

# **BETTER TOGETHER:**

## *The Power of Collective Impact for Community Change*

**Partnership & Investment in Liberty City, Florida**

*Prepared for the Key Biscayne Community Foundation & the  
Himan Brown Charitable Trust by Civic Enterprises*

## INTRODUCTION: THE VALUE OF PLACE-BASED PHILANTHROPY FOR COMMUNITY CHANGE

In communities across the United States, families seek to ensure that their children have the opportunities they need to excel in school, stay safe, and become thriving young adults. For those living in communities affected by poverty and crime, the journey to adulthood is full of roadblocks and detours. Liberty City in Miami-Dade County is one of these communities, existing on the margins of a society that has left it far behind. Historically, Liberty City has been largely ignored by local philanthropic and social initiatives – the narrative being that it is simply too poor and its history too fraught to ever recover.

But there is a new story emerging, one of collective vision, strategic investment, and determination to improve outcomes for the youth and families of Liberty City. The partnerships that make this transformation possible have been organically formed and carefully nurtured by two important partners, the Himan Brown Charitable Trust and the Key Biscayne Community Foundation. Through the persistent cultivation of relationships and trust building, these two foundations have succeeded in uniting a strong coalition of nonprofits, schools, and community advocates around a common goal – to enable young people in this communities to prepare for successful futures, from cradle to career.

This unique partnership, and the successes achieved as a result, demonstrates how similar communities in Miami and across the country can leverage the power of local philanthropy to create community change. This white paper will explore how two philanthropic organizations are working together to empower a community, and identify best practices to inspire others to join or mirror their efforts.

### *Definitions of terms used in white paper*

**Place-based philanthropy:** *focused philanthropic efforts on a specific geographic area – e.g. a central city, or a specific neighborhood. The place-based funder seeks to provide opportunities for residents of the area to have greater involvement in the foundation’s decision-making process.*

**Collective impact:** *the commitment of a group of actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a complex social problem.*

**Block by block community development:** *a steady and systematic approach to community development that provides a holistic set of educational, social, and community supports to a designated Impact Area, and gradually expands that area outwards over time.*

## THE HISTORY OF LIBERTY CITY

Originally a sparsely populated outskirts of Miami in the 1930s, Liberty City was designated by Franklin D. Roosevelt as the location for the first public housing development in Miami-Dade County as an effort to provide safe and affordable housing for those living in the slums of the nearby community called Overtown. In 1937, Liberty Square opened its doors in the center of Liberty City as a Blacks-only housing development. The residences encompassed nearly 66 acres of land, with a total of 753 yellow brick apartments, which remain largely unchanged to this day. Restrictive covenants intended to segregate Black residents from White residents later resulted in the construction of a four-foot wall around the housing development, enclosing the inhabitants and cutting them off from the larger community.

While the wall was eventually torn down, the racial and economic barriers and segregation persisted. Liberty City continued to attract low-income residents, while wealthier families and

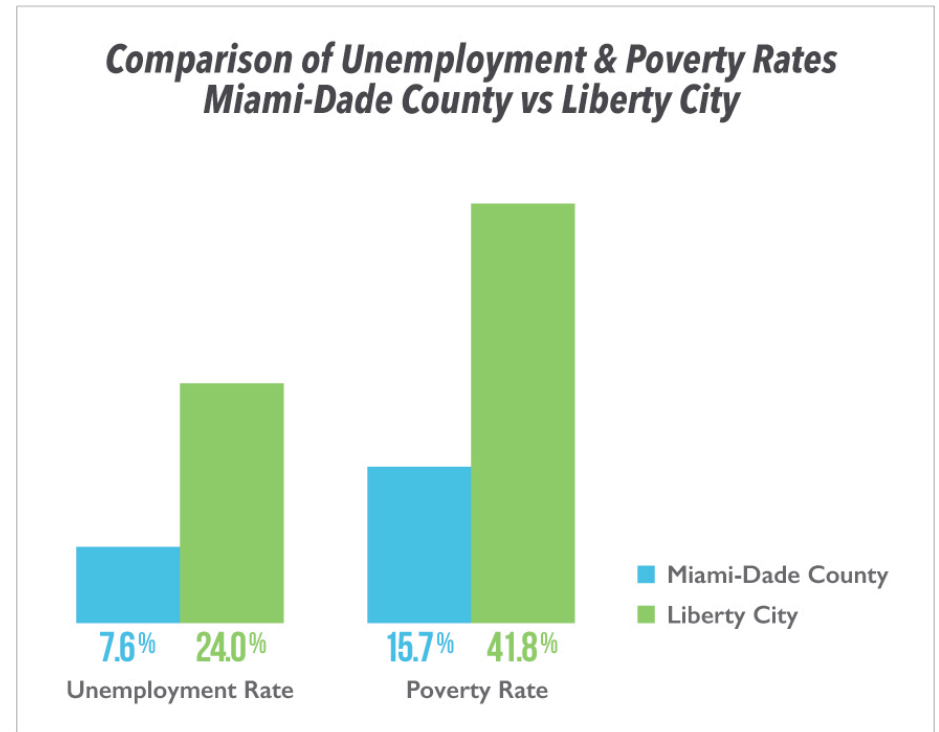
individuals gradually fled to suburban areas. The effects of this concentration of poverty are still very evident today.

