

a magazine for friends of the GREATER MILWAUKEE FOUNDATION

GREATER together

**Changing MKE's
housing system
for future
generations**



Greater Milwaukee
FOUNDATION
greater together

Volume 6 Issue 2 Fall 2021

VISION Greater Milwaukee becomes a vibrant, economically thriving region comprised of welcoming and inclusive communities that provide opportunity, prosperity and a high quality of life for all.

PRESIDENT & CEO

Ellen M. Gilligan

VICE PRESIDENT, MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Laura Porfilio Glawe

EDITOR & WRITER

Becca Mader

DESIGN

Creative Director, Paula J. Perez
Graphic designer, Todd Schmidt

PHOTOGRAPHER

Jim Moy

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Carolyn Kott Washburne,
Jeremy Podolski



ON THE COVER:

Rae Johnson and their son, Elijah, in front of their home, which they purchased with help from ACTS Housing.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Greater Together is published biannually by the Greater Milwaukee Foundation's Marketing and Communications Department. Please send your comments or address changes to Becca Mader at Greater Milwaukee Foundation, 101 W. Pleasant St., Suite 210, Milwaukee, WI 53212 or send an e-mail to bmader@greatermilwaukeefoundation.org.

greatermilwaukeefoundation.org
414.272.5805



WHAT'S inside

Fall 2021



- 3 **REMAKING THE HOUSING ECOSYSTEM**
- 9 **THRIVEON SMALL BUSINESS LOAN PROGRAM**
- 13 **INVESTING IN PEOPLE**
DANA GUTHRIE/GATEWAY CAPITAL
- 15 **LEAVING A LEGACY**
PEDRO COLÓN AND BETTY ULMER
- 17 **GENEROSITY AT WORK**
HISTORIC AREA THEATER RENOVATIONS
- 19 **PROFILE IN PHILANTHROPY**
RALPH AND MARGARET HOLLMON
- 21 **FOUNDATION NEWS**
GREATER TOGETHER AWARDS

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We all recognize housing as a basic need for everyone, but ensuring that everyone in a community has a home they can afford and depend on is anything but basic.

While our community has some remarkable public programs and nonprofits that have helped many people buy a home, make repairs, get rent assistance and more, Milwaukee today is trending in the wrong direction on housing from a systemic perspective.

Homeownership overall has declined in Milwaukee over the last 15 years, according to recent research. Racial equity issues are looming, with the largest disparities experienced by Black residents, for whom the homeownership rate is lower now than it was 50 years ago.

The grass isn't greener for those who rent. Most struggle to afford their payments, with more than 53 percent of Milwaukee families exhausting at least 30 percent of their income on rent, which the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development considers rent burdened.

These regressive conditions must be reversed, but they won't be corrected by single solutions or single problem-solvers; the causes and implications are too complex. We need all hands on deck.

My trust lies in the power of strategic collaboration, a belief recently validated when the Community Development Alliance released Milwaukee's first

collective affordable housing strategic plan. The Greater Milwaukee Foundation is among the CDA's founders and funding partners, and I look forward to helping achieve the goals of this plan, which seeks to advance racial equity through a quality, affordable home for every Milwaukeean.

The stakes are high. Housing is a major building block of life, health and wealth. Safe, affordable housing means greater economic stability for residents, living conditions that support well-being, educational consistency for children attending schools where they live and opportunities to build generational wealth through a home's value.

The comprehensive strategies we are undertaking call for the endurance of a marathon and the urgency of a sprint. I am grateful for generous Foundation donors whose sustained commitment to housing solutions has allowed us to deepen our investment and impact. In the pages that follow, you'll see how we and our partners are working together to make life better for people today while also changing the housing system for future generations.

Ellen M. Gilligan
President & CEO
Greater Milwaukee Foundation



Greater Milwaukee Foundation President and CEO Ellen Gilligan joins Program Officer Kermiath McClendon and 30th Street Industrial Corridor Executive Director Cheryl Blue in Milwaukee's Garden Homes neighborhood. The Foundation has supported the work of the nonprofit, which is focused on bringing more affordable housing into the area. It is renovating 30 foreclosed homes in the historic district, which is the nation's first municipally sponsored public housing cooperative.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jacqueline Herd-Barber, Chair | Paul Jones, Vice Chair | Pedro Colón | David J. Drury | Susan Ela | Thomas W. Florsheim Jr. | Cecelia Gore | Dale Kent | Naryan Leazer | Gregory S. Marcus | Darryl D. Morin | Cory L. Nettles | Greg Oberland | Marie L. O'Brien | Mary Ellen Stanek | Derek L. Tyus | Jacqueline Ward | Gregory M. Wesley

For far too long in Milwaukee, far too many of our neighbors have been unable to access one of the key drivers to achieving equitable economic opportunity – owning a home.

As part of our strategic vision in building a Milwaukee for all, we are committed to helping remake the local housing ecosystem into one that works for all our neighbors. One of the ways we are doing so is through our investment in and leadership of the Community Development Alliance, a 70-member cross-sector coalition that – for the first time in Milwaukee’s history – is working together to advance racial equity by providing a quality, affordable home for every Milwaukeean.

