



2023 Annual Report

LEANING INTO ECOSYSTEM BUILDING

THE GUILD

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2023 was a year of building organizational and ecosystem infrastructure...

As a social enterprise rooted in social movements, partnerships and coalition-building within the ecosystem are extremely important to us. While we're invested in our own impact and sustainability, without a resilient ecosystem at-large, we wouldn't be able to build the regenerative, community-owned future we envision. Strong partnerships require an equitable distribution of labor, mutual accountability, trust, and reciprocity. In 2023, we built and flexed new muscles in our approach to building trusted partnerships, both internally and externally with other organizations in the ecosystem.

“Discerning what is yours to hold and what is the collective's is an essential life skill and fundamental to organizational work, collaboration, and meaningful engagement of others.”

— Maurice Mitchell, National Director of the Working Families Party



Building a culture rooted in our values of accountability, creative excellence, safety, and integrity

Our partnership with **Grow Dialogue**, an organization that helps teams with internal decision making, conflict resolution, and collaborative innovation, grew out of a need to strengthen our team culture and address operational challenges that arise for organizations during periods of growth:

- Lack of accountability and clarity in expectations
- Inadequate frameworks for addressing internal issues, including changes in team members' roles
- Disconnection among The Guild's strategic planning process, culture, and values, which was affecting execution of our work and mission

Grow Dialogue and The Guild co-created a compassionate transition protocol for when we find ourselves at points of transition, when team members' roles shift or they part ways with the organization. Grow Dialogue provided a mediation practice that is critical and core to cooperative and collective movement. Through bi-weekly check-ins, issue visibility, and course correction, The Guild identifies triggers that disrupt workflow or our ability to achieve our mission, such as unmet shared agreements or unfulfilled job needs.

We also reinforced the concept of collective accountability to ensure tasks are completed and address personal needs. By making sure we have clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and values, The Guild and Grow Dialogue deepened each employee's sense of ownership of their contributions and commitment to our shared goals.

As a result of The Guild's partnership with Grow Dialogue, The Guild has improved our team cohesion, strengthened our organizational resilience, focused our strategic alignment, and become more effective in our community impact.



Groundbreaking & Construction

We finally broke ground on construction at 918 Dill Ave.! Getting shovels in the ground on our first property in the Community Stewardship Trust has been a three-year labor of love and learning. With construction financing from Reinvestment Fund we broke ground in May 2023. with an expected completion date of late 2024.

Part of demolition meant losing the interactive mural we'd painted the year before that asked passerby, "what do you want to see here?" To honor those contributions, we worked with local artist Craig "Flux" Singleton, who used the sentiments that neighbors left to create a new art piece. This became a 100 ft. long mural that serves as our construction wrap, covering the entire west-facing facade of the building.

With music, games and food from past Accelerator businesses and future 918 restaurant tenants, attendees said our Groundbreaking celebration "felt like Old Atlanta"... which is the best compliment we could've hoped for. We got the chance to debut renderings of the interior spaces and invite feedback on their uses as well as build conversation and galvanize energy around the Community Stewardship Trust.

We also introduced our Space/Time Asset Map, an expansion of previous asset mapping we undertook with the Capitol View Neighborhood Association in previous years. This project invited participants to not only consider spaces that are important to them in the present and what they'd find useful in the future, but also consider spaces that no longer exist. From long-demolished apartments folks used to call home, to schools and shops that have been repurposed — we are mapping the gaps and opportunities in both physical and temporal space.





The Community Stewardship Trust

We've been continuing our work with our legal partners at Orrick to refine the structure for the Community Stewardship Trust in advance of its opening in Fall 2024. Among the milestones on that front has been designing the organizational decision matrix for the CST board and members. We are working with instructional designer David Ferris to launch the CST educational programming next spring, to prepare residents for investment and collective stewardship. After hosting the first of our CST orientation meetings in the Pittsburgh and Westview neighborhoods, we have 50 residents committed to becoming Community Investors.

The CST grew this year with the addition of two new properties: 890 Dill, just down the block from 918 Dill, and the Multi-Use Radical People's Hall (The MURPH) in West End.