More than 50 years later, Liberty City remains predominately Black (over 90 percent of residents), with poverty and crime rates well above Miami-Dade County averages. Liberty City's unemployment rate is 24 percent, as compared to 7.6 percent countywide. Likewise, the poverty rate in Liberty City is significantly higher than Miami-Dade as a whole: 41.8 percent of Liberty City residents fall below the poverty line, compared to an average of 15.7 percent in Miami-Dade.<sup>1</sup>

Quality educational options for residents of Liberty City are also limited. A 2014 report by the National Council for Teacher Quality found that 70 percent of the 60 Miami-Dade public schools that received a D or F from Florida's public school grading system were located in Liberty City's school district. The same report found that this group of schools is more likely to have teachers who are new to the profession, who miss more school time, and who receive lower evaluation scores.<sup>2</sup> Only 40 percent of Liberty City residents hold a high school diploma and just eight percent have a bachelor's degree.

Liberty City is a dangerous place to live and work as an adult, and to learn and play as a child. Violent crime rates are far higher in Liberty City than in Miami-Dade County as a whole – 19.93 per 1,000 residents for Liberty City, as compared to just 6.83 countywide.<sup>3</sup> This trend is mirrored by juvenile crime rates. In Miami-Dade County, juvenile arrests for violent crimes steadily declined between 2003 – 2013, dropping from 4,218 to 1,952. In contrast, the number of juveniles arrested for violent crimes increased in Liberty City over the same time period, hitting a high of 700 arrests in 2009.<sup>4</sup> In just the first seven months of 2014, forty-three individuals, ranging in age from 10 to 67, were shot

within a 13-block radius around the public housing development of Liberty City.<sup>5</sup>



Given its troubled history and continued state of disarray, funders and investors are usually disinterested in working with Liberty City, citing that sustainable improvement is unlikely. Instead, the majority of funding goes towards communities perceived to be more easily served, often following trends in real estate development. This has left the current residents of Liberty City facing the same struggles as those living there nearly 60 years ago – isolated from the rest of the city of Miami, struggling with poverty and crime with few avenues of opportunity.

# Evolution Of The Partnership In Place Based Giving

Key Biscayne Community Foundation & Himan Brown Charitable Trust

2010

KBCF redefines its mission and vision, focuses outward to Miami communities in need.

2011

KBCF meets with HBCT to discuss grant making strategy.

2012

KBCF and Village of Key Biscayne Police Chief coordinate holiday relief (toys & turkeys) for the children and seniors of Liberty City through MCI.

KBCF and Village of Key Biscayne formalize support of charitable efforts to Liberty City through MCI.

HBCT approaches KBCF about creating a matching program for KB residents to pre-qualified nonprofit organizations.

KBCF establishes Key to Giving Program raising \$50,000 including matching Funds from HBCT.

KB residents develop a connection to nonprofits through site visit and staff meetings.

KBCF, HBCT, & MCI attend Practitioners Institute in Harlem to increase understanding of the HCZ/Cradle to Career model.

KBCF, KB Police Chief, & KB residents host back to school event Christmas In July for Liberty City children.

200 Children are given uniforms and school supplies.

2014

KBCF establishes Village of Empathy: Time, Talent, Treasure as a way for residents to “plug-in” with pre-qualified nonprofits.

KBCF formalizes sister city program with Liberty City to foster the growing connection between the two communities.

KB residents & MCI partner to bring healthy eating to Liberty City through a monthly food co-op.

Volunteers come together to bring fresh food to the 40-50 neighborhood families: Families pay \$2 to receive \$40 worth of fresh produce twice per month.

KB residents continue to partner with MCI and LC residents to create and run programming including: computer training, culinary courses, job placement, and a safe neighborhood initiative.

Second round of Key to Giving is initiated with an increase in matching from HBCT.

100K milestone is reached with matching from KBCF/ HBCT to local nonprofits.

KBCF reaches milestone of over \$100,000 provided in In-Kind services.

## PHILANTHROPIC ENGAGEMENT WITH LIBERTY CITY: PARTNERSHIP FOR CHANGE

Himan Brown Charitable Trust and Key Biscayne Community Foundation saw in Liberty City an opportunity to positively influence some of the most at-risk young people in the City of Miami and to break the cycle of entrenched poverty and crime that prevented the community from improving. If Liberty City was to improve, multiple roadblocks facing its most vulnerable residents had to be addressed.

In order to tackle the many challenges facing Liberty City, these two place-based funders are leveraging their resources to support a collective impact strategy, building a pipeline of support and care around families and children in Liberty City from cradle to career. The partnership between these two Miami philanthropic leaders draws on their complementary skills and resources, and is made possible by a common goal of long-term commitment and investment in Liberty City.

Himan Brown Charitable Trust (HBCT) is a private trust supporting education-focused projects in New York City,

Washington, D.C., and Miami. HBCT first began work in Liberty City when it saw an opportunity to become a part of a collaborative effort between nonprofits and school administration to boost graduation rates at Liberty City's high school. JP Morgan's seminal "Education Effect," coordinated this effort, and it's initial investment in Miami Northwestern HS, along with major support from nonprofits like City Year and Teach for America, created a momentum that paved the way for other philanthropic organizations to make key investments to dramatically improve the school. With these new supports, Miami Northwestern moved from a failing school on the brink of closure to a school with an 80 percent graduation rate and an A ranking from the Florida State Department of Education. (More information on the Education Effect can be found on page 3). HBCT's initial support of the ongoing efforts at Miami Northwestern evolved quickly into an intensive and long term engagement with Liberty City's public schools and served as HBCT's entry point to the broader community.

