2024

Impact Report

one person, one village, one community at a time

We Fortify

SOCIAL IMPACT

COMMUNITY BUILDERS

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We build communities that create **IMPACT.**

One of the greatest challenges we're facing today is the societal impact of generational poverty intensified by a lack of living wage salaries and affordable housing. The inability for a young labor force to work, live, and contribute to society is creating human and economic ripple affects that will have profound consequences far into the future.

Our mission at We Fortify is to change this trajectory and create positive and compounding generational shift—one person, one village, one community at a time.

We are social impact community builders.

Who We Are

We are a non-profit land development and human services company. We build villages and programs that elevate young adults out of poverty and give public service professionals a better chance to serve. By focusing on whole healthy humans today, we can build a more resilient, empowered, and prosperous future for generations to come.

We Fortify Villages combine dignified housing and supportive peer communities with individualized services and caring accountability. This dynamic synergy creates a powerful cycle of growth and sustainability—one that empowers individuals and transforms lives, families, and entire communities.

Our Vision

At We Fortify, we believe people inherently want to live lives of independence and purpose.

One person, one village, one community at a time—we envision a mighty ripple effect that creates a vibrant and resilient society where every individual has the opportunity to thrive and create a legacy of hope for the future.

Whole healthy humans

are empowered to change the trajectory.

The programing structure of We Fortify allows us to meet each resident where they are at and to provide truly individualized support and goal management.

Life Skills & Education

Each year we evaluate the efficacy of our programming support for our residents. After further review of our current programming, we determined that we wanted to make the life skills curriculum more engaging to ensure that residents leave with not just knowledge, but the skills and confidence to apply what they've learned in daily life. With changes to the life skills curriculum we also then change the life skills assessment.

Life Skills Curriculum Revamp

The main goals for this revamp were:

1. Enhanced Learning Approach: We are updating our life skills curriculum to include more interactive and hands-on activities.
2. Active Engagement: The new approach ensures residents actively engage with the material, moving beyond passive learning.
3. Practical Application: Residents will have opportunities to apply life skills in real-life scenarios, reinforcing their understanding.
4. Tailored Learning: Activities are designed to be personalized and relevant to each resident's unique experiences and needs.
5. Collaborative Learning: Group activities will promote peer collaboration, allowing residents to learn from each other's perspectives.
6. Skill Retention: By focusing on experiential learning, we aim to improve long-term retention of essential life skills.
7. Immediate Feedback: Residents will receive instant feedback during activities, helping them correct mistakes and build confidence.
8. Empowerment through Practice: Hands-on experiences will empower residents to take initiative in real-world situations, boosting their independence.

We Fortify Life Skills Workbook

In addition to the revamping of the life skills curriculum, we are creating a We Fortify Life Skills workbook for all residents. The purpose of this workbook is to provide the residents with the ability to take notes during classes, refer back to those notes, and have this workbook to take with them upon graduation.

- Interactive format - includes note-taking space, encourages residents to actively engage with the material, and reflect on what they learn
- Expert driven content - includes a resource guide created by professionals in various fields, offering reliable advice and best practices
- Step-by-step learning - structured in sections to make it easy to follow along and apply lessons in real-life situations
- Self-paced - residents can move at their own pace, with opportunities to revisit key areas of interest or need
- Actionable worksheets - provides exercises that help residents practice skills
- Goal-oriented - encourages goal setting and tracking throughout the workbook to help residents stay motivated

Tracking & Assessments

We Fortify has always tracked resident empowerment plans, assessments, and other data. We do this so that we can understand the state of our residents and can determine the trajectory they are taking at any given time. The problem has been that this data was kept in different files and it had to be manually consolidated to create these projections. One of our three key initiatives for 2024 was to consolidate all resident data, including therapeutic notes into one system and use that system to bill Medicaid for services that we were already performing.

We researched these systems and decided on a Colorado based system, Reliatrax. One of the many reasons that we chose Reliatrax was that we could design it to fit the unique needs of our villages. Within Reliatrax, our residents can create their own portals and have access to all of their documents. They also have the capability to complete assessments, schedule appointments, fill out property maintenance requests and even pay their rent.

