

spring 2023

Thriving in Place: How Greater Heights is Empowering Senior Citizens

Norm Elam spent decades working hard to raise his family in Hackensack, NJ, commuting daily to work as an MTA bus driver in New York City. He was used to the hustle and bustle of a big city – flashing lights, loud noises, a city that never sleeps. But when his late wife, Carrie, suggested they move down to Florida – he didn't think twice. They packed their bags and made their way South. And he was no stranger to travel, as he spent years serving our country in the Air Force as a jet engine mechanic. Once his family landed in Orlando, Mr. Elam traded the city bus for a Disney shuttle bus, and a magical new work endeavor began.

But as Mr. Elam got older, and after his wife passed, finding a stable, safe space to live and to be cared for became daunting. After hearing about Greater Heights from his daughter, a resident herself, he put in an application. Shortly after submitting the application, he was approved to move in.



presents to the kids, and more. I feel blessed by God," Mr. Elam shared proudly.

Reliable and affordable housing is critical for seniors like Mr. Elam. Not only that, but it can provide a number of benefits, including financial stability, health and well-being, social connection, access to services, and peace of mind. Overall, affordable housing can help senior citizens to maintain their independence, improve their quality of life, and provide them with the support they need to age in space.

We feel blessed too, to have tenants like Mr. Elam and his family in Greater Heights, a community living up to its name – providing greater heights to all residents dwelling there. It is a joy to live and work alongside them, and provide hope and a safe place for them to rest their heads.

I enjoy my stay here. It's quiet and peaceful. Everyone looks out for each other.

At 88 years old, Mr. Elam is young and vibrant. "I enjoy my stay here. It's quiet and peaceful. Everyone looks out for each other," Mr. Elam shared about living in the community. "Neighbor Up Brevard does lots for the community. During the holidays, they give us food, deliver



THE POWER OF THE DOCK FOR YOUTH SUCCESS

Portraits of Irene Summerford, longtime resident of the Booker T. Washington area, and visionary and founding Director of the DOCK, are plastered across the colorful walls of our community center. Her wisdom, advocacy for children, and legacy of love ring through the halls – loud and clear!

And if she were alive today, she would be so proud. Since opening its doors in 2001, the DOCK continues to provide a safe and supportive environment for youth to learn, grow, and thrive. From creative music workshops, hands-on STEM experiments, spiritual mentoring, experiential field trips, and so much more – there's no shortage of exciting enrichment happening daily afterschool.

But our program is about more than that. We're also committed to helping our students develop the skills and confidence they need to succeed in school and beyond. Our experienced mentors offer one-on-one support and tutoring in subjects like math and reading, while other staff and volunteers provide guidance and mentorship as our students navigate the challenges of adolescence.

We sat down with Jade, a kindergartener who attends the DOCK program on a daily basis. Since beginning the program this year, she already feels she has found a second home. "I love coming to the DOCK to see my friends, and I love doing karate" Jade says, smiling. She looks forward to many more days with her friends and mentors at the DOCK everyday afterschool.

As we look ahead, we're excited to build on this momentum



and continue expanding our afterschool youth program. We know that there is so much potential and promise in each and every one of the DOCK students, and we're committed to helping them reach their goals and achieve their dreams. We hope you stick around for the ride as we continue to pour into our youth so one day, they can pour back into the community!



BRINGING COMMUNITY TOGETHER AT THE EVANS CENTER



For many years, Neighbor Up has been a vital partner to Evans Center, Inc. a social enterprise located in NE Palm Bay/SE Melbourne. Opened in March 2019, the community market at Evans transformed a former USDA-designated “food desert” into a food oasis! Evans played a critical role during COVID as a safe, walkable place to purchase fresh produce, meats, and other staples. There is also a warm food deli on site. In an area with few commercial establishments, Evans Center has generated jobs including mentoring 18 teens in their first job. In fact, Evans Center has invested over \$1 million into this low-moderate income community through jobs. The resident staff’s commitment to bless their neighborhood runs deep! The Brevard Health Alliance operates a clinic at Evans, providing preventative and sick care to adults on a sliding fee scale. Classroom space at Evans hosts health & wellness programs such as children’s cooking camps and senior fitness classes. Evans is a summer-time site for Read & Feed, a children’s outreach that provides free warm lunches and books to youth in need. Evans also hosts workforce training, civic meetings, and social affairs. This unique, holistic approach brings multiple services under one roof, making healthy living more possible. Evans Center is a valuable and appreciated community resource and the sole nonprofit of its kind in this county! See more at evanscenter.org.

