### **501CTHREE**

# IMPACT REPORT 2021



#### To our community:

We thank you from the bottom of our hearts for allowing the past year to become a year of transformation and growth for 501CTHREE. Thanks to your support, we've partnered with amazing leaders to place 15 Water Boxes throughout cities facing environmental injustice in the US. Each Water Box provides important data on water quality, including how many people it serves and how many bottles it prevents from ending up in landfills.

We started our journey in 2018 with the Water Box, which is a program that has now grown so much that we've decided to give it its own website: waterbox.org. What began as a program to address issues of contaminated water became so much more: it gave us a deeper lens into the issues that communities with contaminated water face.

We saw winter storms devastate the South, and we acted by deploying an emergency response Water Box to Jackson, MS. We met with community leaders at the Better Watts Initiative and joined forces to create a water testing program that will give residents crucial data and inspire community action around their water quality. We saw our partners in Newark mobilize and organize a network of volunteers fighting for racial justice in their community. Our experiences taught us that in the US, racial inequity seeps into all facets of the environment: access to electric vehicle charging is unequal, food deserts deepen racial health disparities, and that a lack of data surrounding water quality hurts communities of color the most. At 501CTHREE, we want to be a driving force in addressing and doing something about these injustices.

This upcoming year we are dedicating ourselves to uncovering more stories of climate injustice, listening to more communities, partnering with more leaders, and providing clean water to those who lack access. We appreciate you for making this possible.

Best.

Drew FitzGerald and the 501CTHREE team

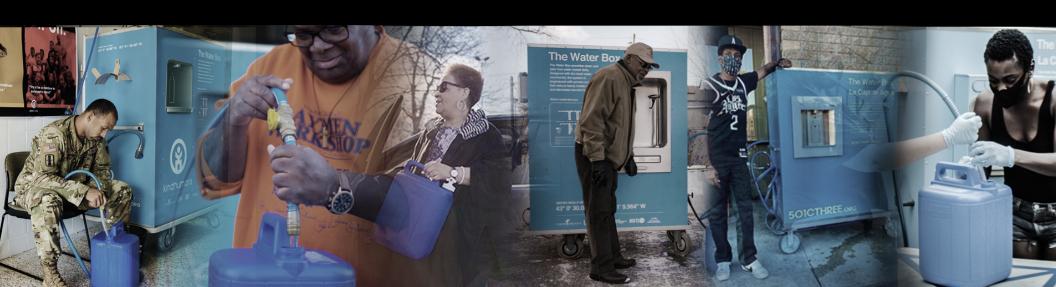




#### **OUR MISSION**

501CTHREE promotes climate justice and equity in food, water, and energy by developing and advancing technology-based and community-led solutions.

501CTHREE's Water Box program helps community organizations in fifteen BIPOC US communities provide their residents with safe drinking water.



## 501CTHREE Impact by the numbers:

The Water Box Key Performance Indicators at the end of 2021:





