

SPRING 2023 | FOUNDATION FOR THE CAROLINAS

PHILANTHROPY

FOCUS

BUZZCITY BAR & GRILL

Beyond Open CLT

New grant program
helps local small
business owners get
some buzz

Read more on page 2

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Mayor's Racial Equity
Initiative Makes Goal
and Progress

More on page 3

Updates From the
Robinson Center for
Civic Leadership

More on pages 4-5

CMCF Grants More
Than \$1.2 Million to
Help Families, Children

More on page 6

Artist Mervil Paylor
Shares Her Vision and
Her Legacy

More on page 10

Fundholders Help
Students Achieve With
FFTC Scholarships

More on page 11

Photo Credit: Mark Borja



FM Auto Service, a car repair business in East Charlotte owned by Kevin Pak, received a grant from the Beyond Open CLT grant program.



William Fulton, owner of Jugo Bar, spent his formative years traveling the world before he settled in Charlotte to open his business. He recently received a Beyond Open CLT grant.



CLT Black Owned calls itself a "social good company" that supports Black-owned businesses. The group received a grant in the first round of the Beyond Open CLT grant program.

Stay Alive & Thrive: Beyond Open CLT Helping Diverse Small Business

Michelle Ashley grew up along Beatties Ford Road, which made her decision to open Buzz City Bar & Grill there easy. Of course, as a small business owner starting a new business, that was one of the few easy decisions she has faced.



Photo Credit: Kyle J. Britt

Michelle Ashley received a \$20,000 grant from Beyond Open CLT.

Thanks to a \$20,000 grant from the Beyond Open CLT grant program — administered by FFTC and made possible by Wells Fargo's Open for Business Fund — Ashley will buy a truck, which will help her with her supply runs.

"I'm very thankful for the program because it will allow me to do things I wasn't able to do before," she said. "I was struggling."

The grant is just one of the ways Beyond Open CLT is already helping local small businesses. The program recently announced \$5.9 million in its first round of grantmaking to 178 businesses and nonprofits throughout Charlotte-Mecklenburg. From laundromats and construction companies to accounting firms and barbershops, the businesses that received funding in the first round of the Beyond Open small business grant program are as diverse as the business owners themselves.

Beyond Open's goal is to help build economic mobility in Charlotte-Mecklenburg through support of diverse-owned (minority, woman, veteran, LGBTQ+) small businesses. The fund also works in conjunction with the Mayor's Racial Equity Initiative: Priority is given to businesses located within and near one of the City of Charlotte's six Corridors of Opportunity neighborhoods.

In the first round, 90% of recipients identified as a person of color and 61% identified as female, while 72% of businesses were located within or near one of the six corridors.

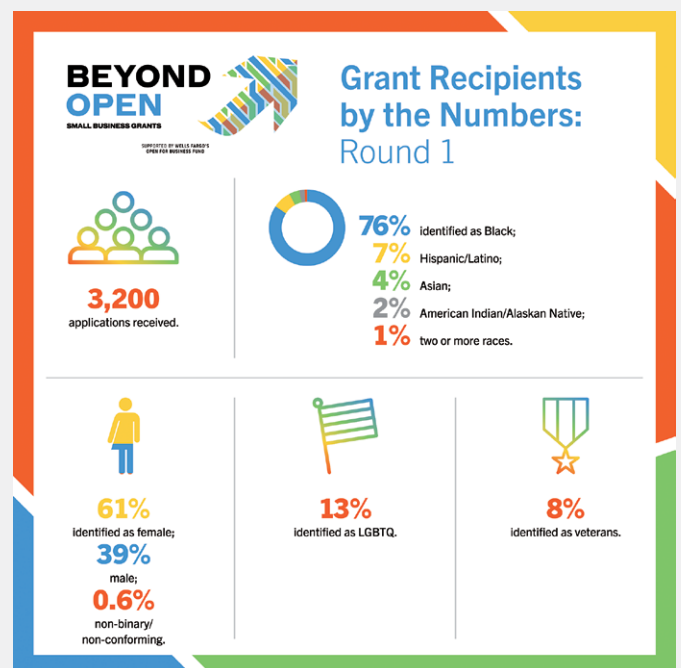
"Foundation For The Carolinas is proud to help build economic mobility in the community through Beyond Open," said Tracy Russ, special advisor for civic initiatives at FFTC.

