

**EVERY
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no matter their
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direct access to
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Armstead Academic Project
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“I didn’t think it was fair that certain students would receive poorer or lesser education due to where they live. Kids should have the same level of education. And **they deserve the same shot at life**, to be successful and go on to college and work in certain fields that they want to work in.”

Arik Armstead, as quoted in the 6/18/20 Sports Illustrated Article: For 49ers Star Arik Armstead, Making an Impact Starts With Educational Equality

OUR STORY

Dedicated to ensuring that every student, no matter their socioeconomic status, has direct access to the resources they need to thrive, the Armstead Academic Project provides youth with positive spaces, tools, and academic support to unlock their potential and achieve their goals.

Founded by San Francisco 49er Arik Armstead and his wife Melinda Armstead in 2019, the Project supports students in Sacramento and the Bay Area of California. The fundamental premise of AAP is that a zip code should not define student opportunity.

RESOURCES & SUPPORT

With the support of the Armstead Academic Project (AAP), students can focus on setting and achieving goals while being attentive to their physical and mental wellness. Through AAP, students are encouraged to **Read, Explore, Connect**, and **Stay Well**, along their academic continuum. AAP provides youth with supplementary opportunities (i.e. afterschool programming, summer reading tuition, STEAM programming, and college and career field trips) that allow for exploration of their interests, additional academic tools to succeed, increased self-esteem, and a sense of purpose. AAP supports teachers with resources in and out of the classroom to make learning relevant so that together, our youth can thrive. Additionally, AAP uses its platform to elevate the voices of educators in its advocacy efforts to bring more resources that support our underserved students across the state of California.



THE NEED

According to KidsData.org, **just 39% of California's socioeconomically disadvantaged students met or exceeded the grade-level standard in English language arts in 2019, compared to nearly 70% of their non-socioeconomically disadvantaged peers.** The California Children's Report Card 2022 from Children Now points to systemic inequities in learning opportunities and quality instruction resulting in English Learners, American Indian/Alaska Native, Black, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Latino/a students performing well below their English-proficient, Asian, Filipino/a, white, and Multiracial peers in math and science on California statewide tests. Furthermore, 2019 statewide testing data shows that black students are the lowest-performing subgroup with 67% not meeting English Language Arts Standards and 79% not meeting Math Standards, regardless of income bracket.

The educational inequities create additional stress for physical and mental wellness, especially when compounded with trauma in the home or in the community. As a result of these entrenched inequities, many young people lose their spark—their drive to dream big and succeed. They watch their better resourced peers achieve what they know they could too if only they had the support anyone needs to thrive.

OUR SOLUTION

What began in 2015 as the Arik Armstead Football Camp evolved into the Armstead Academic Project in 2019, with an initial anchor partnership with Mercy Housing California, an affordable housing developer serving low-income families in the Greater Sacramento area. The Armstead Academic Project has committed \$2M in direct funding for youth in Sacramento

and the Bay Area to receive the academic and social-emotional support they need to succeed.

From providing pro-social support in afterschool programming and exposure to college and career paths, to community resources and tools to support the educational environment, **AAP has resourced over 4,500 underserved youth in tangible ways** including but not limited to the list below:

STORYTIMES WITH ARIK ARMSTEAD



Inspired 2,500 Elementary students to read in over 30 classrooms and distributed diverse books with the SF 49ers to over 2,600 students.

AFTERSCHOOL + IN-SCHOOL EXPLORATION



Social-emotional support, academic tutoring, and STEAM programming for 500+ underserved 3rd - 9th graders.

COLLEGE + CAREER FIELD TRIPS



Providing 250+ High School students the opportunity to make their learning relevant and connect to their community.

