CONNECTING COMMUNITY, IN PERPETUITY

Greater Tacoma Community Foundation has always been a connection point for people who care about a thriving Pierce County. Our philanthropic support and partnerships provide a unique lens into the region’s most pressing issues and most promising opportunities.

Philanthropy evolves alongside the community it serves, and GTCF remains committed to the practices and deep community knowledge that yield positive outcomes and long-lasting impact. Because GTCF was founded to serve the community in perpetuity, we offer up-to-date philanthropic tools, capacity building, and relationships designed to stand the test of time.

CEO & BOARD CHAIR LETTER

Over the past 38 years, Greater Tacoma Community Foundation has seen Pierce County grow and change, but what has remained constant is the passion people bring to building a thriving community. Emerging tools like impact investing, dynamic partnerships across multiple organizations, and innovative approaches to issues are a few of the ways GTCF is able to support the best minds of this generation, thanks to the vision and legacy of those who came before us.

When it comes to making a positive impact in our community, we’re stronger together. That’s why GTCF offers philanthropic support informed by community voice. We have seen how shared community knowledge builds everyone’s capacity to make a positive impact. Our goal is to connect individuals and organizations across Pierce County to leverage our strengths and build new opportunities.

In this book, we share stories and insights from individuals and organizations who are making a difference in Pierce County. In their own words, they speak about the dreams and lessons that fuel their work in the community.

We hope you will find inspiration to continue sharing your time, talent, and treasure. Your vision and voice have the potential to support generations to come. GTCF’s philanthropic services, knowledge-building, and networks are here to help you shape the future.

Dwight Williams
GTCF Board Chair

Kathi Littman
President & CEO, GTCF

“...the community foundation concept is a recognition of two fundamental facts - first, that certain and constant change takes place in our society and in our attitudes with respect to charity, and - second, that the problems of each generation can be solved better by the best minds of these generations than by those of the past.”

– Cleve A. Reading, President, 1984 GTCF Annual Report
Wayne Williams' mother and grandmother were his guiding light. “They recognized something special in me but told me and demonstrated that the only thing that would make what I had meaningful was to give it away.”

“I was one of only a handful of African American students in the MBA program at the Wharton School of Business. I remember sitting in a class on portfolios with other students who actually had their portfolios with them! My immediate instinct was to look at them as something more than me. But, it was there that I began to see myself as I really was. Not as something less, but someone in the same class as them, learning the same things.”

Wayne’s experiences and knowledge led him into a career as a product innovator with the Xerox Corporation. As a teacher and administrator with Tacoma Community College and Metro Parks Tacoma, he turned his knowledge and experience into a twenty-one-year involvement with the Elizabeth Wesley Youth Merit Incentive Award Program through the Urban League, supporting the retention of African American public high school students.

“The way I see it, if I look at disease or social unrest or environmental threats, it occurs to me how pompous it is for us as human beings to overlook any mind that might find the cure or have the answer. It is ludicrous for us to put any mind at risk.”

“The first thing people often ask young people is, ‘what do you want to do or be?’ But, my first question is, ‘how can I support you?’” – Wayne Williams

“I realized in my retirement that I didn’t work all these years to accumulate skills and knowledge to wake up one day and say, ‘that was that’. I think that is one of the worst self-devaluating things you can do, and I refuse to devaluate myself.”

With over 30 years of observing Greater Tacoma Community Foundation’s work throughout Pierce County, Wayne believes, “The simplest way of doing the most good with my legacy gift is through GTCF because I know they will leverage and amplify my intent. GTCF shares my values. They understand my intent. They will take my gift and do more with it than I could do alone.”

“The intent of the Wayne Williams – Lifting Lives Legacy is to help young people of color discover, like I did, the best parts of themselves and to share it with others.”
The financial advising industry has evolved a lot during my career, as have my own methods, into more of a life-centered planning approach. Life-centered planning is about so much more than just the money. It’s about living the life you want to live with the money you have and investing in the things you care about.

Bev is interested in discovering the story that got her clients where they are. The story they want to live right now and the story they want to leave behind. “It’s all about creating an empowering vision around their story.”

