

# Forum

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**POVERTY RATE**

**A SHARP PUNCH**

**IN THE GUT**

The incredible growth and gains that our city has experienced over the past few years haven't been equal for everyone, columnist says. LIZ DUFOUR/THE ENQUIRER



## For the area to truly thrive, we need to all dig a little deeper to care, share

Contrasting headlines about our city can make us proud or make us squirm. In April, a headline was "U.S. News: Cincinnati in top 50 of Best Places to Live 2018." Just last week, we had a much different headline: "Cincinnati's poverty rate up, higher than pre-Great Recession at 27.7 percent, Census says."

While we live in a great community, we also live in a place with great needs. Childhood poverty. Opioid crisis. Homelessness. Mental health. Racism. Not everyone in our community is thriving. Recently our city has grappled with what to do about the homeless camps in our downtown, a police officer being shot while serving a warrant at a group home, and the devastating effects of mental illness. These are tough issues with no easy answers.

For ALL of Greater Cincinnati to truly thrive, we need to boldly address these and other problems ... and the nonprofits of our community are on the front lines of this work. I believe that high-performing nonprofits are vital to a thriving community. In my work with OneSource Center for Nonprofit Excellence, I'm humbled and honored to learn about and support the incredible work that our nonprofit community is doing each and every day. We count on this "unseen" work so we can live our comfortable and safe lives. But can we really live in

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### Your Turn

Christie Brown Guest columnist

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## Brown

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comfort and expect others to do all the hard work? Jason Williams, Politics Extra writer, covered this issue in a recent column and points the finger at himself and all of us for not doing enough. We live in a culture of busyness where everyone seems too busy to add anything more. Our first step should be to pause enough to care.

Often people ask, "But what can I do?" Here are just a few ways individuals help:

- Thank a nonprofit staff member.

Easy, but means a lot.

■ **Volunteer.** Cincinnati Cares is a guide to over 400 organizations with over 1,200 listed ways to volunteer or help across 13 cause areas in our community.

■ **Serve on a board.** BOLD, a board training program run by United Way, is designed for those looking to grow their leadership skills in order to become effective board members and help nonprofits meet a diverse range of community needs.

■ **Attend a fundraiser.** There are literally hundreds of fundraisers that happen each year. Dive in and attend one. Meet some nice people. Learn more about the organization. Listings are included in this newspaper and Movers & Makers Magazine, available for free online or on newsstands.

■ **Donate.** And while every nonprofit could use additional donations, I suggest that everyone does more than just write a check. Get engaged enough to really know and support what that donation is funding.

Community can mean many things, but I use community to mean the concept of fellowship and shared purpose. So let's all dig in a little deeper to care and share, and we'll get rewarded with a more thriving community for all.

*Christie Brown is CEO of One-Source Center for Nonprofit Excellence, a resource center providing services, products, and connections to strengthen the impact of area nonprofits.*



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