

Elevated Thought



elevated thought®
i AM ART. i AM CHANGE.

FOUNDED: 2010

CURRENT ORGANIZATION BUDGET: \$400,500

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Investment Opportunity

Elevated Thought is seeking an investment of \$1,028,500 over the next two years to amplify its impact by doubling the number of youth served. This is achieved by investing in staff and contractor infrastructure to offer more workshops as well as paid employment and apprenticeship opportunities for youth. Elevated Thought also needs to continually upgrade its video and sound recording equipment to stay current with industry standards.

Elevated Thought (ET) welcomes, nurtures, and exposes youth ages 13-22 to the power of arts and creativity to help them harness and amplify their voices to change their community and society. Based in Lawrence, MA, ET works with a primarily Latinx population who are persistently experiencing the consequences of inequality and inequity typical in marginalized communities in America.

Using visual arts, spoken word, and video production as an entry point, ET is an inclusive, affirming, and welcoming space for youth. Through its tested model, ET's students gain both hard and soft skills, secure jobs, advance their education, and make positive, impactful, long-lasting changes by collaborating and participating in socially-themed public art projects.

According to Americans for the Arts, each dollar invested in the arts yields a nine dollar return on investment (ROI); ET witnesses this outcome firsthand. ET has injected \$200,000 back into the Lawrence community by employing youth over the past two years in roles that engage and leverage their creativity, while developing individual pathways to success. This directly impacts not only their own lives, but their communities as well, and supports the process of bringing about an active, equitable, and just society.

Two-Year Goals

- Feasibility study for capital campaign
- Double the number of youth served through workshops from 450 to 1,000
- Triple the number of paid youth through commission projects and apprenticeships
- Expand the number of engaged community members from 900 to 1,500 through increased community workshops, public forums, gallery openings, and public art projects

Ways to Invest

FINANCIAL

- \$40,000 funds six Youth Apprentices for one year
- \$20,000 funds expansion of existing ET space to accommodate increased program capacity
- \$10,000 funds one community mural
- \$5,000 funds new digital equipment for video and visual arts program

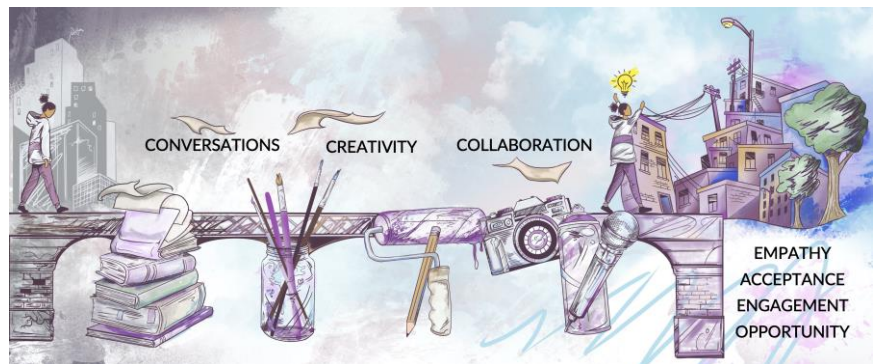
IN-KIND

- Trademark, licensing, and legal assistance
- HR training and systems development
- Social media marketing assistance

Leadership & Governance

Executive Director Marquis Victor holds an MA in Education from Lesley University and is completing his EdD at Northeastern University. A poet and artist, Marquis developed the art and social justice curriculum that serves as the foundation of ET's creative youth development work after acquiring over seven years of experience in Boston Public Schools. Marquis works closely with ET's young staff and 8 members of their Board of Directors who represent the passion, talent, and diversity of Lawrence.

ELEVATED THOUGHT'S MODEL



“

ET addresses the needs of youth holistically by activating their talents and inviting critical thinking into their lives through art, recognizing its healing power.

”

JESSICA VILAS NOVAS, DIRECTOR
Lawrence Public Library



CONVERSATION + CREATIVITY + COLLABORATION

With a space located in a mixed-use former textile mill adjacent to the historic Lawrence Bread and Roses Strike of 1912, ET youth continue the tradition of lifting voices for justice and equity through various art mediums. ET provides a safe and welcoming entry point to youth ages 13–22 to explore their creativity to tell their own stories and leverage their skills to address the plight of residents in their community.

CONVERSATION. I AM ART. I AM CHANGE. This afterschool-based program is at the heart of ET's work. Creative Mentors push ET participants to explore new ideas and creative solutions, yielding end products as varied as community murals, short films, and development of a student bill of rights for Lawrence Public Schools.

CREATIVITY. Commissions & Beautification. Elevated Thought's Commission Services provide funds for the youth programs and operating costs producing commissioned murals, design, photo, and film projects for for-profit and nonprofit businesses alike. Through the beautification efforts, ET students create relevant and positive art culture in the City of Lawrence, spark conversation, create awareness of art's positive impact, and strengthen the community as a whole.

COLLABORATION. Community Workshops. ET knows the power that comes from creative community engagement, relationship building, and collaboration. Creative Mentors and ET students often lead a wide range of workshops for nonprofits, schools, and municipalities. ET also provides Lawrence community members with monthly free or low-cost creative workshops in their space, designed for a wide range of ages and creative experiences.

“

At ET, I explored my passion for poetry, literature, and social activism by learning and doing with guidance and deep mentorship. Transitioning into college, I already knew what I wanted to study thanks to my experience.

