2015 – 2016
Annual Report
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Our work this year has been guided by three main ideas: quality, sustainability and scalability. These pillars are defining organizational growth at Spark and form the foundation of our newly created 10-year vision and strategic plan.

Having recently completed Spark’s four-year plan and progressing past the organization’s 10th anniversary, this year presented the opportunity to take stock of where we’ve been, where we are and where we want to go. Our reflection focused heavily on analysis of student impact and core program elements driving results.

Along the way, we heard from former Spark students like Joseph in the Bay Area who talked about the impact of his Spark experience on his new life in high school and his summer job. One of Joseph’s Spark Mentors helped him with a job application and provided a statement of recommendation. “Getting a job taught me even more about why it’s important to have mentors in your life,” he shared. “Sometimes you need help and it’s okay to ask for it. Because of Spark I know how to interact with adults and feel comfortable in an office. I can start to surround myself with a network of positive people... to help me achieve even bigger things.”

We also heard from Joseph’s mom, Rocel who believes in our work. “There’s something appropriate about the word ‘spark’ and what this program does for young people,” she explained. “Working with his mentors and being part of this program helped Joseph develop new skills and strengths. Because of Spark, I feel more confident in Joseph’s very bright future.”

This sense of possibility, these types of success stories and knowing that 92% of Spark Students are on track to graduate high school, are why the strategic plan pushes Spark to new heights.

With more than 10 years of supporting data and thousands of volunteers engaged in our work, we know we’ve created a tailor-made program that unites businesses and the community in partnership with middle school students.

Spark’s new plan charts a path to actualize this vision with the goal of partnering with 10,000 students annually by 2026. It’s ambitious. And, it’s possible. We know because of the tremendous impact our staff, Board, partners and funders have demonstrated since Spark was founded. It will take time and it will take work, but we now know that if we grow in our current regions and strategically target new regions, schools and corporate partners, we will transition to a more robust growth path that yields exponentially greater impact.

In the next year we will embark on the hard work of aligning our business and program models in support of this new vision. We will drive impact by balancing scale, sustainability and quality. We will build a more consistent and efficient program in our current regions and look toward future geographic expansion.

As we do, we will also look to you for your continued commitment to supporting students’ successful academic journeys from seventh through ninth grades. We remain incredibly grateful for your confidence and support.

Sincerely,

Jason Cascarino
CEO, Spark

Dr. Adrian K. Haugabrook
Board Chair, Spark
Vice President, Student Success and Engagement, Wheelock College
OUR WORK

Influencing What’s Possible

As young teens transition to young adults, it’s the best time to show them what’s possible. It’s also a time when 7th, 8th and 9th grade students can benefit from opportunities to understand, experience and pursue what’s possible for the future.

Understand What’s Possible

**Exploration**
Seventh graders participate in Spark Labs, or on-site workshops, hosted by local companies and organizations. Employee volunteers guide students through structured, group activities that build skills and expand career options.

Experience What’s Possible

**Immersion**
Spark connects seventh grade students with employee volunteers based on common interests and skills for Workplace-Based Mentorships. Spark Students receive direct guidance from a Spark Mentor and work together on a project related to their interests.

Make Possibility Real

**Transition**
Spark offers High School Pathways and ninth grade support to eighth and ninth grade students so they can take action and feel equipped with the knowledge and resources to make the possibilities they’ve experienced real.

Spark’s proven model partners with students in the middle grades at this critical inflection point. Spark emboldens more than 1,000 students annually to succeed in high school and beyond by connecting them with mentors in leading workplaces and inspiring their academic journey.

Spark Mentors and partners also benefit with volunteers gaining leadership experience, businesses connecting with local communities and schools gaining experiential learning opportunities. Together, Spark and its partners open eyes, minds and hearts to show middle school students what’s possible!
OUR IMPACT & REACH

2015-16 By The Numbers:

A Movement of Adults, Businesses, Institutions and Communities Promoting Possibility

More than 4,500 supporters powered The Possibility Movement in 2015-16, helping more than 1,800+ students build individual skills and access opportunities!

Preparing Students to Make Possibility Real

There are clear results when communities come together to help students understand and experience what’s possible!