“Not all of my clients are high net worth individuals. There are many other ways I help others think about their legacy, be it resources to help them write a legacy letter or simply helping them find more time to volunteer with a cause that they care about.”

Bev is also thinking about her own legacy and passing on what is important to those who are important to her. “I have started a giving project with my own grandchildren. I have set aside some funds and together we talk about what we care about and make decisions about how to use that money to support it.”

“I want everyone who is doing life and estate planning with a philanthropic focus to know what a great resource GTCF is. I am out here planting seeds, saying to folks who have an interest, ‘just go and see what they are doing, and you will be amazed.’

“The way I see it, the Greater Tacoma Community Foundation is the cog at the center of so much good happening in Pierce County.”

Bev Cox was a part of the first cohort and study group of the Chartered Advisor in Philanthropy education and certification opportunity, facilitated by GTCF. “The relational and learning opportunities that GTCF has provided have helped me connect my work and my heart more fully. They have helped me meet other people with a similar mindset and given us the opportunity to collaborate together as professional advisors in a unique client-centered environment.”

Bev has partnered up with other professional advisors through GTCF connections to teach a workshop at Tacoma Community College. “My part was about legacy and I tried to get people to really think about what qualities they want to be remembered for.”

“The relational and learning opportunities that GTCF has provided have helped me connect my work and my heart more fully.”

– Beverly Cox
“My parents moved to Tacoma in 1955, after my father finished his residency, to open a private medical practice in Tacoma. My folks didn’t have a lot of money after medical school, but my grandmother owned the old Japanese Language School, so we lived in the teacher’s quarters for a time.”

Greg’s father, the late Dr. George Tanbara, soon built a home on Yakima Avenue that he and Kimi, Greg’s mother, would live in for over 60 years. “As it turns out, my family and I moved back into the neighborhood ten years ago just six blocks from the house I grew up in. I think I drove everyone crazy with all my stories and memories of the neighborhood. I’ve lived my whole life here. It has been a very rooted existence in a place that I love.”

Working with another Tacoma community legend, Jim Walton, Dr. Tanbara treated patients in a makeshift clinic in Salishan. In 2009, Community Health Care constructed a new health care center that serves Tacoma’s Eastside neighborhood and beyond. The Kimi and George Tanbara, MD Health Center is named after Greg’s parents.

“I can remember my dad working long hours at his practice only to go out again in the evening to work at the clinic or do some other kind of volunteering. Sometimes he would take me with him. He taught me about service to others. I saw him building relationships with people he liked and together they would see an opportunity to do something good for the community and then they’d just go do it.”

“I can remember my dad working long hours at his practice only to go out again in the evening to work at the clinic or do some other kind of volunteering. He taught me about service to others.”

– Greg Tanbara
Xavier is working with Greater Tacoma Community Foundation to establish the “Everyone Learns Different” scholarship, which will help youth who are challenged with learning disorders pursue higher education.

“GTCF has a great reputation with phenomenal leadership. They’re helping make connections to shape and form my vision. I want to collaborate in sharing my passion for these youth.”

“The incentive football provided me was a blessing. I want to provide youth an incentive to opportunity - scholarships to pursue higher education. Words from Nelson Mandela, ‘Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.’”

“These youth are special. I will be a resource who encourages their dreams.”

Xavier Cooper, born and raised in Tacoma, graduated from Wilson High School. Before earning a football scholarship to Washington State University, he attended Tacoma Community College. After 3 successful seasons, Xavier declared for the NFL draft. In 2015, he was selected in the 3rd round and played four years.

“At 14 years old, I was diagnosed with learning disorders. I struggled socially and educationally to comprehend. I know personally the barriers to meet academic standards.”

“Life isn’t a straight line. It’s series of learning curves and everyone’s path is different.”

– Xavier Cooper
“It can be hard to make a home in an unfamiliar place and every move brings change. Many military families experience the deployment of a spouse, leaving one parent to hold the fort down. It’s experiences like these that create a unique brotherhood and sisterhood among our families as they care for one another.”

