

FURNITURE WITH A PURPOSE  
**PURPOSEFUL-DESIGN**  
— EST. 2013 —

REBUILDING LIVES AND PROVIDING THE  
GIFT OF WORK THROUGH SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

by Byron R. Johnson and William Wubbenhorst







# Purpose & Mission

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# Purposeful Design:

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*Rebuilding Lives and Providing the Gift of Work  
through Social Enterprise*

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 | Baylor University  
INSTITUTE FOR STUDIES OF RELIGION





**PURPOSEFUL DESIGN:**  
*Rebuilding Lives and Providing the Gift of Work  
through Social Enterprise*

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**CUSTOM FURNITURE  
WITH A SOCIAL IMPACT**





## INTRODUCTION

Purposeful Design is a Christian ministry established to help rebuild lives of individuals who have struggled with addiction, homelessness, incarceration, and other obstacles; to equip them with valuable work skills; and to provide the gift of work. Purposeful Design (PD) is a social enterprise, located in Indianapolis, IN, that provides entry level employment to men coming from the streets through homeless missions who want a better life. Much of PD's success stems from a social enterprise model through the production and sale of handcrafted, custom furniture that creates a revenue stream to support the primary work of rebuilding lives. PD also provides life skills and work-readiness training classes through a school called Advance! to an estimated 300 men, women and youth per year, referred to the school through a network of community-based partners.

The first section of this case study evaluation provides a background on the origins of PD as a type of 'spin-off' of Wheeler Mission, the largest homeless ministry in Indianapolis. This story affirms the central importance that relationships and networking among other community-based ministries and organizations, both faith-based and secular, have had for PD from its inception. The second section provides a detailed examination of the social enterprise component of PD, which centers around the production and sale of custom-made furniture to corporate clients.

The third section describes PD's more recent ministry efforts through the establishment of the Advance! school, which helps struggling individuals bridge the gap from relief services to sustainable work. The fourth and final section of this case study provides a preliminary Return On Investment (ROI) analysis of PD's social enterprise and the Advance! programs, as well as including interviews of participants in both programs.

## I. BACKGROUND: The Origins of Purposeful Design

David Palmer, the founder and CEO of PD, previously served on the board of Wheeler Mission, the largest program serving those experiencing homelessness in Indianapolis, for approximately the last 15 years. More importantly, though, was Palmer's direct involvement in Wheeler's ministries by leading Bible Studies with men staying at the Mission. Palmer recalls some of the conversations he encountered through this work:

*I would frequently ask the men how they were doing, and I so often heard the response, "I'm looking for a job." When I heard this, I always felt saddened for the person that said it and at the same time I felt thankful because I had a job that was providing for my family, and I wished I was able to offer employment to them.*

Palmer sought God's guidance on how to address this issue, alongside some other friends and associates that shared this same burden. Shortly thereafter, Palmer discovered that some people were breaking down old shipping pallets and building furniture out of the material. He wondered if the men he met at Wheeler Mission could learn to build furniture like that and sell it to create a revenue stream. Though this idea did not work out, it led to the idea of using beautiful Indiana hardwoods to create salable furniture. None of the founders had experience making furniture or general manufacturing or even significant woodworking experience. As Palmer readily admits, it was truly a walk of faith.

Soon afterward, a business friend told Palmer he had extra space in his warehouse and allowed them to begin building furniture there. Then College Park Church, which owned an old 5,000 sq ft empty church in the city allowed them to turn the vacant church into a workshop, where Palmer and his friends worked for the next four years teaching men referred by Wheeler Mission and other relief agencies. Five years later in 2018, Purposeful Design moved into their current 30,000 sq ft facility which has ceilings 24 feet high, 3 loading docks, office space, and a beautiful showroom.

## II. Purposeful Design as a form of Social Enterprise

Purposeful Design is a version of a social enterprise which, broadly speaking, is defined as a business with specific social objectives that are its primary purpose. In many cases, social enterprises are termed as such because they direct their profits towards social programs. For PD, however, the running of the business (i.e., the production of custom furniture) is itself, the ministry. That is, since PD hires those formerly experiencing homelessness and/or those struggling with addictions and employs them to produce merchandise to be sold, with the subsequent revenues generated providing for their wages.



As a not-for-profit enterprise, the growth of sales revenues is for the purpose of increasing the number of homeless men to whom PD can minister and employ.

