

Priscilla King Gray  
Center for  
Social Impact

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# Annual Impact Report 2025

# Letter from the Director



The future of civil society is intertwined with technology, and will be shaped profoundly by the leadership of MIT scientists and engineers. Founded in 1988, the PKG Center has developed deep expertise in experiential social impact education specifically for STEM students—from our IDEAS Social Innovation Incubator, which has launched hundreds of tech-based social enterprises in over 60 countries, to the Center’s internship program, which has enabled hundreds of undergraduates to execute data science, coding, and AI projects for organizations across the United States. Nearly four decades on from our founding, legions of PKG alumni have gone on to make a positive impact in their personal and professional lives—all made possible by the enduring support of the PKG Center’s sponsors.

This past year, the Center continued to expand programming and courses to meet growing student demand for social impact education. New initiatives included Code.Tulsa: Igniting Tech Futures, a summer internship program enabling MIT students to learn from and support tech-based community development strategies at work in the Tulsa region. At the end of the summer, PKG interns supported an advanced STEM camp for Native youth in Oklahoma developed by a first-year student. The Center also offered a course on philanthropy available to students and alumni, and launched a new program called IAP Climate in partnership with MIT’s Office of Sustainability.

The PKG Center also completed a new 2025-2028 strategic plan to position us for the future. Titled “Reengineering Social Impact Education at MIT,” the plan calls for evaluating the long-term outcomes of PKG programming, and includes new initiatives to better prepare students to make a positive social impact through careers in industry.

With the adoption of this plan, we’ve changed our name from the PKG Center for Public Service to the PKG Center for Social Impact. Through the planning process we learned that “public service” evokes a narrow conception of what we do, whereas the term “social impact” allows for the range of issues students choose to work on, their varied academic disciplines, and the different personal and professional contexts in which they can make a positive impact as MIT graduates.

At a time of financial uncertainty, where the need for PKG Center programming is greater than ever, we are deeply grateful for your support, and look forward to working together this coming year to continue fulfilling MIT’s mission of educating students for “the betterment of humankind.”

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alison Badgett". The signature is fluid and cursive.

**Alison Badgett**  
Associate Dean and Director





# About the PKG Center

The Priscilla King Gray (PKG) Center for Social Impact was cofounded in 1988 by MIT's First Lady Priscilla King Gray, Dean of Student Affairs Dr. Shirley McBay, and Professor Robert Mann '50. Since then, the PKG Center has been the hub for experiential social impact education at MIT, a place where students can turn theory into action and ethics into tactics.



**The PKG Center educates MIT students to address complex social and environmental challenges in collaboration with affected communities, empowering students to become agents of change for the betterment of humankind.**

PKG programs are rigorous, immersive, driven by community perspectives, and intentionally reflective. Students begin by learning best practices for working with communities affected by social and environmental challenges to understand their root causes and consequences, in order to then develop effective interventions that leverage their technical skills.

Reflecting Institute priorities and student interests, our programs focus on four key areas: climate, health, expanding access to STEM education, and public interest technology. PKG programs connect students with opportunities to work on these issues side-by-side with those impacted by them, and with organizations that are driving positive change locally, nationally, and globally.

We work with all MIT students, from first year undergraduates through last stage PhD, across all disciplines and class years. Not only are all PKG programs free of charge to students, but we also provide internship stipends, paid fellowships, and social entrepreneurship start-up funds, enabling students to apply their distinct expertise to the world's greatest challenges.

# Strategic Plan:

## Fall 2025 - Summer 2028

### *Reengineering Social Impact Education at MIT*

Through discussions with dozens of students, alumni, faculty, staff, and external stakeholders – both familiar and not with PKG – the Center identified four strategic goals to guide our activities over the next three years:



**Strategic Goal 1: Codify, evaluate, iterate, and market a model of social impact education** that complements an engineering ethos by refining learning goals, mapping them to PKG programming to create a formal scope and sequence, and evaluating near-, mid-, and long-term outcomes to refine and design new programming. As MIT professors Acemoglu and Johnson argue in *Power and Progress* (2023), leveraging technical innovation for broad benefit requires empowering communities affected by technology to inform its use, shaping the public narrative, and influencing policy. PKG can both teach these tactics and connect students with the many courses and programs across MIT aligned with related competencies.



