

RELATIONSHIPS WORK

2024 IMPACT REPORT

The Role of Mentorship
and How it Affects Our
Collective Future

ELEVATE
USA



OUR MISSION

Building long-term, life-changing relationships with youth, equipping them to thrive and contribute to their community.



A MESSAGE FROM KEVIN BYERLEY

Dear friends,

42 years ago, Dr. Kent Hutcheson created Colorado UpLift as a jobs program for Denver's youth. He knew that workforce readiness was a key element for a future of thriving, and his passion was to help under-resourced young people find hope in hopeless circumstances. That program quickly morphed into the Elevate model we use today – complete with teaching character qualities and life skills to thousands of students all around the country.

While the model has greatly expanded from the original jobs program, the mission of creating thriving contributors remains the same. But what does it mean to be a thriving contributor? As the crux of our mission at Elevate, it is worth dissecting precisely what this means.

Every year, we invest significant funding into evaluating our students in four key areas: School Success, Character Development, Community Engagement, and Social Emotional Health. (The pages that follow illustrate our latest findings for each of these among Elevate students). We know that when we can move the needle in these four areas, we are fostering a thriving contributor. All of this is driven by relationships with their Teacher Mentor. Here are three things we know for certain:

Relationships prepare young people for work.

A young person who is a thriving contributor has a high level of workforce readiness. They've developed the hard and soft skills necessary to become gainfully employed, support themselves and a family, obtain work and life satisfaction, and become leaders every place they step foot. It means becoming an effective employee, and for many, it even means becoming an effective employer.

Relationships require work.

It is no small feat to bring 24/7/365 mentorship to tens of thousands of students across the country; to teach kids character qualities and life skills in a digital, post-Covid age; and to build "bottom-up" infrastructure and systems that disrupt well-worn paths of trauma, poverty and instability. Teacher Mentors are doing this every day. "It's more than a job, it's a calling." This is the culture and attitude of Elevate Teacher Mentors when it comes to their role. This is the work, and it requires all of us.

Relationships work.

Looking at the data, this is the simplest, truest conclusion we can form. Transformation happens through relationships that are deep and long-term.

DEPTH x TIME = TRANSFORMATION

Like anything truly transformational, there are no shortcuts here. Only work. I will let the data in this report speak for itself. Thank you for your support and generosity as we co-labor for a better future.

With immense gratitude,



Kevin Byerley, CEO

THE PROBLEM

YOUTH ARE EXPERIENCING UNPRECEDENTED MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES.

47% of students say they are moderately or extremely **DEPRESSED**.¹

55% of young people report a **MENTAL ILLNESS** diagnosis or treatment, compared to 31% of those aged 55-64.²



Young people are spending nearly **5 HOURS PER DAY ON SOCIAL MEDIA**³, but less than **30 MINUTES PER DAY VOLUNTEERING**.⁴

YOUNG PEOPLE ARE NOT PURSUING HIGHER EDUCATION.



In the past decade, total college enrollment has dropped by nearly **1.5 MILLION** students, or about **7.4%**.⁵

The undergrad college enrollment decline has accelerated since the pandemic, resulting in a loss of over **900,000 STUDENTS**, or **6%**, between fall 2019 and 2023.⁶

900,000 STUDENTS

4%

of low-income students attend **SELECTIVE 4-YEAR COLLEGES**, compared to 33% of higher-income households.⁷



Educational attainment has been widely recognized as a **ROOT OF HEALTH DISPARITIES**. People with higher levels of education have **BETTER HEALTH STATUS** by almost every health measure.¹⁵

The nation risks a weakened economy and limited opportunities for gainful and meaningful work without addressing these gaps. Preparing the next generation is crucial for personal and societal growth, and vital for sustaining thriving communities.

YOUNG PEOPLE ARE NOT WORKFORCE-READY.