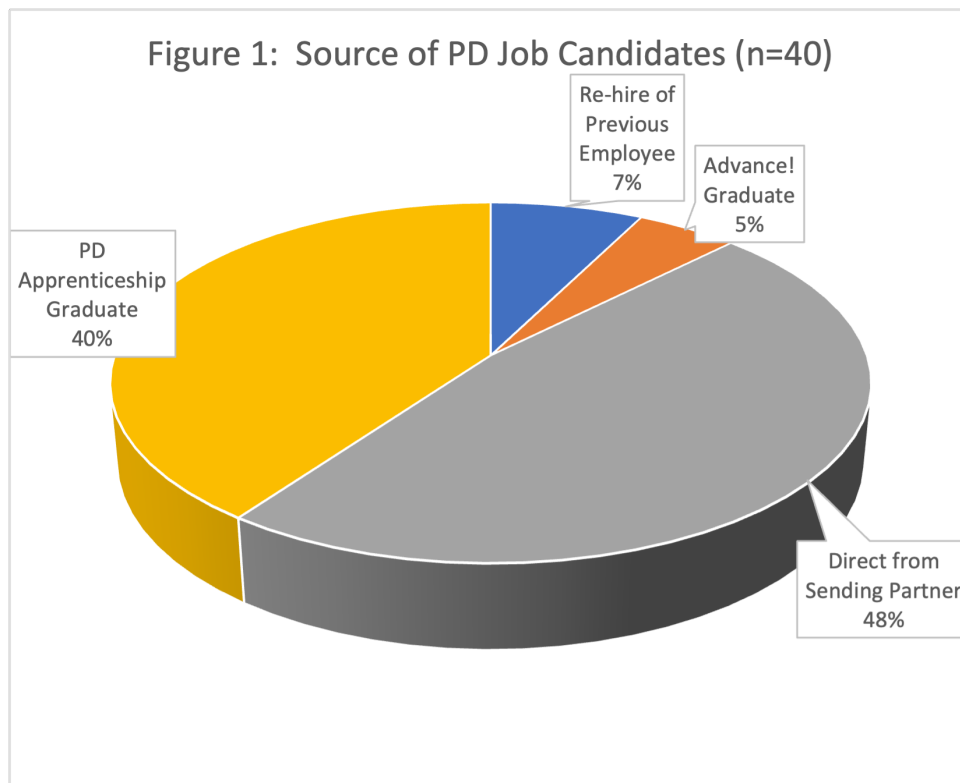
### What Makes the Enterprise Work?

There are two key elements to Purposeful Design's social enterprise that are essential for its success:

1. Collaboration with community-based partners to provide candidates/employees and wrap-around services for Purposeful Design; and
2. Corporate partners that purchase merchandise.

#### Collaboration with Community-Based Partners

PD relies on its network of community-based partners to supply it with trainees/employees for the furniture making enterprise. Before being hired, most referred candidates go through the Advance! school (1-week) as well as an apprenticeship program (2 weeks). As shown in figure 1 below, almost half of the candidates were referrals from what PD calls 'Sending Partners.' Going forward, PD plans to have all of its hires complete the Advance! Program as a pre-condition for employment (see section III below for more on the Advance! Program).







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**PD PARTNERS ARE JOINING THE  
FIGHT AGAINST POVERTY**



PD's collaboration with community-based organizations (CBOs) also extends beyond referrals to include additional support services for PD employees from a variety of organizations including Heart Change. While Heart Change primarily focuses on providing housing for women and their children, they also provide housing for PD employees that need it.

### Corporate Partners

Corporate partners, known as "PD Partners" consist of a variety of corporate entities that desire to focus the power of their purchases to strategically fight poverty. The partners agree to prioritize PD as a supplier for suitable furniture purchases. The PD engagement strategy, as explained by Steve Znachko, PD board member and VP of Sales Strategy, is as follows:

*We compete for business on the street every day on the basis of quality, service and price. We also clearly present the mission of Purposeful Design up front as well. Customers fall in love both with the mission of PD and the quality of the product. Once we have a corporate partner on board and get the stamp of approval at the top of their management hierarchy, we then need to shift to questions about where and how we can meet their furnishing needs, and who are the key procurement decision-makers within the corporation we need to get on board.*

One of the key components for translating these partnerships into actual furniture sales is the designation of a Corporate Partner advocate within the company. These advocates help PD navigate the procurement process within the company and obtain the proper status as a vendor. As explained by Julie Boynton, Senior Director, Interior Architecture for the University of Notre Dame and who also serves as their corporate partner advocate:

*Once we attended the presentation and agreed to partner with Purposeful Design, the next step was for me to introduce David [Palmer, PD's CEO] to the primary furniture dealer for Notre Dame. We also engaged with procurement staff and shared Purposeful Design's mission with them. This allowed us to designate them as a no-bid contractor <sup>1</sup>.*

PD also relies on these corporate partner advocates to connect PD with their counterparts in other corporations to expand their customer base. In addition, many corporate partner advocates, as well as other corporate staff, volunteer their time providing workshops for PD's Advance! school on topics ranging from financial literacy to resume building and job preparedness.

<sup>1</sup> This status as a no-bid contractor allows Interiors Team Members within Notre Dame to specify furniture from PD without requiring them to bid against other furniture manufacturers.



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**ADVANCE! SCHOOL  
A PATHWAY TO LIFE IMPROVEMENT**



### How the PD Enterprise Works

The PD furniture-building enterprise seeks to promote a family-type culture, with informal mentoring and discipleship programs intentionally integrated into the workday experience. The supervisors, who were all originally program participants working on the floor, are paired up with new hires to serve that critically important mentoring and discipleship role. The PD furniture-making enterprise generally has more employees than required to give participants flexibility to step away for various legal and health-related appointments linked to stabilizing their lives physically as well as emotionally. A good deal of family restoration takes place with PD employees/participants that had ‘burned bridges’ often related to their past struggles with addiction.

Luke Hart, production foreman for PD, explains the unique aspects of the PD social enterprise:

*While we certainly function as a business, Purposeful Design is, first and foremost, a mission. As we expand the business, we are, in effect, expanding the mission. We focus a lot of attention on creating a healthy culture on the work floor through patience, building trust, and team building through daily fellowship and sharing, which is the key to building successful lives and a successful business.*

\* See Exhibit 1 for a current listing of PD Partners

### **III. Advance! School**

While the PD social enterprise is an effective model for helping to transform the lives of men experiencing homelessness and struggling with addiction, the reach of the program is limited to the 25-30 employees per year they can support through their current operating level. To expand their reach and impact in serving the most vulnerable in the community, PD launched the Advance! school in June of 2022, with funding primarily through a grant obtained through The Lilly Endowment.<sup>2</sup>

Advance! represents another example of PD’s emphasis on collaboration with other community-based programs, with over 30 community partners in total. PD has a reciprocal relationship with these partners, whereby students are referred to the program, and likewise, PD connects students with the appropriate resources offered by these organizations. Advance! also provides an opportunity for the previously referenced corporate partner advocates to engage directly in the ministry side of PD by teaching Advance! classes on subjects varying from personal development and job preparation, to good worker skills and spiritual development.