Of Spark Students

• 92% improved their engagement in the classroom, attendance or grades
• 85% demonstrated positive mindsets contributing to doing better in school and other areas of life
• 84% agreed that working hard can change someone’s intelligence
• 89% agreed that they could do well in school even if it’s hard
• 86% agreed that what’s learned in school is important for their future
• 92% demonstrated growth in social-emotional skills
• 87% agreed that they can have the job they want someday
• 89% agreed that they can master the skills they need for the job they want

Of Spark Mentors

• 79% feel closer to their community
• 74% increased their satisfaction, motivation and appreciation for their job
• 71% built deeper connections with their coworkers
• 77% developed new skills such as communication, leadership and collaboration

Workshops for 8th grade students help them explore their options for high school, using the Spark Pathfinder online tool:

95% of Spark Students in Chicago agreed that the Select Your High School Tool will help them decide on which high schools they want to apply to

77% of Spark Students agreed that they feel more prepared to start the high school search as a result of participating in the Select Your High School workshop

79% of Spark Students in Los Angeles agreed they learned information about schools that they wouldn’t have learned on their own

sparkprogram.org
BAY AREA

Story of Possibility

A Spark Student’s Story:
Building Skills that Last a Lifetime

Leon, an 8th grade student from Westlake Middle School in Oakland, was encouraged by his teacher to participate in Spark as a way to build his confidence and self-esteem. He was excited for the opportunity to hone leadership skills and take ownership of his education and future. Leon was paired with Allison, a marketing professional at Adobe. Both have big personalities, engage well with others and have a passion for acting. Allison was first attracted to Spark because she loved the idea of students coming to the office, and was excited to do a creative project during the workday.

In the fall, the pair focused on growing Leon’s public speaking skills. His final project included his very own video reel and a solo performance on stage at Spark’s fall Share Your Spark hosted by Westlake Middle School. “I admire her enthusiasm, humor and how she didn’t care about being unique,” said Leon of Allison after working together in the fall. They decided to stick together for the spring semester and fuse Allison’s communication background with their joint love of acting. Alongside Angela, another Spark Mentor from Adobe, they scripted and filmed their very own SNL-style monologue.

Allison, who considers herself a “big acting geek,” accredits much of her professional success to her strong public speaking skills honed over years of participating in theater. “It was great to help a student develop these important skills and nurture the potential of a super talented young person!” said Allison. “Spark was such a great experience!”

Highlights:
Making More Possibilities Real

• Spark in the Bay Area’s first citywide Discovery Day was held in Justin Herman Plaza in San Francisco. Two hundred students and their mentors from across the Bay Area came together and proudly presented the projects they worked so hard to create. More than 700 people came to celebrate the incredible impact of united communities and dedicated mentors.

• Spark expanded programming in the Bay Area to serve two middle schools in the East Palo Alto community.

• Spark brought mentoring to 14 new Corporate Partner sites in the Bay Area including: Adobe, Bloomreach, Box, Cisco, Keenan, Talkdesk, TubeMogul and Workday.

• Spark deepened its impact with new and current corporate partnerships. By the spring of the 2015-16 program year, 100% of companies had more than five volunteers participating as mentors, and many had more than 10. Google had the largest group of volunteers with 50 mentors meeting students each week at Google’s headquarters in Mountain View.

• Spark was selected as a recipient of Genentech, Inc.’s 40th Anniversary Grant to expand programming in Bay Area schools.

• Spark continues to partner with students in Redwood City, Spark’s founding program region, and was awarded a special grant of $100,000 from the John & Marcia Goldman Foundation to continue efforts in this community.
A Spark Student’s Story: Inspiring the Next Generation

Ely, an eighth grader at Bethune Middle School, was matched with Sarah, an Analytical Linguist at Google. Before Spark, Ely was a timid and reserved student, unaware that engineering could be a possible career choice. Sarah inspired Ely to pursue a STEM career by teaching her about programming. Since Ely loves video games and drawing, Sarah merged her student’s interests with her own day-to-day experience to develop each of their Spark Projects: ‘How to Build a Game App’ in the fall, and ‘How to Create a Website from Scratch’ in the spring. Through her mentorship, Ely gained hands-on experience with coding and learned how to undertake website development using HTML, CSS and jQuery. Sarah also helped Ely map out a future in STEM. They talked about potential careers and different ways to attend college. Equipped with the exposure to STEM, Ely was no longer a timid and reserved student. Her leadership teacher, Mr. Hagiwara, noticed a more confident Ely and said, “I was really surprised by how comfortable she looked when she was presenting her projects. It was a whole different side of Ely I had not seen before.”

Through partnerships with socially responsible companies like Google, Spark exposes young women to STEM careers and encourages them to contemplate options for their future they did not know existed. Sarah has no doubt Ely “would make a fantastic animation engineer.” Thanks to the bond they developed, Sarah shared that she was, “very impressed by Ely, and feels very invested in her future and her progress,” and even offered to help her get into, and through, college.

