



## **The Spartanburg County Foundation Community Leadership Overview**

Recognizing over 75 years of service to the greater Spartanburg community, The Spartanburg County Foundation is the oldest community foundation in South Carolina. The Foundation is governed by a volunteer board of seven respected community leaders and managed by ten professionals with knowledge of the community and its most pressing needs.

Established in 1943, The Spartanburg County Foundation is committed to improving the lives of Spartanburg County residents by promoting philanthropy, encouraging community engagement, and responding to community needs. Currently, the Foundation manages a portfolio of over 1,000 charitable funds with assets in excess of \$269 million. Since its inception, The Spartanburg County Foundation and its donors have given more than \$206 million in grants for the advancement of education, civic health, social environment, public health, natural environment, economy, and cultural vitality.

In 2020 and 2021, the Foundation shifted its grantmaking to support nonprofit organizations working to combat the challenges and disparities caused by the pandemic. In May 2020, the Foundation launched the COVID-19 Grant Opportunity to support nonprofits serving communities disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. By early fall, over \$225,000 was awarded from the Foundation to ten local nonprofit organizations. These grants enabled offices to reopen to the community, improve the cadence of community food distributions, provide assistance to special needs children and their parents, and create transitional housing opportunities for people in need. In 2021, grant investments were focused on sustaining the nonprofit sector and building the capacity of People of Color Led nonprofit organizations in Spartanburg. Over \$439,000 was awarded to 18 nonprofit organizations. These grants expanded critical services for basic needs and mental health, kept nonprofit staff employed and enable new position to be created, and developed new resources for rural areas of the community.

Beyond grantmaking, the Foundation serves as a catalyst to bring diverse groups together to collaborate, form partnerships, address issues, foster giving, and generate involvement. Highlighted below are some of the Foundation's key leadership efforts:

### **Spartanburg Community Indicators Project**

Since 1987, The Spartanburg County Foundation has published indicator reports to effectively raise awareness of the key issues that impact the growth, health, and quality of life in Spartanburg County. The goal of the Spartanburg Community Indicators Project is to report on data and community initiatives to inspire dialogue and strategy that lead to change within the community. The project is now a collaboration of The Spartanburg County Foundation, United Way of the Piedmont, Spartanburg County Government, The University of South Carolina Upstate, Mary Black Foundation, Spartanburg Regional Foundation, and Spartanburg Area Chamber of Commerce. These sponsoring partners work collectively on seven Indicator Areas: Civic Health, Cultural Vitality, Economy, Education, Natural

Environment, Public Health, and Social Environment. A host of community and faith-based organizations use the indicators for their strategic planning and outreach efforts. Visit [www.strategicspartanburg.org](http://www.strategicspartanburg.org) to learn more.

### **Grassroots Leadership Development Institute**

Since 2004, The Spartanburg County Foundation's Grassroots Leadership Institute has provided leadership training and resources to more than 450 individuals, who are serving the community in various leadership roles. The Institute was developed as part of the Foundation's Strengthening Voices Initiative, which was designed to empower the community to assume responsibility for positive social change. This seven-month leadership development program, designed to equip participants with the knowledge, skill-set, and resources to be effective in leading change throughout the greater Spartanburg County community and beyond, has become a nationally recognized best practice model as it continues to garner interest from groups throughout the country. In 2016, the Jugaad Leadership Program in St. Cloud, Minnesota, was developed and modeled after the Institute. This new program is giving minority community members opportunities to become effective leaders within the St. Cloud community.

An extension of the Grassroots Leadership Development Institute is the Grassroots Leadership Alumni Association. The purpose of the Grassroots Leadership alumni Association (GLAA) is to engage graduates by creating opportunities for networking and collaboration, connecting Alumni to leadership positions within the community, keeping them informed of pressing community needs, and providing continued leadership training. Membership in GLAA is open to all Institute graduates.

