

IMPACT
EDITION



IMPACT. EDITION 2022 / ISSUE 01 ■

WHO IS MIAMI

STORYTELLING FOR CHANGE



STORIES
THAT INSPIRE
COLLECTIVE
ACTION FROM
GRASSROOTS
ACCELERATE
THE CHANGE
WE NEED

Miami's diversity and multiculturalism, unique entrepreneurial spirit, and bustling art scene inspired the launch of Impact.Edition, an intellectual media space that brings together businesses, artists, startups, academics, social enterprises, and nonprofits: all those who shape Miami's local culture and business ecosystems.

Impact.Edition empowers readers with best practices and creative solutions for a more just, more sustainable world. Our journalism merges meaning and emotion to drive positive social change, raise awareness about an issue and connect on a human level.



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WHO IS MIAMI

STORIES WORTH READING & REMEMBERING

We call them ordinary people doing extraordinary things. They are of different ages. They are of different cultures and skin colors. They work in different industries. But their truth, wisdom, power, and beauty are in what they do consistently and – sometimes quietly and invisibly – for a better world.

“Who Is Miami” is an alternative way to discover this beautiful city through the lens of Greg Clark’s photography and our stories about social innovators who make tremendous efforts to make life more just, resilient, and sustainable. Most importantly, they bring us back to our shared humanity, empathy, kindness, and solidarity.

We are excited to present our first printed edition of Impact.Edition magazine, full of stories that enrich our souls and fuel our minds.

Through the creative power of community journalism, we can fill the gaps in a fragmented news landscape and among our neighborhoods. Through our research, networking, and storytelling, we articulate sustainable, alternative development that strengthens our broader communities’ capacity for advocacy and resistance. Something as simple as a story, or photography, can accelerate social discourse, justice, and inclusivity in Miami, and add meaning to our city and uniqueness to our communities.

We hope you’ll find inspiration in this collection of our most in-depth, inspiring stories of people driving change fearlessly and tirelessly.

Thank you to everyone who supports us on our journey.

With ♥ from Miami,

Yulia Strokova & Samantha Schalit



IMPACT.EDITION **Leadership**

Yulia Strokova, Founder & Editor-in-Chief

Samantha Schalit, Content & Community Lead

IMPACT.EDITION **Writers**

Kacie Brown, Social Impact Writer

Sofia Zuñiga, Social Impact Writer

Anjuli Castano, Social Impact Writer

Katy Prohira, Contributor

Juan Ortega, Graphic Designer

ORCHESTRATING CHANGE

Why mass access to music education is critical in helping young people build neural pathways for mental health and resilience

by **Kacie Brown**

We call it the universal language, a puzzle of frequencies pieced together through time and space that communicates so viscerally to an audience of strangers it forges a shared experience. But music's practicalities – a history dominated by the perspectives of white men, a need for expensive instruments and highly trained instructors, plus a precarious place in an education system with values that often lie elsewhere – challenge equitable access to meaningful education in the art defined as much by the community as it is by technical skill.

Even through these challenges, music education programs are innovating to enrich students' entire lives in measurable, enduring ways. Organizations like Guitars Over Guns, Miami Music Project, and South Florida Center for Percussive Arts use music to equip students with pivotal skills like teamwork, critical thinking, and resilience. They're creating social change, starting with our youngest generations.

Musician, Chicago-native, and founder of Guitars Over Guns, Chad Bernstein, says music's power as a comprehensive educational tool comes from its science and history.



Miami Music Project





“It’s primal. Music has been a part of every society, every organized group of people, since the beginning of time. As a form of communication and a way of connecting with people, music accesses the entire brain. But really, at the end of the day, it’s the emotional connection that we feel through music that allows us to either express ourselves or find ourselves expressed through something that’s been created.”

Chad Bernstein
Founder of Guitars Over Guns

Chad says studying music is critical in helping young people build those neural pathways and find means for expression.

“It’s very important that these kinds of programs give the kids a chance to have a chance.”

Meeting students where they are

Programs like these don’t have to be expensive. Miami Music Project offers after-school programs and summer camps; 96% of their students come from low-income families and more than 95% are non-white. If a student qualifies for their public school’s free —or reduced— lunch benefits, Miami Music Project waives the registration fee, and they also provide students with most instruments.

Like other youth orchestra programs, Miami Music Project immerses students in classical music with a rigorous rehearsal schedule, but their goal isn’t to send kids to conservatories. Speaking from Michigan’s renowned Interlochen Arts Camp, where she was chaperoning a group of Miami Music Project students attending on scholarship, President Anna Klimala says the program’s biggest role is to use intensive musical study to build skills that uplift students in communities with what she calls “untapped potential.”



The Miami Music Project serves students from 62 zip codes, but efforts like theirs are happening on a smaller scale too. Yale-bound Fadhina Petit-Clair graduated in 2021 from Miami's School for Advanced Studies. She won a Miami Herald Silver Knight Award for teaching violin to students with autism. Primed with a background in music and years of experience working with kids with special needs, Fadhina taught students from her aunt's special education class.

Then the pandemic hit. Fadhina couldn't meet with students in-person anymore and didn't have access to enough violins to send one home with everyone, but she didn't give up. *"I thought to myself, violin teaching is not a priority anymore, it's figuring out how we're going to give these students some support so they're able to succeed in the next school year,"* Fadhina says. She adapted to offer her students virtual academic tutoring every weekday. She says she was sure to include some element of music in

each of her lessons, like basic music theory, or songs to help students memorize their multiplication facts. Fadhina found that traditional classical music lessons weren't the only form of music she could use to support her students. Guitars Over Guns founder, Chad, who's performed with artists like John Legend and Shakira, came to the same conclusion. He takes this idea even further.

Guitars Over Guns mentors meet with students at the many Miami-Dade County schools they partner with. They create safe, accepting relationships and communities with their students while training them in contemporary disciplines like drum set, hip-hop vocals, and music production. The students hold performances and even produce a music video of their own to finish off each year. This year, Guitars Over Guns released their first album, *The Rain May Be Pouring*. It features students, mentors, and alumni and delves into the myriad of trials 2020 carried.



Guitars Over Guns

by Greg Clark, Good Miami Project

“We’ve watched kids teach each other how to read,” Chad says. “We’ve watched kids unpack trauma and deal with it and support each other through it. We’ve watched kids break social strata.”

Compelling connections

In 2020, 100% of Miami Music Project’s graduating students went to college. Guitars Over Guns has reached more than 5,000 students, and 94% improved their GPA and school attendance records. But these programs’ leaders suggest that the most important skills their students gain are the ones that statistics can’t measure.

Fadhina focused on instilling resilience in a marginalized community. “Society often regards them as incapable,” she says. Because of this, her choice to teach an instrument regarded as one of the most difficult to learn was intentional. “I thought this would help them to make their presence known,” she says.

Beyond the sounds —the voice— they’re helping students discover, the emotional intelligence these programs cultivate start students on a path out of invisibility. Guitars Over Guns trains their mentors to facilitate tough conversations. They’ve identified literacy challenges, and other struggles, that otherwise would’ve likely gone unnoticed. Their mentors are all mandated reporters and work closely with social workers embedded in the programs to support students holistically.

Chad says he first discovered the compelling connections music cultivates while helping lead a music program at a juvenile detention center. At first, the kids weren’t interested. The big names he’d collaborated with didn’t impress them. “We’re about to pack up and leave, but we’re like, let’s play a song before we get out of here. And as soon as we started playing, they were like, *oh, this is dope*, and they were in ... We realized that music was this way in, to start these conversations that kids weren’t otherwise willing to have and build these relationships.”

From extracurricular to a birthright

The South Florida Center for Percussive Arts runs music programs for children ages 18 months to 18 years. Through drums and percussion, young students begin with listening and imitation games and develop into confident readers and performers. They learn the fundamental techniques of the entire percussion family, their origin, and cultural history.

