

From Lemons To LemonAID



A Story of Passing the Lemons



Each Lemon Passed Creates a New Pour of Impact

When Lemons are Passed with Purpose

Every great story begins with a moment of possibility.

In a Global Business Academy classroom at Valley High School, an invitation was extended, not to join a project, but to lead one. Team Kids didn't come with answers; they came with a challenge. In their hands was the LemonAid Stand Kit, a tool with a proud legacy, but one in need of new life. What they passed along wasn't just a box of materials, it was a lemon. And what happened next turned that lemon into momentum.

Ten Global Business Academy seniors accepted the challenge, supported by the guiding hands of nonprofit partners and a committed instructor. Over the next six weeks, they would reimagine, rebuild, and relaunch a social enterprise driven by student voice, collaboration, and the belief that youth can turn any challenge into change.

This is the story of how passing the lemons became a new kind of leadership and how each handoff contributes to the recipe for the next LemonAid.

“When life gives you lemons, make LemonAid.”



Passing the Lemons: Where Mentorship Meets Momentum

When the LemonAid Stand Kit was placed in the hands of the Global Business Academy seniors, it came with a simple request: help make it better.

This wasn't about starting from scratch, it was about bringing something meaningful into a new era. The kit, first created in response to Hurricane Katrina, had empowered thousands of kids to raise money for causes they cared about. But time had passed, and it needed to speak to the world young people are navigating now.

A group of ten seniors stepped forward with focus and intention. They weren't handed a script; they were handed lemons. And from that moment, the kit became a conversation.

From the very first meeting, nonprofit partners from Team Kids, Mentorshipped, Doing Good Works and High School Inc., along with a dedicated Global Business Academy instructor, stood beside the students, not to dictate solutions, but to guide, support, and believe in their process. Each mentor shared their "why," offering real stories, lived experience, and encouragement that created a space for students to lead with authenticity and purpose.

The seniors began by unboxing the original kit, piece by piece. They analyzed the contents with a critical eye, what would engage a 10-year-old? How do we make this usable for adult supporters? What's missing to make this feel exciting, modern, and impactful? Ideas poured out: redesign the visuals, update the messaging, create a workbook that doesn't just guide, but teaches young people how to launch and lead their own stand as a mini business.

Each week, the group built momentum, squeezing those lemons into something new. But perhaps the most powerful moment wasn't in the critique or the creative planning. It was in the passing of belief from adults to youth.

The lemons weren't just handed over; they were carried together, infused with mentorship, and uplifted through partnership.

By entrusting the students with the responsibility to shape something bigger than themselves, the partners planted the seed for something lasting. And in the process, the students began preparing to pass their own lemons forward to inspire the next class, the next group of leaders, the next wave of change.





Squeezing the Lemons : Turning Ideas Into Action

With their ideas in place, the founding advisors knew one thing for certain: a good idea only matters if it can work. It was time to test what they had built.

The seniors mapped out their next move: a beta test of the redesigned LemonAid Stand. Their goal was simple: to take everything they had developed in their weekly meetings and put it into action. They selected the Children's Hospital of Orange County (CHOC) as the recipient of all proceeds and got straight to work.

Together with support from their teacher and nonprofit partners, the students planned the event from the ground up. They took on roles in marketing and operations, designed flyers, produced video announcements for the school's daily broadcast, and shared materials with local elementary schools. This stand wouldn't just raise funds; it would showcase what youth can do when they're trusted to lead.

The event featured bright signage, stickers, games, and a space where customers could write thank-you cards for CHOC. Each element reflected the students' vision of what today's LemonAid experience could be fun, interactive, and connected to a meaningful cause. Partners and teachers stood by in full support, cheering them on as they brought their project to life.

But the most powerful piece wasn't just what they built. It was who they built it for next.

