BUILDING THE FUTURE

Wine industry maven Michael Franzia, who serves as president of the board for Enterprise for Youth, shares how the organization is establishing positive change for the next generation

by LINDSEY SHOOK  photography by DREW ALTIZER

What inspired you to become involved with Enterprise for Youth?
I have always been drawn to youth workforce development, knowing full well the youth are our future leaders. I had previously volunteered on the board of another San Francisco-based youth workforce agency and when the opportunity to serve on the board of directors of Enterprise for Youth arose, it felt like a natural fit. Little did I know at the time that Enterprise for Youth was the sole producer and beneficiary of the Fall Show. I quickly got up to speed during our monthly board meetings and came to understand how critical the success of the Fall Show was to enabling Enterprise to fulfill its mission.

How do the organization's efforts benefit the community?
Imagine this small but mighty not-for-profit providing over 500 youth annually with workshops that cover topics ranging from interviewing and résumé and cover letter preparation to money management skills and conflict resolution. This year we provided 300 youth the opportunity to discover their passion through paid internships. Some of our students are first-generation Americans and English is their second language. Others may be recent immigrants whose parents work hourly jobs in the service industry and don’t speak English at home. These young people are the first of their family to graduate high school and matriculate to university. San Francisco employers such as the Gap, Kaiser Permanente, Tucker & Marks, UCSF, First Republic Bank, Google Food, Stitch Fix and Rothy’s are just a few of our employer sponsors who offer these young people amazing, life-altering opportunities to work in safe, caring and nourishing environments where their interests are piqued and transformative experiences await.

Can you share a success story of a student who benefited from the program?
We recently had a board brunch at Fort Mason’s Room with a View on the final day of the Fall Show. At the podium, a lovely young woman named Skye Goette, who was the youth speaker at the event, explained her challenges growing up in a single-parent household and having to come to terms with her diagnosis of dyscalculia. She articulated beautifully and authentically how the Enterprise for Youth programs cemented her vision of herself and provided clarity about her future as a professional educator. In Skye’s own words, “There was one moment in particular that sparked this vision of my future. One of the students I was working with couldn’t speak and had difficulty hearing. By the end of my internship we had figured out a system for communicating. Working with this young student helped me understand that teaching is not just about giving information to a student but also making sure they understand it and supporting them when they don’t.” This past summer, Skye was placed as an intern in supervisor Hillary Ronen’s office in City Hall, a position that she said provided her with the ability to interact in a professional environment and learn about city government.

Aside from support of the Fall Show, how can the design community become more deeply involved?
As a board, we have grappled with how to further enhance the relationship between the design community and Enterprise. We have many designers who have stepped up their commitment; Suzanne Tucker, Kendall Wilkinson and Jonathan Rachman have provided our youth with incredible internship opportunities. Other designers such as Ken Fulk have graciously offered their space for donor cultivation and appreciation events. We also seek designers for potential board seats, which assists in getting the message out and expanding our own reach.