

A family of four is walking along a paved path in a park-like setting. The father, wearing a green hoodie and a blue baseball cap, is on the left. The mother, wearing a brown leather jacket and a brown beanie, is in the center. The son, wearing a black jacket and a pink beanie, is on the right. A young girl, wearing a black jacket and a pink beanie, is walking in front of them. The path is surrounded by trees and grass, and a parking lot is visible in the background.

CREATING

life-changing

pathways for families

ATLANTA CIVIC SITE

The Annie E. Casey Foundation

Atlanta is one of two cities designated by the Annie E. Casey Foundation as a “civic site”—a place where the Foundation has a long-term commitment to improving the futures of at-risk children. For more than 60 years, the Casey Foundation has worked to help vulnerable children and families throughout America, but we have a special connection with Atlanta, which became the UPS headquarters in 1993. UPS grew out of a small messenger service started in 1907 by a teenager named Jim Casey in order to help his widowed mother support him and his three younger siblings. The company’s later success allowed Jim Casey and his siblings to launch a charitable foundation in 1948 named for their mother, Annie E. Casey.

“What is needed is a renewed determination to think creatively, to learn from what has succeeded and what has failed, and, perhaps most important, to foster a sense of common commitment among all those concerned with the welfare of children.”

—Jim Casey

About the Atlanta Civic Site

The Annie E. Casey Foundation's long-term commitment to Atlanta has been guided since 2001 by proven practices, strong partnerships, and sound investments that help build successful futures for children and families. In Atlanta and across the country, we are supporting efforts to increase opportunities for children and strengthen families through evidence-based strategies that can be replicated and expanded to scale.

The Casey Foundation's efforts have been focused on a set of neighborhoods located just south of downtown Atlanta, called Neighborhood Planning Unit V (NPU-V). In these neighborhoods, we are working with young children and their parents to ensure

that children *learn to read* by third grade so that they can *read to learn* in later grades and go on to succeed in school and careers.

We are working with parents and other adults to ensure that they have access to employment, work supports, and asset-building opportunities that can provide their families with financial security and stability. And, we are working with residents, community organizations, and public agencies to ensure that these neighborhoods become places where children and their families can be safe and successful.

Each of these three efforts has benefits of its own, but Casey believes that by bundling services to address the needs

of two generations simultaneously—along with the needs of the communities in which they live—those benefits are profoundly increased.

These ambitious goals require deep collaboration and partnership. The Casey Foundation Atlanta Civic Site invites you to join with us to build better futures for the children and families in NPU-V and across Atlanta. For more information, visit www.aecf.org/atlanta.

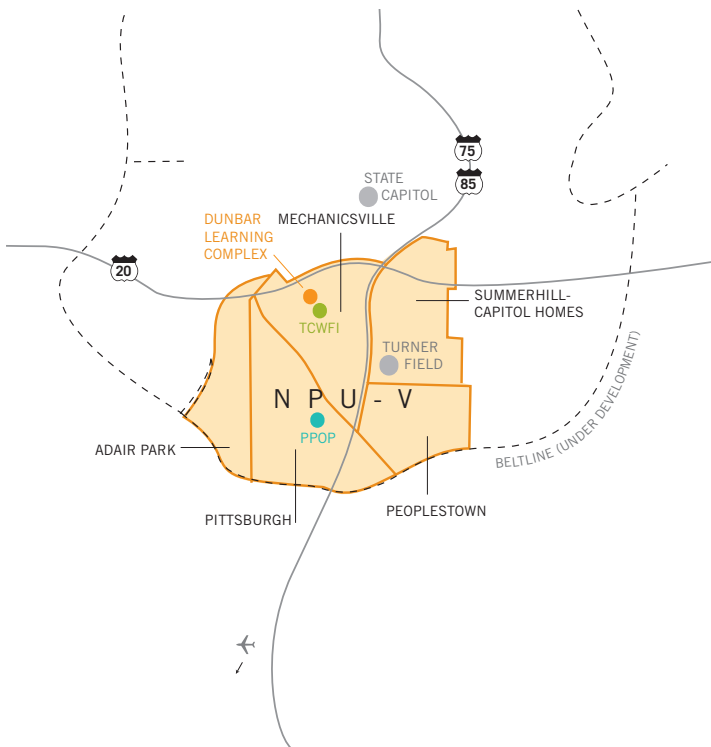
Digital Connectors students at The Center for Working Families, Inc. (from left to right) Nicholas Palmore, Stanley Collins, Charles Leach, Andre Heath, Seqonya Sinclair, and DeAndre Thomas collaborate on a joint project.



