



Our mission: Partner with schools and youth programs to develop, share, and deliver map-based, outdoor experiential education for students of all abilities. We promote active learning through orienteering, helping children develop navigation skills, life skills, and a connection to nature.

Navigation Games Turns 10

2025 marked 10 years for Navigation Games as an official nonprofit organization! We celebrated our anniversary in big ways this year, looking back to our roots, continuing our important work and looking forward to all that we can become. For those who have been with us since the beginning, we thank you, and for those who joined us this year, welcome! Here's to our next 10...



A Year in Numbers

- **453** orienteering classes and events for more than **12,602** participants.
- **13** new schools experienced orienteering in classes (pre-K - 12).
- **19** workshops for educators in **14** states (AL, CA, ID, MA, MT, NC, NE, NH, OH, PA, VA, VT, WA, WI, and online).
- **62** maps used.
- **16** new maps made.
- **127** volunteers donated nearly **3,500** hours, virtually and in-personand still counting...



2025 Program Highlights

Navigation Games has been making big things happen around Cambridge and the Greater Boston Area in 2025! We had a busy spring, summer and fall, and we are thrilled to share the year's highlights with you!



Spring 🌱 On top of our regular programming at Cambridge and Brookline public schools, we joined forces with new partners in new places for new adventures:

- **Leprechaun-O** at Fresh Pond Reservation - roaming checkpoints made this tricky and fun! (Sponsored by the City of Cambridge; designed by staffer Evalin Brautigam)
- **Programming** with Boston Green Academy, Eliot School, and Mary Lyon School
- **Team Score-O's** in Middlesex Fells with Education First (EF) students who visited from around the country and learned about New England nature

Summer ☀️ Over the summer, our programming team Juan, Erkan, Mikayla, and Saskia mentored ten Cambridge MSYEP (Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program) teen interns, to deliver events across the area.

- **Children in the Park** at Teddy Ebersol Field (partner: Esplanade Association)
- **Innovation Islands** - A Boston Harbor Now (BHN) Innovation grant funded 3 days of activities on Spectacle Island for hundreds of local summer campers
- **Paul Revere's Crossing NRE** in Boston, our first foray into an Orienteering USA sanctioned National Ranking Event (NRE)

Fall 🍂 All year long, we were ramping up for our biggest celebrations of the year. Each was a huge success and helped us celebrate our 10th Anniversary in style!

- **U.S. Champs (Sprint) Race** in the North End of Boston produced in partnership with the New England Orienteering Club (NEOC) and close to 70 volunteers
- **Vampire-O** at Danehy Park - our biggest event of the season! Hundreds of children avoided vampires as they orienteered (Partner: City of Cambridge)
- **PE Unit** at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) - Navigation Games goes to college! We developed and taught an 11-class orienteering unit.
- **Conferences and webinars** around the country activated youth educators to teach orienteering (see Program Spotlight below)



2025 Supporters

Hundreds of volunteers support Navigation Games in every aspect of our programming and operations - event delivery, marketing, social media, application development, kit making, curriculum development, strategic advice. There are too many to mention, but a huge shout out to all of you!

And to our partners and collaborators who support us and partner with us: NEOC, OUSA, and Cambridge Volunteers.

THANK YOU - MORE YOUTH ARE BUILDING SKILLS BECAUSE OF YOUR SUPPORT, TIME AND EFFORT!



Program Spotlight: Conferences

With financial support from an OUSA grant, Navigation Games has been piloting a Conferences project for the last year.

This pilot project has engaged orienteers from across the country to deliver an orienteering workshop at an educator conference near them. Conference types include physical and health education, environmental and experiential education, and camp and after-school provider symposiums. Participants are encouraged to explore and use Navigation Games' library of activities and contact us, if they need help getting started. We have been thrilled with the success of this campaign and have had positive feedback from our fellow orienteers who have shared their time and knowledge with conference attendees. Huge shout out to all of the presenters, map makers and OUSA for their support!

“Attendees learned [that] orienteering is more than compass bearings and “something used for search and rescue”. All you need are the easy to use, already established lesson plans and simple supplies to have a fun and energetic activity block that can be done inside or outside.” -2025 Conference Presenter

Want to know more? Want to get involved? Check out the OUSA [webinar](#) on Youtube - we talk you through everything!

Orienteers in Residence

Juan De Oliveira

This summer, we were fortunate to have one of our former orienteers in residence return to volunteer with us. **Juan De Oliveira** joined us from Brazil for the second time to lend his orienteering expertise: helping with everything from mapping, to program delivery, to lesson plan design. He led the charge in designing and delivering our 4-week program at a Brookline Public School summer camp and was delivering programming in Newton on his first day here - way to hit the ground running! Read the upcoming [blog](#) to hear from Juan about his summer.



