more consistent, more accountable, and more willing to take initiative in group sessions, one-on-one coaching conversations, and professional environments both on and off site. Their growth was visible not only academically or professionally, but personally. Participants became more comfortable advocating for themselves, navigating difficult conversations, and taking ownership of their futures.

Our team adapted continuously in response to the needs we observed. Rather than relying on a fixed model, we leaned into flexibility while maintaining clear expectations for growth. We strengthened individualized coaching and adjusted programming to address mental wellness, motivation, and the real-world barriers many young adults face today.

We also deepened partnerships and embedded staff within partner high schools to engage students earlier in their decision-making process. These adjustments allowed us to provide more proactive support and ensure young adults had access to guidance before critical transitions occurred.

The work of PUSH-To-START plays a vital role in advancing the broader Freedom House mission. Our program serves as a connector within the organization's pipeline, linking high school engagement to college persistence and workforce readiness. By supporting young adults during these transitional phases, we help ensure that members of our community do not disengage when challenges arise. Instead, they remain connected to mentorship, resources, and opportunities that allow them to continue moving forward. This alignment strengthens outcomes not only for individual participants, but for the entire Freedom House community.



What continues to fuel my passion as the leader of this program is witnessing transformation in real time. Many of our young adults arrive believing they have fallen behind or missed their opportunity to succeed. Through PUSH-To-START, they are able to redefine success on their own terms while building practical and tangible steps toward it. My leadership approach is grounded in creating spaces where young adults feel both supported and challenged. Growth happens when encouragement and accountability exist together, and seeing participants rediscover confidence and direction continues to affirm why this work matters.

Looking ahead to 2026, I feel a strong sense of momentum. PUSH-To-START now has clearer structure, a growing network of partners, and increasing recognition as a vital transitional resource within our community. Our focus moving forward will be to deepen programming, expand educational and employment pipelines, and strengthen early engagement with young adults at critical decision points. The foundation built this year positions us not only to grow in scale, but to deepen our impact with greater intentionality.

I would like to acknowledge our Program Specialist for consistently demonstrating adaptability, compassion, and commitment to the success of our young adults. I also recognize our participants themselves, whose willingness to stay engaged through challenges made this year's growth possible. Finally, I extend gratitude to our partners and collaborators who helped expand opportunities and strengthen the network of support surrounding our young adults.

At its core, the PUSH-To-START Gap Year experience provides something many young adults have never been given: the time and structure to explore identity, build confidence, and make informed decisions about their futures. Rather than rushing into pathways without clarity, participants are able to reflect, test interests, develop professional skills, and gain a deeper understanding of who they are and where they want to go. By the end of the year, many move forward not simply with plans, but with readiness—equipped with the confidence, self-awareness, and tools necessary to take meaningful next steps.

Malcolm Thomas
Manager, Career Development and Civic Engagement



KEVIN'S STORY SCHOLAR-TO-STAFF

“Freedom House helped me recognize opportunities and believe in the direction I was working toward.”



MEET KEVIN WILLIAMS

PUSH TO START SUCCESS SPECIALIST

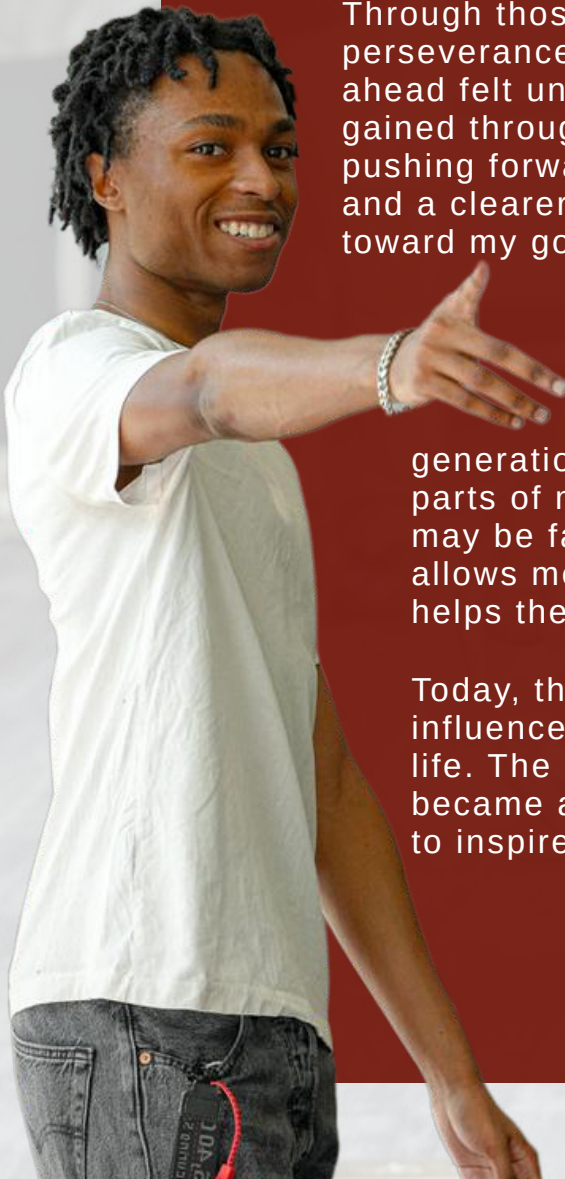
Figuring out your direction after high school is not always straightforward. Like many young people, I was trying to understand what my future could look like while balancing responsibilities and navigating the transition into adulthood. During that time, Freedom House became a place where I could find guidance, support, and people who genuinely wanted to see me succeed.

