

# Silicon Oasis

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# A MESSAGE FROM OUR EDITOR



**Kyle Macdonald**

**Editor-in-Chief,  
Silicon Oasis**

This issue captures a cross-section of what's being built in Arizona right now. A new AI venture studio opens in Mesa. A robotics pharmacy facility adds hundreds of jobs. Healthtech companies scale out of Tempe. University research turns into real products. Founders are launching platforms that operate inside education, law, logistics, and mental health — industries where execution matters more than hype.

The through line is infrastructure. Companies in this issue are tied to facilities, supply chains, hospitals, universities, and long-term capital. The ecosystem is expanding through systems that hold weight, not just ideas.

Events like Pitch Night and Venture Café continue to bring founders and investors into the same rooms, while new venture partnerships create paths for companies to stay and grow locally.

Across Arizona, progress is showing up in tangible ways: buildings repurposed into innovation districts, research translated into startups, and teams choosing to scale here because the support structure exists. The stories in this issue reflect a region getting more connected, more technical, and more confident in its ability to build at scale.

**Kyle MacDonald**  
**Co-Founder, Silicon Oasis**



# VISION & IMPACT

**Transforming Arizona into a global tech hub led by local founders, built for the future.**

Silicon Oasis is a nonprofit dedicated to uniting Arizona's tech ecosystem. Our mission is to strengthen the local innovation economy by bringing together founders, investors, and entrepreneurs—and by creating spaces where collaboration can thrive.

We do this in three key ways:

- Centralizing the Ecosystem through startup-focused events and practical workshops led by experienced builders and funders.
- Cultivating Community by fostering authentic, expectation-free connections that go beyond traditional networking.
- Spotlighting Talent with dynamic video podcasts and media that highlight Arizona's most promising innovators.



# NON-PROFITS IN ACTION

## Silicon Oasis Joins Forces at Venture Café Phoenix for Youth, Entrepreneurship, Healthcare, and Innovation

Last week, **Silicon Oasis** stepped up as a key connector at **Venture Café Phoenix's "Non-Profits in Action"** gathering. The Thursday evening event—part of Venture Café's weekly Thursday Gatherings—brought together founders, nonprofit leaders, community builders, and ecosystem players for an inspiring night centered on real-world impact: youth development, entrepreneurship support, healthcare access, and cutting-edge innovation across the Valley.

Co-Founder **Kyle Macdonald** represented **Silicon Oasis**, sharing how the organization serves as Arizona's unifying community platform. By bridging founders, operators, investors, and partners, **Silicon Oasis** works toward one bold goal: growing the next generation of unicorn companies right here in the state. As a **501(c)(3) nonprofit**, it curates high-signal events, insights, and connections to fuel Arizona's rise as a global tech hub—proving that collaborative, homegrown ecosystems can compete anywhere.



### A Night of Stories, Impact, and Guidance

The gathering spotlighted Phoenix's most dynamic changemakers and nonprofits driving tangible change every day. Attendees heard directly from organizations about their missions—empowering young people, nurturing startups, expanding healthcare access, and sparking innovation that lifts entire communities.

These stories weren't abstract; they highlighted measurable wins and everyday impact, reinforcing Arizona's collaborative culture where collaboration turns ideas into scalable solutions.

## Silicon Oasis Community

Adding real value for founders, the event featured mentor hours with experts **George Pisaruk (Founder & Managing Attorney at Pisaruk Legal)** and **Austin Gudzak (CEO of Valley Visionaries)**. Founders lined up for one-on-one guidance on critical legal topics and entrepreneurship strategies—practical advice that helps early-stage teams navigate challenges and accelerate growth.

### Why This Matters for Arizona's Momentum

Events like this underscore the Silicon Desert's secret strength: a tight-knit, supportive network that blends nonprofits, startups, and community leaders.

**Venture Café Phoenix**—running every Thursday from 4:30–7:00 PM—creates the perfect low-pressure space for serendipitous connections that spark big ideas. When **Silicon Oasis** shows up to amplify those conversations, it helps turn local talent and ambition into globally competitive ventures.

The night ended on a high note of gratitude: thanks to the nonprofits for sharing their stories, and to everyone who attended to learn, network, and explore partnerships. In a state climbing national rankings for startup-friendliness, gatherings like this keep the momentum building—one meaningful connection at a time.



Stay tuned for more from Silicon Oasis—whether it's Pitch Night on January 28, ongoing resources, or the next community spotlight. Arizona's tech future is being shaped by people who show up, collaborate, and drive change. Head to [thesiliconoasis.org](https://thesiliconoasis.org) for details, registration, or to nominate a startup.

### Learn More About Silicon Oasis



# GROUNDBREAKERS MIXER

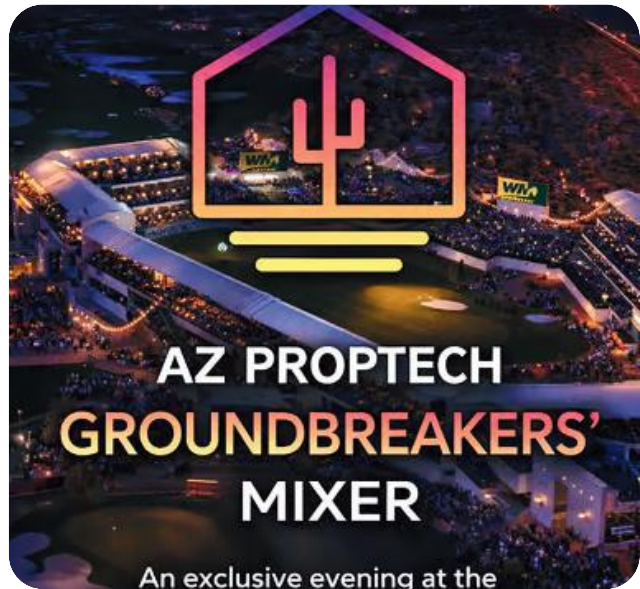
## Phoenix's PropTech Power Play

Phoenix has spent decades mastering the art of turning raw desert land into thriving communities, office towers, and infrastructure. Now, the city is channeling that same relentless energy into something new: the technology that will redefine how real estate and construction are developed, managed, and financed for the next decade.

### An Exclusive Gathering

On Thursday, February 5, 2026, from 6:00 to 9:00 PM in Scottsdale, the **AZ PropTech Collective** will host the Groundbreakers Mixer. This exclusive, approval-required event brings together real estate veterans, private equity investors, tech founders, and operators for focused conversations at the intersection of traditional industry knowledge and frontier innovation.

The evening is built for high-impact connections rather than casual mingling, with the explicit goal of helping Arizona-grown proptech and contech ventures scale through local capital, expertise, and real-world testing opportunities.



### Phoenix as the Ultimate Living Lab

Phoenix's rapid expansion, relatively low barriers to entry, and constant stream of new developments make it an ideal testing ground for emerging technologies. Tools ranging from AI-driven property valuations and sustainable building materials to smart construction robotics, virtual staging platforms, and blockchain-secured transactions can be piloted here at speed and scale. The mixer highlights practical ways established players can participate and benefit directly from this ecosystem.

### The Evening's Flow

The program keeps momentum high and conversations flowing. It begins at 5:30 PM with refreshments and early networking among the Valley's key decision-makers.

### Silicon Oasis Community

At 6:00 PM, a Frontier Fireside Chat explores why Arizona is uniquely positioned to emerge as a major tech hub and provides clear guidance on how seasoned professionals can step in as angel investors. By 6:15 PM, the spotlight shifts to local founders who share real stories of building and scaling proptech solutions in the region. From 6:30 PM onward, the **Collective Lounge** opens for open, high-value dialogue.

### Practical Ways to Engage and Win

Discussions center on leveraging decades of real estate experience to identify and back promising startups early, taking advisory board roles that provide a front-row view of innovations capable of reducing operating costs, and partnering as early adopters—offering sites, feedback, and data to help new technologies prove themselves in live environments.