"We are grateful for each and every diverse small business owner who applied in Round 1 and shared their abundant talents, ingenuity and dedication. Their very strong participation created an energetic and extremely competitive selection process."

To help reach communities, the first grant cycle was promoted through door-to-door canvassing and appearances at community events, workshops and applications in English, Spanish and Vietnamese, as well as advertising and news coverage in diverse-owned, local media outlets.

The Beyond Open Round 2 grant cycle timeline will be announced by mid-2023 and the Round 3 timeline in 2024. Eligible businesses, including Round 1 grant recipients, are encouraged to apply.

For more information: BeyondOpenCLT.com





To invest in the City's Corridors of Opportunity, the Mayor's Racial Equity Initiative contributed \$1 million to help buy two hotels. The goal: increase housing, decrease crime.

Going Strong: Mayor's Racial Equity Initiative Achieves Goal and Makes Progress

When Johnson C. Smith University announced the hiring of Dr. Nicole McDonald last fall, the new senior vice president for transformation initiatives was heralded by the school as “a strategic, visionary leader.” That will be essential as she leads JCSU’s plan to become one of the top 10 HBCUs in the country.



McDonald

The goal to transform JCSU — and to hire a skilled leader like McDonald to oversee it — is one of several outlined by the Mayor’s Racial Equity Initiative, a public-private partnership launched in November 2021 to address Charlotte’s lack of racial equity, economic opportunity and upward mobility.

The path to get there will be through four focus areas: transforming JCSU; investing in the City’s six “Corridors of Opportunity” neighborhoods; erasing the digital divide and increasing digital literacy; and commitments from Charlotte’s corporate community to promote more Black and brown leaders. A little more than a year after launching, the \$250 million initiative is making progress:

- ▶ **Fundraising:** In December, MREI announced it had surpassed its private-sector fundraising goal of \$150 million, raising more than \$157 million for the cause. Including public-sector commitments, the initiative has raised \$240 million of the initial public-private \$250 million total goal, with additional public-sector grants pending.
- ▶ **Bridging the Digital Divide:** The focus area has already

distributed more than 13,000 laptops and helped 900 underserved families in Mecklenburg County sign up for a program that pays for their Internet service.

- ▶ **Investing in Corridors of Opportunity:** The workstream recently committed \$1 million to buy two aging motels near Sugar Creek Road. The plan — which the City is supporting with an additional \$3.2 million — is aimed at reducing crime and increasing affordable housing. In addition, several projects have been launched, including an initiative for three of the corridors aimed at helping residents from being displaced. The priority in 2023 is to finalize planning for all six corridors and implement development projects for small businesses.
- ▶ **JCSU:** In addition to hiring McDonald to implement JCSU’s long-term growth plan, the college has begun work on new marketing efforts to build brand awareness and increase student recruitment. Atrium Health will provide medical services to the university and its students, faculty and staff, with enhancements and expanded services for the entire JCSU community.
- ▶ **Employer Commitment:** CLT Alliance spent several months building out the strategic framework for this focus area. As part of that, CLT Alliance engaged with The KARS Group LTD, a change management firm, to craft an action plan for the next phase of development.

To find out more about the Mayor’s Racial Equity Initiative and follow its progress: EquityCLT.org

Robinson Center 2023: Continuing Our Work on Key Community Issues

FFTC's flagship program, the Robinson Center for Civic Leadership, convenes partners and funding to address our region's greatest needs and opportunities. The stories on these pages reflect the impact of RCCL in recent months.

Leading on Opportunity Launches Data Tracker

Leading on Opportunity, an initiative of FFTC that addresses economic mobility, recently launched its Opportunity Compass, a tool that works as an equity dashboard to measure Charlotte's progress on the subject.


The Opportunity Compass tracks drivers of economic mobility through available data to determine if interventions are effective. So far, the data reveals the City has improved in 22 of 33 areas measured.

The new tool was developed in collaboration with community leaders to help determine the best path to improve upward mobility and social capital in the region. A 2014 national study by a Harvard economist ranked Charlotte last among the 50 U.S. cities in economic mobility.

That study galvanized the public and led to the 2017 Opportunity Task Force Report that outlined a path to improve our social mobility. The report also created Leading on Opportunity. Measuring progress, however, was not easy. That's why the Opportunity Compass was developed.

