BOLD FUTURES ACADEMY · EIN 33-3751028

IMPACT AND LEARNING REPORT · OCTOBER 2026

WHAT WE BUILT, AND WHAT WE LEARNED.

A public account of every program Bold Futures Academy has delivered, what students practiced and produced, what the evidence shows and does not yet show, and the questions we are carrying forward.

REPORTING PERIOD

SEPTEMBER 2023 THROUGH OCTOBER 17, 2026

PREPARED BY

RUTH GAY · FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Covers every program through the close of LaunchLab Fall 2026 at Demo Day, October 17, 2026.

Bold Futures Academy at a glance.

We help young people understand themselves, build readiness, explore what is possible, and turn experience into opportunity. Students arrive at different points and circle back as their thinking changes, so the work rarely moves in a straight line.

70+

YOUNG PEOPLE REACHED

In total, across our founder's mentorship and workshops and everything the organization has delivered.

50+

SINCE INCORPORATION

Reached by Bold Futures Academy itself since March 2025. Page 3 shows how both are counted.

5

PROGRAM LINES

College mentorship, UConn workshops, two LaunchLab cohorts, the Hartford workshop, and the summer internship.

100%

FELT UNPREPARED

All seven UConn workshop participants said high school did not prepare them to think like a founder. n=7.

11 / 11

FIVE-STAR MENTEE RATINGS

Every rating from four mentees on UConn's own platform was five out of five.

9.25 / 10

FALL FOUNDERS RECOMMEND

All four Fall founders finished all six sessions, built a working prototype, and pitched it live at Demo Day.

ONE THING WE LEARNED THIS YEAR

Students told us consistently that the people mattered most. Every Fall respondent named a person rather than a session when asked what made the biggest difference. At the same time, when we asked whether they had an adult or organization they could go to for help with an idea, the answers were uneven: one knew exactly who, one said yes but was not sure who, and one said no. That is three students, so it is a signal rather than a finding, but it tells us that connecting a young person to their next step is work we have to do deliberately.

This report distinguishes four things throughout: documented activity, what students reported about their own experience, what facilitators observed or students produced, and what we intend to do next. Sample sizes appear beside results. Quotations keep the student's original wording and spelling.

Where the seventy come from.

More than seventy young people have been reached by this work in total, and more than fifty of them since Bold Futures Academy was incorporated. They are not two competing counts. Seventy is the whole body of work. Fifty is what the organization itself has delivered.

DELIVERY	REACHED	PERIOD
One to one mentorship, February 2024 to January 2025	6	Before founding
UConn summer speaker series, July 2024	8	Before founding
UConn cohort session, November 2024	About 7	Before founding
One to one mentorship, March 2025 onward	9	Since founding
Werth Innovators summer internship mentoring, 2025	7	Since founding
UConn cohort workshop, November 2025	10	Since founding
Werth Innovators summer internship mentoring, 2026	8	Since founding
BFA summer internship, 2026	8	Since founding
LaunchLab Spring 2026	6	Since founding
Hartford Youth Scholars workshop, July 2026	8	Since founding
LaunchLab Fall 2026	7	Since founding

HOW WE COUNT

The rows add to 84. Some people appear in more than one row, so the unique total is lower. About six people who sat in an earlier session later became mentees and are counted once, under mentorship. Two summer interns were mentees first and are counted once, under mentorship. Before this edition we also counted five Hartford scholars as continuing into Fall LaunchLab; we are reconfirming that against the Fall roster, and we report the more conservative figure in the meantime. On either reading the totals stay above seventy overall and above fifty since founding. Not counted at all: two 2024 class cohorts for which no roster survives, and students our founder picked up when their own mentor could not attend.

How we got here.

This organization did not start with a plan for programs. It started with mentoring, and with noticing the same thing repeatedly.

Sep 2023 — **Before BFA existed**

The Werth Institute for Entrepreneurship at the University of Connecticut invited Ruth Gay to join NetWerx as an alumni mentor. The mentoring and workshops that followed are where the thinking behind this organization began. That work was hers as a volunteer.

2024 — **First UConn workshops**

A summer speaker series in July and a cohort session in November. Students sharpened real business ideas and made the case for them out loud.

Mar 2025 — **Bold Futures Academy is incorporated**

Everything from here is delivered by the organization rather than by one person volunteering.

Nov 2025 — **A second UConn workshop, and a survey**

Seven participants completed a feedback survey that became the clearest early case for LaunchLab.

Spring 2026 — **The first LaunchLab cohort**

April 18 to May 23, ending in Demo Day.

Jul 2026 — **Hartford Youth Scholars**

A personal branding workshop co-facilitated at Central Connecticut State University.

Summer 2026 — **The internship**

Eight college-age interns took real responsibility for organizational work.

Fall 2026 — **The second LaunchLab cohort**

Six Saturdays from September 12 to October 17, closing with Demo Day.

What students told us they needed.

Across mentorship, the internship, and interviews our college interns ran in 2026, the same needs kept surfacing. These are small, self-selected groups, and we treat what follows as direction rather than proof.

WHAT WE HEARD	WHY IT SHAPED THE WORK
Someone who shows up and stays	The failure students named most was the mentor who is warm at the start and gone by the end.
Real work, and something to show for it	A business plan, a prototype, a portfolio piece, or a clearer sense of direction they could describe.
Honest critique, lightly held accountability	Tell them plainly what to fix, then check in with a short message rather than another meeting.
A return named up front	Pay, a relationship, evidence, or a credible next step.
Room to explore, or room to go deeper	Some wanted to test a new interest. Others wanted depth in one they already had.
A bridge to people and opportunities	One student said she wished someone had built her a bridge of connections.

HOW THE PROGRAMS FIT TOGETHER

College mentorship, the UConn workshops, LaunchLab, the Hartford workshop and the internship are different ways of doing one piece of work: helping a young person understand themselves, practice what any path asks for, and turn an experience into a better next decision. What changes between them is the age of the student, how much time we get, and how real the stakes are.

PROGRAM 01 · COLLEGE MENTORSHIP

Five roles across three years of recurring engagement.

A relationship with the UConn Werth Institute that began through alumni mentoring in September 2023 and has since included mentoring, workshops, pitch review, and other recurring engagements. It is still active. It has taken five distinct shapes, and it is the closest thing we have to a model of what listening to one place, over years, actually looks like. It is recurring engagement rather than a formal BFA and UConn organizational partnership, and we do not describe it as one.