The following story details our role in this monumental work, which those involved describe as a once-in-a-generation opportunity to bring about transformative, long-lasting change for populations that have been disenfranchised for decades.

REMAKING^{THE} HOUSING ECOSYSTEM

Rae Johnson spent more than a decade renting on Milwaukee’s south side before deciding in 2019 they needed more stability.

They were tired of paying high rent for something that wasn’t their own.

“It always felt like a scam to me to be living in someone else’s home,” said Johnson, who particularly wanted their own place as a single parent of a then 10-year-old. “I had to hit the reset button on my life.”

The process of becoming a homeowner in Milwaukee, historically, hasn’t been easy going for Black residents like Johnson. As the first homeowner in their immediate family, Johnson knew it would be challenging.

With guidance and ongoing support from ACTS Housing, a nonprofit housing agency, Johnson closed on their new home – and lease on life – in the middle of the pandemic.

A new collective action effort is looking to pave the way for more residents like Johnson to participate in that wealth-building opportunity. The Greater Milwaukee Foundation is one of the lead funders and founding members of the Community Development Alliance, a cross-sector coalition that unveiled a citywide plan in September to provide quality, affordable housing for every Milwaukeean. It marks the first time funders, government and housing practitioners have aligned goals and strategies to address the issue.

A Milwaukee resident in front of the house she grew up in, located across the street from Rose Park in the Harambee neighborhood. In Harambee, only 22 percent of residents own the home they live in.



According to Milwaukee’s new collective affordable housing plan, there is a need for 32,000 rental units for families with wage earners making \$7.25 to \$15 per hour. The former 37th Street School in Washington Park was recently remodeled into 49 units of affordable housing for adults 55 years and older.

“Housing is at the root of everything we do,” said Janel Hines, the Foundation’s vice president of community impact. “If your basic needs aren’t met, it affects everything else you do.”

EVOLUTION OF THE WORK

The CDA evolved out of a need for funders to pool their resources to better address community development work in Milwaukee. In 2010, the Foundation, Zilber Foundation and Northwestern Mutual formed a funders collaborative to align place-based activities and investments. In 2018, the CDA began thinking about its next iteration. At the same time, the city was looking for a more coordinated affordable housing plan.

“For those three foundations to work together over the past 10 years to build something that is now ready for its next transformative state has been key,” said Teig Whaley-Smith, CDA’s planning project manager.

A PROBLEM DECADES IN THE MAKING

The root causes of racial disparities in homeownership stem from racially discriminatory policies that have prevented people of color from accessing the generational wealth

that homeownership can provide. Milwaukee is the second worst metro area for Black homeownership. Latino homeownership is nearly 20 percent lower than that of whites.

Low wages also have served as a barrier. Fifty-three percent of Milwaukee households are “rent burdened,” defined as spending 30 percent or more of household income on rent. Existing homeowners can’t afford to stay, leading to evictions and foreclosures. An average of about 13,000 evictions occur per year in Milwaukee.

Milwaukee also has fallen further behind as outside investors acquire properties faster than residents can. In the last 15 years, the city has lost about 15,000 homeowners, almost exclusively within Black and Latino communities.

SENSE OF URGENCY

The impact of the pandemic and the racial awakening following the murder of George Floyd in 2020 led to increased focus on the issue, causing partners to “feel empowered to be bold and engaged in a different way,” said Tony Panciera, director of MKE United, a collaborative between the Greater Milwaukee Committee, the Foundation, LISC Milwaukee, the

Urban League of Milwaukee and city of Milwaukee.

The potential ability to take advantage of millions of dollars in federal funding available from the American Rescue Plan Act also accelerated the work.

Over eight months, a group of 70 experts in neighborhoods, housing, banking, health care and numerous other sectors explored the root causes, poring over findings from more than two dozen neighborhood-based quality of life plans, thousands of surveys and dozens of community meetings.

The analysis uncovered two key findings: First, there is a need for 32,000 more Black and Latino homeowners and, secondly there need to be 32,000 more affordable rental units available for families making between \$7.50 and \$15 an hour.

OFFENSE VS. DEFENSE STRATEGIES

Organizers say quantifying the need has been critical in developing the plan’s key equitable offensive strategies (increasing homeownership and making housing more affordable) and

defensive strategies (preserving homeownership and affordable housing to avoid foreclosures and evictions).

VIA, a community development organization on Milwaukee’s south side, has focused on affordable housing over the past quarter century by connecting its residents, primarily Latino, to resources such as its turnkey renovation program, which transforms vacant, foreclosed homes into move-in ready homes for interested homebuyers. Executive director Brianna Sas-Perez is hopeful

the plan will bring together the right resources and collaboration needed to advance equity and homeownership on a much larger scale.

The CDA plan focuses on reducing the homeownership gap for Blacks and Latinos by adding units and supporting residents who want to purchase homes; using anti-displacement tools and preservation programs to maintain homeownership levels; increasing the number of rental units for low-income residents; and preserving units by advocating for anti-displacement and anti-eviction efforts.

