Creating Wellbeing
The Intersection of Data & Cross-Sector Partnerships

Place-Based Philanthropy Tour | Athens, Georgia
Welcome to Athens

Full of life, culture, a vibrant history, and helping hands, our Athens, The Classic City, is a special spot on Georgia's map. We boast exceptional food, craft breweries, fantastic coffee houses and a rich, diverse arts scene that includes museums, live music, theater and so much more. If you crave the outdoors or neighborhood strolls, our State Botanical Gardens, Greenway system, Firefly trail, and public parks will ensure you forgot you owned a phone. Home to the nation's oldest land grant institution, the University of Georgia offers tradition, education, and an incredible history of service to our state.

My Athens, our Athens, has something for everyone.

Like many cities, if you pull back the curtain and peek into our day, you will be met with contradicting and harsh realities. For example, Forbes magazine has consistently listed Athens as one of the best places to retire. Yet, the U.S. Census indicates Athens-Clarke is one of the poorest counties in the nation.

We invite you to experience the beauty and brokenness of our sweet city. Athens is home to diverse people with incredible skills and ideas. When we explore the notion of community wellbeing and improving the quality of life for all, partnerships rooted in true collaboration and shared outcomes are the key to longitudinal, positive change. As grantmakers we seek effective, equitable ways to share and distribute resources. In Athens, we are turning to unprecedented data collection and informed decision-making strategies to shape effective responses with our community.

Thank you for allowing us to share the Classic City with you! We love it here and we hope you do, too.

Sarah McKinney
President & CEO, Athens Area Community Foundation

As a statewide network of private grantmakers, the Georgia Grantmakers Alliance (GGA) has the privilege of working with philanthropic leaders who share a passion for helping others and giving back to the community. Philanthropy often starts with a person's instinct to help another person in need. With time and growth, additional levers are sought to make a greater impact – collaboration, data, informed policy and more. In this GGA Place-Based Philanthropy Tour of Athens, we feature leaders using these tools to tackle complex community challenges.
Program Agenda

8:30am   Arrival and Networking at UGA Health Sciences Campus - Breakfast served by Java Joy and Joyristas

9:00am   Welcome to Athens: Strategic Philanthropy, Data Collection and the Athens Wellbeing Project
Dr. Grace Bagwell Adams, Assistant Professor, University of Georgia College of Public Health
Phil Bettendorf, Chairman of the Board, Athens Area Community Foundation
Sarah McKinney, President & CEO, Athens Area Community Foundation
Jere W. Morehead, President, University of Georgia
Alex Patterson, Founding Board Member, Athens Area Community Foundation

10:15am  Cross-sector Data Utilization: Philanthropy, Government, Nonprofits and the University of Georgia
Dr. Montez Carter, President and CEO, St. Mary’s Health Care System
Deborah Lonon, Assistant County Manager, Athens-Clarke County Unified Government
Rick Parker, Executive Director, Athens Housing Authority
Dr. Charles Peck, (Retired) President and CEO, Piedmont Athens Regional Medical Center
Claire Suggs, Chief of Community Engagement and Strategic Partnerships, Clarke County School District
Ed Perkins, Board Member, Athens Area Community Foundation (Moderator)

11:00am  Break and Load Bus

11:30am  Lunch at Creature Comforts Downtown Athens Taproom - Lunch served by The National
Chef’s Welcome: Peter Dale of The National
Funder Perspective: Matt Stevens, Director of Community & Culture, Creature Comforts Brewing Company
Welcome and Introduction to Hot Corner: Athens-Clarke County Mayor Kelly Girtz

1:00pm   Walking History Tour to Morton Theatre through Hot Corner: Athens’ historic African-American business district

1:45pm   Place-Based Philanthropy and Partnerships: Where funding and data are addressing entrenched issues (includes Q&A)

