FIRST GRADUATE’S MISSION

is to help students become the first generation in their families to graduate from college ready to pursue meaningful careers. First Graduate is a nonprofit in the heart of San Francisco’s Mission neighborhood dedicated to SUPPORTING, EMPOWERING, AND ENABLING FIRST GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS TO GRADUATE FROM COLLEGE. We are a 12-year free program—recruiting students in 6th grade. Offerings include homework and study support, test prep, school evaluation, field trips and school/university visits, scholarship and internship access, community building, career presentations from industry professionals, and more.
Our founder, philanthropist Anne-Eve Hazen, had the vision to seed the creation of a non-profit organization dedicated to making an impact in college access and success for low-income students in San Francisco.

Anaflor (Smith) Graham soon joined her, and in 2002 a new program launched, serving 24 eighth graders from San Francisco middle schools. The challenge was great, but clear — to provide guidance for aspiring first-generation college graduates that would replicate the advantages enjoyed by students with college educated and higher resourced families.

We have built upon this foundation, and now combine high-touch and high-tech solutions to coach our students and communicate with their parents and guardians. Our students’ success rate is outstanding—75% of our students graduate college in 4-6 years, compared the national average of 11% for first-generation college students.

The arc of our program is long— we recruit students in sixth grade (currently from two middle schools: James Denman and Everett) who begin their journey with us during the summer through a partnership with Aim High (an award-winning summer program and collaborating nonprofit). We not only focus on academic success to make our students competitive with their more advantaged peers; we also expose them to career opportunities from middle school on, through visits to local companies, career speakers, access to paid internships, and more.

Our newest program, LaunchPad, provides college seniors and recent alumni with career workshops that include resume building, LinkedIn profile creation, navigating interviews, and negotiating salaries.

We seek to expand our footprint in San Francisco by serving more students and parents, developing best practices that can serve students beyond our cohort, increasing our partnership with local youth-serving organizations, and developing college and career readiness resources that may be utilized by other nonprofits and schools.

As we look forward to a new cohort of college graduates this coming year, we are working to shift the culture in San Francisco to one that encourages every child to think about college as a possible future. The need is greater than ever. As one of our donors and honorees has said, “Every child deserves what you want for a child that you love.”
OUR APPROACH

We use a high-touch method, giving each student free personalized coaching throughout the year. We work with students for 10 to 12 years— from the time they are rising seventh graders through college graduation and into their first careers. We are embedded at Everett Middle School and James Denman Middle School from which we recruit rising seventh graders.

**Academic Support**
- Each student receives free academic instruction and homework help each year through both school-year and summer academic sessions.

**Career Exploration**
- Our students participate in career panels and events, resume writing and networking workshops, job shadow days, and mock interviews to gain exposure to career opportunities available to degree holders.

**Coaching & Guidance**
- Our team tracks progress and works closely with students, families, tutors, mentors, teachers, and partner organizations to make sure that our students are successfully completing each step on the way to becoming college graduates.

**College Support**
- We communicate with students consistently to ensure they are persisting through college and connecting with resources on campus. We also help our college students find paid summer internships.

**Family Engagement**
- Students’ families learn how they can support their children while they are on the path to become first generation college graduates.

**Mentoring**
- Students gain insight into college choices and professional careers from college educated volunteers. Younger First Graduate students connect with older students and benefit from peer mentoring.

**School Counseling**
- We help students with the rigorous H.S. application process and their successful transition into 9th grade. We also provide intensive college counseling, standardized test preparation, college application planning, financial aid workshops, access to summer enrichment programs, college visits, and help with college scholarships.
CLASS OF 2022 COLLEGE GRADUATES SPOTLIGHT

Adolfo Barrales
UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO
MAJOR: Psychology

What are your career plans? Research in Psychology, perhaps pursue a Masters in Quantitative Psychology, though not right away.

Brittany Woods
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO
MAJOR: Marketing

How has FG supported you through the years? You have helped me stay in the path to graduating college.

Christine Wong
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA - IRVINE

CLASS OF 2022 COLLEGE GRADUATES SPOTLIGHT
Deandra Crawford
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, EAST BAY
MAJOR: Criminal Justice
What are your career plans?
Working with youth.

Donna Li
KALAMAZOO COLLEGE

Elaine Huang
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA - SANTA BARBARA

Ethan Romero
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA - IRVINE

Fountine Zhao
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, IRVINE
MAJOR: International Studies/Drama
What are your career plans?
Dance/ I want to create my own company in the entertainment industry.

Hilda Gonzalez
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY–STANISLAUS STATE
MAJOR: Psychology
MINOR: Spanish
What are your career plans?
I want to become a counselor.
Jacky Huang
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
MAJOR: Physics and Mechanical Engineering
What are your career plans?
Aerospace industry and/or research.

