

Expressions of Thanks - Annual Gratitude Newsletter



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Gratitude is the attitude that changes everything.

*To be grateful for something is to see it and acknowledge it as a gift,
even when the gift is not immediately apparent.*

City Startup Labs was launched ten years ago, this past January, with the idea of developing entrepreneurial talent and capacity within young Black men in Charlotte.

It was a new and potent idea that was full of possibilities and promise. It wasn't a complete seat-of-the-pants operation, but it sure was a one-man band. And, even though at that time, the gifts weren't always readily apparent – they were there, if you knew where to look.

It showed up in the young men's eagerness to try-on this entrepreneurship thing and make a go of it. It was there in the band-of-brothers that formed and the explorations into manhood that resulted. And it was there, in the biggest gift - when they allowed me to earn their trust.



I wasn't aware of it at the time, but these guys were going to be up to something amazing. Ten years on, here's a partial snapshot: one is a professor at Stanford, another builds data centers for Google, another became a doctor of physical and occupational therapy, after receiving a kidney transplant, yet another runs one of Charlotte's most impactful community organizations, while another is a marketing director for the City, while also becoming the entrepreneur that he imagined back then.

...even when the gift is not immediately apparent!

On October 10th City Startup Labs hosted a Tenth Anniversary

This video captures moments of gratitude that were expressed during that event.



We've also included some added video remarks of our CSL alum below...



Participant Remarks

Fast forward to today, we now guide justice-impacted folks, as they attempt to navigate the risky startup waters with the ReEntry Entrepreneurship Program (REEP).



We're working with our 6th cohort, which will soon wrap up next month (stay tuned through CSL's social media channels).



Along with REEP, we continue to be thankful for the opportunity of Restorative Pathways — City Startup Labs' reentry workplace readiness project with Atrium Health. On November 8th, we graduated our seventh cohort here in Charlotte and with that now over 100 justice-impacted people have been given the opportunity to chart their career course in healthcare.



Left to right (standing) LeeRoy Jordan, Shaheedah Jackson, Angel Padilla, Travis Williams, Brandon Moore, Megan Van Fleet,
(seated) Margaret Velez, Henry Rock, Camille Stephens

Finally, one gift that is immediately apparent is the amazing group of people who make up the CSL team. We are incredibly lucky to have dedicated folks who are willing to go above and beyond day in and day out on behalf of the people we are fortunate to serve. We're all underpaid and overworked but there is rarely a day when we aren't smiling and enjoying carrying on with our mission. By design, CSL is entrepreneurial, and it shows up in our experimentation, iteration and continuous improvements. But, this couldn't happen without the right people and City Startup Labs is most grateful to have been gifted with them.

We keep counting our blessings and the more we do, the more we have.

Read all about it!

10 YEARS OF IMPACT REPORT

MAKE YOUR 10TH ANNIVERSARY CONTRIBUTION HERE

With Gratitude,

Henry Rock



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