The Foundation has invested in programs over the years that have supported both homeowners and renters. In the past two years alone, grants have supported rental assistance, homebuyer counseling, free legal services to prevent evictions and home repair programs.

The Foundation provided \$100,000 in seed funding to MKE United’s Anti-Displacement Fund, only the second fund of its kind nationwide that to date has provided \$130,300

in property tax relief. In 2020, the Foundation contributed \$100,000 through an anonymous donor. The money has helped 144 homeowners in neighborhoods who have experienced rising taxes due to nearby development, avoid displacement. Recipients have largely been individuals of color and long-time homeowners.

Hines said the plan’s targeted racial and income parameters will help the Foundation become more strategic with its investments.

“We’ll identify where we can have an impact and leverage our dollars with other donors to increase opportunities for affordable housing,” Hines said.

Heather Ramirez, a Foundation donor and an attorney who volunteers for the Eviction Defense Project and serves on ACTS Housing’s board, is excited for the increased level of attention to and the Foundation’s leadership role in addressing the issue.

“The Foundation has the influence and relationships to bring together organizations around a common goal,” she said.

“Housing is at the root of everything we do. If your basic needs aren’t met, it affects everything else you do.”

Janel Hines, Vice President, Community Impact, Greater Milwaukee Foundation

Nonprofits such as Milwaukee Habitat for Humanity and VIA are helping address the affordable housing gap through new construction, home repair and turnkey renovation programs.



Using anti-displacement tools to preserve homeownership in places like Walker's Point, which is facing rising assessments, is part of Milwaukee's collective affordable housing plan. To read the full housing plan, visit housingplan.org



BRIGHT SPOTS IN HOUSING LANDSCAPE WORK

CDA members point to the existing strong network of housing counseling agencies and newer programs such as Milwaukee's Home Down Payment Assistance Program, which provides forgivable grants of up to \$7,000, as existing bright spots on which to build.

Newer programs – such as Eviction Free MKE, which launched in September and provides families facing evictions access to legal representation free of charge, and the Milwaukee Rental Housing Resource Center, which began in the

summer 2021 and provides help and resources for both landlords and tenants – further the momentum.

EASY WINS

Increasing capacity of nonprofits like ACTS could lead to potential early wins. Not only do they have successful track records of preparing homeowners like Rae Johnson, but the demand is there. ACTS has helped 30 percent more homeowners in 2021 (240) than its previous best year in 2020 (181).

Johnson worked with ACTS for more than a year to prepare for homeownership, which included setting incremental goals, paying

off debt, saving money, applying for a mortgage and selecting and rehabbing a home in Milwaukee's North Division neighborhood, down the street from their parents' home. They credit ACTS with providing key support during what otherwise would be a discouraging and confusing process.

'CAN'T BUILD OUR WAY OUT OF THE CRISIS'

Yet strictly building and rehabbing properties is not the solution.

"We can't build our way out of this crisis," said Brian Sonderman, executive director of Milwaukee Habitat for Humanity, which offers

new construction and home repair programs. "A collaborative approach is the only way we are going to be able to tackle this."

Sonderman said the process has inspired Habitat to think about new partnerships and ways it can serve families.

"The idea that you can make a substantial down payment on this massive problem – the timing couldn't be better," he said.

PATIENCE AND TRUST

The plan marks a "landmark change" in the way groups are working together, Whaley-Smith and others

said. With that change comes challenges.

"You can't launch all 15 strategies at once," Whaley-Smith said. "It will take some patience, commitment and trust to see the staircase and that all 15 steps are necessary."

CDA's role is to convene stakeholders and drive collective action. One of the new approaches identified was the creation of an acquisition fund, which would pool money to acquire properties and preserve them for local homeowners.

VIA's Sas-Perez said for the plan ultimately to be successful, people

most impacted by the work will need to lead it. CDA is committed to continuous resident engagement and is creating resident action groups that will meet monthly to inform strategies and approaches.

While practitioners agree it is a monumental task, there is no denying the energy and commitment of those involved to achieve the plan's goals.

"Once you start thinking big, you don't want to start thinking small," said Michael Gosman, ACTS' executive director. "Why can't we do it in a way that no one else has and share that with the rest of the country?"



DONORS PROVIDE RELIEF, SOURCE OF GROWTH TO 17 SMALL BUSINESSES

Passion, persistence, patience.

Entrepreneurs like Rachaad Howard, SeonJoo Oh and Tokara Henry have relied upon those traits to help build their small businesses.

But when the pandemic hit, they went from thriving to simply surviving.

With support from the Greater Milwaukee Foundation's ThriveOn Small Business Loan program, these entrepreneurs can once again focus on the future. They are among the 17 business owners who received a total of \$780,000 in low-interest loans as part of the Foundation's impact investing program. Through impact investing, the Foundation

invests in programs, projects and businesses that generate a social and financial return. Once the loan is repaid, the money is reinvested into new programs and projects.

Foundation donors contributed more than \$550,000 toward the loan program.

"Impact investing addresses one of the largest inequalities caused by structural racism, which is where the system restricts access to capital to people of color," said Tom Florsheim,

a Foundation Board member and chairman and CEO of Weyco Group. "It not only makes loans available when they otherwise would not be, but helps these businesses see a path eventually to traditional financing."