What stood out most during my experience with Freedom House was the mentorship I received. The staff took the time to listen, challenge me to think more intentionally about my goals, and help me recognize opportunities that I might not have seen on my own. Having people who were invested in my growth made a lasting impact on how I approached both my education and my future.

Through those experiences, I learned the importance of perseverance and accountability. There were moments when the path ahead felt uncertain, but the encouragement and perspective I gained through Freedom House helped me stay focused and continue pushing forward. Over time, I developed a stronger sense of purpose and a clearer understanding of the steps I needed to take to move toward my goals.

As my journey continued, my relationship with Freedom House evolved. What began as a space where I received guidance eventually became a place where I could give back. Returning to support the next generation of young people has been one of the most rewarding parts of my experience. Being able to connect with students who may be facing challenges similar to the ones I once navigated allows me to share encouragement and perspective that I hope helps them keep moving forward.

Today, the lessons I gained through Freedom House continue to influence the way I approach both my personal and professional life. The program was more than a moment in my journey. It became a community that helped shape who I am and continues to inspire the way I support others.



PUSH TO START SAMSON A.

“
Trying
cybersecurity
pushed me to
build better
study habits
and take
ownership of
my learning.”

I first heard about Freedom House through my older brother. He told me it was a place with a great community and amazing mentors. I decided to give it a chance for the same reasons he mentioned, and I ended up staying because I could actually see myself improving as a person.

One accomplishment I'm especially proud of this year has been stepping into the field of cybersecurity. At first it felt strange having to study on my own and search for resources to help me understand new topics. Over time, I learned how to find the materials I needed and incorporate studying into my daily schedule. That process pushed me to become more disciplined and take greater ownership of my learning. For me, it represented an important first step toward trying something new and challenging myself to grow.

Freedom House also helped me realize that my voice matters in conversations. It helped me understand that if I have something to add, I should speak up because my contribution is meaningful. That shift changed the way I participate in discussions and how I approach different situations.

One moment that stood out to me was meeting a former Freedom House student named Kwame Dance, who is now a mental health professional. I noticed he had several tattoos and asked him about them. He explained that each one represented an important lesson or moment in his life. I thought that was really powerful because he chose to carry permanent reminders of his growth. That conversation stayed with me and made me think more deeply about how experiences shape who we become.

Being part of Freedom House has also helped me gain more clarity about my future. The experience helped direct my path toward cybersecurity and gave me the confidence to keep exploring that field.

To me, Freedom House is a place with a strong community and amazing mentors. It's also a place where people can grow, improve themselves, and make sure their voice is heard.



PUSH TO START JAYLAN C.

“—
Starting my own clothing business showed me that building something real takes time, effort, and commitment.”

I first heard about Freedom House through a friend. At the time, I was looking for opportunities and experiences that could help me grow. What made me decide to stay was the people. The community at Freedom House gave me a space where I could connect with others, talk about ideas, and keep learning along the way.

One accomplishment I'm especially proud of this year is starting my own business and creating clothes that I designed myself. Turning an idea into something real pushed me to be creative and remain committed to the process. It also showed me that building something of your own takes patience, effort, and the willingness to keep going even when things feel challenging.

Through my experience with Freedom House, I've realized that I'm stronger than I sometimes give myself credit for. Being in this environment helped me recognize that growth comes from putting in the time and effort needed to reach your goals.

Being part of Freedom House has helped me understand that achieving what I want will require dedication and consistency. At the same time, it has given me a place where I can talk to people, gain new experiences, and receive support as I continue working toward my dreams.

For me, Freedom House is a place where people come to grow, learn from others, and get the help they need while building their own path forward.





PUSH COLLEGE



PUSH College extends Freedom House’s commitment to supporting students as they transition from high school into higher education and early career pathways. The program creates a structured bridge between high school and college, allowing students to build academic confidence, leadership skills, and professional experience while remaining connected to a supportive community.