Rachanee Curry, President of the Madigan Foundation, grew up in a military family. She served on active duty and is a military spouse. She has observed first-hand some of the challenges that military families can face.

“Our foundation supports military families, active and retired, and the Madigan Army Medical Center through programs designed to improve and enhance the quality of care and life of patients, their families, and their healthcare providers.”

“We have been at this since 1995 – supporting research, education, and professional development, and have developed many programs supporting health related needs of soldiers and families. Many of these – like our childcare and taxi vouchers, dental screenings and immunizations awareness, or support for wounded warriors, behavioral health and palliative care – were born out of one person’s need and then seeing a pattern of need and addressing it.”

Perhaps no program captures the spirit of the foundation more than their Young Heroes program that recognizes children of military personnel with mental or physical disabilities for their courage and perseverance.

“Each year, two of our Young Heroes receive college scholarships through the Sandra Kay Green Memorial Scholarship. This year, one will study social work because she wants to come back and serve in the community that has supported her, and the other is pursuing medical research with a desire to help others who have medical conditions similar to his own.”

“At Madigan Foundation we constantly strive to increase our impact through strategic thinking and innovation.”

Part of that journey was the search for a partner to help them invest and grow their resources. “We appreciated finding a community organization like GTCF who shares our values.”

“GTCF has given us the opportunity to learn and grow. We’ve been a grant recipient. The way GTCF shares best practices, and connects us with others also making a difference, has inspired our own vision for how to more effectively communicate and deliver on our mission.”

“The Madigan Foundation is one of a network of great organizations in our community who care for our military and families – who are also our neighbors – in their time of need.”

“...one of a network of great organizations in our community who care for our military and families – who are also our neighbors – in their time of need.”

– Rachanee Curry
The American Leadership Forum (ALF) brings together influential leaders from many sectors in the community who likely wouldn’t meet otherwise. Every year, twenty to twenty-five at a time, ALF is connecting diverse leaders who are forming unlikely relationships and increasing important collaborations with one another.

Beth Boggs, Executive Director of ALF, and a participant in the program herself, grew up in Tacoma. “I was a part of the first magnet school at McCarver Elementary. Coming from a very white part of Tacoma, I learned early to share space with people that were different from me.”

“With each class I get to watch these relationships develop and personal transformations take place. In addition, our Fellows come to understand their own privilege better and are utilizing new information and perspectives to tackle systems-level change – to create a more equitable, accessible, and inclusive Tacoma-Pierce County.”

“I think we’ve seen an evolution in what the word leader means. Our first six classes of Fellows were more hierarchical leaders in positions of power. But that has changed because it just doesn’t work today. Leadership has become more distributive and collaborative. If you want real change and impact you have to have the entire community represented.”

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“Greater Tacoma Community Foundation was the initial fiscal sponsor in 1990. GTCF helped raise the core funds to get ALF started. Without GTCF, ALF would not exist.”

“Our chapter is the last chapter in the country that is needs-blind, which means we don’t let someone’s ability to fulfill the financial commitment have any bearing on our decision. This helps us stay as diverse as possible. It is GTCF and other local support that allows us to do this.”

“When I took this job, I felt like I had to know everything; I was now the leader of leaders! What I’ve realized is that leadership isn’t about a label, or position, or knowing everything. It isn’t about holding on to power.”

“Leadership is a practice and a way of being. It is about being vulnerable and building authentic relationships. It is about learning to see your own humanity and that of others.”

“If you want real change and impact you have to have the entire community represented.”

– Beth Boggs
The disempowered go to the table with emotion and a lack of information. The powerful with a calm demeanor and a wealth of information. Decisions need to be driven by actual data not anecdotes and ideology.

Dr. Ali Modarres is the director of Urban Studies at the University of Washington-Tacoma (UW-T) and is engaged in the work of developing UW-T’s Center for Applied Urban Research, dedicated to archiving, aggregating, and synthesizing urban data for the region.

