A LETTER FROM CO-FOUNDER AND CEO SARAH HEMMINGER

Dear Thread Community,

I am awed by what can happen in a decade.

Ten years ago, as I sat in my car outside Paul Laurence Dunbar High School in East Baltimore, keenly aware of my sense of isolation, I longed for a way to meaningfully connect with others. After going home that night and talking with my husband (Thread’s Co-Founder) Ryan Hemminger, Thread was born. Since its founding, with 15 students and two volunteers, Thread’s mission has been about remedying that sense of isolation for both students and volunteers by facilitating connections, the kind of connections enjoyed by families, and the kind of connections that provide the emotional support and access to resources that create a community in which everyone thrives.

Over the last decade, our original 17-person extended family has grown to include 159 students, over 700 volunteers, and over 70 collaborators, and our outcomes are unmatched. What began as a desire to end the social isolation of a handful of individuals has evolved into a rich community of relationships that extends throughout Baltimore. Accordingly, this year, we changed our name from Incentive Mentoring Program to “Thread,” and our tagline to “The New Social Fabric.” While our Mission to engage underperforming students remains unchanged, we realize that our Community provides much more than mentoring; we offer the kind of support and access to resources that families provide, and we are working to end not only our students’ social isolation, but our own.

Our caring and enduring relationships have been the foundation of our success and have led to our retention of 100% of the students we’ve engaged. This past year, the Thread Strategic Planning Committee, Board Chairman, Debbie Cameron, Johns Hopkins University President, Ronald J. Daniels, The Annie E. Casey Foundation Director, Sophie Dagenais, The Abell Foundation President, Robert C. Embry, Jr., Thread Chief Operating Officer, Tong Zhang, and Thread volunteers Tyler Cash-Padgett and Alex Rhee, worked tirelessly to develop a roadmap to enable us to engage as many students as possible as quickly as possible, while maintaining exemplary outcomes.

In March, we launched our FY15-FY17 Strategic Plan at Conversation Thread 2014, where over 200 students, volunteers, collaborators, and community leaders gathered to look forward. As the evening progressed, I was taken aback by the interactions among people of all backgrounds and ages. I found myself listening in on a conversation in which Derick, a Thread student alumnus and college graduate, described his work as a Site Coordinator for AmeriCorps Reading Partners to Fagan Harris, CEO of Thread collaborator, Baltimore Corps, and Amber, a former Thread volunteer who is now a Thread staff member. As Amber excitedly chimed in about recently buying a home near Hopkins’s Homewood campus, I realized I was catching a glimpse of how Baltimore’s future might look if all of its residents were as connected as our Thread Community. I caught a glimpse of a new social fabric.

As we look forward to expanding to our third high school site in January at Frederick Douglass High School and engaging 207 students, I am enormously grateful that you are part of our Thread Community. I hope that you join us as we continue to change lives and the fabric of Baltimore.

Warmest regards,

Sarah Hemminger

Sarah Hemminger
Thread engages underperforming high school students confronting significant barriers outside of the classroom by providing each one with a family of committed volunteers and increased access to community resources. We foster students’ academic advancement and personal growth into self-motivated, resilient, and responsible citizens.

Since its formation as the Incentive Mentoring Program over ten years ago, Thread has woven "extended families" for 159 Baltimore City high school students. Each of these students, once engaged, is supported by Thread for nearly a decade.

**YEARS IN THREAD**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>HIGH SCHOOL</th>
<th>POST HIGH SCHOOL</th>
<th>ALUMNI</th>
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**MISSION**

**SUCCESS**

**ALUMNI AND POST HIGH SCHOOL**

- 100% have been retained in Thread
- 100% have graduated from high school
- 96% have been accepted to college

**ALUMNI**

- 86% have completed or are enrolled in a 4- or 2-year degree or certificate program
- 60% have completed a 4-year degree program
- 6% are enrolled in a degree or certificate program
- 20% have completed a 2-year degree or certificate program
- 13% are enrolled in a degree program
- 60% are employed

**POST HIGH SCHOOL**

- 33% have completed a certificate and are enrolled in a four- or two-year degree program
- 33% are enrolled in a degree or certificate program
- 69% are enrolled in a degree or certificate program
- 13% are employed and enrolled in a degree program
- 19% are both employed and enrolled in a degree program

**159 THREAD STUDENTS**

- 71% High School Students
- 10% Alumni
- 19% Post High School Students
Thread understands that children growing up in concentrated poverty need more than just improved financial resources or better classrooms; they need the same unassailable support and deep interpersonal bonds that we all need. Thread believes that, by cultivating relationships that transcend racial and socioeconomic barriers – and by creatively building an unconventional family and community not defined by DNA and address – we can overcome the poverty of isolation and, in its place, establish a wealth of human connection permanently linked by unconditional love and support. Thread builds these bonds for students, volunteers, and collaborators.