A Neighborhood Focus

When the Casey Foundation launched its work in Atlanta in 2001, we analyzed data on Atlanta neighborhoods. That research revealed that many of Atlanta's most vulnerable children and families live in five historic neighborhoods located just south of downtown. These neighborhoods include Adair Park, Mechanicsville, Peoplestown, Pittsburgh, and Summerhill/Capitol Homes and comprise Neighborhood Planning Unit V (NPU-V).

This once thriving and diverse community has experienced a great deal of property disinvestment, population decrease, and general economic decline over the past 40 years. But the area also has many important assets, including trusted institutions and dedicated, active residents. The Foundation has made a commitment to support strategic, evidence-based programs that benefit families in these neighborhoods, while also actively seeking opportunities and partnerships to support the replication and expansion of the work in NPU-V to other struggling communities throughout metro Atlanta and Georgia.



Three mission-critical entities support the Civic Site in its efforts to support families:

- **The Center for Working Families, Inc. (TCWFI):** a private, nonprofit agency providing residents with a combination of workforce development, work supports, and asset-building programs.
- **The Dunbar Learning Complex:** Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School and the Early Learning and Literacy Resource Center (ELLRC), two educational institutions located under one roof that are working together to ensure that NPU-V children are reading on grade level by third grade.
- **The Partnership for the Preservation of Pittsburgh (PPOP):** a collaboration between Sustainable Neighborhood Development Strategies, Inc., the independent nonprofit entity formed by the Civic Site to coordinate development in NPU-V, and the Pittsburgh Community Improvement Association, the Pittsburgh neighborhood's community development corporation.

It Takes All Three: Bundling Services to Benefit Children and Families

The Casey Foundation Atlanta Civic Site is working in partnership with a diverse group of partners to bring about measurable success in three result areas: Education Achievement, Family Economic Success, and Neighborhood Transformation. Efforts in each of these areas can produce important results, but we believe that, when they are “bundled” together so that families are benefiting from programs in all three result areas, they can achieve life-changing results for children and families.



Children are healthy, thriving socially and emotionally, and developing on track to achieve academic success by the third grade.

Neighborhoods are safe and have sustainable and affordable housing, high-achieving schools, well-paying jobs, and opportunities for families to improve their communities.

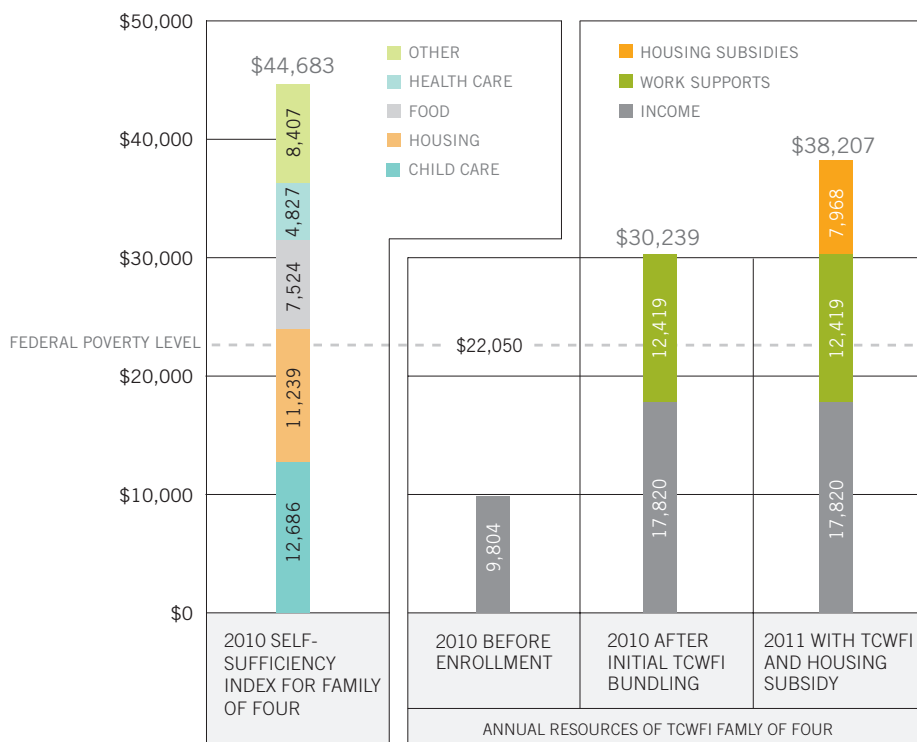
Families are employed and on a pathway to a family-supporting career, accessing work supports and building assets and wealth.

