

THE GROWTH FUND

Greater Hill District Development Growth Fund

2011-17

Six-Year Report

POWER OF
THE PEOPLE



In the Interest of Growth

by Reese Randall

“This story begins with the State of Pennsylvania passing legislation to legalize gaming. Nothing happened without that decision,” says Dr. Kimberly C. Ellis, scholar and artist entrepreneur. Further, as an historic Hill resident. Dr. Ellis was adamant there should not be a casino in the front yard of her neighborhood. The Hill was in a fragile place in its development. “As a community, we had one foot in new development and one foot in abandoned lots and buildings,” recalls Dr. Ellis. West Virginia had gambling, however, Pennsylvania and Ohio did not have licenses for gaming. The legislation passed in 2005; and the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board (PGCB) granted 13 gaming licenses, with Pittsburgh receiving one. This was the ultimate catalyst behind the ideation of the Greater Hill District Development Growth Fund (Growth Fund).



DR. KIMBERLY C. ELLIS SCHOLAR & ENTREPRENEUR; REV. DR. JOHNNIE MONROE OF GRACE MEMORIAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AND MARIMBA MILLIONES, PRESIDENT & CEO OF THE HILL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION STAND AT FREEDOM CORNER (CENTRE AVE. AND CRAWFORD ST.) LOCATED AT THE WESTERN SECTION OF THE LOWER HILL DISTRICT.

OPPOSITE PAGE: RIVERS CASINO LOCATED ALONGSIDE PITTSBURGH'S NORTH SHORE.

Neighborhood impact was a strong point of consideration for the PGCB and the location mattered. There were three, separate entities in three different neighborhoods vying for the casino, each with its own celebrity investor and representative. There was businessman and entrepreneur Don Barden and Smokey Robinson for Rivers Casino on the North Shore, the Pittsburgh Penguins and Mario Lemieux with Isle of Capri in the Hill District, closely bordering downtown; and Forest City Harrah's with Franco Harris, for Station Square. With each group compiling presentation packages to make a proposal, the whole process lasted approximately a year. Dr. Ellis explains, “These competitors kept sweetening the pot. They each had a final presentation and package to present to the PGCB in Harrisburg.

Again, it became clear that the sole casino might be located in the heart of the city—the Hill District—Dr. Ellis' beloved neighborhood. “What I cared about was there might be a casino erected just

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“Don Barden's pledge and subsequent follow through by the Rivers Casino to support the economic development of Hill District residents was an indication that our community matters. So often, in the past, pledges made have remained just pledges. POISE Foundation is pleased to be the institution to manage these funds that will seed economic development so necessary and overdue in the Hill District.”

— Mark Lewis | President and CEO POISE Foundation

IMAGE PROVIDED BY RIVERS CASINO

4/2011

River's Casino commits \$3M to POISE Foundation (and makes first installment of \$1M) to establish the Greater Hill District Development Growth Fund (Growth Fund). Rivers appoints advisory committee to make recommendations to POISE Foundation.

8/2011

Rivers Casino makes second \$1M donation to Growth Fund.

2/2012

Hill Community Development Corporation receives \$200K to support operating expenses.

8/2012

Rivers Casino makes third \$1M donation to the Growth Fund.

12/2012

Hill District Federal Credit Union receives \$200K to secure Hill House EDC grocery store loan and \$50K to capitalize the Hill District Federal Credit Union.

Hill House EDC receives \$115K grant to support the grocery store.

12/2013

Schenley Heights Community receives \$10K to support sidewalk repairs.

3/2014

Hill District Consensus Group receives \$10K to support the KaBoom playground project.

4/2014

The Center That C.A.R.E.S. receives \$100K to support the Jeron Xavier Grayson Community Center.

2/2015

Schenley Heights Community Development Center receives \$10K to support the restoration of Madison Elementary School.

3/2016

Hill District Federal Credit Union receives \$15K to support entrepreneurial activity in the Hill District.

3/2017

Amani Christian Community Development Corporation receives \$10K to support the "Fix It First" program.

The Hill District Federal Credit Union receives \$20K to support entrepreneurial activity in the Hill District.

FOR A FULL LISTING OF GRANTS PLEASE VISIT POISEFOUNDATION.ORG

(cont. from page 3)

blocks from my house; and in a place where neighborhood residents went walking, including my own mother, Freda Ellis and Ms. Michelle Campbell, who walked her dogs—and it would no longer be a safe, residential area, and it would eventually change everything about the Hill,” says Dr. Ellis. She contacted Marimba Milliones, President & CEO of the Hill Community Development Corporation (Hill CDC). Ms. Milliones informed her that the Hill CDC and the Hill House Association had merged forces under Pennsylvania State Representative Jake Wheatley, Jr.'s advisement to create the Hill District Gaming Task Force to educate Historic Hill residents about the possibility of a casino development. “[Representative Wheatley’s]