## 111,000+ Gallons

Clean, free water distributed to BIPOC communities



## 886,000+ Bottles

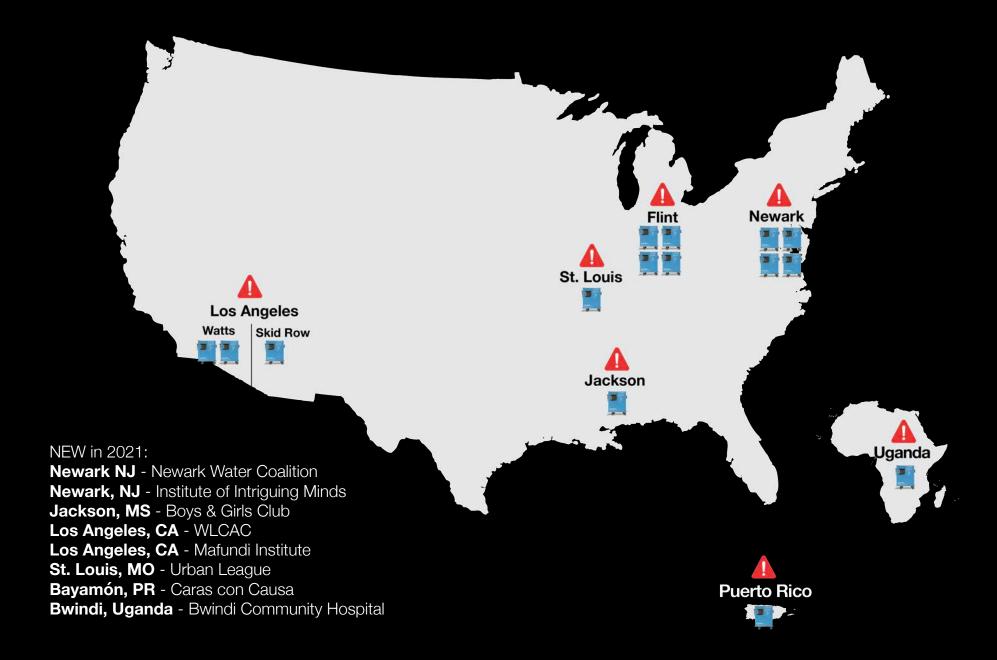
Reduction in the cost, logistics, and waste of single-use plastic bottles

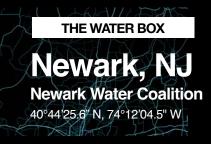


140,000+ Kg CO2

Reduction in the carbon footprint of single-use plastic bottles

## 501CTHREE LOCATIONS IN 2021:





## A key platform for NWC to reach residents in need of clean water and testing.

Since its founding, the Newark Water Coalition has worked to expose the environmental racism at the heart of the city's water crisis. Their demands have been for the city to replace residents' water pipes, to conduct blood tests for all residents, and to establish mandatory testing of residents' water — all of which are currently being done. Two other demands, to establish a long-term supportive program for victims of lead poisoning and place a moratorium on water utility bills until lead levels reach zero, have not seen action by the city.

The Water Box at Alkaline Xpress in Newark's Central Ward is the The Newark Water Coalition's third water distribution point, where regular water drives are hosted along with Alkaline Xpress' community programming. With the Water Box, local residents and visitors to the wellness center and restaurant have ongoing access to a reliable source of healthy water.

**DONOR** 



Complex Networks champions the people, brands and new trends you need to know now, will obsess over next, and we build consumer universes around them. We're what a modern entertainment company looks like and what others have followed since 2002. From pop culture and style, food entertainment, music discovery, sneaker news to our festival of cultural convergence.

**PARTNER** 



The Newark Water Coalition is one of the frontline organizations fighting for clean water in the city of Newark. NWC acknowledges that Water, Housing, and Food is a human right, and NWC's intention is to cultivate a self-determined local, national, and international community of people who recognize the connection between systemic environmental racism and capitalism. NWC fights to liberate natural resources whether it be food, land, air or water as sources of life for all.



#### Newark, NJ

**Institute of Intriguing Minds** 

40°43'42.0" N, 74°11'23.3" W

## Supporting early childhood development and education with clean, safe water.

Since 2016, The Institute of Intriguing Minds has expanded from one to four campuses across Newark. In all five years, The Institute has not felt comfortable letting the children in their programs drink tap water because of Newark's known lead contamination issues. The Institute has had to dedicate precious educational space, not to mention significant funding, to an ongoing stock of plastic water bottles.

Operated in partnership with the Newark Water Coalition, The Water Box at the Institute of Intriguing Minds replaces the cases of bottled water that were stacked along walls of classrooms. The money previously spent by The Institute on bottled water can be dedicated to hiring staff and purchasing learning materials. The Institute has activated their wide network on social media and the childcare app that connects parents to invite other community members to access the Water Box for clean, safe drinking water.

**DONOR** 



The Bob & Renee Parsons Foundation believes that all people – regardless of race, religion, roots, economic status, sexual orientation or gender identity – deserve access to quality healthcare, education and a safe place to call home. The foundation inspires hope by providing critical funding at critical times to communities striving to make a difference.