The Key Biscayne Community Foundation (KBCF) serves the community of Key Biscayne, a barrier island off the coast of Miami that attracts some of the top wealth and talent from the

### ***The Education Effect***

*In September 2011, JP Morgan Chase provided the Miami-Dade County School district a three-year, \$1 million seed grant to help establish "The Education Effect," a university supported community partnership between Florida International University (FIU) and Miami Northwestern Senior High School, located in Liberty City. This seed grant supported many school improvements, catalyzed a wave of investment on the part of other local funders, and attracted many new nonprofit partners to the school.*

*The grant supported a full time director from the FIU College of Education and several school improvement initiatives including: the construction of an aquaponics laboratory, increasing dual enrollment which allows Northwestern Senior High School students the opportunity to take courses for college credit, financial literacy and investment workshops with the FIU College of Business and an exposure program that brings Northwestern students to FIU campus for academic enrichment.*

*From 2000-2010, Miami Northwestern Senior High School had received grades of only "D" or "F" through the Miami-Dade County School Grading System. By 2012-2013, Miami Northwestern had transformed into an "A" school.*

United States and abroad. In previous years, the foundation focused primarily on programs and projects that benefitted the residents and community of Key Biscayne. However in 2010, KBCF overhauled its mission and vision to redirect the resources and talent of residents outward to struggling communities in the city of Miami. The Foundation began several ambitious initiatives to enable residents to give of their time, talent, and treasure to those most in need.

The first piece of collaborative work began with KBCF's *Key to Giving* Initiative, which encourages individual Key Biscayne donors to give to vetted, high-quality local nonprofit organizations, rather than directing funds further afield. HBCT was already funding multiple nonprofits in Liberty City and was searching for ways to attract additional attention and resources toward philanthropically underserved areas of Miami. Seeing a natural ally in KBCF, HBCT launched a program that matched, dollar-for-dollar, contributions from Key Biscayne residents to pre-selected nonprofits (see sidebar on the *Key to Giving* initiative).

Through a careful selection process, KBCF chose twelve organizations working in three underserved areas of Miami-Dade County, and presented the Key Biscayne community members with the opportunity to financially support those organizations with matched contributions. The match program raised \$50,000 for these nonprofits in its first year, with HBCT's match maxing out within the first 10 weeks. This year, the program will raise \$100,000, with plans to continue growing in the years to come.

### **Key Biscayne Community Foundation Initiatives**

*Key to Giving: created in 2013, Key to Giving allows Key Biscayne residents to donate to 12 pre-selected nonprofits making a positive impact throughout greater Miami.*

*All selected nonprofits go through a rigorous vetting process to ensure that their mission and vision aligns with KBCF's grantmaking strategy; program inputs, activities, and outcomes demonstrate measurable progress towards target goals; and there is a culture of learning where the nonprofit tests its assumptions on what activities and inputs create the best outcomes for children. In this way, the organization seeks to understand not just what works, but why and how the interventions were successful.*

*The long-term goal of Key to Giving is not only to positively influence underserved Miami-Dade communities by building sustainable funding sources for strong community nonprofits, but also to positively impact the population of Key Biscayne by building strong connections between their community and less fortunate neighborhoods in Miami.*

*Under this strategy, called the Village of Empathy, Key Biscayne residents are encouraged to give through three different initiatives: time, talent, and treasure.*

During this initial engagement, both organizations discovered their common interest in directing long-term support to the communities most in need in Miami. They also noted that they possessed complementary strengths. Through its involvement with Miami Northwestern High School, Himan Brown had begun to build strong relationships with community leaders, and an understanding of the key stakeholder organizations within Liberty City. Key Biscayne Community Foundation on the other hand brought both human capital and financial resources, and the ability to direct the energy and enthusiasm of Key Biscayne residents towards the neighboring community of Liberty City.

Through this combination of unique skills and resources, as well as the long-term investment of time and dollars, the foundation partners are building a diverse coalition of community

stakeholders, united around a common goal to create a positive future for Liberty City and its young people.

## **BUILDING A PLATFORM FOR COLLECTIVE IMPACT IN LIBERTY CITY**

In order to leverage their resources for maximum impact, HBCT and KBCF strategically invested in key nonprofits and schools within Liberty City. These organizations and their partners were chosen for their evidence-based programming, deep roots within the community, and their potential to grow and scale their impact.

HBCT and KBCF jointly support these linchpin organizations by investing in their capacity, programs, and leadership, as well as leveraging the volunteer efforts and financial support from Key Biscayne residents. This investment has also enabled the supported organizations to develop new ways to coordinate their services, form partnerships, and share resources to advance their common goals.

## **MCI: BLOCK-BY-BLOCK COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

A linchpin organization in this strategy is the Miami Children's Initiative (MCI), a nonprofit implementing a block-by-block community development plan inspired by the successful Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ) in New York City. MCI has designated 29 blocks of Liberty City as the initial "Impact Zone" for its work. Through its block-by-block strategy, MCI provides some 200 children and families with the intensive supports and resources they need to break the cycle of poverty. MCI will continue to sustainably scale up to serve even more community members in this way in the coming years.

Growing up in poverty has severe impacts on a child's ability to learn, their physical and mental health, and their future earnings

and engagement with society. Multiple studies have shown strong correlations between early childhood poverty and academic outcomes, as well as increased risk of dropping out of high school.<sup>6</sup> Family poverty is also associated with higher risk for behavior and emotional problems, teen pregnancy, and low self-esteem. Children who grow up in poverty are more likely to earn lower wages and have lower levels of productivity than their peers who did not grow up in poverty, and are more likely to fall below the poverty line at least once later in life.<sup>7</sup>