I grew up with deaf parents. My mother was diagnosed with bipolar disorder when I was nine. She refused to take her medicine, and living with her was weird and scary. I started running away from home and would be gone for months at a time. My mother became addicted to drugs and my family fell apart. I was left to live with my mother and her heroin addicted boyfriend. My mother spent all her money on drugs, and I had to fend for myself. I stopped caring about school and my grades dropped as well as my attendance.

Then I was introduced to Thread. My Thread Family helped me do my homework and study for my tests and exams. [One member of my volunteer family] helped me wash my clothes when I didn’t have clean clothes to wear to school. When I got sick, [another member of my Thread Family] bought me the medicine I needed. When I failed English and had to take online courses to graduate, my Thread Family worked out a schedule to help me complete it.

Thread gave me the motivation to give school a second chance. I have graduated from high school on time. I have been accepted to community college. My goals are to help people in the deaf community. I want to show that not everyone is a product of her circumstances. Thread has molded me into the motivated and determined young woman that I am today.

– Thread student
OUR COMMUNITY MODEL

COMPPELLING STUDENT SUCCESS
At the core of the Thread Community Model is a student, who, when engaged in his or her freshman year of high school, is in the bottom 25% of his class and faces significant challenges outside of the classroom. Each student is supported by Thread for nearly a decade. As they spend time in the Thread Community, students form deep and meaningful relationships with other students, volunteers, and collaborators. Relationships are at the heart of what we do at Thread.

CULTIVATING VOLUNTEERS AS AGENTS OF CHANGE
THREAD FAMILIES
Once engaged, each student is matched with a Thread Family, comprised of the student and a group of up to eight university- and community-based volunteers willing to do whatever it takes to support their student in realizing his or her potential. Each Family has a volunteer leader called a Head of Family (HOF), who supports the volunteer Family members as they make sure their student’s needs are met.

THREADS
In order to facilitate peer-to-peer connections across student cohorts and volunteers, up to ten individual Thread Families (including students of different ages, their Families, and HOFs) are woven together to form an extended family of support called a “Thread.” Threads are managed by an experienced volunteer GrandParent (GP) who mentors the HOFs and facilitates the sharing of resources and practices among Thread Families.

THREAD RESOURCE TEAMS
Thread Resource Teams add another strand of support by providing access to specific expertise (see chart at right) and creating efficiency in the allocation of resources. Resource Team volunteers serve as low-barrier touchpoints that connect Thread students and volunteers to Thread collaborators, who provide pro bono services not only to students, but also to volunteers and the organization.

Unlike traditional school-based tutoring programs, Thread Families extend support beyond the school day and into the home by creating customized and comprehensive solutions to address the root causes of academic and social challenges. Thread Family members work to build a deep foundation of trust with their student and with each other, modeling consistency, communication, and persistence.

Thread Family members are active agents in their student’s life. Daily activities might include:
- Making morning wake-up calls
- Packing lunches
- Providing rides to school
- Cheering a student on at a sporting event
- Providing individualized tutoring
- Completing college applications
- Obtaining daycare for a younger sibling
- Sharing a social activity (going out for ice cream or attending a baseball game)

CREATIVELY LINKING COMMUNITY

THREAD COLLABORATORS
Thread collaborators are members of the larger community who provide pro bono services, resources, expertise, and opportunities not only to students, but also to volunteers and the organization.

THREAD SITES
In 2004, the Dunbar flagship site was founded and began matching volunteers from the Johns Hopkins University (JHU) East Baltimore campus with students from Paul Laurence Dunbar High School. In 2010, the ACCE site was founded and began matching volunteers from the JHU Homewood campus with students from the Academy for College and Career Exploration (ACCE). Each Thread site is comprised of 16 Threads (which are, in turn, each made up of several Thread Families).

