What does community really mean? In a year marked by unprecedented challenges, Chattanooga’s resilience was tested but unbroken. At the Community Foundation, we learned that being community means listening to understand, responding quickly, and adapting together.

We came alongside our partners—nonprofits, donors, and community leaders—with the most agile and responsive grantmaking in our history. The creation of innovative funds and collaborations allowed us to confront our collective challenges head-on by investing in strong leaders, anchors, stories, and ideas.

Together, we put theory into practice and were reminded that elevating the most vulnerable among us strengthens all of Chattanooga. As our community recovers, we will continue this work together.
Dear Friends,

Each of us will remember 2020 in different ways. At the Community Foundation of Greater Chattanooga, we recall this transformative—and in many ways, traumatic—year as both a window and a mirror.

A global pandemic. A crippling economic recession. A major tornado. The racial reckoning we faced after the murder of George Floyd. These experiences gave all of us fresh insights on our community. Despite the difficulty of social distancing, 2020 actually brought us much closer to the challenges we are facing and allowed us to see the people who are affected by them with greater clarity than ever.

The multiple, overlapping crises of 2020 also revealed what’s best about our community. Over and over, we found that the resources we need to combat these challenges are all around us. In a year that was defined by so much loss, we still found so much resilience.

We now know that the pandemic did not affect all parts of our community equally. Black, Latino, and other ethnic minority groups saw infections spread and hospitalizations rise at far greater rates than the region’s white population. The economic effects of the pandemic—the loss of employment for workers, the loss of learning for students, and the loss of housing for entire families—also hit our minority communities disproportionately hard.

To be clear, the pandemic did not cause these disparities, but it did reveal and reflect them in ways we cannot deny.

That is what our new strategic plan is about: looking at the present with more honesty and looking to the future with more hope. In this historic moment, we owe it to ourselves to understand the forces that have held some Chattanoogans back and which may yet limit their opportunities moving forward.

We will be putting the plan into action by investing in the individual leaders and critical institutions who are making change and addressing problems right now. The Foundation’s staff have already made substantive improvements to our methods of talent recruitment, donor cultivation, and grantmaking. The plan gives us the tools to hold ourselves accountable so that we advance equity in all that we do.

We do not know what challenges lie ahead, but we know this: serving as the community’s most trusted philanthropic partner is a sacred responsibility, and it is our privilege to support those who support Chattanooga. The pages of our 2020 annual report will introduce you to many of the remarkable people throughout Chattanooga who are putting those resources to work in ingenious, creative, and life-changing ways.

We are eager to see where the year ahead leads us. Thank you for trusting us and believing in where we can go next.

Maeghan Jones
President & CEO

Charlie Brock
Chair, Board of Directors
RECOGNITION - RECKONING

Photos by Brooke Bragger Photography
Eviction Prevention Initiative (EPI)

The economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic shoved many families who had been struggling to make their rent or mortgage payments fully over the edge, triggering a wave of evictions across the country. Despite a series of moratoria from the federal government meant to ease the flow of evictions, many people quickly found themselves threatened with homelessness after they simply could no longer pay their rent.

Housing insecurity in Chattanooga and Hamilton County is a severe problem, and it's getting worse. The metro area's rapid population growth over the last decade has not been followed by a commensurate increase in wages or enough construction to satisfy the demand for new housing units. As a result, the cost of living in Chattanooga is climbing faster than almost anywhere else in the country.

A single episode of eviction destabilizes almost every other aspect of a person's life. Data suggests that individuals experiencing homelessness have a more difficult time getting to work or getting their kids to school. While schools are closed, lack of a home makes remote learning nearly impossible. An eviction on someone's credit history will make it harder for that person to find quality housing again in the future.

The downstream effects of evictions damage the entire community. According to the Innovation for Justice Program at the University of Arizona James E. Rogers College of Law, the City of Chattanooga will spend more than $24 million per year on downstream costs related to evictions—police response, emergency room visits, foster care, and other crisis services.

Chattanooga responded to this crisis as it had many others before—with quick action and strategic collaboration. Attorneys from the private bar and Legal Aid of East Tennessee stepped up to provide legal representation for tenants in court. To cover their attorneys’ fees and other court costs, a “flex fund” of private dollars was established at the Community Foundation of Greater Chattanooga. Chattanooga Neighborhood Enterprise (CNE) and social work students from the Southern Adventist University provided intake services for individuals facing eviction, case management, and resource connections to help stabilize families.

