

YEAR
OF

(RE)BUILDING

2022 ANNUAL REPORT



PRODIGY
VENTURES

THE MISSION

Through personal development and hands-on learning in a Prodigy enterprise, young adults build a foundation of mindsets and skills for sustainable lives, economic mobility and, most importantly, to go forth and enrich their city.

THE MODEL

Prodigy hires young adults from northeast Denver into a paid apprenticeship in one of our two coffeehouses. Here they discover their own inherent greatness while learning to run a craft coffeehouse. The apprenticeship is a 12-18 month experience, designed by educators, of 'deep work and deep learning in a culture of healing.' From healing in community together, these prodigies are the next generation of leaders this city wants and needs.

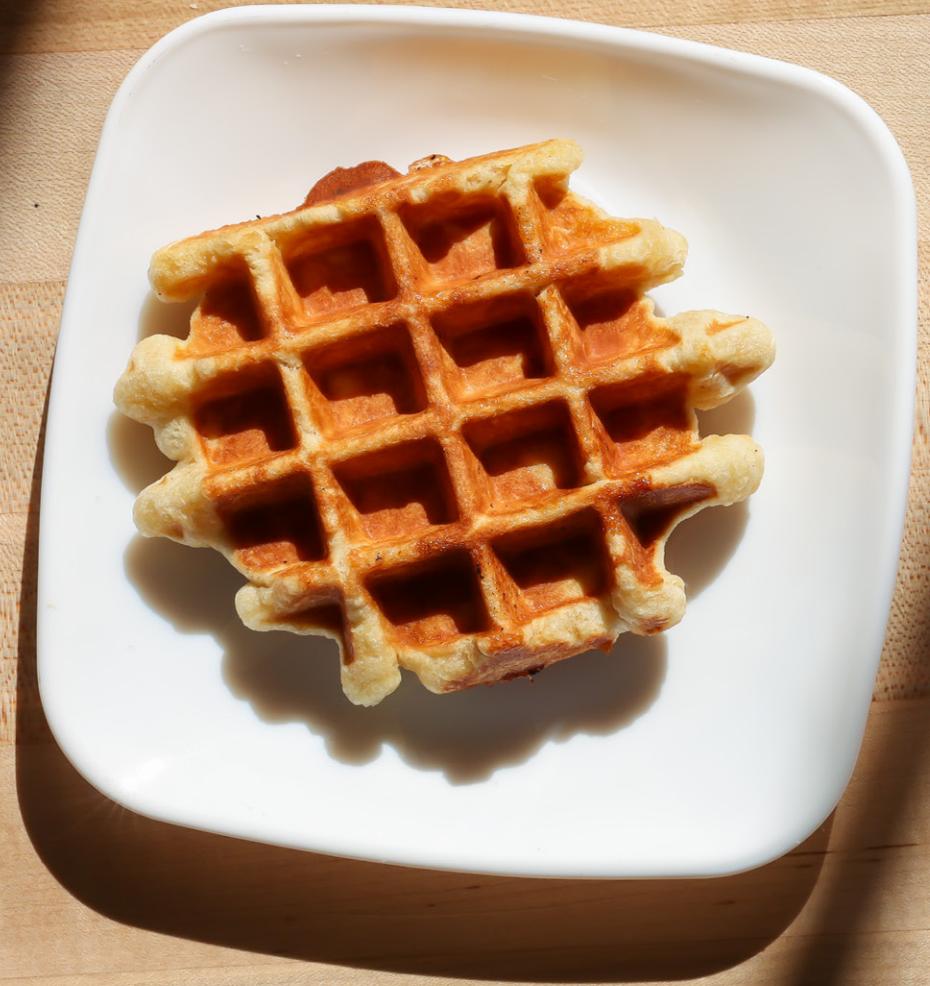




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**A LETTER FROM
THE FOUNDER**

Twenty twenty two. A year of release for me personally; A year of change and A year of (re)Building for the organization. Thank you for opening this Annual Report. Thank you for caring. We crafted this 'report' to share the impact of this beautiful and complex social enterprise apprenticeship in northeast Denver, and even more importantly for you to meet the people that make it thrive, and peel back to feel how depthful it is behind the scenes. Let's do this...

Twenty twenty two is the year I decided to step down from Prodigy. Below is a portion of the letter I wrote in November 2022 to the Prodigy community about my decision. It's time to (re)Build.

Friends and Family, Lovers and Supporters of Prodigy,

I am writing today to share the news that I have decided to step down from Prodigy. I can't hardly believe it, but it's true...And good...

Why am I stepping down? The simple explanation is: "It is time." And I just know it with all my being.

After eight years of thinking, breathing, eating, sleeping, and talking non-stop about Prodigy, it is simply time. ***This gorgeous, joyful, messy, wild experiment in creating space for young adults to step into their prodigious greatness has been the honor of my life.*** And, now that Prodigy is all grown, it is time to release it...To release it into the next level / phase / era of endless possibility. With a knowing that Prodigy is ready for this.

We've been tested over and over and over again. And we've weathered whatever has been thrust and thrown at us. We've survived pandemic, recession, violence, heartache, trauma in and all around us; We've survived our own naivete, with a leader who had never led before, a founder who had never founded before, craftsmen and women who had never crafted before, and a crew of random young people who had never been a crew before.

...and, we've weathered it with the most counter-cultural thing you could imagine right now: by turning toward each other and believing in each other; By banding together, despite the chaos around us, ***in a steadfast faithfulness. A faithfulness in the inherent and basic and profound greatness inside each one of us. A faithfulness in humanity. In people. In each other.*** We embrace this notion of 'spiritual hospitality,' where we give each other permission to focus on and commit to and be curious about and to be changed by this call to 'create space for people to be fully and authentically themselves.'

And the crazy part is: it has worked. Prodigy is not just ready. It's not just grown. ***It is a vibrant, resilient, and even essential, part of this city now. It, with you all a part of it, has cracked this city wide open.*** In these years, you've helped us earn over \$2M in coffeehouse sales, open a second shop and pay \$1.2M directly to

apprentices in wages and tips. You've helped us train 200 young adults and hire 100 apprentices who have built a foundation of skills and mindsets to experience economic mobility. But moreso, become the type of leaders and lovers, who we need in this city. The type of leaders who, despite their proximity to and experience of inequitable systems, they choose spiritual hospitality, who value craft, who have become independent learners, use their voices in loving, respectful, responsible ways to build the city we want and need.

Will Prodigy be ok? Oh Hell Yes It Will. This is one of the biggest 'Oh Hell Yes's' of my life. I mean, we have an insane core Leadership team that's here to stay, full of spiritual magic and wise-beyond-their-years truth-telling generosity. With a powerful emerging leadership-manager crew who have also been living, working, learning, modeling and emitting spiritual hospitality for years. We have an amazing Board of Directors, with diverse life experiences and careers, almost all who live near Prodigy, who know how lead through listening to the right voices, through curiosity and with courage.

And, Prodigy has apprentices. The city, the world needs them right now. They ***have a unique gift that no other human on the planet has. And it deserves to be cultivated, shared and honored. Apprentices are the soul of Prodigy, and the soul of this city.*** And by far, the most courageous, open-hearted, wisest sages alive.

And, importantly, we have you—the heartbeat of the community, who have wrapped your arms around us over and over and over again. Even after you came into the shop and it took 12 minutes to get your latte that one time. Even after you didn't hear from us for months on end, or weren't thanked properly for your generosity. ***Despite it all, you all have accompanied us to today.*** You, the community around and within us, have made us. ***And, your support and generosity will weather Prodigy through this transition as well.*** You ain't going nowhere.

So, will Prodigy be ok? It's a clear 'Oh Hell Yes.' Not only will we be ok, but my transition is an opportunity. It's an opening of bigger possibilities for each apprentice, for the organization, and for this city.

Oh, by the way, I ain't really going anywhere either. I might not work for Prodigy in a year, but I do live four doors down from the Globeville shop. (I'm really hoping for a lifetime discount on cortados and tortas!). So, yeah, I'll be around. I mean, just as I will always have Prodigy inside of me, woven into the being that I am and the being that I will transmute into over time, I will also always be a part of Prodigy, cheering alongside you as you cheer Prodigy on.

In gratitude to you for sharing this one wild and precious life with me...and with Prodigy.



Steph.

THE OVERVIEW



94%
Graduates
Employed

90%
Apprentices
Earned Industry
Recognized
Certifications

43
Young adults
trained by
Prodigy

35
Young adults
working as
Apprentices

153
Number of
Applicants

2022 IMPACT AND OUTCOMES

★ **90%** OF APPRENTICES

INCREASED EARNING POWER

We're not just interested in apprentices getting a job after Prodigy. We're successful if they are confident in their skills and abilities, use their voices to articulate their stories and build a career that inspires them. Apprentices increase earning power by building technical skills, earn industry-recognized certifications, and promotions. As a result, they graduate with the ability to earn a living wage and be leaders in their homes, communities and workplaces.

