



# *The* **POWER** *of* **NEIGHBORING**



**20  
24**  
**ANNUAL  
REPORT**



# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT & BOARD CHAIR

**WE'VE ALWAYS BELIEVED THAT  
LASTING CHANGE ISN'T JUST ABOUT  
PROGRAMS—IT'S ABOUT PEOPLE.**

It's about neighbors knowing one another, showing up for each other, and weaving relationships that make a place feel like home. This year, we've seen the transformative power of neighbor-ing in action, and we are honored to share how these connections are shaping South Atlanta.

The journey to this point—and the road ahead—has been shaped by many faithful hands. The vision of seeing neighbors flourish is bigger than any one organization. It takes partnerships and close collaboration.

Take The Morning Crew at Community Grounds, for example—a group of neighbors who gather over coffee each morning to laugh, share stories, and offer support. What may seem like a simple daily routine is actually something deeper: a third space where friendships form, where newcomers

**JIM WEHNER**

President



**CHRIS GRAY**

Board Chair





are welcomed, and where belonging takes root. It's these kinds of informal yet powerful relationships that foster true community.

Neighboring also means ensuring that longtime residents can remain in their homes, preserving the history and wisdom they bring to the neighborhood. Over the past year, we've been overjoyed to partner with both longtime neighbors and new faces in this work.

Through the Legacy Home Repair Initiative, neighbors like Miss Maggie are able to make critical repairs, allowing them to age in place with pride and dignity. "We want to stay in the community. It's going where it needs to go, and we want to go with it," she told us. Because of the support of this community, she and many others can continue to call South Atlanta home.

And as our Neighborhood Engagement Director, Pamela Stringfield, reminds us, the work of community transformation isn't about outsiders coming in with solutions—it's about listening. It's about slowing down, building trust, and ensuring that those who call

## **It's about slowing down, building trust, and ensuring that those who call South Atlanta home are the ones leading the change.**

South Atlanta home are the ones leading the change. At FCS, we don't seek to be decision-makers, but rather connectors, bridge-builders, and partners in our neighbors' vision for flourishing.

This is the power of neighboring. It's not just about what we do, but how we do it—together. Thank you for the ways that you have accompanied FCS and South Atlanta in this generational work.

As we celebrate the power of neighboring in 2024, we're excited for what the future holds. Your generosity and partnership make this work possible, and we couldn't do it without you. ■



# *Mixed-Income* **HOUSING**



*Mixed-income housing  
is the foundation of a  
thriving neighborhood.*

**FCS REVITALIZES PROPERTIES,  
BUILDS NEW HOMES,  
AND PROVIDES RENTAL  
AND HOMEOWNERSHIP  
OPPORTUNITIES TO  
ENSURE NEIGHBORS OF ALL  
BACKGROUNDS CAN PUT  
DOWN ROOTS.**

By fostering a diverse, sustainable housing inventory, we're not just creating homes—we're strengthening community connections and ensuring long-term neighborhood flourishing.

# *Not Just* **ANOTHER REPAIR**

**WHEN A LONGTIME NEIGHBOR CALLS FOR HELP WITH CRITICAL AND SOMETIMES DANGEROUS HOME REPAIRS, OUR FOCUS NATURALLY TURNS TO FINDING A SOLUTION AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.** For many

seniors in our Legacy Home Preservation and Repair initiative, the choice is often between making costly repairs or selling their home—a heartbreaking decision that threatens both stability and generational legacy. The urgency of the work is clear. But at FCS, we know that what happens during these repairs is about more than just fixing a home—it’s about neighboring.

Neighboring is at the heart of our work. It’s the intentional act of walking alongside neighbors, not just to plan and problem-solve, but to build lasting relationships.

Repairing a home means being invited inside, where family photos, artwork, and well-loved décor spark conversations. Stories unfold—about family, faith, struggles, and triumphs—turning what starts as a repair into a moment of connection.

Before long, the relationship extends beyond the work itself. Neighbors start calling us by our first names. They seek advice, share their hopes for the community, and welcome our team as “part of the family.” The repair may have been the reason we showed up, but the real work—the deeper work—is in fostering trust, belonging, and shared investment in the neighborhood’s future.