HON. JAKE WHEATLEY, JR., PENNSYLVANIA STATE REPRESENTATIVE

leadership was essential,” says Ms. Milliones. “He did whatever he could to ensure the Hill District had resources and later to keep Rivers Casino at the proverbial table to maintain Don Barden’s vision of giving back to our community.” Earlier in the process, Governor Ed Rendell had created Plan B to ensure that whichever entity won the slots license would have to build a new arena for the Pittsburgh Penguins. Further, after hearing from Hill residents and retrieving information from his representative in attendance at the Hill gaming meetings, Mr. Barden was inspired to make a change. He decided to offer what he envisioned as the most competitive

gaming package by matching his contribution to the North Side, giving the Hill District \$3M, to help spur development in the community. “Thus, Representative Wheatley negotiated with the Rivers Casino group and brought in an attorney to establish guidelines for what became the ‘Hill District Growth Fund’ in an effort to invest in the built environment and facilitate businesses based in the Hill.” Ms. Milliones adds, “These actions were taken not only to aid new businesses, but to use for ongoing initiatives; to garner more capital, as well as to utilize the interest from the Fund and let it grow.” The \$3M included in Barden's winning bid is what served as the economic basis of the Growth Fund. The entire project was not just a business decision but also a leap of faith for the Hill District community and no one knows that better than Rev. Dr. Johnnie Monroe of Grace Memorial Presbyterian Church. “My hope is the Growth Fund becomes what it’s named for,” says Rev. Monroe, “That it will be used to bring about new initiatives, especially for children and families.” “Most of us were Hill District residents and we now had \$3M to give to community initiatives that we think are important—that doesn’t happen every day,” says Ms. Milliones. Because of Representative Jake Wheatley’s leadership, the Hill District had the first meeting with all three potential casino applicants and became the only community with whom a community agreement was created outside of where the casino was physically located. According to Dr. Ellis, the Growth Fund helped to empower the Hill District by placing the \$3M into the POISE Foundation, processing loans through the HDFCU and putting money into the Hill CDC operations. The Growth Fund is living up to its name and with its continued use of collective power, all parties believe the best is yet to come.

POWER OF THE PEOPLE

As champions for the Hill District, recipients of the Greater Hill District Development Growth Fund share their development within their neighborhood.

The Hill District has no ally greater than its steadfast residents.

From families, neighbors, business owners and consumers;

to stakeholders and political leaders, each stake claim to a landscape

that invites all who want to contribute to its wealth. There are individuals

pushing for growth through business development and organized agendas

—ready to grow the Hill into a mountain—the larger-than-life stature

it still represents. In recognition of plans to execute businesses

that will foster change, provide new jobs and resources for the Hill,

the Growth Fund was established to provide financial leverage

to secure such initiatives reflective of these changes.

Meet the grantees who continue to shape the maturation process

of a community's development and growth.

Karris Jackson
Vice President, Programs
POISE Foundation

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Jenifer Schweitzer
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Growth Fund
Development Committee**
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Austin Davis
Dr. Kimberly C. Ellis
Rev. Glenn Grayson
Dr. Rahmon Hart
Hon. Daniel Lavelle, Pittsburgh
City Councilman
Marimba Milliones
James Myers
Rev. Ron Peters
Hon. Jake Wheatley, Jr.,
Pennsylvania State Representative
Richard Witherspoon

“The Greater Hill District Development Growth Fund is a unique asset to the Hill District community. Over the past six years, the Fund has provided critical support to anchor institutions and catalytic funding to entrepreneurial efforts that align with the Hill District's Master Plan. The Hill District is poised for further growth and development and the Fund is well positioned to be a valuable partner in those efforts.”

— Karris Jackson | Vice President Programs POISE Foundation

6 THE RESILIENT LEADER

President & CEO

Marimba Milliones

HILL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (HILL CDC)

"There is an eco-system in the Hill District that is very powerful and we are rebuilding a model for healthy community dynamics. We can have divergent views at times and somehow, we manage to pull it back together and push our community forward in business."

— MARIMBA MILLIONES

Describe your reaction upon being a recipient of the Growth Fund.

In short, the Hill CDC is here today because the Growth Fund believed in the organization and invested in us at a time when others did not. This made me feel grateful and encouraged that the community could direct its own fate. Empowered that we were able to be supported by colleagues from the same vantage point facing the challenge of rebuilding a non-profit organization. When there is a source of funding that you don't control, you don't control the agenda. When you don't control the agenda, you don't control the finances. The Hill CDC survived because the board at that time didn't walk away. Glenn Grayson, Emma Lucas Darby, William Bercik, Sala Udin—they were the Hill CDC members committed to stewarding the organization to the next phase.

How has being a recipient of the Growth Fund generated stability in building your organization?

