

ANNUAL REPORT



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Letter from the Board Chair



Gloria Tison

Dear Friends,

As I reflect on another successful year of our CEO Program, I am filled with gratitude and pride for the impact this program continues to have on the lives of our students. Each year, we witness remarkable growth in the young entrepreneurs who participate, and this year was no exception.

One of the most inspiring aspects of this year's class was the determination many students showed in launching their businesses well before the annual Trade Show. Rather than waiting until the final stages of the program, several students went the extra mile to get their products into the marketplace early. They marketed their products on social media, to their school classmates, at the investor breakfast, and at a Harrisburg elementary school in-service day. Their willingness to take risks, learn from challenges, and put in the extra work embodies the true entrepreneurial spirit that CEO strives to cultivate.

It was exciting to watch these young business owners turn ideas into reality and gain confidence through real-world experience. We also continue to see students carrying their businesses forward after completing the CEO Program. Whether operating on a part-time basis while attending school, entering the workforce, or pursuing entrepreneurship full-time, these students are applying the skills, relationships, and confidence they gained through CEO to build successful futures. This continued commitment to their ventures is a powerful testament to the lasting impact the program has on their lives and the value of experiential learning. None of these successes would be possible without the support of our investors, mentors, and speakers.

To every investor who has generously contributed to the program, thank you for believing in our students and in the mission of CEO. To every mentor who has offered guidance, encouragement, and wisdom, thank you for investing your time and expertise. To every speaker who has shared your journey and inspired our students to dream bigger, thank you.

Your contributions extend far beyond the classroom. Quite simply, you change lives. We are excited to announce that our 2026-2027 class will be the biggest class to date. More students require more resources. As a result, we are trying to grow support for the program through our Friends of CEO initiative. This program was created to give individuals and businesses an opportunity to support CEO at a level that works for them, even if they are unable to make the traditional \$1,000 investor commitment. Gifts of any amount can make a meaningful difference in the lives of our students. Donations can be made through the SICF website and may be set up as recurring monthly contributions, making it easy for more people to participate in the success of our program. On behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you for your continued belief in the CEO Program and in the potential of our students. Because of your support, young people are discovering their talents, developing entrepreneurial skills, building businesses, and gaining experiences that will serve them throughout their lives. We are grateful for your partnership and look forward to another year of empowering the next generation of leaders and entrepreneurs.

Gloria Tison

Board Chair, Saline County CEO

Letter from the Facilitator

TINA NORMAN



As another Saline County CEO year comes to a close, I am filled with gratitude. This year marks the end of my **fifth year** as Facilitator, and I find myself reflecting on what an incredible privilege it has been to walk alongside five outstanding classes of young entrepreneurs. Watching students grow in confidence, discover their potential, and develop the courage to pursue their dreams has been one of the greatest joys of my career. Each class has left a lasting impact on me, and I am continually reminded that the future of Saline County is incredibly bright. To our investors, mentors, board members, business partners, volunteers, and families—thank you. Your generosity, encouragement, and belief in our students make this program possible. The time, wisdom, and resources you invest today will impact our community for years to come.

To our students, thank you for embracing every challenge with determination and an open mind. Your creativity, resilience, and willingness to grow inspire all of us. It has been an honor to witness your journeys, celebrate your successes, and watch you become leaders who will make a difference wherever life takes you.

As I close this fifth year, I am more convinced than ever that Saline County CEO is changing lives. Together, we are building stronger leaders, stronger businesses, and a stronger Saline County. Thank you for believing in this mission, for investing in our students, and for allowing me the privilege of serving as your Facilitator.

With sincere gratitude,

Tina Norman

Facilitator, Saline County CEO

87.5%

Participants wanting to stay in the community after CEO

69%

Participants believe that their community invests in them and their potential

Investors

Powering the Next Generation

Our Program Investors provide support to our community driven program. An annual investment of \$1,000 provides the necessary resources for current-year facilitator salary and operating expenses, and ensures the sustainability of the Saline County CEO class for future students. Investors also contribute their time to the program. Hosting host business visits, provide guest speakers and serve as mentors. All crucial to the success of Saline County CEO.



