

# THE CATALYST



spring 2021

## Celebrating 20 years of Neighborhood Revitalization

Brad Smith, a local landscape architect (who has since relocated to Ocala), originally became interested in neighborhood revitalization when he visited a once struggling neighborhood in downtown Atlanta, Georgia, where he had served during his high school years, and was surprised to find a community flourishing with housing, economic development, and neighborhood engagement.

The metamorphosis was the result of a commitment made by Bob Lupton of Focused Community Strategies (FCS), a Christian community development corporation whose mission is empowering neighborhoods to thrive. FCS's operating belief is that all people have value, dignity, and something to contribute to their community. Listening and working in partnership with residents translates to their ownership and empowerment to transform and sustain their neighborhoods.

Smith was inspired to bring this concept to Brevard. A founding board comprised of church, business, and neighborhood leaders incorporated Brevard Neighborhood Development Coalition (now DBA "Neighbor Up Brevard") in 1996. The new organization explored possible partnership projects in south Melbourne and Cocoa. Then they heard about Melbourne's "North Target Area"; the zone bordered by Aurora Road to the south, Lake Washington Road to the north, US1 to the east and Cedarwood Drive to the west. Local and federal funding was being devoted to the area but there were no tangible results. Melinda Thomas, who worked for the City of Melbourne (1983 – 2013), said, "This was a neighborhood under siege. Good people were scared to come out of their homes."

Thomas appealed to Neighbor Up's leadership to focus on the North Target Area. Also, resident leader Diane Key rallied her neighbors. They renamed the area and formed the Booker T. Washington Neighborhood Association (BTWNA) and they

encouraged others to become their partners. Under the direction of Lynn Brockwell-Carey, Neighbor Up joined the BTWNA and began building trust and relationships with projects like home renovations and neighborhood beautification.

It was through the early projects that Brockwell-Carey met Sister Irene Summerford – a respected, long time BTW leader. God had given Summerford a vision of opening a safe haven where children could find academic and spiritual support. Brockwell-Carey, Thomas and Smith all recount stories of Summerford leading prayer walks through the neighborhood. Wherever she went – from church halls to the corporate offices at L3Harris, Summerford was a powerful, compelling advocate for the children. Her dream was realized when she and Neighbor Up opened the DOCK in a small public housing apartment (2004) and then as the permanent building that now houses the DOCK elementary program (2007).

While this was progress for BTW youth and families, the block directly across the street was a blighted eyesore notorious for drug dealing and other illegal activities. It was known as "the Bottoms". Thomas said, "It was terrible. No one in the neighborhood liked what they were seeing."

Despite the dangers, BTW residents remained committed to their community. Pauline Thompson says, "I've



### 2020 Impact Report Inside!

*Celebrating 20 years continued inside*



## Celebrating 20 years *continued*

*"These things take a partnership of public and private to make it happen."* – Melinda Thomas

been here my whole life. When my Habitat for Humanity application was accepted, I was offered a home in Palm Bay or Viera. But I decided to wait another two years until a lot became available in the BTW neighborhood. I always wanted to be here. This community is my home."

The high crime rate was a frequent topic of conversation at BTWNA meetings. Everyone agreed that wresting control of the Bottoms was key to taking back the neighborhood. When Brockwell-Carey learned that the City had funds to help with acquisition of the blighted apartment complex, she shared the news with the BTWNA leaders who encouraged Neighbor Up to take on the project. Thomas and the city were resolved to help. Thomas believes that "affordable housing is like public infrastructure and utilities - it's a key factor in making a city a desirable place to live." What came next was the most challenging. The Bottoms was made up of ten small properties with multiple mortgages that foreclosed at different times over more than a year. Neighbor Up's board, the city officials and other funders took a leap of faith, trusting that Neighbor Up would be able to acquire all the properties. The first property that came available was situated exactly in the middle of the complex. Thomas said, "It was the scariest thing not knowing if we would get the remaining properties and make it to the finish line. The planets had to align perfectly to make this project happen". She added, "I'm still pinching myself that it came to pass."

