WE BELIEVE IN Durham

EST. 1869

2019 IMPACT REPORT
No one organization is going to be able to serve a community holistically, but TOGETHER WE CAN.

3 years ago, a group of faith leaders in Durham asked a bold question: what would it look like if the whole community came together as a community to solve its toughest challenges? The attempt to answer that question led to what is now ReCity—a social impact hub that houses a network of over 40 nonprofits, businesses, and faith communities all committed to building a more just city, together.

While the word together gets used a lot around here, we are all still individuals doing what's necessary to create change. Each one of us has a role to play, sometimes in the shadows away from the limelight.

It might feel like the work we do, both big and small, can go unnoticed. But the very nature of what our partners do means that they're a “hero” to someone out there. All of the nonprofits and mission-driven businesses that create ReCity touch and shape the lives of the people they serve. And by building authentic community through shared space, our partners get to become heroes to each other.

Real community is the result of proximity plus intentionality. Sharing space, services, and values is the key to accelerating partnerships. While we do everything we can to set our partners up for success at ReCity, ultimately it's up to them to show up, listen and build trust with each other. That's when impact happens.

So join me in celebrating the individuals and organizations who have come together over the past year to create connections and to build something worthwhile for the people they work with and the people they serve. Here at ReCity, we are so grateful to be the catalyst for this growth and support. I'm inspired by this incredible group of leaders who are reimagining what's possible for their community, and locking arms to do the hard work side by side.

We're three years in, but we're just getting started.
I think ReCity’s role is as an interrupter. There’s a lot of growth and progress happening in Durham and you start to think, am I part of that progress? What ReCity has done is said, “Wait, what about the people who are not at the table?” ReCity showed me it believed in me and championed what I was doing, every step of the way.

Cecilia Polanco
Owner, So Good Pupusas
What makes ReCity unique is bringing nonprofits out of their silos. Being able to just get up out of my desk and go and talk to another executive director about program development, about fundraising, is a real gift that can’t be overstated.
Other nonprofits will say, “Oh hey, here’s a funder that I’ve been talking to”... so I’m getting to meet folks that I never would be able to meet otherwise.
Coworking On Purpose

Change happens at the speed of trust, which is why we put such an emphasis on relationships. Here are some fun facts about our partners:

**Best Person to be Stranded on an Island With**
- Reynolds Chapman

**Most Upbeat**
- Tameka Brown

**Most Likely to Win a Nobel Peace Prize**
- DurhamCares

**Most Contagious Laugh**
- NCWorks NextGen

**Most Collaborative**
- Partners for Youth Opportunity

**Most Energetic**
- SixEight Church

**Most Likely to Pick Up and Move to a New Country**
- Communities in Partnership

**Always on the Hustle**
- PYO, DurhamCares, H.E.A.R.T.S.

**Best Storyteller**
- The Helius Foundation

**Most Caffeinated**
- The Summit Church

**Most Connected in Durham**
- Julie Wells

**Most Likely to Work an Entire Week on the ReCity Porch**
- Camryn Smith

**Always on the Hustle**
- Miriam Valle

**Most Likely to Work an Entire Week on the ReCity Porch**
- Gini Knight

**Most Connected in Durham**
- Steve & Relley

**Most Likely to Work an Entire Week on the ReCity Porch**
- Root Media

**Most Likely to Work an Entire Week on the ReCity Porch**
- Community Food Strategies

**Best Person to be Stranded on an Island With**
- Elizabeth Butler

**Most Upbeat**
- Tameka Brown
A New Approach to Durham’s Affordable Housing Crisis

You don’t have to live in Durham for long to hear about one of its most pressing issues: affordable housing. In the midst of explosive economic growth, Durham County has one of the highest rates of eviction (per capita) in the state of North Carolina, with almost 900 eviction filings per month. For Syretta Hill, Executive Director of StepUp Durham, the effects of this housing crunch are an everyday barrier to stability for the StepUp participants that she partners with.

And qualifying for a housing voucher is often not a guarantee of stability - many properties do not accept housing vouchers, and it is possible for people to lose their vouchers simply because they are unable to find housing that will accept them before they expire.

It was this brokenness that motivated The Summit Church and StepUp Durham to partner around a new affordable housing model that they are calling “restorative housing.” It started with a business owner at The Summit approaching the church with the idea to offer housing at 20% below market rate to people experiencing housing instability while remaining self-sustaining. What they quickly realized was that many interested renters still faced a major barrier to making rent: unemployment or poverty wages.

That’s when Matt Humble turned to StepUp Durham.

Matt Humble, the Associate Pastor of Community Development and Local Outreach at The Summit, has also come face to face with the brokenness of the housing system, and how hard it can be to qualify for and take advantage of housing assistance.

