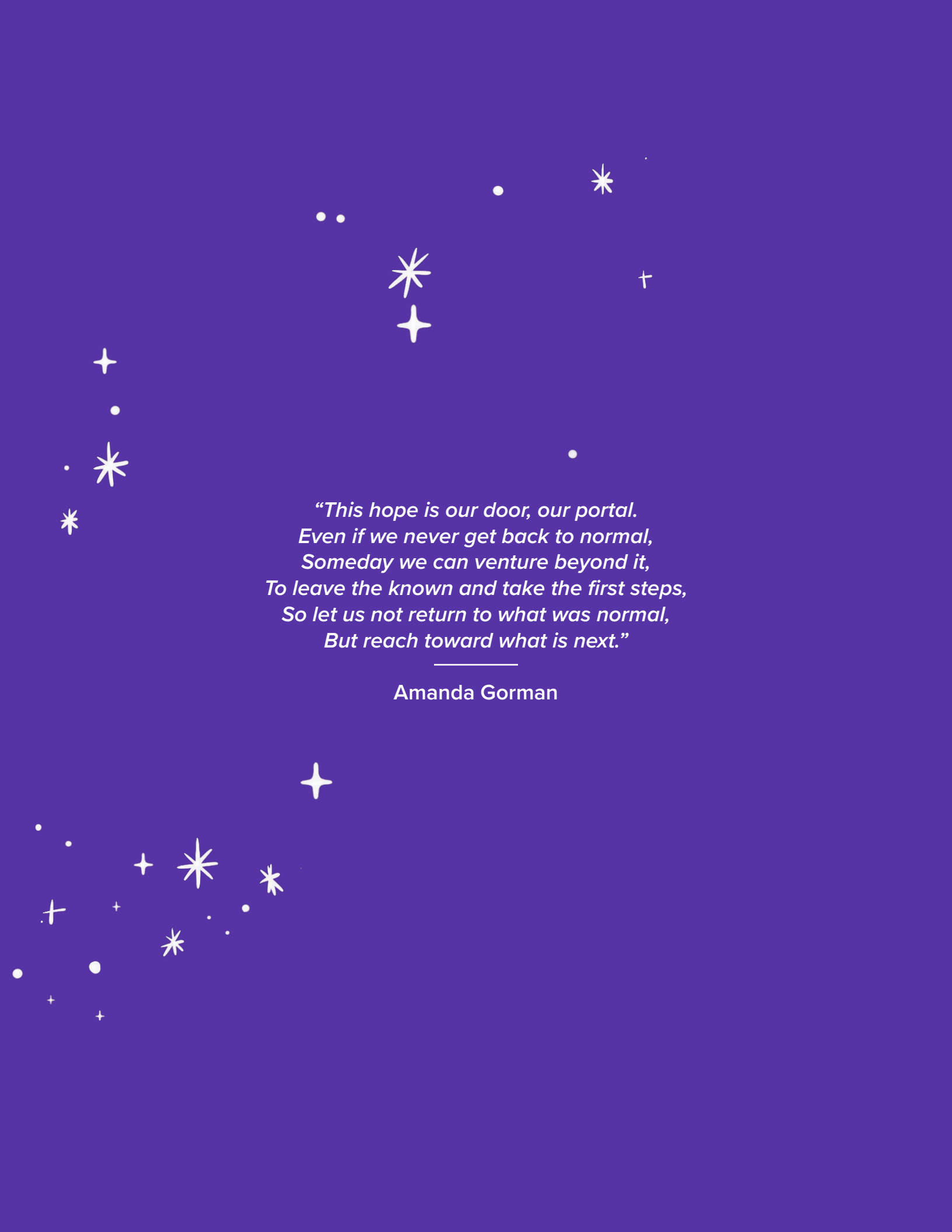




Moonshot edVentures

Impact Report 2016-2021





*“This hope is our door, our portal.
Even if we never get back to normal,
Someday we can venture beyond it,
To leave the known and take the first steps,
So let us not return to what was normal,
But reach toward what is next.”*

Amanda Gorman

TABLE OF CONTENTS

04 A LETTER FROM OUR CEO

06 MOONSHOT IN ACTION

08 OUR HISTORY

10 5 YEARS OF TRANSFORMATION

13 A NOTE FROM OUR FOUNDER

15 5 YEARS OF INNOVATION

16 THE MOONSHOT NETWORK

18 WITH GRATITUDE



This report is dedicated in loving memory to
Kinyata Jackson

Our beloved member of Cohort 4, the founder of
Remembrance Wellness and Yoga,
a community activist, wife, and mother whose joy and
smile will live in our hearts forever.

