

**Black Women *Thriving***

***East of the River***

~ Path to Quality Jobs & Health Equity ~



# BLACK WOMEN THRIVING EAST OF THE RIVER

Expanding Cancer Survival and Economic Success



An Innovative Approach to Community Engagement  
for Meaningful Collaboration in Overcoming  
Racial and Misogynoir Barriers

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# Open Letter from Black Women Thriving East of The River

Dear Friends,

To the world, Washington, D.C., is America's capital – our seat of power and global influence. But we know Washington, D.C., is the proverbial tale of two cities, divided by an expanse of water called the Anacostia River. Our story centers on this divide, a narrative about life east of the Anacostia River, away from the symbols of power and glamour. On these pages, we chronicle our visions and aspirations for a brighter future and the route we have chosen to get there.

In Washington, its citizens pay taxes but do not have a U.S. Senator or U.S. House of Representatives member who can vote. Yet, it is home to more than half a million people.

West of the River sits America's three branches of government – the White House, the U.S. Congress, and the U.S. Supreme Court.

West of the River are marble monuments representing this country's rich history. The Lincoln Memorial sits west of the Reflecting Pool. Just a little farther east is the Washington Monument. Near the start of "the Mall" is the Jefferson Memorial where tourists celebrate the annual blooming of cherry blossoms and mount paddle boats for gentle spins in the Tidal Basin waters next to the memorial.

West of the River, the Smithsonian Institution's impressive array of museums line the Mall from the National Museum of African American History and Culture to the National Air and Space Museum. West of the River, senators, congressional representatives, judges, chief executive officers, and most of the District's residents live in Wards 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6.

Less than three miles away from the White House, the Anacostia River severs the city, separating it into two societies. One enjoys the privileges of the powerful, the other endures the daily struggles of urban life.

East of the River is a predominantly Black community, our community, marked by decades of neglect and blessed with resilience. We live in Wards 7 & 8, with a small section of those wards included West of the River after recent redistricting.

The geography forms the basis of our narrative. On these pages, you will meet us, hear our stories, and learn about our dreams. For those of you who do not know us already, we want to introduce you to our community and our centers of power so you will feel like our neighbor, and not a stranger.

Walk our streets and you will discover the home in which former slave, abolitionist and statesman Frederick Douglass lived on W Street SE in modern-day Ward 8.

Down the block and around the corner, you will see "The Big Chair," a historical landmark symbolizing economic opportunity. At 19.5 feet high, it looms over the corner of Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue SE and V Street SE, across the street from the Kings Cafe.

Among the wood-frame and brick homes that dot the streets of Ward 7, you will find the sites of Civil War forts transformed into parkland, including Fort Mahan Park, Fort Davis Park, Fort Chaplin Park and Fort Dupont Park, the largest city-owned park in the District.



### **Abby Charles, MPH**

Co-chair of the Workforce Development Workgroup and program director at the Institute for Public Health Innovation, a nonprofit

"It is absolutely unfair and unjust that where a person lives can determine their health outcomes. And in Washington, D.C., for Black women who live in Wards 7 & 8, that's the inequity and the injustice that we see.

Through Black Women Thriving East of the River, we are working to transform these outcomes by changing systems, policies, and environments to ensure that women can access the care and prevention that they need and have the quality of life that they deserve by accessing jobs and careers that provide for their families and for themselves."

You will gaze upon vibrant, colorful, and dynamic murals along our streets. You will pass the doorways of our community's important non-profit organizations.

East of the River, our southern border presses against Maryland. A little further north, toward the center of our community on Alabama Avenue SE is the historic St. Elizabeth's Hospital, site of a new state-of-the-art health facility scheduled to open in 2024.

But the consequences of disinvestment have meant high rates of poverty, chronic disease, unemployment, and mortality for those of us living east of the Anacostia River. It has also meant a lack of resources for basic needs such as public safety, affordable housing, quality education, and fresh food.

But things are changing.



On a cool autumn morning on Friday, Nov. 22, 2019, a multiracial group of women walked through the front glass doors of Building Bridges Across the River, a community center formerly known as THEARC, here on Mississippi Avenue SE, to talk about our lives, our challenges, our hopes, and our dreams.

We put these words on a poster on the wall: "We as women, we carry the seeds."

That day, after months of early development at the Jane Bancroft Robinson Foundation, we launched an innovative new process called the "Strategic Design Initiative," uniting women living and working East of the River with allies committed to transforming the lives of our families.

### **Leicester Johnson**

CEO of Academy of Hope Adult Public Charter School in Ward 8

"Black Women Thriving East of the River is an amazing opportunity to work collaboratively across sectors in partnership with the community to design solutions that best represent the needs of the residents of Wards 7 & 8.

At the end of this project, I hope that we're able to create something that is real, lasting, and truly impacts the residents of these communities."



We number 28 – women with diverse backgrounds and lived experiences in healthcare, community service, education, workforce development, and a host of other specialties. We are physicians, non-profit leaders, community activists, and so much more. We are mothers, grandmothers, aunts, sisters, and neighbors. We run non-profit organizations, such as Momma’s Safe Haven and Academy of Hope.

We help to clothe, educate, heal, nurture, energize, activate, and agitate for justice for those in our communities East of the River.

We met to develop solutions on two fronts: improving health and economic outcomes for Black women living East of the River.

In August 2021, we chose a name for our effort: Black Women Thriving East of the River.

We intentionally said we are Thriving East of the River — not just surviving — because our goal is to see all Black women and girls not just living East of the River but thriving. The narrators’ voices in this report represent the brilliant Black women who lead the initiative, confront the challenges we all face and promote the dreams we all embrace.

We are more than the obstacles we have experienced.



### **Shantie Morgan-Palmer**

Founder of Evelyn’s Closet, which collects and provides clothing to under-resourced residents in Washington, D.C. She is a native Washingtonian who lived East of the River.

"I watched my mom overcome breast cancer and watched my grandmother pass from it. I stand as a true testament and an informer. Through Black Women Thriving East of the River, we have been armed with seeds we can give to our family members and friends. What we have been given is priceless."

Our effort, Black Women Thriving East of the River, is a mobilization to dismantle inequitable systems by convening community leaders and the most impacted individuals in our neighborhoods. Through our initiative, we created a series of specific, actionable interventions to address the root causes of the barriers holding us back.

We created workgroups to better understand the challenges regarding employment and economic mobility, as well as illness and death from cancer. We forged paths to solutions.

Over the next two years, through the COVID-19 pandemic, we met in person and online. In our second meeting, on Friday, January 24, 2020, our workgroups met at the R.I.S.E. Demonstration Center on Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue SE. R.I.S.E. stands for Relate, Innovate, Stimulate, and Elevate. And those powerful words symbolize our work.

## Manon Matchett

Co-lead of Black Women Thriving East of the River, and Director of Strategic Partnerships at the Jane Bancroft Robinson Foundation.

"Our project is an opportunity to validate the lived experiences of Black women East of the River. This sets precedents that individuals can provide critical intel on potential solutions to critical problems in their own communities.

Our effort demonstrates the power of bringing diverse stakeholders together and centering focus on the realities of day-to-day living. My participation allows me to further invest in creating improved quality of life experiences for me, my family, and fellow neighbors."



The next month, on Wednesday, February 12, 2020, our working groups walked through the doors of the Smithsonian Institution's only museum in southeast – the Anacostia Community Museum on Fort Place SE – to assemble in a room with the paintings of world-renowned Black artists on the walls. From the beginning, this has been a venture that tapped the skills, resources, and talents of the shining stars East of the River – from our consultants and vendors to catering chefs and meeting facilitators.

Ultimately, we created road maps for change, including analyzing the root causes of problems, journey maps, analysis and prioritization of themes, intervention design, racial equity impact assessments, and stakeholder engagement. At each step, our lived expertise drove decision making and the integrating and prioritizing of our stories as Black women with close ties to communities East of the River.