890 Dill is major milestone toward our "block approach," creating four CST-owned parcels along the Dill & Sylvan intersection. The MURPH is our first expansion of the CST outside that block, spreading the reach of our approach beyond Capitol View into the West End (still within 30310). Both properties are exciting additions that hold the promise of how the CST is able to scale within both immediate and larger neighborhood boundaries



890 Dill Avenue

Like our neighboring pilot property, 890 Dill lived many lives before our acquisition. As part of our environmental assessment of the property, we discovered an underground fuel tank that appears to date back to the 1990s when a transportation company was located on the site. Soil and groundwater samples show that small amounts have leaked in the immediate vicinity of the tank.

In order to prevent more fuel leaks, we extracted the 800 gallons that remained in the tank and transported it to a regulated water treatment facility. We've enrolled the property in the [EPD's Brownfield program](#), and have been working with a reputable remediation company and environmental attorney.

While these environmental issues are challenging, we welcome the work of turning this space into a healthier community asset for the neighborhood. We can begin co-designing its future with clean(er) slate.

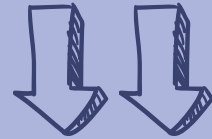
The MURPH @ 561 W Whitehall St. is an example of the multiple roles we play in the ecosystem – real estate developer, reparative capital provider, community ownership incubator



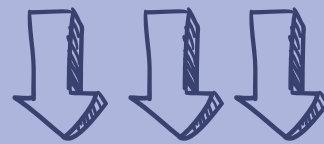
Organizers of the MURPH approached The Guild in December 2023 to support their vision for a community-owned movement infrastructure space.



The Guild's fund, Groundcover, put up the capital to purchase The MURPH.



The Guild is staying on as The MURPH's real estate developer to complete renovation and ensure transition to community ownership.



After renovation and activation, The MURPH will join The Guild's Community Stewardship Trust.



Previously held by Southerners on New Ground (SONG), the MURPH team carries forth SONG's radical, queer, anti-capitalist, and feminist legacy. Their commitment to going against the grain by refusing to sell out to corporate interests allowed a principled transition to developing the MURPH as a community-owned space. Longtime organizers Charlene Carruthers, Kate Shapiro and Mary Hooks steward the space to meet the needs of everyday people and organizations and provide much-needed space for cultural work and movement infrastructure.





BRITTANY LOVE

CEO, FREE BIRDS VEGAN KITCHEN

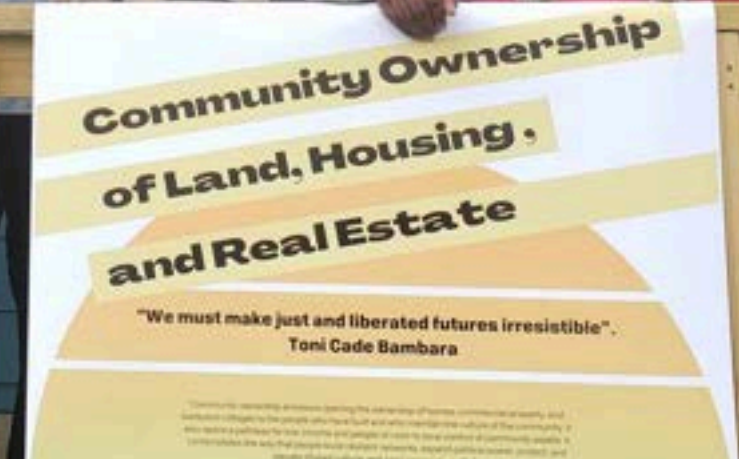
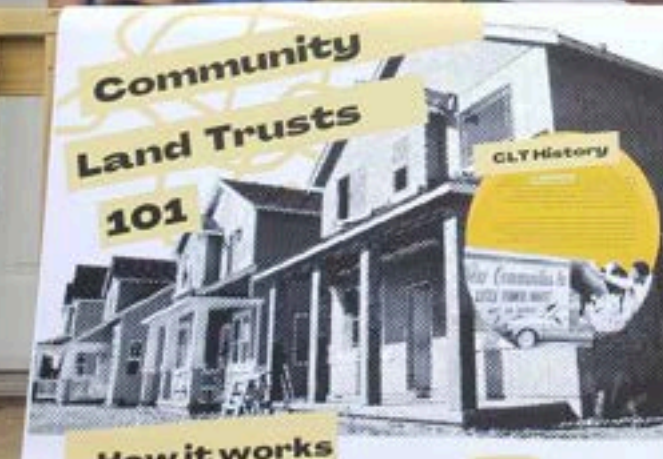
Impact Story: Ecosystem Building at 918 Dill Ave.