Our team will work within this system alongside the residents to continue building on their empowerment plans. On our end, we'll have the capacity to complete the onboarding process with incoming residents, record notes from our weekly meetings, analyze data in real-time and identify any support needed. A vital piece of this new system is that it will allow our team to bill Medicaid directly through our HIPAA compliant notes for services that we are already providing. We are working with a consultant to complete our application to become a Medicaid approved facility.

In addition, two team members participated in Pikes Peak State College's pilot program to become Qualified Behavioral Health Assistants. By earning this badge, they are now considered providers who can bill Medicaid. This allows our agency to bill for case management services, building treatment plans, crisis services and more. Our QBHA badges create more opportunities for financial reimbursement for the services we currently provide.

Resident Statistics

75% of our residents* have increased their overall self-sufficiency scores in **emotional & mental health, life skills, safety & stability, self-care and sustainable work**

71% of our residents* have increased their scores in **emotional and mental health**

83% of our residents* have increased their scores in **life skills**

67% of our residents* have increased their scores in **stability & safety, self-care & sustainable work**

* residents in this assessment have more than one set of data

Referrals

123 referrals since our first "all call" in August of 2022.

35 young adults have been housed in the village:

- **5** have graduated
- **7** left by choice
  Moved to be with family, not ready for growth, severe trauma
- **7** soft evictions
  Asked to leave due to non-compliance with the programming and/or lease. Not reported to the credit bureau.

It's Working!

Historically

4 residents have graduated with an **associates degree or trade school degree.**

5 residents have graduated the **2-Year Working Fusion Program** and **4 more** will be graduating within the next 6 months

In 2024

4 9 residents are currently pursuing **GED, an Associates degree or a 4 year college degree**

13 13 out of 16 current residents are **working**

8 8 out of 16 have **increased their income** since moving in

We're More Than Statistics

RESIDENT VOICES

What was your living situation before coming to Working Fusion? **Shelter**

"For the last year and a half, I've been living in the village after experiencing homelessness. Since then, I've gotten help and accomplished so much that if someone told me where I would be now, a couple of years ago, I would have assumed you were making a joke.

I've learned car and house maintenance, extensive food prep, how to pay for my taxes even. I've gotten accepted into med school, got my own insurance for so many things, and how to navigate FAFSA and scholarship info. **I don't know where I'll be when I leave here, but I know I'll be ready.**"

What was your living situation before coming to Working Fusion? **Homeless**

"I'm glad I got to be a part of a community that supports people while not holding their past mistakes against them and works with us despite our struggles. I met a lot of amazing people that I continue friendships with and who support me. **It has opened my eyes to finding out what I love doing which is helping people** and I hope to come back and continue supporting people who are in a position I once was in. "

What was your living situation before coming to Working Fusion? **Couch Surfing**

"You all have done a lot and helped a lot. **It has changed the trajectory of where my life was going** or heading to. Living in the village has helped me by talking to Jill in therapy and having support. It takes a lot of stress and weight off your shoulders. It gives you some sense of security."

What was your living situation before coming to Working Fusion? **Foster Home**

"I was in a foster home previous to joining the village and I had the feeling not only internally but from the family that it was time to move on. Coming into the village has been really cool. It took time for me to get comfortable and at first I wasn't totally sold but now it's a decision I'm very thankful I made. I have love for all of my neighbors and I'm getting to know really cool people and learn from them. I am continuing to feel comfortable with staff and opening up but as time goes on it becomes easier. **Since entering the village I've become more open to trying new things and looking for new experiences.**"

It takes a village.

And we can't do it without you.

Our volunteer teams empower our residents to be the best humans they can be. We are changing the game in how support and encouragement are provided to this underserved, overlooked and underestimated population.