<sup>2</sup> The Lilly Endowment, Inc is a private philanthropic foundation based in Indianapolis that supports the causes of community development, education and religion.

This collaborative community-based approach gives students access to a rich network of support resources, equipping them with the necessary tools and assistance needed for employment readiness. By leveraging their partners' expertise, Advance! can focus on providing high-quality career training, while ensuring students receive comprehensive support in areas beyond PD's specialization. As of June 30, 2023, the community partners, also known as sending partners, referred 232 of the 284 (82%) individuals enrolled in Advance!.

The requirements for graduating Advance! are based on the PATHS acronym:

- **P**resence:  
Students can miss no more than 4 hours out of the 30-hour training program.
- **A**ttitude:  
Students must be engaged in, and participate in, class sessions.
- **T**imeliness:  
Students are only allowed to be more than 15 minutes late once.
- **H**omework:  
Students must complete 100% of homework assignments.
- **S**ocial interaction:  
Students are expected to interact and engage with fellow students in the class sessions.

These requirements are designed to prepare students for the expectations that employers will have of them. Upon graduation, Advance! facilitates each student's transition into the workforce by assisting in defining their next steps. Recognizing the varying needs and circumstances of everyone, Advance! directs graduates into three different pathways:

- 1) permanent employment,
- 2) apprenticeship for additional technical training, and
- 3) 'barrier-busting' support for those still working to overcome employment barriers.

Regardless of the pathway, the Advance! aim remains the same: to guide each student on a personalized, supported journey toward successful employment.

Moving forward, as a precursor to employment in the furniture-making enterprise, PD will require all apprentices to complete and graduate from the Advance! school.

## IV. A Preliminary Evaluation of the PD Social Enterprise and Advance! School

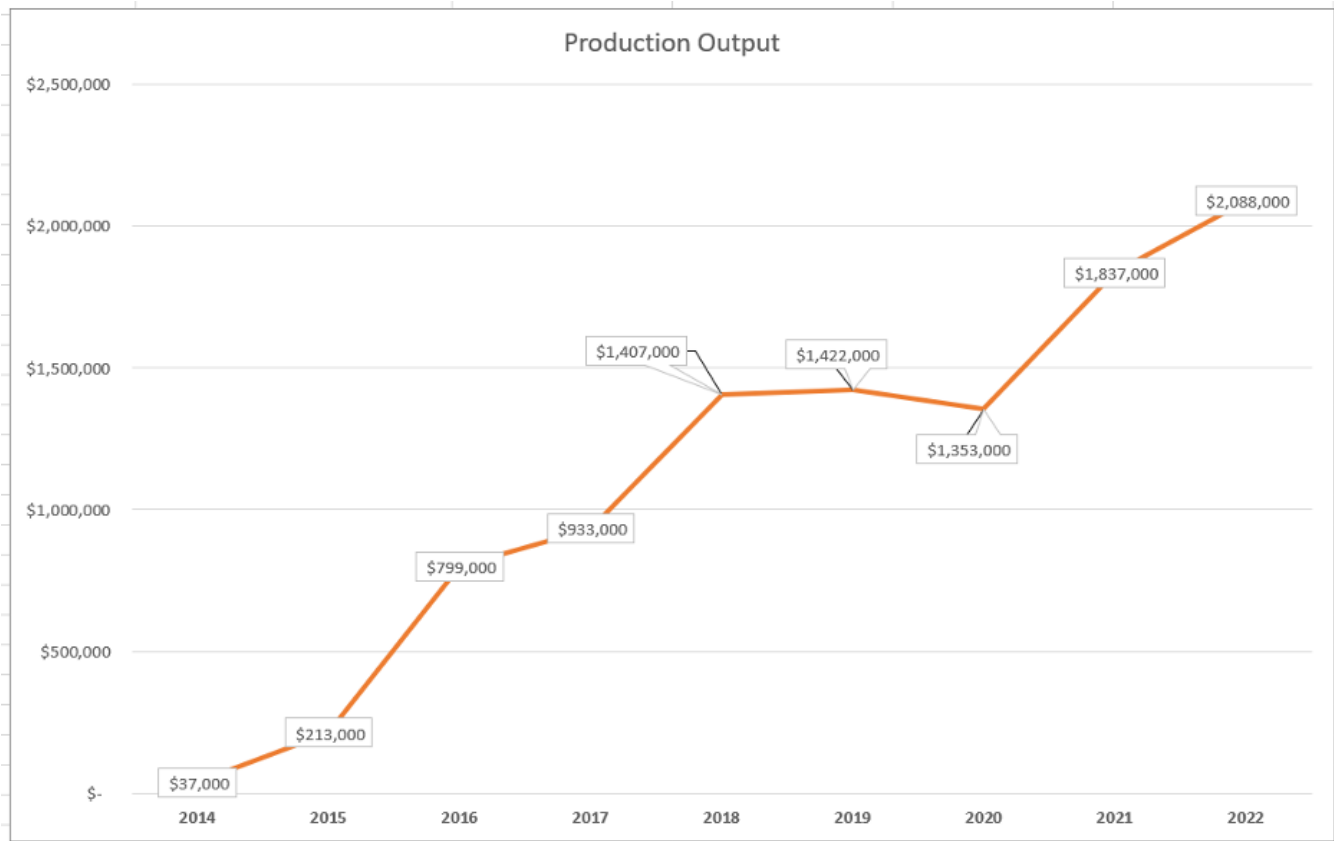
This section provides both a qualitative and quantitative evaluation of both the PD furniture-making enterprise and the Advance! job readiness school. The qualitative component of this evaluation is based upon interviews with participants of either or both the PD enterprise and the Advance! school.

