

2022 YEAR IN REVIEW



John Palmer

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

This past year I think all of us Springboard members as well as Springboard grantees breathed a sigh of relief as we were generally able to return to more routine programming and gatherings after two years of masked-up remoteness during the pandemic. During that time most of our grantees were forced to create some kind of remote programming for the kids they served. While this enabled them to continue to sustain and even grow their programs, getting back to in-person gatherings is, especially for the children and teens they serve, the most productive and gratifying way to participate in any program, and also in life!

In my years as a Springboard member, I have been so impressed and struck by the commitment our grantees have to their organizations. They have all recognized a need in their communities and have thought creatively about how they can utilize their skills to build organizations that can address those needs to the benefit of the young people in their communities. Five years ago I was fortunate to be asked to serve as Grantee Champion to this year's Springboard Award winner, Chicago Eco House. Over the course of those years I had the opportunity to meet with founder Quilen Blackwell on numerous occasions as he went through the process of developing and building his organization. It was just great to watch his organization "blossom" (pun intended) into what it has become today!

We as an organization help to underwrite the efforts of all these leaders, who in turn served thousands of children in the city of Chicago this past year. I am so proud to be a part of this, and honored to have had the opportunity to serve as President this past year. I retired from the investment business a few years ago, and when friends ask me how I am spending my time, one of the first things I like to tell them about is my involvement in the Springboard Foundation Fund and what we do in the city of Chicago. I hope you all are equally proud of your involvement and that you will have time in the coming year to attend our meetings and calls, and if time permits (this is my favorite thing to do and very gratifying) to make site visits to some of our grantees.

I am looking forward to seeing my successor, Doug Sharfstein, step into the role of President this coming year. Doug brings a ton of energy, experience and enthusiasm to the role, and with the extremely able guidance of Sejal Shah-Myers I am sure we will have an excellent 24th year.

Warm Regards,

JOHN PALMER

2022-2023 GRANTEES

BandWith Chicago	Lions Pride Mentoring
Box United	LOTUS
Boxing Out Negativity	New Community Outreach
Chicago Arts & Music Project	PRETTY, Inc.
Chicago Chess Foundation	Prismatic Movement
Chicago Eco House	Project Impact 180
Chicago Industrial Arts & Design Center	SHE Chicago
Chicago Mobile Makers	South Chicago Dance Theatre
Debate It Forward	Street Soccer USA
Downstage Arts	Student-led Ed
Dream Big Mentoring	Successful Inspirations After School Program
Focus Fairies	The Alliance 98
GoSTEM	The Bloc
Harv War Bangerz Boxing Club	Voices of Youth Ensemble

28 total grantees

68% are founded by intrepid leaders of color

64% of grantees are led by women

7 tutoring/mentoring | 6 sports | 5 arts & culture

4 STEM

2 career

1 design

1 debate

1 racial justice

1 violence prevention

SPRINGBOARD AWARD WINNER QUILLEN BLACKWELL GETS HIS FLOWERS

The Springboard Award recognizes a grantee in the fifth and final year of funding for the progress they have made. It can be an increase in the number of students served or locations, or improvement in the leadership and planning. All of these scenarios remind us of the ultimate goal of Springboard—strong, sustainable organizations—serving more students. This year's Springboard Award Winner is Quilen Blackwell of Chicago Eco House and below is an excerpt from his remarks highlighting the impact of Springboard.

"We started the Chicago Eco House in 2014 with the goal of transforming the inner-city economy through sustainability for high risk youth, and all we had at the time was a lot of youthful energy, faith that God would somehow make a way, and a budget of \$150 thanks to the very generous donation of one of my friends who took a chance on us.

We were a rag tag outfit barely keeping our heads above water by the time Springboard threw us a lifeline in 2018. They offered our fledgling organization stability with a 5-year renewable annual grant. They gave us access to professional mentorship through our champion John Palmer as well as the Grantee Roundtables. And we were able to hire consultants who guided us in enlarging our organizational capacity through the Management Suite Grants. These wrap-around services enabled us to innovate in a safe and controlled manner as we were able to get the kinks out of our programming model, build the support structures to unlock our fundraising and marketing, and connect with a peer network to lean on as we navigated challenges.

Ultimately, this Springboard support package enabled us to grow into an organization that is pushing \$750,000 this year, serving nearly 400 youth between our afterschool education and long term employment programs. We have a farm on 10 acres of formerly vacant land that generates over 4,000 kilowatts of solar power each year, and diverts nearly 40,000 gallons of rainwater to productive agricultural use. Best of all, the Black community in Chicago now has a realistic end game where poverty, violence, and urban blight can be replaced with shears, shovels, and farms. This is all possible because Springboard gave us the opportunity to take a chance on our belief that the humble flower could be the cash crop that drives our youth out of gangs and onto farms literally building a more colorful future."