### **Harlem Children's Zone**

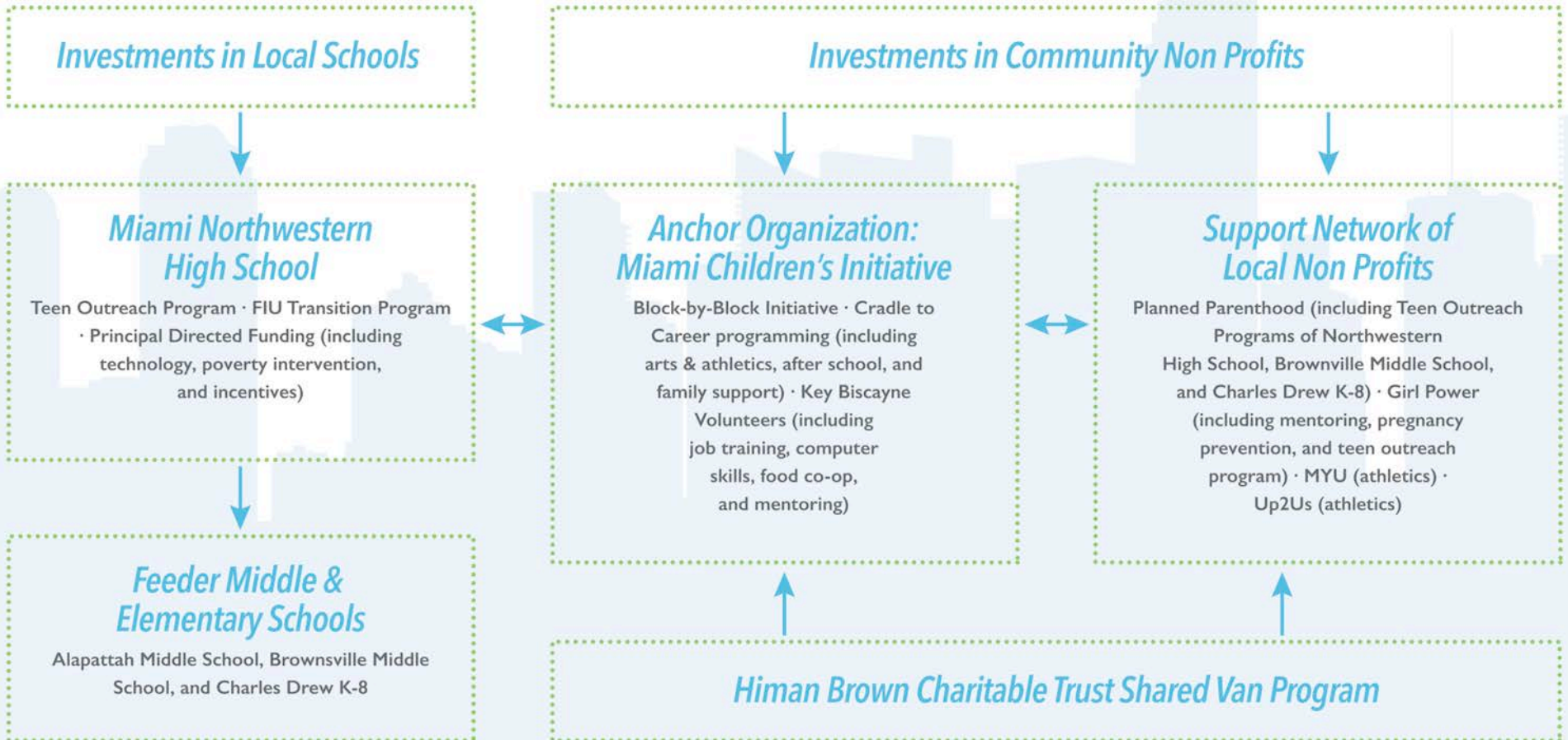
*Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ) goal is to give kids the individualized support they need to get to and through college and become productive, self-sustaining adults. What began as a one-block pilot in the 1990s, "The Zone" now encapsulates 97 blocks in central Harlem. HCZ programs begin at birth and help kids every step of the way until college graduation through education, social services, family support, health, and community-building programs.*

*HCZ has opened a full-day pre-K program that works with 240 children, connects with students in 7 traditional public elementary schools across the Zone and has opened three K-12 Charter Schools that work with over 1,000 middle-school students and 1,000 high school students.*

*HCZ tracks 600 goals each year and constantly reviews data to ensure kids are staying on track to graduate college. In 2014, HCZ served 13,284 adults over the age of 23 and 13,705 youth ages 0-23 for a total of 26,989 people served. All pre-k students in HCZ programming tested as "school-ready" in 2013 and 92% of HCZ high school seniors were accepted into college this past year.*

# KBCF & HBCT: Investments in Liberty City

Key Biscayne Community Foundation & Himan Brown Charitable Trust





## MCI AND CRADLE TO CAREER PROGRAMMING

MCI's "Cradle to Career" approach seeks to interrupt the cycle of structural poverty by engaging children as early in life as possible, and staying with them as they grow. With this consistent level of support, the young people served will develop into thriving adults who will in turn positively influence their community.

MCI holds to a "whatever it takes" mentality to help young people achieve their dreams, and to that end provides intensive support to families through its staff members, academic and after-school programming for students, and a plethora of resident-driven community improvement initiatives.

**Staff support for families:** Each family in the Impact Zone works closely with a Student Advocate – an MCI employee who is available to help the family with everything from finding the right after-school program for their child to budgeting and saving for their child's future. Most importantly, the Student Advocate becomes a trusted partner who can help the family identify potential roadblocks and develop response strategies. Many Student Advocates are residents of Liberty City themselves, which makes them more able to understand and anticipate the difficulties that a family may face and help them navigate around those challenges.

**Community engagement and development:** MCI's block-by-block strategy recognizes that the social climate of a community has a significant impact on a child's mental health and physical well-being. Improving this aspect of life in Liberty City is therefore a critical component of MCI's work. Just a few of the efforts directed towards that goal include community gardens that provide residents with fresh and healthy food, a partnership with kaBOOM! to build a playground near the local school, a resident-created and maintained outdoor gym, and a Collaborative Table

process that facilitates input and guidance from the residents as changes are being made in the community.

