



shaping our urban leaders



**2024  
Impact  
Report**

# THE SOUL FOUNDATION

**Too many of our communities face a heartbreaking truth: young people are growing up without access to the resources, support, and opportunities they need to thrive. When educational gaps widen, safe spaces disappear, and guidance is absent, the consequences reach far beyond the individual child—they affect the future of the entire community. The safety, stability, and success of our youth must become a shared responsibility.**

**The S.O.U.L. Foundation (Shaping Our Urban Leaders) was born out of this urgent need. In 1998, a group of concerned citizens came together with a common conviction: that every child deserves the chance to succeed, regardless of their circumstances. They saw the gaps—in education, in wellness, in opportunity—and committed to closing them.**

**Through targeted programs in education, wellness, and athletics, the S.O.U.L. Foundation empowers young people to build character, self-discipline, and integrity. These are not just after-school activities—they are lifelines. Our work provides more than skills; it offers belonging, belief, and a path forward.**



**In a world where too many children are left behind, S.O.U.L. steps in to say: not in our community.**



# OUR IMPACT

In 2024, the S.O.U.L. Foundation reached more than **10,617 children and teens**—on golf courses, in schools, and through trusted community partners.

Our innovative “Center on the Move” model brings our programming and services directly to where young people live, learn, and play—embedding our work in schools, recreation centers, and neighborhoods across Central Ohio. By meeting youth where they are, this approach eliminates barriers to access, expands our reach, and ensures that more children can benefit from our resources and mentorship. Combined with our deep-rooted community relationships, this mobile model allows us to both broaden our impact and strengthen connections with the families we serve.

But our numbers only tell part of the story. Behind every program, activity, and lesson are the dedicated individuals who make it all possible. In 2024, our work was powered by a team of 5 committed adult mentors and 12 inspiring youth volunteers—showing up for after-school programs, summer experiences, and special events to support, guide, and uplift the next generation.

Their service is a powerful reminder: transformation happens through relationships. And it is our collective investment in youth that turns opportunity into reality.



# WHO WE SERVE

**10,617**

Total young adults  
and children  
impacted in 2024.

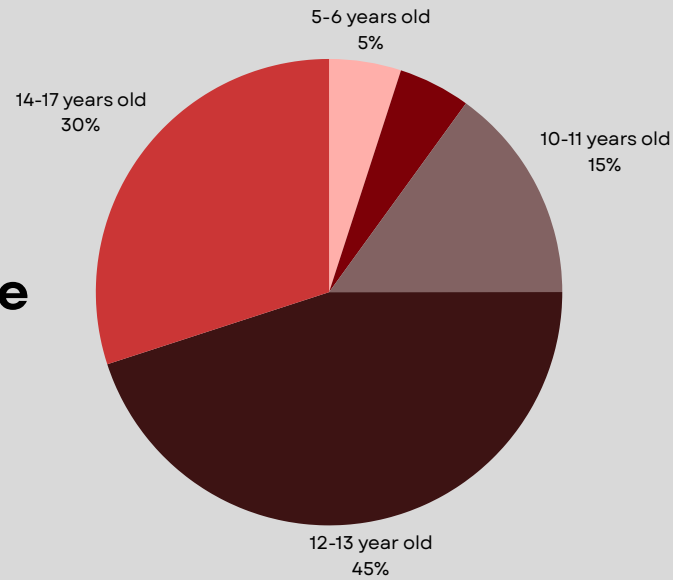
**32**

Schools across  
Central Ohio.

