In addition to building homes, James and Martha Monroe build communities. In 2006, when James and Martha were in their early twenties and had been married for a year, they launched James Monroe Homes. For the first several years while the company was getting started, James received no salary from the business; it was Martha’s income as a registered nurse that sustained the family.

Today, James Monroe Homes is a nationally recognized business that has won numerous awards, and James has been recognized as one of the top 40 under 40 professionals in the country by Professional Builder magazine. Besides building homes in Lexington, a total of three neighborhoods—in Georgetown, Nicholasville and Richmond—are comprised exclusively of James Monroe Homes.

Even during those early lean years, the Monroes made giving back a priority. At the end of each year, James and Martha reviewed how much money they had earned and then chose which charities to support.

“Our philosophy was always: Don’t wait until you have a lot to give. When you have a little, give a little. When you have more, give more,” said James.

As the Monroes found they had more to give, the couple considered forming a nonprofit so they could be more strategic with their giving. An attorney they consulted urged them to contact Blue Grass Community Foundation instead.

“BGCF showed us how we could continue to support our passions in a way that would also maximize our gifts,” said Martha.

The Monroes are especially passionate about helping those who struggle financially.

James grew up in Lexington, the middle of five children. His family frequently ran out of food stamps before the end of the month. School breakfasts and lunches were often the only meals James and his siblings could count on. The family had no health insurance. A higher-than-expected electric bill could spell disaster. Martha was sensitive to the realities of poverty as well and worked through Lexington Parks & Recreation with children at the Kenwick Community Center. She frequently took the kids on field trips to the old Charles Young Center in Lexington.

Recently, the Monroes used their charitable giving fund at the Community Foundation to make a major gift to Splash!, a water feature scheduled to open this summer in the newly refurbished Charles Young playground in Lexington’s East End, a neighborhood traditionally lacking in free, kid-friendly water features and dynamic green spaces. The neighborhood, said James, reminded him of the place where he grew up, a place where people work hard yet still struggle financially.

The Monroes also use their fund to support their favorite charities and to match charitable donations of employees of James Monroe Homes. And, because the Monroe’s Fund is endowed, it will continue to have an impact beyond James’ and Martha’s lifetimes.

Perhaps most important of all, the Monroes want to teach their three children—James (16), Topher (14), and Mary (9)—that giving back to one’s community is an important responsibility, no matter where you start or how much you have to give. Investing in an endowed giving fund at BGCF allows the Monroes to lead by example.

“We highly encourage others to start a giving fund at the Community Foundation,” said James. “Not only will donors learn how their contributions can impact an entire community, they’ll also learn how much fun it is to give.”

Our philosophy was always: Don’t wait until you have a lot to give. When you have a little, give a little. When you have more, give more.

— James Monroe

To learn how you and your family can support your community and leave a meaningful legacy, contact BGCF Vice President/Advancement Scott Fitzpatrick at 859.225.3343.
BGCF365, a giving circle at Blue Grass Community Foundation for emerging philanthropists, held its annual grantmaking event, The Finals, on April 20 in downtown Lexington’s Base249. During the event, three local nonprofits pitched innovative projects and competed for $25,000 in grants.

In late January, the BGCF365 membership selected the 2022-2023 grant theme of “Youth Development and Wellness” to support programs that foster the resiliency, safety, connectedness, physical health, mental health, and overall wellbeing of children and youth (birth to age 22) in Fayette County.

After the BGCF365 Advisory Committee reviewed 40 amazing project proposals, it selected three organizations to pitch their programs at The Finals: The African American Ballet Troupe, Operation Making a Change and Specialized Alternatives for Families and Youth. After each nonprofit presentation, the BGCF365 members voted live on how to award $25,000 total in grants. Those grant amounts and winners are:

**First Place $15,000 Grant Winner: OPERATION MAKING A CHANGE**

Operation Making a Change (OMAC) offers a 12-week violence prevention/intervention program for Fayette County Public School students in grades 3-12. In addition to violence prevention (with an emphasis on gun violence), the program addresses other critical issues such as substance abuse and mental health and reinforces positive behaviors and decision-making.

