The US Census identifies more than one half of the population living and working on the West Side of Charleston as living below the poverty line, thus indicating the likelihood of food insecurity. Additionally, a 2014 national Child Trends report highlights that growing up in poverty shapes brain structure in ways that hinder development, prompting depression and behavior problems; however, when we promote caring relationships, and help children learn wellness-promoting skills, such as social-competence and problem-solving, we increase the odds that children — even when they face adversity — will thrive. In a research article published in 2013 by The American School Health Association findings show that social-emotional character development programs improve academic achievement and improve student behavior and health by way of fostering such factors as improved school climate, emotional regulation, attention, and executive functioning skills.

Keep Your Faith Corporation, Inc. (KYFC) is a growing grassroots nonprofit organization operating on Charleston’s West Side since 2006. KYFC works with several partners to increase community enrichment through outreach services focused on improving the lives of children and families in the local area.

**Literacy. Empowerment. Community.**

These are the founding and operating pillars of KYFC’s service efforts and guide the direction of programming and outreach activities. It’s important to note that early KYFC school-based programs were developed to address reading and spelling deficits in students on Charleston’s West Side, a personal mission rooted in the experience of
the CEO and founder of KYFC, Dural Miller, who was raised in the service area and overcame reading and associated social difficulties as a youth. KYFC understands the importance in the connection between social-emotional output, a positive sense-of-self, a sense of connectedness, and academic performance. Assisting students and their families in meeting basic needs and supporting improved functioning in school and at home builds on the strengths of communities and promotes improved opportunities for enrichment positively impacting the living experience of all families living and working in the local area.

**Gardening Education Programs**

KYFC’s program initiatives have expanded with these deficits in mind, addressing barriers to resources that move the individual, family, and community forward. In 2014 KYFC designed a school-based garden that provides an outdoor learning space for programming focused on improving agricultural and nutritional literacy while promoting positive academic and social development among the population served. KYFC uses traditional and urban indoor and outdoor gardening strategies to improve the functioning of participating students through coordinated efforts under the West Side Grown and Horticultural Therapy programs piloted at Mary C. Snow West Side Elementary.

The “West Side Grown” (WSG) program, supported by The Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation and community partners utilizes a token system to promote entrepreneurship and a sense of economy within the community while improving access to fresh fruits and vegetables as well as nutritional and agricultural literacy. The Horticultural Therapy Program (HTP) focuses primarily on improving social-emotional regulation and social skills for improved learning and development.

The term “Horticultural Therapy” describes the intentional development of gardening, or plant dominated space shaped to meet the needs of any identified population for the purpose of improving health and wellness. Goals and outcomes of horticultural therapy can vary across specialized populations where benefits can be observed across several areas of functioning and development — intellectual, social, emotional, and physical. The practice of horticultural therapy is not a new treatment modality; rather, work in the garden has been described as curative throughout the history of psychotherapy, positively impacting both primary and behavioral health determinants.

KYFC’s approach to therapeutic gardening through the Horticultural Therapy Program has proven benefits in addressing anxiety, depression, stress reduction, emotional management, behavior management, social skills, healthy lifestyle choices, cognitive development, self-esteem, and empowerment. Student gardeners witness and nurture plant growth from a dormant stage to blooming in quarterly periods throughout the school year while being supported in failures and successes of maintenance and harvest. The garden constructs a setting for catharsis (renewal of emotion) while a clinical school-based therapist utilizes a developmental guidance approach to improve the students’ understanding of stress-response and the connection between thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. Students can be linked to professional counseling and individualized services where the need is identified.
The Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation (TGKVF) is on a journey to become more, a journey that is being propelled by our love for humankind, which is the true meaning of the word philanthropy. We are becoming more than just a source of funds for nonprofits.

