

Urban League Annual Report

30

YEARS

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A Mission of Growth

The mission of the Urban League is to enable African-Americans and other disadvantaged persons to secure economic self-reliance, parity, power and civil rights.

For more than a century, the National Urban League has enabled African-Americans and other disadvantaged persons to secure economic self-reliance, parity, power and civil rights. ☹ An affiliate of the national organization, the Urban League of Greater Chattanooga has spent 30 years implementing this mission of empowerment on a local level. From their early days leading advocacy and policy efforts to address educational and financial disparities, the Urban League of Greater Chattanooga has focused on transforming lives and empowering the community. ☹ Today, this mission of empowerment is the same – but it is implemented on a much broader scale. The Urban League of Greater Chattanooga has grown their mission by enhancing academic success, economic confidence and healthy living. They now offer educational programs for children and adults; workforce development initiatives for professionals and rising business owners; and health and wellness resources for the greater Chattanooga community. ☹ To attain their goals, the Urban League of Greater Chattanooga has consistently created and nurtured programs to promote acceptance, belonging, dignity and self-worth. This past year alone, the organization has assisted nearly 7,000 people through education and youth empowerment programs, workforce development initiatives and health and wellness resources. ☹ As they celebrate their 30th anniversary, the Urban League of Greater Chattanooga has a vision to grow their mission through academic success, economic empowerment and healthy living, promoting a community that will thrive for decades to come.

Growing Academic Success

Strongly believing that an educated Chattanooga is a greater Chattanooga, the Urban League provides students with assistance in reading, language arts and mathematics, as well as artistic and athletic enrichment activities. Since July 2011, the Urban League of Greater Chattanooga proudly served more than 600 young people in grades K-12 through community partnerships.





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Digital Connectors

High school students in the Digital Connectors program volunteered more than 900 hours of community service by teaching digital literacy to the community. During this year-long education program, they also shadowed at local utilities and communications companies to see how to put digital skills into practice in the workplace.

Equity and Excellence Project

The Equity and Excellence Project takes a grassroots approach to raising awareness about important education issues. Since July 2011, the project hosted a series of events to share information about education reform efforts with parents and community members. They also partnered to host workshop sessions for

parents which addressed Common Core Standards and Tennessee's new teacher evaluation methods.

National Achievers Society

The National Achievers Society is the National Urban League's academic honors society. The society promotes and rewards academic excellence and scholarship among students of color in grades 9 - 12. Students must maintain a 3.0 or higher GPA and exhibit excellent behavior. This year's achievers participated in a variety of learning experiences, including college preparation workshops and classes at the Hunter Museum of American Art.

STEM Academy

Students participating in the STEM (Science, Technology,

Engineering and Math) Academy are inspired by robotics, aviation and technology. The program documents a 32% post-program increase in students' interest in STEM-related careers. Students also learn about the types of courses they will need to take in high school to successfully enter related professions. The program operated at Chattanooga School for the Arts & Sciences, Dalewood Middle, Tyner Middle Academy, Ivy Academy, the South Chattanooga Recreation Center and the Urban League of Greater Chattanooga.

Street Academy

More than three hundred K-5th grade students received additional academic support

through the Urban League's Street Academy, which provides additional reading and math instruction in an after-school setting. Students who participate in the program have shown gains in reading and mathematics. The program operates at East Lake, Calvin Donaldson, Clifton Hills, and Orchard Knob Elementary Schools.

The Urban League's Education and Youth Empowerment programs are funded by the Tennessee Department of Education, Unum, the Tennessee Department of Health, the Lyndhurst Foundation, the Benwood Foundation, Comcast, AT&T, the National Urban League, BI-LO Charities and the Community Foundation of Greater Chattanooga.

“The Urban League keeps in touch with the community and works every year to make it stronger through education and inspiration. They gave my daughter, Zowie, powerful computer skills she will need when she launches her career years from now. It also provides her with opportunities to teach seniors what she has learned. Service is in her heart, so working with the Urban League is a great fit.”

*Tonya Boyd
Parent of Digital Connectors Student*



“The Urban League has helped me prepare for the future and be a positive role model for younger kids. I’ve learned how to interact with other people and communicate as a leader. There are people out there who don’t have the opportunities that have blessed so many of us. It’s my responsibility to share the lessons I learn.”