“We are grateful to BGCF365 for its generous $15,000 grant! This support means the world to us and will make a huge difference in our program,” said Geo Gibson, founder of Operation Making a Change. “Thanks to this funding, we can keep on doing what we love: helping hundreds of kids every year. It’s all about giving them the guidance, coaching and support they need to make a positive impact in our community.”

**Second Place $7,500 Grant Winner: AFRICAN AMERICAN BALLET TROUPE**

The African American Ballet Troupe provides free ballet classes to traditionally underserved youth, including children of diverse races and those experiencing financial hardship, to increase the diversity of the Lexington ballet community. Students benefit from regular physical activity, and experience positive changes to their confidence levels and mental health by connecting with a community of dancers and performing in dance productions.

**Third Place $2,500 Grant Winner: SAFY**

Through Specialized Alternatives for Families and Youth of KY’s Older Youth Services Pathways to Success Skill Building Program, youth aging out of foster care (ages 18-21) receive monthly independent living skill building programming from a SAFY case manager. In addition to hands-on life skills, such as cooking, cleaning and financial planning, the youth also receive trauma-informed mental health care.

BGCF365 is an initiative of Blue Grass Community Foundation which unites and informs emerging philanthropists to make a collective impact on Fayette County. BGCF365 is for givers of all ages who want to be more engaged with their giving to make Lexington a better place to work, live and play for all! Members commit to giving $1 a day ($365 a year) to the BGCF365 Fund at the Community Foundation. Half of this contribution goes toward immediate grantmaking, while the other half is added to a permanent endowment fund that will produce an annual charitable payout for the group, in perpetuity.

Social and networking events are held quarterly and to date, BGCF365 has awarded $150,000 to the Lexington nonprofit community!
What can you do with $5,000?

Take a trip? Buy exclusive season tickets for the University of Kentucky Men’s Basketball team? Maybe score a Taylor Swift ticket?

Dr. Everett McCorvey had something a bit different in mind. Dr. McCorvey is a classical tenor, teacher, conductor and producer who, among many recognizable roles, serves as the director for the University of Kentucky’s Opera Theatre and Professor of Voice. He is also the founder and conductor of the American Spiritual Ensemble.

The American Spiritual Ensemble preserves and continues the tradition of storytelling through the performance and preservation of the American Negro Spiritual. Performing these spirituals serves as a tribute to enslaved people who were not permitted to speak their native languages or sing their traditional songs. In 2022, the American Spiritual Ensemble received a $5,000 Better Together Grant from the Lexington Black Prosperity Initiative.

The Lexington Black Prosperity Initiative (LBPI), a community-advised committee of Blue Grass Community Foundation (BGCF), established the Better Together Grants alongside the Walton Family Foundation to support important work by a variety of local nonprofits across a range of industries and focuses, including arts, civic engagement, construction, cultural inclusivity, education, equine and technology.

The American Spiritual Ensemble put its grant to use by funding the Singing in the Spirit: ASE Vocal Camp in February 2023. This camp was an experiential camp for children, adolescents and adults to foster a community of talent interested in the performance, preservation and understanding of the American Negro Spiritual. The community sing and workshop was open to choral singers, music directors and music lovers who were welcome to explore topics like the value embedded in spirituals, the role of cultural and spiritual traditions, and the significance and power of a shared communal experience through discussion of historical, social, and political context.

“During the era of slavery, those who labored in captivity pioneered a musical motif that began as unaccompanied songs of sorrow and hope,” said Dr. McCorvey. “They have morphed into the music only America can lay claim to. This is our mother music. It is the music that helped America find its musical voice and define what we now call “the American sound.” All of the musical genres that have evolved over the past few centuries — including jazz, blues, gospel, rock and even rap, are deeply rooted in the spirituals.”

“LBPI and its Better Together Grants are just one way the Community Foundation is continuing the critical work to create a more inclusive, welcoming and equitable community,” said Lisa Adkins, president/CEO of BGCF. “We’re excited about the diverse and compelling ideas funded by the grants that are now coming into fruition.”

