



# 2025 Communitas® America Annual Impact Report

**COMMUNITAS**  
**AMERICA**

## CEO MESSAGE

### PHASE 1

#### 2018–2025 — BUILDING THE FOUNDATION

Quiet Progress

Communitas® Ventures Accelerator and Heyground Harlem Incubator

Steady Impact

Community-Driven Entrepreneurship

Success through Collaboration and Contribution

### PHASE 2

#### 2026 — CO-CREATING THE FUTURE

Entrepreneurship as Economy · Culture · Education

## PEOPLE

# QUIET PROGRESS. STEADY IMPACT. COMMUNITY-DRIVEN. SUCCESS THROUGH COLLABORATION.

2025 tested us in ways we could not have predicted. It felt like climbing uphill, facing challenges, uncertainty, and pressure. This feeling defined much of the year—yet quietly, steadily, and without losing sight of our purpose, we sustained impact through connection, collaboration, and care.

Together with our alumni founders and ecosystem partners, we completed our 15th Communitas® Ventures Accelerator cohort, bringing our alumni network to nearly 300 founders who continue to build and sustain businesses that give back to the communities that shaped them. Our alumni ventures are not built for hype; they are built for care, continuity, conversation, and relevance.

In December, more than 200 partners, alumni, and supporters joined us in person and online for Communitas® Ventures Fifteenth Pitch Night, where twelve external judges reviewed 17 ventures across science, technology, education, and community health. The winners reflected the heart of our work:

- **ThinkHumanTV:** Backed by the National Science Foundation, their app Humie turns children's screen time into emotional-learning experiences using shows like *Bluey* and *Daniel Tiger* to build emotional intelligence.
- **Creative Plane:** A Bronx-based studio whose Life Is My Canvas program pays young artists to transform vacant storefronts into public art, revitalizing commercial corridors and creating pathways to creative and economic mobility.
- **SoonForward:** A SaaS marketplace platform that brings real-time tracking and transparency to care-package logistics for immigrants and first-generation families, modernizing a vital transnational support system.

These are promising businesses—rooted in local realities and designed for long-term impact, where our neighborhoods and families are both the customers and beneficiaries. Throughout the room on Pitch Night, we witnessed multiple layers of “small-world moments”—unexpected intersections that felt almost inevitable, as if these connections were always meant to find each other. They reminded us why we do this work: weaving relationships grounded in care and support, and honoring our alumni founders for their dedication to growing deep and growing together.

We envision 2026 as a year where effort and support form a reinforcing cycle, grounded in kindness, trust, and care. In 2026, we will continue to anchor entrepreneurship as culture, as economy, and as education — reaffirming that economic mobility is not built alone, but in community. Our focus is to convert community assets into real pathways: capital that reaches the right founders, partnerships aligned with our values, and opportunities that honor lived experience as expertise.

With nearly 300 alumni, a committed team, and partners who believe in this mission, we enter 2026 with cautious optimism and a renewed commitment to long-term impact. The roots are strong — and we are ready to grow.

Best,



Executive Director of Communitas® America

# KEY MILESTONES OVER THE YEARS

ORGANIZATION  
FOUNDED;  
COMMUNITAS®  
VENTURES  
ACCELERATOR  
LAUNCHED

COHORTS 2-3 AT  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

COVID ERA;  
PROGRAMS CONTINUED FULLY VIRTUAL  
THROUGH COHORT 6

DESIGNATED NYS  
CERTIFIED BUSINESS  
INCUBATOR; HYBRID  
MODEL LAUNCHED  
(COHORT 7)

HEYGROUND NEW  
YORK PHYSICAL  
INCUBATOR SPACE IN  
HARLEM OPENED

COMMUNITAS®  
VIRTUAL HUB  
INTRODUCED (COHORT  
12)

COMMUNITAS®  
VENTURES ALUMNI  
REACHED 300  
FOUNDERS (COHORT  
15)