Highlight:
The Power of Mentorship at Spark A Dream 2015

Los Angeles’ Spark A Dream 2015 Gala was graciously hosted by award winning actress and philanthropist Judy Reyes. With Judy’s support, Spark brought together the LA community and the city’s top companies to celebrate the magic of mentorship, raising nearly $300,000.

This magic was on full display when Spark Mentors and Students shared their experiences of participating in the Spark Program. However, the highlight of the evening came when, after 34 years, Judy was reunited with her mentor and 8th grade teacher Chuck Abbott, who Judy still refers to as Mr. Abbot. On the stage and through tears, Judy shared with the Gala’s guests her personal story and the transformative effect Mr. Abbot’s guidance has played on her personal journey towards success, saying that he “taught me about hard work through the spirit of competition.”
A Spark Student’s Story:
Spark Students Team Up for a Cause

“Shoot Hoops, Not Guns.” This is not a typical response you hear from middle school students who are asked how they want to utilize their Spark Mentorships to explore their interests. However, Charles, Michael and Semaj, three 7th graders from Frazier International Magnet School in North Lawndale, aren’t your typical middle schoolers. Barely reaching their teenage years, they have already experienced tragedy and loss; each of them has lost a relative to gun violence. These fatalities motivated them to bring awareness to the issue of gun violence in North Lawndale.

When they began their Spark Mentorships at LinkedIn, each student was working one-to-one with their mentor, but as relationships developed and interests were honed, it became evident that the mentor-student pairs could be more successful as a team. Guided by Spark’s curriculum with a focus on social-emotional learning skills and career exploration, the mentors supported and engaged the students throughout the development of their campaign **Shoot Hoops, Not Guns**. They set a goal to raise enough money to donate to an organization that offers young people in their neighborhood the opportunity to play sports and stay off the streets.

With their mentors’ help, they learned how to raise awareness about an issue, run a fundraising campaign and leverage their networks to spread the word. In addition to designing a t-shirt, Charles, Michael and Semaj raised more than $10,000 through their campaign, participated in a peace march with Noah’s Arc Foundation and gave to a cause they’re passionate about. “One City, One Voice, One Message, One Sound. Put the Guns down.” Spark Students and Mentors combined their voices, ideas and skills to spread their message while learning about future careers!

**Highlights:**

**Growing Through Partnerships**

- Spark was approved by The Chicago Board of Education as a preferred vendor qualified to provide school time programming with a focus on social-emotional learning.
- Spark held its first citywide Discovery Day at Daley Plaza in Chicago. Three hundred fifty Chicago Public Schools students from nine neighborhoods were able to connect and share their projects with one another. Former U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, U.S. Senator Mark Kirk, and Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel each promoted Discovery Day on social media. Deputy Mayor Andrea Zopp and CPS Chief Education Officer Janice Jackson also attended the event.
- Spark in Chicago was one of the first recipients of a $100,000 Impact Grant from The REAM Foundation in support of the expansion of Spark High School Pathways (formerly High School Transition) programming.
- Spark expanded to two new Chicago Public Schools partners, Deneen School of Excellence and John Fiske Elementary School.
- Spark launched the Spark Ambassador Task Force, a group of rising leaders at Corporate Partners. Spark Ambassadors were critical in the recruitment of more than 400 volunteer mentors at over 20 companies.
- Spark brought mentoring to five new Corporate Partners in Chicago including Bain & Company, Clayco and Schneider Transportation.
PHILADELPHIA

Story of Possibility

2016 Career Discovery Project Spotlight:
Gaming for A Cause

For his mentorship, John Barry student Bishop wanted to work with his mentors, Albert and Laura, on a project that would allow him to explore his video-gaming interests while also helping Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) patients and the greater public. Together, Bishop and his mentors created an HTML5/Javascript game for CHOP’s Poison Control Center to educate parents on the dangers of button batteries. The project gave Bishop valuable insight on game design and execution, a career he is interested in pursuing. Not only did Bishop get to showcase his game during Spark’s Discovery Night, but he also presented his work at the Philadelphia’s Science Fair!

