

# TechDiversity Recap Report

## 2023 PROGRAM IN REVIEW



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Now in its sixth year, thanks to the unwavering support of the Nielsen Foundation, the 2023 TechDiversity Accelerator proved again to be an incredibly exciting and successful program. Tampa Bay Wave (“Wave”) is proud and honored by its long partnership with the Nielsen Foundation to advance the elimination of barriers for founders from underrepresented populations in the Tampa Bay region and communities everywhere.

The 2023 TechDiversity Accelerator continued to reflect our geographic and industry diversity goals, with a cohort of strong, predominantly US startups. With TechDiversity’s successful five-year track record and referrals from alumni companies, Wave selected this year’s cohort of high quality startups from hundreds of applicants across 31 US states and 46 foreign countries. Among the 15 cohort companies selected were six women founders, four founders self-identified as Asian/Pacific, two LatinX founders, one Black founder, three LBGT founders, and one U.S. Veteran.

The 2023 TechDiversity Accelerator cohort also represented a variety of industry sectors including: HealthTech, EdTech, FinTech, Artificial Intelligence, Drones and Social Platforms. Many of these startups graduated from other highly regarded programs, including 500 Startups, 3 Global, Techstars, Draper Startup House, TMCx, Capital Factory, and other leading accelerators. One recently won the Enterprise and Smart Data Speed Pitch at the famed SXSW conference in Austin this past March. The founders themselves also had impressive backgrounds include graduates from Stanford University, Columbia, Rice, Duke, MIT, Chicago Booth, University of Virginia, NYU, and the University of Miami School of Law. Multiple founders have their MDs, MBAs and PhDs, plus one is a JD and another is an aeronautical engineer. Career experiences include Fortune 500 companies such as McKinsey, Booz Allen Hamilton, Leidos, Forbes, Ernst & Young, Vodafone, Disney, CBS, NBC, JPMorgan Chase, Morgan Stanley, Goldman Sachs, UBS and Infosys.

Thanks to the Nielsen Foundation’s support, the cohort companies were provided with access to PitchBook, the leading investor research database, a tool that is financially out of reach for most. In addition, more than 500 hours of mentoring and other support were provided to these companies during the course of the 2023 program.

The ongoing success of our TechDiversity Accelerator also helps Wave continue to deliver on our commitment to diversity by attracting additional partners who are passionate about DEI such as alumni companies (Peerfit), Florida Business Development Corporation, and the Tampa Bay Rays/Rowdies Foundation. Partnerships allow us to garner even more media and social media coverage and exposure for our cohort companies. We were delighted that Andrea Bertels could join us for our third year of hosting the TechDiversity Pitch Night at their stadium, as “Pitch at the Trop”, thanks to our partnership with the Rays/Rowdies Foundation.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY - cont'd.

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The Pitch Night event itself was attended by dignitaries, politicians and community leaders, as well as Mentors and other members of Wave's network. The marketplace respect for the Nielsen Foundation helps us continue to attract public and private funds committed to supporting startups led by underrepresented founders in our other Wave programs. We are seeing significant capital investments this year so far in our startups despite a tightening in the overall investor capital markets; Wave's vetting and coaching continue to connect our supported startups with investor capital, having raised more than \$150 Million collectively so far in 2023, putting us well on our way toward achieving our \$1 Billion goal for our startups. Ultimately, we believe proof of viability will continue to find investors and support from the Nielsen Foundation remains important.

The following pages offer highlights from the 2023 TechDiversity Accelerator, as well as updates on alumni companies and an update on Wave's growth and future activities.

On behalf of the entire Tampa Bay Wave team, "Thank you!" We are incredibly grateful to the Nielsen Foundation, who has made all of this success, and the future success of these startups, possible.



Linda Olson  
CEO, Tampa Bay Wave



# THANK YOU Nielsen Foundation

For the many years that the Nielsen Foundation has supported Tampa Bay Wave



Cohort Training Sessions at Wave

Welcome Reception opened and Pitch Night



## PHOTOS (cont.)

### Welcome Reception - Startups, Alumni Companies, Economic Development Partners and the Wave Team



## Visit Tampa Bay Center

May 8, 2023



## PHOTOS (cont.)

### Pitch @ the Trop - Startups, Community Partners and the Wave Team



## Tropicana Field

July 20, 2023

# RECRUITMENT & SELECTION

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## Benefits of a Multi-Year Program

Since Tampa Bay Wave launched its downtown Tampa venture center and accelerator programming in 2013, the region's technology sector has seen transformative change. In just ten short years, the local ecosystem is hardly recognizable as the region seems to regularly boast about its startups getting national and global attention. With 2023 as the sixth year of the TechDiversity Accelerator program, Recruiting benefited from the brand awareness and reputation that comes from a multi-year program like this. Many applicants come from referrals by prior cohort companies as well as from individuals and organizations who are familiar with Wave's programs and benefits. They notice the success rates of our member companies and the mentoring and coaching that lead to long-term growth.

## Key Recruiting Metrics

- 488 Total Applications received
- 214 Cities, 31 states and 46 foreign countries in the applicant pool
- 83% of applications from outside Florida
- 51% of applications from outside the US
- 30 Semi-Finalists selected from initial screenings
- 15 Companies selected for the cohort

## Recruiting Efforts

Wave staff engaged our national (and global) network of partners plus media channels to help build awareness for the 2023 TechDiversity Accelerator.