- **Align Wealth Management/Michael Tison**
- **All in One Real Estate**
- **Banterra Bank**
- **Beck's Drugs**
- **City of Eldorado**
- **City of Harrisburg**
- **D&D Electric**
- **Farmers State Bank**
- **Ferrell Hospital Community Foundation**
- **Fowler for Senate**
- **Galatia Community Schools**
- **Harrisburg Community Schools**
- **Harrisburg Rotary Club #3318**
- **Kemper CPA**
- **Legence Bank**
- **Little Tractor & Equipment**
- **Medicine Shoppe**
- **Michael Stewart & Associates Financial**
- **Murphy's Do-It Center**
- **Nancy Braddock State Farm**
- **Peoples National Bank**
- **Saline County Chamber**
- **Saline County Industrial Development**
- **SIH**
- **SIU Credit Union**
- **Tate's Blue Flame**
- **WLC Management Firm**

Investor Testimonial

Investing in the CEO program has been one of the most rewarding ways we can support the future of our community. Watching the students develop confidence, leadership skills and an entrepreneurial mindset while working alongside local business leaders is truly inspiring. The program has equipped students to real- world experience that extends far beyond classroom work, preparing them for the next chapter in life as business owners and community leaders. We are proud and thankful to invest in a program that is making an everlasting impact on our students and community.

Jessica Stephens

Financial Advisor

Michael Stewart & Associates Financial Services

BOARD MEMBERS



Gloria Tison

Board Chair
Legence Bank & Kotner Title
EVP/ General Counsel



Ayn Bartok

Board Member
All in One Real Estate Company
Owner/Entrepreneur



Dale Fowler

Board Member
President
University Correctional Healthcare
Solutions



Natalie Fry

Board Member
Harrisburg Community Schools
Curriculum Coordinator



Tina Gibbs

Board Member
Ameren Illinois
Manager,
Community Relations



Jessica Grinnell

Board Secretary
Legence Bank
AVP Marketing & Communication



Angie Hampton

Board Member
Egyptian Health Department
Chief Executive Officer



Eric Witges

Board Member
FSB Insurance Agency
Chief Executive Officer



Luke O'Neal

Board Member
Banterra Bank
SR. Loan Officer,
Residential Lending



Martin Rowe

Board Treasurer
First Eldorado Bancshares, Inc.
Chief Executive Officer



Scott Stout

Board Member
WLC Management Firm, LLC
Chief Executive Officer



Ben Vinyard

Board Member
Carrier-Mills Stonefort CUSD#2
Assistant Principal



Alex Watkins

Board Member
SI Accounting
Accountant



Cody Cusic

Board Member
Eldorado Schools
Superintendent



@salinecountyceo
Email facilitator@salinecountyceo.com
for more information

Mentors

Guiding the Next Generation

A mentor is a business owner, entrepreneur, or intrapreneur from the Saline County business community who plays a vital role in shaping the next generation of leaders. By sharing their time, expertise, and real-world experiences, mentors provide invaluable guidance, encouragement, and insights that help CEO students develop confidence, critical thinking skills, and an entrepreneurial mindset.



TW NORMAN

Little Chapel Church

Mentoring: Abel Henson

OLIVIA BRADLEY

Legence Bank

Mentoring: Adi Lane

KELLY RAMSEY

Align Wealth Management

Mentoring: Anzley Butler

BETH HARRAWOOD

SIH

Mentoring: Kylee Bridewell

AARON PHELPS

Country Financial

Mentoring: Titus Norman

DANA HULL

Banterra Bank

Mentoring: Lucy Mortag

HOLLY KOTNER

Egyptian Health Dept

Mentoring: Nevaeh

McDonald

CHRISTINE HANKINS

Farmers State Bank

Mentoring: Koral Hathaway

LESLIE JONES

D&D Electric

Mentoring: Addie Currin

JESSICA STEPHENS

Michael Stewart &

Associates

Mentoring: Mackenzie

Reeves



Mentor Testimonial

As a mentor for the Saline County CEO Program, I've had the opportunity to work with outstanding students, and I believe it's one of the best programs available to high school students in our community.

The program builds confidence, develops communication and leadership skills, and connects students with local business owners and community leaders. It also gives them valuable hands-on experience by starting and managing their own businesses while learning real-world financial and entrepreneurial skills.

I've seen the program's impact firsthand. Farmers State Bank and our insurance agency have hired three CEO graduates who are now successful full-time employees. Without this program, we may never have met these talented individuals.