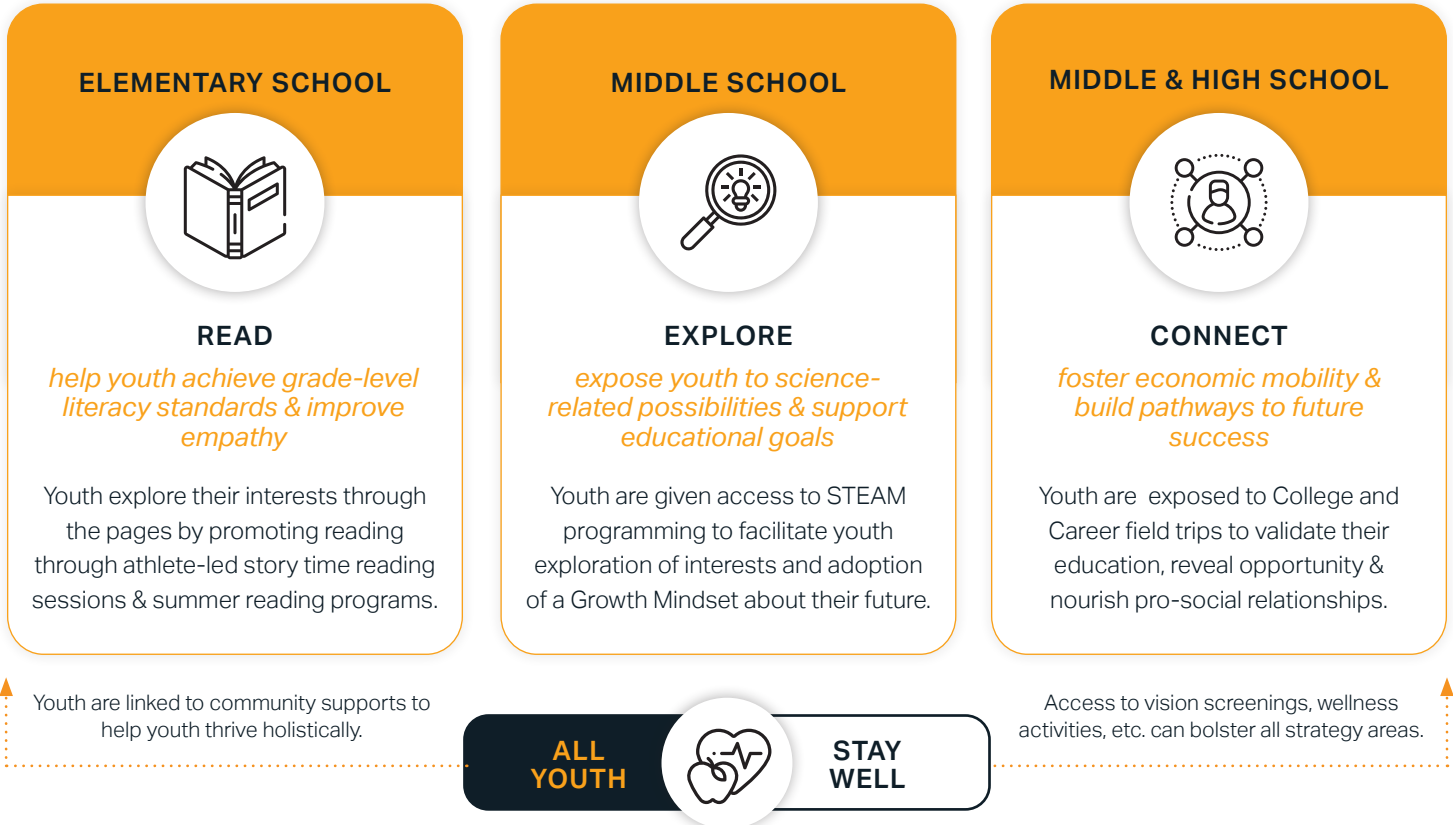
COMMUNITY WELLNESS SUPPORT



Providing tools like education kits (bursting with Chromebook computers, internet services, books, learning activities, school supplies, and healthy snacks), community health fairs, and vision screenings for kids living in low-income housing areas.

PROVIDE YOUTH WITH POSITIVE SPACES, TOOLS, AND ACADEMIC SUPPORT TO UNLOCK THEIR POTENTIAL AND ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS

AAP now seeks to formalize its investment in the future of our youth by creating supplementary support for youth in both in-classroom and out of school modalities, helping youth unlock their potential and explore their interests through books, experiences, and social connections along the academic continuum:



SYSTEMS CHANGE APPROACH

Direct programmatic support to help youth struggling with educational injustice, must be complemented by system-level advocacy to even the playing field of education.

Most recently, Arik and AAP supported a statewide assembly bill to fix a fundamental flaw in the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) by creating a new supplemental grant for California's lowest-performing subgroup of students not receiving funding, which were black students. AB 2774 was authored by Assemblymembers Dr. Akilah Weber (D-San Diego) and Chris Holden (D-Pasadena) and sponsored by AAP partner, Fortune School of Education.

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ARIKARMSTEAD.COM



ARIK'S STORY

The youngest of four siblings, Arik Armstead attended high-performing schools in the Elk Grove Unified School District with predominantly white peers from what he describes as “a diverse melting pot” of home life: rural, urban, and suburban. His primary relationship to school was through sports. He struggled with reading and paying attention in class, especially in 1st through 3rd grade and remembers having to attend remedial reading classes before school in order to catch up to his peers. Arik’s mother, Christa Armstead, was a very involved parent, adamant that teachers not label her young Black son with learning disabilities. Arik recognized early on the inequities embedded in the “tracking” system in schools, and is forever grateful to his mother for speaking up on his behalf.

“He didn’t forget that he was a kid once upon a time and he had some struggles,” Arik’s mother Christa said in a 2021 interview for an ESPN article, “and he had a lot of support to help him overcome any obstacle he would have in life. And he realizes not every kid has that. So, his work today is to somehow try to level that out.”

Arik’s dad, NBA trainer Guss Armstead, facilitated a pathway for Arik to explore his interest in sports. Though Arik excelled in both basketball and football, he needed additional academic support which he received by entering a homeschool program in 8th grade in an effort to get back to grade level. Arik soon caught up, eventually taking extra classes in his senior year so he could graduate from high school early. By that time, Arik stood out on both the defensive and offensive lines at Pleasant Grove High School, and also played in the U.S. Army All American Game his senior year.

Arik entered the University of Oregon as a football recruit. He also played basketball at Oregon, redshirting for the program that won the Pac-12 Conference Tournament title and advanced to the Sweet 16 in the NCAA tournament. Earning his college degree was very important to Arik as he believed it would help him make the biggest impact. He majored in general social science. In 2015, Arik was drafted by the San Francisco 49ers, making his NFL debut in the season opener against the Minnesota Vikings. Key to the 49ers’ defensive line in their run to the 2020 Super Bowl, Arik also won the Perry/Yonamine Unity Award that year, an honor given to a current 49ers player who has demonstrated a commitment to promoting unity and giving back to the local community. He also won the NFLPA Community MVP two consecutive years (2020, 2021), received two nominations for the NFL Walter Payton Man of the Year awards (2020, 2021) and was nominated for the NFLPA Alan Page award (2022) –all for his commitment to making a positive impact in his community. He remains passionately committed to advocating for—and putting his financial and personal power behind— educational equity for all students in the Sacramento region and Bay Area, no matter their socioeconomic status.



“I have been so blessed in so many things that are challenging for others,” Arik says. “I feel my responsibility to use everything I have to help others on their journey to navigate spaces where odds are stacked around you and your success can be stunted. Equity starts with education for this next generation.”