"Leading on Opportunity is still guided by our North star that every child in Charlotte-Mecklenburg will have a chance to achieve social and economic success," said Sherri Chisholm, Leading on Opportunity's executive director, to the Charlotte Post. "Providing decision-makers with a tool like the Opportunity Compass to guide strategy and measure progress is a demonstration of our commitment to this work and our children."

For more information: LeadingOnOpportunity.org/Compass



The Compass creates clarity out of complexity:

- 1 Discover the key drivers of economic mobility
- 2 View community data on these key drivers
- 3 Align programs and investments to these common metrics



The Garmon-Brown Board Room will be complimentary for local nonprofits to use during weekday business hours starting this summer.

Board Room Named for Dr. Ophelia Garmon-Brown

Dr. Ophelia Garmon-Brown was a trailblazing family physician, hospital executive, dedicated community leader, ordained minister and passionate advocate for economic equality. Her work guiding the process that eventually created Leading On Opportunity will forever impact our community.

In honor of her memory, FFTC recently dedicated the new Dr. Ophelia Garmon-Brown Conference Room. This convening space was made possible thanks to Novant Health Foundation, who joined us in honoring their former employee, Garmon-Brown.

The room — which is located on the ground floor of our headquarters, with windows facing North Tryon Street — will be available for local nonprofits to hold meetings at no charge during weekday business hours, and for companies and others to rent.

"It was wonderful how she bridged various communities, fluidly crossing lines that most others might see as borders," community leader Anna Spangler Nelson said of Garmon-Brown. "Ophelia was humanity at its very best."

For more information: fftc.org/220NorthTryon



Olivia Thomas speaks about the legacy of her sister, Dr. Garmon-Brown.

Creatives get an Opportunity for Impact Through Arts Fund

The vision of spoken word group Guerilla Poets is simple: to ensure every person has access to the healing power of arts. To help achieve that, the nonprofit will soon offer twice-a-week poetry workshops at the Mecklenburg County Detention Center, helping detainees find an outlet and voice.

That is just one of 33 innovative grants awarded in the past year through the Opportunity Fund.

The Opportunity Fund is part of the larger Infusion Fund, a \$38 million public-private partnership between the City, FFTC and private donors to support the local cultural community through June 2024. Whereas the Infusion Fund is focused on providing operating support for local organizations, the Opportunity Fund offers grants to arts and culture groups and individual artists for specific projects and innovative ideas.

The Opportunity Fund was piloted through two project grants early last year, and then formalized in the fall through an innovative, open call that awarded rapid response funding for timely projects via monthly cycles — providing an unprecedented \$600,000 to 31 projects by creatives over three months.

"As our community grapples with how to sustain local arts and culture, we're seeing how tools like the Opportunity Fund are filling gaps for creatives and groups who have fresh ideas, but who may not qualify for other grants, align with longer grant cycles, or have access to financial



Guerilla Poets (top and below) — a local arts nonprofit that offers workshops at the Mecklenburg County Detention Center for detainees — was one of 33 local arts and culture groups to receive an Opportunity Fund grant.

support through existing relationships," said Priya Sircar, the city's arts and culture officer.

Among the projects supported through grants from the Opportunity Fund:

- ▶ **Arko & the Moon Immersive Exhibit** by artists Arko and Luvly Moon: an immersive art installation that gives viewers the opportunity to explore the art in a different way.
- ▶ **Durag Fest** by Dammit Wesley and Lica Michelle: Juneteenth festival celebrating the creativity, ingenuity and diversity of Black communities through art, fashion, food and music.
- ▶ **The "Afterschool" Audio Engineering Masterclass** by Nigel Malone of Colorful Noise: Free introductory classes that teach people audio mixing, mastering and music production.

For the full list of past recipients of the Opportunity Fund and the larger Infusion Fund, visit: CharlotteNC.gov/arts-culture

Robinson Center for Civic Leadership Welcomes Federico Rios

The Robinson Center for Civic Leadership has a new leader with longtime connections to the Foundation and the community.

FFTC recently announced the hiring of Federico Rios, a talented local leader and advocate for equity and issues facing immigrants, as senior vice president of the Robinson Center for Civic Leadership.

In his role, Rios will help develop the Center's overall strategy, conduct research, convene stakeholders, monitor progress of major initiatives and communicate results to the community. In addition, Rios will build upon the Foundation's role as a regional civic leader, serving as

FFTC's point person for a variety of programs and overseeing the Foundation's convening and civic leadership activities.

