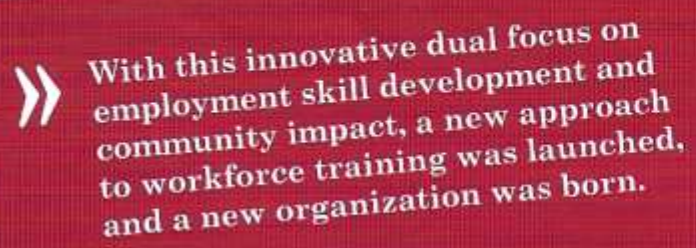




## A NEW APPROACH

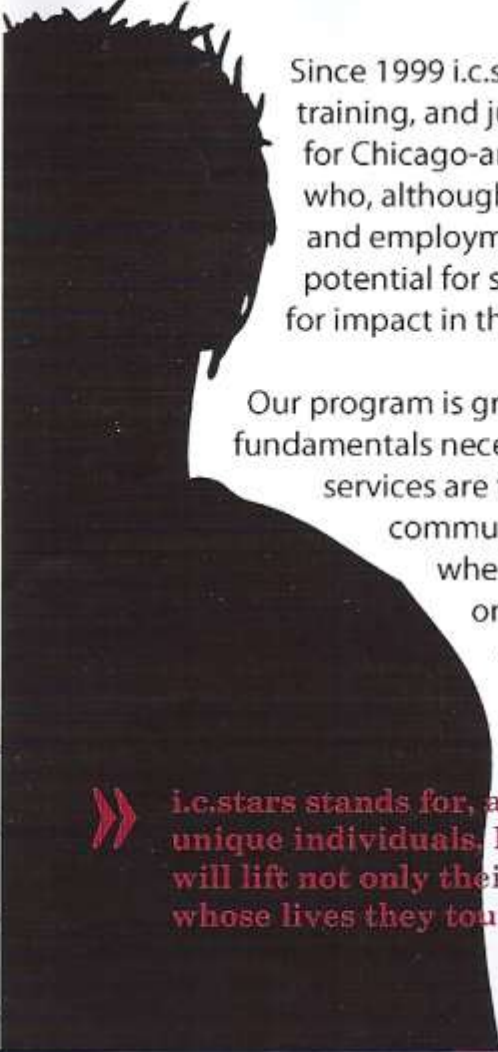
By the late 1990s, the founders of i.c.stars had been working for fifteen years in various workforce development programs. Their experience led them to develop a technology-based curriculum that combined hard skills and training with a broader perspective on community impact and a “bigger than you” sense of accountability for the young adults in their program.

Importantly, their outcomes were five times better than those reported by organizations in the field. Their students were not just more successful at getting and retaining jobs, they were also taking responsibility for lifting others in their communities, helping through various forms of civic engagement to attack the root causes of unemployment. As these students were solving their own problems, they were also reaching out to help others.




» With this innovative dual focus on employment skill development and community impact, a new approach to workforce training was launched, and a new organization was born.

## AN UNTAPPED TALENT POOL



Since 1999 i.c.stars has been identifying, training, and jump-starting technology careers for Chicago-area low-income young adults who, although lacking access to education and employment, demonstrate extraordinary potential for success in the business world and for impact in their communities.

Our program is grounded in the conviction that the fundamentals necessary to succeed in technology services are the same as those necessary for community leadership. We believe that when young adults focus their talent on both technology services and community impact, their success in both increases significantly.



» **i.c.stars stands for, and stands behind, these unique individuals.** knowing that their success will lift not only their own lives but all those whose lives they touch.

# TWO SIDES OF A SINGLE CHALLENGE...

We know a lot about the young adults we serve.  
We know a lot about the employers we serve.  
We know the challenges faced by each.

Our young talent pool lacks access to opportunities to demonstrate their extraordinary capacities on the job; employers lack the means to identify and retain the talent they need for entry level positions.

The way we see it, these challenges are mirror images of one another, and i.c.stars provides a solution for both sides. We recruit talent in communities to which employers have limited access, and train them using curricular methods that have been refined over decades of experience. Through i.c. stars, employers mitigate their risk of entry level hires and young adults gain opportunities they would never have on their own.

The value chain is simple and direct. And by participating, everyone wins: young adults gain opportunity, employers gain access to talent, and our communities gain the solid ground from which to prosper and grow.