★ **93%** OF APPRENTICES

BUILT TRANSFERABLE SKILLS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY ECONOMY

At Prodigy, we measure our ability to equip youth with these skills using the Essential Skills and Dispositions framework from the National Center for Innovation in Education. It includes measures of Communication, Collaboration, Creative problem-solving, and Self-Direction.

★ **76%** OF APPRENTICES

INCREASED SOCIAL CAPITAL

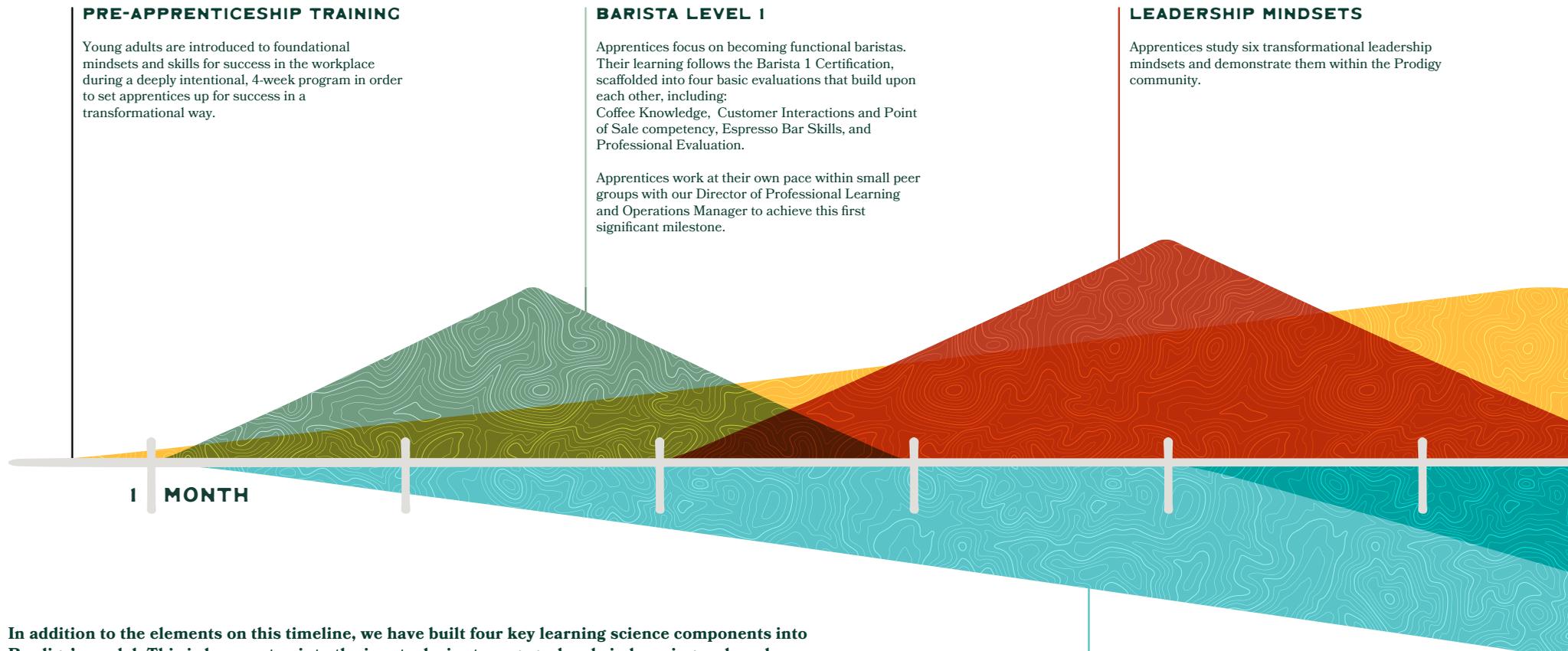
Our research shows us that bridging social capital, or ties that cross groups, are important for overall economic mobility. Understanding the assets in your community, how to leverage them, and increasing your community may be more powerful for economic growth than your education or work experience. At Prodigy, we intentionally design the apprenticeship to include activities that increase apprentices' social capital and sense of belonging.

★ **65%** OF APPRENTICES

EXPERIENCED HEALING

We understand that economic mobility cannot happen from increasing earning power and skills alone. Personal and cultural identity development and healing from inequitable systems is necessary to thrive. At Prodigy, apprentices engage in mental health and wellness, like healing circles, identity-based groups, and therapy. They study power, oppression, and liberation. They can attend therapy. They use their voices to change leadership and shape the culture in the shop for customers and employees alike.

APPRENTICE TRAJECTORY



PRE-APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

Young adults are introduced to foundational mindsets and skills for success in the workplace during a deeply intentional, 4-week program in order to set apprentices up for success in a transformational way.

BARISTA LEVEL 1

Apprentices focus on becoming functional baristas. Their learning follows the Barista 1 Certification, scaffolded into four basic evaluations that build upon each other, including: Coffee Knowledge, Customer Interactions and Point of Sale competency, Espresso Bar Skills, and Professional Evaluation.

Apprentices work at their own pace within small peer groups with our Director of Professional Learning and Operations Manager to achieve this first significant milestone.

LEADERSHIP MINDSETS

Apprentices study six transformational leadership mindsets and demonstrate them within the Prodigy community.

In addition to the elements on this timeline, we have built four key learning science components into Prodigy's model. This is how we tap into the innate desire to engage deeply in learning and work:

Time on task and deliberate practice: Mastery requires deliberate practice. At Prodigy, apprentices work and learn for an average of 1,000 hours with a 2:1 student-to-teacher ratio.

Clear, relevant, and ongoing success milestones: Learning requires setting clear standards and providing scaffolded teaching to help learners achieve success.

Generative feedback: On the first day of Pre-Apprenticeship, young adults learn that feedback is not their enemy. At Prodigy, feedback is a natural, dignifying, and essential part of continuous learning.

Community of spiritual hospitality: All of these learning strategies exist within a culture of spiritual hospitality: "We create space for people to be authentically and fully themselves."

MENTAL HEALTH + WELLNESS

We believe Mental Health and Wellness is critical in a work and learning space. Apprentices are paid to engage in individual and group activities centered on liberation and healing. All have the option to engage in weekly 1-on-1 therapy with a clinical therapist. Prodigy partners with community organizations, therapists and higher education programs to provide workshops, healing experiences and therapy.

PEER LEARNING TEACHING

Learners are more attuned to learning in a social context with their peers. Peer teaching is a meta-cognitive skill that requires not only an understanding of the content, but the ability to articulate it to others, build relationships with learners, and customize teaching strategies for different personalities.

Peer teaching and learning is associated with greater psychological well-being, social competence, communication skills, and self-esteem.

SCA CERTIFICATIONS

Apprentices can become certified by the Specialty Coffee Association, an internationally recognized organization that launches baristas into careers in craft coffee. They receive specialized training on topics such as the Foundations of Espresso Making, Brewing Methods, Latte Art, and more.

JOB DEVELOPMENT + TRANSITION TO WORKFORCE

Prodigy provides paid experiences outside the shop such as guest barista shifts, job shadows, internships. The apprenticeship also includes portfolio and job development in preparation for graduation.

GRADUATION

Apprentices graduate with the ability to secure meaningful employment in their community. Graduates continue to have access to Prodigy's staff and resources indefinitely after graduation.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MODULES

Apprentices participate in group and individual professional development modules on topics such as, Coffee & Colonialism, Personal, Cultural and Social Identity, Intersectionality, Power & Oppression, Collective Liberation, Book Club, Civic Engagement, Train the Trainer, Financial Literacy, Real Life Skills 101, and Storytelling & Healing.

def: **PRODIGY** \n,
a person, especially a young one,
endowed with exceptional abilities.

The organization *PRODIGY VENTURES* was crafted by a team of educators in Denver, Colorado, on the conviction that the city's next great contributors are already here: the young adults just beyond our periphery, those disconnected from our institutions.

