



AUGUST APPRECIATION

You are the key to our impact!

August is here, and with it comes our beloved tradition of August Appreciation - a time to pause and reflect on the immeasurable impact you've had on the lives of so many. You are absolutely key to our partners' success. Without your steadfast support, we wouldn't be able to empower communities through education, healthcare, job creation, and entrepreneurship. Your generosity fuels the work our partners do, and for that, we are profoundly grateful.

It's because of you that we can invest in transformative programs that uplift individuals and families in Zambia, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Chicago. I just returned from Zambia where yet again I was reminded that calling the programs we support "life-changing" is really not an understatement. By investing in communities around the globe, you are helping provide better futures by giving individuals the resources they need to achieve their potential.

As we reflect on the impact we've made together, we're reminded that every step forward, taken hand-in-hand with our partners, is in large part thanks to your ongoing commitment. Your belief in our mission is what enables us to continue empowering communities and transforming lives. We are deeply grateful for your support and look forward to the continued impact we will create together in the months and years ahead.

With deep gratitude,

Kristin

Kristin Schrepferman
Executive Director, Spark Ventures



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HIGHLIGHTS FROM ZAMBIA JULY 2025

A Journey of Wonder & Connection (plus singing, dancing, ice cream and Hungry Lion...)

This July, Spark Ventures led a group of 19 passionate supporters on yet another unforgettable Impact Trip to Zambia, deepening our partnership with Hope Community School. Travelers spent a week immersed in the Hope community - visiting classrooms, touring the school farm, and experiencing the magic of Victoria Falls and a safari in Botswana's Chobe National Park.

Before the main trip, a group of educators participated in a Teacher-to-Teacher "Pre-Trip," designed for professional exchange and collaboration. These teachers shadowed their Zambian peers, co-taught lessons, and shared classroom strategies—building bonds that bridged continents. The week concluded with a joyful "glows and grows" reflection over a celebratory lunch of Hungry Lion fried chicken in Hope's library.



The trip's central theme, "Wonder," inspired classroom activities rooted in the popular book by R.J. Palacio. Educators and travelers alike led creative lessons that sparked imagination and emphasized kindness, identity, and literacy - from crafting personal "superpower" stories with younger students to online quizzes and spirited discussions with secondary students. In science lessons, learners explored the microscopic world using Foldscopes - sturdy paper microscopes - brought from the US, while math instruction came to life with hands-on manipulatives.

Beyond the classroom, deep friendships were formed, laughter was abundant, and growth was evident on both sides of the exchange. From painting chalkboards and sharing soft serve at the local mall, every moment added to the rich tapestry of the journey. As one traveler shared, "Hope School is a magical place. The community's resilience and joy are contagious - and every time I return, I'm reminded of the power of connection."

YOU SUPPORTED HER; NOW MEET HER IN PERSON

Our campaign supporting the Women Entrepreneurs Program in Mexico was a great success

We are thrilled to share that our recent fundraising campaign to support the Women Entrepreneurs Program at Entreamigos was a resounding success! Thanks to our incredible supporters and a matching gift from a generous donor, we raised \$10,000, helping to empower women in San Pancho, Mexico, and transform their lives through skill-building, entrepreneurship classes, and therapy sessions. Your contributions are not only directly fueling their economic independence, but also fostering lasting change within the broader community.

By supporting this initiative, you've given these women the resources they need to thrive in their businesses, strengthening their confidence and skills in the process. They are creating a ripple effect of change in their community. And, we are incredibly grateful for your role in making this happen!

Coming up in February 2026, you have an exciting opportunity to see the incredible work of the Women Entrepreneurs Program firsthand! Join us for our next Mexico Impact Travel Experience to explore the vibrant community of San Pancho, meet the inspiring women whose lives are being transformed, and learn how your support is making a real difference. This trip will provide ample opportunity for deep engagement with our partner Entreamigos, where you'll witness the power of sustainable partnerships and the lasting impact of Spark Ventures' work.

We would love for you to join us on this impactful journey. In addition to spending time with the Women Entrepreneurs, you'll get a tortilla making lesson, enjoy a few cool drinks on a beautiful beach, shop at the Entreamigos gallery, and more! Learn more, and register at sparkventures.org/travel.



RIBBON CUTTING AND MORE

Celebrating impactful new programming at We Grow Chicago

Spark Ventures' funding for We Grow Chicago has grown to support their "Englewood Strong" program - an initiative that allows Englewood residents to identify and break down barriers to success. The program targets interconnected challenges to stability ranging from transportation hurdles to housing insecurity to food insecurity and more. Here are some exciting updates:



Healing House Ribbon Cutting

On May 15th, after nearly two years of planning, fundraising, and vision, our incredible partner We Grow Chicago officially opened the doors to the Healing House - the newest addition to the Peace Campus in West Englewood. The Healing House stands as a powerful symbol of restoration, offering the Greater Englewood community access to mental health support, wellness programs, and healing-centered engagement in a safe and welcoming space. What was once an abandoned bungalow is now a safe space for community healing.



Grainger Day Provides Specialized STEM Programming

On July 15th, more than 30 students from We Grow Chicago's Kids on the Move Summer Camp took part in an inspiring, hands-on STEM themed program at "Grainger Day" via the Grainger Corporation. This engaging educational workshop provided an opportunity for the students to visit Grainger's Chicago office, explore career opportunities, and garner a passion for reading. Grainger also donated \$1000 to the Kids on the Move Summer Camp program to cover transportation and any additional expenses. Special thanks to Spark Board Member Tumsheen Qureshi for facilitating the connection to Grainger and opening the door for these students to have access to this eye-opening program.

Do you have our Fall Gala on your calendar yet?

Save the date: **Thursday, October 16, 2025** | *More details coming soon.*

sparkventures

208 S. LaSalle St., #1670, Chicago IL 60604 | 773.293.6710

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