



ACADEMY  
*of* IDEAS

COMMUNITY

# IMPACT REPORT 2022-2023

# 250

Students have  
participated

# 75 PERCENT OF PARENTS

Saw improvement in our areas of focus





# WHO WE ARE

**Our commitment to serving the underprivileged communities of low to moderate income is at the heart of our mission. For years, we have been dedicated to making a tangible impact on the lives of children in grades K - 12 in these communities through our programs. We feel that everyone deserves the VIP experience.**

Having already served over 5,000 kids, we are proud of the strides we've made in providing access to education, mentorship, and athletic opportunities that empower young minds. Our efforts extend beyond the immediate, seeking to break the cycle of limitations and open doors to a brighter future for each child we reach.

Looking ahead, we are determined to amplify our impact. In the next two years, we aspire to double the number of children positively influenced by our programs. This ambitious goal reflects our unwavering belief in the transformative power of education, sports, and mentorship. By expanding our reach, we aim to create a broader network of empowered individuals who will, in turn, uplift their communities.

Our commitment to inclusivity drives us forward, ensuring that every child, regardless of their economic background, has the opportunity to thrive. We envision a future where the number of lives touched by Academy of Ideas' serves as a testament to the strength of community-driven initiatives in fostering lasting positive change.

## **Empowering Through Education:**

Our mental health component is integral to our mission, focusing on essential aspects such as self-confidence, social skills, self-esteem, creating a safe environment, fostering financial literacy, promoting mental health awareness, emphasizing exercise and weight loss, and encouraging the adoption of healthy food choices.

## **Transforming Lives:**

In 2023, we proudly worked with over 250 teenage students, and the impact of our program is evident. An impressive 75 percent of participants have demonstrated substantial growth in the targeted areas. These transformative changes speak to the efficacy of our approach in promoting holistic development among the youth we serve.

## **Building Self-Confidence and Social Skills:**

Through engaging basketball activities and life skills workshops, we empower our participants to build self-confidence and enhance their social skills. This, in turn, equips them with the tools needed to navigate life's challenges with resilience and grace.

## **Fostering a Safe Environment:**

Our commitment to providing a safe and supportive environment allows participants to express themselves freely, fostering a sense of belonging and community that extends beyond the duration of our camp.

## **Promoting Financial Literacy:**

Understanding the importance of financial literacy, we incorporate lessons that empower young individuals to make informed financial decisions, setting them on a path to financial independence and success.

# OUR STORY SO FAR

## OUR MISSION

Academy of Idea's mission is to provide a transformative and inclusive environment where aspiring athletes not only develop their basketball skills but also cultivate essential life skills that mental health awareness, foster personal growth and community engagement.

Rooted in the synergy of basketball skills development, mental health awareness, and life skills education, we strive to create a transformative experience that goes beyond the court.

Our commitment is threefold: to nurture budding basketball talent, to foster a resilient and well-rounded mindset, and bring awareness to their mental health and support their growth. Through specialized training programs, we aim to elevate each participant's basketball proficiency, instilling teamwork, discipline, and a passion for the game.

In parallel, we prioritize mental health awareness as an integral component of our camp. Recognizing the importance of mental well-being, we provide resources, guidance, and a supportive environment to raise awareness and reduce stigma. By integrating mental health education, we empower our participants with tools to navigate life's challenges with resilience and emotional intelligence.

Life skills are woven into the fabric of our camp, equipping young athletes with essential tools for success both on and off the court. We focus on communication, leadership, and decision-making, fostering a foundation for personal growth and responsible citizenship.

## OUR VISION

Academy of Ideas envisions a future where every young individual has the opportunity to realize their full potential, both on and off the basketball court. Our Youth Basketball and Life Skills Camp aspires to be a beacon of empowerment, fostering a generation of resilient, compassionate, and community-oriented leaders.

# 75%

GROWTH IN OUR AREAS OF  
**FOCUS. PROGRESS!**  
MENTAL HEALTH AND SAFE  
**ENVIRONMENTS**  
ARE OUR MAIN GOALS!



