

# 2024-2025 IMPACT REPORT

It Takes a Village



“Because of Little Elevate, I have learned to be a more confident and expressive person. Becoming a mentor to younger students has lowered my anxiety and timidity.” **Bridge Academy Student**

Elevate Bridgeport

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*A closer look inside the village that surrounds our students.*

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# Introduction

## Dear Elevate Champions,

This past year has been nothing short of remarkable. We've had the wonderful honor and privilege of serving Bridgeport students in a way that has been both impactful and inspiring. Together, we've executed with excellence the African proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child." Our collective efforts are creating safe spaces for students, fostering trustworthy relationships between mentors and mentees, and promoting academic, social, and emotional growth.

In these past five years, we have served over **1,545 students**, celebrated two graduating classes, and look forward to countless more. There is still so much more we hope to implement in the days, months, and years ahead for our thriving organization. Our focus has been on expanding both wider and deeper, and now, as we enter the next leg of this journey, we will intentionally focus on our alumni. This means we will develop a robust alumni program that ensures our Elevate Bridgeport graduates are not overwhelmed by the uncertainties of life as they transition beyond high school.

## Why Our Mission Is Critical

In Bridgeport, where **47.81%** of public school students are Hispanic and **33.28%** are Black, our young people face significant barriers to college completion and career success. Nationally, approximately 40% of Black college students and 30% of Hispanic college students do not complete their degrees within six years. Additionally, students of color are more likely to experience underemployment, carry an average of **\$25,000** more in student debt than their peers in surrounding towns, and lack access to the mentorship and professional networks critical for career advancement.

The success of our village is contingent upon the continual support and involvement of our dedicated community members who labor in love with our team—those committed to our mission and the services we are honored to provide with our **40-year proven logic model**.

We invite you to journey with us through this year's data-driven impact report as we celebrate our successes and map out our path ahead.

With gratitude,  
Eric Torres, Executive Director of Elevate Bridgeport



# THE SCIENCE OF SUPPORT SYSTEMS WHY IT TAKES A VILLAGE

The original African proverb **“it takes a village to raise a child,”** means children thrive when they are cared for and influenced by a diverse network of adults within their community. This collective care provides a safer, healthier environment and instills shared values.

## **Information:**

Equips students with the tools, confidence, and mindset they need to live and lead healthy, productive, and purpose driven lives.

## **Relationship:**

Connecting students with caring adults.

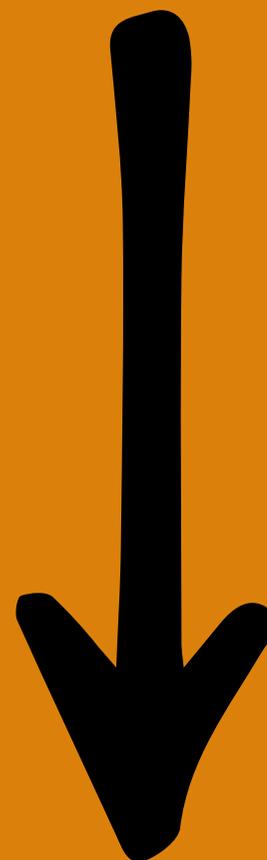
## **Exposure:**

Opens students to new experiences that connect classroom learning to real life opportunities.

## **Empowerment:**

Inspires students to trust their abilities, pursue their goals, and lead with purpose

# THE MODEL



## A DATA DRIVEN PRACTICE

**A PROVEN MODEL, 40 YEARS & COUNTING**



**Learning that sticks becomes growth that lasts. These lessons give students the tools and confidence they need to thrive in every part of their lives.**



**Strong voices become strong futures. Empowered students carry their confidence into everything they do.**



**Discovery sparks growth in ways a classroom alone cannot. When students step into new spaces, they gain direction, confidence, and hope.**



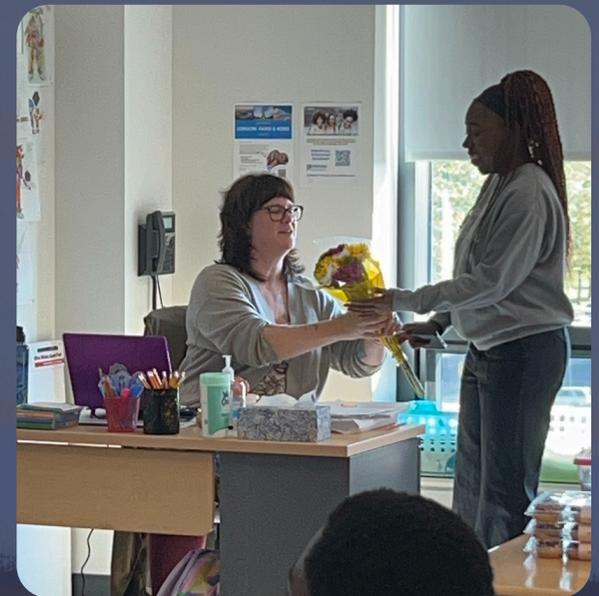
**Connection creates confidence that students carry into every area of life. Mentorship turns moments of doubt into moments of growth.**

# INFORMATION

Elevate Bridgeport has had a positive impact on my life. I always feel excited to come to class because of the good vibes the teachers bring every day.” **Bassick High School Student**

Elevate Bridgeport pushes students to apply classroom learning to real life. Lessons integrate social-emotional learning, CASEL competencies, academic standards, public speaking, teamwork, and time management. Through independent and group work, students build self discipline, responsibility, collaboration, and communication. Interactive lessons help them practice emotional regulation, problem solving, goal setting, and working with diverse perspectives—skills that support their relationships, communities, and future careers.