### **Spartanburg Academic Movement**

The Spartanburg County Foundation's role in meeting educational attainment needs has been one of leadership and guidance. When *The 40/30 Challenge* was proposed in 2008, which challenged 40 percent of Spartanburg County residents age 25 and above to hold a bachelor's degree by the year 2030, the Foundation stepped in to provide leadership and facilitate the logistics of how to proceed moving forward. The journey continued as the Foundation turned *The 40/30 Challenge* into a working plan, with a primary focus that included the establishment of the College Hub. The Foundation recruited an inaugural board, developed organizational by-laws, and continued its incubation of the initiative until December 2010 when the structure of the College Hub was set in place. The College Hub's goal was to increase college attainment through the implementation of programs that focus on connecting students to college resources, connecting businesses to education, and impacting a college-going mindset in Spartanburg County. In addition to its initial investment of over \$200,000 in staff time and financial support, the Foundation presented a \$500,000 lead challenge grant to the College Hub in 2011 as seed funding in a continued effort to show support and promote sustainability.

In 2012, the College Hub merged with the Children's Services Alliance, which served as a network engaging pre-K providers and agencies, to form the Spartanburg Academic Movement (SAM). In 2013, SAM was adopted as both a nonprofit organization and a community movement, forming an all-in partnership of education, business, government, foundation, community and faith leaders across Spartanburg county, all working together in pursuit of high levels of academic success for ALL of our children. Its goals are to measure academic accomplishments that matter from cradle to career; set achievement targets that escalate annually; align networks in pursuit of these targets; and report progress with persistent regularity. Spartanburg Academic Movement is also part of StriveTogether, a national, nonprofit network of more than 70 community partnerships, all working to ensure that every child succeeds from cradle to career, regardless of race, family income or zip code. Learn more about SAM at [www.learnwithsam.org](http://www.learnwithsam.org).

### **Women Giving for Spartanburg**

Women Giving for Spartanburg is a women's giving circle founded in 2007 as a special project of The Spartanburg County Foundation. Its mission is to maximize women's leadership in philanthropy by engaging and informing its membership, increasing charitable contributions, and significantly improving the greater Spartanburg County community through the impact of collective giving. Each May, membership contributions are pooled, and high impact grants are given to local organizations. To date, Women Giving for Spartanburg has awarded over \$3 million to 75 local nonprofits (the average grant amount is \$29,142). Currently, Women Giving for Spartanburg has a membership of 171 community-minded women.

### **Mary L. Thomas Award for Civic Leadership and Community Change**

In 2006, Mary L. Thomas, Chief Operating Officer of the Foundation, was awarded the prestigious Robert W. Scrivner Award for Creative Grantmaking. Selected because of her imagination, optimism, and leadership in developing the Strengthening Voices Initiative, Mary received a \$10,000 prize as part of the award. In her boundless spirit of giving, Mary used the money to start the *Mary L. Thomas Award for Civic Leadership and Community Change Fund*. The fund has since grown to over \$100,000 through the support of the generous Spartanburg community. The Foundation Trustees created an award that is given through the fund to honor diverse individuals who are making a significant difference in the Spartanburg community through innovation, community leadership, and civic participation. Recipients of the award receive a \$5,000 grant to be given to a local charity in his/her honor and is recognized at The Spartanburg County Foundation's Annual Meeting.

### **Citizen Scholars Institute**

The Citizen Scholars Institute works to provide disadvantaged youth, through mentoring and program support, with the life skills, knowledge and character needed to obtain college scholarships, complete college, and become contributing citizens. Under the traditional or Legacy Model, students from sixth grade through the completion of high school receive tutoring and participate in activities designed to help them succeed in all aspects of life. Scholars are exposed to a culture where education is a priority and an essential element to a successful future. Since its inception in 1996, the Foundation has matched more than 200 student/mentor pairs under the Legacy model.

Over the last several years, the Citizen Scholars Institute (CSI) has evolved to provide a more comprehensive approach to mentoring. Currently serving over 300 students, CSI programs include: College and Career Ready Model, which implements mentoring/tutoring programs for select rising sixth graders in all seven school districts; iCAN, a college access network through Wofford College and USC Upstate, and Mentor Training, which provides training for Citizen Scholars mentors and others in the community. The Institute has been a special initiative of The Spartanburg County Foundation for over 20 years and in the fall of 2021, became a separate 501(c)3.

### **Nonprofit Connect**

Nonprofit representatives from across Spartanburg County are invited to monthly lunch and learn sessions known as Nonprofit Connect. Nonprofit Connect is a series of knowledge sharing sessions that cover topics ranging from board development and strategic planning to grant writing and donor engagement. Participants take part in forums to share techniques, receive updates on local and national trends, and learn more about specific Spartanburg County activities. The *FREE* lunch sessions are an excellent training opportunity for all organizations.

