

PEERFORWARD TO TRANSPORT FIRST GENERATION COLLEGE-BOUND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TO SUMMER WORKSHOPS AT NAZARETH UNIVERSITY



Photo Credit: Erika L. White

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New York, NY (July 12, 2024) - With a shared commitment to creating equitable opportunities for people in underserved communities across the nation, **PeerForward** and **Amtrak** have come together to support first generation, college-bound high school students on their journey to future success. This partnership came to fruition through PeerForward's board member, **Robert Grasty**, who is also Amtrak's Executive Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer.

"Giving back to the communities we serve is at the heart of who Amtrak is as a company," said **Robert Grasty, Chief Human Resources Officer at Amtrak**. "The knowledge these students will experience will be invaluable to how they visualize their future, and Amtrak is honored to be a part of that journey."

Through Amtrak's **On Track for Good** program, PeerForward will be able to offer students rail transportation to their summer workshops at **Nazareth University** in Rochester, New York. Additionally, volunteers from Amtrak will ride along with PeerForward staff and students from Moynihan Train Hall (NYC) as they embark to Rochester. On-campus, the Amtrak volunteers will

further support Peer Leaders as they get a glimpse at the life of a college student. Over the course of five days, students will learn how to navigate the college application process, experience university dorms, and attend developmental workshops that will prepare them for their postsecondary journeys.

“PeerForward is proud to have the support of a fellow organization eminently empowered by the opportunities they create for people in need across the nation,” said **Gary Linnen, CEO of PeerForward**. “We’re grateful for Amtrak’s sensitivity and partnership as we prepare students with the tools they need the most to create a clear pathway to success in their postsecondary journeys.”

In 2023, PeerForward trained approximately 300 students hailing from Bermuda, California, District of Columbia, Florida, Hawaii, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, New York, Pennsylvania, and Texas. Students are trained in leadership development techniques to help their friends connect their friends to college and career opportunities. They also walk away with their personal statement, a curated list of colleges tailored to their personal and educational interests, a larger network filled with peers, alumni, and volunteers from diverse geographic and professional backgrounds; many of whom are alumni from PeerForward!

Amtrak Statement

Amtrak is proud to partner with Peer Forward and grant in-kind transportation through our On Track for Good program. Amtrakers will also serve as career mentors to the participants. Amtrak’s commitment to the community is a hallmark of our values to do the right thing, put customers first and excel together. On Track for Good is one of four initiatives of Amtrak’s community engagement program, Amtrak Gives Back. Through this program we are making it possible to introduce Amtrak to the next generation of travelers and railroad professionals.

About PeerForward

PeerForward maximizes the power of positive peer influence to transform the lives of students in low-income communities by connecting them to college and career.

For 28+ years, young leaders have driven the work of PeerForward’s core program, igniting change in their school communities and guiding close to 600,000 classmates on the path to postsecondary success. Formerly known as College Summit, PeerForward is the leader in the practice of youth activation: youth identify inequities and barriers to success in their communities and work with adult allies to solve the challenges. By training teams of influential students in fundamental community organizing principles and call-to-action campaigns, we motivate students to plan for, apply to, and succeed in higher education. The PeerForward Method shifts the operating systems in schools to be more student-driven, creates a culture where continuing education beyond high school is the expectation, and develops a corps of young leaders of color skilled in leading community change.

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