The Workforce Development Workgroup created a road map aimed at advancing and creating individualized pathways to health-related careers that meet the aspirations of Black women East of the River and support upward mobility, create family economic security, and ensure family sustaining wages. The Patient Navigation Workgroup created a road map aimed at supporting and advocating for Black women living East of the River, across the cancer continuum. The interventions target a broad range of systemic issues and establish ways to humanize the cancer journey and improve outcomes.

As we developed our road maps, we identified "landscape analysis" as an important first step to charting solutions, studying existing systems and best practices through the lens of racial and gender equity.

The results, detailed in this report, include exciting new paths to improving our quality of life. Thank you, our neighbors, and potential visitors, for joining us on this journey – East of the River.

The time for change is now!

Sincerely,  
*Black Women Thriving East of the River*

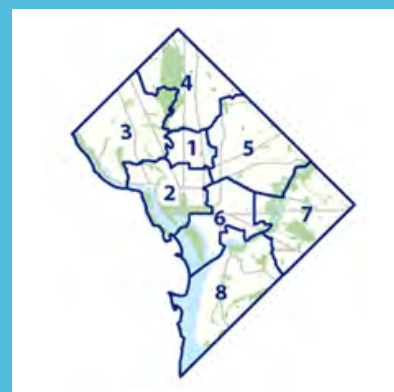


# Executive Summary

Galvanized by the Jane Bancroft Robinson Foundation's trailblazing approach to community empowerment, the Black Women Thriving East of the River initiative has spurred hope in the District's Wards 7 & 8. Launched in 2019, a group of community residents and leaders spent more than two years working with the Foundation to design and begin implementing innovative solutions to address workforce development and cancer survival among Black women East of the River.

Creating transformational social change requires a strong mission and vision. We embraced two challenges: reducing cancer mortality and preparing Black women East of the River for career opportunities, especially in health-related fields. We envision a future in which Black women living in Wards 7 & 8 thrive with more access to opportunities, resources, and effective treatment, leading to optimal health and economic success.

The initiative underscores the commitment to helping Black women not only live and survive in some of the District's most challenging neighborhoods, but also thrive. The group created comprehensive road maps for progress in the areas of workforce development and cancer patient navigation, with detailed recommendations. A process we call the Strategic Design Initiative (SDI) provided a foundation for our team building, training, and facilitation. Though this groundbreaking process, we relied on the best examples of lived expertise to elevate powerful voices in this work. Two taskforce-like workgroups developed impactful and informed solutions for the community's most pressing challenges. Participants bonded, in part, by resolving power dynamics, engaging across cultural differences, and committing to hearing and respecting all voices.



To be sure, a comprehensive engagement is necessary to confront discriminatory practices and structural racism steeped in the myth of white, male supremacy. Those forces contribute to devastating circumstances for Black women. And, for far too long, when institutions attempt to resolve inequities, the voices, knowledge, and experiences of those most affected are not elevated in the process. The most harmed populations are frequently the objects – rather than the architects – of policies and programs purported to address systemic oppression and injustices.

This has been the experience in the nation's capital as it is in communities across America. It is particularly galling here where prosperity reigns in most of the nation's capital, yet those East of the River face a far more difficult existence.

Washington, D.C., was built on the exploited labor of enslaved African Americans. The city, whose residents are taxed without representation, has continued to oppress, and exploit Black residents in an uncomfortable truth with which we live. While Congress formally recognized the role enslaved African Americans played in the capital's creation, two hundred years of racist and discriminatory practices directly contribute to the widespread health and economic disparities experienced today, especially East of the River. More than 90% of the residents in these communities are Black.



Data paint a clear picture of the suffering caused by the health and economic inequities. Black residents experience cancer at a 54% higher rate than White residents, with mortality rates for Black people a staggering 90% higher than for Whites.<sup>1</sup> Despite city-wide household income growing by 15.5% over the past decade, wages for Black residents have remained unchanged, and unemployment levels among Black people have risen by 32%.

These statistics reflect the neglect and uninspiring efforts to address health, wage, and wealth gaps. Moreover, Black women experience a compounded oppression called misogynoir, or the intersection of misogyny and anti-Black racism. The term was coined by Moya Bailey, a scholar at Northwestern University. (Noir is French for black). In addition to being traditionally undervalued in the workplace due to our gender, Black women also face occupational segregation from racist hiring and promotion practices. Today, Black women in the U.S. earn on average 36% less than white men and 14% less than Black men.

But Black Women Thriving East of the River is changing these destructive dynamics by putting Black women in the seat of power.

With equity-focused practices in place, our workgroups transitioned from defining and understanding problems to developing solutions to dismantle harmful systems while providing relief for community members as we navigated the day-to-day realities of our problems.

Through the Black Women Thriving East of the River initiative, those most affected by discriminatory practices and policies in East of the River communities are now driving the change with actionable, impactful solutions.

As COVID-19 devastated Black communities, Black Women Thriving East of the River became a haven of support for workgroup members, as we persevered together. We relied on each other to grieve losses and celebrate life and progress. Amidst the devastation, work continued in new ways. Our workgroups artfully adjusted to the virtual world, modifying the in-person decision-making process to include collaboration on technology platforms such as Zoom, Mural, Google, and Jamboard. Ultimately, we developed strategies to tackle the issues of workforce development and cancer survival with grace, intellect, and wisdom.

1 Battaglia TA, Bak S, Heeren T, et al. Boston Patient Navigation Research Program: The Impact of Navigation on Time to Diagnostic Resolution after Abnormal Cancer Screening. *Cancer Epidemiol Biomark Prev Publ Am Assoc Cancer Res Cosponsored Am Soc Prev Oncol*. 2012;21(10):1645-1654. doi:10.1158/1055-9965.EPI-12-0532

# Workforce Development Group

Our Workforce Development Workgroup interventions focused around two key areas stemming from a root cause analysis and prioritization: the workforce development training program and delivery system, including solutions designed to address issues related to employers, wages, and benefits. Across these key priorities, interventions aim to advance and create new programs that are tiered to meet the needs of Black women. We focused strategies on changing employer practices and policies, facilitating supportive work environments and better employee retention, once job placement occurs.

Our interventions focus on understanding the best practices for workforce development training and the support needed for Black women to be successful in the workplace. Anti-Black racism and diversity, equity, and inclusion training are foundational to our corrective strategies. For instance, with the new Cedar Hill Regional Medical Center poised to open in 2024 in Ward 8 on the site of St. Elizabeth's East Hospital, we plan to create opportunities for residents East of the River to get jobs in the new facility that will partner with George Washington University. We propose working with hospital leadership to ensure they weave employer best practices into the hospital's philosophical fabric from day one of operations.

## Our Workforce Development Interventions Include:



### Landscape analysis

Existing workforce development systems in the D.C. area are complex but provide a wide range of support to our diverse populations across the city and surrounding areas. To help Black women navigate this web of services we focused on understanding the scope of workforce development currently available and to whom it is targeted. Our plan is to curate the best practices for training and supporting Black women for good jobs. We will create a map showing all workforce development opportunities and outline the concrete steps necessary to take advantage of various programs.



### Workforce development data coordination entity

We will develop a data coordination system to monitor equity in workforce training, placement, and retention for Black women East of the River. Findings will be regularly shared with all stakeholders. This initiative aims to build a baseline of race specific and culturally competent data, which will be updated annually. Building comprehensive, multi-year data that identifies trends and improves the workforce development system across the D.C. area will not only inform future interventions but foster increased engagement with the system.



### Scholarships for pursuing or advancing in health-related careers

A scholarship program will provide significant financial support for Black women in Wards 7 & 8 who pursue health-related careers. Careers in the health field frequently require advanced training, licensing or certification, making it a field with a high barrier to entry. This fund will provide ongoing, wrap-around support for Black women participating in workforce development, professional development, or advanced degree programs focused in the health-related field. An essential piece of the program will support Black women who continue to have difficulty finding jobs after completing workforce development training, understanding that even the most talented individuals will still face some employment discrimination. That support will include funding for additional professional development.

