

TRIANGLE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Make a Difference

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THE IMPACT OF COMMUNITY-BASED CHANGE

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NEW FUNDS

Please welcome the following funds, opened after November 2018, to the Foundation.

DONOR ADVISED FUNDS Hill-Brown Charitable Fund, The Walter H. Bennett, Jr. and Elizabeth M. Bennett Family Fund, Tennyson Family Fund, Marcia H. Morey Fund, Rich and Tracy Harris Fund, Seventy Pound Pull Fund, Sandpiper Fund

DESIGNATED FUNDS Starfish Fund

AGENCY FUNDS Bridge II Sports Fund

NEW HITCHINGS SOCIETY

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Editor: Meg Buckingham | meg@trianglecf.org

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Triangle Community Foundation is building a brighter future for everyone in the Triangle. By working with dedicated donors and strong nonprofits, we are able to guide gifts in a strategic way to fill gaps, reduce inequities, and solve the region's most pressing challenges. Since 1983, we have envisioned a Triangle that works together so everyone can thrive.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

In the past two months, I've been at several events (and hosted one!) with the word "thriving" in the title, I've listened to countless speakers in the nonprofit sector ask who is thriving, how we can thrive, what thriving means. It seems to have become a buzzword of sorts in our region, and for good reason. In a moment when the Triangle continues to top "best of" lists nationally, we *should* be looking more deeply into why everyone isn't thriving, and what we can do collectively to change that for the future.

In this issue of our *Make a Difference Magazine*, you'll find stories about how fundholders are working with residents to create community-based change, how nonprofits are collaborating to break barriers, and how the Foundation is working to bridge the gap between donors and nonprofits to ensure *everyone* can thrive. Everything we do leads back to that vision, and we thank you for your trust and dedication to our community.

Over the last few months, we've been out in the Triangle, working with you to learn more about important issues. In March, we partnered with the NC Center for Nonprofits to host two Town Hall meetings and an Advocacy Workshop in Raleigh and Durham. We learned with our nonprofit partners and community leaders about the legislative issues affecting nonprofits and the advocacy they can engage in to ensure they are able to effectively and efficiently carry out their missions.

We co-hosted our fourth annual FailFest, a celebration of failure, in March with BCDC Ideas and ThirdSpace Studios. Over 130 nonprofit leaders joined us to hear from seven local and inspirational speakers about their nonprofit experiences, and how it's possible to turn failure into success.

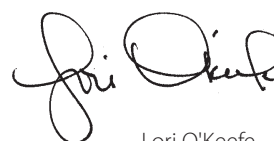
In April, donors and community leaders joined us at Hayti Heritage Center for a Donors Forum with David Dodson, President of MDC. We took a deeper look at their *State of the South Report*, and the progress that has moved our region forward, how we are falling backwards, and what we must do to continue making strides towards a more thriving community.

We've been celebrating the Arts in our own office space, as our Triangle Community Artist's Gallery partnership with Durham Art Guild welcomed the 9th artist to our space. Annie Nashold's "Beating Hearts" exhibit features local connections through interviews, conversation, and community. Stop by and take a look!

On May 1, we welcomed over 500 community leaders at What Matters: A Thriving Community, to learn with donors, nonprofits, and the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI), and to participate in inspirational opening sessions with many of our talented nonprofit and resident leaders. You can read more about this event, and find resources from the day in our Special Feature on pages 16-21.

Finally, I want to invite you to join me in welcoming our newest staff members at the Foundation, Natalia Siegel and Sarah Guidi. Natalia, Donor Services Officer, works our fundholders, and Sarah, Program Officer, works in our arts and environment programs.

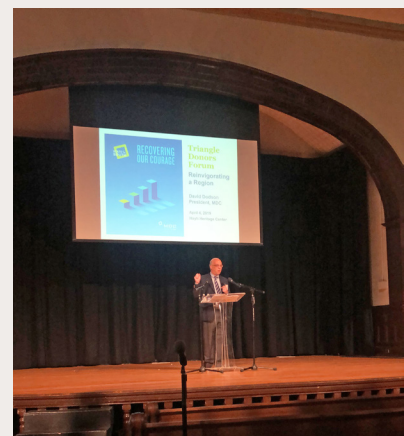
As always, thank you for working with us to make our community better, for generations to come.



Lori O'Keefe,
President & CEO



To read more about what we've been working on at the Foundation, please visit our website at www.trianglecf.org.



^ David Dodson of MDC at the April Triangle Donor's Forum



^ "On the Wing" by Annie Nashold

WINNING THE LOTTERY: CONNECTING WITH BARKER FRENCH

"THROUGH THIS WORK I MEET AMAZING PEOPLE WHO ARE DOING GREAT THINGS FOR DURHAM FAMILIES."

BY ADRIENNE ANDERSON | PHOTOGRAPHS BY MEG BUCKINGHAM

W. Barker French is perfectly at ease sitting in a blue plastic school chair at East Durham Children's Initiative (EDCI). His comfort is understandable; for the past eight years, French has spent a lot of time with EDCI, volunteering first as a founding member and now as Board Chair of the organization.

French and his EDCI co-founders (Wanda Boone, Minnie Forte-Brown, and Ellen Reckhow) came together with a common goal. They were determined to provide children in low-wealth communities with high-quality, comprehensive services and opportunities. In partnership with community organizations, they began asking people in East Durham to join a conversation around the idea of linking all the available organizations and services together to create a path for children.

EDCI's mission and vision informs much of French's other volunteerism and philanthropy. He and his wife carefully make their giving decisions based on where they think can do the most good in the world with the resources they have.

"I've always thought it would be great to win the lottery," French says.

"I can't think of anything that would be more fun than giving away all that money. You could help a lot of people."

But David Reese, EDCI's Executive Director, already feels like he's won the lottery with French.

"Barker is by far the best Board Chair I've ever engaged with," Reese says. "There are folks in the world who have the option to live a life that's really all about them. But when someone like that decides instead to improve the world around them, it gives us hope. That encapsulates Barker, and it's part of why he has such a tremendous influence on our vision."

When the EDCI Board first hired Reese, French worked with him as much as possible. He felt he'd gotten him into the job, and it was part of his responsibility to help him succeed. Eight years later, the two still work side by side toward EDCI's vision, and the benefits of this partnership also go both ways.

"EDCI and David have helped me be a better person, for myself and in my community," French says.

Before EDCI, French was trying to make strides on similar issues on his own. After graduating from Duke, French was hired to work at Wachovia Bank, and through that role began to volunteer in the community. Before he knew it, he was on the board for a local arts organization in Winston Salem.

"And, who knew, it was so much fun!" says French. "It gave me so much pleasure to be involved in the community, to be doing more than just getting a paycheck from a job."

The rest, as they say, is history. Everywhere he lived after that, from Chicago to Pittsburg, French found meaningful volunteer work to do. When he and his wife returned to Durham, her hometown, French started looking around for his next volunteer commitment. He first served on the board of the Carolina Theatre, then at Durham Arts Council, and Preservation Durham. He made connections throughout the Durham community.

One day, he got a call from the Gang Unit with the Durham Police Department. They asked him if he could help find a job for a young man they had encountered. French



^ Barker plays with a student at EDCI's LEAP Academy Preschool

was happy to help. He soon realized that he could leverage his business expertise and connections to make a broader impact than he could achieve working with individuals one-on-one. EDCI presented an opportunity to benefit the larger community.

Because he is out in the community with EDCI, working with the folks his philanthropy aims to serve, French feels like he can make clearer decisions about how to direct his resources. During his time on various boards, he began to worry that nonprofits were in a rat race for funds. That was where his interest in collective impact started.