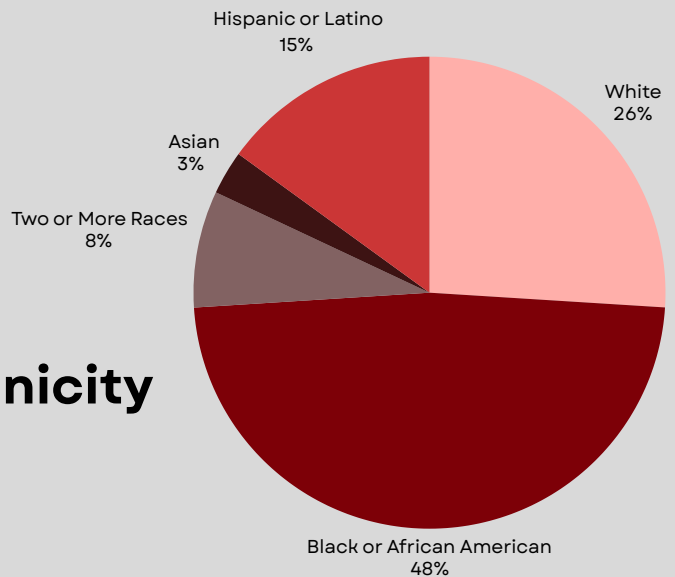
**10**

Community  
partners.

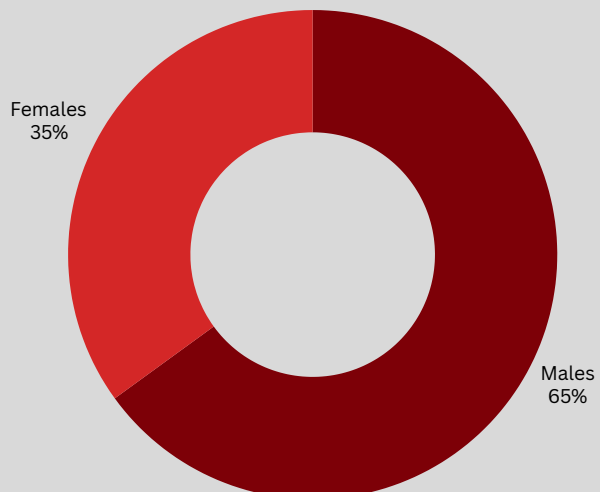
## Age



## Ethnicity



## Gender





# LEADERSHIP THROUGH GOLF

Leadership Through Golf is an innovative S.O.U.L. Foundation program designed to serve historically underserved and marginalized students and families.

Launched in 2018, the program reimagines access to the game of golf—using the sport not just as a recreational activity, but as a powerful vehicle for teaching life skills to students who are often excluded from traditional enrichment opportunities.

By meeting youth where they are and inviting them into a space traditionally seen as exclusive, Leadership Through Golf opens doors to new experiences, confidence, and networks.



The program's core focus areas—leadership development, community engagement, career exploration, and self-efficacy equip participants with tools that extend far beyond the course.

Now in its sixth year, this community-driven initiative has built strong momentum, but in many ways we have only just teed off. The potential for growth, deeper impact, and broader access remains vast. Leadership Through Golf is just getting started.



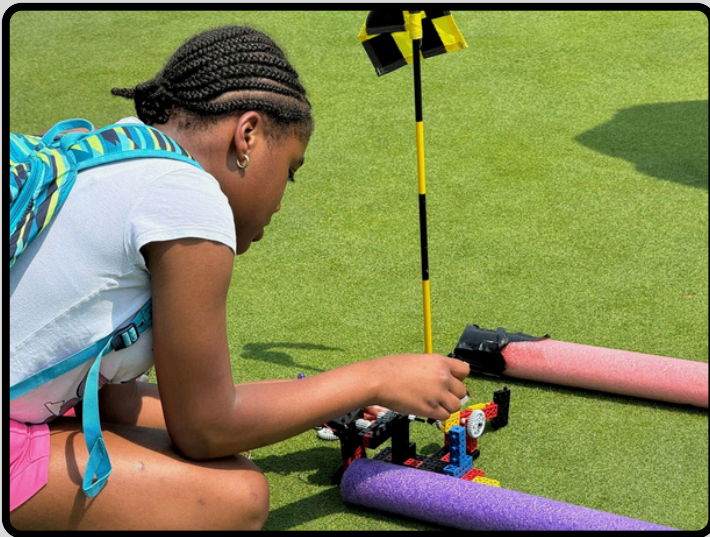


# SOUL IN ACTION - SNAG GOLF



**S.O.U.L., in partnership with the Columbus Recreation & Parks Department's Golf Division, uses Starting New At Golf (SNAG) equipment to introduce the fundamentals of golf to youth across Central Ohio.**