Jahniece Belton
SONOMA STATE
MAJOR: Political Science
MINOR: American Multicultural Studies
What are your career plans?
Career within Policy or Law.

Jordan Mai
UC - SANTA CRUZ
MAJOR: Technology Information Management
MINOR: Computer science
What are your career plans?
Technology Consultant/Software engineer.

Julia Ávila
GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
MAJOR: Latin American and Hemispheric Studies
MINOR: Spanish and Geography
What are your career plans?
Education.

Julio C. Rodríguez, Jr.
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY - NORTHRIDGE
Major: Television Production
What are your career plans?
I am going to be working with Hammer Creative and hope to work with the Dodgers and/or Fox as a Camera Operator.

Karen Rodriguez
SAN FRANCISCO STATE UNIVERSITY
MAJOR: Physiology
What are your career plans?
Physician Assistant.
CLASS OF 2022 COLLEGE GRADUATES SPOTLIGHT (CONTINUED)

Kidist Benyam
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA - SANTA CRUZ

Luis Colmenares
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, LONG BEACH
MAJOR: Studio Art

What are your career plans?
Art education.

Luorong Lamu
SIMMONS COLLEGE
MAJOR: BS in Nursing

What are your career plans?
Do humanitarian work as a Nurse Practitioner.

Marcos Ruiz
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA - LOS ANGELES
MAJOR: Public Affairs
MINOR: African American Studies and Chicano and Central American Studies

What are your career plans?
Communications in a Political Organization.

Melissa Tam
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, LONG BEACH
MAJOR: Hospitality Management
MINOR: Business Marketing

What are your career plans?
Technology - Project Management or Marketing.

Miguel Yanez
WHITTIER COLLEGE
MAJOR: Biology

What are your career plans?
Bioinformatics based career.
What are your career plans?
Non-profit work.

What are your career plans?
SWE

What are your career plans?
Medical field

What are your career plans?
Looking to go to grad school.
H.S. GRADUATES AND COLLEGES ATTENDING IN 2022

AVA AKHIONG
Ruth Asawa School of the Arts (SOTA)
BOSTON UNIVERSITY

NATALY ANZUETO BAMACA
Mercy High School
COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF SAN FRANCISCO

BRIANNA BERLANGA
Immaculate Conception Academy
UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

JOSE ESPINOSA
Mission High School
UC - DAVIS

FRANCESCA ESPINOSA
Phillip & Sala Burton Academic High School
UC - DAVIS

KAELANI FAITUALA
Leadership Charter High School
COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF SAN FRANCISCO

LARISA GRIGORYAN
Gateway High School
UC - MERced

MAX HERRERA
City Arts & Tech High School
UC - MERced

ELIANA JIMENEZ
Leadership Charter High School
SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY

ANNIE LU
Phillip & Sala Burton Academic High School
UC - SANTA CRUZ

STEPHANIE MARTINEZ
Raoul Wallenberg Traditional High School

ZAIHRA MENA
Abraham Lincoln High School (SF)
COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF SAN FRANCISCO

MIRIAM MOLINDA VALDIRA
Phillip & Sala Burton Academic High School
COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF SAN FRANCISCO

JESUS MONTOYA PEREZ
Leadership Charter High School
UNIVERSAL TECHNICAL INSTITUTE

JAZMINE OLGUIN
KIPP San Francisco College Preparatory
SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY

BLANCA PEREZ
Immaculate Conception Academy
UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

PAOLA QUEZADA
Raoul Wallenberg Traditional High School
COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF SAN FRANCISCO

GABRIELA REAL
Immaculate Conception Academy
UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

MAYRA ROMERO CORTEZ
Raoul Wallenberg Traditional High School
COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF SAN FRANCISCO

MAYRA ROMERO HUYNH
Lowell High School
COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF SAN FRANCISCO

