



Thread's Founding Story

As a young girl growing up in Indiana, Sarah Hemminger learned the debilitating power of social isolation when her church community ostracized her and her family for reporting their pastor for misuse of church funds. She also learned, however, what it looks like when communities band together to confront isolation. In high school, her classmate Ryan failed his freshman year when his mother was badly injured in a car accident, and, unable to work, lost their home, moved the family to an impoverished neighborhood, and became addicted to prescription drugs. Ryan's life trajectory dramatically changed, however, when a group of teachers rallied around him and began serving as extended family members who provided academic support as well as access to secure clothing, food, and bus fare.

After marrying Ryan and settling in Baltimore years later, Sarah recognized that there were likely students at local high schools who, despite their differences, were just like her and Ryan: exceptional individuals in extraordinarily challenging situations, feeling alone and disconnected. In 2004, Sarah and Ryan co-founded Thread to combat social isolation and form a community positioned to lift up Baltimore's youth, adults, and the city as a whole.

The Thread Community Model

Thread enrolls 9th grade students who rank in the bottom 25% of their class and face an abundance of challenges outside of the classroom. Our youth remain in Thread for 10 years, surrounded by a Thread Family – a group of up to four volunteers, including a volunteer leader who serves as Head of Family – that provides customized support and increased access to community resources while deeply enriching the lives of everyone involved. We weave eight Thread Families into an extended family of support called a *thread*, which is led by a GrandParent volunteer leader.

Our youth and volunteers receive wraparound support from Thread Resource Teams, collaborators, and donors who provide services, programming, and connections to other existing community resources. By weaving a new social fabric, Thread cultivates communities that transcend barriers, creating a future where everyone thrives.

Key Outcomes

100%

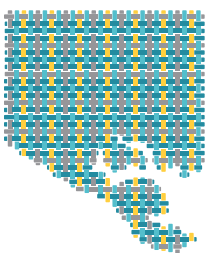
of young people continue to be enrolled in Thread for 10 years, no matter what

85%

of students complete high school within six years of beginning the 9th grade

83%

of students complete a college degree or certificate program within 10 years



Featured Articles

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- The Baltimore Sun: [Thread, a Baltimore Nonprofit, Weaves Students' Lives Together](#)
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- Stanford Social Innovation Review: [Early-stage Entrepreneurs Can Drive New Social Movements](#)
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