### **Spartanburg Interfaith Alliance**

The Spartanburg Interfaith Alliance is a network of clergy, lay leaders, and faith communities that have joined together for the purpose of contributing to the common good. The Alliance was formed in 2014 as a partnership between area clergy and The Spartanburg County Foundation. Its central goal is to serve as a resource hub for community engagement and create a network to leverage the faith community and its many assets to meet the needs of the greater Spartanburg County community. Representatives from many faiths meet periodically to educate themselves on community issues and discuss how they may address community needs. The Alliance also plans and hosts an annual Community Thanksgiving Service in partnership with The Spartanburg County Foundation. The offering collected at the service is matched up to \$5,000 by the Foundation and granted to a nonprofit organization working to meet immediate needs. In 2017, the Alliance completed its first community project by building a Habitat for Humanity home within the City of Spartanburg. In 2018, the Alliance embarked on a “Pilgrimage of the Peoples” trip to Washington, D.C., to experience history together by touring the Holocaust Museum, National Museum of African American History & Culture, and the National Museum of the Native American. The Alliance is guided by three co-chairs, representing diverse faith communities.

### **Institute for Youth Justice**

In 2016, the Spartanburg County Clerk of Court, Hope Blackley Logan, and The Spartanburg County Foundation partnered together to launch the Spartanburg County Criminal Justice Youth Institute, now known as the Institute for Youth Justice. This four-month leadership training program is designed to introduce Spartanburg County 11th-12th graders to the criminal justice system to help them gain a deeper understanding of the inner-workings of the system, eliminate misconceptions, build long-lasting partnerships between youth and criminal justice officials, and empower Spartanburg County youth to become positive contributors and leaders in our community. The Institute begins each January with an opening retreat that provides an opportunity for participants to connect with one another in an informal setting and hear from an inspirational leader. Sessions are held January – April, one weekday per month, from 8:30am – 12:30pm. A graduation ceremony is held in May. Participation is open to any 11th-12th grader that attends a Spartanburg County public, private, or home school. Since the pilot launched in 2017, over 120 students across Spartanburg County have graduated from the Institute.

### **Community Convenings**

As a community foundation, The Spartanburg County Foundation serves as a community connector and knowledge source in identifying and strategically addressing critical issues, promoting collaboration, and embracing innovation. Community convenings are an opportunity for the Foundation to foster awareness and educate the community and nonprofits on pressing issues in order to inform decision-making and collaborative action. Below are examples of recent community convenings:

In 2018, the Foundation partnered with the Council on Foundations to host the first Inclusive Economic Prosperity in the South Convening. Nearly 130 regional and national philanthropic leaders gathered on the campuses of Milliken and Company and BMW North America to examine the landscape that contributes to a healthy economy that seeks to be both equitable and innovative. Co-Founder of the Ballmer Group, Chairman of the Los Angeles Clippers, and former Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer joined the convening as the keynote speaker. Mr. Ballmer provided meaningful and strategic ideas to increase a community’s economic mobility. Local leaders such as Bill Barnet, Mary Thomas, and Gage Weekes facilitated group discussions and provided expertise on philanthropy’s role of inclusive economic prosperity.

In 2019, the Foundation held a private screening of *Emanuel* – a documentary of the survivors and family members of the 2015 shooting at Mother Emanuel Church in Charleston, SC. The Foundation saw this screening as an opportunity to foster dialogue among diverse groups and promote a safer, equitable and inclusive Spartanburg County. In addition to the screening, a facilitated Race Relations Roundtable was held to discuss what could be learned from Emanuel. Nearly 100 individuals attended the screening and over 65 individuals attended the Race Relations Roundtable.

In 2020 and 2021, the Foundation hosted virtual REAL TALK Forums to keep the Spartanburg area community connected and informed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Forums engage local and regional experts on a variety of topics including the impact of COVID-19 on minority and immigrant communities, racial healing, positive youth development, the mental health and substance abuse crisis, and more. In addition to the structured discussions, community members have an opportunity to participate in a Q&A time with the panelists.

### 2021 Foundation Facts

- Number of Contributions 2,605
- Total Contributions \$29 million
- Number of Grants Awarded 1,879
- Total Grants \$14 million
- Total Assets \$277 million
- Funds Under Management 1,080

For more information, please contact The Spartanburg County Foundation at (864) 582.0138 or visit our website at [www.spcf.org](http://www.spcf.org).