Robert Lewis Jr. (right) gave up a good job at The Boston Foundation three years ago to follow a dream — and to help ensure inner-city kids get a chance to follow dreams of their own.

That risk has paid off. He has built his venture The BASE into a solid nonprofit, one with an annual budget of roughly $2 million and 14 staffers. The program provides mentorship and academic training, all around a baseball-focused program for kids. Lids Sports Group recognized that success with a $25,000 grant in April. Then, Franklin Sports of Stoughton signed an agreement on May 31 that will provide baseball equipment and funding to The BASE; meanwhile, Lewis's group will provide product testing for Franklin.

Governor Charlie Baker made two trips to honor The BASE this month: the first to Franklin’s headquarters, to celebrate the partnership between the two organizations, and then on Monday, when he visited Fenway Park for a BASE fund-raiser. The group now serves about 800 kids.

Lewis said he started to question his idea of success while he was at the Boston Foundation, a self-examination that prompted him to leave in January 2013.

“How can I be successful if . . . kids are dying, not going to college or are unemployed?” Lewis said.

Now, of course, he has teens from inner-city Boston playing at the highest levels of their sport, as part of the Boston Astros. And they’re headed off to college by the dozens every year.

A far as New Balance vice president Matt LeBretton is concerned, Lewis can easily call himself a success. LeBretton helped encourage his employer to contribute to The BASE after hearing Lewis speak.

“There are a lot of good charities in Boston,” LeBretton says, “but this one to me is particularly needed and particularly effective.”

— JON CHESTO