



## Taylor McPherson

### Computer Science '20

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Frontend dev & user advocate  
@ LifeBlue, a digital agency &  
B-Corp that believes business  
should be a force for good.

### *What does being part of the Tech4Good family mean to you?*

(Condensed excerpt from 2020 Lab Reflections, read more at [bit.ly/t4g-reflections-2020](https://bit.ly/t4g-reflections-2020))

“Being in the Tech4Good family to me means that I always have a space I can go where I am challenged to learn and create and be completely supported throughout the process. I get cheesy when I start to think about what the Lab means to me because it has without a doubt been the most fulfilling aspect of my college experience.

I joined as a fresh transfer student looking for some meaning and community. I found that and so much more. As a CS major with a background in gender studies, I knew my big-picture goal was to get in tech for social good, but I wasn't sure how to approach it. When I joined, I was quickly stretched to apply my background in social science to user testing and interviews, and even became involved in writing a research paper. This summer I worked in the Lab as a fellow. I not only continued in my UX Research team, but also joined a design team for the first time, which has been beyond rewarding.

**Sometimes it feels like I have learned more in the last 8 months I've been involved in the lab than the entire 4 years I've spent in undergrad combined.** Everyday here brings new things to learn and problems to solve. I'm a newcomer to most of what I get involved in, and yet I always feel supported and capable of doing the work, which is so rare. I cannot thank the Tech4Good family enough for letting me be a part of it.”

Your donation creates stories and experiences like Taylor's.



# Eliza Gonzales EOP Student | Cognitive Science '22 | Potential Fellow

Your donation will help Eliza realize her dream of bringing her diverse background and empathy & passion for challenges in society to designing technology that emphasizes equity, accessibility and inclusion (and will support others like her too).

September 2019

*First in family to attend college*

When I learned about UX, I was the **primary care for my siblings** and had an untraditional and slow start.

June 2021

*Getting started with Tech4Good*

I eventually made the time to learn more about UX, **put myself through extensive self-education, and became involved in tech clubs and Tech4Good!**

Summer 2022

*Become a t4g Fellow*

As a Fellow, I hope to publish research on the barriers to connecting student learning with community projects, and **lead a UX Design team on platforms to address this.**

September 2023

*Attend grad school in HCI*

My dream would be to attend Stanford's Design Impact Masters program.

Own a design consulting company that emphasizes equity, accessibility, and inclusion!

Design can be used for the greater good if we make that the standard, and my plan is to do just that.

My Story

My Dream





## Harlene Virk

Computer Science '23

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Mentor @ SWE

*Outside of the box  
Like minded community  
Help to make a change*

### *What does being part of the Tech4Good Lab family mean to you?*

(Condensed excerpt from 2021 Lab Reflections, read more at [bit.ly/t4g-reflections-2021](https://bit.ly/t4g-reflections-2021))

“Joining an organization in the middle of a pandemic is an unique experience, not many can say, ‘I spend 10-15 hours a week with these people, but have only seen their faces a handful of times.’ **Despite the virtual barrier that divided us for a year and a half, I have never created such a bond and felt so welcomed through computer screens as I have during my time in the lab.** When I meet with the other members of the lab for our work sessions or weekly meetings, it brings me a sense of comfort because I know I am collaborating with like minded individuals that are also experiencing the same struggles. The Tech4Good family has provided me with great friendships, opportunities, and a support system which is more important than ever during these times. In addition to creating strong connections, the lab has also allowed me to explore my interests and I can certainly say I’ve learned so much more in a few months than I would’ve in a traditional classroom setting. My experience in the lab has not only strengthened my confidence in myself as a developer and tech student, but has also reassured my place in the UCSC community, and I am especially grateful to be part of one that constantly strives for the greater good of those around us.”

Your donation creates stories and experiences like Harlene's.