- Global and national recruiting partners included: Morrow (GAN.co), Gust, F6s, Global Entrepreneurship Network, Startup Champions Network, and more.
- Referrals through Wave startups and founder connections, including TechDiversity Alumni and other Wave accelerator program members.
- Referrals through Mentor and Advisory networks.
- Referrals through Investor network.
- Referrals through Sponsors and Donors.
- Community partner referrals and connections.
- Cold inbound leads.
- Mix of paid digital advertising, email campaigns, and social media.

# RECRUITMENT & SELECTION - cont'd.



**83%**

Applications  
Outside of FL



**51%**

Applications  
Outside of US



**15**

Companies  
Selected

## Year-Round Recruiting Impact on 2023 Cohort

The TechDiversity 2023 Accelerator had a shorter frame for recruiting, as the program moved up from the typical third quarter schedule. However, due to Wave's long-standing network, the Programs team was able to secure a stellar class ranging from all over the world. Wave continued to utilize relationships from alumni, investors, incubators, and accelerators.

## The most solution diverse cohort in Tampa Bay Wave history

The TechDiversity 2023 cohort boasted the widest range solutions. Industries ranging from Artificial Intelligence (AI), augmented reality (AR), healthtech, fintech, infrastructure, proptech, social networking, community support, dual-sided marketplaces, digital content delivery and management, data analytics, consumer care tech, and climate solutions!

## Continued Success in Recruiting International Startups

The 2023 cohort featured 1 international startup, but even more applied. Utilizing international partnerships, Wave is able to extend its reach and showcase West Central Florida, particularly, the Tampa Bay region, as a valuable emerging tech space.

## Tampa Based Startup

Black Stock Footage, the stock photo marketplace, is advancing black presence in media and drawing attention to the disparity in current stock footage solutions.



**Imani Lee**  
*Black Stock Footage*  
*CEO and Co-Founder*

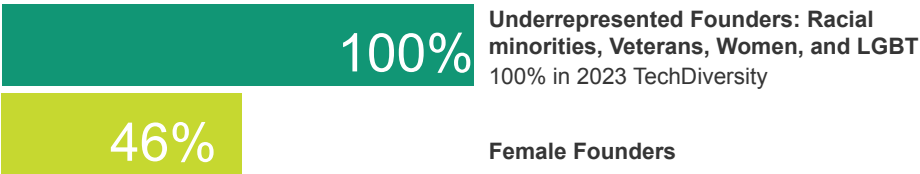


# DIVERSITY

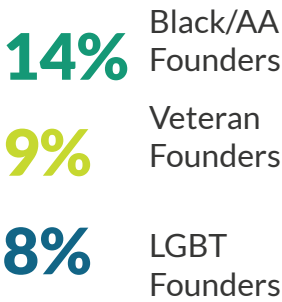
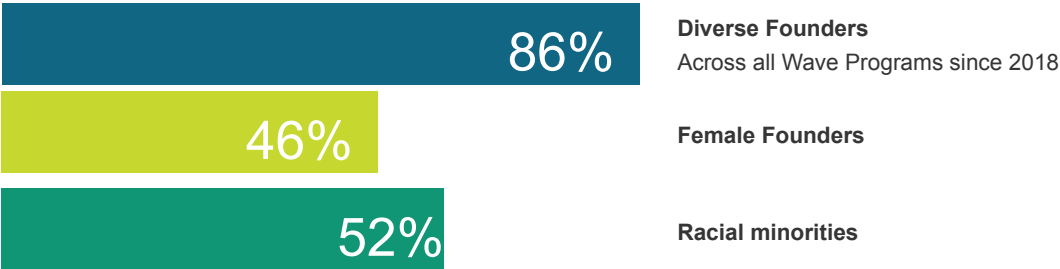
## Wave Continues to Set the Standard

Wave continues to make strides in engaging female founders, founders of color, other diverse demographics. We also continue to attract both geographic and industry diversity, helped by our growing reputation and continuously broadening recruiting strategy. Wave is does not discriminate and some founders opt not to self-identify. However, based on both founder self-identifications and observations, the following advances are apparent:

In the 2023 TechDiversity Accelerator, of the 24 total founders, there are 13 males (54%) and 11 females (46%). Of those, 9 are Asian/Pacific, 3 are LatinE, 2 are Black/AA, 3 are LGBT, 1 Veteran, and 1 Disabled. Wave continues to make outreaches both directly and through its partners to encourage members from underrepresented populations to apply.



Since launching the TechDiversity Accelerator in 2018, Wave has achieved nation-leading DEI statistics across all programs:



84% of Wave startups identify as an Underrepresented Founder



# TechDiversity Accelerator 2023

Powered By:



The startups selected for the 2023 TechDiversity Powered by The Nielsen Foundation cohort continue the trend of strong national and international applicants, as well as a diverse maturity set. Some of the startups are in early revenue stages, with the majority generating between \$100,000 to \$1,000,000 in annual recurring revenue (ARR). Cumulatively, the group has **raised over \$11 million** in external capital.

Several founders are also alumni of 500 Startups 3 Global, Techstars, Draper Startup House, TMCx, Capital Factory, Founders Institute, and other leading accelerators. One of the companies recently won the Enterprise and Smart Data Speed Pitch at the famed SXSW conference in Austin, Texas, in March.