Many people going through eviction often do so pro se—without the guidance of a professional legal counsel. “Tenants facing eviction need legal representation to ensure they understand their rights. It is about fair and equal access to justice under the law,” says attorney Emily O'Donnell. “In addition to legal representation, they also need money to pay for things like court costs and to negotiate settlements with their landlords. “Property owners and landlords are by no means necessarily the villains in this scenario. Without the ability to collect rent, many owners will themselves face foreclosure.” That's why the Community Foundation's 'flex fund' was so critical,” says O'Donnell.

Together, these efforts became known as the Eviction Prevention Initiative (EPI). The results of flexible private dollars, compassionate case management, and professional legal representation were positive and immediate. By the beginning of August 2021, a little over one year into the pilot program's implementation, 141 households had been spared eviction and homelessness, which included 165 children.

The hard numbers mask the emotional impact that the program has had on people in crisis. “I was so thankful that I met the social worker,” one client reported to her Southern Adventist University case manager. “I was praying and crying...before [my attorney], it was just terrible. I feel like if I hadn’t met her, nothing would have been done.”

The pandemic also laid bare racial disparities in wealth and income. For instance, 65% of EPI clients were Black, while Black residents comprise less than one-quarter of Hamilton County’s total population. The Community Foundation's new strategic plan centers racial equity in all aspects of its grantmaking and commits to meaningfully confronting these inequities.

The future of the Eviction Prevention Initiative will be determined by its supporters and partners, including Legal Aid and the City of Chattanooga. One thing is certain—with the support of the Community Foundation of Greater Chattanooga, this important work to prevent homelessness and family destabilization will continue.
On April 12, 2020, a tornado tore through the Southeast and devastated sections of Hamilton County. Our community, though already strained by the ongoing pandemic, reacted with speed and agility by giving, granting, and working. Within three days, we partnered with United Way of Greater Chattanooga to launch the Tornado Relief Fund (TRF) and assemble a grants committee composed of community leaders, nonprofit partners, trusted community servants, and Foundation staff. In just over two weeks, generous community members and businesses had donated more than $500,000 to the Fund.

Operating with the understanding that time is of the essence when responding to a natural disaster, the committee created a simplified grant application process that allowed organizations to focus their time where it was needed the most—assisting members of our community in crisis. The TRF was designed to provide rapid, flexible resources to organizations serving individuals, families, and communities who were affected by the tornado. To date, it has provided nearly $600,000 for direct financial assistance, legal assistance, and other resources to these community members.

The YMCA of Metropolitan Chattanooga was central to Hamilton County’s tornado response—first as an emergency housing shelter and then as a leader in rebuilding and direct assistance efforts through the Tornado Relief Hub. For Bill Rush, Executive Director of the J.A. Henry Community YMCA, this work was done by looking to the past as a guide. The YMCA has been pivoting to meet changing community needs for 170 years. It’s in their DNA.

In the aftermath of the storm, Bill and his colleagues realized there were many obstacles to recovery, especially those created by the pandemic. They reacted by honoring the loss and anchoring themselves in the power of collective service. This preference for a collective approach allowed them to be more equitable and precise in their service and to support as much as they led.

Tornado Relief Fund (TRF)

Bill Rush

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“We don’t have to lead in order to have an impact. We can play what role is required for us to fill gaps the community needs filled.”

– Bill Rush
“This work—the work of improving the overall health and wellbeing of people, the work of community, the work of equity and inclusion—means checking the ‘I’ at the door and seeing a table large enough for collective impact.”

– Commissioner Katherlyn Geter

Bill Ulmer & Dwayne Marshall

During the pandemic strong leaders, servant leaders, showed up with ideas and action. As COVID cases rose, it became clear that communities of color were experiencing disproportionate impacts on health and economic outcomes. Additionally, the location of testing sites created barriers to access for many in these neighborhoods. Bill Ulmer—former Director of Community Health Services for the Hamilton County Health Department—showed up to address these inequities in COVID response.

