



ANNUAL REPORT

Helping Families,
Neighbors, and
Small Businesses
to **Thrive** in

2019



A WORD FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CHUCK MORSE



When was the last time you went somewhere new without using a GPS or phone navigation?

As humans, we prefer to put our faith in our GPS. But in community development, there are no turn-by-turn directions. Broken relationships and broken systems add layers of complexity and complication that no “non-profit GPS” could map out. We have to approach community development differently, finding and following a north star to guide us through the complicated ground we tread walking with neighbors to see them thrive.

At the core of our organization, our north star is inextricably tied to our beliefs, and is embodied through four core values. In all the work we do: every conversation, program, or partnership we

pursue our goal is to be *intentional, relational, actionable, and inspirational*.

By ensuring that our decisions and actions are intentional, we are able to work against systems that perpetuate harm. Being relational, we do the hard, yet all important work of building lasting relationships within our community. Choosing to be actionable leads us to embody change. And in striving to be inspirational we trust our work would be an encouragement and catalyst of change for others.

The impact we've had across the city, the growth we've experienced, and the lives we've had the honor to touch over the past year have all been a result of pursuing this “north star”. As we share all the dreams and hard work that 2019 has brought to fruition, we hope that this report in itself would inspire you to intentional action and relationship here in New Orleans.

Join us in helping neighbors, families, and businesses move from surviving to Thriving in New Orleans in 2020.

We Were All Designed To Thrive

Imagine a world where nothing is broken, nothing is missing. A world where kids play, learn, dream, and grow to be flourishing adults. A world where families are rooted in their communities in homes they cherish. A world where individuals unleash their passions, purpose, and creativity freely through business. A world where work is a place of refreshment and purpose.

The hard truth is that when we look around and within ourselves, we see brokenness all about us. We live in a world where many children lack the safety, stability, and hope to begin dreaming of a future. Our neighbors are pushed to financial breaking points and forced to move from their homes. In business, doors to resources, access, and support are afforded to a select few, while systemic and societal norms bar women and minority entrepreneurs from a place at the economic table. And many feel trapped and overwhelmed by work, rather than welcomed and affirmed.

Yet at Thrive, our faith leads us to believe that imagining such a world is not just some pipe dream, but a call to action. We believe that we are called and empowered by Christ's example to cultivate those sorts of realities, because at our core we were all designed to Thrive.

Since 2009 we have been responding to that call by using the assets we have to empower others to flourish in whatever ways we can. Over our 10 years, we have been blessed to have grown, now having the opportunity to serve neighbors, churches, nonprofit partners, and small businesses through four pillar programs:



Providing Affordable Housing and Pathways to Homeownership, Helping Create Stability, Community, & Generational Wealth.



Creating a Safe Space and Programs that allow Kids, Families, & Local Leaders to Flourish in the Desire Neighborhood.



Creating Welcoming, Affirming, & Empowering Workplace while Providing Affordable Goods and Dignifying Shopping Experiences For Our Neighbors.



Equipping, Connecting, & Empowering Underserved Entrepreneurs to Launch & Grow Thriving Businesses that Impact Their Communities.

As we head toward a new year, we reflect on all that 2019 has allowed us to accomplish and head toward a renewed and reimagined vision of what a thriving New Orleans can look like in 2020.

We invite you to reflect, to dream, and respond with us to the call to help create an equitable, flourishing, thriving New Orleans.

- Ben McLeish
Founder of Thrive New Orleans
Current Chair of the Board



THRIVE NEW ORLEANS

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Launch NOLA



Strength In Community

With 161 Business Academy Alumni, the community of fellow entrepreneurs has quickly become one of the greatest assets for local business owners. Through peer-led mastermind sessions, co-working, and alumni events, Launch has strived to create a community of mutual support, fueled by the gifts that each unique entrepreneur brings to the table.

Although training is valuable, the strength that entrepreneurs find as a collective is far greater than any singular course or coaching session can provide. Through this intentional and relational act of community, more and more entrepreneurs are empowering one another to Thrive.

LAUNCH NOLA

PROGRAM NARRATIVE

New Orleans is bursting with entrepreneurial activity, and yet many who call the city home are barred from the economic prosperity and possibility that small business ownership holds.

Many men and women of color are restricted from accessing the capital, business training, and the social networks necessary to launch a business, while others face similar systemic barriers as they attempt to scale and grow.

This leaves many promising entrepreneurs feeling worn out, frustrated, and at times defeated.

At Launch NOLA, we believe that the economic opportunity that small business ownership creates should be accessible to all.



***In New Orleans, only 2%
of all sales go to minority
owned businesses.***

Launch's mission is to Equip, Connect, and Empower New Orleans' entrepreneurs to launch and grow thriving businesses. We do this through our core programming:

Equip: Launch equips entrepreneurs with the business training and acumen to start and grow well through the Launch NOLA Business Academy, Alumni Coaching, and Workshops

Connect: Launch connects entrepreneurs to resource providers, small business support partners, supportive networks, and contract opportunities to foster sustainable growth.

Empower: Launch empowers entrepreneurs to take ownership of their businesses, launching and leading with confidence by taking a coaching, not consulting approach to holistically develop the entrepreneurs we serve.

2019 Program Summary

Small Business Training

Launch NOLA is actively engaged in training new minority entrepreneurs to develop thriving business entities. This spring, we celebrated the graduation of two Launch NOLA general small business

cohorts, and in November celebrated the graduation of a third small business cohort. These 35 professionals completed our 12-week Small Business Training Academy where we utilized the evidence-based curriculum – Co.Starters.

In close partnership with Propeller, Launch hosted three “Get Started Workshops” during the first half of 2019. The workshops were well attended and in total, 35 go-getters, and entrepreneurs attended. The workshop sessions were the first part of a small business development pipeline, helping entrepreneurs move from concept to launch, from launch to established business and from established business to scaling. Two of our cohort members entered Phase 2 training with Propeller.

