

# Give an EVkid a high five



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# EVkids Horizons

Spring 2022

## EVkids students of all ages make an impact

### *Sarah grows her business through grad school*

Sarah Shelton was a tutee for 4 years, graduating highschool in 2015. Since her time with EVkids, she went on to start her own Business while still in college, and graduated with a degree in small business entrepreneurship from the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth

in 2019. She is now pursuing an MBA from Lasell University to grow her business. While striving to reach her goals, Sarah has continued to have her former tutor, Claire Looney (BC '15, EVkids Board member), as a mentor and cheerleader.

Claire was a big supporter when Sarah launched SJ Health and Beauty in spring of 2019, and is always happy to give advice. "Claire was the first person I contacted when I first decided to go to grad school," said Sarah. Claire felt that Lasell University's MBA program



*Sarah Shelton (UMD '19), EVkids tutee 2011-2015.*

### *Swahibu inspires his community with clothing line*



*Swahibu Kaba, current College Success mentee and former tutee 2011-present*

Swahibu Kaba has been involved with EVkids for over ten years. He started Tutoring in 2011, graduating high school in 2019. With the launch of College Success, Swahibu was among the first to enter college with a College Success mentor. He went into his first year at Bunker

Hill Community College with Luis Zambrano (BC '10) to help guide him through the college experience. "I can ask Luis anything," says Swahibu, "He checks in on me a lot, even when we don't have meetings."

Like many new college

students, Swahibu discovered new interests once classes began. Swahibu discovered an interest in business after taking an introductory business course, and was newly inspired by fashion – particularly male celebrity fashion icons like singer Farrell and NBA basketball

### *Hadiatou ensures her community's voice is heard*

Now in her fourth year in Tutoring, Hadiatou knows it's important to advocate for herself and her community. In fall of 2020, Hadiatou learned that the Boys and Girls Clubs of Dorchester were planning to build a new field house right next door to her home in the Harbor Point

Housing Development. Wanting to make sure it would be welcoming and inclusive of the Harbor Point community and to students who go to school in the area, she joined the Boys and Girls Clubs' Youth advisory Council. She expected the Advisory Council to meet virtually at

first, but she figured eventually the meetings would be in person. A year later, they were still meeting virtually. "The biggest challenge was doing all this over Zoom, and pushing it through during COVID," Hadiatou said.

#### **INSIDE**

*Read the rest of Sarah, Swahibu, and Hadiatou's stories!*

# Continued, EVkids make an impact

## Sarah's story...

was a great fit for Sarah so she connected her to faculty there. "If it wasn't for Claire, I wouldn't have applied to Lasell," said Sarah.

Like many students in early 2020, Sarah was taking classes online for the first time. Having to adjust to grad school level courses and virtual learning simultaneously, she tackled this challenge the same way she and Claire used to during Tutoring – learning limits and adding on slowly. Sarah will graduate with her Master's degree this spring. Shortly after starting classes, Sarah began growing the social media and physical presence of her business, including getting her business into pop-ups and trade shows around Boston – allowing customers to see and

## Swahibu's story...

player, Shai Gilgeos-Alexander. Last summer, Swahibu and his cousin, Ishmail Fofana, turned a passion for fashion into a new business – Pushthru – a clothing line with a message. "We are trying to bring something positive to our community with Pushthru," said Swahibu, "We are setting an example to never give up on your goals – to push through."

## Hadiatou's story...

All of Hadiatou and the Advisory Council's hard work culminated in January 2022 at a virtual public meeting with the Boston Planning & Development Agency, with over 100 people in attendance. Hadiatou and the Advisory Council proposed that the field house be open to not just residents of the neighborhood, but also the many students who attend schools within walking distance to it. The proposal was approved with all of the Youth Advisory Council's suggestions included!

The field house will be completed by spring of 2023, which the Boys and Girls Clubs of Dorchester describes as a \$50 million investment for kids and families, including the dozens of EVkids Tutoring and Camp students who live and attend school in the neighborhood. Hadiatou was an important part of ensuring this new field house would

**"Claire was the first person I contacted when I first decided to go to grad school"**

**-Sarah Shelton**

hold the products. Sarah plans to keep growing SJ Health and Beauty, and will continue to be at pop-ups around Boston. If you are looking to try any of Sarah's beauty products, Sarah recommends the Aleo Mint collection, "This was the first collection I started the business with. It will always have a special place in my heart."

**"I can ask Luis anything. He checks in on me a lot, even when we don't have meetings."**

**-Swahibu Kaba**

Swahibu and Ishmail had the idea and the mission, but weren't exactly sure how to market the brand and get the word out. Swahibu thought Luis – who currently works for the US Department of Commerce – could help. Luis provided marketing advice, and connections with people who will help get the Pushthru name out. Swahibu launched an official website in January with the original Pushthru hoodie for sale. He is excited to keep growing the clothing line, with plans to expand with zip ups, hats, and sweatshirts this summer. Swahibu can't wait to embrace, grow, and inspire with Pushthru.



Hadiatou (11th grade), current tutee

center the kids and families of Harbor Point, as well as for students who go to school near Harbor Point. "My little sister keeps asking if the gym is ready," Hadiatou said. Sarah, Swahibu, and Hadiatou are all using their passions and talents to achieve big goals – with the EVkids community of support there to provide advice, connections, and congratulations as they reach higher.

# Excitement for EVkids Camp is hatching!



Planning for EVkids Camp is in full swing this spring! Campers will once again be in the Green Mountains of Vermont this July. Up to 36 campers will climb to the top of mountains, play the EVkids camp official sport – volleyball, and enjoy swimming every day.

Camp will continue to be a screen-free environment, giving campers a break from virtual interactions and build community in-person with fellow campers and counselors.

Applications for campers and counselors are available at [www.evkids.org/camp](http://www.evkids.org/camp).



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