Bill, who spent thirty-six years in community health promotion, knew that confronting these issues of access would require flexibility, collaboration, and new methods. He leaned on trusted leaders from Black churches for a new effort. Following traditions of faith, they created a mobile clinic, setting up in a new church parking lot each week. By partnering with churches, the reach of the testing clinic was naturally spread to vulnerable populations.

As an organization, we were proud to support this effort. Dwayne Marshall, our Vice President of Community Investment, worked closely with Bill Ulmer and Chris Ramsey, Sr. and led our team in volunteering and resource support. Together with a diverse army of strong leaders, medical professionals, and volunteers, the mobile clinic tested over 7,400 people at 12 different Black churches from June through August of 2020.
Strong Leaders
The People’s Champion

Christopher Ramsey, Sr., a leader in our fight against COVID, was lost to the disease in January of 2021. We honor him, his work, and his legacy through the words of friends and colleagues.

The Community Foundation is honored to partner with Lucrecia Ramsey for the Chris L. Ramsey Sr. Memorial Scholarship Fund. If you would like to contribute to Chris’ legacy, please visit cfgc.org/donors/donate-now.

“Chris Ramsey, Sr. personified community leadership and engagement to me. In the short time that I was blessed to know him, I had the pleasure of witnessing firsthand his never-ending love for Chattanooga and his passion for helping others reach their full potential. He was a warrior for advancing public health and a beacon of hope for so many young leaders and local activists that looked up to him.

Chris would often reference the famous quote by Shirley Chisolm, “Service is the rent we pay for the privilege of living on this earth.” Chris left us way too soon and with very large shoes to fill. His rent was paid in full and our community has the opportunity to advance forward the powerful foundation he has left for all of us to build upon”.

– Dwayne Marshall

“It was an honor to know Chris and serve with him. There are so many individuals that you will meet, that pass through your life for a reason, a season, or a lifetime. Chris was a lifetime! I am forever changed and grateful to have served with him throughout our communities building health equity. A person’s legacy is so much more than what’s left after you are no longer here. Your legacy is you! It’s all the many things you have given to others. For Chris, it’s his service to others!”

– Katherlyn Geter

“Chris was often referred to as a gentle giant because of his physical stature and the enormity of his impact. But, I came to know him as a warrior, fighting for a community where all people have access to high quality healthcare.”

– Maeghan Jones

“Christopher Ramsey, Sr. was the people’s champion. He carried the torch proudly across all obstacles, protected it from the elements, and passed it along to us.”

– Bill Ulmer
“Marylee and I have naturally gravitated towards helping our community, the place where we both grew up and have made our home. That’s where the Community Foundation comes into play. The Foundation uniquely understands the local nonprofit world and aligns everyone’s interests in a way that creates greater impact than if Marylee and I did it alone.”

– Barry Large, CFGC Donor and Board Member

At the Community Foundation, we believe in the power of generosity and its potential to transform the giver, the recipient, and the community. We are grateful to live in a city with a deep legacy of philanthropy and a culture of giving.

For more than 50 years, our donors have told us that their giving is most meaningful when it helps them live out the values they hold dear. We work closely with our donors to identify the values that motivate their giving now and the impact they wish to have on the community in the future. We help them curate a meaningful legacy focused on the issues and causes they care about most through endowed funds designed to create a permanent source of support for the causes that matter most to them.

At the foundation, we are fortunate to connect our donors’ values and vision with real needs. This was more important than ever throughout 2020. Our donors adapted with us to meet the new challenges in our community and funded $20M in grants to nonprofit organizations. With a catalytic grant from our endowed Fund for Chattanooga and backing from responsive donors, we created the Tornado Relief Fund and Community Response and Resilience Fund so that we could rapidly deploy funds in places and spaces where they were urgently needed.
Growing up in Chattanooga’s Orchard Knob neighborhood, there were times when Darrell Freeman’s family had trouble keeping the lights on. He now lives in Nashville, but the successful entrepreneur remains rooted in his home and story. Darrell’s approach to giving is simple: be the philanthropist he would have needed as a child.

During 2020, the importance of giving was brought to the forefront for Darrell and his wife Gloria. Knowing that inequities like the racial wealth gap would make the pandemic’s effects harder on neighborhoods like the one in which Darrell grew up, they targeted their giving strategies accordingly. The Freemans paired their generosity with our nonprofit knowledge and expertise to identify nonprofit work that aligned with their goals. Together, we developed a plan to support Hope for the Inner City, an economic development nonprofit located just around the corner from Darrell’s childhood home.