The Saline County CEO Program prepares students for success while strengthening our local workforce and community. I highly recommend it to any student looking to invest in their future.

Christine Hankins
Farmers State Bank

Little Royals Ball

Where Learning Meets Doing



The Little Royals Ball was a magical community event created by the Saline County CEO team for elementary-aged boys and girls. Families enjoyed an afternoon filled with dancing, hands-on crafts, delicious treats, and unforgettable memories in a fun, welcoming atmosphere. The event was made possible through the generous support of numerous community sponsors, whose partnerships helped create a high-quality experience for every child who attended.

Beyond bringing joy to local families, the Little Royals Ball was also a strong entrepreneurial success. Revenue generated through ticket sales and business sponsorships resulted in a profitable event, demonstrating the CEO team's ability to plan, market, and execute a successful community-focused business venture while building meaningful relationships with local businesses.



Business Visits

Beyond the Classroom: Learning from Real Businesses

A key part of the CEO experience is visiting local businesses in Saline County. Every day, people pass these businesses without realizing their impact on the local economy. Through these visits, students gain a new perspective—walking away with a deeper appreciation and never seeing these businesses the same way again.

STEWART CHIROPRACTIC

LITTLE TRACTOR & EQUIP

WALMART

BECKS DRUGS

STEPHANIE SUSIE

WOODSY EARTH

CITY HALL

DAPPER DOGS

COURTHOUSE

MANCAVE

D & D ELECTRIC

FSB INSURANCE

KADE'S STREET

FIRE STATION

MICHAEL STEWART

LUXE HAVEN

SOUTHERN TRUSS

JIM HAYES

VILLAGE PIZZA

DR. OLDHAM

SBDC

BIGGS & MOORE

TEAL VETERINARY

FARMERS STATE BANK

IHUB

LEO'S FITNESS

RABEN FARMS

AIR-EVAC

DAIRY QUEEN

MICHAEL TISON FINANCIAL

THE NEST

MURPHY'S RENTAL CENTER

ILLINOIS STATE CAPITOL

PEPSI MID-AMERICA

CHIK-FIL-A

ETHOS

DOWNTOWN DIP

CROWN BREW

VINE STREET VENUE

JMAG

SIC



Business Testimonial

At Little Tractor & Equipment Company, we are honored to welcome the Saline County CEO class each year. We believe today's students are tomorrow's leaders, innovators, and business owners, and investing in their future is one of the most rewarding things we can do. By sharing our story, our passion for agriculture, and our commitment to serving our local communities, we hope to inspire these young entrepreneurs to dream big, work hard, and make a lasting impact wherever their journey takes them. We are proud to play a small part in helping cultivate the next generation of leaders.

Lindsey Teas

Little Tractor & Equipment Co.
Marketing & Outreach Coordinator

Guest Speakers

Wisdom from Those Who've Been There

CEO participants gain a unique experience as guest speakers serve as instructors for the program. Community leaders share their life stories, entrepreneurial journeys, and valuable lessons on a variety of business topics.

TW NORMAN

MIKE PHALIN

JERRY KING

TRICIA OVERTURF

KAILYN CASH

AUSTIN LEWIS

BRANDON BISHOP

DR. JACK SMOTHERS

CHRIS EGELSTON

AYN BARTOK

NOAH TURNER

SANTA CLAUS

KYLE HAMMERS

DR. AMY DIXON

KENDRA MITCHELL

BRAD MCCORMICK

ROB LANDES

BRYAN QUESTELLE

RUSS WILLIAMS

JENNIFER VINYARD

MELISSA KINNARD

VIVI AND ROSIE MINGS



GUEST SPEAKERS

Guest Speaker Testimonial

As a past speaker of the Saline County CEO class, I had the opportunity to share lessons learned from my professional life with a group of young people who were eager to learn. My experience is that the students in class were very attentive, took notes, asked great questions, and spoke confidently when asked questions.

From my experience, Tina (the facilitator), holds a high standard for her class, and I believe the students rise to the occasion. Lastly, this class is one that builds not only curriculum but also community. Interactions between student(s) and facilitator are strong. You can tell that they really enjoy being around each other, and the students respect the facilitator as a leader worth following.

