

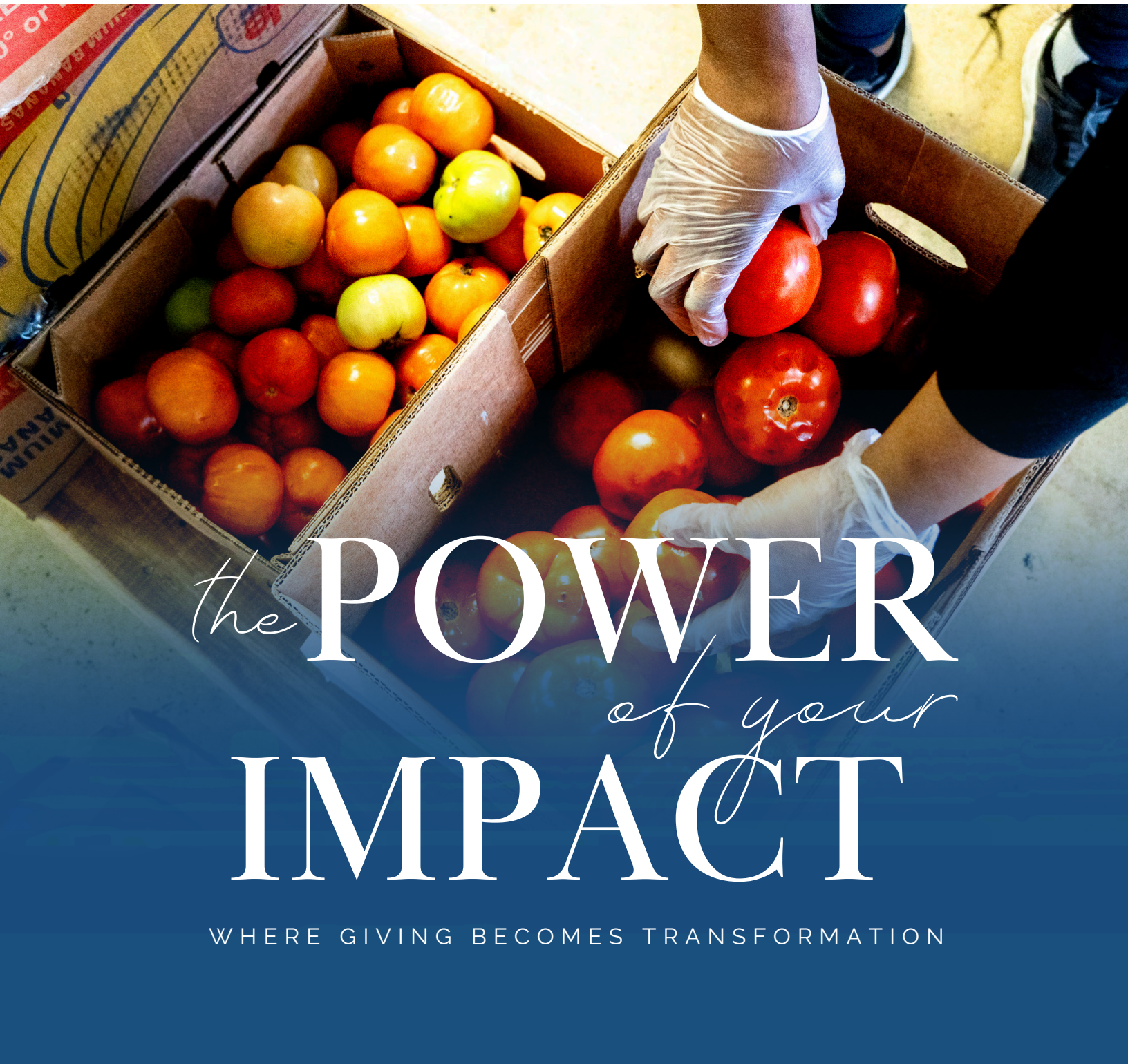
A VISION FOR GIVING

The Catalyst

SPRING 2026



HIGH POINT COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



the **POWER**
of your
IMPACT

WHERE GIVING BECOMES TRANSFORMATION

An aerial photograph of a city at sunset, with a large, stylized speech bubble graphic overlaid on the sky. The speech bubble is light blue and white, with a jagged, gear-like top edge. The city below is densely packed with buildings, including a prominent white building with a curved roof and a tall, thin tower. The foreground is filled with lush green trees. The sky is a mix of soft orange and pale blue, with wispy clouds.

Think big.
ACT BIGGER.

a look inside
The Catalyst

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LEADING WITH IMPACT



from the

Chairman

The Impact You Make Possible

Every community has a heartbeat created by people who believe in something bigger than themselves. Here in High Point, that heartbeat is you! Your generosity, your compassion, your willingness to invest in your neighbors is what gives this city its strength. When we talk about *impact*, we aren't speaking in abstractions or statistics. We are speaking about real lives changed, hope restored, and progress taking root in the place we all call home.

Over the past year, we have watched extraordinary things unfold. We've seen families discover stability through services you helped fund. We've watched nonprofits expand their reach, not because it was easy, but because you believed they could. We've witnessed creativity, courage, and resilience that are all fueled by the quiet but powerful act of giving.

As Board Chair, I have the privilege of witnessing the ripple effect of philanthropy every day. A grant that keeps food on the table. A program that offers a child their first sense of possibility. A partnership that strengthens the foundation of a neighborhood. These moments are connected, interwoven by donors, nonprofits, and community members who step forward when it matters most.

That is what makes High Point remarkable. We do not wait for change; we create impact!

Thank you for being part of this collective movement of good. Thank you for believing in what High Point can be and for helping us take bold steps toward that vision. May we continue to give boldly, love generously, and lead with purpose, knowing that every gift is a seed of change.

With gratitude and hope,



Mark Nelson
Chair, High Point Community Foundation

LEADING WITH IMPACT



from the

President

As we move into our 28th year of operations at the High Point Community Foundation,

we are grateful for the privilege and opportunity to make transformational impact upon the community we love! When you think about it, the idea that each of us has the capacity to, with our time, talents and resources, become agents for positive change in our world is remarkable. I recognized this quality in High Pointers in 1975 as a young High Point College soccer player who was coaching youth soccer during my off-seasons. I quickly learned that folks in this town sincerely cared about one another, always stepped up to meet unmet needs, and sincerely believed everyone deserves the opportunity to reach their fullest, God-given potential. I remember thinking, “This is a community I wanted to be a part of.”

Over the past three decades, our Community Foundation has granted over \$130 million into local nonprofits, and we have watched truly transformational changes taking place. Isn't that what our lives should be about? Impact like this is only possible when men and women with good hearts and resources are willing to invest in something larger than themselves. My wife, Jayne, likes to remind me that our time on this earth is brief, “nothing but spit on a griddle,” and as you start moving toward your 70s, you begin to realize that all we really get to keep in the long run is what we have already given away. It's about legacy, leaving the town we love better than when we first found it.