**2018**

**2019**

**2020**

**2021**

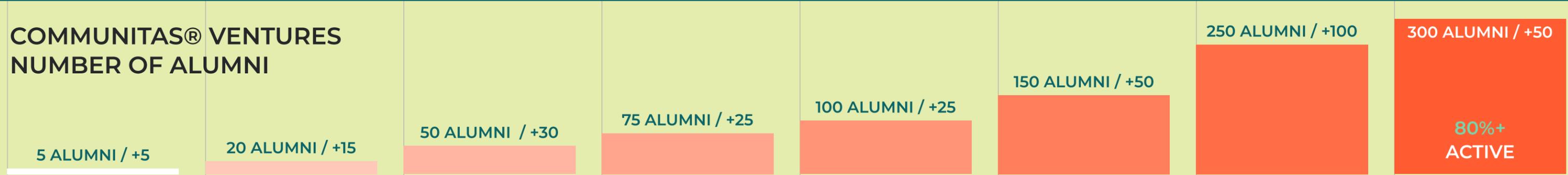
**2022**

**2023**

**2024**

**2025**

## COMMUNITAS® VENTURES NUMBER OF ALUMNI



## HEYGROUND NEW YORK ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

Members / Alumni-led Events / Ecosystem Events



Justworks.org (New Funding Partner) | HearstLab | EGF Accelerator by Edwin Gould Foundation | Blue Ridge Labs @ Robin Hood Foundation | Peace is Loud

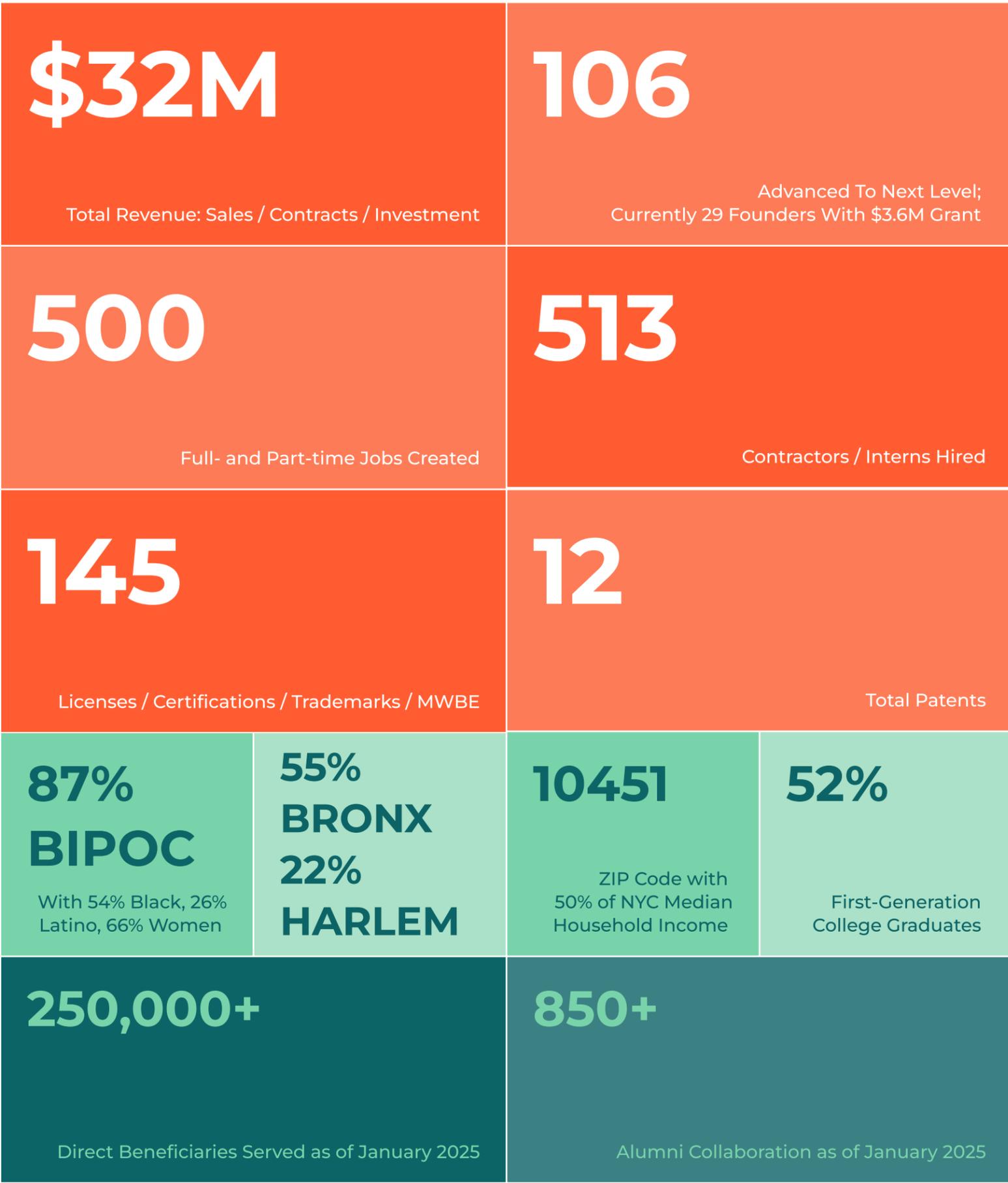
## COLLABORATION WITH ECOSYSTEM PARTNERS