“If twenty groups are trying to help with homelessness, I’m interested in how we get those organizations to work together so the impact of their collective work is greater than the single organizations acting on their

own,” French says.

French encourages other funders to ask themselves about the future of the organizations they choose to fund. Are they being run well? Do they have vision and goals? Are they utilizing partnerships? How does the organization ensure community voice in its programming? Do they have plans to go to scale?

Then, French goes one step further and asks this important question: how can I best help them to achieve all of that?

This interest in volunteerism and collaboration has gotten French the reputation of being a connector in the Durham community. He builds bonds between EDCI and other nonprofits, or in his role as member of the Durham Technical Community

College Board of Trustees. Friends and acquaintances reach out to him when they are deciding what to do with their time once they retire or when they meet someone new in town who wants to get involved.

“Through this work, I meet amazing people who are doing great things for Durham families, even without personal resources,” French says. “It takes time, talent, and money—not everyone has money, but everyone I run into has either time or talent. I’m incredibly proud to live in Durham and to be part of this community.”

It may not be the Powerball or the MegaMillions, but Barker French’s generosity of time and resources is a win for the Durham community.



^ Board Chair-Elect Farad Ali at the Foundation office in RTP

THE PRODUCT OF OPPORTUNITY

"WE WANT THE BEST ENCOUNTERS FOR EVERYTHING IN OUR LIVES, WHY DON'T WE HAVE THE SAME PASSION FOR PEOPLE? LET'S BE HUMANS FOR EACH OTHER."

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY MEG BUCKINGHAM

He seems to own any room he enters. With his boisterous and booming voice, "Cheshire cat" smile, and colorful suits, without knowing Farad Ali, you might assume that he was born into a privileged life. But you'd be wrong.

"I didn't know I was poor, but I was poor," Ali said. "I was born into an eclectic family, taught to understand the grit and grind of life; I saw things that little kids don't usually see growing up – tragedy, drugs, AIDS, murder, prostitution, effects of the penal system."

A Native New Yorker, Ali was born in Brooklyn in the 1960's to a mother from a small South Carolina town where his grandmother was a domestic worker who picked cotton and grandfather was an uneducated farmer, and a father who grew up in the inner city and was no stranger to a "rough environment." He fondly remembers that through their life struggles, there was a place for good jazz, lots of family, and love in his upbringing, and that his parents always put others first.

"Mom and Dad really taught me how to do for others before you do for yourself," he said. "The lesson of family, of being supportive of one another was so evident to me at a young age because of their example. We are all just passing through this station, and they instilled in me the importance of selflessness."

Ali's life changed when IBM opened in their community, providing opportunity for his grandmother, aunt, and other family members to gain sustainable employment and better their lives. "This company coming into the hood and being responsible for community economic

development. It changed my life, my family, and how I think about ensuring people can thrive," he said. "It offered a sense of pride, a chance to do and see and be more than we were before – to be in a world we never thought possible."

The change sparked more opportunity, and Ali's mother became a cosmetologist and opened a salon. They were able to purchase a house, and the trickle effect spread through the family. "A job leads to housing, leads to building real wealth, and then the next generation goes to college and things start to happen for the entire family – it opens a door that where I'm from isn't ever open," he said.

When Ali was in middle school, his family moved to Durham, close to Hope Valley. He recalls being naturally athletic, making diverse friends, and credits a lot of his success in life to Durham Public Schools.

"I made relationships, and had mentors, through the public school system I never would have had if we didn't relocate," he said. "I got a chance to see for myself the next level of upward mobility, going to school with affluent students who had college ambitions, went on summer vacations, and be coached by inspirational teachers, all while still being the kid who could co-relate on the edge of the community."

Now an experienced finance and business professional, Ali looks back on yet another opportunity he was provided access to as the reason for his success. "I was recruited by INROADS (a nonprofit that helps businesses gain greater access to diverse talent through continuous leadership development of outstanding ethnically diverse

students) in high school, and it was critical for me, opening doors that would never have been otherwise," he said. "I was able to interview for a position that highlighted my math skills in banking and got a job at BB&T, working every summer there."

It's no surprise once you hear his story why Ali has dedicated his life to making a difference through economic development, as the opportunities that business leaders have given him have literally changed his life.

"I am the product of good policy, investment in education, and those in power recognizing where to help," he said. Because Ali sees the connectivity at play when people are given the opportunity to be their best, he thinks it's important to maximize that to help others, and that work fuels his passion.

Ali thinks it's critically important that we understand the people we are working with to be able to invest in them, and he is committed to this mindset.

"It saddens me to see policy and structure and people who don't always act in the best interest of everyone – poverty isn't a character issue. It's a cash issue. I want to help people see that," he said. "We want the best encounters in everything in our lives, why don't we have the same passion for people? We are humans, let's be humans for each other."

Ali has served on the Foundation's Board since 2015 and will take the helm as Board Chair on July 1.

A LEGACY OF GIVING: TIPS FOR FAMILY PHILANTHROPY

"THE JOY OF SEEING GRANDCHILDREN PAYING IT FORWARD IS A RICH REWARD FOR A LIFETIME OF SERVICE."

BY JULIE JOHNSON

"Hi Nana and Grandpa," the email began, "After some serious consideration, I would like to donate my \$500 to the Ocean Conservancy."

Nana and Grandpa, local residents who started a donor-advised fund when they moved to the area 14 years ago, were elated to receive the note from their oldest grandson. In response to their Christmas gift—a gift of giving—to all their grandchildren last year, the email went on to explain how their grandson decided where to invest the funds his grandparents offered to give on his behalf.

He explained, "It is one of the oldest and largest marine research and preservation charities in the world, founded in 1972. Not only does the Ocean Conservancy do significant work to clean our oceans and protect wildlife, they also have major initiatives to raise awareness about ocean related issues, particularly surrounding climate change's impact on marine life and health.

Furthermore, they also actively partake in research concerning a wide variety of ocean related issues. I also looked into how well they spend their money on [CharityNavigator.org](https://www.charitynavigator.org),

and they received one of the highest possible ratings."

The joy of seeing grandchildren doing their research and paying it forward is a rich reward for a lifetime of service. Nana and Grandpa can't quite put their finger on when they first knew giving back was important, but wherever they've been, they've always gotten involved in the community and given of their time and resources.

And they've passed that legacy on to their children and grandchildren, enjoying the thrill of seeing the whole family enthusiastic about sharing with others.

Their daughter says her parents always emphasized giving. "When you have a lot, you have a lot to give," they taught her, and they're still leading by example.

She and her husband started teaching their kids these same values when the now nearly adults were just four and six years of age. Their first "gift of giving" was one hundred dollars their parents gave them, with instructions to choose who they'd like to give it to.

The gift sparked conversation about how to invest limited funds for good

causes. It was a thoughtful way for all the generations—grandparents, parents, and kids—to discuss what was most meaningful to them and then follow through with a viable contribution. Those conversations around the dinner table and decisions made together through the years have laid the foundation for a giving home.

Teaching their children and grandchildren to live generously is this family's strategy for overcoming one of the greatest challenges facing communities today: lack of involvement. They point out only 15 percent of people typically reach out through volunteering, but the solution for our neighborhoods lies with each of us.

"When we come together, we're a safety net." Without that net, too many fall through the cracks, often missing out on basic needs—food, clothing, and shelter—while others have seemingly endless opportunity.

The family sees these discrepancies as another significant challenge facing local communities. Through the years, they've witnessed "a lot of people who've had a hard time." They've also been on the receiving end when "good

people funded scholarships.”