This will be a very special year for me as it is my final lap in what has been one of the most meaningful seasons of my life serving as President of the High Point Community Foundation (HPCF). My sisters and I were blessed with parents who modeled servant leadership early in our lives and taught us the importance of serving others. We were a proud Marine Corps family, not wealthy by the world's standards, but rich in the knowledge that we had a sacred responsibility to positively impact our world. I cannot think of a more powerful gift to give a child as it endows them with a sense of worth, mission, and a desire to become a force for good in their world. I could not have had better preparation for my service here at the High Point Community Foundation.

The success we have experienced at the Foundation has been a team effort, and I am very proud of and thankful for my amazing staff: Karol Murks, Jaymi LaGuardia, Amanda Bennett and Allison Seymour, who have brought so much talent and commitment to our great endeavor. I am grateful to my Board of Trustees, past and present, and especially to my 14 Trustee Chairs who have each brought their unique skills and talents to make us better every year. Finally, I want to thank our donors who have so graciously and generously given us their trust and confidence.

I realize I am one of the lucky ones who not only had a career I loved, but a mission that has allowed me to use my gifts and talents to serve the community I cherish. How blessed can a guy be? I arrived in High Point 50 years ago to play for a great college soccer team and, by the grace of God, found the home I had always been looking for.

For Good, For High Point, Forever...

Always Faithful,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul". The letters are cursive and fluid, with a large loop for the 'P' and a long tail for the 'l'.

Paul Lessard
President, High Point Community Foundation



“When donors entrust the Foundation with their generosity,

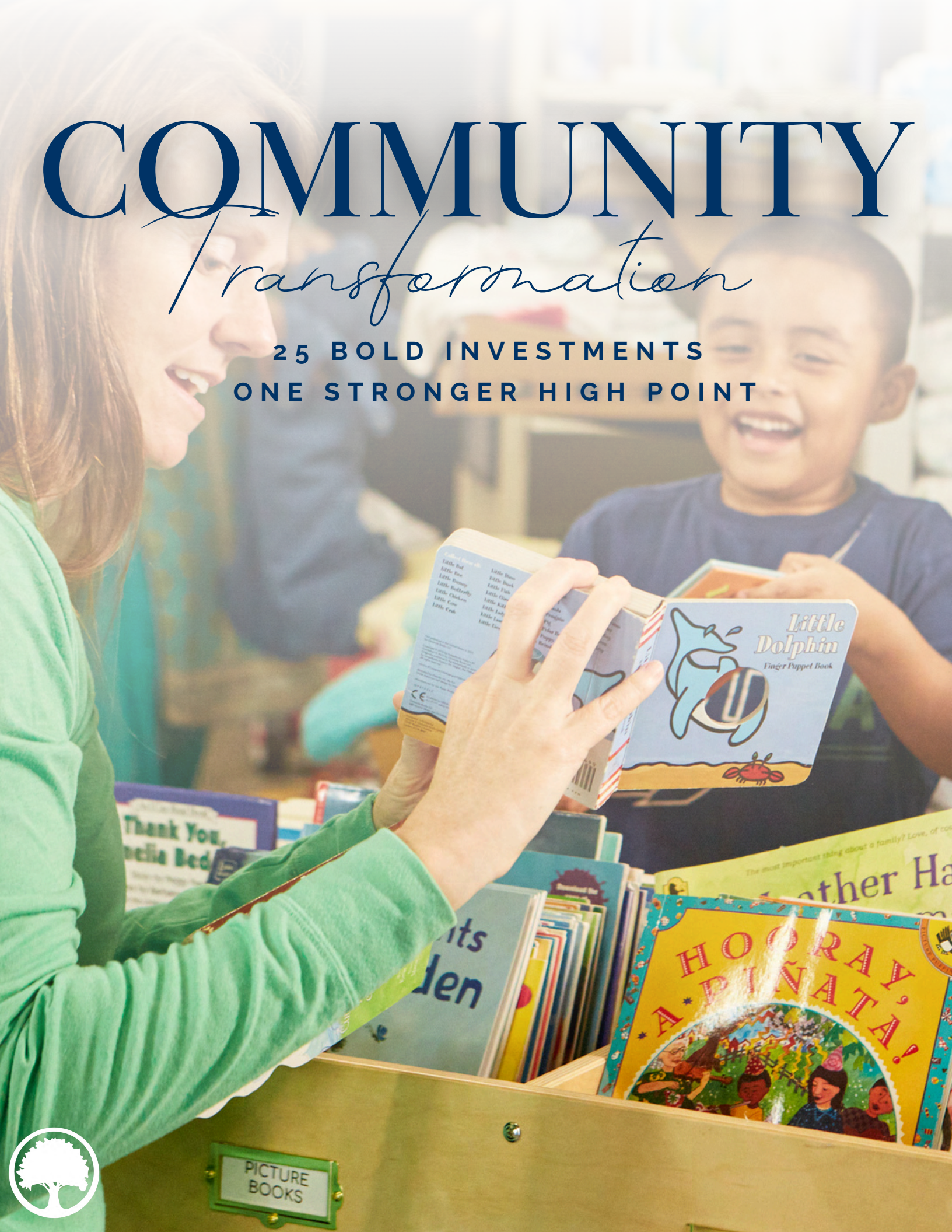
they are trusting us to invest wisely in High Point’s future. As a grant committee member, I take that responsibility seriously. We support nonprofits that are creating lasting change—organizations that are lifting individuals, strengthening systems, and pushing our community forward.”

DAVID LITTLEFIELD,
HPCF GRANTS COMMITTEE

COMMUNITY

Transformation

25 BOLD INVESTMENTS
ONE STRONGER HIGH POINT



PICTURE BOOKS

Annual Grants Program

This year, the High Point Community Foundation is proud to champion 25 exceptional nonprofit organizations that are not just meeting needs—they are transforming lives. These grants represent decisive action, faithful stewardship, and a deep commitment to the future of our community. Because of our generous donors, critical challenges are being addressed with courage and innovation. Together, we are not simply responding to today's needs; we are shaping the High Point of tomorrow.

Total Granted: \$572,200

ANDREWS HIGH SCHOOL

At T. Wingate Andrews High School, their highest priority is to educate, equip, and empower all stakeholders to reach their highest potential.

GCS SparkLab Expansion Project

The purpose of this project is to provide a health fair organized by students, in partnership with Atrium Health, to offer health screenings, educational services, and resources for individuals and their families.

A SIMPLE GESTURE

Engages the community to provide a sustainable supply of food to local food pantries, food banks, and nonprofits serving meals to the community or to clients. Their goal is that no child or family is hungry.