### The Organization Behind It The AZ

**PropTech Collective** is a community-led nonprofit dedicated to strengthening **Arizona's** proptech and contech ecosystem through meaningful in-person events, collaboration, and connections among founders, investors, operators, and leaders in real estate and the built environment.

### How to Get Involved

Registration requires host approval to ensure quality conversations.



Interested real estate professionals, investors, or founders are encouraged to reach out promptly for details, as spots are intentionally limited.

Phoenix is no longer content to simply develop land. It is developing the future of development itself. Events like the **Groundbreakers Mixer** are where that future takes shape—one strategic connection at a time. If bridging traditional real estate expertise with frontier technology excites you, this gathering could mark your entry into Arizona's rising proptech story.

**Register For The Groundbreakers Mixer Here**



# PITCH NIGHT RETURNS

## January 28 Gathering Unites Founders, Investors, and Leaders for Real Talk and Real Opportunities

On Wednesday, January 28, 2026, **Silicon Oasis Pitch Night**, hosted in partnership with **PHX FWD**, brought Arizona's tech community together for an evening of innovation, connection, and insight. Over **100 attendees**, including founders, investors, and community builders from across the state, filled the room, creating an energetic and engaged audience for six early-stage startups.

The companies on stage—**Olli**, **Solentrex**, **SaveNaturally**, **HALO**, **GrubiQ**, and **Triptimize**—each delivered focused **5–7 minute pitches**, followed by live Q&A with a panel of experienced investors and operators. Audience questions added another layer of engagement, fostering a dynamic, interactive environment where feedback was actionable and connections formed immediately.

Unlike larger demo days, **Silicon Oasis Pitch Night** emphasizes high-signal, founder-first engagement. Doors opened at 6:00 PM for networking, with pitches beginning at 6:30 PM, and the event wrapped by 8:00 PM, leaving participants energized and ready to continue conversations, collaborations, and deals beyond the room.



### Why It Matters in Arizona's Rising Ecosystem

The event highlighted Arizona's rise as a national startup leader. The state now ranks #1 for nurturing startups, supported by growing AI infrastructure, booming data centers, and a rapidly expanding talent pool. **Silicon Oasis Pitch Night** exemplifies this momentum: it surfaces early opportunities, fosters mentorship, and transforms casual introductions into tangible outcomes, from investment to partnerships.

For founders, the evening offered visibility and direct feedback from experienced operators and investors. For investors, it was a chance to identify promising new ventures. For operators and ecosystem builders, it was a networking hub, bringing together the people and ideas fueling Arizona's growth.

## Silicon Oasis Community

Past Silicon Oasis Pitch Nights—including themed evenings such as PropTech and Construction Tech—have demonstrated the power of intimate, curated gatherings.

Startups often leave with follow-on meetings, mentorship, and connections that accelerate growth. By maintaining a balance of focus, interaction, and practical insight, the series continues to set a high bar for Arizona’s startup events.

As the Silicon Desert thrives, Pitch Night demonstrates the strength of strategic partnerships, founder-focused programming, and a growing ecosystem.

With PHX FWD as a key collaborator, the initiative is connecting innovators and investors while positioning Arizona as a global tech hub.

The January 28 event reaffirmed Silicon Oasis’s position as a premier monthly pitch platform in Arizona’s startup ecosystem—an evening where energy, engagement, and insight converge to create real outcomes for founders, investors, and operators alike.



For highlights from the night, including founder moments, investor engagement, and the overall crowd energy, visit [thesiliconoasis.org](https://thesiliconoasis.org).

### Register For The Silicon Oasis Pitch Night



# SILICON OASIS 2026 KICKS OFF STRONG

## ASU Honors, CES Buzz, and a Major AI Venture Studio Launch in Arizona

ASU honors Ink'd Greetings co-founder Sammi Ekmark, CES 2026 highlights, and WaveX, an AI venture studio launching in Arizona signal strong momentum for the state's tech ecosystem.

Arizona's startup world kicked off 2026 with real energy, highlighted by three major developments: a well-deserved ASU award for **Sammi Ekmark** of **Ink'd Greetings**, key takeaways from **CES 2026** in Las Vegas, and the launch of **WaveX**, a new AI venture studio designed to help early-stage founders build and scale right here in the state.

### Sammi Ekmark Earns ASU Young Alumni Recognition

The news started local and personal. **Sammi Ekmark**, co-founder and Chief Product Officer of Ink'd Greetings, was named a recipient of **Arizona State University's Young Alumni Achievement Award**. The honor was described as "more than well-deserved," with praise for Sammi and her husband **Andrew Ekmark** as a true joy to work with.



**Ink'd Greetings** has been quietly scaling: last year's **Venture Madness** champion and a standout on **Amazon's Entrepreneur Elevator Pitch**. The company now runs more than **140 kiosks across 35 states**.

Those kiosks have printed tens of thousands of personalized cards for every occasion—birthdays, anniversaries, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and more. (An ASU email had listed only **16 kiosks** and **5,000 cards**; the record was corrected to reflect the actual growth.)

If you're ever racing to grab a last-minute card, the tip is simple: head to an **Ink'd Greetings** kiosk first. Huge congrats again to Sammi.

## Silicon Oasis Community

From there, the focus turned global. **CES 2026 in Las Vegas** remains one of the planet's biggest tech showcases, where giants like **Samsung** debut see-through TVs and startups demo the next wave of innovation everything from boxing robots to tomorrow's gadgets.

Arizona had a front-row seat with boots-on-the-ground coverage from **Jordan Fourcher**, founder of **Cryo X CO**. The coverage welcomed anyone curious about the state's ecosystem to reach out via LinkedIn DM—no gatekeeping, the goal is to demystify the space for newcomers.

## WaveX Brings Early-Stage Hope to Arizona

The biggest headline for local founders? **WaveX**, a new AI-focused venture studio, is launching in **Arizona** in partnership with the **Arizona Commerce Authority** and **LG Nova** (LG's innovation arm). It will back early-stage companies in healthcare, sports, media, energy, and beyond.

The launch was called a “relief” for the community. Pre-seed funding has been a persistent struggle. Many founders with solid ideas and work ethic still feel forced to look outside the state for believers. Seed and Series A funds do great work, but **WaveX** fills a critical gap by giving **Arizona** builders a real shot to stay, scale, and keep the economic impact local.



## Momentum Building

From ASU celebrating homegrown talent like **Sammi Ekmark** to Arizona teams scouting the future at **CES** and **WaveX** stepping in to support the next wave of founders, 2026 feels like a turning point.

If you're an early-stage builder in healthcare, sports, media, energy, or any high-potential vertical, **WaveX** could be the partner you've been waiting for. Arizona's **tech story is accelerating—stay tuned for what's next.**

# TEMPE STARTUP LIFEGUIDES RAISES \$1M

## How a Arizona- based startup is scaling non-clinical mental health by putting human connection first

At 2:17 a.m., long after emails go unanswered and office lights dim across Tempe, a different kind of work begins. A daughter weighs whether her father can safely live alone another year. A mid-career professional lies awake rehearsing how to tell their manager they're burned out. A leader quietly balances quarterly targets with caregiving schedules and mounting personal strain. These moments don't appear in productivity dashboards, but they follow people into work every day, shaping focus, health, and performance in ways traditional healthcare rarely addresses.

**LifeGuides** was built for those moments.

### **Built in Tempe, Designed for Real Life**

Founded in **Tempe** and shaped by **Arizona's** growing innovation ecosystem, **LifeGuides** operates at the intersection of human connection and scalable technology, offering non-clinical mental health support that fills the space between therapy and everyday life.