## Apprenticeship opportunities

Apprenticeships must be expanded in our communities. By engaging Black women in all aspects of the planning and program development, apprenticeships for health-related careers that engage government, business, and nonprofit resources will facilitate the advancement of Black women in those roles. By working together with District government and other existing workforce development programs, Black Women Thriving East of the River can ensure programs are rooted in equity and Black women can flourish.

## Health-related career programs for youth

Workforce development must begin with youth and young professionals, providing youth with clear paths to successful careers. The programs will bolster opportunities for youth at middle and high schools in the District as well as with summer employment programs to put more youth on track to succeed in health-related fields.

## Workforce development employer forum

A thought leader forum will promote the best practices identified through the WFD landscape analysis and highlight employers who have successfully advanced partnerships with community-based workforce development providers. The forum will begin as a series of four meetings, with the aim to create an annual conference. Employers, workforce development providers, and national leaders in the workforce development field will gather annually to share strategies for employee retention and community engagement. The first annual forum will result in a position statement outlining best practices for employers to advance equity, inclusion, and sustainability in hiring and retention practices.

## Research examining racial equity in workforce development and family-sustaining wages

It was challenging identifying and understanding the many significant barriers to sustainable employment for Black women. The lack of comprehensive data about the experiences of Black women in the workforce has a ripple effect on the types of services and support offered, frequently resulting in services that do not fully meet their needs. Without reliable data, making sufficient change to close racial and gender disparities will not be possible. This initiative aims to produce evidence of the value of family sustaining wages in Washington, D.C.

## Health career pathways resources map

An employment resource website will be a resource for Black women, providing support to effectively identify the jobs and career pathways that best align with their personal and professional goals. The website will include comprehensive detail about various careers, including training and support to enter the position, as well as the different career opportunities. With easy access to support like the employment resource website, Black women will be able to gain employment and advance swiftly in various health-related careers.

## Employer training series

With training for employers, we aim to shift employer culture toward more understanding, supportive, and equitable policies, and practices. Proposed training areas include addressing anti-Black racism/misogynoir, trauma-informed care, cultural humility, bias, and stigma. These will help employers understand the experiences and needs of employees from a variety of backgrounds, including those returning to the workforce and those on public assistance. Trainings will also include workforce development coaches to provide support for women as they enter new job opportunities. While helping employers build awareness and appreciation for the lived experience of workers.



# Patient Navigation Workgroup

Our Patient Navigation Workgroup has designed interventions to reduce illness and death from cancer for women living east of the Anacostia River. Our initiative will strengthen existing patient navigation systems to ease the burden of a woman's cancer journey by addressing the barriers that prevent patients from prioritizing cancer screenings, prevention, treatment, and survivorship care. With key partners, such as health care systems and patient advocacy networks, our work can spur improved cancer outcomes for Black women. Training related to cancer navigation and clinical trials will be established. We will identify integrative wellness best practices and champion leading practitioners based East of the River. We will add additional cancer patient navigators for East of the River residents to the existing D.C.-wide support system. We will tailor navigation services to each patient's needs—including their financial security throughout their cancer journey—and design the services to address the unique experiences of Black women navigating cancer while living East of the River.

## Our Patient Navigation Interventions Include:



### Cancer navigation training

A curriculum will inform patients, practitioners, and care providers about the importance and benefits of patient navigation across the cancer care continuum. We will support women on their cancer journey by building a database of caregivers and providers.



### Cancer clinical trials training

Despite clinical trials being an essential way to access innovative cancer care, less than a quarter of Black people nationwide report being informed of clinical trial options by healthcare providers. Our intervention will provide researchers and providers with concrete strategies to ensure regular inclusion of Black patients in clinical trials, while tracking referrals and enrollment of Black women.



### Thought leader forum with integrative wellness champions

Integrative wellness is an evidence-based strategy to advance cancer care. Convening champions of the model will define integrative wellness in the District and advance availability for Black women in Wards 7 & 8, improving women's experience and health outcomes.



### Cancer Data Infrastructure Task Force

Only fragmented data exist on cancer care and outcomes for Black women. This intervention will establish an entity to convene key stakeholders across the District that collect cancer data relevant to District residents. Convening regularly, the task force will perform a landscape analysis of cancer data that identifies cancer data inequities, with special attention paid to Wards 7 & 8. Recommendations will improve and expand the existing data collection infrastructure.



### Increase to the number of Black women practitioners

Across America, only about 5% of medical doctors are Black. But Black women East of the River tell us they strongly prefer healthcare providers that look like them—other Black women. To increase the number of Black women practitioners, this strategy includes supporting a sustainable pipeline for Black healthcare providers and partnering with the Workforce Development Workgroup to advance Black women entering the health field. This includes policy advocacy for additional funding to reduce the loans Black women must accumulate to get the education and training they need.



## Anti-misogynoir training

Misogynoir is the intersection of anti-Black racism and misogyny resulting in the gaslighting of Black women. We will establish anti-misogynoir training for health practitioners. Through regular assessment and ongoing training, health providers will gain an understanding of the ways in which implicit and explicit levels of racism and misogynoir manifest in healthcare delivery. Training will also help practitioners develop strategies to address and counter biases or problematic behaviors. Practitioners will gain an understanding of how internalized racism affects the psyche of Black women and learn to counter the detrimental effects of this through improved communication and messaging with Black female patients. Training for practitioners will be accompanied by educational opportunities for patients to help advance understanding of how to be a self-advocate. Hearing, supporting, and advocating for Black women is the first step to combatting the potent forces that propel misogynoir. With in-depth training for healthcare providers and others involved in the cancer continuum, we envision a stronger, healthier, and invigorated community East of the River.



## Cancer Patient Bill of Rights for Black women East of the River and annual assessment

It will document what Black women living in Wards 7 & 8 should experience during their cancer journey and outline the actions to take to receive the correct level of care throughout the cancer continuum. The Bill of Rights will include measures for accountability, including regular assessments of cancer clinics, primary care centers, and hospitals that serve Black women in Wards 7 & 8 to ensure that healthcare settings and/or systems are honoring Black women East of the River.



## "Best practices" position statement on dismantling misogynoir in the health care system

A position statement will center the humanization of Black women while advocating for increases in Black healthcare providers and training to eliminate anti-Black racism across the healthcare system. It will send a strong, actionable message about the importance of racially equitable and just practices in medicine. This position statement by Black healthcare providers will raise awareness to racism within the healthcare system and garner the support of aligned institutions and individuals, and in the long term, transform unjust and racially inequitable practices. We will create more equitable healthcare experiences of Black patients, staff, and providers.



## Cancer Navigation Landscape Analysis

This intervention will discover the current state of patient navigation for individuals living in Wards 7 & 8. We will map the current cancer navigation continuum; outline various roles and settings in which navigation takes place; understand what types of navigation services are being provided; and where and when they are provided with the goal of improving their quality and efficiency. This analysis will also outline the various organizations (hospitals, primary care centers, etc.) that provide navigation as part of their service model.



## Augment cancer patient navigation system

We seek to increase the number of patient navigators available to Black women in Wards 7 & 8, as well as augment the breadth and depth of services by creating a patient navigation coordinating body (i.e., a formal network). The patient navigator network will provide an infrastructure to better facilitate the transfer of patients between primary care and specialty care, ongoing training and information sharing for patient navigators, and better access to patient navigation resources.



## Tiered approach to cancer patient navigation

We will develop a new approach to patient navigation specifically for Black women in Wards 7 & 8. Guidelines for patient care will be tiered to meet the needs of patients. A standardized assessment tool will be developed based on existing research and validated for Black women East of the River. The assessment will indicate the level of support, or tier, needed by each patient to optimize their cancer treatment journey and improve outcomes. Both the assessment and the patient care guidelines will be developed to better understand and mitigate issues related to the social determinants of health, including distress levels and environmental factors. The assessment will be conducted by a culturally competent community health worker to bolster trust and reduce non-disclosure. Through this pilot intervention, the assessment and resulting recommendations will be tested to ensure accurate stratification and relevant identification of need for Black women East of the River.