The quantitative evaluation is based primarily upon data furnished by PD as a result of its Lilly Endowment grant.

### The PD Social Enterprise

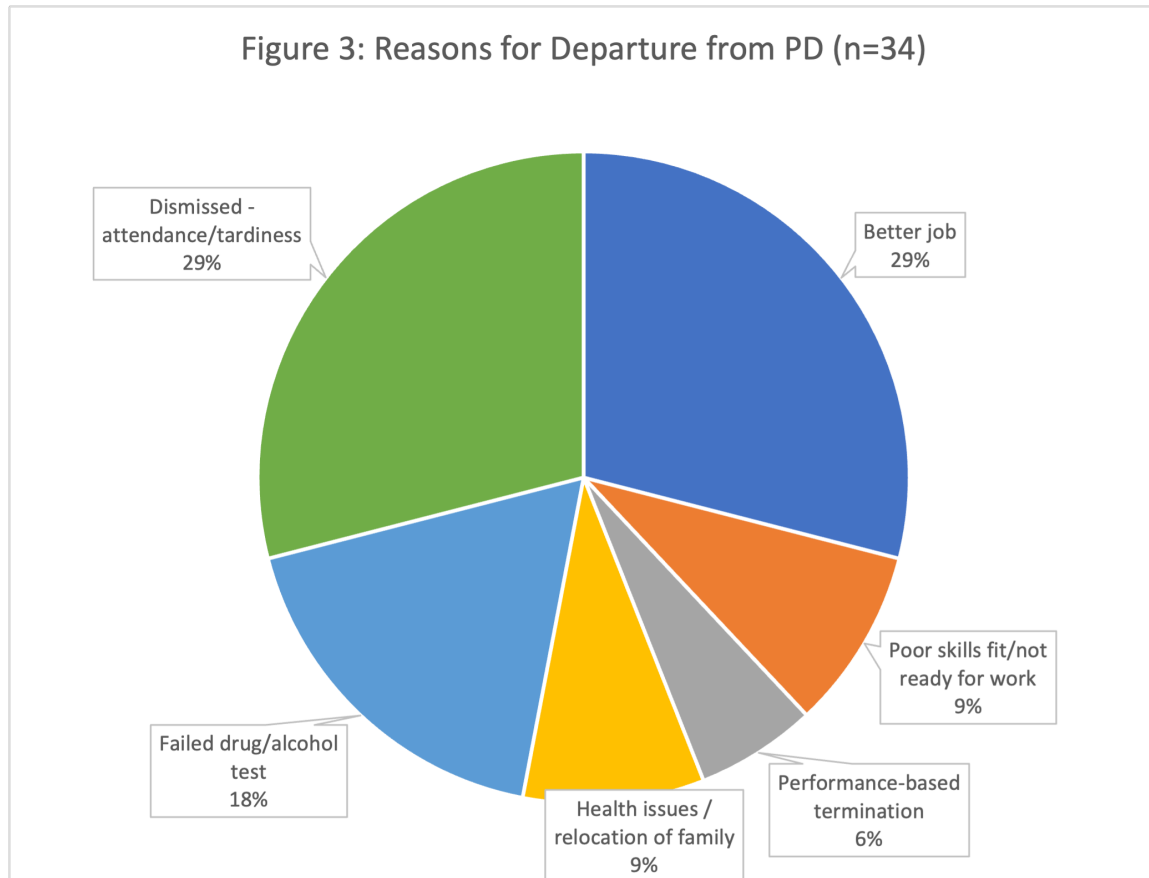
As shown in figure 2. The PD social enterprise has shown robust growth between 2014 and 2022. The production output estimate for 2023 is \$2,300,000.

**Table 2: Production Output**





Since 2014, the PD furniture-making enterprise has employed 221 men, all of whom were unemployed and living below the poverty level. Over 90% of these men had previously served time in jail, and 89% were currently or previously homeless. Based on PD data collected since 4/1/21, 100% of PD employees experienced an improvement in wages, responsibilities, or skills, including five men that were promoted into supervisory roles within the enterprise. The average annual turnover between 4/1/21 and 6/30/23 was 47%, with the reasons for departure shown in Figure 3.



A Preliminary ROI Analysis of PD

A Return On Investment (ROI) analysis of the PD social enterprise centers on comparing the costs for operating the enterprise against both the projected savings in taxpayer-funded services (e.g., for treating addictions and housing those experiencing homelessness) and the additional tax revenues resulting from the employment through PD and jobs obtained after leaving PD. This short-term ROI only concerns the costs and savings of the program during the time the PD employees/participants were in the program.