It provided a commitment of five years of support as long as we met our benchmarks established by a strategic plan. Having multi-year support is a rare opportunity; generally operating support is offered for two maximum years. The Hill CDC brings a certain amount of vision, drive and delivery. We are a thread that connects the community as a whole and we are deter-

mined to reweave the thread when people try to fray it away. There is an eco-system in the Hill that is very powerful and we are building a model for healthy community dynamics in business. We can have divergent views at times and somehow, we manage to pull it back together and push our community forward in business.

A successful sign in business is filling a void in the market. How is your organization making strides in closing that margin?

The Hill CDC is precisely comprised of three components: People, work place and policy. We are trying to fill the void in each one of these areas. For the people, we are trying to provide economic opportunity. For the work place we are trying to transform vacant buildings and lots. For policy, we are focused on assuring the implementation of the Greater Hill District Master Plan. We follow this and aspire to it as we develop the community. The Hill CDC's workflow is widely guided by the goals outlined in the Plan. There are city and state policies that consistently impact our ability to perform our redevelopment work. It's essential we focus on the legislative components that will support and strengthen our ability to succeed as well.

did you know?

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THE HILL CDC IS TRANSFORMING VACANT DILAPIDATED PROPERTIES INTO AFFORDABLE HOMEOWNERSHIP UNITS FOR HILL DISTRICT RENTERS & VITAL COMMERCIAL STOREFRONTS FOR SMALL BUSINESSES. THE HILL CDC STAFFS THE HILL DISTRICT'S DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PANEL (DRP) PROCESS WHICH ENABLES RESIDENTS TO VOTE ON INCOMING DEVELOPMENT—ASSURING VOICE AND POWER TO THOSE WHO ARE MOST IMPACTED.

How has your passion for the industry contributed to your commitment of ownership?

I feel fortunate I get to live at the intersection of community, business and government—three areas that I'm passionate about. My personal passion is fulfilled through this ownership centered model of community development.

What are your thoughts on 'Giving Back'?

Public service exists because of a need. That need has created an opportunity for many of us to do work that is meaningful. It's allowed us to do work for others that is personally rewarding as a profession and it's a privilege to serve.

The Hill District is... much more than people imagine. It's on the rise and a great story in the making.

What's next for your organization?

The next phase of both the Hill CDC and our community is to utilize a strength-based approach to our organizations and collaborations. Better understanding of our individual talents and organizations' abilities will help multiply impact.

“The POISE Foundation's management of the Greater Hill District Development Growth Fund has had tremendous positive impact on the neighborhood and the Pittsburgh community. The thoughtful administration of these resources has helped improve the quality of life today and created new pathways for the future. Rivers Casino is very proud to support the POISE team and its efforts.”

— Craig Clark | General Manager Rivers Casino

8 THE AMBITIOUS ONE

Founder & Owner

Scott Thomas-Tunstalle

POWER 59 CONSTRUCTION, LLC

"We're providing those in our neighborhood an opportunity to learn and contribute to the larger picture."

— SCOTT THOMAS-TUNSTALL

Describe your reaction upon being a recipient of the Growth Fund.

I felt elated. It was a great feeling to know there was a program that would grow my business. I used the award to renovate my building I purchased. We gutted the building and completed a demolition, including plumbing. We're adding residential living in the upper space of the building and store fronts on the street level.

How has being a recipient of the Growth Fund generated stability in building your business?

It provided us an actual place to grow—or a central location for tools, equipment and office space. My employees were able to attain supplies and process paperwork in an office as opposed to our homes. It's given us a company to centralize my business around.

A successful sign to business is filling a void in the market. How is your business making strides in closing that margin?

We're dealing with construction, providing quality work and employing people from the community. We teach our employees skills to work for us and providing those in our neighborhood an opportunity to learn and contribute to the larger picture.

How has your passion for the industry contributed to your commitment of ownership?

My passion is not just in construction, but it's in business. I feel I want to keep growing and learning. For example, we've renovated a juice bar and from what I learned during that time doing construction, I'm now a vegan. Working in general makes me want to be better as a person and continue to grow in business.

The Hill District is... the pulse of the city.

What are your thoughts on 'Giving Back'?

One of the initiatives we've done is partnering with a local public school to do a coat drive for kids. We're also one of the sponsors for the Hill District Midget League Football team.

What's next for your company?

I would like to position myself with various community organizations to build as a whole instead of building separately. Making development a cooperative process so more can be done as a city to relinquish the division between neighborhoods.

THE ADVOCATE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE 9

Founder & Executive Director

Rev. Lee Walls

AMANI CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORP

"We exist to initiate community and economic development through the projects that restore existing community assets, create new developments for families and home ownership."

—REV. LEE WALLS

Describe your reaction upon being a recipient of the Growth Fund.

I think the fund has probably benefited the main community organizations in the Hill more so than the smaller ones, but the Hill CDC has been very strategic with their portion of the Fund which has benefited the Hill District in general. The Growth Fund is good for the community and keeps viable organizations like ours going. It's helped us with the grants we've gotten and has been very timely.