## Sustainable funding and reimbursement for cancer patient navigation

We want to create and test a methodology that could establish sustainable funding for cancer patient navigation. This could be based on the Collaborative Approach to Public Good Investments model that utilizes funding from multiple sources (i.e., Medicaid, private insurers, health care systems, philanthropy) that would be used to fund patient navigation throughout the city. Additionally, this should include developing a business case for patient navigation that shows the positive return on investment for funding navigation (i.e., fewer missed appointments, better compliance, etc.)

**In future stages of its work, Black Women Thriving East of the River is committed to realizing sustainable, real-world change that uplifts the lives of the courageous and enterprising Black women living East of the Anacostia River.**

**Please visit our website to learn more about the interventions and innovative work of Black Women living East of the River.**



# What Black Women Thriving East of the River Means to Shanta Hendry



What does Black Women Thriving East of the River mean to me? It means I have an even bigger opportunity to make a difference than I have in the past.

One of my goals in this work that I'm doing is to always see how we can level up, how we can improve things and make things better for our participants in their communities. I've always been a person who has been out in the community, on the ground, as we call it, but this is a great opportunity to sit around a table of diverse women who bring so much knowledge, education, professionalism, and experience. Being selected to participate in this initiative has made me very proud and uplifted in helping to visualize, create, collaborate, and implement changes for women, to break down barriers and create pipelines for success. It makes me very proud to participate in something that will have a profound effect on our communities and societies for a long time. This is my wish for this initiative. On a personal note, this group has made me stronger in my views about systems and policies and how they need an immediate overhaul.

Often, when I see women, I ask myself: what could change their lives, what are they in need of? What are their hopes and dreams for their families? And what can I do to help them? What systems or policies need to change to make this happen? I'm not only interested in implementing change, but I take great pride in helping to create it.

What do I hope to accomplish with Black Women Thriving East of the River?

I hope that our vision for a change to systems and policies will be heard by the right people and become a part of a new system and policies that positively affect our low-income communities. I hope partners and organizations will join with us in creating career pathways for women to obtain and retain gainful employment and careers. I plan to use this model to get people who live in the most affected communities to come around the table to create, visualize, and implement change for themselves and their communities.

Born and raised in Washington, D.C., Shanta Hendry is a social worker connected to East of the River communities through Bread for the City, a nonprofit organization with a center in Southeast D.C., serving Wards 7 & 8.

# About the Jane Bancroft Robinson Foundation

Grounded in the legacy of the United Methodist Church and Sibley Memorial Hospital, the Jane Bancroft Robinson Foundation strives to advance the health and livelihood of Black women who live East of the River in Washington, D.C. The Foundation collaborates with community members to identify their most pressing needs and an authentic path for growth and improvement. This philanthropic approach produces mutual satisfaction, substantial stakeholder buy-in, and tangible results.

The Foundation's job is to listen. Those closest to a situation can best identify how to meet needs and solve problems. Innovative thinking that yields results is sought from grantees, and the Foundation champions the inclusion of community voices as catalysts for change. The Foundation is a partner and a facilitator, not a dominating presence in any initiative.

The empowerment of women is rooted in the Foundation, as is a commitment to empowering Black women living East of the Anacostia River.

The Foundation's history speaks volumes about the values it embraces. In 1890, Methodist women from the Women's Home Missionary Society – the predecessor to United Methodist Women – started the Lucy Webb Hayes National Training School for Deaconesses and Missionaries. Jane Bancroft Robinson a young scholar from West Stockbridge, Massachusetts, emerged as a bold deaconess in the Methodist Episcopal Church, taking the helm as president of the Woman's Home Missionary Society in the early 20th century. As a spokesperson on behalf of deaconess work, she earned support from William J. Sibley, a member of Foundry Methodist Church. In 1894, Sibley provided a \$10,000 grant to build Sibley Hospital to give nurses a clinical setting to practice their skills and serve a growing population in Washington, D.C. The hospital opened in 1895.

Consistent with the times, their well-intentioned care and scholarship largely focused on uplifting White women – and in the District that meant women west of the Anacostia River. In late November 2010, Sibley Memorial Hospital and Johns Hopkins Medical System established the Jane Bancroft Robinson Foundation. Early on, the Foundation adopted the strategy that it would support and encourage partner organizations to turn bold ideas into outcomes. Their approach elevating lived expertise has helped design and drive solutions, a key to our initiative that positions Black women to flourish.

The Foundation assists, rather than directs, the search for solutions. Further, the Foundation believes in making long-term commitments. Their work honors Jane Bancroft Robinson, the guiding light of a Washington, D.C., school that trained women to care for those whom society had neglected. This commitment to the health of an entire community is reflected in the Foundation's DNA and guides its investments today.

Over the years, the Foundation has supported some of our community's most impactful nonprofits, including the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Washington, Bread for the City, and the Smith Center for Healing and the Arts, just to name a few. East of the River, the foundation served Breast Care for Washington on Atlantic Avenue SW in the Bellevue/Washington Highlands community, Calvary Women's Services on Good Hope Road SE in Anacostia, Community of Hope on Atlantic Street SE, and The Fishing School on Meade Street NE.

In 2019, the Jane Bancroft Robinson Foundation launched its most comprehensive investment – Black Women Thriving East of the River. The work, born out of the Foundation's unwavering commitment to Wards 7 & 8, empowers Black women living East of the River.

Thank you to the staff and leadership of the Jane Bancroft Robinson Foundation for celebrating and uplifting the bold women you meet on these pages.

# Our Approach: The Strategic Design Initiative

For decades, women East of the Anacostia River and our communities have faced significant challenges with chronic diseases, economic stability, and other social determinants of health. We needed a gamechanger, an innovative approach to finding and implementing solutions. That is the environment in which the Strategic Design Initiative was launched.

Kara Blankner, a public health expert at the Jane Bancroft Robinson Foundation, was the driving force for using this powerful framework in our community. A veteran of nonprofit work and community philanthropy for about 20 years, she refined what she learned working to reverse childhood obesity at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and helping to build the field of health impact assessments in the U.S. from her role at The Pew Charitable Trusts. The most important lesson was that successful community initiatives must have meaningful and authentic stakeholder engagement. The insights and voices of those impacted must be central to the strategies and interventions that are implemented. That became the guiding approach for Black Women Thriving East of the River. Kara had seen it be effective more than once.

As a member of the Washington Region Food Funders, a D.C.-area affinity funders group, Kara helped lead a team of collaborators tasked with creating more equitable and inclusive food system reforms in the Chesapeake Foodshed. For two years, she collaborated closely with partners to develop a framework for realizing these goals. The “Community Ownership, Empowerment and Prosperity Pilot” paid community members and food-system innovators for their time and expertise to develop solutions and recommendations. The scope of their work and outcomes for the pilot were impressive.

“It blew me away,” Kara says.



## **Kara Blankner**

Director of Programs at the Jane Bancroft Robinson Foundation.

The Strategic Design Initiative means a new way of doing things for philanthropy, a model for increasing racial equity, balancing the power dynamics, and practicing intentional inclusivity. It's a way for philanthropy to walk the talk and invest in community-driven solutions that get at the root causes of the inequities that we see. Using this approach, the community designs the strategies and interventions that we collectively implement to improve mortality rates and career trajectories for Black women living East of the River.

She tapped these experiences to imagine an innovative approach to finding community solutions to the challenges women face living East of the Anacostia River. She called it the “Strategic Design Initiative,” because, as the name suggested, it was an effort strategically designed to realize positive impact. For several months, Kara consulted with community leaders, refining the model with each new meeting.

Finally, she pitched the vision to Robert “Bob” Sloan, the founding chief executive officer of the Jane Bancroft Robinson Foundation, and the Foundation’s board of directors. Despite a significant departure from the traditional philanthropic grant-making approach, Foundation leaders approved this innovative vision for improving life outcomes for Black women living East of the River.



Put simply, the Strategic Design Initiative is a groundbreaking approach to achieving meaningful inclusivity, disrupting the status quo, and dismantling inequitable systems.

It uniquely centers us – the community members – in forging solutions that effectively address the systemic inequities we face. This model brings together community leaders and individuals impacted by the barriers and conditions that Black Women Thriving East of the River is addressing.