A Long-Term Pathway to Family Self-Sufficiency

The Civic Site works with partners to promote neighborhood-scale programs, policies, and activities that are designed to achieve measurable outcomes in our three result areas. Experience has shown us that these efforts are strengthened significantly when they are bundled together to serve the needs of all family members as well as the community as a whole.

The data below illustrate the importance of bundling services and how a family can move to self-sufficiency over time. The graph below compares the Self-Sufficiency Index for a family of four (1 adult with 3 children) with the current and projected earnings of a family of four enrolled at The Center for Working Families, Inc. (TCWFI). The Self-Sufficiency Index determines the income required for working families to meet their basic needs at a minimally adequate level, taking into account family composition, ages of children, and geographic differences in costs.

When this mother of three came to TCWFI, she was earning \$9,804 annually in a part-time job with fluctuating hours. After enrolling at TCWFI, she secured a job as an administrative assistant, consistently working 30 hours per week. She also accessed a number of work supports, including the Earned Income Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, Food Stamps, Medicaid, Head Start, and subsidized child care for two of her children at the Early Learning and Literacy Resource Center—all with the help of TCWFI. As a result, this parent more than tripled her family's annual resources.



In 2011, we will help this family take advantage of subsidized housing opportunities through the Partnership for the Preservation of Pittsburgh, further increasing their resources.

By providing bundled employment, early education, and housing supports to this family, the ACS partners will have nearly quadrupled their annual resources, helped place the young children on a pathway to education success, and provided them with safe, stable, and affordable housing that sustains healthy families. More than half of those resources, however, are provided through various subsidies. In order to help this family continue on a pathway to self-sufficiency and a diminished reliance upon public subsidies, ACS and its partners will remain engaged with them over time. We will seek to help this parent obtain a high school diploma equivalency, advance in her career, and move her family toward successful, stable homeownership.

Data-Driven Programs and Investments

All of the work supported through the Atlanta Civic Site is informed by ongoing data collection and analysis in an effort to advance our various strategies.

Sharing Neighborhood-Level Data:

The Civic Site worked with NPU-V residents and area nonprofits to produce the *Neighborhoods Count Data Book*, providing residents and community stakeholders with access to reliable, high-quality data on the well-being of families in their neighborhoods. Local partnerships helped expand this tool to form Neighborhood Nexus, a community information system that gives users up-to-date, family-focused data and research about Atlanta neighborhoods.

Understanding Risk Factors for Young Children:

The Civic Site partnered with the Dartington Institute to conduct an in-depth survey of young children and students in Atlanta, with a focus on NPU-V, to ascertain the level of child and adolescent well-being across numerous physical, mental, educational, socioeconomic, and interpersonal dimensions. Initial analysis revealed a critical need to focus on the social and emotional development of young children and helped to shape and advance our early learning agenda.

Supporting Evidence-Based Practice:

Evidence-based practices are strategies that are rigorously evaluated and shown to demonstrate proven results. The Casey Foundation believes that focusing on these approaches will increase the effectiveness of programs offered to children and families in NPU-V and beyond.

Measuring Outcomes Across a Family:

The Civic Site has developed a Family Data System that helps measure progress being made by all family members enrolled in various programs, to assess the impact of bundling services around each family. A student's progress at the Early Learning and Literacy Resource Center can be tracked, while also seeing how that child's parents are faring through services provided by The Center for Working Families, Inc.





“I am advocating for sound mind, body, and soul for my family and for all families in NPU-V by letting them know about the resources available here.”



Deep Roots, Growing Strong

Katrina Monroe Green lives in a home purchased by the Partnership for the Preservation of Pittsburgh with her husband, André, their two sons, Sadarius and William (Trey), their granddaughter Angel, grandson Jakeem Whatley, and Katrina’s mother Minnie Monroe.

