



2025 ANNUAL **REPORT**

creating entrepreneurial opportunities



LETTER FROM THE **BOARD CHAIR**



GLORIA TISON

Board Chair

Dear Friends,

“None of us is as strong as all of us” is a saying that perfectly captures the spirit of the Saline County CEO Program. The success of this unique class depends entirely on the collective strength and support of our community. I am deeply grateful that Saline County continues to recognize the value of investing in our young entrepreneurs and leaders.

CEO is not your typical high school class. It’s a hands-on, real-world experience that prepares students with the skills they need to succeed after graduation—while introducing them to the incredible opportunities available right here in our own backyard. And none of this would be possible without you—our investors, mentors, class speakers, business owners, and board members.

Throughout the year, students are supported by our incredible facilitator, Tina Norman, guided by dedicated mentors, and inspired by guest speakers who generously share their knowledge, experiences, and encouragement. Our local businesses welcome students in, offering not only a behind-the-scenes look at how things work, but also a glimpse into what’s possible. Because CEO is entirely privately funded, our investors are the heart of what we do. Whether you’ve been with us since the beginning or joined recently—thank you. Your support goes far beyond funding. You invest your time, your wisdom, and your belief in these students. Each student is at a defining moment in their life. That’s what makes this program so powerful. This year’s post-impact survey results highlight the transformation:

- **88.9% of students said the program exposed them to potential careers.**
- **44.4% said it helped them narrow down their career path.**
- **67% became a customer of a business they learned about through CEO.**
- **56% referred a parent or friend to one of those businesses.**
- **89% reported gaining a new perspective on the value of local businesses.**
- **Students identified confidence and communication skills as two of the most important ways the program impacted them.**
- **They also found the class business and the teamwork experience to be especially valuable.**

That’s the power of connection—students see firsthand how much their community has to offer, and the community in turn sees the bright future ahead through them.

The reason I continue to invest in CEO is because I witness its impact year after year. I love learning about each student and watching them grow in ways that will shape their future success. Having been part of this program since its beginning, I can confidently say it is transformational. It doesn’t just change the lives of the students—it transforms everyone who chooses to support them, sparking new hope and inspiration in all of us.

Thank you to everyone who makes the Saline County CEO Program possible. By giving your time, sharing your knowledge, and contributing financially, you are part of a team that is shaping the leaders and changemakers of tomorrow.





LETTER FROM THE **FACILITATOR**



TINA NORMAN

Facilitator

Dear CEO Supporters, Partners, and Community Members,

As I reflect on my fourth year of the CEO program, I'm filled with immense pride and gratitude for the journey we've taken together. What an incredible year it has been — a year marked by growth, innovation, and deeper connection within our Saline County community.

Each year brings its own unique energy, and this year we saw a powerful shift: a stronger community mindset emerging among our students. They not only built individual businesses, but also supported one another in ways that truly embody the entrepreneurial spirit — collaborative, resilient, and forward-thinking. One of the most exciting developments this year was the launch of a brand new class business venture: "The Little Princess Ball," a Daddy-Daughter dance that captured hearts and sold out completely. This event was not only a financial success but also a shining example of what happens when creativity meets purpose. Watching our students bring this idea to life — from concept to execution — was inspiring and I'm thankful to have had a front row seat.

I am deeply thankful to our investors, board of directors, community leaders, and of course, our program mentors, who continue to pour time, energy, and wisdom into this next generation of entrepreneurs. Your commitment to meeting with students monthly, guiding them through their personal business ventures, and encouraging individual growth is truly the heartbeat of this program. As I look ahead to year five, I am more excited than ever. This program continues to be a transformational opportunity — not just for our students, but for our entire community. CEO opens students' eyes to the opportunities that exist right here in Saline County. Often, what they seek is already in their backyard — they just need a lens to see it. CEO provides that lens.

Thank you for believing in the mission of CEO and for walking alongside us on this journey. Here's to an even more impactful and inspiring year ahead.

With gratitude,

Tina Norman
Program Facilitator



PROGRAM OVERVIEW



2024-2025 PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

Harrisburg High School
Galatia High School
New Hope Christian Academy



VISION

CEO nurtures entrepreneurial thinkers who possess an awareness of themselves and their communities.



MISSION

Being and developing life-long learners, owners, creators, communicators and connectors



CULTURE

Expecting the best of ourselves and others that reflects the spirit and accountability found in CEO.