Specifically, the initiative developed a series of actionable interventions targeting root causes of our community's most prevalent challenges. Leaders anchored in the community are encouraged, elevated, and resourced to champion transformational change critical to designing and implementing solutions that will lead to a more equitable and just society in Wards 7 & 8.

Further, the model called for a taskforce with issue-specific workgroups collaborating in a structured process to develop comprehensive plans for action. Our workgroups develop roadmaps to execute equity-focused strategies in the community.

## Insight

The Strategic Design Initiative provides a framework to take any issue and spur action rooted in community. It revolutionizes the approach to dealing with challenges in communities, serving as a model for future efforts to enact transformational change in any location. A process is created to authentically engage, empower, and center the voices and needs of any community.

## Addressing Issues with Intention

After developing a deep, authentic understanding of the far-reaching disparities and resulting barriers that Black women in Wards 7 & 8 face, it was a challenge to identify where to begin to address these issues. Intentional facilitation to continually connect the systemic barriers with present-day results helped the workgroups further focus our efforts on interventions that would target cultural, institutional, interpersonal, and individual barriers.



The approach worked in partnership with Black women living in Wards 7 & 8 and the community-based organizations that serve them. The human-centered, place-based approach partnered with 28 women, nearly 80% of whom live in Wards 7 or 8, are native Washingtonians, share generational family ties to the community and/or founded grassroots organizations anchored in the community. This group of exceptional women represent 20+ non-profits located East of the River or serving residents there.

We are providing philanthropy leaders and others a model for taking community engagement to new levels, while pursuing transformational change that can build equity in communities and counter the effects of racism. It is an approach that can be replicated across all health, social, and economic sectors, and communities can adapt it to their own context. In short, it is a comprehensive framework that can bolster the success of racial equity work and be applied to any issue or geographic area.

The Strategic Design Initiative approach has arrived East of the River and is a major component in enhancing life outcomes for Black women here.

# Our Team

In building our team, lived expertise was a priority. We asked those without lived experience in the daily realities of life East of the River to take a step back and make space to listen and learn. Sharing lived experience can be daunting, especially since it has been overlooked and diminished for generations. With intentional level-setting and candid conversations that gave everyone a basic understanding of our language and racial-equity-centered values, we established an environment of trust so we could speak our truth.

The Black Women Thriving East of the River leadership team coordinated a series of level-setting, knowledge-based, and skill-based trainings. Over the first three months, we developed a shared understanding of how race, class, gender, and experience interact with existing systems to create unjust health and economic outcomes for Black women. We learned new skills and practices that helped us develop realistic and impactful solutions.

Together, we dove into the historical context that drives racial inequities. In training, we focused on learning about the impact of structural racism through an historical lens, identifying barriers to equitable outcomes for Wards 7 & 8, and learning how existing systems of power and influence interact with social and cultural stigmas to prevent Black women from flourishing.

Facilitators led workshops in which we learned about the complex systems, policies, and practices that oppress Black women. We gained a shared language around racial equity, and this helped our groups address power dynamics. Importantly, we made space for healing the trauma that we, as Black women, so often experience in our daily lives.

We are very proud to have assembled a team that represents Wards 7 & 8 with broad perspectives and robust lived expertise. To make sure we included the most important perspectives, we launched a competitive application and selection process to identify eight of 11 members of each workgroup. We communicated the process clearly to establish transparency and trust from the start. We recruited six members to add experience and knowledge we still needed around the table, including cancer survivors, Ward 7 residents, formerly unhoused individuals, and women with knowledge about workforce barriers. Our team is the foundation of our effort, and it is an essential way to ensure diverse, strong, community-based workgroups.



“I feel value in having my experience as an impacted community member being given a seat at the table.”

Nkechi Feaster, Board member of the Washington Legal Clinic and the Diverse City Fund, born and raised in Washington, D.C., with close ties to Wards 7 & 8. She is the co-owner of Service to Justice, a collective of community leaders.



## Participants joined for many reasons...

- Learn more for a **healthier life**
- Connect to the **community** as native Washingtonians and East of the River residents
- Be a resource and voice for **our families**
- **Heal**
- Pay forward our lived and **professional experiences**
- **Collaborate**
- **Connect** to the social determinants of health, including education, literacy, housing, transportation, and food
- **Work** East of the River
- Provide holistic, emotionally supportive **care**
- **Shift paradigms**
- **Change** things, out of anger and sadness



## Co-Leads



### Manon Matchett

Born in Miami, Florida, Manon has lived in Ward 8 since 1996. She is actively engaged in a variety of civic, political, and social justice causes East of the River, including the Green Ward 8 project, the Oxford Manor Tenants Association, and the Hillsdale Civic Association. Throughout her work, Manon strives to ensure her community is no longer neglected. She serves as co-lead for Black Women Thriving East of the River and is director of strategic partnerships at the Jane Bancroft Robinson Foundation. .

### Kara Blankner, MPH

Born in Boston and living in Virginia, Kara is the director of programs at the Jane Bancroft Robinson Foundation. She served as co-lead for Black Women Thriving East of the River. In philanthropy, Kara is committed to deep, ongoing collaborations with grantee partners to develop meaningful solutions to our most intractable community health challenges. She has funded many nonprofits serving the community in Wards 7 & 8.



## Workforce Development Workgroup



### Abby Charles, MPH – Co-Chair

Born in Trinidad and Tobago, Abby is the program director at the Institute for Public Health Innovation, where she coordinates a team that addresses regional policy, research, training, employment, and systems change to expand the workforce of community health workers, primarily East of the River. She supports multi-sector collaboratives to achieve goals through facilitation, coordination, and communication. Abby serves as Co-Chair for the Workforce Development Workgroup.

### Natasha Dupee, M.Ed. – Co-Chair

Born in Washington, D.C., Natasha is a lifelong resident of Wards 7 & 8. She has worked at George Washington University supporting students with disabilities. Her passion is to change, create, and defend policies that provide all people access to a quality life. She is now founder of Strength Through Awareness and Inclusion LLC.



### Charnal Chaney

A native Washingtonian, growing up and attending school in Ward 8, Charnal channels mindfulness to those around her. She assists children with incarcerated parents achieve their goals and coordinates events for Women Involved in Re-entry Efforts, or The W.I.R.E., in the D.C. area. She is the owner of Bold Yoga LLC, which teaches yoga to community members East of the River.



## Nkechi Feaster

Born in the District's Ward 7, Nkechi has lived in many places in Washington, D.C., including Wards 7 & 8, where she has family and friends. Her father lives in Ward 8. She advocates on issues that affect the most impacted community members. She serves on the boards of the Washington Legal Clinic and the Diverse City Fund, where she brings her unique perspective and lived experience as a D.C. community member to the table. She is the co-owner of Service to Justice, a collective of community leaders.

## Lisa Fitzpatrick, MD

Born in St. Louis, Missouri, Lisa currently lives in Ward 8, working as a physician, health advocate, health educator, and entrepreneur, serving East of the River communities and beyond. At Grapevine Health, she improves understanding of health information through connection.



## Julie Green

Born in New York City, Julie lives in Washington, D.C. She worked at New Futures, where she led the organization's work to help underserved youth obtain certifications and college degrees across Washington D.C., including Wards 7 & 8. She approaches problems through the lens of community engagement and relationship building.

## Shanta Hendry

Born and raised in Washington, D.C., Shanta is a social worker and is connected to East of the River communities through Bread for the City, a nonprofit organization with a center in Southeast D.C., serving Wards 7 & 8. As a social worker, she provides a variety of support systems to her clients daily.



## Leicester Johnson

Born in Birmingham, Alabama, Leicester lives in Maryland. She is the CEO of Academy of Hope Adult Public Charter School in Ward 8. She has always been enthusiastic about education and never gives up on anything or anyone. Growing up in a large family, she held summer school for her younger siblings so that they could maintain their academic progress.

## Nicole Lynn Lewis

Born in Stamford, Connecticut, Nicole lives in Maryland, where she is the founder of Generation Hope. Nicole helps teen parents earn college degrees across the D.C. metro area, including in Wards 7 & 8. She is focused on amplifying her organization's work and increasing awareness about the need to support young parents and see them succeed.