Learn more about the Lexington Black Prosperity Initiative and the Better Together Grants at bgcf.org/racialequity.

BETTER TOGETHER GRANTS UPDATE

SINGING IN THE SPIRIT OF COMMUNITY

The community sing and workshop was open to choral singers, music directors and music lovers who were welcome to explore topics like the value embedded in spirituals, the role of cultural and spiritual traditions, and the significance and power of a shared communal experience through discussion of historical, social, and political context.

“During the era of slavery, those who labored in captivity pioneered a musical motif that began as unaccompanied songs of sorrow and hope,” said Dr. McCorvey. “They have morphed into the music only America can lay claim to. This is our mother music. It is the music that helped America find its musical voice and define what we now call “the American sound.” All of the musical genres that have evolved over the past few centuries — including jazz, blues, gospel, rock and even rap, are deeply rooted in the spirituals.”

“LBPI and its Better Together Grants are just one way the Community Foundation is continuing the critical work to create a more inclusive, welcoming and equitable community,” said Lisa Adkins, president/CEO of BGCF. “We’re excited about the diverse and compelling ideas funded by the grants that are now coming into fruition.”

ALL ABOUT ENDOWEMENTS

Thanks to the Endow Kentucky Tax Credit, there has never been a better time to invest in the future of our community. Gifts to endowed charitable funds at Blue Grass Community Foundation are eligible for up to 20% in state tax credits. Unlike tax deductions, tax credits are subtracted from a donor’s tax bill, dollar for dollar. A gift of $5,000 can reduce what you owe in state taxes by $1,000. A gift of $50,000 can reduce your tax bill by $10,000. And this is in addition to your federal and state charitable tax deduction.

But these credits go fast! The Kentucky Department of Revenue begins accepting applications for Endow Kentucky Tax Credits on July 1. All applications submitted between July 1 and July 7 are guaranteed to receive at least a prorated portion.

An endowment’s income provides annual support for charities and charitable causes in perpetuity. Whether it’s supporting an existing endowment at BGCF or creating one of your own, we can help. A gift to an endowment fund is an investment in today and tomorrow.

Would you like to make a gift that qualifies for the Endow Kentucky Tax Credit? Call us at 859.225.3343 or scan the QR code to download our Endow Kentucky Tax Credit Toolkit.
In 2012, the Little Endowment for LCT has paid a total of $1,364,058 to bring Shooting Stars Youtheatre to Rowan and Elliott Counties. Today, the endowment that was established with a $2.5 million grant now has a balance of $2.67 million—thanks to the power of endowments and the Community Foundation’s careful stewardship of the funds it administers.

For more information about endowments, or how to establish your own, contact Lisa Adkins, President/CEO, at ladkins@bgcf.org or 859.255.3343.
Endowed Funds at BGCF

Endowment funds help nonprofits safeguard charitable dollars for the future of their work and mission. Donations to any of the funds listed here are eligible for the Endow Kentucky Tax Credit.

**Community-Based Funds**

- Fund for Greater Lexington
- Clark County Community Foundation
- Franklin County Community Fund
- Harrison County Community Fund
- Madison County Community Fund
- Magoffin County Community Fund
- Our Foundation for Fayette County
- Rowan County Community Fund
- Woodford County Community Fund

**Community and Special Interest Funds**

- Lexington-Clark Prosperity Initiative
- BGCF365 Hall Endowment
- BGCF Civic Leadership Fund

**Agency and Designated Funds**

- African American Forum Fund
- BGCF Civic Leadership Fund
- BGCF365 Hall Endowment
- Fund for Appalachia Kentucky
- Rowan County Community Fund
- Our Foundation for Morgan County
- Magoffin County Community Fund
- Madison County Community Fund
- Harrison County Community Fund
- Clark County Community Foundation

