**Charleston Main Streets**

The past 13 years have collectively been transformative for the West Side and East End of Charleston. These very unique and different neighborhoods and business districts are two thirds of the total urban core of this beautiful city and have been lucky enough to each have nationally certified Main Street programs focusing on business and community development for well over a decade. Charleston is the only city in West Virginia to have two certified Main Streets. What does a Main Street organization do, you may ask? Main Street is a network of over 1,000 programs that build social and economic capital for business development through focus on urban design, marketing & promotions, program development, and business development.

This development model is certainly used here in Charleston, and we have poised ourselves in a unique position as an organization that fosters the growth of urban-focused programs. As an urban Main Street, we face exciting opportunities and different challenges than our suburban and rural counterparts; and yes, we are certainly up for that challenge!

Over the past year Charleston East End Main Street and Charleston West Side Main Street went through the process of creating a very unique and exciting new organization being referred to as an Administrative Connection, rather than just a “merger.” Why an Administrative Connection? We take deep pride and have vast appreciation for the unique cultures and programmatic aspects these two business districts and programs have built over the past 13 years (East End) and 10 years (West Side). We understand these cultures and community brands take years to construct and recognize the wildly successful events like HallowEast, OktoberWest, the East End Pub Crawl, and the West Side Old Fashioned Ice Cream Social help further market and advertise the appeal to living and shopping in these districts.

While appreciating the differences in culture, there is a common thread throughout the two programs that can always be strengthened: the need for built administrative capacity, a more robust and comprehensive staff structure, and a streamlined process for economic, property, and business development throughout the city. The newly formed organization, Charleston Main Streets, through this Administrative Connection, will achieve these goals and build an even stronger, more sustainable economic and community development organization that only leaves room for growth on the East End, West Side, and beyond.

I am extremely excited to be the first leader of this new organization and anticipate large strides in development to occur at an even faster rate. I am also very proud to call the Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation an ongoing strategic partner in our district development initiatives like Gallery 64 on the West Side and the upcoming Gateway Enhancement project on the East End. Right now, we’re seeing new life being breathed into the Staats Hospital building on the West Side’s Historic Elk City District. We’re watching a building at the corner of Elizabeth St. and Washington Street, East on the East End finally begin the renewal process. We’re seeing more and more entrepreneurs wanting to start their first venture, whether it be Tesori on Five Corners, or Hidden Trails in the East End Warehouse District, in the urban core of Charleston. With the continued support and partnerships with TGKVF, the City of Charleston, the Charleston Urban Renewal Authority, our countless volunteers, talented new Boards of Advisors and Board of Directors, and our recently expanded staff of Program Directors for each district, Charleston Main Streets is poised to take the countless successes of its affiliate programs and set new precedents on a national level in the realm of economic and business development in our beautiful Capital City. I look forward to serving you and working with other community leaders to continue to make real change in Charleston.
Increasing Philanthropy’s Impact

Large-scale social change comes from cross-sector coordination rather than from isolated individual organizations. Substantially greater progress can be made in alleviating many of our most serious and complex social problems if nonprofits, governments, businesses, and the public work together on a common agenda. This doesn’t happen often, not because it is impossible but because we rarely attempt it. Funders and nonprofits alike overlook the potential for collective impact because they are used to focusing on independent action as the primary vehicle for social change.

The nonprofit sector and funders often operate under the approach of finding and funding a solution by a single organization, combined with the hope that the most effective organizations will grow or others will replicate their findings and thereby extend the impact more widely. According to an article in the Stanford Social Innovation Review authored by John Kania and Mark Kramer, nearly 1.4 million nonprofits try to invent independent solutions to major social problems, often working at odds with each other thus increasing the resources required to make meaningful progress. No single organization is responsible for any major social problem, nor can any single organization cure it.

The problem with relying on the isolated impact of organizations is further compounded by the isolation of the nonprofit sector. Social problems arise from the interplay of governmental and commercial activities, not only from the behavior of social sector organizations. As a result, complex problems can be solved only by cross-sector coalitions that engage those outside the nonprofit sector.

Creating a successful collective impact initiative requires a significant financial investment: The time participating organizations must dedicate to the work, the development and monitoring of shared measurement systems, and the staff of a lead organization needed to support the initiative’s ongoing work. Funders must be willing to let grantees steer the work and have the patience to stay with an initiative for years, recognizing that social change can come from the gradual improvement of an entire system over time, not just from one single breakthrough by an individual organization.

This requires a fundamental change in how funders see their role, from funding organizations to leading a long-term process of social change. It is no longer enough to fund an innovative solution created by a single nonprofit or to build that organization’s capacity. Instead, funders must help create and sustain the collective processes, measurement reporting systems, and community leadership that enable cross-sector coalitions to arise and thrive.

Originally published in the Charleston Gazette, Dec. 29, 2011.
Agency Spotlight

Submitted by Ellen Allen, Executive Director, Covenant House

Darryl Henry grew up in Charleston, so he has known about Covenant House for a while. He was staying in the Crossroads Men’s Shelter and struggling with addiction when he decided to give us a call and ask for help. Two years later, he’s clean and living in housing provided by the Housing First Program.

Darryl has a big family, but they’ve never been very close, so he was on his own after he made some bad choices and became addicted to drugs. He started using Covenant House services to wash his clothes, secure food vouchers, and just spend some time inside out of the cold before finally choosing to set himself on the path to recovery. Through countless trials and tribulations, Darryl has stayed clean and on the straight and narrow — above all, he wants to make sure that nothing gets in the way of his hard-won personal success. Having a place to live is a huge source of pride for Darryl, and he’ll do anything to make sure he stays where he is.