# SCHEA'S STORY

**Hailing from Los Angeles, California, I spent my early years immersed in the lively community of San Pedro. Sports were an integral part of my childhood, with baseball as a Peck Park Oriole and basketball with the Peck Park Cavs shaping my fondest memories.**

The Park Western Elementary School playground became my basketball haven, sparking a passion that revealed my potential as a skilled player. As I navigated through Bandini, Cabrillo Elementary, and Dana Jr. High School, I also developed a taste for local flavors, finding solace in spots like the Enchilada House and Pacific Diner for satisfying meals.

Culinary delights held a special place in my journey—Circus Donuts on Western for sweet treats and the "Sandwich Saloon" and "Busy Bee's" for savory pleasures. These local gems aren't just about food; they encapsulate a significant part of my story, weaving memories that resonate with my Los Angeles upbringing. Schea Cotton, a 1990s basketball prodigy from Southern California, earned recognition for his exceptional skills. Mater Dei High School in Santa Ana witnessed his explosive playing style, versatility, and scoring prowess, drawing comparisons to established basketball stars. Despite unforeseen challenges in his journey to professional basketball, Schea Cotton's legacy remains significant. His story is a reminder of the complexities talented athletes face transitioning from high school to the professional ranks.

**Today, as the founder of the Academy of Ideas, Schea Cotton is a mentor, coach, and philanthropist. The nonprofit empowers K-12 youth through sports, mentorship, academics, and life skills and Mental Health, solidifying his commitment to making a positive impact on young lives.**



# OUR 2024 GOALS

Remembering that each child is unique, and a holistic approach that addresses these various components can contribute to a supportive environment for their mental health. Regular communication and creating a safe space for expression are essential elements of any mental health support system for teenagers.

## 1

### **Empowering Through Education:**

Our mental health component is integral to our mission, focusing on essential aspects such as self-confidence, social skills, self-esteem, creating a safe environment, fostering financial literacy, promoting mental health awareness, emphasizing exercise and weight loss, and encouraging the adoption of healthy food choices.

## 2

### **Building Self-Confidence and Social Skills:**

Through engaging basketball activities and life skills workshops, we empower our participants to build self-confidence and enhance their social skills. This, in turn, equips them with the tools needed to navigate life's challenges with resilience and grace.

## 3

### **Promoting Financial Literacy:**

Understanding the importance of financial literacy, we incorporate lessons that empower young individuals to make informed financial decisions, setting them on a path to financial independence and success.

## 4

### **Prioritizing Mental Health:**

Recognizing the significance of mental well-being, our program places a strong emphasis on mental health awareness, providing resources and tools to cope with stress, anxiety, and other challenges.

# OUR 2023 PROGRAMS

## THE CLINIC

- 90 minute immersive experience consisting of exercise & basketball and the Circle Of Trust (Mental Health Component)
- With emphasis focused on: Self Esteem, Accountability & Good Work Habits.

"The Clinic" Session 1 & Session 2 took place at:

Perry Lindsey Middle School

5075 Daisy Ave, Long Beach, CA 90805

**(Long Beach Unified School District)**

Each session was 90 minutes, twice per week.

**The Clinic Session 1 & 2 reached 250 students.**

## SCHEA COTTON EXPERIENCE

- 118 minute screening of MANCHILD "THE SCHEA COTTON STORY"
- 60 minute intimate Q&A experience involving sports, mental health, life and it's adversities.

We have implemented the "Schea Cotton

Experience" in several cities in the US including:

Oakland CA. at Castlemont High School & Oakland

Tech, CSULB, Raleigh Studios Hollywood, City of

Carson, Dave & Busters New York City, NY.