**Endowed Funds at BGCF**

- Frankfort Parks Recreation & Historic Sites
- Franklin County Humane Society Endowment
- Franklin County Trust for Historic Preservation
- Friends of the McConnell Springs Endowed Fund
- Friends of the Kentucky Theatre
- Friends of the Lexington Senior Center
- Frontier Nursing University Endowment
- FUMC of Cinthiana Chartered Scout Troop 60 and Troop 607 Endowment
- FUMC of Cinthiana Children’s Fund
- FUMC of Cinthiana Endowment for Evangelism
- FUMC of Cinthiana Scholarships Fund
- FUMC of Cinthiana United Preschool Fund
- FUMC of Cinthiana Youth Fund
- Garbulinska Initiative Endowed Fund
- Gateway Regional Arts Center Fund
- GeorgeF C and Scott County Museum Foundation
- GleanKY Endowed Fund
- Global Adoption, Counseling, Cultural Resources, Inc. Endowed Fund
- God’s Pantry Food Bank Hunger Relief Fund
- GreenHouse17, Inc. Endowed Fund
- Growing Together Preschool Endowed Fund
- Hazel Burns Endowment Fund for Oneida Baptist Institute
- Headley-Whitney Endowment Fund
- Henry T. Duncan Memorial Fund
- To support the Fayette County Bar Association
- HEP Endowment Fund
- For First Presbyterian Church
- Historic Christ Church Preservation Fund
- Hope’s Wings Endowment
- Hospice Care Clinic Endowment Fund
- Independence Place Endowment Fund
- J.R. McClanahan Foundation to support Eastland Church of God
- James and F. Glenn Fund for Indigent Medical Care
- To support the University of Kentucky Human Needs Fund
- Jane Kbeeble Resident Education Fund
- To support the University of Kentucky Department of Surgery
- Jean B. Ezzell Foundation Account
- For First Presbyterian Church
- Jeff A. Woodson Endowment
- For the University of Kentucky College of Law
- Josephine Sculpture Park Endowment Fund
- Just Fund Education Project
- Keith MacAdam Endowment
- For the Kentucky Nature Preserves
- Kentucky Bluegrass Chapter SWCS Endowment Fund
- Kentucky Equal Justice Center Endowment Fund
- Kentucky Historical Society (KHS) Kentucky Treasures Endowment
- Kentucky Law Enforcement Memorial Foundation (KLEMP) Inc. Fund
- Kentucky Natural Lands Trust Endowment Fund
- Kentucky Refugee Ministries Endowment Fund
- Lawrence County Resources Foundation
- Kentucky River Foothills
- Development Council Inc. Fund
- KSDAR Endowed Fund
- For Duncan Scott Historic Center
- LCA Teachers Endowment Fund
- LCHS Tuition Assistance Endowment Fund
- Leeds Center for the Arts Endowment Fund
- Legacy Greenspace Endowment Fund
- LexArts Inc. Fund
- Lexington Art League Endowment
- Lexington Children’s Foundation
- Lexington Community Radio Endowment Fund
- Lexington Fairness Endowment Fund
- Lexington History Museum Endowment Fund
- Lexington Holy Family Endowment Fund
- Lexington Jewish Community Endowment Fund
- Lexington Leadership Foundation Inc.
- Endowment FBO Amachi Central Kentucky
- Lexington Philharmonic Orchestra Foundation
- Lexington Public Library Clock Pendulum and Rotunda Preservation Fund
- Lexington Rescue Mission Endowed Fund
- The Lexington Theatre Company Endowment Fund
- Life Plan of Kentucky Endowment Fund
- Living Arts & Science Center Fund
- Lowder Howard Center Endowed Park Fund
- Madison County Atheneum Fund to support the Madison County Public Library in Berea and Richmond
- Martin Luther King Neighborhood Association Endowment Fund
- Mary Louise Young and Mary Lillard Young Fund to support Central Christian Church
- Millie E. and Gayle J. Adams Memorial Fund to support the University of Kentucky
- Lucille Markey Cancer Research Center
- Mission Lexington Endowed Fund
- Montessos High School Endowment Fund
- Morehead Area Arts Council Endowed Fund
- Mt. Sterling-Montgomery Co Parks and Recreation Fund
- The Next Coat for Women, Children & Families Endowed Fund
- New Opportunity School For Women Endowed Fund
- Newton’s Attic Endowment Fund
- Northside Community Endowment Fund
- Nursing Home Ombudsman Agency Fund
- Ohayow Synagogue Endowed Fund
- One Parent Family Facility/Virginia Place Fund
- Opera Lex Endowment Fund
- Pam Hammonds Memorial
- Endowed Fund for Central Music Academy
- Paris Animal Welfare Society Endowed Fund
- Paris-Bourbon County YMCA Endowed Fund
- Prichard Council for Academic Excellence Funded Fund
- Primate Rescue Center Endowment Fund
- Presbyterian Endowment Fund
- Radio Eye Endowment
- Ralph W. Gabbard Educational Fund to support the Governor’s Scholarship Program
- Rockcastle Karst Conservancy Legacy Endowment Fund
- Rose Mary C. Brooks Place Fund
- Rowan County Promotion Foundation
- Rowan365 Endowed Fund
- Save The Grand Theatre, Inc. Fund
- Saykaly Garbulinska Philharmonic Foundation
- Composer-In-Residence Endowment Fund
- Serve Kentucky Foundation
- Seton Catholic School Education Opportunities Endowment Fund
- Shakertown Village Endowment Fund
- Shoulder to Shoulder Global Endowed Fund
- St. Agatha Academy Endowment Fund
- Step by Step Endowment Fund
- Surgery on Sunday Endowment Fund
- Thoroughbred Charities of America Endowment Fund
- Temple Adath Israel Blue Grass Fund
- United States Pony Clubs Endowment Fund
- University of Kentucky Bilal Ibn Rabab Scholarship Endowment
- W. Paul and Lucille Caudill Little Endowment for Lexington Children’s Theatre
- W. Paul and Lucille Little Endowment for the Morehead Theatre Guild
- Wilderness Trace Child Development Center Endowed Fund
- Woodford County Rural Land Bond Endowed Fund
- Woodford Humane Society Endowment Fund
- Woods & Waters Land Trust Endowment
- YMCA of Central Kentucky Endowment Fund
- Tanker Endowed Fund
- for PJ Library Bluegrass

