



LEAD

COLLECTIVE

2023

IMPACT REPORT

OUR CONTACT INFO

www.leadgvl.org

864-214-5877

info@leadgvl.org

110 S. Pleasantburg Drive
Greenville SC 29607

CONTENTS

Mission	1
Lead Collective FAQ	2-3
Our Story	4-5
Measuring Impact.....	6-7
The Ministry of GOAT	8-13
The Ministry of Eleos	14-19
The Ministry of Reach	20-25
Jay Goodjoine's Story	26-29
Final Notes.....	30-31

EQUIP

We exist to equip and elevate youth leaders in the way of Jesus

AND

from historically under-resourced communities

ELEVATE

through three distinct but unified ministries.



The Ministry of GOAT

We exist to equip and elevate youth leaders in the way of Jesus, through outdoor adventures.



The Ministry of Eleos

We exist to equip and elevate youth leaders through neighborhood-centered ministry.



The Ministry of Reach

We exist to reach and equip today's incarcerated youth to become tomorrow's leaders.

OUR MISSION

“We exist to equip and elevate youth leaders in the way of Jesus from historically under-resourced communities.”

OUR BOARD

Charnise Mangle

Ryan McCrary

Michael White

Henry L. Parr

Joy Hill

Allen Chaney

OUR VALUES

Relationships

The only way to truly understand the needs of an individual or a community is through trusted friendships formed over time. All of our ministries rely heavily upon relationships as we pursue holistic transformation in the lives and communities where we serve.

Dignity

We want to honor the worth and value of every person we serve because we believe every one of us has been made in God's image. Dignity is a gift from God etched in our DNA. We want that conviction to be reinforced in every part of our ministry.

Empowerment


As people made in God's image, we are all full of God-given potential. We were made with the incredible capacity to create, serve, and change the world. All true transformation takes place when we discover and lean into that reality!

Justice


We acknowledge the sobering reality that our country's history is marked by injustice both personally and structurally. We recognize that the individuals and communities we serve did not become under-resourced in a vacuum. We are committed to pursuing just social structures that uphold the transformation taking place in the lives of the individuals we serve.


Leadership Development


“Those closest to the problem are closest to the solution but furthest from the resources.” This is not original to us, but we've gladly adopted it. Leadership development is the cornerstone of all sustainable ministry. We are raising up leaders from the communities we serve, equipping, and elevating them to join the mission with us.


 Ryan McCrary takes students in his neighborhood on the very first Great Outdoor Adventure Trip. **2008**


2009 | GOAT (Great Outdoor Adventure Trips) incorporates as a non-profit organization. 

 GOAT builds a climbing gym that would go on to serve thousands of students. **2011**


2013 | Cam and Joy move to Nicholtown to establish what would become Eleos Ministry. 


 Eleos Ministry hosts its first Open Gym Basketball night at Phillis Wheatley Community Center. **2016**

2018 | Cam Hill meets with Juvenile Detention Facility staff to discuss partnership with Eleos Ministry. (This partnership would evolve to become Reach). 

2019 | Eleos Ministry purchases an after-school center and makes Nicholtown home. 

 Lead Collective is formed to bring the ministries of GOAT & Eleos together to provide more support and create greater impact. We launched with 3 full-time ministry leaders. **2020**

2021 | Reach is launched providing ministry inside the Juvenile Detention Facility, and outside of the facility as a 1-year re-entry program. 

2023 | Lead Collective secures new facility and expands ministry. 



EQUIP AND ELEVATE

Better Together

In 2019, GOAT and Eleos Ministry began to dream about joining forces to expand their reach and increase the impact of their ministries. Since then, the Lead Collective model has allowed us to launch a new ministry (Reach) and do more together than we ever could have done apart. Our team is stronger, our resources are greater, and our vision is clearer. We truly are better together.

Measuring Impact

At Lead Collective, we are committed to equipping and elevating youth leaders in the way of Jesus from our most vulnerable communities. Everything we measure is meant to help us answer this question: “Are our ministries effectively reaching students from historically under-resourced communities, and are our programs transforming students into leaders who lead like Jesus?”