Launch NOLA Green

In December, Launch NOLA Green celebrated its fourth graduation of Storm-water Management/Green Infrastructure professionals. These entrepreneurs completed our 14-week Launch NOLA Green Academy and are moving on to the next phase of our pipeline. Within our Green Academy, we've recognized the unique opportunity that green entrepreneurship holds for returning citizens, and have partnered intentionally with organizations like The First 72+ and the Restoration Initiative for Culture and Community who support returning citizens with the re-entry process.

Bridging the gap between classroom and practice is critical when equipping green sector professionals for success. For this reason, Launch has strived to move from providing one build day opportunity, to coordinating two for each cohort; providing more opportunities and exposure to apply Stormwater Management techniques for entrepreneurs breaking into Green Infrastructure.

Launch NOLA Green was able to partner with the international engineering firm and CAP Prime Contractor, APTIM and a local DBE firm, CAG, LLC to utilize only Launch NOLA Green Alumni businesses to install residential water management landscaping interventions as a part of the Gentilly Community Adaptation Program (CAP).

The CAP is a part of a HUD grant awarded to the city of New Orleans to be used to mitigate flooding in the Gentilly neighborhood, which has a propensity to flood. The grant is intended to serve roughly 150 Gentilly homeowners who make

80% of the area median income by providing them with up to \$25,000 each to be used to design and install water management landscaping interventions at their homes.

Through the partnership with APTIM and funding from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and BCM, Launch NOLA Green is now in position to support alumni businesses as they serve as subcontractors for 40+ homes that have been awarded to APTIM over two “stages” of design and installation. The partnership will be a critical catalyst for helping new green infrastructure professionals grow and develop their businesses.

Since breaking ground this fall, the Launch NOLA Green graduates anticipate completing the first phase of the project in January 2020. The estimated revenues for Launch NOLA Graduates through phase 1 is expected to be \$500,000, while also providing a dramatic increase to their green infrastructure acumen.

On Claiborne Avenue

In March, as part of NOEW (New Orleans Entrepreneurship Week in your Neighborhood Launch NOLA and the Cultural Innovation District partnered with local leaders and businesses to highlight the history and to celebrate a new future for the community and businesses on Claiborne Avenue. Local leaders shared his wisdom and experiences about Claiborne and Jerome Smith was honored for his steadfast commitment to the Treme neighborhood. There was a powerful conversation regarding the past, present and future of Claiborne Ave. Panelists and attendees both held firm to the hope, commitment, and vision for creating a new future for Claiborne Avenue where it will serve once more as a thriving cultural, community, and business corridor.

This spring, Thrive completed renovations at our co-working space located on the historic Claiborne Ave. business corridor and hosted a pop-up showcase at our *NOEW in your Neighborhood* event. At the pop-up showcase, Launch NOLA alumni shared their products and services with attendees, representing the creativity, quality and passion of New Orleans' local businesses. The showcase was one component of Launch NOLA's pilot Pop-Up Coaching Series. Alumni interested in the pop-up market model were provided specialized training, gained real experience “prototyping” their pop-up, and were connected with year-round pop-up opportunities to grow their business.

In May, we started a coaching pilot with eight of our entrepreneurs. The entrepreneurs are paired with an experienced Launch NOLA Business Academy facilitator who is also a certified coach. Participants are provided with one-on-one coaching sessions that focus on: business growth, pivot-al decision-making and setting up structures for accountability. The sessions are biweekly for 35 to 45 minutes over three consecutive months and are held at the Launch NOLA co-working space also known as *The Hub*.

As a result of the initial coaching pilot's success, Launch NOLA committed to building out a more robust coaching practice and has built in three months of regular coaching as an extension for all Business Academy graduates to participate in.

Launch NOLA also hosted the first of two Alumni Circle events in order to listen and learn from our alumni. These events help us ensure that our model is rooted in the needs and vision of the alumni themselves. The Alumni Circle, which included "speed marketing", a talking circle, and plenty of "family" time for alumni to catch up, also served as an informal alumni reunion.

Power in Partnerships

Launch NOLA is collaborating with the Urban Conservancy on an initiative in the Hoffman Triangle neighborhood. The project helps educate local churches and residents about responsible stewardship of local flooding risks and alternative methods to mitigate these stormwater challenges. Through our partnerships, we are also able to provide complimentary rainwater barrels and trees for the church properties and residents' homes, while providing subsidized stormwater management installations for qualifying community members. The Launch NOLA Green small businesses we responsible for three green infrastructure installations in the Hoffman Triangle that collectively hold an estimated 3500 gallons of runoff onsite; helping mitigate flooding and pollution. For more on this partnership, visit www.UmbrellaNOLA.org

We are intentional about contracting with minority-owned businesses. **In the first six months of the year, we spent over \$131,707 (64% of all expenditures) with minority-owned contractors** and professional service businesses for accounting, program facilitation, summer camp, lawn care, management fees, repairs and maintenance, food and catering and janitorial services.

In addition, Launch NOLA is providing advice and counsel to several church communities in the New Orleans area regarding flooding and storm water management. Many of these churches are located in the Lower 9th ward and Gentilly neighborhoods.

New Leaders Pave the Way

During 2019, Launch NOLA welcomed all new staff. The Program Director, Kayti Chung-Williams came on board, bringing with her deep experience in food and hospitality startups, as well as a ruthless commitment to equity. Program Coordinators, Ari Williams and Nika Carter support Business Academy participants and Launch NOLA's 140+ alumni.

Looking Back and Looking Forward

Coming on board in the summer of 2019, the transitions that were happening gave the new team a space to review and reflect on the past 5 years of Launch's work within the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Whenever you start to reflect on the past, there are a few things that you can focus on: what worked, what didn't work, who were the key players, and most importantly, what was the feedback. It has been encouraging to see/hear how much Launch has made an impact on our entrepreneurs.

The Launch Team has been focusing on tightening and streamlining how we engage with interested entrepreneurs to EQUIP, CONNECT, and EMPOWER them in their journey. Not everyone has the same journey and we want to meet entrepreneurs where they are individually. That's what has led us to creating The Collective, where our alumni, current cohort members and local entrepreneurs can all come for co-working, 1-1 coaching sessions, and small intimate workshops every Thursday.