This week, the company announced a **\$1 million strategic investment from the CEOc Aging Innovation Fund (AIF)**, with an additional **\$2 million reserved for follow-on funding—capital** that will accelerate **LifeGuides'** expansion as demand grows for preventative, human-centered mental health solutions.

The company's rise mirrors a broader shift underway in the **Tempe** and greater **Arizona** tech landscape. Long known for engineering talent, enterprise software, and applied research, the region has increasingly become a launchpad for healthtech and workforce innovation companies tackling national challenges with pragmatic, scalable models. With deep ties to **Arizona State University** and a rapidly maturing healthcare corridor, **Tempe** has become fertile ground for companies designed to scale.

## Venture Capital

### Before Therapy, There's Life

**LifeGuides** was founded in 2016 by entrepreneur and impact-focused leader **Mark Donohue**, who recognized that many of life's most stressful experiences fall outside the reach of clinical care. Caregiving, loneliness, career transitions, grief, and aging-related anxiety are rarely treated as healthcare events, yet they drive much of the mental and emotional strain people carry into work and home life.

Rather than positioning itself as a replacement for therapy, **LifeGuides** was built to support the moments surrounding care. The platform connects individuals with trained Guides who have navigated the same or similar life events, creating support that feels relatable, accessible, and deeply human.

### Engagement Is the New Outcome

That non-clinical, peer-to-peer approach has translated into measurable results. Today, **LifeGuides** supports guidance across more than **500 everyday life events**, consistently delivering higher engagement and utilization than traditional clinical-only mental health benefits. Employers using the platform report reductions in absenteeism and presenteeism, improved employee satisfaction, and lower overall healthcare costs.

The company is growing at more than **100 percent year-over-year**, driven by enterprise demand for preventative solutions that address real life—not just diagnoses.

### Why the CEOc Fund Leaned In

That momentum drew the attention of the **CEOc Aging Innovation Fund**, managed by **Castellan Group** and backed by healthcare leaders including **Humana, Elevance Health, University of Louisville Health, BrightSpring, and Trilogy**. The fund was created to address a persistent gap in healthcare innovation, where founders with proven solutions often lack the capital and industry access needed to scale nationally.

For **Steve Cunanan**, General Partner of the **Aging Innovation Fund**, **LifeGuides** stood out because it addresses where mental health challenges actually begin. Employees dealing with aging parents, major life transitions, or chronic stress don't always need clinical intervention—they need someone who understands what they're facing and knows how to help them move forward.

### From Arizona to Everywhere

With strategic backing from the **CEOc Aging Innovation Fund** and its national healthcare partners, **LifeGuides** is scaling a model rooted in empathy, lived experience, and measurable impact. The company's leadership sees this moment as a signal that the healthcare system is ready to evolve.

As **LifeGuides** continues to grow from **Arizona** onto the national stage, its core belief remains unchanged: the future of mental health care may not begin in a clinic, but in a conversation between two people who truly understand each other.

# WAVEX: BRINGING AI TO ARIZONA'S CORE

**NovaWave unveils WaveX AI Venture Studio in Mesa—LG NOVA, AZVC, and Sunny Day Sports fuel Arizona's AI Rise**

In the golden light of a January afternoon in Phoenix, where the desert meets ambition, a quiet transformation is accelerating. What was once a sprawling, sun-faded shopping mall on the edge of **Mesa—the old Fiesta Mall** is being reborn as the Palo District, a gleaming campus of sports fields, tech labs, and creative energy.

At its heart stands **WaveX, the new AI venture studio** launched by **NovaWave Capital in partnership with the Arizona Commerce Authority**. The announcement, made with fanfare at **CES** earlier this month, feels less like a press release and more like the opening scene of Arizona's next chapter.

The story begins with **"Tonton" Ali Diallo**, the soft-spoken yet relentless Founding **Managing Partner of NovaWave Capital**. A former White House Presidential Innovation Fellow and the mind behind **Aurion Capital**, Diallo has spent years connecting dots across continents.



From **Silicon Valley to Seoul, Dubai to Abu Dhabi**, he watched capital and talent concentrate in a handful of coastal zip codes while entire regions—places like the American West and Appalachia—brimmed with untapped potential. His answer: build bridges.

**NovaWave**, founded in 2024 as a registered investment adviser under **Aurion's** umbrella, already had **LG Electronics** as its anchor limited partner through **LG NOVA**, the innovation arm with hubs in Silicon Valley and West Virginia. The model was simple but powerful: combine corporate scale, public-sector alignment, and venture discipline to back high-growth AI companies that deliver real-world economic and industrial impact in energy, healthcare, digital health, and enterprise software.

## Venture Capital

Then came the latest turn. At **CES 2026**, **NovaWave** revealed two new investors joining the **NovaWave Fund I** generation: **AZ Venture Capital Inc.**, a stalwart supporter of Arizona startups, and **Sunny Day Sports**, the Scottsdale-based innovator championing women's sports and wellness. Their participation deepens the fund's public-private character and signals strong local belief in the vision.

**Governor Katie Hobbs** and **ACA President/CEO Sandra Watson** wasted no time endorsing the initiative. They see **WaveX** as a natural extension of **Arizona's** talent pool, pro-business climate, and growing leadership in advanced technologies. The choice of location reinforces the message: the Palo District redevelopment led by **Sunny Day Sports CEO Vicki Mayo** turns a symbol of retail's past into a beacon for tech's future.

**NovaWave's** reach extends far beyond Mesa. The fund draws strength from **LG NOVA's** existing footprint, partnerships with the **Nevada Governor's Office of Economic Development** and **West Virginia Division of Economic Development**, and academic ties to UNLV, Marshall University, and West Virginia University. Internationally, connections in South Korea, Qatar, the UAE, Japan, and Saudi Arabia—through collaborators such as Samrya Group and the University of Sharjah—open doors to Europe and the Gulf for portfolio companies.



For Arizona entrepreneurs, the implications are immediate and profound. A healthcare startup here can prototype AI diagnostics with **WaveX** resources, accelerate regionally in the Southwest, then scale globally with **LG's commercialization muscle**. An energy company can tackle grid resilience for desert climates and find partners across the American West and beyond.

In an era when many decry the over-concentration of tech, **NovaWave** and **WaveX** represent a deliberate counterweight. They prove that meaningful innovation—AI that powers cleaner energy, smarter healthcare, stronger sports performance, and richer media—can flourish outside traditional hubs when vision, capital, and public will align.

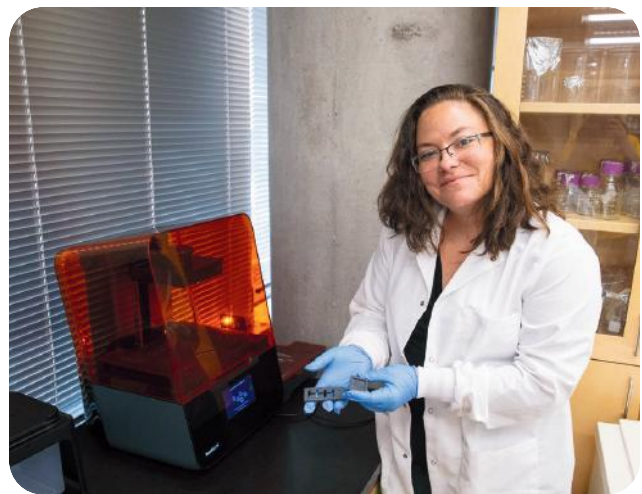
# FROM LAB BENCH TO PATIENT BEDSIDE

Tempe faculty are launching startups that dose patients and slash opioids—quietly outpacing the coasts.

**Jessica Weaver** has spent years watching Type 1 diabetes patients receive life-changing cell transplants—only to see their immune systems destroy the new insulin-producing cells within months. The heartbreak of repeated failure drove her to find a better way.

