

spring 2025

## The DOCK:

### A Lifeline for Youth & Teens Through Holistic Afterschool Programming

In today's fast-paced and complex world, after school programs play a pivotal role in the development and well-being of children and adolescents. The DOCK (Dorcas Outreach Center for Kids), a cornerstone program of Neighbor Up Brevard, exemplifies how holistic afterschool programming can transform lives and communities. By addressing educational, social, and emotional needs, the DOCK provides a vital lifeline for youth in the Booker T. Washington Park neighborhood and beyond.

According to the Afterschool Alliance, 11.3 million children in the U.S. are left unsupervised after school, increasing risks of academic underachievement, behavioral issues, and exposure to negative influences. Conversely, children in afterschool programs demonstrate:

- **Improved Academic Performance:** Students in these programs are 2.5 times more likely to improve their grades and test scores.
- **Reduced Risky Behaviors:** A 25% reduction in drug use and a 40% reduction in juvenile crime rates.
- **Enhanced Social Skills:** Participants are 70% more likely to report better relationships with peers and adults.

These statistics underscore the importance of programs like the DOCK in providing a safe and enriching environment for children during critical after school hours.

The DOCK's holistic approach distinguishes it from traditional afterschool programs. The program offers:



1. **Academic Enrichment:** Tutoring, homework assistance, and activities that inspire a love for learning.
2. **Life Skills Development:** Workshops on financial literacy, conflict resolution, and leadership equip students with essential tools for success.
3. **Emotional and Social Support:** Staff, mentors, and counselors help students navigate challenges, build self-esteem, and foster positive relationships.
4. **Creative and Physical Activities:** Arts and crafts, dance, karate, sports, and other fitness activities promote overall well-being.

#### The Impact of the DOCK

Over the past five years:

- **High School Graduation Rates:** 100% of DOCK participants graduated high school, compared to the national average of 85%.
- **Post-Secondary Enrollment:** 67% pursued higher education or vocational training.
- **Community Engagement:** 90% reported increased involvement in community service and civic activities.

These outcomes benefit individuals and foster a generation of engaged, capable, and compassionate citizens. Even with its many successes, the DOCK faces funding and resource challenges. According to the

*(Continued on inside)*



# Greater Heights:

## Addressing the Growing Need for Affordable Housing in Brevard

The need for affordable housing in Florida has reached a critical point. Rapid population growth, rising property values, and increasing rental costs have left many families struggling to find stable and affordable housing options. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, Florida ranks among the top states with the highest housing cost burdens, where nearly 1 in 3 households spends more than 30% of their income on housing. The impact of this crisis is widespread, affecting economic stability, educational outcomes, and community cohesion.

### The Housing Crisis:

A Snapshot: Recent statistics highlight the urgency of the issue:

- **Rising Rents:** The average rent in Florida has increased by over 30% in the past five years, outpacing wage growth.
- **Home Prices:** Median home prices in the state have surged by nearly 50% since 2019, making homeownership unattainable for many.
- **Low Availability:** Florida faces a shortage of over 400,000 affordable rental homes for extremely low-income households.

These figures spotlight the pressing need for innovative and sustained efforts to provide affordable housing solutions.

At Neighbor Up Brevard, we recognize the transformative power of affordable housing. Our **Greater Heights** affordable housing program is a testament to this commitment. This 18-unit rental community currently serves 48 residents, providing them with safe, stable, and affordable homes. By offering affordable rents in a secure and supportive environment, Greater Heights helps reduce financial stress and fosters a sense of community.



Building on this success, we are excited about the upcoming **Greater Heights II** project. This new development will expand our capacity to serve even more families in need. Scheduled to break ground this year, Greater Heights II will include eight additional rental units designed to meet the diverse needs of our community, ensuring more individuals and families can access the housing stability they deserve.

### The Broader Impact of Affordable Housing

Affordable housing does more than provide shelter; it creates pathways to hope and opportunity. Stable housing improves educational outcomes for children, enhances physical and mental health, and strengthens economic mobility. For communities, affordable housing fosters diversity, reduces homelessness, and promotes local economic growth. Every dollar invested in affordable housing generates significant returns, from job creation during construction to long-term savings in healthcare and social services.