ROLE	WHAT IT HAS MEANT IN PRACTICE
One to one mentor	Fifteen documented mentee matches since February 2024, across two successive mentoring platforms, running from a first introduction through a full venture arc. Four of those mentees have rated the mentorship through the university's own platform, eleven times between them. Every rating is five out of five.
Invited guest speaker	Eight students at the summer speaker series in July 2024, a Werth Innovators cohort on campus that November, and a second cohort in November 2025 for a session on pitching and sharpening a business idea. The last of those produced the survey data reported in this section.
Summer program mentor	Three consecutive summer programs, including the Werth Innovators internship for first-year women, mentoring students across the full length of their projects.
Pitch reviewer	Final project presentations reviewed in person on campus in May 2025 and virtually since, giving structured feedback on each student's final pitch.
Stand-in mentor	When a student's assigned mentor cannot make a session, our founder takes them. This is the least visible part of the relationship and probably the largest by headcount.

WHY WE ARE SHOWING YOU THIS

A funder looking at a young organization reasonably asks whether its partnerships are real or aspirational. This one has survived a platform migration, a change of staff contacts, and the founding of an entire nonprofit in the middle of it, and the invitations still come unprompted. That is the standard we are trying to reach with every partner named in this report.

What happens after.

The honest limit of this report is that we are too young to show ten year outcomes. What we can show is what has already happened to students who came through the mentorship line first, because some of them have kept going.

FROM MENTEE, TO COLLEAGUE, TO THEIR OWN VENTURES

Two of the college students first met through the UConn mentorship pipeline went on to intern with Bold Futures Academy this summer. One of them returned as a co-facilitator and mentor for the Fall 2026 LaunchLab cohort, which means a student who was being mentored two years earlier spent this fall helping high schoolers test their prototypes. Both of them are building. One launched her own podcast, out of the venture work she and our founder had been doing together, and has since invited her on as a guest. The other started her own YouTube channel, then built a wellness platform and published a wellness journal aimed at helping people track and improve their mental health. It is a real product, on sale, and our founder is a customer.

> **THIS IS THE PATHWAY WORKING, IN MINIATURE**
>
> One student, mentored two years ago, is about to teach the next cohort. That is the exact arc this organization is built to produce, from mentee to capable adult to someone who turns around and builds for the people behind them. It is two people, named here in outline rather than as a statistic, because two is what we honestly have. In two years this should be a table. Right now it is a promising start, and we are going to describe it as one.

11	5/5	4
RATINGS RECEIVED	**EVERY ONE OF THEM**	**MENTEES RATING**
Submitted through UConn's platform between October 2024 and November 2025.	No rating below five has ever been given.	Four distinct students, one of whom rated the mentorship seven separate times.

Every voice, in one place.

Everything students, alumni, interns, and mentors have said about this work, gathered from four years and five different settings. Shared with permission, with names withheld. Nothing has been invented.

IGNITE AND COLLEGE MENTORSHIP · UCONN WERTH INSTITUTE

> *She helped me embrace my own entrepreneurial ideas, sparking newfound confidence. Her encouragement empowered me to overcome my hesitations and pursue new ventures.*
>
> ANONYMOUS MENTEE · IGNITE · UCONN WERTH INSTITUTE

> *Working with Ruth honestly felt so natural. I loved how our values aligned and how easy it was to brainstorm with her. I always left our chats feeling inspired and encouraged.*
>
> ANONYMOUS MENTEE · IGNITE · UCONN WERTH INSTITUTE

> *From our very first meeting, she was intentional, kind, and genuinely cared about helping me grow. She supported me through every stage of my project, starting with ideation.*
>
> ANONYMOUS MENTEE · IGNITE · UCONN WERTH INSTITUTE

> *Her guidance set me on the right path for my final two years of undergraduate studies and played a key role in helping me secure internships and build meaningful relationships.*
>
> ANONYMOUS MENTEE · IGNITE · UCONN WERTH INSTITUTE

PROGRAM 02 · UCONN WORKSHOPS

What the November 2025 UConn research told us.

Our second UConn workshop, after the first in 2024. BFA student feedback survey · n=7 · UConn Werth Institute · Mixed sophomore and junior cohort · Self-reported, post-workshop.

100%

FELT UNPREPARED BY HIGH SCHOOL

All seven said high school did not prepare them to think like a founder. Four said not really, three said not at all.

86%

WOULD HAVE JOINED LAUNCHLAB IN HS

Six of seven said yes outright. One said maybe. None said no.

4.1/5

POST-WORKSHOP CONFIDENCE

Average confidence in taking their idea to the next level after one session. Six rated 4, one rated 5.

100%

SAID BFA CAN BRIDGE THE GAP

All seven. The gap between high school exposure and college readiness is real, and they believe we are positioned to close it.

SKILL GAPS THEY NAMED	SHARE NAMING IT
Time management	86%
Identifying real problems	71%
Financial literacy	71%
Pitching	57%
Empathy mapping	43%
Business planning and team collaboration	43%

Asked what they most wanted to be taught, the group named empathy mapping, pitching practice, team collaboration, AI literacy, ethics, and financial literacy. Asked what was standing in their way, they named two things: money and confidence. Five of the seven opted in for ongoing mentorship and have been re-engaged.

What they actually said.

Direct responses from all seven participants, grouped by theme. These are the sentences that shaped the LaunchLab curriculum.

ON THE GAP THEY FELT IN HIGH SCHOOL

- How to come up with ideas, how to be successful in entrepreneurship.
- Design thinking. Having a bright idea isn't always the same as having an execution plan.
- How to network and how to connect with other people.
- More about mindset and purpose.

ON THE SUPPORT THEY WISHED THEY HAD EARLIER

- I wish I had encouragement. Most adults look at me like I'm crazy and it would have been nice to have more support.
- People in similar fields, alumni from my program.
- Mentorship. Most important thing.

ON WHAT BFA CAN DO FOR YOUNGER STUDENTS

- Let them know that their big ideas are realistic.
- Give them the confidence to pursue their ideas.
- Understanding that their potential is limitless, and seeing what they are capable of.

> **IN ONE WORD, THE WORKSHOP WAS**
>
> Insightful. Amazing. Insightful. Perspective. Fun. Insightful. Great. Three of the seven independently reached for the same word.

PROGRAM 03 · LAUNCHLAB

LaunchLab, two cohorts on the same definitions.

Six weeks in which each high school student develops a venture from a problem they have noticed, builds and tests a prototype, and pitches it. Spring 2026 was the first cohort. Fall 2026 was designed around what Spring taught us. Enrolled means a student accepted and confirmed a place. Started means they attended at least one session.

	SPRING 2026	FALL 2026
Expressions of interest	Not recorded	50, through a LinkedIn posting with no acquisition spend. Staff time was still required.
Enrolled	6	7
Started, attended at least one session	6	7
Completed	3, delivering a Demo Day pitch, including one modified completion	4, attending all six sessions and delivering a live Demo Day pitch
Left early	3, after the opening weeks	3, after one or two sessions
Exit survey	3 of 3 who completed	4 of 4 who completed

> **COMPLETION, ON THE SAME DEFINITION**
>
> Both cohorts define completion the same way, delivering a live Demo Day pitch. Spring completed 3 of the 6 who started and Fall completed 4 of the 7 who started. Those are small groups, so we read them as the same lesson twice rather than as a trend: getting a student to start is not the same as getting them through, and every student who left early received outreach. Retention is the clearest weakness in both cohorts.