KBCF is investing significantly in MCI's community development work through the time, talent and treasure of Key Biscayne residents. Liberty City residents frequently approach MCI with ideas for community improvement, and MCI in turn collaborates with KBCF to connect Liberty City residents with Key Biscayne residents who have the skills and resources to help craft a solution. For example, MCI and Liberty City residents identified the lack of access to healthy foods and nutritional information in the Impact Zone as a major problem for health and wellness. In response, Key Biscayne residents with backgrounds in nutrition created a food co-op, purchasing and transporting wholesale fresh fruits and vegetables to Liberty City each month. The produce is made available to families living in the MCI Impact Zone at a nominal price (usually \$2). Liberty City residents are active participants in identifying what should be purchased each month, and in managing the operations of the food co-op.

**Academic, after-school, and extra-curricular programming:** MCI staff members are available six days per week to residents of Liberty City at their community space near Charles Drew, the community K-8 school. Here, MCI offers tutoring for students, and runs a computer lab where youth and adults can learn computer skills, search for jobs, and build resumes. The center offers young people a safe place where caring adults serve as mentors and role models. MCI works closely with Charles Drew running many homework help and after-school programs at the school facilities. MCI partners with other nonprofits that have specific areas of expertise to bring a wide range of extracurricular offerings to Liberty City students. This includes a partnership with the Miami Music Project providing students in Liberty City with music lessons using a wide range of instruments, and a variety of ensembles. Access to sports is provided through partnerships

with community nonprofits such as Up2Us and The Miami Youth Hurricanes (MYU), offering Liberty City youth opportunities to participate in football, cheerleading, and track programs.

Unemployment is a major challenge for Liberty City, and Key Biscayne residents have donated time to help residents gain valuable work force skills. One Key Biscayne resident created and runs a culinary skills certification course to certify participants to work in food service jobs. To give Liberty City residents access to computers, a Key Biscayne resident donated computers that are now housed in MCI's community space and offers computer classes to residents free of charge. Another resident works closely with Liberty City residents to craft resumes, look for job fairs, and provide transportation to interviews.

MCI leadership has invested significant time in building trust and buy-in among residents for their vision and mission, and now plays a central role as a community advocate and convener. HBCT and KBCF saw an opportunity to amplify the reach of an organization that was already acknowledged as a leader and force for positive change within the community, and have made MCI a key piece of their strategy in Liberty City. Funder investments in MCI include internal capacity building, as well as funding for a rigorous third party evaluation program, and the data collection and tracking system to make evaluations possible. Working with Barry University, MCI will track 200 students over the next five years, measuring their progress against MCI's four key impact areas.

HBCT and KBCF have worked closely with MCI to prepare for the evaluation. KBCF provided funding for a program officer to work with MCI to set up and manage the data tracking system, and to support MCI's Student Advocates as they manage and input student data. HBCT has also worked closely with MCI to jointly set progress points and goals to prepare for the start of the

evaluation, and to ensure that data is accurately collected and placed into the system.

The evaluation will be used as a learning tool for MCI to better understand where they are succeeding, and where they need to make adjustments. But beyond internal learning, MCI intends to use the quantitative data around their outcomes to strengthen their message and advocate for increased investment in Liberty City on the part of corporations, local government, and private donors.

Currently, the Miami Children's initiative is working most comprehensively on 8 blocks in its Impact Zone. In less than two years, MCI has had a transformative impact on access to programming for children in this area. For example, the number of children attending early childhood education and participating in summer camps has moved from 20% before MCI's involvement, to over 85% respectively. Through joint funding and significant volunteer contributions, HBCT and KBCF are supporting MCI to scale its operations, repair the social fabric of its community, and serve many more families within Liberty City.

## **COMMUNITY SCHOOLS: CRITICAL TO COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT**

Local schools play a pivotal role in the life of a young person. They serve as the foundation for academic and social development during highly formative years. HBCT and KBCF are therefore investing in Miami Northwestern High School, and its feeder elementary and middle schools in Liberty City through programming during and after school, and capacity building efforts to improve school resources and climate.

Through intensive philanthropic investment, coupled with the strong vision and leadership of Principal Wallace Aristide, Miami Northwestern has seen dramatic improvements in recent years. It

has moved from an A to an F school, and boasts an 80 percent graduation rate.

***Investing in social, emotional, and academic success:***

Building on the momentum created by JP Morgan’s initiative and other philanthropic investments, HBCT, determined to make improvements in areas that continued to derail students from achieving academic and life success, directed efforts to mitigate the rising rates of teen pregnancy within the school population.

***Miami Northwestern Senior High School***

*The total enrollment of Miami Northwestern Senior High School was 1,619 in school year 2013-2014. The racial diversity of the school is comprised of 91% Black, 7% Hispanic, and 2% White. The school reported that during the 2011-2012 school year, 82% of students were economically disadvantaged in some way.*

*A study by John Hopkins University labeled the school as a “dropout factory” after finding that only 41% of freshmen entering Miami Northwestern Senior High School in 2004, 2005, and 2006 went on to graduate. The school has seen a sharp increase in graduation rate, reaching 80.7 in 2013-2014. Additionally, after receiving scores of “D” or “F” for 12 consecutive years from 1998-2010, the school has achieved either a “B” or “A” in the past 4 years.*

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, thirty percent of all teenage girls who drop out of high school cite teen pregnancy and parenthood as key reasons. These rates are even higher among Hispanic (36 percent) and African American (38 percent) girls. Less than 40 percent of teen mothers will graduate from high school, and of those who do, fewer than two percent will go on to finish college.<sup>8</sup>

In concert with MNWHS leadership, HBCT looked for ways to address this major factor in the school’s high school completion rate. After an intensive search for evidence-based teen pregnancy prevention programs, HBCT chose to fund Planned Parenthood to implement the Teen Outreach Program (TOP), an evidence-based program designed to reduce the risk of teen

pregnancy, and promote positive choices and healthy behaviors. TOP engages students both during the school day, and through service learning projects that students design and run in their own communities. TOP has been shown at the national level to reduce the risk of teen pregnancy by 53 percent. After the first year of TOP programming at MNWHS, third party evaluator Philiber Research Associates evaluated the program outcomes and found statistically significant improvements among the treatment group. This included a 25 percent reduction in course failure, a 43

percent reduction in suspension, and 44 percent reduction in cut-classes. Given this strong start, MNWHS anticipates meeting and surpassing TOP’s national pregnancy reduction levels within the next three years.