*Travis Lytle, Jr.
Digital Connectors and National
Achievers Society Participant*



“After graduating high school, you are constantly working to find yourself and the things that intrigue you. The Urban League helped me discover my passion for the people of our community. I really love participating in the college fairs and helping high school students plan for the future. It feels good to make an impact.”

*Ashley Macon
Former National Achievers Society
Participant; Entrepreneurship Center
and Workforce Development Center
Participant*



Growing Economic Empowerment

Through hard work and collaboration, Chattanooga is working to achieve economic success on every level. The Urban League's Economic Empowerment initiatives are an important piece of the community's goal. Since July 2011, more than 700 people have visited the Urban League's Employment Center for job counseling, job information sessions, training and coaching. Fifty-three percent (374 people) of those continued the support process and obtained jobs. The Urban League's Employment center also offers helpful resources such as computer and internet training and career workshops. Workshop topics include resume writing, interview tips, making a great first impression, and resolving workplace conflict.

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The Urban League's Economic Empowerment programs positively impact Chattanooga in a variety of ways:

Contract Compliance

The Urban League works with local governments to ensure equal job opportunities for women and minority employees. During 2012, the Urban League monitored construction job sites and documented women and minority hiring patterns for Hamilton County Government.

The Entrepreneurship Center

The Entrepreneurship Center is a resource for new and existing minority and women-owned businesses. The center offers assistance and guidance to increase business skills. The goal is to position program participants to take advantage of new opportunities and develop and expand their operations and increase revenue opportunities and job creation. Since its inception late last year, more than 30

new entrepreneurs have completed the business development training program and numerous others have participated in technical assistance workshops, training sessions and one-on-one coaching. The Entrepreneurship Center's first course offering, SpringBoard, began in June 2010. SpringBoard is an eight-week business development course that outlines how to start and maintain a successful business.

Homeownership Counseling

The Urban League is a THDA Certified Homeownership Counseling Service, providing the training and skills to help potential home-buyers become creditworthy. More than 120 persons have completed homeownership training at the Urban League.

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)

In partnership with the IRS, the Urban League coordinated the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) network, which covers East Tennessee, from Hamilton County all the way to Milligan College in Carter County. The VITA program helps citizens prepare their taxes at no cost to them. More than 5,000 persons sought assistance in completing their returns at one of the 15 VITA sites. These returns represent approximately \$7.2 million in tax refunds that were reinvested in the local economy.

Workforce Development

Clients who have been placed in companies throughout the Chattanooga metropolitan area have totaled \$6.2 million in wages, contributing greatly



*\$7.2 million in tax refunds
reinvested in the local economy*

to Chattanooga's economic well-being and empowering local families.

Young Professionals Association (Auxiliary Program)

The Urban League of Greater Chattanooga Young Professionals Association was formed to encourage the next generation of leaders to connect with one another and explore issues that impact Chattanooga and its residents. Serving professionals ages 21-40, the organization also gives young people an opportunity to make a positive impact on the community and work together using their diverse talents.

The Urban League Economic Empowerment Programs are funded by the City of Chattanooga, Hamilton County Government, the Internal Revenue Service, BrightBridge, The National Urban League, SunTrust, Regions Bank and Wells Fargo.



“My Urban League story began with my grandmother. When I was a little girl, a branch in Ohio offered her tax assistance. Years later, I am continuing the relationship in a different way. The Urban League Young Professionals Association has taught me to lead my community through service and better myself through education. Knowing that I play the key role in managing my personal finances is empowering.”

*Ashley Gates
President, Urban League Young Professionals Association*



“For years I worked for the same corporation, commuting long-distances daily and sacrificing time with my family because I couldn’t see what else might be on the horizon. The Urban League saw my resume online and offered me an opportunity to try something new. Thanks to their friendliness and support, I gained the confidence I needed to step outside of my box and succeed. They are truly the heart of this community.”

*Calvin Johnson
Workforce Development Participant*



“As a TVA professional with ambitions to start a small community business, I was looking for balance between my entrepreneurial aspirations and my family. SpringBoard helped me find that. I learned the difference between assets and liabilities, what would help me grow professionally and personally. For 30 years, the Urban League has been teaching skills like this to help individuals in our community grow. Through the Urban League, I was taught how to be a success. Now I’m teaching.”