“Partnering with the Community Foundation connects my giving to specific, community-driven need. I want to help folks with experiences like mine make it. Working with the Foundation and Hope for the Inner City gives me comfort that the effort is going to happen for a long time.”

~ Darrell S. Freeman, Sr., CFGC Donor
As a native Chattanoogan and Professional Wealth Advisor, Jennifer Harper knows the value of aligning charitable intent with tangible community impact. From her perspective as a donor and advisor, she sees the importance of building strategy that combines tactical, financial expertise with the deep community expertise and responsiveness of the Community Foundation. That’s why she recommends us to her clients. It’s also why she and her husband, Tony, partner with us to achieve their own philanthropic goals.

As legacy donors, the Harpers worked with the Community Foundation team on a long-term strategy for lasting gifts in four areas: financial stability, women’s leadership, natural resource conservation and access, and childhood literacy. Legacy for them is about leaving the world a better place. The Foundation’s big-picture view of the community allows them to connect their generosity to meaningful action and impact in the community.

“We have a bias for action.”

– Jennifer Harper, Legacy Donor
RESPONSE – LEARNING & ADAPTING

Photo by Brooke Bragger Photography
Scholarships

Since our founding in 1963, thousands of Chattanooga students have attended and graduated college thanks to the deep generosity of Community Foundation donors. Assisting as many students as possible to achieve their dream of earning a college degree is fundamental to our vision for a better city and a better world. Rebecca Suttles, Director of Scholarships for twenty-one years, has been one of the area’s greatest champions for the personal and professional thriving of our students. Though no longer with the Foundation, Rebecca’s impact is felt throughout Chattanooga and the nation, as these students—students like Klarke Stricklen—make their mark.

In April of 2021, Klarke Stricklen added another point to her already long list of accomplishments. She would become the first Black Truman Scholar in Sewanee’s history. Klarke became one of only sixty-two in the nation selected, and she’s in good company. The last Sewanee student to receive the honor was Chief United States District Judge Travis McDonough.

Klarke is focused. When her mother first introduced her to Rebecca, she remembers looking at her wall of graduates and imagining herself included among them. Rebecca connected Klarke to two Foundation scholarships—the Together We Can and Mary Adams Scholarship Funds, but the support ran deeper than that. Rebecca supported the whole human being. “She’s been my saving grace,” says Klarke. “Every hurdle that I’ve had to overcome, she’s been right by my side.”

Since that first encounter, Klarke has taken the Sewanee campus by storm. In addition to her most recent honor, she became co-founder and Vice President of the University’s NAACP chapter in April of 2019. In August of the same year, she became the Student Research Assistant and then working group member of The Roberson Project on Slavery, Race, and Reconciliation. Rooted in the resilience of her ancestors, supported by her community, and committed to social justice, the aspiring attorney will make a more just and inclusive world wherever she goes next.
Community Response and Resilience Fund (CRRF)

In March 2020, we assembled a cross-sector coalition of partners to launch the Community Response and Resilience Fund (CRRF). Seeded with a $200,000 grant from our Fund for Chattanooga, the fund was designed to provide flexible resources to organizations serving low-income workers, families, and vulnerable communities most impacted by COVID-19 and its economic consequences.

We recognized that the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic were uniquely affecting low-income individuals and families. That’s why initial grants provided through CRRF were allocated as flexible resources to front-line organizations serving communities disproportionately impacted by the health and economic impacts of COVID-19. Since then, the Fund has raised more than $2M and provided support for organizations that have deep roots and experience working within vulnerable communities that were on the frontlines of this crisis. To date, nearly $2M has been awarded to 35 local nonprofits or government agencies.

“When something happens, I’m always waiting for that call [from the Community Foundation] asking what we need.”

– Becky Whelchel, Metropolitan Ministries Executive Director

| 400,000+ | 10,000+ |
| Meals Served | People Helped |
| $370,000+ | 33,000+ |
| Financial Assistance Provided | Diapers Provided to Families |
Guardian Angels began in 2016 to help people in Cleveland, TN who are grappling with the complicated effects of living in poverty. The group has grown from its roots as a food drive to serving the community in more extensive ways, including direct financial assistance and domestic abuse support. Inspired by faith, community, and family, Guardian Angels exemplifies the importance of trust and cultural competency.

