



# Budo Accelerator Progress Report:

# 2023

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# INTRODUCTION

Dear Supporters and Stakeholders,

As we reflect back on 2023, it is with immense pride and gratitude that I present Budo Accelerator's Progress Report. This past year has been marked by measured growth, impactful partnerships, and, most importantly, the continued fulfillment of our mission to transform the lives of young people through the power of Budo.

In 2023, Budo Accelerator achieved significant milestones that have laid the foundation for an even brighter future. We successfully developed and deepened alliances and partnerships in Orange County, CA, fostering a stronger sense of community and support. Our collaboration with UC Irvine expanded, solidifying our commitment to connect martial arts, social impact, and education.

The launch of our programs in the Bay Area marked our first expansion outside of Southern California and the introduction of our new mentor portal will bring new knowledge, opportunity, and community to our students.

In 2023, over 260 students were served, over 90% of which are, or will be the first in their families to graduate college. Together, they experienced both personal and communal growth. The development of leadership skills and the sense of belonging fostered within our community were paramount achievements that will resonate in the lives of our students for years to come.

As we embark on the exciting journey ahead, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to each one of you who has contributed to the success of Budo Accelerator in 2023. Your support fuels our mission, and we are eager to continue transforming lives in the years to come.

With gratitude,



Josh Gold  
CEO and Co-founder



# NAVIGATING MODERN CHALLENGES

Young people growing up in today's complex and challenging world need martial arts more than ever. Rates of mental illness are high, and concerns about the future are pervasive. Budo Accelerator explicitly addresses these challenges, providing tools and guidance to navigate the uncertainties of the modern world.

As society grapples with profound changes, providing young people with an activity that goes beyond the individual and equips them with essential life skills becomes not just desirable but essential. Budo Accelerator stands as a beacon, offering a transformative path through martial arts that extends far beyond the dojo.

-Ellis Amdur, Board Director

”

This program has taught me more about leadership than I've ever learned in my life, including inclusivity, communication, teamwork, adaptability, and perseverance.

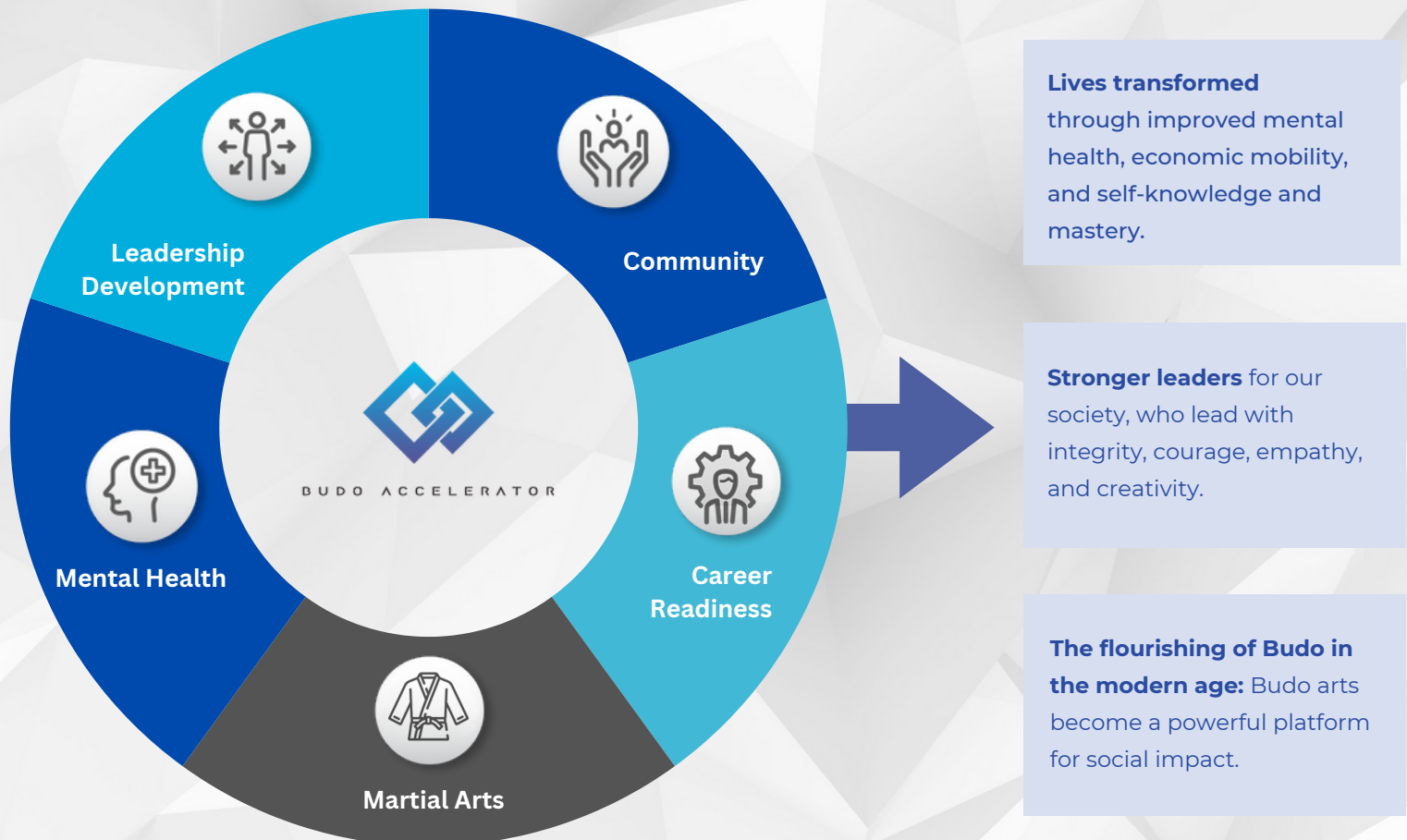
-Vanessa L.