Siegel Family Endowment (New Funding Partner) | PiTech at Cornell Tech | Citizens Committee for New York City | The David Prize | CUNY Advanced Science Research Center CAT | CUNY Hub for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (iHub) | Compass Pilot National Science Foundation

Life Science Cares (New Funding Partner) | Columbia Tech Ventures: Climate Initiatives | National Science Foundation's Compass Pilot | Columbia Business School for Inclusive Entrepreneurship Initiative | Baruch SBDC (Small Business Development Center) | Harlem Biospace

Idealist.org | Stanford in New York | Thomas Yoseloff Business Center at New York Public Library | Fordham Law School | Black Ambition

# ECONOMIC IMPACT OF 2025



In 2025, according to our impact survey and on-going impact data tracking, Communitas® Ventures expanded its impact with a community of nearly 300 alumni whose work continues to strengthen local economies in the Bronx, Harlem, and beyond. Our founders generated \$32M in revenue through sales, contracts, and investment; created 500 jobs; engaged 513 contractors and interns; and secured 145 licenses, certifications, trademarks, or MWBE registrations, with 12 patents filed. Rooted in neighborhoods where 52% identify as Bronx-based, 55% Bronx and 22% Harlem; 87% BIPOC; and 52% first-generation college graduates, our founders served 250,000+ direct beneficiaries and cultivated 850+ alumni collaborations—living examples of mutual support, opportunity, and shared progress.



# KEY ALUMNI

Alumni highlights represent selected alumni from 15 cohorts across key impact areas, including education, health and wellness, climate & sustainability, financial inclusion, consumer, and creative industries. Click on company and founder names to visit their profiles. Due to space limitations, we encourage readers to visit our [Communitas Community](#) page, to explore profiles of all 300 founders.

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## Liiv

Founded by [Devin Abraham](#)

Liiv is the automation layer for the public sector, using AI to automate documents, compliance, and case management so agencies can deliver services faster.

Cohort 15

FinTech, IT &amp; Digital Platforms



## SoonForward

Founded by [Lerone Savage](#)

SoonForward uses a software-as-a-service (SaaS) marketplace platform to revolutionize the logistics industry, making the real-time tracking of care packages accessible to millions of 1st-generation Americans and immigrants, allowing for a modernized shipping experience.

Cohort 15

FinTech, IT &amp; Digital Platforms



## Lulo

Founded by [Dani Lopez](#)

Lulo is an easy-to-use app that helps families save time WIC shopping by showing eligible items, allowing users to check their balance and scan items in-store to confirm approval, and more, making WIC trips faster.

Cohort 12

FinTech, IT &amp; Digital Platforms



## CampusLush

Founded by [Mac Exumé](#)

CampusLush is a student success and engagement platform that enhances the college experience by centralizing academic support, campus resources, events, and career opportunities into one easy-to-use hub, helping institutions boost engagement, retention, and overall student success, personalizing the experience through real-time analytics.

Cohort 10

EdTech &amp; Coaching/Consulting



## Honor Your Dreams

Founded by [Josue De Paz](#)

Honor Your Dreams advances economic mobility for low-income youth by providing access to paid workforce opportunities, mentorship, capital, and other essential supports.