## Tiffani Powell

Born in Antigua, West Indies, Tiffani is a leader at DC Central Kitchen, charting career paths for graduates of its culinary job training program. Most of the graduates live in Wards 7 & 8. She provides guidance on education plans, quality employment opportunities, financial literacy, credit building, home ownership, entrepreneurship, and other wrap-around services. She also develops partnerships with area educational institutions and employers to identify new opportunities for clients for career advancement. She lives in Silver Springs, Md.

## The Reverend Lorena M. Parrish, Ph.D., MSSW

Born in New York City and living in Fort Washington, Maryland, Lorena is an associate professor of urban ministry at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C., where she is also director of the Community Engagement Institute and Center for Public Theology. The seminary provides health ministry certificates, including the Heal the Sick Health Ministers Certificate, to clergy, healthcare workers, social workers, community advocates, and others in Wards 7 & 8. She is also co-founder and co-director of Wesley's Specialization in Children and Youth Ministry and Child Advocacy program. An ordained minister and skilled bridge-builder, Lorena is a womanist scholar-activist who specializes in urban ministry and practical womanist theology and ethics. She is committed to uplifting communities through meaningful collaboration and community engagement.



## Beverly Smith-Brown

Born in Fort Belvoir, Virginia, Beverly was raised in Wards 7 & 8. She is founder and executive director of Momma's Safe Haven, where she is dedicated to giving back to her community. She was raised in Southeast Washington, D.C., in a low-income single-parent home. She gathers like-minded people to make a positive difference in their communities, one event at a time.

# Patient Navigation Workgroup



## Sade Anderson-Brown, Ph.D.

Born in South Dakota and living in Prince Georges County, Maryland, Sade is a racial equity consultant. Her mother is a third-generation Washingtonian, born and raised in Ward 7, graduating from Anacostia High School in Ward 8. She is deeply connected to community members and family living, working, and finding joy in Ward 7. Sade strives to lift and center those most affected by inequity and injustice, by building connections and relationships across identities. Sade serves as Co-Chair for the Patient Navigation Workgroup.

## Amari Pearson-Fields, Ph.D.

Born in Washington, D.C., Amari is a native Washingtonian who lives in Maryland. Her grandparents lived in Southeast Washington, D.C. She is an enthusiastic advocate for health justice. She has worked to address health disparities for more than 30 years. She serves as Co-Chair of the Patient Navigation Workgroup.







## Lynda Brown

Born in Greensboro, North Carolina, Lynda grew up in Ward 8. She attended all three public schools in Ward 8 and has worked in Ward 8 since 2002, and lived in Ward 7 for 25 years. She is the Southeast Center director for Bread for the City in Ward 8. She manages daily operations and recommends policies and practices for growth and expansion of products and services. Lynda is very connected to East of the River communities.

## Claudia Campos, MA

Born in Guatemala, Claudia lives in Washington, D.C., and works for the community-based organization Nueva Vista, founded in 1999 by Latina breast cancer survivors to help medically underserved Latinx communities. She does everything from counseling and workshops to development and leadership to enhance the lives of Latino families in Washington, D.C.



## Lisa Fitzpatrick, MD

Born in St. Louis, Missouri, Lisa currently lives in Ward 8, working as a physician, health advocate, health educator, and entrepreneur, serving East of the River communities and beyond. At Grapevine Health, she improves understanding of health information through connection.

## Delia Houseal, Ph.D., MPH

Delia is the founder and principal of NEAN Consulting LLC, a public health and business management consulting firm, based East of the River. A Ward 7 resident, Delia is also an elected government official serving Single Member District 7E06 and as the Chair of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 7E. She serves as the program and policy lead for the End-Stage Renal Disease Quality Incentive Program at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.



## Marquita Iddirisu, MPH

Born in Atlanta, Georgia, Marquita lives in Maryland. For six years, she worked as a cancer screening and diagnostic navigator in Washington, D.C., with a focus on Wards 7 & 8. Currently, she is a quality improvement specialist for preventative health, where she leads a cancer screening portfolio.

## Megan Loucks

Megan worked for the DC Primary Care Association where she managed a peer group for cancer navigators and has worked to improve health equity in the District, especially in Wards 7 & 8. She enjoys communicating and solving problems to develop and implement sustainable solutions to complex health challenges.







## Shantie Morgan-Palmer

Born in Washington, D.C, Shantie lived East of the River. Through Evelyn's Closet, Shantie collects and provides clean clothing to underserved residents in Washington, D.C. She has a keen ability to inspire and an unwavering determination and perseverance. She has been a caregiver to loved ones with breast cancer.

## Ronette Moton

Born and living in Washington's Wards 7 & 8, Ronette is the program associate for Community Health Worker Programs at the Institute for Public Health Innovation. Formerly employed at AmeriHealth Caritas, she is connected to her friends and community members in Wards 7 & 8 and sees that they share the same needs and wants to be able to live long, healthy lives. With more than 10 years of experience as a community health worker, Ronette brings expertise in navigating individuals through the complex health and social service system.



## Mandi Pratt-Chapman, Ph.D.

Born in Maine, Mandi lives in Virginia, writes proposals, and analyzes data for publication at the George Washington University Cancer Center. A leading LGBTQ-focused health research executive, her goal is to build capacity in patient navigation and systems change towards health equity, a perspective that she has brought to the initiative. She has worked in community outreach, cancer survivorship, and patient navigation in Washington, D.C., for the past 15 years. She has educated school staff about children returning to school after cancer treatment.

## Erin Price, LICSW

Born in Fairfax, Virginia, Erin lives in Maryland, where she is connected to Wards 7 & 8 through her work at the Smith Center for Healing and Arts and the George Washington University Cancer Center. She has worked with cancer patients, survivors, and caregivers who live East of the River, and is sensitive to the barriers they face to receive adequate cancer care.



## Julia Rowland, Ph.D.

Born in New York City, Julia lives in Washington, D.C., where she provides senior counsel to the Smith Center for Healing and Arts, helping them raise visibility and recognition for their unique work, while also working as a trained clinician, helping patients navigate through their cancer journey. She is deeply connected to Wards 7 & 8 through Black Women Thriving East of the River.

## Satira Streeter, Ph.D.

Born in Columbus, Ohio, Satira is a licensed clinical psychologist and executive director of Ascensions Community Services Inc., living in Washington, D.C. She lived in Ward 7 before moving to Ward 5. She founded a nonprofit in Ward 8. Since arriving in D.C. in 2001, she has worshiped, worked, and made friendships East of the River. Her children attend a school, Statesmen Academy, in Ward 8, where she is a parent and school board member. Her research has focused on African American inmates and college students. Satira's life mission is to be a healer and a helper, providing culturally relevant therapeutic interventions and empowerment to the people of her community.



## Marsha Williamson

Born in Washington, D.C., Marsha has lived in Ward 7 since 1998. A breast cancer survivor, Marsha is intimately familiar with the struggles faced by her fellow residents while navigating cancer treatment from East of the River. She is an enthusiastic communicator and an educator at Washington Nationals Youth Baseball Academy, a nonprofit that uses sports to foster positive character development and wellbeing among youth.

## The Reverend Lorena M. Parrish, Ph.D., MSSW

(See above in Workforce Development Workgroup.)




# Road Maps Driving Change East of the River

Our two workgroups identified barriers that Black women living East of the River encounter obtaining quality jobs, careers and receiving optimum cancer diagnoses and treatment. Using the Strategic Design Initiative approach, we developed comprehensive, action-oriented road maps, detailing specific strategies and interventions for improving workforce development and patient navigation systems in Wards 7 & 8.

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Workforce development is a set of policies, systems, structures, and programs that use a comprehensive approach to meet the individual needs of women who seek successful careers. It ensures that every person has opportunities to enter the workforce and that they are prepared to do so.