Academic success is reinforced through intensive one-on-one coaching that supports students with college enrollment, FAFSA completion, navigating campus life and the financial aid process. Program Specialists work closely with students to ensure they remain on track academically while also connecting them to internal and external resources, including scholarships, social-emotional support, economic resources, and other opportunities that help remove barriers and support their progress

Students participate in dual enrollment college courses offered on site through partner institutions, giving them the opportunity to earn college credits while developing the academic discipline and expectations required for higher education. This model allows students to begin their college journey in a familiar environment while preparing for the transition to full time college enrollment.

The program also prioritizes student wellness and whole person development. Students have access to wellness services that support both mental wellbeing and physical health, recognizing that academic success is closely connected to balance, stability, and personal growth.

Students gain valuable professional experience through employment opportunities and work based learning. Many students serve in roles connected to Freedom House initiatives such as the Summer Learning Institute and the PUSH Leadership Institute (PLI), allowing them to build workplace skills while mentoring younger students and contributing to program leadership.

Leadership development remains one of the core components of the experience. Through workshops, advisory groups, and opportunities to facilitate programming, students strengthen their communication, teamwork, and leadership abilities while developing the confidence to lead within their academic and professional environments.

Cultural enrichment and peer connection are also central to the College experience. The program creates space for collaboration, creativity, and meaningful dialogue, helping students build strong relationships while remaining connected to their community.

Through the Push College model we provide students with the structure, exposure, and leadership development needed to persist in higher education and continue advancing toward their long term goals.



FROM OUR DIRECTOR PUSH COLLEGE

One of the most defining achievements in our program this year was the number of students who graduated from college. In 2025, we celebrated 12 graduates, doubling the number from the previous year. This growth reflects increased student persistence and the continuous support provided through the PUSH College Program. Several of the graduates were female students who completed STEM degrees, highlighting continued progress in representation in these fields.



Throughout 2025, students demonstrated growth across academic, personal, and professional areas. Many students showed strong persistence by re-enrolling each semester, continuing their education without breaks, and achieving successful semesters. Students also returned to school after time away and made meaningful academic progress. Additionally, students we have worked with for several years graduated from college and transitioned into adulthood by obtaining their first professional jobs. I also saw growth in students' personal lives, including increased self-awareness, resilience, and confidence. Many students prioritized their mental health and self-care while navigating the responsibilities of school and life.

My team consistently adapts by remaining flexible and responsive to students' changing needs. When unexpected circumstances arise such as academic challenges, pauses in enrollment, or personal situations, we adjust our approach, provide individualized support, and connect students to resources so they continue to feel supported and guided throughout their post-secondary journey. Through intensive one-on-one coaching, including weekly check-ins and consistent communication, we take a holistic approach to student support that addresses academic, personal, financial, and social-emotional needs.

The PUSH College Program supports Freedom House's mission by helping students access, persist in, and graduate from college. Through this work, we create pathways to economic opportunity through education. We also support students in becoming leaders who give back to their communities.



What fuels my passion as a leader of this program is helping students achieve their goals, whether academic, career-related, or personal. Supporting students as they work toward their goals and witnessing the moment they accomplish them is motivating. It is not just about the outcome. It is about walking alongside students throughout the process and being part of their journey. Knowing that achieving these goals can positively impact not only their lives but also their families' lives makes this work meaningful and priceless.

Looking ahead, knowing that our work has a long-lasting impact on students' lives and their future encourages me to keep pushing forward and to continue supporting students to the best of my ability. Seeing students graduate from college, achieve their goals, and move forward in life is an incredible thing to witness and be part of.

I would also like to acknowledge Patrick Cardoso, our PUSH Post-Secondary Specialist, for his role and contributions this year. Working alongside Patrick has been a strong example of teamwork and collaboration. Our ability to work closely as a team has played a key role in the progress and successes we have seen among our students. I am also grateful for our college and external partners, whose collaboration and support help make this work possible and create meaningful opportunities for our students. Lastly, I want to recognize our students for their commitment, resilience, and hard work, as well as their families for their continued support throughout their journeys.

Teresa Dasilva
Director, College Programs and Partnerships



PATRICK'S STORY SCHOLAR-TO-STAFF

"The moment I first stepped into Freedom House, I felt safe. That feeling has stayed with me until this day."

MEET PATRICK CARDOSO

PUSH POST-SECONDARY SUCCESS SPECIALIST

My connection to Freedom House began during a visit to Burke High School, when coaches Teresa, Malcolm, and Ashley spoke with students about postsecondary opportunities. Their encouragement led me to enroll at Bunker Hill Community College, where Teresa later supported me as an advisor. After my first year, I returned as a Junior Coach for the Summer Program, an experience that deepened my connection to the community and eventually led to my current role as a PUSH Postsecondary Specialist.