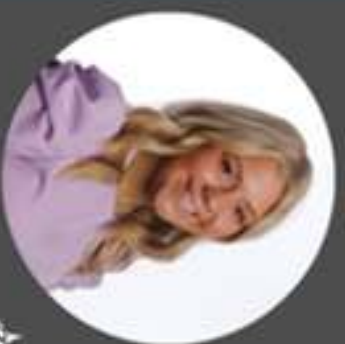
Kyle Hammers

Little Chapel Church

ANNUAL REPORT



Lucy Mortag is the founder of Just a Girl Boutique, a brand focused on helping people express their unique style with confidence. Just a Girl Boutique offers a variety of trendy products, including crewnecks, trucker hats, and accessories designed to fit every personality. Instagram: [justagirlylucy](#) Facebook: Just a Girl Boutique
Mentored by Dana Hull



Abel Henson is the founder of Reforged Clothing. Reforged Clothing provides simple yet bold Christian clothing. Their mission is to provide Faith based clothes for anyone. "...every saint has a past, and every sinner has a future." - Oscar Wilde. For more information, contact Abel on Instagram ([reforged_clothing2608](#)) or Facebook (Reforged Clothing).
Mentored by TW Norman.



Titus Norman is the owner and founder of Fiddles and Fidgets, a business dedicated to supporting children's focus, engagement, and well-being. With a passion for helping young individuals thrive, Titus specializes in both selling and custom-creating high-quality fidget tools tailored to meet individual needs.
Mentored by Aaron Phelps.



Addie Curriu is the founder of The Sip Shoppe, a specialty drink business focused on creating fun, customizable beverages for every taste. Offering a variety of dirty sodas, Italian sodas, and flavored teas and lemonades, the shop allows customers to mix flavors and craft a drink that's uniquely their own.
Mentored by Leslie Jones.



Koral Hathaway is the founder of Here Comes The Sun Boutique. Here Comes The Sun Boutique offers trendy clothing, air fresheners, jewelry, and hair tinsel designed to help you feel confident and stand out. For more information, contact Koral on Facebook through Here Comes The Sun Boutique.
Mentored by Christine Hankins.



CLASS OF 2026



Nevaeh McDonald is the founder of The Grey Area Project. The Grey Area Project offers mental health coloring books for adults and children. For more information contact Nevaeh McDonald on Instagram and Facebook through The Grey Area Project.

Mentored by Holly Kotner.



Go
GOLD & GRACE

Kylee Bridewell is the founder of Gold and Grace. Gold and Grace offers high-quality, gold-plated jewelry that blends modern trends with timeless elegance. The goal is to create pieces that customers love and can wear with confidence, offering a touch of affordable luxury for any occasion. For more information contact Kylee on Instagram (@gold.and.grace) or Facebook (@Gold and Grace).

Mentored by Beth Harrawood.



Adi Lane is the founder of EcoEnergy Co. Adi's business is a health-focused beverage and snack company that offers natural energy drinks and nutritious energy snacks. Our mission is to provide clean, safe, and sustainable energy options for people who want to feel energized without harmful ingredients.

Mentored by Olivia Bradley.



Kenz Killer Welds is a small welding business based in Southern Illinois and owned by Mackenzie Reeves. The business specializes in durable, handcrafted metal art and decorative pieces made with skill and creativity. Each item is carefully welded to create unique designs that add character to homes, shops, and outdoor spaces.

Mentored by Jessica Stephens.



Anzley Butler is the founder of EverGlow. EverGlow offers hand-poured candles and wax melts in Saline County, featuring a variety of cozy scents. EverGlow aims to create products that bring warmth and a relaxing atmosphere to any space, whether at home or as a gift. For more information, contact Anzley on Instagram (@everglow.ab) or on Facebook (Ever Glow).

Mentored by Kelly Ramsey.



Alumni SPOTLIGHT

A member of Eldorado High School and the Saline County CEO Program's class of 2017, Mattie went on to study marketing at Southeastern Illinois College and University of Southern Indiana. While in CEO, Mattie founded **A Wildflower Affair**, a silk floral business that had much success even after her time in the program until she moved to Evansville for school.



Mattie Hudnell

After graduating with her Bachelors in 2019, she started her career with four years of in-house digital marketing efforts at Midwestern Pet Foods in Evansville, Indiana. After falling in love with influencer marketing early on in her tenure at MPF, Mattie switched to the agency side and is now part of Later Influence's Client Services team as an Enterprise Influencer Account Manager, facilitating end-to-end influencer campaigns for a variety of well-known brands such as Cinemark, P&G, Trident Gum, Mohawk Flooring, and more.