Funding for arts education is still rarely secure. The threat of decreased allotments for the arts during the pandemic prompted the National Association for Music Education to collaborate with other arts organizations on an initiative called Arts ARE Education. It provides resources for individuals, school boards, and school districts to prioritize arts education funding and promotes research linking arts education to better outcomes for students. The decline in arts funding isn't just a pandemic

“We have programs for the kids, youth, adults, for the children with special needs like autism. Their parents tell me, wow, they never come out of their shell like they did when they came from a drum jam class. I've worked with veteran senior citizens. We launched our summer camp. We have a jam session for all instruments on Wednesday nights. And on top of that, we get invited to do community events at other camps, schools, libraries, parks. Thanks to our donors, all these community programs are absolutely free or have a meager cost.”

Brandon Cruz

Founder & Director of the South Florida
Center for Percussive Arts



Guitars Over Guns

by Greg Clark, Good Miami Project



Guitars Over Guns

by Greg Clark, Good Miami Project





Guitars Over Guns
by Greg Clark, Good Miami Project

problem, though. A 2011 President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities report found stark declines in arts education decades in the making, suggesting that both budget cuts and a narrowing curriculum are to blame. The fact that these programs, educating often-forgotten students in a regularly neglected subject, survived through a pandemic is a big deal.

“Every time I hear that music education is extracurricular or it’s used as a reward...I just cannot help but become very passionate,” Anna says. “Music education should be a birthright.”

And, for Chad, the ability to guide students in that birthright-worthy discipline is gratifying in itself. ■

“The energy that comes back from the audience and the crowd — that is a magical, special, spiritual place in my life, the place that I feel closest to whatever higher power you believe in. That’s the altar for me. To experience that and chase that as a lifetime pursuit is an incredibly wonderful thing. But to be able to give that to somebody else? It’s maybe the most powerfully transformative gift in the world.”



Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning



Reduce inequalities within and among countries

WE LIVE OUT HERE

How cultural practices, beliefs, and rights of indigenous people are tied to the health of the environment and why you should help protect them

by **Anjuli Castano**

On a Saturday April morning, I joined activists, scientists, and nature lovers at a trailhead off Alligator Alley (I-75 highway). About 30 people stood in a circle at the southern entrance of the trail, in a prayer led by Betty Osceola, The Miccosukee elder who organized the walk.

The plan of action was to walk four miles in and back down a pathway of wet prairies covered in dwarf cypresses and sawgrass. The trail had been flattened by Burnett Oil's investigations of the Big Cypress Preserve. We were there to learn about Burnett's proposed plan to expand their oil exploration and see one of the expected drilling sites.

Walking through the tall sawgrass, I felt the natural cooling effects of a green space. I witnessed pollinators dance from flower to flower fulfilling their duties. The soil was rich and inviting, asking us to feel its nutrients. I obliged, taking my shoes off to let the earth squish through my toes and kiss my blisters.

I felt free and protected, the way you'd want to feel in your home. That is the role of an ecosystem, to be the home of all the independent abiotic and biotic

life which build the harmony needed for all to live in health.

Yet, those who call the Everglades their home do not feel free or protected.

In 2021, the Texan oil developers sent in four applications to expand their oil-drilling sites with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection — just five days before President Biden signed an executive order pausing oil exploration on public land.

Their first interactions with the preserve though, were in March of 2017 when they ran through 200 miles —the distance of Miami to Orlando— of sawgrass, marshes, and cypress forests in war-like vehicles causing “mechanized land clearing, ditching and channelization,” according to a 2020 report by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Plowing down the homes of snakes, birds and crawfish, they left only a dried vastness of depressed soil. The Corps later rescinded their conclusion because of Burnett's “expressed commitment to environmental stewardship...”



Betty Osceola
Environmental Advocate
by Greg Clark, Good Miami Project



by Greg Clark, Good Miami Project



“ We are the two-legged manifestation of the earth; in indigenous teachings it is all about we.”

Burnett’s upper hand in this battle comes from the Big Cypress ‘split estate’ status, meaning the surface is owned by the federal government —and protected as a preserve— while the underground minerals ‘belong’ to Collier Resource Company, giving them the right to lease the land to Burnett Oil.

The law of man may treat the earth as property, like an antique pocket watch or a painting, which can be stolen or fought over. But you cannot divide the ground from its minerals nor can you divide the sea from its shore. The Collier empire holds the legal rights to violate the land and still, all they do not own on that land inevitably becomes collateral damage.

The Big Cypress Preserve and the Everglades, as a whole, are a home to many indigenous populations. The wood storks, panthers, and mangroves all serve a purpose in regulating and continuing the systems of life there, which are interconnected with the systems of life in urban areas. The city may feel detached from nature but it’s not.

Ownership of the land, which makes us feel as though we are more valuable than it, does not allow for a relationship of reciprocity. The Miccosukee and Seminole peoples live and tend to these lands but they do not demand ownership, they demand respect. To fulfill the demand for respect, you cannot consider the land an inanimate object but as a moving, living being.

Betty Osceola, who sits on the Everglades Advisory Committee, shared with me the wisdom that was passed down to her from her elders:

The same *we* insists “the elements are nothing without the humans who are meant to be part of the whole.” Just like how humans are nothing without the earth.

“We all come from and embody the land. Learning how to respect the land is essentially learning how to respect ourselves,” she continued, expressing the ties between people and their environment.

“When you are speaking to the tribes, environmental issues are social justice issues because we live out here. There are a lot of decisions made that impact our daily lives, made by individuals who don’t exist out here.”

If we are not listening to those who live in and with the Everglades, how are we meant to love and care for the Everglades?

At the end of the walk, we sat near a proposed drilling site among splintered logs — ashy, white shards that used to be cypresses. We all gathered and rested. Betty steered the conversation and offered herself up to answer questions.

The question which prompted me to write this piece came from a young woman:

What is the best way to help?

With little hesitation, Betty responded,

“ART”





by Greg Clark, Good Miami Project



Houston Cypress

Co-founder of Love The Everglades

by Greg Clark, Good Miami Project

When I asked her why she felt art was the most effective tool for advocacy, she expressed how “The feelings of the artist are transmutable because the art is alive. When an artist is creating, there are a lot of feelings put into it and those feelings live through the art.” Politics and bureaucracy work through a “dead system” which only promotes exclusivity. Art conveys the human experience, giving safe space for even the most divided groups to relate.

Art is free to experience, publicly or privately; it's a medium of communication with the creator that doesn't actually require a dialogue. It can simply be felt and contemplated in isolation. Politics create a hierarchy of systems not to be felt but to survive through. The freedom that art brings empowers community care and disciplined organizing so conversations of respect and responsibility begin. In systems of punishment and oppression, we see endless cycles of violence.



I spoke with Jane Thayer, the program manager at AIRIE, Artists In Residence In Everglades. For 30 days they provide housing to one artist and immerse them in all things Everglades. This year they celebrate 20 years of coupling artists, scientists, and native stewards to build bridges of understanding.

Jane shared that AIRIE's mission is to help artists become interpreters of what they learn in the Everglades and relate it to the public, "being able

“The medicine man knew all about the circle of life. How to stay in harmony with the dance of the universe.”

to communicate specific issues but also build awareness about it in general. You link people to a desire in stewardmanship.”

“In order for there to be success in an environmental movement there needs to be equity and diversity,” Jane continues. “We’re working on bridging the gap between science and art, using artists as communicators.”

I asked Jane if she felt art was ‘alive’ as Betty puts it. She says that with art, “even if it’s not a language you speak, there will always be an emotional response.” A shared human trait.

One of the overseers and a collaborator with ARIE is Houston Cypress, the co-founder of Love The Everglades. He uses all forms of art to bring awareness to environmental issues and the livelihood of their people. Houston believes all should “have an understanding of how our cultural practices and beliefs are tied into the health of the environment.” He recently collaborated on a short film titled “Every Step Is A Prayer” (2021) available through NOWNESS, speaking on the interconnectedness of all living things in tandem with the earth.

Also available for viewing, is his short film ...what endures... (2021), an interfaith dialogue between Houston and local artist Sister Robin Haines Merrill. They share the joy and appreciation in understanding the earth as a living being, deserving of our awareness, through poetry and choreography. In his poetry, Houston writes: Defending the sacred is about giving back as much as we can to the land and those who protect

it as reparations for the exploitative relationships we already have with the earth. Houston made the point of asking “How can we share the joys of our gardens?” He continues, explaining how sharing curriculum, foods, or the ways we care for our children will close the gaps between us and our natural purpose as stewards of the land.