A LETTER FROM OUR CEO

I first learned of Moonshot at a tiny coffee shop around the corner from Sloan's Lake. A friend told me that CDL, founder of Moonshot, was hiring, and that he thought it was my dream organization. While at a conference in Denver, I took a thirty minute Uber ride across town to meet with her during a break. If you've heard CDL tell the story, she describes it as 20 minutes of me grilling her with questions about Moonshot. All I remember is the undeniable feeling that this was the organization for me.

I joined Moonshot in 2019 when I, much like our Fellows, felt disenchanted by the oppressive limitations of the local education systems. Moonshot's mission of surfacing and supporting a diverse pipeline of leaders to design and launch their own learning environments felt like a much needed breath of fresh air. I jumped at the chance to serve leaders who shared the experiences of our students by creating new, equitable systems specifically designed for our leaders and students to thrive.



So, where have we been?

In only five years, Moonshot has developed a pipeline for diverse and incredible talent in Metro Denver. We have worked with 84 phenomenal Fellows through the Moonshot Fellowship, leaders who came to us with passion, drive, and ideas that are disrupting the status quo of the education ecosystem. In 2021 alone, our leaders worked with over 4,500 students through their schools and programs in Metro Denver. Every year, we hear from more and more leaders on the need for spaces that allow them to engage authentically and in community with others; we had 90 interested applicants for 15-20 spots for Cohort 5 alone. We have come a long way from our early days of lugging workshop supplies across town every Thursday evening, and at the same time, it feels like our work is just beginning.

Where are we going next?

We're looking forward to four key priorities in the upcoming year:

- **Digging in with our 84 alumni** who are launching and leading schools and programs to support their sustainability, the growth of their ventures, and the rigor of learning that their students are experiencing.
- **Welcoming our sixth cohort** into the Fellowship, bringing us to **100 leaders & education entrepreneurs** in Metro Denver
- **Launching a Program Track for our Residency** modeled after a successful School Launcher Residency, where program founders spend a year with Moonshot developing sustainable revenue streams, scaling their impact, and building a strong non-profit board.
- **Setting the course for Moonshot's next 5 years** of innovation and impact. We are beginning our strategic planning work to set the direction for us to continue to move the needle in creating a learner-centered ecosystem in Metro Denver and beyond.

Moonshot began and continues as a community effort, as a village of passionate, equity-minded individuals coming together to make equity and justice happen for our kids. To our community of Fellows, alumni, board, team, funders, mentors, and partners: we could not do this work with you. Thank you.

In solidarity,


Kat Ling
CEO

MISSION

Moonshot edVentures seeks to surface and support a diverse set of leaders to design and launch the learning environments of tomorrow.

VISION

We envision a learner-centered system, led by individuals who share and empathize with the experience of the students and communities they aim to serve, where all children become lifelong learners who persist through life and meaningfully contribute to their communities.

WHY WE EXIST

Moonshot edVentures aims to solve several connected problems. The growing opportunity gap between white students and students of color, which is driven by both those teaching and leading, as well as the type of learning environments students are able to attend. We know that having teachers, leaders, and role models who represent students' experiences and identities are crucial and impact student achievement rates, graduation rates, consideration of college attendance, student mental health, and social-emotional outcomes.¹



Moonshot believes that if we invest in the leadership development of **local, underrepresented leaders**, support them in developing new models of learning environments that look dramatically different than the status quo, and provide them with the resources, tools, and support to launch, then we can **transform outcomes and opportunities** for students traditionally underserved by our current system

¹ Carver-Thomas, D. (2018). Diversifying the teaching profession: How to recruit and retain teachers of color. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute. <https://doi.org/10.54300/559.310>.

