Collaborative Giving Makes a Difference in Thomville Heights

Since 2018, the Community Foundation has worked to close the opportunity gap in the Thomville Heights neighborhood in southeast Atlanta. Began by our Spark Opportunity Giving Circle and their collective grantmaking, this place-focused approach has been a catalyst for additional investments. Our impact strategy includes grantmaking, strategic nonprofit partnerships, policy advocacy and THRIVE. Thomville, a resident-led council that directs funding to community-designed projects. THRIVE builds on neighborhood strengths and empowers community-led strategies to develop and address neighborhood needs by the residents who call it home.

In 2020, the place-based giving focus in Thomville Heights shifted to address the short-term and immediate needs of the Thomville Heights community, such as housing, food insecurity and emergency funds.

Examples of How Your Community Foundation Worked to Strengthen Our Region in 2020

These are just two of many programs tackling the issues and seeing outcomes to build a stronger, more equitable Atlanta.

The Program The Action The Impact

GoATL Fund The GoATL Fund accelerates outcomes in our community through impact investing, the practice of strategically investing capital to achieve both a social and a financial return. Using cost-effective loan capital, strategically investing capital to achieve both a social and a financial return. Using cost-effective loan capital, strategically investing capital to achieve both a social and a financial return. Using cost-effective loan capital, strategically investing capital to achieve both a social and a financial return. Using cost-effective loan capital, strategically investing capital to achieve both a social and a financial return. Using cost-effective loan capital, strategically investing capital to achieve both a social and a financial return. Using cost-effective loan capital, strategically investing capital to achieve both a social and a financial return. Using cost-effective loan capital.

GoATL Fund Investment Portfolio* $10,75M 8 PARTNERS

11% Well-being 1 therapy practice
9% Early Childhood Education (ECE) 32 ECE seats built or renovated
11% Housing 162 seats built or renovated
9% Multi-Family Housing 24 family units
8% Economic Inclusion 133 jobs created or retained; 21 small or micro-businesses financed
8% Single-Family Housing 31 affordable units
8% Faith Institutions 18 churchs

Donor Giving Increases Substantially in 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic was an unprecedented challenge for our community and the generosity of our donors increased dramatically in response. In partnership with our donors, the Community Foundation distributed $72 million in grants and support in 2020, compared to $38 million in 2019 – an increase of over 82%. In 2020, 72% of our total grant dollars were given from donor-advised funds. The increased generosity of our donors follows a national trend – community foundations across the country saw a collective estimated $6.7 billion for COVID-19 relief.

Combined Donor Giving Impacts Region Across Key Areas of Need

Helen Keller said “Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.” That sentiment is true of so many things, but especially giving. Through the Community Foundation, our donors work together to make a collective impact in Atlanta and beyond. Did you know that 72% of grants from the Community Foundation are donor-directed? Our donors are passionate about a diverse array of causes and it’s no surprise that the biggest program areas in 2020 were those most heavily hit by the pandemic, including education and healthcare.
The COVID-19 pandemic touched and disrupted every facet of our society. It ushered in a “perfect storm” of public health and economic crises not seen in our lifetimes, and exacerbated systemic inequities that many Georgians have suffered under for generations. In 2020, we, as an organization, individual donors, and so many others grappled with how to make a difference for those impacted. COVID-19 was like a knot, tangling around education, public health, transportation, and more. It was important to tackle the most urgent issues first, like food insecurity and emergency assistance for families to pay their bills, but the core of the knot was – and is – the most tangled. Why were so many of us poised to be disproportionately impacted by the pandemic? Historical and systemic racisms and policies have created ongoing and severe disparities. How can we advocate and use strategic giving to change that paradigm? We partner and invest in an equitable future.

Greater Atlanta COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund

In March of 2020, it became apparent that COVID-19 would have a huge impact on the Atlanta region. Children were out of school, businesses were temporarily closing, performances were shuttered and workers being laid off. Over the course of a weekend, the Community Foundation and United Way of Greater Atlanta connected, planned and pulled together, creating the Greater Atlanta COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund. Supported by a coalition of philanthropy, government and corporate partners, the COVID-19 Fund received donations from thousands of individuals, foundations and corporations.

The community needs were urgent and initial grants were focused on providing crucial services at scale to more vulnerable audiences, including seniors, families with children who normally receive school meals or reduced meals at school, front line workers and other families in need of childcare, homeowners and renters at risk for eviction, and hourly/low-wage workers. Families with access to resources were able to create learning pods or transition to working from home, but many front line workers were unable to quarantine. This increased exposure to COVID-19 was a leading cause for the disproportionate COVID-19 case rates. As the weeks and months progressed, evidence showed specific populations disproportionately impacted – Black, Latina/o, undocumented and immigrant populations. As the situation in our community evolved, the Fund pivoted to address rapidly changing needs, such as small business support and mental health. In 2020, the COVID-19 Fund mobilized over $525 million to 454 organizations in Atlanta.

The Fund has continued to evolve into 2021. While we are still in response mode, funding has shifted to recovery, including funding grassroots vaccine awareness efforts and advocacy. Learn more at cfpgreateratlanta.org/Covid

“The strength of our COVID-19 response was in our relationships – our partnerships and the co-investment of our donors. That is how we will move to our new normal in Atlanta going forward.” – Frank Finan

COVID-19 Response & Recovery Fund

Foundation Supports Mental Health and Wellness of Nonprofit Leaders

Atlanta’s nonprofits stepped up in 2020, and as a result, our nonprofit partners that staff their members faced burnout, exhaustion and higher than normal levels of stress. Recognizing how crucial it was to care for nonprofit staff during this time of crisis so that they are able to continue supporting the community, the Foundation partnered with several local organizations to provide series of free mental health trainings. In the words of one participant, “This training helped me think about how trauma and resilience show up not just for clients, but for ourselves and our colleagues.”

Donors Give Generously in 2020

Outside of the COVID-19 Fund, our donors supported the community with COVID-related grants directly from their donor-advised funds. An astounding 822 grants were made totaling $24,969,459, including $1,217,400 in response to Vital Metro. The Vital Match book was published in May and highlighted nonprofit needs associated with the pandemic.

Arts Funding Focuses on Stability and Innovation

Arts organizations faced an especially perilous situation in 2020 due to revenue losses, shuttered performances and closures. The Metropolitan Atlanta Arts Fund supported small to mid-sized arts organizations including those that responded with safe, innovative programming to uplift arts in the region. $1.26 million was distributed. 66% went to organizations founded or led by Black, Indigenous or People of Color (BIPC). 18 had never before received an Arts Fund grant. In late December, an anonymous donor gave $250,000 to an additional 10 organizations.

The COVID-19 fund gave $6,015,979 to 126 organizations to combat food insecurity, including location, with students no longer able to access meals near school.

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