Over the summer, through community meetings and events, door-to-door visits, phone calls and emails, the Foundation identified 156 potentially eligible businesses. Of the businesses that received loans, 50 percent had temporarily closed due to the pandemic. Forty percent of them lacked access to traditional financing.

Given its extensive supply of hair and beauty products, SeonJoo Oh's Cool Beauty Supply has been a destination for many women since opening on Martin Luther King Drive in 2015. Without access to proper PPE, Oh was forced to temporarily close her 7,000-square-foot space in March 2020. When she reopened, a strong existing customer base and word-of-mouth advertising helped. She first offered curbside pickup and later opened with limited in-store capacity. Oh is using her loan to support payroll, purchase a new company vehicle and renovate the building, which she owns.

Tokara Henry, who grew up in Milwaukee's Harambee neighborhood, kept her nail salon closed until last July. Being able to pay personal and business expenses was extremely

(Above) Tokara Henry, a ThriveOn Small Business Loan recipient, is using the money to invest in equipment upgrades and marketing, which will benefit her nail salon and newly opened nail academy.

(Right) Seonjoo Oh, owner of Cool Beauty, and her husband, Daniel.

challenging. But while Bijou Nails and Company was closed, Henry thought about her next move. With 20-plus years of experience as a nail care professional, she had long desired to open a school to help others develop their nail care skills. She is using the loan for equipment upgrades, payroll and marketing, which will benefit both her salon and Advanced Nail Tech Academy, which opened in June and operates out of the same space.

Rachaad Howard opened his T-shirt print and sip space, Cream City Print Lounge, in West Allis six months before the state imposed its safer-at-home order. He closed for two months and turned to online sales, and making pandemic-related gear like "Netflix and chill" T-shirts. He appreciated the Foundation loan for its simplicity, "just knowing that we didn't have to jump through hoops as a Black-owned business to get this."

"It puts us at a different mindset of growing," said Howard, who is using a portion of the loan to remodel his store. "Now we have the capital to expand on ideas

"Small businesses are the lifeline in most cities, particularly in communities of color. Small business growth is how you change communities and keep them thriving."

Margaret Henningsen, an adviser to the Legacy Foundation fund and donor to ThriveOn Small Business Loan program

that were just sitting there but we couldn't do because we didn't have the financial backing to execute them."

The loans could be used for working capital and normal operating expenses, improvements to physical locations or refinancing debt. Approximately 40 jobs are expected to be created or reestablished through the program.

"When you are a donor, you want to create social impact, but a lot of times it is not so clear you have done that," said Florsheim, who contributed to the program through his Foundation fund and recruited his brother and father to do the same. "This is so targeted and measurable. The fact that the money will continue to be reused is very appealing to donors who really want to see their giving create better lives for people."

Loan recipients also have access to technical assistance for up to a year to enhance their business management skills. That assistance, coordinated by Legacy Redevelopment Corporation, drew the support of Foundation donor Margaret Henningsen.

"Small businesses are the lifeline in most cities, particularly in communities of color," said Henningsen, an adviser to the Legacy Foundation fund. "Small business growth is how you change communities and keep them thriving."

ThriveOn Small Business Loan recipients

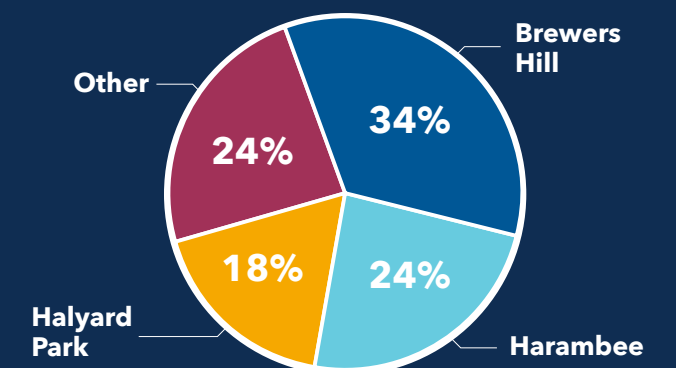
- Ajas Beauty and Wellness Boutique
- Bijou Nails & Company
- Colorful Connections
- Cool Beauty
- Cream City Print Lounge
- Dolled
- Edwards Ingenuity
- Ilashout Beauty Co.
- JGSJ Optimum Health
- Maures Development Group
- MLK 1920
- P3 Development Group
- PepperPot CateringMKE
- Rise & Grind
- Santari (Reynolds Pasty Shop)
- Transformation Services, Inc.
- Vogue Dreams



Rachaad Howard, owner of Cream City Print Lounge, used his loan from the Foundation to remodel his screen printing store in West Allis, which opened merely six months before the pandemic.



Loans by neighborhood





“People of color are underrepresented in certain sectors. In venture capital, they are nonexistent. Dana is so compelling; we know she can help us move the needle.”

Ken Robertson, COO, CFO and executive vice president, Greater Milwaukee Foundation

(Photo) Dana Guthrie, managing partner of Gateway Capital, raised \$13.5 million in less than one year to support pre-revenue startups in Milwaukee County that impact low- or moderate-income communities.