² Denver Public Schools. (2021, October). Facts and figures. Denver Public Schools. <https://www.dpsk12.org/about/facts-figures/#students>

³ Colorado Department of Education (2021). Count of teachers by district, ethnicity, and gender [Data file]. Retrieved from <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdereval/2020-21teachersby-raceandgender>

⁴ Colorado Department of Education (2021). Principal and assistant principal by gender and race [Data file]. Retrieved from <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdereval/2020-21principals-byraceandgender>

MOONSHOT IN ACTION

For five years, Moonshot has been building a diverse pipeline of leaders through our flagship program, The Moonshot Fellowship.

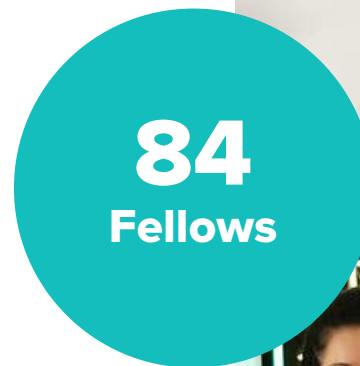
The Moonshot Fellowship provides a safe and authentic space for leaders in education to explore designing and launching a new learning environment like a school or program.

After completion of the first phase of the Fellowship, our Fellows advance to alumni-hood. In alumni-hood, our Fellows have access to services and supports including micro-grants and large grants opportunities, 1:1 career and fund-raising coaching, an Expert Bench of consultants, therapy with BIPOC providers, community building events, and professional development workshops.



The three stage program (named Explore, Cultivate and Prepare For Launch) focuses on leadership development, designing and piloting in partnership with students and families, identifying pathways to launch, and building connections to local and national networks, all within a tight-knit, supportive cohort community.

Across five cohorts, our Fellows have launched micro-schools, charters, non-profits, art centers, consulting companies, after-school programs, push-in programs, summer enrichment programs, apps, podcasts, turnaround schools, and a mobile mental health clinic.



In 2021, the Moonshot Residency Program was launched as a full-time, intensive program designed for Moonshot edVentures Fellows who are committed to launching and leading high-quality new charter schools. Four Fellows representing three schools made up our inaugural cohort with plans to launch schools in Denver County, Adams 14, and Jefferson County.



Fellows in Cohort 2 during their “Excellent Schools and Programs Visit” in the Bay Area

116

hours of programming completed per Fellow in the Explore (first) stage

252

empathy interviews conducted with students and families in 5 years

40

local and national “Excellent Schools and Programs Visits” completed by Fellows in 5 years

“ I’m proud to be a Moonshot Fellow. Joining this community was life changing for me as a woman of color in educational leadership...More than anything this fellowship has helped me develop a mindful connection to myself as a leader and gain confidence in myself. ”

**Ashlee Morris
Cohort 5 Fellow & Founder of
Girl Talk**

OUR HISTORY

2015

Christine DeLeon "CDL" imagines what it could look like to support local leaders in education in developing new learning environments for their communities on a post-it note at a 4.0 Schools workshop

SPRING 2016

CDL co-founds Talk to Action, a community group dedicated to DEI in education and begins conversations with local K-12 leaders and education entrepreneurs

FALL 2016

Moonshot edVentures is founded in Denver with CDL as Founder & CEO

SPRING 2017

Moonshot hires its first employee, Lindsay Finklang, and begins recruiting members of Cohort 1

FALL 2017

The School Launcher Fellowship begins with Cohort 1 with 16 Fellows

WINTER 2017

Moonshot hosts first Showcase with Cohort 1 sharing ideas for innovative learning environments with the public

FALL 2018

The School Launcher Fellowship Cohort 2 begins with 15 Fellows

SUMMER 2019

Kat Ling and Sasha Green join the Moonshot Team

FALL 2019

Cohort 3 begins with 17 Fellows

WINTER 2019

Moonshot gets an office space of its own at 3840 York Street

SPRING 2020

COVID-19 pandemic begins and Cohort 3 shifts to all virtual programming, running Moonshot's first virtual piloting sessions with students