As Neighbor Up was rebuilding the Bottoms, Habitat for Humanity renovated an adjacent block with new townhomes. The BTWNA, Neighbor Up, and Habitat solicited ideas from the community for what to call the new area. A community survey asked residents to submit their ideas for a name that would (1) glorify God, and (2) look to the future. That is how "the Bottoms" became "Greater Heights"!

Residents began moving into Greater Heights Apartments in July 2009. Crime rates on the block dropped significantly (see Impact Report). Today, the sounds of gunfire have been replaced

with the laughter of children at play and the whir of bicycles. Thompson says, "In the past, our kids' eyes grew up too fast. They saw too much. The best thing today is that the kids have safe havens – the DOCK and Police Athletic League (PAL). Parents have a peaceful place to raise their kids. It is so much better."

In 2016, Neighbor Up partnered with Club Esteem and Love, INC. to apply principles of Christian community development to how we approach Christmas charity. Based on the understanding that families prefer to provide for themselves rather than accept a handout, Gifts from the Heart Christmas Shop allows parents and guardians to purchase gifts for their children at a drastically reduced cost. This is a unique concept because each present is actually two – a gift for the child and the gift of dignity for the parent. Since its inception, the program has grown to include nine local organizations (see Impact Report for more details).

By 2018 the DOCK program was quickly outgrowing its space. Through generous private donations, Neighbor Up expanded the DOCK campus, constructing a teen center next to the youth building.

Also, while continuing to serve in the BTW community, in 2010 Neighbor Up Brevard answered the call to be a partner on the Evans Center project in the Driskell Heights-Powell communities of NE Palm Bay/SE Melbourne. Resident leaders invited Neighbor Up to join their mission to restore Mr. Roosevelt Evans' historic community grocery site and bring jobs, health care, and a health education center to the neighborhood. The Evans Center opened in 2019, turning a USDA-designated "food desert" into a food oasis! Evans has quickly become a community hub, including providing essential services during COVID (see Impact Report). Neighbor Up continues to play a vital support role for leadership and business development at the Evans Center.

There is so much to celebrate as we mark the 20th year of this community ministry!



### 25+ YEARS AGO

Tabernacle Church leaders became intrigued by the national Christian Community Development Association (CCDA). Their exploration of the CCDA movement included travel to Atlanta where they met with Bob Lupton of Focused Community Strategies, a CDC that was restoring inner city neighborhoods through incarnational living (moving in) and partnering with resident leaders.

### 1996

Inspired to bring a CCDA-type ministry to Brevard, Brevard Neighborhood Development Coalition (now DBA Neighbor Up Brevard) was incorporated. Its founding Board reflected a cross-section of persons from churches, businesses, and neighborhoods throughout Brevard.

### 1999

Received non-profit, 501c3, status from IRS.

### 1999-2001

Meetings are held periodically to discuss vision and to discern where in Brevard to focus efforts. While Neighbor Up Brevard's mission extends county-wide, it is agreed that this new ministry should target initial efforts in one community.



## Volunteer Spotlight – Chas Hoyman

For Chas Hoyman, a long time Brevard County resident, respected CPA, and current Board Treasurer of Neighbor Up Brevard, the seeds of civic engagement were planted long before he became known for making outstanding contributions at many local non-profit organizations. Hoyman's volunteerism began while a student at Eau Gallie High School. While in high school he served as a volunteer fireman in West Eau Gallie and as an aide in a 5th grade classroom at Croton Elementary. While these early experiences were fulfilling, Chas believes his commitment to helping others solidified as the result of a family tragedy. When Hoyman was just a teenager, he lost a sibling suddenly to Reye's Syndrome. Chas saw how the community rallied around his family to provide support, and this made a lasting impression on him.



When Chas and his wife, Vonnie, moved back to Melbourne after college and early in their careers in 1975, they did not waste time getting involved and paying back. Chas said, "I didn't try to get involved in every organization. I picked organizations I had a passion for and where I felt I could make a difference."