**SUMMER 2023**
What does a three-time GRAMMY Award-winning musician, the first ever winner of NPR Music’s Tiny Desk contest, and dynamic storyteller do before he goes on tour with Bruce Springsteen? He comes to The Lyric Theatre, of course!

At least, that is what Xavier Amin Dphrepaulezz, better known by his performance name, Fantastic Negrito, did in April 2023. The contemporary blues artist’s latest project, “White Jesus, Black Problems,” which explores racism, the enduring impact of slavery and forbidden love, was a concept conceived when he learned his seventh great-grandmother was a white indentured servant from Scotland, who entered into a common-law marriage with an enslaved African American man. Many of the album’s lyrics deal with slavery in historical times and its effects on modern-day people of color, as well as interracial relationships that were illegal during certain periods of American history.

The album is accompanied with a visual film component which audience members at The Lyric were able to view after Fantastic Negrito performed an acoustic set of his fifth studio album.

“The event exceeded expectations,” said co-founder of Black Mountain Management, David Helmers. “It was a unique cultural event that allowed for a true artist to be on display and share his work and process. The screening, the intimate Q&A, and the spellbinding acoustic performance provided an evening of film, music, and thoughtful dialogue that was very special. It was a profound artistic experience for those in attendance and something you won’t encounter very often anywhere.”

Helmers continued, “Fantastic Negrito was charming, funny, provocative, conversational, and approachable - yet extraordinary in the storytelling and musical ability.”

The Lexington Black Prosperity Initiative (LBPI), housed at Blue Grass Community Foundation, was a beneficiary of the event and portion of the ticket sales went toward supporting LBPI’s mission of strengthening, supporting, and making a meaningful impact in Lexington’s Black community.

“The Lexington Black Prosperity Initiative is rooted in family, community and opportunity,” said Lisa Higgins-Hord, co-chair of the Lexington Black Prosperity Initiative. “The supporters of this initiative generously share their time, talent, and treasure to advance LBPI’s work and this event was just one example of ways to give! From hosting artistic community events like this to simply making a one-time donation, any gift to LBPI is an investment in Black leaders, organizations, young people and families in Fayette County.”