Rios previously served as the City of Charlotte's assistant director, office of equity, mobility and immigration integration. "We had the pleasure of working alongside Federico in his capacity with the City of Charlotte, and we are excited to add him to our team," said Laura Smith, FFTC's interim president and CEO.

At the City of Charlotte, Rios helped lead several equity initiatives, including development of the first equity-in-governance framework, which applies an equity lens to City Council's policy decisions.



Federico Rios



As a recipient of the CMCF social capital grant, Digi-Bridge pairs mentors from local companies with students to spark interest in STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math).



A Rocket Mortgage employee mentors a student with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Carolinas.



Children play at Charlotte Bilingual Preschool, a recent CMCF grant recipient.

CMCF Awards \$1.2 Million+ for Projects Promoting Equity, Opportunities for Youth

For more than a century, Big Brothers Big Sisters has helped change kids' perspectives and provided opportunities to reach their potential. An operating grant from the Charlotte Mecklenburg Community Foundation will help sustain their mission to create and support one-to-one mentoring relationships that ignite the power and promise of youth.

Since 2001, the Charlotte Mecklenburg Community Foundation has made investing in children and families across the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area a top priority. CMCF — FFTC's primary grantmaking arm — recently granted more than \$1.2 million to local nonprofits for various projects that center around the needs of families, children, youth and young adults, and social capital.

The most recent round of grant recipients include:

- ▶ \$25,000 to Ada Jenkins Center to provide elementary school students with afterschool academic support and enrichment programming.
- ▶ \$10,000 to Augustine Literacy Project to recruit and train volunteers who will tutor 300+ young, aspiring readers in under-resourced communities.
- ▶ \$15,000 to Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Carolinas to provide mentorship, career and college guidance, and job shadowing opportunities for students.
- ▶ \$30,000 to Carolina Youth Coalition to provide high school students with mentors and college-preparatory resources.
- ▶ \$35,000 to Charlotte Bilingual Preschool for programming that will advance equity for Latinx children and families.
- ▶ \$15,000 to CrossRoads Corporation for Affordable Housing and Community Development to provide programming that supports youth in the Grier Heights Community, including college preparation, access to mental health support and mentoring.
- ▶ \$15,000 to Latin American Women's Association to host bilingual workshops and tours at colleges for local families.

Grants will fund such projects as aiding first-generation college students, equipping youth with skills for future job prospects and providing out-of-school programs to immigrant and refugee students — expanding opportunities, strengthening social capital and promoting equity.

CMCF, the Foundation's primary grantmaking arm was established following a \$35 million bequest from Lucille Puette Giles in 1995. To date, the Charlotte Mecklenburg Community Foundation has awarded more than \$57 million in grants — more than \$20 million beyond the original gift. Because the fund was established as an endowment, it provides a permanent source of grantmaking to address community needs as they evolve over time.

For a complete list of grants: [CharMeck-cf.org](https://charmeck-cf.org)



The Augustine Literacy Project received a \$10,000 grant from CMCF to recruit and train volunteers who will tutor more than 300 aspiring readers.

The Plus Collective Grants \$123,000 to Local LGBTQ+ Nonprofits

Time Out Youth offers support, advocacy and opportunities for personal development to LGBTQ+ teens. An operating grant from The Plus Collective will help sustain their mission to support lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning youth. The organization offers vital programs, fosters unconditional acceptance, and creates safe spaces for self-expression through leadership, community support and advocacy.



The Plus Collective grantee Time Out Youth has been a safe haven for LGBTQ+ youth for years. Find out more: PhilanthropyFocus.org/TOY.

The Plus Collective — a collective giving program and endowment at FFTC serving Charlotte's LGBTQ+ community — announced \$123,000 in grants to nine local nonprofits. Since it was founded in 1994, the Plus Collective (formerly known as the Charlotte Lesbian and Gay Fund) has distributed more than \$1.8 million to local nonprofits serving our diverse LGBTQ+ community.