His first non-profit commitment occurred when college roommate, Hugh Evans Jr., asked him to serve on the board of Circles of Care. It was during Chas's tenure that Circles built their first inpatient treatment facility and began the transformation from a fully government supported entity to a self-sustaining entity. Another early involvement was at the Economic Development Commission, where he worked with business leaders from across the County to transition the EDC from a government led organization to a public private partnership. Over the years,

Hoyman has also served at the Melbourne Chamber and as United Way of Brevard's Board Chair and Campaign Chair. While he was Board Chair, the organization set a focus on early child education and success. This change in the United Way's focus has benefited many organizations working with children in our community including Neighbor Up.

Chas's guiding principle is simple: "Every day is a blessing, do the best you can, and help others." He adds, "I feel so blessed in so many ways to be able to come back to Brevard County, have a successful business career, be involved in our community and lead by example."

## On the Job Training at Evans Center

Zen is a 16 year-old who attends Palm Bay High School and lives within walking distance of the Evans Center, where he found his first job two years ago. He started working on the floor where regular tasks included cleaning, taking the trash out, restocking shelves and closing up the market. Recently, after a lot of hard work, Zen saw his goal of getting promoted to the deli come to fruition. These days, Zen works about 16 hours a week in the deli prepping food, making biscuits and frying chicken. His dad was so excited to learn that he could make chicken, that he immediately rushed out to purchase supplies and Zen didn't disappoint! Zen says that one of the most valuable lessons he has learned is "to do that hardest work first and get it out of the way."



Market Manager, Josh Hulings, says, "Zen is always excited to learn and try new things. He is dependable and always willing to pick up shifts." Since opening in early 2019, the Evans Community Market has mentored 15 teens in their first job!



Dear Friends,

This Catalyst honors Neighbor Up Brevard's 20th anniversary! I hope you will enjoy the trip down memory lane. Neighbor Up was launched by a small, diverse group of Christ-followers

who were grateful for God's redemption of their lives, and convinced of God's desire to also redeem communities. They found inspiration in the Biblical prophet Isaiah's promise that God would help them "raise up the foundations of future generations, to be called Repairers of the Breach, and Restorers of Streets to Dwell In." (58:12) Through prayer, partnerships, hard work, and in-it-for-the-long-haul commitment, we've seen God breathe new life into neighborhoods. A block of blighted, crime-ridden apartments has become a peaceful family-oriented community. Vacant land now houses outreach centers for youth and a community market stands in a former "food desert". Each December brings the joy of Gifts from the Heart Christmas Shop.

Events of 2020 were a stark reminder that there is much repair work yet to be done across our nation and at home. So we will continue to envision and strive toward greater justice and opportunity for residents in Brevard's under-resourced communities.

To all who have supported this mission over the years, we are so deeply grateful. And to those who have recently decided to "Neighbor Up", welcome! There are exciting days ahead!

*Lynn*

P.S. There were times in this past year that COVID tested our stamina, but never our resolve to serve. The enclosed annual report celebrates myriad ways that Neighbor Up, along with our partners, met critical emergency needs during COVID.



**2000**

Neighbor Up Brevard becomes involved in planning efforts in the Booker T. Washington (BTW) neighborhood. The BTW Neighborhood Association President joins Neighbor Up's board and encourages a collaboration.

**APRIL 2001**

The Neighbor Up Brevard founding Board hired Lynn Brockwell-Carey to be their Executive Director.

**2001-2004**

Neighbor Up Brevard develops relationships and builds trust in the BTW neighborhood through early action/quick success projects. This includes ten exterior home renovations, signage at the north and east entries of the neighborhood, and neighborhood clean-up days.

**2004**

Neighbor Up partners with long-time BTW resident Sister Irene Summerford to open a community drop-in center for kids. The public housing authority provides a 1,000 SF apartment. The "Dorcas Outreach Center for Kids" (DOCK) is Irene's vision. As its first Director, Irene creates a safe haven full of love and guidance. Neighbor Up engages volunteers from area churches to serve as tutors.



# Donations sustain the mission of Neighbor Up Brevard— To plan, facilitate and implement solutions for the revitalization of impoverished communities.

Neighbor Up Brevard has been blessed with generous grants from the following sources since the last issue of the Catalyst.