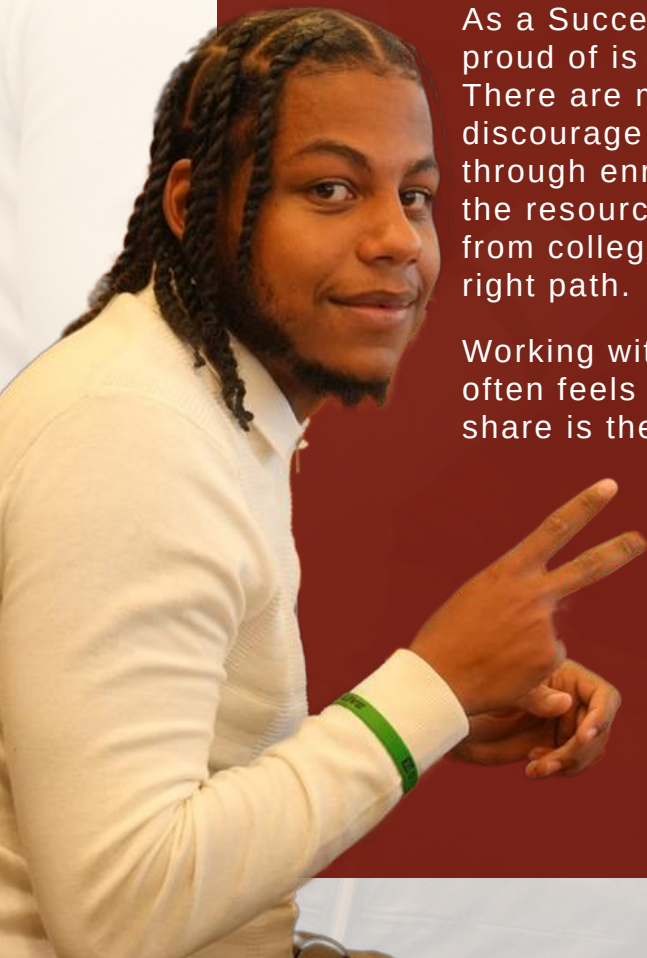
When I reflect on my time as a scholar, one of the most meaningful lessons I learned was the importance of prioritizing my mental health. Coming from a background where it was not always emphasized, Freedom House helped shift my perspective through workshops, conversations, and a community committed to growth.

Several experiences helped prepare me for leadership, especially site visits and success roundtables. At one point, I struggled with public speaking, but those environments pushed me to grow and build confidence. Today, I carry those lessons with me, knowing that real growth happens through connection, conversation, and learning directly from others.

As a Success Specialist, one of the accomplishments I am most proud of is guiding scholars through the postsecondary process. There are many misconceptions about higher education that can discourage students and families. Being able to support students through enrollment and financial aid, while helping them understand the resources available, is incredibly meaningful to me. Graduating from college was also a major milestone that affirmed I was on the right path.

Working with students who are now walking a path similar to mine often feels like a full-circle moment. One message I frequently share is the “Power of Showing Up.” It represents consistency, presence, and commitment. Each time I showed up, even when I felt uncertain, I proved to myself that I was capable of more.

Transitioning from scholar to staff has given me a deeper understanding of the responsibility that comes with this work. Leadership means being prepared, present, and ready to support students in whatever way they need. My experiences at Freedom House continue to shape the leader I am becoming, and I am grateful to now help the next generation pursue their own paths.



PUSH COLLEGE ODALYS M.

“

Having people believe in me helped me believe in myself.

”



I first connected with Freedom House while I was still in high school. At the time, I was looking for academic support and guidance as I prepared for the transition to college. What I found was much more than tutoring. Freedom House became a steady source of support during a challenging time for my family and me, especially during the uncertainty of COVID.

As a first-generation college student, balancing school, work, and personal responsibilities has not always been easy. One accomplishment I am especially proud of this past year is maintaining strong academic progress while managing multiple responsibilities at once. Along the way, I developed stronger time-management skills, better study habits, and the confidence to ask for help when I needed it. Those changes helped me stay focused on my goals even during difficult moments.

Through my time with Freedom House, I have gained a stronger sense of confidence and resilience. The program helped me realize that seeking support is not a weakness. It is a strength. I have learned how to advocate for myself and trust that I belong in the spaces I am working toward.

One person who has had a meaningful impact on my journey is Teresa DaSilva. Her mentorship and encouragement helped guide me through personal, academic, and financial challenges. Knowing that someone believed in my success helped me stay motivated and continue moving forward.

I am currently working toward completing my bachelor's degree in Exercise and Health Science, and I plan to continue my education by pursuing an Occupational Therapy Doctorate. My goal is to build a career where I can support others and give back to my community.

Freedom House has been more than an academic resource for me. It has been a community and a source of encouragement that continues to push me toward my future.

PUSH COLLEGE YAMILET R.

“
Knowing there were people invested in my success helped me stay focused on my goals.”

