People’s Liberty is a philanthropic lab that brings together civic-minded talent to address challenges and uncover opportunities to accelerate the positive transformation of Greater Cincinnati. People’s Liberty invests directly in individuals through funding and mentorship, creating a new, replicable model for grantmakers in other cities.
People’s Liberty invests in people with bold ideas to strengthen our neighborhoods, highlight our city, and advance our region.

People like you.
Five years ago, we set out to explore how giving grants to people to implement civic projects could positively transform Greater Cincinnati.

We hoped to disrupt the traditional grantmaking process—by funding people directly—but more than that we hoped that by supporting the next cadre of leaders in our city we could play a small role in sparking necessary change. So, that’s what we did. For five years we awarded Haile Fellowships, Project Grants and Globe Grants. We opened our space, opened our ears, minds, and hearts, and watched something special unfold. Did we achieve what we set out to do? Did we do anything noteworthy? Relevant? Impactful? Well...you did. You, the people, showed up and taught us something new about power within community. Thank you for journeying with us.

In the following pages, we invite you to take a look at our final year. If you’ve been tracking with us from the beginning, you’ll notice some things have changed, and some things have remained the same. Soon, our neon lights will finally click off, but the sparks ignited in this place are sure to keep burning.

Thank you, Cincinnati (and beyond) for believing.
The Team

Hannah, Megan, Eric, and Jake say “farewell” at the final PL family party, “Bust a Move!”
2019 Team
Eric Avner, CEO
Hannah Gregory, Community Manager
Jake Hodesh, VP of Operations
Aurore Fournier, Program Director
Destinee Thomas, Resident
Megan Trischler, Program Director
2019 Haile Fellow Asa Featherstone welcomes neighbors to their family dinner at Findlay Market.
In the spirit of experimentation, we reimagined the Haile Fellowship in 2019 to be an immersive program aimed at developing more effective, courageous, and visionary citizens.

2019 Haile Fellows
Kyle Ebersole
Asa Featherstone IV
Brian Yangyuen

Three individuals were selected to work together for six-months to hone their leadership skills, learn from notable subject-matter experts, and expand their connections across sectors, all while tackling a vexing community issue. The challenge? “How do you preserve the spirit of a changing neighborhood?” The Haile Fellows—Asa, Brian, and Kyle—partnered with the team at the Corporation for Findlay Market to explore and implement actionable solutions to this challenge.

The Fellows began with a rigorous process of research and discovery, meeting local stakeholders, and looking near and far for wisdom and inspiration. After a month of insight gathering and synthesizing, the team decided to reframe the challenge in order to make demonstrable movement within the six-month time constraint. The rephrased question: “How might Findlay Market become a place where neighborhood families feel like they belong.” A series of outdoor dinners became the way to engage those families, (12 families total; both long-time and new residents), connecting them to each other and to Findlay Market in a new way.
While the dinners proved to be successful in connecting neighborhood families, the Fellows still felt there was more to be done to foster a sense of belonging. During the second half of the Fellowship, Brian, Kyle, and Asa each elected to design and implement immersive activities around the Market, leveraging their unique interests and skills, to further the goal of Findlay Market to become a place where neighborhood families feel like they belong.
Brian’s project, Findlay Family Fun Force, brought together market patrons in spontaneous acts of play!
Kyle’s project, Cooler Cooler, encouraged local artists and Findlay Market patrons to participate in the creation of vibrant panels to adorn vendor coolers throughout the market shed.

“We’re trying to find new ways to supply what we all want most: to be happier, to be healthier, to feel more connected. In a world that is dominated by screens, automation and distance, Findlay Market is about people.”

– Joe Hansbauer, President and CEO, Findlay Market
Over the course of six-months, there were many ideas explored and many lessons learned. Here’s what happened (and what we hope keeps happening):

• More families feel like they belong at the market and the market belongs to them
• The cohort of families engage their networks and expand that feeling of belonging to their neighbors
• Children have a meaningful connection to Findlay Market that will last into adulthood
• Findlay Market has new ways to connect with and strengthen bonds to an important neighborhood stakeholder group
• Findlay Market remains a vital community asset and diverse public gathering place
Globe Grants enable teams or individuals to take over the People's Liberty storefront for six weeks and transform it into an interactive public experience.