**Strategic Goal 2: Prepare students to make a positive social impact in their professional lives** through new and enhanced programming related to making a social impact specific to careers in industry, social entrepreneurship, academia, and public service. PKG aims to promote an expansive conception of civic professionalism—enabling students to embrace civic engagement and social impact as part of their professional identity.



**Strategic Goal 3: Prepare students to make a positive social impact in their personal lives** through new and enhanced programming related to nonprofit board service, philanthropy, and civic engagement that leverages their distinct STEM expertise. Fundamental to effective board service or philanthropy is understanding systems change strategy—that is, PKG’s newly codified model of social impact education is foundational to preparing students to make a positive impact in their personal lives. The Center will also support students to assume a more prominent civic role in public policy advising



**Strategic Goal 4: Position the Center for sustainability and growth** through timely, cohesive thematic initiatives that align with and advance MIT’s social impact priorities and/or are designed as demonstration programs, while expanding alumni engagement and diversifying funding through foundation and corporate sponsorship. Given financial constraints, PKG must also scale through cost-neutral means, such as providing wraparound education for other programs.





## Academic Courses

This year, the PKG Center continued **SP.259: Pathways to Social Justice at MIT and Beyond**, a course that explores how students can support social change efforts in the greater Boston area. Through readings, discussions, reflection, and hands-on service with local organizations, students developed ethical, community-informed approaches to social impact while connecting with MIT changemakers.

We also brought back **SP.256: Informed Philanthropy in Theory and Action** over IAP. This experiential course—available to students, alumni, and MIT employees—examines the potential and pitfalls of philanthropy as a tool for social change. Students analyzed nonprofit work in MIT's neighboring communities, culminating in the group allocating \$7,000 to local organizations. The class applied deliberative decision-making methods and collaborative discussion to ensure funding reflects thoughtful community engagement.

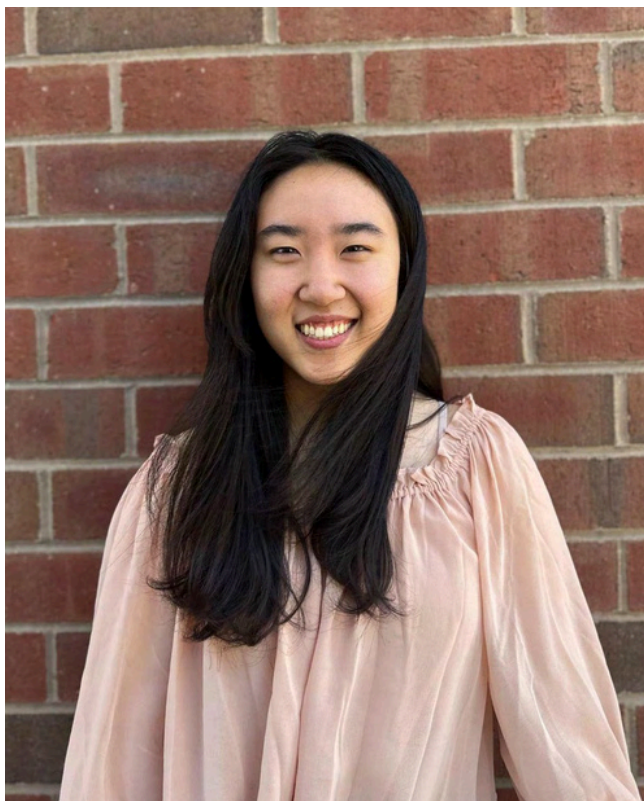
### STUDENT PERSPECTIVES

#### *SP.256: Informed Philanthropy in Theory and Action*



This class was a great complement to my other coursework in the sense that we were looking at human-focused issues and bringing emotion and heart into our work rather than just solving equations or writing programs. It brought me back to my community and reminded me why I wanted to come to MIT in the first place: to make a tangible impact on someone's life. Unlike my other classes, I knew my work was going toward more than tests or essays — I felt I, along with my classmates and instructors, was working toward a real positive difference in my community.

