

ANNUAL REPORT

CATALYST COLLECTIVE



2023



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This past year I had the opportunity to participate in a program called the Foundry, an incubator of sorts for small businesses looking to impact the world. As the only non-profit organization present, I was able to ‘sneak’ in. Each month we met to dive into the methodology behind successful enterprises. Led by some of the most brilliant entrepreneurs I have ever met, these meetings were filled with all the things they never teach you in business school.

As I write this report, it is not lost on me that the vast majority of great ideas and businesses fail. Organizations must always be willing to adapt, remain disciplined with their resources, know when to take risks, never stop innovating, and create a culture that other talented people want to be a part of. Who you partner with along the way also matters. So, unlike any other report I have written in our 12 year history, this recap will be a narrative of how we have positioned ourselves, using fiscal and business best practices, to expand our mission of bringing this generation’s unique design to life.

The highlights for the year revolve around hitting the mentor jackpot with a jaw dropping 740 volunteer applications, growing our revenue/donations by 69%, publishing a new book for young adults, positioning for growth and achieving a 83% impact score with teens we served.

Being a remote organization, we do not have a physical headquarters but some of you may have noticed we are using a Lockhart, Texas address now. This is because my family and I moved from Cedar Park to open up an outdoor event venue called Wild Roots with glamping tents and tiny homes. While there is no connection to Catalyst

here, our hope is to leverage the 45 acres of this space for students when we can. In December, we had a local school principal reach out and ask if they could partner with Catalyst and Wild Roots to address a need within their student population. So as of February of 2024, they will be busing out up to 50 at-risk students from their DAEP program every week to experience the Purpose Project and have these struggling teens explore some of their gifts and passions!

While this was a challenging year, I am proud of our team and growing community of mentors who continue to expand our reach and impact around the country. As we push forward to spark a movement of mentoring in America, we do so with faith in God's guidance of this mission and a commitment to be disciplined in our approach to business practices that have proven to be successful.

In my opinion, there is no greater time than the present to invest in our youth. The future is being shaped by those who are willing to step into the life of a frustrated and confused young person in order to show them a path forward. Simple conversations, when targeted, can be catalytic. The conversations we are training others to have through the Purpose Project will continue to create ripples that eventually lead to transformation. We hope you will be witness to this with us as active members of our community.

Thank you for being on this journey with us.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joe Elliott', with a stylized, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Joe Elliott
Founder & Executive Director
Catalyst Collective

THE PROBLEM

When students do not have a solid foundation on who they are (Identity), why they are here (Purpose), and where they fit in (Belonging), they fall short of maximizing their impact in life. Almost every major issue attacking this generation (suicides, depression, drugs, violence, active shootings, drop out rates, social media addictions and more) can be traced back to the lack of identity, purpose and belonging. The Purpose Project we first piloted a decade ago, continues to prove its effectiveness by accelerating the discovery of what makes a young person unique, their strengths, talents, values, motivators, experiences etc. As a result, students stay in school and graduate, explore new areas of passion and talent, experience improvements in their mental health, and focus their energy away from criminal activity. The secret to our success over the past few years has to do with the way we envision the future of mentoring.

Mentoring, in general, works.

According to [Mentoring.org](https://www.mentoring.org), students who have a mentor are more likely to graduate, step into leadership positions and become mentors themselves. Mentoring is also linked to improvements in mental health and resilience among youth. The problem, however, is that very few Americans are signing up to mentor. There are over 36,000 organizations in the US that are attempting to find mentors for teens, and yet, finding any that are successful at doing so is its own challenge.

Why don't people want to mentor teens? We will cover that as we speak to our competitive advantages.



Would you recommend the Purpose Project?

“I would. I would because if people all go through much of the same stuff in life, the same questions about life, then I would assume most kids are like me, who isn’t born knowing what their purpose is, or what to do or even know themselves very well. And they probably have doubts like everyone else. This Purpose Project is a good step to finding the answers to some questions and learning how to find the rest of the answers to their questions and doubts.”

~2023 Mentee



What was the most meaningful to you?

“It meant a lot to be able to identify my strengths and understand them, and it felt good to lay out my characteristics, strengths and weaknesses and values and mold a purpose out of that.”