FALL 2020

Cohort 4 begins as the first-ever all virtual cohort with 19 Fellows building community & their ventures over Zoom

VJ Brown and Alex Chavez join the Moonshot Team

WINTER 2020

CDL transitions from her role of CEO

Moonshot hosts the first virtual Showcase Event with over 200 attendees joining from across the United States

SPRING 2021

Moonshot has its strongest Fellow recruitment season with 90 interested applicants

SUMMER 2021

Moonshot begins the Residency Program, a intensive full-time school launcher program, with 4 school founders working to create new schools in Denver, Adams 14, and Jefferson County

The Second Annual Shoot for the Moon Challenge raises over \$200,000 for 12 Fellows and their ventures

FALL 2021

Kat Ling becomes Moonshot's second CEO

Cohort 5 begins with 14 Fellows with a return to partially in person programming

WINTER 2021

Moonshot hosts its 5th Annual Showcase and 5 Year Anniversary Event in person with 200 guests in attendance

EARLY 2022

Moonshot begins strategic planning for its next 5 years

5 YEARS OF TRANSFORMATION

Moonshot has witnessed the transformative power of bringing together like-minded individuals to build and create. Our Fellows have centered their voices and identities in their work, disrupted the status quo, and dismantled barriers in their pursuit of justice and equity in education.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT Cory's Story

Cory Montalvo's Moonshot story begins with a familiar scene: sipping a coffee in a local cafe with Moonshot founder, CDL. With one foot out of education, Cory was seeking an opportunity that uplifted his talents alongside his humanity. His next plan was to move to Austin and go to grad school. CDL then pitched Cory an idea: "Why not start a school?"

His response? "Hell no, not starting a school. That's a ridiculous concept."

And yet, that "ridiculous concept" transformed the next few years of his life. Through Moonshot's inaugural cohort, Cory build out an educational program model that nurtures "a sense of safety where you feel like you can fail and still be affirmed and where showing up fully is celebrated instead of repressed." The program is called Youth Empowerment Broadcasting Organization (YEBO).

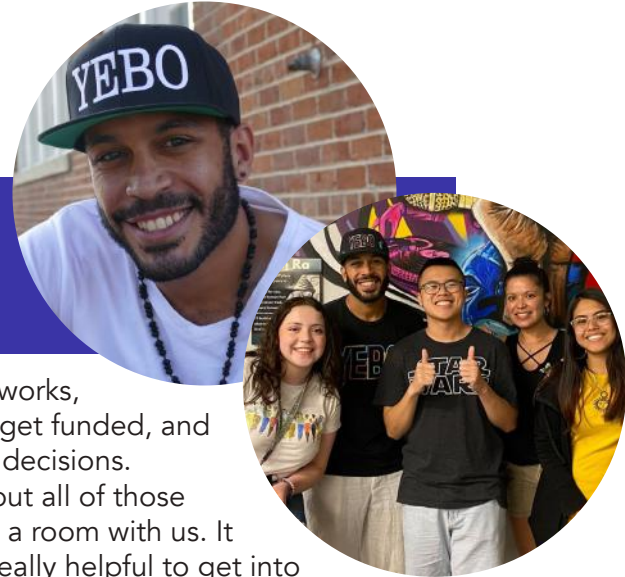
Cory believes the access to networks and supports that Moonshot facilitates for Fellows is an exceptional benefit. He explains that "no one ever teaches you how things work, how

the system works, how things get funded, and who makes decisions. Moonshot put all of those people into a room with us. It was really, really helpful to get into the doors of some of those rooms that we never had access to, particularly as leaders of color in our own communities."