The founders of these companies come from accomplished backgrounds, including McKinsey & Associates, Booz Allen Hamilton, Leidos, Forbes, Ernst & Young, Vodaphone, Disney, CBS, NBC, JP Morgan Chase, Morgan Stanley, Goldman Sachs, UBS, and Infosys.

Founder backgrounds also include time at premier academic institutions, including Stanford University Graduate School of Business, Columbia, Rice, Duke, MIT, the University of Chicago Booth School of Business, the University of Virginia, NYU Stern School of Business, and the University of Miami School of Law, and the cohort includes multiple PhDs, aeronautical engineers, and MD and JD founders as well.

Top to bottom, they are companies solving real problems led by world class founders, and we are proud to have them joining the Tampa Bay Wave portfolio.



# 2023 COHORT COMPANIES

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Lake Oswego, OR



Livingston, NJ



Tampa, FL



New York, NY



Denver, CO



Winnipeg, Manitoba



Tampa, FL



Madrid, Spain



Miami, FL

## 2023 COHORT COMPANIES (cont.)

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Austin, TX



Miami, FL



Chicago, IL



Frisco, TX



Houston, TX



Houston, TX



## 2023 COHORT COMPANIES - Descriptions

**Artclever** helps creative professionals from 23 countries start or upscale a career by providing modern skills, personal mentorship, and portfolio building services to earn remotely or relocate through their talents. Students, experts, design schools, and companies benefit from Artclever's services, which are paid for by the users. Location: Lake Oswego, OR, USA | Co-founders: [Maria Pokrovskaya](#) and [Daniil Voronin](#)

**Bakstage** CX platform offers 2-way live video conversations, augmented by AI, to help businesses deliver premium experiences that boost conversion, increase customer satisfaction and lifetime value. Using Bakstage, brands can better understand their customers and create a vibrant and engaged community of loyal customers. Founder(s): [Shashank Singh](#), [Preet Rai](#) | Location: Livingston, NJ, USA Company Website: <https://bakstage.ai/>

**Black Stock Footage, LLC** is a social impact startup that operates the first centralized stock video marketplace specializing in Black representation of people, cultures, and activities. Their vision is to become the largest supplier and distributor of stock content focused on Black representation through their own stock content marketplace and distribution partners including Adobe. Founder(s): [Imani Lee](#), [Zebrina Edgerton-Maloy](#), | Location: Tampa, FL, USA Company Website: <https://blackstockfootage.io/>

**Blackhedge** is a smart investing platform that provides AI/ML solutions for users in a simple format through their mobile app. Their algorithms scan the markets every day to determine good entry and exit points for users based on their proprietary algorithm. Founder: [Danish Sayed](#), Founder & CEO | Location: New York, NY 10013, USA Company Website: <https://www.blackhedge.io/>

## 2023 COHORT COMPANIES - Descriptions, Cont'd.

**Dateability** is the only dating app designed for the disabled community, providing a safe and inclusive space for people with physical, psychiatric, and intellectual disabilities and chronic illnesses to find companionship. The app includes a "Dateability Deets" section on user profiles, which helps to neutralize and de-stigmatize disabilities, reducing the anxiety of disclosing one's disability or chronic illness.

Founder(s): [Jacqueline Child](#), Alexa Child | Location: Denver, CO, USA

Company Website: <https://info.dateabilityapp.com/>

**FLUIX** is an automate cooling with the power of AI, enabling data centers & critical infrastructure (greenhouses, raw material storage, 4.0 manufacturing) to save up to 35% in energy costs, reduce ops CO2 by 45%, and save time & water resources by running HVAC on autopilot.

Founder: [Abhishek Sastri](#) | Location: Tampa, FL, USA

Company Website: <https://fluixpro.com/>

**Insttantt** is a Madrid, Spain-based startup that aims to be the standard for personal data processing, enabling instant and secure transactions between people and companies through a data wallet and white-label SaaS platform.

Founder: [Andres Ramirez](#) | Location: Madrid, Spain

Company Website: <https://www.instantt.com/>

**Koda Health** is a B2B Enterprise SaaS solution targeting health systems and payors that digitally guides their patients through the process of proactive healthcare planning, auto-generates legal documents that protect their care, and virtually notarizes these documents at no cost to patients. In doing so, we curb the delivery of inappropriate care at the end of life, empowering seniors to make more informed decisions and retain control of their healthcare journey.

Founder: [Tatiana Fofanova](#) | Location: Houston, TX

Company Website: <https://www.kodahealthcare.com/>



## 2023 COHORT COMPANIES - Descriptions, Cont'd.

**Lazo** is an all-in-one financial and legal SaaS platform for early-stage startups, providing streamlined bookkeeping, tax, compliance, legal, payroll, and investor relations solutions for venture-backed companies.

Founder: [Juan Manuel Barrero](#) | Location: Miami, FL

Company Website: <https://www.lazo.us/>

**Pulse Charter Connect** digitizes an antiquated logistics system used by transplant centers, facilitating faster, safer, and more efficient transportation for organs and surgical teams. Our software aims to improve long-term outcomes for transplant recipients through data collection and artificial intelligence.

Founder: [Laura Epstein](#) | Location: Chicago, IL

Company Website: <https://pulsecharterconnect.com/>

**Snipitz** is an AI-powered SMART Video Engagement Interface that delivers hyper-personalized viewer experiences and user behavior analytics.

Founder: [Denny Darmo](#) | Location: Frisco, TX, USA

Company Website: <https://www.snipitz.app/>

**Talli** is a simple daily care and health tracking platform for the care economy, from infant care through senior care. We help families and caregivers share better information and make better decisions across care teams and providers.