**PARTNER** 

The Institute of Intriguing Minds

The Institute of Intriguing Minds is a childcare center where young students benefit from Children enjoying an engaging, active atmosphere and participating in projects designed to develop academic skills and provide physical activity. Children benefit socially, intellectually, and physically from participation in quality group care experiences, with proven results that last into their school years. The curriculum includes theme days, spirit week, and outdoor recreation.



#### Jackson, MS

**Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Jackson** 

32°15'06.8" N, 90°17'32.3 "W

## The Water Box helps a community respond to a climate-driven natural disaster.

In February of 2021, an ice storm hit Jackson, Mississippi, a city where 82% of the population is African-American and a quarter of the residents live in poverty. The storm burst a huge number of the city's water pipes, and a month later, over 40,000 of Jackson's residents were without running water. The storm damaged the already dilapidated water system and left much of the water system contaminated with lead and other toxins. It was left to local organizations, such as the Boys and Girls club, to ensure that their community has access to safe drinking water.

In response to the emergency, 501CTHREE rushed a Water Box to the Boys & Girls Clubs Walker Unit in Jackson, which expanded its educational programming to include food and water drives for local residents. After the emergency, The Water Box was relocated to the Jackson Central Unit to support residents in the urban center's growing need for clean, safe water.

#### DONOR



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#### **PARTNER**



Clubs provide a fun, safe and constructive environment for kids and teens during out-of-school hours. Community-based and led by professional staff, Clubs serve small towns, large metropolitan areas, public housing communities, and Native populations, as well as those on U.S. military installations worldwide. They offer programs and services to help young people succeed in school, develop leadership skills, and maintain healthy lifestyles.



#### Los Angeles, CA

**Watts Labor Community Action Committee** 

33°56'12.5" N, 118°15'11.7" W

## Supporting the struggle for clean water & environmental justice in Watts.

Watts is a neighborhood in Los Angeles full of vibrant culture and Black history. For a century, residents in Watts have led in the fight against a legacy of racial and environmental injustice, and they are still fighting for justice today. Currently, Watts is LA's community with the youngest population, and the youth in Watts, like their predecessors, are leaders in community action and shaping their future.

Unfortunately, the youth of Watts face a familiar public health crisis: lead contamination in their drinking water. According to the Centers for Disease Control, lead is a potent neurotoxin with no safe level of exposure. Young children are at the greatest risk: Even small amounts of lead can cause learning disabilities, lower IQs, and other permanent developmental and behavioral problems. In 2018, Tim Watkins, CEO of the Watts Labor Community Action Committee (WLCAC) purchased equipment to do its own testing; results indicated contamination at highly actionable levels.

The WLCAC aims to help neighbors near and far understand the unique conditions that contribute to racial injustice in America by creating an economically and culturally rich community that is peaceful, healthy and a place where anyone would be happy to live, work or play. The WLCAC Center is the organization's home-base, and the center features stunning public art installations, statuary, exhibits, and galleries devoted to American history and healing. With The Water Box, WLCAC has been able to provide the visitors to the Center and nearby residents with access to clean, safe drinking water.

#### **PARTNER**



WLCAC is a non-profit, community-based, human social services organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for residents of Watts and neighboring South Central Los Angeles communities. The mission of WLCAC is to stimulate economic growth, upgrade the physical conditions, and improve the quality of life for poor families. The WLCAC aims to help neighbors near and far understand the unique conditions that contribute to racial injustice in America.



#### Los Angeles, CA

Mafundi Institute

33°56'35.5" N, 118°14'22.7" W

## The Water Box brings clean, safe water to a historic landmark in the struggle for equality.

The Mafundi building is a community center which has historically acted as a prominent hub for Black artists, writers, musicians, filmmakers, and poets. Since 1969, Black art, culture, and activism have flourished in this rare Late-Modern style building in the Watts neighborhood of South L.A.