At FCS, we are not just fixing homes. We are strengthening the fabric of community, one neighbor at a time. ■





# ECONOMIC *Development*



*Together, we are building  
a thriving local economy.*

**A THRIVING NEIGHBORHOOD  
IS MORE THAN A PLACE TO  
LIVE—IT'S A PLACE TO WORK,  
GROW, AND BUILD A FUTURE.**

FCS is investing in local businesses like Carver Market and Community Grounds to create jobs, circulate wealth, and provide essential services. More than businesses, these spaces foster connection, strengthening the community and ensuring all residents have opportunities to flourish.



# NEIGHBORS SUPPORTING NEIGHBORS: *The Heart of South Atlanta*

**ABOVE:**  
The Breakfast Club- a group of neighbors who get together over a cup of coffee every morning.

**LAST YEAR, SOUTH ATLANTA HAD ONE OF ITS “HURRICANE DAYS”**—a

day when schools closed, businesses shut down, and neighbors prepared for what was forecasted to be a major storm. While the worst passed us by, a massive tree fell on Marci Street and Gammon Avenue, cutting power to the entire block. As neighbors gathered outside, wondering how long the outage would last, Community Grounds and Carver Market did what they always do—opened their doors.

With most of our staff living nearby, they arrived safely and walked the neighborhood to check in. Seeing the need, Dylan, our store manager, and Jeff invited neighbors in for

a warm breakfast, a cool place to sit, and WiFi—on the house. They spread the word: everyone was welcome.

Throughout the day, neighbors came together—sharing coffee, groceries, and conversation. They checked on one another and made plans to stay connected. The most powerful part? It wasn't just neighbors gathering—it was neighbors serving. Some of our own staff faced the same outage, yet they showed up to create a space of care and hospitality.

Throughout the day, neighbors came together—sharing coffee, groceries, and conversation.



This is what makes South Atlanta strong. It's the quiet, everyday acts of neighboring—offering a seat at the table, showing up when it matters, and ensuring no one has to weather the storm alone. ■





# *Neighborhood* **ENGAGEMENT**



*We believe in the  
transformative power  
of neighboring.*

**BY PARTNERING WITH LOCAL LEADERS AND INVESTING IN PROGRAMS LIKE THE SOUTH ATLANTA CHRISTMAS STORE AND FOOD CO-OP, FCS STRENGTHENS COMMUNITY TIES AND EQUIP RESIDENTS TO LEAD.**

Through connection, shared responsibility, and support, we're fostering a neighborhood where everyone has a voice, a role, and the resources to thrive.

# STRATEGIC COLLABORATION FOR HOLISTIC WELLNESS

## *in the Carver Cluster*

**WHAT BEGAN AS QUARTERLY COMMUNITY UPDATES** in Neighborhood Planning Unit Y (NPU-Y) meetings has evolved into a powerful space for strategic collaboration. Today, more than a dozen community partners gather monthly to address a critical missing resource—holistic wellness for all Carver Cluster neighbors.

Together, we are implementing initiatives that foster mental, spiritual, physical, and emotional well-being. One initiative has

established a communication system to connect partners and neighbors with timely resources and opportunities. Another is expanding mobile and virtual health and wellness access, alongside hosting events like Community Conversations, Cooking Series, Health Awareness Day, and Community Kickball.

Through these collective efforts, we are building a more connected, healthier neighborhood—one where every resident has access to the support they need to thrive. ■



**LEFT:**

The South Atlanta Christmas Store creates an intersection between volunteers, neighbors and staff that work together to create flourishing.





**LEFT + BELOW:**  
Our Food Co-Op is not only for our neighbors, it is run completely by our neighbors.



# BUILDING FINANCIAL STABILITY *Through Community Collaboration*

**THROUGH A PARTNERSHIP** with HousingPlus Inc., United Way, and the South Atlanta Food Co-Op, FCS had the opportunity to support 15 co-op members in a seven-month financial literacy and savings-match program.

Participants engaged in critical topics, from budgeting on a fixed income to estate planning, equipping them with tools for long-term financial stability. Even when challenges arose, this

committed group encouraged one another to stay the course—demonstrating the power of mutual support.