Kieran Woods

Kieran wrapped up his time with us this spring. Joining us from New Zealand, he is the president of his local club. Kieran contributed an exceptional amount during his time with us. Along with Evalin Brautigam, Kieran designed and delivered our new Summer Camp lesson plans and taught orienteering to PE classes in Brookline and Cambridge Public schools. The two of them took on a mentorship role with the Cambridge High School orienteering team. From Cambridge, they went to Europe to coach and compete at international and world championship orienteering races.



"Since the first day there, I had a lot of joyful moments teaching orienteering to children, teenagers and adults at summer camps, school yards, and public events - it was a blast!"
- Juan De Oliveira

Do you want to come to Cambridge, MA as an orienteer in residence? We are always looking for orienteers to come and spend 3-6 months with us - learn skills, build friendships and contribute to the global orienteering community! Check our [website](#) for more information or email [us](#)!

Event Spotlight: U.S. Orienteering Sprint Champs 2025

Navigation Games wanted to do something BIG for our 10th Anniversary, so when NEOC invited us to host the U.S. Orienteering Sprint Championships, we couldn't say no! The original idea was to use the Georges Island map we made (funded by a 2024 BHN innovation grant), but the island was unexpectedly closed all summer. Another long time dream was to host a sprint race in the North End of Boston, an area reminiscent of the complex and winding streets found in Europe. So we refocused our team and endless effort went into securing permits, going door to door to get permission to place checkpoints, overseas Zoom calls with our renowned course setter (Graeme Ackland), creating and updating maps (thanks to J-J Cote), vetting the courses (thanks to Nancy Duprey and Ethan Childs), building maze structures...and so much more! The monumental planning effort...

...was met with a full nor'easter, which blew in on the day, peaking during the hours of the race. Knowing that orienteers are about the hardest group out there, we decided to move forward rain or shine (and there was plenty of rain..and wind) and hold the race. We weren't disappointed: 197 orienteers joined us from all over the country (and world) to brave the storm and explore one of the most beautiful parts of our city. More than 80 incredible volunteers helped us pull off this harrowing effort! Soaking wet, but smiling, all of our competitors made it back and had the experience of a lifetime. Thanks to donations from REI and the team at the Boston Marriott Long Wharf hotel...and a special thank you to everyone who took part - each one of you made this event a success!



Staff Spotlight: Erkan Sezgin

Our newest program staff member is Erkan Sezgin. Erkan was born and raised in Turkey, and after traveling the world, he eventually found his way to Boston. He discovered orienteering while serving in the Turkish Air Force, and it quickly became more than a sport - it became a way of life. He spent years on Turkey's national team and coached athletes who competed internationally.

Now, with Navigation Games, he's helping the next generation discover that sometimes, getting a little lost in the woods is the best way to find yourself. He is also coaching the Cambridge High School orienteering team, bringing all his experience to the next generation of orienteers.



2025 Funders

Thank you to all our friends who donate to Navigation Games financially or in kind- your support funds and makes possible programming for youth to develop life skills through orienteering.

In 2025, grants were received from: the City of Cambridge, the Cambridge Public Health Department, the Saul O Sidore Family Foundation, Boston Harbor Now, the Cambridge Community Foundation, the Commonwealth Foundation & OUSA.



Photo Credit: Evalin Brautigam, OUSA 2025

Funding: A Changing Landscape Requiring A Fine-Tuned Approach

This year, it is even more important for you to support our mission and donate. Our financial landscape is changing, as school budgets shrink and extracurricular activities take a hit. The Navigation Games staff and board is working hard to meet this challenge, by seeking alternate funding sources to replace direct fees from schools, and streamlining our programming, so that we can continue to introduce as many children as possible to the endless benefits and fun of orienteering. Your generous donation gets us one step closer to achieving this mission.

Donate

Navigation Games is a 501(c)3 non-profit with a Platinum GuideStar transparency rating. Donations are tax-deductible. We rely on community support to fund our mission. This giving season, **December donations (up to \$10,000) will be matched by a generous donor, so don't wait, make your donation today so that you can double your impact!**

Here's how:

- Online - Via www.navigationgames.org. - Venmo / PayPal (@NavigationGames)
- Send a check: "Navigation Games", 116 Henry St, Cambridge, MA 02139.
- We are eligible to receive donations from your donor advised fund (DAF): Navigation Games Inc. - EIN: 47-3952861
- Many employers will match your donation. Please request your employee match when you donate!

Thank You

Community Love

"You really have developed something that is of value to our students and touches on so many important areas; life skills, practical knowledge, and social emotional learning, in conjunction with physical movement, communication, teamwork, problem solving, and critical thinking!"

- Jenna Sorensen, K-5 Dept Head for PE & Health, Plymouth PSD

We couldn't have said it better ourselves. The work we do at Navigation Games really matters, and empowers students and teachers alike to take navigation into their own hands, to learn and to teach, and to orienteer every day of the year!

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