

Elm City Internationals

2017-18 Annual Report



ECI Generation 3 students had the opportunity to participate in the Disney International Soccer tournament with their Bridgeport Premier team. They are so proud that they won the tournament and had the opportunity to play against some of the top clubs from Brazil and other South American countries. ECI appreciates all of the opportunities that our partner organization, Bridgeport Premier has provided for our student-athletes.

ELM CITY INTERNATIONALS
360 Fountain Street #40 • New Haven, CT 06515

www.elmcityinternationals.org
lauren@elmcityinternationals.org
phone: 203-506-4768

A Few Words from Executive Director, Lauren Mednick

Dear Friends,

The 2017-2018 academic year was a busy, yet exciting year for ECI student-athletes. 2017 marked the year that 100% of ECI's first cohort of students (or "Generation 1" as we call them) graduated from college. I feel lucky to have had the honor to help guide these young men since they were in middle school and watch them work hard and overcome many obstacles in order to have the opportunity to reach this milestone. It gives me great pleasure to witness their academic success and, more importantly, watch the contributions that they are making in their communities. These young men act as such inspirations to the younger generations of ECI students.



*Lauren Mednick,
Executive Director*

ECI is also excited to announce that we have four "Generation 2" students beginning their first year of college (at Hobart and William Smith College, Middlebury College, and Central Maine Community College). I look forward to witnessing their growth throughout their college years as they discover how they can best make their mark on society. ECI's Generation 2 cohort currently spans between high school sophomores and college juniors. ECI's Generation 2 students who are already in college are thriving academically, athletically and socially. In the past couple of months the younger ECI students have thoroughly enjoyed visiting our college-age students at Dickinson College and Wesleyan University to watch them play soccer games and explore their college communities. Our Generation 2 students who are still in high school have had a very busy year exploring social justice issues, conducting extensive research papers, going on college trips and completing another undefeated soccer season.

ECI's youngest "Generation 3" students had a very busy and productive year. When I recently asked one of our 7th graders what his favorite parts of ECI were in this past year, he said without hesitation "Going to play in the international soccer tournament in Florida and winning, going to Dickinson College to watch Minimo and Maximo [these are two of our Generation 2 students] play soccer, watching Elm City Express games, and going to Vermont to visit Ish [this is one of their former mentors and former Elm City Express player who recently moved to Vermont to start medical school]." I can't say that I was not a tiny bit disappointed that he didn't mention any of our reading or writing assignments but I did set my expectations accordingly. To me his response shows the importance of the experiences our students have in ECI. These wonderful experiences bond them to one another and to their teachers, mentors and coaches, and allow them to really immerse themselves in our academic programming as well as the college advising process.

As our current students continue to flourish, we at ECI are constantly working to adapt our academic, social and athletic programming to best fit the needs of our students so that they can continue to thrive academically in college and beyond.

I am beyond thankful to our many loyal supporters. The ECI boys consider ECI a second family. Our wonderful supporters are all truly part of the extended ECI family and contribute greatly to the success of our boys. As the traditional African proverb says, "It takes a village to raise a child." Thanks so much for being part of our wonderful village.

Sincerely,

Lauren

A Testimony from an ECI student

Dear ECI Supporters,

My name is Mohamed Kourouma and I am a member of ECI Generation 2. My memories of ECI go back to 2007, when I was just 7 years old because my older brother, Elhadj, was part of ECI Generation 1. I vividly remember getting excited when Lauren would tell me that I could come with them to watch an ECI game and remember envisioning myself as a future ECI soccer player. In my eyes ECI was the best soccer team I had ever seen. I still remember the day in 8th grade when Lauren told me that they were about to form a new “generation” for ECI and asked me to be the first Generation 2 member. At the time, I was so excited to play for this team that I knew my older brother referred to as his family. I did not yet realize how much ECI would impact my life off the soccer field.

The first ECI activity that I participated in with the rest of Generation 2 was going to watch a Sage College of Albany soccer game. 4 of our “Generation 1” brothers played for this college team and although I already knew all of Generation 1 because my older brother was part of it, this was the first time that that rest of Generation 2 met our older Generation 1 brothers. Now that I am a sophomore in college and really understand the mission of ECI, I know that we took this trip to Sage before we even started our own soccer practices and academic programming so that we could be inspired by the older ECI students and so that we knew that we had the power to go to college just like them in a few years.

Elm City has impacted me in more ways than I can imagine. Not only have I had the opportunity to play soccer on a team with some of the best players that I know but I also got to work towards my academic goals. I got to work towards these goals with the support of my ECI teachers, mentors and coaches and more importantly with the support of my ECI brothers. The kids in ECI are my best friends and my brothers. We support each other through good times and bad times.

One ECI memory that I now laugh at took place on my first college trip in 10th grade. My first college trip was to Dickinson College. I remember in the car on the way home Lauren asked me and the other kids in the van how we liked the school. My response was “It is pretty but I do not see myself going there because it’s small and looks boring.” At the time, Lauren’s response was “We will visit many colleges and take time over the next couple of years to really understand your values but please promise to keep an open mind.” Lauren kept her promise and over the next couple of years we visited many schools, talked about the benefits of different types of schools, and talked about the importance of balance between soccer and academics. This story is funny to me because I am now a sophomore at Dickinson College and could not be happier. In fact, the thing that I love most about the school is that it is small, which means I get to really know my professors and classmates. Playing for a very strong D-3 soccer team means that I get to play soccer at a high level and get to be known on campus as a soccer player but also have time to pursue my other interests and focus on school.