Themed weeks deepen learning with relevant exposure and guidance. College and Career Week introduces professions and pathways. Health and Wellness Week reinforces habits that shape long-term wellbeing. Relationship Safety and Awareness Week—led by Family Justice Center experts—helps students identify healthy and unhealthy communication. Financial Literacy Week teaches budgeting, saving, and banking basics. Through consistent mentorship and community support, students start believing in futures once thought out of reach.



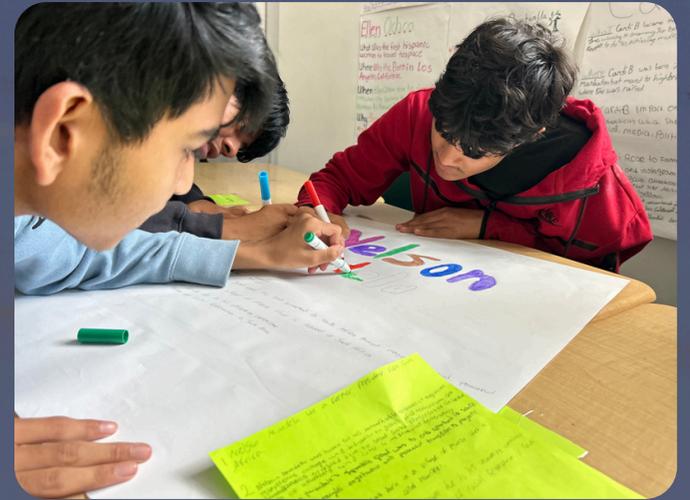
**97%** of Elevate Bridgeport students are on track to graduate.

# RELATIONSHIPS

“Elevate helped me see how good life can get when you have people who actually care about you and stay by your side. Everything feels different when someone is there to lift you up at your lowest.” **Bassick Alumni**

Relationships are the heart of Elevate Bridgeport. Many of our students long for consistent, dependable adults who truly see, hear, and value them, and our mentoring approach meets that need. Students build trust with caring adults who show up day after day, creating a sense of stability and safety many have never known. These relationships help students find their voice, ask for support, and take positive risks that strengthen their confidence and identity.

Beyond the classroom, connections grow through shared experiences—community service, meals, holiday celebrations, and recreational outings that deepen bonds and help students feel supported. We also partner with families through the Parent Leadership Council, recognizing that strong home relationships reinforce student success. For students who cannot participate in off-campus mentoring due to family duties or safety concerns, we remove barriers by offering on-site support before and after school, creating meaningful in-building experiences like group activities, movie time with snacks, and holiday celebrations—ensuring every student receives the same guidance, warmth, and relational care as their peers.



**70%** of Elevate Bridgeport students believe their teacher-mentors provide strong developmental relationships that expands opportunities and provides support.

# EXPOSURE

“Elevate Bridgeport has boosted student leadership at The Bridge Academy through the Little Elevate initiative, where students teach younger peers. This empowers them as mentors and reinforces their learning. The program fosters confidence and positively impacts our school culture.” **Bridge Academy Superintendent & High School Principal**



At Elevate Bridgeport, we believe exposure creates opportunity and success, which drives our programs and mission. With support from dedicated teacher-mentors, students gain experiences that expand their mindset and equip them to thrive through academic and career exploration. Our annual college tours—like recent trips to Philadelphia and Niagara Falls, NY—deliver academic, historical, and cultural enrichment, inspiring students to pursue post-secondary education and career pathways. Through our Earn and Learn Summer Internship, high school students work with local business leaders for five weeks and earn weekly stipends, building reasoning, communication, teamwork, responsibility, and entrepreneurial confidence. Through the Little Elevate Mentorship Certification, students become certified youth mentors themselves—teaching life skills and character lessons to nearly 400+ elementary peers annually while sharpening leadership, collaboration, and public speaking. Across all initiatives, we are shaping a generation that is inspired, capable, and ready to rise



**1 in 2 students** are inspired to serve others through community engagement activities because of their teacher-mentors.

# EMPOWERMENT

“Elevate Bridgeport has positively impacted my life by giving me the courage to speak in front of large groups. I feel empowered to serve others and engage with my community.” **Bridge Academy Student**

Elevate Bridgeport amplifies student voices by creating access to new spaces through service and civic engagement, helping them see the power of their presence, ideas, and ability to drive positive change. By partnering with local organizations and neighborhood initiatives, students grow as confident contributors and community changemakers. Impact projects like Marine Toys for Tots, the Schoolwide Shoe Drive, Friendsgiving Can Drive, and Christmas on the Green give students firsthand experience supporting families and neighbors facing hardship, turning compassion into action. These moments strengthen character, advocacy, and leadership as students take ownership of uplifting their community. With the support of a united village, they learn their actions matter beyond our city—carrying impact forward and shaping the next generation of leaders who will continue strengthening the community around them.