The need for affordable housing in Brevard is undeniable, but so is the impact of effective, community-focused solutions. At Neighbor Up Brevard, we remain steadfast in our mission to provide housing that inspires hope and catalyzes prosperity; because every family deserves access to the stability and opportunity that a safe and affordable home provides.

(DOCK: A Lifeline... *continued*)



Brookings Institution, every dollar invested in afterschool programs yields a \$3 return through improved academic performance, reduced crime, and increased workforce readiness. Supporting the DOCK addresses immediate needs and lays the groundwork for a brighter, more equitable future. The DOCK exemplifies the transformative power of holistic afterschool programming. By addressing the multifaceted needs of young people, it provides them with the tools to overcome challenges, achieve their potential, and contribute meaningfully to society. Let us rally together this year to ensure the DOCK continues to be a beacon of hope and opportunity for generations to come!

## Enhancing Vocational Education and Training (VET) Opportunities at the DOCK

Neighbor Up Brevard is thrilled about the expansion of VET programming and services for older adolescents at the DOCK, which is vital for equipping teens with employability skills for the future. This new initiative responds to a growing trend: more students are choosing to pursue trades and professional licenses immediately after high school, bypassing traditional college routes. This practical path not only aligns with workforce demands but also offers a direct route to financial independence and stability.

### Why Vocational Education and Training (VET) Matters

VET provides hands-on training, preparing students for high-demand fields such as healthcare, construction, and technology. Research shows that students in VET programs are more likely to graduate and secure well-paying jobs. In fact, VET participants experience a 10% higher employment rate within two years of graduation compared to their peers.

### A Vision Backed by Generosity

The implementation of this new initiative is made possible through the incredible support of our partners. **Orion180** contributed a generous donation of \$25,000, believing in our mission and the potential of our students. Likewise, the **Embraer** Foundation awarded \$28,250 to fuel this initiative. This funding will allow us to hire a part-time VET Coordinator, ensuring students receive personalized guidance and access to top-tier resources.

### What This Means for Our Teens

With the expanded vocational education and training opportunities, students will now benefit from:

- **Specialized Training:** Access to workshops and certifications in areas such as IT, plumbing, and automotive repair.
- **Career Coaching:** One-on-one mentorship to explore career paths and navigate post-graduation options.
- **Industry Partnerships:** On-the-Job training through internships and apprenticeships with local businesses.

### Building a Future of Opportunities

Thanks to the trust and investment of Orion180, Embraer Foundation, and individual donors, we can provide our teens with tools to succeed in the modern workforce. By focusing on career readiness and technical skills, we're not just preparing students for jobs—we're empowering them to build brighter futures. The VET program enhancement at the DOCK is a milestone in our mission to inspire hope and catalyze community transformation. We are so grateful to our supporters for believing in the potential of our youth and teens. Together, we're shaping a future where every student has the opportunity to thrive.



Hope inspired. Community driven.

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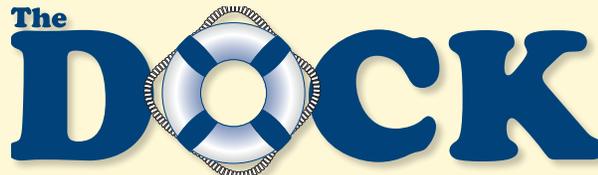
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# Impact Report



**DORCAS OUTREACH CENTER for KIDS**

Socioeconomic factors that impact academic achievement:



**70%** of households are led by single moms.

**Family's income** relative to the median income: **68% Extremely Low Income, 18% Very Low Income and 9% Low Income.**

**76%** Black and Hispanic.

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

The **DOCK** graduated **5 seniors in 2024** and has graduated **42** since the teen program opened in 2018.