The founders, Pakistani-American immigrants, have a valuable perspective on the role of culture in community dynamics. This perspective was crucial following the 2020 Easter tornados, when many in our local immigrant communities faced unique barriers to accessing relief support.

Through two relief programs, Back to Normal and Stronger than Storms, Guardian Angels was able to provide over $70,000 in direct financial assistance to 26 families and 36 individuals affected by the spring tornado. The group continues in their normal work, helping more than 35 clients through direct assistance and operating an emergency shelter program for domestic abuse survivors who, for various cultural or religious reasons, are unable to go to other kinds of shelters.
RISE Chattanooga started as a jazz festival in 2011 and has since become a champion of Black arts and culture in the Chattanooga region. Through performance, community education, and cultural preservation, the minority-led organization has honored the rich cultural legacy of Chattanooga, while creating opportunities for current Black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) and female artists and culture bearers to thrive.

During the pandemic, RISE had to pivot, which largely meant transitioning to all-virtual programming, even as something else was looming in the background: trauma and mental health. Stories and data tell us that Black communities have a complex relationship to mental health—complicated by cultural stigma, barriers to access, and a lack of culturally competent providers.

Aware of the outsized effects of the pandemic on BIPOC communities, RISE committed to a new initiative. They partnered with counselor Tabi Upton and MySuspire to lead weekly gatherings focused on skill-building and group processing. Equity in mental health remains a focus of RISE who will soon be conducting programming in a new space in East Chattanooga.
Metropolitan Ministries (MetMin) has been providing social services in Chattanooga around poverty and homelessness for over 40 years. The organization has experienced many changes during its four decades, but nothing quite like what 2020 had in store. For the MetMin staff, it wasn’t hard to pivot; they had always been responsive to community needs. The hard part was not being able to let people in when they came to the door.

MetMin didn’t let this stop them, however, and quickly transitioned in two major ways. First, they moved to virtual and phone-based connections and were still able to provide more than $1M in direct assistance. Second, they leaned into the power of collaboration and embraced colocation by officially moving into the MetMin Impact Hub space. The 10,000 square foot Impact Hub, a space shared by MetMin and several other social service organizations, is a physical commitment to the type of collaboration that made MetMin and others resilient throughout the year.
LifeSpring

Healthcare workers were the foundation of our collective resilience in 2020. Among them were the staff at LifeSpring Community Health, a pediatric clinic and community health ministry. LifeSpring began in 2006 to serve uninsured immigrant children in the Highland Park neighborhood and has since become an anchor of health for our most vulnerable neighbors.

The LifeSpring family stayed focused and agile in a constantly-changing pandemic environment by remaining grounded in faith. Deeply rooted in the community, these frontline workers reacted immediately to the suffering around them. Continuing their pediatric work, they also saw the overwhelming need for testing and joined the effort as facilitators and volunteers.

The good work continues for LifeSpring. As the team thinks about the long-term impacts of the pandemic, they’ve made a new commitment to the mental health of the marginalized communities they’ve been serving for years.
Since 2004, La Paz Chattanooga has been dedicated to serving Chattanooga’s vibrant Latinx communities. They do this through social services, community education, business development, and community connection. When the pandemic began, La Paz saw that most of this community was receiving little to no government assistance, though many were essential workers. They adjusted with the community and went into action providing bilingual education and awareness, direct financial assistance, PPE supplies, workforce development, food assistance, and housing assistance.

Seeing the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on Chattanooga’s Latinx community, La Paz developed the Latinx Relief Fund. Through the Fund, La Paz provided $150,000 in direct financial assistance to over 435 families. La Paz also became a COVID testing site and in partnership with Cempa Community Care, Clinica Medicos, LifeSpring, and Aleo Health, tested 1,817 people.
DREAMS DON'T WORK UNLESS YOU DO

RECOVERY – CHANGE
In 2019, we worked with two foundation donors to design and launch The Accelerator Loan Fund, an innovative impact investment fund and program that provides access to opportunity, early capital, and critical mentorship for emerging entrepreneurs that traditionally experience barriers to entry into the market.