In her **ASU lab**, she developed a hydrogel that acts like an invisibility cloak: it encapsulates therapeutic cells, shielding them from immune attack while allowing nutrients and insulin to pass through. The result could mean a single transplant that lasts, without patients needing lifelong immunosuppression drugs that carry serious side effects like infections and cancer risk.

Weaver spun out **ImmunoShield Therapeutics** in 2021 directly from NIH-funded research. Early animal tests hit a wall—the hydrogel degraded too quickly. The team pulled all-nighters for 11 weeks, adapting a natural structure inspired by jellyfish to stabilize it. The breakthrough worked.



Human trials are now targeted for summer 2026, bringing the promise of safer, more durable regenerative therapies one step closer to reality.

Postdoctoral researcher **Matthew Becker**, who helped translate the lab concepts into scalable prototypes, sums it up: “At **ASU**, innovation isn’t an add-on—it’s how we do science.”

## Racing the Clock on Pain and Stroke

**Brent Vernon** refuses to pick just one fight. He’s co-founded two companies tackling major clinical pain points. **Sonoran Biosciences**, launched with CEO **Derek Overstreet**, creates temperature-responsive hydrogels that turn solid at body heat and slowly release local anesthetics directly into surgical sites.

## University Moves

The goal is straightforward but transformative: control postoperative pain effectively enough to eliminate routine opioid prescriptions after most operations.

The urgency is real. New FDA regulations on opioid prescribing tighten in 2027, and hospitals are already looking for alternatives. Vernon's team knows they need solid Phase II clinical data soon to stay ahead. An early ASU entrepreneurship seminar years ago planted the seed, and the school's growing support for startups has kept the momentum alive.

Vernon's second venture, **Aneuvax Technologies**, addresses strokes with an injectable liquid embolic that hardens instantly inside brain aneurysms. Current coil treatments work well but carry risks—coils can shift or recanalize years later. **Aneuvax** aims for a more permanent, safer seal with minimally invasive delivery.

CTO **Timothy Becker**, another ASU alum now teaching at **Northern Arizona University**, credits the collaborative environment: "Here, you're expected to think beyond the paper and into the patient's life."

Both companies have secured competitive **NIH SBIR** and **STTR grants**, which provide not just funding but structured validation and pathways to clinical adoption.



### Watching Molecules Dance in Real Time

**Shaopeng Wang** took a different route—one that proves you don't always need to start your own company to create massive impact.

His **Optical Biosensing Lab** at ASU developed advanced plasmonic and scattering microscopy tools that visualize single-molecule interactions on living cells in real time, without fluorescent labels. These platforms reveal binding kinetics, protein behaviors, and cellular dynamics at resolutions previously impossible, accelerating drug discovery, antibody engineering, and molecular diagnostics.

## University Moves



Rather than spinning out a startup, Wang partnered deeply with **Biosensing Instrument**, turning lab prototypes into commercial systems now used in pharma and academic labs worldwide. Companies pay premium prices for the ability to track hundreds of molecules simultaneously on live cells—speeding up therapeutic development pipelines.

**NIH STTR** grants fuel the ongoing collaboration, blending hardware, chemistry, and software while integrating student training. Years ago, **Wang** turned down a \$28 million buyout offer from a major pharmaceutical company that planned to shelve the technology for half a decade. He chose impact over a quick exit. The platform continues to evolve in Tempe, staying active and pushing boundaries.

### Why Tempe Is Winning Right Now

While many universities debate the meaning of “translational research” in committee meetings, **ASU’s School of Biological and Health Systems Engineering** is quietly shipping real products. Faculty code late into the night, students turn capstone projects into patents, and programs like **Skysong Innovations and Venture Devils** make launching a company feel like a natural next step—not an outlier.

The outcomes are tangible: safer cell therapies for diabetes, opioid-sparing postoperative recovery, more durable stroke interventions, and powerful new tools for global drug discovery. NIH funding continues to flow because the data and progress hold up under scrutiny.

Tempe isn’t politely asking for a seat at the biotech table. It’s already running the show.

Dive deeper at [researchmatters.asu.edu](https://researchmatters.asu.edu) or [sbhse.engineering.asu.edu](https://sbhse.engineering.asu.edu). In 2026, the fastest path from lab bench to patient bedside might just run through **Arizona State University**.

### Lean More About ASU Here



# GITHIRED: RESUMES LIE. GITHUB DOESN'T.

Picture this: A promising developer stands in front of a whiteboard, heart racing, as they struggle to reverse a binary tree under time pressure. Despite building a React app that powers over 1,000 real users, contributing to eight open-source projects, launching two profitable side ventures, and logging more than 1,200 meaningful commits in a single year, they get rejected.

Meanwhile, the candidate who nailed the algorithm puzzle gets the offer—only to require step-by-step guidance for every basic feature months later. The overlooked builder? They join another team, ship an MVP in three weeks, scale to 10,000 users by month two, and secure seed funding.

This isn't just a hiring horror story—it's the spark that ignited **GitHired**. In the high-stakes world of startup talent acquisition, where runway burns fast and velocity is everything, founder Raghav Bansal saw the broken system clearly: Resumes promise, interviews test puzzles, but only real shipped code reveals who can actually build.



## From Hackathon Prototype to Launch

**Raghav Bansal**, a 3x founder, 6x hackathon winner, and ASU alum with prior experience in AI collaboration tools (including a Techstars-backed venture), didn't wait for permission. The core idea crystallized during intense **48-hour sprints** at hackathons, including a standout win at **Cal Hacks**.

Alongside collaborators **Aarav Matalia, Asmi Kachare, and Krishna Oza (now a core team member)**, they built the first version in a frenzy of code and caffeine. By early 2026, **GitHired** launched publicly. The platform lets companies create autonomous hiring forms—simple links or embeds for LinkedIn, Handshake, or career pages.

## StartUp Spotlight

Applicants connect their **GitHub** (public repos by default, private ones with consent), and **GitHired's** AI gets to work: It maps true tech stacks from actual usage, evaluates project complexity through architecture and scale, assesses code quality and depth, and filters out inauthentic activity like fake commit spam or green-square farming. The result? A crisp, one-page live technical portfolio for each candidate, plus automatic ranking against the job's needs.

No more keyword roulette or whiteboard guesswork—just prioritized shortlists of proven shippers ready to contribute from day one.

### Momentum in a Competitive Landscape

The launch hit hard: **GitHired** climbed to #2 on **Product Hunt** soon after going live, earning enthusiastic upvotes from makers and early adopters who celebrated the shift toward "proof of work." Community chatter on LinkedIn, X, and dev forums amplified the message—especially in ecosystems hungry for faster, smarter hiring.

A key accelerator came late 2025 with a strategic partnership: **AlgoSync**, the developer-first social network founded by **Kevin Ly** (a recent CS grad crafting a dedicated home for tech minds, journeys, and builds). **AlgoSync's** Jobs tab now surfaces **GitHired** opportunities, while top community builders earn direct referrals to founders.



### Why This Matters in Today's Startup World

In **2026**, as AI tools ace take-homes and live coding often misleads, the strongest hiring signal remains unchanged: commits in production. For founders facing tight budgets and fierce competition for talent, **GitHired** delivers independence—engineers who ship fast, handle ambiguity, and drive iteration without heavy hand-holding.

**GitHired** isn't just a tool—it's a bet on the future of work, where talent discovery favors those who do over those who say. Visit [githired.tech](https://githired.tech) today: Create a hiring form, connect your profile as a developer, or explore the platform yourself.

# FROM OHIO TO THE DESERT

## Gifthealth Brings Robotic Pharmacy Power to Mesa, Creating 200 Jobs and Faster Access Nationwide

Picture this: a prescription starts in a doctor's office, routes instantly through smart automation, gets processed by robots handling thousands of meds daily, and lands on a patient's doorstep tracked in real time, often within days, at the lowest possible cost. That's the frictionless future **Gifthealth** is building, and it's now taking root right here in **southeast Mesa**.