My journey with Freedom House began when I was still in high school. What started as academic support during those early years grew into something much more. Over time, I moved through several stages of the Freedom House pipeline from the High School Program, to Push to Start, and now the College Program. Each stage provided new guidance and support as I continued working toward my goals.

One accomplishment I am especially proud of this year has been continuing my college journey while balancing the many responsibilities that come with school and everyday life. Staying committed to my education has required discipline, patience, and determination. There were moments when the workload and expectations felt overwhelming, but those challenges helped me grow and pushed me to stay focused on the future I want to build.

Throughout this process, the support I received from Freedom House played a meaningful role. Having mentors and staff who consistently checked in, offered advice, and encouraged me to keep going helped me remain motivated even during difficult moments. Knowing there were people invested in my success made a real difference in how I approached my goals.

Being part of Freedom House for so many years has also helped me build confidence in myself. I have learned that asking for support is part of growth and that perseverance matters when pursuing long-term goals.

As I continue working toward completing my degree, I remain focused on building a future where I can use what I have learned to create opportunities for myself and give back to my community. My journey is still unfolding, but the guidance and encouragement I received from Freedom House continue to shape the path ahead.



PUSH COLLEGE ELOGHOSA O.

“—
Freedom House became a safe haven for me during a time when everything in my life was new and uncertain.
—”



I was introduced to Freedom House in 2024 by my cousin shortly after I moved to the United States. At the time, everything felt unfamiliar. I was trying to understand the school system and how to begin my college journey in a new environment. My cousin connected me with Teresa, who helped guide me through scholarships and enrollment. I never expected that level of support so early, and it made a significant difference during a very uncertain time.

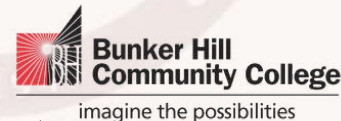
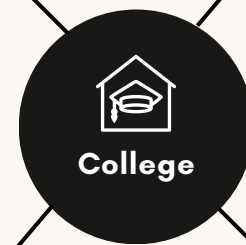
One accomplishment I am especially proud of this year is my academic progress in the sciences. In high school in Nigeria, I was in the art track and had never taken most of the science courses I study now. When I decided to pursue nursing, I felt intimidated, especially by chemistry. But once I pushed past that doubt and believed in my ability to succeed, my performance began to reflect it. That experience showed me I am capable of more than I once thought.

The support I have received from Freedom House has been constant. Patrick checks in regularly, not only about school but about how I am doing personally, and Teresa continues to guide me academically. One moment I will never forget was receiving a scholarship during my first semester. It lifted a major burden and strengthened my confidence in what I could accomplish.

Being part of Freedom House has expanded how I see my future. What once felt limited now feels full of possibility. I am continuing to build my academic path while exploring opportunities that align with my long-term goals. To me, Freedom House is a safe haven where students are supported, encouraged, and challenged to become their best selves.

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SNOWDEN
INTERNATIONAL



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- Dr. Albert D. Holland High School of Technology
- Snowden International School at Copley

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- Roxbury Community College
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- Americorps
- Beats Rhymes and Life
- Be Whole Psych Services
- Boston Private Industry Council
- Boston Public Schools
- Catapult Strategies
- Children's Services of Roxbury
- Daniel Laurent
- Ebenezer House of Worship
- Eversource
- Hall Group Unlimited
- Hazel Approach Psych Services
- InnHer Uplift

- JPMorgan Chase
- MassEdCO
- New England Medical Association
- Northeastern University
- OneVsn
- Reckonings Project at Northeastern University
- SuccessLink Department of Youth Engagement & Employment
- The Drop Out Academy
- The Mental Health Access Program
- U*Aspire
- Urban Farming Institute



IMANI'S STORY
ALUMNI
SPOTLIGHT
SCHOLAR-TO-STAFF

“I want them to understand that leadership does not always have to be loud. Leadership can grow at its own pace and develop authentically.”

MEET IMANI JOSEPH

Administrative Assistant, Freedom House

My journey with Freedom House began around 2013 when I was 14 years old. At the time, the program was operating out of the Grove Hall Library. I initially supported the front desk by checking students in and assisting with daily operations. Between 2014 and 2017, I participated as a scholar throughout high school, including summer programming while Freedom House was temporarily operating out of trailers during renovations. Those years played a major role in my personal growth and leadership development.

My time as a scholar shaped me in ways I did not fully understand at the time. It helped me grow from a very quiet and reserved teenager into someone who slowly built confidence in her voice and leadership. Programs like the BFIT course allowed me to experience college level learning early on, and workshops like JP Morgan Chase expanded my understanding of financial literacy and long term planning.

During that time, Nicola served as a mentor and consistent source of support. Even now I occasionally seek her advice. That guidance extended far beyond my years as a scholar and continues to influence how I approach growth, leadership, and responsibility today.