This deeper understanding of the territories we inhabit “cultivates compassion because we start to appreciate what is beyond us and all the beautiful things we are benefited by.”

There is an emotional, spiritual and environmental disconnect between the average South Floridian and this land when there should be a sense of kinship. Our first and largest national park, the heart of the state, the provider of drinking water for two-thirds of all Floridians and irrigation for much of the state's agriculture goes unfelt, unappreciated.

Oil-drilling in the Big Cypress Preserve will have detrimental consequences for generations to come due to the continuous fracturing of these habitats. Now, in the wet season through summer, some vegetation has grown back, but the effects of Burnett's last exploration can still be seen in the massive soil ruts, and the chilling absence of wildlife.

Central to the path toward healing the Everglades is unifying water sources and allowing the waterways to fall back into a south-flowing stream. The Everglades is Florida's natural filter, with water flowing from Lake Okeechobee through its nutrient-rich soil and into the Biscayne Aquifer sitting directly beneath it. It is fair to say we drink Everglades water everytime we drink tap water.

Interrupting the necessary flows by building roads and poisoning the delicate ecosystems with oil exploration has already proven damaging. According to the





by Greg Clark, Good Miami Project



by Greg Clark, Good Miami Project

Everglades Foundation, there is as much as 50% less of the pure filtered water that we all rely on in South Florida.

The tribes who live on reservations in the Everglades will be the first to be burdened with the consequences. But the rest of us are just as vulnerable to the harmful effects of ignoring the warnings from native populations.

I left the walk with a deeper understanding of how the abuses we infringe upon our ecosystems are abuses we do unto ourselves. The land, with all its life-sustaining forces, is an extension of ourselves. The more we can love the land the more we can love each other, and through art we are given the tools to communicate with one another on what that could look like.

Betty Osceola guided me through a meditation recently when revisiting the preserve. On a small patch of grass between the entrance of the trail and the busy I-75 we connected with our mother Earth and felt her breath bridge all gaps of unfamiliarity between animate and inanimate. I listened deeply to the grass swaying and the bugs crawling in one of the most humbling experiences of my life. Betty interpreted Earth's response, saying our mother was happy and she said thank you.

If you feel a stranger to this land, I implore you to lay outside with the soles of your feet and your palms touching the ground. Visualise the breath of life that flows through the ecosystems around you. Visit the Everglades and meet Houston for an airboat ride or any of the other locals who offer tours. Place a face to the name and find yourself in them. ■



Taking urgent action to tackle climate change



Sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss



Project T.H.U.G.

by Greg Clark, Good Miami Project

REDEFINE ME

While young black men are targets of racial profiling and police brutality, one organization is raising them to serve as beacons of integrity and leadership

by Anjuli Castano

Two Black boys unwarrantly stopped, rushed out of their cars, issued to raise their hands — all at gunpoint.

This narrative has been retold countless times in the last decade as citizens have taken it upon themselves to be primary sources in the defense against police brutality. Relying less on traditional forms of news and empowering ourselves, and each other, through social media. The truth of these events sparked nationwide outrage that manifested a renewed fight for civil rights and against anti-blackness.

David L. Jackson and Rashard Johnson became best friends in the 6th grade. In their adolescence, they too were protagonists in the story so often told. One afternoon, when leaving Aventura Mall, an officer in plain clothes cut in front of them, gun drawn, demanding they get out of their car.

A gun was pointed at them before words were even spoken.

David recalls the fear and confusion they felt, “What did we do?” he asked. The officer told them to shut up, that he was going to lock them up for disorderly conduct.

“Very often the way in which our young boys are perceived is: before they are judged by their intellectual aptitude, they're going to be looked at as criminals.”

David tells how “experiencing racial profiling for the first time together helped us see the world in a different way.” Their story did not have a fatal ending, reversely, while fostering a successful academic career, David and Rashard joined forces in the same fashion as when they were kids and founded Project T.H.U.G. (Transforming Hope, Unifying Generations).

Since 2019, Project T.H.U.G. has curated a space for young Black boys to unlearn the institutionalized racism that tells them they don't belong. Reclaiming the title of ‘thug’ is meant to “take that negative stereotype and transform it into something that typically doesn't exist for us,” David says.

They asked themselves, “How do we take the word and add substance to it, and how do we give our students something meaningful down the line? It really came down to unifying generations.”

In creating space for different generations of the Black community to share collective knowledge & experiences in conversation, Project T.H.U.G. is giving young Black men the opportunity to redefine themselves and transform their hopes for a greater future.

Both David and Rashard come from immigrant parents. David expresses how “watching them kick and scratch to make means,” inspired their work ethic and dedication to achieving a better life. They knew they were going to have

to work harder but never stopped moving with gratitude, keeping the mentality that they were going to give back. They carried this mentality with them developing their mission statement “The Future I Create,” which is about being more than what you have been told you are. Transforming. Hoping.

Project T.H.U.G. does much of their work through mentorship, Unifying Generations. By working with 8th and 11th graders they are offering tools to kids in pivotal times in their lives when transitions and growing pains are all-consuming. By fostering relationships grounded in respect and accountability among these age groups, the boys receive a full-circle mentorship experience. Coupled with their individual training in leadership, Project T.H.U.G. hopes to break barriers and heal traumas.

Rashard tells of one of his favorite workshops called “The Story With Me” where the boys fill out a ‘man box’ describing what a man is supposed to be like.

“We unpack that, and we kind of allowed them to know, you can be and you can do whatever you want to do.” There is a subconscious resistance from the students as they unlearn a toxic culture that was part of their upbringing.

He reflects on the largest obstacle when working with these kids, noting “We’re meeting these guys when they already have





Project T.H.U.G.

by Greg Clark, Good Miami Project

been through so much. And sometimes it's like, *okay, well, you're teaching me how to express myself in the correct manner, but I was never taught that, you know? I can't ask for help, because that's a sign of weakness.*"

Project T.H.U.G. is leading by example. David and Rashard use their own experiences with mental health to open conversations with their fellows. Their "Real Talk" sessions give the kids an opportunity to openly ask questions about all topics "whether that be talking about the prison system, talking about the racial injustice that's going on, especially with the protests that were just happening a few months ago."

David describes these sessions as an act of "teaching the languages of loving yourself."

With any openness, there is bound to be resistance.

David and Rashard have faced their fair share of criticism from members in their communities, whether it was their choice to reclaim the title of thug or through their alternative teaching styles. When met with opposition, David says you can do one of two things:

“You can continue to pull the other direction, making the link that much weaker. Or you can meet that resistance right in the middle and come a little closer. So, when it comes to resistance, it's all an opportunity to build, an opportunity to grow, to create. It's a chance to talk and then utilize the name of our organization to say that we're transforming hope and unifying generations.”





Rashard followed, stating very matter-of-factly and unperturbed, “Once we have faced that resistance that David spoke about, we're gonna still do the work.”

Never wavering, David and Rashard are dedicated to their community, to knocking down the aggressive stereotypes placed on them and the boys they have shown so much grace and love to. Project T.H.U.G. operates with compassion at the forefront of all their initiatives and will continue to do so as they both have confidently expressed.

As Rashard simply put it, “We’re doing what we got to do and making this change to begin a catalyst within our community.” ■

David L. Jackson and Rashard Johnson

Founders of Project T.H.U.G.

by Greg Clark, Good Miami Project



Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning



Reduce inequalities within and among countries





Green Haven Project

by Greg Clark, Good Miami Project

WE CAN FEED OUR WORLD

**Free meals, community
fridges & urban gardens:
which long-term solutions
could solve hunger?**

by **Katy Prohira**


In March of 2020, a visit to some of Miami's most established community food distribution sites meant waiting in line for upwards of six hours — only to walk away empty-handed.

Which was exactly what happened to Jessica Gutierrez and Kristin Guerin, founders of Miami Community Fridge, a Buddy System Initiative. They decided then, that the need of their community was much greater than they thought. Something had to be done, so they began to hold their own weekly food distributions.