**Table 1: Estimated ROI for the PD Social Enterprise**

Type of Outcome	Estimated annual savings/ additional tax revenues per employed individual	Estimated Taxpayer savings, since inception	Methodology/Source
<p><b>Cost saved from homelessness prevented.</b></p> <p>89% of 221 PD employees (196) were previously homeless <sup>3</sup>.</p>	\$44,196 in taxpayer costs per year for emergency and transitional services for chronically homeless individual (adjusted for inflation).	196 PD employees * \$44,196 * 70% discount factor = <b>\$6.06 million</b> in life-to-date savings in taxpayer costs for emergency and transitional shelters.	Estimated Costs of Homelessness in Indianapolis in 2016  (chipindy.org)
<p><b>Savings from reduced incidence of drug and alcohol abuse.</b></p> <p>91% of 221 PD employees (201) previously battled addiction <sup>4</sup>. National average relapse rate is 67% and PD relapse rate is 25% (PD = 42% better).</p> <p>42% * 201 PD employees = 84 PD employees not in relapse better than national average.</p>	\$5,417 in health care service provider costs per year for chronically homeless individuals (adjusted for inflation)	84 PD employees * \$5,417 * 70% discount factor = <b>\$318,000</b> in life-to-date savings in healthcare costs due to drug addiction.	Substance Abuse and Homelessness: Statistics and Rehab Treatment  (americanaddictioncenters.org)
<p><b>Savings from reduced criminal justice costs.</b></p> <p>91% of 221 PD employees (201) previously served time.</p> <p>Estimated 29% of offenders return to incarceration within 3 years <sup>5</sup> and PD recidivism rate is 2% (PD = 27% better).</p> <p>27% * 201 PD employees = 54 PD employees prevented from recidivism.</p>	\$14,115 in criminal justice costs per year for chronically homeless individuals (adjusted for inflation)	54 PD employees * \$14,155 * 70% discount factor = <b>\$535,000</b> in reduced criminal justice costs.	Estimated Costs of Homelessness in Indianapolis in 2016 (chipindy.org)  2022-Adult-Recidivism-Summary.pdf (in.gov)
Total taxes paid by PD wage earners <sup>6</sup> .	N/A	<b>\$257,000</b>	
<b>Total Estimated Savings</b>		\$6,060,000 + \$318,000 + \$535,000 + \$257,000 = <b>\$7,170,000</b>	
<b>Estimated life-to-date net program costs</b>		<b>\$2,263,000</b>	
<b>Estimated ROI</b>		<b>\$3.17</b>	Every \$1.00 invested in SSEP produced \$3.17 in taxpayer savings and increased tax revenues.

<sup>3</sup> Data provided by Purposeful Design.

<sup>4</sup> Data provided by Purposeful Design.

<sup>5</sup> 2022-Adult-Recidivism-Summary.pdf (in.gov)

<sup>6</sup> PD average length of employment was 254 days, or 8.4 months. This generates a Full-Time Equivalent of .7 FTE. All annual savings calculated will be multiplied by a 70% factor to reduce the annual savings to align with the average length of employment.



Since its inception in 2013, PD generated an estimated \$7.2 million savings against a program cost of about \$2.3 million for a ROI of \$3.17 for every dollar invested in the program. This is a very conservative estimate, which does not incorporate the significant additional savings associated with the positive outcomes for PD participants in the years following their completion of the program. Furthermore, the program costs were not borne by the taxpayers themselves since PD does not receive any government funding.

### PD Participants

The qualitative evaluation of the PD social enterprise consists of summaries of interviews with current and former participants.

- *Jameel* (current PD supervisor)

Jameel currently serves as a supervising craftsman<sup>7</sup> for PD. He found himself homeless 3 years ago after getting kicked out of Job Corps program for smoking marijuana. He was introduced to PD by a volunteer at Wheeler Mission. Jameel spent the last 2.5 years in transitional housing at the Wheeler Mission and now resides with two other PD craftsmen in housing provided through one of PD's community partners, Heart Change. He has worked for 3 years for PD and was promoted to supervisor 6 months ago. As Jameel explains:

*The Purposeful Design workplace is like family to me, and I've received a lot of support from the staff and volunteers. The work experience has helped me get a little outside of my comfort zone and develop my communication and relationship skills. I am hoping to get my own place in the next year or so and hope to continue my work here at PD. God has his hands on this place.*

- *Casey* (former craftsman)

Like Jameel, Casey was referred to PD by Wheeler Mission where he was living. He was not ready for a regular job and, like Jameel, appreciated the supportive, family-like atmosphere that PD provided. Casey left PD 18 months ago and now does furniture repair work. As Casey describes:

*I have experienced a lot of hypocrisy in my past experience growing up in a church, so I was wary of that when I came to Purposeful Design. I found the people at PD to be genuine, and the family atmosphere made me feel at home and gave me the time to overcome some recent trauma I had experienced until I was ready to move on to the next phase of my life.*

- *Paul* (current craftsman)