WHAT CHANGED BETWEEN THE COHORTS

Asynchronous pitch recording, so a student who misses a session can still complete the work. An explicit attendance policy reviewed at orientation. A strengthened mid-program mentor touchpoint. A Navigator baseline completed before the program began, which gave Fall a real before and after on the same students. And because Spring founders told us they did not understand how to earn a stranger's trust, Fall Week 5 was designed around exactly that.

What the cohort produced.

One founder pitched *NeuroGuard*, an AI safety net for stroke triage. Another pitched *Bridge AI*, a tax documentation tool that helps farms turn surplus produce into deductible donations. Each delivered a seven minute slot: three minutes of pitch, two of peer feedback, two of mentor panelist feedback. Both were grounded in working prototypes, complete business plan notes, and customer hypotheses they had actually tested.

A third founder built *Asian Student Awareness* across the prior weeks and pitched at Demo Day before leaving the program early for legitimate reasons. Her venture exists and her arc is documented. That modified completion path is one Fall 2026 will explicitly design for, through asynchronous pitch recording and makeup options.

> *From a lack-of-scope, data-less, un-researched idea with an ambiguous solution, to a professional-grade deck and pitch presentable to board members.*
>
> **VOLUNTEER MENTOR · LAUNCHLAB SPRING 2026 · DEMO DAY OBSERVATION**

WHAT SPRING FOUNDERS SAID

> *Before LaunchLab, I thought entrepreneurship was strictly building a business. Now I think entrepreneurship is building an idea with purpose to help other people.*
>
> **ANONYMOUS FOUNDER · SPRING 2026**

> *It gives students real hands-on experience building a venture, not just learning about entrepreneurship in a classroom. You meet amazing people, gain confidence, and leave with skills you can use in any future career.*
>
> **ANONYMOUS FOUNDER · SPRING 2026**

All three founders who completed the Spring cohort answered the exit survey. A third Spring quotation appears in the first founder profile that follows.

Student profile 01 of 04.

NeuroGuard · An AI safety net for stroke triage

ONE-WORD ANCHOR	FORMS SUBMITTED	ROLE IN TEAM SIM	OUTCOME
Discernment	Weeks 1 to 5, complete	CEO, Week 4	Full Demo Day pitch

THE VENTURE

NeuroGuard is an AI assisted tool that flags when emergency stroke triage AI may be underweighting a patient's symptoms because of biased or unrepresentative training data, so a clinician can review the case before a time-sensitive decision is made. By Week 5 the founder had repositioned it as a second layer of safety rather than a replacement for clinical judgment, a framing she arrived at through user feedback during the MVP panel.

WHAT SHE DEMONSTRATED

- **Personal experience as method.** Drew on her own observations throughout, never treating the venture as an academic exercise.
- **Mentor feedback as input.** Took panel feedback seriously and visibly narrowed from broad AI bias to one clinical use case.
- **A documented shift.** Began with a profit-first framing of entrepreneurship. By Week 5 she was articulating human-centered design as the moat rather than the constraint.
- **Leadership under pressure.** Stepped into the CEO role during the team simulation and held it.

> *LaunchLab gave me the chance to turn an idea into something real.*
>
> ANONYMOUS FOUNDER · SPRING 2026 · WEEK 6 EXIT REFLECTION

Student profile 02 of 04.

Bridge AI · Tax documentation for surplus farm donations

ONE-WORD ANCHOR	FORMS SUBMITTED	ROLE IN TEAM SIM	OUTCOME
Pivot	Weeks 1 to 5, complete	CTO, Week 4	Full Demo Day pitch

THE VENTURE

Bridge AI moved through three distinct stages: a hardware environmental concept in Week 1, a machine learning platform for food waste reduction in Week 3, and finally a business to business tool that helps farms document surplus produce as tax deductible charitable donations. By Demo Day it had a working prototype and a real customer hypothesis. This founder was the only student present every single week.

WHAT THIS FOUNDER DEMONSTRATED

- **Iteration as identity.** Three pivots in five weeks, each grounded in new feedback or evidence rather than in indecision.
- **An early shift.** Their Week 1 reflection captured a move from a profit-first frame to a learning-first one, credited to guest speaker Conor Twomey.
- **Founder thinking, not user thinking.** Their closing reflection positioned them as the agent using AI rather than the other way round, a distinction many adult founders never make.
- **Consistent attendance.** The only student in the cohort present every week.

Student profile 03 of 04.

Asian Student Awareness · Reducing bullying through cross-cultural learning

ONE-WORD ANCHOR	FORMS SUBMITTED	DEMO DAY	OUTCOME
Purpose	Facilitator observation	Pitched, modified path	Modified completion

THE VENTURE

Asian Student Awareness was built directly out of the founder's own childhood experience of being bullied. The venture focused on reducing bullying through structured cross-cultural learning, with interventions designed to run in school settings where students from minority backgrounds are routinely targeted. By Demo Day she had carried it from a personal memory to a pitched concept.

WHY THIS PROFILE IS BUILT FROM OBSERVATION

This founder did not submit weekly live session forms. Her profile is drawn from facilitator observation across the weeks she was present and from the work she submitted directly. The signal she gave was strong enough that a full profile could be built from observation alone, which says something about how clearly she carried the venture.

WHAT SHE DEMONSTRATED

- **Personal experience as a starting point.** Built the venture out of the most honest source she had.
- **Mission-first framing.** By the end she was describing entrepreneurship as building an idea with purpose to help other people, which is close to a word for word statement of the LaunchLab thesis.
- **She came back to pitch.** Despite an early departure for legitimate reasons, she returned to deliver at Demo Day.

Student profile 04 of 04.

Food insecurity venture · Reducing shame as a barrier to access

ONE-WORD ANCHOR	FORMS SUBMITTED	ATTENDANCE	OUTCOME
Depth	Week 2 only	3 absences, disqualified	Did not complete

THE VENTURE

This student's venture centered on food insecurity, with a focus on lower income households and students who could not reliably afford good food. The distinguishing insight was identifying shame, rather than cost or logistics, as the deeper barrier keeping people from using food resources that already existed. It was the most sophisticated root cause framing in the cohort.

> **IMPORTANT NOTE ON DATA SOURCES**
>
> This student submitted one live session form, from Week 2. The profile is built from that form combined with facilitator observation across the weeks they were present. The depth of that single form was unusually high and the patterns in it are real. The student missed three sessions including Demo Day, which closed their engagement and disqualified them from completion.