How has being a recipient of the Growth Fund generated stability in building your business?

Stability in this business exists in the strength of commitment from our community and for that the Growth Fund has contributed to our stability. Our organization's name is Amani—it means peace in Swahili. As long as we have economic support, education and understanding world peace is an attainable goal. We're working from our corner of the world to build that vision.

A successful sign to business is filling a void in the market. How is your business making strides in closing that margin?

It's given us a chance to tell our story. We're able to keep going and continue our mission to facilitate affordable housing and home ownership opportunities.

How has your passion for the industry contributed to your commitment of ownership?

We do community development to revitalize the Hill District community and that is our passion.

The Hill District is... a vibrant community.

What are your thoughts on 'Giving Back'?

One of these days we hope to do ministry around youth and senior citizens. We do free lawn and free snow removal and we'd like to offer services for youth and children of incarcerated parents.

What's next for your company?

We want to work with the Hill District Education Council to close the academic achievement gap.

"The Greater Hill District Development Growth Fund has proven critical to both the development and continued success of small businesses and community-based organizations. Whether it's The Center that Cares, Power 59 Construction or Shop 'n Save, the Growth Fund has filled a void and need not met by traditional resources."

— Hon. Daniel Lavelle | Pittsburgh City Councilman

10 THE INSPIRED ARCHITECT

Founder & CEO

Lakeisha Byrd

COMMUNION™

"[We will] build a generation of creative entrepreneurs, and increase minority participation in architecture, urban design, and real estate development."

— LAKEISHA BYRD

Describe your reaction upon being a recipient of the Growth Fund.

As a recipient of the Growth Fund, Communion™ has developed a Place-based marketing strategy that will better inform our communities, clients and partners about the value of Communion™ as a community and project partner. This will increase our collective impact as well as create future growth opportunities as a business woman.

How has being a recipient of the Growth Fund generated stability in building your business?

As a Benefit LLC, Communion™ is transforming its model to pioneer a "hood of neighbors"

through more inspired architecture and development.

A successful sign to business is filling a void in the market. How is your business making strides in closing that margin?

Most predominately Black neighborhoods identified as "low-income" have been adversely impacted by socio-economic stressors. These stressors have weakened the social and economic fabric of our communities, such as healthy neighborhoods, resilient housing, creative spaces, main streets, and opportunities for growth. In response to this weakened socio-economic state, Communion™ transforms

neighborhoods into resilient Communities of color through architectural interventions and place-keeping strategies. Communion™ is creating opportunities to foster local talent; build a generation of creative entrepreneurs, and increase minority participation in architecture, urban design, and real estate development.

How has your passion for the industry contributed to your commitment of ownership?

Becoming a business owner and pioneering how architecture and development shapes our neighborhood is essential to rebuilding our communities. Architecture lays at the foundation of our culture. It is an expression of how we live, come together, and traverse the physical environment. However, Black communities are often designed and developed by third-parties; those who do not intimately and inherently understand the experiences, aspirations, needs, and purpose of our culture. Unbeknownst, this form of engagement creates unresponsive places. Since growing up in one of these unresponsive environments,

I've long since been inspired to reimagine, purpose, design, and develop the built environment to respond to the needs of the Black community. This notion demonstrates the deep need for African American participation in the architecture and real estate development industries. Ownership affords opportunities to engage our community and youth in the design process, as well as afford opportunities to foster local talent in our communities.

The Hill District is... one of very few places that the Black community—near and far—can call home.

What are your thoughts on 'Giving Back'?

My philosophy is about inspiring others and creating opportunities for others to give back and grow. 'Giving Back' is core to the Communion™ vision of creating a place for the least, the last and the lost. This includes creating participatory opportunities for those who are marginalized to become the next generation of design-thinkers, design researchers, and design-builders.

What's next for your company?

Over the next three years, Communion™ intends to become a Benefit Company to inspire creative entrepreneurs and investors to join our socio-economic mission. We will launch Communionplace™—a place based initiative to foster local experiences and build stronger networks.

THE DREAMER 11

Founder & Owner

K. Chase Patterson

SOCIETY MEN'S GROOMING LOUNGE

"I was placed here to deal with challenges for myself and my community. To make a dream into a reality."

— K. CHASE PATTERSON

Describe your reaction upon being a recipient of the Growth Fund.

My family and roots are in the Hill. My business is in the same building where my mom had her first bank account at the Savings and Loan bank. Needless to say, I was honored.

How has being a recipient of the Growth Fund generated stability in building your business?

It helped to serve as a bridge from one rocky moment to a stable place. We are in our third year now and most businesses by now would have shut the doors. It proved to be a very much needed and helpful support for our work.

A successful sign to business is filling a void in the market. How is your business making strides in closing that margin?