Food Recovery on the Run: Quick, Wholesome Community-Building Meals for Families

Children and families in Guilford County experience high rates of food insecurity, while at the same time, schools discard wholesome food daily that could help these families. If this food is properly recovered and stored, A Simple Gesture can get this food to children to take home.

BACKPACK BEGINNINGS

Connects children and their families with resources needed to thrive. Backpack Beginnings (BPB) envisions a community of healthy children.

Community Distributions of Basic Resources for High Point Children and Families

Each week during the school year, BPB distributes food to 17 High Point schools, providing weekend nourishment for 418 children. These weekly bags include shelf-stable food items designed to bridge the weekend nutrition gap for students who rely heavily on free or reduced school meals. This consistent access to food helps reduce absenteeism, improves focus in the classroom, and supports the overall well-being of students. This grant allows BPB to continue service to High Point residents through 2026.



BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS OF THE CENTRAL PIEDMONT

Creates and supports one-to-one mentoring relationships that ignite the power and promise of youth.

Keeping the Power of Mentoring for Youth in High Point

With this grant, Big Brothers Big Sisters can continue mentoring services to 13 children in High Point through 2026 with the help of state funding as well. It covers the cost for one year of support. They match a Little (mentee/child) and a Big (mentor/adult) at a cost of \$1,300 per child/match for one year at Johnson Street Global Studies, Kirkman Park, and Parkview Elementary School.

By continuing services to young people referred to us through the schools, mentors help their Little Brothers or Sisters increase confidence, competence and caring in their day-to-day lives.

BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF GREATER HIGH POINT

Enables young people to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens. They operate five clubs in High Point and one in Asheboro, serving 1,847 kids year-round at zero cost to families.

Power Up Power Hour

As the Club's membership grows, there is an increased need for additional technology resources and maintenance of existing technology that is needed for the Power Hour academic time in the club. The Property & Safety Director coordinates the inventory and maintenance of all technology resources at all 6 clubs, identifying a need for additional Chromebooks and technology resources, maintenance, and replacement of existing technology resources to meet the growing number of members per age group and classroom.

CHILDREN'S LAW CENTER OF CENTRAL NC

To provide children with quality legal advocacy focusing on Domestic Violence issues, High Conflict Custody cases, and the rights of children in public education.

Providing a Voice for Children in Greater High Point

Children's Law Center of Central North Carolina (CLC) provides a voice for vulnerable children in court proceedings. CLC will use grant funds to support their Custody Advocacy Program (CAP). CAP staff and volunteers serve as champions for children and legal advocates. Their attorneys advocate for children's best interests and serve as the eyes and ears of the Court.

COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS OF THOMASVILLE

Surround students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life.

Strengthening Student Support Through Program Leadership

This grant will help fund the new Program Director position, allowing them to expand and coordinate services across all Thomasville City Schools. Their primary goals include increasing student engagement, improving school attendance, and providing consistent support to families facing barriers to student success. This investment will lead to more effective coordination of case management and school-based services, increased student participation in academic and social-emotional support programs, improved communication with families & community partners, and enhanced tracking of student progress and program outcomes.

DIAPER BANK OF NORTH CAROLINA

Promotes and protects dignity, health, and opportunity by ensuring every North Carolina family has access to basic hygiene products by distributing free diapers, period products, and adult incontinence supplies through trusted local partners.

Expanding Hygiene Access in Greater High Point

Funding will support Diaper Bank of North Carolina (DBNC)'s distribution model, which provides diapers, adult incontinence products, period supplies, and hygiene items to families and individuals through a network of trusted local partners. In 2024, DBNC distributed 85,654 baby diapers, 48,870 adult incontinence items, 5,798 period products, and 21,140 wipes in Guilford County alone. An additional 11,916 diapers and 4,800 adult products were distributed in nearby regions, reflecting strong demand and deep regional need.

COMMUNITY HOUSING SOLUTIONS OF GUILFORD, INC.

Make Guilford County homes warmer, drier and safer by providing repairs and ownership opportunities for low-income homeowners.

Increasing Impact with Critical Home Repairs

This grant will enable CHS to make a measurable impact on housing stability, health, and safety for vulnerable homeowners in High Point. Within 12 months, CHS aims to:

- Repair 63 homes to make them warmer, drier, and safer (an increase of 8 homes over 2025)
- Provide accessibility modifications and in-home health education to 20 clients through their Aging Gracefully program
- Deliver utility cost savings to at least 45% of homeowners receiving HVAC, plumbing, or energy efficiency repairs.



EMMANUEL SENIOR ENRICHMENT CENTER

Complements family caregiving by providing adult day services that enhance the social, physical, and emotional well-being of adults with disabilities and age-related challenges.

Relocation of Adult Day Services Program to Better Serve the Community

Grant funding will support the relocation of their Adult Day Care and Adult Day Health programs, specifically supporting the cost of the lease and utility costs for the first year of operations at the new facility. This relocation necessitates a critical need for funding to ensure uninterrupted program delivery for the elderly and vulnerable disabled adult population.

FAMILY ROOM FOSTER CARE RESOURCE CENTER, INC.

Loves, encourages, and supports families that foster and have children in foster care.

Capacity Building Capital Campaign to Build a Forever Home for Family Room

Each year, over 5,000 babies, kids, and teens enter foster care in NC, at no fault of their own, usually with nothing but the clothes on their backs. Family Room provides immediate support, including beds, mattresses, dressers, bedding, clothes, shoes, diapers, food, toys, and more, at no cost to the foster parents. The grant will assist in the purchase of land that will serve as the permanent facility that will impact the children of our community for generations to come.



GREATER HIGH POINT FOOD ALLIANCE

Coordinates and improves the effectiveness of entities in greater High Point focused on alleviating hunger by creating and executing city-wide and neighborhood-focused initiatives to develop a more just and sustainable supplemental food systems.

Reducing Food Access Barriers

Funds from this grant will be used to support the professional translation and printing of their Community Resource Guides into Spanish, as well as the bi-annual outreach and updating process required to keep the guides accurate and relevant. These guides are a vital tool for improving access to healthy food and essential services for Hispanic and Latino neighbors in High Point. While translation technologies like ChatGPT have been suggested, these automated tools often mis-translate local street names and service providers, creating confusion and reducing the effectiveness of the resource.

The guide includes information on food pantries, community meals, healthcare options for uninsured and under-insured individuals, senior services and homelessness support.



GROWING THE DISTANCE INC.

Operates child enrichment programs that empower and equip children with the necessary tools, resources, knowledge and character to be trailblazing pillars of their community and succeed in college, in their careers and beyond.

Kindergarten Readiness Initiative

The grant will fund operating support for their “Bright Beginnings,” a new Kindergarten Preparatory Program, a half-day initiative for children ages 3-4. This program is committed to providing a nurturing environment that stimulates early education through a variety of learning styles and imaginative play. By focusing on kinesthetic learning, embracing individuality, and promoting early math, literacy, and language skills, the program aims to build a brighter future for the children in the community.