LOOKING *for the* OVERLOOKED

Entrepreneur is advancing economic racial equity by infusing capital into communities of color

Everyone who knows Dana Guthrie describes her as “passionate,” “focused” and “hardworking.” Thanks to \$1 million in early support from the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, Guthrie is now able to direct her energies to developing Gateway Capital, a venture capital fund that will support pre-revenue startups in Milwaukee County.

As managing partner of Gateway, Guthrie uses a “money for minnows” strategy that focuses on making smaller investments across many startups and technologies, many of them in communities of color and low-to-moderate income communities. Gateway “looks for the overlooked” – emerging entrepreneurial geographies that traditionally lack venture capital investment.

“We believe that the number of great ideas per capita are equally distributed, yet capital investment is not,” said Guthrie, who has two engineering degrees and first got into the entrepreneurial community as a technical adviser to several startups. “Our emphasis is on low-to-

moderate income communities. That can look like investment in founders from those areas, startups operating and hiring there, or startups that positively impact those communities.”

There is a critical need for a venture capital fund like Gateway. Milwaukee County, whose population is 27 percent Black and 16 percent Latinx, has traditionally lacked early-stage venture capital investment. Analyses of the sector show that Black and Latinx founders have

received only about 2 percent of all venture capital in the United States during the past five years.

“It is well known that people of color are underrepresented in certain sectors,” said Ken Robertson, Foundation COO, CFO and executive vice president. “In (venture capital), they are nonexistent. Dana is so compelling; we know she can help us move the needle.”

Like all venture capital funds, Gateway’s primary objective is to exceed national average returns for its investors. It also wants to generate both financial and social returns. This meshes with the Foundation’s emphasis on impact investing, an approach that allows capital to be reclaimed and reinvested in new projects.

West Bend Mutual Insurance Company was another early investor. “We feel confident that Gateway will not only provide the market rate of return that we seek for our portfolio but will also have the impact of empowering underserved communities,” Tyus said.

Gateway is “industry agnostic,” however it is geographically-focused. The companies must be Wisconsin based and have at least one full-time employee. Guthrie is supported by an investment committee of successful serial entrepreneurs and experienced venture capital/private equity leaders.

Guthrie was able to raise a total \$13.5 million in less than a year. Gateway made its first investment – \$400,000 to Tip a ScRxipt, a crowdfunding platform for out-of-pocket medication costs – in October.

“The Foundation was the first institution to commit to Gateway, which was a momentum boost for us,” Guthrie said. “It also gave me credibility as I approached potential investors. I can’t say enough about their commitment to Gateway and to the community.”

“The Foundation was the first institution to commit to Gateway, which was a momentum boost for us.”

Dana Guthrie, managing partner of Gateway Capital

'MAKING MORE OF A DIFFERENCE THAN YOU CAN IMAGINE'

Pedro Colón knows the workings of the Greater Milwaukee Foundation from the inside, having been on the Board since 2016 and currently serving as vice chair of its Community Impact Committee. So the Foundation was the logical choice when Colón and his wife, Betty Ulmer, decided to make a legacy gift.

"When you look at other options for giving in the community, you see that the Foundation is the best place," said Colón, a Milwaukee County Circuit Court judge in Branch 18. "It has a great history of concern for the community, which is what I care about."

Through the process of setting up their fund, Colón said he and Betty have learned that giving is not just for the super wealthy.

"When you learn about the process, you understand that you can make a difference at the level at which you are," he said. "You can make more of a difference than you can imagine."

Colón grew up on Milwaukee's south side and graduated from Marquette University. He was the first Latinx elected to the Wisconsin State Legislature, where he served the 8th Assembly District from 1999 to 2010. He also served on the Metropolitan Milwaukee Sewerage District for eight years. He and Ulmer, who is vice president – legal at Brookdale Senior Living in West Allis, met at the University of Wisconsin Law School.

The couple want their fund to focus on education, in particular relating to Hispanic law students. "We want to support the ongoing efforts to make post high school education more affordable for kids who traditionally cannot afford law school," Colón said.

He adds, "I was very lucky to attend both Marquette and UW Law School. We are aware of the struggles of Latino kids, and we want to give back."

Ulmer says, "When we started practicing law, there were very few Latinos. The numbers are increasing, although still small, so this support is important."