Green Haven Project

by Greg Clark, Good Miami Project



Buddy System began as a volunteer placement program in response to the coronavirus pandemic. In less than a year, it evolved into a fully established nonprofit organization focused on providing food security and advocacy resources for those in need throughout Miami.

Shortly after they began offering weekly food distributions, the founders quickly became aware of the deeper socioeconomic issues that plagued the city, which had only intensified after the pandemic hit. Buddy System suddenly became a “COVID resources hub.”

Using their organizing power, they started to work with other established organizations and a group of approximately 100 volunteer case managers to provide social services for those in need.

Jessica recalls the early days of coming together as a sort of “divine intervention” during a critical time for Miami and the world.

“It was coming from a place of, we really need to be there for our community and support our community in any way possible, and I never thought that it would get to where it is today.”

Sharing food

Today, Buddy System has over 950 volunteers that provide food distribution and advocacy services for upwards of 5,000 individuals throughout South Florida. This includes 10 community fridges located in public spaces that enable food to be shared amongst the community; anyone can put food in and take food out.

And with the recent unveiling of their 10th community fridge, at Mana Wynwood, the organization has no intention of slowing down.

In April 2021, they planted a community garden, which will be followed by the opening of their first food pantry.

What started as a “Band-Aid” for their community in need, has evolved to an organization aimed at providing long-term solutions to hunger through education and art for social change.

If you find yourself wondering how you can help, the answer is: donate whatever you can. Whether that be your time as a volunteer helping to clean and maintain one of the 10 community fridges throughout the city, or by sharing your creative talents to help build a website, paint a fridge or get the word out through social media. Every action, no matter the size, can help.

“Another huge thing would be advocacy and education. And keeping that at the forefront,” Kristin explains. It’s not just the Band-Aid of picking up food at the food distribution, and it’s not just the Band-Aid of community organizing. Each of these play a role together to create long-term systemic change.”

Growing food

Unlike Buddy System, which was started just over two years ago, Green Haven Project has been serving its neighborhood for over four years. A community garden in Overtown, Green Haven Project is on a mission to educate and empower inner-city communities to grow their own food. Through urban gardening, educational workshops and food distributions, they are fighting to reduce inequalities and create sustainable communities.

Community activist and president of Green Haven Project, David Roper, manages the two acres of urban farmland, which he estimates that, by now, has fed thousands of inner-city residents.

His goal: to provide long-term solutions to hunger by teaching youth to become self-sufficient and emphasizing the value of growing their own food.

“You may see an issue within your community that no one's touching on. And if you feel strong about it, and you feel it's an issue, do something about it. Build your teams, get up off your booty and do something about it.”

Open pretty much every day of the week, the garden runs on the efforts of volunteers to provide free food for anyone in need within the community. And since its inception, David has seen his efforts extend far beyond that of his own community.

“As time progressed, more and more people would come to the garden and want to help in any way they could, or to collect fresh fruits and vegetables, not only for Overtown,” he explains. “A prime example: on Saturday, we gave 30 bags for 30 different families to take to Little Haiti.”

David goes on to discuss how this same system can be adopted almost anywhere, as long as you have the drive.

“We have folks that want us to implement the same thing we're doing in Overtown in other spaces within the city as well.”

In addition to the community of volunteers that show up each day,

David recognizes the roles that other organizations throughout Miami play in the fight against food disparity and hunger. Working with other local groups, like Citizens For A Better South Florida, The Miami Give Back, and Dream Defenders are just a few.

“Whenever we collaborate with these organizations, it's to expand the resources that we all have. So, prime example: we have fresh fruits and vegetables, and The Miami Give Back, which is a group of barbers and beauticians that provide haircuts and hygiene services to people that are houseless, also provide food and clothes.”

“It's kind of like bringing pieces of the puzzle together into our own picture and expanding it. We have containers where we hold things like clothing, canned goods, dry food, Pampers and diapers, hygiene packs, so if anyone needs anything, they can just come to us and be like, *hey, I need this*. And we'll go in the container and give it to them.”





Green Haven Project
by Greg Clark, Good Miami Project



“We want to show people that this can be done; you can change something that you may not agree with, or most people might not see a solution to. And as long as you have that drive, and you have that consistency, you can create change.”

How can you help?

As David puts it, simply show up.

“You don't have to necessarily join what we are doing or help us. You may see an issue within your community that no one's touching on. And if you feel strong about it, and you feel it's an issue, do something about it. Build your teams, get up off your booty and do something about it.”

Rescuing food

Since 2011, Rescue Food US has provided over 52 million meals and delivered 69 million pounds of food.

Everyone could be a food donor or food rescuer. Follow the instructions on their website and help reduce food waste.

Not only is food waste detrimental to our communities who are suffering from food disparity and hunger, it continues to harm our environment. According to UNEP's Food Waste Index Report 2021, “The fact that substantial amounts of food are produced but not eaten by humans has substantial negative impacts:

environmentally, socially and economically. Estimates suggest that 8-10% of global greenhouse gas emissions are associated with food that is not consumed.”

For years, organizations throughout South Florida have worked tirelessly to provide food for their communities in need. With over 130 food distribution programs throughout Miami, many low-income residents rely on these programs to provide essentials they have little, or no access to.

Through food-rescue, food-growth and food-share programs, community agents of impact are working hard to bring circular economy solutions to the problem of food waste and insecurity. Hunger is not an issue of scarcity; it's a matter of logistics, an efficient use of resources, and an exercise in empathy.

Green Haven Project, Buddy System, and Food Rescue US are just some of the dedicated organizations who are working hard to manage food waste and fight food insecurity within Miami and throughout South Florida.





Green Haven Project

by Greg Clark, Good Miami Project



Green Haven Project

by Greg Clark, Good Miami Project

For more information, or to volunteer at any one of the other activist organizations, check out Instagram:

Compost For Life offers a compost pickup service to reduce environmental impact by diverting food waste from landfills, and recycle it into high quality soil to create a sustainable cycle. By composting you are eliminating the emissions of the methane gas, which is 21 times more potent than CO₂.

@compostforlife

Bridge to Hope provides services and programs to low-income communities and those individuals in need during times of crisis. They aim to provide comprehensive wrap-around support to improve health and promote self-sufficiency within the community.

@bridge2hope

Feeding South Florida is the largest food bank that serves Palm Beach, Broward, Miami-Dade and Monroe County. Through general food distribution programs, children's and senior programs and disaster relief preparations, Feeding South Florida serves 25% of the state's food insecure population.

@feedingsouthflorida

Health in the Hood provides access to fresh foods and education to low-income neighborhoods, through their Urban Farms and Filling Fridge Program throughout Miami. ■

@healthinthehood



End poverty in all its forms everywhere



To end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture



Taking urgent action to tackle climate change and its impacts



Sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss



by Greg Clark, Good Miami Project



YOU, INCLUDED

Two community leaders enlighten what we do right – and wrong – in the quest to build truly inclusive physical and digital spaces for all

by **Kacie Brown**

Starting at 10 a.m. on Biscayne Bay, children’s smiling eyes reveal the beginnings of meaningful connections. Kids sail in pairs, a child with a disability cruises through the water with a high school mentor.

Harry Horgan, an ocean-lover paralyzed by a car accident at age 22, co-founded Shake-A-Leg Miami to give people with disabilities an equal opportunity to enjoy the water. But their impact extends beyond leisure; Shake-A-Leg has been hosting adaptive watersports and vocational development programs for people with physical, developmental and economic challenges, together with their families and friends, for nearly 32 years.

“When you're out there sailing in the middle of Biscayne Bay and looking back at Miami from a different perspective – feeling the breeze and filling your lungs and your spirit with it all – that water has magical qualities.”

On the water, Shake-A-Leg participants gain essential “soft” skills and socialization through programs like Seaworthy Transition, which helps prepare young adults to join the workforce. Socialization opportunities in an inclusive, positive setting are

invaluable, especially for young people who have experienced highly-segregated educational environments. Students also gain watersports training and learn about practical skills, like boat and facility maintenance, dock operations, and customer service. Once they complete the course, they're able to apply for a summer internship, further experience in support of their goals.

