People's Liberty invests in individuals with bold ideas to advance our region.
In 2018, 12,740 people engaged with a PL-powered event.
Still going, still growing...

We’re still surprised when the office phone rings and the voice on the other end of the line says something like: “I heard on the radio that you give grants to people...is that true?” or, “My cousin told me I should call and talk to you guys about my idea” or, “Can I speak to Nina?”

Four years into this radical philanthropic experiment, we’re still hearing from citizens from all corners of the city, eager to bring their bold, community-oriented ideas to life. For the Haile Foundation, this opportunity to connect on the ground floor with so many passionate local doers is an absolute gift—one we hold with great reverence.

This year, we saw our people-focused philanthropy yield new and surprising outcomes. More than before, we’re coming to understand how recognizing and rewarding everyday citizens inherently changes the way those individuals see themselves: as active agents with the power to bring about positive community change. When we look back on 2018, we see dedicated people who’ve chosen to sacrifice their time, their resources (and sometimes their sanity) in service to our city. Where it might be easy to just see the projects, it’s more important that we see and name the faces. We see Elisa Hoffman’s giant grin as she graduates her first class from School Board School. We see Yemi Oyediran’s exultant ears as he convenes Cincinnati music legends for a provocative discussion around the history of protest music. We see Bethany Pelle’s welling eyes as she explains how creating her project, Make Someone’s Day, allowed her to find her ground again after a difficult season. We see a whole crowd of delighted noses perking up with a single whiff of brew at Melissa Aydogan’s Turkish coffeehouse Rüya. These moments and these faces are ingrained in us.

From the beginning, our goal has been simple: empower citizens to shape the future of their city. But somewhere along the way, those citizens became our family. And now, together, we’re pooling our resources (time, talent, treasure) to co-invest and co-create the city in which we long to live and help flourish. It’s not philanthropy as usual. It’s a whole new way of operating; and as we go, we’re learning how to pilot together.

In a time when the dominant media perpetuates a culture of fear, distrust, and tribalism, we’re encouraged by the people we see in Cincinnati who are writing a new narrative, building community one relationship at a time. “We” over “me.” The common good over the common self. It’s the renaissance, the renewal, we’re all desperate for. This is the story we’re watching unfold before our eyes. This is the story we tell in the next 60 pages. This is the story we’re inviting you into. Will you join us?

* Nina received a 2016 Globe Grant for her project King Me. Like many of our grantees, she sometimes receives phone calls at our office :)
The people make the place.

Eric, Emily, Hannah, and Megan visit Globe Grantee Kaley Madden at her Anti Fashion Boot Camp in Camp Washington.
Core Team
Eric Avner, CEO
Jake Hodesh, VP of Operations
Aurore Fournier, Program Director
Megan Trischler, Program Director
Hannah Gregory, Community Manager

2018 Residents
Paisley Stone, Design
Marcus Donaldson, Communications
Emily Vriesman Payne, Design
Anna Maffey, Camp Washington

Hannah, Paisley, and Marcus fieldtrip to the Price Hill Incline District.

Aurore...makes something?!
The Haile Fellowship provides a year-long civic sabbatical for two highly-motivated Cincinnatians.

2018 Haile Fellows
Elisa Hoffman, School Board School
Nicole Armstrong, Queen City Certified
School Board School activates a diverse network of citizens and aspiring school board members to create significant change in their local school system.
Elisa Hoffman
School Board School

Elisa Hoffman spent her Fellowship year creating School Board School, a first-of-its-kind program focused on training a diverse group of citizens to be effective school board members and community advocates. School Board School provides opportunities for prospective candidates to attend board meetings, visit schools, and engage with current board members, district administrators, and education experts, as well as help ground participants in their values and motivations for this important work.

Elisa used her Fellowship year to pilot this new curriculum for the 2019 CPS board election cycle and plans to offer it to other school districts regionally and nationally in the years to come.

www.schoolboardschool.org
The first graduating class of School Board School (Pictured Left to Right): Kareem Moffett, Melisse May, Samuel Burbanks, Marlena Brookfield, David Brenner, Heather Couch, Tess Brown, Tim’m West, Heather Gerker, (Elisa Hoffman), and Chanda Davis. (Not pictured): LaVonda Stewart and Jasmine Coaston.
Queen City Certified is the first US-based certification model for gender equity in the workplace.

