



Beyond Boundaries, Creating Futures:
Unveiling a Year of Impact and Solidarity

2023

Annual
Report





A world where our young adults are empowered to find, define, & follow their passion into the workforce or entrepreneurship and cause a ripple effect, transforming families and communities while inspiring the next generation of youth.



Inspire under-resourced young adults to overcome adversity and empower them to leverage their passion through mentoring, partner events, festivals, excursions, and innovative workshops.

Our strategies open up pathways to young adults exploring their personal passions by offering alternative safe spaces that will mitigate crime, serve as creative hubs, and improve economic sustainability in under-resourced communities. While entertainment can reach thousands of young adults, opportunities to display their talent, and much needed resources offered in innovative and creative ways will help them find, define, and follow their passion, a light switch that can generate confidence and motivation, and inspire communities.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO YOU?

What do you want to be when you grow up? It's a question every adult asks us as we make our way through the world.

For some, the answer is an astronaut, lawyer, or pilot. For others, it might be a chef or DJ.

Whoever you are, whatever your answer is, we'd be willing to bet it is something that stretches the limits of your imagination. Something that ignites your passion.

Every child should have that chance to dream. Unfortunately, some of them don't. Many kids are thrown into violent and uncertain situations simply based on where they grow up. Suddenly, their focus turns more toward staying out of a gang, or simply staying alive, rather than pursuing the career of their dreams.

WE ARE DEDICATED TO TRANSFORMING THIS SITUATION. HOWEVER, WE FULLY UNDERSTAND THE CHALLENGE AHEAD...

- 20% of U.S. homicides occur in the local Chicago area.
- Chicago area kids witness their first shooting at an average age of 14. The average age for being shot? Only 17.
- December 2022 was the most violent month in Chicago since 2016 (55 murders).





HOW CAN CHILDREN FOCUS ON FOLLOWING THEIR PASSION WITH THINGS LIKE THIS HAPPENING AROUND THEM?

The silver lining is that researchers have pinpointed that 21.1% of this activity takes place between 4 and 7 pm. If we can keep kids off the street during that time, working toward their dreams, our community can win!

That's exactly what we're doing at YourPassion1st. We're offering kids in Chicago and internationally opportunities to pursue their passion during those crucial hours of 4 and 7 pm, as well as our in-school offerings, and night/weekend opportunities.

We offer mentoring in areas like music/entertainment, sports/wellness, and culinary/nutrition. Kids in our programs also experience cross-cultural networking, employment opportunities, and exposure to leaders in their industry via our collaborative festival events. They also get to experience the reward of using their unique skills to give back to the community through our innovative workshops.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

- OUR 4TH ANNUAL WELLNESS FESTIVAL (IN PARTNERSHIP W/ A GREATER GOOD FOUNDATION & MI CASA HOLIDAY, AND 2ND ANNUAL YOUTH EMPOWERMENT MUSIC FESTIVAL HAD 600 ATTENDEES EACH!
- WE ENGAGED 500+ YOUTH IN 2023 THROUGH OUR LIBRARY/SCHOOL PROGRAMS, WORKSHOPS, FESTIVALS & EVENTS.
- OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH WHAT ABOUT US CHARITABLE ENTERPRISES HAS RESULTED IN MEALS FOR 960+ FAMILIES IN THE CHICAGO AREA IN 2023, AS WELL AS OUR COLLABORATIVE MENTORING PROGRAM AT THE AUSTIN NORTH LIBRARY.

IN 2023, WE MADE SOME INCREDIBLE STRIDES TOWARD ACCOMPLISHING OUR MISSION.

- We coached (1 on 1) 39 young adults through our entrepreneurship program (13 from Oak Park, 22 from Austin/Garfield Park/Hermosa/Belmont Cragin, and 4 from South Africa). Out of those 39, 26 were able to start their journey toward making their passion a career through paid opportunities.
- Our program with the Oak Park Library has allowed us to touch the lives of about 15 young adults per week, guiding them toward a career or business they'll love every day.
- We've started a new Youth-led Podcast called The Undivided Bridge focused on bridging the gap between Austin & Oak Park (IG, FB, YouTube @theundividedbridge).

FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT OF THE YEAR 2023

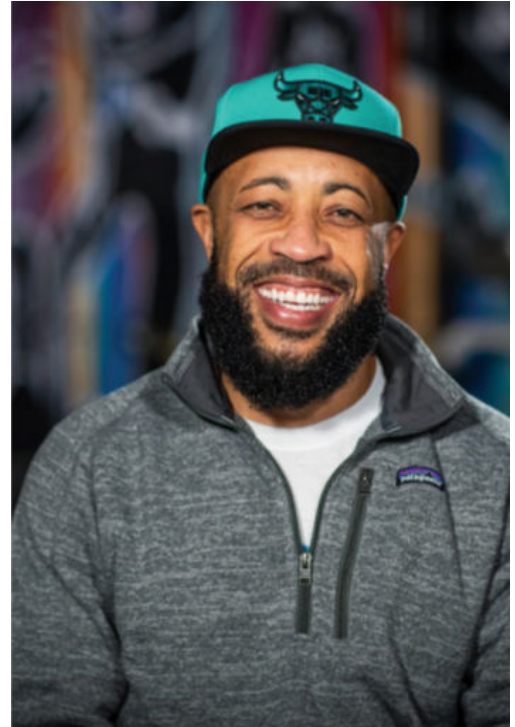
Total Raised: \$302,841	Individual: \$32,203
	Foundations: \$22,527
	Corporations: \$7,950
	Public Funding (state, city, libraries, schools): \$240,161

Net Expenses: \$275,502	General Expenses: \$147,661
	Program Expenses: \$136,328

A Message from our Founder

“We’ve come along way in the past 4 years, and it’s a testament to the hard work by all of our YourPassion1st community. As a child I dreamed of having one of the dopest community centers around, and while we are not there just yet, we are well on our way. Remember, in order to achieve your dreams, you have to follow #YourPassion1st.”

Chris Thomas
Founder & Executive Director



A Message from the YourPassion1st Team



“None of this would be possible without the help of our donors, volunteers, mentors, and, of course, our amazing kids. We want to extend a huge, heartfelt thank you to everyone who helped us in some way this year. Our results this year have been amazing and we’re excited to do even more together in 2024!”



HELPING YOUNG ADULTS ACHIEVE THEIR DREAMS THROUGH A DREAM TEAM

Our partners represented below have played a crucial role into helping the organization make an impact in the greater Chicago community and across the globe in Brazil and South Africa. YourPassion1st is forever grateful for our partners!



FEB 12TH 2024

How can you help?

Interested in being a mentor or volunteer?

Volunteer Days twice a month starting in April to support Festivals & Events

Generally 4 hour windows on weekends

Signup to learn more:

<https://jtmt.typeform.com/to/OHGK3GBq>

Interested in being on our advisory board or board of directors?

Follow the link below for further details:

<https://www.yourpassion1st.com/contact>

Interested in being on our Podcast?

Do you have some knowledge/tips to drop our young adults?

Does your organization offer opportunities for young adults?

Sign-up today: <https://jtmt.typeform.com/to/OHGK3GBq>

Interested in being a partner at one of our festivals in 2024?

Below are the types of engagement experiences we look to produce:

Explore: the opportunity to get hands-on experience that day

Participate: the opportunity to physically interact and engage in your work

Learn: access to valuable insight and resources to expand their knowledge

Work: the ability to start a career on the spot by signing up for a program/interview, or the ability to create and/or sell something that day

Inspire: Intergenerational Testimonial/Spoken Word/Storytelling

Signup to learn more:

<https://jtmt.typeform.com/to/OHGK3GBq>

Interested in being a sponsor?



Donate Now | YourPassion1st
CONTACT: If you're looking for sponsorship opportunities, please contact us for the full story. We appreciate your support in helping us reach our goals.

Our Board

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PsyD

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