Founder: [Lauren Longo](#) | Location: Atlanta, GA

Company Website: <https://talli.me/>

**Tempest Droneworx** is a software company that focuses on saving lives, resources, and the planet through their flagship product, Harbinger. Harbinger aggregates real-time data from various sources, such as drones, satellites, and sensors, to present easy-to-read, multispectral and real-time 3D maps with a user-friendly interface.

Founder: [Dana Abramovitz](#), [Ty Audronis](#) | Location: Houston, TX

Company Website: <https://www.tempestdroneworx.com/>

## 2023 COHORT COMPANIES - Descriptions, cont'd.

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**The MÔN App** is a community app that focuses on conversations about relationships and sex, bringing creators, experts, and communities together through live, premium, and short-form voice and text-based chats and groups.

Founder: [Caleth Jones](#) | Location: Austin, TX, USA

Company Website: <https://www.themonapp.com/>



# PROGRAMMING

Wave member companies have access to **over 500 hours** of mentoring and other support including 70 workshops and training sessions utilizing an incredible line-up of expert speakers. Startup founders also benefit from numerous 1:1 mentoring and coaching hours with members of Wave's Staff and our 150+ Mentor Network.

## Featured Speaker Examples

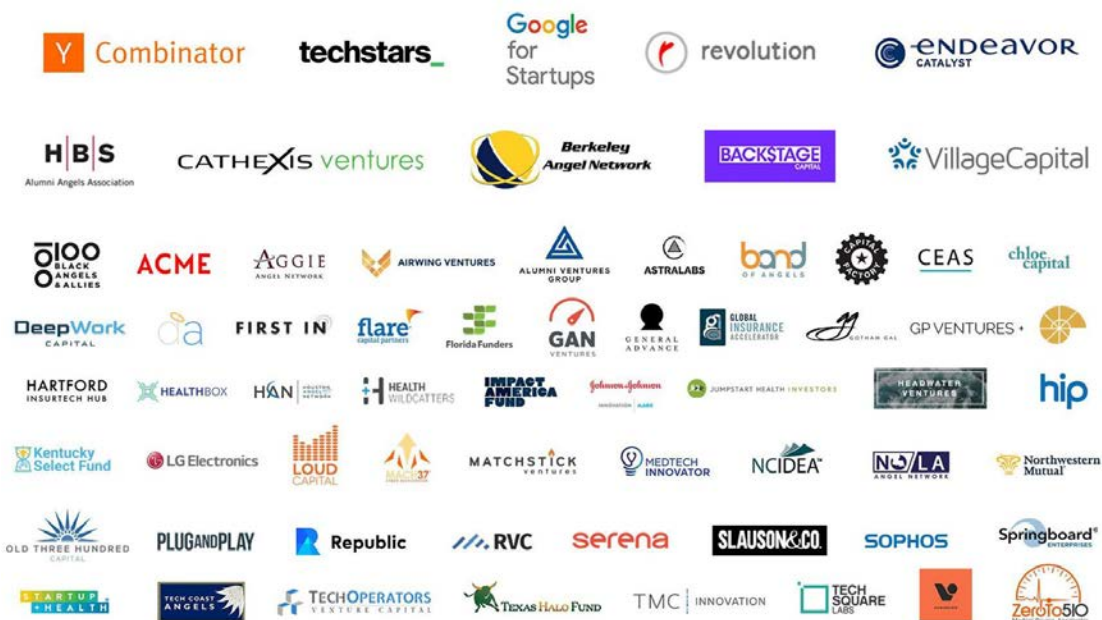
- **Venture Capital & Banking**
  - Danyell Jones, Raymond James
  - Luiz Rabelo, Silicon Valley Bank
  - Matthew Livak, J.P. Morgan Chase
  - Derek Barnett, Cogent Bank
  - Ken Hall, Deepwork Capital / Florida Opportunity Fund
  - Ryan Whittemore, Florida Funders
  - Andreas Calabrese, TampaBay.Ventures
  - Giselle Melo, MATR Ventures
  - Isabelle Styslinger, Revolution / ROTR
  - Marshall Kuremsky MD, LOUD Capital
- **Industry Experts & Founders/Alumni**
  - Cesar Hernandez, Omni Public
  - Nathan Beckord, FounderSuite
  - Mike Lingle, Rocket Proforma
  - Joe Berklund, MMM Law
  - Kailah Matyas, Redwood Partners
  - Dax Patton, Pickled Agency
  - Michelle Waite, GrowthMVP
  - Steven Taylor, Medzoomer
- **Returning Alumni**
  - Ed Buckley, PeerFit
  - Miraj Patel, Harness
  - Erik Maltais, Immertec
  - Joe Hodges, Care Valet
  - Shama Rathi MD, LunaJoy
  - Stacy Edgar, Venteur
  - Anthony Nagendraraj, Spontivly
  - Marissa Huggins, Spontivly
  - Amanda Levay, Redactable
  - Dieum Christel, EnlightApp



## Featured Topic Samples

- Venture Capital Strategies
- Financial Projections and Modeling Best Practices
- Alternative Funding Sources (Family Office, Venture Debt, RBF, Crowdfunding)
- Building with an Exit in Mind
- Tax-Advantaged Strategies
- Enterprise Sales Strategies & Hacks
- Enterprise Marketing Strategies
- HR Best Practices
- Professional Business Presentations
- Growth Strategies and Scaling Up
- Sourcing and Hiring Top Talent
- Targeting and Managing Talent
- Securing Development Tax Credits
- Avoiding Burnout
- Community-Led Growth
- Art of Storytelling and Design
- Crisis Management and PR Strategies
- Negotiations
- Startup Banking and Fueling Growth

# INVESTOR INTEREST



The Tampa Bay Wave Investor Relations team is continuously recruiting new investors to the network, just as with the startups. Using connections through the network, going to conferences and startup events, and email campaigns, Wave now has over 500 unique investors in the network spread throughout the nation. Finding high-value investors, focused on early stage investing and a pattern of deploying capital is a continual challenge, but one that is bearing fruit over time.