WHAT THIS STUDENT DEMONSTRATED

- **Empathy as a working tool.** Approached the process through the people they wanted to serve rather than through the product.
- **Root cause thinking.** Identified shame as the barrier rather than the surface symptom of cost.
- **The non-completion case.** We do not erase students from the record because they did not finish. Including this profile honors what they contributed and gives Fall 2026 a clearer signal on how to support students whose engagement is uneven.

FALL 2026 FOUNDER 1 OF 4

OMNI: real-time guidance before fatigue changes how an athlete moves.

He came in with a problem he had watched hurt a friend, a heat stroke on the tennis court. His Day 1 goal was to build and finish a prototype, and he reached it.

WEEK	WHERE THE FOUNDER WAS
1	Named people missing the early signs of exhaustion. Chose shelter first in the Island Challenge and explained the tradeoff out loud.
2	Learned from interviews that athletes already try to read their own fatigue. Asked his mentor to attack his ideas.
3	Chose performance over heat safety because the interview evidence was stronger there, and named his riskiest assumption: whether athletes will trust OMNI enough to act.
4	Led the team simulation as CEO and explained why the team turned down a $200 investor rather than abandon its first customers.
5	Built a working app with live stride-based recommendations and coach alerts, and collected data from student athletes across the four schools in his district with his statistics teachers.
6	Pitched OMNI as a full product: a prototype built for $28.62 in parts, personal baselines, coach dashboards, pricing and three-year projections.

Demo Day. He credited his mentor's question about medical history and stress for moving OMNI from a single fatigue threshold to personal baselines. He named his next test, 50 to 100 athletes outside his region, and asked the room for one introduction.

What the room said. The board chair said he would invest in him. His mentor called him coachable and passionate, with strong design thinking.

Growth, in their own ratings. Explaining an idea clearly rose from 3 to 5. He rated LaunchLab 9 out of 10 and reported speaking to six or more people outside the program.

> *I realize that I love feedback... my perspective doesn't cover everything.*
>
> FALL 2026 FOUNDER · DEMO DAY

FALL 2026 FOUNDER 2 OF 4

Linkage: a research workspace for students without a mentor.

She built Linkage from her own experience of doing research with no one to guide her. Her Day 1 goal was to finalize her problem and brainstorm ideas, and she said she reached it.

WEEK	WHERE THE FOUNDER WAS
1	Caught the AI telling her team to use its only knife as a fish hook, and explained what the tool could not account for.
2	Realized that understanding a paper is as hard as finding one, because of the jargon.
3	Named testing bias: testing only with people already working on a design builds in a favorable answer.
4	Chose intellectual honesty as a value, meaning students see the evidence that challenges their idea. Served as CMO in the simulation.
5	Built a full workspace: research questions, PDF annotation, notebook, experiments, findings, and an assistant set up to support a student's thinking rather than replace it.
6	Renamed the venture Linkage and rebuilt her story around one student in under thirty minutes after a single round of feedback.

Demo Day. She opened with her own experience, introduced a student curious about microplastics who sends cold emails and hears nothing, and presented three pillars: organization, guidance and intellectual honesty. She named what she still has to prove: willingness to pay and the cost of running the AI.

What the room said. A co-facilitator praised how she tied personal experience to outside data. Her mentor said she consistently incorporated feedback. A board member said bringing the student back at the end worked as a call to action.

Growth, in their own ratings. Teamwork rose from 3 to 5, the largest single gain in her ratings. She rated LaunchLab 8 out of 10.

> *If we're just testing it among people that are already working on a design, then they already have some bias toward the product in the first place.*
>
> FALL 2026 FOUNDER · WEEK 3

FALL 2026 FOUNDER 3 OF 4

Sage: stepping in before a regretted purchase.

On Day 1 he rated the statement "I believe entrepreneurship is possible for me" a 2 out of 5. He stayed with one idea for six weeks, and his goal was to commit to a project and scale it.

WEEK	WHERE THE FOUNDER WAS
1	Read the motion blur in a photo as a picture of how scrolling makes time disappear. Named relationships as what becomes scarce when everything is automated.
2	Narrowed to teens controlling impulse spending, then made privacy a value after an interviewee said she was scared of her data being leaked. Changed his view in the debate.
3	Designed a real test: when Sage flags a purchase, do people change their decision or click through?
4	The only founder to turn down the investor outright in the Theranos case. Served as CFO and named what pricing would cost families who could barely afford it.
5	Wrote the most complete brief in the cohort and built a clickable app that intercepts a payment and shows how it delays a savings goal. Recorded three changes after a peer tested it.
6	Reworked his deck with his mentor in thirty minutes and pitched Sage through a 16-year-old with her first paycheck and a coat in her cart.

Demo Day. Sage never blocks a purchase. It offers three choices at checkout: buy now, wait 24 hours, or move the money to the goal. He explained how it differs from budgeting apps that only show the damage afterwards, and named schools, parents and sponsors as possible payers.

What the room said. His mentor said he implemented every piece of feedback. Another mentor said, "I need this app."

Growth, in their own ratings. Belief that entrepreneurship is possible for him rose from 2 to 4. He rated LaunchLab 10 out of 10. He had not yet talked to anyone outside the program about the idea.

> *Whatever you do, the light will always shine on it.*
>
> FALL 2026 FOUNDER · WEEK 4, ON THE INVESTOR DECISION

FALL 2026 FOUNDER 4 OF 4

Open Doors NYC: real opportunities, honestly listed.

His venture comes from his own path through school, not knowing where to look for opportunities. He said on Day 1 that he wanted to learn how to present his ideas.

WEEK	WHERE THE FOUNDER WAS
1	Named students lost without a guide. Said openly that a classmate's point about everyone using the same AI changed how he saw it.
2	Changed his mind in the debate and said so: he had seen it as black and white. His advice shaped a classmate's privacy value.
3	Noticed that whoever adapts fastest to new technology gets the most resources, the idea at the heart of his venture. Named it Open Doors NYC.
4	Built his team's prototype as CTO and wrote the venture's trust promise.
5	Built a working site covering all five boroughs, with a status on every listing and a button to report a change. Suggested a chat feature a classmate adopted.
6	Rewrote parts of his story and slides in minutes after hearing his classmates pitch, then thanked them for pushing him.

Demo Day. He explained why counselors with roughly 200 students each cannot close the gap, walked through a live listing and the next-cycle feature, and told the story of making a list of opportunities for a younger student at his school.

What the room said. A guest professor called it clearly needed and praised the quality check on listings. A mentor told him to think beyond New York City. A board member said it was a powerful name.

Growth, in their own ratings. Explaining an idea clearly rose from 3 to 5, the exact skill he named as his Day 1 wish. He rated every Day 1 statement a 5 in Week 5, and rated LaunchLab 10 out of 10.

> *One little action could change somebody's whole life. And it's not only just one person, it could change a whole generation.*
>
> FALL 2026 FOUNDER · DEMO DAY

Demo Day, October 17.