THE IMPACT OF CEO

Joining the CEO Program is easily the best decision I made in high school. Not only did it help me build meaningful connections to grow my business, but it also gave me lasting connections that have far outlasted my time in the program. In the 10 years after graduating from CEO I've had the opportunity to work for my CEO Mentor, Jerilyn Joyner, at Craze Concepts to work on my floral skills for my own business; present CEO on a national level with a fellow White County CEO student on behalf of SIC; intern for the marketing team at Legence Bank; serve as the youngest CEO board member for a period of time after graduating college; and even reconnected with Jonathan Russell during the purchase of our new home when we moved back to Saline County earlier this year. I'm thrilled to be able to return as a mentor this school year and continue to pour into a program that poured so much into me as a young person and shaped so much of who I am today.

Transform Our Community **Get Involved**

ceu[®] SALINE
COUNTY



GUEST SPEAKER

Come join class as a guest speaker, this is such a critical part of CEO. We love for speakers to tell us stories about how their business started, personal philosophies about work and success, life topics or specific business topics. Guest speakers are really the true teachers in CEO.



BUSINESS VISIT

Students look forward to visiting the many different businesses that create our community. Consider inviting the class to tour and learn more about your business. Contact facilitator@salinecounty.com to learn more.



MENTOR

Become a mentor if you are ready to experience CEO right along with the students. Being a mentor is a rewarding way to get involved.



INVESTOR

CEO is free for students and schools. The program relies on local investors to support this transformative learning experience. By helping us connect our young people with local businesses and area leaders, you can make a direct impact on the workforce and leaders of tomorrow.



BOARD MEMBER

Becoming a board member for CEO offers a rewarding opportunity to shape the future of aspiring entrepreneurs. Serving on the board allows you to contribute to the growth of the next generation of innovators and make a lasting impact on our community.



WE NEED COMMUNITY-MINDED INDIVIDUALS LIKE YOU.

CEO is free for students and schools. The program relies on local investors to support this transformative learning experience.



INVEST IN TOMORROW, TODAY.

By helping us connect our young people with local businesses and area leaders, you are making a direct impact on the workforce and leaders of tomorrow.

AS AN INVESTOR, YOU RECEIVE:

- Name/Logo Recognition on CEO Website
- Social Media Acknowledgement
- First Rights to host/visit the class



"The CEO experience has been life changing for me. I learned a lot of skills I wouldn't have been able to gather otherwise and I feel more prepared for my future. CEO opened up more doors for me than any other opportunity ever has."



"CEO is so much more than how to run a business. It is teaching students the life skills and all of the things that go into being successful in any career path you choose. It exposes all of our students to what endless opportunities are right here in our backyard."



"In 20+ years in economic development, the chamber of commerce and the economic development corporation, CEO has been the most beneficial most gratifying program I have been involved with."

DISCOVER HOW TO TRANSFORM OUR COMMUNITY THROUGH CEO®

The CEO (Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities) Program gives young people hands on business experience and transforms them into entrepreneurial thinkers who are invested in our community.



ABOUT THE CEO PROGRAM

CEO is unlike any other class. It is a program for high school juniors and seniors that teaches them about business. But even more, it teaches them about life.

Kids think that opportunity exists everywhere but in their hometowns. The CEO Program shows them that there are thriving businesses, opportunities for growth, and people who want to support them right here in their community - all they have to do is look.

76%

Of participants report that they plan to return or are open to returning to their community down the road.

63%

Report that they can see themselves working for a business they encountered during CEO.



CEO IMMERSES STUDENTS IN THE COMMUNITY.

CEO is never held in a classroom. Instead, participants spend each day, five days a week, in area businesses, absorbing essential skills from local business owners and community leaders.



CEO INSTILLS AN ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSET.

Each student is guided through the creation of two real businesses, with the support of a local mentor. These aren't classroom exercises - they are real products, real services being exchanged for real money.



CEO INSPIRES THE NEXT GENERATION.

It shows young people the opportunities that exist to them and challenges them to own their work, innovate creative solutions, and think big - because they have the support of the community behind them.