No element of sailing lies untouched at Shake-A-Leg. Adults in the Vocational Program learn about woodworking, operating in a workshop, and even creating adaptive equipment aids. This program operates in partnership with Miami-Dade County

Public Schools and The WOW Center, a training center serving adults with developmental disabilities.

These are just two of the many programs Shake-A-Leg offers. They serve business groups and other adult groups with the Adult Shake Days, where groups can build team rapport and communication through watersports or environmental clean-up projects. They also help prepare students for the transition out of high school with activities like paddlesports, multimedia, and even island exploration with the Sunday Social program. The Shake Days for Kids teach kids with and without disabilities to sail and kayak while they learn about



marine life and improve hand-eye coordination and social skills.

Harry says activities like these are chipping away at obstacles to equality. They're showing parents of children with disabilities that their kids are safe. They're providing welcoming connection to people who are often isolated. They're revealing purpose and possibility to people who have heard they'll never amount to anything.

"We want those that are feeling down and not seeing potential. There's nothing but opportunity to get out in the water and go home feeling better," he says.

Harry says he sees hope for the future, especially in Shake-A-Leg's work with young people who haven't internalized unfair stereotypes that can diminish confidence in their potential. Shake-A-Leg helps inspire them to dream and to see those dreams through to fruition.

“Socialization is probably an element that we all need to work on to get more people with disabilities into activities that resonate with them. They can make relationships that will make them feel whole. So, getting them to have better self-esteem is something that has to be done.”



by Greg Clark, Good Miami Project

Shake-A-Leg helps foster this self-compassion and social engagement in disabled veterans, too, through courses ranging from boat-building to fishing.

“When you give a person an opportunity, a support system, and ways for them to succeed and make friendships, their outlook on what's possible changes completely,” Harry says. “When you figure that out, you can live life to the fullest.”

Context: 20% of the population is disabled

One in four American adults lives with a disability, according to the CDC. That's close to the same percentage of Americans who have Samsung smartphones. Furthermore, almost everyone will experience a disability at some point in their lifetime. Yet inaccessibility and prejudice still present barriers to equality for people who use a chair to move or their hands to speak.

The CDC also states that one in three adults with disabilities (ages 18 through 44) lack a health care provider. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that only 19.1% of people with disabilities were employed in 2020. Most of them experience higher rates of poverty, criminalization, and racial discrimination.

Many recognize the need to work against ableism – a term used to describe discrimination and prejudice against people with disabilities – to achieve equal opportunities for and treatment of people with disabilities. Disability advocates like Beth Wagmeister consult businesses on how they can comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

We are inclusive tech

Beth first found aptitude and joy in sign language at summer camp in the Wisconsin Dells. She became a sign language interpreter, but her superiors'

repeated dismissals of her concerns about the treatment of people she interpreted for led her into a rich career of advocacy.

Like Harry, Beth says she sees a lot of positive change as she works to increase accessibility and awareness, particularly in Miami's tech hub. She mentions Michelle Bakels of G2i who won't show up to a talk without an interpreter, coding schools like Boca Code that educate students on web accessibility, or Stark, a company focused on making software more accessible.

“The South Florida tech community has just been the easiest to convince of all industries. It's been wonderful, and I think it's because they're so innovative. They realize that things change so rapidly, and they want to stay relevant.”

The shift to more remote work also brought opportunities for people with disabilities. “For people who maybe have anxiety about being in an office, or work better in a quieter place without the socialization and distractions, or need to take medication at a certain time, they now have the comfortability of being at home,” Beth says.

When reflecting on her hopes for the future, she talks about organic inclusion of the needs of people with disabilities. Generally, we don't have to request accessible parking spots anymore. We don't have to ask whether there will be accessible bathroom stalls – they're a given. And people like Beth are working so that hopefully soon, we won't have to check ahead of time to find out whether there will be an interpreter at a community event, or a large-print version of a brochure. Things like these won't be “special needs.” They will be everyday components of an inclusive world. ■



Photo courtesy of Shake-A-Leg Miami



“My goal in my life, the legacy that I would love to be able to leave behind, is to remove the ask.”

Beth Wagmeister



Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning



Reduce inequalities within and among countries

THE SWEET TASTE OF A CIRCULAR ECONOMY

How can a plant-based ice cream shop in Wynwood influence a sustainable movement for small businesses?

by **Sofia Zuñiga**

When you buy ice cream, do you ever think about the impact that one scoop can have on the environment? From the contents of the ice cream to the packaging, your purchase can have a bigger effect than you expected.

Founded by Ola Kayal in 2019, Nabati Ice Cream aspires to be completely waste-free and is taking action both in their store and in their community.

The yellow corner shop on NW 25th street is an ideal example of a small business carrying out the circular economy concept, moving away from the outdated, linear —“take, make, dispose”— model and shifting toward "reducing, reusing, recycling, and sharing" initiatives.

More flavors - less waste

Ola eliminates as much food waste as possible by using every aspect of an ingredient. For example, after making their own almond milk, they use the dehydrated leftovers to make almond flour for their baking. Reincorporating waste products into production or the end product is the key element of a circular economy.

“As a young entrepreneur, I feel kind of responsible to whatever I create has to have a good impact not just on our bodies and what we eat, but also on the environment.”

Nabati, meaning “plant-based” in Arabic, offers 18 ice cream flavors such as Rose Goji Pistachio and Vanilla Mango Almond. Ola does not use any animal products, instead she blends cashews and coconuts for most of their ice cream bases. Nabati also offers nut-free bases, which are made from fruits and coconut milk. They also sweeten their ice cream with dates and maple syrup.

According to the United Nations FAO report, the livestock industry generates more greenhouse gas emissions than transport, it drives deforestation, pollutes water, degrades land and more.

Rethink packaging

Nabati still offers biodegradable single-use containers for customers but Ola encourages customers to bring their own containers whether



by Ola Kayal

they're looking to bring home a pint or stop in for a single treat; if a customer brings their own reusable container, they receive a 5% discount. She hopes to establish a return program soon, too.

Ola purchases all her raw materials in bulk to reduce packaging. She reuses any packaging they are given, such as Ziplocs, and uses them in the store. Nabati also composts all their food waste themselves. In a recent Instagram post, Ola brought her social media followers behind the scenes in Nabati to show them how plastic-free the store is.

Ola explained, "when you throw compostable or biodegradable material in the landfills —because there's a lack of energy and a lack of sunlight—they don't biodegrade. So, you're just adding to the pollution and adding to the waste without actually decomposing it."

The shop's compost is then turned into soil which is distributed to farmers in Homestead, ensuring a complete cycle. By sharing their journey on social media, other businesses can get inspiration and implement these practices into their own shops.

"We're building a budget to look into all the different elements of where we can be sustainable. And it's not just by cutting out plastic, but also looking deeper, having our main ingredients being always sustainable, not depending on any of the animal agriculture industry," Ola explained.

Among the Nabati community, they continue their eco-friendly and sustainable initiatives. Nabati highly encourages anyone to bring their own compost to the store for the team to handle it and properly distribute it to local farmers.

Eco-coaching

Originally from Saudi Arabia, Ola considers herself

a citizen of the world. She spent 10 years of her life in Switzerland and later worked in London. After graduating with a Bachelor's in sustainable business and culinary arts, in 2018, she visited Miami for the first time. She found the city a perfect place where there is no season for ice cream and plenty of opportunities for sustainable growth.

"Miami is quite a challenging environment to have a shop, especially a shop like mine with hyper eco-consciousness. From my experience here, many people aren't ready to pay more for being sustainable. We live so close to the ocean, and there's literally plastic everywhere. But I don't think the residents take it seriously and are ready to pay the price for it. So they would wait until they get some order from the city or some impact from higher authority. There is a little bit of a lack of discipline in Miami in general."

Hoping to encourage the general public to be more environmentally-aware, Nabati uses all their resources to spread their messages.

They continue their educational efforts on their social media channels with a weekly series called "Eco Monday," when Ola sits down and speaks about a specific issue. Recent topics include the detrimental effects of the fishing industry on the environment, fasting and what to pay attention to in a nutritional label.