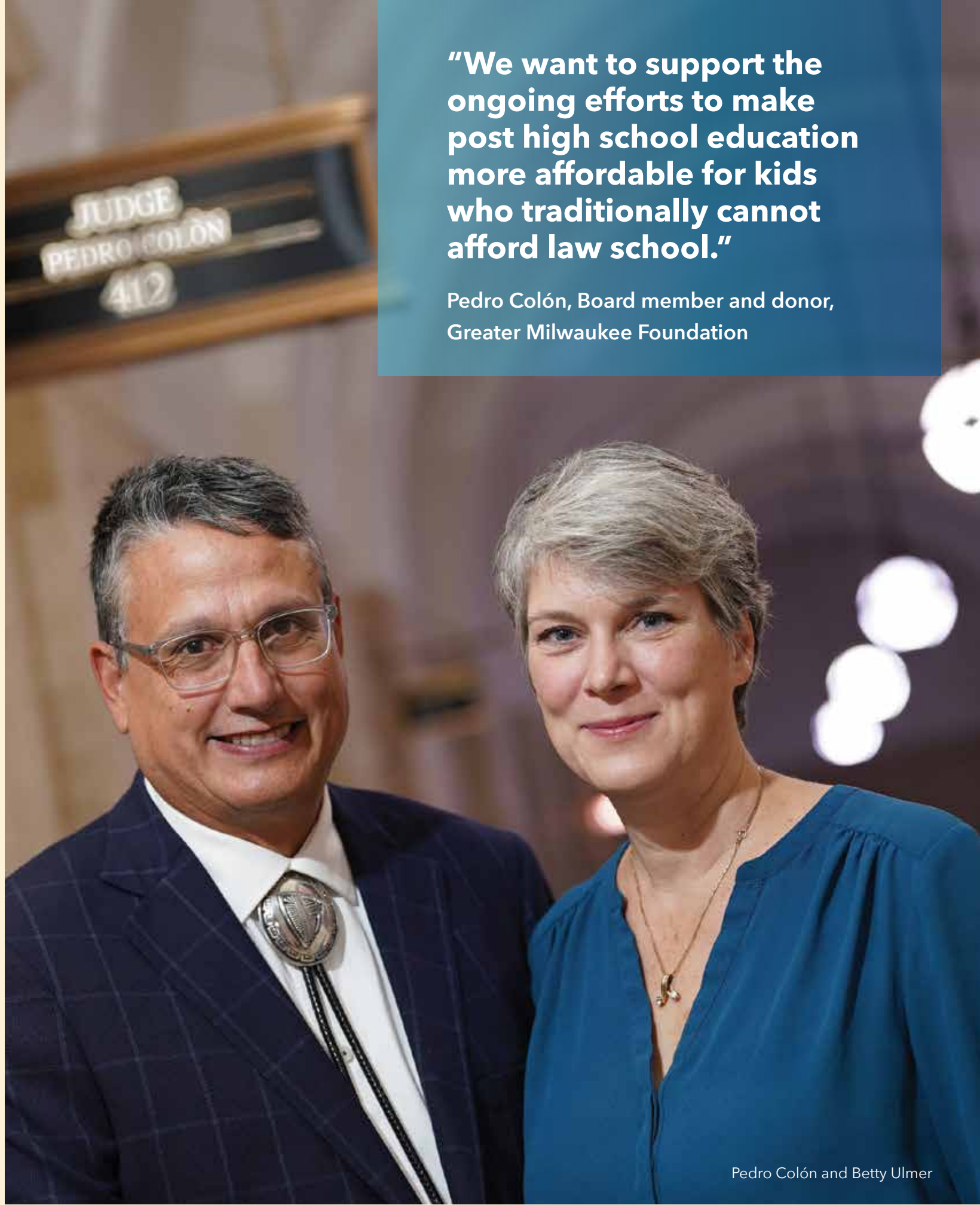
She adds that the fund will provide grants for students' practical needs: "Food, books, rent, tuition – whatever they need to get through school."

Both Colón and Ulmer have also given back through decades of volunteer work. He has served on the boards of the United Community Center, Divine Savior Holy Angels High School and Cristo Rey Jesuit High School. She is currently on the board of the Milwaukee Christian Center.

Colón said he is proud of being a lawyer because he believes lawyers are critical to our democracy. "I know everybody has opinions about lawyers, but without lawyers, we wouldn't be able to equalize the debate, equalize the power," he said. "Lawyers help us think critically about what a better society might look like."



The fund started by Foundation Board member Pedro Colon and his wife, Betty Ulmer, will help support Hispanic law students meet practical needs like food, books, rent and tuition.



"We want to support the ongoing efforts to make post high school education more affordable for kids who traditionally cannot afford law school."

Pedro Colón, Board member and donor, Greater Milwaukee Foundation

Pedro Colón and Betty Ulmer

SECOND ACT

for area's historic theaters

In 2020, thanks to the global pandemic, the greater Milwaukee area's arts and culture scene experienced its longest – and most economically painful – intermission. Ever.

This fall the curtain rose once again and gave the public the ability to check out three architectural gems that have been carefully preserved and dramatically transformed – the Oriental Theatre, Bradley Symphony Center and Historic West Bend Theatre – thanks in part to \$1.6 million in support from the Greater Milwaukee Foundation and its donors.



THE BEND

After more than a decade of disuse, the Historic West Bend Theatre, West Bend's only surviving movie palace, held its grand opening March 14, 2020. A four-year, community-led effort culminated in a \$4.6 million restoration of the 1929 Art Deco building. The stage was extended, HVAC replaced, seating reduced, iconic marquee sign relit and purple paint peeled away from the walls to reveal original detailed stencil artwork. The very next day, the theater went dark again. After a two-month hiatus it reopened in June 2020 with limited capacity. Now known as The Bend, it has plans for 170 events in 2022 including a mix of corporate events, classic movies, concerts and comedy shows.