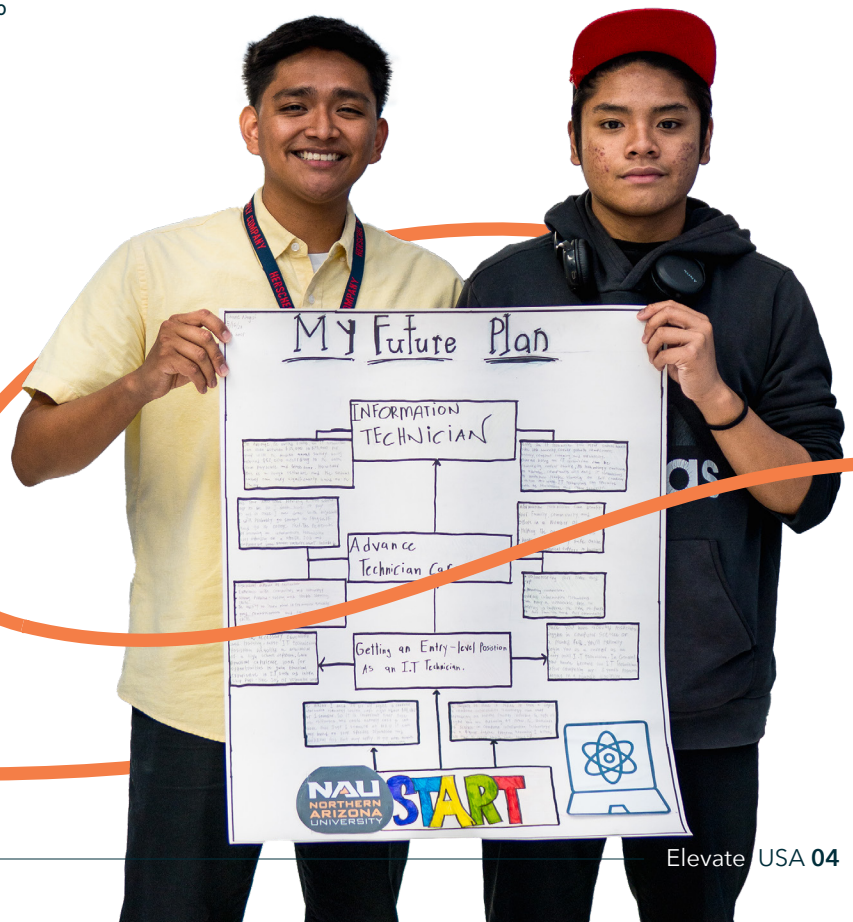
60% of executives, directors and managers surveyed in a 2024 study agreed that recent college graduates (Gen-Z employees) are **UNPREPARED FOR THE WORKFORCE**.⁸

73% of employers rated **TEAMWORK AND COLLABORATION** as “very important,” but **ONLY 27%** of new hires were rated highly proficient in these skills.⁹

92% of employers report a **LACK OF ESSENTIAL SOFT SKILLS** among job candidates.¹⁰

SOFT SKILLS INCLUDE:

- “People skills”
- Problem-solving
- Emotional intelligence
- Professionalism
- Time management
- Ability to handle feedback



OUR SOLUTION

The Elevate model is dedicated to developing students of character, who have the social-emotional intelligence to navigate anything that life throws their way, who actively engage in their community, and whose grades and post-secondary plans reflect all of this. The following four areas of thriving are made possible by relationships (**DEPTH** x **TIME**).

1. SCHOOL SUCCESS

Pass their Classes Because of their Teacher Mentor:

No deep relationship
with Teacher Mentor

21%

Deep relationship
with Teacher Mentor

40%

Engaged in School:

No deep relationship
with Teacher Mentor

33%

Deep relationship
with Teacher Mentor

59%

Why does school success matter?

Over a lifetime of working, those without a HS diploma can expect to earn about 75% of what one with a high school diploma may earn, and less than half (46.2%) of the potential income of someone with a college degree (Current Population Survey).

"Because of Elevate, I was able to graduate top ten of my class and received a scholarship, which alleviated the financial burden on my family."