In 2020, we look forward to having more entrepreneurs come through Launch in different ways! Different journeys = different pipelines. We hope to create impact through cultivating those pipelines to a circular journey within Launch. Wherever an entrepreneur may begin in their journey, their goal would be to grow in their business and in turn grow within Launch as an alumni mentor/coach or through sharing their services with other entrepreneurs.

In any way that Launch can be a resource, we want to be readily available for our entrepreneurs. We look forward to building more relationships with resources around capital, real estate, and other entrepreneurial support organizations to not only widen but deepen the possibilities for our entrepreneurs.

- Kayti Chung-Williams, Director of Launch NOLA

Launch NOLA's Impact



LAUNCH NOLA INTERNALLY CONTRACTED WITH LAUNCH ALUMNI BUSINESSES FOR \$50,849 OF GOODS AND SERVICES IN 2019

LAUNCH NOLA HELPED CONNECT LAUNCH NOLA ALUMNI TO OVER \$305,470 IN CONTRACT REVENUES IN 2019

Taking The Leap: From Concept to Launch



Shelita Ratliff is the proud owner of Mae's Boutique, a mobile boutique serving plus-sized women. For several years Shelita was fearful to take the leap of launching her business. Through her experience receiving Pop-Up Coaching, she gained the confidence to finally launch her business and was able to afford to register to sell at Essence Fest and purchase her initial inventory. During her first Pop-Up experience ever, her passion for helping others feel beautiful paid off...to the tune of \$1,200 in profit after paying all of her costs!

Building A Family Legacy of Entrepreneurship



After wrapping up his Olympic running career, Greg Nixon and his wife Nicole made the decision to move to New Orleans to help build a better future for the city Greg has known growing up. After going through Launch's Business Academy and Launch NOLA Green, the Nixons launched Ubuntu Construction, a construction and landscaping company specializing in storm-water management. They've begun their journey as one of the primary installers of storm-water management interventions for the Gentilly Community Adaptation Program, as they help Gentilly homeowners mitigate flooding while beautifying their homes.

Restoration Thrift



Welcome

It's not just a greeting, it's the feeling and atmosphere that each and every customer walks into when they enter Restoration Thrift. By creating a space where all feel welcome, dignified, and restored, Restoration Thrift often feels more like ministry than retail. Over the year, the staff has walked with customers through life's greatest and hardest moments: celebrating weddings, birthdays, and graduations, and consoling customers who lost loved ones, battled depression, and navigated homelessness. Of course, affordable clothing and wares are necessary to survive, but relationships, care, and belonging are what allow our neighbors to Thrive.



“Providing things that our neighbors need opens the door to allow us to provide what everybody desperately needs: community and compassion, to feel truly seen and cared for. When people experience that, it's transformational.”

- Joy Williams, Thrift Store Manager

RESTORATION THRIFT

PROGRAM NARRATIVE



For many, shopping is an exciting time; shoppers feel confident and beautiful in new clothes, and families swell with a sense of pride in bringing home new goods or furniture for their home.

Clothing and home goods are staples that everyone needs, yet not everyone can afford.

For many of our neighbors, the rising cost of living in New Orleans, along with fixed incomes and the financial pressures of raising families has made shopping for necessities like clothing and home goods a serious financial burden. Rather than feeling confident, beautiful, and proud, shoppers feel stressed and overwhelmed.

We believe that household necessities should be affordable to all, and that every shopping experience should be one that leave guests and their families feeling dignified and uplifted.

That's why for the past five years, Restoration Thrift has been providing shoppers and neighbors with excellent products and only the highest level of customer service, at prices that are affordable to all.

At the same time, many people across our city lack the security of stable work. Even more who may have regular work find themselves feeling stuck in jobs where they feel less than human. Restoration Thrift provides meaningful work, fair wages, and consistent job training to provide both job security and set employees up for future success.

Through all that Restoration Thrift does, they help neighbors thrive through creating dignifying experiences, building thriving relationships, and empowering them and their families to achieve financial stability.

2019 Program Summary

At Restoration Thrift, we hire team members from many walks of life. Team members include individuals who are transitioning back into the workforce, those recovering from addictions, those with health challenges, and those with other challenging circumstances. We provide daily customer service training and life skills training for all employees and a week-long new employee training as well.

Many of our team members are actively engaged in their churches, i.e. Greater Liberty Missionary Baptist Church, Asia Missionary Baptist Church and St. Roch Community Church and support the store's mission as a ministry for the community.

Volunteers are actively engaged in what we do. During spring break, we partnered with several churches in Louisiana and from surrounding states to help sort donations and vet them.

Partners Bless Others Through Generosity

We partner regularly with several Christian-based organizations such as Plains Presbyterian Church, Zachary, LA, The New Orleans Mission, and The Gathering, Chalmette, LA. Our church partners regularly make donations to the store and we provide donations to other partners when there is limited space to maintain the inventory. In addition, our partner, True Love Missionary Baptist Church stores inventory for us when our space is limited.

This year, we developed a partnership with Mike Valentino, owner of Valentino Family Hotels. Mike donated furniture from his hotel collection and welcome center to our store. In June, Mike also donated an entire floor of office furniture to our organization. He equipped Thrive New Orleans with assets that allowed us to give back beyond our own organization, which in turn will create better opportunities for our com-munity members. Some of our partner organizations that received donations were: Union Baptist College Theological Seminary, St. Mark the IV Missionary Baptist Church, Pleasant Zion Missionary Baptist Church, and Central Missionary Baptist Church.

We have a new partnership with the Jefferson Parish Civil District Court. We walk with individuals mandated by the court to complete service hours for charges individuals may have incurred. Once the person completes their service at the store, charges are dropped and the individual is released from their disciplinary requirements.

We are also using an online book and CD buy-back program that is helping us develop a new revenue stream for the store.

Looking Back and Looking Forward

The past year has been one of provision and blessing. Through every season, and in every way we could not have imagined the means by which we have come to receive what we need, at just the right time. This provision in turn allowed our staff to help customers find just what they need at just the right time.