~2023 Mentee



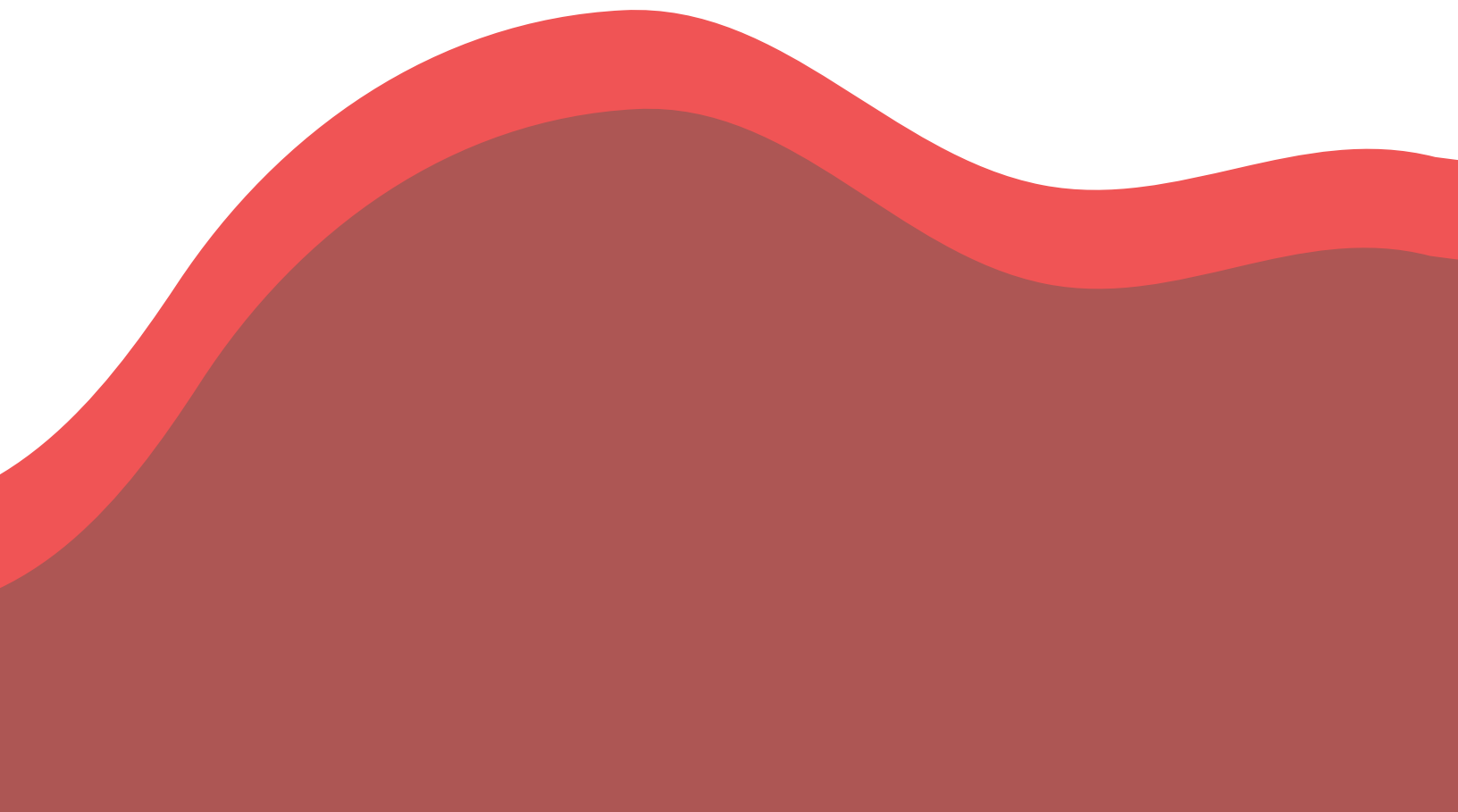
OUR MISSION & VISION

Most of us have never been taught how to study our unique design and as a result, fall short of the impact we could be making.

At Catalyst, we have created a simple path for helping teens, young adults and organizations discover what sets them apart and how to leverage their uniqueness to develop their passions and achieve their goals.

Our mission is to support thousands of students per year in discovering their unique design and purpose by 2026 so that they can become the leaders and influencers our world needs them to be.

Our vision is to empower a new movement of mentors and guides capable of efficiently and effectively connecting the next generation to a deeper sense of identity, purpose, and belonging.






CATALYST'S COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

Bringing an innovative approach to the tradition of mentoring requires a paradigm shift around how we think mentoring should be executed. In its simplest form, mentoring, like leadership, is influence. To the extent one person can guide or influence another in a direction that yields positive results, you have a successful mentor.

When it comes to mentoring youth, we have long been stuck in an ideology that insists upon face to face, weekly meetings for at least a year or more, with no real plan or agenda other than to encourage and support the mentee. While this style of mentoring does produce positive outcomes, there remains one glaring problem - very few people want to do it.