# PKG | Social Impact Internships



The PKG Center's Social Impact Internship program enables MIT undergraduates to apply their talents where they're needed most. Through full-time, funded internships over the summer and IAP, students bring fresh energy, technical expertise, and problem-solving skills to dozens of social impact organizations across the country, from community-based nonprofits to organizations with global reach.

In all cases, MIT students bring distinct technical expertise to organizations that need it the most, while gaining invaluable professional development experience that often shapes their academic journey and their professional careers, while inspiring a long-term commitment to making a positive social impact.

Demand for internships far outpaces what the PKG Center's resources allow. In the 2024–2025 academic year, the PKG Center was able to support 70 interns with stipends and mentorship— just 16% of 443 applicants eager to make a difference.

## SUSAN HONG

Class of 2027, Course 6-9

***Susan interned with the Justice Innovation Lab, a nonprofit which builds data-informed, community-rooted solutions for a more fair and effective criminal justice system.***



My internship at Justice Innovation Lab (JIL) was my first time doing a lot of things. It was my first time writing code for something that actually mattered—outside of class and personal projects. It was my first foray into the intricacies of the justice system. And, it was my first time realizing that social advocacy was not as different from science as I'd thought. During my first week at JIL, I was able to experience the real-world intersection of scientific rigor and human perspectives for the first time. As I met the different members of the team, I learned more about JIL's mission of tackling criminal injustice, but also how they were working towards this goal in a systematic way: by targeting the infrastructure that injustices had been built into. This reminded me of how, if my experiment in the lab had failed, I would go back through the protocol—the basis of the experiment—to see what had gone wrong and what I could potentially fix.



# Community-Based Cohort Programs

PKG | IAP Climate

PKG | IAP Health

PKG | IAP Indigenous Innovation

PKG's Cohort programs offer an intensive experience that combines internships with weekly educational and reflection dinners, giving students the chance to learn and grow together while tackling real-world challenges. For many students, participating in a PKG cohort program is a turning point, building a community of changemakers on campus and inspiring new directions for their studies and careers.

Most cohort programs take place during the Independent Activities Period (IAP). Our longest running program, PKG IAP: Health, which launched in 2017, places students alongside medical professionals to improve healthcare access in Boston. In 2023, we launched the Indigenous Communities Initiative (ICI) in partnership with MIT SOLVE, which places interns with indigenous social entrepreneurs.

This past year, we introduced IAP: Climate in partnership with MIT's Office of Sustainability (MITOS). The program enables students to execute climate projects that build capacity of local government and nonprofits partners and accelerate progress on Boston area climate resiliency plans.



## SONIA SELIGER

Class of 2026, Course 14-1

*In IAP: Climate, Sonia worked with MITOS to develop a dashboard that visually presents data on extreme heat across MIT's campus, helping the community better understand localized temperature variations and heat risks.*



This experience reinforced my passion for sustainability and energy policy, especially in using data-driven insights to create more equitable climate solutions. Moving forward, I want to continue working on projects that connect technology and policy to address environmental challenges. I also gained a deeper appreciation for how complex climate resilience issues are. Addressing extreme heat requires a mix of policy changes, infrastructure improvements, and community engagement. The success of projects like this really depends on bringing together experts from different fields, such as sustainability, urban planning, public health, and data science. This experience strengthened my commitment to working in the field of sustainability, and I am excited to keep applying what I have learned this January in my future studies and career.