Apart from reduction in pregnancies, Principal Wallace Aristide affirms that the program has begun to improve the attitudes of his students towards each other, as well as school staff and leadership. TOP implementers become mentors to the students, able to engage honestly on topics

that might be difficult for students to discuss with a parent or teacher, acting as positive role models within the school community. TOP continues to integrate more substantially into the fabric of MNWHS each school year, and HBCT plans to begin evaluating its long-term effects on a full cohort of students as they move from freshmen year to graduation.

**BUILDING STRONG PATHWAYS TO HIGH SCHOOL**

In order to excel in high school, students must arrive on track and ready to take on high school level academics. Middle school is a critical time during which students are either prepared to succeed or begin to fall behind their peers, increasing their likelihood of dropping out. A 2009 report from Johns Hopkins University looked

### **Teen Outreach Program (TOP)**

*The Teen Outreach Program (TOP®) began in 1976 and has approximately 1500 programs located across the United States. TOP® is an evidence-based program specifically designed for teens in 6<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade. TOP® reduces the risk of problem behavior while promoting healthy choices and empowering teens to lead successful lives and build strong communities through an engaging and relevant nine-month curriculum.*

*Specifically, in Miami-Dade County, Planned Parenthood of South Florida and the Treasure Coast uses TOP® to reduce the risk of unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections. TOP® is offered to 500 teens within the Miami-Dade School District, including nearly the entire freshmen class at Miami Northwestern Senior High School.*

*TOP® has reached an estimated 30,000 youth in the United States. A national study conducted in 2001 found that students participating in TOP® are at 52% lower risk of suspension, 60% lower risk of course failure, 53% lower risk of pregnancy, and 60% lower risk of school dropout.*

at the performance of middle school students in high-poverty environments across three key indicators – Attendance, Behavior, and Course Performance. Of the sixth graders who got off track in just one of these indicator areas, less than 1 in 4 would graduate from high school, even when given an extra year to complete the requirements. Sixth graders who failed Math or English, who attended school less than 80 percent of the time, or who received an unsatisfactory behavior grade in a core course had only a 10 to 20 percent chance of graduating on time.<sup>9</sup>

To help Liberty City students arrive in high school ready to learn, HBCT and KBCF began targeting the feeder middles schools of Brownsville, Alapattah, and Charles Drew. HBCT has implemented the TOP program at all three schools, preparing students for the social and emotional challenges of high school. MCI also collaborates with the schools to house many of its after school and tutoring programs to keep students on pace academically. By knitting supportive programs and funding into the fabric of these community schools, HBCT and KBCF are

building a strong network of supports for students at a critical time in their academic and social development, setting them up for future success in high school and beyond.

### **Providing wrap-around supports:**

Other essential partners in HBCT and KBCF's community strategy are high performing, locally based nonprofit organizations. In communities like Liberty City, there is a scarcity of safe spaces for young people to socialize, study, and engage with positive adult role models outside of school. These nonprofits collaborate with MCI and the local schools to fill that gap and

provide students with high quality programming and greater exposure to caring adult role models. Supported nonprofits include: Girl Power, offering TOP programming, mentoring, after-school, and arts courses to over 150 students; UP2US, providing sports-based youth development programming; and MYU, providing Liberty City youth with football, cheerleading, and track programs. Together, these nonprofits provide students with exposure to a wide range of arts and athletics programs, and intensive academic supports to keep them engaged and on track with their studies.

## **STRENGTHS OF A COLLECTIVE IMPACT APPROACH**

The organizations receiving support from KBCF and HBCT represent a cross-section of community institutions – public schools, arts and athletics programs, and academic, social and emotional development programs. Consistent support from local funders with deep knowledge of the community allows these

organizations to build their capacity, increase their impact, and plan for the long-term. It also means that these organizations can operate as part of a bigger vision for change, rather than in a vacuum, opening the door for increased collaboration and resource sharing.

For example, Girl Power, MCI, and MYU each have programs that require student transportation to activities outside of the neighborhood. However, owning and maintaining vans to transport students can be prohibitively expensive for a nonprofit. HBCT purchased four vans for this purpose, now shared among the three organizations, making it possible for more students to attend their programs at an affordable cost to the organizations. Another case is MCI's partnership with the local schools. Charles Drew allows MCI to run its tutoring and after school programs on school property, bringing positive programming to the school, and giving MCI access to physical space it could otherwise not afford. This initial partnership and trust building is especially critical now that MCI is beginning a rigorous evaluation of its work. Almost all of the students that MCI will be tracking for its evaluation attend Charles Drew, and the school has agreed to share academic data for those students with MCI so the evaluation can contain a full picture of the gains being made.

Each of these organizations is working to support young people in Liberty City to achieve their full potential. This common goal allows the group to move outside of their silos, share resources, and form deep partnerships. Because the funders have not forced collaboration, but rather helped to organically build relationships that make sense within the community architecture, there is great potential for long-term partnerships that will last beyond the grant dollars.

## REPLICATING SUCCESS IN HOMESTEAD

Given the success of this model in Liberty City, HBCT and KBCF are now replicating many of those same components in Homestead, an exurb located just south of Miami.