How Do We Measure Impact

We regularly tell our team, “We are responsible for the input, God is responsible for the output.” In a sense, you could refer to this report as an “input report.” We are trying to measure our inputs, and we are trying to observe God’s work (output). I like to think of this as measurable impact and observable impact.

Some things can be identified and measured, but some things just need to be observed and celebrated.

Measurable (DATA)

Our aim at Lead Collective is deeply personal. We want to see students transformed into leaders. As we all know, transformation is something we can contribute to, but cannot control. We don’t measure the success or failure of our ministry based on outcomes that are out of our control - we base our ministry strategy on the effectiveness of inputs that we can control. In this impact report, you will see a page for each ministry dedicated to measuring the inputs of our programs - these inputs are tangible expressions of love...which we all know is the soul of lasting transformation.

Observable (STORIES)

They say a picture is worth a thousand words. Likewise, we think a story is worth a thousand data points. Transformation can be a hard thing to quantify, but when you see it, transformation becomes hard to deny. You can’t always trace the transformation back to a particular influence, or a specific “input.” But that’s okay. The transformation that we observe is worth beholding and celebrating. Let’s thank God for the things that are hard to put your finger on, but are undeniably beautiful. That’s transformation. It’s slow... It’s often born out of pain... It’s almost always cultivated in community... and it’s worth celebrating every single time.



THE MINISTRY OF GOAT

We exist to equip and elevate youth leaders in the way of Jesus from historically under-resourced communities through outdoor adventures.

128

STUDENTS SERVED

51

ADVENTURE TEAM OUTINGS

140

PAID JR.GUIDE HOURS

972

MENTOR HOURS PROVIDED

1,126

MILES COVERED

458

TOTAL ADVENTURES PROVIDED

144

Rock Climbing Trips Provided

58

Hiking Trips Provided

130

Biking / Mountain Biking Trips Provided

92

Paddle Boarding Trips Provided

14

Backpacking Trips Provided

20

Outdoor Skills Training Sessions

2008-2023

The History of GOAT

The outdoors was always an incredible source of peace and joy for Ryan McCrary. But he also wanted young people who never had the opportunity to adventure outside to experience all the outdoors had to offer. In 2008, Ryan took several students from his neighborhood rock climbing and white water rafting. By 2009, a few outdoor trips led by a passionate climber and rafter turned into a Ryan forming the non-profit GOAT (Great Outdoor Adventure Trips.) At Lead Collective, we believe the outdoors provides a unique space to experience God and adventure serves as a vehicle to build resilience and grow as a leader. GOAT began with a community member wanting to bless kids in his neighborhood but quickly evolved into formal partnerships with local community centers, mentor agencies, group homes, and residential treatment facilities for youth. Not long after GOAT became a registered non-profit, Ryan hired a Program Director named Joey Short to help plan and guide these growing outdoor adventure trips. Over the next few years, the pair found an office with an attached warehouse with twenty-foot-tall ceilings. As you might expect (or not) they decided to build a climbing gym for the students they were serving. This provided a climate-controlled adventure center for year-round mentoring services, rain or shine, cold or warm. This climbing gym was known locally as The Mountain Goat. In addition to providing thousands of adventures, the gym was open to the public. In 2017 with news of a large commercial climbing gym coming to Greenville, GOAT made the hard decision to close the climbing gym (Mountain Goat). Today, Mountain Goat exists as a separate business serving third-wave coffee and the best liege waffles you can find on this side of the Atlantic. Mountain Goat donates their profits to GOAT, but is technically a separate business (it's complicated, we know). GOAT purchased property next to the coffee shop and built a pump track to teach the fundamentals of mountain biking here in the city.

The Status of GOAT

So much has happened since GOAT began in 2009. We've taken over 10,000 students on outdoor trips from under resourced communities in Greenville County. We've partnered with dozens of amazing nonprofits and agencies, working with students walking through challenging circumstances or living in some of Greenville's most vulnerable neighborhoods. We continue to serve these organizations by offering day trips throughout the summer, which are made possible through hiring college-aged guides who lead these adventures and share the hope of Jesus through rock climbing, paddle boarding, mountain biking, hiking, and backpacking.

