



Above are GoPeer co-founders Erik Laucks, Zura Mestiashvili, and Ethan Binder. Below is a view of the interactive GoPeer digital classroom.

GoPeer

The mission of GoPeer is to improve the quality and lower the cost of education. The company pairs vetted college students who attend top universities with students between the ages of 5 and 18 for one-on-one online tutoring lessons. It integrates technology with a near-peer education model to provide jobs to college students, logistical help to parents, and academic mentorship to youth. Students and tutors communicate through GoPeer’s secure online classroom, using tools like real-time face-to-face video conferencing, photo/document sharing, and a virtual whiteboard/notepad.

GoPeer co-founder **Ethan Binder** created GoPeer in 2017 with two of his classmates, **Zura Mestiashvili** and **Erik Laucks**, while they were students at Lafayette College. “If there is one thing we set out to do each and every day,” Ethan says, “it is building tools that turn our tutors into online teaching superheroes, bringing cost-effective and high-quality education to every kid in the world.”

The SEG Network Effect

Early in the development of GoPeer, Ethan realized his team had a lot to learn as the founders of a social venture. He applied to join SEG’s 2018 Impact Accelerator and began to make regular trips from the Lafayette campus to Providence to attend the sessions. One of Ethan’s Accelerator mentors opened his network and helped the team form key connections that remain important today. In addition, GoPeer’s first angel investors were SEG board members.

“One of the best things we’ve learned from SEG is to never stop learning and to appreciate and take hold of opportunities when they present themselves, such as advisors and mentors,” says Ethan. “I’d say the SEG advisor and mentorship network was the most beneficial thing for us.”

GoPeer’s first tutoring team included 20 college students, working with about 100 local students. Now its student body is nationwide and numbers in the thousands. More than 10,000 college students have applied to become GoPeer tutors, and the company’s current tutors represent 153 colleges and universities. The core team has grown, as has the budget – GoPeer closed on a seed round backed by a major West Coast investor last year – and Ethan can recount many moving stories from families that have seen their children thrive as a result of tutoring.

“Online tutoring is a solution that will provide the access, affordability, and flexibility necessary to move education forward in a substantial way,” says Ethan. “We provide the best tutors to anyone, no matter where they’re located, and right now that’s our vision. If we can create an experience online that is personalized, collaborative, and effective, then we can provide a great experience to a lot of families.”