In partnership with ThinkWatts Foundation, which is focused on grassroots activations in Watts, 501CTHREE provided a Water Box for public water distributions at the Mafundi Institute. At the building, which houses several community arts and cultural programs and a coffee shop, ThinkWatts and its partners distribute clean water and food along with creating community events and meaningful spaces where the residents of Watts can connect.

Recently, the City of Los Angeles announced a plans to lease the building to a developer and turn it into apartments. Watts organizers and residents were outraged at the proposed demolition, and 501CTHREE joined them in petitioning the city council for the building's preservation.

**DONOR** 

Hey, I'm Here For You Hey, I'm Here for You (HIHFY) is a U.S.-based charity concentrated on enhancing the lives of teens and adolescents. HIHFY was started in 2021 by singer-songwriter and cancer survivor Harry Hudson. HIHFY's vision is that every young person should have the resources to find and pursue their passion. HIHFY's programming focuses on the needs of adolescents and young adults undergoing cancer treatment.

**PARTNER** 



ThinkWatts Foundation is a 501c3 organization with a primary focus on community grassroots activations along with developing financial literacy programs, custom container housing solutions, and charitable fundraising through entertainment industry efforts. ThinkWatts is responsible for a wide array of programming such as free financial literacy courses, a Weekly Meal program that feeds hundreds of Watts residents, and entrepreneurship training.



#### St. Louis, MO

The Urban League 38°35'33.9" N, 90°00'26.2" W

## Clean water for a community at risk from flooding and neglect.

Centreville, Illinois is a city prone to flash flooding and rain due to its location on a Mississippi River floodplain known as American Bottom, and its archaic infrastructure can no longer withstand heavy rainfall. Nearly every time it rains in Centreville, the city is flooded with raw sewage; people's streets and lawns are covered with human waste, and a putrid scent blankets the area. Centreville is not a unique case of poverty in the US - the city epitomizes the intersections between environmental injustice, public health, race, class, and gender.

Dozens of local news articles describe the city's uninhabitable conditions over and over again in deep detail, and citizens testify that their property is damaged, that their health has worsened, and that their quality of life is unbearable. The city is filled with activists who care and are working to change their community, and our partners at the Urban League in Centreville work diligently to distribute water and empower African Americans and others throughout the region in securing economic self-reliance, social equality and civil rights.

DONOR

PRULMITEHELL schools The mission of Paul Mitchel Schools is to provide a quality educational system to prepare students to pass the state board examination and gain employment within their chosen field of study. Their core values are fostering the principles of fairness, equity, inclusion, anti-racism and social justice, celebrating diversity, bringing out the best in people, and giving back locally and globally, and pursuing excellence in every aspect of a Paul Mitchell School education.

**PARTNER** 



Founded in 1910 and headquartered in New York City, the National Urban League spearheads the efforts of its local affiliates through the development of programs, public policy research, and advocacy. Today, the National Urban League has 90 affiliates serving 300 communities in 37 states and the District of Columbia, providing direct services that impact and improve the lives of more than two million people nationwide.



#### Bayamón, PR

Caras con Causa

18°25'43.8" N 66°08'14.7" W

## The Water Box at the intersection of community service and climate resiliency.

Puerto Rico has the worst record in the U.S. for drinking water safety, and according to the Natural Resources Defense Council, "Virtually everyone on the island is getting water from systems that violate testing or reporting requirements." The water safety problems for Puerto Rico's residents go beyond bacteria and viruses; recent federal data shows a widespread failure to monitor and report on lead and copper violations.

Puerto Rico is also at risk from one of the most dangerous climate impacts: increased frequency and strength of tropical storms. When Hurricane Maria slammed into Puerto Rico in 2019, the storm damaged reservoirs and knocked out power to water pumps, leaving many people dependent on bottled water for months. Several years later, a large number of the island 's residents still experience frequent disruptions to their water service.

In Bayamón, just outside San Juan, Caras Con Causa is preparing to serve their community in times of need. With the support of Para la Naturaleza and Empowered by Light, Caras Con Causa has equipped their school to serve as a community resiliency center. In 2020, the school installed a solar PV system that can keep operating when the electrical grid fails, and In 2021, the school received a Water Box.