15 organizations have been certified leaders in gender equity, including two city departments.
Nicole Armstrong
Queen City Certified

Nicole Armstrong believes that Greater Cincinnati can be a national leader when it comes to gender equity in the workplace. Nicole spent her Fellowship year developing Queen City Certified, the first locally-focused gender equity certification process for Cincinnati-based businesses and organizations. Borrowing from other certification point-system platforms, Queen City Certified encourages organizations of all sizes to participate in the certification process while learning best practices to enhance policies along the way. Grounded in research, QCC is founded on the understanding that diversity, inclusion, and transparency are good for business.

www.queencitycertified.com
The first Queen City Certified cohort celebrates their achievements and learnings, as cohort two prepares to begin their certification process.
Bethany Pelle, 2018 Globe Grant recipient, and a group of visitors at Make Someone’s Day.
Globe Grants enable teams or individuals to take over a storefront space for six weeks and transform it into an interactive public experience.
Arian Armstrong
The Good King

Arian Armstrong’s project, The Good King, rallies people from around the world (aka “the tribe”) to color weekly coloring pages drawn for people bravely fighting a battle. During the term of her Globe Grant, Arian transformed the People’s Liberty storefront into an abandoned clock tower turned art studio. Old wooden floors, stone walls overgrown with ivy, rustic beams, a giant clock overlooking city rooftops, and makeshift tables filled with coloring pages and art supplies propelled guests into a world of imagination and creation.

www.followthegoodking.com
Bethany Pelle
Make Someone’s Day

Bethany Pelle is an artist whose work promotes self-reflection, critical thinking, and community building. An ardent supporter of inclusivity, equity, and social justice, Bethany believes that a future of well-being for us all can be built through compassionate communities. Her project Make Someone’s Day gathers the overlapping and intersecting communities in Over-the-Rhine in collaborative gestures of kindness. Visitors nominated locals deserving recognition or kindness to receive handmade ceramic flower arrangements.

www.make-someones-day.com

Melissa Aydogan
Rüya

Melissa Aydogan is a first generation Turkish-American working to be a positive voice for a lost generation of Middle-Easterners marginalized by the American media. Melissa’s project Rüya Coffee reimagined the Findlay Market Globefront as a Turkish coffeehouse. Cozy ground seating, traditional Turkish lanterns and rugs, lively music, stimulating conversation over sweets, and games played among various groups invited folks from all ages, races, and backgrounds to connect in an intimate and unique setting.

www.ruyacoffee.com
In 2018, 3,850 guests visited the Findlay Market storefront to engage with a Globe Grantee project.
Fortune telling at Rüya coffee.
Anh Tran and Sidney Cherie Hilley

LOOK!

Sidney Hilley is a multidisciplinary artist and writer, working in video, performance, and design. Anh Tran engages the community in immersive art experiences. LOOK! was a shop and reading lounge with artist-made publications from local and national contributors. The space encompassed a small performance area for open studio practice and programming, sparking the neighborhood and community to find their voice.

Kaley Madden

Anti Fashion Boot Camp

Kaley Madden is interested in the intersection of privilege and higher education. Her project Anti-Fashion Boot Camp invited the community to grow their understanding of fashion ecology as a practice in the form of workshops, lectures, and a 6-week “bootcamp” program for Cincinnati high-schoolers. From this “radical education sanctuary,” AFBC aimed to help participants discover a platform from which they could express their individuality and freedom.