I was first drawn to Freedom House as a young teenager who needed a safe and structured space to grow and learn. What kept me coming back was the welcoming environment and the opportunity to see leaders who looked like me and carried themselves with confidence and purpose. Returning as a staff member truly felt full circle. I wanted to contribute to the same space that once poured into me and help create that experience for the next generation.

In Summer 2024, I returned to Freedom House as a Senior Coach, serving as a mentor and leader to scholars. Later that fall, I stepped into my current role as Administrative Assistant. In this position I support front office operations and administrative tasks that help maintain the day to day flow of the organization. I greet families and visitors, manage inventory for essential supplies, support the CEO and COO with operational tasks, and help ensure that the office runs smoothly. While much of this work happens behind the scenes, it contributes to the structure and stability that allows programs to operate effectively.

As a staff member, I am intentional about creating an environment where scholars feel seen, capable, and supported, especially those who may be quiet like I once was. I want them to understand that leadership does not always have to be loud. Leadership can grow at its own pace and develop authentically. Supporting scholars where I once stood is meaningful and humbling. It reminds me how much growth is possible over time and how important community support is along the way.

Moving from scholar to staff has deepened my appreciation for the mission of Freedom House and the intentional work behind the scenes. As a scholar I experienced the support, and now I help create it. This transition has shown me that growth truly comes full circle.



TIELLA'S STORY

ALUMNI

SPOTLIGHT

STAFF-TO-PARTNER

“Leadership is not a title. It is a practice that begins with how we lead ourselves.”

MEET TIELLA GRIMES

Founder & Principal, InnHerUplift Consulting LLC

My journey with Freedom House began in 2016 when I served as the PUSH High School Program Manager. That role marked a major turning point in my professional path because it was one of the first opportunities where I was leading at a deeper level. I was not only managing programming, but also managing people, culture, and outcomes.

Stepping into that level of responsibility stretched me in the best ways. I had to learn how to build and support a team where staff felt clear, capable, and empowered in their roles. It sharpened my ability to balance accountability with care, and it gave me real insight into what it takes to show up as a leader consistently. Decisions, communication, and team morale were all directly connected to how I showed up in leadership.

One of the biggest lessons I carried forward from that experience was delegation. In earlier roles, I was used to taking on too much and equating that with commitment. At Freedom House I learned that delegation is not a weakness. It is a leadership skill that builds trust, develops capacity, and strengthens results. I grew into a more sustainable leadership style rooted in collaboration rather than overextending myself.

That experience also helped me name something that had been developing within me all along. I lead as a transformational leader. I encourage people to step into their power, take ownership, and become more autonomous and proactive. I learned that strong leadership does not require having all the answers, and that micromanagement can unintentionally shut down creativity, initiative, and innovation. Instead, I focused on creating environments where team members could bring ideas forward, test approaches, and still remain aligned with shared goals.

The leadership perspective I gained at Freedom House has stayed with me in every role since. It shaped how I build teams, how I develop people, and how I lead with both structure and humanity.

As my career evolved, that experience opened the door for me to re-engage with Freedom House as a partner. Today I bring both the perspective of someone who once led programming from the inside and the expanded skill set of a coach and educator focused on whole-person development.

When I served as the PUSH High School Program Manager, I saw firsthand that many students needed social and emotional support before they could fully engage academically. Balancing program outcomes, student coaching, and limited time helped clarify something important for me. My strongest impact and deepest passion lived in personal development, mentorship, and identity work.

That realization shaped my path into consulting and coaching. In my current role as Founder and Principal of InnHer Uplift Consulting, I now create experiences that focus on leadership development, communication, emotional intelligence, decision-making, and wellness. Through this work, I am able to support Freedom House scholars in building the internal skills they need to thrive in school and beyond.

What matters most to me is helping young people understand that leadership is a practice, not a title. I teach scholars that they are leaders right now. I encourage them to think critically about who they are, what they stand for, and how they want to show up in different spaces. A core part of my approach is affirming that young people are the experts of their own experiences and helping them lead themselves with clarity, intention, and accountability.

I focus on helping scholars strengthen their internal power. Self awareness, emotional intelligence, and mindset influence how young people communicate, navigate conflict, make decisions, and build relationships. I have seen scholars shift from reacting to situations to responding with confidence and purpose. When a young person moves from thinking “I’m just trying to get through this” to recognizing “I can lead myself through this,” that is when the work truly lands.

