



## Lighting the Way: Medtronic's Spark Initiative Reflects a Bold Investment in Human Potential

We believe that investment decisions should reflect both financial responsibility and deep moral conviction. We intentionally seek companies whose practices align with holistic Christian values, like dignity, compassion, access, and justice. One of our stock holdings, Medtronic, is a global healthcare technology leader. They recently launched Spark. This initiative represents a bold and value-aligned approach to addressing one of the most pressing global challenges of our time: the growing healthcare workforce shortage.

### *A 10-Year Commitment to Opportunity*

In March 2025, Medtronic announced Spark, a decade-long effort to prepare 1 million low-income students for careers in the growing health tech sector. This multi-pronged endeavor is designed to reduce barriers to opportunity. It also aims to build a more inclusive, better-trained workforce to meet urgent global needs.

The healthcare industry will face an estimated shortfall of 11 million health workers by 2030. At the same time, the tech sector, including health tech, is projected to experience a talent gap of 4.3 million people. These shortages are not abstract numbers; they represent real threats to public health, economic mobility, and global equity, especially in under-resourced communities.

Medtronic Spark addresses these challenges through three key programs:

- **Spark Credentials:** This industry-recognized certification provides practical, job-ready skills to young adults, particularly those without traditional college degrees. With 63% of employers citing skill gaps as a major hiring barrier and 58% of Gen Z supporting non-degree pathways into careers, the credential aims to meet both market and worker needs.
- **Innovator Labs:** These hands-on learning environments expose students in low-income communities to STEM education and health tech innovation. Currently, only 42% of U.S. high school students participate in hands-on STEM activities, and just 20% are prepared for college-level STEM coursework. Innovator Labs aim to bridge this gap and spark early career interest.
- **Spark Scholarship:** While traditional tuition aid is helpful, only 11% of low-income students who receive financial support actually complete their degrees. The Spark Scholarship is designed to address a broader range of needs – from tuition and

transportation to academic support. This support will ensure more students not only enroll, but graduate and thrive.

### *Values in Action*

When 72% of Americans express concern about healthcare workforce shortages, initiatives like Spark offer more than a market solution – they provide a moral one. By opening doors for historically marginalized students and preparing them for meaningful, well-paying careers, Medtronic is advancing equity, restoring dignity, and building generational impact.

The initiative also has clear economic implications: The global health tech industry is projected to reach \$775 billion by 2029. Preparing young people to contribute to and benefit from this growth is both strategic and socially responsible.

### *A Theological Case for Workforce Investment*

For the United Methodist Foundation of Michigan, Spark a reflection of the kind of long-term, human-centered investment that we champion. As Rev. Dr. David S. Bell, President and Executive Director of the Foundation, explains, “We view investment not just as a financial activity, but as a form of witness. Spark represents the kind of initiative that resonates with faith-based investors. It’s centered on the inherent worth of every person, and it’s strategic and scalable. Leading the Foundation means identifying these investment opportunities and aligning our resources with our deeply held convictions. Faith-driven investing truly can drive real-world change.”

### *Faith-Based Investors Take Note*

Medtronic’s Spark initiative demonstrates how a global company can respond to social needs with creativity, integrity, and measurable impact. For church investors, it’s a reminder that your portfolio can do more than perform – it can and does reflect our shared beliefs. We embody our faith in action when we place capital with companies that are building a more just and compassionate world. Initiatives like Spark show that the future of investing is about renewal where capital becomes a catalyst for healing, hope, and human flourishing.

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