

# The Social Innovation Lab Year in Review: 2023



JOHNS HOPKINS  
UNIVERSITY

Social Innovation Lab

# Table of Contents

Director's Welcome.....	Page 1
Staff.....	Page 2
Accelerator.....	Page 3
Accelerator 2023 Cohort.....	Page 5
Special Events.....	Page 7
2023 Cohort & Alumni Shout Outs.....	Page 8
Contact Information.....	Page 9



# Welcome

This year we were truly inspired by the work of all 10 of our Social Innovation Lab teams who are doing transformational work to impact Baltimore communities. From workforce development and digital upskilling, to healthcare navigation and veteran support services, our teams are developing novel solutions to solve some of Baltimore's most challenging problems. Over the course of the six month accelerator teams engaged with the local community through our customer discovery process, where they were tasked with interviewing 100 community members, customers, and stakeholders. This process helped them to refocus their work through the lens of the people they work to serve while discovering other stakeholders for whom they could provide economic value and potential return on investment. This process would inform their fundraising, operational, and marketing strategies as they worked alongside mentors, staff and each other for feedback and support. The curriculum also included lessons in impact measurement, business models, branding, PR, storytelling, fundraising, governance and financial planning.

Our work would not be possible without the help of our alumni, mentors, ecosystem partners and workshop facilitators who take time to pour into and support Social Innovation Lab changemakers. Thanks to generous support from our donors we were able to give out more non-dilutive funding than ever before in Social Innovation Lab history. Each team received a \$5,000 stipend, and we were able to award another \$28,000 at our accelerator showcase.

I believe that social enterprises are the catalyst to solving Baltimore's most challenging problems by creating sustainable impact, while also spurring economic growth. We must continue to support and uplift these innovative founders as they continue to create positive change in Baltimore and beyond.

## **Anthony Watters**

Director of the Social Innovation Lab  
Johns Hopkins University



# Meet Our Team



**Anthony Watters**

**Director of the  
Social Innovation Lab**



**Josh Ambrose**

**Director of Student  
Ventures**



**Sephora Saint-Armand**

**Student Program  
Manager**



**Crystal Allen**

**Student Intern**



**Matthew Reeds**

**Student Intern**

**Along with assistance from the FastForward U team.**

# Accelerator

Mix of live and online programming for a cohort of 10 social entrepreneurs, all based in Baltimore. Social Innovation Lab provides the funding, mentorship, office space, and workshops that help these innovative nonprofits, mission-driven companies, and disruptive technologies develop into thriving, sustainable ventures that make a measurable impact. This includes weekly virtual and in person workshops as well as special “Super Saturday” workshops with special speakers, mentorship from student advisors, and more! This year’s Super Saturday workshops also included fresh new collaboration between the FastForward U Spark program, which allowed for new connections, collaboration and fellowship between the different accelerators and the Johns Hopkins University student body. Social Innovation Lab teams also participated in mixer nights with other FastForward U teams and the Johns Hopkins University community . Social Innovation Lab creates a space for the community, collaboration and relationship building that is essential to the growth of a social enterprise. Mutual support from fellow cohort members was most commonly mentioned as the most helpful resource offered by the Social Innovation Lab accelerator.



Social Innovation Lab 2023 Cohort Showcase



# Accelerator

Notable information on this year's cohort:

- Three teams in the Social Innovation Lab cohort with Johns Hopkins University affiliation
- Seven teams from the Greater Baltimore community
- 90% of teams are led by people of color
- 90% of teams are co-led by women
- 60% non profit teams, 40% for profit, 30% tech-based
- Over \$80k awarded in stipend grants and Showcase prizes
- Over the past seven months, the 2023 cohort teams have collectively raised \$695.5k in outside investments and grants in a addition to Social Innovation Lab funding
- 2023 cohort teams have collectively generated approximately \$164k in revenue during their time in the Social Innovation Lab accelerator
- Since starting Social Innovation Lab, cohort teams have hired a total of three full-time and eight part-time employees
- Social Innovation Lab teams in this cohort have impacted over 2,000 community members since starting the accelerator
- Over 30 new strategic partnerships were made this year, connecting our Social Innovation Lab teams with resources, funders, procurement opportunities and mentorship

# Accelerator Cohort 2023



The Baltimore Writing Center is a student-run high school writing program with ambitions for becoming a citywide workforce development program. The center provides students with the support necessary to become effective writers. Led by Lena Tashjian.



Fosterpreneur offers foster care youth and alumni employment opportunities, skill training, financial guidance and counseling to develop a career plan, networking connections and education opportunities. Led by Erica Myers and William Honablew Jr.



Kamoky is an app that helps consumers find and connect with minority business owners, and promotes their restaurants, stores and services. Led by Toyin Ajisemola and Peju Awodipe.



Knowboundary facilitates a supportive Pan-African community for collaboration that cultivates impactful and translatable research, amplifies diverse perspectives, and leverages creative audiovisual, graphic and technological design. Led by Peter Penar, Violet Acumo and Eva Penar.