12 MONTH

WITH GRATITUDE

2022 SUPPORTERS

\$50,000+

- Colorado Health Foundation
- Fiona & Bill Arnold
- Kenneth King Foundation
- City and County of Denver Economic Development & Opportunity- Denver Workforce Services
- Anonymous
- Anonymous
- Anonymous

\$10,000 - \$49,999

- The Denver Foundation
- Anonymous

\$5,000 - \$9,999

- All Souls Church of Boulder
- Bayless Family Foundation
- Bret & Jayla Poppleton
- Colorado Housing and Finance Authority
- Hillary Frances
- Robert E. & Anne T. Sneed Family Fdn.
- Tania Zeigler & Kenneth Ho

\$1,000 - \$4,999

- Brad & Sara Johnson
- Brian & Laura Rhea
- Heather Lafferty & Dart Winkler
- Jennifer & Robet Gamble
- Jeremy Sluyters
- Jill & Dave Van Noord
- Judd & Nicole Nutting

- Karen & Lynn Sanson
- Kate Sneed
- Leonard & Nancy Peterson
- Linda & Wes Brown
- Lyn & Lori Belcher
- Mary Kate Flaherty
- Nancy Grandys-Jones
- Reuben & Rachel Zylstra
- Ronald Janusz
- Sumaya Vanderhorst
- Tanner & Alley Sandoval
- The Starbucks Foundation
- Trace & Becca Bundy
- Woody & Georgia Garnsey
- Anonymous

\$1 - \$999

- Aliko McCain
- Ann Swanson
- Anne & Frank Rowe
- Anonymous
- Anonymous
- Barbara Atkeson
- Belen Vizio & Eddie Gurrola
- Bessie Castro
- Bradley West
- Caroline Rassenfoss
- Casey Kochenberger
- Celia Sheneman
- Charities Aid Foundation America
- Chelsea Haag-Fernandez
- Chelsea Hahn
- Cheryl Peterson
- Chuck Sullivan
- Colin Sullivan
- Connor Berry

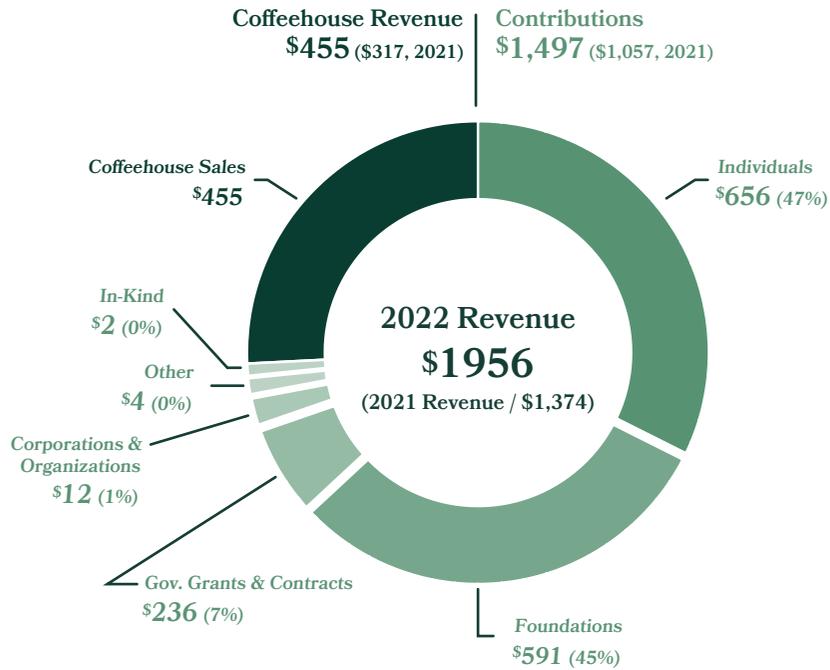
- Courtney Soltys
- Dan Grant
- Dean McCabe
- Deborah Froeb
- Denise & Kevin Gliwa
- Derrick & Zaneta Kelsey
- Eleanor Atkeson
- Elitza
- Elizabeth Clark
- Elizabeth Heidl
- Elizabeth Newton Hayes
- Elizabeth Stamberger
- Evan & Sera Smith
- Familia Saints
- Foothills Bridge Company
- Gayle Bates
- Hana Sayeed
- Harris Rollinger
- Irit Lockhart & Jay Roberts
- Jeanne Granville
- Julie Hertzberg
- Julie Voyles
- Kate & Jon Kalstein
- Kate Levy
- Kate McKenna
- Kathleen Crowley
- Kathleen Newman
- Kaylen Higgins
- Ken Weil
- Kevin Holwerda-Hommes
- Kristen Banard
- Kristin Hatcher
- Laura & Christopher Baker
- Leah Cousin
- Lena Schmidt & Jenn Bredsdorff
- Leslie Findlen
- Lindsay Heller
- Lisa Brus

- Margaret Hoffman
- Mark Tapy
- McGladrey Family
- Melissa Crowley
- Melissa West
- Michelle Lee
- Mike Domenighini
- Network for Good
- Paige Bayless
- Pam Prag In honor of Daisy-Jo Weaver
- Pamela Basey
- Patricia & Lewis Grant
- Patricia Moran
- Rachel & Jeffrey Almond
- Rebecca Cottrell
- Richard Foster & Julia Waggener
- Rob & Sara Bayless
- Robert & Cheryl Dixon
- Roxanne Tanick
- Salesforce.org
- Sally & Daniel Hirsch
- Scott Griebing
- Sean Prag
- Sheryl Josephson
- Stacy Elwell-Chalmers
- Susan C Wofford Charitable Fund
- Susan Grant & Deb Pierce
- Suzanne White
- Sylvie Rupp
- The MacMeier Foundation
- Tim & Stephanie Pease
- Tina and Kevin Peterson
- Torry Hayden
- Trevor & Jane Nydam
- Walnut Hill Workshop
- Will & Lauren Forsythe
- Willock Family Fund
- Wittman-Gomez Family

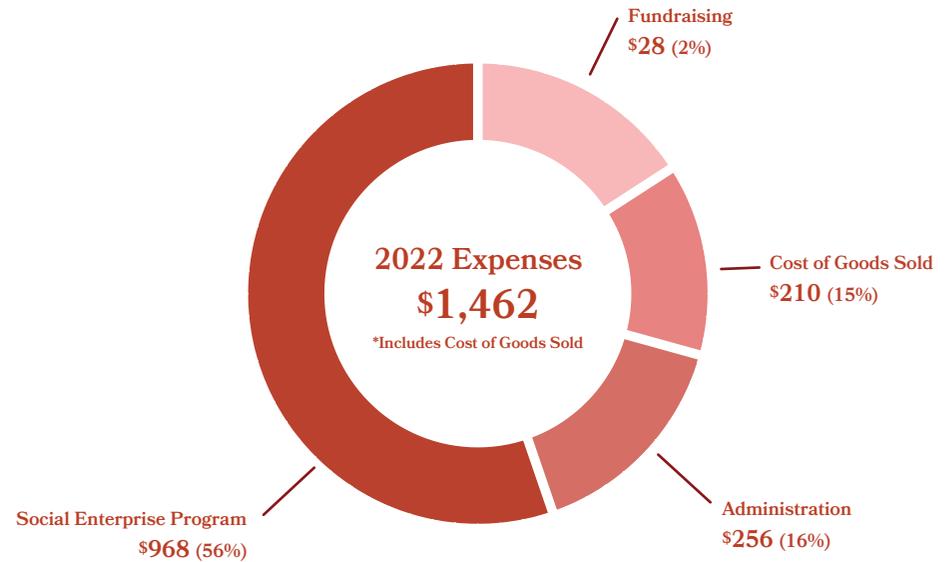
2022 FINANCIALS

*TOTALS ARE IN THOUSANDS AND ROUNDED TO NEAREST DOLLAR.

REVENUE



EXPENSES



NOTES:

- Of the total \$1,497,000 in donations and contributions, \$340,000 was restricted to the Expansion Campaign, a two-year \$900,000 campaign.
- \$10,679 was returned to Colorado donors through tax credits via Colorado Enterprise Zone Contribution Program.

THE PEOPLE

MEET THE APPRENTICES

AND THE MANAGERS IN TRAINING

▶ WE ASKED THE APPRENTICES AND MITs:
WHAT I AM (RE)BUILDING RIGHT NOW?



AALIYAH

COHORT: 26

NEIGHBORHOOD: LAKEWOOD

2022 was a year of new beginnings and a fresh start. I got new opportunities and started creating my own new beginning. I am building off of the knowledge I already had and adding to it all the time. Also, I am growing as a person while I am learning. Both with the people I work with and on my own. I know I am growing in a way that will allow me to be a great leader and to teach others to be one, too.