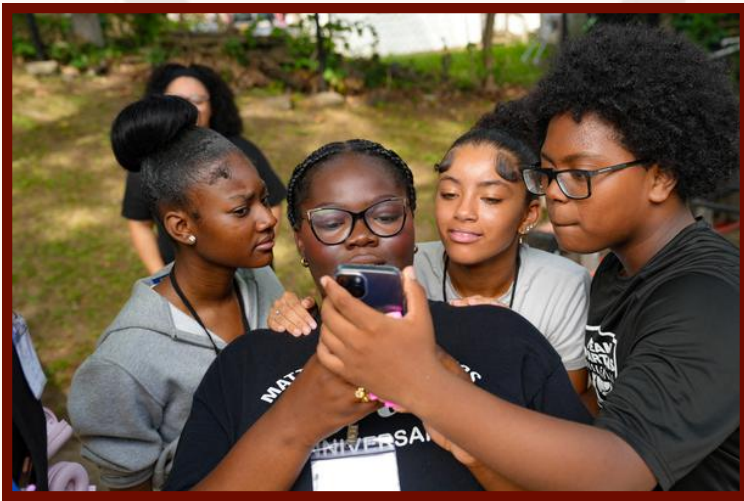
Working with Freedom House feels deeply meaningful to me because it is personal. It connects to my roots and to the legacy that shaped the community I come from. As a teenager, I attended the Muriel S. Snowden International School. At the time, I did not fully realize that Muriel Snowden was one of the co-founders of Freedom House. Learning that history later moved me deeply and helped me see my own educational journey through a different lens.

When I began working at Freedom House, I felt honored to step into an organization built on vision, cultural leadership, and community transformation. It was not just a job. It felt like entering a living legacy that the Snowdens built with purpose. Being able to walk the path of Educate, Inspire, and Give Back, not only as someone who once admired the work from the outside, but now as someone who can return and contribute, feels profoundly full circle.

In this season of my life and work, staying connected to Freedom House feels like a true honor. I have the opportunity to support new generations of young people as they grow into leaders while remaining connected to a legacy that has always been rooted in community uplift and transformation.

The spaces I now facilitate are grounded in humanity. Learning is not driven by hierarchy, but by shared experience and reflection. Young people, adults, staff, and families all bring wisdom to the table. When people see each other fully and learn from one another honestly, individual growth strengthens the entire community.

Being able to support that kind of growth in partnership with Freedom House during this season of my life, when my purpose feels even clearer, means a great deal to me.



A REFLECTION OF IMPACT AT HOME FAMILY VOICE SPOTLIGHTS

“They speak about their future with greater clarity and excitement, especially when it comes to college and the goals they hope to achieve.”

The Madondo-Neves Family

“Freedom House has become a second family to us.”

The Davis Family

At Freedom House, we often speak about impact through growth, outcomes, and opportunity. But behind every data point is a family navigating that journey in real time.

The reflections shared here offer a closer look at what that experience feels like beyond our programs. They capture the moments that happen at home. The shifts in confidence. The challenges families work through. The progress they witness day by day.

Our work does not happen in isolation. It extends into households, routines, and long-term aspirations. Families are not separate from this work. They are part of what makes it possible.

These voices reflect that truth. They remind us that impact is not only something we measure. It is something that is lived, carried, and sustained over time.

MEET THE DAVIS FAMILY

Taneshia D. - Noah & Chase's Mom

Our family was first introduced to Freedom House through our oldest son, Chase. What began with him quickly became something that impacted our entire family. Over the past four years, we have watched Freedom House strengthen not just one of our children, but both of our sons in ways that have meant more to us than we can fully express.

Before joining the program, my son was very shy and reserved. Since becoming part of Freedom House, that has completely changed. He is no longer intimidated to share his opinions or speak up for himself. Watching that shift in confidence has been incredible to see as a parent.

One of the biggest differences we have noticed is in self-advocacy. That was not always a strong point for my sons, but after completing the program, the change was like night and day. They have grown into young people who are more comfortable expressing themselves and standing up for what they believe in.

Freedom House has also made a difference for us as a family. We feel supported and secure knowing our children are part of a community that truly cares about their growth and future. The guidance, resources, and encouragement they receive have given us confidence in the path ahead for them.

What has kept us engaged all these years are the people. Samantha has been incredible, and of course we cannot forget Ms. Charmaine. Their dedication and care for the students make a lasting impact on families like ours.

To our family, Freedom House means everything. It has become a second family to us, and we are truly grateful for the role it continues to play in our children's lives.

“
Before Freedom House,
my son was very shy
and reserved. Now he is
not intimidated to voice
his opinion.”



MEET THE MADONDO- NEVES FAMILY

Millicent N. - Tsungirirayi & Vimbikai's Mom

Our family connected with Freedom House because we wanted support to help our children succeed in college and reach their goals. When we learned about the program, we were drawn to the guidance it offered for students and the opportunities available through scholarships and mentorship.

Over the past two years, we have seen meaningful growth in both of our Scholars. They are more confident, more focused, and more motivated in school. They speak about their future with greater clarity and excitement, especially when it comes to college and the goals they hope to achieve. They have also developed stronger habits, including managing their time more effectively and asking for support when they need it.