Brittany Love, founder of Freebirds Vegan Kitchen, was both a former resident at The Guild's co-living space in Sweet Auburn, and part of our Community Wealth Building Business Accelerator in 2019. Now, she's signed an LOI to open up a kitchen space at 918 Dill Ave., and is a prime example of the weaving of our work across affordable housing, technical assistance for small businesses, affordable commercial real estate and community investment.

[Click the video to learn more](#)

PEOPLE'S COMMUNITY LAND TRUST UPDATES

The People's Community Land Trust went from zero to 20,000 square feet over the course of 2023. Thanks to the strength of our partnerships with **Housing Justice League** and **AFSC**, we were able to acquire two new properties: a single family home in Peoplestown and a multifamily apartment complex on Elm St. in the English Avenue neighborhood. In September we hosted a neighborhood housewarming for Ms. Juliet, our first resident, in September after making renovations and updates to the home. In December, we hosted the first tenant meeting at Elm St.





Impact Story: Dreams on Elm St.

Acquired in December 2023, 379 Elm St. is the first multi-family land trust property in Atlanta. A 9-unit apartment building with 1, 2, and 3-bedroom units, is the PCLT's second acquisition.

Before joining the PCLT, rents at 379 Elm St. constantly went up despite management refusing to make requested improvements to the property, like the additional outdoor lighting residents requested. Several tenants had been evicted.

Since 379 Elm St. joined the PCLT, rents have decreased, and priority for vacant units will go folks with incomes at or below 30% of the Area Median Income for the area. The PCLT will continue partnering with residents to proactively manage and steward the property.

[Click the video to learn more](#)



Homecoming for a displaced elder

The PCLT's first acquisition was a permanent home for Juliet Brown, a beloved elder displaced from her home of 30 years by a predatory landlord. Ms. Juliet's fight for stable and affordable housing along with Housing Justice League and AFSC was the galvanizing factor that ultimately led to forming the People's Community Land Trust.

The lot on which Ms. Juliet's home sits is large enough to construct additional units of housing, which we will be exploring over the next 2-3 years.

Groundcover Updates

In 2023, we officially soft-launched Groundcover, our fund to seed and scale community-owned models of land, housing, and real estate in Atlanta and across the South. After a successful funder briefing in the summer, we raised and deployed \$3M in investment capital and \$1M in grant capital. The capital went as low-interest, uncollateralized loans to support the acquisition of 2 properties in the PCLT (Ms. Juliet's home and 379 Elm), as well as the acquisition of 2 CST properties (890 Dill Ave. and The MURPH)



The importance of patient, reparative capital like Groundcover was clear in the acquisition of 890 Dill Ave.

In the case of 890 Dill, a group of Black commercial real estate professionals (who The Guild had a relationship with) came together to co-invest and “buy back the block” in 2021, shortly after we purchased 918 Dill Ave. Sadly, their development plans didn't pan out, and they had a hard money loan that was racking up interest. This summer, they reached out to us directly to sell, given our relationship and our mission. 890 Dill Ave. — as so many properties in historically Black neighborhoods do due to environmental racism — comes with some environmental challenges. We're no stranger to such challenges after dealing with them on a couple different properties, and have a good partnership in place with an environmental remediation company (and an environmental attorney) that has worked with us for a few years.

The funding that The Guild received from Groundcover Fund is unique and necessary because it is right-sized to the project's true development time horizon, risk expectations, revenue generation, and mission preservation. Applying the learnings from our previous pilots, the Guild understands that pre-development capital (historically the most difficult type of funding to get for real estate projects) is absolutely critical when turning vacant, abandoned and “blighted” buildings into assets for community.

Developer programming

DEMOCRATIZING DEVELOPMENT

Our partnership with the Capitol View Neighborhood Association continues to flourish. Together we co-sponsored the Democratizing Development program, which sought to expand accessibility to real estate and civic development knowledge among neighborhood residents. We worked with Nedra Deadwyler of Civil Bikes to create a series of resident-designed and -led bike and walking tours that helped to connect Capitol View's past and present to the forces designing the future of the community.

TRANSFORMATIVE DEVELOPMENT

This year we continued and expanded the TransFormative Development Partnership (TDP) across the state of Georgia. In partnership with **TransFormation Alliance** and **The Center for Community Progress**, the 2023 cohort included 12 Black and Brown developers and land banks with sessions in Atlanta and Augusta.