From helping a bride find the perfect wedding dress, to seeing grandmothers getting gifts and clothes for all of her grand-babies at our dollar sale, the space that Restoration Thrift creates is special because we have the chance to touch people's lives in the times and places that matter to them.

Of course, none of what we do would be possible without the right staff. This year, our staff has grown, not just in number, but as leaders too: taking on new responsibilities, and taking ownership of projects to really touch our customers and neighbors.

In 2020, I know that Restoration Thrift will be stepping into a brand new chapter, a milestone that I believe is proof of what our talented staff, loving customers, and committed donors have accomplished over the past 5 years. In 2020, as we embark upon the next chapter of our journey we will continue to be visionary leaders with a heart to serve our guests and community at Restoration Thrift.

- Joy Williams, Thrift Store Manager

Restoration Thrift's Impact

7

JOBS CREATED

8

JOBS SUSTAINED

102

HOURS OF EMPLOYEE
DEVELOPMENT PROVIDED

117,530
LBS.

LBS OF WASTE SAVED
FROM LANDFILLS

THE SAME WEIGHT AS NEARLY
60 MITSUBISHI SEDANS

9057

UNIQUE CUSTOMERS
SERVED

\$200,000

IN REVENUE BROUGHT IN
TO SUSTAIN ORGANIZATION

Retirement Can't Hold Her Back



Imagine Mary Poppins as a retired electrician from the 7th Ward and you have Ms. Brenda.

We first met Ms. Brenda when she “flew in” to the store several years ago as a shopper. Even then, she quickly became an integral part of Restoration Thrift, volunteering to help stock clothes and to stay around to help shut down the store when it got dark out. After months of Ms. Brenda’s volunteering, we convinced her to let us pay her. The rest, they say, is history!

Ms Brenda has been working day-in and day-out ever since, making sure that the store is stocked and beautiful for customers to enjoy. Her hard work, stern care, and heart for others has grounded, blessed, and inspired team members, volunteers, and customers for years now.

Not All Heroes Wear Capes



Life constantly throws things at you. For Ebony life was no different. Yet when most people would choose to give up, break down, or run away, she has chosen to persevere, to build up, and to serve others.

Most can't even imagine how tiring being a mother of 10 can be. Yet even after her full-time job as a mom, Ebony comes to the thrift store each day making the choice to serve others, making them feel seen, heard, and welcomed. On top of the care she brings to the Restoration Thrift family, Ebony is also an entrepreneur and graduate of Launch NOLA's Business Academy. Her business, Bertha & Kos got started so that her children could participate in learning and growing through their own family business.

At home, at work, and in her "free-time" Ebony chooses to help others Thrive. So while she doesn't have the ability to fly, read minds, or some crazy super strength, the super power she does have is far greater: heart.

Thrive Housing



More than a house

In New Orleans, housing costs have risen dramatically, while wages have largely remained the same, making rent unmanageable for many long-time residents.

Thrive Housing seeks to not only provide affordable rentals for neighbors in our community, but to support them holistically. For many of the families and individuals we walk with, we help them find and sustain work, connect them to the community through the local church, and commit to working through the ups and downs with them.

A house is necessary to survive. But community, stability, and belonging...that's what it looks like to Thrive.

“The people who rent from Thrive Housing aren’t tenants to us, they’re so much more. They’re neighbors, friends, coworkers, and church members. When we welcome a new family into one of our houses, we walk in relationship with them, which opens the door to far greater things than just a roof over someone’s head.”

**- Chuck Morse, Executive Director
of Thrive New Orleans**

THRIVE HOUSING

PROGRAM NARRATIVE

Healthy families and neighborhoods are stable families and neighborhoods. Community develops when families are able to afford to stay in their homes over the long haul. Yet the sharp increase in rent and home value in our City has forced many long-term residents to leave their neighborhoods, while those who stay find themselves financially fragile due to the burden of rising rents.



Thrive Housing believes that a stable home and community can change the lives of our neighbors and communities.

Since 2008, Thrive Housing has been helping residents across New Orleans find affordable, dignifying housing and pathways to homeownership.

For many years after Katrina, this looked like helping renovate the homes of our neighbors, and enabling first time homeowners from the neighborhood to purchase a home they could take pride in at below-market-rate prices.

As the need in the our city has evolved over the past 11 years, so has Thrive's approach: evolving from renovation, to preservation. Today, Thrive's efforts are focused on providing affordable rentals that create stability for the renters and their families. As renters achieve stability, Thrive works with them to prepare them for homeownership, with the vision that they would one day own the home they currently rent.