“Whether it's the methane sources, or just deforestation and animal cruelty in all senses together, avoiding using any dairy or eggs helps me eliminate contribution to this.”

Their Instagram also has a "Sunday Swaps" series where they post alternatives to single-use or plastic

materials. Their suggestions include using bars of soap instead of bottles, bringing your own bags to shop, using bamboo cutlery and much more. All of these small transformations can have a big impact on the environment.

Ola also personally trains all her employees to lead more sustainable practices. By making sure everyone in the store follows eco-friendly practices, she creates a workspace that values sustainability, which is necessary for a business that strives for a circular economy.

Ola believes that businesses should work together and cooperate in spreading positive and eco-friendly initiatives. They “can accomplish a lot more than just standing alone.”

If businesses along a supply chain worked together, they could charge lower prices on sustainable goods and tap into audiences they wouldn't normally have access to.

Local businesses can share equipment and reuse machines that another shop may no longer need. They should also try to reduce transportation emissions by basing production near the resources and infrastructure that will be used to create the product. In buying local, raw materials, they will not only reduce transportation costs and reduce pollution but also support their neighboring businesses.

“We're already consuming and polluting so much that if we don't start making these changes, then we're just not going to have anything to live for,” Ola believes. “We can't ignore facts and just start a business still consuming these objects, even if it's cheaper because, at the end of the day, we're going to pay the price for it or our children will.” ■



Ola Kayal



Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

FROM GOOD TO **AWESOME**

Greg Clark, an environmental and social documentary photographer, speaks about his journey from Wall Street to the Good Miami Project

by **Yulia Strokova**



To see Miami with Greg Clark's eyes means to visit Miami, which is known and loved, but not by everyone. This is not about glorious sunsets and all-day-all-night Miami Beach vibrations. This is about Miami-Dade locals, at times overlooked, living outside the tourist havens; with very kind faces, modest smiles and bright eyes that are sometimes contemplative and truly tired. Each of them has their own story in the shade of palm trees; some of them would be painful to tell in words.

"I decided just to let the images tell the story," says Greg about the Good Miami Project. Greg founded

it in October 2020 as his 'reaction to the ugliness of pandemic time and media environment around.' "It's pictures of good things, it's obviously subjective, but it's about good people, organizations, and places."

"Some of the stories are pretty heavy but still hopeful and heartwarming. I photographed the Florida Immigration Coalition where I talked to families where the dad was deported, talked to his little kid or his wife. With YG Institute I worked with some ex-prisoners and discussed the issues around reintegrating back with society, talked to their families, and learned about all this stuff that they've been through. I wanted to focus more on this human side and make people laugh a little bit and not just have the ultra-serious images because I think that doesn't always tell the whole story."

Greg's passion for documenting the good work others do for their community started in early childhood. His community, growing up, was Shelter Island, NY. In the 1980s, algae bloom killed off most of the scallops and clams his father made a living off. That environmental disaster galvanized his lifelong effort to take care of how people interact with water.

Today, he is on the Board of Miami Waterkeeper, which he supports, as he says, "for my daughters!" For this nonprofit, Greg made dozens of images to illustrate the connection between humans and the waters around Miami with the goal to build community awareness and support fundraising campaigns.

Another turning point in his life happened on September 11, 2001. That day, Greg had been inside the World Trade Center (2 WTC 62nd floor) working for Morgan Stanley.

"This experience profoundly affected my life and world views," he says. "It made me want to



by Greg Clark, Good Miami Project



understand common humanity around the world more. It also crystalized that life is short, and I needed to move with haste on what I want to accomplish.”

After leaving New York for Miami, Greg found himself in a new reality, far away from Wall Street. He discovered a new beauty and meaning in life, full of social activism and a strong wish to help the community. After discovering Overtown, poetically named ‘the Harlem of the South,’ he began working with a small nonprofit named the Overtown Music Project, trying to bring music

back to this Miami's neighborhood. In the 1960s, the newly-constructed I-95 highway loomed above Overtown, and a vibrant middle-class, African American neighborhood was destroyed.

Greg became friendly with many musicians during his work and came up with a photo project called “I Played Here.” The concept positioned musicians in front of places that had once been nightclubs. Most of these locations were parking lots or empty lots. “This project changed how I thought about my photographic career and made me want to focus on



Greg Clark, Good Miami Project



GOOD MIAMI PROJECT

“The money and the will to do the right thing is challenging because sometimes you're highlighting flaws. And that doesn't always go with those glamorous messages that Miami tries to market itself. The reality is that the city is built on its pretty water. People sell the view for tourism and real estate, which are the main drivers of this economy. So a brown Biscayne Bay, which we saw last year, isn't good for business. So, it's like you want to hide it, but you also have to deal with it. It's a constant journey and battle and there's a lot of work to get this city to where it needs to be.”

helping nonprofits by donating my time and work,” continues Greg.

Greg is yet optimistic about Miami's path toward sustainability and resilience but he sees two conflicting forces that we still need to navigate in order to drive progress.

Greg has been living in Miami for almost 20 years. He believes in this city it is a lot easier to build relationships and get something off the ground. "It's not a big city still, in some ways."

"At the same time, there are a lot of the separate 'islands' here," he says. "So figuring out how to build the bridges between them is really the challenge if we want to see a truly supportive and sustainable ecosystem here, inclusive for people who live here for years and who just moved." ■



Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

‘I SEE MY FACE THERE’

The meaning of solidarity and what's missing in the quest to solve chronic homelessness

by **Anjuli Castano**



Under the highways and bridges of the Greater Miami area, you will find shelters molded together by the inhabitants' sheer will to survive, held up by the necessity of cooperation. The materials are the remnants salvaged after city-sanctioned clearings. If it wasn't for the recycled cardboard, tin, and plastic in its construction, the encampment would look like homes with furnished patios full with neighbors sitting and talking. The people who live there are without housing but not without community; there are lessons to be learned from their resilience.

Lisa Jones is 50, and has been living on the streets of Downtown Miami for 18 years. Her sunburnt cheeks perk up when she notices me approaching her, a wide smile and crinkled eyes ease me. In our conversation I feel I am the first to let her speak about her life. Her voice carries the same tone of desperation I hear in all of us witnessing and experiencing Miami's rising rents and environmental disasters. Still she's disciplined in hoping for a better future in the same way my peers and local organizers are.

Actively experiencing substance abuse disorder, Lisa has not found the level of support she needs to maintain recovery. After going through temporary

shelter programs she amounts them to nothing more than that, temporary, leaving her right back where she started. She, like other residents who live near the wharf, always finds a way to regroup in this area. These encampments offer spaces for autonomy as well as accountability with a "safety in numbers" mindset that comes from familiarity with the people and the place that those without homes have chosen to stay in.

"When we're all together like this, we're safe," she says, looking around at her neighbors who she has known for years.

David Peery; an outspoken advocate and former class representative of Pottinger plaintiffs, can attest to the traumas of experiencing homelessness: during the 2008 economic crisis, with the fall of the housing market, he lost his job, fell behind on rent, was evicted, and found himself with no family and no home in Miami.

“Whenever I see someone on the streets, I see my face there... every day you're in homelessness, it gets harder.”

He singles out intergenerational poverty and a lack of affordable housing as the causes of chronic homelessness, a systemic

maintenance of poverty and extreme poverty. It's exacerbated by the "misunderstanding in how we are all connected. How public policy excludes the poor from our economy, voting, affordable housing, and participating in the community as a whole."

Social exclusion is the barrier to reducing societal ailments, such as homelessness, because it stonewalls potentially productive members of society. In blocking those most affected from participating, we lose an invaluable understanding and perspective of the experience, and without it, we'll never establish a path to the solutions found in affordable, permanent housing.

"Ultimately, it's all rooted in policymaking," says Peery.



by Anjuli Castaño

Public policy and the systems they uphold are human-made; they're not immovable mountains or beyond our understanding, we have the ability to rebuild social systems so they are strong enough to uphold the rights of all.

Dr. Armen Henderson shared similar political parallels: that "when you start to draw connections like that, you start to see that the same underlying conditions that bar people from having adequate housing are the same conditions that [prove] individuals who do have housing [can be] on the brink of eviction."