Highlights:
Growing Support and Program Innovation

• Spark doubled its reach in Philadelphia by expanding to two new schools: Bache-Martin and General George Meade school which put Spark on track to more than double the number of students served from 67 to 179.
• Spark launched a new fall program innovation called Spark Lab: on-site workshops, hosted by local companies and organizations, which engaged 254 working professionals from more than 20 businesses to complete an astounding 3,400 volunteer hours as Spark Mentors.
• Due to the generous investment of several key multiyear funders, including the Lenfest Foundation, as well as the launch of peer-to-peer fundraising campaign: Mentoring Matters, Spark increased revenue in Philadelphia by more than 40%.
• Spark officially launched the Corporate Champions program seeing increased investment from Corporate Partners committing both human and financial capital.
• Spark’s annual Share Your Spark (formerly Discovery Night) was held at Top of the Tower where nearly 200 students and their mentors showcased Spark Projects ranging from flying cars and custom clothing lines to video game apps and heart rate monitoring devices. The student showcase was followed by an invitation-only panel of prominent Philadelphia business leaders discussing their insights on education and pathways to career success.
STRATEGIC PLAN & 10-YEAR VISION

Partner with 10,000+ Students Annually by 2026

Spark’s tailor-made Career Exploration and Self-Discovery Program has been tested and proven for more than 10 years to help middle school students gain experiences to pursue what’s possible for their future.

Align Program and Business Models for Growth and Impact

To achieve its 10-year vision, Spark will:

- Enhance the Program Model
- Improve the Quality of Partnerships
- Empower & Align the Organization
- Build Earned Revenue & Grow Philanthropy
- Drive Depth & Add New Markets

Strategic Growth Goals

- 10,000+ students annually
- 100+ school partners
- 20,000+ mentoring experiences annually
- Hundreds of corporate partners
- 8 regions
- Financial sustainability

Multi-Year Plan & Long-Term Vision

FY2017 Develop

- Develop resources, training and technologies
- Trial elements of partnership, program and business models

FY2018 Implement

- Implement updated program and business models
- Transition partnerships to new models

FY2019 Scale

- Grow more students per school, more schools per region
- Assess and ramp up for new markets

FY2020 Expand

- Begin launch in one of four new regions
- Continue scaling in existing regions

Current Regions

- Bay Area 9.0% total available students served
- Chicago 2.0% total available students served
- Los Angeles 0.7% total available students served
- Dallas 17.4K total available students

Selected New Cities

- New York 113.6K total available students
- Philadelphia 4.0% total available students
- Atlanta 16.6K total available students
- Houston 21.3K total available students

*Strategic planning conducted with support from Bain & Company
BOARD MEMBERS

National Board of Directors

National Board Leadership
FY15 and FY16

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FY2015-16 Donor List

These donors have made Spark’s work possible!

Formal multi-year commitments with are marked with ***

$250,000+

• Brin Wojcicki Foundation

$100,000+

• Michael & Susan Dell Foundation***
• Focusing Philanthropy***
• Genentech, Inc
• John & Marcia Goldman Foundation
• Rockefeller Foundation
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$50,000+

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• W.M. Keck Foundation
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$25,000+

• All Points North Foundation***
• Aviv Foundation
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• Kraft Foods Foundation
• Laura and Gary Lauder
• Legacy Charter School
• Leigh-Ellen Louie
• LinkedIn
• Lisa Vallee
• Louis N. Cassett Foundation
• Marilyn Florero and Greg Vaisberg
• Mathias Maciejewski
• Maya Khemlani David and George Anthony
  David Dass
• McGrory Glass, Inc.
• McGuireWoods LLP
• Megan Beare
• Michelle and Greg Nathan
• Mintel
• Moelis & Company
• Mohawk Industries
• Monica Leas
• MWH
• National Teachers Academy
• Nayan Shah
• NBCUniversal
• New Frontiers Foundation
• Odette Go
• Pajeau Children’s Foundation
• Patricia Eberwine
• Perkins Bass Elementary School
• PREIT
• Public Allies
• Rajit Agrawal
• Robert Half International Foundation
• Robert J. Daverman Foundation
• Rodney Prezeau
• Salesforce.com
• Samuel Powel
• Sara R Foster
• Sarah Murray
• Schneider Transportation Management
• Seer Interactive
• Shelby King Nelson
• Sidharth Jayadeep
• Suzie S. Thorn Family Foundation
• Textline
• The Christopher Ludwick Foundation
• The McLean Contributionship
• The Seybert Foundation
• The Thomas J. Wilson and Jill M. Garling Charitable Fund
• Thomas Yankowski
• Tom and William Gilbane Foundation
• Tomas Fuller
• Tomoko Nakamura Fortune
• Tracey Parry
• UBS
• Union Benevolent Association
• Valerie Brown
• Walter P Moore
• William Dick School
• Wilmes Family Charitable Foundation
• Woods•Dangaran
CORPORATE & VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