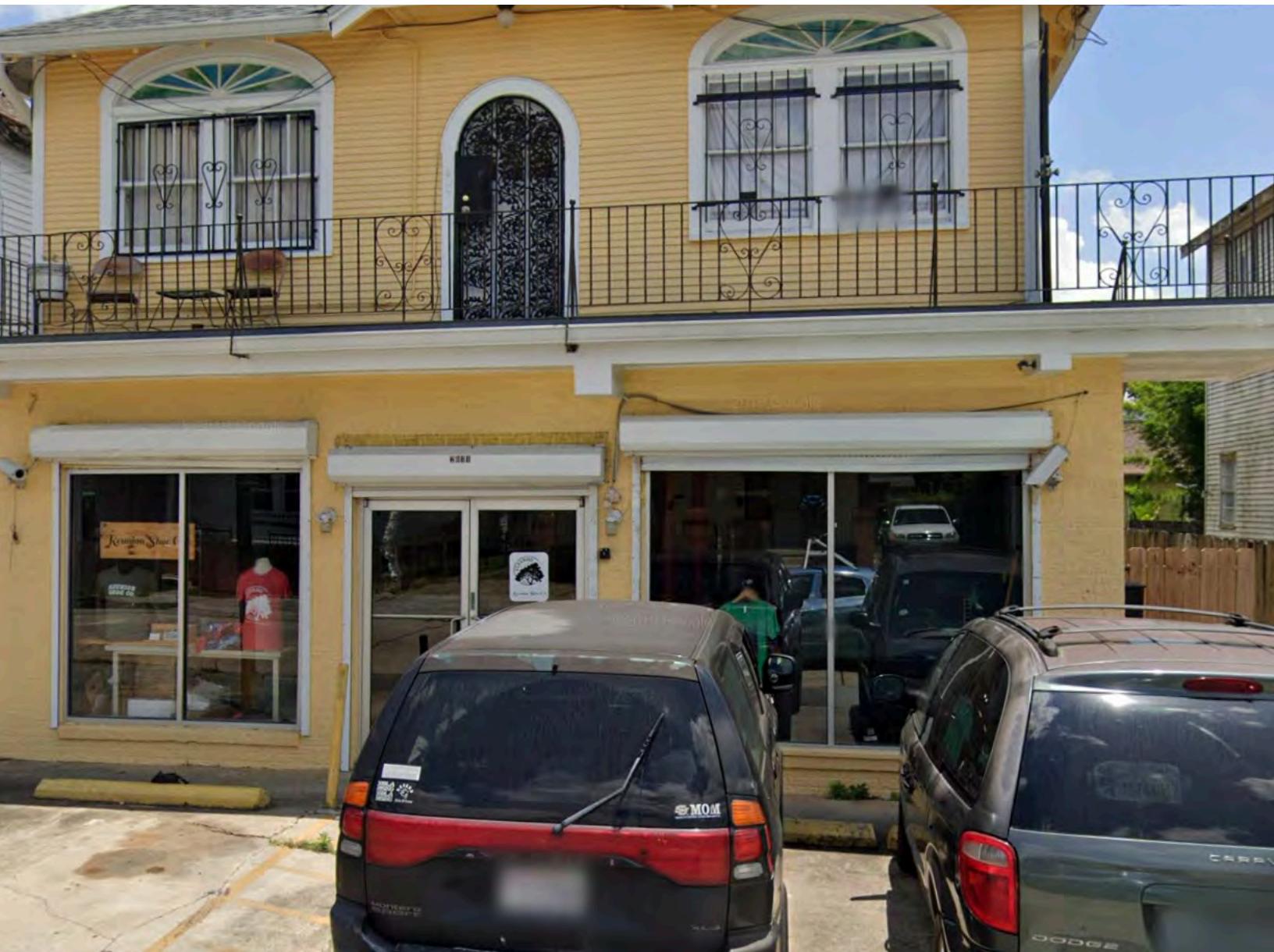
Stable, affordable housing and homeownership leads to generational wealth, rooted communities, and a Thriving New Orleans.

2019 Program Summary

At the end of 2018, the Preservation Resource Center donated a historic home to Thrive New Orleans. Since that time, Thrive partnered with Leidenheimer Baking Co., Davie Shoring, and Preservation Resource Center on this historic restoration project. Each partner has played an important role in helping Thrive to prepare the home for its move to the St. Roch community. Recently, the home was moved to its new permanent location at 2200 Almonaster Ave. for rehabilitation and rental purposes.

By moving this single shotgun home, Thrive New Orleans will be able to create an affordable housing opportunity for a family in need. After the renovation, Thrive will sell the property to a moderate-income family earning up to 120 percent of the metro area median income.

Thrive New Orleans is leveraging affordable housing to bless and serve eligible participants in need and who may have participated in one of our Thrive programs. Two of our Launch NOLA Green participants are currently renting from Thrive as they grow their small businesses in stormwater management and green infrastructure.



Thrive's multi-unit property on Desire St. has created a space for faith-based business, Launch NOLA entrepreneurs, and families to thrive together.

Looking Back and Looking Forward

Thrive Housing has faced numerous challenges over the past year, due to the rising costs of renovating and maintaining housing in New Orleans. Yet these challenges underscore the deep need for access to affordable housing for families in our city.

Recognizing the financial and logistical challenges and setbacks, while pursuing the life-changing impact that stable, affordable housing has on individuals and the community, Thrive Housing has done serious searching to discern how best we can steward the rentals and lots we have preserved and renovated over the years since Katrina.

Ultimately, Thrive is committed to the families and neighbors we serve, and as such our 2020 vision will be focused on three things: preparing our long-term renters to become owners, refinancing any outstanding mortgages, and divesting any undeveloped lots. In doing so, we intend to reduce the breadth of our properties so that we can focus on serving families more deeply while ensuring the financial sustainability of Thrive Housing.

- Darren Morris, Director of Operations



*One of Thrive's houses, built in 2018, is now home to members of the Thrive family,
Kayti and Gentry Williams*

Thrive Housing's Impact



INDIVIDUALS SERVED

UNITS OF
AFFORDABLE HOUSING



UNITS OF AFFORDABLE
COMMERCIAL SPACE

HOUSES UNDER
RENOVATION



52.5%

AVERAGE THRIVE'S UNITS
ARE RENTED BELOW
MARKET RATE

A New Home For The Holidays



After a fire forced Kevin and his family out of their apartment early this year, home hadn't been the same. Living with extended family, while a blessing, had made it hard to find peace and a space of his own. But this November, things began to change.

Thrive Housing was able to match Kevin with a new apartment, and starting Dec 1st, Kevin began moving into a space he can once again call his own to rest after his work at Launch NOLA and Restoration Thrift, and where he can continue his studies toward the bachelor's degree he is pursuing at Union Baptist Seminary.

Out Of The Past Comes A New Beginning



In the words of Executive Director Chuck Morse, “Homeownership that transforms a community goes beyond just owning a home. Transformative homeownership entails pride and belonging for families living there.”

That's why Thrive Housing was honored to relocate and repurpose a 124 year old home, previously on the verge of demolition. To do so entailed moving the home four miles from the Leidenheimer Baking Co's property, where it had served as housing for workers in the early 1900s, to its new location in the St Roch neighborhood.

Thanks to the committed efforts of Leidenheimer Baking Co., the Preservation Resource Center, and Davie Shoring in helping facilitate the move, Thrive anticipates being able to provide a new home for a local family, and new purpose for the historic house in 2020.