Society was created to provide a place where we felt didn't exist. Where folks can come by and experience a retreat from the regular. We offer scalp treatments, oil massages for both hand and feet, plus beard and natural styling. Additionally, we lease the Lounge for private events—so once we make you look your best, you can enjoy the best.

How has your passion for the industry contributed to your commitment of ownership?

If you are a Black man you get your haircut every two weeks—it's standard. My passion and desire was to get my haircut in a nice establishment. What we created is different in design and layout. We have a lounge on street level with a 55"-inch flat screen TV, lounge and seating area, a wet bar and back patio. We facilitate a multi-chair barber shop on the second floor. My dad, grandfather and mom are business minded and for as much as Society is a business it's also a barbershop. I guess I'm designed to appreciate a challenge. I know I definitely appreciate good people and niceties. If I came to work and it was easy it would be a waste of my talent. I was placed here to deal with challenges for myself and my community. To make a dream into a reality.

The Hill District is... powerful.

What are your thoughts on 'Giving Back'?

It's a prerequisite to good citizenship.

What's next for your company?

Hopefully, expansion into additional locations.

did you know?

IN 2011, THE HILL DISTRICT CONSENSUS GROUP MOBILIZED MORE THAN 200 RESIDENTS AND PROVIDED OTHER COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUPPORT IN CREATING THE LATEST GREATER HILL DISTRICT MASTER PLAN.

Co-Founders & Owners

Charlotte Ka & Errol Mobutu Reynolds

MOKA ART GALLERY



"We have to rebuild the vision of our community through art and music—the legacy once fostered in the Hill District."

— CHARLOTTE KA AND ERROL MOBUTU REYNOLDS (COLLECTIVELY)

Describe your reaction upon being a recipient of the Greater Hill District Development Growth Fund.

C.K.: The Fund was wonderful, as it gave us a grant at the beginning of our venture and started MOKA (an acronym for Errol's nickname Mobutu—or Moe and my last name Ka; as well as for Mecca of Kulture and Art). We bought a building for \$10K from the City of Pittsburgh. The building was slated for demolition and we did not realize it needed a sewer system. Our grant from the Growth Fund along with a loan from the Hill District Credit Union made that possible. These funds along with \$203K HUD mortgage allowed us to transform a wreck-of-a-building into a jewel in the Hill.

How has being a recipient of the Growth Fund generated stability in building your business?

E.M.R.: Although the Hill CDC is our fiscal sponsor we have received grants from McCauley Ministries, Neighborhood Allies and Innovation 21. We will be forever grateful for their support. The funding from each has provided us with a stable beginning.

A successful sign to business is filling a void in the market. How is your business making strides in closing that margin?

C.K.: There is a void of places to go to access culture in the Hill District. The Hill District was at one time the place to go. Moe and I longed for the vibrant culture of art, music and community that was so vital to the Hill's legacy. We as witnesses to that history with extensive experience in the arts, decided to develop a House of Kulture as a part of the Hill District's current transformation and cultural rebirth.

How has your passion for the industry contributed to your commitment of ownership?

C.K.: Moe says, "If you can find a partner who shares your passions in life you've found paradise." Together we are creating our paradise. As an installation artist, painter, printmaker and art educator (originally from Crestas Terrace but lived in New York most of my life) and Moe (a Hill District native) is a sculptor, educator and percussionist who spent twelve years touring with Grant Green. Our partnership with the Hill CDC has been a major benefit to us. Ms. Milliones and her staff at the Hill CDC have been angels. We still need additional funds to complete the gallery. To donate please go to: www.ioby.org/project/moka-pittsburgh

The Hill District is... in need of revitalized art and culture to make it the viable community it's legacy is known for.

What are your thoughts on 'Giving Back'?

E.M.R.: We have to share our expertise so our youth can learn from us and benefit from each other. MOKA is a place where we can come together and enrich each other's lives.

What's next for your company?

C.K.: We would like to develop exhibitions, intimate musical concerts, artist residencies and art and music classes.

Director

Rev. Ronald E. Peters, Ed.D.

SCHENLEY HEIGHTS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

"While life often seems challenging—with so much of the news we hear reporting things that are fearful—I still believe the best is yet to come."

— REV. RONALD E. PETERS, ED.D.

Describe your reaction upon being a recipient of the Growth Fund.

Gratitude and excitement that we were able to strengthen the program's ability to create a safe and healthy learning environment for children and their families.

How has being a recipient of the Growth Fund generated stability in building your business?

It has helped to enable the program in supporting children and their families in an environment that encourages hope, confidence and positive self-awareness while opening up youth to new possibilities for their future.

How is your business making strides in closing a void in the market?

We started the program in 1995 and throughout these past 23 years we've built wonderful partnerships and made an impact on our students. For example, we have an annual summer camp program. For the past two years it has been coordinated by Darius McGhee, a program alum. Every summer he has come back to work here because it meant so much to him when he was a kid enlisted in the program. Darius is not only our summer camp director, he graduated college and

is now earning his master's degree in counseling.