We realized we needed a partner that could help drive development specifically in the area of employment, and from our time working at ReCity I had developed a close relationship with Syretta at StepUp and had really bought into the way they approach employment and the way that they holistically cared for their participants.

For Syretta Hill, it was carefully built trust that brought The Summit into partnership with StepUp. “We’ve known and worked with the Summit since we started being a ReCity partner and we are at this point because we have built trust over the years. That’s the benefit of being at a place like ReCity - you are able to build those trusting relationships.”

Matt’s hope is that the product of this trust will be a new grassroots model for addressing the affordable housing crisis. “Part of everything we began was to set up a modular model for people who had access to property that wanted to make affordable housing available. I really don’t think there’s a lack of money out there that’s willing to do this, there’s just no picture of success out there.” With their shared restorative housing project, The Summit and StepUp Durham are trying to paint that picture.

This past year, 58% of the folks that we work with experienced housing instability, and over 30% of those are coming directly out of shelters, so we know our population has acute housing issues.

“If you’ve slept on a couch or stayed in a hotel room in the last two years, you are no longer chronically homeless”
When Julie Wells began teaching her second cohort of Unity Fellows, she thought she had a pretty good idea why Unity Fellowship needed to exist. Durham’s nonprofit landscape was oversaturated, and many organizations, especially newer or smaller ones, were struggling to establish stability. She began her second Unity Fellowship cohort in 2019 with a clear plan: “I was laser focused on helping nonprofit leaders develop their skill sets around defining their theory of change and building greater organizational stability.”

Halfway through the 2019 cohort, she realized that her focus was too broad. “The folks whose needs stood out in the space were those leaders of smaller organizations who were really using Unity as a lifeline, and it became apparent that the organizations that were the hungriest and needed the most support were created by and for members of marginalized communities.”

The nonprofit sector has a well-documented racial equity challenge: less than 20% of nonprofits in the U.S. are led by people of color, and these organizations face particularly steep resource challenges compared to other organizations. This was made evident in the 2019 Cohort. Amongst the twelve organizations that participated, the total annual assets available to organizations led by women of color were over twenty times less than their peer organizations.

The four nonprofits led by women founder/leaders of color had an average annual operating budget of $50,000, compared to $450,000 for the remaining nonprofits in the cohort.

These impressive social impact leaders have in many cases founded new grassroots organizations out of necessity, to address concerns in their communities that the mainstream nonprofit sector overlooks, precisely because of its systemic representation problem. However, they are challenged by inadequate salaries, less access to social capital and networks, and most importantly, funding sources. The truth is, continued professional and organizational development is helpful for any nonprofit executive leader, no matter what their background.

What Julie Wells came to learn during the 2019 Unity Fellowship is that more training will never be enough. “We need funders who recognize that there is good grassroots work being done in the community by leaders who are from marginalized communities, who are aggressively working to build their organizations’ capacity, and I think funders need to give some more credit and attention to those folks.”

With this in mind, the mission of the Unity Fellowship is continuing to evolve, in the hopes that it can create a structure that forces funding organizations to recognize the organizational capacity-building of small and sometimes marginalized grassroots nonprofit organizations, and reward that hard work with more impactful funding. Fortunately, the work of the Unity Fellowship is already bearing fruit - of the seven organizations that were awarded 2019 Capacity-building Grants by the Triangle Community Foundation, two were organizations who had recently completed the Unity Fellowship.
Monica Daye, Executive Director of StandUp-SpeakOut, did not exactly know what to expect when she signed up for the 2019 Unity Fellowship. What she found was a community of colleagues and mentors, and new solidarity.

“For a while I thought my challenges were because I was a founder and new Executive and a small start up nonprofit. However, it was very eye opening to share space with others serving the community. I think I valued the opportunity to be in a space with other Executive Directors who have years of experience working in the nonprofit sector, yet their challenges were parallel to my own.”

Since graduating from cohort two, Monica has leveraged the new connections she made. “StandUp-SpeakOut of NC has been very successful since Unity; we have received several important new grants, including the Triangle Community Foundation Capacity-building Grant, Art of Giving Grant, Durham Arts Council, and Durham ABC Grant.”

Meet the 2019 Fellows
After 5 months of intensive work around organizational stability practices, our 13 Fellows are ready to share what they have learned and begin implementing strategies that will help the populations they serve thrive.

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- Foundations: $82,000
- Individual & Faith Communities: $44,660
- Corporations: $97,931
- Earned Income: $231,158

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- Operations: $67,979
- Facility: $227,987
- Development & Personnel: $144,042
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