### Grand Opening Milestone in the Superstition Commerce Park

On January 8, 2026, **Gifthealth** officially celebrated the grand opening of its new **43,000-square-foot state-of-the-art pharmacy** at 4008 S. Signal Butte Road in the Superstition Commerce Park.

The facility marks the Columbus, Ohio-based healthtech company's strategic expansion into the Southwest, boosting its national capacity while injecting up to **200 high-skilled jobs** into Arizona's economy—from pharmacy operations and tech support to logistics and fulfillment roles.



### Robotics and Smart Tech at the Core

The **Mesa** site is no ordinary pharmacy. It features advanced robotic-assisted processing capable of handling more than **28,000 medications per day** with precision and speed. To accelerate delivery even further, **Gifthealth** partners with **UPS** and deploys cutting-edge RFID scanning combined with twin-packaging technology—giving patients real-time visibility from the moment a script is filled until it arrives at their door. This setup slashes delays, boosts accuracy, and turns what used to be a multi-step hassle into a seamless, reliable experience.

## StartUp Spotlight

### Unifying the Prescription Journey

Founded in 2020, **Gifthealth** pioneered a single-partner digital pharmacy platform that combines patient access, fulfillment, and ongoing support under one roof—no gaps, no hand-offs, no unnecessary friction. Their **Digi+Hub** model blends the speed of digital dispensing with flexible hub services, helping patients start therapy faster (average written-to-fill time of just 1.4 days), stay adherent longer, and always secure the best pricing. With a 95% dispense rate, nationwide delivery to 88% of U.S. zip codes, and more than **six million patients** served to date, **Gifthealth** has quietly become a go-to for biopharma brands, providers, and patients seeking predictable, high-quality outcomes.

### Why Mesa?

The location in **Superstition Commerce Park** offers prime logistics advantages in a thriving industrial zone just miles south of Apple's Global Operations Center.

**Southeast Mesa** has emerged as a hotspot for health and wellness innovators, drawing companies that value proximity to talent, transportation hubs, and Arizona's growing bioscience ecosystem.

Arizona Commerce Authority President and CEO **Sandra Watson** highlights the fit: the new facility "strengthens Arizona's reputation as a destination for the world's most innovative health care companies" while creating skilled jobs in a rapidly expanding industry.



### Arizona's HealthTech Wave Gains Steam

This Mesa launch joins a broader influx of healthtech and bioscience investments in the region, aligning with state goals to attract high-wage jobs (Mesa aims for 100,000 such roles). For Gifthealth, it's about more than bricks and mortar it's scaling a model that delivers faster, more affordable, and transparent care nationwide while rooting operations in a forward-looking market.

Head to **gifthealth.com** to explore their platform, patient resources, or current openings in Mesa. As Arizona solidifies its spot on the healthtech map, **Gifthealth's** robotic-powered arrival is a clear sign: innovative pharmacy care is accelerating right here in the desert.

# PROPLAINTIFF.AI

## The AI Paralegal Quietly Revolutionizing Personal Injury Law

In late 2022, as **ChatGPT** captured headlines, personal injury attorney **Kristopher Rezagholi** sat in his Phoenix office experimenting with the new tool. He wanted it to draft demand letters and organize medical records, but the output was inconsistent, slow, and far from reliable for real client work.

Frustrated, Kris reached out to **Jason Turnquist**, CEO of **Fyresite**, a Phoenix-area software development firm he had collaborated with before on websites and custom apps. **Jason** immediately recognized the opportunity: build a specialized AI tailored for plaintiff-side personal injury practices, not a generic legal assistant.

### From Internal Tool to Full Platform

The two started small, creating a prototype exclusively for **Kris's** law firm. Paralegals tested it daily, providing feedback that shaped rapid improvements. The results were striking—hours of manual work collapsed into minutes. Encouraged by the internal success, **Jason** and **Kris** decided to expand the tool beyond one firm.



### How the Platform Works

**ProPlaintiff.ai** functions as an always-available AI paralegal. Attorneys upload case files—medical records, police reports, videos, audio—and the system delivers polished outputs almost instantly.

It generates customized demand letters with accurate facts and compelling arguments, builds clear medical chronologies from hundreds of disorganized pages, summarizes entire case files, extracts key insights from documents, analyzes media transcripts, and pulls relevant precedents from a **6.5-million-case** law database. Every feature is designed to reduce repetitive tasks while maintaining precision and professionalism.

## StartUp Spotlight

### Security and Ethics at the Core

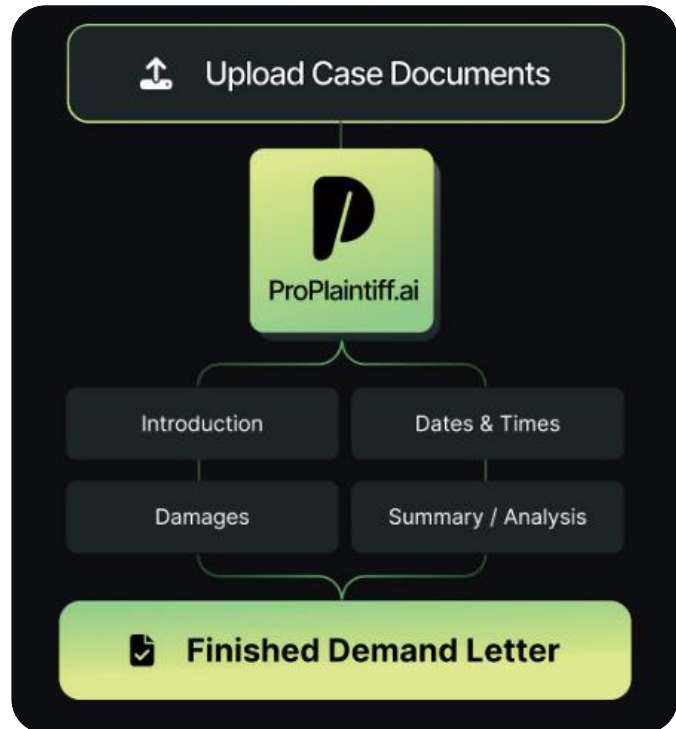
From day one, the founders prioritized trust. **ProPlaintiff.ai** is fully **HIPAA-compliant** and **SOC 2** audited, with strict controls ensuring client data is never used to train models. Confidentiality and legal ethics remain non-negotiable. This approach has allowed cautious firms to adopt the technology without fear of compliance risks or data exposure, turning early skeptics into enthusiastic users.

### Real Impact and Rapid Growth

Early adopters reported saving three to four hours per case on average, a meaningful gain in high-volume practices. As AI moved from experimental to essential in legal workflows, adoption accelerated. By late 2025, **ProPlaintiff.ai** had rolled out **Version 3.0**, introduced agentic AI capabilities that autonomously handle intake screening, file opening, scheduling, and lead qualification, added **DocGen** for unlimited drafting of liens, briefs, and subpoenas, and expanded secure client portals and file handling up to 10GB. Dozens of firms across the country now rely on the platform, with subscriber growth continuing into 2026.

### Recognition and Momentum in Arizona

In summer 2025, **ProPlaintiff.ai** won the **Arizona Innovation Challenge**, joining a select group of high-potential AI startups. In October, it was accepted into the PHX Fast FWD Accelerator, gaining coaching, investor connections, and community support to scale sustainably.



**Jason and Kris** continue to push the platform toward a fully agentic future, envisioning it as the operating system for personal injury firms—handling routine tasks around the clock so attorneys can concentrate on strategy, advocacy, and client relationships. Their vision is grounded in real-world needs rather than speculative trends.