ORIENTAL THEATRE

The Oriental Theatre was the first theater to close in Milwaukee as COVID-19 emerged in March 2020. While dark, the authentic 1920s movie palace was not void of activity. Its owner, Milwaukee Film, used the time to complete the fourth phase of renovations as part of its \$10 million capital campaign that began in 2018. It completed major main house restoration, including upgrading the concessions area in the main lobby to make it ADA-compliant, streamline sales and relieve congestion. From the 8-foot chandeliers hanging from the ceiling to the hand-painted murals, every piece has been preserved that makes the place so special to Milwaukeeans. In the process, it uncovered little bits of history such as the original blueish hue of the main house ceiling. The theater officially reopened Aug. 20, 2021.



BRADLEY SYMPHONY CENTER

The Warner Grand Theatre was once the fanciest theater in Milwaukee and a stunning centerpiece in downtown Milwaukee's shopping and theater district. Since 1995, however, the Art Deco building was shuttered. Not anymore. After an extensive three-year, \$90 million restoration, which included moving a seven-story-tall, 625-ton wall 35 feet to the east, the public can once again delight in the opulence of the three-story-high lobby, grandeur of the main performance hall and ornate paintings and plaster, a mix of Beaux Arts, Rococo and Baroque designs. The Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra had planned to debut its new home in 2020 but that was pushed back until October 2021 because of the pandemic.

FORWARD THINKING

Couple view fund as helping address Milwaukee's needs far into the future



Ralph and Margaret Hollmon

Ralph Hollmon, who spent 14 years as president and CEO of the Milwaukee Urban League, now serves as board chair of the America's Black Holocaust Museum. The museum explores under told stories of the African American experience and the harmful legacy of slavery as well as promotes racial repair, reconciliation and healing. After being closed for 10 years, it will reopen in a new building in February 2022.



Over the years, Ralph and Margaret Hollmon have enriched the Milwaukee community through their activism and their volunteer efforts. Now, through the recently established Ralph and Margaret Hollmon Family Charitable Fund at the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, they will be giving to the community far into the future.

The Hollmons decided to place their fund with the Foundation not only because of its track record, but because the Foundation is forward-thinking and nimble.

"The Foundation gives us flexibility with our fund, so that if we want to redirect our focus, we can easily do that," Ralph said. "Plus, another attractive component is that the Foundation might bring to our attention

organizations or issues that we might not be aware of that we might be interested in funding."

The Hollmons' vision for the community aligns perfectly with the Foundation's strategic vision of building a Milwaukee for all.

"We can't have sectors of our community doing well and others mired in poverty," Ralph said. "That creates the 'tale of two cities.' We want a community that values and respects everyone."

Ralph, former president and CEO of the Milwaukee Urban League, is currently the board chair of America's Black Holocaust Museum. Margaret was a special

education teacher, first in the Milwaukee Public Schools then Madison Metropolitan School District before returning to MPS, where she retired after 26 years.

The Urban League's mission, Ralph said, was to help people improve the quality of their lives in three areas: education, employment and economic development. "We felt that these three areas would help people become more self-reliant so that they would have the long-term tools – information, resources – that they needed to improve their lives," Ralph said.

He shared what he called the "old cliché:" Give a person a fish, and you feed them for a day. Teach them how to fish, and he can feed himself for a lifetime. "That was our work at the Urban League, which has had a long-term and very supportive relationship with the Foundation."

As a classroom teacher and, later, a resource room teacher, Margaret's mission was to give special needs students opportunities to thrive. "It's not an easy field

to be in, but it's very rewarding," she said. "Many of our students had low self-esteem, so my goal was to give them the courage to try. Often they very much surprised themselves with what they were capable of."

Not surprisingly, the Hollmons' fund will focus on education. "Education is one of the pillars that can help people improve their quality of life," Margaret said. The fund will support the Milwaukee Urban League, the Milwaukee Public Schools Foundation and Milwaukee Area Technical College to provide scholarships for minority students.

"We want a community that values and respects everyone."
Ralph Hollman, Foundation donor

"We have been very fortunate to have people help us through the years," said Ralph. "Now we want to give back."

Added Margaret, "There is no better way to do that than to partner with the

Foundation. It has a long, distinguished and respected track record in supporting so many things that make our community a better place."