Cohort 6

EdTech &amp; Coaching/Consulting



## ThinkHumanTV

Founded by [Melissa Cesarano](#)

ThinkHumanTV makes screen time good for kids by transforming popular children's media into a vehicle for emotional learning and resilience; created with funding from the National Science Foundation, ThinkHumanTV's app, Humie, helps kids build emotional intelligence while they watch their favorite shows like *Bluey* and *Daniel Tiger*.

Cohort 15

EdTech &amp; Coaching/Consulting



## Gorjus Doc LLC

Founded by [Natasha Ramsey](#)

Gorjus Doc LLC curates intentional and beautifully designed sex-education resources for all youth, delivered through guest speakers for sex-ed classes, social-media collaborations, guidance on building your own sex-ed organization, and strategies for making healthcare practices more teen-friendly.

Cohort 15 &amp; 11

Youth &amp; School-Based Programming



## MVP Swimmers, Inc

Founded by [Olga Perez](#)

MVP Swimmers makes very proficient swimmers one stroke at a time by building strong skills that help every child become confident and self-reliant in the water, and as an authorized provider of the American Red Cross Learn-to-Swim Program, it also offers an exciting, interactive water-safety education workshop tailored for elementary schools.

Cohort 11

Youth &amp; School-Based Programming



## Good Vibes NYC

Founded by [Ibrahima Badji](#)

Good Vibes NYC expands horizons and empowers students through education, with a mission to increase college access, simplify the admissions process, and reduce the financial-aid burden for underprivileged students.

Cohort 10

Youth &amp; School-Based Programming



## Strive Higher Inc

Founded by [Olga Baez](#)

Strive Higher Inc. is a Bronx-based nonprofit focused on literacy and financial education, offering read-alouds, book clubs, community events, and financial-education programming for underserved students, with its Kids Building Wealth initiative introducing children to financial literacy and entrepreneurship.

Cohort 9

Youth &amp; School-Based Programming



## Start Lighthouse

Founded by [Rina Madhani](#)

Start Lighthouse revives defunct library spaces in Title I schools by creating permanent learning hubs that bring students, teachers, families, and authors together to raise reading levels, increase comprehension, and close the literacy gap through daily programming.

Cohort 6

Youth &amp; School-Based Programming



## Inspiring Futures Inc.

Founded by [Vicky Garalina](#)

Inspiring Futures improves high school and college outcomes for youth with current or past involvement in the child welfare, homeless, or juvenile justice systems by providing comprehensive mental health support, free therapy, educational services, and support networks.

Cohort 11

Wellness &amp; Mental Health



## Delgracia Corp

Founded by [Katherine Cherry](#)

Delgracia Corp supports the social-emotional needs of young parents through its family-based care management Community Maintenance program, providing preventive case management, mental and behavioral health services, peer counseling, therapeutic family activities, and connections to life-coaching and community resources.

Cohort 7

Wellness &amp; Mental Health



## Trac Activities & Eleos Behavior Care

Founded by [Lucas Addo](#)

Trac Activities delivers personalized, engaging learning experiences for individuals with autism, while Eleos Behavior Care provides Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapy and an app that streamlines the process of obtaining Medicaid waiver services for children.

Cohort 8

Wellness &amp; Mental Health



## Flash Grüb Inc

Founded by [Roselyn Macagba](#)

Flash Grüb is a one-stop app that helps individuals and businesses buy discounted surplus food, deliver donated meals, save on groceries, and reduce food waste while supporting local communities; turning excess food into meals, compost, or clean energy, fighting food insecurity and cutting emissions.

Cohort 15

Food Justice &amp; Nutrition

## KEY ALUMNI

2/2

**Foodstream Network** [↗](#)Founded by [Johanna Salazar](#), [Richard Cumming](#)

Foodstream Network is a membership-based digital platform transforming how surplus food moves from businesses to communities via FoodStream Connect, which serves as a central real-time logistics hub that connects food operators, community groups, schools, and pantries in NYC. In addition, pillars such as FoodStream Learn, its school-based nutrition and food-systems education program, and FoodStream Delivery, advance a smarter, more equitable food system.

Cohort 6

Food Justice &amp; Nutrition

**Inside Out Impact** [↗](#)Founded by [Lauren French](#), [Táimese Revell](#),  
[Nicole Sample-Harris](#)

Inside Out Impact is dedicated to empowering Long Island communities through health, fitness, and connection by offering initiatives like the Inside Out Run Club, community events, and local programs that empower individuals to build discipline, resilience, and confidence while creating impact from the inside out.