Quilen Blackwell and Devin Smith

DEVIN'S JOURNEY FROM HUNGRY CATERPILLAR TO BUTTERFLY

This year, Devin Smith shared the keynote duties with Springboard Award Winner Quilen Blackwell of Chicago Eco House. Devin shared how working with Southside Blooms, the flower business side of Chicago Eco House, has changed him.

"My name is Devin Smith, I'm 21, and I live on the Southside of Chicago. My experience working for Southside Blooms has been an amazing journey for me. It really impacted me as a person and as a man because Southside Blooms gave me an opportunity to actually better myself as a person. They gave me that hand and showed me that I am capable of turning my life around, rethinking some of my decisions, and knowing my worth. I never thought that I would be a huge fan of flowers. I never knew that putting your time into something could become something so beautiful. You never appreciate flowers until you're actually dealing with them and seeing how your hard work has paid off. I even started my own art and photography page because I was around so many beautiful plants. Now people love the art I make.

Young people often face difficulties when it comes to putting what they learned into practice. But I learned some life lessons from working with Southside Blooms so I planted some flowers on my own and took what I learned from the flower shop and on the farm into my life. I learned not to hesitate when you should act. Being stuck in that mindset keeps us from moving forward when we should be trying to reach our goals. If you need help, you can ask for guidance rather than being stuck in a cage and wondering what might have been.

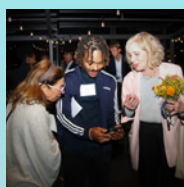
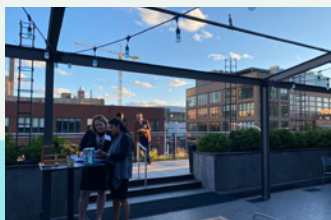
Thank you so much for supporting this organization and giving me a chance to fall in love with flowers. I hope one day you will become a 'flower head' too."





ANNUAL DINNER WRAP UP

More than 100 members, grantees, and supporters came together at Morgan's on Fulton to enjoy a beautiful Fall evening in our "sky greenhouse." The incredible drumline from Bandwith brought the beats for our guests and the entire Fulton Market Neighborhood. What a way to welcome our 24th year!



THE SPRINGBOARD SERVICE CORPS

Under the leadership of founder Doug Mabie Springboard is launching the Springboard Service Corp. Following in their predecessors footsteps yet also blazing their own path, the Springboard Service Corp is made up of young professionals able to volunteer with organizations Springboard funds. This corps of volunteers will help boost the capacity of Springboard grantees who are often solo operators. Opportunities include event support and logistics, pro bono projects, administrative and program support too.



MAKE YOUR ANNUAL DONATION

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Make your check out to The Chicago Community Foundation, include Springboard Foundation Fund in the memo line and mail to our Administrative Office:

The Chicago Community Trust
33 S. State Street, Suite 75
Chicago, IL 60603



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BY CREDIT CARD

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<https://bit.ly/31SeokQ>.



Need Help? See insert for details or email sejal@springboardfoundation.org with questions.



The inspiring words of this year's Springboard Award Winner really gave me a moment to reflect on our grantmaking and what it means. There are times when progress is clear year over year or grantees share metrics that point to program improvement and student gains. Other times,

the reason to fund the organization is a feeling—a feeling about the uniqueness of the program or clear vision from the founder, or the emotion of their "origin story." For those reasons, we acknowledge grantmaking is both art and science.

However, there is another variable to factor in—time. There's a saying in philanthropy that goes, "the best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago, the second-best time is now." The point is it takes time—for leaders to develop their skills, for programs to embed in the community, for students to progress, and for small dollar donors to turn into major gifts. One of the most valuable things Springboard provides is the safety of time and space for leaders to build, try, and learn as their organizations grow.

Another important component of grantmaking is taking risks. Often the Springboard grant is among the first grant new founders have ever applied for. As a result, we often get incomplete information. Or sometimes programs haven't been running long enough to calculate the impact yet. In the case of our Springboard winner, Quilen Blackwell of Chicago Eco House, sometimes grantees come to us with new models we've never seen before. So, we take imperfect information and make the best decisions we can. Taking risks is not only part of good grantmaking, it is our duty.

As we begin our 24th year(!) together, these are the things I'll be thinking about: art + science x time / risk = living Springboard's values. Thank you for continuing to believe in Springboard. I'm so glad we get to do this work together.

Onward,
SEJAL SHAH-MYERS
Executive Director

THE CRAFT BEER OF PHILANTHROPY. SMALL BATCH GRANTMAKING THOUGHTFULLY CRAFTED.

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Mike Revord
Robb Rickett
Daria Rickett
Doug Sharfstein
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Allen Smith

Tor Solberg
Susan Stelter
Scott Stevens

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