In community actions such as the Foot-Washing event, which makes pediatric care accessible to houseless locals, Dr. Henderson and the Miami Street Medicine team make wins in building bridges between those who can serve and the underserved, through education and exposure to the conditions our houseless neighbors live in. Now, Dr. Henderson and his team have founded a free urgent care, one out of only 27 free urgent care centers in Florida. He says the location at 5505 NW 7th Ave was chosen with the neighboring residents in mind.

There is a Village (Free)dge right next to the new clinic where, he says, "There are an average of

200 individuals who get food from the fridge every day." Those experiencing food insecurity, who use the (free)dges as a resource, are overall financially insecure. Housing, physical and mental health, food; in poverty, all the basic necessities are compromised because of the lack of resources extended to those most in need.

“We aim to provide a free walk-in clinic that does not require appointment or insurance. The clinic is an extension of how I feel health care should be in this country, free and accessible.”

This awareness of how all struggles are inevitably connected is at the heart of Dr. Henderson's efforts and the clinic's operations. He employs medical students to provide the clinic's free services to not only "change the narrative in politics but in education." Training students through exposure debunks the myths of homelessness and instills a compassion that not only makes them better medical professionals, but it ensures that any patient they encounter, no matter their social status, receives equal treatment.

Misinformation about the experience of being homeless compromises society's



understanding of the full extent of services needed to address the traumas that perpetuate homelessness. Unless society collectively ends the othering of homeless people, unless the people and organizations closest to the issue are part of the problem-solving process and policymaking, homelessness will persist.

Miami Workers Center (MWC) is an organization that "works alongside people rather than over-promising any services," as Norma Uriostegui, tenant organizer with MWC, describes



it. Most, if not all, members of MWC are working-class renters who have faced evictions or abuses from slumlords. In essence, MWC practices homeless prevention through grassroots organizing.

Norma says “for us, it isn’t about rushing into crisis response, it is about what needs to be fundamentally changed in order for folks not to be pushed out of their homes so easily, as it is in Florida. We’re about doing the slow, intentional work of base-building to get to the root of the problem.”

Through teach-ins and strategy sessions where all members are invited to speak, MWC has created an informed people’s movement that challenges specific policies that historically burden renters and working class people. In less than a year of mobilizing, they won the creation of a new government resource, the Office of Tenant Advocate, where renters can go directly to file complaints and access assistance, the first of its kind in Miami-Dade. While a 60-day notice period for any rent increase is now required by law, an entire Tenant Bill of Rights – which would actualize a tenant's

right to legal counsel, place a cap on application fees and other protective measures – is now being introduced to legislative bodies, sponsored by Miami-Dade commissioner Raquel Regalado.

“It’s never been a single person, or the government, having a sudden change of heart, it’s always been people pushing forward,”

says Norma, and through MWC’s organizing efforts, we can see the change in both policy and people. Educating vulnerable communities on their right to freedom and

security yields the power of choice. This is what differentiates the Miami Workers Center from other organizations. MWC's vision is centered on the idea that everyone has the same right to demand their freedom and security.

Solidarity is about unity; it grounds all peoples in our connected struggles, and finding strength to overcome those struggles defines the power of community. *But the practice of solidarity is not exclusive to political action; rather, it requires the reshaping of societal and material dynamics that then inform changes in policy.*

Carlos Banks, creator of Clypr, is using his business to promote volunteerism within his community of barbers. For three months, Carlos gave free haircuts to residents of Camillus House. To him, "it was a no-brainer" to collaborate and provide his community with what he could. He explains how in a small business model, you "are part of the community, and without community, we can't be successful."

Miami-Dade County Public Schools runs Project UP-START, a program that helps students in unstable housing conditions succeed in school. In collaboration with the Homeless Trust, Project UP-START created an online Homeless

Sensitivity and Awareness curriculum for elementary and secondary schools. In person, UP-START volunteers are always available to meet at The Shop located at 750 NW 20th street. Here, Miami-Dade County's homeless students and families in need can "shop" for food, clothing, shoes, and personal items all-new, all for free.

The key to making a difference is finding niche ways to redistribute resources and revitalize our connectivity to one another. Identify the talents you have at your disposal and partner with others who share a common mission. A Small Hand (ASH), is a group of Miami locals who go out on Fridays to distribute clothes and food to the people of Overtown; they are solely funded by donations and collaboration with similar groups, sharing information and materials.

Daniela Hernandez, co-founder of ASH shares, "My hope and perseverance grows when we are able to effectively collaborate with other groups who share the same heart we do for this cause. It takes a lot of effort to do this work alone, and when we are able to work together, it reminds us how easy it can be [to share resources] and that other people are dedicated to making a difference in this community as well. It



UP-START Project

by Greg Clark, Good Miami Project



shows the world that a greater difference can be made when we work as a collective.”

Since their first year of service, ASH has made close connections not only with other organizations but with the people they support. Daniela says “our philosophy is simply to ensure the members of our community who have been displaced and [are] experiencing houselessness feel a sense of consistent support and friendship from us.”

During a food distribution, ASH introduced me to Ernst, 70. Living under a bridge on NW 3rd avenue, his favorite saying goes “today is the tomorrow you looked for yesterday.” There is no greater time than now to join an organization, volunteer for a food distribution, or push your local politicians to act with compassion. When the government, service providers, and members of the community can sit at the same table and when the narrative of who homeless people are is ruled by those experiencing it, we will see a more just world, and progress may finally be for all. ■