Our year-round mentoring program, Adventure Team is still going strong. We have a tremendous relationship with a local climbing gym called Bloc Haven, who hosts our indoor climbing nights. We continue to equip and elevate youth leaders through our junior guide program, eventually hiring them to serve their peers as guides during the summer. As you might expect, the mountains have not lost their charm. We still have the privilege of witnessing hundreds of students experience the beauty and calm of God's creation every year. Best of all, these services are still provided for free thanks, to your incredible generosity!



SNAPSHOTS FROM GOAT





THE MINISTRY OF ELEOS

We exist to equip and elevate youth leaders in the way of Jesus from historically under-resourced communities through neighborhood centered ministry.

102

STUDENTS SERVED

82

FIELD TRIPS TAKEN

67

HOURS OF CREATIVE ARTS

67

HOURS OF TUTORING

78

HOURS OF BIBLE STUDY

102

HOURS OF ORGANIZED BASKETBALL

1,350

HOURS OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

2,448

MENTOR HOURS PROVIDED

8,250

MEALS SHARED

2016-2023

The History of Eleos

In 2013, my wife Joy and I moved into the Nicholtown community to do asset-based community development. For those familiar with ABCD, you know this form of community development takes time. It took us three years to really discover what God was already doing in Nicholtown. We discovered many nonprofits doing great work, community centers providing afterschool care for elementary-aged students, and a long line of civil rights activists and community leaders still active in the neighborhood. We began talking with these nonprofits, community centers, and community leaders, asking how we might be a part of the great work already going on. There seemed to be a unanimous answer to our question: “opportunities for the youth, of course.” The age group with the greatest felt need was middle and high school.

So in 2016, we partnered with a local community center and began hosting a weekly Open Gym for students in the neighborhood. It was simple: we played basketball, offered students help with their homework (which they didn’t take us up on, but it’s the thought that counts, right?), hosted a Q&A about all things related to God and faith, and then we would eat dinner together. For several years, this was our only form of ministry. But by 2019, God opened the doors for us to provide evening Bible studies, a year-round leadership cohort, and a building to house our very own afterschool program providing creative arts services, tutoring, field trips, mentoring services, dinner, and so much more. By the spring of 2021, our afterschool program filled up, and we’ve been operating with a waitlist ever since.

The Status of Eleos

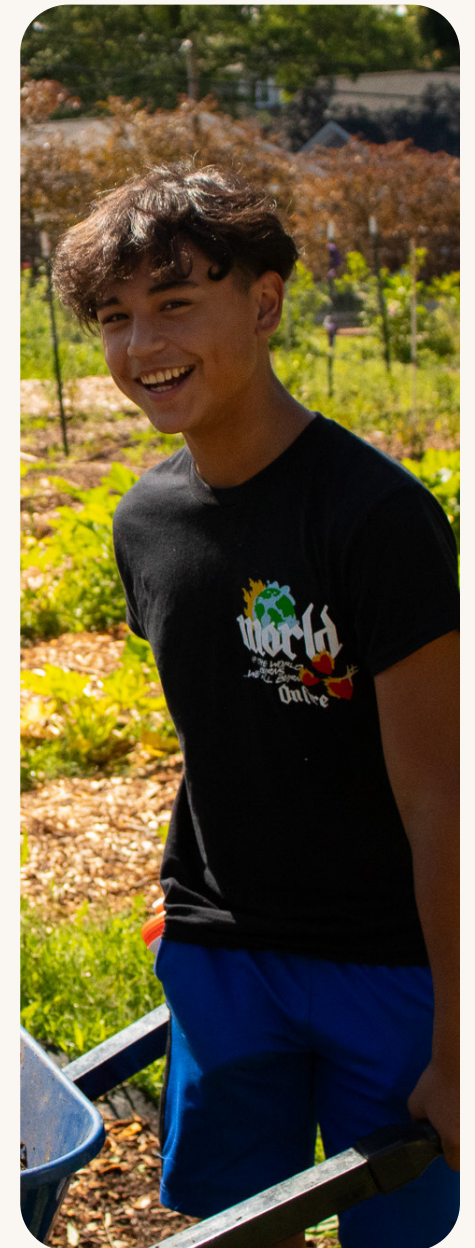
Fast forward to January 2024. As I write these words, our team is preparing to move into a brand new building with 4x the space to make room for those students who have been patiently waiting to be enrolled in our program. Our new facility will feature dedicated rooms for the services provided in our afterschool program. We will even be able to add physical wellness to our program offerings as we open a wellness center where students can take yoga, dance, and fitness classes.