2019 Globe Grantees
Jennie Wright, Siri Imani & Alexis Thompson
John Bromels
Noah Glaser & Allison Lester
Jennie Wright, Siri Imani, & Alexis Thompson  
Sankofa

Sankofa created an immersive cultural exchange and improvisational arts experience with thought-provoking environments that celebrated watershed moments in African American movements—the 1920’s Cotton Club-era, and the 1980’s and 1990’s hip-hop era. Through musical performances, freestyle battles, and other creative expressions Sankofa invited participants to grab a costume and join the show.

John Bromels  
Professor Lorenzo’s Carnival of Mysteries

Professor Lorenzo’s Carnival of Mysteries transformed the Globefront into a 1920’s circus-inspired puzzle house. Part escape room part art installation, participants were invited to solve puzzles, engage in tests of creative strength, explore classic circus games, and embark on a virtual reality experience throughout the surrounding Findlay Market neighborhood.
Noah Glaser & Allison Lester
Digital Playscape

Digital Playscape created a cohesive, immersive, and interactive STEAM learning experience that paid homage to retro science fiction games and themes. From Star Trek to Tron, the digital playscape helped children and adults alike explore “what makes science cool,” inspiring the next generation of STEAM innovators.
Globe Grantee John Bromels opens his Professor Lorenzo's Carnival of Mysteries at the Globe.
Project Grants enable teams or individuals to implement creative community projects in Greater Cincinnati neighborhoods.

2019 Project Grantees
Angela White
Kristin Suess & Jeff Suess
Bridget Leak & Trey Tatum
Eban Taylor
Kathy Wade & Erica Page
Terana Boyd
Rebecca Smithorn
Napoleon Maddox & Kim Gory
Jeremy Mosher & Scott Holzma
Project Grantee Eban Taylor delivers groceries to Avondale neighbors.
Angela White
Debatable

Angela White’s project Debatable enabled civic discourse through academic debate. Over the course of her grant, Angela hosted community debates in three Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky neighborhoods around pressing community concerns, while unpacking the techniques, skills, and ethics of public debate.

Kristin & Jeff Suess
10 ______ Women

Kristen and Jeff Suess’ project 10 ______ Women was a multi-disciplinary experience that connected the accomplishments of female trailblazers from times past with their contemporary counterpoint. Leveraging the creative talent of several local artists, 10______ Women brought these powerful stories to life, honoring the legacies of Cincinnati women impacting the world.
Bridget Leak & Trey Tatum
Desktop Theatre

Bridget and Trey’s project Desktop Theatre was an interactive, DIY puppet theatre that introduced elementary and middle school students to basic puppetry and acting performance skills. These “micro-plays” brought dynamic stories to the classroom in a new and surprising way while leveraging the talent of local playwrights and artists.
**Eban Taylor**
**Freshmen**

Eban Taylor’s project Freshmen was a community service that used minimal technology to deliver groceries to the doors of Avondale residents limited by resources. During her grant, Eban brought together a number of local partners to (literally) feed citizens in need—especially those who live without access to healthy food, reliable transportation, or technology.