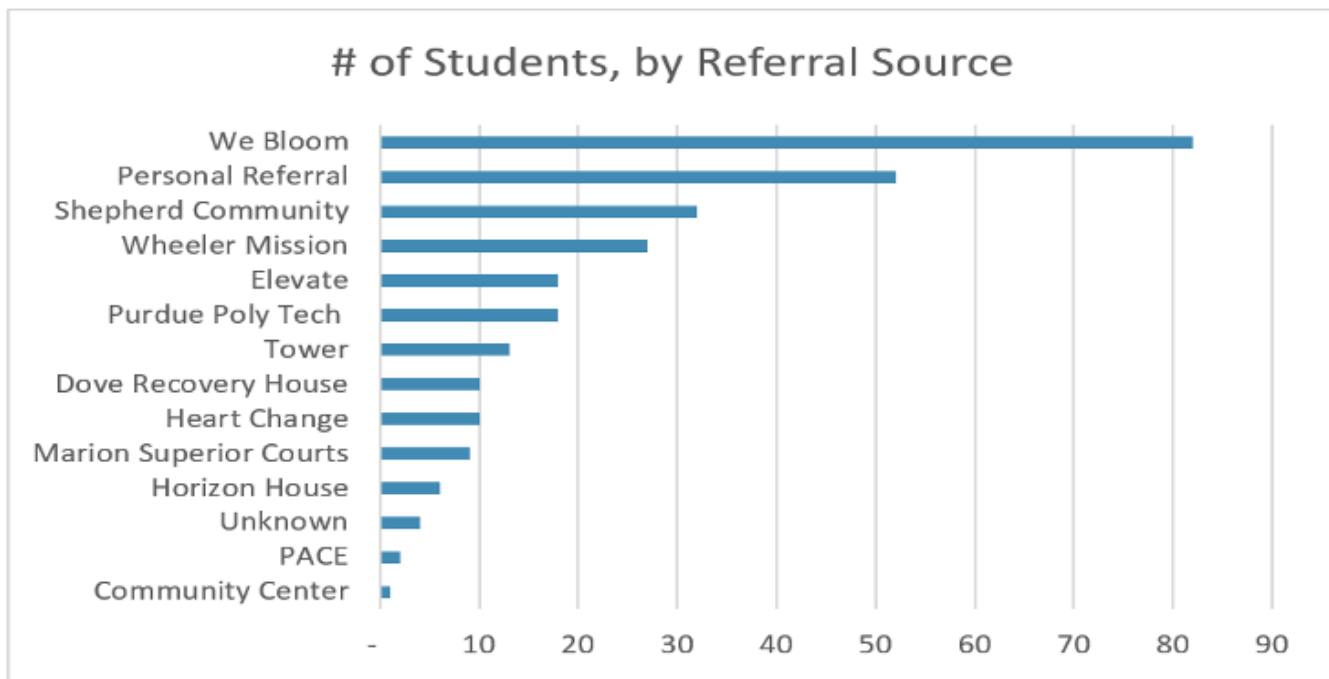
Paul spent 14 months at the main shelter for Wheeler Missions before moving to their transitional housing at the Delaware Street location. He is now in housing through Heart Change, sharing a house with other PD craftsmen. Like other craftsmen, Paul was taken in by the family-like atmosphere at PD. He is currently attending Lincoln Tech School to be certified in welding, a skill greatly in demand. As Paul describes:

*My job at PD is different from any other job I have had. This is a family-like workplace, with social support and a time for daily sharing, reflection and thankfulness. I am not a sociable person and being able to work in such a friendly environment helps me to stay grounded and start planning my future.*

The Advance! School

The Advance! school served a total of 284 students between December of 2022 and August of 2023 through a total of 24 classes, with an average of about 12 students per class. Figure 4 shows the source of student referrals, which again demonstrates the extent of PD’s collaboration with other community-based agencies throughout Indianapolis.

**Figure 4: Number of Students, by Referral Source**



The fact that the largest source of referrals, We Bloom Inc., is not a faith-based organization also dispels the common notion that FBOs like Purposeful Design only collaborate with other faith-based organizations and churches.

We Bloom Inc. is a membership-based network of 11 Recovery Cafes located across the US and in Canada. They provide safe spaces for member peers to attend recovery classes, share meals and participate in a variety of activities and workshops together. The Advance! school has held a couple of classes on-site at We Bloom as well. Christina Rodriguez, who serves as a case manager at We Bloom, describes:

*I have received a lot of positive feedback from We Bloom members participating in the Advance classes. In fact, many have been asking for more, including more budgeting and financial classes and more hands-on support with actual job applications. We are very happy with the partnership with Purposeful Design and their assistance with folks getting past their addictions and stabilizing their lives.*

### Advance! School Outcomes

Graduation – Overall, Advance! had a 85% graduation rate, with 80% of adults<sup>8</sup>, 90% of incarcerated individuals<sup>9</sup>, and 81% of high school students<sup>10</sup> completing the program requirements.

Follow-up – Advance! also conducted a one-month follow-up with the adult graduates. Incarcerated students served were unable to do make any concrete steps and next the next step for high school students<sup>10</sup> is to continue high school through graduation. Figure 5 shows the preliminary outcomes following completion of the class. For the adult population, outcomes were classified as follows:

30 days after graduation students fall into one of the following categories:

- Hired or apprenticing.
- Final steps prior to employment -- Final interview, HR tasks, employer-provided training program.
- Applied for employment – Submitted 1+application for employment/apprenticeship and awaiting next step.
- Gaining Life Stability / Removing Employment Hurdles – Made progress toward driver's license, green card, housing, GED, etc.
- Nest steps not identified – Encountered positive relationships, received encouragement and support.