The **average GPA** of DOCK youth is **2.58.**

**99%** of DOCK students advanced to the next grade.

## *How we do it:*

- The DOCK served **158 unduplicated youth grades K-12** after school and for summer camp in 2024.
- The DOCK was **open as a safe haven for 952 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 **2,000 lunches** and over **8,000 healthy snacks.**

# 2024



**Greater Heights**  
Apartment Community

**Affordable housing matters!**



**53** Families provided **safe affordable housing** since 2009.

Average length of residency: **6 years.**

**48 Residents** currently housed in affordable well-maintained units: **29 Adults, 19 Children.**

**100%** of survey respondents report an **improved quality of life.**



**24** Housing applicants currently waitlisted.

*Greater Heights is a great place to live!*



*Gifts From The Heart*

**2024 Seasonal Christmas Shop stocked with affordable toys**

**1** Location.  
**3** Community partners – Neighbor Up Brevard, Community of Hope, and Family Promise of Brevard.

**Families served 57.**

**145 kids served.**

**Community volunteers: 95**

**Gifts collected:**

**1200+**

Quote from a GFTH customer:

*“This has been amazing! I actually feel excited for Christmas now as opposed to a few hours ago being frantic with worry. Will the kids have an amazing Christmas, or will the water/power be cut off because funds are limited...one or the other. And now, I am able to do both with your assistance. Thank you, thank you, thank you! I am so grateful.”*



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

Linda & Tom Brandon  
Cynthia Brust  
Natasha & Brian Cartegena  
Tyrone & Denise Carter  
Ashford Clunie  
Justyn & Jillian Cole  
Joe Croswell  
Ashlee Davidson  
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Claudia Marra  
Michelle & Eric Mello  
Kim & Nat Miller

Carol Sanchez  
Kim White & Booker Schmidt  
Tiffany & Steven Sergis  
James & Janeille Sisserson  
Kenneth Stackpoole  
Leslie & Tom Tibbetts  
Trinity Wellsprings Church  
Amy & Brian Turner  
Mark & Judy Wallace

## Letter from the Executive Director



As we enter into a new year, I want to take a moment to express my sincere gratitude for the lasting impact we accomplished together in 2024; and, look forward with excitement as we continue the good work of building communities for Christ!

Looking back, *community prosperity* has never been the language of barriers, it has always been the language of bridges. To that effect, thank you for being the bridge that connects kids to opportunities to learn, grow, develop and pursue their dreams! Thank you for serving alongside us in our efforts to create affordable housing to bridge the housing affordability gap for our most vulnerable neighbors! THANK YOU, for helping Neighbor Up Brevard build bridges between individuals and communities that have been historically under-resourced; inspiring a sense of unity, shared purpose and connection! Hopefully reading through this edition of *The Catalyst* and reflecting on the past year, evokes a sense of pride and accomplishment. However, our work is far from over.

Looking forward, "*We have every one of us a charge to keep ... needful duty to be done ... our generation to serve.*" This year we are excited to offer DOCK kids, specifically older adolescents, more career-focused services aimed at connecting program participants with resources and services to develop their passion and interest in various careers with an emphasis on those that do not require a 4-year degree. We will also enlarge our territory by constructing more affordable housing options for seniors as well as low-income households. We are grateful for the ongoing support of **Matthew Development, LLC** as we endeavor to develop eight additional units of affordable rental housing by the end of this year. Lastly, we will continue to strengthen our community and build connections with fellow *neighbors* who share our commitment to making Brevard County a better place for all by providing more neighborhood services and offering our facilities as safe supportive spaces for local residents to gather, learn, access community resources and flourish.

On behalf of all of us at Neighbor Up Brevard, thank you for your generosity, prayers and support. Because of your faithful service and cooperation, we remain uniquely positioned to provide hope, opportunity and tangible resources to individuals and families across our community.

*LaShaundra*

**GIVE WITH CONFIDENCE!**



**Neighbor Up Brevard is proud of our Guidestar platinum seal.**



**Neighbor Up Brevard is a proud United Way agency.**



Hope inspired. Community driven.

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SAVE THE DATE FOR  
NEIGHBOR UP BREVARD'S

# Anchor Dinner

WITH KEYNOTE SPEAKER  
CAPTAIN WINSTON SCOTT



📍 Where: The Grand Manor

📅 When: Friday, April 25, 2025

🌟 Theme: Expedition Beyond

For more information, including sponsorship opportunities & tickets, scan the QR Code.