Homestead is a rapidly growing community – according to the 2013 census the population has more than doubled from 31,000 in 2000 to 64,000 in 2013.<sup>10</sup> The residents are diverse, with a large population of African Americans as well as representative populations from Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, and many Caribbean Island nations. This diversity lends itself to language barriers that hinder residents from obtaining employment, or succeeding in school. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 31 percent of the population was living below the poverty line in 2012, and 43 percent of households earned less than \$25,000 annually. Similar to Liberty City, many students struggle academically, with some 37 percent referred to a dropout prevention program by the time they reach high school. Compounding this problem are language barriers. Sixty-two percent of Homestead is Hispanic, and of those households 59 percent cannot communicate in a language other than Spanish.

***Investment in key community organizations:*** In line with their strategy in Liberty City, HBCT and KBCF are working with the community schools within Homestead, as well as with key local nonprofit organizations with deep roots in the community. A central organization to this strategy is EnFamilia, a nonprofit currently serving some 700 children and 1,500 adults each year. EnFamilia collaborates with multiple nonprofits in Homestead, coordinating a wide variety of positive programming for residents. This includes after school programs, adult education and parenting classes, counseling for families and couples, financial literacy workshops, and arts and athletics offerings. Much like its work with MCI, HBCT's investments in EnFamilia are geared towards helping them grow their capacity so that they can serve

as a community hub even more effectively, and begin to track and measure their impact.

HBCT and KBCF are also investing in the local schools Laura C. Saunders Elementary and Campbell Drive K-8. A large part of this work is the funding of full-year after school programs that engage some 400 children between the two schools. HBCT also provided a matching grant that will support Branches Florida City to serve an additional 200 students through their after school programming, as well as expanding financial literacy offerings for parents. With backing from HBCT, Branches has begun to implement TOP in its middle school programs, in line with the implementation underway in Liberty City. Both funders are working to build strong relationships and mutual trust with the school leadership in Homestead, as was done in Liberty City. By partnering with the local schools in this way, the funders hope to support student success in school from kindergarten to the day of high school graduation.

***Replicate what works:*** EnFamilia is using many of the tactics and strategies that have been successful in Liberty City to create positive outcomes in Homestead. EnFamilia works closely with MCI to learn best practices and strengthen their programs. Staff from MCI and EnFamilia recently traveled together to Orlando to meet the team at Parramore Kids Zone Cradle to Career Program, a national leader in school-based Cradle to Career work. Staff from both organizations took away best practices, built their professional networks, and learned from their counterparts at Parramore.

With the support of HBCT, EnFamilia has begun to pilot a “cradle to career” model with a segment of their families. They use the same data tracking system as MCI to monitor progress, and are using the Student Advocate model to keep youth engaged with school and on track for success. HBCT will fund an evaluation of

this work similar to the evaluation being conducted for MCI. The evaluation plans to track approximately 150 families over the course of five years, and monitor their progress across EnFamilia’s program components, including parent engagement, academic assistance, and mentoring.

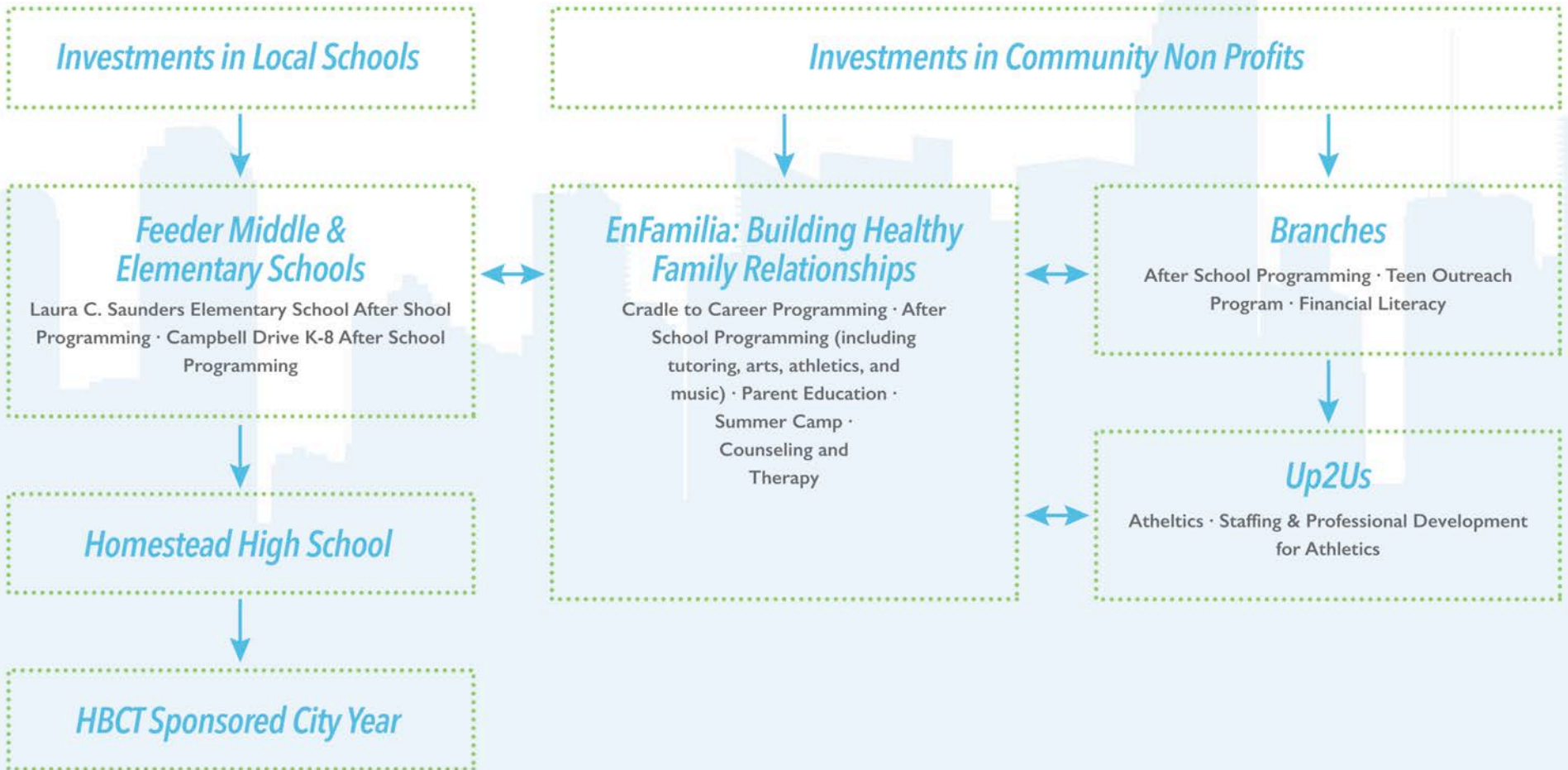
As in Liberty City, KBCF has brought in additional funding for EnFamilia through its Key to Giving program. KBCF has also provided funding for a program officer position at EnFamilia to increase its internal capacity and support the evaluation process. KBCF matched a Key Biscayne resident, an art therapist, with EnFamilia, who now volunteers her time to support EnFamilia’s programming.