Thrive 9th Ward



Hitting Our Stride

The Law of Inertia is as true in community development as it is in physics: getting something moving takes a push. In 2019, new leadership, programs, partnerships, vision meant getting a whole lot of things moving for Thrive 9th Ward.

Yet over the course of a year the commitment and efforts of the staff, partners, funders, and the community have made that push possible. One year in, Thrive 9th Ward has touched thousands of community members, and is headed into 2020 with exciting new momentum.



“We always say that we want this facility to be a focal point in making the Desire neighborhood a desirable place to live. And we want everyone in the community to be a part of it.”

**- Oscar Brown, Director
of Thrive 9th Ward**



THRIVE 9TH WARD

PROGRAM NARRATIVE



Each and every person is designed and called to be fruitful; to flourish in their lives, relationships, and community.

Residents of New Orleans Desire and Florida Neighborhood have faced serious obstacles to flourishing for generations due to systemic injustices, natural disaster, and restriction from community resources.

There's a broken narrative that many have adopted, not by choice, but by generations of let down. Many believe that "nothing good comes out of the 9th Ward" and that "if you from the Nine, you don't mind dying".

Thrive 9th Ward is helping neighbors embrace a different narrative.

Today, Thrive 9th Ward has continued the good works that began with Desire Street Ministries years ago, thanks to our partnership with Giving Hope NOLA.

Thrive 9th Ward provides space, creates opportunities, and empowers local leaders to Thrive in the Desire and Florida neighborhoods, ultimately resulting in renewing hope and making the community a place where neighbors are proud to live, work, and play.

Over the first year of operation as Thrive 9th Ward, the center has impacted neighbors and begun raising up and partnering with local leaders through community events, summer camps, youth basketball, dance classes, workforce training, and much more.

With every child, parent, and grandparent; every intern, student, and leader; every coach, instructor, and partner...we can't help but start to see a new narrative unfolding, because **each person we interact with at the center reminds us that something very good can come out of the 9th ward.**

2019 Program Summary

Since the beginning of the year, Thrive 9th Ward has strengthened its programming and strategically created a large number of service provider partnerships and programs that are helping residents of the Desire/Florida

neighborhoods become mentally wealthy, spiritually healthy and financially wise.

Our partnerships include:

Vacation Bible School: We partnered with three local community churches (i.e. Mount Kingdom Missionary Baptist Church, Carver-Desire Baptist Church, and Revelations Baptist Church) for two weeks. In all, 60 young people attended. Pastors came together to develop a unified curriculum for the youth. This year's theme was ROAR Vacation Bible School with the goal of emphasizing God's protection of all beings, animals and humans.

NORDC Summer Camp Partnership: This year's NORDC summer-camp started June 3rd and every spot was filled, with 125 energetic campers joining the staff each day. Thrive 9th Ward's acclaim from the neighborhood for an outstanding program wasn't their only success. The camp had a 12 member intern staff that are all native to the 9th Ward and the Desire Neighborhood. Many of the interns have attended the summer camp as youth, and went on to showcase their leadership abilities by giving back to their community in a positive way; encouraging the next generation to follow in their footsteps.

This summer's camp included eight weeks of fun activities for the youth, including art classes, dance classes, basketball, majorette, a Reading Intensive Program, storytelling, and swimming lessons. Each week youth were involved in a new adventure with invigorating field trips to places like the zoo, the aquarium, and even a magic show!

Parents were also encouraged to join activities at the camp including participating in a painting event. This event was a parent hang-out time that provided a relaxed atmosphere for parents to unwind, build relationships with other parents, and the Thrive 9th Ward staff, while their children engaged in supervised play activities.

This link on YouTube provides a broad overview of the great work that happens at our summer camp: https://youtu.be/FxmR_jjeYsQ. Please take a few minutes to view this 7- minute video.

Sports ministry: Our basketball ministry focuses on mentoring and training 5-12 year old, girls and boys on basketball skill development. Students learn critical skills needed to become a starter on a team. Games will start once we have 30-40 young people participating regularly.

In our flag football ministry, youth play one game weekly and practice one to two times per week.

Students play in the FNL League. Longtime coach and community resident, Richard Johnson leads the young people and the ministry, and Drew Brees endorses this league.

Stewarding Space To Host Faith-Based Communities: The First District Missionary Baptist Association Evangelical Conference was held at the Thrive 9th Ward Community Center. Twelve church leaders came together to teach church members on how to evangelize.

Single Mothers' Support Group: Ms. Alison, a local Social Worker and community member, leads this effort on a bi-monthly basis. The group started with the goal of providing a safe space for single mothers to be able to relax and not have to worry about the safety of their kids. While mothers have the opportunity to unwind, build relationships with other mothers and engage in fun, self-care activities, youth engage in supervised play activities such as basketball and video games.

Son of a Saint Partnership: An award-winning mentorship program located in New Orleans partnered with Thrive 9th Ward to bring their annual beginning of the year program to the community center. Numerous , "pL^%participated in the event including college representatives, and community program representatives. In addition, throughout the year, "pL community center hostLH mentors and mentees as a preferred play site. Young men and their mentors play basketball, video games and engage in other organized activities at the center.

Adult Acting Classes: Thrive 9th Ward's partner, No Dream Deferred has been hosting their well renown acting classes at the center, providing a space and instruction for community members to engage in performing arts.

Community Coding Classes: Operation Spark partnered with Thrive 9th Ward to be able to provide multiple levels of coding workshops at the center. Each workshop was open to community members and geared toward both introducing participants to computer coding and providing advanced training that equips participants to pursue careers and entrepreneurship in web development and coding.



Other partnerships include:

Carver High School | Seniors helping Seniors program | Morning work-out classes | Dance classes for young people, teens and adults | Theater Performance classes | Computer Literacy classes | Career Readiness class through JOB1 led by Taking Back Our Youth NOLA | Back to School Bash and backpack give-away | An urban community farming and teaching garden workshop for parents and young people | Green infrastructure certification training program | Partnership with a Small Business Expo and Pop-up shop partner | Small business training classes.

