

KNOX ST. STUDIOS

COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES

2023 - 2024



OUR WHY

We champion social justice, equity and inclusion. We employ our unique understanding of the economic and educational hurdles that affect diverse and underserved communities. We help people navigate a clear and forward path to economic mobility. We steward entrepreneurship and the STEM educational skills that are needed to thrive in the dynamic North Carolina ecosystem.

The Why – Sharing is the optimal approach to growth. We believe that intelligent design is inspired by the sharing of information. A community must be well informed.

The How – Through information sharing, teaching, and apprenticeship, we will create more equitable scenarios in community economic affairs and business.

The What – Knox St. Studios designs and facilitates instruction to educate community stakeholders (residents & business owners) on community asset creation and asset protection.



OPENING DOORS

With a lot of hard work and community support, we were able to open Knox Street Studios in 2019 and have been working hard to drive innovation and community impact ever since!

*** BUYING BACK THE BLOCK!**

- *Successfully purchased the Knox St. Studios property in 2019*

*** FUNDRAISED WITH COMMUNITY SUPPORT**

- *Raised \$20k from community crowdfund*
- *Raised \$25k from Local Grants*

*** COMPLETED RENOVATION**

- *Worked with local contractor team, plus sweat equity to fully renovate 1948 building in Walltown*

*** DOORS OPEN AUG 2019**

- *Successfully open the doors after seven months of renovation.*

*** MCDONALDS CODING PILOT**

- *Completed TWO Triangle Area Computer Coding Program over 7-Weeks*
- *Expanded program to Triad Market*



*** GRIT ENTREPRENEURSHIP SERIES**

- *4 - Part Evening Series*
Topics: Imposter Syndrome, Silicon Valley Startups, Community Reinvestment

*** EDUCATION & STEM**

- *Provided rapid response for families during Covid*
- *Over 150 families participated in virtual sessions to skill-up on managing learning from home*
- *Opened flexible (in person) learning environment for youth at American Tobacco Campus*

*** EXPANSION & PARTNERSHIPS**

- *UNC School of Medicine*
- *E3 Durham (Forward Cities)*
- *American Underground*
- *Access Center for Equity & Success*
- *Techstars*
- *Partners in Equity*

SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

2022-2023



Impact Area #1

Small Business

Program Names: "E3 Durham" & "Early Stage KSS Accelerator"

- Knox St. Studios is a regional Entrepreneur Support Organization participating in the SBA-backed E3 Durham program. We recruit and support entrepreneurs and small business owners through services focused on: connections, convenings, counseling, capital, care, civic support, communications, and coordination.
 - KSS in 2022, successfully onboarded 180 small business owners, and engaged over 400. In 2023, KSS will continue to on-board small business owners. 500+ impressions expected.
- Early Stage KSS Accelerator works across small co-horts (5-7) diverse led businesses and/or individual entrepreneurs prepare their ventures for the next phase of business development. Additionally KSS looks to collaborate with other small business education platforms to further connect our community of entrepreneurs.
- Additional Accelerator Topics for 2023-2024. Curriculum on the fundamentals of business covering general business topics such as:
 - Creativity in business + leadership
 - Loan readiness seminars
 - Business plan development + P&L management
 - Pro-forma development
 - Digital roadmap + Social media + Marketing
 - Fundraising & secure construction contracts.

SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

2022-2023



Impact Area #2

Economic Equity

Program Name: "Techstars Startup Weekend" & "Community Advancement Convening Topics" - CACT)

- The Techstars Startup Weekend Social Innovation is a marathon entrepreneur event (presented by Knox St. Studios) purposely designed to be a catalyst of the same type of energy that propelled the Triangle (prior to the Pandemic) as a destination region for entrepreneurship, innovation, diversity, and opportunity! KSS will host 3 region wide Startup Weekends in 2023. Expected outcomes, 200-300 participants in 2024
- CACT - Property Ownership & Preservation - Working with Real Estate and Finance professionals, Knox St. Studios host sessions on the approaches and power of ownership. KSS chooses monthly topics relevant to community advancement. Once a month, 12 months, 35 pp, 420 Impressions.



SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

2022–2023



Impact Area #3

Workforce Readiness

Program Names: “Embedded STEM Labs Initiative” & “Apprenticeship Program” & “Community Code” & “Life Sciences Internships & Apprenticeship”

- Embedded STEM Labs Initiative is a collaboration between Duke University Christensen Center, Knox St. Studios, and Inspiring Minds. This research practice partnership is designed to:
 - Develop University staff capacity
 - Create design based and culturally relevant STEM curricula
 - Provide community engagement opportunities for university students
 - Develop metrics that will track programmatic impact.
 - Expected Outcomes:
 - A co-developed culturally relevant curriculum combining design and STEM,
 - An increase in the number of opportunities BIPOC youth in Durham have to access educational projects in STEM.
 - Engagement opportunities for university students and staff
- STEM Career Apprenticeship Program is a six-month, 20-hour-a-week apprenticeship and exploration pipeline program. Apprentices used the knowledge and concepts gained from their experiences to solve real-world problems and gain valuable experience for career advancement. In 2021-2022 Knox Street piloted with the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Medicine, IT department.

CASE STUDY: E3 DURHAM

Durham County is growing in population size and diversity. Income and wealth inequalities are key drivers of inequitable access to business ownership locally and nationally. The E3 Durham program is a collective of Durham entrepreneurial support organizations. The goal of this SBA backed initiative is to ensure Equity for Every Entrepreneur (E3). This means equity in access to resources, tools, and funding. Participants work with business expert Navigators to develop customized action plans that are executed with ongoing support from spoke organizations. The collective recruits and supports both aspiring and existing entrepreneurs.