- Elevate Student

Those four things, woven together, build holistic transformation in students' lives.

DEPTH x TIME = CHARACTER TRANSFORMATION
DEPTH x TIME = EDUCATIONAL TRANSFORMATION
DEPTH x TIME = SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL TRANSFORMATION
DEPTH x TIME = COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION



2. SOCIAL EMOTIONAL HEALTH

Students Who Are Not Afraid to Try New Things:

No deep relationship
with Teacher Mentor

45%

Deep relationship
with Teacher Mentor

70%

Students Who Have Adult Friends for Support:

No deep relationship
with Teacher Mentor

30%

Deep relationship
with Teacher Mentor

53%

Why does social-emotional health matter?

A 2019 study revealed that out of 500 people managers, 75% use emotional intelligence levels as a criteria for considering a team member for a promotion or raise.¹¹



"Before, I couldn't talk properly in front of my classmates because I was nervous. But now I can talk in front of them without feeling nervous or anxious. The lessons encourage me to work harder on my personal goals and mindset."

- Elevate Student

3. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Students Who Serve Regularly Because of Their Teacher Mentors:

No deep relationship
with Teacher Mentor

26%

Deep relationship
with Teacher Mentor

57%

Students Who Say Their Peers Select Them to Lead:

No deep relationship
with Teacher Mentor

19%

Deep relationship
with Teacher Mentor

40%

Why does community engagement matter?

Students who performed voluntary community service are 19% more likely to graduate from college than those who did not.¹² Volunteering is also associated with 27% higher odds of employment.¹³

"Elevate has given our students experiences outside of the building that they would not have had otherwise and from which they benefited immeasurably."

- Principal, The Bridge Academy



4. CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Students Who Say They Are Hard Workers:

No deep relationship
with Teacher Mentor

51%

Deep relationship
with Teacher Mentor

81%

Students Who Help Others Learn:

No deep relationship
with Teacher Mentor

54%

Deep relationship
with Teacher Mentor

84%

Why does character matter?

Studies show that holding leadership positions in high school increases self-esteem, teaches teamwork and communication skills, & leads to higher pay after graduation - up to 33% more!¹⁴

"My experience with Elevate has been incredible. They have helped me grow as a person and be more mature. This experience has changed me and taught me what it actually means to be a leader."

- Elevate Student



RISING RESILIENCE

How One Elevate Savannah Student Rose from the Ashes of Tragedy

In the warm embrace of Savannah's moss-draped trees, Nasir found himself navigating a new life, far from the familiar streets of Philadelphia. After a devastating house fire took everything he knew, he was thrust into uncharted territory as he and his mother tried to rebuild what they lost. Savannah was a world away, with its slow rhythms and sunlit charm, and he didn't know a soul as he entered Alfred E. Beach High School.

But everything began to change when Nasir joined Elevate Savannah. It was then he discovered a community that welcomed him with open arms. His Teacher Mentors nurtured his leadership and public speaking skills, igniting a passion he hadn't realized was always there. Through Elevate, he helped create the Elevate Savannah Student Ambassadors (ESSA), where he not only found his voice but also encouraged others to share theirs.

Now, in his senior year, Nasir is student body president, a testament to the respect he has earned among his peers. With a GPA ranked 8th among hundreds of seniors, he balances academics with leadership, becoming a role model for others. As a member of Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), he was chosen as one of twelve students nationwide to pitch his business concept at the National Leadership Conference, impressing CEOs of major fortune 500 companies. His impressive resume is fueled by his desire to inspire and build a bright future for his family, especially the little ones he had saved from the flames—his baby niece and nephew.

With dreams of attending the University of Georgia or Georgia Southern to study business management, Nasir envisions a future where he is a successful CEO and can buy his mom a house. In every challenge he faces, he views it as an opportunity to elevate others, proving that from the ashes of loss, a new, vibrant life can flourish.

WATCH FOR NASIR'S STORY ON ELEVATE USA'S YOUTUBE CHANNEL, COMING SOON!