**Bank of America-Neighborhood Champions**  
*DOCK staff and youth with the Neighborhood Champions award from Bank of America. This grant will allow Neighbor Up greater capacity to grow programs and serve more.*



**City of Melbourne**  
*The City of Melbourne's annual CDBG grant supports the many youth who attend the DOCK after school and during the summer.*



**L3Harris Foundation**  
*The DOCK is a proud recipient of L3Harris' Social Impact grant. This award provided for new technology and supports our Junior Leaders, making much needed jobs available for teens in the BTW neighborhood.*



**The Margaret Binz Foundation**  
*Support from the Margaret Binz Foundation will also fund our Junior Leaders in 2021; giving 2020 DOCK graduate Tyliyah Bursey a job at the DOCK while attending Eastern Florida State, and giving current youth who attend the DOCK a strong role model.*



**Sherry Kukowski, devoted volunteer and donor**  
*In addition to the 12+ hours I volunteer at the DOCK every week, I also give financially. I see where my money goes and the difference that it makes, so I am happy to give."*



## 2007

Neighbor Up constructs a permanent DOCK. The 3,500 SF building is home to our elementary program today.

## 2007-2008

Neighbor Up begins acquiring the blighted duplexes and triplexes across the street from the DOCK. This area was once called the "Bottoms" and was notorious for criminal activity. The process is arduous, involving multiple lenders, title problems, the discovery of asbestos, and the need to bring the entire site into code compliance. Tapping into public and private funds, Neighbor Up Brevard forms a team of development leaders to work toward the goal of demolition and rebuilding upon existing building slabs.

## JULY 2009

Residents begin moving into Greater Heights Apartments – 18 units of affordable housing for low-moderate income working families and the elderly.

## 2010

Residents of the Powell-Driskell Heights communities in NE Palm Bay/SE Melbourne invite Neighbor Up to join them in planning for the Evans Center - a model for community healthy living that will honor the past and raise the standard of healthy living today.

## *Recent Donors Contributing \$500 or more\*:*

James Adams  
Jim & Susan Antoon  
Ascension Catholic Church  
Steve & Millie Badolato  
Bank of America  
Boater's Exchange  
Wendy Brandon  
Buckingham Strategic Wealth  
Hartley & Brenda Caldwell  
Rev. Michael Carey & Lynn  
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Rev. Joy Willard-Williford &  
Mark Williford  
Matt & Christie Williams  
John Willison  
Catherine Wright  
\*donations received between  
8.29.20 and 3.17.21

## **Special thanks to our Community Partners—donors who make a monthly pledge to Neighbor Up Brevard and provide necessary operating funds for the organization:**

Mary & Rick Blucker  
Tom & Linda Brandon  
Ryan Brown  
Michael Carey & Lynn  
Brockwell-Carey  
Jordin Chandler  
Mark & Katherine Cobb  
LeRoy & Arlene Darby  
Ashlee & Ernest Davidson

Pennie & Joe Di Prima  
Arturo & Susan Echarte  
Melissa & Michael Euziere  
Lisa & Dave Farrall  
Georgianna United  
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Kim & Nat Miller  
Lindy Pettet

Chris & Luis Rodriguez  
Carol Sanchez  
Tiffany & Steve Sergis  
Rebekah Tanner  
Trinity Wellsprings Church  
Amy & Brian Turner



### **2016**

Neighbor Up purchases the vacant lot to the west of the DOCK elementary building for the purpose of developing six more units of desperately needed affordable housing.

### **DECEMBER 2016**

Neighbor Up recruits Club Esteem and Love INC...together they launch Gifts from the Heart Christmas Shop – an alternative way to traditional Christmas charity. Two gifts are given (1) the blessing of dignity for parents as they purchase presents for their children at drastically reduced prices, and (2) joy for children as they receive toys from their parents.

### **JANUARY 2018**

A new 3,800 SF building opens and the DOCK campus expands with this dedicated space for the teen program.

### **MARCH 2019**

Construction of the Evans Center is completed and a former "food desert" becomes a food oasis! This multi-use economic development project serves residents with a community market, Brevard Health Alliance clinic, workshops on health & wellness, and youth job training.