ALEX

COHORT: 25

NEIGHBORHOOD: SUNNYSIDE

The year of 2022 is the year of self-love and sets the precedent of amazing years to come. Having high standards and goals for myself, 2022 is the year where I live a life of stoicism and leadership. By developing self-love, I know I can do anything I set my mind to. My end goal is to raise a family, and to create and lead in an environment where I can help others. Prodigy, and the year of 2022, is the first step in helping me achieve those goals. Re-building means to improve upon or deliberate in a different manner. I'm currently rebuilding myself physically and mentally. Physically, I am living an active and healthy lifestyle that gives my mind and body energy. Mentally, I am much more socially active and setting time for self-affirmations, care, and learning.



ALONZO

COHORT: 29

NEIGHBORHOOD: ELYRIA

2021/22 were big years of growth for me. A lot of ups and downs, I guess. Baby brother Aron being born was a highlight. But a lot of loss last year. One battle after another. Consistent in having to get past things and through them. It pushed me to be a better person. To realize I need to find happiness in myself. Things you really want, you can't buy with money. Rebuilding is when something was broken and you're building it back. You lose some things, go through the process, and then you starting building back up. Right now I am building up a savings, building back up clientele for barbering, building a foundation for my future. For becoming a barber. I am rebuilding my plan, my goals.



AUTUMN

COHORT: 28

NEIGHBORHOOD: GLOBEVILLE

When I found Prodigy in 2022, it changed my life, I guess. I wasn't myself to start the year; but I have found myself. I'm working, I've made awesome new friends. Going back to Pride with my sister—it was a good feeling. Spending time with my dogs. Haven't figured out driver's ed. I am working on being more open to people. Re-Building means fixing your own mistakes. Right now, I'm building connection more with my family. Going back to school this year and going to try to stick with it.



CISCO

COHORT: 26

NEIGHBORHOOD: GLOBEVILLE

2022 was the year of chaos and adjustments. Highlight was Prodigy for sure. Graduating high school. Meeting new people. Prodigy made me realize that no matter what happens you always need to take care of yourself and your business. Rebuilding can mean creating something for the greater good. I am building habits and routines to set myself up for when I am ready to take a leap of faith. Right now, I'm building my relationships with others. There's diversity amongst my friends and I am learning to connect deeper. Being around others has helped me to build myself because I figure out what I like and don't like.



DEAGO

A.K.A SOS W/ TOAST

COHORT: 29

NEIGHBORHOOD: GLOBEVILLE

2022 was about getting money. It motivated me to want more and better for myself. I'm not shy with people. Rebuilding to me is to break something down to its core. Right now I'm getting my money up to touch 100 million. I'm trying to build up my social confidence.



ELSA

COHORT: 27

NEIGHBORHOOD: CLAYTON

Last year I did a lot of growth, mentally and emotionally. Losing and refinding myself. Rebuilding just means growth. Wanting to improve. Right now, I am building relationships with myself and learning how to navigate relationships with others and my career. I am learning how to be more myself, and to not compare myself to people. Starting back at school for psychology and building barista skills here, I know I'm moving forward and learning how to grow with every challenge that comes my way.



ERYC

COHORT: 26

NEIGHBORHOOD: CAP HILL

2022 was about practicing being gentle and listening to my body more. I'm building to always have the mentality to take a breath. "There is no need to go anywhere, fast." Keep it slow. Working on being gentle with myself.



HALLA

COHORT: 24

NEIGHBORHOOD: BARNUM

2022 meant finding the growth and strength I didn't know I had in me. Going back to school, working my way up to shift lead, learning about myself. These experiences helped me see I still have a future of prosperity even though I may have gone a little off track for a time. Rebuilding to me means taking in every part of myself as I am, the good and the bad, and pursuing my best life anyway. I've finally built a strong foundation for my life, now I'm building the walls, doors and windows. I'm moving beyond surviving and learning how to thrive but there is work to be done.



JULIAN

COHORT: 24

NEIGHBORHOOD: COMMERCE CITY

2022 for me was extremely hard, from the beginning to the end. But the most important thing for me is that I am alive and trying my best in life and for my future. 2022 broke me down, but I had to rebuild myself. And what I mean by 'rebuild' is that I had to take everything I am and improve by learning from my hardships and get the lesson out of it and use it in my future to get better. What I am building is a better life for my family and for me as well as a career for me, too.



MALENI

COHORT: 26

NEIGHBORHOOD: MONTBELLO

2022 taught me being able to show resiliency when bad things happened. Finding Prodigy was a highlight. This gives me a more optimistic point of view. Gives me a sense of tranquility that I don't have to be in a rush. Right now I am building my mental health and confidence. I am building stability, building patience for myself and those around me. I can catch myself before I get irritated.



RAFAEL

COHORT: 27

NEIGHBORHOOD: GLOBEVILLE

2022 was transition: from being a kid to being an adult. I graduated high school, got a job and started transitioning to adult things. It's a thinking process of what I'm gonna do next. In high school, you show up everyday and do your thing, whereas in the workforce, more responsibility is on your shoulders. Rebuilding is learning from your mistakes. Right now I'm building a career and a place where I can find peace. I'm moving up in my life. Finding peace in what I'm doing with my life and how I'm gonna do it.



ROMAN

COHORT: 26

NEIGHBORHOOD: **NORTHSIDE**

In 2022, Life taught me to take time for yourself and do the things you enjoy every chance you get. I finally saved enough for my first truck, and GRADUATED. Which kickstarted it all, soon started a path with Prodigy and am keeping myself satisfied—challenged to accept that I am going good for where I'm at. In my life right now I am creating something. I'm building assurance and generational wealth. I got us. Wait on it. I'm building the life I want. The life I deserve.



SHAUN

COHORT: 26

NEIGHBORHOOD: **EAST SIDE**

In 2022 there were a lot of lessons. Learning from my mistakes, what to do and not do. Definitely some growth. Graduating high school was a highlight. This job is a highlight, 100%. Putting me first was a challenge. 2022 kinda' shows me that I have more control of my own future. It's in my hands. It showed me to have patience. Right now, I'm building connections. I'm making more space for myself instead of just going with it. That's building. My leadership abilities. I'm learning how to work with others. I've been pushed here, but I am starting to push myself. Have that mentality.



SIERRA

COHORT: 29

NEIGHBORHOOD: **PARK HILL**

2022 was a year of change and growth. My daughter was born in June 2022. It was a year of learning patience and how to be more independent. Rebuilding means having a second chance at things, overcoming challenges you may have had in the past and building a core structure. Right now, I am building my family. I am building a healthy stable life for my daughter. I am building a healthy mindset, staying happy and positive for myself.



STEPH

COHORT: 24

NEIGHBORHOOD: SUNNYSIDE

2022 was about my growth. Because I stepped outta my comfort zone and put myself first. I built a lot of friendships. I felt very loved in 2022. Now I'm not afraid to talk to people and that will help me make connections to build my future. Right now, I guess I'm like starting over. Starting from the beginning and building myself back up. By not being afraid of change. I have more confidence now and that helps me know change will be ok.



TIFFANY

COHORT: 29

NEIGHBORHOOD: LAKEWOOD

2022 was Change, definitely. I turned 18, I graduated high school. Started at Prodigy at the end of the year. A friend moved away. I started being an adult, doing taxes, and all that stuff. I got an internship at MSU doing research. That was a good highlight. One of the challenges was I was living with a friend because of family issues. And still graduated high school. Right now I am building stability to get to the place where I will make goals. A sense of happiness. With Prodigy, I have goals which allow me to grow. With the barista evaluation, I like having the goals. There's work. I'm growing as a person because I get to speak to people and build relationships with them.



VEE

COHORT: 29

NEIGHBORHOOD: GREEN VALLEY RANCH

2022 was good and bad. I learned a lot of stuff about myself. Learned what I do and do not want for my future. In 2022 I was becoming independent; moved into my first place on my own, got a car. Challenge were dealing with negative aspects of being independent. Rebuilding means: First, acknowledging that I need to rebuild. Second, Forgiveness: for myself, then others potentially. Third, Mindset: to know what I want and pursue it. Right now I am building confidence, Relationship with God and trust with self; trusting that she's making the right decisions.



XXIA

COHORT: 25

NEIGHBORHOOD: WESTWOOD

2022 was about self-care, self-improvement, self-development. I improved on speaking up for myself, learned a lot about coffee, learned a lot about myself. I was challenged by leadership roles, using my voice, meeting new people. In my life I am building myself by being a better person, taking risks, learning to love myself, being more confident. Building myself has helped me learn so much about myself. A big part of the reason I am able to work on myself is thanks to prodigy. If i didn't start working here I would've never developed new skills and met new people. Prodigy has taught me spiritual hospitality which I will forever take along with me.