“My whole career has been concerned with notions of access. Access defines equality and segregation. It is the difference between getting left behind and getting ahead together. Data is about having the right information and the democratization of data is about how you get and package important information in accessible ways to inform the public.”

“For me the immigrant experience was key. Coming from Iran at age 20 to study – I was shocked how ingrained the concept of difference was in the American psyche. How do you work within a society that inherited a system with such flaws, where difference is a part of the collective narrative, and change it?”

“This is what our work with the census is about – trying to show the public how data impacts their everyday life. If you don’t participate then you don’t exist. You actually erase yourself as far as they are concerned and those decisions are made without you. Decisions that can impact a whole generation of people.”

“Greater Tacoma Community Foundation is partnering with us on the census work because they see the value that this data can provide for the region. GTCF sees this work as a community investment. A way they can contribute to the collective impact of those they work with.”

“As a board member, I see GTCF as an instigator of ideas and a builder of networks. I think that is their greatest contribution—the relationships and connections that increase the impact. They do this by convening, informing, educating, and most importantly empowering those they work with.”

“Community foundations are unique in that they implement individual donor’s interest, but collectively those interests add up to what is happening in the larger region. Community foundations like GTCF create a constellation of ideas and relationships that is much more diverse in scope than any one investment.”

“This is what our work with the census is about – trying to show the public how data impacts their everyday life.”

– Dr. Ali Modarres
T’WINA NOBLES
Ladies First

T’WINA NOBLES
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SPARK GRANT RECIPIENT

T’wina Nobles spent many of her childhood and teen years homeless and living in a shelter. It was there that the director Mrs. Miles made a memory for T’wina of the kind of woman she wanted to be.

“Mrs. Miles put me to work volunteering at the shelter and I was enriched by service and I learned valuable skills. She spent time with me and exposed me to opportunities I wouldn’t have had otherwise. She helped me begin to understand the power of sisterhood – women and girls who invest in and are loyal to one another.”

Inspired by people like Mrs. Miles, T’wina started Ladies First, a school-based learning program dedicated to empowering young women to make healthy decisions while promoting free thinking and cultural awareness in their everyday lives. Through partnership with Citizens for a Healthy Bay, T’wina became interested in creating an Environmental Justice Camp. She applied for a GTCF Spark grant to help bring the vision to reality.

“At the Environmental Justice Camp, the girls were informed so that they could be better advocates for the environment, but they were also exposed to women who were scientists, not working in a lab but out in their own community.”

“If I had to sum up my work with women and girls in Pierce County, I would say it is about creating a sisterhood of lifelong relationships that provide memories to inspire who and what they are becoming.”

“The Spark Grant we received for the camp truly was a spark. Not only did it lead to further private and corporate investment, but it has allowed us to grow to three camps this next year and to expand our environmentally focused programming into experiences like hikes and visits to National Parks.”

“From the very beginning, the grants committee began to talk to us about how this idea could grow. With their encouragement, and the ways that Greater Tacoma Community Foundation told our story, we saw new relationships and connections develop that helped us do just that – grow it.”

“It’s hard to quantify the impact of that $1500. We’ve leveraged it into at least three times as much. But, the impact is immeasurable for the girl who took her first boat ride on Puget Sound or hiked in the rain for the first time with her sisters – making memories.”

“If I had to sum up my work with women and girls in Pierce County, I would say it is about creating a sisterhood of lifelong relationships that provide memories to inspire who and what they are becoming.”

– T’wina Nobles
At Fort Nisqually, people learn about history and culture experientially, using their senses, not just reading dusty old books about dead people. Learning in a way that is memorable and in the process building ties to their community. It’s not a paper exchange, it’s a human exchange.”

Dana Repp, the current President of the Fort Nisqually Foundation, got involved with the fort about ten years ago through her two daughters’ interest.

“We have to understand where we’ve been to understand where we are going. We believe that if we are going to tell these stories then we have a responsibility to tell them well, and that means the ugly parts too. We need to learn from our history – the good and the bad parts.”