The sixth session was built as a learning experience in its own right, not only a showcase. All four founders delivered a five minute pitch followed by about ten minutes of feedback from mentors, board members, guests and peers.

TIME	WHAT HAPPENED
11:30	A storytelling workshop. Founders watched a real venture pitch from an Oxford Foundry Demo Day, named the techniques themselves, then rewrote one section of their own pitch and tried it aloud for peer feedback.
12:00	One to one rehearsal with mentors. When one mentor could not attend, Ruth stepped in so the block stayed intact.
12:30	Four live pitches, each with questions and feedback.
1:30	A conversation about the future of work, a journey video, and each founder's final sentence.

CHANGING IN REAL TIME

Before any coaching, the founders named every technique the facilitator later summarized: a statistic paired with a person, a story instead of a list of facts, and an ending that ties back to the opening. The clearest evidence of the day was how quickly they revised. One founder rebuilt her opening around a single student in under thirty minutes after one round of feedback. Another reworked his deck with his mentor in the same window. A third rewrote parts of his story in five to ten minutes after hearing his classmates. These are the skills Weeks 3 to 5 target: using evidence and feedback to change course.

WHO WAS IN THE ROOM

Two board members, including the chair, four mentors and co-facilitators, the fundraising strategist, and a community college biology professor attending as a guest. Each founder left with a named network of about a dozen adults.

> *This is an incredible platform for people to learn from with each other and with mentors.*
>
> **VOLUNTEER MENTOR · DEMO DAY**

What the Fall measures show.

All four founders completed the Week 5 program impact survey. One submitted after the session, and the figures below include all four. Ratings use a 1 to 5 scale, 5 highest. The group is small, so every number describes these four founders rather than a wider population.

DAY 1 AGAINST WEEK 5 N=4, MATCHED STUDENTS

STATEMENT	DAY 1	WEEK 5
I can clearly explain an idea so someone who has never heard it before understands it	3.50	4.50
I can spot problems in my school or community worth solving	3.75	4.25
I believe entrepreneurship is possible for me	4.00	4.50
When I am stuck, I can break the problem into small steps	4.00	4.75
I feel comfortable working on a team and sharing ideas	4.50	4.75
I feel like I belong in programs and spaces where people build new ideas	4.25	4.75

Every average rose, and the largest gain was explaining an idea clearly. Individual standouts were belief that entrepreneurship is possible rising from 2 to 4 for one founder, teamwork rising from 3 to 5 for another, and two founders moving from 3 to 5 on explaining an idea. One founder rated spotting problems lower in Week 5 than on Day 1, and his teamwork from 5 to 4. After five weeks of interviews his bar for a real problem likely rose, and he described his best moments as team moments.

THE START AND END OF THE WEEK 5 SESSION

STATEMENT	START	END
I know what it takes to earn a stranger's trust in my idea	2.50	4.70
I feel confident creating a simple, testable prototype in a short amount of time	3.25	4.75
I feel confident using observations from a prototype test to decide what to improve	4.00	4.75

The trust end figure uses the three forms submitted during the session. The late form recorded that item as 3 at the start and 1 at the end, which reads as a misclick; including it gives an end average of 3.75. The trust jump was the day's design goal, because the Spring cohort said they did not understand how to build trust.

Growth in every session.

Each session had its own skill statements. Every average rose in every session that had a before and after measure.

SESSION	STATEMENT	START	END
Week 2	I can name who is affected by a community problem		5.0
Week 2	I can write a clear problem statement from what I hear		4.5
Week 2	I know an assumption from something I actually heard		4.25
Week 2	I can listen for what someone means, not what I will say next		4.0
Week 3	I can generate multiple possible solutions to one problem	3.3	4.3
Week 3	I can use evidence to decide which idea is worth pursuing	3.7	4.3
Week 3	I can explain a simple business model	3.3	4.3
Week 3	I can tell apart a physical product, digital product, service and hybrid	3.3	5.0
Week 4	I can contribute to a team when people have different ideas	4.0	5.0
Week 4	I can use values to make a difficult business decision	3.75	5.0
Week 4	I can help a group make a decision when there is no perfect answer	3.5	5.0
Week 4	I can explain what my venture should stand for and why	4.0	5.0

Week 2 was measured at the end only, n=4. Week 3 n=3, Week 4 n=4.

WHY WE WEIGHT THE OBSERVED EVIDENCE MORE HEAVILY

Every Week 4 end rating was a 5, which leaves no room to show further growth, and same-day self-ratings tend to run high. So the stronger evidence is what founders did. In the Week 4 team simulation the group turned down a $200 investor offer to protect access and declined funding that came attached to a dashboard naming struggling students, naming the cost of each decision out loud.

What founders could do by the end.

Observed across all four founders, from session recordings, transcripts and their work.

SKILL	WHAT WE SAW
Observing before solving	In Week 5, comparing two smart-glasses launches a decade apart, founders noticed that one ad showed how the glasses fit a face and the other never did.
Finding the need under the complaint	All four named reliable access to files, not the lost USB drive, as Dropbox's real problem.
Correcting assumptions	One founder moved from detecting fatigue to real-time guidance after interviews; another named testing bias in Week 3.
Using values to decide	One founder was the only student to turn down the investor outright in the Theranos case.
Building and testing	Four working prototypes, each tested with a partner and revised.
Telling the story with evidence	All four opened Demo Day with a real person, closed with a next step, and named what is still unproven.
Giving and taking feedback	Founders gave each other specific, honest notes, and by Demo Day each revised in under thirty minutes.
Talking to real customers	Still the weakest area, though improving. One founder collected data across four schools and pitched to two outside professionals before Demo Day.

HOW MUCH THE PROGRAM HELPED, IN THEIR RATINGS N=4

SKILL	RATINGS	AVERAGE
Understanding a specific customer and what they feel	5, 5, 5, 5	5.00
Telling the story of my venture	5, 5, 5, 5	5.00
Designing a solution for the root cause, not just the symptom	4, 5, 5, 5	4.75
Finding a real problem that people actually experience	3, 5, 5, 5	4.50
Building and testing a prototype with real people	4, 4, 5, 5	4.50
Changing my idea based on evidence	3, 5, 5, 5	4.50

In their words, Fall 2026.

Written answers keep the founder's original wording and spelling. Spoken lines are lightly cleaned of filler words. Names are withheld.