The Thrive 9th Ward team: Oscar Brown, Dwana Caliste, Eddie Percy, and Ms. Shirley Howard are all native residents to the 9th ward/Desire Community and still live in the neighborhood. This group of passionate individuals is vested in the success of the center and its mission of all residents having the opportunity to go from surviving to thriving. This model helps to get to the heart of community needs and allows trained community members to help other community members who may be in need.

In addition, we have retained a strong partnership with Carver High School, an important anchor institution in the community. Our Thrive 9th ward Director sits on their board and Dwana Caliste, Program Coordinator for Thrive 9th Ward is also a full-time staff member at Carver and serves as Senior Advisor. Seniors have one volunteer experience per month at the Thrive 9th Ward Community Center and as a result have developed a program called Seniors helping Seniors. The seniors from Carver host bingo events, a Thanksgiving food giveaway and other collaborative events with their elders. This partnership has helped to build important mentoring relationships between the students and these seniors.

We walk hand in hand with Giving Hope New Orleans. This generous non-profit is a very valuable partner in the work that we are doing. Troy Duhon, founder of Giving Hope, is passionate about our work and is very committed to our success.



Looking Back and Looking Forward

This past year has been a sort of rebirth, both personally and for the community center here in Desire.

The building Thrive 9th Ward (T9) operates in was the same place I came as a kid when it was Desire Street Ministries. Growing up, it was my safe place, my family outside my home, where I came to my faith, and where I saw what it looks like to grow up as a man of God.

Now, to be able to come back as the director of T9, things are coming full circle. Over the past year, through God's provision and the incredible leaders, partners, and families in the Desire and Florida neighborhoods, the community center has been thriving.

In 2019, we focused on building relationships with the community, and bringing in all sorts of programs that are led by people from the community for the kids and families in the community. Carver High School events, dance programs, coding classes, summer camp, watching the Saints on the big screen, and much more have all been about creating a space that our neighbors can call their own.

Our vision for 2020 is taking those relationships and programs to the next level, creating a safe place for kids and adults to come, where local leaders are raised up and the community feels a real sense of hope and pride about coming up in the 9th Ward.

In December, we revealed our brand new gym, fully equipped with multiple courts and regulation nets for basketball and volleyball. Basketball brings people together, and we envision this opening doors to impact youth through basketball, tutoring and mentorship and to engage high school students and adults through rec leagues and free play.

New plans are being laid to use our commercial kitchen to help local caterers grow, and outfitting the space with couches and a cafe so people can feel welcome at home anytime they come. Ultimately, 2020 will look like going deeper in our partnerships, programs, and investing in the people of our neighborhood, so that each of their lives are made more whole through Christ's love and care for all people.