**Through school visits to elementary and middle schools in underserved inner-city neighborhoods, S.O.U.L. brings the game of golf directly to students who might not otherwise have access to it—breaking down barriers and creating early, positive exposure to the sport.**



**SNAG is also a key part of Columbus City Schools' Summer Experience, where youth mentors from the Leadership Through Golf program teach kids ages 6–15 how to putt, chip, and drive in a fun, approachable way. Once students gain confidence with these foundational skills, they get the unique opportunity to take their learning to the course, using real golf equipment in a real golf environment—bridging practice with authentic experience.**





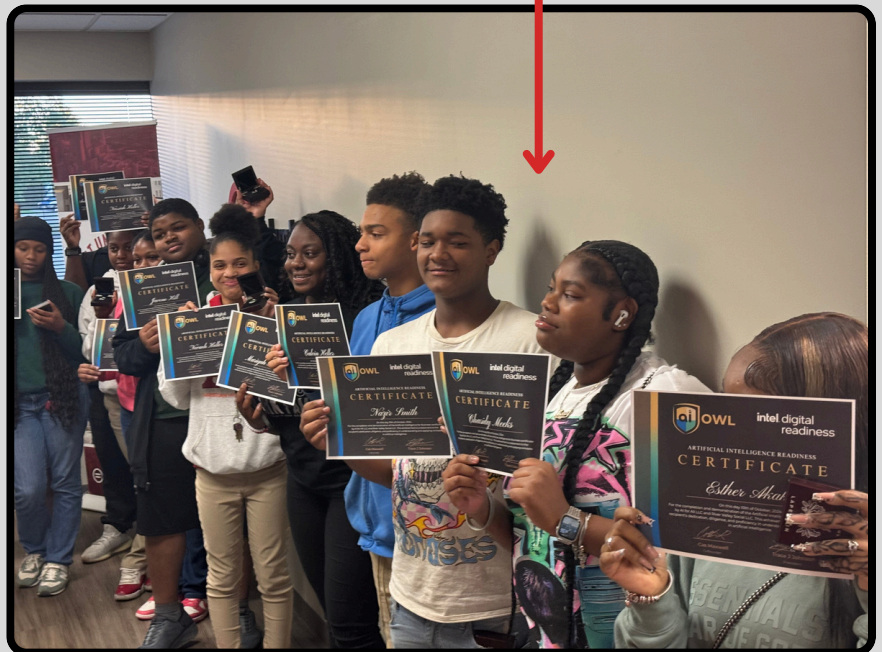
# SOUL IN ACTION - AI OWL



Through a dynamic, instructor-led curriculum paired with the immersive video game “Jumper AI,” students are introduced to the fundamentals of artificial intelligence in a way that is engaging, relevant, and deeply impactful. This innovative blend of hands-on instruction and gameplay allows students to develop real-world skills while building confidence and curiosity about the tech-driven world around them.

Upon completion, students receive an AI credential (Artificial Intelligence Readiness Certification).

For S.O.U.L., this initiative is more than just a tech program—it’s part of our mission to break barriers, create access, and empower youth with the tools they need to lead and thrive. By meeting students where they are and introducing them to high-opportunity fields like AI, we are planting the seeds of opportunity, equity, and excellence right in the heart of our communities.