To learn more about the Lexington Black Prosperity Initiative and how you can support its efforts, please visit bgcf.org/racialequity.
Blue Grass Community Foundation hosts a network of endowed community funds, each seeking to improve the quality of life in its geography. In partnership with local leaders, these funds work to increase charitable giving and build local charitable resources to impact their community’s greatest needs and opportunities.

Contributing to your local community fund is one important way to invest together for community good.

If you live in, or love, Clark, Franklin, Fayette, Harrison, Madison, Magoffin, Rowan or Woodford counties, visit our website to learn more about endowed community funds in these counties: bgcf.org/communityfunds.

THE POWER OF ONE

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE OF CLARK COUNTY

I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples.

— Mother Teresa

One Clark County native took those words to heart and realized one person can make a huge difference in the future of their community.

In 2022, a friend of Clark County came to Blue Grass Community Foundation with a dream and a plan: to make Winchester/Clark County a more equitable and inclusive place to live, work and play. A collaboration was formed between Blue Grass Community Foundation, Clark County Community Foundation, the Greater Clark Foundation, this Clark County benefactor, and facilitator Colene Elridge to develop an initiative with the goal of empowering the next generation of diverse leaders in Winchester/Clark County. Thus, the Winchester Minority Leadership Initiative (WMLI) was born.

“WMLI is a one-year, in-depth leadership training program with a passionate initial cohort of Clark Countians who are seeking to create positive change for our community,” said Halee Cunningham. Halee not only serves as general counsel and director of planned giving for Blue Grass Community Foundation, she also provides staff support to the Clark County Community Foundation board of advisors, assisting them in growing their fund and awarding grants to charitable organizations and causes in Clark County.

“We are so excited to see the ripple effect this program will inspire, including the opportunity for participants to direct grant funds toward needs and opportunities they have identified through their work and lived experiences in our community,” said Cunningham.

The program began hosting its initial cohort of participants ages 21-45 in the Spring of 2023. Each cohort will participate in a 13-month facilitated program, with the additional opportunity to receive one-on-one personal development coaching from Coach Colene. Sessions currently focus on leadership building in the professional and community space, including sessions on public speaking, personal branding, agility and resilience building, and critical thinking and problem solving. The program even hosts a book club for the cohort, covering books provided by WMLI.

Following the completion of the program, participants will have the opportunity to develop grant proposals from a pool of $250,000 in funding for needs and opportunities in Winchester/Clark County.

“The Winchester Minority Leadership Initiative is a great opportunity to further develop leaders within the community,” said Coach Colene. “The individuals enrolled are passionate about their growth, but even more passionate about the growth of Winchester. The information is useful and practical, but the real change is in how they see themselves. So many times, they’ve told me that they’ve done something differently, or responded differently than what they normally would have. I believe in them and know they will make an incredible impact in Winchester!”

I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples.

— Mother Teresa

To learn more about the Winchester Minority Leadership Initiative, please visit winchestermli.org.
FROM LISA ADKINS

Our President’s Letter

Money doesn’t grow on trees; it grows in endowments. We say it all the time around the Community Foundation, because we know how true it is. This issue of BGCFyi proves the point that charitable endowments play a critical role in sustaining and enhancing the quality of life across our communities. For BGCF fundholders and donors, it’s a terrific way to perpetuate one’s values and priorities, create a permanent legacy and make a significant investment in the future. For nonprofit organizations and causes, it creates an ongoing stream of income, diversifies the funding base, enhances sustainability and promotes more giving.

We are so fortunate the state of Kentucky incentivizes endowed charitable giving at community foundations through the Endow Kentucky Tax Credit program. The team at BGCF is here to help you build your charitable legacy and invest in the communities and organizations you love. If you’re interested in establishing an endowed charitable fund or applying for Endow Kentucky tax credits, don’t hesitate to contact me at 859.225.3343 or ladkins@bgcf.org.

Lisa Ashner Adkins, J.D.
President/CEO