“ Moonshot put all of those people in a room with us. It was really, really helpful to get into the doors of some of these rooms that we never had access to, particularly as leaders of color ”

Five years later, Cory is now Founder and CEO of YEBO, a nonprofit organization with a team of six. YEBO cultivates habits of belonging, wellness and independence in youth by leveraging media for the development of civic practices. YEBO has two main programs: The Remix, which invites high schoolers to design, build, and manage their own media ventures; and Digital Holistic Leadership, a partnership with CU Boulder that facilitates collaboration between high schoolers from Northeast Denver and undergraduates to re-imagine the role of digital media and co-design new learning environments.

Learn more at yebomedia.org





Cohort 5 Fellow, Destiny Hardney giving her keynote address to guests at Showcase on December 9, 2021

34

Fellows received a vertical promotion since joining the Fellowship

4,500

students served through Fellows' ventures and Moonshot piloting in 2021

100%

of Fellows agree the Fellowship helped them build and improve their venture design

*“Throughout my experience, I marveled at the talents of my fellow cohort members. I was humbled to be in their presence. I **gained confidence by listening to their stories, accepting feedback, and obtaining encouragement.** There is power in connecting with like-minded Persons of Color that believe that positive change can happen for underrepresented youth. With each passing week, my conversation went from ‘I’m not worthy of being in the community of such greatness’ to ‘I am great and deserve to uplift and be uplifted by other greatness.’ **I was transforming.**”*

Roy Holloway

Cohort 3 Fellow & Principal of Omar D. Blair Charter School



A NOTE FROM OUR FOUNDER

Dear Moonshot Family,

As a new mom, people say that the days are long, but the years are short. In some ways, Moonshot was my first “child” and the saying rings true for the last five years of Moonshot. There are too many memories to recall in a short letter. Perhaps what I’d love to leave you all with are a few requests that I hope takes Moonshot and its network boldly into the next five years under Kat’s leadership.

To Moonshot Fellows - Three lessons: 1) When faced with the choice between competition and collaboration, recognize each other’s gifts — your work is far more powerful when you work together. 2) Building an incredible team cannot be underestimated - an entrepreneur can only go so far before the idea of sharing one’s vision and allowing others to embrace it and take it on becomes far more important. 3) You have to make sure that you are open to receiving as much as you love the fulfillment of giving. I’m not the first to say it, but put your oxygen mask on before assisting others. (This also goes for the Moonshot team!)

To Moonshot’s supporters - Give these entrepreneurs what they need. Several thousand dollars acknowledges the gifts these leaders bring into the world, but these entrepreneurs are still working their day jobs, caring for their families, and finding side gigs to pay the bills while living out their dreams. If we truly believe in them, we have to give them the level of funding that allows them to do this work while not running themselves into the ground. Remind them that they need to pay themselves!

To Moonshot’s families and friends - Thank you for giving these folks the space to dream and build in a way that they may have never had the chance to before. It certainly does require sacrifice from their entire network to make their dreams into realities and I have extreme gratitude for each of you.

To all of you - If you can, thank a Moonshot team member for the work they do during the days, nights, and weekends for this organization, year after year. They are the smallest and mightiest team who do so much work out of care and love for each person in the Moonshot network—the Fellows, the alumni, the funders, the partners, the community members and the students.



I couldn’t be more confident that with this incredible network of alumni, the Moonshot team, the contractors who have supported Moonshot’s programming, as well as all of you, Moonshot’s impact will continue to reverberate through our local communities and inspire what’s possible elsewhere. So much gratitude for you - yesterday, today, and always.

xo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'CMA'.



Inaugural Innovation Award Recipients at Moonshot's 5 Year Anniversary Event:
(left to right) Branta Lockett, Joanne Liu, Ellie Adelman, and Tania Chairez

265
applicants to the
Fellowship since our
inception

25
ventures launched
in Metro Denver

\$202k
raised in the 2nd
Annual Shoot for the
Moon Campaign

“ We don’t even know the full scope of what we are creating yet. Our alumni are collaborating and working in community at all levels in the local education ecosystem. Just by seeing how that’s happening, in a short five years, there’s no telling what we can do by investing in the people truly changing communities. It’s amazing to think about what’s possible. ”

VJ Brown

Alumni & Partnerships Manager, Moonshot edVentures

5 YEARS OF INNOVATION

We believe that no dream is too big, risky, or impossible to achieve. Over the past 5 years, we have seen a demand for innovation in the ecosystem and a deep passion for ventures with community and love at their core.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT A Tale of Two Amandas



As alumni of Cohort 2, Amanda Gonzales and Amanda Marquez quickly realized that they were kindred spirits. With a combined 39 years of working in education as first generation, Latina women, Gonzales and Marquez both saw a desperate need for innovation in the ecosystem. Marquez was certain that after meeting Gonzales through Moonshot and “joining forces over drinks” that they were going to work together to create something beautiful.