The recognition of how they’ve benefited from others’ generosity fuels their own passion for generously helping others and teaching the next generation to do the same. They say getting the word out about existing disparities could be one of the simplest solutions to increasing involvement.

And they applaud Triangle Community Foundation for making it so easy to learn about existing needs. “It’s very helpful for doing background research on organizations and for preventing donations to questionable agencies.”

The option of a donor-advised fund also made it simple to involve the entire family in giving. When they moved to North Carolina, they didn’t know much about local needs but knew the community foundation would. The result of the partnership has been the joy of passing down a legacy of giving to future generations.

A note from grateful grandchildren to their grandparents says it all, “Again, thank you very much for this amazing gift. Not only is it important to give back, but researching all of these charities and seeing the amazing work they do gave me hope for the future...So thank you guys both so much...!”

In this couple's opinion, there's no better way to spend a life.

TOP TEN LIST FOR A LEGACY OF GIVING

1. Discuss the community, schools, and daily news with children to build awareness of local needs.
2. Have family conversations about “giving back.” Discuss your own beliefs and the beliefs of your children and grandchildren.
3. Make those conversations a routine part of family dinners.
4. Keep giving simple and relatable to the kids. Guide them in their early years, asking what their interests are.
5. Encourage children to think about how to make situations better rather than complain or criticize. Be a role model!
6. Include family members of all generations in giving decisions for your donor-advised fund at a community foundation.
7. Make holiday giving a tradition. Give kids a designated amount of money and let them choose which charitable organization to donate it to.
8. Remember that time can also be a gift. You don’t always have to give money, but you can participate in opportunities to give your time.
9. Look for ways to serve locally as a family. Volunteering creates shared experiences that make giving more meaningful.
10. Connect giving with things your family may take for granted to deepen appreciation for others.



The fundholders in this story asked to remain anonymous.

THE GIFT OF LAND

"WHETHER WE APPRECIATE IT OR NOT - OUR COMMUNITY, SOCIETY, AND SYSTEM HAVE CONTRIBUTED A LOT TO THOSE OF US WHO HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL."

BY EMILY MCNAMARA | PHOTOGRAPH BY MEG BUCKINGHAM

"I am sure everyone can find their equilibrium between enjoying life and philanthropy," says Ish Sud.

It's about making choices. It's differentiating between what is important and what is not. It's perhaps spending judiciously on larger items, sacrificing symbols of status, and contributing the cost difference to charity while still being able to enjoy a fun vacation and a fine bottle of scotch, a smaller pleasure that could be defrayed by the tax savings.

Ish grew up happily in a well-to-do family in India, but he remembers seeing poverty: "Some things are difficult to erase from your memory," he says. "People born poor and caught in a cycle of survival."

He recalls that on their birthdays, his family would take food and clothes to people in need, at orphanages or homes for the blind. "It was just an atmosphere to be kind to the poor and to animals."

Ish came to the United States in 1970 to pursue graduate studies in engineering at Duke University. He had an assistantship that covered his

tuition, but his living stipend was small. However, he says, "I did not feel deprived. I learned to be frugal and enjoy life...to enjoy experiences over expensive things." Asked if he found ways to give back even then, he says that "When you were young, you just did what you could." He volunteered as a Big Brother.

After graduating from Duke, Ish worked for a while at the university and for a consulting firm before eventually founding his own company in 1979.

Ish and his family have been in Durham ever since and made it their home. The walls of his office are still decorated with the colorful drawings made by his two daughters over twenty years ago when they were small.

He encourages "giving back in kind" as when he volunteered his time and expertise at his temple, helping to redesign their air conditioning system and managing some construction projects.

Now that his children are grown and his biggest financial obligation (their education) is fulfilled, Ish says he's

thinking more seriously about how to make a difference.

This year, Ish donated two lots of land on Horton Road to Triangle Community Foundation's real estate subsidiary. The net proceeds from the land's subsequent sale were placed into the Sud Family Charitable Fund at the Foundation, and Ish can now distribute grants from this fund to charitable efforts that are important to him.

For Ish (who says he was familiar with the Foundation through several sources), donating to the Foundation met his needs perfectly. "It's convenient, allows time for thinking, and you can donate anything - land, stocks, any appreciated asset - on your schedule."

The tax savings benefit is important too; any capital gains tax that Ish would have owed if he had sold the land personally is instead funneled into his donor-advised fund.

According to Robin Barefoot, General Counsel at the Foundation, if you look beyond the simple transactional details, however, you see



^ Ish Sud stands on the land he donated through the Foundation to Habitat for Humanity of Durham County

the story of Ish's donation.

For example, the word-of-mouth network that connects donors to Triangle Community Foundation. "People find out about the Foundation through relationships. It's an organic process," Barefoot says.

Another example: the realtor who helped with the sale of Ish's land had connections to Habitat for Humanity and brought the opportunity to the attention of the non-profit (which has benefited regularly from Foundation grants).

Habitat eventually entered a bid for the land, but their offer was below the asking price. Barefoot took some time to consider all the offers before

eventually accepting Habitat's bid. In her mind though, what ultimately makes the transaction a "perfect circle," is that, when she asked what Ish thought about selling the properties below market value, he told her "it's as if I'm already making a grant from the fund before it even exists."

All in all, Ish's donation of land is like a triple-win in the arena of giving back: a charitable fund that gained money through tax savings; a charitable non-profit acquiring assets to continue their work; and eventually disadvantaged families who will have new homes.

Ish thinks it's important to give back to the community.

"Whether we appreciate it or not - our community, society and system contributed a lot to those of us who have been successful. The socio-economic barriers in this country have hardened," he says, pointing to the low minimum wage and the day-to-day struggle to survive that prevents some people from attaining upward mobility.

According to Ish, while giving back may not "uplift" everyone, it does provide opportunities for people "to escape the system and do better. At the same time, we should be willing to extend a helping hand to those who are in dire need."



^ Charles Phaneuf, Mike Williams, Sarah Powers, and Erika Rauer

Student art at the
Art Therapy Institute,
in part funded by a
grant from
Longleaf Collective >



GIVING CIRCLE FEATURE

LONGLEAF COLLECTIVE: YOUNG PROFESSIONALS SUPPORTING
SOCIAL INNOVATION IN NORTH CAROLINA

BY HIRAL PATEL | PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF LONGLEAF COLLECTIVE

We all want to see a Triangle where everyone thrives, and it takes a group of committed people to help create that Triangle. As philanthropy has changed from an individual act to a more community effort, it seems fitting that giving circles have become a way for everyone to take part in philanthropy.

Longleaf Collective, a giving circle hosted by Triangle Community Foundation, has proved that being a young professional doesn't mean you can't make a difference in your community.

Longleaf began as an idea with a few people over coffee, but these few people knew they wanted to give in an effective, strategic, and impactful way.

"We as young professionals can often struggle to make ends meet as we start our careers and pay off student loans, and even if we do donate, we sometimes don't know where or what it goes to," said John Coggin, 2017 chair of Longleaf Collective.

"The Longleaf Collective allows us to leverage our personal philanthropy by giving to the fund at the Triangle Community Foundation and then voting on where that money should be given. They may still be small grants in the grand scheme of things, but we see more clearly how our donations are making a difference."

Getting involved in philanthropy at the start of your career is often overlooked. The beginning of a career is about getting settled into your first job, learning things hands on, or figuring out your future goals. It's easy to forget about getting involved and giving back when there's a belief that experience is required to make a meaningful impact. Longleaf, on the

other hand, proves this isn't the case. In fact, giving back at a younger age sets up a pattern of giving throughout a lifetime. The benefit of joining Longleaf is there is an intention to stay connected to nonprofits.