# OUR MODEL

## WE TRANSFORM LIVES THROUGH THE POWER OF BUDO

*Budo*: A comprehensive practice encompassing self-defense, ethics, and tradition through disciplined training.



## OUR STUDENTS

We run programs for high school and college students. We're committed to serving communities in need and offer full scholarships to qualifying students. Over 90% of our students are (or will be) the first in their families to go to college.

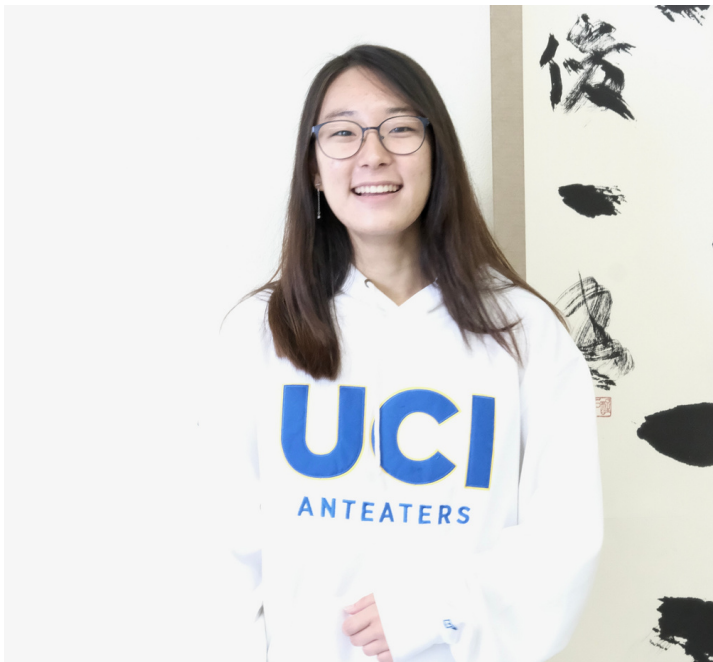


# 2023 HIGHLIGHTS

## Spring

In early 2023, we expanded our partnership with Simon Scholars, a leading OC-based nonprofit, and with a team of Budo Accelerator instructors and students, ran a Leadership Day intensive for 150 high school juniors from backgrounds of adversity. This immersive experience integrated leadership principles with the practices of aikido, kali, and tai-chi, fostering the exploration and development of adaptability, resilience, and self-awareness among the students.

We're honored we've been asked to collaborate again by Simon Scholars for their 2024 Leadership Day and are thrilled to begin offering our summer intensives and year-round programs to their students.