However, the road ahead would prove challenging. According to Gonzales, “trying to innovate while working full time as part of a huge system was defeating.” In 2020, they decided to apply, and were accepted, into Moonshot’s inaugural Residency cohort, where they began working on their vision for Be The Change Community School (BTCCS).

The Moonshot Residency is a full-time, year-long program where Residents spend

four days a week working in administrative roles in host schools and one day a week in Moonshot programming, designing their school models and preparing a high-quality charter application. Residents also receive executive coaching, support from application writers, learning

“ The Residency program not only reminded me that I was capable, but that Be the Change Community School is possible. ”

through instructional rounds, and mentorship from principals. Gonzales stated that “the Residency program not only reminded me that I was capable, but that Be The Change Community School is possible”

While working as Assistant Principals at North High School, the Amandas began to lay the groundwork

for BTCCS. They hosted a project-based learning pilot with a cohort of teachers to gain data and insight for their school design model. Every Thursday of the Residency is spent co-working with three other Residents and ideating what their school would look and feel like. Be the Change Community School, a prospective 9-12 high school in Adams 14, will provide rich educational and project-based learning opportunities for BIPOC communities in Commerce City.

Working in collaboration with the students and families of Commerce City and the district, their ultimate hope is to create an innovative school option that puts learning back into the hands of students and the communities they come from.

If approved, Be the Change Community School plans to open in Fall 2023 in Adams 14.

Learn more at bethechangecommunityschool.org

THE MOONSHOT NETWORK

To our network of Alumni: from late workshop evenings, pitch revisions, and piloting to challenging each other's thinking, co-creating, and designing with love, your passion and commitment to each other, the Moonshot team, and your communities are unparalleled. Thank you for sharing your dreams and talent with us.

Cohort 1 (2017)

Alesha Arscott
Amy Lovell Boylls
Angelina Walker
Anthony Grant
Auset Maryam
Branta Lockett
Cory Montalvo
Jessica Martin
Jim Stephens
Justin Darnell
Karolina Villagrana
Keely Vaughan
Meredith Stolte
Paul Yumbla
Sean Wybrant
Wisdom Amouzou

Cohort 2 (2018)

Alejandro Fuentes Mena
Alex Malone
Amanda Gonzales
Amanda Marquez
Antonio Parks
Candice Smith
Cheryl Jackson
Cristina Chacon
Elom Amouzou
Jessica Valsechi
Kelly Okoye
Mario Yuzo Nieto
Mia Coffing
Nikesha Holliday
Susana Cabrera

Cohort 3 (2019)

Bre Donnelly
Brian Lightfoot
Brianna Mestas
Erin Williams
Ginnie Logan
Hilari Smith
Jordan Roehl
Juan Sanchez
Keena Day
Lela Payne
Marianna Lucero
Miguel Gonzalez
Paul Clifton
Roy Holloway
Shalelia Dillard
Sofiya Erman
Tania Chairez

Cohort 4 (2020)

Anne Keke
Anthony Lucero
Ellie Adelman
Enrico Gomez
Fryda Faugier Ferreira
Gabiella Carrethers
Hanna Franzblau
Jasmine Massey
Joanne Liu
Joyelle Naomi
Kinyata Jackson
Luis Antezana Alba
Megan Casimir
Oliver Thornton
Olivia Gardner
Paul Taylor Loftley
Rowena Capuno
Tatenda Blessing Muchiriri
TeRay Esquibel

Cohort 5 (2021)