When you add up all of the available mentors serving teens through non-profits around the country and then compare this to the number of teens available to mentor, we are reaching less than .01%. Even that number is being very generous. So the natural question is why are adults not mentoring teens, especially in the middle of an era of mass shootings, mental health problems, a rise in violent crimes and drugs among youth, etc, etc? Even adults without kids recognize that the middle school/high school situation in America is a mess and that teens are struggling.

Awareness that there is a need is not this issue. The issue lies in how we are asking people to get involved. Give up an hour a week for an entire year? Take more time out



of my day to travel to meet with a student who might not even show up? Spend more money doing an activity with them? What will I say? What if I can't help them? What if they don't like me?

These are all valid concerns that directly point to the competitive advantage Catalyst has in the marketplace. We eliminate these obstacles to make it easy for an adult to step in and solve a problem using the skills we help them develop, our model results in having a deeper impact in the life of a teenager in a shorter amount of time and at a fraction of the cost of traditional programs.

OUR MENTORING VS TRADITIONAL MENTORING

It's remote. No geographical limits! This experience maximizes the time volunteers have to give and provides flexibility to meet without typical geographical constraints.

It's targeted on the main issue. You don't need to be a professional counselor or expert in everything, you simply need to learn how to have 6 conversations that directly address the core of the issue for most students...there lack of identity, purpose and belonging.

It's leveraging advanced matching metrics. Our process requires a clear connection to be in place using multiple points of view from personality type and passions to values, experiences and talents which increases the probability of a stronger match.

It's immediately impactful. Students love the experience as much as our mentors do creating a win-win scenario in the first few sessions!

It's scalable. Our mentors serve more students and have these conversations in group and classroom settings.

THE KEY METRICS AND PROBLEMS WE ARE FOCUSED ON



There are many things we measure to ensure we are driving our mission forward, none are more important than these four metrics:

THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS SERVED

THE IMPACT THE PROGRAM HAS ON THESE STUDENTS

THE NUMBER OF MENTORS WE HAVE

THE NUMBER OF MENTORS WE RETAIN

If students do not opt in, we may be focused on the wrong issues or be wrong about our approach to mentoring. If they do not report positive outcomes, we also must reevaluate. In a similar way, if adults do not sign up to mentor or leave because they do not have a good experience, this model will need to change.

In order to spark a movement of mentoring in America, we feel there are three macro problems that we must prove we can address.

WE MUST INSPIRE ADULTS TO MENTOR

WE MUST CREATE BOTTOM UP DEMAND

WE MUST ESTABLISH A SUSTAINABLE MODEL

If adults do not sign up to mentor through our model at a faster rate than they would through a traditional mentoring program, our thesis is lacking. We feel we have proven we can solve this problem and will speak to it in this report. Creating bottom up demand is our focal point for 2024. If students hear about our program and opt in without any adult coercion needed, then we will not only be creating a more positive experience for our mentors (and thus increasing retention), but we will significantly reduce expenses adding to the scalability of our approach.

Finally, to make our model sustainable, we must be able to keep our overhead low, turn mentors into donors, and create products that are in line with our missional objectives and that can generate income to support our programs. We believe we have these products in place but need more resources to test their impact and worth in the marketplace.



ASSESSING OUR 2023 RESULTS

In this section of our report, we will lay out the objectives we began 2023 with and the result of our efforts. Note that a “Certified Purpose Project Guide” is our terminology for a mentor.

We will begin with a recap of our key metrics.

143 STUDENTS SERVED

**83% REPORTED AN INCREASE TO THEIR CONNECTION TO IDENTITY
AND PURPOSE**

93 ACTIVE MENTORS

66% RETENTION

We began the year with the hope of engaging more schools that would help us radically increase our student reach to up to 1,000 teens. We fell short of achieving this because we underestimated how much time and focus it would take to address the infrastructure needs of our organization. In order to serve thousands of students, we would need to create a process for recruiting, training and retaining mentors that was more frictionless and automated. Instead of putting our efforts on connecting with schools, we pumped the brakes quickly and decided to invest in what we would need internally. As a result, we served 143 students.

The impact we had on these students was just shy of our expectation, however, this is in part due to our implementation of a more robust measurement process. We hired a third party to revamp our surveys and outcome tracking and were not able to implement the new system until September. This adjustment made it more challenging to accurately track results. We did, however, receive positive feedback from all 143 students with almost no negative comments.

Closing the year with 93 active mentors was also shy of our goal which we could have easily achieved if we had the funding to do so. More on this under the recap of our first objective.

OBJECTIVE 1:

Establish the Purpose Project as a scalable and effective, teen mentoring program that makes a significant impact in a short period of time.