# SOUL IN ACTION - SPECIAL OLYMPICS

**S.O.U.L. is proud to partner with Special Olympics to create a wide range of opportunities for athletes across Central Ohio. Through this collaboration, we are able to provide our youth with the chance to not only support athletes, but also learn the invaluable lesson of community service.**

**As part of the Leadership Through Golf program, our young adults volunteer at Special Olympics events, engaging directly with athletes and providing encouragement and support. This hands-on involvement teaches them the importance of giving back to their community, while also fostering empathy, inclusion, and a strong sense of leadership.**



**Through these experiences, our youth learn that true leadership goes beyond personal success. It is about contributing to the well-being of others and creating positive change within their community.**



# SOUL IN ACTION - LEGOS AT FAIRWOOD

**In partnership with Brixilated and The Braxton Miller Foundation, S.O.U.L. visits Fairwood Elementary each week to lead engaging LEGO buildout sessions for kids ages 6-13.**

**Through creative LEGO projects tied to specific prompts, students are introduced to essential STEM concepts like engineering, design, and problem-solving in a hands-on, accessible way.**

**While building structures and imagining new possibilities, students strengthen their critical thinking, collaboration, and communication skills—all under the guise of play. It is joyful learning with real educational depth.**

**The program also fosters empathy and introduces students to career pathways related to the objects they create, helping them see how their interests can translate into future opportunities.**



# SOUL IN ACTION - STEM PLAYBOOK



**In partnership with the STEM Playbook, S.O.U.L. is bringing high-impact, hands-on STEM curriculum to youth across Central Ohio.**

**Over the course of seven interactive weeks, students dive into engaging activities that demonstrate how science, technology, engineering, and math are woven into everyday life.**



**Each session is designed to make learning fun and relatable, while also helping students connect these concepts to real-world careers and opportunities they may have never considered. It is all part of S.O.U.L.'s mission to equip youth with the knowledge, confidence, and curiosity to see themselves in spaces where innovation happens.**



# MEMBER SPOTLIGHT - JOHN CURRY

**John Curry is a trailblazer in our Leadership Through Golf program, proudly becoming the first Leadership Ambassador to attend college.**

**After completing a successful first year at the University of Cincinnati, John is continuing his academic journey this fall at The Ohio State University where he plans to study Exercise Science.**

**John's passion for sports and helping others has shaped his career goals and his commitment to growth continues to inspire those around him. Even while pursuing higher education, John returns each summer to work with the S.O.U.L. Foundation where he encourages and uplifts other Columbus youth to dream big and stay focused on their goals.**



# MEMBER SPOTLIGHT - TROY FERGUSON



**Troy's story highlights what's possible when inner-city youth are given access to opportunities that are too often out of reach.**

**Golf is more than a game, it teaches discipline, focus, patience, and confidence. That is why the S.O.U.L. Foundation is committed to exposing as many kids as possible to the game and advocating for the launch of golf programs in urban schools, where talent and potential already exist just waiting to be unlocked.**

**Troy Ferguson was just 13 years old when he was introduced to the game of golf through our Leadership Through Golf program.**

**What started as a new experience quickly turned into a passion. Through years of commitment and support from mentors, Troy earned a spot on the newly formed Linden-McKinley golf team, where he went on to receive Second Team All-City honors. Today, he's being recruited by multiple colleges and continues to inspire other young athletes in his community.**





# OUR PARTNERS

The S.O.U.L. Foundation would not be where it is today without the unwavering support of our partners and donors. Their generosity has been instrumental in helping us bring life-changing programs to kids and teens across Central Ohio—from golf courses and classrooms to community centers and beyond.

We are deeply grateful for every partner who believes in the power of showing up and investing in our next generation.

## 2024 Partners:

**Columbus Urban League**

**Legacy U**

**Columbus Central Ohio  
YMCA**

**Office of Violence  
Prevention**

**Columbus City Schools**

**STEM Playbook**

**CRPD Golf Division**

**Stringer Family  
Foundation**

**Brixilated LEGO**

**The Braxton Miller  
Foundation**

**Central Ohio Special  
Olympics**

**21<sup>st</sup> Century Grant**

# CONTACT INFORMATION



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