“The Victorians lived the concepts of use, reuse, and recycle – it was a necessity for them. Our experiences encourage a different pace and perspective – practicing patience, being content with what you have, and not always looking to the next thing. The fort gets kids into nature and helps them disconnect from technology for a little bit. Kids go home with a greater appreciation for modern conveniences.”

“We need a diversity of opportunities for learning and building community. Not everyone is interested in the same thing. The fort has been a place where people that don’t fit in somewhere else fit. I’ve seen a kid that’s always been awkward in sports throw a tomahawk better than anyone else. We help people find what they are good at and give them a place to learn it and then share it with others.”

We came to Greater Tacoma Community Foundation when our friend and former board president Glenn Sutt passed away and left a significant legacy gift to the foundation. Glenn had been volunteering at the fort for over 30 years, giving generously of his time and knowledge.”

“We chose GTCF because they are connected to community and those that can help us grow. They are so responsive, and they treat everyone the same no matter how big or how small. Like us, GTCF is committed to telling our story well and connecting us to other people’s stories.”

The Fort Nisqually Foundation and their 200 plus volunteers, with the help of Glenn Sutt’s legacy through GTCF, are seeking to preserve and expand the fort and its programs. “We want to bring attention and raise awareness so that the fort serves many generations to come.”

“We have to understand where we’ve been to understand where we are going.”
– Dana Repp
“I started out studying atmospheric sciences and applied mathematics, but what was missing for me was the people part. I learned about weather and climate, which impact people’s quality of life, but not how to connect with community and influence decision makers to affect change.”

Jennifer Chang, the Executive Director of the Puyallup Watershed Initiative (the Initiative), was born and raised in Tacoma. “The Puyallup Watershed is my home. It’s where I always want to be.”

“The broad focus of the Initiative is around improving environmental and social conditions throughout the watershed. The way we do that is by listening deeply and learning from each other, developing shared long-term goals through collaboration, and centering on community-based change.”

“In the fall of 2015 there were a string of crashes in Tacoma that involved children being struck by vehicles that became a catalyst for our Active Transportation Community of Interest (ATCOI). They found crashes happen in every corner of Tacoma, but some neighborhoods are more affected than others – specifically Hilltop, Eastside, and Southend neighborhoods.”

“Several years later Tacoma has a Safe Routes to School program with a full-time staff person. It just wouldn’t have happened without the ATCOI’s work and efforts to bring together countless other partners including the City of Tacoma and Tacoma Public Schools. While it directly impacts social conditions it also promotes more safe and active forms of transportation, which cut down on car usage and has a direct effect on stormwater run-off and water quality.”

From the beginning, the Initiative has been an experiment in doing philanthropy differently. “It began with The Russell Family Foundation having intentional conversations about the impact of their own giving and the desire to explore a long-term, place-based investment that gave community the power to develop a collaborative vision for those investments.”

“Greater Tacoma Community Foundation is about allowing people and community to develop solutions. So they are a natural partner for us. They help us think creatively about how to directly fund community members and non-traditional partners doing great work. GTCF’s willingness to learn along with us and try new things is a primary reason the Initiative’s been able to do what we’ve done.”

“The Initiative brings such a diversity of people and organizations together with so many different lived experiences. We are discovering a new way of working together and a new hope for this place we care about.”

– Jennifer Chang
Most of the funding for the Pierce County Library comes from taxes, about 95 percent. That remaining 5 percent is one of the reasons the Pierce County Library Foundation was founded. It has been operated with a volunteer board for nearly 50 years.

Dean Carrell, the director of the foundation, is an employee of Pierce County Library. “When I got to the foundation, I saw a need for an unrestricted endowment to provide flexible dollars to allow us to be nimble in responding to community needs that the library had identified.”

“Rather than going through a bank, we felt Greater Tacoma Community Foundation was the solid community partner we needed. Their partnership extends throughout Pierce County, like ours does. At GTCF there is a spirit of generosity that extends to each partner. No feeling of competition – a real commitment to all boats rising.”

“Libraries are based on the values of sharing and trust and exist for the good of all.”

