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The Inspiration Behind EduNetwork Partners

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Founder and CEO @ EduNetwork Partners | I create 5-star, turnkey CSR program designed and executed for you

January 16, 2026

I'm Norm Goldstein, CEO of EduNetwork Partners. This space will be dedicated to stories from the frontlines of my work, but this first issue is a little different. Today, I want to share the story behind my company and the inspiration that shaped my approach, so you can better understand who I am and why I do this work.

Before I started EduNetwork Partners, I was a serial entrepreneur and business coach. I was the guy who knew how to get in, make serious money, and get out.

And that's exactly what I did for decades. Financially, I was successful. But none of it had real meaning. My bank account was healthy, but my heart felt like it was limping along. Eventually, a colleague suggested I wrap up my latest contract and start something that brought more than money into my life. Something that reconnected me to my passion.

Around that time, my youngest daughter, Cassidy, was about eleven and struggling.

She had a minor disability related to fine motor skills, which made it difficult for her to hold a pencil or crayon. That small difference kept her from enjoying school, despite her obvious intelligence, at least to me. Worse, it made my bright, vivacious daughter shy and hesitant to make friends.

I hated watching her struggle, so I found a tutor who specialized in working with children facing similar challenges.

During Cassidy's first session, the tutor asked her to draw a picture. Cassidy reached into her tub of crayons and pressed each one to the paper, only to have them snap in her hand. Soon, she was in tears. She couldn't draw without breaking her supplies.

"It's okay," the tutor reassured her. "There's no rush. Why don't you work on a drawing over the week, and I'll take a look next time I come back?"

The following week, Cassidy changed both her life and mine.

She sat at the table waiting for her tutor, grinning like a Cheshire cat. In front of her was a breathtaking drawing of our backyard. Beside it sat a few odd pieces of plastic.

The tutor stared at the picture while my wife and I took in the scene.

"Cassidy, did you do this?" she asked.

Cassidy nodded, then pointed to the plastic tubes. I recognized them immediately. They were the small tubes that hold water at the base of flower stems to keep them fresh.

Left to her own devices, Cassidy had realized that the opening of the tubes was the perfect size for her crayons. She slid one in and started to color. No shaking. No breaking.

For the first time, she could trust her hands enough to create the picture she saw in her mind.

That was the moment everything opened up.

Cassidy's simple innovation set off a chain reaction. Her tutor took six of the tubes to her elderly clients at retirement homes, where they helped people write and draw without tremors. Soon after, I hired a patent attorney named Kurt, a great guy, and we worked together as a team. Cassidy brought the vision. I brought the business experience.

Before we knew it, people who needed this solution were finding their way to us.

The phone started ringing constantly. Educators, administrators, and caregivers wanted to know how they could get it. Kurt warned us early on that the patent process would be long and demanding, and he was right. But I saw it as an investment worth making. For the next three years, we pushed forward together.

From Money to Mission

Watching my daughter grow into a confident inventor changed something fundamental in me.

Money became the last thing on my mind. I stopped thinking about sales plans and spreadsheets and started focusing on the life-changing

potential of this simple tool in classrooms, therapy centers, and retirement homes.

That shift, from money to results, lit me up in a way nothing had in years. I realized this was what I had been missing. A mission bigger than myself.

I loved helping my daughter explore what was possible through her invention, but I also became excited about what this could mean for my own work. The bottom line no longer defined success. All I wanted was to see other kids light up the way Cassidy had.

I did not yet know exactly how that would take shape, but I could feel the answer forming on the horizon. That sense of possibility pushed me forward and forced me to stay open in ways I had not before.

It was marvelous.

What Happened Next

One day, Kurt called.

"Norm," he said, "are you sitting down?"

I sat.

"I have big news. Cassidy has just been granted a United States utility patent for her crayon-holding device. She is now one of the youngest inventors in the country."

"That's wonderful," I said, already standing up to share the news. But I stopped when I realized he was not finished.

"Once the patent was published, someone nominated her for National Youth Inventor of the Year, a congressional honor. She won."

Soon, I was shouting for the whole family to come hear the news. Congress knew my daughter's name. Her invention would help millions.

At the ceremony in Washington, D.C., Cassidy stood at the podium and spoke to members of Congress about how simple observation helped her solve a real problem. "This is an invention by a kid, for kids," she said.

With her permission, I used that idea to create the first version of my company, By Kids For Kids.

Once she gave her blessing, I was off.

How We Became EduNetwork Partners

By Kids For Kids was a meaningful organization that encouraged youth innovation through school programs. But it was not perfect.

We quickly learned that teenagers did not want to be labeled as kids. They wanted to be seen as young adults, innovators, and leaders of the future.

Then the pandemic hit, and schools shut down. We could no longer rely on classrooms as our primary setting.

Those two forces pushed us to rethink everything. How could we design programs that were not dependent on physical classrooms and still appealed to students over thirteen? Was invention still the focus, or was it time to broaden our approach?

We went back to the beginning and asked how we could combine the desire to inspire young people with the funding, reach, and resources of large organizations.

That led us to partner with major corporations, sports teams, health organizations, and media companies. To my delight, they were eager to help. They wanted to be part of something that genuinely improved young lives.

Before long, I was speaking with marketing leaders at companies like Mattel, major franchises like the NFL, and studios such as Disney and Paramount.

EduNetwork Partners was born from those conversations.

Since then, we have helped kids invent with partners like Xerox, taught financial literacy alongside Warren Buffett, and encouraged reading through programs with the Dodgers. Every year, I get to watch kids light up as they create, compete, and discover new passions.

The joy I get from this work is so deep that I have no plans to retire. I am having far too much fun.

What's Next

As always, EduNetwork Partners continues to explore what is possible.

Right now, we are focused on developing AI literacy programs for young people. Our goal is to help kids understand this powerful technology and use it ethically and responsibly, without losing their critical thinking skills.

It is an ambitious challenge, but with the insight of our partners, I am confident we can create something truly meaningful.

If you would like to follow along, I invite you to subscribe to the EduNetwork Partners newsletter.

In upcoming issues, I will share:

- Stories from projects with organizations like the NFL and the American Cancer Society
- How I integrate personal values and purpose into leadership
- What CSR really looks like when it works
- Life lessons from the CEO chair

Thanks for reading, and I hope you will join me for what comes next.