In partnership with LAUNCH Chattanooga and Tennessee Valley Federal Credit Union, the Accelerator Loan Fund works to provide low-interest rate loans to entrepreneurs of color who would otherwise not have the opportunity to seek such capital. Entrepreneurs are exposed to new banking and business relationships and given an advisor who will provide wisdom, thought leadership, and insight. At the end of the loan term, the goal is for each entrepreneur to be able to access new sources of capital from other investors and other financial institutions.

This work continued through 2020, and we are encouraged by what has been accomplished so far by our dedicated group of entrepreneurs, mentors, and CFGC team members.

Kenyatta Ashford

Chef Kenyatta Ashford is proof of silver linings in the midst of crisis. Though not immune from the obstacles facing the restaurant industry, he doubled down in his determination to follow passion last year. Furloughed early in the pandemic, it was this setback that ultimately opened the door for him to launch his restaurant Neutral Ground. Located in the Proof Bar and Incubator, the opening took place on Juneteenth of 2020 at a time when many local restaurants in the city were closing their doors for good.

Despite this and the number of barriers facing entrepreneurs of color, Neutral Ground closed a loan, grew its staff, and gained national recognition. Inspired by strong mentors like DeJuan Jordan at LAUNCH, his colleagues at the incubator, and his community, Kenyatta believes in the power of social capital. Following his 2021 victory on the Food Network reality show Chopped Next Gen, Chef Kenyatta is focused on growth and passing forward the lessons he's learned along the way.
Mahogany Hudgins

With focus, determination, and a million-watt smile, Mahogany Hudgins has plans to make Wings Top Tots a major player on the Chattanooga food truck scene. Mahogany—Accelerator entrepreneur—first considered the food business at Tyner Academy and later as a business student at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. By the time she started the Accelerator, she had a vision, a name, a menu, and a truck; what she needed was support from her community.

With her loan, Mahogany was able to fully equip her truck for service, completing it in December of 2020. Like many food-related businesses, Mahogany’s work slowed during the pandemic, but she used this time to regroup, reimagine, and prepare for the growth ahead. All the while, she was supported by her neighbors—encouraging customers, wise mentors, and fellow entrepreneurs. Mahogany looks to the future of Wings Top Tots with hope and determination.

Bob Bosworth

Bob Bosworth isn’t a fan of the word ‘mentor’. Instead, he prefers Chief Encouragement Officer. As a partner in our Accelerator program, he gets to be just that for Ghanaian-American entrepreneur Ella Livingston and her business, Cocoa Asante. Bob—a longtime leader in Chattanooga’s business and nonprofit worlds—sees the Accelerator as an opportunity to foster entrepreneurship while also fostering inter-generational and cross-cultural relationships.

The relationship between Bob and Ella is about more than giving business advice. There is teaching involved, but it’s also about support and encouragement. For Ella, this means having opportunities to build the kind of social capital that will sustain her business. For Bob, this is the true power of the program: the ability to grow businesses, relationships, and trust all at the same time.

“When it comes to the Community Foundation’s commitment to equity, the Accelerator Loan Fund program is a prototype for leading by demonstration, not proclamation.”

– Bob Bosworth
LAUNCH

LAUNCH CHA has been a partner in the Accelerator program from the beginning. Started in 2011 as a Community Foundation project fund, LAUNCH has remained committed to a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem in Chattanooga—creating 300 jobs and supporting 383 businesses in ten years.

Early in the pandemic, it became clear that food-related businesses (25% of their partnering entrepreneurs) like Wings Top Tots were struggling to adjust as many of their neighbors were experiencing food insecurity. In response to these challenges, LAUNCH started the Kitchen Incubator of Chattanooga (KIC).

The ultimate purpose for the KIC is to be a resource for entrepreneurs facing systemic barriers to success. However, the pandemic provided an opportunity to pivot in the name of collaborative change. Together, with the help of community partners across the city, the group cooked and delivered 50,000 meals in 2020 and has plans to provide another 25,000 in 2021.

Nonprofit Alliance

The Hamilton County area has a sizeable nonprofit community. Throughout the pandemic, this community responded to unprecedented demand for programs and services, while themselves experiencing a significant reduction in available resources. As a reply to these challenges, over 70 organizations and individuals from this community, including the Community Foundation, partnered to create the Chattanooga Nonprofit Alliance. Our purpose: “to consolidate COVID-19 recovery efforts that will most effectively and efficiently ensure impartial mid and long term economic vitality of the Greater Chattanooga nonprofit sector.”