HELPING HANDS

A Christian organization providing food, emergency assistance and basic life skills education to community members in need. Their vision is to enhance the quality of life for all people in the greater High Point community.

Food Insecurity - Expanding Community Outreach

Funds will help expand food options and operating hours of their food pantry, and to assist Helping Hands in obtaining a walk-in cooler/freezer at the new location. They have run out of space and do not have enough refrigerated capacity at their current location due to the growth they have experienced and the amount of food it requires to operate the food pantry.

In 2021, they provided food to 8,576 families, compared to 27,482 families in 2024. There has also been tremendous growth in the amount of food they receive from outside sources, and they do not have the space to store all of it, especially produce.

HIGH POINT ARTS COUNCIL, INC.

Enriching lives and amplify the arts through a broad range of activities, entertainment, and education.

Rooted: The Neighborhood Artist Residency-Cultivating Community Through Creative Place-Making

“Rooted” is a transformative, community-based artist-in-residence program designed to elevate underrepresented neighborhoods in High Point through public art and storytelling. Each year, HPAC will partner with a local neighborhood association to embed a visual artist within a historically underserved or low-income neighborhood. This grant will help fund the installations.



HIGH POINT COMMUNITY AGAINST VIOLENCE (HPCAV)

HPCAV is solely dedicated to working with law enforcement (HP Police Department and other agencies) with the goal of reducing violent crime in High Point.

Focus on Elementary Age Children & Address Domestic Violence

This grant will help HPCAV continue to expand its efforts in reducing violence through training and by providing essential services to our violent notified offenders, while also targeting younger offenders and their families. The funds requested will be utilized to assist violent offenders with rent, housing, gas, power bills, and food assistance.

LEARN TO SWIM INC.

Provides free water safety and swimming lessons to all 2nd grade students throughout Guilford County Schools during the school day for their safety, health and education on the many benefits of learning to swim.

2nd Grade Learn to Swim Program

This grant will help fund program expenses including instructors and deck coordinator wages, mileage reimbursement for instructors traveling to any of their other partner facilities (including those in High Point), t-shirts, drawstring bags and certificates of completion, which are given to each 2nd grade participant, other facility rental fees and lifeguard fees at YMCA locations, misc. expenses including printed materials, life jackets and other pool supplies and equipment used in the program.



OAKWOOD COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, INC.

Serving low-income, homeless, and unemployed individuals in High Point through a range of services aimed at providing food, clothing, employment information, and housing resources.

Community Day Center

Funds will be used to support the first-year operations of the Day Center, a vital resource providing essential support, stability, and access to services for individuals experiencing homelessness. With support from the City, this center will offer a safe and welcoming environment where individuals can take showers, find respite, connect with peer support specialists, receive haircuts, participate in job-ready workshops, access job search and placement services, and engage in activities that promote personal growth and well-being.



OUT OF THE GARDEN PROJECT

Nourishes children and families with fresh, nutritious food so they can grow, learn, and thrive. Their vision is a community where no one goes hungry.

Produce Partner Program: Pantry Partners

The goal of the program is to strengthen the capacity of the greater High Point food pantries while specifically targeting two key food pantries by providing them with consistent, weekly deliveries of fresh produce, enabling them to better serve their clients. The funds granted will be used to cover the cost of produce pick up, storage, packaging and distributing in the designated High Point central locations.

READING CONNECTIONS

Reading Connections transforms the community by improving literacy and promoting educational equity for people of all ages, empowering them to navigate changes in an increasingly complex world.

Deepening Our Roots in High Point

This funding will expand Reading Connections' services in High Point in response to the growing demand for adult literacy, ESOL, family literacy and workforce development. Many adults in High Point lack the reading, writing, digital and English language skills needed to secure stable employment and support their families. These skill gaps limit access to opportunity and keep residents from thriving in high-demand industries such as manufacturing, healthcare and the skilled trades, fields essential to High Point's economic future.



SECOND HARVEST FOOD BANK

With the community and local partners, Second Harvest will increase food security and create pathways that build a stronger Northwest North Carolina.

Reaching More Kids: Community Meals in High Point

Funding will be used to both sustain and expand the number of healthy meals Second Harvest is able to prepare and deliver after-school enrichment programs in High Point. They also will be able to provide additional food to those kids who require more sustenance and send home food/meals for children in the families who don't participate in the afterschool programs, recognizing that hunger affects the entire family.

UNITED WAY OF GREATER HIGH POINT

Develops resources and partnerships that make a measurable difference in people's lives.

UWGHP Backpack Program

High Point continues to face alarming rates of food insecurity, especially among children. Many kids rely on school meals during the week but have little or no access to food on weekends, holidays, and breaks. The UWGHP Backpack Program targets this critical gap by providing weekend food bags to 2,000 at-risk youth annually across the Greater High Point area, including students from Title I schools, afterschool programs, and housing communities. This grant will help support the effort to keep the program running till the end of the school year.

WELBORN ACADEMY

Leadership Development Implementation Act (LDIA) introduces scholars to critical aspects of leadership, develops programming that fosters leadership development, and creates opportunities for scholars to demonstrate leadership skills in the school and community.

Leadership Development Implementation Act (LDIA)

Develop and sustain a leadership development program to enhance the academic and social environment at Welborn Academy. Specifically, funds will be allocated to the development of the Men of Distinction Program (mentoring program for young men), the Ladies of Value and Excellence Program (LOVE: mentoring program for young ladies), and the school wide implementation of the individual Welborn Way Leadership Program.



WEST END MINISTRIES, INC. (WEM)

WEM serves and works with residents and stakeholders to make this city a safer & better place to live by meeting short-term crisis needs & providing opportunities for long-term change and growth, enabling individuals to overcome barriers & poverty they face.

Winter Shelter, Housing Women

These funds will help supply the space for WEM's 2025-26 women's Winter Shelter, providing an additional 20 beds for women struggling with homelessness during the winter months. New staff needs to be hired and trained to successfully operate the winter shelter each year and the increased utilities costs of hosting the shelter in WEM's community center.



YMCA OF HIGH POINT

YMCA of HP puts Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all. The YMCA is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment to all consistent with the mission.

Y Readers Summer Learning Loss Prevention Program

Grant funding will help with the expansion of the Y Readers Program. The goal is to improve literacy skills and to support students' reading at grade level by third grade with pre/post assessments in coordination with the local school.



Stranger
TOGETHER

A COMMUNITY-WIDE RESPONSE
TO HUNGER IN HIGH POINT



Finding Food Solutions



In every community, there are neighbors quietly carrying burdens most of us never see. For some in High Point, that burden is food insecurity—a daily uncertainty of not knowing where the next meal will come from.