**Terana Boyd**
**POP UP Roselawn**

Terana Boyd’s project POP UP (Professional Organized Portfolios Uplifting Progress) provided Roselawn community residents with a professional portfolio, including a resume, cover letter, reference sheet, and an explanation letter for people that may have felonies. During her grant, Terana partnered with local Roselawn businesses to host a job fair, helping residents from start to finish on their job search.
Kathy Wade & Erica Page
Loads of Love

Kathy Wade and Erica Page's project Loads of Love was a six-week, interactive workshop conducted between washing and drying cycles at the Bond Hill Super Laundry. Through guest speakers, hands-on activities, and lessons, the project engaged and taught simple and accessible life skills using social-emotional learning in 60 minutes.
Rebecca Smithhorn
SoundWebs

Rebecca Smithhorn’s project SoundWebs was a series of live music events in public spaces—including a downtown parking garage, a downtown library, and a big purple bridge that links Ohio and Kentucky(!)—that invited people to engage with music, the sounds of their environment, and the ways in which they intersect. Rebecca’s project helped the public notice the “web of sound” we inhabit every day.
Napoleon Maddox & Kim Gory
The Mobilization of Congo Square

Napoleon Maddox and Kim Gory's project The Mobilization of Congo Square was a series of free jazz concerts in neighborhoods around Cincinnati. These performances brought an under-appreciated aspect of jazz to an underexposed audience, championing freedom of expression and possibility, along with the history of New Orleans’ Congo Square.

Jeremy Mosher & Scott Holzman
The Welcoming Party

Jeremy Mosher and Scott Holzman’s project The Welcoming Party was a foil to the “going-away party,” and sought to honor the good and interesting people who move to Cincinnati. This community-driven enterprise attempted to speed up the process by which newcomers feel at home in the Queen city.
Project Grantee Rebecca Smithorn conducts Soundwebs in a downtown parking garage.
The final cohort of Project Grantees begin their six-month journey during Launch Day at People’s Liberty.

People’s Liberty transforms into a Cotton Club to mark the opening of Globe Grantee Jeni Wright’s project Sankofa.
People's Liberty receives an OTR Made Award; several grantees flood the stage to accept on PL's behalf!

People’s Liberty celebrates 513 Day by inviting PL alum to nominate an “unrecognized but notable leader in our community.” Little did they (or anyone!) know their nominee would receive a $1,000 check for their good work!

The PL team and Haile Fellows visit London to attend the International Public Markets Conference and connect with other community development leaders.
Jul.

2018 Globe Grantee Melis Aydogan partners with The Welcome Project for a Rüya Turkish coffee pop-up to share their collaborative mission of empowering marginalized immigrants and refugees.

Aug.

2016 Globe Grantee Nina Wells celebrates her King Me exhibition opening at the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center. The exhibit coincides with the debut of the Smithsonian’s Men of Change exhibit.
Sep.

One final hoorah in the Globefront! People’s Liberty partners with Cal Cullen of Wave Pool for the opening of Advice for Future Homecomers, an exhibition that invites reflection and exchange around homecoming and what it looks like to engage in our changing communities with thoughtfulness and care.

Oct.

Eric and Megan attend City Lab 2019 in Washington D.C. (Megan makes the AtlanticLive photo stream!)
People's Liberty partners with the Urban Consulte, ioby, the Mercantile Library, and the Greater Cincinnati Foundation to host the Civic Symposium, a 4-day convening of workshops and dialogues between changemakers from Cincinnati, Philadelphia, Detroit, New Orleans, Memphis, Austin, and Oakland who are challenging the status quo and imagining new possibilities for cities.
Shari Davis discusses the Participatory Budgeting Project in Oakland, a democratic process in which community members decide how to spend part of a public budget.

Right: Changemakers gather for two-days of exchange, and share their daring ideas for the future of cities.

Urban Consulate Co-host Naimah Bilal welcomes guests to People’s Liberty for the Cross-City exchange, a day of salon-style conversations between changemakers.
Left: Activist and family advocate Mia Birdsong takes the People’s Liberty stage with iooy Program Director Jennifer Allen.

Writer, columnist, and cultural critic Anand Giridharadas takes the Mercantile Library stage with PL CEO Eric Avner.

Anand Giridharadas at the Mercantile Library.

Mia Birdsong at People’s Liberty.
Mia Birdsong with the People's Liberty team and ioby team.
Sold out crowd at the Mercantile Library.
That’s a wrap!
Lights out.

See you soon,
Cincinnati.