

September 2023 Issue- EQ News

Building Your Community with Equiduct Inc.



The excited faces of the Eastside Community Action Center students in 2022.

Going into our second year serving the Lansing community, we are beyond excited to expand outreach and impact throughout Michigan State University and Lansing Public Schools. Our website underwent a sparkling makeover, and our socials are rising this volunteer season. This year we want the community to understand who we are, what we do and how we are here to help others. Equiduct is proud to uplift educationally underserved communities via student volunteers from MSU. We thank our valued supporters, volunteers, staff, donors and community members. We are excited and eager to answer the burning question: **What is Equiduct?**

Meet Equiduct

Equiduct Inc., formerly Cornerstone Community Education Project, began operation in 2021 with a small group of MSU students looking to encourage and assist underserved students in STEM career paths. After a few months and some significant steps in the right direction, the team decided the students they helped needed support beyond the STEM field. They need confidence, well-rounded academic support and self-belief to realize their potential and achieve their goals. Our founders John Henige and Jonas Padilla, both STEM majors (biochemistry and neuroscience) looking to make a change, connected with the Lansing Public Schools system to spread Equiduct's new mission. Starting at the East Side Community Action Center, the program grew to 33 dedicated volunteers and three tutoring locations.

“We are here to remind college students and young adults the power they have.” –John Henige, co-founder

With help from MSU's Burgess Institute for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, as well as a generous donation by DETDSP, Equiduct became a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization shortly after its launch in fall 2023. This recognition helped solidify our dedication to

connecting college volunteers with the students of Lansing to provide support, encouragement, and experiences that last a lifetime.

Providing Social and Academic Support to Lansing's Youth

As a band of MSU alumni and students, we aim to connect dedicated college volunteers to the Lansing Public Schools system. Through Equiduct Inc., college students work to empower younger students who would most benefit from academic and social support.

Just a few blocks from MSU, Lansing Public Schools are working to grow their educational and academic systems. By 2025, LPS is looking to raise graduation rates to 85%, increase attendance rates to 90%, and achieve an enrollment of 11,500 ([Lansing School District](#)).

During our time serving the community, we can attest that Lansing youth are hungry to learn, engage, explore and thrive. Our program sets these students up to succeed through our three modes of educational and social support:

Equiduct Tutors

Our volunteer tutoring program creates an opportunity for college students to tutor Lansing students in subjects such as math, science, language arts and history. At various locations, our volunteers dedicate their time and effort to building their own knowledge and spreading the magic of learning to Lansing's youth. Our tutors help Lansing

students find their academic interests and form personal goals to further their success in school and in life.



Equiduct Co-Founder Jonas Padilla and an EQ tutor with a student. (Photo courtesy of Niccolo Seillo)

Equiduct JA Instructors

In our newest program, we partner with Junior Achievement of Mid-Michigan to execute their well-structured financial literacy curriculum. This program educates young students about the importance of financial independence, understanding and fluency. JA is a globally accredited program that works to familiarize students with entrepreneurship and career readiness, alongside financial literacy. Equiduct's role in the program is to ensure an enriching, fun, and stress-free experience for college volunteers who choose to teach Junior Achievement courses. Volunteers instruct classes with games, interactive learning materials, props, scripts, real-world stories and more to engage students in a fun version of learning necessary skills ([Junior Achievement](#)).

College Mentorship Program

With our mentorship program, volunteer college mentors connect with Lansing students and build their in-school and out-of-school experiences. In 2023, we had the opportunity to take our mentees to the fair, bowling and go-carting. By joining the mentorship program, Equiduct Volunteers develop relationships with Lansing students on a deeper, more unique level and offer them support outside of the classroom. We work to provide Lansing youth with long-lasting, strong relationships; and a second set of peers they can look up to. Equiduct College Mentor Volunteers share their personal life lessons, advice, experience and knowledge, and act as big siblings to students in the LPS system.

Making Volunteer Work in College Convenient and Rewarding

Our team of volunteers is dedicated to building the infrastructure that allows the flow of hundreds of committed college students into the Lansing community. We are here to recruit, empower, and coordinate the vast body of MSU volunteers to provide equitable solutions to current social issues. Hence our name, we serve as the bridge to Lansing's learners on the other side.

According to [Youth.gov](https://youth.gov), one in four college students volunteer, which in 2019 generated \$6.7 billion for the betterment of American communities. We understand the difficulties of a college-work-life balance and want students to find volunteer opportunities that work for them. One of our main goals is to

make volunteering easy, fun and mutually beneficial for college students looking to serve their community.

In broad terms, volunteer work is giving your time and effort to a service that benefits other people while personally growing and enriching your own experiences. Volunteering can provide a sense of purpose to an individual, which is important for college students who may feel tied to academics and in need of an outlet for expression. Volunteering helps you personally leave an imprint on your community and ensure your local infrastructure supports those in need. Through Equiduct, MSU volunteers can ensure they have a hand in bettering the Lansing community.

“We believe that education is the most effective tool for creating positive change in society.” -Jonas Padilla, co-founder

Equiduct's mission is to optimize and transform college volunteering; to help them, help others. Our programs are designed to inspire, encourage, support, and grow the younger generation's self-belief. We work to help them set the bar high, realize their goals, and provide the guidance, support, and resources to achieve them. Equiduct believes that education is power and that all humans have the capacity for greatness. With the right support, Lansing's youth will become the next

MSU students, business owners, journalists, STEM professors, teachers and hopefully, volunteers.

As we work to build lasting social and academic structures for Lansing youth, we encourage all college students to participate in uplifting the next generation of learners. We believe that volunteering is more than sharing your time. It is the decision to save just a few hours a week and transform this time into a catalyst for change.



College instructors smile with their JA class. (Photo courtesy of Junior Achievement)

Connect with Us!

We can help match your academic and personal interests with the right Equiduct volunteer activity.

Visit our website at www.equiduct.org

Follow us on Instagram @Equiduct.msu

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