E3 Durham services include monthly convenings (to build the ecosystem), ongoing counseling, and a framework to access capital. The Community Navigator Program is growing a stronger network of local entrepreneur support organizations and improving trust and collaboration between institutional and grassroots organizations. Knox St Studios in partnership with Forward Cities and other local organizations is leaning on the legacy and culture of Durham's Black Wall Street to reimagine it in this day and age.



CASE STUDY: STEM EXPLORATION APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

Knox Street Studios, one of the leading innovators of STEM career, education and exploration pathways located in the Triad & Triangle areas of North Carolina, uses apprenticeships to prepare entry-level black professionals for careers in STEM.

Knox Street's STEM Exploration Apprenticeship Program a six-month, 20-hour-a-week apprenticeship and exploration pipeline program. In 2021 Knox Street piloted with the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Medicine, IT (Client) department. Apprentices used the knowledge and concepts gained from their experiences to solve real-world problems. Three days a week, apprentices at Knox Street Studios worked on a Capstone Project initiative to support our clients as well as Knox Street Studios special projects across the varying IT & Web Developmental organizational needs.

In our initial pilot the apprentices received a monthly stipend, deep dive in HTML / CSS, Javascript for the front-end, Python/Selenium for the backend, and Knox St Studios Collaborative Community Partners access.

Knox Street Studios has several takeaways from our pilot with UNC Healthcare IT. (1) There is great value for the client (UNC hospitals IT) in that they are getting a group of potential employees that they would have not otherwise had access to.



The median annual wage for computer and information technology occupations was \$86,320 in May 2018, which was higher than the median annual wage for all occupations of \$38,640.

CASE STUDY: STEM EXPLORATION APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM (II)

There are various studies that show diversity in staff leads to more robust products and innovation. (2) The apprentices themselves get a deep dive into real-world coding experiences they have not received from their various boot camps. (3) The size of UNC is considered to be enterprise level, which creates a learning environment of large and small teams -- apprentices, through their experiences can decide if the perfect size organization to seek employment.

Knox St. Studio is folding this learning in our curriculum as we onboard new clients of various sizes. And finally, Knox Street Studio's curriculum on top of the day-to-day work that our apprentices are getting with clients like UNC Health Care IT, will provide a much broader perspective that most new people to the IT field don't get until much further along in their career. Our network is going to be critical in helping them master the hard/soft skills necessary to be successful in the IT field.

Knox Street's approach is two-fold, not only do apprentices get the real world experience in their respective cohort, they also actively participate in Knox Street's curriculum for the development of the necessary hard/soft skills to excel in their tech career. Examples of topics are: Mentoring, Life cycle career of Programmer/Data Scientist, Project Financial Modeling, Imposter Syndrome, and Project Time Estimation.

Only 9% of STEM workers in the US are black or Hispanic. Our aim is to increase that 9% dramatically through intentional programs and services for underrepresented youth and young adults.



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CASE STUDY: EARLY STAGE ACCELERATOR

The success and feedback from the 2022 Techstars Startup Weekend- Social Innovation, powered by Knox St) was resounding. Our participants wanted more! More collaboration, more innovative mentorship, more expert level guidance. This feedback inspired us to reimagine our Early Stage Accelerator program to support members of the Knox St community who want to further their work within this model. The accelerator applies the pillars of fast paced collaboration where participants get the benefits of building out their ideas on teams.

The Topics included in our 2022 accelerator were:

- Pitching - How to Tell Your Story
- Understanding Your Market - Product Market Fit
- Collaborative Exchange - Public Speaking Amongst Teams
- Accessing Funding - Revenue & Funding



The Continued Accelerator Goals for 2023 are:

- To serve 3-4 cohorts representing 10-20 diverse led businesses and individuals to prepare their ventures for the next phase.
- To provide intensive track sessions and connect Triangle region entrepreneurial networks.
- To help establish Mentor-Protégé relationships with business leaders through collaboration with other organizations in our network.
- To share and give access to Accelerator participants the accessible tools and resources locally available for business growth.
- To build on the spirit of collaboration a sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystem



CASE STUDY: ACCESS POINT ACCELERATOR

ACCESS Center for Equity and Success has partnered with Knox St. Studios to implement the ACCESS Point MBE Accelerator. The concentration of capable MBEs >\$1MM in annual revenue is in the Metrolina, Piedmont Triad, and Triangle regions of North Carolina. Our goal is to scale 10% of firms we engage to seven-figure firms by October 2022. That is by leveraging the call out of ResilNC in the report "Don't Knock the Hustle: Plotting to Scale NC's Black Businesses Post-Covid," to achieve 22% by 2022. The population data point representing that 22% of the NC is African American and requests public and private entities to commit to 22% of their spend be with Black-owned suppliers, developers, and service providers in both industrial and professional capacities.

Our accelerator is an eight-week program which we plan to implement three cohorts in 2022 after our Fall 2021 pilot. The courses include Branding to Compete, Maintaining the Status Quo: Pricing and Packaging for Success, Bidding to Win: MBE/HUB Certification, Teaming & Joint Ventures: Mentorship Office Hours, Access Bonding & Financing: benefits of Relationship Banking, A Live Panel Discussion with Supplier Diversity leaders & Buyers, Peer & Corporate Matchmaking Sessions. Each MBE will be required to certify with the state of North Carolina if not already certified and pay a reimbursable registration fee upon completion of the program. We have secured an agreement with the developer to execute the construction and project management of Wake Baptist's \$65MM Eye Center in development. Our role is to be the primary supplier diversity pipeline developer. To fulfill the goal of 22%, we will draw on MBEs throughout the state to secure Tier 1 and Tier 2 contracts, focusing on sub-contractors to assist the execution from the triad that creates a multi-regional economic multiplier our targeted impact.