PARTICIPATING
SCHOOLS

3



CURRENT
STUDENTS

9



TOTAL
ALUMNI

82



ACTIVE
INVESTORS

29



BOARD
MEMBERS

13



YEARS
ACTIVE

11



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 by hosting business visits, providing guest speakers and serving as mentors.



Beck's Drugs
Southeastern Illinois College
SIU Credit Union
Fowler for Senate
Harrisburg Community
Schools
Galatia Community Schools
Carrier Mills-Stonefort USD 2
Saline County Industrial
Development
Harrisburg Rotary Club #3318
Saline Care Nursing & Rehab
Carrier Mills Nursing & Rehab
Legence Bank
Saline County Chamber
Ferrell Hospital Community
Foundation
All in One Real Estate
Align Wealth
Management/Michael Tison
City of Harrisburg
Michael Stewart Financial

SIH
RMG LLC
Medicine Shoppe
Kemper CPA
Peoples National Bank
Nancy Braddock State Farm
Tate's Blue Flame
Murphy's Do-It Center
City of Eldorado
Farmers State Bank
Little Tractor & Equipment

FRIENDS OF CEO

Friends of CEO is comprised of a group who give in-kind or monetary donations totaling between \$500-\$999.

Oldham Boy Outdoor Advertising
Steam Cafe
Vine Street Venue
Nature's Nest

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.



BETH HARRAWOOD

SIH

Mentoring: Hannah Jones

HOLLY KOTNER

Egyptian Health Dept.

Mentoring: Taylor Michel

DR. BRENT JONES

SIH, D&D Electric

Mentoring: Myles Mattingly

DARLA MARTIN

D&D Electric

Mentoring: Isabel Rister

CAMDEN SCHIFF

Farmers State Bank

Mentoring: Wade
Romonosky

ANDY BIGGERSTAFF

*BIGG'S & MOORE HEATING
AND AIR*

Mentoring: Xavier Castros

CHRISTINE HANKINS

Farmers State Bank

Mentoring: Cheyenne Street

MELISSA KUHLMANN

JMAG, CMSF Schools

Mentoring: Laikyn Dooley

JESSICA STEPHENS

Michael Stewart & Associates

Mentoring: Kailyn Harbison



THE LITTLE PRINCESS BALL

WHERE LEARNING MEETS DOING



OPERATION

The Little Princess Ball was a heartwarming Daddy-Daughter dance event, designed to create lasting memories for families in the community. The event featured a lively atmosphere with a professional DJ spinning family-friendly tunes, ensuring a fun and energetic experience on the dance floor. Attendees were treated to a variety of sweet indulgences, with a food truck offering delicious meals and a sweet treat station for dessert. A special Letters to Santa station added a festive touch, allowing little ones to send their holiday wishes. To commemorate the night, guests received custom photo ornaments, capturing the magic of the evening. With attention to every detail, the event was a resounding success; fostering joy, connection, and a sense of community.



FINANCIALS

The class had a lofty goal of \$6,000 in net profit. We are excited to report that they exceeded the goal and made a profit of \$7,566.17



BUSINESS VISITS

BEYOND THE CLASSROOM: LEARNING FROM REAL BUSINESSES

A key part of the CEO experience is visiting local businesses in Saline County CEO. 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
GLAMOUR & GRACE
VINE STREET VENUE
HARRISBURG CITY HALL
BECK'S DRUGS
D&D ELECTRIC
DAIRY QUEEN
WOODSY EARTH
STEPHANIE SUSIE PHOTOGRAPHY
LITTLE TRACTOR & EQUIPMENT
FERRELL HOSPITAL
EHD IHUB
FSB INSURANCE
NATURE'S NEST
WKI
DAVID MORSE COUNTRY FINANCIAL
SOUTHERN TRUSS
KEMPER CPA
KADE'S STREET
SALINE COUNTY SHERIFF &
COURTHOUSE



BIGG'S & MOORE
HMC
LEO'S FITNESS
VILLAGE PIZZA & GRILL
FARMERS STATE BANK
MICHAEL STEWART & ASSOCIATES
DR. OLDHAM
AIR EVAC
THE NEST
DAPPER DOG GROOMING
JMAG
MURPHY'S RENTAL CENTER
JESS MOORE FARMS
MOUNTAIN DEW PARK
AISIN
ETHOS
GRANNY PUCKETT'S
YUMMY'S EVENT SPACE

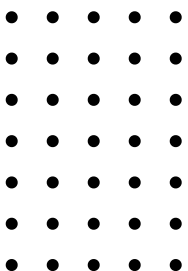


GUEST SPEAKERS

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.