Cohort 15

Fitness &amp; Youth-Based Sports

**In Podcast Mode** [↗](#)Founded by [T. Francis](#)

In Podcast Mode sparks social connections through a conversation game designed to inspire honest dialogue.

Cohort 10

Media, Entertainment &amp; Digital Content

**Uptown & Boogie****Healthy Project** [↗](#)Founded by [Judith Desire](#)

Uptown & Boogie Healthy Project unites farmers and communities through its Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program, connecting farmers directly with residents to ensure fair pay and fresh, affordable produce, and further supports urban neighborhoods through farmers markets, a kids club, a waste-reduction composting program, and the Harlem Greenhouse.

Cohort 13

Food Justice &amp; Nutrition

**Equity Design, Inc** [↗](#)Founded by [Maurelhena Wallis](#)

Equity Design leverages data and strategy to design, implement, and evaluate programs and environments that promote physical activity across public spaces, schools, and community centers through its Movement-First Design approach, advancing its Healthy Schools and Communities initiative to transform schools into activity-supportive environments while promoting cycling as both transportation and recreation.

Cohort 5 &amp; 3

Fitness &amp; Youth-Based Sports

**Stapledon Arts** [↗](#)Founded by [Charlecia Joy](#)

Stapledon Arts brings portraits to life with its Melanin Series skin-tone colors that reflect our diverse world, championing representation and transforming creativity in homes, schools, and beyond by making art accessible and fun for all backgrounds, ages, and skill levels.

Cohort 9

Consumer Products &amp; Retail (and Trade)

**Apian Industry** [↗](#)Founded by [Marcellis Counts](#)

Apian Industry is a beekeeping and urban farming organization building Newark's first SAFE (Science, Agriculture, Food & Economics) Lab, an innovation hub that fosters community healing through hands-on education, STEAM and environmental learning, health and wellness programs, and urban food production and entrepreneurship opportunities.

Cohort 8

Food Justice &amp; Nutrition

**BioWraptor, Inc.**Founded by [Maëva Coste](#)

BioWraptor stabilizes biologics at room temperature to make diagnostics and therapeutics more affordable and accessible; by removing cold-chain barriers, we cut costs, prevent product losses, and reduce environmental impact—helping providers deliver reliable, life-saving care anywhere.

Cohort 15

Bio, Life Sciences &amp; HealthTech

**iSandNewYork LLC** [↗](#)Founded by [Izaiah Barrow](#)

iSandNewYork LLC is led by a third-generation wood-flooring specialist who has mastered the craft passed down from his granduncle and uncle, and is now collaborating with local officials to launch "A Floorman's Dream," an economic-development program that remodels senior homes while providing youth with job training and trade opportunities.

Cohort 11

Consumer Products &amp; Retail (and Trade)

**Grassroots Grocery** [↗](#)Founded by [Dan Zauderer](#)

Grassroots Grocery is transforming how communities address food insecurity by cultivating a neighbor-powered network that brings the pantry directly to the people, building one of the largest peer-to-peer volunteer systems to deliver fresh food through trusted local leaders while fostering dignity, connection, and resilience across the communities it serves.

Cohort 7

Food Justice &amp; Nutrition

**Anew Material Inc** [↗](#)Founded by [Jiye Son](#)

Anew Material creates solvent- and plastic-free coatings using peptide technology that matches the target material's surface chemistry and nano-/micro-structure for optimal adherence, all without relying on volatile organic compounds (VOCs).

Cohort 9

Bio, Life Sciences &amp; HealthTech

**Featuring The Center For Culinary Arts Inc** [↗](#)Founded by [Arnyce Foster-Hernandez](#)

Featuring The Café serves thoughtfully crafted seasonal and organic beverages, including coffee and tea, while supporting small businesses in the community and providing food and hospitality training and employment opportunities for people navigating tough circumstances, including those impacted by incarceration, poverty, or systems that too often overlook human potential.

