

Building Businesses with Purpose: Davis Pfund's Journey in Renewable Energy, Community, and Connection

Can you describe your startups and how they create social impact? What inspired you to focus on these issues? Please describe all three.

Mettā Creative's mission is to connect and inspire the world to live more regeneratively through transformational experiences. We focus on creating impactful music and creative arts events that help participants connect authentically with themselves, each other and nature, while raising money and awareness for social and environmental causes. #PartyWithPurpose

Mettā Creative was founded in 2017 by UD alumni and Entrepreneurship minor, Dylan Nunn while standing shoulder-to-shoulder with Gavin Pomerantz in Newark's most popular and rowdy bars on Main St., Grotto's, packed in like sardines, shouting inaudible words, getting blasted by 14 different sports programs on the numerous overly-bright TVs, getting beer spilled on them by blacked-out strangers that wouldn't ever remember the conversation they just had in the morning.... They knew that something wasn't right. People we're coming to connect, but leaving feeling more disconnected and genuinely unfulfilled the next day.

So, like a Phoenix rising from the ashes, the idea to create alternative nightlife arose, out of the longing for genuine connection while still enjoying epic parties, and instead of wasteful plastic cups that become trash, we reward party goers that bring their own reusable cup or bottle.

After about a year, I came into the picture and would take the cofounder role with Dylan, as Gavin went on to focus on his music career, which he has since toured the world with a number of prominent bands and played festivals like Bonaroo, Lollapalooza and Coachella with Chelsea Cutler, Anna Shoemaker and others, including venues like Red Rocks, House of Blues and Boiler Room, to name a few.

We launched Mettā Creative with the help of the Horn Entrepreneurship program and community. After taking as many ENTR classes as possible, joining E-Club and Venture On, and all the FLF's, we were invited to the prestigious Summer Founders in 2019 with Vince DiFelice to work on the venture full time for a summer.

We developed the passion and drive to plan, promote and facilitate these events because we noticed people were finding it easier to make and sustain meaningful, authentic connections in real life, and learning about sustainability in a fun way at the same time.

Tierra Fresca is an self-sufficient Earth-focused neighborhood and regenerative hub for education, experiences, connection, exploration and innovation. The mission is to serve as a

scalable and repeatable template and source of inspiration for other land-based community projects to further the betterment of humanity and our planet.

We achieve this through living with the land, and in alignment with the rhythm of nature, growing our own food, making our own plant-based medicines and providing outlets for residents and guests to learn and grow through educational events, workshops, classes, festivals, retreats and intentional content and media.

We aim to create a working process for the development of sustainable communities worldwide that can serve as a foundational system for budding land-based community projects worldwide.

New Earth Solar is a Nationwide Renewable Energy Service that utilizes all of the top nationwide brands, product partners, installers and financing solutions to broker the best energy deal possible for clients nationwide.

Our mission is to help people reclaim their power, own their energy, and become more financially independent, all while making strides towards a more sustainable and regenerative lifestyle for all. We lead with authenticity, integrity, transparency, and serve with the heart first.

What was the timeline of your startups' development? Specifically, you started Mettā Creative in 2018 (please confirm). What years did you launch Tierra Fresca and New Earth Solar? Are the startups related? If so, how?

I became a cofounder of **Mettā Creative** in 2018 with Dylan Nunn, who I met on the frisbee field, and who also minored in Entrepreneurship. We both had a passion for helping people, helping the planets, and planning epic parties! So we put our minds and hearts together and have been doing events for almost 8 years now.

During COVID, Dylan and I moved to a farm with some of our closest collaborators and friends who became like family, learned to grow our own food, work with the land, and create higher-value ticketed events like PDCs (permaculture design courses), natural-building workshops, intentional retreats, and educational classes like foraging, making medicine, etc. We realized that previously we were spending a lot of money renting venues and campgrounds to host Mettā Creative events, so owning our own venue would help us save costs, keep the art installations up all year, have year round storage, and have the ability to host multiple events throughout the year! So after almost two years at [The Reed Center](#), we decided to split up and learn as much as possible about land-based community living, eco-villages, permaculture farms, and what the heck an "intentional community" even is....

So in 2019, we bought some quality old school buses and converted them into homes. We sold a few, and kept one for Mettā Creative event storage and gear (mobile parties) and I kept one and turned it into a solar-powered 'mini-mansion-on-wheels', then drove it across the USA, through Mexico (twice) and then throughout Guatemala before finding the farm where I've been living on for

the last 2.5 years. The goal was to visit and learn from as many eco-villages as possible while visiting every single country in Central America, in order to eventually build our own 'eco-village' one day.... And 5 years later...

Tierra Fresca was born out of many years combined experience of a few very talented people on our team, including my 5+ years experience living on, working at, and volunteering for a number of land-based eco-projects. Using the Entrepreneurial skills and abilities I was taught at Horn, we were able to create all of the necessary documents needed to launch a community homestead and eco-neighborhood project on this historic coffee farm just one hour south of "the most beautiful lake in the world" Lake Atitlan. It's not perfect, but its working, and we're dedicated to improving, listening, pivoting, adapting, always...

New Earth Solar stemmed from my 14+ years experience in the energy efficiency industry with the family business, [Zerodraft Maryland](#). After working with numerous utility companies and energy programs over the years, I had clients asking about solar energy. So I asked around, and discovered the first decentralized platform for solar energy. I was intrigued yet cautious, so I drove across the country from DE to CA in 2022 to make sure that "Powur" was what it was made out to be (the Uber/Airbnb/Amazon of renewable energy) and sure enough, it was.