## Summer

Building on our partnership with UC Irvine, a top 10 public university with over 15,000 first-gen undergraduates, we embarked on a groundbreaking year-long study. This collaborative effort, conducted with UCI's Stress, Emotion, and Physical Health Lab explores the positive mental health impact of our program. And with a new partnership with the Division of Continuing Education, we are now able to offer our programs for UC credit to high school and community college students nationwide.

# 2023 HIGHLIGHTS

## Fall

We launched our first program with an external dojo partner in the Bay Area in the fall of 2023. In collaboration with Aikido West in Redwood City, we rolled out our program to high school and college students.

Invaluable knowledge was gained and new relationships have been established with Bay Area nonprofits and educational institutions. We're inspired by the work done by our partners at Aikido West and are encouraged by the potential to grow our programs in Northern California and beyond.



## Winter

We've been informally pairing students with mentors since our programs began. Students have already obtained guidance, internships, and post-graduation jobs through these connections. With the goal of making mentor connections for all of our students, this winter we launched a dedicated mentor portal. Now we'll be able to harness the power of the entire martial arts community to make this benefit more accessible to all of our students.

# MEASURING PROGRESS

Key Indicator	Data / Outcome
<b>Leadership development</b>	94% demonstrate gains in creativity and innovation.  88% improve communication skills.
<b>Community</b>	100% of students make friends in our program.  100% of students join supportive dojo communities and 100% of college students gain access to mentor connections.
<b>Career Readiness</b>	92% leave our program with good or great career knowledge and skills.
<b>Mental health</b>	Students experience a decrease in loneliness and depression and an increase in self-efficacy and mastery*  <i>*vs. control group of first-gen college students not in the Budo program. Preliminary findings from UCI's Stress, Health, and Emotion lab.</i>

*\*Data collected on students who participated in at least 20 hours of our programs*



“BUDO ACCELERATOR CHANGED MY LIFE. IT’S HELPING ME TO BECOME THE PERSON I KNOW I CAN BE. I FEEL THE CHANGE HAPPENING AND SEE IT IN MY CLASSMATES TOO, WHO I NOW CALL MY FRIENDS”

- DIANE VU, FIRST-GEN COLLEGE STUDENT



# LOOKING AHEAD

In closing, the year 2023 has undeniably been a chapter of growth, collaboration, and meaningful impact for us. We take pride in the strides we've made in Orange County, deepening our roots in the community and expanding our commitment to education through our partnership with UC Irvine. The Bay Area launch marked a significant milestone in our journey, and the introduction of our new mentor portal demonstrates our dedication to creating economic mobility and career readiness for our students through strong connections within the martial arts community.

As we pivot towards 2024, our priorities are clear: rallying our supporters, scaling our impact, and refining our programs. Your unwavering support has been instrumental in our achievements, and we look forward to your continued partnership as we navigate these ambitious objectives. Together, we will amplify our reach, strengthen our impact, and ensure that the transformative power of Budo continues to shape the lives of young people, particularly those from backgrounds of adversity. Thank you for being an integral part of our journey, and we are excited to embark on this next chapter with your continued support.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Mark Tercek, Board Chair and Co-Founder
- Josh Gold, CEO and Co-Founder
- Adrienne Wonnacott, Director
- La'Tonya Rease Miles, Director
- Ellis Amdur, Director

"WITH THE CHANGES THIS PROGRAM BROUGHT ABOUT IN ME, I WAS ABLE TO BRING MY DREAM TO LIFE OF STARTING AN ON-CAMPUS CLUB. I KNOW I CAN APPLY WHAT I LEARNED TO THE CHALLENGES I'LL FACE IN THE FUTURE. BUDO ACCELERATOR IS TRULY THE START OF SOMETHING AMAZING. "

-CARLOS FLORES



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to our entire community for your partnership and generosity. Together, we are making a tremendous impact in the lives of our students, their families, and our communities. We'd like to extend a special heartfelt thank you to:

- The Budo Accelerator Board, leadership team, and instructors
- Our donors, mentors, and supporters
- UC Irvine, Simon Scholars, Ikazuchi Dojo, Aikido West
- Our students, who inspire us always

*We thank you for your continued support*

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## CONTACT

**Budo Accelerator**

17777 Main Street  
Suite G  
Irvine, CA 92614

[budoaccelerator.org](https://budoaccelerator.org)  
[hello@budoaccelerator.org](mailto:hello@budoaccelerator.org)

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