

Annual Letter

August 31, 2020

We write this letter in the midst of an unprecedented global pandemic, an economic crisis, and a racial reckoning. These circumstances—and their ripple effects—have underscored the urgency of our work and galvanized our commitment to our mission. Now more than ever, parents and educators need *scientific insights to help all children thrive*.

2020 Milestones

We continue to scale the infrastructure of Character Lab Research Network (CLRN). Here's our growth over the past year, by the numbers:

- School partnerships grew by 45% and now include 94 schools serving over 100,000 students across the country.
- The number of leading university scientists around the world actively conducting research on our platform increased by 103% for a total of 79.
- The number of pilot studies increased by 169% to 132
- The number of fully powered research studies increased by 130% to 37. These studies were informed by 232 feedback sessions with students as well as school and district leaders.
- Publications increased by 80% to 18 articles accepted by peer-reviewed scientific journals.
- We expanded by 300% the number of high school students who give feedback on research.
- More than 20,000 students participated in fall, winter, and spring surveys, providing a window for CLRN school partners into the social, emotional, academic, and physical development of students.

We are expanding our actionable advice, based on science, for parents and educators:

- We published 43 new [Tips of the Week](#), increased our readership to over 22,000 subscribers, and expanded our reach to over 5 million through syndications with [Thrive Global](#) and the [Philadelphia Inquirer](#).
- By including more than a dozen guest experts—such as [Dan Willingham](#), [David Yeager](#), and [Alia Crum](#)—to author Tips of the Week, we enriched the content while remaining true to scientific integrity.
- We developed four new [Playbooks](#)—[Emotional Intelligence](#), [Honesty](#), [Creativity](#), and [Growth Mindset](#)—research-based guides to the conditions that cultivate strengths of heart, mind, and will.

- We partnered with *Education Week* to launch the [Ask a Psychologist](#) column for educators.
- Together with Relay Graduate School of Education, we hosted a virtual [Educator Summit](#) that included workshops and keynote speeches by Chris Emdin, Reshma Saujani, Marc Brackett, Jason Okonofua, and Angela Duckworth. In moving from in-person to online, we served our largest audience and achieved our highest attendee satisfaction ratings to date.
- We hired our first-ever Director of Strategic Partnerships to expand outreach to parents and educators.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

James Baldwin once said that “not everything that is faced can be changed; but nothing can be changed until it is faced.” This historic moment has catalyzed critical reflection within our organization. We are asking ourselves how we as an educational nonprofit can more effectively work toward an anti-racist society.

Here are steps we have taken as an organization in recent months—recognizing that this is the beginning, not the end, of the necessary struggle:

- We created a Character Lab Fellowship program to improve representation on the Character Lab team from underrepresented groups.
- We have worked to diversify our school partnerships and built systems to promote student and educator voice in equitable and inclusive ways. Currently, 25% of the students involved in CLRN are Black, 39% are Latinx, and 46% are experiencing poverty.
- We made donations to [Campaign Zero](#) and to the [Bread and Roses Community Fund](#) in Philadelphia, where we are based.

Looking Ahead

In the coming year, we will embrace our core value of Kaizen, or continuous improvement:

- We will accelerate partnerships with schools that serve high proportions of Black, Latinx, and students experiencing poverty.
- We will execute a targeted strategy to recruit underrepresented scientists into our Research Network.
- We will promote the voices of leading scientists of color as we translate scientific evidence into actionable advice for parents and educators.
- We will prioritize strategic partnerships that help us reach the broadest community of parents and educators.
- We will abandon our one-roof policy, allowing us to recruit talent nationally and build a more diverse team.

- We will work with an outside consultant to enhance the values of anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion in our practices and culture.

As always, we are grateful for your support and encouragement.

With grit and gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Talamas". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Sean Talamas

Executive Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Angela Duckworth". The signature is bold and cursive, with a large initial "A" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Angela Duckworth

Founder and CEO