Realizing they couldn't finish the full redesign in just six weeks, the seniors made a decision that would extend the impact far beyond their time: they created a plan to pass their lemons forward. They developed a presentation and delivered it to the juniors in the Global Business Academy, sharing the journey, what they learned, and what still needed to be done. It was their way of ensuring that the next class wasn't just handed off a project; they were passed on a purpose.

And the ripple effect didn't stop there.

Elementary school students who visited the stand left inspired, asking how they could host their own LemonAid events. Watching older students lead with confidence showed them that making a difference wasn't something you had to wait for, it was something you could do now.

From advisors to juniors, from teens to younger youth, the lemons continued to move. Each handoff wasn't just an exchange; it was a spark. A growing chain of student-led action, fueled by mentorship, collaboration, and the belief that every generation has something to contribute to the recipe for change.





Pouring the LemonAid: Ripples of Youth-Led Impact

You know a project matters when it changes the people involved.

For the ten founding advisors, the LemonAid Kit Revamp wasn't just another school assignment; it was an opportunity to lead, collaborate, and create something lasting. And when asked to reflect on their experience, the message was clear: this project made a difference.

All students surveyed said they felt supported by partners, valued for their contributions, and believed that this was a great senior project for future Global Business Academy students. More than that, they saw how the lessons from their Global Business Academy came to life through this experience. From marketing and graphic design to teamwork, public speaking, and strategic planning, they applied real skills in a real context, and they saw the results.

“One of the most valuable things I learned was how important teamwork and communication are.”

“It made me feel a part of something.”

“Having them [partners] tell us their stories was impactful.”

Students shared that the most meaningful support came from being seen and heard. Weekly meetings with partners weren't just check-ins, they were moments of mentorship, storytelling, and encouragement that reminded students they weren't doing this alone.

“The support that was most helpful to me was them just being there guiding us.”

“Telling us and then letting us talk about how we saw the plan.”

Of course, it wasn't without its challenges. Nearly every student pointed to time as the biggest obstacle, six weeks flew by fast. Still, even under pressure, the team rose to the occasion, leaned into their roles, and found creative solutions to bring their ideas to life.

“Even though we didn't have enough time, everyone played a significant role, and the LemonAid Stand was a success.”

And it wasn't just the students who felt the impact; our partners did too.

“What began as a classroom presentation turned into a full-circle moment of leadership, purpose, and impact.”

“Being part of this experience was a blessing... the students took ownership and made something real.”

“When we come together to equip and empower the next generation, you can bet the outcome is going to be ‘sweet like LemonAid.’”

Perhaps the most unexpected ripple came from those watching. Younger students who visited the stand didn't just buy lemonade; they left with new ideas and big dreams. One young visitor took it upon herself to walk the school, knock on doors, stand on the sidewalk, and even hop on a public bus determined to spread the word about the LemonAid Stand. She was our youngest ambassador, and a perfect reminder that when students lead, others follow.

“She walked away feeling empowered and inspired, knowing she can make change, even now.”

This is what happens when students are trusted with leadership.

This is what mentorship looks like in action. This is what real learning and lasting impact feels like.

The LemonAid Stand Kit revamp was never just about improving a product. It was about passing something on belief, ownership, leadership, and the power of youth-driven change. From nonprofit partners to seniors, from seniors to juniors. From teens to younger kids.

Each lemon passed created a new pour of impact, refreshing, real, and full of promise.



From Lemons to LemonAid, The Legacy Continues

“Every Lemon Passed is a Chance to Lead.”

This story wasn't just about revamping a kit.

It was about trust. Mentorship. Ownership.

It was about what happens when we hand young people the lemons and give them the space to lead.

Thanks to the dedication of students, educators, and community partners, this project became more than a pilot. It became a movement. A model for what's possible when we believe in the power of youth.

The LemonAid Stand Kit will continue to evolve, passed down from class to class, leader to leader, and generation to generation each adding their own squeeze of creativity and purpose.

Here's to the next pour of change.

And to every young person who dares to make a difference, one lemon at a time.



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