Featuring investors is a key part of programming. Funds and VCs participate in live panels, giving the startups a safe, unfiltered reality of approaching venture capital funds and tips for best practices. They also share insights and observations from their world so that our founders can adopt these learnings on the fundraising trail. Their outlook on the economy, company valuations, and capital deployment are critical as startups go into these conversations and plan company strategy.

TechDiversity 2023 Investor Demo Day experienced the widest outreach effort yet. To an expanded network of accredited investors utilizing a variety of outreach techniques: mailings lists, personal invites, social blasts, and conference networking. Over 3,000 unique investors from across the country were targeted and invited. The virtual demo day was a great success, enabling us to reach 100+ registered investors and immediately facilitate conversations between them and the startups. A few new innovations were brought to the fold: a live Investor Portal, startup Investment Memos, and an Outreach Survey for immediate response.

We expect this cohort to draw significant capital interest over the next few months. Not only has this cohort come in with a very impressive baseline funding, but several of them already were able to secure capital commitments during the program and are well on their way to completing their rounds.

A continuing mission of Wave's Investor Relations team is to draw attention not only to diverse founders in the network, but also increasing activity and awareness of underrepresented investor funds and networks. These funds want to be connected to diverse founders and Wave offers an approachable source of continual deal flow.

# TECH DIVERSITY SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

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## Extremely Diverse Founder and Speaker Set

Using a variety of network contacts, the team yielded a very inclusive 90-day program. From 15 amazing startups representing all underrepresented groups, to diverse speakers and advisors, and wide pool of investors, this was an extremely successful cohort.

## Well-attended Investor Demo Day

The 2023 TechDiversity had one of the most successful Demo Days in recent history. Using revamped engagement tactics and a new virtual event platform, the Investor Relations team was able to create maximum exposure for the cohort and deliver an experience with zero technical difficulties.

## Record Number of Alumni Returning to Speak

As this program continues to exist year after year, more alumni are available to come back and share their experiences. We had at least 10 TechDiversity alumni come back to share their experiences with this cohort. This flywheel continues to bear fruit for both the founders and the TechDiversity program.

## Capital Continues to Flow to TechDiversity Companies

Since the end of the 2022 TechDiversity Accelerator until this report, over \$65 million has been raised by TechDiversity startups. Remaining our most successful program, this is an outstanding figure considering the shorter timeline between programs.

## Challenge: Short interval between 2022 and 2023 programs

Due to shifts in Tampa Bay Wave's program schedule, the 2023 Accelerator was held about 6 months earlier than normal. This presented a shorter recruiting timeline to find and source companies. In spite of this, the team was able to find fifteen companies, This also became a challenge for the Wave team to innovate faster and find new value for the program.



# PRESS + PR

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The 2023 TechDiversity Accelerator Powered by The Nielsen Foundation was visible in a number of publications, including:

[EIN Distribution Press Release](#)

[TBBW](#)

[TBBJ with 2021 photo \(reprint requested with updated photo\)](#)

[3BLCSR Wire](#)

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. Additionally, the Tampa Bay Rays honored Tampa Bay Wave by showcasing our “Pitch at the Trop” on their jumbotron during the game. The link to this recording is now on Wave’s YouTube channel and can be viewed on this link:

[Tampa Bay Rays Baseball Presents Check to Tampa Bay Wave at 2023 Tech@theTrop!](#)

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.  
. Alumni companies from prior TechDiversity cohorts continue to remain in the news as their successes build thanks to the support they received.

. [The Inc Lab](#)

. More updates are provided as spotlights on the following pages

## Demo Day - Additional Links

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[Link to Demo Day Recording](#)

[Link to Demo Day Web Page](#)

# STARTUP SPOTLIGHT



**Chris Molaro**  
*Co-Founder & CEO*  
**Adam Pardes, PhD**  
*Co-Founder & COO*

**2019 TechDiversity  
Alumni**

*Philadelphia, PA*



Neuroflow, a mental health platform, optimizes mental wellness and performance through effective monitoring, positive reinforcement, and targeted guidance.

Army veteran, CEO, and co-founder Chris Molaro joined Tampa Bay Wave as a member of our 2019 TechDiversity cohort. He often returns to speak to our TD cohort and share his experience.

Neuroflow continues its meteoric rise, having **raised over \$50 million in capital** and has grown the company to over 200 employees. Neuroflow remains one of the top companies to have participated in the Tampa Bay Wave accelerator program.