Cohort 13

Consumer Products &amp; Retail (and Trade)

**Bee University NYC** [↗](#)Founded by [André Ware](#)

Bee University NYC engages urban communities through hands-on beekeeping, leadership, and environmental education, offering a paid Urban Beekeeping Fellowship for youth, school-based STEM programs on pollinators and sustainability, and a Green Jobs Pipeline that provides early-career workforce placements and mentorship for high school and college-aged program alumni.

Cohort 13

Food Justice &amp; Nutrition

**Black to Business** [↗](#)Founded by [Monique T. Marshall](#)

Black to Business equips solo Black founders with the tools, guidance, and support needed to grow efficiently and build toward hiring through its Business Shortcuts Hub, featuring AI-assisted tools and workshops, and the Black to Business Podcast, which offers over 280 episodes of vetted Black founders sharing their real journeys.

Cohort 15 &amp; 9

Media, Entertainment &amp; Digital Content

**CarbonCLAIR** [↗](#)Founded by [Fares Al-lahabi](#)

CarbonCLAIR develops mobile air-quality systems that reduce dust, odors, and harmful chemicals at construction and municipal sites. Our goal is to protect workers and nearby communities by providing fast-deploying, low-power scrubbing and clear, data-verified results that improve site safety and environmental health.

Cohort 15

Environment &amp; GreenTech

# THEORY OF CHANGE

**Communities include the families, neighbors, and the places** where we live, work, and serve - built on greater opportunities and collaboration

Community-driven entrepreneurs expand **ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY** and strengthen the **QUALITY OF LIFE** across our communities

Communitas® America has supported nearly **300 FOUNDERS** across **15 COHORTS**



# 2025 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

In 2025, Communitas strengthened New York City's local economy through key program highlights—including Cohort 14 in collaboration with Idealist.org, investor panel discussions at Heyground, and Cohort 15 with 37 founders—supporting nearly 300 founders through cohort-based acceleration, place-based incubation, and targeted ecosystem convenings that translated community-driven entrepreneurship into measurable economic opportunity.



**COHORT 14**  
Spring 2025  
Collaborated with Idealist.org

[Watch Video](#)



**LIFE SCIENCE INVESTOR PANEL DISCUSSION**  
May 2025  
With West Harlem Innovation Collective

[Watch Video](#)



**COHORT 15 ORIENTATION**  
September 2025



**COHORT 15 PITCH NIGHT**  
December 2025

[Watch Video](#)



# PODCAST SERIES

The Communitas of New York Podcast is available on [Apple](#), [Spotify](#), and [iHeart Radio](#).



In 2025, we launched Communitas® of New York, a podcast capturing the constellation of stories and collaborations shaping early-stage founders' success in the ecosystem. Monique T. Marshall (Black to Business), a Communitas® Ventures alumna, leads rich conversations, uncovers tales of trials and successes, and hears valuable advice from entrepreneurs shaping New York's landscape of entrepreneurship.

Season One highlights alumni founders working across education, food security, housing, community building, the arts, and health and wellness sectors, showcasing the on-ramps to success they create for themselves and others.

Season Two focuses on collaborations that form after the Communitas® Ventures program, where alumni partner to scale impact across New York City.

## SEASON ONE MEANING OF SUCCESS



Dan Zauderer  
Grassroots Grocery



Charlecia Joy  
Stapledon Arts



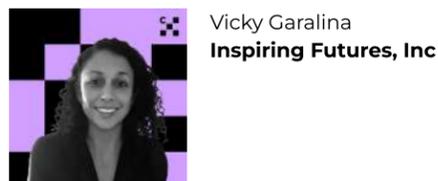
Lucas Addo  
Trac Activities & Eleos  
Behavior Care



Jiye Son  
ANEW MATERIAL



Idicula Mathew  
Hera Health Solutions



Vicky Garalina  
Inspiring Futures, Inc

“I’VE MADE COMMUNITAS A STAPLE—WHETHER PROVIDING MY KNOWLEDGE TO OTHER ENTREPRENEURS OR GIVING FEEDBACK AS AN ALUMNA TO HELP THE PROGRAM GROW.”

