

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

have donated more than \$650,000 to Purple Paladin nonprofits.

Isaac M. O'Bannon • Sep. 12, 2022



Grant Thornton

Grant Thornton LLP, one of America's largest audit, tax and advisory firms, has named [Fair Opportunity Project](#) to its [Purple Paladin](#) program, which helps emerging nonprofit organizations move from "start-up to unstoppable." As part of the program, Grant Thornton provides funding, business advice and volunteer support, while also helping nonprofits raise awareness of their work and mission.

Fair Opportunity Project has a team of volunteer college students, high school counselors and lifelong educators working across the country to make college more affordable and accessible. The organization provides personalized mentoring, a downloadable step-by-step college application guide, a self-guided video course, virtual office hours, college essay reviews, and other offerings — at no cost to students.

"There are 415 students to each counselor in America's public schools," said Luke Heine, who founded the organization alongside his friend Cole Scanlon. "Counselors

are completely overwhelmed with the number of students they need to serve, which

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

“I had a few false starts and stops in my educational path, and there was a short time when I didn’t know if higher education was in the cards for me,” Seigel said. “I ultimately became part of the first generation in my family to graduate college, and I am inspired by the work Fair Opportunity Project is doing to make that same dream a reality for students throughout the U.S. Our firm looks forward to supporting Luke, Cole, and their incredible team as they continue this life-changing work.”

Closing the gap

Luke Heine and Cole Scanlon took different paths to college. Growing up in a rural community in Minnesota, Heine found out about financial aid in a takeout line. Meanwhile, Scanlon came from one of the biggest public-school systems in the U.S. They ultimately attended the same university, and a chance encounter in their dining hall revealed a shared passion for making the college application process more accessible.

“I grew up in a family of educators, so I had really good support, but for most students at my high school, that wasn’t the case,” said Scanlon. “I went to a really big public high school with a little over 3,000 students, and there was one counselor per grade level, so about one counselor per 900 students.”

“Today’s college application process is more complicated and costly than when many of us went to college,” added Heine. “It’s also not always fair.”

Seeking to close the gap in both affordability and access, the duo founded Fair Opportunity Project in 2017. They draw on the expertise of higher education specialists and hundreds of counselors across the country to educate students on the college application and financial aid processes. One of their key resources is “The Guide”: a digital book that walks students through the most current steps when

applying to college. Additionally, the organization offers a chat line for students to

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

Box, Weird Enough Productions, Invisible Hands Deliver, Pal Experiences, Sneakers for Soldiers and Coming Up Rosies.

- Free Mom Hugs is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that creates allies who support the LGBTQIA+ community through visibility, education and conversation. To learn more, visit www.freemomhugs.org.
- WeaveTales is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that helps refugees of all kinds share their stories via books, exhibits, films and other channels. To learn more, visit www.weavetales.org.
- Warrior Reunion Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that reconnects combat veterans via life-changing reunion experiences. All events are provided at no cost to those who attend. To learn more, visit www.warriorreunionfoundation.org.
- Go Team Therapy Dogs is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that produces well-trained therapy dogs and places them at disaster sites, hospitals, and other places where they can offer comfort and care. To learn more, visit www.goteamdogs.org.
- Find Your Anchor is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit focused on suicide prevention. To help people who are struggling to find hope, the organization creates and distributes boxes of curated items known as “anchors.” To learn more, visit www.findyouranchor.us.
- Foster Nation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that helps former foster youth overcome the challenges associated with ‘aging out’ of the foster-care system. To learn more, visit www.fosternation.org.
- Hope in a Box is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that provides educators with literature, detailed curriculums and coaching to improve classroom environments for LGBTQIA+ students. To learn more, visit www.hopeinabox.org.

- Weird Enough Productions is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that develops free, interactive

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

- Pal Experiences is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that helps people with non-visible disabilities — such as autism — have more inclusive experiences at museums, entertainment venues, sporting events and more. To learn more, visit www.palexperiences.org.
- Sneakers for Soldiers is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that provides properly-fitted athletic shoes to deployed combat troops in all branches of the military. To learn more, visit www.sneakersforsoldiers.org.
- Coming Up Rosies is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that provides “smile kits” to hospitals so children — particularly those suffering from hair loss — can engage in therapeutic art activities to create custom head scarves, neck scarves and superhero capes based on their own unique designs. To learn more, visit www.cominguprosies.com.

Grant Thornton's Purple Paladins program derives its name from the word *paladin*, a champion of a cause. Grant Thornton and its professionals have donated more than \$650,000 to Purple Paladin nonprofits, and more than 450 Grant Thornton professionals have volunteered their time and skills to support to the firm's Purple Paladins.

To learn more about Purple Paladins, or to nominate a nonprofit for potential support, visit Grant Thornton's website: www.grantthornton.com/PurplePaladins.

Firm Management • Income Tax • Nonprofit

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us