Longleaf understands they are not the experts in their focus areas (the arts, education, health, and poverty). Every year, they choose an area for their grantmaking and bring in experts in the field to speak on these areas and their own work.

Through this, Longleaf aims to create informed grant makers. "Our focus for last year was the arts, and we brought in panelists from the art community to talk about the systemic issues in the arts industry and their own work in the community," says Coggin.

By being more strategic and informed in their grantmaking, Longleaf empowers its members to make a difference.

"When we make a grant, we're not just giving money. We are learning about systemic issues facing our community, talking with experts and community members about what is happening philanthropically...and what isn't. Our goal is to find holes in current giving, take risks, and fund innovative projects that otherwise may get overlooked," expresses Coggin.

It's not just about giving through grantmaking, but being intentional with volunteerism and providing a forum and network to their fellow young philanthropists involved in grantmaking. However, this has proved to be challenging for Longleaf. Pairing volunteer opportunities with grantmaking has been difficult since they're "choosing some deeply

challenging subjects such as mental health workshops for parents in low-income neighborhoods or supporting art-based therapy for refugees.

The group works hard not only to find volunteer opportunities but to work hard at volunteering as they understand the importance of being involved with their community.

As the community and world evolves, Longleaf knows philanthropy is also changing. What was once based on an individual act of kindness and goodwill evolved into collective giving for people who shared a passion for community.

"We use a democratic process in all of our decision making. So as the group grows and changes, the models we are using now may not be the ones the next group will want to use. But that's the whole point – by bringing many voices together, we are going to think of strategies and realize projects we never could have done on our own."

Giving Circles are established by donors who are interested in pooling their charitable dollars to make a greater impact. They have memberships, their own activities and events, and make grants as a group. Several giving circles and committee-advised funds are operating currently at the Foundation.

HELPING PEOPLE FINISH WHAT THEY STARTED

THE JOSEPH NYSTROM WORKING STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP

BY JENNIFER ROEDER | PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF MARTIN NYSTROM

On the long drive home together from the beach, Martin Nystrom staved off the usual fatherly lectures. Instead, he enjoyed his son's company, just the two of them. Joseph, age 24, controlled the radio, and pried at his father to share his appreciation for country music. He worked his way from Tyler Farr to Dierks Bentley and gained some measured success by the end.

The family home was undergoing a floor renovation, so they took an opportunity for a short vacation to the beach. Martin and his wife Jennifer invited Joseph to join them. They were surprised that he agreed, even embraced the time together, despite having an independent life. "Joseph really engaged with us. We went out to dinner, played shuffle board, and watched movies. He seemed to relax and favor us with his presence," Martin shared.

Two months later, in October 2017, Joseph's life was cut short when he was killed by a drunk driver.

The third of Martin and Jennifer Nystrom's four children, Joseph was quiet; a calm but confident kid.

"He cultivated close relationships through our church and school," recalled Martin. In 2012, he graduated from Eastern Alamance High School in Mebane, NC and continued his education at the University of North Carolina (UNC) Charlotte to study computer science. "He accepted my guidance and studied at UNC but got distracted and quickly lost his joy in college," shared Martin.

After 18 months away at college, Joseph moved back home. He found a job and eventually found his own place. He needed time to figure out what he wanted to do.

After a couple years on his own, he started hitting his stride in a new sales job. He was building a career, hitting sales goals, borrowing ties from his Dad's closet, and saving money to return to school.

Martin and Jennifer continually offered financial support for him to return to college, but, "Joseph was resolved that he was going back to school on his own terms, with his own money." Joseph never made it back to college. "He was starting to gain some independence and enjoy the success

of a career when he was killed."

In response to the tragedy, Martin and Jennifer's family and friends immediately asked where to make donations in Joseph's memory.

Martin recalled, "Scores of people were asking where they could donate. Family, close friends, college and high school friends, work mates." He quickly directed this generosity, nearly \$15,000, to establish a scholarship fund in Joseph's honor.

In early 2018, Martin researched foundations, scholarship rules, and fees, and ultimately selected Triangle Community Foundation to establish Joseph's legacy to ensure that "His shy but accepting countenance, his generosity, advocacy, and serenity ... will never leave us."

For the first time in 2019, the Joseph G. Nystrom Working Student Scholarship accepted applications. The scholarship honors Joseph's memory by helping working students return to college or remain enrolled in post-secondary education. Because Joseph considered physical vocations where he could "get his hands dirty,"



^ Grace, Joseph, Luke, Hannah, Martin, and Jennifer Nystrom

the scholarship is available for many types of post-secondary schools: universities, community colleges, and vocational schools.

“We are investing our hopes and sorrows in this scholarship. Like all grieving parents, it gives a sense of purpose, of progress,” shared Martin. “This scholarship is for working college students because Joseph was working to get back to school. He wouldn’t take my money, so we are giving it away in his memory.”

Martin remembers the challenges of paying for college. “I grew up without a father; he died when I was 7 years old. When it came time for college it was clear that, even with Mom’s help, I needed government grants and loans, and worked 20 hours per week to pay the bills.”

Martin and Jennifer believe in the virtue of work, to help each of us recognize the value of what we gain. For this reason, they made the decision that their kids would work through school too. They also recognize that not every educational path looks the same; sometimes students need time away, whether to save money or to address the unique challenges of life.

To quote George Eliot, “It’s never too late to be what you might have been.” Martin emphasized, “This scholarship is to help people get over the line and finish that degree. It is for those who are working hard and want to finish their degree.”



^ Joseph at his brother Luke’s wedding in December 2015

What Ma

WHAT MATTERS: A THRIVING COMMUNITY



BY MEG BUCKINGHAM | PHOTOGRAPHS BY JIM COLMAN

On May 1, over 500 passionate leaders gathered at the Raleigh Convention Center for What Matters: A Thriving Community, to learn what it will take for everyone in our community to thrive, and how we can build the roadmap to get there together.

The day began with four dynamic opening sessions led by volunteers-

community leaders, funders, students, and field experts - for a deeper discussion around thriving in our region. Focusing on community-based solutions, advancing equity in education, green gentrification, and supporting a vibrant and inclusive arts scene, these sessions left attendees inspired with ideas for how to collaborate towards what's next.

As the luncheon began, Board Chair Pat Nathan announced that since the What Matters: Women event last year, a donor impact group has been formed and has collectively raised almost \$500,000 to benefit women in our region. This important funding will invest in innovative, community-based solutions to create pathways to economic security for low-income women.

matters



President and CEO Lori O'Keefe welcomed the audience and shared the importance of our collective work in the community.

"Here in the Triangle, the success we have in making strides to close gaps, strengthen nonprofits, and fund critical needs is because of fundholders and donor families who see us as partners in their giving, and who trust our expertise and resources

to help them make the most of their philanthropy," she said. "We take the responsibility as stewards of our community assets very seriously, and we are humbled by the trust that many of you in this room place in us."

As part of a Foundation priority to ensure a strong and vital ecosystem of nonprofits, O'Keefe announced that over the last five years we've been working with other funders,

through the Triangle Capacity-Building Network, to ensure that the nonprofits aren't the only ones collaborating – and that we're working together to tackle very real, very important issues.

"I am excited to announce our first grant cycle, investing up to \$200,000 in nonprofit capacity, specifically for leaders of color or nonprofits exclusively serving populations of color," she said. "This sort of

collaboration is ground-breaking and necessary, and I'm proud to be a founding member."