INDELISA ROMO
Lowell High School
SAN FRANCISCO STATE UNIVERSITY

MARIA SANCHEZ
Lowell High School
UC - DAVIS
FG COLLEGE STUDENTS AND COLLEGES ATTENDING

Javier Acosta Rivera
Domingan University

Jaymar Agtang
St. Olaf College

Joilah Aleman
UC - San Diego

Ahaf Ali
Community College of San Francisco

April Alonso
Community College of San Francisco

Mariela Andrade
Dominican University

Marion Araujo
CC - Los Medanos

Itzy Arroyo
UC Merced

Laura Barbosa
UC - Merced

Esmeralda Barrios
UC Santa Cruz

Raissa Brito
San Francisco State University

Eric Chen
Community College of San Francisco

Sesika Feiloaktiau
UC Irvine

Dalia Garcia
San Francisco State University

Wyniee Chen
UC - Santa Barbara

Selena Contreras
Community College of San Francisco

Antonio Diaz
San Francisco State University

Vinny Diep
UC - Davis

Jahaira Escobar
San Jose State University

Anthony Espinosa
San Jose State University

Elias Guzman
UC - Irvine

Salmon Haddad
Community College of San Francisco

Edin Haddad
Community College of San Francisco

Joanna Hernandez
Community College of San Francisco

Jennifer Gee
San Francisco State University

Anderson Gonzalez
Kalamazoo College

Johan Guerrero
San Francisco State University

Evelyn Guo
UC San Diego

Joshua Herrera
University of Hawaii at Mānoa

Wantang (Winnie) Hu
UC - Davis

Elaine Huang
UC - Santa Barbara

Andy Huang
UC - Santa Cruz

Edward Humphrey
CSU Dominguez Hills

Milton Jeronimo
Community College of San Francisco

Danny Jeronimo
San Francisco State University

Yesenia Hernandez
Community College of San Francisco

Dennys Juan De Leon
UC - Merced

Amy Jia Yi Li
San Francisco State University

Xinglin Li
UC Irvine

Alex Li
University of the Pacific

Hazel Loa
San Francisco State University

Daniela Martinez
UC Merced

Joshua Lopez
UC Santa Cruz

Katerine Martinez
UC Santa Cruz

Maria Mendoza
San Francisco State University

Emilio Lopez
CIA - NY

Belinda Lopez
San Francisco State University

Andres Lopez
Skyline College

Lessa Lopez
UC - Davis

Aldo Macedo
Pratt MWP College of Art & Design

Luis Maldonado
Community College of San Francisco

Jonathan Mancia
UC - Santa Cruz

Jonathan Marquez
UC - Merced

Stacey Perez
Community College of San Francisco

Sarah Ramirez
San Francisco State University

Vitor Martinez
CSU Chico

Estefany Martinez
San Francisco State University

Daniela Martinez
UC Merced

Emilio Lopez
UC Santa Cruz

Madia Mendoza
San Francisco State University

Maria (Isabel)
Milan

Community College of San Francisco

Aurora Mora
Community College of San Francisco

Gerardo Nunez
San Francisco State University

Sada Romero Romero
San Francisco State University

Kevin Tam
Community College of San Francisco

Melvin Rodriguez
Community College of San Francisco

Cristian Rodriguez
San Francisco State University

Vanessa Rodriguez
San Francisco State University

Anthony Rodriguez
UC Santa Cruz

Sara Romero
San Francisco State University

Erika Torres-Arzate
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Umanzor

UC Berkeley

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San Jose State University

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Sonoma State University

Diego Velich
UC Santa Cruz

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San Jose State University

Natalie Wennerstrom
UC Santa Cruz

Juarez Wright
CSU - Sacramento

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St. Olaf College

Harrick Wu
Trinity College

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Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University

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University of Arizona

Betty Yang
UC Davis

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I remember the late nights at the First Graduate Office working on college applications and feeling both excitement and fear for the future. There were so many things that I had to juggle, but I always knew that First Graduate was there to help me. They guided me through so many important milestones in my life: applying to high school, giving me my first job, and becoming the first in my family on the path to graduate college.

My time with First Graduate first started in 6th grade when I filled out a short application at my local after-school program. I remember being hesitant to apply because it meant that I had to do after-school tutoring and I wanted to hang out with my friends, but little did I know that joining would completely change my life path. The next several years would be spent meeting new people and creating connections that put me into the very spot I am in today. I’m currently at San Jose State University, which would not have happened if my First Graduate mentors didn’t recommend researching it and applying. Taking their advice is the best decision I have ever made.

I am incredibly grateful for all the support and help that First Graduate has given me throughout the years. Every day they are changing lives and helping other first-generation students like me accomplish the dreams of our parents, and our own.
CHILDREN ARE APT TO LIVE UP TO WHAT YOU BELIEVE OF THEM. -LADY BIRD JOHNSON

J. RUIZ

A QUOTE THAT’S IN THE BACK OF MY HEAD? “Cast your bread upon the waters, for after many days you will find it again.” A second one? “A society grows great when old men plant trees in whose shade they shall never sit.”

Three years, and then four, and then four more. It all started in 2010. It then ended in 2012, and then again in 2016, and then again 2020. It’s now 2022, and it’s still here. Not the old office, of course. How many times have they moved now? I don’t remember. And the same people? No. So what remained? Am I traveling on a modern Ship of Theseus? Is it the same program if literally, everything about it has changed?

Well… the name is consistent. And with it, its purpose. First Graduate. It’s an interesting name, isn’t it? It’s almost bland with how straightforward it is. Well, I did it: I fulfilled the mission statement of the slogan. I graduated from middle school. I graduated from high school. I graduated from college. And that was it.