In addition to a larger program facility, our program itself has become more robust and holistic. We began in 2016 by building meaningful relationships with students in our community. We can honestly say now we build authentic relationships with entire households. This has given us the ability to come alongside parents and partner with them to pursue the highest good for their students. This has helped us tremendously as we partner with the local school system to help students flourish academically, as well as local businesses and organizations to help our students become career-ready and prepared to take the next steps beyond high school. Finally, we partner with local churches to care well for the spiritual needs of our students. In fact, when we move into our new facility, a local church (where many of our students and staff attend) will begin leasing our existing building.

God has done so much since 2016, and we can’t wait for the exciting developments ahead.



SNAPSHOTS FROM ELEOS





THE MINISTRY OF REACH

We exist to reach and equip today's incarcerated youth to become tomorrow's leaders.

18

STUDENTS SERVED

5%

RATE OF RECIDIVISM

13

FIELD TRIPS TAKEN

42

BIBLE STUDY HOURS

540

MEALS PROVIDED

960

COACHING HOURS PROVIDED

1,400

MENTOR HOURS PROVIDED

2021-2023

The History of Reach

The Ministry of Reach officially began in 2021, but our story dates back to 2018 when a seed for the ministry was planted. Mark Caligaris at the Juvenile Detention Facility heard about the ministry of Eleos and asked if we would be interested in hosting a satellite version in the JDF. I toured the facility with him and had a strong sense that we needed to partner for the sake of the students held in the juvenile detention facility. At the time, however, Eleos was a fully volunteer-led ministry, and we didn't have the volunteer horsepower to pull it off. We ultimately decided to put a pin in the conversation with a strong desire to come back to it later.

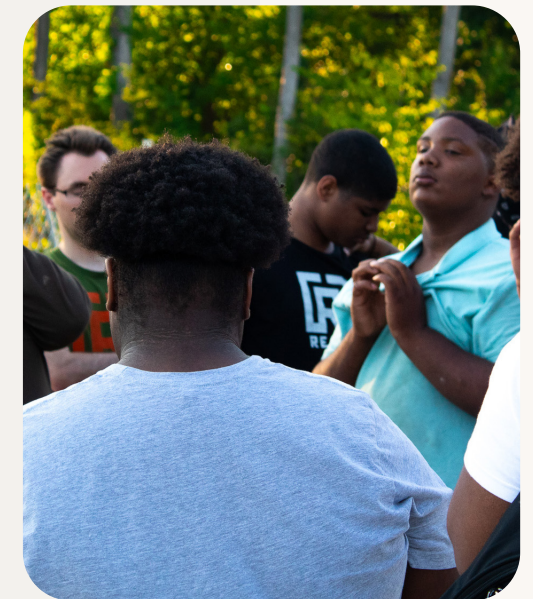
In 2020, we began dreaming once again about this ministry opportunity. After speaking with several experts in the field, we decided to form a separate ministry and provide more holistic services to the students held at the JDF. Inspired by ministries like Jumpstart and Soteria CDC, we wanted to offer services both inside the detention facility and outside for those who were returning home. In August 2021, upon hearing that the JDF was reopening to visitors after the pandemic, we decided to launch the ministry. However, one week after we launched, we received word that the detention facility would be closing due to another outbreak of the novel virus. We were cleared to enter the facility that winter, but our time in the Juvenile Detention Facility was short-lived.

By March 2022, due to a guard shortage, the entire facility shut down. As is often the case, this unexpected turn forced us to think creatively about how to adapt our ministry to continue serving the needs of students at the Department of Juvenile Justice. We developed a more robust re-entry program and began taking direct referrals from DJJ.