Evans Center’s sponsorship in Florida’s Community Contributor Tax Credit Program yields a wonderful benefit for business donors. Businesses that pay Florida taxes typically receive 40% -50% of the value of their donation back, through tax credits or sales tax refunds. It is a very simple process and now is the time to act, as donations must be made prior to July 1. To learn more, please contact us at 321-591-6683 or lynn@neighborupbrevard.org.

SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT: The Williams Family

Meet the Williams! The Williams are a local family dedicating themselves to positively impacting the community! Mike and Theresa became acquainted with our organization as volunteers in 2003, when Neighbor Up was planting its roots. And the Williams have stood by Neighbor Up ever since, not only as financial contributors, but as fierce advocates. But perhaps most importantly, the Williams family are enthusiastic ambassadors for Neighbor Up Brevard’s development. The Williams family have generously utilized their company, MHWilliams, to be our builder at cost with every Neighbor Up Brevard development. The development contributions include the DOCK Children’s Center, Greater Heights Apartments, the DOCK Teen Center (in collaboration with Sutton Properties), and the Evans Center. They have even committed to Phase II of Greater Heights, slated to begin early next year.



Such generosity is the Williams’ way of putting their faith into action. Participating in our mission to help revitalize impoverished neighborhoods is one way that they show honor and gratitude to God. And Mike and Theresa’s sons, Mike Jr (MHWilliams) and Matt (Matthew Development), are following in their footsteps: developers by trade, and advocates for the community at heart. When asked why he gives, Mike Sr shares “...for me, it’s about seeing the end product. People living in a community where they can feel safe and secure brings me peace and joy.”

Spotlighting this family for all the good they do for Neighbor Up and for Brevard is vital. People like the Williams family are what this world needs – people who use their market skills and resources to bless others. They are the definition of hand-uppers – not hand-outters: As a result of their impact, because they have chosen to invest in a mission that is bringing opportunity to people, their legacy will continue; with every DOCK scholar graduate, with every family afforded stability and a roof over their head, and with every citizen merely looking for a place to commune and get a healthy bite to eat.

Thank you, Williams family, for all you do for Neighbor Up Brevard and the community. Your hard work and dedication are truly appreciated, and we look forward to continuing to work with you to make a positive impact in the lives of others!

*And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;
you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;
you shall be called the repairer of the breach,
the restorer of streets to dwell in. (Isaiah 58:12)*

2022 IMPACT REPORT

Greater Heights

Affordable housing matters!

- The average fair market rent for a two-bedroom in Brevard is **\$1,196**.
- The hourly wage necessary to afford such an apartment is **\$23**, a salary of \$47,840 a year.
- For a single mom working a minimum wage job (\$10/hr), that would require a **114-hour** work week.
- Total number of residents 46 (29 adults, 17 children).

\$17,500

is the average household income at Greater Heights and rents are based on income.

Greater Heights is a great place to live! Crime in the BTW neighborhood has dropped by **67%** since the DOCK and Greater Heights were built.

Here's what you made possible in 2022!

The DOCK

Kids who attend the DOCK come from households where socio-economic factors are stacked against their success in school:

- **89%** of households are led by single moms.
- **76%** Black and Hispanic.
- **97%** low-moderate income with an average household income of **\$26,500**.



The DOCK is leveling the playing field and setting youth on a path for academic and lifelong success!

The average GPA of DOCK youth is 2.6 with 100% of DOCK students advancing to the next grade for school year 2022-2023.



4

DOCK teens were employed as Junior Leaders for summer camp 2022.

No child with regular attendance has been arrested or dropped out of school since the DOCK opened in 2004.

The DOCK graduated **4** seniors in 2022 and has graduated **32** since the teen program opened in 2018.

How we do it:

The DOCK served **124** unduplicated youth ages 5-19 after school and for summer camp in 2022.

The DOCK was open as a safe haven for **908** hours after school and during the summer.

DOCK youth received over **220** hours of academic support and **80+ hours** of character education.



The DOCK served over **1,600 lunches** and over **8,000 healthy snacks**.