O'Keefe was then joined by Board Member Michael Schoenfeld on stage to present the Foundation's two philanthropic awards; a Legacy Award to Jim Stewart for his commitment to making our region a better place, particularly in the field of education; and a Catalyst Award to Carol Robbins

significant St. Joseph's African Methodist Episcopal Church at Hayti Heritage Center, listening to David Dodson of MDC speak about the issues we are facing in the ever-changing South," she said.

"During this discussion, his use of an Iroquois Nation principle struck me as poignant, and I thought I'd share it here today. The '7th generation' principle says that in every decision,

and for seven generations into the future?

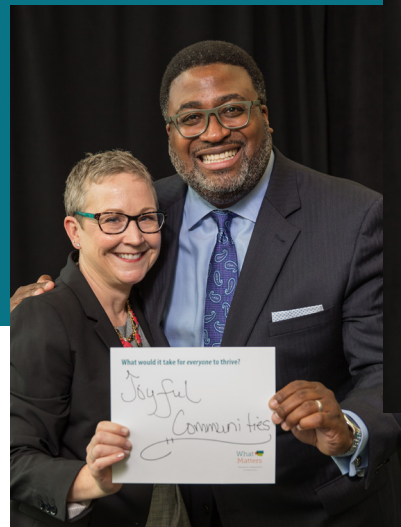
Joining Board Member and Moderator Anita Brown-Graham on the main stage to discuss thriving and how community-based efforts can break down barriers and reinvigorate a region were Rep. Liz Miranda and Tracye Booth from Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI).

THANK YOU

Thank you to our Presenting Sponsor, Wells Fargo, and the support of all of our Sponsors: American Underground, Duke Energy, Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina, Mary Duke Biddle Foundation, Lenovo, UNC-TV, and WUNC.

Thank you to our Host Committee: Farad Ali | Perry Colwell | Julia & Frank Daniels, Jr. | Christine DeVita | Debbie & Sheldon Fox | Annette & Rick Guirlinger | Alice & George Horton | Fred Hutchison | Mark Kuhn Beth & Phil Lambert | Prue & Peter Meehan | Pat Nathan & Mervyn Groves Cathy Pascal & Ron Strom | Elizabeth & Michael Schoenfeld | E. Jack Walker, Jr.

Thank you to our Community Builders: Bank of America | Bourke Services, LLC | Duke University Health System | Fifth Third Bank | Hamilton Point Investment Advisors, LLC | Hutchison, PLLC | IBM | KDI Capital Partners, LLC | Kuhn Advisors, Inc. | PNC | The Redwoods Group | Schell Bray PLLC | Stewards Fund | Walker Lambe, PLLC



for her dedication and work towards access to the arts for all children in our community.

O'Keefe then reminded the crowd that it's OK to acknowledge that this work can be hard. That it often feels like we're not moving fast enough, or doing enough to make a dent in the real issues, but that it's about the long-haul, and none of this can be done hastily.

"Recently, I sat in the historically

be it personal, governmental, or corporate, we must consider how it will affect our descendants seven generations into the future. Not simply this generation or the next – but seven generations forward."

O'Keefe asked attendees to ruminate on that as discussion continued, and answer three questions - who is thriving, who is not thriving, and what would it take for everyone to be thriving now, for the next generation,

DSNI is a community-led effort in Boston, Mass. with a mission to empower residents to organize and plan for a vibrant, diverse and high-quality neighborhood in collaboration with community partners.

The organization has programs in K-24 education pipeline and youth development, cultural arts, affordable housing, environment, health, and workforce development, and is a great example of what can happen when you work together for change.

The pair jumped right in to their experience in how to engage a region's youth in decision making, how funders need to change their perspective when grantmaking through resident engagement and long-term strategies, and how collaboration can change an entire community.

"True progress in community is a shared commitment," said Rep.

to be a part of the transformation in my community, and that is priceless."

They asked the audience to question themselves - who are you planning for and who are you planning with?

"Entitlement does not have to be a bad word. People should feel entitled to healthy, safe neighborhoods where communities thrive," said Booth.

said Ali.

"And you know what? Let's do something radical while we're in dialogue together - let's listen. Really listen. It's time we start amplifying different voices, don't you think?"

"While you're continuing these conversations, while you're having moments of challenge and brilliance, share them. Share them with your family and friends, share them with us.



Miranda. "People from multiple sides reaching for one goal. But we need money to make that happen and funders who trust the residents to make the decisions, and don't only fund what they want to."

Booth shared what residents gain when they are empowered to lead.

"I gained power I wouldn't have otherwise had, leadership training and experience, education in realistic goal setting, and most importantly - a voice - from DSNI," she said. "It allowed me

Chair-Elect Farad Ali and O'Keefe came back to the stage to encourage our region's leaders to work together, discuss what's possible, and turn words into action as we look to the future of our region.

"Let's talk. And not just to the people sitting next to us or the people we share meals with. Let's talk to people directly affected by some of these issues in our community. Let's trust people without the power, and let's engage others in decision making,"

We want to hear them. We want to be a part of these discussions, and we want to work together to make change," said O'Keefe. "You don't have to be a fundholder to co-invest with us and make an impact in this community. There are so many ways to get involved - we can't do it alone, and you can't either. The only way to make change is together."

For more information and resources from What Matters, visit our website at www.trianglecf.org.

WHAT MATTERS: A THRIVING COMMUNITY

WHAT COMES NEXT?

WE GATHERED, LISTENED, BRAINSTORMED, AND LEFT INSPIRED AT WHAT MATTERS ON MAY 1. **BUT WHAT'S NEXT?**
USE THESE RESOURCES FROM OUR OPENING SESSIONS TO BE A CATALYST FOR CHANGE.



ARTS

Read: Racial Equity in Arts Philanthropy – Grantmakers in the Arts

Be Active: Contact your local arts council! Arts councils are nonprofit organizations that support the arts and artists by providing programming, exhibit space, technical assistance, programming, and/or grants. Want to know more about the arts where you live? Contact your local council: United Arts Council (Wake County) | Durham Arts Council | Orange County Arts Commission | Chatham County Arts Council

Contact us: Reach out to Sarah Guidi or Treat Harvey on our staff to talk more about cultural arts.



COMMUNITY

Read: Community Engagement Toolkit by Collective Impact Forum | NC Center for Nonprofit's Walking the Talk: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion | DSNI: Streets of Hope and Holding Ground

Be Active: Share stories - learn more about the strength, knowledge, and expertise of residents in your community. | Get involved locally through events and volunteering. | Ensure your organization is empowering initiatives led & informed by those most affected by the issue.

Contact us: Reach out to Ebony West on our staff to talk more about community-based solutions.



ENVIRONMENT

Read: Durham's Equitable Engagement Blueprint at durhamcommunityengagement.org | The NextCity article featuring Foundation grantee Extra Terrestrial Projects | Just Green Enough: Urban Development and Environmental Gentrification, by Winifred Curran and Trina Hamilton

Be Active: Become an engaged resident! Check out your city/county's public meetings calendar or learn more about opportunities to volunteer on a city advisory group.

Contact us: Reach out to Sarah Guidi on our staff to talk more about green gentrification.



EDUCATION

Read: EducationNC's statewide reporting on education | NC Early Childhood Action Plan | Pathways to Grade-Level Reading Action Framework | MyFutureNC | The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice

Be Active: Become a mentor for a current student by volunteering with a local youth-focused nonprofit | Participate in or support local and/or statewide education-focused efforts | Support the Foundation's educational programming | Involve students & educators in programming and funding decisions

Contact us: Reach out to Sarah Battersby on our staff to talk more about equity in education.