The Foundation is also a capacity building resource — helping nonprofits to strengthen their operations, build their infrastructure, and develop leadership. This evolving role is evidenced by the positive feedback from our first ever conference — Building Bridges for Good Measure — which was held last November at Adventures on the Gorge in Fayette County. The conference included 25 workshops on leadership, fund development, financial management, evaluation, and program delivery. There was also a funders’ panel and three plenaries on topics pertinent to the nonprofit sector. We had to close registration at 180 attendees after surpassing our 150 attendee goal.

The Foundation is becoming more by serving as an active, visionary community agenda-setter as demonstrated by our creative placemaking efforts. In creative placemaking, public, private, not-for-profit, and community sectors partner to strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, tribe, city, or region through arts and cultural activities. In May 2017 we convened a diverse group to explore how we can make Charleston even more supportive of artists. With more than 30 stakeholders in attendance, including visual and performance artists, city and state government officials, arts and cultural organizations, community and economic development practitioners, philanthropic organizations, restauranteurs, and the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB), intentional creative placemaking in Charleston began to take shape.

The “Branding Charleston as an Arts Community Workgroup” that evolved from this gathering is one of the most productive of the five workgroups that formed. This volunteer workgroup includes Monika Jaensson (TGKVF board member and patent attorney), John Auge (Auge+Gray+Drake), Alisa Bailey (CVB), and Ian Bode (visual artist). Putting indigenous art in the public spotlight is the focus of the Charleston CVB’s new marketing campaign, “Art From the Hip,” which evolved from the efforts of the workgroup and riffs off of the CVB’s already existing “Hip, Historic, Almost Heaven” campaign. Revealed in February 2018, “Art From the Hip” is an initiative to display local art in businesses and public places throughout Charleston. Currently, “Art From the Hip” exhibits are located at the Charleston Marriott Town Center, Black Sheep Burritos and Brews, Four Points by Sheraton, Gonzoburger, and Charleston Town Center Mall. Each piece of work is tagged with the local artist’s name, the name of the work, and the price if the piece is for sale. The CVB is working with additional businesses — some with local art already on display — to expand the “Art From the Hip” campaign. The CVB also has Food From the Hip, Recreation From the Hip, and Music From the Hip campaigns.
The desire to become more is an aspiration that should extend beyond TGKVF. As a community, we become more when we are careful to remember the plight of the marginalized; when we feed those who are hungry; when we are kind to strangers in our midst; when we clothe those who are naked; and when we take care of those who are physically and mentally sick. This movement towards becoming more may include making strategic investments to support some controversial initiatives that will yield significant returns downstream.

When I think about our charge as a community foundation, I am reminded of a quote that I often return to from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. As Dr. King wrote, “We are now faced with the fact that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. In this unfolding conundrum of life and history, there “is” such a thing as being too late. This is no time for apathy or complacency. This is a time for vigorous and positive action.”

As the Foundation works on becoming more, we will maintain a sense of urgency. We will work collaboratively to address the urgent issues of the region, like the opioid epidemic. We will keep pushing as we strive to make a difference through our nonprofit partners. In doing so, we will forever be grateful for the support of our donors.

Furthermore, as the Foundation works to become more, we will continue to strengthen our nonprofit partners who are on the front lines every day; they are our heroes and she-roes. We will find ways to help them do their work better. We will show them our respect and admiration as they are helping us to achieve our mission.

Finally, as TGKVF works to become more, we will share the stories of our nonprofit partners and the impact that our donors’ community investments have made on our neighbors. Please refer to **www.tgkvf.org** for a film entitled “West Side Stories of Becoming More.” The film features a few of our nonprofit partners who are passionately transforming lives on Charleston’s West Side, one resident at a time.

**Go to tgkvf.org for information about how to support the The Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation’s work**

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**FOUNDATION SPOTLIGHT**

**Candace Krell**
Grants Manager

Candace Krell began working with The Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation (TGKVF) as a consultant in 2016 and transitioned to full-time work with the Foundation in 2018. She received a BA in visual communication from the University of Kansas in 2009 and a BS in Elementary Education from Fort Hayes State University in 2016. Prior to her work with TGKVF, she worked as a graphic designer, email marketing coordinator, customer service representative, and student teacher. Candace has worked in a number of different industries and held various kinds of jobs, but finds that she is happiest when she is doing work that is meaningful.