[neuroflow.com](https://neuroflow.com)

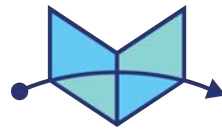
# STARTUP SPOTLIGHT



**Stacy Edgar**  
*Co-Founder & CEO*  
**Timothy Edgar**  
*Co-Founder & CTO*

**2022 TechDiversity  
Alumni**

*Berkeley, CA*



## Venteur

Venteur, an AI-powered marketplace helping employers offer personalized health benefits and insurance plans while giving employees full control over their healthcare purchasing decisions, increasing predictability and lowering costs for all.

CEO and co-founder Stacy Edgar joined Tampa Bay Wave in the 2022 TechDiversity cohort. She has returned to speak to subsequent cohorts and helped startups with scaling and finding solutions for benefit offerings.

Venteur **closed a \$7.6 million funding round** in mid-2023, led by GSR Ventures, Headwater VC, Revelry Venture Partners, Houghton Street Ventures, Plug and Play, Techstars, CRCM Ventures, and various strategic angels.

[venteur.com](https://www.venteur.com)



# STARTUP SPOTLIGHT

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**Adriana Avakian**  
*Founder & CEO*

**2019 TechDiversity  
Alumni**

*Tampa, FL*



TheIncLab (TIL) is the first human-centered artificial intelligence experience (AIX) lab. TIL offers its clients comprehensive capabilities for rapid ideation, software development and building of smart systems and hardware solutions.

CEO and Founder Adriana Avakian joined Tampa Bay Wave in the 2019 TechDiversity cohort. TIL has expanded to over 50 employees and expanded their office space in Ybor City.

In early 2023, TIL was **awarded a \$95 million contract** from the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), to build artificial intelligence-based technologies for aerospace, defense, cybersecurity and intelligence applications.

[theinclub.com](https://theinclub.com)

# STARTUP SPOTLIGHT



**Anthony Nagendraraj**  
*Co-Founder & CEO*  
**Marissa Huggins**  
*Co-Founder & COO*

**2021 TechDiversity  
Alumni**

*Saint Petersburg, FL*



Spontivly is a community management platform intended to help organizations build and grow vibrant communities. Providing real-time analytics to measure community engagement, growth, and impact, enabling organizations to gain valuable insights.

CEO and Co-founder Anthony Nagendraraj joined Tampa Bay Wave in the 2021 TechDiversity cohort. Originally from Edmonton, the team **relocated to the Tampa Bay region** after experiencing the growth and warmth of the innovation ecosystem.

In 2023, Spontivly continues to grow, **closing over \$3.5 million** in funding and have expanded the team to 12 people. Investors include Mark Cuban, LOI Ventures, Tampa Bay Ventures, and the Florida Opportunity Fund.

[spontivly.com](https://spontivly.com)

# STARTUP SPOTLIGHT



**Anya Freeman**  
*Co-Founder & CEO*  
**James Layfield**  
*Co-Founder & Advisor*

**2023 TechDiversity  
Alumni**

*Miami, FL*



Kind Designs manufactures 3D printing living seawalls addressing the rising sea-level challenge. The company uses 3D printing technology with embedded water quality sensors to print living seawalls that mimic coral reefs.

CEO and Co-founder Anya Freeman is part of the 2023 TechDiversity cohort. A lawyer by trade, Anya started the company after understanding how current seawall solutions create toxic and uninhabitable environments for marine life.

Kind Designs **closed a \$5 million round**, with investment from Ankh Impact Ventures and the Florida Opportunity Fund. They have also **deployed their first round of seawalls** to customers and have millions of dollars of pre-orders.

[kinddesigns.com](http://kinddesigns.com)



# STARTUP SPOTLIGHT



**Erica Cole**  
*Founder & CEO*

**2022 TechDiversity  
Alumni**

*Richmond, VA*

## NO LIMBITS

No Limbits is an adaptive clothing brand intended to offer products that combine fashion and function by providing garments specially made to work with prosthetics.

After losing her leg in a car crash in 2018, Founder Erica Cole found that her new prosthetic leg wasn't compatible with her existing wardrobe. After joining our 2022 TechDiversity cohort, No Limbits has since expanded to include wheelchair and sensory friendly clothing lines.

Erica presented on **Shark Tank** and secured a funding deal with **Emma Grede** and **Mark Cuban**. She has also built an e-commerce retail brand and established **partnerships with leading retailers** such as Walmart, Target, Walmart, Zappos, REI, and Veterans Affairs (the VA).

[no-limb其ts.com](https://no-limb其ts.com)

# STARTUP SPOTLIGHT

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**Laura Epstein**  
*Founder & CEO*

**2023 TechDiversity  
Alumni**

*Chicago, IL*



**PULSE  
CHARTER  
CONNECT**

Pulse Charter Connect (PCC) automates and streamlines the inefficient process of organ transport logistics. Using advanced technology and real-time data to improve organ transplant success rates for patients and ensuring faster, safer, and more cost-effective transportation.

Holding an MBA from University of Chicago Booth School of Business, in founding PCC she has combined her top-tier business acumen with personal experience as a transplant organ pilot to create a life-saving solution.

PCC has **raised over \$700,000 in capital** during the time of the program. Laura has also been a **finalist presenter at FIME 2023, Rally 2023, and won the HeartLabU 2023 pitch competition.**

[pulsecharterconnect.com](https://pulsecharterconnect.com)

# STARTUP SPOTLIGHT

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**Severance McLaughlin**  
*Founder & CEO*

**2021 TechDiversity  
Alumni**

*Miami, FL*



DeLorean AI raised millions from investors to speed up the development of artificial intelligence technology it says can help millions of people improve their health.