2,142 guests visited the Camp Washington storefront to engage with a Globe Grantee project.
SkateABLE vs Non was a thematic skatepark that featured creative elements of skateboarding, taught from experience and exposure, while providing space for the community to learn, interact, and experience at all levels.
2018 Globe Grant winners.
Project Grants enable teams or individuals to implement creative community projects in Greater Cincinnati neighborhoods.
Amy Osborne’s Pollination Station Project at Ziegler Park in Over-the-Rhine.
April Culbreath
Operation Comfy Chair Drop

April Culbreath spent four years in the U.S. Army Reserves as a combat medic before attending school for Fashion Merchandising and Design. After school she joined the Army, moved to Germany, and designed and made clothes, which were featured in a collaborative fashion show with various Military department stores. April’s project Operation Comfy Chair Drop taught veterans how to reupholster and refinish chairs to be donated to organizations who strive to help veterans and the homeless with furniture needs. April believes that teaching this skill will increase other veterans’ self-esteem and self worth while providing a comfortable piece of furniture to a home in need.

Jeffrey Miller
ResQ

Jeffrey Miller is an experiential brand strategist and event producer with a focus on the culinary and packaged goods industries. Jeffrey’s project RESQ invited the community to enjoy a meal created from ingredients rescued from local grocery stores and farms. His hope is to educate the community about food waste and “ugly food” by providing a unique meal experience.
Eric Gruenstein
Biochar

Eric Gruenstein is a professor of molecular genetics and neuroscience at UC Medical School and founder of the Green Partnership for Greater Cincinnati: a collaboration between six regional institutions whose goal is to encourage and support efforts that will improve environmental performance. Eric’s project Biochar taught children and their families how to use biochar, charcoal used as soil amendment, to produce healthy vegetables and to remove greenhouse gases and carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. His hope is to mitigate the dangers of climate change and to improve nutrition through awareness.

Tina Dyehouse
City Ombudsman

Tina Dyehouse is a civic-minded and dedicated public servant with over 20 years of experience as a dispute resolution professional and government employee. Tina’s project City Ombudsman provided the Cincinnati community with information to help solve neighborhood and city-wide issues, such as snow removal, littering, etc. Tina hopes this online resource will make the government agencies seem less impenetrable.

www.cityombudsman.com
Simone Cocks-Charles

College Trunk

Simone’s project College Trunk is a mobile resource for college students from low income households that provided care packages and other upcycled necessities, making the transition into their new college life easier. Simone hopes that this will help to extend the reach of the FAFSA application, increase awareness of proper usage, and increase the successful integration of students from low income homes into universities.

Geralyn Sparough

Shelter from the Storm

Geralyn Sparough is a fabric artist and storyteller invested in social inclusion. Geralyn’s project Shelter from the Storm was a large weaving shelter that invited the public to “weave” themselves into our collective social fabric by answering a series of prompts. Through community participation, Geralyn hopes to create a sense of camaraderie, understanding, and compassion, while strengthening our ties to each other as a community.
Clay Brizendine
Courts of Art

Clayton’s project Courts of Art transformed an outdoor basketball court in Eden Park into a work of art. This colorful public space aims to be a focal point for a community—a place where people of all backgrounds can come together and play.

www.courtsofart.com

Jay Kalagayan
MeSseD Tunnel Tour

Jay Kalagayan is the founder of the Know Theatre, co-founder of the Cincinnati Fringe Festival, and has worked alongside many of Cincinnati’s art institutions. In 2017, Jay wrote and published his own comic titled MeSseD, a sci-fi drama featuring a female protagonist who fights to ensure the city’s water keeps flowing. His project MeSseD—part comic, part underground tour—showed citizens the world beneath our feet by allowing people to fully immerse themselves in the life of MSD workers. Jay believes tours like these enhance understanding across cultures and increase public knowledge of essential public services.

www.messedcomics.com/tunneltour
Project Grantees spend the day together clarifying ideas and building project timelines.
Cassandra Clement and Troy Melnyk
Troy Gives a Duck

Troy Melnyk is a nineteen-year-old committed to eliminating the isolation of those with disabilities with a positive message. His mother Cassandra Clement is a doer who loves to build projects with community. Their project, Troy Gives a Duck shows how a single person can create a chain reaction of community good by providing people with a physical reminder that they are valued.