NAYELI DIMAS

MANAGER IN TRAINING YEAR 2

COHORT: 13

NEIGHBORHOOD: SWANSEA-ELYRIA

2022 was a constant state of transition. Hard lessons learned and core memories made, like traveling to the ocean!, new home, DU Class, New shop + responsibilities, Pride month. Re-building is like a second chance. It is never too late to believe in yourself. Never too late to reflect, reexamine morals, structures, start a new career. Rebuilding means being open and honest about the past and implementing new learnings. Right now, I am building routine, I am building time for myself, I am building foundations for my future.



ERIONNA TOVAR

MANAGER IN TRAINING YEAR 1

COHORT: 16

NEIGHBORHOOD: NORTH EAST DENVER

2022 was a year of re-evaluation and perseverance. It was like a constant time of trials, tribulations, and lessons. A year of grounding and ungrounding. A year of losing and learning. 2022 was a huge space full of growth. Re-building is when things fall apart a bit or aren't as sturdy as they used to be, re-building is when there is a lot of hard work being done to help create a strong and more stable environment. Re-building is building up for my family and I. Breaking all the unstable habits and thriving forward for generations after me. Right now I'm building a healthy relationship with myself, for myself and for my loved ones. I'm building knowledge to heal myself and my family. I'm building an empire, a beautiful peaceful empire.



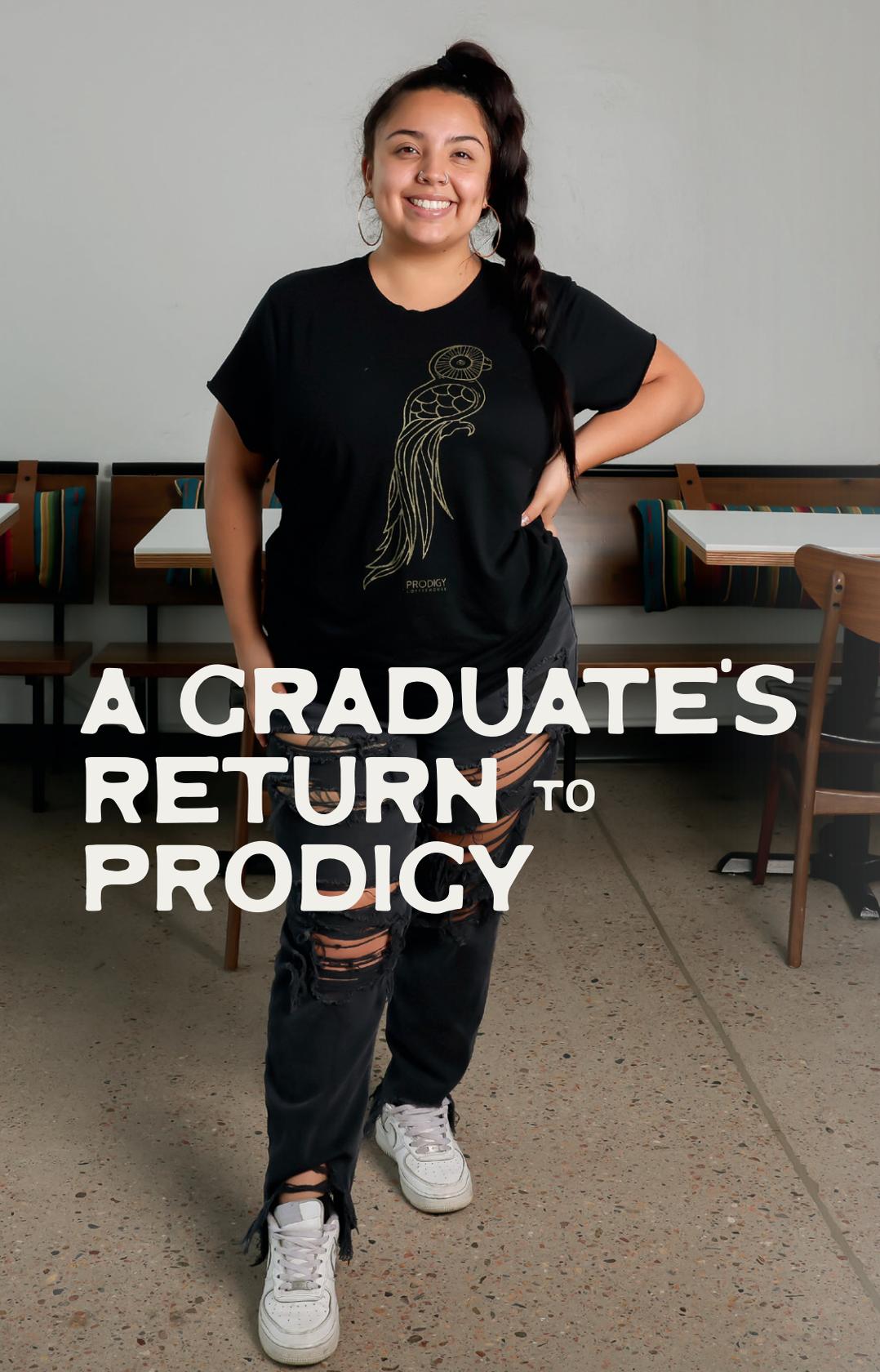
MALINDA MEDINA

MANAGER IN TRAINING YEAR 1

COHORT: 18

NEIGHBORHOOD: FIVE POINTS

2022 was stepping into my own power and growing in leadership and with Prodigy. The year had challenges, like a loved one's death and highlights like the DU Class Rebuilding is also another form of re-growing and adding on to your foundation or remodeling it to represent who you are. I am rebuilding self love and self awareness and healing, I am building a healthy community with the amazing people I work with, I am rebuilding my mindset and growing with new knowledge everyday.



A GRADUATE'S RETURN TO PRODIGY

ERIONNA TOVAR

APPRENTICESHIP DATES: Oct 2020 - Dec 2021

EMPLOYMENT ROLES AFTER PRODIGY GRADUATION:

- After-School Art Program Director, Scholars Unlimited
- Barista, Cherry Bean Coffee
- Rec Center Assistant, Birdseed Collective

CURRENT ROLE: Manager in Training (MIT), Prodigy Ventures

MANAGER IN TRAINING DATES: Aug 2022 - Present

EDUCATION: Junior at Metropolitan State University of Denver

PROGRAM: Bachelor of Science in Human Services, High-Risk Youth Studies concentration

Why did you choose Human Services, High-Risk Youth Studies program for your bachelor's degree?

Almost all the youth I grew up with, including myself, were at-risk. We didn't have the best education systems. We had bad drugs, violence in this community. It's easy to be reached at that age. I want them to break through those addiction barriers. Being at-risk youth myself I know that. I am now a first-generation college student in my family.

What was a challenging part of your Prodigy apprenticeship?

Graduation [from my apprenticeship]. I was hurt. I had frustration because [during my apprenticeship] even being part of the [the event to raise money for the Globeville shop]; me speaking on my story and the history I have with Globeville. That led me to believe I was going to be able to experience the start up with Globeville. But then I graduated. Graduating without a job was hard. But, then I had to put in the work. I learned I was able to take things into my own hands and take the initiative to succeed." Erionna worked three jobs, including as an after-school program director in her time after graduation before she was hired into the Manager in Training program.

About the Manager-in-Training Year 1 (MIT1) Program at Prodigy:

Erionna has been an MIT1 since August 2022, with a focus on Globeville shop. Prodigy Leadership recruited her to apply for the role for a few reasons. First, during her apprenticeship, she was passionate about wanting to work at the Globeville shop. As well, during her nine-month break after graduation, working in other places, Erionna matured, and grew more serious about her work. Her interview for the MIT role was powerful. Immediately in the MIT1 role, she was intimately involved with the start-up process of opening the Globeville shop in September. Today, on the day-to-day, Erionna is the coffeehouse leader, teacher, supporter, characterized by 'spiritually hospitality' with deep connection to the Globeville community.

As part of the program, MIT1's are taking a class at University of Denver University College, the Frontline Manager Leadership Program. Erionna and Malinda (Erionna's partner MIT1) are taking this course alongside aspiring managers in corporations (think Chipotle, Target, Macy's). This class is a big lift, considering she is also a student at MSU. But she believes it's going well. We are learning about different leadership styles. Kind, clear communication. Clear is kind. [Also], how to be specific with what you're asking. It's a good way for me to incorporate what I learn into my work and my life.

What else are you learning right now?

[This experience] is giving me the space to take accountability when I do need to take accountability because of the trusting environment that there is here. We lean on each other for support. I am improving my communication. And I can have the conversations with apprentices on my team: How am I supporting you? What can I do better? I can take on more.

What are a few highlights of your MIT1 experience?

Pumpkin carving as a team at the Globeville shop around Halloween. And, being part of the Globeville Block Party. I was able to see a lot of people I knew from growing up. I was proud. I gave out coffee. My mom was proud.