### Why It Matters in Silicon Oasis

**ProPlaintiff.ai** offers a compelling example of vertical AI done right. **Arizona's** lower costs, strong accelerator support, and focus on high-impact use cases create fertile ground for similar ventures. Tempe-based **ProPlaintiff.ai** shows how local founders can target underserved markets, deliver measurable value, and scale nationally.

Visit [proplaintiff.ai](https://proplaintiff.ai) to explore demos, start a free trial, or use their AI savings calculator to estimate time and cost benefits for your own practice. ProPlaintiff.ai proves that thoughtful, specialized AI can quietly transform how plaintiff attorneys work—and win.

# PHOENIX RISING: AXIO EDUCATION'S AI REVOLUTION

## How One Desert Startup Is Redefining Learning for the World

Imagine overhearing Phoenix college students in a local coffee shop: one swears by a quick YouTube clip to nail a tough concept, another credits a late-night chat with an AI for finally making it click. It's fast, adaptive, and feels personal.

Yet most university courses still rely on lengthy videos that get skipped, quizzes that encourage guessing, and development timelines stretching months or years.

### A Founder's Frustration Turns into Vision

That everyday disconnect hit home for **Dr. Mark Naufel**. As a former ASU student body president, professor of practice, and key figure in the university's **Luminosity Lab**, he knew higher ed's bottlenecks intimately from every angle.

When generative AI surged forward, he spotted a true leapfrog opportunity. In 2023, he spun **Axio Education** out of ASU, vowing to build an **AI-native platform** from first principles instead of patching legacy systems like LMS, CRM, or SIS.



### Built Agentic, Not Bolt-On

**Axio** skips the compromises. Its agentic AI creates one unified ecosystem that tackles it all: instant course generation, truly personalized student guidance, smart enrollment outreach, and flowing real-time analytics for educators. No costly migrations or consultant overhauls just a modern, modular foundation institutions can adopt piece by piece and scale with confidence.

### The Demo That Turned Heads

The platform's power shone during a packed ASU+GSV event demo. Naufel took audience suggestions for "**System Dynamics Modeling**" and watched the AI build a complete seven-week course—modules, activities, assessments—in seconds.

## StartUp Spotlight

Switching to student mode revealed the breakthrough: an AI tutor that starts with a friendly check-in, gauges what you know, then teaches through natural Socratic back-and-forth. Short bursts of text for reading-averse learners, targeted videos or simulations only when stuck, interactive challenges that demand real demonstration—no more passive clicking.

### Empowering Faculty, Illuminating Insights

Faculty remain firmly in control: preview every detail, edit freely, override as needed, and treat the AI as an on-demand instructional design ally. Meanwhile, analytics pour in continuously—individual struggle maps, class-wide bottlenecks, engagement highs, precise time-per-objective data. Classroom time transforms from basic lecturing to targeted mentoring on the concepts that truly matter.

### Challenging the Old Guard

**Naufel** cut straight to it: if top university leaders admit they skip mandatory training videos, why force students into the same passive traps? **Axio** flips the model—making learning more rigorous, more engaging, and genuinely rewarding through deeper interaction and authentic mastery.

### New Leadership, Global Ambition

In November 2025, **Axio** leveled up with **Todd Zipper as CEO** (**Naufel** shifting to Board Director and Founder).



**Zipper's** track record—scaling global education lines at **John Wiley & Sons** beyond \$300 million in revenue and driving **The Learning House's** explosive growth to a successful exit—arrives at the perfect moment. Early pilots prove it: full degree programs launched in weeks, then rolled out internationally with native-language support and cultural fit for markets like China and India.

### Modular Magic for Seamless Adoption

**Axio** lowers every entry barrier with flexible building blocks:

- **Axio AI Learn** — lightning-fast course creation, adaptive interactive delivery, and actionable analytics.
- **Axio AI Companion** — a 24/7 personalized tutor for students plus administrative relief for staff.

## StartUp Spotlight



- **Axio AI CRM** — intelligent, human-centered enrollment that fuels growth without endless headcount.

### Arizona Roots, Worldwide Reach

Headquartered in Scottsdale/Phoenix, **Axio** thrives amid the Silicon Desert's rise: ASU's elite innovation engine, surging local talent, and a founder-friendly state.

As AI reshapes every industry, **Axio** delivers educators a straightforward path—start small, demonstrate impact, scale boldly, always prioritizing students and faculty.

### The Desert's Next Big Bet

With 2026 underway and fresh momentum from a **\$3.92 million** seed round closed in late October 2025 (bringing total funding to over **\$4 million** from backers like **Owl Ventures, WGU Labs, and Mercuri**), this hometown startup is one to watch closely.

**Zipper's** scaling expertise—paired with **Naufel's** foundational vision and the platform's proven early wins, like powering AI-native degree programs at partners such as **Jessup University**—positions Axio to turn AI's promise in education into tangible, everyday reality right here in Arizona.

Local coverage hints at major contracts and announcements on the horizon, signaling that the **Silicon Desert's** edtech scene is heating up fast.

Head to **axio.ai** for a demo or to connect. In the **Silicon Desert**, bold ideas keep emerging; **Axio** could be the one that reshapes how the next generation truly learns.

**Silicon Oasis Magazine** spotlights the founders, ideas, and momentum building Arizona's tech future. Subscribe for more stories at **thesiliconoasis.org**.

### Learn More About Axio Education Here



# ADVICE IS CHEAP. EQUITY IS NOT.

## Why Arizona Founders Should Guard their Ownership like the Scarce Resource it is

Spend enough time around founders in Arizona and a pattern starts to emerge. It appears at pitch nights, in follow-up coffee meetings, and eventually—often too late—on cap tables. Founders, especially early on, are giving away meaningful equity to people who offer advice and introductions but who have never actually built a company themselves.

In the moment, this decision rarely feels reckless. Arizona's startup ecosystem is still growing, and with that growth comes uncertainty. Credibility can feel scarce, momentum fragile, and validation hard to come by. When someone with a polished background and confident language offers to help, equity can feel like the fastest and most tangible way to secure their support.

That instinct is understandable. It's also where many founders make one of their earliest and most expensive mistakes.

### Why Equity Feels Like the Right Move

In the earliest stages of a startup, everything feels provisional.



There's often no traction yet, no recognizable brand, and no external proof that the idea will work.

Founders are operating on belief, urgency, and grit. In that environment, equity becomes a kind of universal currency—used to express gratitude, to lock in relationships, or to borrow credibility before the company has built any of its own.

The problem is that equity is rarely treated with the seriousness it deserves. It feels abstract early on, especially when the company itself feels fragile. But equity is not symbolic. It is not theoretical. And it is not temporary.

## Founder Advice

### What Equity Actually Costs

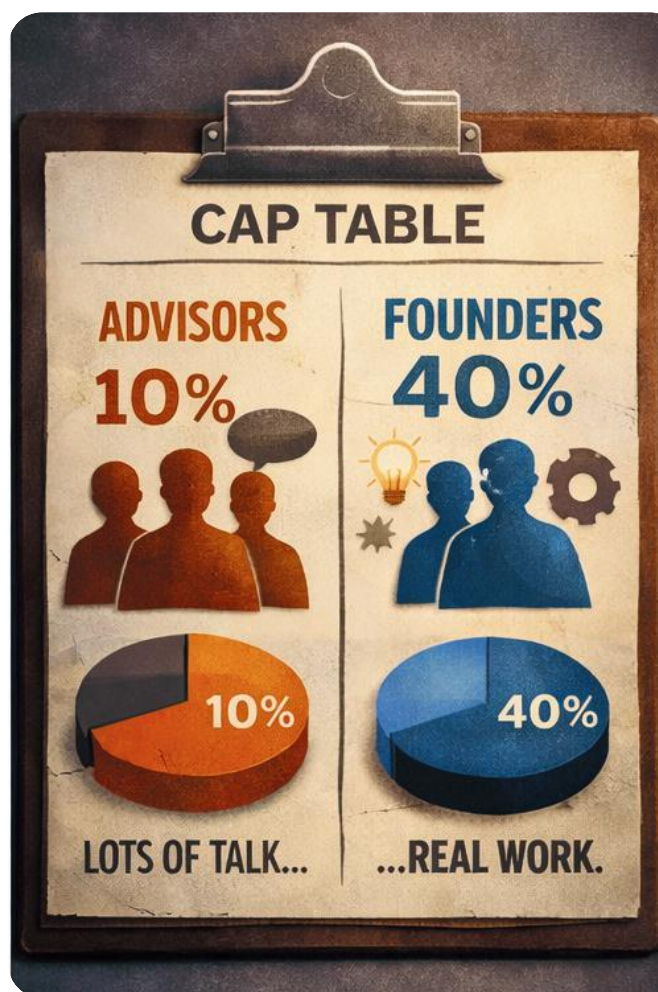
Equity represents permanent ownership in something you are going to spend years of your life building. It carries control, upside, and decision-making power. Once it's given away, it doesn't come back.