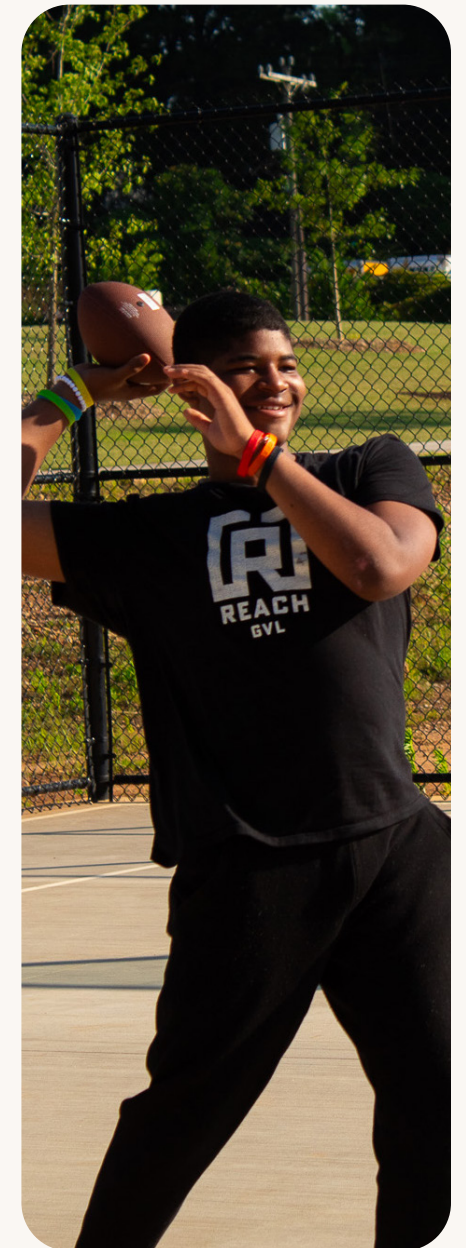
The Status of Reach

Today, we serve nearly 20 students each year who are directly referred to us by the Department of Juvenile Justice. We graduate five students every three months and receive five new students into the first phase of our ministry. Our re-entry program consists of four phases, each lasting three months. Each phase builds upon the last and leads to a point where our students are launched from our program and entrusted to the care of the Lord. However, they are not launched empty handed; they are equipped for success as we send them off with new social capital, life skills, and an individually tailored set of goals created by our launch phase case manager. We have cut recidivism by over half of the state average, and we have seen a number of students experience what can only be described as a renovation of the heart and mind.

But we would be lying if we said that ministry was easy or that our hearts were never broken by the relapse, recidivism, or despair that our students have experienced. This work is incredibly challenging, but we are as committed as ever because we believe that Jesus is as committed as ever. We have received news that the juvenile detention facility hopes to open its doors shortly after the new year, and we are eager to join Christ once again in that place.



SNAPSHOTS FROM REACH





JAY GOODJOINE: A STORY OF MERCY

This part of Jay's story was written by Mikey Hayes, Lead Collective's Creative Director. Similar to Jay, Mikey has stayed connected to Lead Collective since his years as a student. But instead of spending hours on the court with Eleos, Mikey climbed, biked, and paddled with GOAT.

Mikey and Jay are the kinds of leaders Lead Collective exists to equip and elevate. Jay's story resonates so much with mine (Mikey) - I hope you enjoy reading it as much as I enjoyed writing it. May the words that follow shape your imagination into something even more hopeful and merciful.

Jay is from the Westside of Greenville, and like many children raised in single-parent households, faced struggles with housing insecurity from an early age. Besides learning to navigate the many hurdles associated with unstable housing, Jay had to learn how to contribute to the security of his younger siblings while being a child himself. Taking on the responsibilities of a parent while still being a kid often meant sacrificing what little capacity Jay had for school to ensure his younger siblings had a place to sleep and food to eat. Towards the end of Jay's sophomore year, faced with the choice of remaining in school or working more hours for the sake of his younger siblings, he decided, as many of us would do, to drop out and focus solely on providing what he could. In doing so, Jay eventually forgot what it felt like to be a student—a feeling all too familiar to me and any student who's had to leave the safety of childhood for the responsibilities of being an adult.

Although this unfortunate exchange was becoming Jay's new normal, he retained his love for basketball and would eventually meet Cam and Joy as they were setting up for Open Gym. Luckily for Jay, Eleos was offering a safe space that allows for security and community. For students like us who grew up in the absence of parental guidance and stable housing, this is often an unspoken and unrecognized need.