How has your passion for the industry contributed to your commitment?

In the challenging atmosphere of today's society that encourages an 'Us-versus-Them' approach to life, it is exciting to see an historically Black, non-profit that started in Grace Memorial Presbyterian Church move forward with educational programs that teach children to work together cooperatively.

The Hill District is... home to beautiful people.

What are your thoughts on 'Giving Back'?

I learned a proverb long ago that summarizes my feelings. Giving back to help others is the rent I pay for the privilege of being alive and breathing.

What's next for your company?

We are contemplating a new vision for the program that will enable it to serve more people by teaching our children how to build and create their ideas as entrepreneurs in the 21st century.

“By partnering with Don Barden and Rivers Casino, our intent was to support growth along Centre Ave. as we redeveloped the Lower Hill. The funds enabled greater collaboration amongst our most historic community institutions. For that, I believe it has made our transformation more unified, and by extension more successful.”

— Hon. Jake Wheatley, Jr. | Pennsylvania State Representative

CARL REDWOOD, JR.,
PRESIDENT
OF THE BOARD WITH
EDNA COUNCIL,
TREASURER
OF THE BOARD.
STAND ARM-IN-ARM
IN THE OFFICES OF
THE HILL DISTRICT
CONSENSUS GROUP.



*"Our passion is organizing
the community
to help build a better future."*

— CARL REDWOOD, JR.

President of the Board
Carl Redwood, Jr.

Treasurer of the Board
Edna Council

HILL DISTRICT CONSENSUS GROUP

Describe your reaction upon being a recipient of the Greater Hill District Development Growth Fund.

As a community organization, we were happy to utilize the grant for reconstruction of the playground at A. Leo Weil Elementary School. In 2011, the HDCG, the Hill CDC and other local organizations mobilized and assembled hundreds of volunteers to help rebuild it. It was a collective effort for a worthwhile project.

How has being a recipient of the Growth Fund generated stability in building your business?

We've continued to work with volunteers and residents from the community to build local networks for neighborhood improvement.

A successful sign to business is filling a void in the market. How is your business making strides in closing that margin?

In the face of massive gentrification of our community we're able to win some battles. However, we are still losing the war with the amount of work that still needs to be done.

How has your passion for the industry contributed to your commitment of ownership?

Our passion is organizing the community to help build a better future. This is our community and we have to take control of what happens here as much as possible and that means getting our neighbors involved.

The Hill District is... a great community of many different residents located on valuable land.

What are your thoughts on 'Giving Back'?

I want to reference a quote from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. when he said we have to rededicate ourselves to the long and bitter, yet beautiful struggle for a new world. We fight for our neighborhood, but it's for a bigger picture.

What's next for your company?

The bottom line is organizing our residents because many of them are being forced out as we speak. There is a deep love for our people. Organizing allows us to fight for a better world.

A DILIGENT DECISION MAKER

A conversation with
the CEO & Treasurer of
the Hill District Federal Credit Union,
Richard Witherspoon

by Reese Randall

Chief Executive Officer and Treasurer of the Hill District Federal Credit Union, Richard Witherspoon says, "The Hill District is a vibrant community with an infinite capacity to be a community that makes a difference. When you look at where we are located between downtown and Oakland—two prosperous communities—the challenge is for the community to understand its potential." Witherspoon chaired the scoring committee for the Growth Fund. "I was elated that working with the Growth Fund committee coincided with my day job, as I facilitate funds to businesses every day," he says. In some instances, the Credit Union will offer additional support that will prepare businesses in approaching larger institutions. For example, the community was able to acquire a Shop-and-Save on Centre Avenue. While the grocery chain was securing financing, there was a gap of approximately \$300K to complete the project.

(cont. to page 18)

THE GENUINE GIVER

CEO

Rev. Glenn Garrett Grayson, Sr.
THE CENTER THAT C.A.R.E.S
(CHILDREN ADULT RECREATIONAL AND EDUCATION SERVICES)

Describe your reaction upon being a recipient of the Growth Fund.

It was a blessing. The entities behind the Growth Fund understood the hopes and dreams for a community resource such as ours. The Center offers a place for community residents with rentable room, a roof-top deck, an IT lab and is a community asset to children and youth services.

How has being a recipient of the Growth Fund generated stability in building your business?

Being a recipient allowed us to continue the work we've been blessed to do for over the past 18 years. As a 501 c3 organization, CARES serves approximately 200 students weekly through our Afterschool Enrichment and Tutorial program, as well as an additional summer camp for more than 140 children. CARES provides the afterschool students with a learning environment with structure and facilitates employment for adult staff; as well as young people who receive a stipend—it's empowering the community. We don't advertise, but people have found us and spread the good news about our program, as well as our event space. From special events and weddings, to local organizations and businesses conducting meetings here, we service 3-6 functions per week on the event side, while consistently providing a safe haven for middle and high school kids. We've had the model of taking care of kid's pre-K to college. Now you can go seamlessly from one stage to the next under our program.