## Aproop Kamat

Computer Science '21

*Doing social good while gaining practical skills sounds incredible.*

### *What does being part of the Tech4Good family mean to you?*

(Condensed excerpt from 2021 Lab Reflections, read more at [bit.ly/t4g-reflections-2021](https://bit.ly/t4g-reflections-2021))

“When I joined Tech4Good, I was so excited to be in a place where I could put my skill set to use in a practical setting & learn new things on the way. However, once I realized that I had never touched any of the frameworks or tools used in the lab’s tech stack, I started doubting myself. Would I be able to contribute? Would I slow my team down?”

I’ve been with the lab for three quarters now, and each quarter has shown me that I had nothing to fear. Each team I worked with over the past year required unique skills, and every time I faced a concept I had never come across, I found a wealth of resources provided by the lab itself. Moreover, I never felt too intimidated to ask questions. This lab has so many brilliant, hardworking, and knowledgeable members and they’re all so willing to give their time to help others in any way they can.

**To me, that’s what being a part of this lab is all about. Being willing to support one another, seeking opportunities to learn as a team, and working together to build sophisticated projects that have a real impact.** In this lab, no matter what challenge you come across, you always have the guidance and encouragement of your teammates to back you up. Despite joining during the pandemic & spending the entire year away from Santa Cruz, the people I worked with became my friends. I can honestly say that joining Tech4Good was one of the best highlights of my college experience.

Your donation creates stories and experiences like Aproop’s.



## Tucker Fish

Computer Science '21

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*Pleasant summertime  
a passionate community  
works for society.*

### *What's one thing you learned or a reflection from this year?*

(Condensed excerpt from 2020 Lab Reflections, read more at [bit.ly/t4g-reflections-2020](https://bit.ly/t4g-reflections-2020))

"I'd spent much of my college career living in a constant state of stress. I had to be the best student getting the best grades. I was always the one staying up late and getting up early to study and work on assignments. I considered socializing unproductive, taking breaks counterintuitive. Because of that, I wasn't connecting well with those I most cared about. With only my fears to keep me company, this lifestyle began to eat away at me. It wasn't until I began having shortness of breath and panic attacks that I knew something had to change. I was skeptical of the lab when I first joined. The only time I came close to speaking with a professor was as a fly on the wall during office hours. After I showed interest in the lab, David was the one who called me. Our conversation was more about passions and goals rather than experience. With him, humanity followed. **Before I knew it, I was a part of something bigger than myself, a community. I could be vulnerable when finding limitations and I was surrounded with people determined to help.** Learning something new and growing with challenge was common. The things that would cause me stress in the past began to motivate me. When I interviewed for my first internship, I almost exclusively talked about my work on the Relate platform. When I was asked more about the lab, they were surprised something like it existed. The answer was easy, it's the people that make it work."

Your donation creates stories and experiences like Tucker's.



What if recruiting centered on helping people define and grow into their full potential rather than on assessing people's past experiences?

## Create Your PHD: Professional Happiness Design

<https://bit.ly/tech4good-PHD>

In the Tech4Good Lab, the most important part of the application involves reflecting on where you are now, where you want to be, and what you need to do to get there. Students read *Discovering Your Authentic Leadership*, Bill George, *Harvard Business Review*, reflect on a series of questions, design their perfect workday in the future, and write a 1-page magazine column about yourself published 20 years in the future. They end with reflections on their personal advisory board and role models, and their short and long-term goals. **We're close to our goal of accepting every single applicant that fully completes the exercise & decides that Tech4Good is what they need to achieve their impact.**

**Credit:** Based on an exercise by Tina Seelig & Fern Mandelbaum for the Accel Leadership Program at STVP



# Katia Avila Pinedo

First Gen, EOP Student | Comp. Science '23 | Potential Fellow

Your donation will help Katia realize her dream of bringing her diverse background and passion for engineering education to becoming a STEM educator that helps every student see that obtaining higher education is accessible and beneficial (and will support others like her too).

June 2018

## Discovered Passion for Engineering

As part of the Garey Lemelson-MIT Invent team, I worked to create an invention that led to my passion for engineering. After months of self-taught software and hardware skills, our invention, the Heart & Sole, was prototyped and has a U.S. patent pending.