# PKG | Code.Tulsa

In summer 2025, the PKG Center launched Code.Tulsa: Igniting Tech Futures, a program enabling MIT students to learn from and support the tech-based socioeconomic development strategies at work in the Tulsa region. Nine MIT students completed full-time, paid internships, executing data science, AI, and coding projects for the Muscogee Creek Nation, the Cherokee Nation, Black Tech Street, and the Urban Coders Guild. Every week, they participated in educational dinners, where they heard from local leaders, including representatives from the Mayor of Tulsa and the Tulsa Innovation Labs, while PKG staff led culturing outings for students on the weekends.



The summer culminated with interns supporting a new advanced STEM camp for Native youth in Oklahoma and beyond, developed by a first-year undergraduate, called the Tulsa Advanced Sciences Camp. 160 high school students applied, and 12 rising juniors and seniors were selected for the camp's inaugural year.

The program's pilot year was made possible by a grant from the Patrick J. McGovern Foundation, whose President, Vilas Dhar, shared this about the program. "Technology expands opportunity when it strengthens communities. Through Code. Tulsa: Igniting Tech Futures, MIT students are advancing digital equity in Tulsa: bringing classroom knowledge into practice, fueling local innovation, and teaching at the Tulsa Advanced Sciences Camp. This model proves that the next generation of technologists can both drive progress today and lay the foundation for a digital economy that includes everyone in the long term."



## RICHARD OTI

Class of 2028, Course 6-14 & 15-2

*In his internship with Black Tech Street, Richard conducted research to outline societal AI integration for cities across the US*



“At the start of our research, I had gone in with the hopes of learning more about the role that AI could play in our future, especially in terms of new AI devices and tools. Throughout the span of the summer, however, I learned so much more about technological development and design beyond assessing technical components and metrics. On top of this research, I gained the opportunity to both earn online certifications in AI technology and design and network with so many amazing leaders in the Tulsa region. Our work opened my eyes to the diverse networks, communities, and systems that work together in a city and helped me to understand how different industries can have varying impacts on one another. We identified the multitude of ways that people have and continue to use AI in their personal and professional lives while hearing the hopes that others had for the way the technology could improve their lives.”

### TASC CAMPER

*“This is one of the most, if not the most, beneficial experiences in my life. It’s taught me to be a better man.”*



## PAULA STARR

Chief Information Officer of the Cherokee Nation

*MIT students “brought to life a project that had been a dream for years [an AI virtual assistant], and almost in the same breath, they jumpstarted an entirely new initiative that would have taken us years to launch without them [digitizing tribal registration].”*

# PKG | Fellowships



PKG Fellowships support MIT students in pursuing their own independent, social impact projects with community partners across the world, including nonprofits, government agencies, and social enterprises. Fellows include undergraduate, masters, and PhD students from across the Institute who have a vision for making a positive impact.

In addition to funding for full-time work, travel, and living expenses over IAP and summer, PKG Fellows receive mentorship to ensure the success of their project, and in getting the most of the experience professionally.

In 2024–2025, the Center supported 50 Fellows whose projects addressed issues related to climate, education, food insecurity, health, housing, Indigenous communities, and Public Interest Technology. With 109 competitive applications, demand was double what our funding allowed.

## DUC HOANG

Master in City Planning Candidate with a concentration in Environmental Policy and Planning in MIT's Department of Urban Studies and Planning

*Duc designed and implemented the Summer in Engineering and Applied Sciences program, a free intensive STEM camp for high school students in Central Vietnam.*



My fellowship really highlighted how important flexibility and patience and perseverance are to accomplishing even the smallest acts ... let alone comprehensive climate strategy planning ... knowing PKG was supporting my work was very helpful for developing my sense of confidence in furthering the project. Being a PKG Fellow has given me the opportunity to continue to hone the skills that can align with my desire to integrate public service and public interest at the core of my work going forward.