Even small, early grants can have lasting consequences. Cap tables become cluttered. Founders lose leverage. Fundraising becomes more complicated. Incentives drift out of alignment. When institutional investors look at a company, the cap table is one of the first things they study, because it reveals how the company has been built and who truly holds responsibility. A cap table filled with lightly involved advisors tells a story—and it's rarely a good one.

### Proximity Is Not Experience

Part of the issue comes from a misunderstanding about what experience really means. Being around startups is not the same as building one.

Operating a company means hiring when you're not sure you can afford it. It means making payroll before paying yourself. It means shipping product that breaks, raising capital in bad markets, managing customers, legal issues, team dynamics, and a level of stress that never makes it into keynote talks or panel discussions.



That experience compounds over time. Talking about startups does not. Advisors may sound fluent in startup language, but fluency is not the same as accountability. Ownership should reflect responsibility, not proximity to the ecosystem.

### Separating Help From Ownership

This isn't an argument against advisors or outside support. Some advisors provide real, material value, and many are well-intentioned. But advice and social capital alone are rarely worth permanent ownership.

Equity only makes sense when someone meaningfully changes the trajectory of the business.

## Founder Advice



Without that level of impact, equity becomes a mispriced asset. Feedback, encouragement, and introductions still matter. They just belong in a different category—one that doesn't involve ownership.

### A Chance to Shape Arizona's Startup Culture

This is where Arizona has an opportunity. Our startup ecosystem is still being formed, which means norms are not yet locked in. We can normalize founders protecting ownership. We can normalize advisors being compensated clearly and proportionally. And we can normalize treating equity like the scarce and powerful tool that it is.

This discipline isn't about being guarded or ungrateful. It's about building companies that can scale, raise serious capital, and compete nationally.

Strong ecosystems are built on aligned incentives, not inflated cap tables.

### The Question That Clarifies Everything

When founders are unsure where to draw the line, there's a simple question that usually brings clarity: If this person disappeared tomorrow, would the company be meaningfully worse off?

If the answer is no, they don't belong on the cap table.

You can still take advice. You can still build relationships. You can still accept help. Founders don't build alone. But help is not the same as ownership, and confusing the two is a mistake that compounds over time.

### Treat Equity Like the Long Game

Your startup isn't a social club, and it isn't a résumé line for other people. It's the long game—the thing you're betting years of your life on.

Treat its equity that way.

### Learn More About Silicon Oasis Here



# THE DISH THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING

## How Emini Offutt Built Grangu from One Frustrated Swipe

Tired of ghosting, endless chats, and zero real dates, the young Nashville-born founder created a dating app where you match on food—not faces—and you have 72 hours to actually meet.

It started with a single unread message that sat for three months and twelve days. **Emini Offutt** stared at his phone, rereading the same lukewarm thread on **Hinge**. He'd asked a simple question weeks earlier. Silence. Then, finally: "Oh, so sorry. Didn't mean to leave you hanging that long." He laughed—in disbelief. Three months for a half-hearted apology and zero intention to meet. That wasn't just disappointing. It was the spark.

### From Nashville Code Blocks to Vanderbilt Pivots

Emini grew up in **Nashville, Tennessee**, far from any booming tech hub. His first taste of coding came in elementary school through **MIT's Scratch**—a block-based tool that quietly taught him logic before he ever touched real Python. By high school, data science was exploding (**2017–2019**), and Emini leaned in. Math came naturally; statistics felt like a puzzle he could solve forever. He planned to become a machine learning engineer.



**Vanderbilt**, his dream school, changed the trajectory. Classroom theory felt abstract; **Emini** craved real application. He started side projects, built a strong **GitHub** portfolio, wrote research papers and realized the best code dies if no one sees it. That realization pushed him toward sales and marketing. Learning to "sell" his ideas—to himself first, then to others—transformed him. Rejection became feedback. Confidence grew. Communication sharpened. Sales, he says now, "fundamentally changed me as a person."

### The Problem Everyone Felt

Like so many in his generation, **Emini** was exhausted by dating apps. Swipes felt like a game. Bios felt performative.

## Founder Spotlight

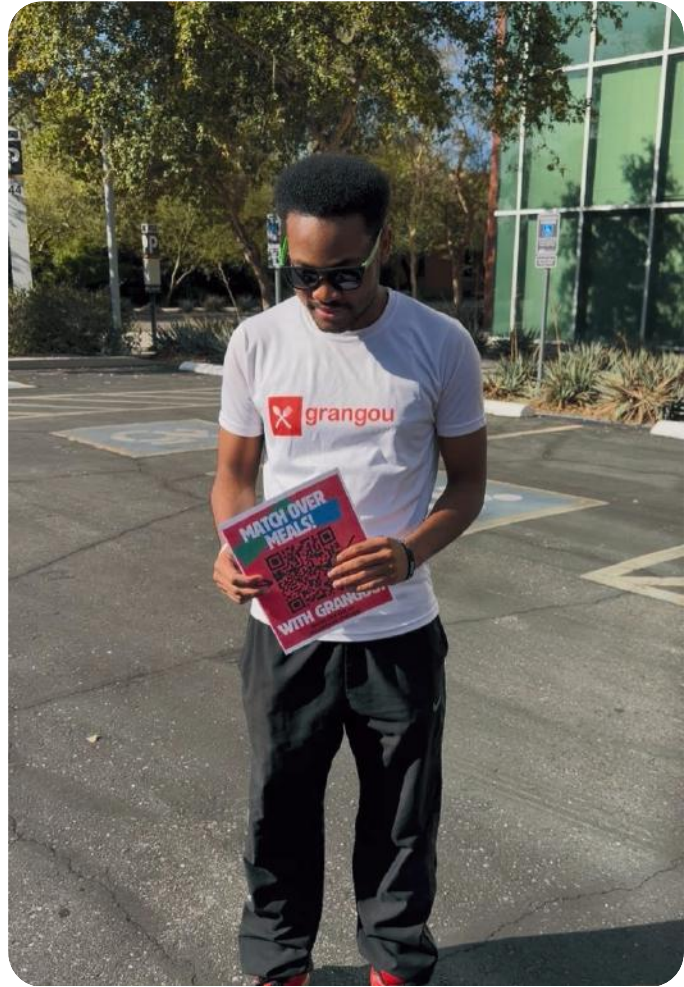
Conversations died in the gray area of ghosting, breadcrumb replies, and dates that never happened. Everyone he talked to felt it too. Gen Z was hungry—literally and figuratively—for real connection. The stats confirmed what he lived: average **Tinder user swipes 1,600 times** a month, yet only about 1% lead to matches, and far fewer to actual dates. The apps were optimized for engagement, not outcomes. **Emini** decided to fix it the way he knew how: by building something better.