**SCHEA COTTON EXPERIENCE reached 400 students**

PROGRAMS	DETAILS	OUTCOME
The Clinic	60 min. Training & 30 min. Circle Of Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We saw that 75% of students wanted another "The Clinic" session.</li></ul>
Schea Cotton Experience	118 min. MANCHILD Screening plus 60 min. immersive Q & A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 75% of students would return to the Schea Cotton Experience.</li></ul>



# OUR 2024 PROGRAMS

## AOI COHORT

- 50 minute immersive experience consisting of Physical Fitness, Mental Health, Financial Literacy & Fentanyl Prevention.
- With emphasis focused on: Self Esteem, Accountability & Good Work Habits.

"AOI COHORT Session 1 is ending & Session 2 took place at:

Harry Bridges Span School

1235 Broad Ave

Wilmington, CA 90744

**(Los Angeles Unified School District)**

Each session is 50 minutes, twice per week.

**The Cohort reached 525 students total, comprised of 6 - 8th grades**

## USS IOWA SCHEA COTTON HOMECOMING (Annual)

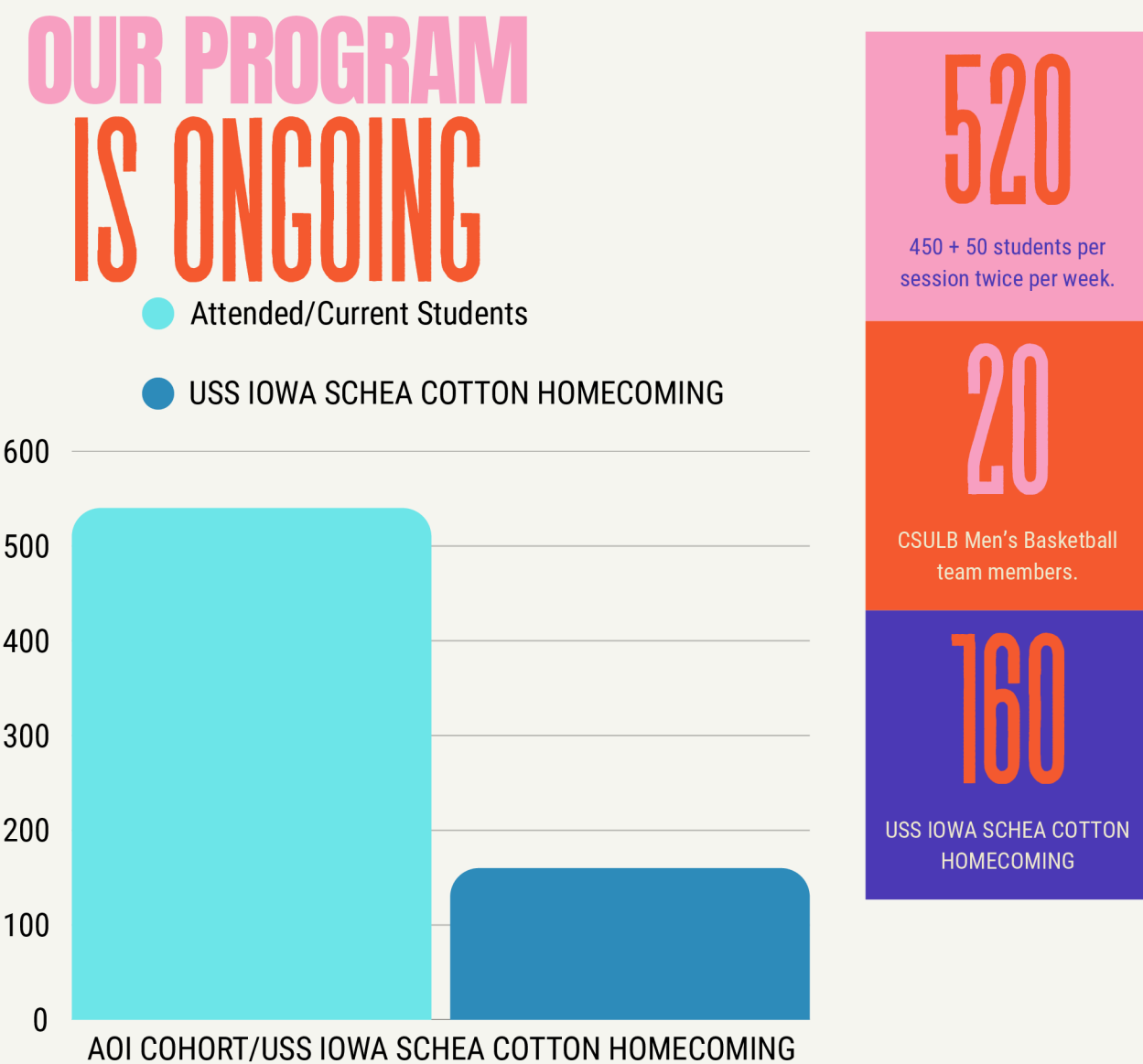
- 118 minute screening of MANCHILD "THE SCHEA COTTON STORY"
- 45 minute intimate Q&A experience involving sports, mental health, life and it's adversities.