This year, the High Point Community Foundation was honored to invest in a coordinated network of nonprofits working together to address hunger in our city. Rather than operating in isolation, these organizations represent a powerful, three-part system designed to make access to food more efficient, dignified, and responsive to real needs.

Together, they are strengthening the safety net for families, seniors, and children across High Point.

“Food insecurity doesn’t just affect individual families—it affects the entire fabric of a community.”

When children come to school hungry, when parents are stretched thin choosing between groceries and rent, when seniors skip meals to afford medication, we all feel the ripple effects.

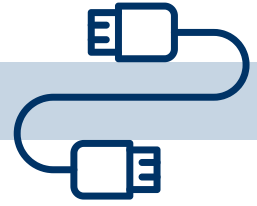
Hunger impacts workforce productivity, educational outcomes, and long-term health.

But when a community works together to ensure reliable access to food, we don’t just address a basic need, we strengthen the economic and social stability of High Point as a whole.”

BRAD BOWERS
WEST END MINISTRIES,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Connector:

THE GREATER HIGH POINT FOOD ALLIANCE



When someone is experiencing food insecurity, the first challenge is often not availability—it’s awareness.

The Greater High Point Food Alliance (GHPFA) serves as the community’s central connector. Through its comprehensive food guide and online resource platform, the organization helps individuals and families quickly locate nearby food pantries, meal programs, and distribution sites.

Their work ensures:

- Clear, up-to-date information about where food is available.
- Reduces confusion for families navigating difficult circumstances.
- Better coordination among local providers.

By mapping resources and building communication across organizations, GHPFA strengthens the entire hunger-response ecosystem. They are the front door helping neighbors find help with clarity and dignity.

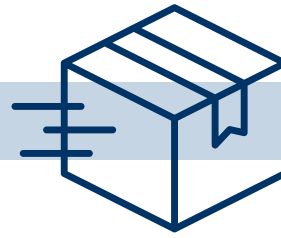
“As we work toward our mission to create a just and sustainable food system, we know that alleviating food insecurity takes more than individual efforts. It requires collaboration, care, and strong relationships across the community. By working alongside local food providers and partners, we connect resources, share responsibility, and respond more effectively to growing needs thus strengthening our community while addressing immediate challenges and working toward long-term, sustainable solutions.”

– REBEKAH DOBBINS
THE GREATER HIGH POINT FOOD ALLIANCE,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



The Distributor:

OUT OF THE GARDEN PROJECT



Behind every stocked pantry shelf is a sophisticated logistics effort.

Out of the Garden Project operates as a regional food distribution hub here in High Point. Through its warehouse operations, the organization collects, stores, and manages large quantities of food. But their impact goes beyond storage.

Using an effective online ordering system, local food banks can:

- Log in and select preferred items their communities need.
- Order culturally relevant and nutritionally appropriate food.
- Reduce waste by requesting only what will be distributed.

This system transforms food distribution from reactive to strategic. Instead of receiving random surplus, local food banks can tailor their selections based on real-time demand. It's a model of efficiency that ensures food reaches tables, not landfills.

“Powered by produce, donations from many local businesses and support from grants like the High Point Community Foundation allows nonprofits that focus on food get it to those who need it most. I am proud to work alongside our High Point pantry partners to deliver fresh food with dignity!”

- BETH CRISE
OUT OF THE GARDEN PROJECT,
PRESIDENT & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

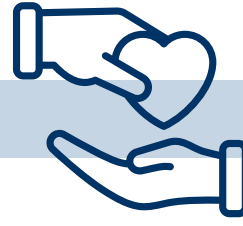


**OUT OF THE
GARDEN PROJECT**
GIVE • TEACH • GROW



The Front Lines:

HELPING HANDS OF HIGH POINT & WEST END MINISTRIES



For decades, Helping Hands of High Point and West End Ministries have been trusted pillars in our community.

These organizations are where neighbors walk through the doors. Where volunteers greet families by name. Where groceries are handed across tables with compassion and respect.

They provide:

- Direct food assistance to individuals and families.
- Long-standing relationships within neighborhoods.
- A welcoming environment rooted in dignity.

Their longevity reflects the trust they have built in High Point. They understand the rhythms of the community, the seasonal spikes in need, and the stories behind every visit.

“When someone walks through our doors, they’re often carrying more than an empty pantry; they’re carrying stress, uncertainty, and sometimes even shame. Access to consistent, nutritious food doesn’t just fill stomachs; it restores stability. It allows parents to focus on work instead of worrying about dinner, helps children concentrate in school, and gives seniors the security of knowing they won’t have to choose between medicine and groceries. Food is the foundation. When that foundation is steady, everything else becomes possible.”

- STEVE KEY
HELPING HANDS HIGH POINT, INC.,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



A System that Works

BECAUSE IT WORKS TOGETHER

Individually, each of these nonprofits play a critical role. But together, they create a seamless pathway:

- The **Greater High Point Food Alliance** connects people to resources.
- **Out of the Garden** equips food banks with what they need.
- **Helping Hands** and **West End Ministries** deliver food directly to neighbors.

This layered approach reduces duplication, increases efficiency, and ensures that charitable dollars are maximized for impact.

By funding organizations that collaborate rather than compete, the High Point Community Foundation is investing in a sustainable, coordinated response to hunger that is built on partnership and shared mission.

MORE THAN MEALS

Food insecurity is rarely just about food. It touches health, education, employment, and stability. When families have reliable access to nutritious meals, children perform better in school, seniors maintain independence, and parents can focus on work and caregiving.

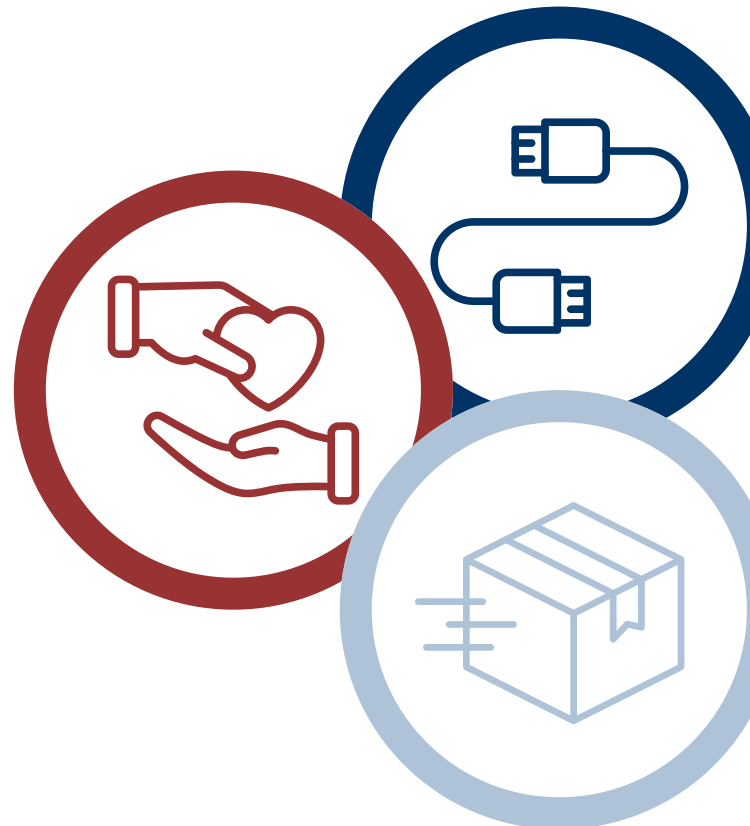
Through strategic grantmaking and community partnerships, we are helping ensure that no one in High Point has to navigate hunger alone.