In her free time, Candace enjoys travelling with her husband, spending time with her two pugs, Gwendolyn and Salvy, and cuddling with her cat Maude. She is an avid knitter and a firm believer that all you need is love.

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**“Branding Charleston as an Arts Community Workgroup” L to R: Ian Bode, Michelle Foster, Monika Jaensson, John Auge, Alisa Bailey, Kevin Madison, and Jeff Pierson.**
Foundation Announces 2018 Second Quarter Discretionary Grants

Regional Family Resource Network - Families Leading Change: $30,000 (Education)
Families Leading Change, a statewide grassroots movement, has partners across the education system to engage, promote, and train families who want to strengthen their community. This second-year renewal grant will allow further engagement of families in TGKVF’s service area, providing mini-grants for projects, training, and technical assistance.

Southern Appalachian Labor School - Accent Education Project: $18,000 (Education)
The Accent Education Project will serve rural, at-risk students in the Upper Kanawha Valley and western Fayette County during the 2018-19 school year, including the summer of 2018. The program will provide core academic support with STREAM emphasis and enrichment opportunities for students and their families in a safe environment. As a fourth year renewal, this grant will support staffing, supplies, and meals for families.

Pollen8, Inc. - Appalachian Academy: $13,000 (Education)
The academy provides tutoring and homework assistance, enrichment classes, behavioral support, mentoring, and free nutritional meals to a cohort of 15 scholars who are rising 5th-7th graders. This second-year collaboration includes Pollen8, Inc., the City of South Charleston, South Charleston Middle School, and Richmond and Bridgeview Elementary Schools.

EnAct, Inc. - Graduation Mentoring Program: $18,600 (Education)
EnAct’s partnership with LifeBridge AmeriCorps supports the Graduation Mentoring Program. The program provides individualized support to with Boone and Clay County high school students with credit recovery, academic success, and

“This meeting lasted five hours instead of three! The parents didn’t want to leave. It was a LONG overdue day of support.”
– John Barton, a parent and project team leader.

“Before he started attending the program, he was always misbehaving in school and at home…since enrolling in the program, his grades and behavior are so much better.”
– Parent of afterschool participant

“A young girl was reading two grade levels behind when she came to the Academy, but through the work and focus of staff, she has been receiving higher than usual marks in school in reading and her confidence grows weekly.”
– Pollen8 program leader

“I have nothing but praise for EnAct’s Graduation Mentoring Program at Scott High School…. More importantly, they helped students recover 173 credits, which helped 36 seniors graduate.”
– Jacob Messer, Scott High School Principal

TGKVF awarded seven responsive grants totaling $155,500 to Arts & Culture and Basic Needs programs and eight grants totaling $208,529 in the Foundation’s proactive priority areas of Education, Health, and Community Economic Development.
life beyond high school. This first-year grant from TGKVF supports the cost of stipends for AmeriCorps members and the required supplies to implement the project.

**WV Food & Farm Coalition, Inc. - Kanawha Valley Local Food Placemaking Project: $30,000 (CED)**

This project will help farmers markets within TGKVF’s footprint become ready to accept Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) by providing incentives through WV SNAP Stretch and engaging attendees through family-friendly programming at farmers markets. The project will also assist two communities in developing and executing placemaking projects involving local foods.

**Future of Nursing WV - Nurse Entrepreneur Pilot Project: $25,000 (CED)**

In this pilot project, the Future of Nursing WV will collaborate with nursing and business building partners to provide the identification, education, coaching, and ongoing networking that nurses need to build and sustain independent health businesses. Funding will support staffing, training, and curricula development.