GOALS:

- Add 100 New Guides (Mentors)
- Maintain 70% Active Guide Community
- 85% of students demonstrating a stronger connection to identity/purpose

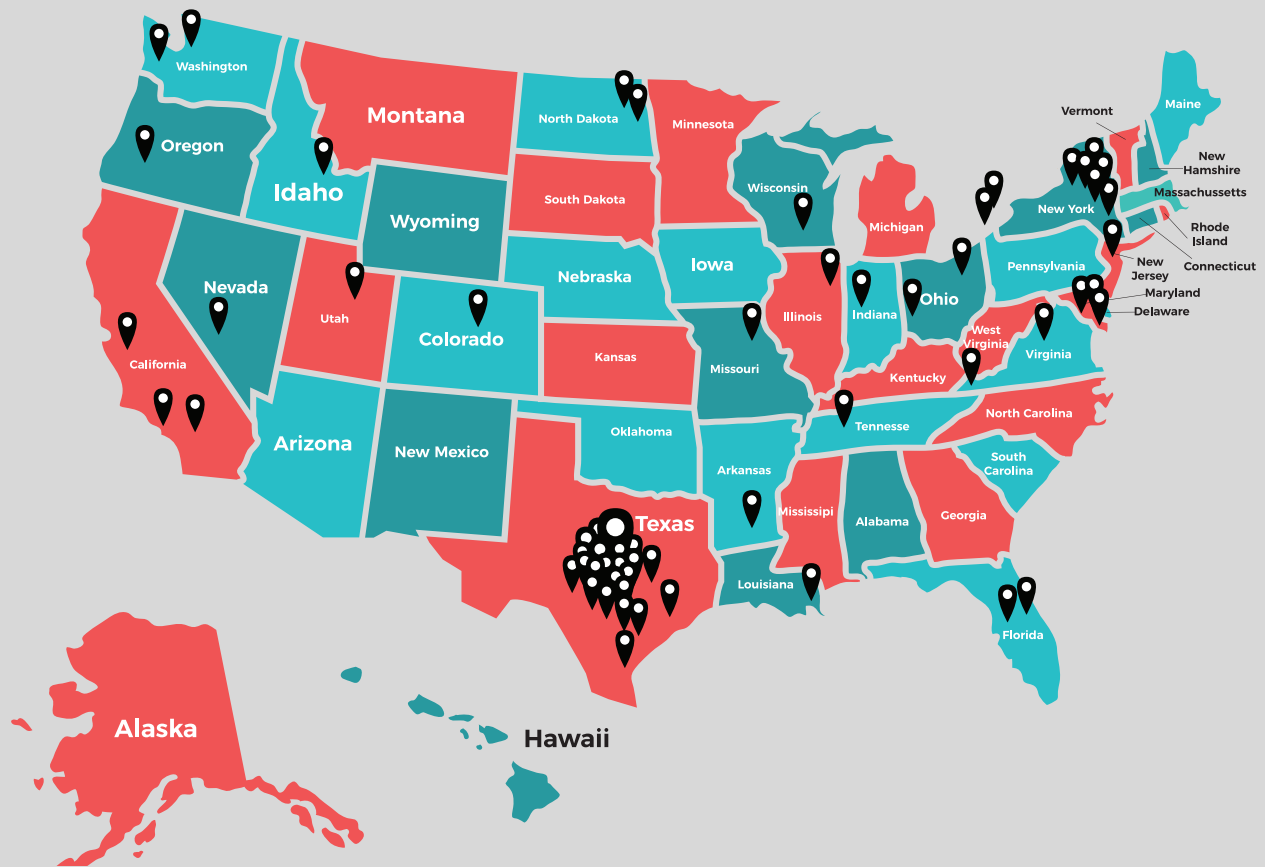
RESULT ACHIEVED:

- **36** Guides (Mentors) added for a total of **93** active mentors
- **76%** Active Guide Community
- **83%** of students demonstrating a stronger connection to identity/purpose

In the second year of our mentor certification program we had set our goal at 100 new mentors. We ran into two problems. The first problem is that we spent so much time trying to recruit mentors in 2022 that we took our focus off establishing more partner pipelines for students to be referred to us. By March we realized we were going to have more mentors than mentees, but with our small staff so focused on improving our infrastructure and processes, we did not put the needed focus into making sure we still had an influx of students coming in. Key staff changes at some of our juvenile court partners also created a hiccup in the number of students being referred.

We had anticipated that this might change by the fall and so, anxious to test our thesis on whether our model could recruit more mentors than our competitors, we ran a small ad on Volunteer Match during Q4. To our surprise, we received over 700 volunteer mentor applications in just 3 months proving that there may be a very large segment of our country that will mentor if traditional obstacles to mentoring can be overcome. While this brought much excitement to our team, it did not help us solve the student referral issue. As we enter into 2024, this issue is one of our top priorities to address. In the meantime, we feel we have a clear path to being able to inspire adults to mentor that no other organization has!