The volunteers at Caras con Causa have been using the Water Box to distribute clean, safe water to two communities in Cataño. The water is delivered door-to-door to 45 families selected by community leaders. Most of the recipients are 60+ in age or have medical needs that constrain their mobility. And with the combination Water Box and off-grid solar, the school will serve as a refuge during the frequent electrical and water disruptions that plague the island's residents.

**PARTNER** 



Caras con Causa promotes community development to eradicate poverty through education, the environment and economic development together with the communities of Cataño and Guaynabo, Puerto Rico. Its mission is to promote community development by coordinating projects that integrate different sectors of society to increase the resilience of all and to create a society in which its diverse populations work together to promote sustainable local development.



#### Bwindi, Uganda

**Bwindi Community Hospital & Nursing School** 

0°58'06.1" S, 29°37'01.4" E

## Health care for the vulnerable at the edge of the Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.

Bwindi Community Hospital is a not-for-profit community hospital in Uganda that offers preventative and curative services to 120,000 people and serves the population in the 3 sub-counties of Kayonza, Mpungu and Kanyantorogo in Kanungu District. The hospital began with a mission to help the Batwa pygmies who were displaced from the Bwindi Impenetrable Forest after it was made a National Park in 1991. Since leaving the forest, many Batwa have lived in extreme poverty and are affected by the health issues that poverty brings. There are few other decent health services nearby in this extremely remote area and people sometimes walk for more than a day to get to the hospital.

Our partner Abercrombie & Kent Philanthropy (AKP) has been a longtime supporter of the hospital, and identified it a high priority for water treatment due to the effects of endemic water safety issues on the health of patients and students at its nursing school. Beginning in 2019, 501CTHREE worked with the AKP and the hospital to design a self-contained system that could remove harmful bacteria from the water - one that could be locally-built and maintained by hospital staff.

While the Covid-19 pandemic delayed the installation for a while, the system was commissioned at the end of 2021 and will now provide clean, safe water to the hospital, nursing school, and surrounding community for years to come.

**PARTNER** 

Abercrombie & Kent

Abercrombie & Kent Philanthropy is dedicated to positively impacting lives and livelihoods in the communities where its guests travel. AKP is equally committed to ensuring guests learn about its philanthropic investments as an integral part of their travel experience. From Africa to Asia, Latin America to the Antarctic, AKP is working with partner communities on education, health care, conservation and enterprise development projects.



**NUTRITION** 

Flint, MI

Sylvester Broome Empowerment Village

43°03'09.1" N, 83°41'38.1" W

## Providing healthier food options to residents of an urban food desert.

Flint, Michigan is known nationally for its water crisis, which is but one of the many challenges facing its residents. Most of Flint's population lacks easy access to healthy, nutritious produce; many parts of Flint are considered food deserts, areas where few retailers sell fresh fruits and vegetables.

With support from the EPA and Toyota Corporation, The Sylvester Broome Empowerment Village (SBEV)'s began a pilot program to open a weekly Mobile Market at SBEV's facility, where SBEV provides childhood education and development services to families in Flint's North End. The program provides Fresh Flint's locally-grown fresh fruit and vegetables to Flint's residents through its Mobile Market program. With support from 501CTHREE and Thrive Market, SBEV was able to expand its Mobile Market program to include healthy, non-perishable pantry items.

DONOR



Thrive Market is a membership based e-commerce platform that supplies nontoxic, eco-friendly, and organic products. Thrive Market is on a mission to make healthy living easy and affordable for everyone. We believe healthy food is a priority - for every paid membership, Thrive Market donates a free membership to someone in need.

**PARTNER** 



At the Sylvester Broome Empowerment Village, our mission is to cultivate leadership capacity. We offer free year-round programming to youth ages 5-17 in the Flint, MI area. Our programs in Academics, Athletics, and the Arts are taught by local professionals who dedicate their time to reinvesting their skills and knowledge and giving back to the young people. By developing and investing in youth, we desire to transform Flint into a just and equitable city.