Eleos was offering something different. It was offering a reliable way to be a part of a nurturing community determined to see students in light of their God-given potential, meeting the often unspoken and unrecognized need for security and community. Through attending Open Gym and building relationships with mentors, Jay could escape from the responsibilities of paying bills and providing for his siblings, even if the break only lasted as long as the program did.

"I used to always look forward to Tuesday because I knew for at least two to three hours, I didn't have to worry about nothin."

Eleos not only afforded a safe place for Jay to play basketball but also a space where students could lean into the security provided by adults who want to see them win. *"That's why I take Open Gym so seriously as a staff member now. I know for sure there are other students going through what I went through. And I know what Open Gym means to them."*

At Eleos, Jay was seen as a student worth investing in, a student brimming with God-given potential, which often contrasted with what he was told in school (more on that later). Open Gym introduced Jay to people who looked different than him but wanted *"to see me win."* In fact, he remembers his first day at Eleos like it was yesterday. Reflecting back on it, he joked and said, *"I saw these volunteers setting up for basketball and I was like, 'who are all these white people?' Cam asked me if I wanted to play ball and the rest was history."*

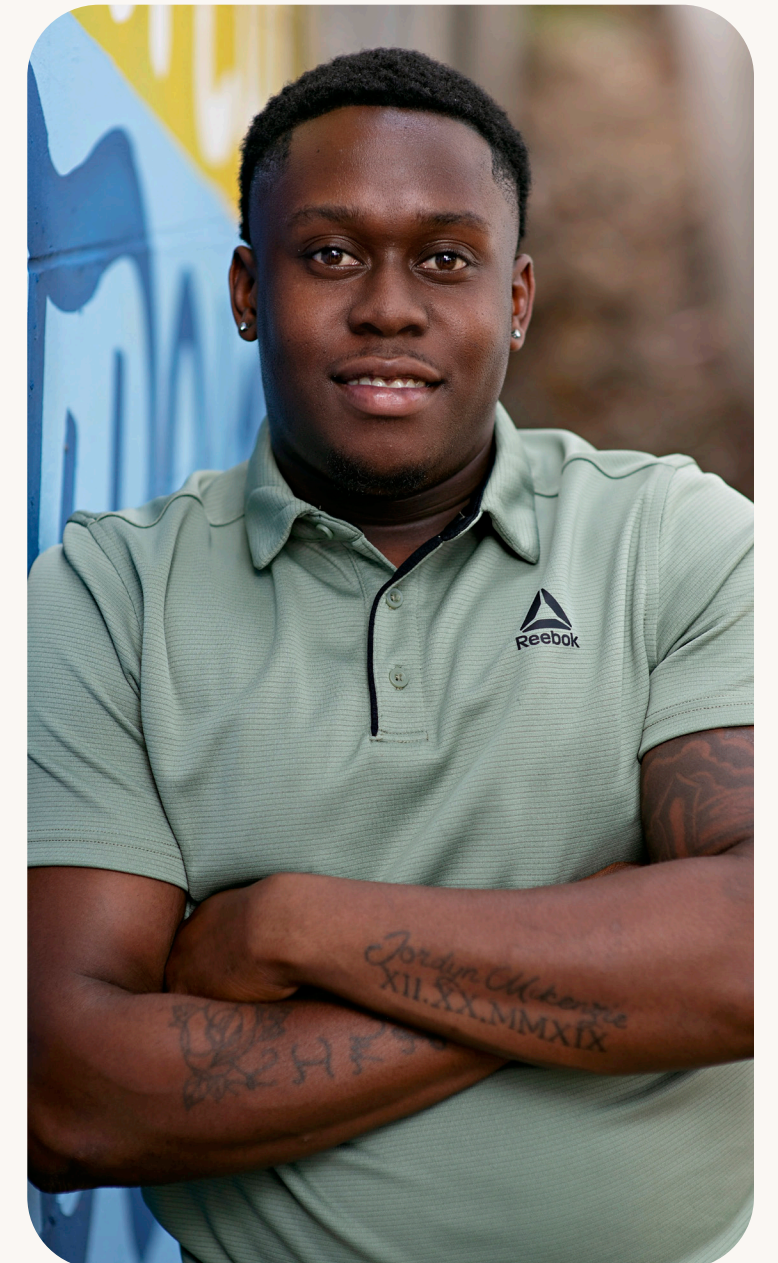
What programs like GOAT, Eleos, and Reach provide students like myself and Jay is reliable access to relationships saturated with grace that at least in our stories, led to significant life change. For me, these relationships offered a new perspective that helped form my desire to contribute to the beauty and abundance of creation as an artist and designer. For Jay, the relationships he developed at Eleos became a deep source of community that he would later return to as an adult.