Volunteers

Our volunteer program is vital in supporting our mission, whether they're empowering our residents to be the best humans they can be, donating their time to beautify our village through landscaping, supporting our mission through data analysis, elevating our fundraising initiatives, and more. We are changing the game in how support and encouragement are provided to this underserved, overlooked, and underestimated population.

The work of our volunteers does not go unnoticed, and the impact is profound.

Resident Mentor Program

The Resident Mentor Program remains a cornerstone of our volunteer efforts. Our 28 Resident Mentors provided invaluable support to our residents, building healthy relationships and trust capital, offering guidance, and helping them navigate challenges and goals throughout their two-year lease. Whether it's an hour meeting building a budget, a drive to the DMV office, working on mock interview skills at a coffee shop, and more, the work of our volunteers does not go unnoticed, and the impact is profound.

Village Support

Our Village Support volunteers have contributed significantly to our organization's initiatives. Through landscaping, working the Switchbacks games, organizing our Care & Share market, and numerous other ways, their support is nothing short of incredible.

Slow and Steady Shifts the Trajectory

One of our volunteers met with a resident who aimed to buy a new, safe, and dignified car. This volunteer drove the resident to local dealerships, educated her on the difficulty of buying a car as a young female, sent recommended listings, and more. After a few months, the resident found a car she loved and shared how profoundly helpful and impactful this support was with the team.

Let's reflect on the Tortoise and the Hare story. Through slow and steady progress, the tortoise ultimately wins the race, illustrating the power of consistent effort and small wins rather than a short-term burst of energy.

This demonstrates our volunteers' incredible work daily in our Working Fusion village—especially this year—and how consistent, steady, empowering support can improve the trajectory of our residents' lives.

Key Accomplishments

Switchbacks Games

Eight volunteers accumulated 143 volunteer hours working the concession stands at the Switchback Games through our Levy Restaurant partnership.

This year, **our volunteers raised $4,910.16 at all the Switchback games combined!**

Care & Share

As you may or may not be aware, Care & Share is no longer receiving pandemic related funding and this was a huge hit to their resources. They had to downsize their team and the services they provide.

The mobile market was created in the space of social distancing and the needs the pandemic required at the time.

This has become a vital source for access to healthy and nutritious dense foods for many communities. We are honored to continue our partnership with Care & Share to not only the residents at Working Fusion but also to our neighbors in the Mill Street neighborhood and surrounding communities.

We'll continue to embrace this partnership and the opportunity to bring free, fresh groceries to the Mill Street neighborhood.

Overall Impact/Conclusion

Our dedicated volunteers generously donated **1,162 hours and 15 minutes** to our organization this year. We're so incredibly grateful! We are humbled by the amount of time donated, the guidance provided, and the passion that flows through our volunteers. Their contributions have made a significant difference in the lives of our residents and our community. We look forward to continuing to grow and expand our volunteer program in the coming year.

1,162 hrs., 15 min.

generously donated by our volunteers in 2024

New Client and Event Management System

Growing with Bloomerang

Bloomerang is a client, volunteer and event management system. It gathers the best tools, resources, and people in a single place and, through it's donor management platform, empowers nonprofit organizations to carry out their missions.

This year, we took a bold step and consolidated our databases for client management, event tracking, and volunteer management. After careful research, we chose Bloomerang as our client database system. It's been a game-changer for our small nonprofit. Bloomerang has helped us streamline our operations, centralize our data, and automate tasks so we can spend more time focusing on what matters: our mission.

With Bloomerang, we aim to improve donor retention, increase fundraising efficiency, and enhance volunteer data. This user-friendly platform has empowered us to grow and achieve our goals. We're excited to see what the future holds with Bloomerang as our partner.

Two dynamic divisions.

One powerful force for social impact.

The dynamic synergy between our two development divisions is what makes this model powerful.

Two dynamic divisions, one powerful force for social impact.

ELEVATE
VILLAGES

Our primary mission is to build programmed communities that **elevate young adults** out of poverty into a state of economic and emotional stability and social connectedness.