Again, collective problems were met with collective solutions. According to a survey conducted by the Alliance, over 60% of respondents expected a reduction in revenue for the year ranging from 20%-70%. Almost all of the organizations surveyed experienced moderate to high levels of interruption in their typical operations.

Nonprofits in our area will need your help to make it. The road to recovery is long but can be better travelled if travelled together. As nonprofits adjust strategies and processes, they also need the continued support of their neighbors. We encourage you to engage and invest how and when you can, so that these anchors of our community can continue investing in return.
Strong Ideas
Opportunity Accelerator

Strategic Plan

2020 was a full year for the Community Foundation—a year of struggle, responding to community, embracing new ideas, and taking opportunities to learn and lead. In 2020, we officially adopted a new strategic plan that is designed to catalyze opportunity and economic mobility. Along with that plan, we reimagined our vision and mission to more fully capture our work and purpose.

We arrived at this new strategic plan and our new vision by engaging hundreds of people across the Chattanooga region to inform our work. While we will continue to be responsive to urgent community needs, we will work to address root causes and barriers to opportunity by investing in local leaders and institutions and centering racial equity in our approach. We will also continue to transform generosity into lasting change by engaging our donors in meaningful giving and inviting them to join our work as co-investors.

CFGC New Mission:

Together with our community and partners, we transform generosity into lasting change toward a prosperous and just Chattanooga where all can thrive and achieve their full potential.
STAFF, BOARD & FINANCES
Staff

- Maeghan Jones, President and CEO
- Marisa Ogles, Vice President of Donor Services and Engagement
- Rebecca Underwood, Vice President of Finance and Administration
- Dwayne Marshall, Vice President of Community Investment
- Dr. Stephanie Young, Director of Scholarships
- Robin Posey, Director of Community Impact
- Ashley Bice, Receptionist and Finance Assistant
- Keely Gilliland, Executive Assistant
- Catherine Coker, Staff Accountant
- Woodson Carpenter, Communications and Engagement Coordinator
- Rebekah Gouger, Community Impact Associate
- Chris Adams, Donor Services Associate

Board

- Charlie Brock, Chair
- Cheryl Key, Vice Chair
- Dallas Joseph, Vice Chair
- Barry Large, Vice Chair
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- Lorie Runge, Treasurer
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- Rondell Crier
- Silvia Ramos
- Ray Ryan
- Dr. Dave Bhattacharya
- Daniela Peterson
- Dr. Ruth Liu
- Dr. Shewanee Howard-Baptiste
- Gladys Pineda*
- Julie Stowe*
- Elizabeth Williams*
- Travis Lytle*

*Rolled off in 2020/21
Total Assets: $211 Million

Educational: 29%
Health and Human Services: 26%
Faith and Community: 23%
Other: 17%
Arts and Culture: 3%
Environmental: 2%

Total Grants Distributed: $20 Million
Total Gifts to the Community Foundation: $48 Million

Increase in Assets from 2019: $23 Million
Total Amount in Scholarships Awarded: $592,000

Numbers reflect unaudited financial statements
2020 was a year unlike any other. As a community, we came together like never before. Our shared resilience—defined by courage, collaboration, flexibility, and trust—was a reflection of what makes us strong every year. At the Community Foundation, we had the distinct honor to serve alongside our neighbors, doing the hard work together.

We had the freedom to try new things because of strong relationships and mutual trust. The effects of 2020—emotional, physical, and economic—will not disappear overnight, but neither will our commitment to community. As we look to the future, we will continue to invest in strong leaders, anchors, stories, and ideas. We remain committed to racial equity and economic mobility. We believe that generosity transforms and that there is power in connection.

The Community Foundation of Greater Chattanooga couldn’t do our work without you—donors, community partners, and neighbors. It is your passion that energizes us, your work that gives us purpose, and your strength that supports us as we support you.

As always, we invite you to reach out if you have any questions or want to get involved in our work.

Contact Marisa Ogles, Vice President of Donor Services & Engagement, at: mogles@cfgc.org or (423) 265-0586.