A few years ago, the house they were renting in the Mechanicsville neighborhood was foreclosed upon when the landlord fell behind in mortgage payments. With little time to move, the family was fortunate to secure a three-bedroom apartment in Heritage Station, a new mixed-income apartment complex in Pittsburgh. The space was insufficient for the family though and they soon began searching for other options.

Working with The Center for Working Families, Inc. and the Partnership for the Preservation of Pittsburgh, Green and her family moved into a large, renovated, energy efficient house in Pittsburgh in 2010. They plan to purchase this home through a Lease Purchase program but old student loan debts have marred Green’s credit. TCWFI is helping her address these debts and improve her credit score.

Green partnered with the Civic Site when she was the Salvation Army’s Family Literacy Coordinator in 2006,

offering GED classes and Parents As Teachers trainings in Pittsburgh. When Sheltering Arms launched the Early Learning and Literacy Resource Center, she became their Family Support Coordinator, working with parents to address health, logistical, and financial issues. “I put myself in their

homebuyer, and job training classes. TCWFI also alerted her to the PPOP housing opportunity. Green’s 21-year-old son, Sadarius, has also enrolled at TCWFI, learning about computer software in the Digital Connectors class. Her husband, André, takes part in the Fatherhood Program at TCWFI.



shoes,” explains Green. “Because I am a resident too, they know they can trust me to help them make a difference.”

Her four-year-old granddaughter joins her at the ELLRC in its Pre-K program and Green is extremely pleased with what Angel is learning there.

Since TCWFI opened in 2005, Green has participated in its financial literacy,

“We are taking care of business,” she explains. “I am advocating for sound mind, body, and soul for my family and for all families in NPU-V by letting them know about the resources available here.”

Katrina Green greets families at the Early Learning and Literacy Resource Center. Katrina and André Green with their family in their newly renovated home in Pittsburgh.

education achievement



The Atlanta Civic Site is employing a Birth through Third Grade Strategy, incorporating multiple evidence-based programs for vulnerable families with young children. These programs seek to ensure that children are healthy, thriving socially and emotionally, and developing on track to achieve academic success by the third grade. We also help their families become their child's best advocate.

Casey views parents as a child's first and most important teachers. We are working closely with parents to increase their children's education achievement through a variety of programs and strategies that provide NPU-V parents with the skills, knowledge, and tools they need to help their children develop on track and advance successfully through school.

Research shows that a child's early years are the cornerstone of their education and can provide a strong foundation for the child's lifelong learning and eventual economic success. In 2010, a Birth through Third Grade Strategy was launched in NPU-V's Dunbar Learning Complex, which includes Dunbar Elementary School, a K through Grade 5 school, and the Early Learning and Literacy Resource Center (ELLRC). Parents enrolled at The Center for Working Families, Inc. are given priority for subsidized early education and care at the ELLRC. Educators at the ELLRC are providing high-quality, affordable early education and care for children ages six weeks to five years in alignment with the elementary school curricula.

This seamless continuum of programs is designed to coordinate and align standards, curriculum, assessment, and instruction from Pre-K to Grade 3, increasing their effectiveness and leading to improved academic achievement for all children in the Dunbar Learning Complex. This effort, implemented through the work of community partners, is intended to serve as a model for other early learning efforts, thereby strengthening the ability of vulnerable children to learn and achieve across the entire Atlanta Public School System.



“My children are all in great learning environments. I love how the teachers are involved. That is important for me as a parent.”

Two Generation Success

Shondra Carter is an active community leader and the dedicated mother of four children, Dorian, 16, Angel, 12, Destiny, 7, and Anaya, 4. She is committed to supporting her children's education and is actively involved in each of their schools. As president of the Parent-Teacher Association at Dunbar Elementary, she re-energized the PTA and is increasing parent engagement. She is also active in the PTA at Parks Middle and serves on the PTA's Communications Committee at the Early College at the New Schools at Carver. Her youngest child is enrolled at the Early Learning and Literacy Resource Center, where Carter is involved in several programs for parents.

As Program Coordinator for K-12 Outreach at Georgia Tech's Office of Government and Community Relations,

Carter is responsible for establishing partnerships with area schools and programs and connecting student and school groups with volunteer activities. “I have contacted Dunbar and the new principal, Karen Brown-Collier, has been open to partnering,” explains Carter. “We have the same goals and focus. Whatever is best for the kids—that is what we want as parents, the community, teachers, and leaders.”