When our community works together, we don't just distribute food.

We build dignity.

We strengthen families.

We create hope.



in the
COMMUNITY



Announcement of New Trustees

The High Point Community Foundation is guided by a volunteer Board of Trustees who reflect the heart and soul of our community. Representing a broad range of professional backgrounds and lived experiences, our trustees provide thoughtful leadership and oversight to ensure lasting impact across High Point.

We are honored to welcome our newest trustees and thankful for their commitment to service, stewardship, and community.



Brandon Hedrick

Brandon Hedrick attended University of North Carolina Wilmington (B.S. Business Administration, Accounting) and North Carolina State University (Master of Science in Accounting, Finance Concentration). He currently works as a Tax Partner at Smith Leonard Accountants & Consultants with more than 15 years of

experience in public accounting, including broad experience in all areas of taxation. In addition to providing traditional compliance and planning services to tax clients, he has worked closely with tax partners in serving a large publicly traded client on a multi-year engagement as an outsourced Tax Director. He regularly applies his strength and knowledge in the IT field to assist Smith Leonard in their endeavor to be a technologically strong firm, both internally and for their clients.

Beth graduated in 1977 from UNC-Chapel Hill with a degree in Classics and then graduated from UNC-Chapel Hill Law School in 1980. She has been practicing law in High Point with Roberson Haworth & Reese since that time in the areas of real estate, municipal law and estate planning. She currently serves as Town Attorney for Jamestown and City Attorney for Archdale.

Beth currently serves on the High Point ABC Board and has served in the past on the City's Planning & Zoning Commission, the United Way Board, NC Shakespeare Festival Board, Arts Council Board, Community Theatre Board, and the Board of the High Point Museum. She enjoys reading, watching sports, working on her family farm and spending time with her friends.



Beth Koonce



Photo by: Yasmin Leonard Photography

Molly Millis Young

Molly attended Furman University and graduated from UNC-Greensboro with a double major in Economics and Business Administration. She worked for Dixon Hughes Goodman, now Forvis Mazars, for 28 years as a Tax Accountant and is currently a Manager of Millbrook, LLC. Molly has a passion for philanthropy and currently sits on the

following Boards/Committees in the greater High Point area: HPCF Grants Committee; Board of Trustees, High Point University; Nido Qubein Scholarship Committee; and Hopefulls Board. She has a heartfelt desire to share Jesus, show up when needed, and love on those who perhaps may not have anyone else. Along with sitting on committees and boards, Molly also contributes toward the community through her passions and area of focus: childhood hunger, literacy, affordable housing, and keeping the city safe through the HP Police Foundation. Molly is married to Ronnie Young and together they have six children, fifteen grandchildren, and three great grandchildren. Along with spending time with their family, they also enjoy traveling and volunteering.

Welcome to our Newest Staff Member

At the High Point Community Foundation, relationships are at the heart of everything we do. By having Allison Seymour join our team with a strong commitment to donor stewardship and a shared vision for meaningful, strategic giving, we will continue to grow relationships with generous donors and partners, creating lasting impact across High Point for generations to come.

Allison Seymour

Allison Seymour serves as the inaugural Director of Donor Engagement at the High Point Community Foundation (HPCF). In this role, she works closely with donors, advisors, and community partners to help individuals and families align their philanthropic goals with their values to create lasting impact across High Point. Her focus includes growing donor engagement through Donor Advised Funds, strengthening support for the Foundation's grants program, and fostering a culture of philanthropy where everyone can see themselves as part of the Foundation's work.

A High Point native, Allison approaches her role with a commitment to listening and learning—connecting with donors, nonprofit leaders, and community partners to better understand local needs and opportunities.



She is passionate about helping philanthropy feel accessible, value-driven, and impactful for the community today and for generations to come.

Allison holds a bachelor's degree in biology and religious studies from UNC-Greensboro and a Master of Divinity from Wake Forest University.

To contact Allison:

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“Never underestimate the power of a small group of committed people to change the world. In fact, it is the only thing that ever has.”

– MARGARET MEAD

The High Point Community Foundation’s story began with nine men; Jim Morgan, Jim Millis, Sr., Nido Qubein, Bill Horney, Bill McGuinn, Phil Phillips, George Erath, Charlie Greene, and Charles Odom, who all shared a dream of establishing a permanent financial resource for the community they grew up in, raised their families, built their careers, and most all, loved and believed in. These men made up the founding Executive Committee of the High Point Community Foundation who tirelessly worked from 1990 to 1998 to build momentum and raise funds to establish a foundation that would serve the needs of High Point in perpetuity. They realized the critical importance of creating a permanent financial resource to ensure that the safety net they and other High Point business leaders had been providing for decades would always be there.

In March of 1998, Jim and Jesse Millis Sr., whose well known family foundation had always been one of High Points most faithful benefactors, called Jim Morgan late on a

Friday afternoon to announce they had decided to make a \$5 million unrestricted gift to launch the High Point Community Foundation, hire a president and open the doors for business.

The hunt for a candidate to lead the Foundation began immediately and soon identified a young man who had worked in the High Point business community for nearly 18 years, was already involved in the philanthropic arena, and very passionate about the town that had adopted him so many years before. Paul Lessard was the son of Colonel Paul and Dorothy Lessard. His father was a decorated Marine Corps career officer who had served in Korea and Vietnam Conflicts with courage and distinction. Paul’s mother, a 4’4” bundle of love and energy, had overseen 26 moves during the Colonel’s 38-years in the Corps and was the guts and glue that had always held the family together.

Because of the Colonel's frequent overseas deployments, Dorothy often had to raise her three children on her own.

The Colonel and Dorothy were both blue-collar kids from New England who had grown up during the Depression and bootstrapped their way to the American dream. Paul's parents were and still remain his heroes; they were both unabashed patriots who were extremely proud to serve their country, and they passed on that same passion and commitment to Paul and his sisters. Paul attributes his work ethic and mission-driven mindset to his amazing, "greatest generation" parents.