ALL OF THESE RESOURCES & STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND ON OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.TRIANGLECF.ORG

BUSTING MYTHS AND MAKING CHANGE

EAST DURHAM CHILDREN'S INITIATIVE IS COMMITTED TO COMMUNITY

BY ADRIENNE ANDERSON | PHOTOGRAPHS BY MEG BUCKINGHAM

It's a gray Friday morning, but the East Durham Children's Initiative (EDCI) halls are bright with color and song. Over the muffled chorus of the children's song "Baby Shark", David Reese and Barker French share the core beliefs that steer their incredibly successful organization.

EDCI's mission is to create a pipeline of high-quality services, from birth through high school graduation, for children and families living in a 120-block area of East Durham. Reese, the President and CEO of EDCI, is quick to set straight the biggest myth about the organization.

Many assume that EDCI is just like every other organization—that they make change because of the hard-working staff and a clear goal. But what really sets EDCI apart is the community ecosystem they have convened.

"We've got an amazing team here," says Reese. "The folks creating the magic are our families, our partners, our staff, and all the people who line up with us to move children along the continuum through their lives, from birth to college or a career."

This emphasis on community and partnership is the core tenet of EDCI's work. Early in EDCI's

inception, Reese and the founding members heard a lot of the same thing: community members did not trust that they were here for the long haul. Over and over, East Durham residents saw organizations pop in, do some research, and leave.

Barker French, a founding member and the current Board Chair of EDCI, says they used the collective impact model to drive their decisions.

"The folks who live in the community know best," says French. "We're not here to tell anyone what to do, we're here to find out what they need and see if we can help. If those same people are saying we've made a difference in their lives, that's success."

Instead of starting with a pre-existing vision, the founding team started by asking questions. At their first community kitchen event, over 100 community members came together to share their input and be a part of the solution.

From their first gatherings, EDCI has asked the community what they need, what they think works, and where they want to see change—and then, they work together to put action behind the answers they hear.

"When we think about our

programs, our success, we have to start here: what does success mean to the parents, to the 9-years-olds, to the 4-year-olds who are transitioning to kindergarten next year?" says David. "We have to be accountable back to these people, more than anyone else."

Above all, EDCI wants to make sure that people feel they are better off being involved with EDCI. The answer seems to be a resounding yes: their approval rate with enrolled parents and caregivers is impressive; 97% say that their Advocate provided helpful information to improve their child's education and 99% say that EDCI helped them to feel more connected to their community. And while the staff and board use thorough data in addition to anecdotal evidence, it's the enthusiasm and appreciation of their families that they care about most.

"Having our families and the people we are connected with say we've made a difference in their lives is what matters," says French.

EDCI's success has garnered lots of attention from neighborhoods across Durham and cities across the state. But that's where another myth shows up: some people believe EDCI can duplicate their work for any other neighborhood in a similar situation,



^ David poses with a student at EDCI's LEAP Academy Preschool

and achieve the same positive outcomes.

Reese is careful to explain that EDCI can serve as a model for other communities, but because its programs are driven by community input, a version of EDCI in any other community would look different. As French points out, not all of Durham is made up with the same people that have contributed to the program in the EDCI zone. Even in Walltown, another Durham neighborhood with similar challenges to East Durham, starting a program would require a significant investment of time to build the relationship with that community.

“EDCI started with an outgrowth of a community effort to drive change,” says Reese. “And we don’t have success if we don’t have leadership on the board and in the community.”

Along with their achievements,

EDCI is facing its own questions about their changing community. As gentrification moves across Durham, the EDCI zone is changing. Families that have long been a part of the organization are moving outside the 120-block scope of the original program. EDCI kids are in schools across the city. The EDCI team are asking themselves what’s next.

While cloning EDCI in different areas is not the answer, it is possible to replicate the model. But French and Reese believe that process must start with listening to communities and building authentic relationships.

Here’s the third big myth about EDCI: despite its name, EDCI is not just about East Durham. The accomplishments they celebrate and opportunities they face are about all of Durham. It is about making Durham a more equitable place for all its residents.

“Every young person in Durham should have the opportunity to have the same success,” Reese says. “All kids deserve what EDCI has to offer. You might call that a challenge, and it is a challenge—it’s daunting! But it’s also an opportunity and that’s what keeps us excited.”

Wherever EDCI turns its attention next, their collaborative spirit will guide the way. They remain committed to learning from each other, from the parents and children in their programs, and from their partner organizations.

On the way out to a meeting with a partner, Reese and French stop by story hour in the room down the hall. Shouts of “Hola, Mr. David! Hola Mr. Barker!” greet them at the door. They leave with smiles on their faces.

“If you can’t tell,” Reese says, “we really enjoy doing this work together.”

GRANTEE
PARTNER



^ Denise Barnes and the North Carolina Jazz Ensemble perform at Hayti Heritage Center

HAYTI HERITAGE CENTER: STEADFAST THROUGH PROGRESS

"WE ARE HERE TO HELP THIS COMMUNITY THRIVE. AND LIKE A
PHOENIX, WE WANT IT TO RISE."

STORY BY MEG BUCKINGHAM | PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF HAYTI HERITAGE CENTER

Housed in the Nationally Historic St. Joseph's African Methodist Episcopal Church, Hayti Heritage Center opened its doors in 1975 and since that time it's been a cultural hub for the African American community with diverse arts programs and events for everyone to enjoy throughout the year.

But six years back, when Angela Lee joined the Center as Executive Director, the vibrancy of this iconic and historic space was at a crossroads.

"People thought we had closed or were preparing to close," Lee said. "The community played an enormous part in keeping it alive, fortunately the city of Durham provided support and people advocated for Hayti to stay in place because of the value of the institution."

Because of the dedication of residents, funders, and the staff at Hayti Heritage Center, the organization is now thriving.

"We pride ourselves on bringing different arts and artists (performing or visual) into this space," Lee said. "Because of our history as an activist organization, we try to bring in groups with convenings and meetings around community topics. We are a cultural arts organization and historical space with a rich history that is tasked with advancing and promoting not only the heritage of this community, but also with promoting and advancing the African American experience through arts."

Lee credits the ambitious success of the organization in part because of funding from LANE (Leveraging a Network for Equity), a 4-year opportunity through membership in the National Performance Network.

Currently in the second year of this initiative, they receive consulting and financial capacity building support, and Lee says it has afforded them the opportunity to brand and promote the center, and create a clear vision for the future of Hayti.

"It's really exciting to have gone from - how do we keep the doors open - to creating a real shared vision for this organization," she said. "We get to think about what's next, and what we want to strategically see for the future of Hayti and the neighborhood. That's pretty inspirational to me."

And when she thinks about the future of the neighborhood and of Durham, Lee says you can't help but think about progress and how important it is to be a part of the planning.

"A part of what we're intent on doing is keeping the history infused in the future," she said. "Not all change is good but change is a part of life and necessary. We can't always predict what that will look like, so it's incumbent upon me to make sure that Hayti stays informed and plays an active role in the change in Durham."

"Durham was great before it was great. We had it all - entertainment, science, technology," Lee remarked. "We want to help this community, the part of downtown that was cut off by the Durham Freeway half a century ago, thrive. And like a phoenix, we want it to rise."

Hayti Heritage Center is proud of their work in building partnerships in the region, with organizations like Extraterrestrial Projects, the Durham Symphony, NC Central Arts and Sciences, the Durham County Library, Playmakers, Raleigh Little Theatre,

and the Museum of Durham History, to name a few.

"These types of relationships are so important," Lee said. "When you have limited capacity in terms of manpower it makes it so much easier and more possible because you can combine your resources."

But what is Hayti Heritage Center really known for? The exciting and fun programs they put on, bringing those with a love of the arts into this vibrant community.

