

# Ensuring North Texas Kids Know They Belong in College, Careers, and their Communities



Classrooms are not the only places that kids learn, and academic learning is not the only learning that students have lost because of the pandemic. More than 80% of Texas students' time is spent learning outside of school. High-quality out of school time (OST), which includes afterschool, summer, and enrichment programs, provides hands-on learning opportunities that help kids develop critical life skills as well as nurturing mentor and peer relationships that accelerate academic learning and prepare youth for their futures.

OST is a critical component of the functioning ecosystem of support necessary for whole child development and whole communities. Community-based providers have been essential during the pandemic, standing up additional health and safety measures to continue offering in-person care and learning, while also connecting families to critical services and resources, such as food, technology, and healthcare. Strong partnerships between schools and these community-based organizations are vital to our state's successful recovery and future.

The [C5 Youth Foundation of Texas](#) helps high potential youth across North Texas prepare to be successful leaders in college, work, and their communities.

Through a unique five year, annual program, C5 supports youth in becoming character-driven, community-focused, challenge-ready, college-bound, and committed to a better future. C5 youth begin their commitment to the program as rising eighth graders with an intensive summer camp experience that's built around foundational leadership development and social awareness curriculum.

C5 youth return to summer camp in their second year, where they continue expanding their leadership skills as role models for first year participants. In their third summer, youth focus on becoming challenge-ready as they plan for and complete a 7-day hike in the Rocky Mountains through C5's partnership with [NOLS](#). Students who complete this wilderness survival trip will be better equipped to overcome the obstacles and change they face on a college campus.

Participants kick off their fourth year by organizing and executing multiple summer college tours and learning the application and admissions process. For their fifth and final summer intensive, C5 youth focus on their communities through [service learning](#)—engaging community stakeholders, identifying needs, advocating for change, and developing solutions.

During the school year, C5 continues to support and engage youth through Pathways programming that takes place on the weekend and offers participants the opportunity to apply their developing leadership and social skills in preparing for college, career, and community action.

At the core of C5's year-round programming is youth voice and choice. Everything from deciding which colleges they want to tour, how they spend their food and lodging budget on trips, and recommending solutions to address community issues is led by youth participants—readying them for the many responsibilities they'll face after high school.



## Creating safe spaces for social and emotional learning

After a gap year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, C5 relaunched summer programs with responsive support for their youth. C5 partnered with mental health organizations to provide youth services addressing social isolation and balancing school and work to support their families. Summer literacy more intentionally focused on learning acceleration and social awareness. Summer programming also prioritized self care with activities like sunrise yoga and 'Talk About It Tuesdays,' where youth had the opportunity to discuss current issues such as bias, discrimination, perseverance, accountability, and evolving education, pandemic, and immigration policies in a safe space.



Full-time staff members with expertise in leadership development and postsecondary success guide C5's overall curriculum and program framework, yet by the last two years, most activities are entirely planned and executed by the youth themselves, with staff there to facilitate and make sure they're meeting their needs.

A recent event focused on entrepreneurship, where youth invited and coordinated guest speakers to discuss successful traits and experiences. C5 aims to expand [youth entrepreneurship](#) programming in partnership with [TXPOST](#) to help youth explore career interests and alignment while also acquiring entrepreneurial mindsets that will serve themselves and their communities well beyond graduation.

As an organization dedicated to ensuring kids have everything they need to get to and through college, strong school partnerships are key to achieving C5's mission. Daneshe 'Dani' Bethune, C5 Youth Foundation of Texas' Executive Director explains, "Schools have high potential students who have what it takes to be leaders, but unfortunately there's a lack of resources in that area. That's where we can become a partner and support their work. Our program helps students hold themselves accountable to who they want to be as a student and as a person."

C5 currently works with Dallas Independent School District (DISD) leadership to recruit students who will most benefit from their program. As C5 aims to scale their impact by serving almost 50% more students per class and increasing the class cohort size at each school, they are pursuing more strategic partnerships and alignment with local education agencies (LEAs) as well as corporate partners. As Ms. Bethune points out, "We're building youth to become better citizens for us *all*. Ultimately, everyone wants to see children succeed, because it has an impact on all of our futures."



## 2021 Youth Impact & Outcomes

**Youth ages** 13–18

### Youth demographics

African-American: 17% Male: 41%  
Asian: 3% Female: 59%  
Biracial: 12%  
Hispanic: 54%  
White: 14%

95% of students will be the first in their families to attend and graduate from college.

### Youth outcomes

- Increased academic performance
- Increased high school graduation rates
- Increased college acceptance rates
- Enhanced social skills
- Positive peer and adult relationships
- Increased self-confidence, leadership abilities, and commitment to community volunteering and helping others



**// C5 did great things for my son. He was a quiet boy that would struggle with speaking up, and after C5 he found his voice and made so many friends.**

—C5 Texas Parent



The Texas Partnership for Out of School Time (TXPOST) is a statewide intermediary whose mission is to convene, educate, and advocate to improve the quality and increase the availability of out of school time (OST) opportunities, like those offered by C5 Youth Foundation of Texas, for Texas youth. TXPOST works in partnership with vital regional and local organizations, which invest deeply in their own communities to offer professional development opportunities, engage in system building work, advocate for the OST field, and support local programs.



### Contact Information

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