# ...A BREAKTHROUGH FOR EVERYONE

Here's what else we know. Some young adults already have what it takes to excel in technology careers and to play leadership roles in their communities. How do we know this? We discovered that the qualities that lead to excellence in technology services are closely linked to those associated with community leadership—namely, solutions orientation, resilience, collaboration, commitment, empathy, reciprocity, and accountability. Through our recruitment and selection methods and our field-based curriculum, we generate unparalleled results for both young adults and employers.

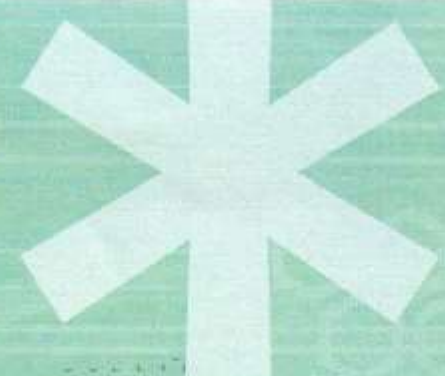
» **By training a talent pool that is driven to succeed both inside and outside the workplace, we are helping our graduates serve their employers, their communities, and themselves.**

# A UNIQUE POINT OF VIEW

For more than a decade, i.c.stars has seen the world as an intersection of two powerfully aligned aspirations. That intersection looks like this:



\* = i.c.stars talent



Our point of view is shared by the unique individuals we select and train and proves its value every day in our communities and with the employers who benefit from our success.

» The success of our perspective is the return on our investment—and yours.

# A TRACK RECORD OF SUCCESS

Beatrice

Title: Project Administrator/  
Web Developer

Employer: Blue Cross Blue Shield

Community Impact: Developing a  
children's community center

Brandon

Title: Senior Business Analyst

Employer: Chicago Public Schools (IT)

Community Impact: Volunteer  
fifth-grade algebra teacher

Ishamael

Title: Senior Systems Administrator

Employer: Juno Lighting

Community Impact: Technology  
competition coach and mentor

Tiffany

Title: Senior Consultant

Employer: Accenture

Community Impact: Volunteer tax  
preparation

Kevin

Title: Technology Specialist

Employer: Microsoft

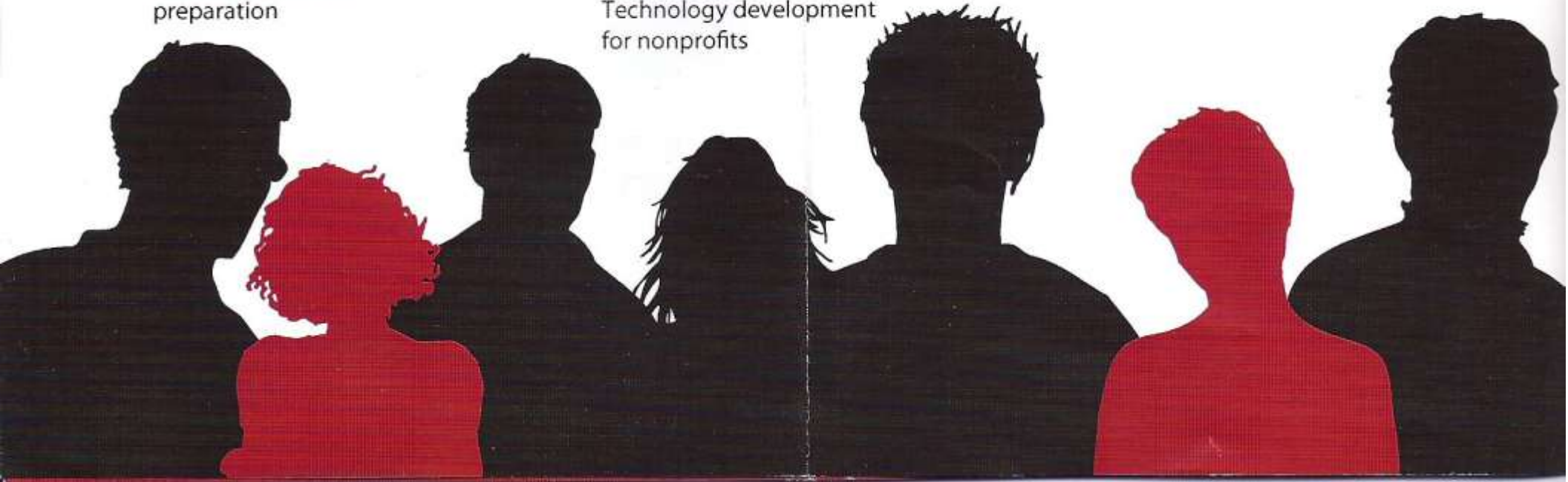
Community Impact:  
Technology development  
for nonprofits