# 2020 IMPACT REPORT - CRISIS RESPONSE

## The DOCK by the Numbers

93

Despite having to reduce numbers to allow for social distancing, the DOCK served 93 unduplicated children ages 5-18 after school and for summer camp in 2020.



The DOCK was open for 10 weeks of summer camp (increased from 8 due to delayed return to school)

9 DOCK teens were employed as Junior Leaders for summer camp 2020.

All youth come from low to moderate income families (as defined by HUD), earning less than the \$51,312 survival budget for a 4-person household in Brevard County (as determined by United Way in the ALICE report). Many of these families lost all or some income as a result of COVID-19.

83% of DOCK families are headed by single women.



0

No child with regular attendance at the DOCK has dropped out of school or been arrested.



The DOCK was open as a safe haven for 620 hours after school and 440 hours over the summer.

DOCK youth received 77+ hours of character education.

Healthy food – over 2500 lunches and 6000 snacks served.



The average GPA among active DOCK youth is 2.5 with 40% of participants achieving a 3.0 or higher (the high school graduation requirement is 2.0). Additionally, 99% of children who regularly attend the DOCK were advanced to the next grade level for the 2020-21 school year.

The DOCK graduated 4 seniors in 2020.



Neighbor Up staff were able to provide services at the DOCK and Greater Heights, staffing to Gifts from the Heart, and support to Evans Center with the equivalent of 6.87 full time employees.

Thanks to your **GENEROUS GIFTS**, Neighbor Up Brevard continues to deliver services despite challenges posed by COVID-19. Here's what you made possible in 2020!

## GREATER HEIGHTS by the Numbers

The average rent at Greater Heights is \$587.

**\$587**

The average annual income of a Greater Heights household is...

**\$21,000**

Crime in the Booker T. Washington neighborhood has dropped by 67% since the DOCK and Greater Heights were built. Calls to the Melbourne Police Department are down 35% in the BTW neighborhood and 90% on the block.



Greater Heights apartments provided affordable, attractive rental housing to over 50 residents.

## GIFTS FROM THE HEART by the Numbers

Parents from 184 families purchased gifts for their children.

**184**

**518**

518 children received three gifts each.

The Shop employed 3 part-time seasonal employees and 85 volunteers.



## EVANS CENTER by the Numbers

The Evans Center is currently providing 12 new jobs in the neighborhood.

**12**

The Evans Center is 6,000 square feet dedicated to healthy living.



**8,429**

The Evans Center became a hunger relief program during lock-down and served 8,429 meals in 25 days.

The Evans Center serves 2,500 households of the Powell/Driskell Heights Subdivisions.

An average of 94 households patronized the market everyday.

## 2021 Board Members

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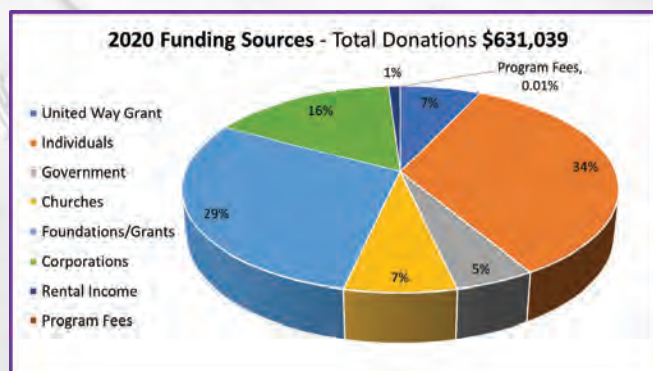
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**Make a gift to Neighbor Up Brevard — Make an INSTANT & LOCAL IMPACT!**



# Neighbor Up Brevard's Anchor Breakfast is Going...

## BACK TO THE FUTURE



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**Live at the Hilton Rialto or Virtually**  
**July 8, 2021 at 8:00 AM**

**Your donation supports:**



**[www.neighborupbrevard.org/anchor](http://www.neighborupbrevard.org/anchor)**

**Join us in celebrating 20 years of neighborhood revitalization featuring DOCK youth along with supporters, volunteers, friends and staff.**