**79%** of students have been empowered to rethink their behaviors at home or school.

# THE RESULTS OF A VILLAGE THAT CARES

**93%** of students feel their teacher-mentors are supportive

**99%** of students were satisfied with Elevate Bridgeport's programs

**79%** of students think about their future before they act

**4,306** Mentoring Hours

**1,685** Mentoring Sessions

**2,000 +** Mentoring Meals Served

## Students Served in 2024-2025

**226** High School Students

**82** Elementary School Students



**“A village doesn't just raise a child. It protects their dreams.” -Unknown**

# AN OVERVIEW OF A VILLAGE THAT CARES

## **Little Elevate:**

Many students enjoyed their experiences with Little Elevate, including teaching children, having fun on the first day, and getting donuts for participating.

## **Field Trips and Outings:**

Popular memories included the Philly college tour, going to UCONN, visiting the Corn Maze, going roller skating, and eating at Chick-fil-A and Dave & Busters.

## **In-Class Interactions and Activities:**

Students appreciate class discussions, icebreakers, playing games, and having real conversations about life and world topics.

## **Mentor/Teacher Relationships:**

Students value the positive impact of mentors/teachers, such as receiving advice, being checked up on, conversating with them, and going out to eat with them.

## **Career Week and Guest Speakers:**

Students enjoy Career Week, especially the dancer and the Air Force guest, and having visitors share their life experiences.

## **Service Activities:**

Helping at the shoe drive, organizing shoes, and bagging shoes were mentioned as favorite memories.



# A STRONG VILLAGE LOOKS FORWARD



**Alumni Expansion and Support:** As we look to the future, our priority is to develop a comprehensive alumni program that supports our graduates in their post-high school journeys. With the introduction of a part-time Legacy Liaison, we will enhance communication with Elevate alumni, organize quarterly events, and offer monthly drop-in life coaching sessions. This initiative is critical, especially in light of the concerning statistics that many young people do not return for their second year of college or pursue career-related programs.



**2025-2026 Budget:** This fiscal year, our budget is set at **\$1.2 million**, reflecting both our current capacity and our ambitious mission. Every dollar raised is invested in educating, empowering, and elevating our students, allowing us to provide year-round transformative services. Despite ongoing budgetary challenges at the federal and state levels, **we have secured \$175,000** from the Connecticut State Department of Education and **\$75,000** from the Connecticut Judicial Branch, underscoring the importance of our work. To meet our budgetary goals, we anticipate **needing an additional \$125,000** in revenue, relying on continued support from last year's donors.



**Little Elevate Expansion:** Elevate Bridgeport is thrilled to announce the expansion of our programming with the addition of a third Little Elevate program, bringing our total to three elementary schools, including Waltersville School and Barnum School. This growth enables us to reach and support even more young learners in our community.

**Elevate Evolution:** In addition to the successful Little Elevate program for 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders, Elevate is entering the exploratory phase of launching Elevate Evolution for 7th and 8th grade students at one of our two filter schools with two newly hired teach-mentors. Elevate Evolution utilizes a national model curriculum developed by Elevate USA, providing students with a highly engaging guided learning experience aligned with the Common Core State Standards Initiative and the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) competencies.

# A STRONG VILLAGE CELEBRATES EVERY MEMBER WHOSE CONTRIBUTIONS MAKE THE WHOLE STRONGER.

Connecticut

Department of Economic and  
Community Development

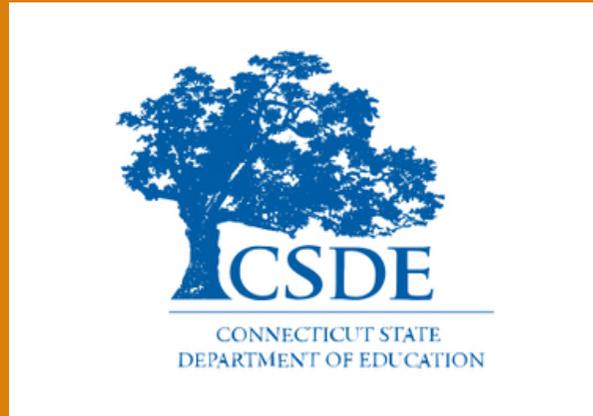
VALLEY

CONTAINER

TRINITY  
CHURCH

Rotary

Club of Bridgeport



ePIQ

**JOIN THE VILLAGE. FUEL THE MISSION. CHANGE A LIFE.**

**We encourage you to share our mission, website, and story with your network. Please consider scheduling a site visit at one of our schools or attending a mentoring session. We would love to connect over coffee to discuss our vision and plans for the upcoming year. Thank you for your support and for being an integral part of Elevate Bridgeport's village.**