HOW THEY SEE ENTREPRENEURSHIP NOW

> *Before LaunchLab, I thought entrepreneurship was intimating and a lot of work. Now I think it is accessible for everyone and anyone.*
>
> FALL 2026 FOUNDER · WEEK 5

> *Before LaunchLab, I though entrepreneurship was just creating a product. Now I think entrepreneurship is more to it, it is the moat, marketing, understanding the customer and leadership.*
>
> FALL 2026 FOUNDER · WEEK 5

> *Before LaunchLab, I thought entrepreneurship was just selling a product. Now I think about the whole picture and variables.*
>
> FALL 2026 FOUNDER · WEEK 5

> *[Before LaunchLab, I thought entrepreneurship] was not for me. Now I think entrepreneurship is something I could see myself doing.*
>
> FALL 2026 FOUNDER · WEEK 5

WHAT MADE THE BIGGEST DIFFERENCE

> *Having [my mentor] as a mentor. I learned so much from just 2 sessions with her about my product, how to think like a leader, how to think in this world of AI.*
>
> FALL 2026 FOUNDER · WEEK 5

In their words, continued.

ON BEING HUMAN IN THE AGE OF AI

Asked on Demo Day whether the worries they brought to orientation were still the same, all four said their concern about AI had eased, for different reasons.

> *We should use it to our advantage instead of letting it dictate what will happen with our futures.*
>
> **FALL 2026 FOUNDER · DEMO DAY**

> *AI is not the end-all, be-all... it's just a boost to get you to the next point. But I don't think it's the final destination.*
>
> **FALL 2026 FOUNDER · DEMO DAY**

> *I'm walking out of this program more confident in my ability to be a leader.*
>
> **FALL 2026 FOUNDER · DEMO DAY**

GROWTH IN THINKING ACROSS THE WEEKS

> *A strong solution is not necessarily the one with the most features. It is the one that responds most directly to what the customer actually struggles with.*
>
> **FALL 2026 FOUNDER · WEEK 3**

> *Values only become meaningful when following them actually costs you something.*
>
> **FALL 2026 FOUNDER · WEEK 4**

> *I realized, like, I need to step up my game... thank you for making me better.*
>
> **FALL 2026 FOUNDER · TO CLASSMATES, DEMO DAY**

What made the difference, and what is still uneven.

All four founders rated the program 8 or higher out of 10: two 10s, a 9 and an 8, an average of 9.25. Three of three who answered said they reached their Day 1 goal.

WHAT THEY NAMED AS THE DIFFERENCE

Every founder named a person or a conversation rather than a session: a mentor, the speakers and case studies, talks with Ruth and a mentor, or a changed sense of how much thought it takes to succeed. One founder asked for a bigger cohort, and another asked to let teammates see final presentations before they go out.

> *The talks with Ruth and [my mentor] made the biggest difference for me because it helped me change my perspective and polish up my idea.*
>
> FALL 2026 FOUNDER · WEEK 5

> *The speaker portions are definitely the most insightful. The case studies were also intriguing because I feel like they challenged my thinking in unexpected ways.*
>
> FALL 2026 FOUNDER · WEEK 5

RELATIONSHIPS ARE THE FRONTIER

Asked in Week 5 whether they had an adult, mentor or organization they could approach for help with an idea, two said yes and knew who, one said yes but was not sure who, and one said no. Asked about people outside the program, one had talked to none, two to three to five, and one to six or more. Asked what could get in the way next, the answers were about money and knowing the right people. Each founder's final profile lists their LaunchLab network, and personal follow-up introductions are underway, starting with the founder who had no adult to ask.

> *Money & knowing the right people.*
>
> FALL 2026 FOUNDER · WEEK 5

PROGRAM 04 · HARTFORD YOUTH SCHOLARS

What happened at CCSU.

Day 3 of the Hartford Youth Scholars College Bootcamp · July 15, 2026 · Central Connecticut State University · Co-facilitated with HYS program lead Natiel Cooper.

We co-facilitated the hour with HYS, using our own personal branding material: an Experience Inventory, an Accomplishment Statement builder, and a Mini Pitch with a live feedback loop. It was a single session, delivered before we had begun to name the readiness pattern it later helped us see. Eight in-person scholars completed reflection surveys. Seven were rising seniors and one a rising junior, drawn from eight different Connecticut schools, a mix of competitive independent schools and Hartford area public and magnet schools.

WHAT WE CAME TO DO, AND WHETHER WE DID IT

The goal for the hour was narrow and we set it in advance: every scholar should be able to name their own value out loud, in specific words, and pitch it. Three of the eight went further and delivered their pitch in front of the whole room, in a session where nobody was required to. At the start of the hour, not one of those three could articulate what they were good at when we asked them directly. Hartford Youth Scholars staff told us afterwards that they had not seen their scholars engage in a workshop like that before.

3.5→4.1

CONFIDENCE DESCRIBING THEMSELVES

Average self-reported, before and after, out of five.

4 OF 8

REPORTED A CONFIDENCE INCREASE

Two more were already at five and could not rise.

4.1/5

LIKELIHOOD TO RECOMMEND

Five of eight rated four or five. One rated two.

5 OF 8

INTERESTED IN LAUNCHLAB

One yes and four maybes, out of one hour of programming.

4 OF 8

WANT TO BUILD SOMETHING

Rated themselves four or five on starting a business, project, or movement.

8

SCHOOLS REPRESENTED

Eight scholars, eight different schools, one shared gap.

What the numbers actually say.

The headline average hides the more useful finding. Read the movement scholar by scholar and the hour explains itself.

MOST USEFUL PART OF THE SESSION	SCHOLARS	CONFIDENCE MOVEMENT
Mini Pitch and feedback	3	All three gained. Movements of +2, +1, and +1.
Experience Inventory	2	One gained by 1. One flat, and she wrote that her table did not talk.
Accomplishment Statement	1	Flat at five. Already at the ceiling before the session began.
Presentation and examples	1	Flat at five. Also at the ceiling.
No selection made	1	Flat at three. Named nothing as most useful.

THE SIGNAL

Every scholar who named the Mini Pitch as most useful gained confidence. Of the six scholars who had room to move at all, four moved, an average of 3.0 to 3.8. The two who started at five could not rise. The two who stayed flat with room to grow are the same two who reported that nobody at their table engaged. Confidence movement tracked table engagement rather than exposure to the curriculum. That is a finding about room design, not about whether the hour worked. Among the six scholars who had room to move, the session produced measurable directional movement for those who engaged with the Mini Pitch. What we learned is how to make sure the two quiet tables get the same hour the loud ones did.

What this changes for the next collaboration.

01

Add a co-facilitator

Small group scaffolding was thin. Two scholars asked for individual attention in writing. Trained peer leads are the cheaper alternative.

02

Structure the turn-taking

A silent table is a design failure, not a student failure. Build named turns into the Mini Pitch sprint so no scholar can be skipped.

03

Lead with the Mini Pitch

Every student who named it as most useful reported a gain, though that is an association rather than proof of cause. In a sixty minute session it should be the anchor, not the closer.

04

One session may not be enough

An hour opened the door and did not finish the job. This is the observation that started us asking whether readiness support should be sustained rather than one-off.