One moment that stands out for our family was during the college application process. At the time, we were feeling overwhelmed and unsure about deadlines and financial aid requirements. Teresa and Patrick took the time to guide us step by step and patiently answered all of our questions. Their support made what felt like a stressful and confusing process much more manageable.

Freedom House has also supported me as a parent by making sure I stayed informed and involved in my children's journey. I never felt left out of what was happening. The staff explained each step clearly and helped me better understand the education system and the college process, which can often feel complicated for families. Throughout the experience, I felt respected and valued as a partner in my children's growth.

Being part of Freedom House has given our family greater confidence in the future. What once felt uncertain now feels possible because we know our children have guidance, resources, and a community that believes in them.

To our family, Freedom House represents support, opportunity, care, and community. It is a place that truly invests in the success of our children and encourages them to believe in a bright future.

“—
Since joining Freedom House, I've seen real growth in both of my Scholars. They are more confident, focused, and motivated in school.”



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Yoon Kim

We sincerely apologize for any omissions or errors.

Please contact Jarek Morgan to correct our records: jmorgan@freedomhouse.com

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Ahsad J. Harvey
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IN LOVING MEMORY CHARLES A. OCITTI

Freedom House honors the life and legacy of Charles A. Ocitti, a dedicated board member, trusted leader, and Treasurer of the Freedom House Board since 2017. Charles passed unexpectedly on July 6 at the age of 47.

For more than a decade, Charles served as a steady and thoughtful presence within our leadership community. He did not simply carry responsibility. He carried people. His leadership was grounded in humility, integrity, and a deep sense of care for others.

He showed up with consistency and intention. In board meetings, youth events, and strategic conversations, he brought clarity, insight, and a quiet strength that anchored the work.

Charles once described Freedom House as a lighthouse, a place of guidance and purpose. In many ways, he embodied that same light. His counsel shaped decisions, his presence strengthened relationships, and his belief in our mission helped move our work forward.

We honor a life defined by service, principle, and heart. His impact remains present in the foundation he helped build, and the future he believed in so deeply.



IN LOVING MEMORY JUDGE LESLIE E. HARRIS

Freedom House honors the life and legacy of Judge Leslie E. Harris, a man whose wisdom, grace, and belief in young people shaped generations. He was more than a jurist. He was a father, husband, mentor, counselor, and a steady presence for justice in our city.

Judge Harris began his professional journey in education before entering the legal field. He earned his B.A. from Northwestern University, a Master's degree from Boston University, and a J.D. from Boston College Law School. His early work as a teacher and professor reflected a lifelong commitment to learning and service.

He later served as a staff attorney, Assistant District Attorney, and Chief of the Juvenile Division for Suffolk County before his appointment as Associate Justice of the Suffolk Juvenile Court in 1994.

Judge Harris believed that young people should be seen for their potential, not defined by their mistakes. He brought humanity into the courtroom and wisdom into every space he entered. His connection to Freedom House was meaningful and lasting. He is featured in our forthcoming Artifact Stories Project, where his reflections on service, leadership, and legacy will continue to guide others.

We hold Mrs. Beverly Harris, her children, and the entire Harris family in our thoughts. Judge Harris legacy lives on in the lives he shaped, the voices he affirmed, and the communities he strengthened.



IN LOVING MEMORY BARBARA BROOKINS

Freedom House honors the life and presence of Barbara Brookins, known and loved throughout our community as “*Ms. Barbara*” and “*Ma Barbara*”.

For many, she was the first welcome. A warm smile, a steady presence, and a spirit that made people feel seen and at ease. She carried a quiet joy that filled the space without needing attention.

Ms. Barbara was a cherished part of the Freedom House family for many years. Her care for this community was genuine and consistent. She loved our young people, supported our staff, and believed deeply in the mission that continues to guide our work.

Her love for life extended beyond our walls. She had a deep appreciation for Broadway and often traveled to New York to experience it. What made that love meaningful was her desire to share it. She created opportunities for others to experience joy, to feel inspired, and to see beyond their immediate surroundings.

She moved through the world with generosity and intention, always creating space for connection and belonging.

Her presence remains part of who we are. The care she extended and the way she made people feel continue to live on within this community.

We extend our deepest condolences to her family and loved ones. We hold them in our thoughts with care and compassion.



1944 - 2026

MURIEL S. & OTTO P. SNOWDEN



WHEN ASKED ABOUT WHAT LED TO THE
FOUNDING OF FREEDOM HOUSE, HER RESPONSE:

“—
Enlightened self-interest... we had to decide whether we would stay and raise our child in the neighborhood where we lived or move to a safer place. Ultimately, we recognized that if our neighborhood wasn't good enough for our daughter, it wasn't good enough for anyone else's either, and we decided to do something about it.

MURIEL S. SNOWDEN



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