Also the DEI work [Diversity, Equity, Inclusion work with the Prodigy Leadership and MIT Team, led by Dr. Debbie Mixon-Mitchell] we're doing. It's important because I know that there are hardships you will face through life, personal or work. You do with coworkers. But it's me and three other brown women, being able to build off of each other and thriving as whole; a power team. We kill it and are super there for each other. Encouraging when we want to speak up about things. We are leaders with high-purpose. Being thoughtful and taking initiative. We can connect people to each other, build community, with having social awareness and cultural awareness.

What is a challenge in your MIT role?

Sometimes I feel like our shop is the most gentrified block in Globeville (a community already decimated by gentrification and colonization). Even physically, it's a coffee shop with a big parking lot with a car charger and two-story residence on the same block. And coffee correlates itself with gentrification, with vanilla lattes. It's complex. It's nuanced. It's both/and. But Erionna continues to choose Prodigy because it's also a place of deep connection, healing and growth. I'm just trying to just show up authentically and intentionally. Throughout this time I've had the chance to connect with a bunch of apprentices. That's important.

Why is the Globeville neighborhood important to you?

I went to elementary and part of my middle school years here. My dad and his family are from here, and he's a big part of my life. And I've seen him want to help the community. I definitely wanted to be part of the Prodigy [Globeville shop], because I would have regretted not trying.

What are you focused on right now in your role?

Using my voice. With helping teach apprentices to help them learn and set an environment for new apprentices and using my voice in a kind way where I'm also building trust. Especially when Globeville was opening. Building trust is like taking time to get to know somebody. And, showing people you care for them and

showing up as yourself. And I'm like a super inclusive person. I try to include everyone and then hopefully that pushes influence of other people to try to build connections and just be kind and nice.

What is something you're proud of?

My mom is proud of me and makes that known. When she has that energy, you can feel it; I have to do better, you know. She teaches me how to be graceful. Both of my parents are super patient with me. Because I'm a first generation college student in my family; I already have this path ready for me, I just have to put in the work for it.

Erionna, I believe you could and should be Denver's Mayor one day. What type of city do you want to build when you're mayor?

I want to see more inclusiveness and programming to support the communities that are struggling. Being more aware of not taking away from the neighborhoods that have been standing there forever. Being more strategic about focusing on one issue to tackle at a time to address all the big issues, especially addiction and mental health for youth. I've even debated the community I want to help but Denver is a community as a whole I want to protect.

What are you building for in the future of your own life?

I want to stay in Denver; Knowing my values and what I stand for and not having to question who I am.

Show my family importance. My two little brothers; they are so good; I was definitely the problem child. they are so dope. They will be heartbreakers, Anthony & Angelo. They are funny and loud and outgoing and I'm like just shut up! My brother just has so much love. I'm such a big family person.

I want to be putting in work and time and dedication and real intentional thought behind trying to build generational wealth. Generational wealth is something that's like setting a foundation up for my little brothers and little cousin; and setting them up for college and real-life stuff that no one teaches you.

When you talk about 'generational wealth,' how do you define wealth?

Having enough to get by but also having some on the side to relax and save and make smart decisions with your money. Personally, I need a vacation. Also being kind to yourself and your family. I have big footsteps to fill with my dad. He's telling me how to be a good person and do what you love and the blessings will come as long as you count them and be smart.

Additional 2022 Graduates:

Aja
Cooper
Elani
Fabian
Gabe
Leslie
Madison
Malinda
Xavier
Yoss

AN APPRENTICE LINEAGE

BUILDING A FUTURE TOGETHER



Apprentice Lineage: Building a Future Together
Written by Steph Frances

Elani lives on the eastside, just down 40th Ave from the original Prodigy Coffeehouse. In 2019, she was a sophomore at Bruce Randolph High School, and her teacher told her about an opportunity over spring break: Prodigy was hosting a workshop for high school students, an introduction to craft coffee. Elani was waiting for her summer job at Lakeside Amusement Park to start back up, and was intrigued. She's the kind of person who will say yes, try new things, so it was an easy 'yes.' And, besides, Prodigy was going to pay her.

This 'yes' from this open-spirited high schooler was the beginning of a years-long transformation for both Elani and Prodigy. For Elani, who later became an apprentice, Shift Lead, and Prodigy graduate, it was a pivotal experience. For Prodigy, it was the start of *a lineage of young warriors in their own right, gracing us with their prodigiousness.*

In 2022, Elani had been at Prodigy for six months and had just been promoted to Shift Lead. She had been waiting for her friends to turn 18 so that they could begin their apprenticeship at Prodigy. We were hosting the next 'cohort,' or group of new apprentices. It was finally time for her homies to get to work alongside her.

(Real quick, how it works: Prodigy invites 18-24-year olds who haven't found traction in traditional school and/or work into a 3-day Transferable Workplace Skills Intensive, also referred to as Pre-Apprenticeship Training. Here, they learn the variables of extraction and other craft coffee concepts through science experiments. But they also find connection with each other and practice 'spiritual hospitality'—the core way of being at Prodigy which means "creating space for people to be authentically and fully themselves." Young adults who complete the training and are a good fit, are offered a paid yearlong apprenticeship in one of our two coffeehouses. Apprenticeship is characterized by 'deep work and deep learning in a culture of healing.')

Elani's that kind of generous person, who discovers something powerful. Instead of hoarding it for herself, she reaches out to all around her, in this expansiveness, to share the treasure and uplift those around her. In her words, "It's this mentality of: you want your little homie to do better than you." When she makes money she helps her family pay rent. When she saves money she takes them out to a sushi restaurant, or buys her brother a gift. For Elani, making \$21/hour as a Shift Lead has empowered her to practice the generosity in her heart.

Ok. Back to her friends.

Elani's closest homie was DeAgo. They bonded in music class. They hated it...together. So they got in trouble...together. (Turns out, the teacher was an enterprising one, creating special projects for the two of them, like Biggie Smalls and Tupac research). This solidified their connection, and a closeness forged through growing up alongside each

other, too quickly and overcoming immense challenges.

Elani was, in her words, "a little girl growing up too fast," partying hard in middle school. "I saw shit growing up, made mistakes." She was told by teachers, by friends, by family, by society, that she had no chance of graduating high school. But Elani, from a place of prescient, deep-knowing inside herself, wasn't up for a life defined by low-expectations. She was, and still is today, driven to prove everybody wrong. She tells me, "I'm not who they say I am."

Enter DeAgo: DeAgo is known for his loyalty, for his social spirit, and his ability to keep it real and authentic. He share what's on his mind. He will tell you the truth. He and Elani bonded over similar experiences growing up. "I was going to drop out. But just seeing [Elani] graduate, and her telling me I had to do it" made him stick with it. "She is the reason I graduated." DeAgo grew into this hard working, insightful, peacemaker.

Enter Roman: Roman is from the northside. He's the kind of guy that people are drawn to energetically; the guy with a superpower for drawing you in close in the warmest, most hospitable, embrace-of-the-eyes you could imagine. If you've been to Prodigy recently, you've likely fallen in love with him. It's his superpower. But, like all superpowers, it has a shadow side that can catch him sometimes. Roman and DeAgo met at Bruce Randolph. DeAgo used to let Roman borrow his headphones. That's how they got tight.



Enter Shaun: Shaun used to live across the street from Bruce Randolph. He is the wise-beyond-his-years, naturally curious, cool-seeping-out-of-his-pores kind of guy that all the kids envied. Shaun and Roman started to hang out when, in fifth-grade when Roman was dating someone Shaun called his sister. Over the years the two of them would be close, then fade apart, but always came back toward each other.

Enter Alonzo: Alonzo grew up nearby and went to Bruce Randolph through sophomore year, when he transferred to Aurora Central to experience a new school. He rounds out the crew as a super thoughtful, thinks-hard-about-everything-he-does and cares deeply about his future kind of guy. He's on a journey to be his own man, and, is now a barber in addition to a barista.

All of them together: Today, you can walk into either coffeehouse and talk about manifesting destiny with any one of these emerging leaders. Elani's a graduate. Shaun and Roman (cohort 26) are both now Shift Leads. Alonzo and DeAgo (cohort 29), certified baristas, embody the focus on deep work and deep learning. Outside of work they all hang out. They play Madden at Shaun's house, go to Nairobi or Pioneer Park, vibe to soul music. They are taking life and love seriously. "Basically, we just chill and speak the truth. We don't want to party. We know that the fast life is not the fun life. We want to explore the state—Let's go have a BBQ this weekend at the lake, go to the mountains and enjoy a hike. Go to the bowling alley. We just manifest together. *We are manifesting getting the life we deserve.*"

It's fun to talk with them about life and the future. When asked what their goals are, their answers are always the same. Some version of "Getting stacks." or "Those 100 stacks." (Ok, embarrassingly, I had to ask what the heck that means. Apparently it's a reference to stacks of cash). They are all about making money. It's almost eye-roll-worthy. Until, of course, you listen deeper.