Jay is now a professing disciple of Jesus, married to his beautiful bride Ty, a father of three kids (with another on the way), and leading and working with Eleos. He is also finding time to earn his Bachelor's degree in business. Jay has worked hard to overcome a mountain of adversity. Eleos had the opportunity to come alongside him at a critical time, helping him grow into the leader we know him as today.

Jay's story is still unfolding, and he's still (similar to you and me) becoming more like Jesus, so I'll just say this: I hope you get to meet Jay and experience the life change that he's worked towards and experienced, partly because he's great company but mainly because Jay is the sort of person that puts you at ease. He's humble, approachable, and calming—a steady reminder that God is in the business of redeeming people and rewriting stories.

Thanks for reading.

Up next, we take a closer look at Jay's journey with faith, and leadership.



JAY GOODJOINE: ELEVATING OUR IMAGINATION



Few things animate my heart more than seeing someone embrace God's best for their life... seeing someone caught up in God's vision for the good life, with the courage to believe they can experience it—even now. I say this takes courage because for so many facing economic adversity, simply believing that God has more for you can be a challenge. When you're surrounded by success, it feels normal to believe that's what God wants for you. But what if marriage, family, and economic stability aren't normal in your community? Wouldn't it feel a bit presumptuous to believe that God wants you to experience those things when so few around you are experiencing them?

Jay is married, with kids, and he has a job that he loves. He talks often about the privilege of being a husband and a father. You can tell it's one of the greatest sources of joy in his life, but it's not something he always saw as a possibility.

"I never saw myself getting married or anything. I honestly didn't even really know what marriage was. It was hard for me even to want it... because I hadn't seen it."

Jay is not only a great husband and father—he's a great leader. God has done so much through his life and ministry already. And even though it seems so obvious to me, it can be hard for Jay to believe that about himself. It's hard for him to see what I see.

And I think I understand why...

I imagine it would be hard to believe that you're a great leader if your ninth-grade teacher told you that "you won't amount to nothin'" and said, "you were just a bad kid." Jay can feel the sting of those words as if they were just spoken to him yesterday. In a sense, maybe they were. His teacher said them ten years ago, but I imagine they've been reverberating in his mind and heart ever since. He went to three middle schools and four high schools before dropping out in his tenth-grade year, and despite all the teachers, the conversations, the transitions... he can still remember where he was standing when his teacher spoke those words over him. 'Honestly, it touched me a little different because it was a black teacher who said it.... For a second, I was gonna take it and run with it. Like maybe I am a bad kid? But she didn't know my story. She didn't know what I was going through at home.' I'm glad he didn't run with it, but I wouldn't have blamed him if he had.

"Handle them carefully, for words have more power than atom bombs." - Pearl Strachan Hurd.

When Jay looks back on those years he says, *"I was just angry at the world. My dad wasn't there...I would think, 'this kid next door got a good life. What did I do not to deserve a good life?'"* In his mid twenties now, he still doesn't have answers to those questions. And honestly, neither do I. Life can be painful beyond words and that pain can be really disorienting. Sometimes, we don't get answers to life's most challenging questions. Sometimes our only solace is discovering a community willing to journey through the confusion and pain of life with us. Jay found that community at Eleos. He found people who were in his corner and wanted to see him win.

Fast forward several years into adulthood, Jay began praying for God to provide an opportunity for him to give back. He even considered starting a non-profit. When he saw a job posting at Éleos, he didn't even need to read the job description; he just knew he wanted to be a part of the team. *"I get to work with the people who helped me become a leader."* Jay applied and got the position. (And yes, he's doing an amazing job).