**Even when challenges arose, this committed group encouraged one another to stay the course—demonstrating the power of mutual support.**



Their perseverance paid off, with participants collectively saving \$4,000, which was then matched with an additional \$4,000 through HousingPlus Inc. and United Way. This initiative is a testament to the impact of collaboration, accountability, and financial empowerment within a community-driven approach. ■



# TRAINING & Consulting



*Our collective experiences equip communities to thrive nationwide.*

**FCS SHARES DECADES OF PLACE-BASED DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE TO EQUIP COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY.**

We provide practical strategies for sustainable change. Our goal is to empower leaders with proven models that foster lasting transformation, ensuring their work not only serves communities but strengthens them for generations to come.



# THE POWER OF NEIGHBORING

## *in Franklin Park, Allentown, PA*

**THE COHESION NETWORK, A NONPROFIT IN ALLENTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA,** is dedicated to supporting marginalized communities by fostering social, educational, and economic empowerment. Through its work in Franklin Park and the First and Sixth Wards, Cohesion Network has embraced a community-driven approach to transformation—one that aligns closely with the model developed by FCS.

FCS's Training & Consulting team has had the privilege of partnering with and equipping Cohesion Network as they work to strengthen neighborhood connections and create lasting change. Through this relationship, Cohesion Network has been able to deepen its engagement with residents and local organizations, applying best practices in place-based development to address critical needs.

This collaborative approach has already yielded tangible results—like resolving a 20-year parking issue at Sheridan Elementary School. By bringing together local businesses, the school district, and the parking authority, Cohesion Network

helped facilitate a solution that benefited the entire community. This success underscores the power of neighboring, where collective action leads to lasting impact.

Through ongoing partnership, FCS is honored to support Cohesion Network as they continue to invest in housing, health, and food

security initiatives. Their commitment to building relationships and equipping local leaders is a testament to the fact that real change happens when communities unite, take ownership, and work together for the common good. ■

**This success underscores the power of neighboring, where collective action leads to lasting impact.**





# *Annual Report* **STATS 2024**



At FCS, our mission is to **empower neighborhoods to thrive**, and we believe the best way to do that is through holistic neighborhood development.

A holistic approach looks at the entire ecosystem of a neighborhood in order to find strategies that impact more than one aspect of a place. FCS has interlocking pillars that create a social fabric and environment where people's entire beings can flourish.

**FINANCIAL  
OVERVIEW**  
*for 2024:*

**REVENUE** \$8,836,197

**EXPENSES** \$8,754,896

## MIXED-INCOME HOUSING

### *Single-Family Home Ownership*

*Program:* Sold 12 homes

### *Down Payment Assistance:*

Gave \$50,000 in down payment assistance to help brand-new homeowners purchase their first home

### *Legacy Homeowners Preservation and Repair Program:*

Repaired 17 homes.

We already have a waiting list of people to participate in 2025 and have expanded the program into nearby Thomasville Heights.

## STEPPING FORWARD:

*The number of residents we assisted:* 70

people in about 24 households

*Total funding provided:* \$31,000

*Types of assistance* (Emergency assistance to neighbors in South Atlanta and Thomasville):

- ✔ Mortgage payment assistance (homeowners facing hardship)
- ✔ Rent payment assistance (those facing eviction)
- ✔ Utilities payment assistance (those facing disconnection)
- ✔ Purchase of groceries and food
- ✔ Bereavement/grieving family financial support

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

*Carver Market and Community Grounds:* 300 customers daily (avg), staff of 20, 87% of staff are residents from the surrounding neighborhood

## NEIGHBORHOOD ENGAGEMENT

### *South Atlanta Christmas Store:*

\$26,000 in sales, 538 transactions, 3,421 items sold.

### *Food Co-op:*

26 sessions (every other week)

- ✔ South Atlanta Co-op serves 31 families.
- ✔ Launched second location
- ✔ Haven at South Atlanta serves 9 families
- ✔ Distributed over 80,000 lbs of food in 2024

### *South Atlanta Youth Group:*

Avg roster of 60 youth ages 5-18

## TRAINING & CONSULTING

### CITY SHAPERS

*Number of Congregation:* 45

*Number of individuals* from congregations participating in program: 88

*Total number* of individuals participating in the program: 214

*Number of events* conducted by the program: 24

### FNI

*Community Events:* 25

*Leadership Roles* filled by residents: 32

*Number of Engaged neighbors* in the FNI process: 322



**FOCUSED  
COMMUNITY  
STRATEGIES**

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