After helping dozens of homeowners make the switch to cleaner energy with residential solar for over a year with Powur, I started a own solar energy consulting company, New Earth Solar. I now help clients with all things solar energy: residential, commercial, community and off-grid/DIY projects nationwide, and internationally depending on the needs. I have a team of salespeople, and do almost all of my work completely remote through Zoom or on the phone.

These 3 projects are all related and beautifully intertwined in my life, and I divide my time weekly on each of the projects depending on the most pressing needs to continue developments. Though my solar clients take the most time right now, my passion for Mettā Creative and Tierra Fresca is strong enough to keep me working late into the night each day, and still have the excitement and energy to rise up with a smile and gratitude every new day. I'm truly grateful for all of these opportunities, and recognize that it's rare one can make a good living from something that helps people and the planet, while getting to work on a fulfilling project that feels like my life's purpose or my personal mission. And for that, I give thanks. All the thanks goes to the source of all creation.

When/how did you know you were comfortable with launching additional ventures?

I love to create things. I even have a few other projects not listed. You can see my LinkedIn, or my personal portfolio here: www.TheMusicalPlant.world The difficult part is finishing things! So now, I strive to maximize my day as much as possible with my Passion Planner, that I fell in love with and have used every single day since getting my first one gifted by the Siegfried Fellows program in 2018! After optimizing my calendar workflows, I knew that I could take on more. If it's not on my calendar, it doesn't exist. If clients need to contact me, they will be guided to book a time that works

for them. Lots of appointments, I even schedule work-sessions on my calendar to make sure I can accomplish everything needed for each project!

What are your social impact goals?

To inspire the world to live more regeneratively, and in deeper connection with the planet! And help break the cycle of the scarcity mindset, and to show people true abundance comes from nature, and that is our natural state - just look at a tree - what happens when you chop it? New shoots spring up. No time for complaining, gossip, negative self-talk... it just keeps growing. They say money doesn't grow on trees, but what about those paper bills? Or the fruits, nuts, seeds, medicines that grow on trees that we spend our money on... isn't that the same? There are so many myths about money and scarcity, I think the most powerful impact goal is to help people reconnect with that truth on a deep level, and encourage them to grow their own food - save money, get healthier, be happier, cultivate prosperity and live longer... it just makes sense.

What challenges did you face in building a mission-driven business(es)?

Ethical funding! From the beginning, it was a bit more challenging to get funding as a B-Corp, so we boot-strapped everything. We've made a small chunk of change over the years, although almost all of it has been reinvested back into the company or the community. So even though Mettā Creative is our passion and mission, and we do have big plans for the future, Dylan and I have temporarily switched into 'get a job'-mode to raise funds to cover our expenses in the meantime. We're still discovering what the most effective business models are in order to adapt to the times that we are living in. Thankfully, through it all, it's our friends, family and community there to remind us of why we do what we do, to give thanks, help people and help the planet.

Was there a particular moment or experience that reinforced your commitment to social entrepreneurship?

The countless stories of people coming up to us after our events, explaining to us that their lives were changed forever because of something at the event that we curated; meeting their new best friend, the love of their life, a business partner, collaborator.... Having an emotional breakthrough or psychological epiphany during a workshop or performance. It's deeply moving. That's what inspires us. Things like that are what we live for.

Of course, getting recognized publicly helps stoke the entrepreneurial flame as well! Including when Mettā Creative was featured in the "Innovate Washington Magazine" here: <https://innovationsoftheworld.com/metta-creative-gathering-intentionally-in-the-present-to-co-create-a-better-future/>

How do you measure the success of your ventures beyond financial performance?

The more people we can help, the better. The more trees we can plant, the better. The more forest we can protect, and species we can help to save, the better. To see people getting value

from the community chats or members areas, or shouting us out online or in person for how something we did helped or inspired them along their journey. That's the real return. Each one teaches ten, and so on!

What advice would you give aspiring entrepreneurs who want to launch socially responsible businesses?

Don't quit your day job... yet! Learn from people that're already doing it. Read "The Soul of Money" by Dr. Lynne Twist, and the book Trust the process, meditate daily. Learn breathwork to regulate stress and keep a gratitude journal daily to 'bio-hack' yourself into more happiness, peace and prosperity.

You participated in a lot of entrepreneurship programming while you were at UD (i.e. VentureOn, Summer Founders, etc.). Were there any programs that you would recommend to current student entrepreneurs or aspiring entrepreneurs?

All of them! Literally, I can't speak highly enough about Horn and the community there at the VDC and beyond... they became like family to me... I spent most of my days there, and would happily go back and do it all over again. :) You will get out what you put in! So, what do YOU want? If you want the best, show up to every class, attend every meeting, and just be engaged! Be a "Front Row Joe" and don't mind what the haters say! (If you don't have any "haters", you're probably not that successful yet, so don't worry about it yet!) Keep your head down, chin up.

Is there anything else you would like to tell the Horn community?

Wow... so many things. I miss you all so much. I cherish all the days, experiences and memories at the VDC. I'm so grateful for all of you, so much. The laughter, the challenges, the success, the celebrations, all of it... life is short and this community is so amazing. Thank you for everything!!! If you're reading this far, please reach out! I'd love to connect.