STUDENT RESOURCE TEAMS
VOLUNTEER RESOURCE TEAMS
ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCE TEAMS

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<td>School liaison</td>
<td>APEX Learning</td>
<td>Team building</td>
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COMMUNITY MODEL
Since I have been in Thread, my views on school and my future are much better. I was exposed to things during a Thread Summer Program that I was taught again in my health class during the school year, which made me feel good because I already knew what my teacher was talking about. Thread has brightened my future and made my goals in life feel possible.

—Thread student
When I look back on my high school career, I know my family is what made me successful. They encouraged me to go to school, convinced me I could do great things, and were always there for me. In Thread, we become an extended family for our kids and they become our extended family. We become what they need. They become what we need.

—Thread volunteer

Like Thread students, Thread volunteers realize the extraordinary benefits of forming meaningful relationships with other volunteers, with collaborators, and especially with Thread students. Both volunteers and students quickly recognize and experience the Thread belief that “everybody has something to teach and everybody has something to learn.”

Thread also invests significant resources in supporting its volunteers as they continue to develop into self-motivated, resilient, and responsible citizens by training them in the Thread Core Competencies:

FAIL SUCCESSFULLY INCLUSIVE DECISION-MAKING
RETHINK WEALTH NEVER GIVE UP

This year, Thread initiated the Impact Leadership Series, a partnership between Thread and the JHUSOM designed to link undergraduate, graduate, and medical students and medical professionals. The series consists of four, two-hour sessions in which student volunteers work one-on-one with seasoned Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine (JHUSOM) professionals, each a leader in his or her field, to practice applying the problem-solving skills they develop in Thread to their future careers in science and medicine. Thread volunteers finish the series equipped to be more effective Thread volunteers and successful professionals.

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—Thread volunteer
CREATIVELY LINKING COMMUNITY

87% of our collaborators have continued their commitment to Thread

15% more collaborators joined the Thread Community

5,000+ hours of pro-bono services were provided by Thread collaborators

more than 90% of these hours were contributed directly to students

Thread creatively links students and volunteers to collaborators in the larger Baltimore community, creating a broader, more inclusive social fabric – a “neighborhood” no longer defined by a map. Collaborators are an essential strand in our success and, like all members of our Community, benefit from the relationships they experience. Our collaborators’ contributions are extensive and include:

• pro bono legal and health services
• paid summer employment for students
• long-term employment for student and volunteer alumni
• volunteer training
• communications and financial consulting

By forging relationships with collaborators, Thread maximizes the support available to our students and volunteers and enables collaborators to build relationships with Baltimore’s next generation of talented employees and leaders.

“ I collaborate with Thread because Thread is all about saying YES – to ideas, to possibilities and especially to people. An environment like this calls you forth to shine. So, while I’ve benefited on so many levels, one of the biggest ways has been from being part of a real family that sees you as amazing, sees your best self. My collaboration with Thread inspires me to play my biggest game – to stretch and to be willing to flop in service of creating something truly remarkable.

– Susan Olson Bishop, Thread collaborator”
The Thread Summer Program

Thread’s Summer Program, designed to ensure that our students are actively engaged during the summer in ways that help them succeed academically and mature into self-motivated, resilient, and responsible citizens, is a striking example of one way in which Thread creatively links Baltimore community members. The Program’s most significant component, the Diversity and Academic Advancement Summer Institute (DAASI), is a partnership between Thread and the JHU School of Medicine (JHUSOM) Office of Student Diversity. DAASI enrolls Thread high school students and recent graduates in 6-week long paid summer internships in laboratories, clinics, and offices at the JHUSOM and other local non-profit and for-profit Baltimore businesses. When students are not at work, they attend DAASI professional development workshops and, once a summer, the DAASI Symposium, where they present posters about their internship experiences.

This year, working closely with JHUSOM, Thread facilitated 56 summer job placements in the following areas:

- **43%** in Community Engagement
- **27%** in Administration
- **27%** in STEM Fields
- **3%** in Education

This year’s DAASI employers included:

- Art With a Heart
- City Ranch, Inc.
- Creative Alliance
- FORCE
- Johns Hopkins BioMedical Scholars Association
- Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
- Johns Hopkins Broadway Center for Addiction
- Johns Hopkins Center for Nanomedicine
- Johns Hopkins Center to Reduce Cancer Disparities
- Johns Hopkins David Rubenstein Children’s Health Center
- Johns Hopkins Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
- Johns Hopkins Hospital
- Johns Hopkins Medicine Department of Orthopedic Surgery
- Johns Hopkins Medicine Pastoral Care Department
- Johns Hopkins Medicine Department of Corporate Security, Parking & Transportation
- Living Classrooms Foundation
- Johns Hopkins Office of International Student and Scholar Services
- Parks & People Foundation