NEW MENTOR BREAKDOWN BY STATE



TOTAL CERTIFIED GUIDES SINCE 2022: **140**

TOTAL ACTIVE GUIDES: **93**

TOTAL INACTIVE GUIDES: **47**

RETENTION RATE: **66%**

What was the most helpful thing you learned?

“One important skill I took home was the use of the SWOT Analysis. It is straightforward and can be very engaging in a way that allows you to be vulnerable with yourself and eventually be able to see how your Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats lead to your overall well-being and how you fulfill purpose.”

~2023 Mentee



OBJECTIVE 2:

Make our process for recruiting, training and retaining mentors the best it can be.

GOALS:

- Develop 10 Strategic Partnerships
- 80% Guide Certification Completion within 60 days of intro call
- Reduce support response time to 24 hours or less

RESULT ACHIEVED:

- **6** Strategic Partnerships
- **80%** of Guides Certified within **60** days of intro call
- Average support response time was **<1.5** hours

Again, the focus on infrastructure and creating a more frictionless process had a direct impact on our bandwidth to develop new partners. In late Q3, we hired someone part time to help us address this need and we feel we will have a ripe funnel of students for our mentors by the spring of 2024.

Since we did not need as many mentors, we also did not rush them through the certification process. We did feel it was important to maintain a culture of excellence by improving our response times to mentors and parents that needed our help. By the end of the year we had tracked every incoming question or need and saw that it only took us on average about 90 minutes to reply.



OBJECTIVE 3:

Leverage the full matching grant of \$100,000



GOAL:

- Raise \$100,000 in individual donations to reach our 100k match goal

RESULT ACHIEVED:

- We raised **\$244,378** in individual donations!

The first nine months of the year were rough financially. We barely squeaked by each month and there were some months that our Executive Director skipped his salary in order to make payroll. Heading into the last quarter, our board was in favor of plans that would scale back our planned growth in order to become healthier financially. Due to some very large contributions and a record breaking influx of donations in Q4, we were able to establish a plan for 2024 that would reduce expenses without impacting our growth. Unfortunately, that meant we needed to let go of some of our staff and contractors. A leaner, more focused version of Catalyst was needed to be able to reach our full potential and prove this model could find a path to sustainability.

Part of this plan also included hiring our first, full time, fundraiser. We felt strongly about a candidate that we had in our community who would meet all of our requirements and be able to embody the story of Catalyst. As of January 15th, 2024, we made Aaron Alba, our former student, intern and part time staff member, our new Development Director. Aaron will pursue donor and partner development alongside our Executive Director, Joe Elliott, and CMO, Kenny Camp.



OBJECTIVE 4:

Deliver exceptional service to our paying clients.

GOALS:

- Sell 50 Certified Licenses to Strategic Partnering Orgs
- Acquire 2 new Juvenile Justice Contracts
- Sign 10 School Curriculum Contracts

RESULT ACHIEVED:

- Sold 4 Licenses
- Acquired 1 new Juvenile Justice Contract
- Signed 1 School

Delivering exceptional service is easy when you don't have a ton of clients. We entered 2023 with the idea that we would have plenty of time to allot to this objective, we were wrong. Here is what we did accomplish instead in order to deliver exceptional service to the tons of clients we expect to have in the future.

Launched a Mobile Version of Purpose Pro Labs - Purpose Pro Labs is our custom software solution to track mentor/mentee engagement as well as host our curriculum and materials that our mentors use. We found a high school teen in our community that had knowledge of creating mobile apps and he volunteered his time to create and launch a Purpose Pro Labs mobile app for Apple and Android devices. Now mentors can easily access mentor information and resources on the go while they connect with their mentees remotely.

Launched a Mentor Community Platform through Circle - To stay engaged with our mentor community, we created an online group through the Circle App (think Slack or FB Group but without all the noise). Our hope here is to foster an organic way for our community of mentors to support one another, share wins, and find resources they can use in mentoring. Ideally this would cut down on our incoming calls and help retain our mentors. We have had 36 people join the platform so far and will continue to add to these numbers in 2024.

Created Automated Parent Email Notifications - After each session with a mentor, an automated email is sent to the parent informing them of what just took place in the meeting and providing them with some tips on how they can further invest in their teen around the topic. We envision this being a great way to get the parent involved in our process and spark more connection with their child. Since parents are often needing the same support students are in terms of discovering their unique design and purpose, these emails also invite them to experience the Purpose Project for themselves.

