

# sparkventures

## FOUNDERS REPORT

Fall 2018



## WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER

A Note from Kristin Schrepferman, Spark Ventures Managing Director

When I was in Zambia this past July, I was inspired by the community effort going in to the Hope Vegetable Farm - the newest project undertaken by our partners there. Everyone from students, to teachers, to parents were lending a hand to clear the land and plant the crops. There was an incredible sense of community pride in the endeavor. There was also an eager enthusiasm for the potential rooted in this new land - the potential for farm profits to support the school, for fresh vegetables to supplement the meal program, for employment opportunities for the community, for the students to learn valuable agriculture skills, and for Spark travelers to visit and experience this powerful project first-hand.

I felt some of this same enthusiasm and community pride all the way around the world, here in Chicago just this past month at our annual Fall Gala. The Spark Ventures community of supporters are a committed bunch - rightfully proud of what we have accomplished this past decade, and eagerly looking forward towards new opportunities to support our partner organizations.

I hope you enjoy reviewing some of our successes from the past quarter highlighted here. We are so grateful for your trust and commitment to support our partners around the globe.

### INSIDE THIS EDITION...

#### LPP Joins Founders Circle

*Honoring our partners at Lincoln Park  
Preschool & Kindergarten*

#### Fall Gala Success

*Our largest event of the year surpasses  
fundraising goals*

#### Zambia Vegetable Farm

*Cabbages, community collaboration and an  
investment in the future...*

AND MORE...



# LPP JOINS FOUNDERS CIRCLE

*The Founders Circle was established by Spark Ventures in 2015 to recognize & honor outstanding contributions to the growth and development of our partner organizations.*



Spark Ventures couldn't have been more fortunate to be introduced to Sharon Kozek, founder and director of Lincoln Park Preschool and Kindergarten (LPP) in the fall of 2016. Just a few months after the introduction, Sharon and 3 of her staff members took a leap and joined a trip to Zambia where they helped launch an early education program at Hope Community School.

LPP's commitment to a long-term partnership with Hope includes not only financial support for the facilities, operations and teacher salaries at the preschool, but also a commitment to send teachers from Chicago twice a year to contribute to, learn from and collaborate with their Zambian counterparts - an incredible example of the Spark Ventures partnership model. Most recently, to encourage and promote the powerful impact of reading, the LPP team has championed the construction and opening of the Hope Community School Library, which is sure to become the heartbeat of the campus.

In two short but action-packed years, the LPP community has surpassed significant milestones in their financial and programmatic support of Spark Ventures and we are honored to have them join our Founders Circle.







## STUNNING PROGRESS AT THE HOPE FARM

It's hard to believe that at the beginning of this year, the Twapia farmland purchased by our **Zambian** partners was pure bush - difficult to access unless you had a machete to cut your way through the thickets. Now, 5 acres have been cleared and tamed into precise rows of vegetables (the farm has 25 acres in total, so there's still plenty of work to be done).

The work to tame this initial swath of land into the beginnings of a productive farm has been an incredible community effort. Students, parents, families, and teachers from Hope have all worked together to remove the bushes and vines and to plant the crops. The first pilot crops have been very successful and are already being used to help supplement the meal program at Hope Community School.

As the farm grows, the vegetables will generate revenue for the school and provide employment opportunities for the people of Twapia. Already, many of the Hope students are gaining hands-on agriculture skills!

Spark Ventures travelers have also spent time at the farm, assisting with planting crops from cabbages to banana trees! If you'd like to see the farm first-hand, you can join our upcoming **Zambia** trip in January 2019 - more details at [sparkventures.org/travel](http://sparkventures.org/travel).



# FALL GALA SUCCESS

Our 2018 Fall Gala was one of our most successful events to date. With nearly 200 supporters gathered at the stunning Ivy Room in Chicago, together we raised over \$150,000 in support of our work. Special guests from Zambia - Malawo and Charles Mumba provided a first hand account of our joint impact. Recent travelers, Michael Campbell and Avery Hellweg, shared personal perspectives. Special thanks to our event chairs Jennifer Kim and Lisa Madonia, along with the rest of the event committee and Spark's Board of Directors for making this event possible.



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