<https://www.youtube.com/@elevateusa8975/videos>

NASIR'S JOURNEY



SCAN TO HEAR
MORE FROM
NASIR AND HIS
FBLA EXPERIENCE



THERE IS WORK TO BE DONE

Elevate USA has set out to create a tipping point of positive societal change, one thriving student at a time. We currently have a network of 21 Elevate affiliates around the country which serves 12,926 students annually, and have ambitious goals to expand our network to more cities.

HOW

- Through cultivating a culture of trust, empowerment and respect as a model for our students and communities.
- Through equipping affiliates with best practices that lead to bold and measurable impact.
- Through uniting our community of stakeholders around developing the wholeness and potential of every child.

WHY

- Because building generations of thriving leaders will transform communities and this nation.
- Because every student is intrinsically valuable and of infinite worth.



Elevate USA supports these 21 affiliates, and launches new affiliates to join the network.



SO LET'S GET TO IT

THE DATA IS CLEAR

Elevate students are doing their work, and it is significant. Join our young people, 21 Elevate affiliates, and Elevate USA as we co-labor to build the next generation of thriving leaders.



STUDENTS ARE DOING THEIR PART...
WHAT'S **YOURS?**

elevatetheusa.org/donate

ANNOTATIONS



Dr. Paul Penley, Excellence in Giving Managing Director, Research Division // Dr. Penley manages the company's research division and leads projects to inform effective grantmaking strategies. He has refined methods for nonprofit due diligence and tracking post-grant impact. He has completed on-site evaluations in a dozen countries around the world. Dr. Penley specializes in creating outcome measurement systems for internal and external reporting of program effectiveness. He has presented his approach at community foundations, Philanthropy Roundtable meetings, and Yale Philanthropy Conference. He has published research insights in Alliance magazine, Planned Giving Today, and OUTCOMES magazine. Dr. Penley's ability to identify predictive indicators of mission failure or success allows those he advises to support high-performing charities making the difference they want to fund.



Search Institute // The Search Institute promotes positive youth development and advances equity through research and practical solutions. Search Institute is a nonprofit organization with a sixty-plus-year history of collaboration with partners to conduct and apply research that promotes positive youth development and advances equity. Their tools build connections that help all young people learn and grow. searchinstitute.org

1. Springtide Research Institute. The State of Religion & Young People 2022: Mental Health—What Faith Leaders Need to Know | 2. McKinsey & Company. How does gen Z see its place in the working world? with trepidation. 2022. | 3. American Psychology Association. DeAngelis, T. (n.d.). Teens are spending nearly 5 hours daily on social media. Here are the mental health outcomes. Monitor on Psychology. | 4. Latham, M. 2003, Young Volunteers: The Benefits of Community Service, Extension | University of Nevada, Reno, FS-03-23 | 5. National Student Clearinghouse Research Center (NSCRC). Current Term Enrollment Estimates Fall 2013. January 2014. | 6. Berg, B., Causey, J., Cohen, J., Randolph, B., & Shapiro, D. Current Term Enrollment Estimates: Fall 2023, Herndon, VA: NSCRC. January 2024. | 7. The Pell Institute; PennAHEAD. Indicators of Higher Education Equity in the United States: 2022 Historical Trend Report. | 8. Heubeck, E. (2024, February 29). Gen Z lacks job-readiness skills, survey shows. Education Week. | 9. Communication and Collaboration: A survey by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) in 2022 | 10. World Economic Forum's. Future of Jobs Report. 2023. | 11. Lee Hecht Harrison Penna Survey. 2019 | 12. Davila & Mora, 2007 | 13. Americorps | 14. 2017 Harvard Business Review | 15. (Woolf & Braveman, 2011)

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CHANCE AT A PRODUCTIVE
LIFE, A CHILD MUST HAVE
AT LEAST ONE ADULT
RELATIONSHIP THAT
IS POSITIVE, CARING
AND LONG-TERM.”**

– DR. DEL ELLIOT



ELEVATE USA



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