+

NOBLE
VILLAGES

We also build dignified and affordable communities to **support noble public service professionals**, such as teachers, police, firefighters, and nurses, so they can focus on their calling to serve.

ELEVATE

Our Programming, or as our board calls it our "secret sauce," consists of four pillars:

- Safe and dignified housing
- Centralized trauma-informed therapies and care
- Life skills education
- Training for and placement in a living wage career position

Our trained Volunteers support the village in 3 ways:

- Maintain and beautify the property
- Mentor | Tutor Residents
- Assist in Event Planning and Support

Our mighty We Fortify staff team is educated, skilled, relational, and fiercely advocates for every resident.

NOBLE

We build affordable, safe and dignified planned communities based on the income and needs of the residents who will reside there.

Each village is designed with the intention of healthy supportive relationships developing within. To cultivate this, each village has a community center that supports many types of events, raised bed gardens, and walking/running paths. These villages are also pet friendly, and less dense.

We Fortify Development Divisions

Two Divisions, One Powerful Force

The dynamic synergy between our two development divisions is what makes this model powerful. The villages and communities within each division are independent and unique, but it's the way the divisions work together that creates growth and sustainability. As We Fortify grows, we will maintain a 1:1 relationship between our Elevate and Noble villages.

For example, Wendy's Village is being built to provide a consistent and dependable revenue stream that will support Working Fusion. The Village at Giberson will support Prospect Village.

Please scan the QR code for videos of our villages.

We Fortify
SOCIAL IMPACT
COMMUNITY BUILDERS

ELEVATE VILLAGES

programmed communities that elevate **young adults** out of poverty into economic and emotional stability

WORKING FUSION AT MILL STREET

Prospect Village

NOBLE VILLAGES

dignified and affordable communities to support **public service professionals**

Wendy's Village

Village at Giberson

Prospect Village and The Village at Giberson branding in progress.

We Fortify
ELEVATE VILLAGES

Working Fusion is our first Elevate Village and ***it is thriving!*** Following this successful model, we are currently in development with a second Elevate Village. As we continue to grow, our young adult villages will be housed under our Elevate Division. These programmed communities will **continue the mission of elevating young adults between the ages of 18–25 out of poverty into a state of stability and connectedness.**

4 Pillars for Success

Like the legs of a chair, each of our 4 pillars are crucial for providing balance, stability and support for Elevate residents. The 4 pillars work together holistically to create positive change, forward momentum, and generational shift.

1

Safe dignified housing within supportive peer community

Provides a dignified home with the space and safety for individuals to heal and grow

2

Individualized trauma-responsive therapies

Fosters trust and healing by addressing the impacts of trauma and developing healthy coping strategies for resilience and recovery

3

Life skills education

Equips each resident with the education, skills, and tools they need for self-sufficiency and the confidence to set goals and move forward

4

Training for and placement in a living wage career position

Creates opportunities and empowerment to secure meaningful, sustainable employment

elevate

verb

: to lift up or make higher
: to raise in rank or importance
: to improve the mind or spirits