Improved Outcome Tracking Measurements - We hit on this earlier, but a more robust form of outcome tracking was put in place to monitor both the short term and long term impact of our program.

Built Faster Tracking and Reports through Salesforce - Reporting helps us know where we stand and what we need to adjust in real time. We were lucky enough to find a dedicated volunteer to help us move off of excel spreadsheets and created a more sophisticated form of tracking what is happening throughout our organization

Together, all of these projects result in saving our staff time and allowing us to focus on the big issues. We will continue to make things even more efficient as we move forward which will enhance the experience our present and future clients have with us.

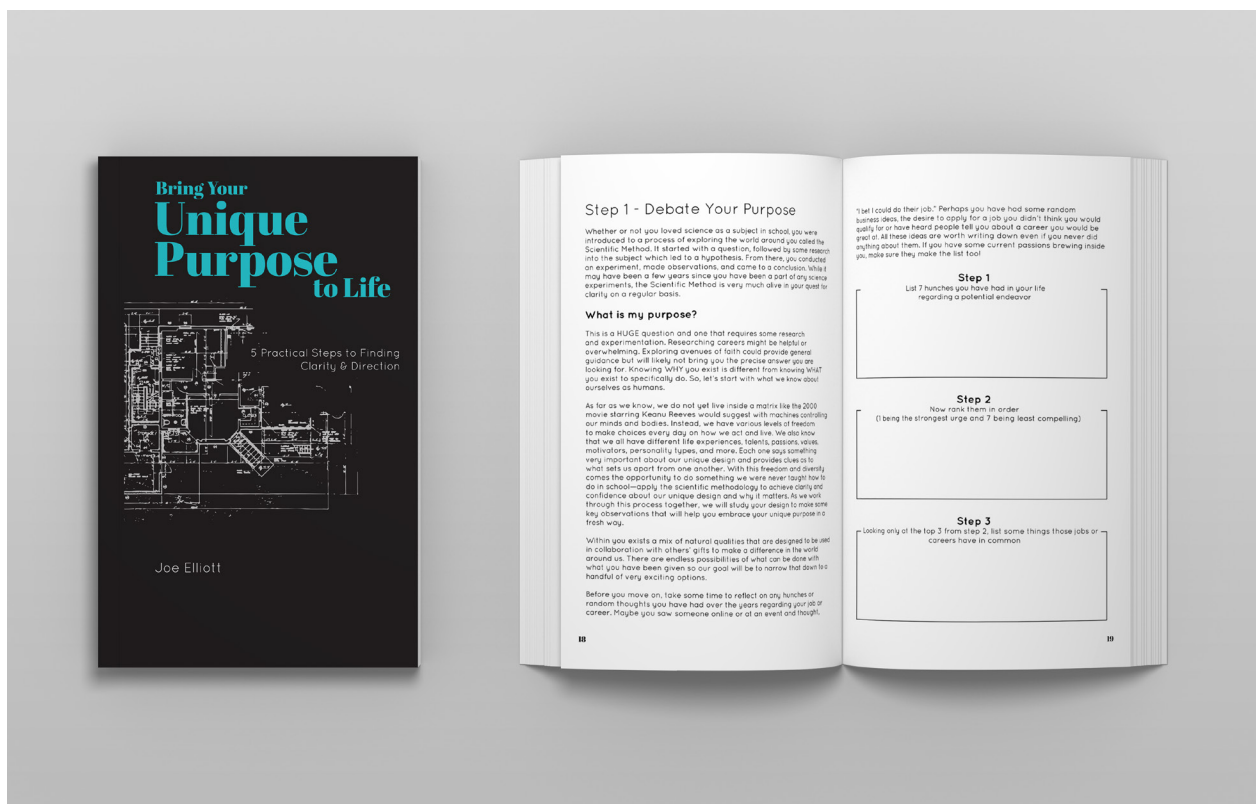


HONORABLE MENTIONS

A few more things worth mentioning...

Ivy Scholars Partnership - We launched a strategic partnership with Ivy League Scholars out of Houston which has given us a pathway to encourage the teens and parents we serve around preparing for college. We gave one of the teens from their program the reins to Season 6 of our Purpose Pro Podcast. She produced a number of episodes addressing the mental health challenges for teens. We also collaborated on a monthly College Admissions Webinar, available on our YouTube channel, and launched a scholarship program specifically for Catalyst teens.

Published a New Book - In October, we released our second book, Bring Your Unique Purpose to Life. This book was written for post high school adults who feel stuck in life and need guidance in discovering their path. It is available for sale on Amazon and is used as a promotional tool for our organization.





What did you appreciate most about your guide?