When asked why they are so focused on making money, Elani tells me, "We all come from lower poverty. We want a street-free life. We want whatever we can put on the tables to feed our families." Shaun elaborates: "The only thing that would make me happy is my mom in a house. My mom buying everything and anything she wants. And my dad." Roman says: "I want my dad to wake up with 100 stacks in his room. We want to break generational trauma and turn it into generational wealth and knowledge." As he finishes this sentence, he reaches out his hand to mine for the seventh time with his classic bro-handshake-gesture-of-love, and says, "Come on!"

This! This is what it means to be young people with exceptional abilities. Prodigies. They want money. But, not to grasp onto for themselves. They want it so they can live with less stress, and then spread their generosity to all the people in their lives.

I am struck by the drastic difference between this reality and the portrayal of young people in our media and politics today.

Despite all they are challenged with in their lives, their true desires are for deep connection and thriving for their loved ones. This is the embodiment of Homeboy Industries' Father Greg Boyle's idea that "there is no separation. No 'us' and 'them.' Only us." This crew is enriching Prodigy beyond imagination. And, there's transformational wisdom for all of us,

if we can get beyond ourselves and our own swirling enough to slow down and listen.

The Elani-Roman-Shaun-DeAgo-Alonzo line is not Prodigy's first succession of friends recruiting friends and family to be apprentices. The first started with Mark (cohort 2), who referred his friend Alonzo K (cohort 3). You may remember Alonzo K from our mini-documentary or as our Latte Art Throwdown champion. Today you can find him at Blue Sparrow Coffee. He's been there four years, since graduating from Prodigy. In these years he's moved into stable housing, supported his family into stable housing, has a car, a savings account, health benefits, and a growing 401k. He volunteers in his community and skateboards in his spare time.

Alonzo K was the kingpin recruiter of his friends from East High School. They were a misfit crew who looked out for each other, shared their leftovers with each other, provided a couch to sleep on when it got rough at home, and made each other go to school. This lineage runs eight cohorts deep from Mark-Alonzo-Domonic-Mark (again)-Tyree-Mark (again)-Eugene-Ashley. All completed their apprenticeship and are now emerging leaders in their families, communities, and workplaces.

There was also the Claudia-Odalis line, the Eric-Andrew, the Shannon-Bri, and the Cooper-Elsa. Cisco (current apprentice from cohort 26), is a sixth-generation Globeville resident. He referred his cousin Rafa (cohort 27) to the apprenticeship. Then, in a first, referral of family to the Leadership Team, Cisco connected us his older sister, Lauren who was just hired into Prodigy's Administrative Manager role.

And, finally, we must pay homage to the lineage of Emilia Cano (cohort 1 apprentice graduate, current Operations Manager and longtime member of Prodigy's Leadership team). This one runs Emilia-Simone-Meriah-Jamie-Sierra-Angelica-and-by complete accident it went full circle back to Shaun. Turns out, Emilia remembers Shaun when he was just a baby.

Often people ask us about our 'success stories' at Prodigy. These lineages are by far our most important success measure. Apprentices want to be here and they want the people they love to be here. Embodying the 'I got you' mentality. Lineages of apprentices like these are beyond what we could have ever imagined when Prodigy was just an idea. Ripples, concentric circles of young adults, who have been deeply underestimated, and underinvested-in. These are the leaders this city wants and needs the most.

I asked the Elani-Shaun-Roman-DeAgo-Alonzo crew what advice they have for the next little homies in their lineage. (Listen up, this is for you, too):

"Let your pride go. Quit treating life as a competition."

"Be open to new experiences and take the risks. Don't be so in your head so much."

"Money's getting printed everyday."

"You'll be alright; Life goes on."

And, as only Elani, this original lineage holder, can do, she reminds us:

"Whatever God has in store for me, he has in store for me. I'm blessed."

A final note: Last week, we hired a fifth line in the Elani lineage: DeAgo's sister Jade, joins us in our newest cohort of apprentices: cohort 30. We can't wait to be affected by her.

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4500



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Special thanks to essential folks, including:

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Bret Poppleton, Transition Consultant

CJ McKenzie, General Manager

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Jeffrey Knott, Craft Coffee Consultant

Lindy Williams, Interior Design

All Souls Church of Boulder, Partners

WE ASKED THE LEADERSHIP TEAM:
WHAT I AM (RE)BUILDING RIGHT NOW?



EMILIA CANO

OPERATIONS MANAGER

Transition. Something that Prodigy has experienced heavily in 2022/23 and a word that we use often. I am also on my own personal transition journey as I prepare to be a first time mother. There is a lot of unknown in this preparation process but I am using this as a reflection time for (re)learning, (re)structuring, and the (re)building of current and past generational concepts and values as I will begin to pass them on to a new life.



SUMMER DAVIS

ASSISTANT OPERATIONS MANAGER

I am currently building systems/organizational skills that I can fall back on when I'm not at 100% but will allow me to still show up and get shit done. I'm also building vulnerable relationships, in which we both can be transparent and honest, build together.



BRADY GRANT

DIRECTOR OF LEARNING

We are building a more equitable and inclusive organization intentionally in the midst of our leadership transition. I am honored to be a part of this and to continue to uplift the other amazing folks on our team. And, I am (re)imagining our apprenticeship programming as we work to increase the impact of this opportunity for our crew now and in the future.



STEPH FRANCES

FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2022 was a monumental year for Prodigy... And, for me personally, came a monumental decision to leave Prodigy. This is a stripping down, an unpacking, a letting go, a release of the thing I love most—as part of a journey toward myself in a new way. Right now, I am not yet in the rebuilding phase. Now is more quiet, discernment, reflection, healing, opening up, with hints of visioning, dreaming-like the architecture and design phase for a transformational renovation of myself.

THE CULTURE



AN APPRENTICE STORY

ME, MYSELF AND I

Aaliyah and Me, Myself and I
by Aallyyah
Cohort 26 Apprentice

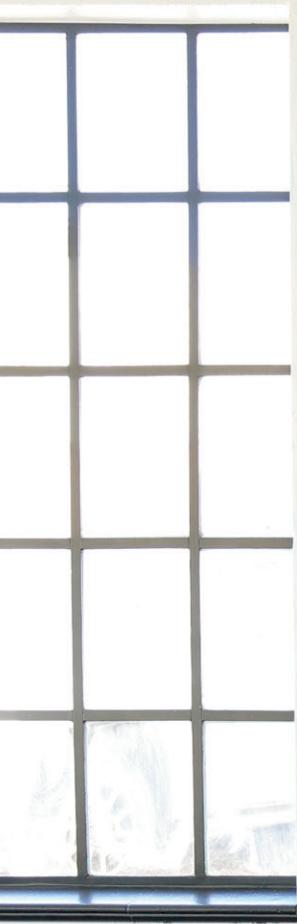
I never thought I would be working at a coffeehouse. A lost girl living in a big world looking for new opportunities, new hopes and a fresh start. I mean, after losing the most precious thing to me last year, I still managed to get up again. On my path, I found Prodigy and I didn't think it was gonna have such a big impact on me.

I came to Prodigy like a deer. Quiet, unsocial, non talkative, observant and shy. I can say I really didn't think I was even able to get this job. I wasn't really at my best but was trying new things. I was learning how to communicate with others which I had never done so much. And, importantly, I was learning how to grow as a person, as well while trying to learn. I wasn't used to smelling coffee everyday or even having to smell coffee at all. Just trying coffee was a big deal. In my childhood I had a history with coffee. I would sit down as a little girl at the table, drink coffee with some pan de dulce. It was good, but most importantly, it was with my loved ones. The best memories. I didn't even think it was what it was back then. And, I didn't know you can make cool art with it. I just loved the way it tasted. Now it's a real difference. My knowledge of coffee keeps on growing and I keep on learning. Learning from my teammates, from myself, and from coffee.

Prodigy has given me so many opportunities to become a better leader and to help me face my fears. I love going to my morning shifts getting ready to bring a smile out of a customer's face. Or going on bar making drinks with my favorite music blaring in the background. Or even having to practice latte art. The confidence that I get here gets bigger and it grows and it makes you learn how to grow as a person. By not just only gaining confidence, but by being kind hearted, communicative, gentle, a problem solver and a leader.