BY THE NUMBERS

$600 Monthly Rent
2-Year Lease

18 DIGNIFIED HOMES

280 SQ. FT. per UNIT

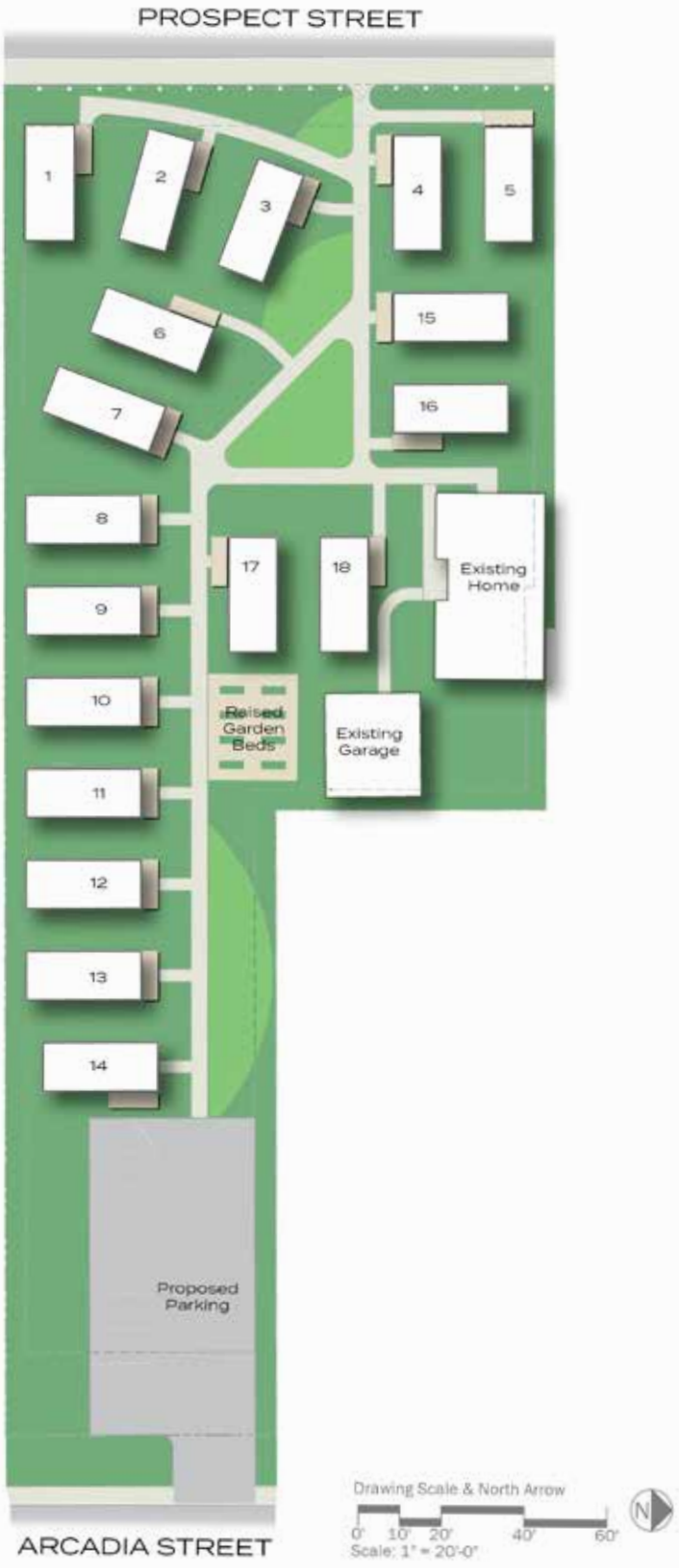
- fully furnished
- trauma-informed design
- energy efficient

ENTIRE SITE IS **< 1 acre**

10 YEARS = **100** GENERATIONAL SHIFTS

"Living in the village has given me a lot of confidence that I'm capable of doing a lot more than I thought I could."

- Working Fusion Resident



Prospect Village

A We Fortify Elevate Village

We Fortify

URBAN Landscapes
DESIGN REVOLUTION

Elevate Renderings - Alpha

ENERGY EFFICIENT 318 SQ FT. SINGLE BEDROOM HOME

We Fortify NOBLE VILLAGES

We're excited to announce a groundbreaking step in our mission: the launch of Noble Villages, a financially sustainable initiative designed to serve our city's vital public service professionals—teachers, police officers, fire fighters and nurses.

These villages will generate a steady income stream, enabling us to bolster the Elevate Villages, which require greater financial support due to the specialized programing we offer. Together, we are not just creating communities: we are forging a sustainable future for those who dedicate their lives to serving others.

Wendy's Village

OUR FIRST NOBLE VILLAGE PARTNERSHIP

Wendy's Village represents a dynamic partnership between the Harrison School District and We Fortify.

Situated on the Mountain Vista Community School property, this innovative initiative will create a campus-like residential environment specifically designed for teachers and school staff.

