

PIERRE PAUL, MS

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Founder & CEO – We Hear You | PhD Student – Disability Studies, University of Illinois Chicago

Research Interests

Assistive technology and disability innovation
Inclusive design and accessibility infrastructure
Social entrepreneurship in disability technology
Disability justice and public policy

Education

- University of Illinois Chicago — Chicago, IL
 - PhD, Disability Studies (Assistive Technology Concentration)
Expected Graduation: May 2027
 - Bradley University — Peoria, IL
 - Master of Science, Nonprofit Leadership — 2021
GPA: 3.9 / 4.0
 - Bachelor of Science, Political Science
 - Minor: Organizational Communications — 2019
GPA: 3.4 / 4.0
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Professional Experience

Founder & CEO — We Hear You

2019 – Present

Founded and led a nationally recognized assistive technology company focused on improving accessibility in built environments.

- Raised \$300K+ in non-dilutive funding to support development of accessibility technology.
 - Led development of the Hero Door Opener, a portable automatic door system designed to expand accessibility in existing infrastructure.
 - Established partnerships across healthcare, education, and hospitality sectors to expand accessible infrastructure.
 - Generated over 120k+ in early product revenue while building a multi-state deployment pipeline.
 - Oversee engineering, regulatory compliance (UL-325), fundraising strategy, and organizational leadership.
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Director of Development — USASBE

2022 – 2023

- Developed strategic partnerships to expand organizational membership and sponsorship revenue.
 - Collaborated with academic leaders to support entrepreneurship education initiatives.
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Access Coordinator — Bradley University

2022 – 2023

- Coordinated accommodations and support services for students with disabilities.
 - Advocated for accessible campus infrastructure and inclusive student resources.
 - Served as liaison between students and university administration regarding accessibility.
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Community Engagement & Family Programs Coordinator — Peoria Riverfront Museum

2021 – 2022

- Designed and implemented public programming and educational experiences related to museum exhibitions.
 - Built partnerships with education and social service organizations to expand community engagement.
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Hall Director / Residential Advisor — Bradley University

2017 – 2021

- Managed residential life programming for 400+ students.
 - Supervised and trained resident advisors and mediated conduct processes.
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Public Scholarship & Consulting

Diversity Consulting & Public Speaking

2020 – Present

Provide training and consulting on diversity, inclusion, and accessibility.

Organizations served include:

- Center for Prevention of Abuse
 - Goodwill Corporation
 - Children's Home
 - Caterpillar Inc.
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Speaking Engagements

Keynote and invited speaking engagements include:

- MO Better Gala — Keynote Speaker (2025)
- IDEAcon Conference — Keynote Speaker (2023)
- University of Illinois Tech Innovation Event — Keynote (2023)
- NAACP Annual Banquet — MC & Speaker (2022)
- Citizen Naturalization Ceremony — Keynote Speaker (2022)
- Bradley University Commencement — Speaker (2020)

Additional professional speaking and training engagements available upon request.

Awards & Honors

OSDAS Distinguished Alumni Award — 2026

Forbes 100 Accessibility Companies — 2025

Champions for Diversity & Inclusion Award — 2025

Arch Grants Award Recipient — 2024

Pink with Purpose Award (Victoria's Secret) — 2024

STL Business Journal 40 Under 40 — 2024

NPR How I Built This Fellow — 2021

Forbes 30 Under 30 Semifinalist — 2022

Illinois Innovation Networks Innovation of the Year — 2022

Turner School of Entrepreneurship Innovation of the Year — 2021

Future Founder's U.Pitch Runner-Up — 2021

Brave Pitch Winner — 2021

Big Idea Competition Winner — 2020

Social Impact Competition Winner — 2020

Publications & Creative Work

Paul, Pierre. Carden: The Wheelchair Warrior. (2022). Children's book addressing disability inclusion.

Certifications

Cornell University

Certification in Diversity, Inclusion & Equity — 2020