Charlecia Joy from Stapledon Arts



Jessica Valencia  
UnlockNYC

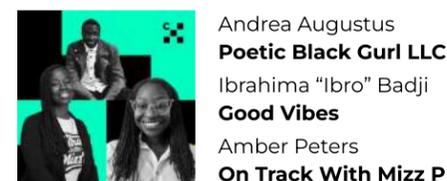
## SEASON TWO SUCCESS THROUGH COLLABORATION

“YOU CAN’T RUN A GARDEN OR A FARM BY YOURSELF. SOMETIMES YOU’RE NOT EVEN SPEAKING THE SAME LANGUAGE, BUT YOU SPEAK THE LANGUAGE OF THE EARTH AND LIFE.”

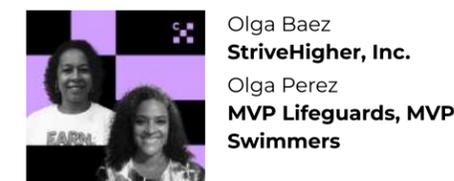
Renee Keitt from KBM Spices and Things



Marcellis Counts  
Apian Industry  
André Ware  
Bee U NYC



Andrea Augustus  
Poetic Black Gurl LLC  
Ibrahima “Ibro” Badji  
Good Vibes  
Amber Peters  
On Track With Mizz P



Olga Baez  
StriveHigher, Inc.  
Olga Perez  
MVP Lifeguards, MVP  
Swimmers



Rina Madhani  
Start Lighthouse  
Amira Mustapha  
Art Defined



Kashon DuBose  
Cultivators  
Renee Keitt  
KBM Spices and Things



Rich Cumming  
Johanna Salazar  
FoodStream Network



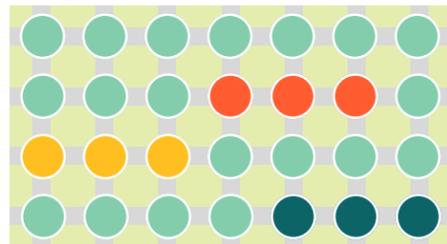
Samia Lemfadli  
Change Food for Good

## EVOLVING PROGRAM STRATEGY

At Communitas® America, we see entrepreneurship not only as a means of starting a business, but as a cultural force, an economic strategy and perspective, and a co-learning framework with rooted in community.

# COMMUNITY-DRIVEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP:

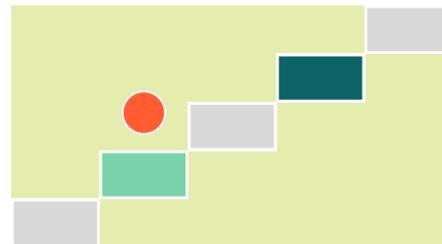
## AS ECONOMY



Our alumni build businesses that strengthen neighborhood economies through sustainable business models, services, and job creation. From patented technologies, emotional-learning apps, school counseling services, and AI-driven publishing for non-English speakers, to food access initiatives, urban agriculture, physical education and wellness programs, community arts revitalization, and accessible logistics for immigrant families—their ventures address needs that traditional markets often overlook.

Our role is to connect these founders to capital, partnerships, and infrastructure so that community-rooted innovation becomes a driver of economic mobility and long-term resilience.

## AS EDUCATION



Our accelerator and incubator function as a continuous learning ecosystem, where technical support, peer learning, and community collaboration shape both business models and mindsets. Through workshops, our Virtual Hub, alumni collaboration, and data-informed strategy, we frame entrepreneurship as a long-term educational journey—one that cultivates a tenacious, growth-oriented mindset.

This care-centered approach to entrepreneurship creates a support system that we hope will be paid forward to the next generation of entrepreneurs—brilliant individuals who will carry this work further and continue creating meaningful change.

## AS CULTURE



We cultivate entrepreneurship as a shared identity and social practice. Across cohorts and our Heyground Harlem Incubator, founders learn to build with and for their communities, honoring local and historic values, relationships, and lived experiences. This cultural foundation strengthens trust, invitation, and civic participation—the soil from which entrepreneurs can truly grow.

**Team**

Sunmoon Jang  
Edward Greenwood  
Sofia Mojica  
Hailey Kim  
David DiGregorio  
Oliver Wheeler

**Board of Directors**

Malcom Glenn  
Yolanda Sealey-Ruiz  
Dorothy Stuehmke  
William Thomas

**Supporters**

**Chung Family**



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Audited or reviewed financial statements from 2018 to 2024 are available upon request.