THE DESIGN CHANGE THAT CAME OUT OF THIS

The fourth item is the one that changed how we think. A single hour can move a room and still leave the work unfinished, and the capabilities involved are not learnable in one sitting. That observation is what led us to start asking whether readiness support should be sustained across several sessions rather than delivered once. We have not answered that question by delivering a full series. It is a direction we are exploring, not a program we run.

What they want solved.

Every scholar was asked to name one problem in their school, community, or daily life that they wish someone would solve. Their answers are the mission-fit evidence.

Three of eight named some form of representation or equity: the absence of people of color at their school, the absence of diversity among teachers, and equality stated plainly as a one word answer. Others named pollution and litter in their streets, aging facilities, and campus access. Five of eight identified themselves as the kind of person who likes understanding people and their problems, which is the empathy-first disposition the human advantage thesis is built on.

> *My experiences can be small, they don't have to be big.*
>
> **12TH GRADER · HARTFORD YOUTH SCHOLARS WORKSHOP**

> *Always say what makes you different.*
>
> **12TH GRADER · HARTFORD YOUTH SCHOLARS WORKSHOP**

THE ANSWER WE ARE NOT EDITING OUT

One scholar wrote that the problem she wants solved is her own school. That it does not try to help students with the future, that it would be nice if it showed even a little that it cared, and that it is annoying to have to figure everything out by yourself. She rated her confidence three before and three after, and marked not right now for LaunchLab. She is the student this organization exists for, and one hour did not reach her. That is the most useful sentence in the dataset.

PROGRAM 05 · SUMMER INTERNSHIP

Real ownership, not another mentorship conversation.

Ignite gives a college student mentorship toward the workforce. The internship is where they actually enter it, inside our own organization first. Eight young adults interned with us over the summer, across operations, communications, partnerships, and program development, and their work was not filing. They took the spring cohort's feedback and turned it into specific changes to the program. When it was over we asked them to reflect, and five of the eight answered. Five of eight is a small and self-selected group, so we treat what follows as an early read and not a verdict, and we report it at its real size.

4.8/5

OVERALL EXPERIENCE

Averaged across the five who answered. Four rated it five, one rated it four.

4.8/5

FELT SUPPORTED

Support from mentors and from the executive director, averaged across the five.

9.6/10

WOULD RECOMMEND

Likelihood to recommend a BFA internship to a friend.

4.2/5

CLEARER SENSE OF THEIR PATH

How much the internship clarified the future they want. Real spread underneath the average.

4.2/5

MORE ABLE TO BUILD OR LEAD

How much more capable they felt of building or leading something of their own.

5 OF 8

RESPONDED

The base for every figure on this page. We do not imply five speak for all eight.

WHAT MATTERS MORE THAN THE RATINGS

It is what they said they can now do that they could not before, because it came from real work rather than a lecture. One is much better at working without solid instructions, which she had struggled with. One built live automations that now run our intake across three different tools. One learned to shape curriculum for an audience and to use AI to make her work clearer and more accessible. One got sharply better at running interviews and pulling the real insight out of them. These are capabilities shown through ownership, which is the whole point of the way we run the program.

WHAT THEY SAID WOULD MAKE IT STRONGER

WHAT THEY ASKED FOR	WHAT WE ARE DOING ABOUT IT
Clearer role framing early	A short written brief for every intern role, so nobody has to guess what their work is for.
Better communication during a pivot	A simple pivot protocol, so when a project changes direction the reason and the new scope are stated plainly.
More cross-pod connection	Built-in time to meet across pods, so the work does not feel siloed.
A steadier coaching cadence	A regular one to one check in for each intern, which is the thing more than one of them named by name.

> *I loved learning how to cater curriculum towards an audience in an innovative way.*
>
> ANONYMOUS SUMMER INTERN · 2026 · SHARED WITH PERMISSION

IN THEIR WORDS

> *This summer was impactful, a bit challenging, and incredibly rewarding. I loved meeting so many new people with such diverse and interesting stories and skill sets.*
>
> ANONYMOUS SUMMER INTERN · 2026 · SHARED WITH PERMISSION

> *This summer was such a rewarding learning experience. Not only did I learn from my team and my role, but I was also able to learn from Ruth.*
>
> ANONYMOUS SUMMER INTERN · 2026 · SHARED WITH PERMISSION

> *I am much better at being able to work without solid instructions, as I struggled with this in the past.*
>
> ANONYMOUS SUMMER INTERN · 2026 · SHARED WITH PERMISSION

> *This summer helped shape how I will work on education policy and curriculum in the future.*
>
> ANONYMOUS SUMMER INTERN · 2026 · SHARED WITH PERMISSION

Four of the five interns who completed the reflection survey gave permission to share their words. Quotes are shared under that permission, with names withheld.

What we learned by listening in 2026.

Our college interns interviewed a small group of college students, most of them from our UConn pipeline, about what would make a real six week experience worth their time. A few of the people interviewed were also our own interns, so this is a small and connected group, and we read it as direction rather than proof. Even so, the same needs kept coming up.

WHAT COLLEGE STUDENTS TOLD US THEY WANT

- **A mentor who genuinely shows up, and stays.** This was the strongest and most consistent thing they said. The failure they named most was the mentor who is warm at the start and gone by the end.
- **Real work, with something real to show for it.** A business plan, a prototype, product samples, or something they can talk about in an interview. For a few, the proof was less an object than a clearer sense of direction and the skills they walked away with.
- **Honest critique and a light hand on accountability.** They wanted to be told plainly what to fix, and checked on with a quick message rather than another meeting.
- **The return named up front.** Whether that is pay, a real relationship, or a credible next step, they were clear that an unpaid, low-value six weeks loses to an ordinary job.
- **Room to explore, or room to go deep.** Some wanted to go deeper on an interest they already had. Others needed repeated chances to find one. The same program has to serve both.

> *I wish someone built a bridge of connections for me. Connections is super important when it comes to finding a job, and I hate admitting it, but it is.*
>
> COLLEGE STUDENT · 2026 EMPATHY INTERVIEW

WHY THIS IS IN THE REPORT AT ALL

None of this is a 2026 result, and we have kept it out of our impact numbers. It is here because it shaped how we think about what comes next. A college experience built around real work, real people and a real next step is what this listening points toward. It is also why the readiness work we are exploring is aimed at organizations already running internship programs, where the work already exists and only the readiness layer is missing. What these interviews are is directional. A small, connected group told us something consistent, and we are treating it as a reason to test something rather than as a finding.

What we learned, and what we changed.

We separate changes already made from changes still being considered.