### Built by Gen Z, for Gen Z

**Emini and his team**—average age 23—aren't theorizing from afar. They live the frustration they're solving. Early users reacted strongly: "Why isn't this already a thing?" "This feels made for us." Practical questions poured in—who pays? (The person who swiped first on the dish, with playful app nudges.) What if someone ghosts? (Algorithm penalty.) Is it too Gen Z? (Yes—and that's intentional.) The target is clear: 18–35-year-olds ready to turn shared tastes into real conversations across a table.

### The Bigger Vision

Emini sees the long game. Post-COVID, people crave offline experiences again. Technology shouldn't trap us in virtual loops; it should remove friction so we can escape them. Grangu uses AI to suggest the perfect spot—factoring in traffic, price, dietary needs—so the only thing left is showing up.



His one-line advice to anyone with an idea? "Just do it." Not as a motivational poster. As practical truth. When you're young, healthy, and in the United States, time is your biggest asset. Don't wait for perfect conditions. Build. Iterate. Fail fast. Learn from rejection the way sales taught him to.

### A New Kind of Match

**Grangu** isn't for casual swipers or people happy with digital flirtation. It's for those emotionally, physically, and literally hungry—ready to turn a love of ramen or jerk chicken into a real date.

Today it lives at [granguapp.com](https://granguapp.com) and is gaining traction on **TikTok**, where Gen Z actually spends time. **Emini Offutt** isn't promising to fix dating forever.

# TEEING UP INNOVATION

## Cory Powell's Hubble.GOLF Revolutionizes Golf Planning in Arizona

In the sun-drenched valleys of Arizona, where desert fairways carve through arid landscapes toward rugged mountain horizons, golf feels as integral to the terrain as the towering saguaro cacti. Here, a quiet revolution is unfolding, led by **Cory Powell**, a former professional golfer turned entrepreneur. His creation, **Hubble.GOLF**, is gaining recognition as "**the Travelocity of golf**"; a platform designed to tame the chaotic, fragmented world of tournament discovery and planning into something seamless, intuitive, and genuinely game-changing.

### From Fairway Frustrations to a Bold Idea

Powell never planned to become a tech founder. Raised in the small California towns of Paso Robles and Atascadero, he grew up idolizing Tiger Woods during the legend's dominant era. By age 18, determined to elevate his game, he chose **Arizona** over Florida in 2010 for its world-class courses, affordable living amid the post-2008 economic recovery, and abundant opportunities. Arriving knowing no one, he blitz-interviewed for jobs, landed a bartending role at a local club, and stayed.



**Arizona delivered:** he met his wife, started a family with two young boys, and embraced a community he describes as a "**land of opportunity**" business-friendly, diverse, and welcoming, the kind of place locals proudly call the "**Silicon Oasis.**"

His years as a pro exposed a persistent pain point. Tournaments for juniors, amateurs, and pros were scattered across obscure websites, word-of-mouth networks, and endless browser tabs. Entry fees, purses, locations, and deadlines had no central home. The breaking point arrived in 2014 during a grueling cross-country drive covering roughly 40,000 miles: from Arizona to Indiana for an invite, then looping through the Dakotas, Iowa, Chicago, and back via California. Hours behind the wheel provided time to reflect, and the question crystallized: **Why isn't there one hub for all golf events?**

## Founder Spotlight

Back home, Powell searched "**how to build a website,**" purchased a domain, formed an LLC, and teamed up with **Arizona State University** graduates to prototype. The initial version, **Mini Tour Hub**, offered a basic database for his fellow pros. Early mentorship from **Alan Lebach**, the late co-founder of **SkyMall** magazine, broadened his vision toward scalability—thinking in terms of total addressable market, venture potential, and long-term impact. The platform soon expanded to include junior and amateur golf, earning traction and advisory roles with emerging pro tours.

### Pivots, Pandemic, and Perfect Timing

In 2016, **Powell** paused tech development to launch the **Outlaw Tour**, his own professional mini-tour organization. Running events firsthand revealed operator-side challenges: outdated software, registration frustrations, and gaps in existing tools. He built the tour successfully and sold it in **January 2020**—just before the pandemic reshaped the world.

Arizona's golf scene remained open during early lockdowns when much of the globe shut down. The **Outlaw Tour** became one of the few active pro circuits, attracting **PGA Tour** stars eager to stay sharp. It drew attention from betting platforms like **DraftKings** and **FanDuel**, and live streams on Twitch earned homepage features.



In that unexpected spotlight, a Texas contact introduced **Powell** to **Kevin Lewis**, a New York-based technical co-founder with experience as CTO or CRO for over 30 venture-backed startups. Their virtual partnership during the pandemic quickly became in-person, and by fall 2022, with angel funding from friends and family, **Hubble.GOLF** was reborn as a comprehensive platform.

### What Hubble.GOLF Delivers Today

Now serving competitive golfers—juniors and their parents, coaches, amateurs, and pros—**Hubble.GOLF** boasts the largest aggregated tournament database worldwide. Intelligent filters by skill level, location, dates, and more provide accurate, real-time data on over 20 points per event.

## Founder Spotlight



Users build personalized itineraries: chronological schedules with total driving distances, per-event and overall budgets, deadline notifications, and integrated booking for discounted hotels. The "**Cash Caddie**" tool tracks expenses, forecasts costs, and prepares tax reports. Nearby activity suggestions, shareable plans, and a YouTube aggregator for top golf content complete the experience.

The mission is clear: save hours of research, reduce planning stress, and let golfers focus on the game. **Powell** stresses data accuracy—once manual and labor-intensive, now enhanced by APIs and partnerships. Seasonality in golf is real (summer peaks, back-to-school lulls for juniors), but **Hubble** launched publicly in late 2025 and continues rolling out features like tee-time bookings and ticketing integrations through 2026.

### Lessons in Grit, Faith, and Service

**Powell's** journey reflects deep faith and resilience. He speaks of "divine timing"—seemingly random encounters years earlier leading to pivotal introductions, chaos resolving in hindsight. He lives by service: be kind, add value without expecting return, let actions speak louder than words

"The universe doesn't reward giving to get," he says. Grit, networking, and persistence matter most—if you have a vision, leap, prepare relentlessly, and don't quit.

In **Arizona's** innovative ecosystem, where wide-open spaces meet entrepreneurial drive, **Powell's** story resonates. **Hubble.GOLF** fills a genuine gap in a tradition-rich sport slow to digitize, helping players chase dreams more efficiently. It's more than an app; it's proof that passion, perseverance, and desert sunshine can tee up something extraordinary.

Plan your season like a pro at [hubble.golf](https://hubble.golf). For more tales of **Arizona** founders turning ideas into impact, follow the **Silicon Oasis Spotlight**—where the next big swing is often just one determined step away.

### Learn More About Hubble.GOLF Here



# MEET OUR AMBASSADORS



Ville Houttu

Privv



Ryan Moorehouse

Ruck



Christopher Trocola  
ARC Defense Systems



Joshua Hanson

ImageAid



Kyle DeSousa

Koko Ni



Jasmine Bhatti

Navi Nurses



Derek Lundsten

LifeGuides



Anisia Corona

DxTx



David Schneider

Dane Health, Inc



Tyler Leber

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Luke Aschenbrand

Emblem



Dirk Beth

Accenture

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Heather Tugaoen  
Watergenics



Jordan Fourcher  
Cryo X CO



Jay Foster  
Carbon Utility



Leah Walczak  
Gemhaus

# MEET OUR TEAM

Get to know the builders, storytellers, and connectors powering the Silicon Oasis movement behind the scenes.



Kyle Macdonald  
Editor-in-Chief



Josue Romero  
Managing Editor



Sean Bair  
Board Member



Jordan Fourcher  
Community Lead

“ We’re not just building stories — we’re building the community behind them. Every event, every article, every founder feature is powered by people who believe in Arizona’s future. ”



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