3:15pm   Load Bus to Return to UGA Health Sciences Campus

Planning Committee
Sarah McKinney (Chair) | Athens Area Community Foundation
Dr. Grace Bagwell Adams | University of Georgia
Lydia Clements | Georgia Grantmakers Alliance
Sally Coenen | Athens Area Community Foundation (Board)
Dr. Jennifer Frum | University of Georgia
Hank Huckaby | Athens Area Community Foundation (Board)
Erik Johnson | Robert W. Woodruff Foundation
Kipper Koslowsky | Athens Area Community Foundation
Ed Perkins | Athens Area Community Foundation (Board)
Matt Stevens | Creature Comforts Brewing Company
Blaine Williams | Athens-Clarke County Unified Government
When people with common goals join forces, everybody benefits

The place is Athens-Clarke County, Georgia. The year is 2014 and something’s not right. Crime rates are increasing, school attendance is dropping, and poverty seems permanently entrenched. Leaders of essential community organizations are putting their muscle behind a new initiative that they hope will turn the tide – the Athens Wellbeing Project (AWP).

With the ultimate goal of improving housing, transportation, lifelong learning, community safety, wealth and employment, civic vitality and health in Athens, the AWP sits at the intersection of data collection and collaboration. While it may not sound sexy, it is proving to integrate efforts through capturing and sharing open-access, neighborhood-level data. Combined with U.S. Census Bureau numbers and other data, AWP information forms a snapshot in time that gives a good overall picture of the Athens-Clarke community, revealing information about racial disparities, access to health care and income levels.

The Athens Area Community Foundation (AACF) pooled donor funds and provided coordination to get AWP rolling. A brief household survey was designed by a team of researchers at the University of Georgia, led by Dr. Grace Bagwell Adams in the College of Public Health in consultation with local agency leaders. It is conducted door-to-door and asks specifically, for example, about parents’ and children’s use of hospital emergency departments, access to child care, and about housing affordability. By repeating the survey every two years, AWP hopes to build a data set that can help schools, nonprofits and other agencies understand pressing needs and coordinate action.

Fast forward to 2019 and nine community partners each have specific plans to use the data. For example, the Clarke County School District is providing its new Local School Governance Teams with data on each elementary attendance zone. Information about food insecurity led St. Mary’s Healthcare to change the route of its mobile food pantry to areas in East Athens where survey data showed food insecurity was greater. The Athens-Clarke County Police Department is using the data to strengthen its community policing strategy.

One finding showed the city has two income peaks, one at about $8,000 in monthly family income, another at about $2,000 monthly. Together, the AWP partners recognize that has tremendous implications and are now exploring ways to support a healthier middle class. The AACF uses the indicators to guide grantmaking strategy and advice for other philanthropists. The business community is also rallying around the AWP to frame a growing giving program led by Creature Comforts Brewing Company.
Businesses Giving Back

Investing strategically in the communities that help them succeed

With the vision of being a good neighbor to those in need, in 2015 Creature Comforts Brewery created the Get Comfortable campaign, which has grown to be a year-round philanthropic program.

The mission of Get Comfortable is to align the business community to support agencies meeting the community’s most pressing needs. In Athens-Clarke County, where one in five people are food-insecure and the poverty rate is 36.7 percent – double the state and triple the national average – the program has traditionally focused on hunger, homelessness, and poverty. A rigorous vetting process anchored by AWP data determines which organizations will be highlighted and receive funding when the program wraps in November 2019. An advisory committee of community stakeholders – social services professionals and leaders of AWP partner agencies – help review all project proposals and select recipients. Get Comfortable is set up as a component fund of the Athens Area Community Foundation and Creature Comforts intends to replicate this structure as it expands to other cities.

Get Comfortable aims to align philanthropic businesses to make the largest collective impact possible. More than 40 local companies are participating in the 2019 program, up from just one, Creature Comforts itself, in its first year. While this is a place-based community movement that began with annual grants of $1,800, Get Comfortable will exceed $300,000 in grants this year and, along the way, has forged a national partnership with Russian River Brewing Company. This new collaborative element has elevated the program and enabled Creature Comforts to intersect with other craft breweries famous for their philanthropic work. With AWP data as a backbone and partnerships as muscle, Creature Comforts is strengthening the community that helped it succeed.

1 In 3 children in Athens-Clarke County grows up in poverty.

The poverty rate in Athens (35%) is double the state of GA.