Meridian Health is an app geared toward Gen Z health that utilizes chatbot artificial intelligence and data science to ensure care continuity, diminish barriers to health, and promote preventative wellness habits. Led by Aishwarya Tare.



Phase 3 is an occupational skills training program that brings quality instruction and skill training to marginalized communities, leading to employment within the elevator and escalator repair industry. Led by Anthony Roberts.



R.I.S.E. provides arts education for youth and young adults to foster personal and artistic growth through visual art exhibitions, theater, musical performances, dance recitals and creative writing presentations. Led by Kammeran Giggers.



Reveille Grounds works with veterans to give them a “third place” and networking connections for career and life success. Led by Katie Kilby.



Seedling combats food insecurity, expands fresh food education and builds community partnerships to provide consistent access to healthy, fresh produce across Baltimore neighborhoods. Led by Arshdeep Singh, Ahkil Atluri, Amy Liu, Anthony Han, Nathan Ji and William Blair.



Sew Bromo is a fashion education incubator that provides specialized industry knowledge from hobbyists to startup entrepreneurs. Led by Stacy Stube.



# Special Events

Social Innovation Lab community-facing workshops and special events

- August 2022 | Social Innovation Lab open house with Brittany Young (founder of B-360 and Social Innovation Lab alum) and Justin Shaw (founder of Shaw's Covenant Custom Clothier) (23 in attendance)
- December 2022 | Fundraising panel on Dec 9 (a 30 in attendance), with Darius Graham (Weinberg Foundation and former Social Innovation Lab director), Maddy Stokes (Chief Operating Officer of UpSurge Baltimore), and Anthony Watters (current Social Innovation Lab director)
- May 2023 | BELN Community of Practice Session on May 9 was co-led by Anthony Watters. The workshop focused on improving alumni engagement and alumni support
- May 2023 | In May, both Anthony Watters and Anthony Roberts (founder of Phase 3 and Social Innovation Lab 2023 cohort member) were invited to the White House for a "Young Men of Color Roundtable on Entrepreneurship" with VP Kamala Harris
- May 2023 | Spring showcase:
  - Around 100 people in attendance and another 70+ checked it out online
  - Special guests included: Darius Graham, Winifred Winston (founder of Dyslexia Advocacy Inc. and Social Innovation Lab alum), Kunal Parikh (founder of Global Institute for Vision Equity) and more.
  - All 10 teams received a \$5k stipend this year!
  - Showcase winners:
    - Audience Choice, \$4K: R.I.S.E. Arts Center of Baltimore \$4K
    - Audience Choice, \$4K: Seedling Hydroponics (WSE & KSAS)
    - Cohort Prize, \$20k: Baltimore City College Writing Center
- June 2023 | Social Innovation Lab Bootcamp returned to pre-pandemic programming, led by Anthony Watters and Sephora Saint-Armand w/support from all FastForward U staff. Held at the arts venue, Le Mondo (Social Innovation Lab alum) on June 24th. Two alumni panels, with teams from 2019 to present cohort. Visit from the comptroller's office. Over 70 in attendance, including Summer Incubator participants

# 2023 Cohort & Alumni Shout Outs

## 2023 Cohort:

- Katie Kilby of Revielle Grounds was nominated for 2023 Baltimore Homecoming Hero
- Meridian Health was mentioned in RealLISTStartups 2023: Meet 20 of Baltimore's fastest-rising tech companies
- Lena Tashjian of Baltimore City Writing Center was a teacher of the year finalist and received an Official Citation from the Maryland General Assembly in recognition of their work

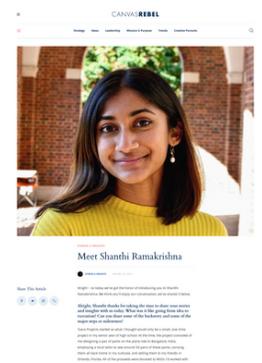
## Alumni:

- Multiple teams lined up significant, six-figure contracts some of them include: Ballet After Dark, MomCares, Phase3, Parity Homes, and RISE Arts
- Fem Equity was mentioned in RealLISTStartups 2023: Meet 20 of Baltimore's fastest-rising tech companies."
- Shanthi Ramakrishna of TAARA was profiled in a Canvas Rebel article
- Clymb (formerly Infinite Focus Schools) participated in TechStars, DC
- Anthony Watters and other ecosystem partners named to Technical.ly's Real List Connectors: 2023 in Baltimore
- More Watter Co. was recognized by Poets & Quants as one of the most disruptive startups for 2022
- Parity Homes had a ribbon cutting ceremony to celebrate their first two rehabilitated homes
- Bree Jones of Parity Homes had her entrepreneurial journey highlighted in AfroTech



## Check out Parity's first rehabbed homes as it tackles blight in Baltimore's Black Butterfly

"It may sound audacious, but we are aiming high and setting our sights on achieving remarkable results," founder and CEO Bree Jones said.



# The Social Innovation Lab Year in Review: 2023



[Ventures.JHU.edu/SIL](https://ventures.jhu.edu/SIL)  
[JHTV-SIL@jhu.edu](mailto:JHTV-SIL@jhu.edu)  
320 W 29th St.  
Baltimore, MD 21211