### Our Road Map to Achieve this Goal:

-  Increases coordination and leverages local governmental efforts  
Increases access to training, job, and career opportunities
-  Transforms employer and workforce development cultures, shifting to a trainee-centered or employee-centered approach
-  Researches and evaluates workforce development efforts for Black women East of the River, including continuous data monitoring for equitable outcomes

## PATIENT NAVIGATION

Patient navigation is a strategy to improve health outcomes by addressing barriers to quality healthcare that arise from systemic inequities and cultural differences. Navigators provide patients with crucial logistical and emotional support throughout their healthcare journey.

### Our Road Map to Achieve this Goal:

-  Strengthens and expands the patient navigation infrastructure
-  Addresses education and awareness of the role of patient navigation in care
-  Addresses misogynoir in healthcare

Our workgroups completed exhaustive research, strategies, and interventions on these issues. Comprehensive details are available on our website.



# Our Timeline

- 01** February 2019 – The board of the Jane Bancroft Robinson Foundation approves the Strategic Design Initiative for the community East of the River.
- 02** March 2019 – The Jane Bancroft Robinson Foundation issues a request for proposals for a co-lead of the Strategic Design Initiative, hiring Manon P. Matchett in June 2019.
- 03** June 2019 – The Jane Bancroft Robinson Foundation issues a request for proposals for co-chairs of each workgroup, selecting them in August 2019.
- 04** July 2019 – The Jane Bancroft Robinson Foundation requests applications for members of two workgroups.
- 05** August-October 2019 – The co-leads and co-chairs select workgroup members with representation from Wards 7 & 8.
- 06** November 22, 2019 – The Strategic Design Initiative launches. All workgroup members assemble for the first of three joint meetings facilitated by a consultant, Two Brown Girls. The first meeting is held at THEARC, a community center in D.C.'s Ward 8.
- 07** December 20, 2019 – The Strategic Design Initiative Workforce Development and Patient Navigation Workgroups convene separately for the first time in Zoom meetings.
- 08** January 21, 2020 – The Strategic Design Initiative meets for the second of three joint convenings with both workgroups and Two Brown Girls. At this meeting, they participate in racial equity and health disparities training, meeting at Martha's Table headquarters, The Commons at Stanton Square, in D.C.'s Ward 8.
- 09** January 24, 2020 – The Strategic Design Initiative Workforce Development and Patient Navigation Workgroups convene separately for a second time at the R.I.S.E. Demonstration Center on Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue SE in D.C.'s Ward 8. All future monthly workgroup meetings occur virtually via Zoom because of the COVID pandemic.
- 10** January 2020 – July 2021 – Root-cause analysis, synthesis, and issue prioritization process begins in January, with seven monthly workgroup meetings of the Patient Navigation and Workforce Development Workgroups.
- 11** February 12, 2020 – The Strategic Design Initiative meets for the last of three level-setting, joint convenings with both workgroups and Two Brown Girls to establish governance structure, conflict resolution, and decision-making processes to guide our work. This meeting is held at the Anacostia Community Museum on Fort Place SE, near Martha's Table in D.C.'s Ward 8.
- 12** February 27, 2020 – The board of the Jane Bancroft Robinson Foundation hosts a meet-and-greet luncheon for Strategic Design Initiative workgroup members at the Ward 8 Community of Hope's conference center, co-located with Martha's Table headquarters at The Commons.
- 13** February 2020 – Strategic Design Initiative workgroup members and leadership team unanimously vote to explicitly state Black women living East of the River as the sole focus of our initiative.







## March – June 2020

### Phase I: Process and Impact Evaluation Planning

-  March 2020 – The Mirror Group conducts Culturally Responsive Evaluation Training for all workgroup members. The meeting is initially scheduled in-person at Marshall Heights Community Development Organization in D.C.'s Ward 7 but is switched to Zoom because of COVID. All future meetings are conducted virtually via Zoom because of the pandemic.
-  May 2020 – The Journey Mapping process begins for the Patient Navigation Workgroup. The Mirror Group conducts qualitative research to center lived experience and community voice in our work.

## June 2020 – June 2022

### Phase II: Process and Impact Evaluation Implementation

-  August 2020 – January 2021 – Intervention design and roadmap development begins in August 2020 over six monthly workgroup meetings for both workgroups.
-  October 2020 – February 2021 – Carry out strategic communications planning process with Tonee Lawson, The Be. Org, a strategic communications consultant. We finalize mission, vision, and distinct problem statements for cancer, workforce, and systems change work.
-  December 2020 -- The journey mapping process begins for the Workforce Development Workgroup. The Mirror Group again conducts qualitative research effort to center lived experience and community voice in our work.
-  February 2021 – May 2021 – We conduct racial equity impact assessments for every roadmap intervention designed by the Patient Navigation and Workforce Development Workgroups.
-  March 2021 – April 2021 -- Stakeholder engagement phase involves meetings and focus groups with community members, key government agency representatives, philanthropy partners, and others.
-  April 2021 – May 2021 – Refine interventions and roadmaps with feedback from partners and finalize roadmaps.
-  April 2021 – Launch requests for proposals for landscape analysis.
-  May 2021 – April 2022 – Complete logo and website design and roadmap report graphic design. We select a consulting partner, Marigold Creative, to help build a website, design a logo, and create a layout for the roadmap report for public release.
-  June 2021 – June 2022--Award first roadmap implementation grants in June 2021 to DC Hospital Association with Dress for Success (workforce development landscape analysis) and Cancer Support Community with Whitman Walker Health (patient navigation landscape analysis). Complete final landscape analyses in June 2022for workforce development and April 2022 for patient navigation.
-  July 2021 – April 2022 – First Collaborative Partnership Committees launch with a subset of Black Women Thriving East of the River participants and additional community-based subject matter experts. Each committee meets monthly with grantee research teams throughout the grant period. All committee members are compensated for their time and expertise.

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July 2021 – February 2022 – Sustainability planning and phased roadmap implementation begins. For nine months, each workgroup continues to meet monthly, establishing a series of bi-weekly subcommittees for planning sustainability, designing a scholarship fund intervention, and continuing roadmap implementation for the two next highest priority interventions – Cancer Patient Bill of Rights and the Health-Related Career Resources Map.

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August 2021 – Strategic Design Initiative officially changes its name to Black Women Thriving East of the River Initiative.

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November 2021 – June 2023 – Begin partnership with Aridai, a Ward 7-based consulting firm, to develop a sustainability plan, recruit and hire an executive director, and identify a new home for the Black Women Thriving East of the River Initiative. This work also includes an asset map and landscape analysis to identify East of the River organizations well-positioned to serve as the new, permanent “home” for this work.

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November 2021 – March 2022 – Workgroup co-chairs develop detailed compendiums, working with Dana Hiniker, a writing consultant.

## March 2022 – Current

### Phase III: Black Women Thriving East of the River

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March 2022 – Move ongoing, staged, roadmap implementation work in-house to the Jane Bancroft Robinson Foundation to incubate the effort until an executive director and new home for the initiative is established. Bring in former workgroup co-chair teams as consultants to lead roadmap implementation efforts. Sustainability planning is led in partnership with Aridai.

31

September 2022 – Launch recruitment process for executive director of Black Women Thriving East of the River. Anticipate hiring a successful candidate in January 2023.