The Miami startup secured \$7.5 million in a series A funding round led by Sopris Venture Capital, with participation from Pinta Capital Partners. Founded in 2018, the company's medical AI analyzes patient health data and creates mathematical profiles to predict the onset of chronic illnesses. From there, it can recommend next best actions, such as intervention suggestions for health care providers. The goal is to stave off disease and, ultimately, extend lives.

[deloreanait.com](http://deloreanait.com)



# SIGNATURE EVENTS RECAP



## TechDiversity Welcome Reception May 8, 2023 @ Visit Tampa Bay

Tampa Bay Wave again hosted a welcome reception at Visit Tampa Bay's office, this time for our 2023 TechDiversity cohort, to introduce our member companies to various community dignitaries and economic development partners.

## Hall of Fame Celebration June 15, 2023 @ Tampa Bay Buccaneers Raymond James Stadium (Tampa, FL)

Wave recognized 25+ startups who achieved significant financial milestones in 2022, along with another 15 alumni startups from prior years at a sell-out event hosted at the Tampa Bay Buccaneers stadium, thanks to the support of Tampa Connection. We look forward to returning in 2024 to honor more of our startups who are making huge waves!



## Tech Diversity Pitch Night July 20, 2023 @ Tampa Bay Rays Tropicana Field (St. Pete, FL)

For the third year, the Tampa Bay Rays baseball team hosted Wave's Tech Diversity Pitch Night, followed by tickets to way the Rays game in an event entitled Pitch@TheTrop! Linda Olson, Wave's CEO, threw out the first pitch at the game.

# MAKING BIG WAVES

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The first half of 2023 reflects even more success for delivery on Tampa Bay Wave's mission. The second half will be filled with even more action, as we launch both LatinTech and HealthTech|X accelerators and continue to grow our portfolio of female-led startups as part of our Women of Wave initiative. We are committed to supporting all women of color, with emphasis on helping Black and Latina women. A small percentage of startups don't make it, for any number of reasons, including timing and life changes, but with our coaching and mentoring support, our founders will have the courage to try again.

If our prior federal grant pursuits successes repeat themselves, Wave will expand its reach and delivery across the region and beyond, tapping both its Tampa headquarters and a new satellite office opened in downtown St. Petersburg in April, 2023. We'll add support for envirotech startups to our specialties and our formal partnerships within our community will continue to expand. Our joint pursuit of funding through the EDA and a consortium of community partners lead by USF is just one example of how an arc between the ecosystem activities can elevate the Tampa Bay region as a nationally-recognized tech innovation hub.

We anticipate 2024 will prove even more amazing, thanks to all who support us. Multi-year funding like yours allows us to build upon the work of the prior year, which is critical to long-running programming.

## WATCH US MAKE MORE WAVES!

# LOCAL ECONOMIC IMPACT

BUILDING THE REGION'S TECH ECOSYSTEM

SINCE OUR PROGRAM LAUNCHED IN 2013

GUIDING ENTREPRENEURS FROM STARTUP TO UNICORN

ACCELERATING  
TECHNOLOGY COMPANIES

INSPIRING  
INNOVATION

CREATING A  
COLLABORATIVE ECOSYSTEM

SUPPORTING A BROAD RANGE OF EMERGING TECH

- AI
- EdTech
- Hospitality

- MedTech
- CyberTech
- FinTech

- IoT
- SaaS
- eCommerce

- HealthTech
- MarTech
- CleanTech

FOSTERING GREATER DIVERSITY & INCLUSION



**NOW 46%**

WOMEN FOUNDERS



**NOW 86%**

DIVERSE & UNDERREPRESENTED FOUNDERS



STARTUP FOUNDERS FROM  
**30** COUNTRIES SHOWCASED TAMPA  
AS AN INNOVATION HUB

LOCAL ECONOMIC IMPACT



**22**

COMPANIES RELOCATED TO TAMPA BAY



**1300**

HOTEL ROOMS



**450**

FLIGHTS THROUGH TPA

2022 WAVE ACCELERATOR PROGRAMS



**403**

TOTAL APPLICANTS



**11%**

APPLICANTS ACCEPTED  
(HIGHLY SELECTIVE)



**9.2**

NET PROMOTER SCORE

## WAVE'S LEADERSHIP TEAM

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**Linda Olson**  
CEO & Founder



**Jay Powers**  
COO



**Dee Garcia**  
Director of Development &  
Strategic Partnerships

## OPERATIONS & EVENTS TEAM

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**Jennifer Ptack**  
Manager, Strategic  
Branding & Events



**Michael "Mike" Lynn**  
Manager, Venture  
Center Operations

## WAVE'S PROGRAMS TEAM

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**Dr. Richard Munassi**  
Accelerator Managing  
Director