“My parents raised me to be a servant leader. Through their example I learned it was our sacred responsibility to help the vulnerable, to step up and pitch in when a need was identified and always strive put others first. My mother and father’s faith, commitment, and love shaped me into the man I am today.”

– PAUL LESSARD,
PRESIDENT OF HIGH POINT COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Paul attended 14 schools in his K-12 journey, growing up in the Philippine Islands and later living in various Marine, Navy, Army, and Air Force bases throughout the United States. As fate would have it, his fourth and final high school was at Camp Lejeune Marine Base in Jacksonville, NC where he played soccer for a remarkable coach and mentor, Francisco Blanco, who believed in him and changed his life. Paul was named to the All-Conference, All-District and the North Carolina All-State Soccer Teams in his senior year, which attracted interest from colleges throughout the South and New England. Several Camp Lejeune athletes Paul knew had gone to play ball at a small college known for their athletics in High Point, NC—High Point College (HPC)—and loved it.

He was soon being recruited, went for an official visit, fell in love with the school and the team and was offered both academic and athletic scholarships.



Paul committed to HPC in the late spring and would go on to play for Coach Woody Gibson from 1975 to 1980 serving as a team captain his senior year. During his time at HPC, he double majored in English and History, coached local youth soccer teams in the off seasons, and eventually worked as the head resident director of the McCulloch Men's Dorm for two years. Through his coaching experiences working with his friends, Bill and Pat Collona, who had established High Point's first local youth soccer league, Paul began to meet people in the community and quickly discovered that High Point was different. He could see that folks cared for one another; when a need arose, they immediately stepped up to meet it, and he really liked that.

Since childhood, Paul's dream had always been to play college soccer and join the Marines to follow in his father's footsteps. He enlisted midway through his freshman year of college and attended Officer's Candidate School that summer at Quantico, VA where he excelled. His life appeared to be going exactly as planned until his junior year when he was severely injured in the '78 Carolina Conference tournament's semi-final match. Toward the end of the first half of a 1-0 game, Paul went up for a header, was undercut, and suffered a traumatic double compound fracture of his left forearm. After being rushed to High Point Regional Hospital he immediately underwent surgery which inserted a metal plate and screws into his forearm. The recovery and rehab were extensive, leading Paul to play with a cast for both the indoor and spring seasons of '79.

Midway through his senior year, Paul received official correspondence from the Marine Corps which stated that upon further review of his surgery and an evaluation of the hardware that had been attached to his arm he was being medically discharged. He immediately challenged the discharge and eventually received a medical waiver that required him to have the plate removed before attending the second half of OCS that next summer. Despite the vehement objections of his civilian doctors, he went through the surgery to remove the plate. The surgery was successful, was once again followed by an extended rehab, and by the end of that spring, the Marines had cleared him to attend his final summer of OCS.



Paul reported to the Quantico Marine Base in June of 1980, and halfway through the 8-week OCS course, he once again broke his left forearm while running the obstacle course at Brown Field. He was medically discharged for the second time from the Marines and completely devastated by the abrupt ending of what had been his childhood dream and life plan. His injured forearm would prove to be a gift that kept on giving, and over the years Paul would eventually undergo six further surgeries.



Following recovery, Paul taught and coached soccer at Westchester Country Day School in High Point for the next two years, which he loved every minute of. At that point, he seriously considered pursuing a college coaching career but instead decided to apply to graduate school.



While attending the UNC-G School of Communications, he played for Greensboro United Football Club, one of the top teams in the South at that time and won two consecutive NC State Open Cups.

After graduating with his Master of Fine Arts in Communications, he began a career writing and producing films and television, which he pursued for the next 14 years until segueing into a marketing career in the early 90s. During that time, he met and married his wife, Jayne Isaacson, who was the Executive Director of the High Point Family Service Agency, and together they raised their daughter, Taylor, and son, Jordie, who, years later, would give them five beautiful grandchildren.



Paul's life trajectory then once again dramatically changed on a cold and rainy Friday morning, April 16, 1993, while he was on his way to play squash at the Greensboro YMCA. At precisely 4:55 A.M., after taking a shortcut through a part of Oak Hollow he had never been before, Paul drove upon a deadly flash flood and took part in the dangerous, near fatal, rescue of a 70-year-old High Point woman. Ella Mae Bowman was on her way to work the first shift at a local textile plant in downtown High Point when disaster struck. Distracted by the darkness and stormy weather, she inadvertently drove into the flood waters and became trapped in her car, which was swept away by the strong current. Within minutes the car was sinking, rapidly filling the interior of her car with water that could drown her. Paul, with the help of another man, broke her out of the submerged car, got her to shore, and revived her.

For his actions that morning, Paul was awarded the Carnegie Hero Medal, our nation's highest civilian recognition for heroism in 1994 and with the monetary stipend that accompanied the medal, he established the Lighthouse Project Foundation.

Paul believed we as a nation were doing a terrible job putting good role models in front of our young people. The Lighthouse Project's mission became bringing in nationally and internationally known positive role-models to speak in our local schools to inspire local young people to be leaders and make wise, positive "life choices."

“A legacy is built over decades of faithful leadership, wise stewardship, and an unwavering belief in the power of community. For 28 years, Paul Lessard didn't just lead this Foundation; he helped build something that will serve High Point for generations to come.”

-BARRY SAFRIT
*CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER, MARSH CABINETS
PAST-CHAIR, HPCF*





Over the next 26 years, the Lighthouse Project brought in more than 70 speakers including such luminaries as: Vietnam War hero, Lt. Clebe McClary, USMC (ret.); Coach Boone, the inspiration for the film *Remember the Titans*; Robert Woodson, a McArthur Genius Grant Recipient for his work with kids in the inner-city of New York; Dr. Patch Adams, inspiration for the film, *Patch Adams*; Gizella Abramson, a WWII concentration camp survivor; Ben Carson, Neurosurgeon, Author of *Gifted Hands* and future Presidential candidate; James Bradley, the author of *Flags of our Fathers*; and many more. Paul likes to say that he made every mistake that could be made—at least a couple times each—and gradually learned the Foundation business through trial and error.

In 1998, Paul was recruited to become the Founding President of the High Point Community Foundation which, over the last 28 years, has grown to over \$135 million in assets under management and to date has granted over \$130 million back into the community of High Point.

“For 28 years, his leadership shaped not only this Foundation, but the future of High Point itself. Through faithful stewardship and a deep love for this community, he built a legacy that will continue lifting lives long after his tenure comes to a close.”

– MARK NELSON
MANAGING PARTNER, DODSON,
SHELTON & NELSON, P.A.
CHAIR, HPCF

Paul still recalls the first day he walked into the Foundation’s one room office that Phil Phillips of First Factors had provided free of charge. That morning, upon arrival, Paul settled in at his desk upon which sat a telephone and a laptop. A single framed picture hung behind him on the wall that had been given to him by the Colonel to celebrate his new job.

