

IF KICKSTARTER, TED TALKS, AND SHARK TANK HAD A BABY THAT GREW UP IN COLUMBUS IT WOULD LOOK LIKE THIS EVENT.

January 8, 2020 | [Margaret Lee](#) | [Leave a comment](#)



Have you ever had an idea but ran into challenges getting started? Or don't know how to get funding?

If so keep reading.

Two years ago: what started as just as a dream to fund student's ideas to better Columbus with hard work has become a reality with an event hosted locally in Hilliard called the O2 conference.

The O2 conference is an inspirational Sunday evening event where middle and high school students present ideas that meet the needs of the Columbus community. People of all ages buy tickets to attend the event, hear from the presenters, and enjoy dinner together. If Kickstarter, Ted Talks, and Shark Tank had a baby that grew up in Columbus it would look like this event.

The first annual O2 conference happened in March of 2018 and ever since has helped fund student projects to help connect, improve Columbus. Projects that have been funded include a children's choir, Senior citizen prom, and Hilliard Schools food pantries.

The unique part of the conference is that each presenter leaves with an adult mentor to help their ideas grow. Taylor McClintock has been involved with the conference for two years as a mentor for two different students.

She says what she has enjoyed most about the whole experience of being a mentor.

"What I've enjoyed most is seeing these students come to life chasing something they are passionate about," McClintock said.

Out of the many presenters, an Upper Arlington High School student Alana Becker presented the idea of creating a children's choir.

Alana said she felt like this was a unique opportunity to present her passion. "It was my first time presenting an idea in front of a large crowd and I felt like I had the opportunity of my life," Becker said.



Alana Becker with her Mentor

David White IV, the conference director Youth Pastor Worked with Upper Arlington Lutheran Church to host and put on this event. He says the conference gives students the ability with the mentors give to students to strengthen their skills.

"The one thing I consistently hear from the students is that their mentor has made all the difference in developing their ideas and their own skills," White stated.



Each year has a theme that helps drive the ideas; this year's theme is Thriving Environment. Environment can be as broad as our world or as narrow as your own home.

The actual event will be hosted at Upper Arlington Lutheran Church on March 1st from 5:00 pm-8:00 pm. If you or a student you know has an idea, applications are now open until January 15th. Applications and more information can be found at O2conference.org