# PKG | IDEAS

## Social Innovation Incubator

The IDEAS Social Innovation Incubator enables MIT student-led teams to develop viable social impact ventures. Students can recruit team members from around the world to develop social enterprise solutions to challenges in partnership with directly affected communities. Teams apply in November for the incubator, and those selected participate in weekly training workshops throughout the spring, covering systems change, organizational models, impact measurement, communication and pitching.



***This year, IDEAS awarded \$65k in funding to student social entrepreneurs. Over the last 24 years, IDEAS has awarded over \$1.5M to 270 teams addressing societal and environmental challenges in over 60 countries.***

During the 2024-2025 academic year, 19 student-led finalist teams participated in iterative workshops throughout spring semester, refined their ideas with mentors, pitched their solutions to peers and judges, and received \$1,000 in seed funding—which helped turn their ideas into social innovations in healthcare, finance, climate, education, and other fields. Their projects were evaluated by a panel of experienced

entrepreneurs based on feasibility, impact, and innovation; seven teams received additional prizes, from \$2,000 through \$20,000.

The 2025 IDEAS cohort partnered with 29 community organizations, spanning 8 sectors, 8 countries, and 2 U.S. states, launching non-profit, for-profit, and hybrid business models.



### Samwise

2025 IDEAS \$20K Grantee  
Cambridge, MA

*Our team began the year motivated by a good idea, but IDEAS gave us the frameworks, mindset, and, more simply, the language to be effective collaborators with the communities we aim to serve. We learned that sometimes building technology for a customer requires more than product-market fit — it requires proper orientation for meaningful outcomes and impact.*