… But then, I noticed something about the slogan; there’s a number one where and “i” should be. It honestly should have been obvious all these years. Maybe it was, but it didn’t mean anything to me until I held my diploma. A piece of cardstock that I haven’t hung, but left collecting dust in my closet.

One. A piece of paper that’s a conversation starter. A piece of paper that gets me a job. A piece of paper that’s proof that I paid and worked hard on a specific subject. A piece of paper that my parents never got… THE piece of paper then.

Does that mean my kids will something similar? They will be able to do or become a ONE, or an A, of THE, of something?

Is that the question First Graduate asks, all the people and their ONE mission statement? That’s what I remember, all those years of new voices telling me that I can. Ha, so many voices, and yet at the end they all sounded the same when they said the one thing: “YOU have to. YOU can.” Me. I. Yo. A single. A single formed from the words of many who don’t enjoy the fruits of their labor, only see it.

It’s now 2022, and still here, albeit, farther than when I started. Thanks to the many who took the pseudonym of One… there’s something interesting about that ship, isn’t there? I mean, it has to keep rowing. Is it the same one I rode on when I was little? No. But it has the one name to it still. And after all, I have to be a One.
FY 2022 REVENUE
TOTAL REVENUE: $2,049,201

- GRANTS: $1,492,780 (73%)
- DIRECT CONTRIBUTIONS: $424,469 (21%)
- GOVERNMENT GRANTS: $68,912 (3%)
- SPECIAL EVENT: $63,040 (3%)

FY 2022 EXPENSES
TOTAL EXPENSES: $1,644,967

- PROGRAM & SCHOLARSHIPS: $1,097,282 (67%)
- MANAGEMENT & GENERAL: $277,250 (17%)
- FUNDRAISING: $270,335 (16%)
WITH A MOTHER IN ACADEMIA, Rebecca Adams grew up in a home that stressed the importance of school in providing personal growth and a promising future. As an adult, she is committed to leveraging a life of learning by opening doors to educational opportunities for underprivileged youth. Her volunteer work at First Graduate guides students to be the first college graduates in their families. In her two years there, she has been a mock interviewer for students applying to private high schools and a college application essay coach.

“My parents both attended colleges, and they both advised me. Not everyone has that, so it’s a real disadvantage. The system is not fair. And if I can provide a little practical support to someone to help them get into college and start to close that gap, I want to do that,” says Rebecca.

Learning about students is what Rebecca likes best about volunteering; their challenges enable her to put her own life into perspective: “A lot of them have experienced a lot of hardship and they are so resilient, talented, and motivated. So they really inspire me.” Even a conversation in which a student has a different idea for a college application essay warrants its rewards. As both share their thoughts, she steers the discussion toward an agreement, and ultimately mentor and student connect.
OUR INSPIRING LEADERS

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FIRST GRADUATE’S 3 YEAR PLAN

Over the next three years, the top-level key results we are driving toward include:

1. Increase the college graduation rate for students from 75% in six years to 85%
2. Increase the percentage of college graduates who are hired into their fields of choice, or have started graduate school, by 15%
3. Secure the resources needed to carry out First Graduate’s goals while maintaining a healthy reserve by increasing revenue to $3.5 million/year by June 30, 2024
4. Support at least 500 students/year by 2023, and grow to support 800 students/year by 2026.
Imagine a city where every child has an equal opportunity for college access and success. Imagine that First Graduate provides the means by which this can happen. This is our vision—to establish a college-going tradition for every family in San Francisco, for those children who seek to pursue that path.

While we have come far as an organization in 20 years, we have not yet scaled to the point where we can fulfill this long-term vision, and we are not likely to in the next three to five years. However, this Strategic Plan will lay the foundation necessary to make this vision a reality in the future by strengthening our position as a mature, growing organization. In the longer term, our vision includes:

- Coaching 2000 students per year
- Having a full-fledged career component that would help our students/alumni find next careers after their first jobs
- Taking our students on college visits to Southern California every year
- Visiting our college students on their campuses yearly
- Hosting thank-you events for donors and volunteers
- Paying staff at the top of the wage scale so that they can continue to work and live in San Francisco and the Bay Area
- Restoring our matching contribution to our 403(b) plan
- Giving staff year-end bonuses and raises
- Earning income by training District faculty to help first-gen students get to college successfully
- Initiating a program for parents of first generation students who want to go back to school themselves
- Having a business model and mindset that enables us to elevate constraints into leverage
- Having a staff, board, and associate board that reflects our student population and community

One lesson learned since 2019 is that the future is unpredictable. Our job is to be resilient, to anticipate possibilities, be responsive to opportunities, and focus on our strengths so that we can outperform expectations.