***Invest in staff capacity and knowledge:*** HBCT is working closely with MCI and EnFamilia around their Cradle to Career models, and continues to invest in professional development and technical skills to help both organizations improve their programming implementation. HBCT made it possible for staff from MCI, The Miami Children’s Trust, and KBCF to attend a comprehensive workshop run by the Harlem Children’s Zone. This investment allowed staff from all organizations to learn from their counterparts at HCZ, a national leader in block-by-block community development. In addition, EnFamilia staff conducted site visits to MCI’s community center in Liberty City to learn from their early successes and challenges.

Through this broad range of supports, both funders hope to see EnFamilia continue to succeed in its central role within Homestead as an organizer and community advocate for positive change.

# KBCF & HBCT: Investments in Homestead

Key Biscayne Community Foundation & Himan Brown Charitable Trust



## LESSONS LEARNED: WORDS OF WISDOM FOR FUNDERS

Early successes in Liberty City and Homestead indicate that this model is replicable in other communities with similar qualities, and sustainable for long-term growth. While much has been accomplished through these early efforts, there is still much work to be done, and long-term success will require the support of a broad range of stakeholders, including private philanthropy, community members, and local government. It is the hope of KBCF and HBCT that as both sites continue to track their progress and demonstrate strong evidence of success, many of these stakeholders will join in the collective effort to make these communities a better place to live, work, and learn. With that goal in mind, HBCT and KBCF reflected on their lessons learned from the first phase of their work in Liberty City and Homestead.

***Listen and learn from the community first.*** For KBCF and HBCT this meant taking care to include and engage key community organizations and leaders from the start to get their buy-in and support. This allowed the funders to understand the true needs of the community, locate the organizations already working to address those needs, and identify any gaps. This deep engagement with local leaders and organizations ensures that funded programs have support from the community, and gives local organizations a stake in making those programs successful. It also prevents duplication of efforts, and allows funders to build on existing momentum.

***Nurture organic partnerships rather than force collaboration.*** Through engaging with community leaders and stakeholders about their needs, KBCF and HBCT were able to serve as conveners, bringing together diverse groups, and providing a platform for collective work that might otherwise not have existed. However, this did not mean making collaboration a prerequisite to receive funding. Instead, it meant looking for opportunities to

connect individuals and organizations, and nurturing and supporting the partnerships that formed organically from common interests and goals. Because these relationships were formed without funder pressure, they have great potential to continue to grow and strengthen beyond the grant dollars.

***Measure and adjust when needed.*** This is essential when working in communities that face entrenched poverty and crime, where large-scale positive change is unlikely to happen quickly or easily. For HBCT and KBCF, this has meant building a philanthropic practice that offers flexibility to thoughtfully change direction when necessary. It has also meant learning alongside their grantees, and planning the future course of action together. This form of philanthropy embodies the qualities of catalytic philanthropy – maintaining close relationships, shifting course together in order to respond to what has been learned, and investment that goes far beyond the grant dollars and treats the nonprofit as a true partner and peer in the process.

***Commit to long-term engagements.*** Being present for the long-term means funding sustainable solutions that may not be realized within the first year of a grant, or the second or third. For example, MCI's block-by-block initiative is strategically working to transform Liberty City – but success will not happen overnight. A long-term commitment from funders allows a program, which is scaling at a sustainable pace, to count on support well into the future, and therefore allows the program to make decisions that will ensure it will be a community asset for years to come.

## CONCLUSION

The challenges facing communities like Liberty City and Homestead are immense – entrenched poverty, crime, limited educational options, and language barriers, just to name a few. But positive change is possible when diverse partners join together and tackle these issues from all sides, sharing resources



and information, learning from each other, and ensuring the success of their partners as well as themselves. This collective impact approach is helping communities that struggle against immense odds to overcome the barriers put in their way. This ambition cannot be accomplished by any one organization – be it a foundation, school, or nonprofit – alone. It requires the commitment of a variety of partners to a common goal.

HBCT and KBCF’s innovative approach has allowed them to leverage cross-sector resources, build trust among community players, and create pathways for long-term partnerships that will positively influence these neighborhoods for years to come. By learning from the successes and challenges faced by HBCT and KBCF during this collaborative work, other funders and community organizations can find ways to engage with their own communities, and leverage their strengths to make long-term positive change a reality.

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