Georgia Lomax has been the executive director of the Pierce County Library System for five years, “I believe information, and supporting equitable access to information, helps people improve their lives.”

“Pierce County Library is committed to regularly listening to community. Our most recent efforts helped us craft our strategic framework, which focuses on providing important services that spark success through learning, enjoyment, and community.”

“At its core, the library is about literacy. Certainly reading, but also things like financial literacy, civic literacy, or Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) literacy. Of course, we serve the whole population of Pierce County, but we’ve always had a particular focus on helping kids succeed in school, and ultimately in life.”

“Libraries are part of the network helping kids learn. We are the educators outside of the formal education system – we’re there before, after, and between school. Learning is a life skill and the library supports people of all ages in being a lifetime learner. All of this improves quality of life.”

“Our donors fund many things through the foundation that allow us to support child literacy. Programs like our Imagination Playground, which uses giant blocks to help foster the seven stages of learning with young children. Our Baby and Science Books to Go Bags contain books, activity sheets, field notebooks, and other resources that support early or STEM learning and curiosity.”

“Libraries are based on the values of sharing and trust and exist for the good of all.”

– Georgia Lomax
When I grew up in Tacoma, I didn’t want to be here. YPB gave me a reason to come back, reconnect with my community, and be the person I needed.” - Dylan Tran, Youth Philanthropy Board member

Since 2011, GTCF’s Youth Philanthropy Board (YPB) has provided young people in Pierce County an opportunity to identify, explore, and address their concerns for their community by using philanthropic resources to support change.

This year, the YPB identified youth returning to community after justice-involvement as a major issue they wanted to address. To better understand the issue, YPB members organized a special convening with a panel of representatives from Pierce County Juvenile Court, Pierce County Executive’s Office, and Team Child to discuss causes and alternatives to justice-involvement for youth. Participants from 14 local organizations also discussed how youth voice could play a bigger role in their work.

In preparation for the convening, Youth Philanthropy Board members took the lead in making decisions about who should attend, how the dialogue would be formatted, and what questions they wanted to ask.

Janece Levien, GTCF Program Officer, guides the YPB, “These youth and young adults are the future leaders of Pierce County, so we have to start listening to them, understanding them, and giving them the space to have their voice heard and actions taken from it.”

Following the convening, the participating Pierce County organizations received a total of $72,500 in general operating grants.

“It is rare that a group of youth can make a decision that directly impacts them, let alone make a decision that will improve the lives of other youth in their community. Too often youth find their voices overshadowed by adults and the YPB helped us take what is directly affecting ourselves and the youth around us into our own hands.”

– Rita Tumbusch

“It is very hard to find a place where your opinion matters, especially when you are young. YPB has allowed me to be a part of great cohort where I was able to apply the skills I never knew and where the youth really had the ability to speak up for what they believe in.”

– Cristobal Luevanos

“Hearing everyone’s input about the juvenile court system and the youth in there made me realize that we are all human and it’s important to not have prejudice about anyone.”

– NgocBich (Kim) Tran

“These youth and young adults are the future leaders of Pierce County, so we have to start listening to them, understanding them, and giving them the space to have their voice heard and actions taken from it.”

– Janece Levien
COMMUNITY PHILANTHROPY

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Pearl Rose
Anna M. Rundquist
Kyle Lee Schreiner
Kit and Gary Severson
Lloyd Silver
Belle S. Smith
James and Myrna Sparks
Shelby Clayson & Elaine Stafford
Marjorie H. Stansfield
Janie & Kirk Starr
David L. Strait
Angelica Shunz
Doris G. Stucke
Mary Helen and Erling Thompson
Sheri and Jeffrey Tonn
Dr. Pamela J. Transue
Timothy and Barbara Tucci
Jack and June Veverka
Bob and Emily Vincent
Heartie Griggs Wagner
James L. Walton
Virginia Funksley Ward
Agnes J. Waterhouse
Fred Q. and Anona Weber
Whitney Family
Ann and James Wilborn
Fred Wilkesen
Donald R. and Mary E. Williams
M. Wayne Williams
Anonymous (34)
*deceased