Darryl glowed when asked about what it felt like to get housing after going without for so long. “There’s nothing like it. It’s the best feeling in the world. It’s priceless - it’s a blessing from God. To be responsible enough to take care of something that you really need is amazing. The only way I would lose this is if I give up on my responsibilities on the part I play with the help I’m receiving. And that isn’t going to happen.”

Personal responsibility is a huge part of Darryl’s life - it’s what keeps him sober and on track. He recognizes that stories like his are far too common, and wants to let others know that recovery IS possible.

“We all have a history,” says Darryl. “If you don’t want more than the street, that’s all you’ll have. But when you look inside yourself and accept your responsibilities, you can get help. You’re only going to suffer as long as you’re willing to suffer.”

Thanks to the consistent support provided by Covenant House, Darryl (and many others like him) hopes to stay off of the street for the rest of his life.

Happy Holidays

One of the top 100 community foundations in the nation.

One of the top 30 innovative community foundations in the nation.
A sample of the people working hard to make a forward-thinking and closely connected community. Thank you.

AAPA
American Heart Assoc.
Arts in Action
Charleston Ballet
Coalfield Development Group
CODA Mountain Music Academy
College Summit
East End Family Resource Center
Education Alliance
Good News Mountaineer Garage
Habitat for Humanity/ReStore
Keys 4 Healthy Kids
Lincoln Co. Afterschool Program/West Hamlin Elementary
Rea of Hope
United Way of Central WV
womanSong
The TGKVF staff having fun and staying in touch with projects throughout the region.
Foundation Announces Fourth Quarter Grants

At its December 9, 2015 meeting, The Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation’s Board of Trustees approved for funding seven grants in the 4th quarter of 2015. There are 69 collaborative partners involved in the approved projects and the Foundation sees these collaborative efforts as the key to achieving TGKVF’s strategic goals. These seven grants total $356,878.00.

Appalachian Reading Center - $55,541.00 (Education)

As a coalition, the Appalachian Reading Center and The Bridge of Mission WV will partner with Clay County Schools to provide outreach in Clay County. The coalition will identify and tutor dyslexic and reading deficient students within foster or kinship care; services will be provided at no charge to participants. Funds will help support training and stipends for tutors, materials for students and families, and scholarships for regional youth to attend the Reading Center.

CADCO Foundation/ Charleston Area Alliance- $11,705.00 (Civic Engagement and Leadership)

Funds will support the Leadership Kanawha Valley (LK V) Program a multi-disciplinary leadership identification, enrichment and networking program in the Kanawha Valley dedicated to developing a robust pipeline of diverse civic leaders to serve the region.

Coalfield Development Corporation- $74,200.00 (Health)

Refresh Appalachia, a regional economic and workforce development initiative, will establish a sustainable training and development program to increase the success of beginning farmers in Lincoln County. By working with Step by Step, Unlimited Future and Lincoln County Schools, the project will strengthen local food systems, increase access to healthy food, and aggregate and distribute produce to meet regional markets. Funding will support staffing, training, and building materials.

KEYS for Healthy Kids- $53,954.00 (Health)

This project will increase exposure of WV children in child care centers to edible gardens and outdoor natural learning environments. KEYS will work with 8 childcare centers to train them in the KEY 2 a Healthy Start program (which is a primary obesity prevention strategy in early care and education) and provide them with edible gardens. They will also be providing 3 centers who are previous graduates of KEY 2 a Healthy Start with natural learning environments that will be open to the community. Funding will support staffing and materials as well as construction of the gardens and natural learning environments.

Regional Family Resource Network- $71,728.00 (Special Initiative)

This project partners with organizations in each of TGKVF’s six counties to meet the basic needs of families with babies. The assistance will be offered through a range of services such as: an intake process at each pantry that will assist families with unmet needs, provision of diapers and formula as needed, the obtainment of an official birth certificate as needed, and each pantry will offer at least one family education component at each visit.

River City Youth Ballet- $39,750 (Special Initiative)

The partners for this collaborative project are the River City Youth Ballet, Appalachian Children’s Chorus, and the West Virginia Youth Symphony. Funding will assist with the production of “A World of Imagination” at the Clay Center which will showcase all three groups and be open to student audiences from Boone, Clay, Fayette, Lincoln, Kanawha and Putnam counties. River City Youth Ballet and the West Virginia Youth Symphony will also offer classes at the Clendenin Middle School to children in the northern section of Kanawha and Clay counties who would like to take classes in ballet and violin.

Organizations Serving Those Experiencing Homelessness-$50,000 (Special Initiative)

Field of interest funds designated to help those experiencing homelessness will be split between five organizations that service the homeless within TGKVF area. The organizations that will receive funding are YWCA Sojourners Shelter, Roark Sullivan Lifeway Center, Manna Meal, Daymark and Covenant House.
Upcoming dates:
Dec. 9 TGKVF Board of Trustees mtg.
Dec. 16 TGKVF Scholarship reception
Dec. 24, 25 TGKVF office closed
Jan. 1 TGKVF office closed
Jan. 15 Scholarship applications due date

Community Connections is a cable television series hosted and produced by TGKVF staff. Guests include nonprofit and local leaders who promote their organizations, services, and upcoming events.

The show is broadcast on KCS-TV, channel 17 and shown twice daily for one week each month. In addition, the segments are uploaded to TGKVF’s youtube channel and facebook page where they can be shared by others to their social media outlets.

How do you want to be remembered?

If you want to start a fund to support the Vision, Mission, and Goals featured in these pages, contact the Foundation at 304.346.3620.

TGKVF, one of the top 100 community foundations in the nation.