How is your business making strides in closing a void in the market?

The history is we've always been able to catch pre-K to 5th graders. Getting kids in the door with stipends and support we pour in the kind of exposure we think will strengthen them in life. We've taken our children on college tours, on city trips and have incorporated the Boys Scouts + Strong Women, Strong Girls all in an effort to expose them to arts and culture. The exposure is helping to build strong relationship in helping to make them stronger citizens.

How has your passion for the industry contributed to your commitment of ownership?

I think I'm best known as a hands-on, community-oriented person, a pastor and a leader. I don't just say it, I do it. You'll find me on the trips. I'm vested in their development and we care—we fill a family gap.

The Hill District is... my heart. I love the Hill.

What are your thoughts on 'Giving Back'?

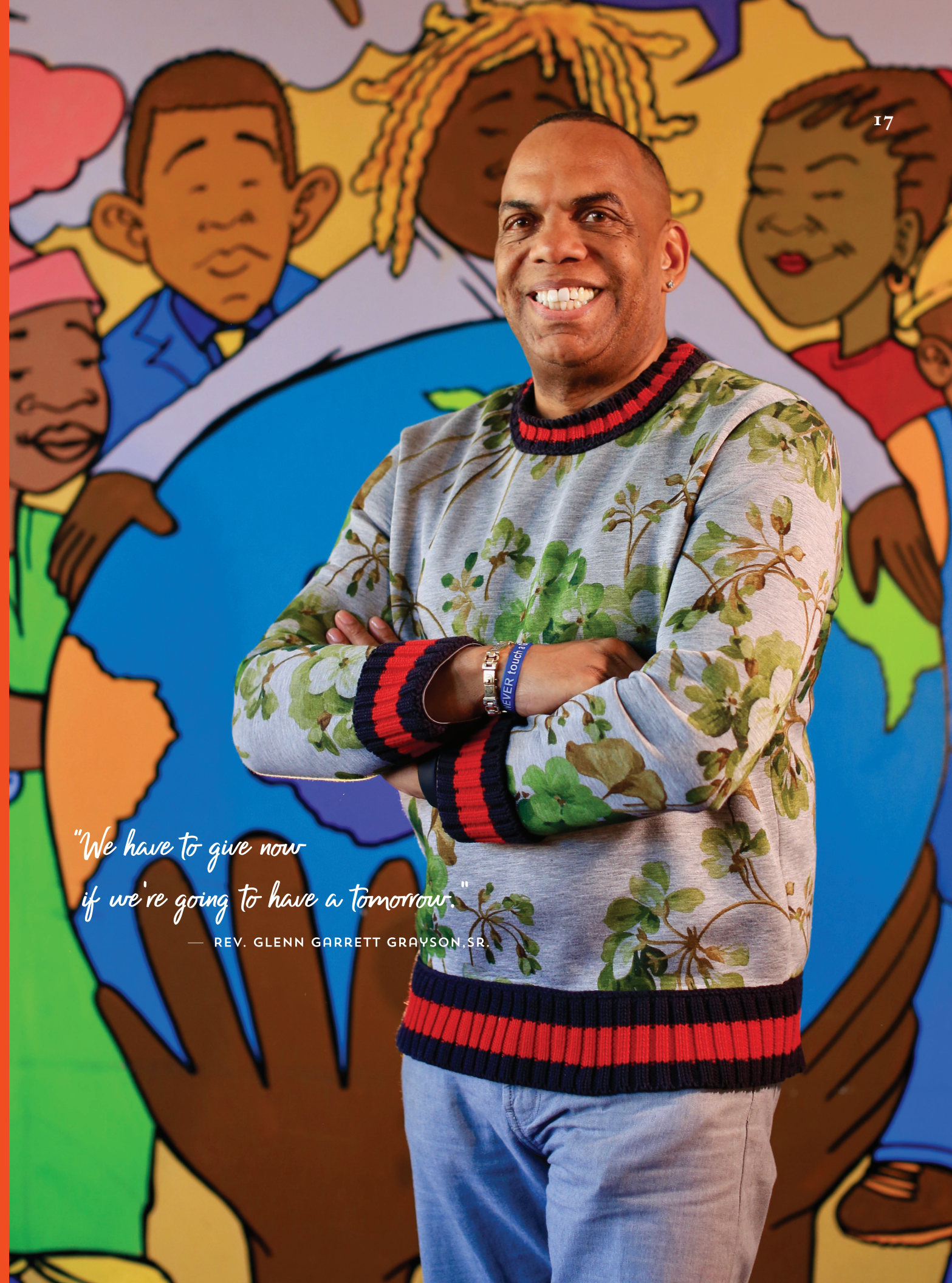
It's essential to our present and our future. What we have to give now to have a tomorrow.