But he still struggles to see what I see. He still struggles to believe that he's a leader worth following. I pushed back on that idea recently. And I pressed him with an uncomfortable question: *"What can you offer these students that I could never offer you?"* He paused for a while. It's a bit bold to think he has more to offer than the Executive Director, right? Jay is such a humble guy, and I'm sure he hated this question. But I really wanted him to consider the nature of leadership in the Lead Collective way. After a few moments, he said, *"I can relate. I can be like... I come from where y'all come from. And honestly...I have the same skin color. That matters. Seeing a white man, married with a family doesn't really make it feel attainable, but when you see a black man in the community where you come from, with the same struggle, become married and successful, you like...alright, I got hope."*

Jay is a great leader, but not solely because of his relatability. He's a great leader because he's resilient, humble, kind, gentle, wise, and so much more. But when you couple great leadership with resonance, you create the opportunity for tremendous impact. Jay comes from this place. And I'm believing as he leads in the way of Jesus, he will continue to be a deep source of hope for countless students to come. I believe there will be generational cycles broken because a younger generation looked at Jay and thought, "alright, I got hope."

I asked him where he saw himself in five years. *"In five years, I hope I'm still here building relationships with students and letting them know they're not alone."*

Jay may struggle to see what I see in him. But that doesn't keep him from leading. He is courageous enough to step into leadership, even if his heart has to play catch up. For that, I'm deeply thankful. One of the most challenging aspects of elevating a new leader into a position of influence is overcoming the barrier of the imagination—helping a new leader believe that they are ready to lead, even though they're not perfect. Imposter syndrome is hard to overcome. We all deal with that, at least a little, right? None of us are perfect. None of us have arrived. God uses crooked sticks to draw straight lines; in fact, his pencil box only contains crooked sticks. Leadership requires a level of courage and conviction that chooses to believe we are more than the worst things our 9th grade teacher ever said about us.

Leadership requires we reject those harsh words, lest they tear us apart like an atom bomb. But if we want to reject a lie, we must replace it with the truth.

Jay, I believe this to be true of you. You are a gift to our team. You are a deep blessing to our students. You are a leader worth following. May you shed the old words spoken over you and receive these words.

Try them on. I think they fit you better.

Final Notes

As usual, this year has been marked by grace. We've received more than we could ever deserve. We've witnessed God's power through the ministries of Lead—seeing generational cycles broken, stories redeemed, and community formed. Miraculously, God met all of our needs as a ministry and provided the resources necessary to meet the increasing needs of our community. How? Through each of you....regular people, living with your hands open, trusting that God will work wonders through your generosity. Well, He has. Thank you for being a critical part of our work in this city!

Because of your generosity, we were able to provide nearly ten thousand meals to the students of Lead Collective. Do you know the best part? Each of those meals was shared with mentors and peers. They not only met a real need - they brought a student to the table.

Thanks to your generosity, Lead Collective provided five thousand mentoring hours for Middle and High School students - each of whom is living in an under-resourced neighborhood in Greenville.

Thanks to you, we were able to invest 1500 hours of leadership development into students participating in either Eleos, GOAT, or Reach.

I'm truly floored by all that God has done through the ministry of Lead this past year. I mentioned this during our building dedication. As a people marked by grace, it feels selfish to ask for more. As people who have already received more than we deserve, it feels wrong to ask God to do more or provide more. However, as I've reflected on that feeling, I've been reminded that God encourages us to ask for more because we're His beloved kids. God delights to work through us, and He delights in giving us more than we deserve—indeed, more than we even ask for sometimes.

So, as we enter a new year and cross the threshold into a new building to expand our ministry and serve more students, we ask for more— more grace, more financial resources, more wisdom, more power. Why are we asking for more? There is more to be done. There are more who need to be reached, served, equipped, and elevated.

Will you join us in that prayer? Thank you for your kindness towards us. Thank you for your faithful support. May the Lord bless you and keep you! May He continue to be at His work in your life and through your life.

All the best, Cam.





Lead Collective Inc.

Equipping and elevating student leaders from historically under-resourced neighborhoods in the way of Jesus.



Middle Ground
Design & Publishing

Made with care and in collaboration with Middle Ground Design & Publishing.