

Annual Letter

November 3, 2023

As I reflect on my first (partial) year as Character Lab's CEO, I'm proud of our achievements and look forward to further innovations in cultivating the character strengths all teens need to thrive.

2023 Milestones

We facilitated 29 studies this year and helped researchers publish 13 articles in leading journals, bringing the total to date to 485 studies and over 50 articles. Here are just a few of the recent publications:

- [“Going beyond traits: Social, emotional, and behavioral skills matter for adolescents' success”](#) was published in *Social Psychological and Personality Science* by Christopher J. Soto, Christopher M. Napolitano, Madison N. Sewell, Hee Jun Yoon, and Brent W. Roberts.
- [“Black adolescents' appearance concerns, depressive symptoms, and self-objectification: Exploring the roles of gender and ethnic-racial identity commitment”](#) was published in *Body Image* by Brianna A. Ladd, Anne J. Maheux, Savannah R. Roberts, and Sophia Choukas-Bradley.
- [““Can you tell me more about this?": Agentic written feedback, teacher expectations, and student learning”](#) was published in *Contemporary Educational Psychology* by Camilla Mutoni Griffiths, Lisel Murdock-Perriera, and Jennifer L. Eberhardt.
- [“A context's emphasis on intellectual ability discourages the expression of intellectual humility”](#) was published in *Motivation Science* by Tenelle Porter and Andrei Cimpian.

We amplified our efforts to advance youth voice by cultivating public awareness, fostering partnerships, and devoting more resources to our programs:

- Our team spearheaded discussions on youth voice at events by leading institutions, such as the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), SXSW Education, and the American Educational Research Association (AERA).
- We partnered with [Hopelab](#) and [Common Sense Media](#) to co-create a national survey on digital technologies and youth well-being. The survey will launch

this fall, targeting a national probability panel of over 1,200 young people ages 14-22. Hopelab and Common Sense Media expect to compile and publish their findings in a report by May 2024.

- CLIP—our internship program that empowers youth to weigh in on the research, products, and services that affect them—welcomed 150 young people to its next cohort. A 50% increase from last year, it's our largest group by far.

To share actionable advice with parents and educators, we worked with TED-Ed to produce nine short videos based on our Tips and Playbooks (you can find them [here](#)), partnered with Kellogg's to feature our Playbooks on the back of 800,000 boxes of Corn Flakes, published 32 new Tips by researchers, and welcomed new strategic partners such as [Gradient Learning](#) and [Digital Promise](#). We also thanked Jackie Bezos, Dave Levin, and Dominic Randolph for their contributions as founding board members.

Looking Ahead

We spent the last year laying the groundwork to innovate further, with new opportunities on the horizon:

- We will cultivate deeper strategic partnerships, with our past successes guiding where we can have greater impact.
- We will expand the role of youth voice by growing CLIP to engage more deeply in research and support the R&D of products and services that affect them.
- We will test enhancements to our research infrastructure to help us meet more practitioners and young people where they are—in networks of schools, youth development organizations such as sports and arts programs, and beyond. We will help these groups not only use scientific insights but also work with researchers to generate them.

These opportunities will enable us to connect with researchers, parents, educators, and young people to nurture a learning ecosystem that equips all youth to thrive.

With gratitude,

Dave Hersh
Chief Executive Officer