

What Does It Take For A Community To Thrive?

I understand that this will be a topic discussed today, and I offer thoughts on how Hayti supports this effort.

Hayti was once a thriving community, part of an economically sustained area of Durham dubbed Black Wall Street by Booker T. Washington. This space, this structure, built in 1891 and only 22 years younger than Durham's incorporation, is the last remaining original structure of the more than 600 homes and businesses that once thrived here.

As the City of Durham experiences extensive growth and gentrification, Hayti continues to serve the community as a cultural destination, especially for African American residents.

How do we help the community thrive? By continuing to tell Hayti's stories past, present, and future. These stories, through the arts, preserve Hayti's historical significance and keep the community vibrant. How do we help the community thrive? By continuing our strong collaborations with other organizations and pursuing opportunities such as the Safe Routes to Parks initiative we recently received. Through this national initiative we are developing a project designed to reconnect Hayti to the heart of Durham (downtown) from here to Black Wall Street Garden. This project will among other things promote safety, movement which promotes better health, and foster a stronger sense of inclusion in the City's rapidly changing landscape.

How do we help a community thrive? By pursuing opportunities that will benefit the Fayetteville Street Corridor aesthetically and economically and achieve the vision of unifying the historic neighborhoods in the corridor and attracting Durham's tourist and visitor populations to the corridor, where history lives.

Hayti is included in the City's upcoming wayfinding signage program. We will soon host community conversations around public art installation in Black Wall Street Garden. We will engage this spring in conversations with the Department of Transportation around plans to improve pedestrian safety and access to retail shopping at and along this intersection. We are a member of a national arts organization and next week will host for the first time its mid-year conference. Hayti is also pursuing funding to recreate and locate at Hayti a mural, "Hayti Remembered," that has been a significant community landmark but is now irreparably deteriorated.

In sum, Hayti is committed to help this community thrive by broadening our individual base of support, retaining current funders, gaining new funders, and strengthening our presence locally, nationally and globally through quality arts programs and projects. If successful, we will effect the change we envision of a sustained organization that will lift up the Hayti community and that will serve as a model for other arts organizations of color.

Hayti is a past recipient of the New Realities grant and we appreciate your support. It is my hope and my goal to secure additional, direct funding from the Triangle Community Foundation because I firmly believe that TCF funding will be a benefit to Hayti, TCF and the State of North Carolina.

Again welcome, and thank you. We are really pleased to host you today.