*Herman Kelly
SpringBoard Participant, Entrepreneurship Center*



“The SpringBoard program helps turn your business dreams into reality. I had great ideas, but I was trying to find a way to make them happen. SpringBoard helped me put my plan into action by connecting me with key professionals from the community. With the guidance of attorneys, bankers, insurance agents and a small business association, I was able to build and grow my business.”

*Taurus Odom
SpringBoard Participant, Entrepreneurship Center*

Growing Health and Wellness

“At least we have our health.”—It’s a phrase everyone has heard before. Without proper care and nutrition, however, good health is not always a guarantee. To ensure our community has the health and strength it needs to grow, the Urban League provides the underserved people in our community with core programs designed to create positive outcomes.

Community Gardens

With support from the Benwood Foundation’s Gaining Ground network, the Urban League assisted in establishing four community gardens. Visitors to these gardens learn about the benefits of eating fresh fruits and vegetables and have access to a variety of locally-grown produce. The communities represented are Emma Wheeler Homes, South Chattanooga, Alton Park, MLK Neighborhood and Orchard Knob.

Community Health Navigator

The Urban League’s Community Health Navigator Program links the uninsured with local, low or no cost health and prescription services. The Program served 747 people. Most of them reported household incomes of \$5,000 or less. At least 70% of them reported being

diagnosed with at least one chronic disease; yet, almost 65% did not have a primary care doctor. Eighty-two percent were uninsured at the time of their first visit. The Community Health Navigator program linked people to the needed healthcare education, services, and options in the Greater Chattanooga Region.

FIT for Life

The Urban League of Greater Chattanooga promotes good health by addressing the epidemic of obesity through Friends-In-Training (FIT) for Life. The program is designed to encourage young people to maintain a healthy weight through physical activity and healthy diet. By sharing information with students and their families, the Urban League endeavors to impact the

entire family. Within the last year, more than 900 children and adults participated in the program.

This year, the program staff partnered with Hamilton County Schools Coordinated School Health and the Benwood Foundation to offer participants workout sessions, nutrition classes, cooking classes, pre- and post-health screenings and community gardening experiences. Sessions were offered at community sites La Paz, St. Andrews Center, Orchard Knob Elementary, Clifton Hills Elementary, Calvin Donaldson Elementary and East Lake Elementary.

Urban League Health and Wellness Programs are funded by the Tennessee Department of Health and the PeyBack (Peyton Manning) Foundation.

“I was feeling sick, but I didn’t really know what was wrong with me. Through the Community Health Navigator program, I was referred to a doctor at the Westside Clinic who did a physical and discovered my high blood pressure. I’m getting the right treatment now, and I am grateful to also have new glasses. I feel healthy and supported. With the Urban League on my side, I feel safe.”

*Joe McClendon
Community Health Navigator participant*



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND BOARD CHAIR

For the last three decades, the Urban League of Greater Chattanooga has remained steadfast in its commitment to empower the community. Whether we are connecting an unemployed father with a new job, providing after-school tutoring in an inner city school, helping an entrepreneur launch a new business, linking an uninsured single mother to medical services or promoting health and wellness for the entire family, *the Urban League transforms lives.*

Our mission of empowerment speaks to the fundamental principles that built our nation. It is what drives our staff, board members and volunteers to work every day to help individuals and families realize their full potential. In 2012, we are stronger as an organization than we have ever been. We have helped nearly 7,000 people achieve better education, better jobs, better job training and better health.

As we celebrate our 30th anniversary, we are inspired by every person we have impacted since our founding and are energized for the future. Our dream is that every individual in our community feels vested, accepted and empowered, and that those who come here see they have value and something to bring to the table, irrespective of their background. We believe our future as a city and nation is dependent upon fostering the principle of *Inclusion by Design*—a corporate and community culture that embraces the talent and contributions of every individual.

Of course, we could not have empowered the community for 30 years without a strong base of partners, supporters and volunteers. We would like to extend our sincerest gratitude to all who have made our work possible and who will be instrumental to our future. It is your support that will help us all achieve a city of inclusion, a city of opportunity, a city of choice.

Warren E. Logan, Jr.
President and CEO
Urban League of Greater Chattanooga



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