The most recent round of grants provided general operating support, including:

- ▶ \$12,500 to Charlotte Black Pride
- ▶ \$14,000 to Charlotte Pride Band
- ▶ \$5,500 to the Charlotte Royals Rugby Football Club
- ▶ \$12,500 to the Gay Men's Chorus of Charlotte
- ▶ \$16,000 to One Voice Chorus
- ▶ \$25,000 to PFLAG Charlotte
- ▶ \$25,000 to Time Out Youth

"The Plus Collective has long been a supporter of the work at Time Out Youth," said Sarah Mikhail, executive director at Time Out Youth. "Their commitment to nurturing the growth and development of LGBTQ+ organizations like ours in the community serves to promote the health and wellness of LGBTQ+ people in Charlotte. Knowing that we have consistent and sustained support from foundations like The Plus Collective is important."

For more information: ThePlusCollective.org



The Charlotte Royals Rugby Football Club was awarded \$5,500 from The Plus Collective, an FFTC collective giving program, for general operating support.



A \$2,500 grant to United Way of Lancaster County from LCCF will help provide hygiene kits to the county's first homeless shelter.

Around Our Region

Foundation For The Carolinas has 13 regional affiliates across the Carolinas, whose advisory boards made up of local leaders award grants to nonprofits in their communities. Several county affiliates recently announced grants that will address their communities' local needs:

Union Supports Programs for Older Adults

Thanks to a recent grant from the Union County Community Foundation, the Council on Aging in Union County provided durable medical equipment to local aging adults at no cost.

"One out of four older adults fall each year, and 80 percent of those falls happen in the bathroom," said Andrew Friend, executive director of the Council on Aging in Union County. "By providing bathroom safety equipment and durable medical equipment to vulnerable older adults, we are helping prevent falls and unnecessary hospitalization."

The \$3,500 grant was one of 19 grants awarded to local nonprofits, totaling \$85,700.

Lancaster Awards Grant to Address Homelessness

The Lancaster County Community Foundation recently awarded \$19,000 in grants to support 10 local nonprofit organizations. The United Way of Lancaster County received a \$2,500 grant for the Lancaster Area Coalition for the Homeless to provide hygiene kits for the county's first homeless shelter.

Among recent grants: \$3,000 to the Alston Wilkes Society Christian Services to provide basic needs to those at risk of homelessness, and \$2,000 to Christian Services to support their Emergency Assistance Food Pantry.

Salisbury-Rowan Funds Education Programs

The Salisbury-Rowan Community Foundation awarded \$315,024 to local nonprofits. This included a \$7,000 grant to ApSeed Early Education for its program "A Path to Kindergarten," through which ApSeed will provide NC Pre-K Rowan with 200 Seedling touchpads to teach colors, shapes, letters and numbers.

For more information: ftc.org/RegionalAffiliates



Photo Credit: Dajia Peeler for QCity Metro

Kieth Cockrell, president, Bank of America Charlotte, and FFTC Governing Board member has made philanthropy a key priority in his life.

A Leader in Business and Philanthropy

When FFTC Governing Board member Kieth Cockrell reflects on his successes, he thinks of those who helped him succeed. He witnessed immense generosity from his grandmother, coaches and teachers, and those memories guide his charitable vision.

He learned the power of generosity from his grandparents, who raised him and were always willing to help others — even though they were not wealthy themselves. When he and his wife, Serena, lived in San Francisco, they began their philanthropic journey by supporting the American Diabetes Association in honor of his grandmother, who was diabetic. They also began supporting United Way.

After moving to Charlotte, the Cockrells expanded their charitable giving to other groups, including those supporting education and the arts.

Today, Cockrell serves on the boards of many Charlotte organizations, in addition to his leadership role at FFTC. It was through the Foundation, however, that he and Serena learned about using donor advised funds to simplify their giving while maximizing impact.

He affiliated his FFTC Donor Advised Fund with Foundation For Black Philanthropy to highlight the power of Black philanthropy and join a network of others who share a common vision for empowering Black communities.

“My wife and I, we have been the beneficiaries of a lot of support from many people over the course of our lives,” he explained. “We are trying to support others who are just behind us, so to speak, on this journey.”

This is an excerpt from a FOCUS story. Read more about Kieth’s giving story: PhilanthropyFOCUS.org/Kieth

Learn more about Foundation For Black Philanthropy: fftc.org/FFBP

PhilanthropyFOCUS.org

FFTC is putting the FOCUS on philanthropy with our storytelling website, featuring profiles of local philanthropists, nonprofits and community partners, as well as giving tips on how to make an even greater impact. Visit PhilanthropyFOCUS.org.