The program provided the cohort with a total of \$80,000 in pre-development grants to support their active projects, hosted convenings that covered key topics, and provided opportunities for knowledge sharing and partnership between the cohort, local land banks, land trusts, and municipalities.

SEED ACADEMY

In partnership with Grow America (formerly the National Development Council or NDC), and with the support of JP Morgan Chase, we instituted the first **SEED Academy** program in December. Out of over 50 applicants, 25 local residents and aspiring developers (100% Black and other people of color, 50% women of color) were selected and completed the curriculum that included training on concept development, building a pro forma, securing financing and equity, and affordable development. Over 15 participants worked together to pitch 11 real life projects for the capstone presentation.

The program recruited capstone judges with backgrounds in lending, real estate, philanthropy and community development. Cohort members are working with local organizations for support with grants and financing.



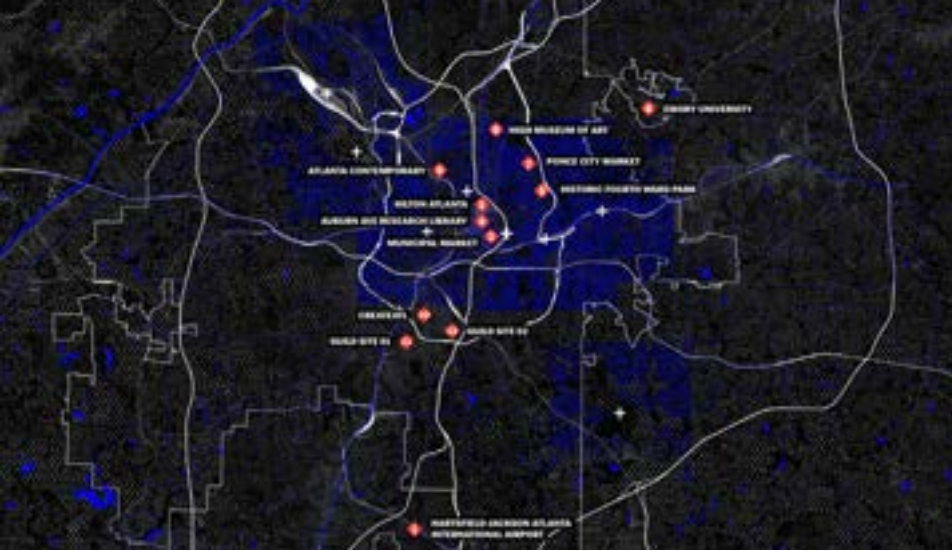
Impact Story: Five Miles South

Bridgett Bell, cofounder of **Robinson Bell LLC**, was an awardee of our first SEED Academy program in Atlanta. Robinson Bell received a \$25,000 forgivable loan from Grow America to support predevelopment for their **Five Miles South** project.

Located in the heart of downtown Riverdale just south of the Hartsfield Jackson Atlanta Airport, Five Miles South is being developed in coordination with the City of Riverdale and their comprehensive plan. The project activates a vacant 3 acre parcel with affordable housing, accessible commercial spaces, and shared green space.

The development includes relocating and renovating six affordable homes, renovating a vacant barn into market space, and developing micro commercial units along Church Street, one of the city's main arteries, creating walkable options and amenities for local residents.