Each year, the center hosts a significant number of events, including WIMMIN at Work, a Blues Festival, a Kwanzaa Festival, and most famously, their film festival in February, now in its 26th year, which engages the entire Durham community.

"It has really been amazing to continue this important festival for our city," Lee said. "It's a wonderful three days that's more than just showing films - we engage everyone - for example, on opening night, the NC Central drum line walked everyone in and kicked things off."

Involving local spoken word artists, and a vocal jazz ensemble alongside a visual montage of historic Durham was only a small part of the festivities. The center also opened a dialogue with filmmakers and funders, discussing funding projects and what's needed.

"[The Festival] is our signature event," Lee said. "It has bloomed and elevated. We want to make it the premier film festival for Black Filmmakers in the south - and we're on our way."

CREATING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN CULTURE AND NATURE

"SOCIAL EQUITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP IS EVERYONE'S WORK."

BY HIRAL PATEL | PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF TARA MEI SMITH

Traveling around the Triangle, we see traffic congestion while commuting to and from work, new apartment buildings in the skyline, and more and more construction of highways and roads. These are just results of the Triangle's popularity across the country as it tops the "best of" lists and more people migrate to live in this flourishing region.

However, all of this economic growth leaves the potential of important elements in our community to be displaced and even erased. This is where Extra Terrestrial Projects (ETP) comes in.

"Our goal is to create a connection between culture and habitats in the region by informing equitable environmental projects such as the blueprints for the Durham Belt Line Equitable Engagement Plan," said Tara Mei Smith, Executive Director of Extra Terrestrial Projects.

When the city of Durham approved the plans to turn the Durham Belt Line, an old railroad track encircling downtown Durham, into a bike trail, ETP realized that many

communities that would be affected by this development knew nothing of it. As seen with the Atlanta Belt Line, there were major concerns about displacement of the existing communities on the path of the trail.

An early survey of the Durham Belt Line engaged 250 people with a median income of \$90,000, but the median income along the trail is about \$36,000. ETP saw this systemic problem across many community engagement processes.

"ETP are thoughtful representatives for citizens of the city. They are respectful and intentional about getting to know the people in the communities they work in, and they take the time to build real relationships," said Heidi Hannapel, co-founder of Landmatters.

ETP was able to bring possible effects of the plan to the residents, which resulted in the voicing of concerns about the equity in the the conduction of the survey and of the use of the Beltline. The Neighborhood Improvement Services department for the City of Durham created a

blueprint for an equitable engagement plan regarding the Belt Line and awaits funding for implementation of that plan.

"We want everyone to have a voice and be sure they are benefitting from these projects so that historic communities such as East Durham and the Hayti neighborhood in downtown Durham are not further displaced," said Smith.

The Hayti Heritage Center, a cultural arts and arts education venue, belongs to the once thriving business and residential district. After the Durham freeway was built, this district was invisibly split from the heart of downtown, and the community was decimated.

"Over 600 homes and businesses were destroyed or displaced by the freeway, and very few original structures like the Center survived," said Angela Lee, Executive Director of Hayti Heritage Center.

The Hayti Heritage Center was awarded in February 2019 with a grant from the Safe Routes to Parks



Activating Communities program, a national program that provides assistance to improve safe, secure park access for people of all ages and disabilities in low-income communities and communities of color.

The grant allows Hayti Heritage Center to receive training and individualized consulting to reconnect the Hayti community to downtown Durham in partnership with ETP. “Our goal is to establish safety, fitness, and equitable access for pedestrians and bicyclists to and from the heart of Durham,” said Lee.

It won’t be just another asphalt road leading to downtown Durham. With art curation from Hayti and knowledge of the local plant environment from ETP, this connection will exhibit the preservation of the local culture. “ETP are wonderful partners and help to inform on the natural elements of the

land,” said Lee. “We want to respect the environment, space, and planet while preserving our community, and ETP does a great job supporting those efforts.”

ETP’s thoughtful and equitable approach to creating green spaces for everyone sets them apart as an organization. The organization helps shine a light on the importance of everyone benefitting from development projects such as the Durham Belt Line. They see value in dedicating time to community engagement and lifting up voices who feel unheard.

“Social equity and environmental stewardship is everyone’s work,” said Smith. “You have to think about the communities you belong to and start making changes there.”



CAMPAIGN FOR GRADE-LEVEL READING

BY EMILY MCNAMARA | PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF CHATHAM COUNTY SCHOOLS AND DURHAM'S PARTNERSHIP FOR CHILDREN

CHATHAM COUNTY

Last summer, 110 children participated in the OnTrack Kindergarten Readiness Camp, a collaboration between Chatham County Schools and the Chatham Education Foundation (CEF). These children (identified as attending underperforming preschools or having no preschool experience) spent three weeks learning procedures and expectations they would encounter in the classroom.

"We figured out that social and emotional development was what was really needed," says Mandy White, Program Director of Chatham Reads, the organization responsible for coordinating Chatham's Campaign for Grade-Level Reading (CCGLR). Daily camp activities included going over a schedule, learning to get along with others, sitting still during learning time, and practicing routines like handwashing and lining up for the bathroom.

Teachers reported that 77% of the attending students were more prepared for kindergarten after completing the program. The goal, says White, is to increase the time spent on academics at the beginning of the school year.

According to Jaime Detzi, Executive Director of CEF, because Chatham County is home to mostly small businesses, pilot



programs like the Readiness Camp normally have to be funded from outside the county, making the commitment of current funding "imperative to their success."

As CCGLR continues to tackle the obstacles to school readiness, "summer slide," and early literacy, some efforts have additionally highlighted the impact of parent involvement on student success. The Learning Institute (a collaboration between Communities in Schools of Chatham and Chatham Literacy) demonstrated that by engaging parents in their own learning and encouraging participation, the confidence of parents to navigate educational needs increased. By the end of the program, parents felt more prepared overall.

Increasing access to books is another area where CCGLR is making strides. Projects include 50

Book Baskets placed in community spaces where children spend time waiting; take-and-read libraries installed in nine under-resourced communities; Books on Break providing books for low-income students to build home libraries; and a Book Mobile that circulated more than 2,200 books last summer.

The innovative strategies being implemented by the partners of CCGLR are already producing encouraging results. Since 2017, Chatham County Schools have reported a 7% increase in third-grade-level reading proficiency as well as a decrease in tardiness.

Looking forward, Chatham Reads is teaming up with the library's youth services to launch an accessibly located Summer Learning Day featuring learning games, local performances, and gently-used books for children to take home.

DURHAM COUNTY

Since generating their Community Solutions Action Plan in 2017, the steering committee for Durham's Campaign for Grade-Level Reading (DCGLR) has engaged extensively with families, schools, and organizations in order to fully discern the "literacy landscape" in Durham. They have emphasized protecting the parent voice by conducting listening sessions and open committee meetings.

"We asked, 'What does literacy mean to you? What does it look like in your household?'" says Danielle Johnson, Director of Early Childhood Systems at Durham's Partnership for Children (DPfC). "[We wanted to flip] the model of parent engagement by building trust and empowering families instead of assuming what's best for them." Exploring how to support literacy education strategies within Durham Public Schools was also critical. The committee has collaborated with school officials from the outset and now includes senior school district leaders and board of education members.

Collaboration, partnerships with community stakeholders, and creation of culturally responsive settings are some of the characteristics that define DCGLR. Johnson likens Durham's Campaign to a basket being woven together by all the families, schools, and organizations involved in and affected by the campaign's work.