When students are not involved in DAASI-related activities, they are engaged in academic advancement and team building activities made possible by Thread collaborators. Thread works closely with Baltimore City Public Schools to enroll our students in summer school and offer credit recovery workshops that enable our students to advance academically during the summer months. We also work with sites throughout Baltimore to offer our students community service opportunities, and twice a summer, we collaborate with Scoutreach, a division of the Boy Scouts of America, to give our students, staff, volunteers, and Board members the opportunity to share in a weekend-long camping experience. It’s an opportunity for students and community members to share in risk-taking and team building, and to just have fun. With the help of Scoutreach volunteers, campers summon the courage to jump off a cliff, canoe down a river, and share their stories.
This past spring, Thread gathered over 200 Baltimore community members for a special evening of conversation, celebration, and connection at the downtown Center Club. A vivid example of how Thread creatively links community, the event highlighted the significant contributions of our Thread students, volunteers, collaborators, and community leaders.

Guests were inspired as they listened to Thread Co-founder and CEO Dr. Sarah Hemminger speak about Thread’s history and vision and Dr. David Hunter, an expert in using performance management systems to improve the quality and effectiveness of programs, share how we might approach Thread’s future growth. Most importantly, guests used the evening as an opportunity to meet and get to know a broad array of their fellow Baltimore community members.

Together, attendees recognized Dunbar, ACCE, and the JHUSOM Office of Student Diversity for their long-standing partnerships with Thread. We also celebrated several of Thread’s exemplary students, volunteers, and collaborators as they were inducted into the Thread Hall of Fame and honored with the Thread Value they most embody.

Before and after the ceremony, attendees had a wonderful opportunity to mix and mingle while eating delicious hors d’oeuvres and enjoying rich conversations. It was an evening for building relationships and an evening that provided a glimpse into our unique social fabric. One community member, after spending some time talking to a Thread student, signed up to become a Thread volunteer and, ultimately, a member of that student’s Thread Family. A Thread student alumnus, after talking to the leader of a Baltimore non-profit organization, was offered and accepted permanent employment.

A full list of Thread’s 2013-2014 collaborators can be found on the back cover.
Thread is deeply grateful for the contributions that have supported the Thread Community from July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014. Your investment has allowed us to demonstrate that a community of students, volunteers, and collaborators working together towards mutual growth can change lives – and the social fabric of Baltimore.

**FINANCIALS**

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**Net Assets Beginning of Year**

| Net Assets Beginning of Year          | $748,179.00  |
| OPERATING EXPENSES                   | $704,254.00  |
| Total Operating Expenses             | $704,254.00  |
| Total Contributions and Future Year  | $748,605.00  |
| Net Assets End of Year               | $790,530.00  |

**INVESTORS**

**VISIONARIES ($50,000+)**

The Abell Foundation  
Jacobson Family Foundation

**TRAILBLAZERS ($20,000 - $49,999)**

Ashoka: Innovators for the Public  
Baltimore Women’s Giving Circle  
The Annie E. Casey Foundation  
The DeVito Family Trust  
Goldsmith Family Foundation  
David and Barbara B. Hirschhorn Foundation  
Johns Hopkins University

**INNOVATORS ($10,000 - $19,999)**

Eddie C. and C Sylvia Brown Family Foundation  
Bunting Family Foundation  
The Charles Crane Family Foundation  
Betty Lee and Dudley P. Digges Memorial Fund  
Erwin and Stephanie Greenberg Foundation Fund for Baltimore  
Johns Hopkins Neighborhood Fund

**Architects ($5,000 - $9,999)**

Anonymous  
Peter and Heidi Augustin  
The John J. Leidy Foundation

**INVESTORS**

The Robert W. Deutsch Foundation  
The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation

**FINANCIALS**

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**INVESTORS**

The Zarnyl and Isabelle Krieger Fund  
Lockhart Vaughan Foundation, Open Society Institute-Baltimore  
M. Sigmund and Barbara K. Shapiro  
Speedwell Foundation  
The Aaron Strauss and Lillie Strauss Foundation

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