Fall 2019

## Curious for Education

I noticed the ways our education system fails to support marginalized students. I became curious to identify the factors that determine a student's success. This led me to become a math intern with Cal Teach and work as a peer mentor for the MESA Engineering Program.

2022

## Become a T4g Fellow

Joining Tech4Good provided me with an opportunity to practice my UI/UX skills and learn about project development. I would like to be a Fellow so I can dig deeper into research and publish a paper in preparation for graduate school.

## Become a STEM educator

My goal is to make every student see obtaining higher education as accessible and beneficial.

September 2023

## Attend grad school

I believe that pursuing graduate school to work as faculty in higher education will allow me to best support students while sharing my passion for engineering.

My Story

My Dream





**Justin Budikentjana**  
Technology Management '22

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*I desire growth  
to achieve my dreams one day  
whatever it takes*

## *Share some college reflections and your post-graduation plans.*

(Condensed excerpt from 2021 Lab Reflections, read more at [bit.ly/t4g-reflections-2021](https://bit.ly/t4g-reflections-2021))

“My college career started with a lot of stumbling from gathering my bearings learning to be independent to finding out that the major that I signed up for didn’t involve any of the hands-on building that I was looking for. I came into Tech4Good with very little lab or internship experience and I was unsure how much I would learn in the virtual COVID environment. Warm welcomes were given on my first day in the Needfinding, Ideation, & Prototyping team and right away we hit the ground running.

**The lab made sure to push us so by the end of my time in the lab I learned needfinding for real issues and how to think outside of the box to solve these needs. The best experience that I got from Tech4Good was working together with others as both peers and community.**

For the next chapter in my life I will be moving across the country to provide solutions for state governments as an implementation consultant. While working I plan to start personal projects and potentially pursue a Masters as I discover more of my passions. Tech4Good has provided me with invaluable experiences and I will be forever grateful for their help in getting me to where I am today.”

**Your donation creates stories and experiences like Justin’s.**





## Kristin Jai

Cog Sci & Economics '21

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Experience Delivery @ Adobe

*Let's go innovate  
I believe in the future  
prototypes are fun*

### *Tell us about yourself, your goals and dreams, and why you joined the lab*

(Condensed excerpt from 2021 Lab Reflections, read more at [bit.ly/t4g-reflections-2021](https://bit.ly/t4g-reflections-2021))

"I have always had an interest in being creative, but had no idea how to make a career out of it. I was looking through our school's facebook group when I saw an application for Tech4Good, and they were advertising UI/UX roles for people wanting to gain real world experience. **Joining the lab was one of the best decisions I have made in my college career.** Over the past 2 years, Tech4Good gave me the opportunity to take on various roles as a UX researcher, a designer, and a leader.

The lab dynamic is unique in the way that we all learn from each other and also with each other. What motivated me as well was that every product that we worked on has impact. **When I think of the Tech4Good Lab, I think of uplifting others for the greater good. It can be scary to try something new, especially if you don't have much experience, but everyone in this lab is so supportive of one another,** and that environment really empowered me to pursue a career I am passionate about instead of settling for one I'm not excited for. I recently graduated and my next step is as a UX researcher and design consultant intern. Although I don't know what path I'm headed down long-term, I know that Tech4Good has given me the confidence and tools I need to get there."

Your donation creates stories and experiences like Kristin's.



**Ben Paulsen**

CS: Game Design '23

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*Self-employed @ Banjo Games*

*Finally believe  
that I really belong here  
I'll make the difference.*

## *What's one thing you learned or a reflection from this year?*

(Condensed excerpt from 2021 Lab Reflections, read more at [bit.ly/t4g-reflections-2021](https://bit.ly/t4g-reflections-2021))

"As I led multiple development teams through 2020-21, I found that the most important part of leadership was taking care of my team members and fostering a culture of respect. When you talk about teamwork, you like to imagine the best case scenario of productivity and combining everyone's strengths. But what I think is more important is to recognize that when something goes wrong, it's our job to have each other's backs.