Make a gift to Neighbor Up Brevard -

2022 IMPACT REPORT

Gifts from the Heart

The 2022 store
included 2 locations.

Parents from 228
families purchased gifts
for their children.



This program is
the effort
of 8 partner agencies.



605
children received three
gifts each.

3

seasonal
employees.



75

volunteers.

Evans Center

Evans Center is raising the standard of health!
The Evans Center is 6,000 square feet dedicated to healthy living.



78

is the average number of households
who patronized the market every day.

Since opening, Evans Center partnerships
with Sustainable Workplace Alliance and
Brevard Public Schools have helped
approximately 50 adults.

The Evans Center serves 2,500 households of
the Powell/Driskell Heights subdivisions.



As a host site for the summer Read n' Feed
program, Evans fed a total of 177 children, with an
average of 59 children attending each day.

The Brevard Health Alliance Clinic at Evans served
2,528 patients in 2022.



The Evans Center is currently providing
16 new jobs in the neighborhood.

Since opening our doors in 2019, Evans Community
Market has mentored 18 teens in their first job.

"Eat the Rainbow" Cooking Camps taught 26 youth
kitchen safety and healthy eating habits by preparing
a variety of colorful, delicious meals!



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Brett Wherry – Treasurer

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- Make an INSTANT & LOCAL IMPACT!

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE DOCK CLASS OF 2023!

We are so proud of all your accomplishments.



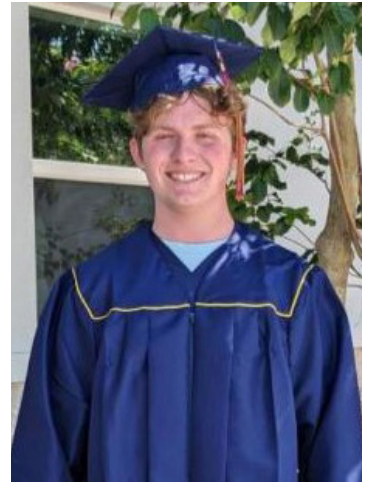
Jahlee Campbell
Eau Gallie High School
EFSC



Takira Johnson
Eau Gallie High School
EFSC



Joseph Melendez
Melbourne High School
USN (Navy)



Connor Rodgers
Eau Gallie High School
Colgate University

Not pictured: **Antonio Hadley-Worford**, Eau Gallie High School, *Trade School*

Special thanks to our Community Partners—donors who make a monthly pledge to Neighbor Up Brevard and provide necessary operating funds for the organization:

Angelon Barber
Mary & Rick Blucker
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Stephanie Brinson
Ryan Brown
Rev Cynthia Brust
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GIVE WITH CONFIDENCE!



Neighbor Up Brevard is proud of our Guidestar platinum seal.

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



*Catalyst (*noun*) – an agent that provokes or speeds significant change or action

Change (*verb*) – to make radically different; to give a different position, course, or direction to

Hello Friends,

We are so glad you are part of Neighbor Up Brevard. As you read the stories and see the impact report in this “Catalyst” issue I bet you’ll agree that this newsletter is appropriately named!

Neighbor Up recently celebrated its 22nd year of partnering with community leaders and good neighbors to affect long-lasting change. Neighbor Up has played a catalytic role in bringing expertise and resources for project development. Those developments have become spaces where youth grow and

thrive; where families and seniors establish residency and help stabilize the neighborhood; and where healthy lifestyle choices become more possible.

Also related to change, have you been wondering about our annual spring fundraiser, the Anchor Breakfast? You haven’t missed it! This year we won’t have a fall fundraiser. The Anchor Breakfast will be held on September 14th. Mark your calendar for this signature event! Look out also for more Catalysts throughout the year, in the form of e-newsletters.

Lynn

*Merriam-Webster

A Day in the Life at the DOCK!





Hope inspired. Community driven.

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Hope inspired. Community driven.

Anchors aweigh! You're invited to SAVE THE DATE

ANCHOR BREAKFAST

**SHIP SAILS AT 8AM ON SEPTEMBER 14, 2023
AT THE HILTON RIALTO**

7:45 a.m. - coffee + conversation

8 a.m.-9:30 a.m. - breakfast + program

join us in celebrating 20+ years of neighborhood revitalization!

Stay tuned for more information. We can't wait to see you there!