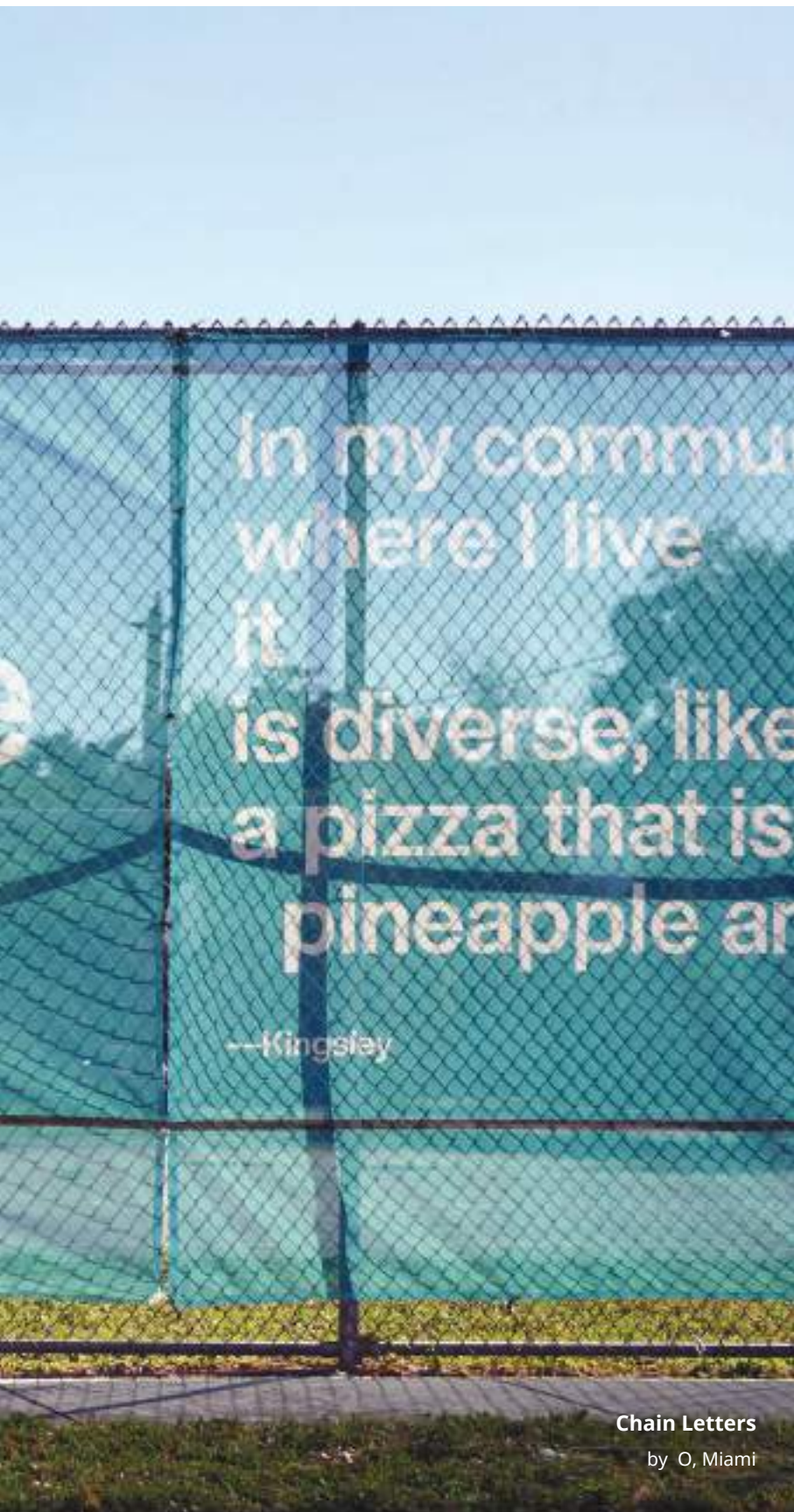


End poverty in all its forms everywhere



Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development



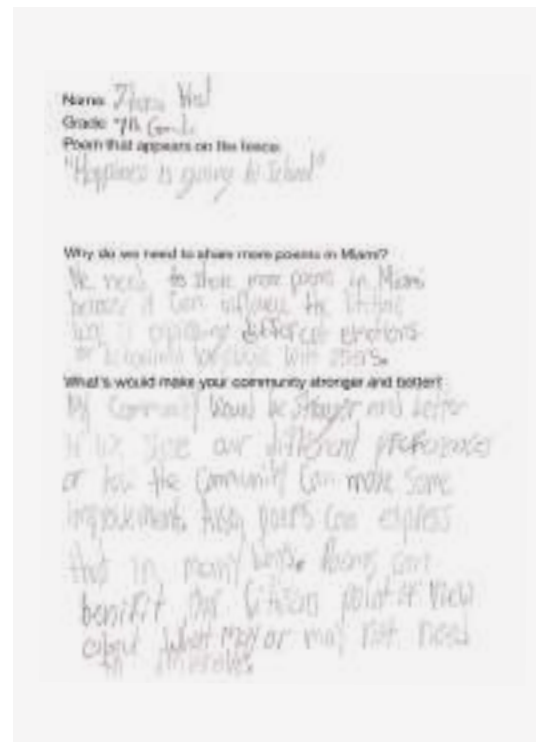


Chain Letters
by O, Miami



CHAIN LETTERS

Chain Letters features 28 poems by Morningside K-8 students in grades 3rd through 5th. The wrap transforms an everyday fence into a colorful art installation that greets commuters on NE 4th Court, adjacent to the school. The poems appear in four languages (English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, and French) and were written during O, Miami's Classroom Residencies at Morningside. ■



Name: Jennile G

Grade: 7th

Poem that appears on the fence:

You are a beautiful breeze
You are the sun's heat
You are so not specific
You are the butterfly that flies out my window.

Why do we need to share more poems in Miami?

There are alot of kids in miami that
want to use their voices to speak but
they can't so O-Miami helps with that.

What's would make your community stronger and better?

Communication because if we all
speak to each other and connect
the community is going to be stronger
and better.

Name: Kaleb Carcamo

Grade: 7

Poem that appears on the fence:

"I saw a rare moth in
my neighborhood and it
was a once in a
lifetime."

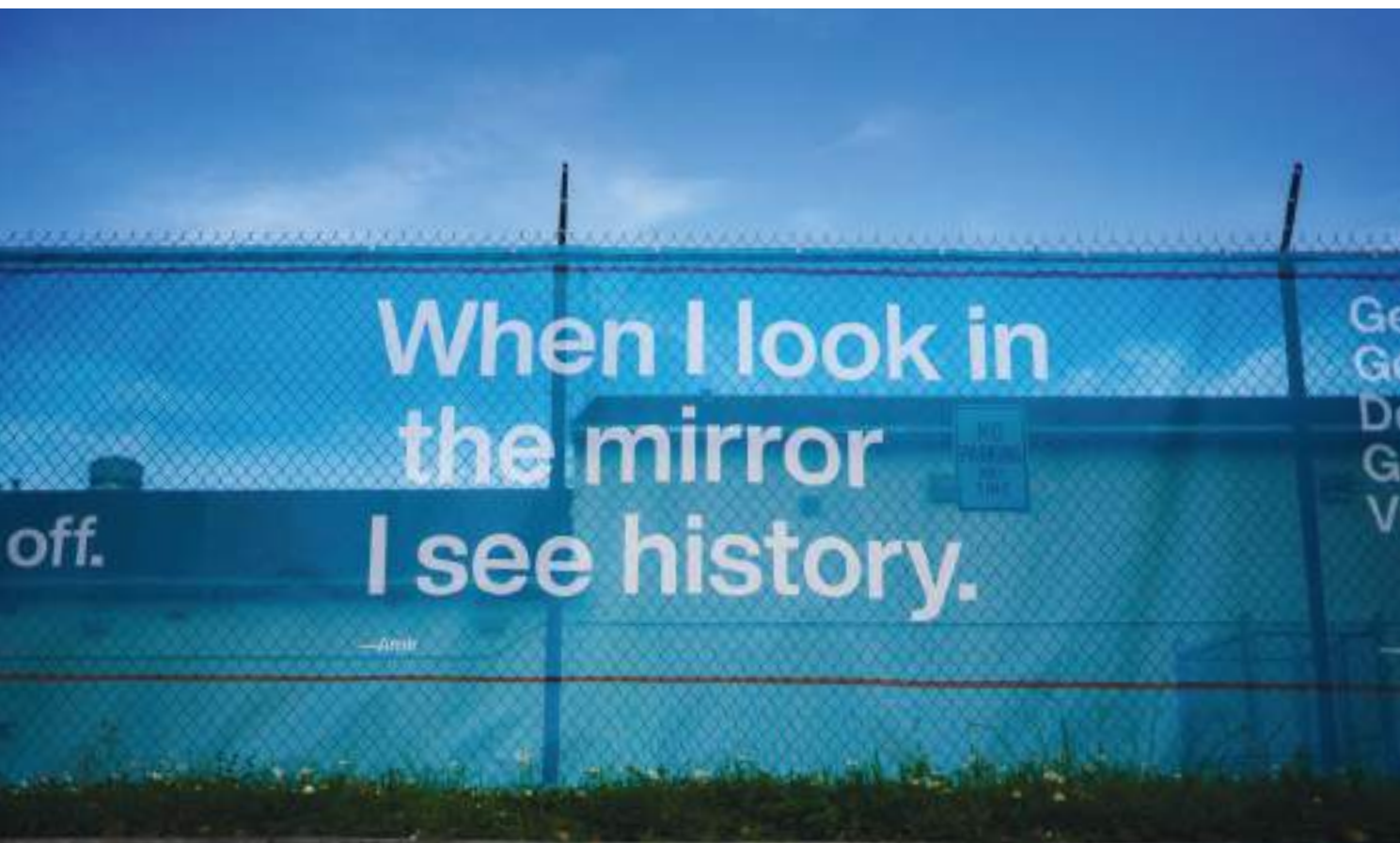
Why do we need to share more poems in Miami?

We need to do it so we can
inspire others to be them selves.

What's would make your community stronger and better?

People making a difference and
changing our community.







**SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS**



MEASURABLE IMPACT

We are one of the first media organizations to integrate impact indicators based on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to measure its performance. Connecting our stories to the Goals allows us to highlight the achievements of changemakers in Miami, share ideas and start conversations – inspiring action for positive social change on a local level eventually makes waves at a global level.

In 2015, the UN announced the SDGs as a call to action for countries, governments, funders, and investors to unite to accomplish 17 global goals to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all. The UN has outlined specific indicators to measure progress and a timeframe to achieve them by 2030, both of which help drive a shared understanding and urgency of this work. ■

To learn how to scale your impact, visit socialimpactmovement.org



Miami Workers Center
by Greg Clark, Good Miami Project



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