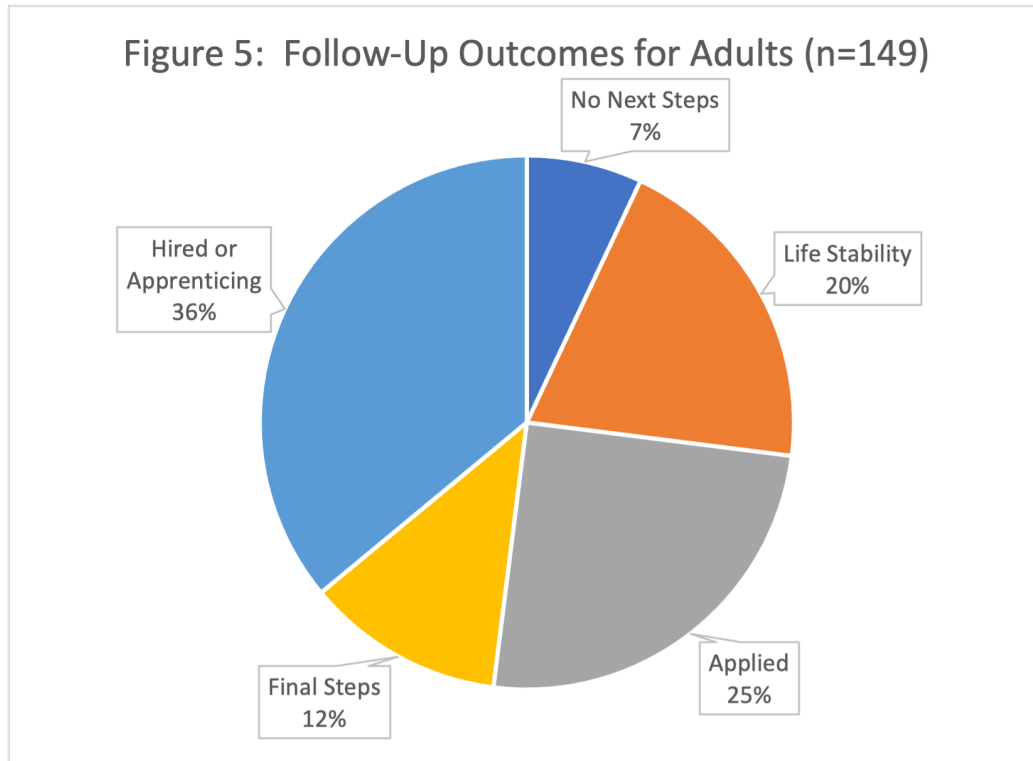
<sup>8</sup> Adults- "Students come into our program via referrals from partner relief agencies in Indianapolis or through personal referrals from prior graduates. Our students come from diverse backgrounds marked by significant challenges such as homelessness, incarceration, substance abuse, and chronic unemployment."

<sup>9</sup> Incarcerated- "These students are actively incarcerated facing various charges. They are currently part of a greater reentry training program called TOWER in the Hamilton County Jail. Each of these men is on a pathway to life improvement with the target of rejoining the workforce successfully and leading a sustainable life."

<sup>10</sup> High school students – which are considered vulnerable because of increased risk of not completing their high school program because of educational performance factors or other predictive elements.



As shown in Figure 5, nearly three-quarters (73%) of graduates were already employed, nearly employed, or had at least completed job applications, while another 20% had taken steps towards life stability in preparation for seeking employment (e.g., obtaining IDs, etc.).



For the high school students, all returned to school plus two of them picked up summer apprenticeships through partner organizations. Future follow-up efforts would be useful to determine how many of these Advance! graduates did obtain their high school diploma.

#### A Preliminary ROI Analysis of Advance! School

The Outcomes are used to estimate the returns for the Advance! school are focused on two outcomes in particular:

1. Employment: Given that all Advance! adult students were unemployed at the time of enrollment, one of the returns that can be measured is the additional tax revenues generated as a result of their employment.
2. Reduced reliance on Medicaid health insurance: Advance! adults previously on Medicaid that obtain employment with health insurance.

Table 2 below provides a preliminary ROI estimate for the Advance! school for the 242 students served between December 2022 and August 2023.

**Table 2: Preliminary ROI Estimate for the Advance! School (students served December 2022-August 2023)**

Description of Outcome	Value of Outcomes	Estimated additional tax revenues attributable to employment (assumes a 10% effective tax rate)
<p><i>Adults</i> - An estimated 88 previously unemployed students gaining employment (the 54 already hired, 18 in the final steps of hiring, and half of those that have submitted job applications).</p>	<p>88 students at an estimated full-time annual salary of \$33,000 (\$16.50/hour) = <b>\$2,904,000</b></p> <p><b>3-year savings - \$8,712,000</b></p>	<p>\$2,904,000 times 10% effective tax rate = <b>\$290,400</b></p>
<p><i>Adults</i> - An estimated 30% of adult Advance! students (72) indicated they were receiving health benefits through Medicaid<sup>11</sup>. Of those, 33% have obtained (or are close to obtaining) employment with health benefits and no longer requiring Medicaid. This results in an estimated 24 individuals removed from Medicaid.</p>	<p>The annual Medicaid cost per person in Indiana is \$9,335<sup>12</sup>.</p> <p>24 Advance! adults that no longer require Medicaid times \$9,335 = <b>\$224,040</b></p>	<p>\$2,214,408 times 10% effective tax rate = <b>\$224,040</b></p>
	<p><b>Total Estimated Savings</b></p>	<p><b>\$514,480</b></p>
	<p><b>Total Advance! Program costs</b></p>	<p><b>\$193,600</b></p>
	<p><b>Estimated ROI</b></p>	<p><b>\$2.66</b></p>

This ROI projection shows that every \$1.00 invested in the Advance! school yielded an estimated \$2.66 in additional tax revenues and Medicaid savings from immediate employment for the Adult Advance! students.