Ángeles Osorio-Cooper
Anna Graves
Ashlee Morris
Benu Amun-Ra
Bushenga AaronAli
Destiny Hardney
Donna Chrisjohn
Eboni Nash
Ezequiel Villanueva-Ruiz
Jean Nguyenloc
Joe Zarella
Melissa Leach
Nestor Meza
Stephanie Tran

“ The Moonshot network is incredible, supportive, brilliant, and all-in for one another’s success. ”

I know that I will be counting on the knowledge, skills, and mindsets I cultivated in Moonshot for the rest of my life. ”

Megan Casimir
Cohort 4 Fellow & Founder
of Words Beyond Walls

VENTURES



WITH GRATITUDE

Over the past 5 years we have seen the incredible power of our community in making the impossible, possible. Thank you from the bottom of all of our hearts for taking the leap and being on this journey with us.



OUR SUPPORTERS

Amazon
The Anschutz Foundation
Carson Foundation
Chan Zuckerberg Initiative
Climb Higher Colorado
Community First Foundation
The City and County of Denver
Daniels Fund
The Denver Foundation
Donnell-Kay Foundation
Education Leaders of Color
Gates Family Foundation

The Gateway Fund II of The Denver Foundation
IMA Foundation
The Jacques M. Littlefield Foundation
Margulf Foundation
NewSchools Venture Fund
The Nord Family Foundation
RootED
Rose Community Foundation
The Reinvention Lab, powered by Teach for America
Walton Family Foundation
Wend Collective

In 2021, Moonshot recieved a record breaking amount of donations from 644 individuals!

A digital listing of all of our donors can be found at moonshotedventures.org/donors

OUR COMMUNITY

33Vincent
Aaron Walker
Abby Schaller
Abigail Hasberry
Dr. Alex Marrero
Amanda Tien
Andrea Pursley
Andrew Allen
Antonio Tapia
Aspen Academy
Aurora Public Schools
Brandon Zeigler
Brayan Montes-Terrazas
Britt Erickson
Brooke Brown
Charles Dukes
Climb Higher Colorado
Cody Ostenson
Corey Graham
Da Vinci Schools
David Clifford
David Portillo
Denver Green School
Denver Metro Chamber Leadership Foundation
Denver Public Schools

Derrick Johnson
Diana Rojas
Dirk Bird
Ebony Coleman
Empower Community High School
Fred Glick
Global Majority Consortium
Dr. Jannah Garfio
Jason Atwood
Jessica Valsechi
Jocelyn Cordell
Jon Schweig
Kristina Scala
Landon Mascareñaz
Liz Aybar Conti
Lizzie Choi
Logan Boon
Matt Reamy
Max Tweten
Melanie Rivera
Michael Chiang
Monica Ryan
New Legacy Charter School
New Schools Venture Fund
Nicole Bergeron

Nora Flood
North High School
Open Media Foundation
Opportunity 180
Pat Donovan
Promise54
Reamy Consulting Group
Rico Munn
Rito Martinez
Riyaz Gayasaddin
Sabrina Skinner Lehmann
Sarah Burns
Sergio Rios
Sharhonda Bossier
Sharma Graham
Sonya Marques-Correia
Susana Cordova
Tara Topper
The Management Center
Tim Farmer
Trina Maull
Urban Leaders Fellowship
Veronica Crespín-Palmer
Washington Navarrete

OUR TEAM

Staff

Kat Ling
Chief Executive Officer

Sasha Green
Program & Operations Manager

VJ Brown
Alumni & Partnerships Manager

Alex Chavez
Finance & Operations Senior Manager

Contractors

Jennifer Douglas
Residency Co-Lead

Erin Sciscione
Residency Co-Lead

Tawnya Ramirez
Accountant

Board

Joshua Klaris
Board Chair

Ian Connell
Board Treasurer

Crystal Rountree
Board Member

Caleb Fields
Board Member

Elizabeth City
Board Member

Harsha Sekar
Board Member

A special thank you to Jocelyn Cordell, Brayan Montes-Terrazas, and Alex Chavez for their work in creating this report

