



# Roses in Concrete

**Roses in Concrete** is a 2021-2022 pilot Leadership & Mentorship Program for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and Person of Color) Brandeis and Waltham High School students and mentors. The program fostered educational, leadership and professional development opportunities through workshops and intergenerational mentoring.

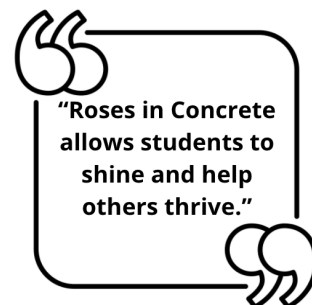
We are pleased to share that in our inaugural year we had 16 Brandeis students, 15 Waltham High School students, and 16 Brandeis alumni and community partner mentors engage with the program. With a lens of equity and inclusion, all student participants received a \$100 stipend per semester for their time engaging with the program. The program was intended to support minority owned businesses, journals, and food. All Brandeis students were given the book, *How to Be a Social Justice Advocate: Create Positive Change in Your Home, Community, and World* by one of our workshop facilitators.



47 Participants

## Workshops & Affinity Spaces

Each month participants attended sessions on topics that were determined through student input during the planning phase. Sessions were tailored to accommodate all styles of learning and included interactive discussions, formal workshops, theory and historical context, and provided an outlet for both personal and professional reflection. In the first session, group agreements were generated to create an affinity space where the group could both be challenged and celebrate what connects us and makes us each unique. All mentees shared presentation content and were able to follow-up workshops with additional conversations. Each semester concluded with a formal closing ceremony which included a catered dinner, speakers, reflection, and presentation of roses. The ceremony was undoubtedly the most powerful moment in the program as the space radiated pride and a sense of community.

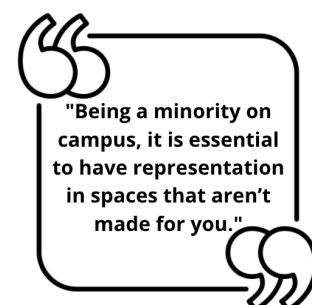


Below you will find a list of our workshop topics and our presenters.

- Code Switching & Working/Learning in Predominantly White Spaces
- Mental Health and Self Care
- Financial Literacy
- Career Readiness
- Waltham Risk and Health Assessment
- Self-Care and Time Management
- Closing Keynote and Inspirational Speaker

## Workshop Presenters

- Alana Anderson '06, Assistant Dean, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at MIT
- Rahema Mooltrey, Founder of Radical Joy Inc.
- Alexandra Bastein MMP '12 Co-Founder of The Imperative
- Tony Chen-Hong, Asst Director of Community & online Health Initiatives at BU
- Shanesha Christmas, Youth Leadership Coordinator at Waltham Partnership for Youth
- Ivy Watts, Youth Coalition Coordinator at Waltham Partnership for Youth
- Mariela Martinez, Grad Assistant in the Brandeis Department of Community Service
- Habiba Braimah, Director of Brandeis Intercultural Center.
- Bobby Martin, Owner of BMB Training & Development LLC and Team USA Gold Medal Basketball Player





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## Impact

We have heard how impactful this program has been from our high school and college participants and 100% have said that they would recommend the program to a friend. On a scale of 1 to 5, participants on average ranked the workshops a 4.3, the mentoring experience a 4.3, and our closing ceremonies a 4.6.

**100%**

**Would recommend the program to a friend**

The most common topics of conversation during mentoring were school and personal life, followed by social identities, mental health, and professional development skills. As we were in a COVID year, most mentoring happened virtually over zoom, and on the phone and email, with some matches meeting in person.

## Looking Forward

We are so pleased to note that Roses in Concrete was a great success and will be moving forward with a second year. As we reflected and heard from all participants, we hope to consider some of the possible adaptations to the program:

- Consider combining workshops for High School and Brandeis students
- Provide more opportunities for mentor and mentor social gatherings
- Ensure marketing reaches all demographics both at Brandeis and in Waltham
- Provide additional leadership opportunities for participants on the planning committee or in workshop facilitation.
- Further brand the program and illustrate the Roses in Concrete meaning, inspired by the Tupac Shakur song “The Rose that Grew from Concrete” emphasizing resiliency in impossible circumstances



## In Appreciation

A special thanks to our planning committee and funding sponsors from the Brandeis University Department of Community Service, Brandeis Institutional Advancement, Brandeis Intercultural Center, Waltham Partnership for Youth, Waltham Black Future Fund, and the Louis D. Brandeis Legacy Fund for Social Justice. Additional recognition to Jonathan Joasil '22 and Waltham High School Student Alexse LeGuerre '21 for designing the logo.



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