Carter is also taking full advantage of the services provided by The Center for Working Families, Inc. to ensure financial security and stability for her family. She knows well how tenuous such security can be after being laid off from a previous job in 2004. She was hired as a temporary employee by Georgia Tech 11 months later, but by then, her family was homeless. After

several promotions, she secured her current, full-time position in 2007.

Her financial struggles during unemployment damaged her credit score and she is working closely with TCWFI to correct and improve her credit report. TCWFI connected her with the ELLRC, where her daughter is enrolled. The subsidized care is enabling her to save for the future while preparing her daughter for Kindergarten. According to Carter, “This is a win-win for my child and my family. It enables me to work and not be worried. The ELLRC takes the stress and strain off of parents.”

Shondra Carter at work, walking with her children in the Mechanicsville neighborhood, and playing with her youngest child, Anaya, at the Early Learning and Literacy Resource Center.

family economic success



The Civic Site is investing in a strategy that bundles workforce development, work supports, and asset-building programs for low-income families with the expectation that those families will be employed and on a pathway to a family-supporting career, accessing work supports and building assets and wealth while their children are on a pathway to student success.

This strategy is being implemented by The Center for Working Families, Inc., based at the Dunbar Neighborhood Center in the Mechanicsville neighborhood. TCWFI provides a combination of workforce development, work supports, entrepreneurship, and asset-building programs to move NPU-V families along a pathway toward family economic success.

TCWFI recognizes that it takes many partners to deliver all of the services and programs that low-income families need to overcome barriers to employment, career advancement, and financial security. So, in addition to its direct service model, TCWFI also employs a Family Coach who assesses services and interventions that are needed to help families thrive. Once needs are identified—whether they be related to securing stable housing, overcoming literacy barriers, or finding after-school opportunities for children—TCWFI functions as a “hub” linking participants to a wide array of partner organizations that can meet those needs while the Family Coach remains engaged to ensure that the supports are high quality and well aligned with participant needs. Drawing on support from the United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta and other funders, TCWFI is able to leverage and bundle the services of other United Way-funded organizations.

TCWFI is an integral part of the interconnected work supported by the Civic Site. It connects parents of young children with subsidized high-quality early education and care at the Early Learning and Literacy Resource Center (at a value of more than \$8,000 per year). It also prepares participants for employment and housing opportunities as a part of the Partnership for the Preservation of Pittsburgh.



“I am trying to put myself in a position where my career is in order so we can get a house in the next year or two. We want a place where we can live comfortably and that can be ours.”

Building a Family and a Future

Born and raised in the Mechanicsville neighborhood, Charles Leach III is now starting his own family there with his girlfriend, Jessika Campbell, and their infant son, Charles IV. Leach’s mother, an active community organizer in Mechanicsville, suggested that he enroll at TCWFI. After graduating from high school, he became a carpentry laborer and worked with TCWFI to explore education opportunities and look for a better job.

The TCWFI Job Readiness course helped Leach conduct job searches, build a strong resume, and brush up on his computer skills. Since working with TCWFI, Leach has secured a number of positions, including a job at Atlanta’s Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport and his current part-time position as a security officer. “When it comes to

a job—anything it takes to make sure my family is afloat—I will take it,” explains Leach.

These jobs enabled him to build a work history while providing him with the flexibility to take advantage of some of the career advancing opportunities offered by TCWFI, including the Year Up Atlanta program. Year Up is a one-year intensive training program that provides young urban adults with a combination of hands-on skill development, college credits, and corporate internships. After completing Year Up, Leach enrolled in Digital Connectors, a technology training program developed by One Economy Corp. and offered at TCWFI. “In Digital Connectors, you learn about different certifications and how to advance in the career you choose,” Leach says.

“You work independently and they will help you when you need it.”

After Digital Connectors, Leach will continue his education by enrolling in Atlanta Technical College. He and his girlfriend also participate in the parent trainings and activities offered by the Early Learning and Literacy Resource Center, where their son is enrolled. The young couple is looking forward to becoming homeowners. “I am trying to put myself in a position where my career is in order so we can get a house in the next year or two,” he explains. “We want a place where we can live comfortably and that can be ours.”