- Oscar Brown, Director of Thrive 9th Ward

Thrive 9th Ward's Impact

200

CHILDREN IMPACTED
THROUGH
SUMMER CAMP

COMMUNITY-WIDE
EVENTS HOSTED IN
DESIRE/FLORIDA

9

20

TEEN LEADERS
DEVELOPED

LOCAL PARTNERS THAT
CONSISTENTLY ENGAGED

23

11

LOCAL LEADERS
DIRECTLY SUPPORTED

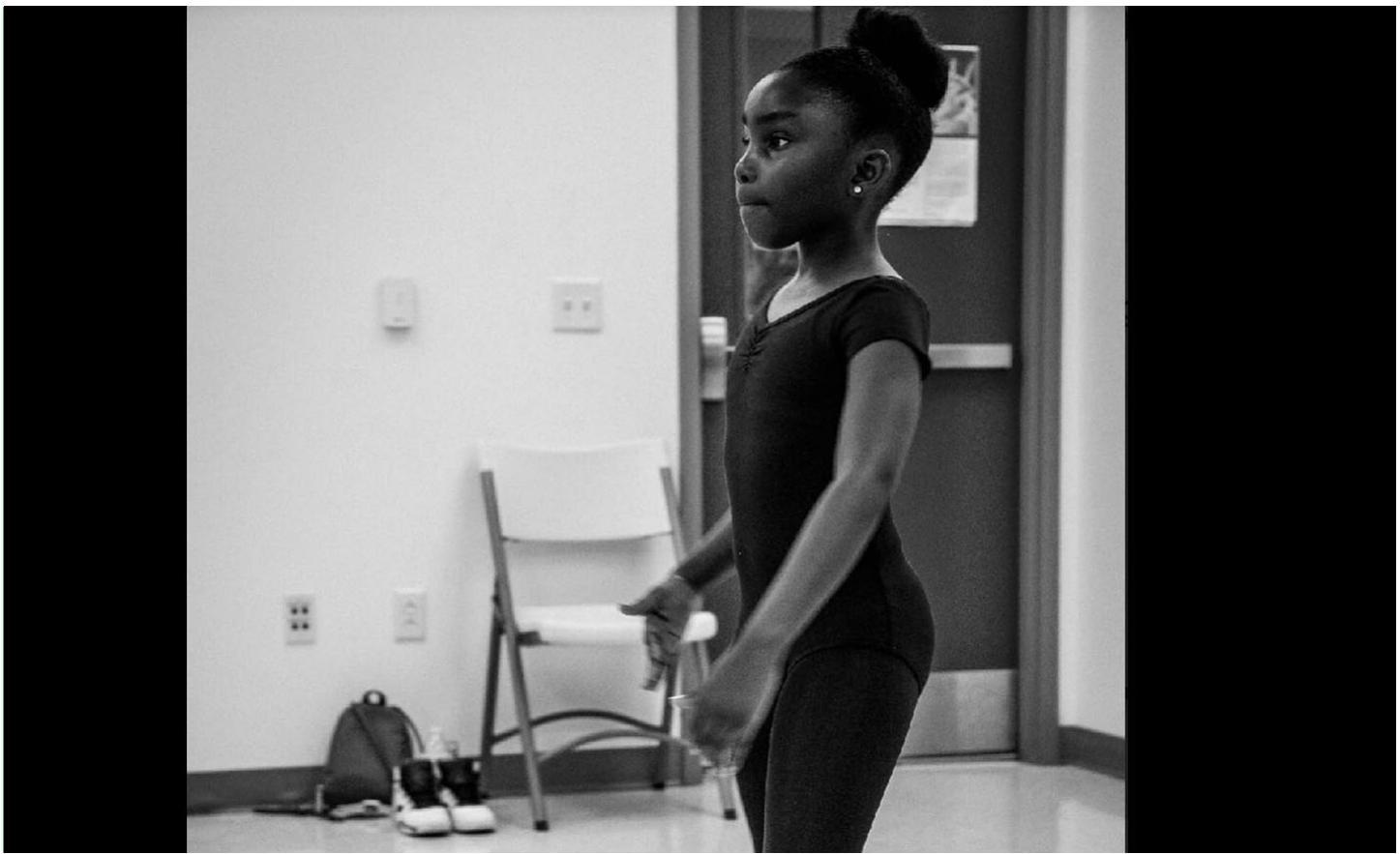
WEEKLY PROGRAMS OFFERED
TO THE COMMUNITY, RANGING
FROM ART TO RECREATION

7

1000

PEOPLE SERVED
IN YEAR 1

Envisioning A New Future Through Dance



When Renata Johnson was a girl, dance changed her life. It provided an outlet to express herself, structure to focus and grow, and a gateway to opportunity. Today, Renata is using her passion for dance to transform others lives at Thrive 9th Ward.

Renata leads fun, creative hip-hop dance classes for adults in the Desire neighborhood as a way to help neighbors embrace a healthy and active lifestyle. She is also one of the only dance instructors of color teaching professional dance technique in New Orleans. Renata teaches this type of dance as more than a sport or hobby, with the vision of empowering youth to use dance to open doors to college and careers that will take them to places far beyond what they may imagine today.

Creating Meaningful Change, Together



"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together" - African Proverb

The Desire and Florida neighborhoods have seen their fair share of outside help stepping into the community offering quick fixes to go along with whatever the solution du jour happens to be. But this sort of "helping" has left the communities hurting and distrustful.

At Thrive 9th Ward, we believe that long-term, transformational change comes from the inside out by developing trust, raising up local leaders, and uniting the community together to write a new narrative for their own community. To see that change happen, T9 has utilized its space to facilitate community meetings. The meetings have been a space for the community to share, encourage, and partner together toward a better collective future for their communities.

Our Team: How We've Grown

Thrive New Orleans Admin Team:



Chuck Morse
*Executive Director of
Thrive New Orleans*



Jackie James
Executive Assistant



Dr. Tanya M. Jones
*Director of
Development*



Ben Shenk
Director of Marketing



Darren Morris
*Director of IT &
Operations*



Kevin Nellum
Head of Maintenance



Christy Ruth
Bookkeeper



Alex Patin
Head of Hospitality



Marissa D. Williams
Graphic Design Intern

Launch NOLA Team:



Kayti Chung-Williams
Program Director



Ari Williams
Program Coordinator



Nika Carter
Program Coordinator



Tronn Moller
*Facilitator and Business
Coach*

Our Team: How We've Grown

Thrive 9th Ward Team:



Oscar Brown
Director



Emily Eckland
Executive Assistant



Dwana Caliste
Director of
Youth Programs



Eddie Percy
Sports Program
Coordinator



Ms. Shirley Howard
Receptionist



Guvaka "Mimi" Reid
Receptionist

Restoration Thrift Team:



Ms. Joy Williams
Store Manager



Ms. Dimple Earin
Donation Processor



Ms. Brenda Jackson
Donation Processor



Ebony Malveaux
Store Associate



Jessica "Noone"
Brown
Store Associate

Our Team: How We've Grown

Restoration Thrift Team Continued:



Jessica Beaudry
Store Associate



Tyrin Lewis
Donation Processor

Thrive New Orleans Board:



Ben McLeish
Board Chair



Whitney Brown
Board Treasurer



Kristen House
Board Secretary



Larry Welch
Board Member



Toni Dixon
Board Member



Gentry Williams
Board Member



James Boring
Board Member

Thank You: Funders & Partners

Without whom none of this work would be possible

OUR FUNDERS:



*The
Ella West Freeman
Foundation*

*The
Rosa Mary
Foundation*



Thank You: Funders & Partners

Without whom none of this work would be possible

OUR PARTNERS:

Cornerstone Partners

- Urban Conservancy
- NORA
- APTIM
- Giving Hope NOLA
- Propeller

Green Infrastructure Partners

- Green Light New Orleans
- SOUL NOLA
- Water Block Global
- The Water Collaborative of New Orleans
- Tulane/Canal Neighborhood Development Corp
- Evans + Lighter Landscape Architecture

Small Business Support Partners

- Good Work Network
- Fund 17
- Lift Fund
- TruFund
- NewCorp
- The Idea Village
- Ujamaa Economic Development Corp
- Chuck Mills

- The Urban League of Louisiana

- Camelback Ventures
- Metromorphosis
- StartSpark Network
- Louisiana Economic Development

Faith Partners

- The Restoration Initiative for Culture and Community
- New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
- Union Baptist College and Theological Seminary
- Plains Presbyterian Church
- St. Roch Community Church
- The CCDA NOLA Network
- True Love Missionary Baptist Church
- Pleasant Zion Missionary Baptist Church
- Mt. Kingdom Missionary Baptist Church
- Revelations Baptist Church
- Carver Desire Baptist Church
- New Birth Missionary Church
- Mt. Moriah Baptist Church

- Rebuild Church and Ministries

- Homewood Community Church

- Pleasant Valley Missionary Baptist Church
- Geaux NOLA

Community Core Partners

- Davie Shoring
- Preservation Resource Center
- The New Orleans Mission
- The Greater New Orleans Foundation
- The City of New Orleans
- Iberia Bank
- Gulf Coast Bank
- Cross Gates Family Fitness
- First 72+
- Crescent Bank
- Bart's Office Moving
- Delgado Community College • NORDC
- Carver High School
- No Dream Deferred
- Operation Spark





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