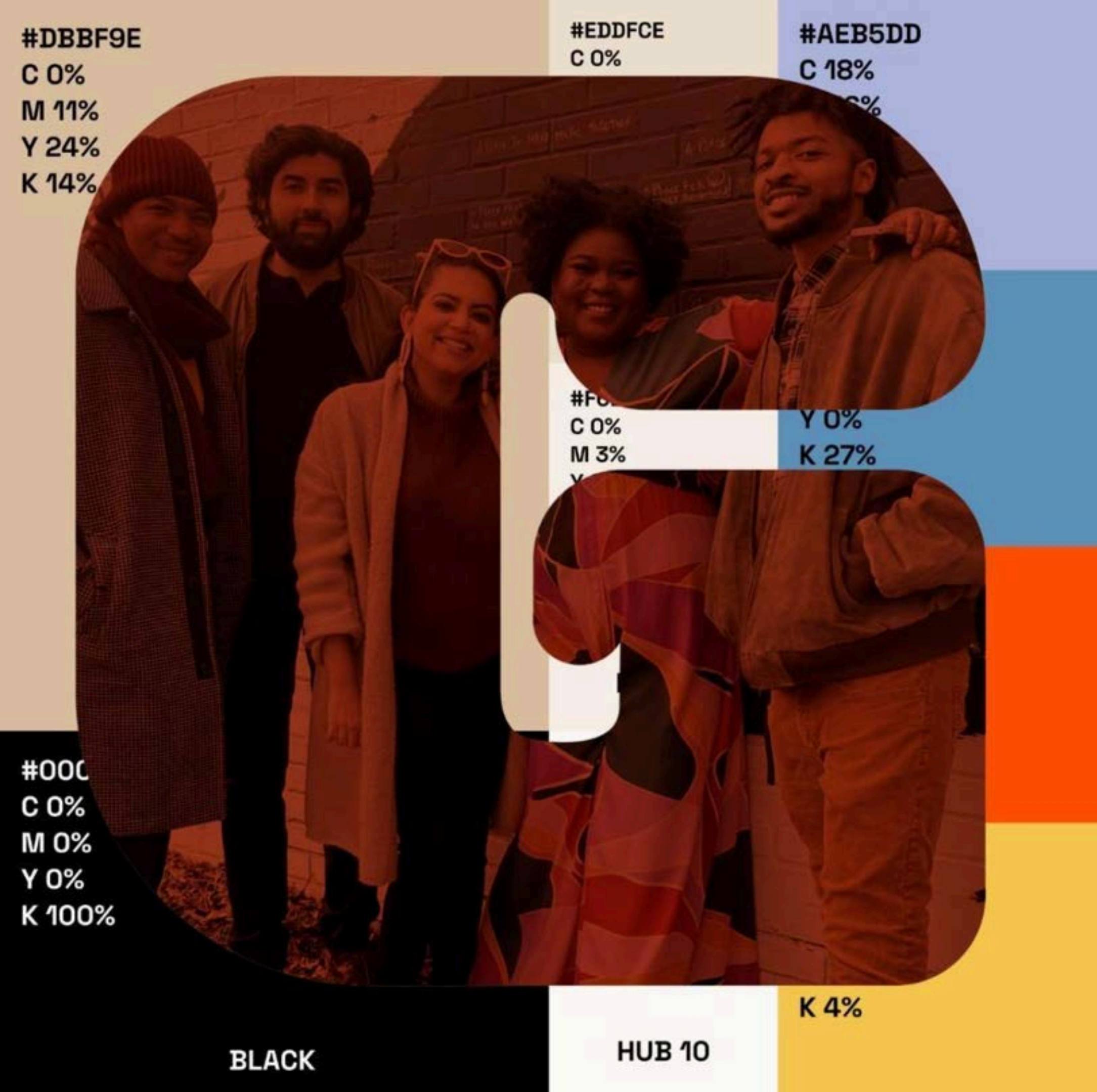
Antariksh from The Guild, outlines the organization's aspirations for ownership models that are more just and community-based. He also highlights the challenges faced in chasing such ideals within a capitalist structure. Crafting strategies and toolkits to challenge the existing system through capitalistic means presents itself as both thrilling and challenging. As we engage in a deep dialogue with Antariksh, he adeptly addresses a stream of questions, enhancing our comprehension of their vision for a future beyond traditional property norms.



Sharing our praxis and learnings with academia

2023 was our third year engaging with Emanuel Admassu's Graduate Urban Design Studio at Columbia GSAPP. Using Atlanta as a backdrop, the studio explores the radical possibilities of land decoupled from ownership, decolonized and reimagined into sites of communal renewal. This year, students leaned deeply into exploring practical models of redistribution. Avery and Dani joined a panel with land trust organizations across the U.S. to discuss the implications, challenges and considerations of community ownership in practice, while Antariksh accompanied students and staff on 2 days of site visits and reflective discussion in the city, including to 918 Dill.





Same ol' G

As we've rapidly grown and changed as a company over the past three years, we realized that our presentation needed to shift to hold the work we are currently engaged in.

We enlisted the brilliant minds at [Polymode Studio](#) to help construct a new, **living container** — space for the narratives within which our work is embedded, embodying our principles in the content we produce.