**NUTRITION** 

## Flint, MI

Sylvester Broome Empowerment Village

43°03'09.1" N, 83°41'38.1" W

## Using nutrition & education to fight the effects of lead poisoning on children in Flint.

In Flint, Michigan, nearly 9,000 children were supplied lead-contaminated water for over 18 months. According to the EPA, lead exposure causes central and peripheral nervous system, learning disabilities, shorter stature, impaired hearing, and impaired formation and function of blood cells in children. Lead also bioaccumulates in the body over time, and poses serious effects for family health.

There is no cure for lead poisoning, however, research has shown that a healthy diet of fresh foods may moderate the effects of lead. Like 23.5 million people in the US, many residents of Flint live in food deserts and depend on highly processed, nutritionally inadequate food for their calories.

With support from the US EPA and 501CTHREE, The Sylvester Broome Empowerment Village ran a pilot program to identify critical gaps in knowledge of how to buy, prepare, and store fresh food. Thirty families on food assistance were selected whose children tested positive for high lead exposure.

For one year, families in the program were provided with weekly deliveries of locally-sourced fresh food that could later be purchased with food assistance dollars. Working together, the staff and families co-created recipes that were healthy, easy to prepare, and tasty. After the first year, families in the program improved the health and wellness of children with high levels of lead exposure, accepted healthier plant-based meals and diets, and bonded over preparing meals at home.

**PARTNER** 



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**RESEARCH** 

#### Los Angeles, CA

**UCLA Samueli School of Engineering** 

34°04'07.5" N, 118°26'40.7" W

## Can technology and innovation help communities prevent the next drinking water crisis?

What if the residents of Flint and other communities had the ability to monitor the safety of their water instead of relying on the city? Could the water crisis, the fatalities, and the long-term health effects on the city's children have been prevented?

The water crisis in Flint fueled increased coverage of the dangers of high levels of drinking water contamination, which can cause lasting health issues - especially in young children. Exposure to lead can seriously harm a child's health, including damage to the brain and nervous system, slowed growth and development, learning and behavior problems, and hearing and speech problems. In addition to high levels of lead, water systems in the US are contaminated with unsafe levels of other toxins including arsenic, copper, iron, chromium, nitrates, and e-coli bacteria.

In the US, race remains a predictor of water safety. The NRDC reports "Nearly 40 percent of the U.S. population still drinks water from unsafe systems, and communities of color face an increased risk of exposure to unsafe water".

With support from 501CTHREE, UCLA's Samueli School of Engineering is developing a first of its kind, low-cost water monitoring system that can be deployed into at-risk communities. The system will collect real-time data on changes to water quality and safety. Our expectation is that the technology can detect eight of the ten most dangerous contaminants regularly found in drinking water, including lead, copper, and microbial contamination. From the combination of inexpensive and robust pH, EC, DO, and ORP sensors we can derive other meaningful water quality parameters.

**PARTNER** 



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**EQUITY** 

#### Los Angeles, CA

**Better Watts Initiative** 33°56'12.5" N, 118°15'11.7 "W

## Supporting community-led testing to identify homes with lead contamination.

People in Watts live, on average, 12 years less than residents from other parts of Los Angeles. CalEPA ranks several Watts census tracts in the top 5% of the most pollution-burdened communities in the state. Researchers are leading studies centered around environmental injustice in Watts, and 501CTHREE has partnered with and provided resources for the Better Watts Initiative's seminal lead study.

The Better Watts Initiative (BWI) is a cohort of local nonprofits, activists, artists, medical institutions, and academic representatives working to address the health and environmental justice challenges that plague the historic community of Watts in South Central Los Angeles; the leaders at BWI are young environmental scientists and activists.