What is a prodigy to me? Prodigy is a nonprofit organization where young adults can become the best version of themselves by crafting with coffee and by developing themselves. An apprenticeship that will help you grow and will help you with the next steps in life. Not only will you learn but you will laugh and love. You can come in Prodigy lost looking for a new beginning and you'll see that change here within a few months. People here think you can do it so you can prove others wrong. After dealing with so much grief people doubted I would move from where I was at. But if I could write my life in a seven word memoir it would be: "They said I couldn't, so I did."

An Apprentice Story: Me, Myself and I. I'm so proud.



PRODIGY COFFEEHOUSE JOINS THE GLOBEVILLE NEIGHBORHOOD

By Lauren Sosa

Sitting in the new Globeville coffeehouse sipping my horchata latte, with high ceilings and an abundance of natural light, the many forms of the space since it was built, are a distant memory. In the building at 4500 Broadway, mechanics previously worked on motorcycles, artists created their canvases by painting directly on the now white walls for inspiration. This space has been many things to many people, just like the neighborhood of Globeville, that Prodigy is now a family member of. Globeville, at the intersection of Interstates 70 and 25 in Denver, is the culmination of a diverse ethnic heritage, strong work ethic, and holds a small-town neighborliness. As a family member of the Globeville community now, Prodigy is learning that here, someone is always related to someone, or knows of each other by word of mouth, or, in many cases, sits at each other's dinner table, where we hold respect and love for one another. My name is Lauren Sosa and I am a fifth-generation Globeville resident, and Prodigy's new Administrative Manager. My one year old son and I look forward to our morning walks to Prodigy Coffee, a space that allows us to know our neighbors, and encourage our community's young adult population.

As you walk along 45th Avenue, you can hear the students of Garden Place Elementary laughing on the playground. Further down at Birdseed Collective, you might see and hear Grupo Tlacloc Azteca dancers practicing in the gymnasium to the beat of their drums. When the weather is warm and families are celebrating together, Mexican corridos and banda sounds blast throughout the span of multiple blocks echoing off the cement structures of Interstate 70. Trains consistently run through the railroad tracks, and cars cruise by during rush hour.

As of September 2022 towards the West end of 45th Avenue, Prodigy's Globeville location brings together families, local vendors, community leaders of Denver and even visitors headed to Denver International Airport visiting from the Rocky Mountain ski slopes.

Walking into the coffeehouse today, you are greeted by the authentic smile of apprentices, the young prodigies from North East Denver. The sign behind their authentic smiles catches your attention, makes you feel at ease: "Come as You Are." The cultural artwork of Anthony Garcia hangs proudly on the walls, another of his many artworks on different structures throughout the Globeville Elyria Swansea neighborhoods. Craftsmanship can be witnessed in apprentices perfecting their latte art skills, all while activating their inherent greatness in their own neighborhood of Globeville. Apprentices play incredible music choices on the coffeehouse sound system, creating an atmosphere of authenticity that you can hear and appreciate, amidst the voices and conversations taking place—the sounds of connectedness amongst humanity, all over a delicious cortado.

Prodigy is proud to have designed the shop with direction from our Apprentice Design Committee. This group of apprentices met over a year's time to deliberate about and develop four core Design Principles: Honor Neighbors, Honor People of All Cultures, Honor Globeville's Legacy and Honor Local Talent. Next, apprentices began work with Lindy Williams, owner of interior design firm SaltWolf, who over a four-month period expertly guided a group of young adults full of eager design ideas. Lindy and the Apprentice Design Committee created a model, tested samples and selected key design features of the shop. Among these are the iconic "Come As You Are" neon sign, the terracotta barfront tile, butcher block countertops, and the built-in benches with serape-inspired pillows at the perfect lumbar-support height.

We are incredibly thankful for all the people who donated time, resources, and energy so that this shop could come to life. In particular, we want to acknowledge the generosity of MAINSPRING, a real estate and business development firm that devoted countless hours and resources to helping us open this shop debt-free. As well, to all who donated to the Expansion Campaign and general operating support over the past two years. A special thanks to: Angela Garcia, Globeville activist and ambassador, and member of Prodigy's Board of Directors. And big shoutouts to: Jeffrey Knot for lending coffee expertise, Sprung Construction, Semple Brown Design, HouseFish custom furniture, Deb Pierce, Marissa Miscelli and the entire Prodigy team.

We hope you'll come visit us soon and experience this very special place. We will be here ready to welcome you. Come as you are.

HOW AN APPRENTICE SPENDS HER DAY OFF

*My Sunday Routine: Halla Villalobos, Apprentice Shift Lead
Written By Summer Davis*

Halla is a 22 year-old Xicana woman from the Barnum neighborhood, film maker, part time barista apprentice, full time student. She found out about Prodigy through her aunt, who was a follower of Prodigy and suggested Halla apply via Instagram. She did the Pre-Apprenticeship training in 2022 and got hired. Her experience at Prodigy has been transformative, the biggest factor to her success over this last year. “I was in a really difficult place when I found Prodigy and was really needing to rebuild my own life, stability, resources and connections. I have worked my way up to Shift Lead and I am seeing the biggest successes I ever have in my life.”

We wanted to get behind the scenes a bit on Halla’s life, so we asked her to share her Sunday (or day-off) Routine.

Part Time + Full Time = Over Time

“The time that I have off is very sacred to me, I really try to set up my week so I don’t have any work or homework at least one day a week. That one day ends up being a backup if I don’t get all my homework done, or I have extra work that needs to get done. So I don’t have a lot of routines on my day off because I have so many routines throughout the week.”

Ease Into The Morning

On Halla’s day off she relaxes in bed and eases into the morning. It’s the one day she gets to. Her mornings start when her and her partner, Lalo, wake up, usually to her cats at the door begging for food and affection. “Sometimes we let them cry and sometimes we shoo them off to relax longer.” Occasionally they let them in and they crawl into bed and cuddle. The cats are so loving and affectionate, it’s a really beautiful time they all spend together.

- 1. Wake up to the cats calling.**
- 2. Relax in bed with Lalo.**
- 3. Get Breakfast.** *A run to the local Santiago’s is her go-to spot. Top choice is a burrito with chicken, rice, guac, hot green chile. OR Indian tacos.*
- 4. Recharge and take time to herself:** *“It’s my time to enjoy the house I pay too much money for, and my cats.”*
- 5. Catch up on homework...***if she has to*

It’s About Movie Time

Halla and Lalo spend their days off together. “My partner and I both like to relax, it’s something we enjoy doing together.” They go to Alamo DraftHouse, where they see a movie, and order some munchies. But the movies don’t stop there.

Evening Time is Coming.

- 1. Order Food.** *[It’s a] “very food forward day!”*
- 2. Shower While Waiting.**
- 3. Dance Around.** *“Not that we’re good at dancing but we like to.”*
- 4. Movie or TV Show with Dinner.** *The Walking Dead is their show of choice right now.*

Talk and Reflect

- 1. Talk and reflect.** *“We talk about how grateful we are for each other, reflect on how far we’ve come, show each other appreciation and love.”*
- 2. Milk and cookies**
- 3. Play with the cats.**
- 4. Chase the cats out of the room.**
- 5. Put a movie on the laptop so the can lay in bed and watch**
- 6. Fall asleep**

On the Horizon for Halla

“I am going to work on self care and building myself up further. I want to have continued success in work and school. Going to be taking the steps to fine tune my happiness and fulfillment. That looks like balance across family, work and school. It looks to me like doing things for myself...and succeeding because I want to, not because I’m expected to. Fulfillment looks like accepting love from the people and my pets that care about me and love me.”

◀ *Halla Villalobos,*
Apprentice Shift Lead



REFLECTIONS ABOUT PRODIGY

“At first Prodigy just seemed like an opportunity to make money and stay occupied, but as cheesy as it sounds, since the first day of the cohort I realized that this is my opportunity to find myself again and to gain my independence back. I met all of the wonderful people I work with today who, without knowing it, helped me grow so much as a person these past 6 months. I’m grateful for Prodigy for being a place I can grow without judgment and a place where everyone is accepted. We’ve built a very tight knit community here, which makes the energy of our shop something you won’t find at just any regular coffee shop. Everyone here shines in their own wonderful way and each day I work, their light brightens my day.”

-Elsa

“Since the beginning of my Prodigy journey, I’ve felt a sense of community with not only my own cohort, but everyone that I’ve met including past apprentices, regular customers, and the leadership team. I was taught to show spiritual hospitality to my team and everyone I encounter because you never know what’s going on in someone’s life. I learned to be my authentic self and I’ve made the most genuine friends that care for me and make me feel included. I feel like my voice is heard and listened to because of the many ideas I have. I hope everyone finds a place like Prodigy to feel at home and welcomed.”

-Melii

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