ABOUT THE ACCELERATOR

The Mission Accelerator was a five-month program designed to fast-track the growth and impact of nonprofits in Greater Austin. This unique opportunity brought new, high-value resources to a select group of enterprising nonprofits each year. To qualify, an organization must have been an established 501c3 with an innovative solution that addressed a community need, and had an initial plan to significantly grow their program or service.

Philanthropitch is a program that offers promising, local nonprofits a chance to pitch for human and financial capital in front of sold-out crowds of philanthropists, donors, concerned citizens and community leaders. From 2014 - 2017, Philanthropitch was the final stage for nonprofits applying to the Mission Accelerator.

The organizations selected for the Mission Accelerator in 2017 were working to solve some of Austin’s most complex community problems in areas such as modern slavery and trafficking, mental health, NICU parental support and more. We were thrilled to shine a spotlight on these incredible, mission-driven organizations addressing some of Austin’s biggest challenges.

Over the next few months, the nonprofits engaged in group classes and received one-on-one guidance from nonprofit consultants as well as Social Venture Partners (SVPs). SVPs are among Austin’s most successful business leaders and social entrepreneurs who invest their time, expertise and connections in promising nonprofit organizations poised to make a significant impact. SVPs were critical participants in the Mission Accelerator and worked alongside nonprofit leadership teams to create a business growth plan and case for support. Out of the Accelerator, three organizations were selected as investees. In collaboration with dedicated SVP teams, these nonprofits refined, piloted, tested and implemented their business growth plans. They came away from the experience with investment-ready business plans, in addition to the network and skills they needed to pitch their plans and receive funding.
ABOUT THE ORGANIZATIONS

Hand to Hold provides support, education and resources to parents in the neonatal intensive care unit and to those who have lost a baby because of preterm birth or a special healthcare need. They were looking to expand their Ambassador Program, which is a comprehensive, hospital based support program that utilizes trained and supervised NICU graduate parents to serve as “Ambassadors” in the NICU, offering support to parents and families. Through the support of Mission Accelerator, they refined their earned revenue model.

Allies Against Slavery harnesses the power of technology, data, and partnerships to combat human trafficking and protect freedom and dignity. One of the most significant challenges to solving the crisis of human trafficking is victim identification. Allies Against Slavery set out to solve the problem of victim identification by developing an online screening tool that helps frontline agencies rapidly and effectively identify sex trafficking victims, called “Lighthouse.” With the support of Mission Accelerator, they were able to develop their business model for Lighthouse, refined an earned revenue element and identified opportunities for growth.

Catholic Charities of Central Texas is composed of people of faith serving anyone in need by strengthening families and promoting respect for human dignity and life. They were looking to grow and expand their Counseling Services to better address the mental health care provider shortage. Their program aimed to provide high-quality, low-cost counseling services to areas not currently served, as well as provide education to the community on the importance of mental health. Through Mission Accelerator, they developed a strategic plan for long-term success and sustainability.

This year’s Mission Accelerator class represented a variety of services, but what they all had in common was an innovative solution to a pressing community need. These organizations had a vision for growth and huge potential for impact - they just needed a strategic investment to bring their vision to life.

Katelyn Lowrey
Accelerator Manager, Mission Capital
ALLIES AGAINST SLAVERY

ACCELERATOR FOCUS
Allies Against Slavery set out to solve the problem of victim identification by developing an online screening tool, called Lighthouse, that helps frontline agencies rapidly and effectively identify sex trafficking victims.

OUTCOMES / ACCELERATOR IMPACT
• Developed and launched Lighthouse.
• Re-branded marketing and new website design.
• Developed strategic growth plan for business model.

SVP IMPACT
• Provided strategic guidance of setting goals and managing the process.
• Supplied a constant source of learning material, coaching and professional development.
• Helped in real time with executing the launch of Lighthouse.
• Acted as execution partners as well as consultants.

THE LIGHTHOUSE TOOL

"The importance of identification is that moment when you help someone move from exploitation into recovery."

John Nehme
President & CEO, Allies Against Slavery

"This experience was one of the most rewarding things I've ever done. I'm grateful I had the opportunity."

Krista Endsley
Social Venture Partner
President & CEO, Cantata Health

“3x the number of victims identified

This was an incredible experience. The SVP partnership was the single most instrumental and strategic partnership in 2018 to move towards our “North Star” of identifying victims and survivors."
ACCELERATOR FOCUS
Catholic Charities of Central Texas aimed to grow and expand their Counseling Services to better address the mental health care provider shortage and overcome obstacles of distance, cost and stigma through virtual therapy.

OUTCOMES / ACCELERATOR IMPACT
• Expanded multilingual services with direct counseling available in Spanish and access to interpreters for other languages.
• Increased impact without increasing expenses by offering virtual therapy to fill gaps in service in rural areas.
• Won Virtual Innovation Award for all Catholic Charities in Texas.
• Presented virtual therapy at Catholic Charities USA annual conference in Santa Fe, NM.

SVP IMPACT
• Navigated technology challenges with the guidance of SVPs whose experience was vital to moving project forward.
• Clarified goals and priorities to address critical needs.
• Functioned as a sounding board and “sanity check.”
• Helped Catholic Charities accomplish goals more quickly than they would have done on their own.

VIRTUAL THERAPY SESSIONS

“Loved this experience! This was a successful game changer for our mission. The SVP knowledge of technology and nonprofit language was vital to moving this project forward.”

Sara Ramirez
Executive Director
Catholic Charities of Central Texas
ACCELERATOR FOCUS

Hand to Hold applied for the Accelerator at a time when they were facing the opportunity for extreme growth in scaling their services nationwide but did not have the foundation needed to support or capitalize on it.

OUTCOMES / ACCELERATOR IMPACT

- Developed formula needed to sell Hand to Hold services to hospitals nationwide.
- Developed earned income strategy to sell their product and secured four new hospital contracts.
- Launched first Capital Campaign which “would not have been possible without the Accelerator program.” Goal to raise $1 million dollars by the end of 2020.

SVP IMPACT

- Built Human Resources system to support staffing decisions developed out of roadmap created with SVP collaboration.
- Provided tactical help once team identified marketing as a missing piece to the equation.
- Gave depth and credibility to staff’s visionary planning when presenting to the Board.
- Acted as thought partners and guides which produced the vision for the capital campaign.

“When we began the first meeting, we brain dumped and it was very overwhelming. The biggest accomplishment we had was being able to narrow in our vision and our goals in order to accomplish even more. We have rethought and restructured ourselves as a company, not a traditional nonprofit.”

Kelli Kelley
CEO & Founder, Hand to Hold

By investing in their staff and their capacity, Hand to Hold has served more families with less of a budget.

Nick Covelli
Social Venture Partner
INSIGHTS: SOCIAL VENTURE PARTNER IMPACT

"There was an inherent trust that SVPs understood the what and why, cared deeply about our mission, and could communicate it in any setting.

Allies Against Slavery"

"We look at ourselves as a small company now, not a typical nonprofit. Our 2020 vision came out of our work with SVPs as thought partners.

Hand to Hold"

"The SVPs were a highly sophisticated, experienced team. They acted as a sounding board and sanity check, and translated social services jargon into business language. The experience was a game changer.

Catholic Charities of Central Texas"

“What I’ve learned about Mission Capital through participating in this program is that everything comes back to building and strengthening the foundations of these nonprofits.”

Social Venture Partner