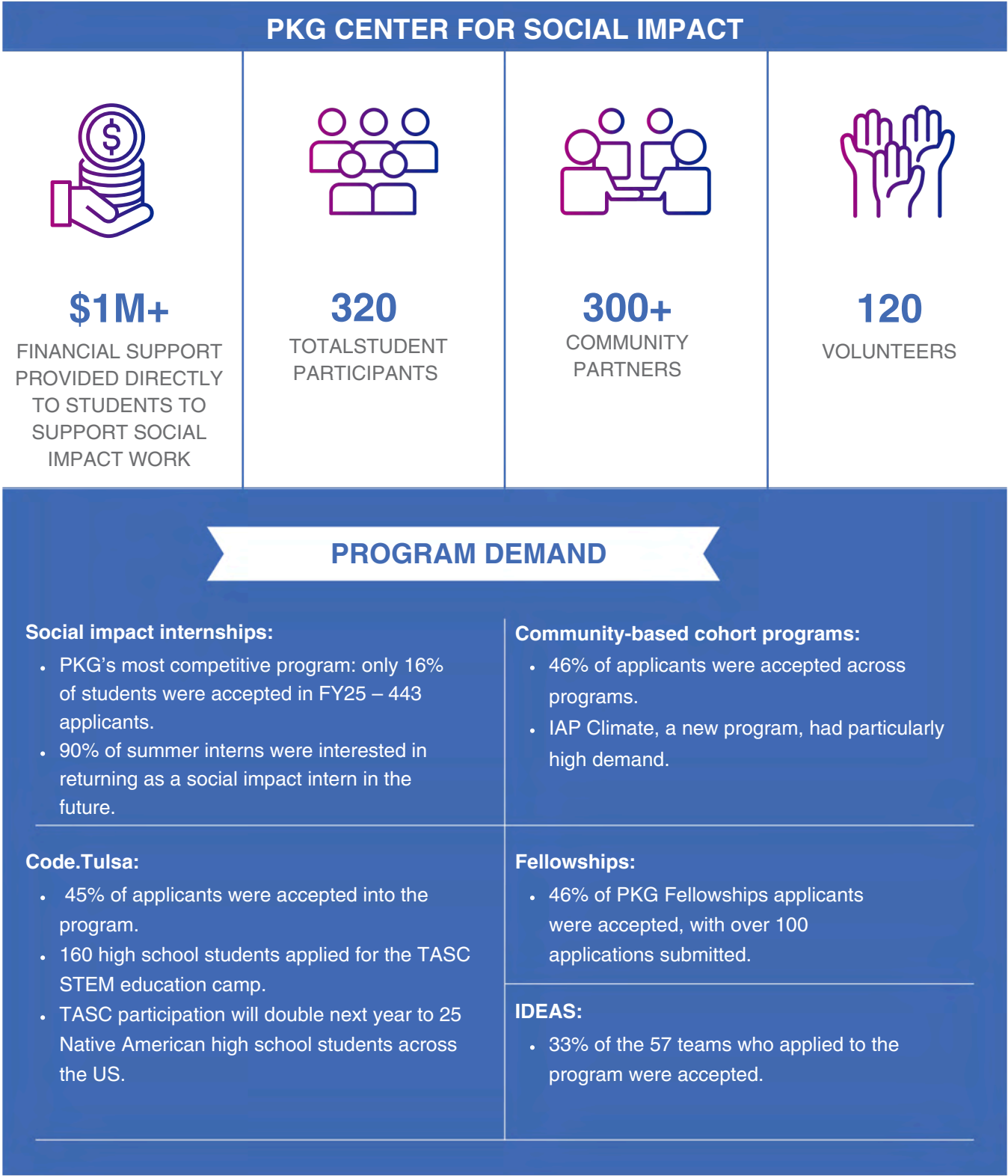
### China Dispossession Watch

2025 IDEAS \$15K Grantee  
Cambridge, MA


*IDEAS provided crucial support by helping us achieve federated, trust-based program rollout rather than rapid extractive scaling, pursue diversified funding aligned with community-driven incentives, and find like-minded collaborators equally invested in human rights and spatial justice.*

# By the Numbers

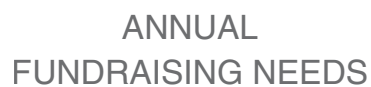
## 2024-2025







**\$2MM TOTAL ANNUAL BUDGET:**



PKG Center

# Looking Ahead

As the stories in this report illustrate, PKG students are developing the skills, mindsets, and networks needed to create meaningful, sustainable social impact. Whether increasing access to health care, supporting climate resilience, or leveraging technology for the public good, students are learning to turn ethics into action through PKG programming and courses. Their PKG experience empowers them as agents of change for the betterment of humankind in their personal and professional lives well beyond MIT.

We believe every MIT student should have the opportunity to participate in at least one PKG social impact experience during their time at the Institute. With your support, we'll continue expanding access to experiential learning that equips students to make a positive difference in the world.

More than half of our annual budget relies on donor contributions. Every gift directly supports students through stipends, project funding, and experiential learning opportunities.

As important, your support benefits the nonprofits, government agencies, and other community partners who gain access to MIT students' energy, technical expertise, and problem-solving talent.

Thank you for making a difference in the lives of MIT students, and the communities they serve!

## Thank you to Friends of PKG Center

### A special thank you to our Friends of the PKG Center committee:

Dheera Ananthakrishnan '90, MBA '23

Aanchal Dasoar Arora MBA '25

Priscilla Elliott\* '10

Lisa Erickson MBA '25

Kristin K. Foss\* '83

Aaliya Hussain '25

Kat Jiang\* '20

Bonny S. Kellermann\* '72

Paul M. Kominers\* '12

Sze-Wen Kuo\* '73

Joseph H. Levitch\* '69

York Lo MBA '18

Elena J. McFann\* '90

Hyun-A Park\* '83, MCP '85

Elizabeth Petheo MBA '14

Titus Roesler '25

Anh Vu Sawyer MBA '20

James W. Taylor\* '65, SM '67

Victor Tung Tom\* '72, SM '73, SCD '81

Caroline Wang\* '86, **Chair**

Eberhard F. Wunderlich\* SM '75, PhD '78

Shahla Wunderlich\* PhD '78

\*Denotes Founding Member