I thank all of you guys for supporting ECI because without ECI I know that I would not be at Dickinson College playing soccer, studying international business, and thinking about the ways that I could impact the communities that I grew up in in West Africa and New Haven, Connecticut after I graduate college. Thank you for believing in me and my ECI brothers.

Sincerely,
Mohamed Kourouma



Mohamed Kourouma, pictured in the black sweatshirt and white shorts, is congratulated by Generation 2 students after a good performance at his season-opening game at Dickinson College.

College News

ECI is excited to announce that the program has 4 new college freshmen! Congratulations to Brayan Canas, Charles Sakouvogui, Brian Mendez, and Mardochee Bouanga who are attending Hobart and William Smith College, Middlebury College, and Central Maine Community College, respectively (Brian and Mardochee are excited to be college roommates!).



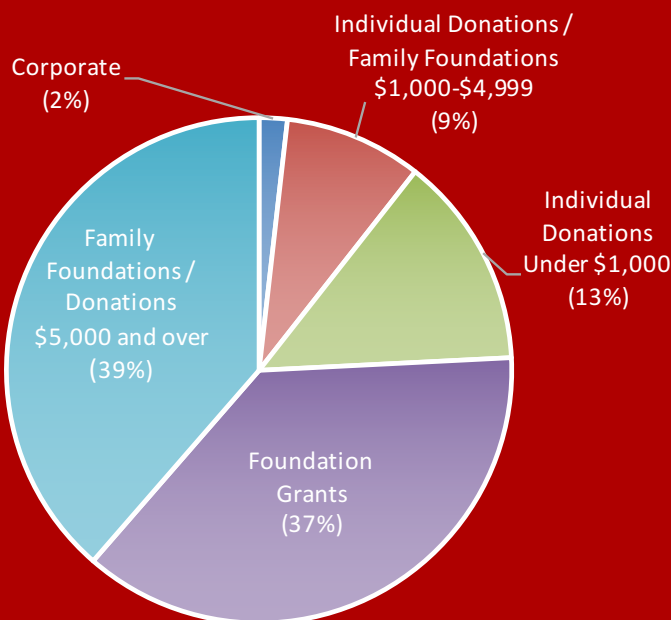
Mardochee and Brian's first photo at Central Maine Community College as accepted students.



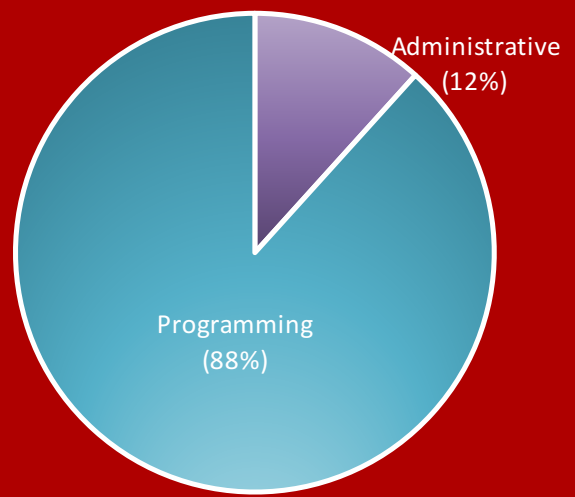
Brayan and Charlie proudly posing in their new college gear shortly after receiving their acceptance letters.

Financial Overview: 2017-2018 Academic Year (August 2017 – July 2018)

Total Deposits: \$142,591



Total Expenses: \$123,357



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Fun Statistics About ECI's 2017-2018 Year:

- 🌟 Each student-athlete received more than 400 hours of reading and writing instruction through the ECI Academy
- 🌟 ECI students visited and connected with admissions offices and/or college coaches at 17 different colleges
- 🌟 High school students played in 4 College Showcase Soccer Tournaments with Bridgeport Premier Soccer and played an additional 20 league and friendly soccer matches
- 🌟 Each student engaged in over 400 hours of soccer instruction and games
- 🌟 92% of students made their school's honor roll at least once
- 🌟 ECI's Generation 3 students won an international soccer tournament in Florida with their Bridgeport Premier U12 team
- 🌟 ECI helped our college students collectively receive over \$323,000 in renewable college scholarships and grants
- 🌟 Students traveled in every state on the east coast from Maine to Florida for college trips and soccer showcases
- 🌟 100% of ECI's high school seniors were admitted to college "early decision"
- 🌟 One of ECI's 7th graders was admitted to Hopkins School with a full scholarship (and is excited to join one of his 8th grade ECI pals there)
- 🌟 2 of our Generation 2 students received a full scholarship to participate in WOZA this summer which allowed them to volunteer to coach children living in poverty and in orphanages in Costa Rica
- 🌟 ECI Generation 2 students completed the last 4 consecutive soccer seasons with a record of 123-1-3

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Jonathan is very excited to be starting as a 7th grader at Hopkins School where he joins his ECI brother Moustapha who is in 8th grade.



Generation 2 students, Tacho and Andrew, hard at work in ECI Summer Academy.

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