CHANGES WE HAVE ALREADY MADE

WHAT WE LEARNED	WHAT WE CHANGED
A student who misses a session can lose the thread entirely	Asynchronous pitch recording in LaunchLab
Expectations left implicit are expectations nobody holds	An explicit attendance policy, reviewed at orientation
One mentor conversation early is not enough	A strengthened mid-program mentor touchpoint
We could not tell what a program changed without a starting point	A Navigator baseline before the program, giving a real before and after
Spring founders did not understand how to build trust	Week 5 of Fall was designed around it, and trust ratings moved from 2.3 to 4.7 that day
An hour of workshop reaches some students and not others	We stopped treating a single session as sufficient and look at small-group structure as a design problem
Interns wanted clearer roles and steadier coaching	Written role briefs, a pivot protocol, cross-team time and regular one to one check-ins
An experiential Demo Day produced same-day improvement	Keep the storytelling workshop before the mentor block, and a named backup mentor for every founder
Founders strongest out loud did not always submit forms	Keep the main impact survey in the last working session, with a short post-program reflection by email
Two admitted Fall students never engaged and two left after one session	Stronger intake, early mutual-fit steps and recommitment points, and a planning size of 10 to 12 active students

WHAT WE ARE STILL WORKING OUT

Across every program, students valued people above everything else, and yet clarity about who to turn to next stayed uneven. Talking to anyone outside a program remained the hardest thing to get students to do. Both are about connection rather than curriculum, and neither is solved by running the same program again.

Looking ahead.

THE OPEN QUESTION WE ARE CARRYING

What actually helps a young person turn an experience into a better next decision, and how much of that depends on someone staying in contact afterwards? We have evidence that students build, revise and explain their work well inside a program. We have very little evidence about what happens once it ends.

We are exploring how to connect experiences with sustained guidance, reflection, and useful evidence, so that a young person can make a better next decision rather than simply finish a program.

The journey we describe has six stages. Students move through them iteratively, entering at different points and returning as their thinking changes. Reflection is what turns each stage into something a student can use, and it is the part our evidence suggests matters most and is easiest to skip.

STAGE	WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE IN THE WORK SO FAR
Understand self	The Navigator baseline, and naming strengths, interests and assumptions with evidence
Explore and prepare	Interviews, guest speakers, mentors, and seeing options a student had not considered
Build and solve	LaunchLab ventures, prototypes, and real responsibility in the internship
Discern and position	Choosing with evidence, revising after feedback, and building a portfolio
Work and deepen	Applying, testing with real people, and acting on a decision
Lead and give back	A former mentee returning to help the next cohort test their work

A proposed Bold Futures Fellowship would test that idea with a small group over a year. It is a proposal, subject to Board approval and funding, and preparing it is a separate decision from authorizing its launch, enrollment, or spending. Nothing here announces a 2027 program.

We are also thinking about how to equip the people around a young person, parents, trusted adults and the staff of other organizations, to support readiness well.

WHAT WE ARE NOT ANNOUNCING

No 2027 program, enrollment, stipend, corporate commitment or implementation schedule. Our delivered workshops are history and evidence in this report, not a service available to book.

Financial stewardship.

The figures below are the planned FY2026 operating budget approved by the Board. They are a plan, not a statement of actual performance.

PLANNED REVENUE	FY2026
Individual donations	$18,000
Grants and foundations	$25,000
Corporate sponsorships	$10,000
Gifts in kind	$10,000
Total	$63,000

PLANNED ALLOCATION	FY2026	SHARE
Program	$32,660	51.7%
General and administrative	$17,714	28.1%
Marketing and fundraising	$11,760	18.6%
Total expenses	$63,134	100%

TWO THINGS TO READ CAREFULLY

$25,000 of the $63,000 is grants and foundations, projected rather than secured. The three expense categories sum to $62,134 against a displayed total of $63,134; the difference corresponds to a contingency amount in our records, which we are reconciling rather than adding a line to make it balance. Donated professional work is our largest real input, is not cash, and is not counted as revenue.

The people behind this.

Eleven directors and advisors covering education, finance, law, marketing, community development and entrepreneurship. Donald Dea chairs the Board. Arlene Powers serves as secretary and Jessica Haberer as treasurer. Ruth Gay serves as board president and executive director. Delivery depends on co-facilitators, volunteer mentors, guest speakers and Demo Day panelists drawn from working founders and professionals, and on the summer interns who rebuilt a good deal of how the programs run.

How to support this work.

Programs are free to students. That is deliberate, because the young people we most want in the room are the ones for whom a fee ends the conversation.

WAY IN	WHAT IT SUPPORTS
Give	Student access, facilitation, mentoring and delivery. We do not publish dollar-to-outcome equivalences until we have costed figures we can stand behind.
Mentor or speak	Every Fall founder named a person rather than a session as what made the biggest difference.
Open a door	Students named knowing the right people as one of their two biggest barriers.
Refer a student	Most of what we have was built through warm referrals.

Bold Futures Academy Foundation · EIN 33-3751028 · admin@boldfuturesacademy.org · boldfuturesacademy.org

> **FROM RUTH**
>
> I started this because I kept meeting young people who were not short on ambition or talent. They were short on someone helping them make sense of what they were learning, and staying long enough for it to matter. This report is an honest account of what we have built against that, what the evidence shows, and what we still do not know. If any of it sounds like work you want a hand in, I would be glad to hear from you.

Sources and methods.

SOURCE	WHAT IT COVERS	COLLECTION
LaunchLab Fall 2026 session forms	Day 1, Week 5 and per-session statements, skill ratings, support and opportunity questions	Sessions 1 to 5, Sep 12 to Oct 10, 2026. Week 5 n=4 of 4
Fall recordings, transcripts and student work	What founders said and did, Demo Day pitches and feedback, the team simulation, prototypes and briefs	All six sessions, Sep 12 to Oct 17, 2026
LaunchLab Fall 2026 final report and student profiles	Six-week progression, Demo Day, mentor impact and network for each founder	Prepared October 17, 2026
LaunchLab Spring 2026 records	Participation, profiles, venture development	Apr 18 to May 23, 2026
UConn workshop survey	Preparation, interest in LaunchLab, named skill gaps	Nov 2025, n=7
UConn mentoring platform	Mentee ratings	Oct 2024 to Nov 2025, 11 ratings, 4 mentees
Hartford reflection surveys	Confidence before and after, most useful element, problems students want solved	Jul 15, 2026, n=8
Internship exit reflections	Experience ratings, capabilities gained, what to change	Aug 2026, n=5 of 8
College student interviews	What would make an experience worth their time	2026, small connected group
Reach records	Delivery counts by program and period	Sep 2023 to Oct 2026
Board-approved FY2026 budget	Planned revenue and allocation	Planned, not actual

Student-reported means a student rated or wrote it. Observed means a facilitator recorded it or a student produced the work. Confidence, satisfaction, demonstrated capability and later outcomes are different things, and we do not use one as evidence for another. Pre-incorporation work is reported separately from organizational activity since March 2025.

BOLD FUTURES ACADEMY.

Understand yourself. Build readiness. Explore what is possible. Turn experience into opportunity.

IMPACT AND LEARNING REPORT · OCTOBER 2026

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