Out of instinct, the first thing Paul did was fold his hands and bow his head as he prayed, “Heavenly father, this is your Foundation. I pray that you will guide and direct us because if I’m the only one in charge here, we’re in big trouble!”

A strong and diverse Board of Trustees was soon established with 38 community leaders who stepped up to govern, oversee, and support the new endeavor. Jim Morgan, the founding Chairman worked hand in hand with Paul and the original Executive Committee to raise not only money, but also build the brand of what would one day become High Point’s largest funder.

Bill Horney served as the first Development Chairman and, together with Paul, began calling on folks who loved the community and were willing to support it. In the first year, Paul would speak more than 75 times and, together with Bill Horney, raised the assets under management to over \$25 million. Midway through that year, Paul realized the organization could not really say the Foundation’s doors were open for business until it took what would be one of the most significant and courageous steps in the Foundation’s history.



“I have had the privilege of watching our Community Foundation grow under Paul’s leadership, and what stands out most is not just what he has accomplished, but how he accomplished it. Paul has always worked with integrity, humility, and a deep, sincere love for this community. He has also been consistently driven by his faith and his belief that our Community Foundation and the money we have raised and granted belongs to God, and we are called to be faithful stewards. What Paul has built over the past three decades will not only be measured in dollars granted, but in lives changed, nonprofits strengthened, futures made brighter. That will be Paul’s legacy, which I believe will endure for generations to come.”

—JIM MORGAN
FOUNDING CHAIRMAN,
HIGH POINT COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
1990-2004

The Board of Trustees voted to take a calculated risk to allocate \$100,000 out of the newly established endowment to fund the very first HPCF Annual Grants program. The grants would be open to all nonprofits operating in the Greater High Point Community, and a Grants Committee was formed with George Erath serving as the first Chairperson. Organizations such as Open-Door Ministries, the Police and Fire Departments, Family Services, United Way of High Point, Guilford County Schools, D-UP, Helping Hands, Rabbit Quarter Ministries, West End Ministries, and others applied and received the Foundation's first grant checks. As they had hoped, the community learned first-hand what the Foundation had been created to be, a "reservoir of hope," a financial resource that would meet the everchanging unmet needs of High Point for generations to come.



In the years that followed, the Foundation would continue to grow to \$30 million in 2004, to \$50 million in 2011, and to \$100,000,000 in 2017. The Donor Advised Funds and the Endowments under management grew larger every year, and by 2026, the Foundation assets reached the \$135 million mark. Over the years, the Foundation has invested in everything from food insecurity, education, crime reduction, support for homelessness, downtown development, community health, needs of the elderly, and youth initiatives.

“In 1998 High Point leaders entrusted Paul with a remarkable mission to steward the hopes, dreams and generosity of its citizens. He has fulfilled their vision with humility, wisdom and an unwavering commitment to serving the people of our community.”

- ANN BUSBY
COMMUNITY LEADER
PAST-CHAIR, HPCF

Key moments that have come to define the Foundation over the years have included the Foundation's quick and decisive response to the COVID-19 epidemic in 2019 when the doors remained open, and Paul and his staff put over \$250,000 into the hands of High Point's courageous nonprofit providers within seven days. By the end of the crisis, more than \$1 million dollars had been invested to feed and treat the most vulnerable in High Point.



When local leaders and the city began investing in the redevelopment of Downtown High Point, the Foundation played a key role by managing and distributing over \$50 million without charging fees for projects including the transformation of the library parking lot that now hosts a fresh market every Saturday, the Truist Stadium, the Children’s Museum and other development around the stadium.

Other flagship initiatives include the establishment of *Students First* that addresses needs in our local schools; *The Heart of High Point Fund* funding organizations that serve basic needs; a *Women’s Fund* that invests in the needs of women and children; *Say Yes*, now called *Shift_Ed*, a countywide last dollar scholarship program, for which the Foundation raised over \$40 million dollars; the *HPCF Literacy Initiative* that raised over \$1million dollars to fund an innovative High-Dosage Tutoring program that has become a national model by insuring all students are reading at grade level by 3rd grade; and most recently, working toward the goal of raising \$40 million to fund the *Housing Impact Fund* initiative.

“As one of the original founders of our Community Foundation and a member of the selection committee who interviewed Paul and attracted him to work with us, I’m familiar with his impact and grateful for his stewardship. He took on a hopeful idea and grew it into a thriving organization that knows how to identify needs, attract donors, and apply purposeful influence in the lives of so many. It is difficult to quantify Paul’s immeasurable investment of heart and spirit in our work. He will be remembered as an extraordinary champion combining philanthropy and citizen engagement to create outstanding results for all of High Point.”

- DR. NIDO QUBEIN,
PRESIDENT, HIGH POINT UNIVERSITY

Paul believes the true strength of our Community Foundation has been and always will be an engaged and committed Board of Trustees, community leaders who will understand and address the constantly evolving needs of High Point.

“While we may not be able to even imagine what the needs of our community will be 100 years from now, our Board of Trustees will,” states Lessard. “By then our Foundation’s assets will be well over a billion dollars! Just imagine the incredible impact we will have upon our future generations!”

Serving something larger than himself has always been Paul’s motivation and driving force, whether it was his dream of serving in the Marines, captaining the HPC Soccer Team, working with youth soccer, risking his life to save Ella Mae Bowman, establishing the Lighthouse Project, and eventually serving

with a remarkable team of leaders to grow a \$5 million Foundation into a \$135 million resource that will serve the needs of the community he loves for generations to come.

Paul, who was recently awarded the Order of The Long Leaf Pine from the Governor for his career achievements, is currently the longest serving Community Foundation President in North Carolina. In December of 2026 Paul will be stepping away from what has been his most fulfilling life’s work, and he is confident those who follow him in leadership will continue to take the Foundation to even greater heights. Most of all, he will be grateful for the opportunity God and High Point has provided him to give back to the community that so warmly and graciously welcomed an ambitious 17-year-old soccer player who came looking for a great soccer team and, by the grace of God, found a home.



Make a Difference

in our community

- Create a Donor Advised Fund
- Contribute to our Community Impact Fund to support Annual Grants
- Donate to one of our Initiative Funds (Students First, Heart of High Point, Women's Fund, Housing Impact Fund)

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What will we
MAKE HAPPEN
today?

The lifeblood of any nonprofit organization is the people who serve, share their wisdom, and lead as Trustees.

We have a rich history of men and women who have played key roles in the growth and governance of our great endeavor. This is key to the success of our Community Foundation. Times and needs will change, but the wisdom, strength, and leadership of Trustees will always remain the same.



A VISION FOR GIVING

The Catalyst

HIGH POINT COMMUNITY FOUNDATION