**Jonathan Truong**  
Sr. Mgr, National Programs  
and Partnerships



**Prathyusha Pappi Reddy**  
Accelerator Associate

### ACCELERATOR & PROGRAM OPERATIONS TEAM



**Amit Agrawal**  
Sr. Mgr, Mentor &  
Investor Relations



**Mariah Ramos**  
Manager, Mentor  
Relations &  
Women of Wave



# WAVE'S BOARD



**Santo Cannone**  
Board Chair



**Linda Olson**  
President/CEO



**Alfred Goldberg**  
Vice President



**Madeline Dent**  
Secretary



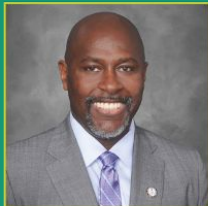
**Catherine Wilhelm**  
Treasurer



**Kailah Matyas**  
Program Strategy Committee Chair



**Kostas Stoilas**  
Fundraising Committee Chair



**Greg Celestan**  
Sustainability Committee Chair



**Diana Hayes**  
Gov. & Ethics Committee Chair



**Charlotte Baker**  
Immediate Past Chair



**Marcus Adolfsson**



**Rob Brown**



**Kathy Chiu**



**Brian Deming**  
Past Chair



**David Eason**



**Joe Hodges**



**Travis Milks**



**Amanda Milligan**



**Nick Outman**



**Chuck Papageorgiou**



**Penny Parks**



**Miraj Patel**



**Lance Raab**



**Cathy Ryan Reneer**



**Inga Schmitzer**



**Yvette Segura**



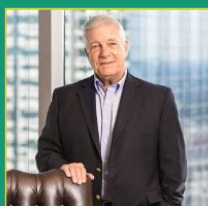
**Alex Sink**  
Past Chair



**Andrew Smith**



**Gerwai Todd**



**Marty Traber**



**Lauren Weiner**

# MENTOR & COMMUNITY PARTNER NETWORKS

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## Wave's Mentor Network

Wave member companies have access to a wide network of professionals in our 175+ all volunteer Mentor network. These professionals have a passion for helping early stage startups. Some offer their expertise on specific topics (such as HR or trademark laws), while others may coach a startup on an ongoing basis, depending on what support the founder(s) need. We host regular Mentor mixers to build strong trusted relationships.

Our Mentor Network is a critical part of startup success. Sharing their experience with a startup can often save a founder time and money, both of which are sometimes in short supply.

Here is the [link](#) to the page on Wave's website, showcasing our Mentor network.

## Wave's Community Partner Network

Wave has also built a strong community partner network, with both formal and informal agreements in place. We connect our member companies to a wide range of community partners, such as our economic development partners and others who can help our startups build their base in our community.

We also provide introductions to others ESO (entrepreneur support organizations) in the ecosystem to encourage their participation and to magnify their visibility and exposure. Logos from several of our community partners are shown below but may also be found under this [link](#) on our website.

## HOW WAVE ENGAGES OTHERS

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### HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT TOMORROW'S BRIGHTEST COMPANIES?



Scan QR Code to Contact Us  
and Learn More

Here are a few ways to engage our Accelerator and CORE Programs to help innovators:

- Volunteer Mentor
- Accredited Investor
- Sponsor or Financial Supporter
- Community Partnerships

# INVESTOR & CUSTOMER NETWORKS

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## Wave's Investor Network

Wave has built a deep network of local investors and mentors, including several former Wave alumni founders who have sold their companies in recent years. Wave also has a strong relationship with various co-investor targets in Florida including DeepWork Capital, Tampa Bay Ventures and Florida Funders, to name just a few. More are shown in the logos below. Here is the [link](#) to the Investor page on Wave's website for more information; some are depicted in the Pillars of Innovation section for their support across programs; Tampa Bay Ventures has specified its contribution for investor readiness.

In all, Wave member companies have access to a 400+ network of investors known to make investments in early stage startups. DeepWork Capital also runs the Florida Opportunity Fund, which is a huge connection advantage.

Additionally, Wave deploys its unique relationship with PitchBook as a tool and resource to curate matches between its member companies and active investors.

## Customer Networking

Wave team members also work their connections to provide introductions to potential customers for our member startups, so that they can build critical customer capital, revenues and profits as part of their business growth success. Below are some examples.

## INVESTOR READINESS & DEMO DAY SPONSORS

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# SPONSORS & PARTNERS

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## Wave's Sponsorships

In the past year, Wave has added national, regional and local sponsors, representing brands with a commitment to supporting diverse and underrepresented founders. Organizations like Delta Airlines and Southwest Airlines have donated flight vouchers to make it possible for Wave founders to travel back and forth and to compete on national and international stages. Corporates have contributed either directly through their business units or through their foundations to underwrite programming and scholarships. The link to that page on Wave's website can be found [here](#).

Wave successfully won federal grants in 2022 through the EDA, the SBA and is competing for more grants in 2023, through the EDA, helping lead a regional consortium that includes academic partners like the University of South Florida, the three surrounding counties of Hillsborough, Pasco and Pinellas plus the City of Tampa and, economic development partners, plus the Port of Tampa, Tampa Airport and so many others.

We are eternally grateful for the support of Congresswoman Kathy Castor, for her advocacy in our securing \$500,000 in funding to launch a LatinTech Accelerator in 4Q23 that will specifically support founders of Latin heritage, thereby magnifying the impact of JPMorgan Chase's funding for Latina founders.

Wave has grown its Pillars of Innovation (\$25k+) sponsors as well as all levels of sponsorship support, allowing to expand our programming.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

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### Federal Support



### Economic Development Partners





# SPONSORS & PARTNERS (cont.)

## Pillars of Innovation



## Tidal Wave Sponsors



## Corporate Friends of Wave



## Partners





# THANK YOU!

For questions, please reach out to:  
**Linda Olson, CEO, Tampa Bay Wave**  
[linda@tampabaywave.org](mailto:linda@tampabaywave.org)

Follow Wave on social media:



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LEARN MORE