All residents of the village will be recommended to Wendy's Village by the school district. Each resident will enter into a one-year lease agreement, with an option for a maximum of three years of residency in the village.

Additionally, a second Noble Village is currently in the master planning stage in collaboration with Harrison School District 2. Once Wendy's Village is fully operational, we will commence construction on the second teacher village, strategically located near Giberson Elementary School.

noble
adjective
: unselfish and morally good
: putting others in front of self
: possessing outstanding qualities

BY THE NUMBERS

$825
per month + prorated with salary increases

This affordable rate is **30%** of area median income

20 DUPLEXES
40 UNITS
6 ADA ACCESSIBLE

352
SQ. FT. per UNIT

- Fully furnished
- Extremely energy efficient
- Classic, bright and clean fixtures

900
SQ. FT.

Shared community center with galley kitchen, pergola with outdoor dining seating, large event space

ENTIRE SITE IS **< 1 acre**

Noble Village #1
Wendy's Village

A We Fortify Noble Village

We Fortify

URBAN Landscapes
DESIGN REVOLUTION

Noble Village #2
Giberson School

A We Fortify Noble Village

We Fortify

URBAN Landscapes
DESIGN REVOLUTION

Noble Renderings

ENERGY EFFICIENT 352 SQ FT. SINGLE BEDROOM DUPLEX

2024 Achievements

Breaking the Cycle

New Management System

Purchased and implemented Bloomerang, **a donor, event and volunteer management system** allowing us to have centralized data and financial processing and tracking.

Revised Life Skills Curriculum

Reconstructed the Life Skills Curriculum to provide an enhanced learning approach, that includes interactive and hands-on activities, active engage in materials, away from passive learning, and increased practical applications providing opportunities to apply life skills in real-life scenarios, reinforcing their understanding.

Prop 123 Land Banking Award

We Fortify was thrilled to receive the Prop 123 Land Banking award in early 2024, **a $470,000 grant from Governor Polis' office and the Land Banking Fund.** This funding fueled the purchase of land for our second Elevate Village, expanding our impact in providing affordable housing, holistic support, and leveraging trauma-informed therapy and life skills curriculums. Among 113 applicants, only 16 were selected. This award signifies more than just a roof over someone's head; it's a beacon of hope for our community's youth.

New Assessment & Tracking System

Purchased and implemented Reliatrax, **a client data, assessment tracking and Medicaid billing system**. This system allows us to centralize resident empowerment plans, weekly meeting and therapeutic notes, create resident portals, and automate assessment process and tracking. In addition it allows us to bill Medicaid for services that we were already performing.

New Nobel Villages Division

Developed a new housing and community development division. Nobel Villages will develop dignified and affordable communities that support public service professionals, such as teachers, police, firefighters, and nurses, so they can focus on their calling to serve. Noble Villages generate a modest income that helps support key programming and operations for Elevate Villages. This makes our mission even more powerful by moving it toward financial sustainability.

Colorado Springs Chamber & EDC Community Investment of the Year Award

Colorado Springs Chamber & EDC honors 'community pillars.' Two entities were honored as "great community pillars" at the 2024 Business Awards, part of the Colorado Springs Chamber & EDC's annual gala on July 27, 2024. We Fortify won the Community Investment of the Year Award.

2025 Goals

Shifting the Trajectory

- **Hire full-time trauma trained therapist** (LSW or MSW)
- **Increase resident mental health support** specifically in the area of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- **Develop a online app We Fortify Tool Box** that addresses best practices in the following areas:
  - Trauma-informed Housing Models
  - Trauma focused Young Adult Community Models
  - Trauma-informed Volunteer Curriculum
  - Resident/Young Adult Life Skills Education Curriculum and Assessments
  - Resident/Young Adult Tracking and Assessments in: Mental Health, Self-Care, Financial Acuity, Self-Sufficiency, Stability and Safety
- **Develop 90 affordable housing units in Colorado Springs including;**

  18 units, Prospect Village

  40 units, Wendy's Village

  32 units, The Village at Giberson