“She was very helpful in helping me organize my thoughts in a way that I could make sense of and helping me think through things about my future that I probably wouldn’t have come up with on my own.”

~2023 Mentee

2024 OBJECTIVES

With our vision to address the mentoring gap in America and help this generation build a strong foundation of identity, purpose and belonging, we must remain innovative, nimble and locked in on what we see working. We have 3 primary objectives as we enter into 2024.

OBJECTIVE 1:

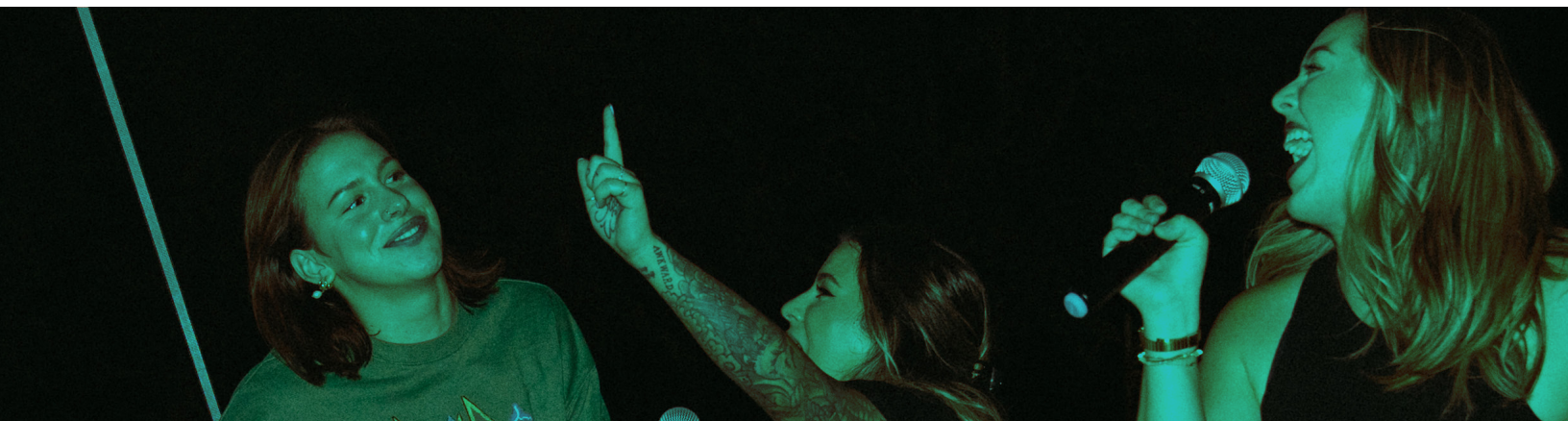
Establish the Purpose Project mentoring program as a scalable and effective alternative to traditional mentoring models that makes a significant impact in a short period of time.

GOALS:

- Reach 150 active mentors and serve 200 students
- Maintain a 70% retention rate of mentors
- 85% of students demonstrating a deeper connection to identity, purpose
- Develop a team of 7 Master Guides able to serve our mentor community.

Our first goal is to slow down our onboarding of new mentors until we can balance the equation with more incoming students to connect them to. While we expect to serve 200 students through our volunteer mentor community, we believe we can serve 100 more students through new partnerships with schools and organizations trained to use our Purpose Project material.

We will also be focusing on our mentor retention, continued effectiveness of our program with teens and launching a “Master Guide” initiative to help us continue to serve our growing mentor community.





OBJECTIVE 2:

Multiply our Purpose Project model through the recruitment and development of strategic partners who are guiding the next generation.

GOALS:

- Add 10 new strategic partners who become licensed to use the Purpose Project in their own context.
- Prove new strategic partners can successfully implement the Purpose Project model

A key role of our new Development Director will be to help us expand our impact not just through monetary resources, but also through empowering other organizations who become licensed partners and use the Purpose Project to serve students in their own context. This will require us to identify and present opportunities to groups serving teens and then walk with them to ensure a successful implementation. We expect we will learn much this year about the need for our solution in the market and how well it can be used to successfully guide teens and young adults.

OBJECTIVE 3:

Increase the resources (funding and people) we need to fuel our mission.

GOALS:

- Increase Donor Acquisition & Retention
- Write \$700,000 in grants resulting in \$185,000 in funding
- Expand our Board of Directors from 6 to 11 members
- Establish a reserve fund of 4 months operating expenses

These goals are clear and speak for themselves. Resources are the main bottleneck to our growth and impact.