**Women’s Health Center of West Virginia, Inc. - Oral Health Education and Dental Care for Low-Income Pregnant Women and Infants: $31,929 (Health)**

The Women’s Health Center of West Virginia will provide oral health literacy education and dental care access to low-income, Medicaid-insured, high-risk pregnant women and parents of high-risk infants. These services will be offered in collaboration with West Virginia Health Right’s dental clinic to increase access to preventative dental care and improve health outcomes. This fourth year, renewal grant supports the Right from the Start social worker and supplies for the program.

**Kanawha County Schools (Mary C. Snow) - Providing Holistic Care for Students on Charleston’s West Side: $42,000 (Health)**

This funding will allow the school nurse to serve Mary C. Snow Elementary School as a full-time Health Care Coordinator. As coordinator, she serves as the liaison between the school and on-site dental clinic, Family Care Health Center; Handle with Care, Legal Aid, WV DHHR, and Project Launch initiatives. In so doing, the coordinator facilitates the engagement of the West Side community in holistic practices that promote good health.

**Arts in Action - Classroom and Performance Supplies: $20,000 (Arts/Culture)**

Arts in Action provides arts education and performance opportunities in Putnam and Kanawha counties. Funding will assist with dance, theater, and visual arts instruction; broadening the population served to include children and families.
youth with developmental and physical disabilities; and providing needs-based financial aid.

**Charleston Ballet, Inc. - Charleston Ballet Season: $17,000 (Arts & Culture)**
Funding will support the Charleston Ballet's 2018-19 season, assisting with guest artists' expenses for nine to ten programs in October, December, and March. All performances exhibit educational and cultural diversity components and have mass appeal to all ages and economic levels including BALLET FOR ALL and 21st Century Learning Programs.

**Community Development Outreach Ministries - Heart and Hand South Charleston & Heart and Hand Putnam County: $22,000 (Basic Needs)**
Heart and Hand serves some of our community's most vulnerable residents. Funding will support low-income families with their basic needs of shelter, food, clothing, baby needs, and clothing requirements for employment.

**Kanawha Valley Fellowship Home, Inc.: $22,000 (Basic Needs)**
The Kanawha Valley Fellowship Home is a transitional home for men in recovery from addiction. Funding will support utilities, food, and rent expenses.

**Mountain Mission, Inc. - Emergency Financial Assistance Program: $20,000 (Basic Needs)**
Mountain Mission's Emergency Financial Assistance Program provides low-income individuals and families with financial assistance to meet catastrophic housing, medical, and nutritional needs. Funding will help the organization serve 200 households (440 individuals) in Kanawha County, with an emphasis on Charleston's West Side community.

**REA of Hope Fellowship Home, Inc. - Rea of Hope Utilities: $22,000 (Basic Needs)**
Funding for this project will allow Rea of Hope to provide safe, affordable housing for West Virginia women focused on recovery from alcohol or drug addiction. This project houses women in a positive, homelike environment with an emphasis on the development of self-sufficiency.

**YWCA - YWCA Sojourner’s Shelter for Homeless Women and Families: $27,500 (Basic Needs)**
Funds will support operation and essential services costs associated with providing emergency housing and basic needs assistance to individuals and families experiencing homelessness in the community.

“There are no words to describe what this meant seeing someone on the stage that is a part of us.”
– Ms. Edna Green

“If you had not bought my clothes and boots, I would still be at Work Release doing nothing. Now I'm working on being free and supporting my family.”
– Chris, who first came to Heart + Hand as a volunteer through the Charleston Work Release program.

“Because of the Home, my Dad was able to regain the son he always wanted”
– Gabriel, 27 years old, became a resident of the Home in October of last year.

“By providing the support and guidance individuals need to address emergency situations, families and individuals can return to their pre-emergency situation and focus on improving their lives.”
– Mountain Mission Project Leader

“I had been full of guilt, regret, fear, and blame. I have learned forgiveness, faith, and accountability.”
– Rea of Hope resident

“At that time I had absolutely nowhere else to go. Thanks to Sojourner’s, now I have everything I need: clothing, food, security, and a home of my own. But even more than that, they helped me learn to budget my money and believe in myself again.”
– Rachael, Sojourner’s resident