\* See appendix for additional examples of PD Social Enterprise and Advance! School Graduates

11 Based on a sampling of 20 recent Advance! students.  
 12 Medicaid spending per enrollee by state U.S. FY 2020 | Statista



## Going Forward

Purposeful Design's ambition is to do all the good it can while it can. "Good" is defined as encouraging people to look toward God as Lord and Savior and helping people who have struggled to find a new path and purpose of that leads to meaning, life improvement, and employment. To fuel growth, there are two chief innovations currently underway at PD. The first innovation is introducing a transitional employment opportunity to the furniture production social enterprise side of PD. Historically, new employees were invited to stay at PD as long as they wanted. While that has provided many obvious benefits, PD is a very comfortable and encouraging place to work, but the downside is that employees like to stay there which limits the number of men that can potentially be employed and served over time. The new transitional employment model allows for up to six months employment at PD followed by assisted placement into a new job in a preferred field with one of PD's 24-member employer partner network.

The second innovation in the works is turning the Advance! school from 100% grant funded to a majority market funded. In the market funded model, employers receiving Advance! graduates as new entry-level employees will pay a reasonable "finding" fee for new employees that excel for new employers over an agreed upon period of time.

## V. Conclusion

Homelessness is a national problem and has continued to rise since 2017. In 2022, counts of individuals (421,392 people) and chronically homeless individuals (127,768) has reached record highs. National data from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) confirms that men and minorities continue to be disproportionately affected by homelessness. Moreover, lack of quality employment continues to be a key factor in this disturbing trend. Although HUD sponsored studies on homelessness do not mention the critically important role played by faith-based organizations (FBOs) in combatting the scourge of homelessness, a 2017 study revealed that FBOs provide an invaluable resource in supplying housing to the homeless (Johnson and Wubbenhorst).

Exemplary programs that are designed to help people find quality employment as well as to intentionally help improve their physical, mental, and spiritual health are desperately needed. Purposeful Design is a rare example of what is needed in jurisdictions throughout the country.

The unique model that PD utilizes to grow their social enterprise is further underscored by Jay Hein, former director of the White house Office of Faith-Based and Community Partnerships under President George W. Bush and current President of the Sagamore Institute, an Indianapolis-based think tank designed to tackle difficult issues with civility and a focus on solutions not ideology:





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**PURPOSEFUL-DESIGN**  
— EST. 2013 —

**WORKING TOGETHER TO PAVE NEW  
PATHS FOR THOSE SEEKING CHANGE**



*This market-based partnership model is effective, sustainable, and scalable. I don't know of any poverty-fighting model that is more effective than what Purposeful Design is doing.*

PD not only represents an innovative approach to social enterprise, but also serves as a poster child for collaboration with other community-based organizations in Indianapolis. As a type of spin-off and extension of Wheeler Mission, PD provides many opportunities for individuals in Wheeler's transitional housing residents to successfully transition into economic independence and further growth. PD's skill in community collaboration is also evidenced through its networking with secular community-based organizations, such as We Bloom, inc. through its Advance! classes. While maintaining a strong leadership team and practicing "business smarts" and creativity are important elements with the PD model, foundational to PD's success is continually looking to the Lord to lead and provide. PD's work among the poor is at its core a walk of faith.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Byron R. Johnson** is Distinguished Professor of the Social Sciences at Baylor University. He is the founding director of the Baylor Institute for Studies of Religion (ISR) as well as director of the Program on Prosocial Behavior. Johnson is a senior fellow at the Sagamore Institute (Indianapolis). He is a leading authority on the scientific study of religion, the efficacy of faith-based organizations, and criminal justice. Recent publications have examined the impact of faith-based programs on recidivism reduction and prisoner reentry. Before joining the faculty at Baylor University, Johnson directed research centers at Vanderbilt University and the University of Pennsylvania. He has been the principal investigator on grants from private foundations as well as the Department of Justice, Department of Labor, Department of Defense, National Institutes of Health, and the United States Institute for Peace. He is the author of more than 200 articles and a number of books including *More God, Less Crime: Why Faith Matters and How it Could Matter More* (2011), *The Angola Prison Seminary: Effects of Faith-Based Ministry on Identity Transformation, Desistance, and Rehabilitation* (2016), and *The Quest for Purpose: The Collegiate Search for a Meaningful Life* (2017).

**William Wubbenhorst** is a non-resident fellow for the Institute for Studies of Religion at Baylor University (ISR). He recently completed a 21-month term as Associate Commissioner for the Family and Youth Services Bureau within the Administration for Children and Families. Previously, Mr. Wubbenhorst worked as a consultant to government and non-profits for over 30 years, most recently as a Return On Investment (ROI) Specialist, developing economic measures for community-based social and health programs. Mr. Wubbenhorst has collaborated with professors from several prestigious academic institutions, including Baylor University, Boston University and Harvard University. He has published a variety of peer-reviewed journal publications and case studies. Recently, Mr. Wubbenhorst co-authored a case studies entitled *Harvest of Hope: A Faith-Based Child Welfare Intermediary and The Crosswinds – Open Table Collaboration: An Aftercare Model for Runaway and Homeless Youth*. Mr. Wubbenhorst received an MBA with a concentration in Public and Non-Profit Management (Beta Gamma Sigma honors society) from Boston University.

## APPENDIX: PD Corporate Partners







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