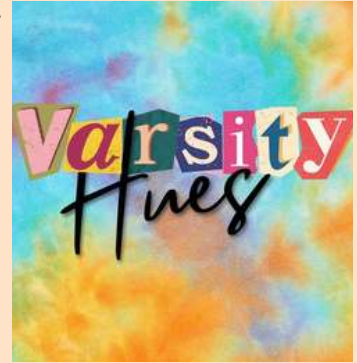
TW NORMAN
GLORIA TISON
MIKE PHALIN
JERRY KING
CHRIS EGELSTON
AYN BARTOK
RYAN FOLLIS
KIM BABINGTON
BROCK NEWMAN
AUSTIN LEWIS
MARILYN ELLIS
BEN VINYARD
OLIVIA BRADLEY
JAMIE STOREY
JENNIFER VINYARD
TRICIA OVERTURF
MICHAEL TISON
TYLER BILLMAN
MOLLY WILSON
BEAU NORMAN
DR. BRENT JONES
ALLISON HASLER
SANTA CLAUS
KENDRA MITCHELL
BYRAM FAGER
TINA GIBBS
KELLY PHELPS
LUKE O'NEAL
JACK SMOTHERS
ROB LANDES
MANDI DAVIDSON
KASSIDY CURRIN
AMY MINGS
ROSIE MINGS
VIVI MINGS



2025 STUDENT BUSINESSES!



Laikyn Dooley is the founder of Varsity Hues. Varsity Hues offers watercolor tie-dye in Saline County, as well as fun, custom designs. Varsity Hues wants to make sure you always stand out at any event you're at, from a football game to shopping at the store. For more information, contact Laikyn on Instagram (@varsity.hues) or on Facebook (Varsity Hues). **Mentored by Melissa Kuhlmann.**



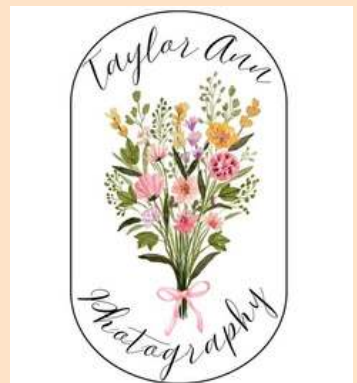
Kailyn Harbison is the founder of Holy Patch Co.. Holy Patch Co. provides products such as crewnecks and trucker hats. It is their mission to create products that customers will love and be able to display their faith through their clothing or accessories. For more information, contact Kailyn on Instagram (holypatchco) or Facebook (Holy Patch Co.) **Mentored by Jessica Stephens.**

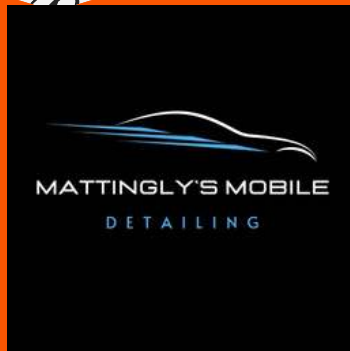


Isabel Rister is the founder of The Piano Studio. The Piano Studio offers personalized beginner piano lessons for young aspiring musicians. Their goal is to share the joy of music with all and offer a fun and positive learning experience! For more information, contact Isabel on Facebook through The Piano Studio. **Mentored by Darla Martin.**

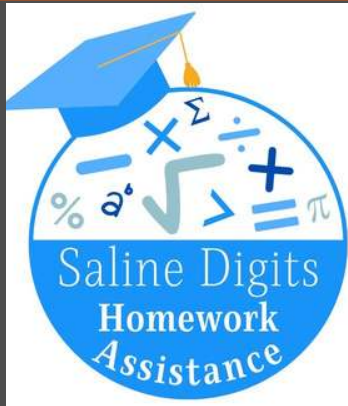


Taylor Michel is the creator of Taylor Ann Photography where she takes and edits pictures for special moments. Whether it's a soccer game or family photos, Taylor can capture the best memories for you to keep. If you have any further questions, please message her through Instagram @taylorannphotography25 or Facebook @taylorann **Mentored by Holly Kotner.**





Myles Mattingly is the founder of Mattingly's Mobile Detailing. His business will detail any kind of car, anywhere in Saline County. He uses many different chemicals that have been tested and are safe for your car's paint. He also waxes cars with many different types of wax to make sure your car will stay shiny. Contact Myles at 618-294-4273. **Mentored by Dr. Brent Jones.**



Wade Romonosky is the founder of Saline Digits Homework Assistance. Saline Digits Homework Assistance is a tutoring business that attempts to maximise efficiency in regards to time by helping students with the assignments they are assigned. Saline Digits Homework Assistance specialises in math and attempts to give students the best possible understanding of their material in the classroom.