Charles Leach III with his son at the Early Learning and Literacy Resource Center and in The Center for Working Families, Inc. Digital Connectors class.

neighborhood transformation



The Atlanta Civic Site is investing in a strategy that combines sustainable and affordable housing, high-achieving schools, well-paying neighborhood jobs, public safety, and opportunities for families to improve their communities.

This work includes the physical development of buildings and a deliberate focus on human capital development. It is led by Sustainable Neighborhood Development Strategies, Inc. (SNDSI), an independent nonprofit formed by Casey to coordinate development in NPU-V.

The physical development work includes two major efforts in the Pittsburgh neighborhood. SNDSI and the Pittsburgh Community Improvement Association formed the Partnership for the Preservation of Pittsburgh and crafted an innovative plan to revitalize Pittsburgh using sustainable economic and environmental principles. After Pittsburgh became “ground zero” for the Atlanta foreclosure crisis, PPOP launched a large-scale effort to acquire vacant and foreclosed properties, renovate them to high safety and energy efficiency standards, and convert them into permanently affordable rental and owner-occupied homes. A community land trust is being developed to prevent future wealth stripping.

The second development effort involves 31 acres of land in Pittsburgh purchased by the Casey Foundation in 2006. This parcel is intended to become a mixed-use, economic generator for the surrounding neighborhoods. Integrating human development into this effort, we prepared residents to be active planning partners by sponsoring the Community Economic Development Institute to train them to employ economic development concepts, tools, techniques, and analysis. The foreclosure crisis put development plans on hold, but residents continue to inform the review of development options and opportunities.

The human development effort also includes work with residents to ensure that high-quality goods and services—including healthy food options and affordable quality child care—are available in NPU-V. We helped residents form the Consumer Advocacy Group and the Customer Satisfaction Network to use consumer research, education, and advocacy to empower residents to demand quality goods and services from local businesses and institutions.



“At times I have I felt like all I could see were vacant properties. I live here and I love this place and I want to do something about it. I want to work with residents to be champions of change!”

Residents as Champions of Change

Stephanie Flowers learned of the Atlanta Civic Site when her apartment complex was about to be demolished and Pittsburgh Community Improvement Association leaders, recognizing her leadership, asked her to help coordinate the resident relocation process.

After her son Marcus was born in 2006, she enrolled in the Civic Site’s Parents As Teachers Program and later joined the Consumer Advocacy Group (CAG) and the Customer Satisfaction Network (CSN). The first two customer service target areas examined by CAG and CSN were early learning and education and nutritional services and grocery stores. Flowers knows how difficult it is to find quality child care. When Marcus was born, she could not find quality child care, so he stayed with her mother.

“I have lived here for years and I have seen what poor services we receive,” she explains. “CAG is a way to advocate for quality services in our community.”

In the CAG, Flowers helped identify quality standards for the service target areas to help residents access quality services near NPU-V. When Marcus turned three, the Early Learning and Literacy Resource Center had opened and he enrolled there. “The ELLRC is an asset to this community,” she says. “There was no tugging at my heart that I was leaving him at the wrong place. This is quality!”

Flowers is also working with The Center for Working Families, Inc. to ensure that she can provide her family with a stable, secure life. Since 2003, she has been employed by

Emory University’s Emory Medical Care Foundation. TCWFI is helping her convert her earnings into stable savings for retirement and education.

Flowers has lived in Pittsburgh for more than 20 years and now is a homeowner there. Having seen the devastation wrought by the foreclosure crisis, she is heartened by the work of the Partnership for the Preservation of Pittsburgh. “At times I have felt like all I could see were vacant properties,” she laments. “I live here and I love this place and I want to do something about it. I want to work with residents to be champions of change!”

Stephanie Flowers with other NPU-V residents at the Pittsburgh Community Improvement Association offices and walking in Pittsburgh. Marcus Cook at the Early Learning and Literacy Resource Center.

The Atlanta Civic Site, the residents of NPU-V, and their partners have a bold and ambitious vision for these neighborhoods and have crafted an innovative set of interconnected strategies to achieve that vision. A great deal of progress has been made in the past decade but this is an ongoing effort. Together, we are working to ensure that the children and families profiled in this brochure and all others who call NPU-V home will have the educational and economic opportunities they need to chart a new and promising future. We invite you to join with us as we create life-changing pathways for families in NPU-V.

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