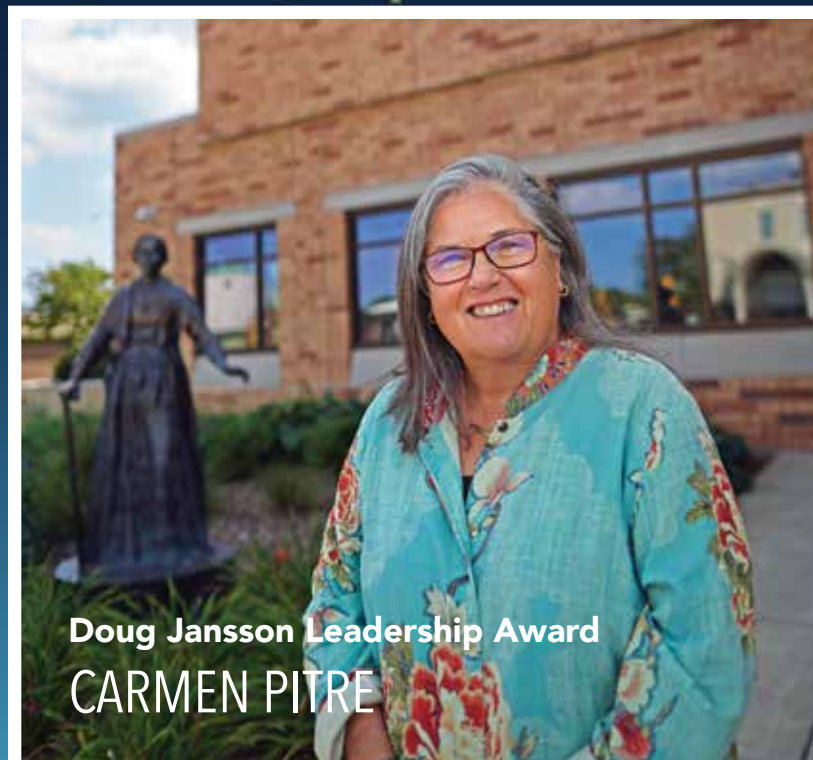
2021 greater together AWARDS

GREATER TOGETHER AWARDS HONOR COMMITMENT, IMPACT OF FIVE COMMUNITY LEADERS

Progress happens in our region because of people who want to see something accomplished that will benefit their community and are willing to take the lead. Our annual civic awards program – the Greater Together Awards – celebrates the commitment, talent, passion and vision of such leaders. In 2021 we honored five individuals for their work, which has expanded educational opportunities for youth, diversified the real estate sector, enhanced services for domestic violence survivors and led to greater protections for migrant farmworkers and underserved populations.

“Imagining the lives that have been changed by the work and generosity of this year’s Greater Together Award honorees is awe-inspiring,” said Ellen Gilligan, Foundation president and CEO. “My sincere congratulations to them all for channeling their wisdom and personal passions to help build a Milwaukee for all.”

To learn more about the Greater Together Award recipients, visit greatermilwaukeefoundation.org/greater-together-awards



Doug Jansson Leadership Award
CARMEN PITRE

Doug Jansson Leadership Award
Honoring inspirational leadership in the nonprofit sector
Carmen Pitre has helped change the way the Milwaukee community addresses domestic violence and serves survivors through her role as president and CEO of the Sojourner Family Peace Center, which has become Wisconsin’s largest provider of domestic violence prevention and intervention services.



Frank Kirkpatrick Award
MARK EPPLI

Frank Kirkpatrick Award
Honoring commitment to enhancing community spaces and places
Mark Eppli was the visionary behind the Associates in Real Estate Program, a rigorous 9-month program that trains people of color in the fundamentals of the real estate industry and the wide variety of available career paths. More than 300 individuals have graduated, leading to changes in Milwaukee’s built environment.

William C. Frye Award

Honoring exceptional civic contributions to create positive change across our region

Through investment of their time and financial resources, Virgis and Angela Colbert have helped further educational opportunities for youth and enhance Milwaukee’s arts and cultural landscape.




William C. Frye Award
VIRGIS AND ANGELA COLBERT



President’s Leadership in Racial Equity and Social Justice Award
NESS FLORES

President’s Leadership in Racial Equity and Inclusion Award
Honoring those who have worked to make our region welcoming and inclusive for all people
Attorney and former judge Ness Flores has spent the better half of the past 50 years working in and for the community, particularly on behalf of underserved communities. His legal and advocacy work has led to greater protections for Latinos, particularly farmworkers.

GreaterMilwaukeeFoundation.org

 facebook.com/GreaterMilwaukeeFoundation

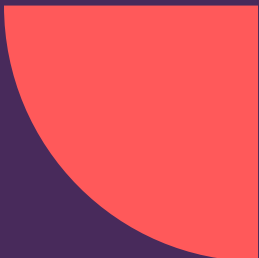
 twitter.com/GrMkeFdn

 youtube.com/GrMkeFdn

 instagram.com/GrMkeFdn

ThriveOn

COLLABORATION



RENOVATION SET TO BEGIN ON NEW FOUNDATION HQ, COMMUNITY HUB

Transformation will begin this winter at ThriveOn King, the future home of the Greater Milwaukee Foundation and the ThriveOn Collaboration, the partnership between the Foundation, the Medical College of Wisconsin and Royal Capital.

What was once the anchor of commerce on Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, Gimbels-Schuster's Department Store, will once again be a vibrant community hub. The Foundation's office will occupy the fourth floor. The Medical College will relocate some of its community engagement programs to the fifth floor. Community voice has been at the center of the planning and design work for a dynamic first-floor space. Aspects designed for social connection include a café, neighborhood hall, community and conference rooms, makerspace, food demonstration center, early childhood and care center. Residential housing is also a part of the building. The ThriveOn Collaboration is inspiring innovative health equity solutions, together with all partners in community.

An opening date is tentatively slated for 2023.