We have implemented the "Schea Cotton Experience" in several cities in the US including: Oakland CA. at Castlemont High School & Oakland Tech, CSULB, Raleigh Studios Hollywood, City of Carson, Dave & Busters New York City, NY.

**SCHEA COTTON EXPERIENCE reached 400 students**

PROGRAMS	DETAILS	OUTCOME
AOI COHORT	Duration 50 min. 25 minutes Physical Fitness, 25 minutes Mental Health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Invited back to start 2 more 8 week sessions. Session 1 ending Fri. Nov 15th 2024</li></ul>
Fentanyl Prevention & Financial Literacy	Duration: 2.5 hours, 450 students Nov. 12th 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• TBD</li></ul>

We are dedicated to adding substantial value to the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) through comprehensive training and mental health programs along with Fentanyl Prevention & Financial Literacy. We aim to create an enriching learning environment that meets diverse student needs. Simultaneously, our mental health programs provide students with essential tools for navigating the challenges of adolescence, fostering emotional resilience and overall well-being.



Our students came from:

Wilmington CA

Our students came from:

Harry Bridges Span School

CSULB Men's Basketball

160 students came from Mary Star of Sea, San Pedro HS, Rolling Hills Prep & Port Of LA HS

# OUR PARENT

## TESTIMONIALS

I brought my son to this training for the first time, and he has not stopped talking about it. He loves the support and advice given during the drills. He loves the circle of trust that he says he can't ask me everything, but he can go to his coach. Being a single Mom, this is important to me, knowing that my son has a reputable and respectful adult he can look up to and talk to. Looking forward to more practices and programs with this organization.

**Shyann P.**

Great environment and training plan.

**Davion W.**

My son now knows how to push himself to another gear, his work ethic has improved. The work ethic is the main thing that's going to help keep him going throughout his basketball career. I would definitely bring him back!

**Mike**

I think my son has benefited a lot, he was able to add a lot of value to his game. He learned toughness, tempo and mentally it's preparing him to take it to the next level in his game.

**Brandon**

Fantastic to see young men give back meaningfully to the community! Keep up the great work Schea! God Bless.

**Sheenagh**

My son has learned discipline, when you show up you're asked to do things in a certain manner and in a certain way and anything less than that is unacceptable. I know kids come and go and probably can't fathom that discipline is something that you need to play basketball and in life.

**Jeffrey**

Thank you for having us, it's amazing! 100% Schea is my the best coach, he always looks forward to coming to the clinic every week, he never wants to miss and he's just becoming an all around much better basketball player and kid too. Schea's taught him sooo much about all kinds of stuff, basketball, life, school. Looking forward to the next clinic.

**Chivy E**

Impactful, the details matter with Schea.

**Cayden M B.**



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**AOI COHORT:** Academy Of Ideas

**Financial Literacy:** Farmers & Merchants Bank

**Concept and coordination by** Carlas Williams

**Our researchers**

Gaynell & Schea Cotton , Carlas Williams

Impact Report was designed by Carlas Williams

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**WE THANK YOU**  
**FOR YOUR SUPPORT IN**  
**OUR PROGRAMS**