www.troygivesaduck.org

Priyanka Sen
VOUCHED

Priyanka Sen is a designer, historian, and educator with an expertise in architecture. Her project VOUCHED reimagined the Section 8 or Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) process through a new visual format. The guide acts as a visual roadmap to the HCV process, including key application requirements and infographics showing resources and agencies that can assist individuals with the process.

www.vouched.org
Julius Jenkins
Heroes Rise: Street Dance Experience

Julius Jenkins is a professional street dance performer, teacher, and founder of dance group the Millennium Robots. Julius has been a part of the street dance community for over seventeen years, traveling as far as West Africa to teach the art of street dancing. Julius’ project Heroes Rise: Street Dance Experience is a two-day street dance event where audiences of all ages experience street dance workshops, dance battles, and exposure to street dance.
Matthew Gellin
T2: Transit Theatre

Matthew Gellin is a theatre researcher and producer. His project T2: Transit Theatre consisted of ten micro theatre productions on the Cincinnati Bell Connector (aka: the streetcar). Each production aimed to amplify community voices and change how people engage with their neighbors. Rather than expecting an audience to go to a physical theatre, T2 brought this collaborative art form to the people.

www.americanlegacytheatre.org
Amy Osborne
Pollination Stations

Amy Osborne is a beekeeper and educator. Her project Pollination Stations deployed beehives—both honeybees and indigenous pollinators—throughout Cincinnati neighborhoods to educate neighbors on the importance of bees, proper care, and maintenance. Pollination Stations aims to merge science and nature education to beautify the community and lay a foundation for engagement.

www.pollinationstations.com

Carolyn Crombie and Lawrence Jones
North Fairmount Stairs Ascend

Carolyn and Lawrence are active members of the North Fairmount community. Their project, North Fairmount Stairs Ascend aimed to beautify stairs in the neighborhood. Neighbors came together to design, prepare, and paint the stairs, not only bringing new beauty to the block, but also fostering community connections.
Project Grantee Geralyn Sparough works with designer Jeremy Thobe on her project, Shelter from the Storm.
Notable Moments
2017 Project Grantee Kick Lee celebrates his second graduating class of musicians from the Cincinnati Music Accelerator.

www.cincinnatimusicaccelerator.org


(We see you Napoleon Maddox!)
2017 Haile Fellows Tamia Stinson and Tracy Brumfield welcome 2018 Haile Fellows Nicole Armstrong and Elisa Hoffman at “Pass the Torch.”

Former Vice Mayor David Mann leads a community conversation about the state of affordable housing in Greater Cincinnati.
May

2018 Project Grantee Geralyn Sparough celebrates the kick-off of her project Shelter From the Storm in Washington Park.

Jun.

2018 Globe Grantee Bethany Pelle opens her project Make Someone’s Day in the Findlay Market Globefront.
Grantee alumni Mark Mussman and Kai Stoudemire-Williams team up to run Tech Needs Us, a multi-week course for adults who want to learn how to code.

Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement (PACE) spends two days at People’s Liberty for their annual convening.

Eric and Megan join leaders from Sprout Fund (Pittsburgh, PA); New Economy Initiative (Detroit, MI); ArtPlace (national); Big Car (Indianapolis, IN); and Mayerson Foundation (Cincinnati, OH) for a day-long, closed-door session in Chicago to discuss methods for responsibly and respectfully “closing” PL’s doors.
Nov.

2016 Project Grantee Kate Zaidan teams up with 2018 Globe Grantee Melissa Aydogan for Cooking for Syria.

Dec.

More than 50 People’s Liberty Grantees and Resident alumni spend the day together shaping the Un:Conference. (It was amazing...keep flipping!)
Grantees Tina and Geralyn "weave" themselves into the People's Liberty social fabric at the UnConference.
Globe Grantee alumni Phil and Nina guide the group through an exercise in playful storytelling at the UnConference.
Does activism work? Grantees discuss at the UnConference.
That's a wrap. For now. The PL story continues... for one more year. Stay tuned!

Thanks for joining us on the journey!
AUGUST 2014

PEOPLE'S LIBERTY

LAUNCH @ THE

GLOBE BUILDING

VIA A SUCCESSFUL

SWEATY PARADE