FFTC Welcomes New Governing Board Members

The work of Foundation For The Carolinas is guided by our Governing Board of Directors, led by Board Chair Arrington Mixon and made up of local leaders from our 13-county region who provide stewardship, oversight and vision. The board recently welcomed five new members, including:

- ▶ **Jeff Brown**, CEO, Ally Bank
- ▶ **Sharyn Ellison**, Executive Director, Ellison Family Foundation
- ▶ **Todd Gorelick**, Senior Managing Director & Co-CEO, Bridge Single-Family Rental
- ▶ **Tropzie McCluney**, Civic Leader & Executive Director, Community Math Academy
- ▶ **Dr. Edward Serna**, President, Winthrop University



Jeff Brown



Sharyn Ellison



Todd Gorelick



Tropzie McCluney



Dr. Edward Serna

For a complete list of our 2023 Governing Board of Directors: fftc.org/GoverningBoard

Foundation Team News

Welcome New FFTC Employees

Stephanie Mudd joined FFTC as vice president, regional business development. She manages business development and relationship management for our footprint outside Mecklenburg County, including our network of regional professional advisors.



Stephanie Mudd

Federico Rios joined FFTC as senior vice president of the Robinson Center for Civic Leadership. He will provide leadership, strategic planning and management for the Foundation's civic engagement and initiatives.



Federico Rios

Natalie Wolf joined FFTC as director of investments. A certified investment management analyst, Natalie leads the internal investment team, which monitors all aspects of FFTC's investment portfolios. She joined us in connection with the retirement of Greg Beuris, FFTC's vice president & director — investment portfolio oversight & reporting, who recently stepped away after more than 30 years in finance.



Natalie Wolf

FFTC Leadership

Alyssa Federico was promoted to senior vice president, finance and facilities. In addition to continuing her leadership of FFTC's finance department, she will also oversee building facilities.

Elizabeth Kiser was promoted to senior vice president, philanthropic advancement and community programs. She will now lead business development, relationship management and competitive grantmaking throughout our 13-county region.

Deviré Robinson was promoted to vice president, philanthropic advancement and centers for giving. In this new role, he will oversee business development and relationship management with our personal, corporate and nonprofit fundholders.

Laura Smith will serve as interim president and CEO of FFTC through the end of 2023. She continues to also serve as president and CEO of the Carolina Theatre, and will resume her role as FFTC's chief operating officer in 2024.

Awards

FFTC Information Technology team: Technology Association of Grantmakers' Community Leadership Award



FFTC's technology team was recognized for presenting a series of webinars on digital transformation, business analytics and project management.

Bringing Your Charitable Vision to Life: Three Centers, One Goal

By Deviré Robinson, Philanthropic Advancement and Centers for Giving

I often refer to myself as a “recovering attorney” because, almost a decade ago, I left a career practicing commercial litigation to work in philanthropy. I made this change because I wanted to use my skills to make a larger difference in the community. That led me to FFTC in 2015, where I found I could make a tremendous impact working with nonprofit and corporate fundholders.



Deviré Robinson

In my new position as vice president of philanthropic advancement and centers for giving, I'm able to expand that impact, working with all of FFTC's more than 3,000 fundholders through our three philanthropic centers: the Center for Personal Philanthropy, the Center for Corporate Philanthropy and the Center for Nonprofit Sustainability.

While each center engages with a different audience, all three are doing similar work — helping to facilitate charitable contributions in support of community needs. Our singular goal is to help our fundholders fulfill their philanthropic wishes in the best way possible, and we offer a variety of ways to achieve that, from donor advised funds to establishing a planned gift, from managing nonprofit endowments to helping companies engage their employees in their philanthropic strategies.

Each of our fundholders is unique, which is why we offer a variety of ways to assist our clients. But it's important for us to remember how connected each of our fundholders are between our three Centers for Giving. You might work for a potential corporate fundholder and volunteer with a potential nonprofit client. The philanthropic advancement team can help connect all those dots.

Because, in the end, we want our fundholders engaged — with us, with their community and with the causes they believe in. We want each client to make the biggest impact they can — whether that is through a donation, or volunteering for a service project, or joining the board of a nonprofit they admire.

I started my philanthropic journey with a drive to be of value to others and make a real difference in our community. And I love working with clients who want to do the same.