Athens-Clarke County given “Persistent Poverty” designation by U.S. Census.
Speakers

Dr. Grace Bagwell Adams
Assistant Professor,
University of Georgia College of Public Health

Sarah McKinney
President & CEO,
Athens Area Community Foundation

Ed Perkins
Board Member,
Athens Area Community Foundation

Dr. Montez Carter
President and CEO,
St. Mary’s Health Care System

Alex Patterson
Founding Board Member,
Athens Area Community Foundation

Dr. Jerry Shannon
Assistant Professor,
University of Georgia Franklin College of Arts and Sciences

Deborah Lonon
Assistant County Manager,
Athens-Clarke County Unified Government

Rick Parker
Executive Director,
Athens Housing Authority

Matt Stevens
Director of Community & Culture, Creature Comforts Brewing Company

Jere W. Morehead
President,
University of Georgia

Dr. Charles Peck
(Retired)
President and CEO, Piedmont Athens Regional Medical Center

Claire Suggs
Chief of Community Engagement and Strategic Partnerships, Clarke County School District
Leaders and Resources

Leaders

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- Matt Stevens | Creature Comforts Brewing Company | (404) 642-9273 matt@ccbeerco.com

GGA Steering Committee:
- Pat Lummus (Chair) | Sartain Lanier Family Foundation
- Mark Crosswell (Treasurer) | Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta
- Sonia Vick (Communications) | Williams Family Foundation of Georgia
- Shell Knox Berry | Community Foundation for the Central Savannah River Area
- Lydia Clements | Georgia Grantmakers Alliance
- Robbo Hatcher | Georgia Pine Level Foundation
- Janine Lee (ex officio) | Southeastern Council of Foundations
- Atiba Mbiwan | The Zeist Foundation
- Lisa Medellin | Healthcare Georgia Foundation
- Lizzy Smith | Woodruff and Whitehead Foundations
- Suzanna Stribling | Wilbur and Hilda Glenn Family Foundation
- Tené Traylor | The Kendeda Fund
- Yvonne Whitaker | NCR Foundation
- Paul White | Communities of Coastal Georgia Foundation

Athens Wellbeing Project

Institutional Partners:
- Athens Area Community Foundation
- Athens-Clarke County Police Department
- Athens-Clarke County Unified Government
- Athens Housing Authority
- Clarke County School District
- Piedmont Athens Regional
- St. Mary’s Hospital and Health Care System
- University of Georgia

Community Stakeholders:
- Creature Comforts
- Envision Athens
- Family Connection/Communities in Schools
- United Way of Northeast Georgia

Books

- When Helping Hurts, Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert (2014)
- This is Where You Belong, Melody Warnick (2017)
- The Search for God and Guinness, Stephen Mansfield (2014)
- Happy City, Charles Montgomery (2014)

Public Service:

Learn how the eight UGA Public Service and Outreach units are at work in your community: www.outreach.uga.edu.

Podcasts/TEDtalks:

Critical Value Audio Podcast (Urban Institute):
- Episode #30: What is Philanthropy’s Role in Cities? (April 22, 2019)
  Hosted by Justin Milner with Rip Rapson, president of the Kresge Foundation.

Dr. Grace Bagwell Adams’s TEDxUGA Talk:
- Beyond the Status Quo: 3 Steps to Strength-Based Community Building
  Posted at www.tedxuga.com/amplify/ or at www.youtube.be/BlstlNKJAw.

Lemuel LaRoche TEDxUGA Talk:
- Chess and Community: The Power of a Single Hour
  Posted at www.tedxuga.com/amplify/ or at www.youtube.com/watch?v=PNfapnJz6Pw.
Founded in 2010, the Georgia Grantmakers Alliance (GGA) is a nonpartisan initiative open to all private grantmakers interested in peer learning, critical Georgia issues, and promising solutions. Our programs feature place-based philanthropic tools, future trends, and local examples of the connections between state policy and grantmaking. By fostering relationships and strengthening the network of Georgia funders, GGA is making a positive and lasting difference in Georgia’s communities.

Special Thanks to the Following Organizations