**My best moments as a lead have been when I took a step back, asked the team how they were doing, whether they needed time off, and how we could help each other get unstuck on the problems we were solving.**

I've never regretted giving someone a break or accomodation, because in a team where people feel their needs are respected, people always come back reinvigorated and ready to contribute."

Your donation creates stories and experiences like Ben's.



# Nathaniel Thompson

Dept. of Customer Love @ Google Cloud | UCSC '18

*Nathaniel is an alum working at the Dept. of Customer Love at Google Cloud & dreaming of growing more empathetic orgs that care for people & their growth, not only productivity. Your donation will create stories like Nathaniel's and help students grow into their full contribution.*

## September 2015 Starting fresh at college

I knew I wanted to work with technology, but I'd never been successful with coding, and didn't have a clear path.

February 2017

## First steps with Tech4Good

The lab's mission of combining research and an entrepreneurial mindset to solve real issues in a gap between governments & private business was inspiring for me.

September 2017

## Grow as T4G Lab Manager

Through work across multiple different projects in the lab, I was able to learn & contribute to academic research, organizational design, UX design, and web development.

## Build and help grow human-centric organizations, with empathy at their center.

I believe putting authentic care for others at the center of an organization amplifies its impact, creating tangible benefit aligned for people both inside and outside the org.

November 2018

## Join Looker's Department of Customer Love (acq. Google)

After graduation, the opportunities & learning the lab provided were key in enabling me to join Looker's Department of Customer Love. They've also proven valuable in navigating our org's integration with Google Cloud.

My Tech4Good Story

My Dream



## Atira Nair

Cognitive Science '22

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UX Design Intern @ Amazon  
Tech4Good Fall 2021 Fellow

*I like art and tech*

*I really like to learn and  
help other people.*

## What does being part of the Tech4Good family mean to you?

(Condensed excerpt from 2020 Lab Reflections, read more at [bit.ly/t4g-reflections-2020](https://bit.ly/t4g-reflections-2020))

**Tech4Good is one of the most foundational experiences of my college career** because it gave me real-world experience on meaningful projects in my industry. While i did learn a lot in my classes, **Tech4Good was where I was able to actually apply what I learned and grow my skills.** I came into the lab with very little experience and a vague idea of what UX design and research was about. I had just stumbled into the realm of UX/HCI and working on projects in the lab gave me a good grasp on not just design and research skills, but also teamwork, communication, and leadership.

## My Favourite Part of the Lab Experience

My favorite part about being at the lab is mostly the people that I've met there. Everyone here is so supportive and willing to help each other out that **my growth as a designer and researcher has mainly come from being able to learn in a safe and welcoming space.** I've met so many cool people who have really interesting insights and perspectives. I'm really excited to continue working on projects and meet even more amazing people.

Your donation creates stories and experiences like Atira's.



**Sarah Avila**

Computer Science '22

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*Software Engineer Intern  
@ Microsoft*

*Learning new tech and  
Helping my community  
Will be rewarding*

## *What's one thing you learned or a reflection from this year?*

(Condensed excerpt from 2021 Lab Reflections, read more at [bit.ly/t4g-reflections-2021](https://bit.ly/t4g-reflections-2021))

"I'm so fortunate to be a part of the Tech4Good lab and have the opportunity for technical development, leadership experience, and personal growth. When I first joined the lab in Winter 2020, I was unsure of myself and my ability to succeed in the lab because I didn't see myself as a strong developer or a leader. The experiences and people I've met through Tech4Good have completely changed that for me. From the challenges that I've encountered and the learning that came with it,

**I've become less afraid to fail at new things and more confident in myself. I'm thankful that there were people that believed in me and pushed me out of my comfort zone**

so that I could continue to grow towards the person I want to become. I've also really enjoyed leading and mentoring a team, even through a virtual setting because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although I haven't met any of my teammates in person, I've been able to form many friendships and good memories that make me sad to finish the quarter but excited to start the next one. I am so inspired by the sense of community that the lab fosters and the great work that comes from it. Wherever I may go in the future, I hope to bring this culture of learning, support, and community impact with me that I found at Tech4Good."

**Your donation creates stories and experiences like Sarah's.**