Juan

Title: Quality Assurance Analyst

Employer: Grainger

Community Impact: Community  
policing program design



# A MEASURABLE IMPACT

College attendance rate:

44%

Average 12-month earnings  
after program:

\$31,000

Initial placement rate:

95%



Industry retention rate:

81%

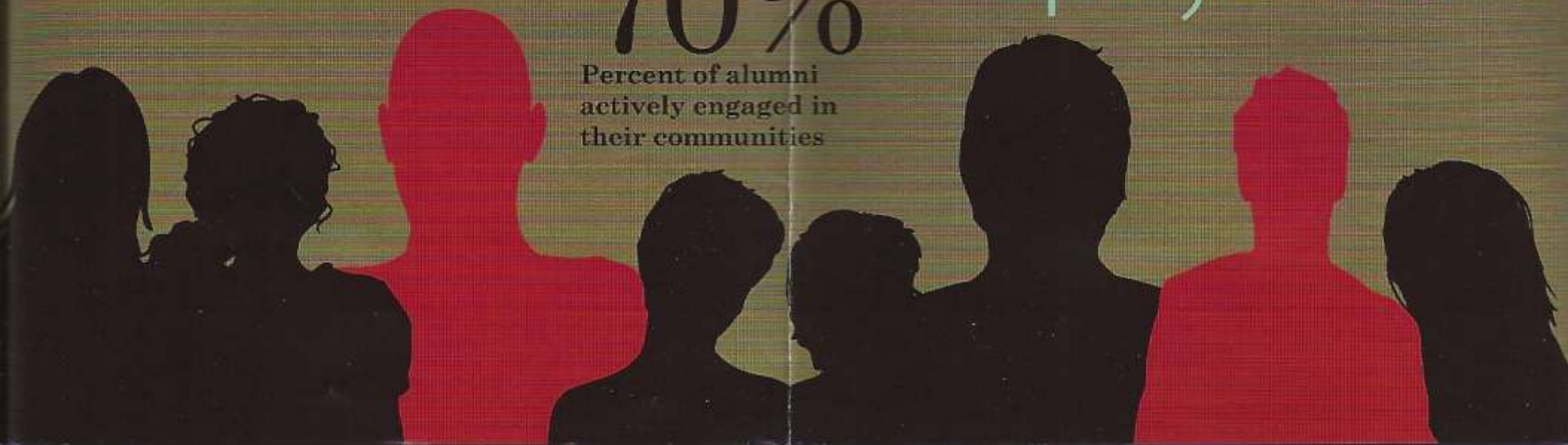


Average 12-month earnings  
before program:

\$9,000

70%

Percent of alumni  
actively engaged in  
their communities



# A PROCESS THAT WORKS



## WE FIND TALENT

i.c.stars is highly selective. Out of six hundred applications for every class, we choose ten interns, following a twenty-hour finalist candidate interview process. We look for individuals who have overcome serious adversity and have developed the highest levels of resilience, a passion for technology, problem-solving aptitude, and motivation to help others.



## WE TRAIN TALENT

Using project-based learning, interns work in teams on a range of client projects over the course of training. Each student gets more than one thousand hours of hands-on practical experience.

i.c.stars interns define and design their community impact paths through a workshop curriculum that includes vision and personal mission definition, community impact planning, and social capital building. After the initial course, participants work with i.c.stars career services staff to find full-time work in the information technology and Internet professions.

Career services are available to participants for the next five years of their careers.



## WE PUT TALENT TO WORK

We have placed our graduates at companies across the Chicago metropolitan area: Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois, Allstate, Grainger, Hewitt Associates, Accenture, Siemens, Insight, Juno Lighting, ThoughtWorks, NAVTEQ, Northern Trust, Microsoft, PepsiCo, CNA, Exelon, Loyola University Chicago, and Sonnenschein.

In addition, we run our own social enterprise company called Bridges. Bridges allows us to employ increasing numbers of our own graduates in project-based work for client companies and organizations.

This model enables us to extend the training and mentoring process, engage directly with the marketplace as a service provider, and generate revenue for our mission.



## WE LEARN FROM THE MARKET

i.c.stars is a market-facing organization. We refine our selection process and training in direct response to regular performance reviews and we create new offerings to meet shifting market demands.