Our philanthropic advancement team is here to help you make a difference. Learn how we can assist you: fftc.org/Open_a_Fund

PhilanthropyFOCUS.org

Want more advice from FFTC? Visit PhilanthropyFOCUS.org/Expert



Lulu, Mervil and Inky sit for a family portrait in the reception trailer of Carolina Poodle Rescue in Pacolet, SC, moments after signing Lulu's adoption papers. Mervil is a passionate animal lover.



Above: Tribute books Mervil designed for friends and family. Right: *Coinkydink*, from Mervil's family art show, featuring prints both of her mothers had hanging in their respective dining rooms in the '60s.



The Artist, Her Vision and Her Legacy

Local artist Mervil Paylor and Foundation For The Carolinas go way back. The relationship spans more than two decades, and in that time, she's done more than leave a mark on the organization — she's created it.

Mervil has designed everything from the Foundation's logo to its brand identity, annual reports and other collateral pieces, as well as invitations, programs and other key visual elements for FFTC's Annual Meetings. She even crafted the "Inspiring the Art of Philanthropy" tagline to blend the Foundation's core work with the beautiful donor art on display in its headquarters.

For more than 30 years, Mervil Paylor Design has been a sought-after graphic design firm whose client list includes the Foundation, along with Davidson College, The Duke Endowment, Arts & Science Council, the Mint Museums, ImaginOn, Johnson & Wales and many others. You'll notice a lot of nonprofits on that list. Mervil's favorite work is "helping people who help people."

"Part of Mervil's magic is that she has a rare combination of deep creativity and artistic talent along with keen business acumen," said Tara Keener, senior vice president of marketing and communications for FFTC. "She takes the time to understand our business needs, and then finds highly creative ways to achieve our goals. Her work isn't just beautiful — there is substance and strategy behind every piece she creates."

Leaving a Legacy

Mervil's impact on the Foundation has been immeasurable, but the Foundation has impacted Mervil, too.

"Through my work with Foundation For The Carolinas, I've come to understand more about planned giving," she said. "When I was doing my estate planning, I decided to leave a gift



Mervil holding her namesake — Mervil, client and friend Ann Browning's Rhode Island Red chicken.

through the Foundation. I knew I could trust them, and they were great about not pressuring me to decide everything *right now*."

A planned gift is a charitable contribution from a donor that takes effect after they pass. For Mervil's gift, she has chosen two focus areas — animal welfare and the environment. Both causes are close to Mervil's heart and an important part of her life.

"I found Lulu after COVID," she explained. "I had another dog that died before COVID, and I took time to grieve that loss. Once we began coming out of the pandemic, I decided to look for a second dog. I like to have two; I like them to have canine companionship."

A previous rescue — a poodle-mix named Lucy — destroyed the upholstery on a sofa and the window blinds. Mervil didn't get mad when she came home to the mess. Once she got over the initial shock, she declared the wreckage a work of art, photographed it and turned it into a poster titled "Lucy, Mixed Media Sculpture, 2006."

Mervil finds beauty in the unlikeliest places.

"I've known all of Mervil's pets since we met, and they've all been rescues," her friend Ann Browning said. "She cares for them in such a tender way. Animals have a big place in her heart."

The Foundation works closely with individuals like Mervil to create a plan based on their unique charitable passions, vision and goals, whether it's to address evolving community needs or to support causes that have a special place in their heart. There is, after all, an art to it.

To learn more about leaving a legacy through a planned gift, contact Sara Piner, VP Planned Giving at spiner@fftc.org

PhilanthropyFOCUS.org

This is an excerpt from a FOCUS story. Read more about Mervil's giving story: [PhilanthropyFOCUS.org/Mervil](https://www.philanthropyfocus.org/Mervil)

Fundholders Empower Students With FFTC Scholarship Funds

In 1979, Lucille Finch Jones established FFTC's first scholarship fund, supporting students attending Queens University of Charlotte. Today, we manage more than 150 funds for companies, nonprofits and individuals who want to support students' school and career ambitions. In 2022, FFTC awarded more than \$2.7 million to support the education of nearly 1,100 students.

One of our newest funds was established as part of a planned gift from the late Robert and Jewell Lee, residents of Albemarle, N.C., who affiliated their fund with the Stanly County Community Foundation (one of FFTC's 13 regional affiliates). The Robert and Jewell Lee Scholarship Endowment provides need-based funding for residents of eight counties to attend local community colleges.