What's next for your company?

We are trying to acquire additional parking and develop the Grayson Campus featuring a Health House, fellowship and counseling. Our future building will focus around a technology center. We're far in the acquisition of the land and we hope to have it completed within five years.

*"We have to give now
if we're going to have a tomorrow."*

— REV. GLENN GARRETT GRAYSON, SR.



"When you give and don't expect anything in return—it's a very rewarding feeling."

—RICHARD WITHERSPOON

(cont. from page 16)

The Growth Fund provided a deposit of \$50K and the Credit Union drafted a loan for \$250K. They deposited \$250K into the Credit Union and used that as collateral for a loan to the grocery store project. The store received what they needed and the interest on the loan goes to the Hill District Federal Credit Union while the funds from the Growth Fund stayed in the community. "We were able to complete the grocery store on our own without external assistance," explains Witherspoon. As a community development credit union, the Hill District Federal Credit Union has a federal designation as a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI). "It's in our DNA to help small businesses and individuals improve their financial health. It's more than a passion, it's our mission. We promote savings and encourage people to borrow wisely. That's what we do," declares Witherspoon.

In 2020, it will be the Hill District Federal Credit Union's 50th anniversary and their reputation is as strong as ever. In the organization's history, there have only been two managers—Witherspoon and Mary Walker.

"When Dr. King was assassinated, the city was ablaze. The HD burned and once the smoke cleared the Hill wasn't able to get financial services. Ms. Walker learned how to open a federal credit union and went door-to-door and asked people for \$.25 to open an account," shares Witherspoon.

Over his 30-years working for the Hill District Federal Credit Union, Witherspoon has been through the evolution of the Hill District. "I've served in various capacities and watched this neighborhood go through changes," he says. "In this arena, I've found that it's more important to give. You have to be willing to help those who don't have the capacity to help themselves." Additionally, Witherspoon serves with nonprofit boards in the area, including serving on the Bridgeway Capital board and the YMCA, among others. "When you give and don't expect anything in return—it's a very rewarding feeling."



● **AMANI CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORP**

Program to educate the Hill District community residents and nurture youth, encourage community and economic development and promote a livable quality of life.

544 Miltenberger St.
facebook.com/amaniCCDC

● **THE CENTER THAT C.A.R.E.S (CHILDREN ADULT RECREATIONAL AND EDUCATION SERVICES)**

An afterschool enrichment program serving 200+ children.

1852 Enoch St.
412.621.9612
info@centerthatcares.org
centerthatcares.org

● **COMMUNION™**

An architecture and development firm focused on place-driven, community-based architectural interventions at the neighborhood scale that fosters community and creates opportunities to live local by creating and cultivating the built environment.

2144 Wylie Ave.
412.589.9518
communionplace.com

● **HILL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (HILL CDC)**

A corporation that works in partnership with residents and stakeholders to create, promote, and implement strategies and programs that connect plans, policies and people to drive compelling community development opportunities in the Greater Hill District.

2015 Centre Ave.
412.765.1820
hilldistrict.org

● **HILL DISTRICT CONSENSUS GROUP**

A membership organization for citizens of the Hill District focusing on lower income residents.

1835 Centre Ave.
412.697.4692
hdcg.org

● **HILL DISTRICT FEDERAL CREDIT UNION**

Financial services provider.

2021 Centre Ave.
412.281-0822
hilldistrictfcu.org

● **MOKA ART GALLERY**

An art gallery, artist studio and art-and-music residence for artists and musicians to share their expertise with the Hill District community.

2297 Centre Ave.
charlotteka346@gmail.com
1moses123@gmail.com
mokapgh.com

● **POWER 59 CONSTRUCTION, LLC**

A residential and commercial construction company.

2503 Centre Ave.
412.326.7812

● **SCHENLEY HEIGHTS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

An out-of-school educational service for youth to improve academically, recreationally and culturally to help create a more abundant life.

3171 Ewart Drive.
412.621.3341
greatschools.org

● **SOCIETY MEN'S GROOMING LOUNGE**

Barber shop and event space—with the essence of a private club offering premiere grooming services.

503 Herron Ave.
412.475.9226
society412.com

did you know?

WITH THREE OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE HILL DISTRICT TO CHOOSE FROM, MEMBERSHIP AT THE HILL DISTRICT FEDERAL CREDIT UNION GREW BY 358 MEMBERS IN 2016. THE UNION DISBURSED 180 LOANS AND ASSETS GREW BY ALMOST 5%, WHILE DEPOSITS WERE UP BY 4% AND DELINQUENCY REMAINED STEADY.



POISE
FOUNDATION

Two Gateway Center
603 Stanwix St, Suite 1700
Pittsburgh, PA 15222