In preliminary tests of water quality, BWI researchers found dangerous lead levels in about 20 percent of Watts homes. Thus, 501CTHREE is working alongside the team to help scale testing efforts across Watts to test 1000 homes in the neighborhood for lead-contaminated water. After establishing a Water Box in Watts and connecting with BWI researchers, 501CTHREE donated four photometers and 1200 test strips to homes to aid the scientists in their ongoing goal to gather lead data for every household in Watts. BWI aims to gather data necessary to spearhead a national environmental movement that puts environmental data in the hands of those affected by injustice.

**PARTNER** 

Better
Watts
Initiative.

Better Watts Initiative wants to spread our message of better health and compassion. We believe that a single action can make a difference in the community, and that collective action can greatly impact the world. By addressing the wrongs that have been afflicted on our community we can begin true healing. Through its community testing pilot study, BWI researchers recently identified toxic levels of lead in the tap water servicing homes.



**EQUITY** 

#### Los Angeles, CA

Think Watts, UCLA, WLCAC

33°56'12.5" N, 118°15'11.7" W

## Addressing unequal access to electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

In Los Angeles, there's a disparity in who has access to electric vehicle charging and cars. In this car-powered city, jobs and people depend on infrastructure, and unfortunately, EV chargers are more concentrated in rich communities. Homeowners are more likely to install EV chargers in their homes, and given that about 60 percent of Angelenos rent, it's much more difficult to charge EVs, since they're hard to find near multi-unit housing. EV drivers migrate to richer neighborhoods to charge, leaving gas-powered drivers in the city's poorer neighborhoods, reducing air quality, and creating a feedback loop that harms low-income neighborhoods. At the same time, the people (many of whom are BIPOC) who operate in the gig economy spend disproportionately higher amounts of money on gas.

From an upward socioeconomic mobility standpoint, making EV charging more available can bring more money to low-income rideshare employees. There are also immense environmental benefits to making EVs and charging more available: according to research, electrifying a single Uber or Lyft vehicle yields the environmental and emissions benefits of electrifying about three private vehicles.

We're here to flip the switch. 501CTHREE is working with community leaders, EV charging experts, and local lawmakers to make EV equity a priority here in Los Angeles. By meeting with and connecting stakeholders in the EV space, we're going to help pass legislation that can be a model for other communities facing EV injustice. Our partners at KIGT, UCLA, and ThinkWatts are leaders in EV justice.

**PARTNERS** 



THINK WATTS.









**EQUITY** 

## Chicago, IL

Abercrombie & Kent Philanthropy

43°30'16.0" N, 110°50'46.0" W

## Connecting inner-city youth with opportunities in sustainable tourism & the American West.

The travel industry is in the midst of a transformation toward greater equity and sustainability. Abercrombie and Kent Philanthropy (AKP) has looked to become more involved in helping local communities in the US, and has partnered with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Chicago to provide inner city youth with an introduction to the tourism industry and a two-week exposure to the lives and livelihoods of those living and working in the western US.

In August 2021, AKP sent youth from Chicago to travel throughout Wyoming and Idaho, where participants learned about the livelihoods of many people living in a very different landscape from that of their hometowns.

501CTHREE was a program sponsor and partnered with AKP as a career partner. We presented programming on environmental justice and the career paths that youth can pursue in protecting the environment and promoting social justice. By working together, 501CTHREE and AKP helped the youth develop professional connections and presented a path forward that highlighted opportunities outside of the traditional career paths experienced by inner city youth.

**PARTNER** 

Abercrombie & Kent

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### Recognition

## **FAST CMPANY**

Winner, Innovation By Design 2019

#### the DESIGN MUSEUM LONDON

Finalist, Design of The Year 2020



Silver Medal, 2020

## **Sponsors & Partners**

#StartSmall





kindhumans

















WATTS LABOR COMMUNITY
ACTION CENTER





Abercrombie & Kent





environmental media association

















#### **501CTHREE** gives special thanks:



To **The Bob and Renee Parsons Foundation** for providing us with operational funding in 2021 and 2022,



and to **Elkay Corporation** for donating their ezH20 LIV bottle fillers for our Water Boxes,

and to the thousands of individual donors who make our programming possible.