”

DANIEL CARRERO
ET Alumus/Former Staff
Providence College, '24

OPPORTUNITY AND EQUITY FOR ALL

ET has provided paid jobs for 30 youth over the past two years. Successful participants in ET's programs have demonstrated their work ethic, responsibility, professional behavior, and communication skills, and have exhibited dedication to their creative skills. The Creative Mentor staff works with ET's youth, helping them to direct commissioned projects such as large-scale murals, photo assignments, or documentary filmmaking for clients that range from for-profit companies to the City of Lawrence. Assisting in the development and execution of the creative projects, ET's staff and youth work directly with clients, create task/flow charts, and are responsible for keeping deadlines and staying within budget. All of their responsibilities require real-time, collaborative problem-solving techniques that are vital skill-building opportunities as they prepare for their careers as creative practitioners, artists, academics, and activists. ET leadership works with the staff and participants to ensure their success through regular check-in meetings, performance reviews, and training sessions. 100% of ET's program participants have continued to college and/or have established their own careers as teachers, graphic designers, photographers, and filmmakers.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Elevated Thought has demonstrated the ability to manage limited funds efficiently and effectively since its inception. With the primary source of funding coming from foundations and fee for service for commissions and in-school programs, ET's Executive Director and Board of Directors are well poised to develop and deepen their individual and corporate fundraising.

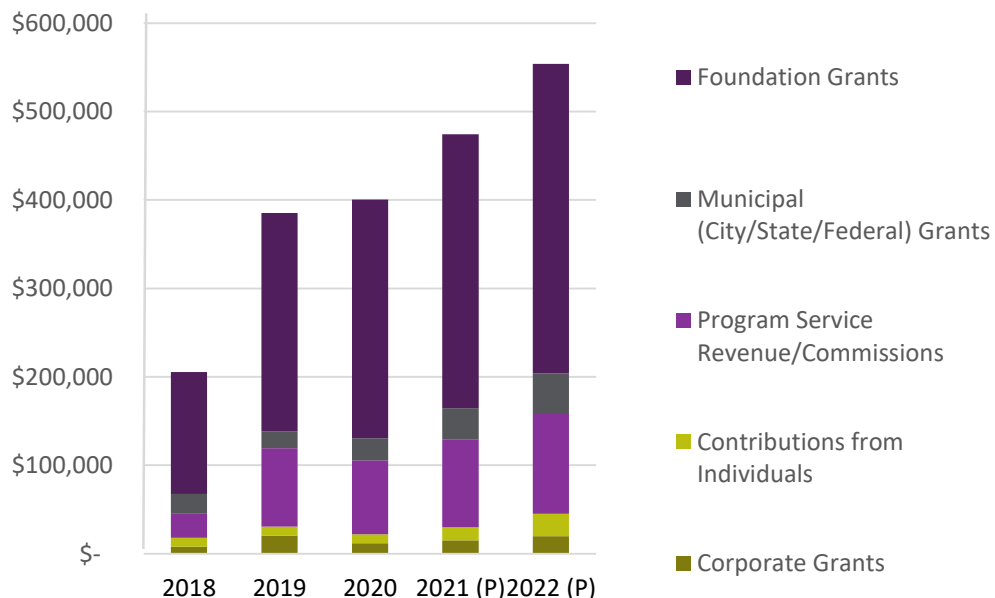
Key Investors

- AMELIA PEABODY FOUNDATION
- ESSEX COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
- MASSACHUSETTS CULTURAL COUNCIL
- NELLIE MAE EDUCATION FOUNDATION
- STEVENS FOUNDATION

Partners

- ANDOVER BREAD LOAF
- CITY OF LAWRENCE
- LAWRENCE PUBLIC LIBRARY
- NORTHERN ESSEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Revenue by Source



Success Story:

Amaryllis Lopez

Amaryllis Lopez is an Afro-Puerto Rican poet, born and raised in Lawrence, MA, whose work explores themes of womanhood, colonialism, and Blackness. Amaryllis joined ET in the fall of 2015 at 16 years old and by the summer of 2016, she was directing ET's first short film, supporting youth conversations around equity in schools, and drafting program ideas and themes to implement in workshops. As ET's first Youth Leader, Amaryllis received a yearly scholarship to use at Bridgewater State University, where she is currently a senior majoring in English, with concentrations in Latin American, Caribbean, and African American studies. With 5+ years of experience in nonprofit work and youth-led organizing, as well as 3 years of national and international writing workshop facilitation, she has continued to support the development of ET programs during college breaks and summers. Upon graduating in May 2020, she will join ET as its second full-time staff member, Program Director.



PROGRAM PERFORMANCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH

Below are some of the key measures ET tracks using a build-measure-learn strategy, in order to demonstrate progress, create internal accountability, capture lessons learned, and adjust strategy as necessary to maximize success.

	FY 2020	FY 2021 (P)	FY 2022 (P)
PROGRAM PERFORMANCE			
Number of youth served	450	800	1,000
Number of community gallery openings	3	5	7
% of youth who graduate from high school	100%	100%	100%
% of youth who continue to college or meaningful employment	100%	100%	100%
ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH/CAPACITY-BUILDING			
Number of full-time employees	2.5	3.75	5
Number of collaborating artists	12	15	20
Number of collaborating partners	12	16	20
Total Revenue	\$400,500	\$474,500	\$554,000

SOCIAL IMPACT

Elevated Thought works with primarily Latinx young people ages 13-22 exposing them to and teaching film production, creative writing, and visual art skills. ET currently employs 14 part-time Lawrence youth between the ages of 17 and 22 in their youth and community programs. In the past two years, ET has provided over \$200,000 in youth stipends and salaries and \$20,000 in college scholarship support to program alumni. Through pre and post program surveys, ET has gathered the following Social Impact indicators:

INDICATOR	2020
% of youth self-reporting increased confidence	100
% of youth active and engaged in the political process (registered to vote, attend local meetings, work on campaigns, run for office).	100
% of youth /alumni reporting increased understanding of social structures and their role	100
% of youth participating in art commissioned projects	60
% of youth participating in public art projects	60
% of youth participating in arts impact conferences	60