Over several months of workshopping, testing and iterating, we collectively landed on a modular visual system that tells our stories and gives us room to tell the stories of the communities with whom we collaborate. It hearkens back to “old Atlanta” and at the same time provokes action and curiosity toward new futures.

We are immensely proud of where we've been, and even more proud of where we're going.

PRESS & OTHER MEDIA

JEI JOURNEYS: NIKISHKA IYENGAR MODELING COMMUNITY-OWNED AND -DIRECTED DEVELOPMENT

Just Economy Institute, 2/5/2024

GROUP WANTS TO NOT JUST STABILIZE RENT IN AN ATLANTA NEIGHBORHOOD, THEY WANT TO LOWER IT

WSB-TV, 1/18/2024

FOUR WINNING MODELS FOR BUILDING COMMUNITY WEALTH

Next City, 10/10/2023

A NEW ATLANTA HOUSING COLLABORATION SUPPORTS RESIDENTS FACING EVICTION

Rough Draft Atlanta, 6/23/2023

INNOVATING EQUITABLE HOMEOWNERSHIP

P&R Edge, 3/7/2023

The screenshot shows a website layout with a blue header and a yellow banner at the top that says "Are You A Vanguard? Applications Now Open" and "DOWNLOAD OUR NEW EBOOK". Below the banner is a blue navigation bar with the logo "THE BOTTOM LINE". The main content area features an article titled "Four Winning Models for Building Community Wealth" with a sub-headline "Op-ed: From Atlanta to Burlington, four financial activists offer a window into their work flowing resources to front-line communities." and a byline "DER NELSON · OP-ED · OCTOBER 10, 2023". To the right of the article is a sidebar with a "MOST POPULAR" section containing three items: "Prilly's Rolling Engagement Van Cuts Recidivism By Bringing Resources Where They're Needed", "Disabled Riders Need Comprehensive Public Transit Planning", and "Food System Transformation Must Reach the World's Small-Scale Distributors". Below the article is a photo of five people standing in front of a building. At the bottom of the page, there is a navigation bar for "GPB" with links for TV, Radio, News, Education, Sports, Events, Kids & Family, and Support Us. Below this is a search bar and a "PASSPORT" button.

The People's Community Land Trust is the latest organization working to keep residents in their homes as rising prices push many people out of Atlanta. The project is a collaboration between three economic and housing justice organizations: The Guild, Housing Justice League, and Atlanta Economic Justice Program.

The trust's first accomplishment was to relocate a longtime community member who lost her home.

The Guild Ecosystem Director Nikisha Iyengar helped develop the land trust. She said the key difference in this project from other, similar efforts is in whom it serves.

"We're focused on folks who are on the front lines of displacement and or being evicted right now to have a permanent home base," Iyengar said. "Versus sort of having an open market for buyers who may be interested in the land trust."

The idea for a land trust first formed during the early days of the pandemic. The Housing Justice League set up a hotline for people experiencing housing struggles as a result of COVID-19 to be connected with resources.

Executive Director Alison Johnson said the affordable housing crisis hasn't gone away since then.

"What we were seeing prior pandemic, it's a bit worse because, you know, we don't have any really strong policies that really protect folks in our community," Johnson said. "So our communities are overdeveloped with not enough housing that really addresses the needs"

ORICE OF POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH (P&R) ABOUT P&R RESEARCH & PUBLICATIONS DIRECTS

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FEATURED ARTICLE

HUD USER Home » P&R Edge Home » Featured Article

Innovating Equitable Homeownership

Accessing housing that is safe and affordable continues to be a challenge throughout the United States, while historic discriminatory practices have amplified inequities in housing. In January 2023, the Turner Center for Housing Innovation at the University of California Berkeley, together with the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University and the National League of Cities, cohosted a symposium on housing supply innovation. One panel discussed how policymakers can increase the housing supply equitably, with speakers highlighting innovative programs that center racial justice and community empowerment while expanding affordable homeownership opportunities. Panelists included Joshua Meritson, creative director and co-founder of Provo; Nikisha Iyengar, founder and chief ecosystem officer at The Guild; and Inan Yasin, director of strategic initiatives at Parity. The discussion was moderated by Chris Harbert, managing

Housing affordability encompasses several aspects, including income levels, the cost of new housing construction, and the cost of the underlying land, that can produce inequitable housing outcomes.

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