According to Laura Benson, Executive Director of DPfC, the multi-year commitment of funding has allowed them to be very intentional during the planning phase "with support to embrace bold visions and new ideas." The committee is now poised to form work groups to tackle literacy challenges by utilizing organizations and resources that already exist within the community.

Such work is illustrated by this year's first Summer Learning Summit directed by Brittany Gregory, DPfC's Program Coordinator for the DCGLR. Operating from the premise that "any space with a child is a learning space," and that a network of trusted community voices allows the campaign's message to reach a larger audience, Gregory invited together organizations responsible for different summer programs including schools, libraries, Parks and Recreation, and the Museum of Life and Science. Using a toolkit

created by The North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation and Book Harvest, Summit participants collaborated to unify summer learning goals and codify a consistent outreach message that all organizations can use across multiple platforms.

Other successful programs in DCGLR include Reach Out and Read (a partnership with local pediatric clinics), Dolly Parton's Imagination Library (in which over 7000 Durham children are now enrolled), and various ongoing projects with Book Harvest (continuing to focus on direct literacy work, parent engagement strategies, and maintaining connections to the National Campaign for Grade-Level Reading).

Benson acknowledges that literacy improvements are a long-game, but she is excited by the early successes of promising practices and believes Durham County is on track to double third-grade literacy rates by 2025.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE FOUNDATION'S BLOG

Our staff, board, and volunteers are a valuable resource. Their voices are important, they offer expert insight into our focus areas and regional issues, and their unique perspectives are what drive the passion of the Foundation. The following are highlights from recent staff blog posts.

WHY ACCESS TO A STABLE HOME MATTERS

BLOG BY JULIA DA SILVA, PROGRAMS AND SCHOLARSHIPS ASSOCIATE

Common financial advice recommends spending less than 30% of your income on housing costs, including rent or mortgage costs, utilities, and repairs. Until I started working at the Foundation, I spent nearly two-thirds of my income on rent and accrued a lot of debt in the process. Of course, I was in graduate school and was holding out hope that my two master's degrees would give me a salary to pay off the debt I accrued in that time and shrink the percentage of my income going to housing moving forward. This is not the case for most people spending that much on housing.

HUD (The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development) defines those with “worst-case housing needs” as renters with incomes below half the local median, who don't have housing assistance, and pay more than 50% of the income for rent or live in severely substandard housing. From 2001 to 2018, the number of people living in these conditions has risen by 66%, but the number receiving aid has barely grown at all.

In 2018, a federal budget was passed that would severely cut housing assistance programs for individuals and families. It included canceling Housing Choice Vouchers—a federal government subsidy for individual or family-selected housing—for 200,000 low-income households, cutting public housing funding almost in half

compared to 2017, and eliminating several partnership and block grant programs. In addition to these cuts, the government shutdown that our country experienced recently created a compounding effect as thousands of Americans receiving HUD assistance are at risk of losing their housing once the previously allocated funds are used.

So why does this matter? There are many overlapping circles in the Venn Diagram of contributors to poverty and housing is just one of them. It's not as clean-cut an issue as many would like to imagine.

- Systemic racial oppression is another contributing factor as Black unemployment rates are nearly twice that of white unemployment rates in the U.S., 6.5% as compared to 3.4%. This means Black individuals are more likely to not have an income that supports their needs, including housing.

- If families are spending more money on housing, they have less money for nutritional food and healthcare, creating poor overall health and increasing risk factors for future illness.

- If families lack stable housing, the likelihood of obtaining or maintaining sustainable employment creates additional barriers to funding for their families.

Each of these barriers also creates emotional and physical stress, affecting personal and professional outcomes. Having access to a stable home is vital to secure refuge where people can address their individual and family needs.

This is one reason why the Foundation chooses to support nonprofit partners working to alleviate poverty through our Community Development focus. In the last five years of this grant program, 21% of grants have been directed to housing-related initiatives and 38% of the population served by all grantees identify as low-income or homeless.

Our contribution can only make up a small percentage of the \$6 billion cut to HUD funding, but that is what fuels our work in this field. We recently completed our fifth year of this program and evaluated our impact and any gaps in this work, so that we can ensure our grantmaking, advocacy, and learning is where it needs to be so that we are serving the greatest need. We look forward to engaging more community and resident partners in the field of public housing initiatives to creatively address the needs of low-income individuals in the Triangle and create a lasting impact—because the only way we can create long-term solutions is by working together.

HOW TO BE A CONSERVATIONIST ON EARTH DAY, AND EVERY DAY

BLOG BY SARAH GUIDI, PROGRAM OFFICER

Wait, am I a conservationist?

In January I became Triangle Community Foundation's newest Program Officer. One of my main responsibilities is to manage our Environmental Conservation Program. Over these last few months, a question has kept bubbling up: Am I a "conservationist"?

I think so. I grew up playing in the woods behind my house with my brothers and the neighborhood kids. As a family, we took walks along the trails in local and state parks and went on long bike rides. I've even spent vacations at national parks. And I'd prefer to commute to work by bus, train, or bike than drive alone in my car.

I don't have an environmental degree (I'm a social worker by training) and I don't own large swaths of land that could be "conserved." But I've spent most of my professional life figuring out how to ensure that communities are using their finite land and natural resources to support the needs of their people in a sustainable way.

So, I am a conservationist, right? Yeah, I am. Are you?

On April 22, 1970, more than 20 million people across the country gathered for the first ever Earth Day because they felt the same way. They were people, mostly young people, a lot of students, who were worried about things like pollution, and humans' impact on the Earth. They didn't call themselves conservationists, but they shared a concern that if we didn't take action, the Earth's natural resources would be quickly depleted and there



would be dire consequences for people all over the globe.

On Friday, April 12, my colleagues and I all put on our t-shirts and sneakers and channeled the sentiment of the original Earth Day participants. Thanks to EarthShare North Carolina's Corporate Earth Day, Triangle Community Foundation staff got to get our hands (and whole bodies in some cases) dirty with staff from Downtown Durham, Inc. (DDI) at Durham Central Park.

With all the rain, flooding has been an issue. Half of our team helped move a significant amount of gravel to keep rain water from flowing into the covered pavilion. That meant lots of raking and clearing tiny pieces of rock from the lawn area to be repurposed as drainage.

The other half of our team dug through the mud to create a trench where water could flow out of the Farmer's Market area, so that farmers don't have to worry about being knee-

deep in mud and rain to sell their food. Then they built the earth back up to keep their irrigation work in place.

And we learned a bit about the history of Durham Central Park. It used to be part of the tobacco warehouse district where farmers would sell their crops and turn around (literally) and buy new tractors and equipment with their profits. As the tobacco trade quieted, so did the neighborhood. Then, in the 90's two Durham residents led the charge to create an urban park that could be a place for public art, music, and gathering.

This event was an important opportunity for us to be in nature (yes, urban nature is nature, too!) and in community with one another, doing something to help maintain an important community green space.

Read more about how you can be a conservationist every day on our blog at <https://medium.com/@Triangle>



PO Box 12729, Durham, NC 27709

phone 919.474.8370 fax 919.941.9208

donor services 919.474.8363

www.trianglecf.org

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TriangleCommunityFoundation is building a stronger Triangle for all. By working with dedicated donors and strong nonprofits, we are able to guide gifts in a strategic way to fill in gaps, reduce inequities, and solve the region's most pressing challenges.

We work tirelessly in the Triangle region of North Carolina to help build a more vibrant community for everyone. By taking a broad view, we are uniquely positioned to identify gaps, support the most important needs, and shape a brighter future for generations to come.

Join us! Visit our website to learn how you can use your passion to be a catalyst for change in our community.



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