Engaging Organizations and Their Employees

**Bolded** listings indicate 10 or more employee volunteer mentors.

- A. Eicoff & Company
- Aberdeen Asset Management
- Abramson Teiger Architects
- Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences
- Accenture
- Activision
- Adobe
- Allen Matkins
- APCO Worldwide
- Ariel Investments
- Atelier Derek Uskert
- Autodesk, Inc
- Bain & Company, Inc.
- Ballinger
- Bank of America
- Beam & Raymond
- Bloomreach Inc.
- Blue Jeans Network
- Bluecadet
- BMO Global Asset Management
- Boeing Company
- Box
- Building Robotics
- BuroHappold Engineering
- Burwood Group, Inc.
- Capgemini Consulting
- Capital Group
- CareerBuilder
- Castlight Health
- CEB
- Change.org
- Chapman and Cutler LLP
- Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia
- Circle of Confusion
- Cisco Systems
- Clayco
- Clever
- Columbia College Chicago
- Communities in Schools of Los Angeles
- Cornerstone OnDemand
- Cuningham Group
- DC Entertainment
- Deloitte
- Designory
- DLR Group
- Dropbox
- E! Entertainment Television
- Education Pioneers
- Entravision
- Facebook
- Facing History and Ourselves
- Feinberg School of Medicine
- Film Fashion
- First Pacific Advisors
- Fitly
- GEM Realty Capital
- Gensler
- Google
- Greenpeace USA
- Groupon
• Harris School of Public Policy
• HBO
• HUGE
• Hulu
• IBM
• Ideate Media
• IDEO
• Innovation Protocol
• InStride Advisors
• IntraSpectrum Counseling
• Joffrey Ballet
• kCura
• Keenan & Associates
• Keller Williams Realty Center City
• Kellogg Company
• KieranTimberlake Associates
• Knoll, Inc.
• KPMG LLP
• LA Beer Hop
• LaSalle Investment Management
• Latham & Watkins, LLP
• LinkedIn
• Load Delivered Logistics
• Los Angeles Center of Photography
• Madeleine Durkin
• Marin Software
• Message Agency
• Miller Cooper & Co.
• Mintel
• Morningstar
• MUFG Union Bank
• National Park Service
• Nlshkian Chamberlain
• Northwestern University
• OpenDNS
• Oracle
• Organizing for Action
• Pandora
• Parsons Transportation Group
• Pennoni
• PepsiCo
• PG&E
• Phenomenon
• RJMetrics
• Roosevelt University
• SADA Systems
• Salesforce.com
• San Francisco Public Utilities Commission and their partners
• Schneider Transportation Management
• Scout
• Seer Interactive
• Shout! Factory
• SilkRoad Technology
• SoCore
• Sony Computer Entertainment of America
• Sony Pictures Entertainment
• Spark Program
• Square
• Starcom Media
• Steelcase
• Stella Oak Financial and Insurance Services
• Studio William Hefner
• Talkdesk
• TBWA\Chiat\Day
• Teach for America
• Towers Watson
• Trunk Club
• TubeMogul
• Tyson Foods
• Udemy
• United Airlines
• University of Illinois EMS
• University of Pennsylvania
• Vibes
• VISA, Inc.
• Wallin Gomez Architects
• Walter P Moore
• Warner Bros.
• Wells Fargo Capital Finance
• West Monroe Partners
• WHYY
• Workday
• XYZ Films
• ZGF Architects
# FINANCIAL REPORT

## FY2016 Financial Information

### INCOME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foundation Support</td>
<td>$2,617,717.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Support</td>
<td>$732,209.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Support</td>
<td>$710,757.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Support</td>
<td>$171,986.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spark Program Fee</td>
<td>$153,359.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Income</strong></td>
<td><strong>$156.45</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Income</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4,386,187.07</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### EXPENSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personnel</td>
<td>$2,865,313.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupancy</td>
<td>$305,667.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Expenses</td>
<td>$693,927.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Service Fees</td>
<td>$25,181.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>$3,890,089.82</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Operating Agreement</strong></td>
<td><strong>$496,097.25</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### OTHER INCOME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Restricted Grants Received</td>
<td>$1,969,300.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restricted Grants Earned</td>
<td>$(850,026.35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>In-Kind Income</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,551,312.50</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Other Income</strong></td>
<td><strong>$3,670,586.15</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### OTHER EXPENSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-Kind Expenses</td>
<td>$2,551,312.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Other Expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,551,312.50</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Income</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,615,370.90</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thank You for Making More Possibilities Real for Students!

“The biggest lesson I learned from Spark is that if I want to achieve something, I can do it. All I have to do is try.”
- Odaliz, Spark Student

When diverse communities come together, we show middle school students a window into the future! Our growing impact is not possible without the support of partners, donors and volunteers. Thanks to partnerships and commitments of all shapes and sizes, we continue to invest in the quality, sustainability and scalability of our programs to open eyes, minds and hearts.

sparkprogram.org