Mentored by Camden Schiff.



Xavier Castros is the owner of Castro's Curb Appeal.

Mentored by Andy Biggerstaff.



Hannah Jones is the founder of HannahMade Designs. HannahMade Designs is a homemade accessory shop that offers a variety of products such as earrings, necklaces and bracelets! The mission is to design products that are unique and one-of-a-kind to each person! For more information, please contact Hannah on Instagram (@hannah.made.designss).

Mentored by Beth Harrawood.



Cheyenne Street is the owner of Twisted Tumblers. Twisted Tumblers uses sublimation paper to insure the design transfers to the cups. You never know when you'll get thirsty and want a nice cup to use! Can check out all the cool/unique cups I've made. You can also email Cheyenne at cgstreet07@gmail.com or text (618)-969-2298. **Mentored by Christine Hankins.**



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 Emeritus
State of Illinois/People's National Bank
Illinois State Senator 59th District



Natalie Fry
Board Member
Harrisburg Community Schools
Curriculum Coordinator



Tina Gibbs
Board Member
Ameren Illinois Community
Relations Strategic
Initiatives Manager



Jessica Grinnell
Board Member
Legence Bank
Director of
Community Relations



Angie Hampton
Board Member
Egyptian Health Department
Chief Executive Officer



Eric Witges
Board Member
FSB Insurance Agency
Chief Operating Officer



Luke O'Neal
Board Member
Banterra Bank
Sr. Loan Officer,
Residential Lending



Martin Rowe
Board Member
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
Managing Accountant



powering on the
entrepreneurial spirit



salinecountyceo.com
@salinecountyceo
Email facilitator@salinecountyceo.com
for more information

Alumni SPOTLIGHT

Hayden Emery is an entrepreneur and skilled tradesman born and raised in Harrisburg, Illinois. A 2022 graduate of Harrisburg High School, Hayden developed an early passion for business and craftsmanship. As a student, he participated in the CEO (Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities) program, where he launched two ventures: HYDN Threads, a men's fashion brand, and Emery Mobile Detailing, providing professional car detailing services.

HAYDEN EMERY



Following graduation, Hayden began working as an auto body painter, further refining his attention to detail and hands-on skills. In 2023, he launched **Howdy Hyde Leather Company, LLC**, a growing business that specializes in hats featuring high-quality, handcrafted leather patches. Each patch is made from real leather, hand-dyed, and hand-stitched—making every product unique. Hayden also designs custom patches for businesses looking to add a personal, branded touch to their apparel. In addition to online sales through **howdyhyde.com**, Hayden actively promotes Howdy Hyde on Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. He also travels to local vendor shows and farmers markets across the region to connect with customers face-to-face and showcase his work.

Hayden continues to apply the valuable lessons he learned in the CEO program—such as marketing, customer engagement, and business planning—to every aspect of Howdy Hyde Leather Company, demonstrating his commitment to entrepreneurship and local community roots.



HOWDYHYDE.COM

TRANSFORM OUR COMMUNITY **GET INVOLVED**



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@salinecountyceo.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.

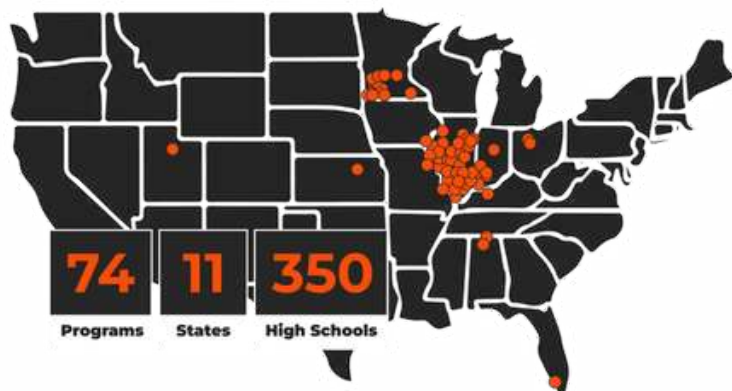


WE NEED COMMUNITY-MINDED INDIVIDUALS LIKE YOU.

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. "