FINANCIALS



	INCOME	EXPENSES	TOTAL NET
2014	\$95,170	\$92,352	\$2,818
2015	\$133,593	\$136,095	-\$2,502
2016	\$166,959	\$161,513	\$5,446
2017	\$160,764	\$152,246	\$8,518
2018	\$192,131	\$186,369	\$5,762
2019	\$169,807	\$171,046	-\$1,239
2020	\$174,807	\$149,288	\$25,519
2021	\$239,524	\$237,571	\$1,953
2022	\$276,396	\$244,448	\$31,948
2023	\$467,151	\$381,862	\$85,289

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Our heart wants to say YES to every young person we meet that is looking for guidance, support and counsel. The challenge is we do not have enough staff or volunteers available to connect with the number of young people we are meeting. The greatest gift you could give to the next generation is your effort. Here is how you can join the ground-breaking work Catalyst is doing and experience the development of your own gifts and passions at the same time.

OPTION 1:

Sign up for a Purpose Project private workshop yourself and become a certified guide afterward if you have one hour a week you can invest in a teen or young adult for 6 weeks. You can do this all remotely! Get started right now at www.purposepro.org.

OPTION 2:

Become a financial partner and sponsor the next student or mentor who desires to experience the Purpose Project. Visit www.catalystcollective.community and select Donate.



SPONSORS

Dell Computers

Emerson

Mama Bettys Tex Mex

Williamson County Juvenile Services

Williamson County Transformative Justice

Travis County Juvenile Services

Topaz Sales Consulting

Ballistic Blade

Wilco Workspaces

Beach Automotive

Kenneth A Camp Coaching and Consulting

United Way of Greater Austin

Hill Country Bible Church

King of Kings Lutheran Church

Thrivent Financial

Summermoon Lockhart

Austin Bridge Builder Alliance

Crystal Wilcox Insurance

Faith Elliott Photography

Wild Roots Glamping and Gatherings

BOARD

Tabatha Callaway, Chairman (Recommitted for 2024)

MSB School Services, CEO

Ron Beach, Vice Chairman (Recommitted for 2024)

Beach Automotive, Owner

Lucia Csoma, Secretary (Recommitted for 2024)

Personal Development Coach

Wendell Williams, Board Member (Recommitted for 2024)

Mosaic Church, Student Pastor

Tyler Schuetze, Board Member (Recommitted for 2024)

Service Operations Manager, Moxion

Susan Keen, Board Member (New for 2024)

Retired Educator





What was the most meaningful to you?

“Gave me a new perspective on life goals and accomplishing them”

~2023 Mentee



What's one definite next step you'll take?

"Think before doing something"

~2023 Mentee

CLOSING THOUGHT

I had the opportunity to present the mission of Catalyst to a group of teens who had been given a small grant to give away to a non-profit of their choosing. My presentation was brief but as I described our mentoring program I saw them one by one lean in with anticipation. After I finished my pitch questions immediately came my way. ...Can I be certified as a mentor to help my friends? ...Can I take this course for myself? ...Can my parents also do this? ...Can I connect with a mentor in a different state?

I was not surprised by any of these questions as this is what typically happens when students have a chance to learn about Catalyst. They quickly realize that this is not just a mentoring program, it's a lifeline. They are drowning in a sea of noise, isolation and depravity that has them more lost than ever. I leave those experiences wishing I had more time to speak to more students.

The reality is I can make more time by increasing the funding coming into our organization. On the surface it appears as though we are a multi-million dollar operation. We clearly are not, yet. I do envision a day where I can leverage my time and strengths to primarily speak and motivate both teens and adults. In the meantime, my presence is required to continue to help with operations until the ability to outsource these tasks becomes available.

I believe we have the right people in the right roles focused on the right objectives and, God willing, our 2024 accomplishments will affirm that. My role as Founder and ED will continue to be fluid for another few years but eventually, I believe I can best serve this mission by being its spokesperson. I will press forward with that end in mind. Until then, we have some big goals to tackle in 2024 and I am excited to see where this goes. I hope you are too.

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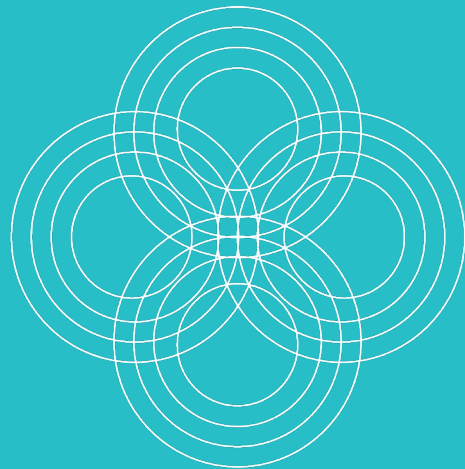
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Chat with us online at www.catalystcollective.community





CATALYST
COLLECTIVE



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