The impact on local students is best told through their own words. Following are comments from recent recipients on how the scholarship will help them bring their career goals to life:

"My life goal is to become a registered nurse and begin helping people. Going to school at Stanly will help me achieve this goal in just two short years."

– Angela Harvell (Oakboro, N.C., studying Nursing at Stanly Community College)

"I feel like I have a bigger reason to achieve my goals; not only for myself and my family but for my daughters and their future.

They are my motivation to work harder and to complete the radiography program. The only obstacle I currently have is financial."

– Jenny Hua (Indian Trail, N.C., studying Radiology at Stanly Community College)

"I've always had a passion for helping others. Not only would this scholarship allow me to better myself and my future but to do it while stress free."

– McKinley Rinehardt (Richfield, N.C., studying Radiology at Stanly Community College)



The Robert and Jewell Lee Scholarship Endowment helps students attend Stanly Community College and other local community colleges.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Catching up with Chris Moxley



Chris Moxley

When Chris Moxley received a scholarship from Greater Steps Scholars (previously known as the Charlotte Housing Authority Scholarship Fund) to attend UNC Charlotte, it was a watershed moment. Having grown up in a public housing community, he had not realized just how much he could contribute to our community.

After graduating from college, Chris worked for TIAA before becoming a successful entrepreneur. And he is committed to giving back to his community: He's currently a board member for the UNC Charlotte Foundation, and serves on the City of Charlotte Business Advisory Committee as well as the executive Committee of the Charlotte Regional Business Alliance.

Read the full story about Chris and Greater Steps Scholars: [PhilanthropyFOCUS.org/Steps](https://www.philanthropyfocus.org/steps)

Did You Know?

FFTC also manages corporate scholarship funds that benefit students, as well as employees of client companies and their families. A few examples include:

- ▶ **Advocates for African Americans Carolinas Scholarship**
This fund is supported by a Duke Energy resource group of African American employees, awarding scholarships to college-bound students pursuing majors in such fields as engineering, science, accounting and business.
- ▶ **Carolinas-Virginias Retail Hardware Scholarship**
Scholarships are awarded to children of employees of its region's National Retail Hardware Association firms.
- ▶ **Crowder Scholarship Fund**
Scholarships are awarded to the children of employees who work for general contracting companies headquartered in Mecklenburg County.

Establish Your Own Scholarship

You too can create a scholarship fund. Share your unique vision with us, whether to honor a loved one, support students at your alma mater or another goal.

Our experts will tailor a program that brings your vision to life, managing the administration from start to finish.

Learn more: [fftcc.org/Scholarships](https://www.fftcc.org/Scholarships)



An Event to Remember

220 North Tryon at Foundation For The Carolinas offers unique, art-filled event spaces to celebrate holidays, retirements, weddings and other special occasions.

With an art gallery, sculpture garden and solarium overlooking expansive city views, 220 North Tryon can make your celebration an event to remember.

Contact us at events@fftc.org.

Revenue generated from our event spaces allows us to offer complimentary meeting space to local nonprofits and to share our gallery with the community.



at Foundation For The Carolinas

Visit fftc.org/Events for more information

Our newsletter, *Philanthropy Focus*, is designed to inform and interest donors, clients and friends of the Foundation. We welcome your suggestions at focus@fftc.org.

Cover Photo Credit: Kyle J. Britt



Volunteers help narrow the digital divide by distributing laptops to local residents.

Monthly Opportunities to Serve & Connect

In January, Foundation For The Carolinas began offering new Monthly Service Opportunities, highlighting a different nonprofit and group volunteering project each month.

Designed to build relationships and connections between FFTC fundholders and the nonprofits that serve our region, projects have included sorting books and school supplies with Freedom School Partners, distributing laptops with Charlotte Mecklenburg Library and the MeckTech Program and preparing non-perishable food items for food pantries with Loaves & Fishes/ Friendship Trays.

We invite you and your family to join FFTC staff, fundholders and partners as we serve and make a positive impact together.

Visit fftc.org/UpcomingEvents or email nonprofits@fftc.org for upcoming opportunities



In January, fundholders volunteered with Freedom School Partners, a nonprofit focused on summer literacy and enrichment for under-resourced students.

Editorial Staff:

Tara Keener
Erica Tomashitis
Susan Gray

Ashley Thurmond
Timothy Hager
Loren Allison

Jennifer McClave