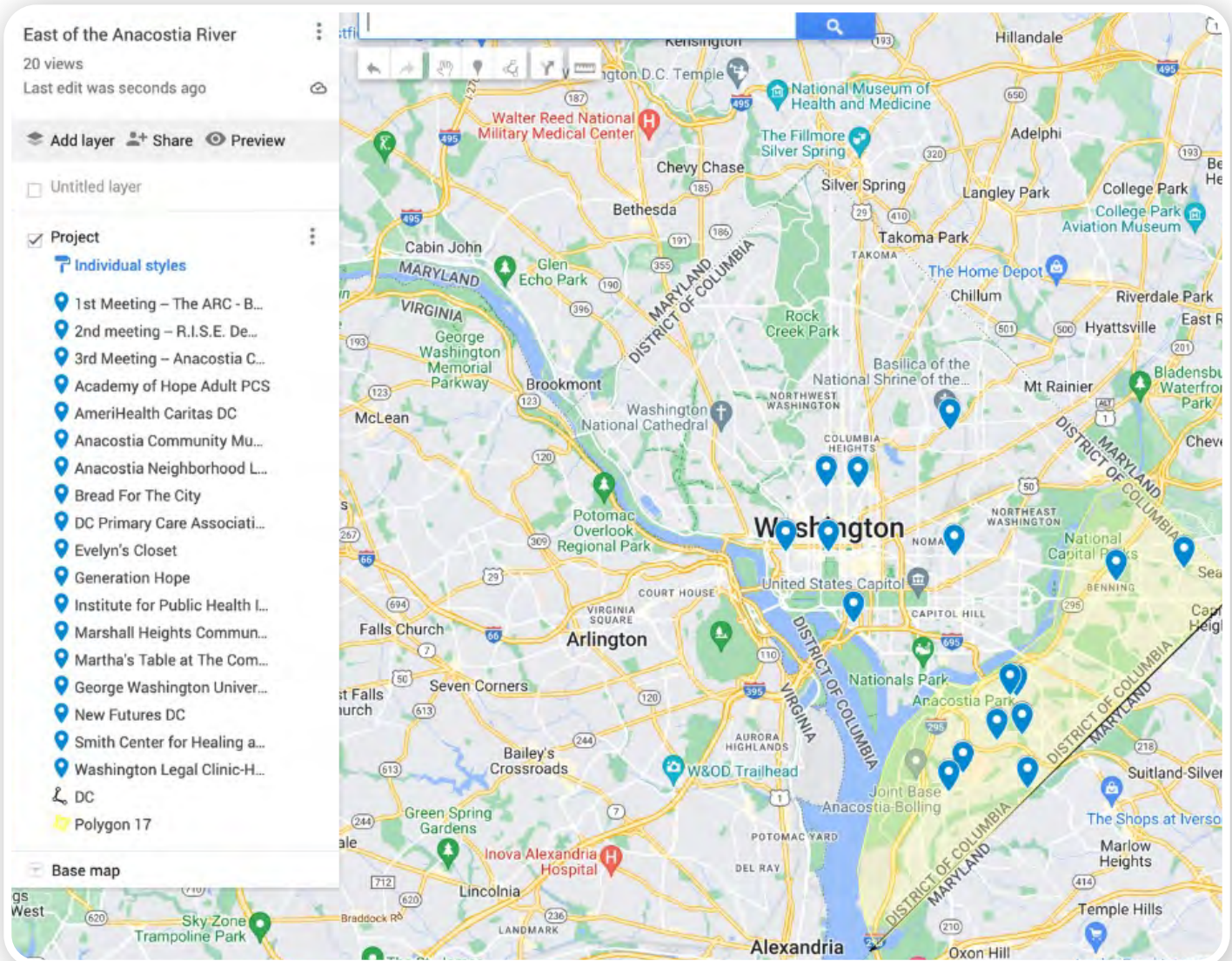
#### Julie Green

Former leader at New Futures, which helps underserved D.C. youth obtain certifications and college degrees

“I feel in so many ways that my personal hopes aren't in the accomplishment, so much as in the process, which has already impacted me deeply and forever changed how I live and work. I hope our initiative develops the solutions for patient navigation and workforce development that we set out to realize, and also creates new models for exploring, creating, and implementing equitable and community-driven solutions to the wide-ranging issues that are the result of systemic racism.”

# Our Geography

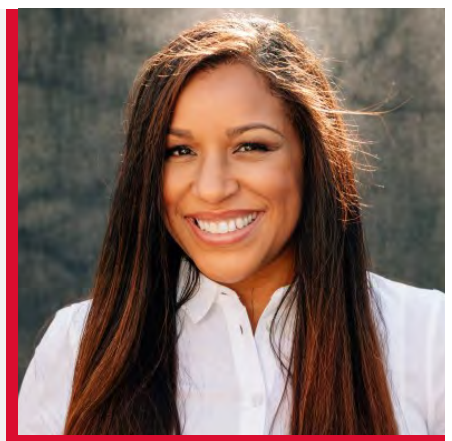
The Anacostia River separates the lower one-fifth of the nation's capital from the rest of the city. Many people never cross the river into Wards 7 & 8. If you are new to our neighborhoods, we invite you to visit with us, call us, walk with us.



## Nicole Lynn Lewis

Founder and CEO of Generation Hope

"I hope to contribute to the conversation by bringing the experiences of young mothers in Ward 8 into this conversation about creating change for more workforce opportunities. And I hope to take the learning that I receive back to my organization to inform our work and collectively create change."





# Our Reflections



## **Marsha Williamson**

Ward 7 resident since 1998, passionate communicator and educator at the Washington Nationals Youth Baseball Academy

"As a breast cancer survivor, I strive to share and advocate with others as they discover and recover from cancer. My journey thus far has been a quiet storm. I pray that I can help others navigate to make their illness a quiet storm, too."



## **Sade Anderson-Brown**

RODIA Consulting LLC and co-chair of the Patient Navigation Workgroup

"Black Women Thriving East of the River gives us an opportunity for multiple partners to center the experiences of Black women in Wards 7 & 8 to create real equitable solutions that change the health and employment opportunities for Black women East of the River."

## **Claudia Campos**

Works for Nueva Vista, founded by Latina breast cancer survivors

"I call this group my family. Being a part of Black Women Thriving East of the River increases my sense of unity with the Black community. I listened with great (interest) to my colleagues in the group, and I would love to continue learning and creating solutions that fill the gaps needed to reduce cancer mortality in Wards 7 & 8 of Washington, D.C."







### **Julia Rowland, Ph.D.**

Senior counsel to the Smith Center for Healing and Arts with connections to Wards 7 & 8

"Black Women Thriving East of the River provides a way to contribute to strategic efforts to systematically address long-standing disparities in cancer outcomes in our nation's capital. There's no 'I' in what we hope to accomplish. Rather, it is a question of we."

### **Charnal Chaney**

Native Washingtonian from Ward 8 who assists children with incarcerated parents, working at Women Involved in Re-entry Efforts, The W.I.R.E., and owner of Bold Yoga LLC

"Our initiative, Black Women Thriving East of the River, is an opportunity for us to create real change within the healthcare system that will allow Ward 8 mothers and families to thrive. I hope to see our approach change the way Ward 8 families are viewed, so that we are better understood, along with the barriers that keep us in survival mode versus thriving mode."



### **Lisa Fitzpatrick**

MD, Physician living in Ward 8 and founder of Grapevine Health, educating community members

"To me, Black Women Thriving East of the River is a powerful community of women working toward a common healthcare goal. I want our efforts to lead to early diagnosis and treatment for all Black and Latinx women and women of color with a cancer diagnosis."

### **Amari Pearson-Fields**

Ph.D., Native Washingtonian who has worked to address health disparities for more than 30 years and co-chair of the Patient Navigation Workgroup

"I'm a native Washingtonian and cancer has been a specter over my family for decades. I have spent so many years of my career trying to increase access and remove barriers to cancer care. Black Women Thriving East of the River is a different way of doing that by uplifting the voices of women most affected."






# Evaluation Goals

The Jane Bancroft Robinson Foundation is reaching out to funding partners to join efforts that will gauge the impact of the Black Women Thriving East of the River initiative. We will gather evidence that codifies this collective impact approach and conveys its value on many levels — with both traditional and non-traditional definitions of impact. As with our initiative's goals of transforming the way philanthropy and other stakeholders do this work, we also intend to transform the way people think about evaluation. We will dismantle broken data systems that perpetuate and mask inequities. Our evaluation approach will push beyond standard data boundaries and uplift racially just metrics of impact that shine a light on root causes and tell the true story behind health and workforce disparities East of the River. Our efforts will transform the strategies and interventions used to advance racial equity and community-centered work.

To that end, the Mirror Group, a consulting team rooted in culturally responsive and equitable evaluation, assessed the Strategic Design Initiative. The Mirror Group helped design the process and created an initial evaluation plan. All along the Black Women Thriving East of the River journey, its team documented impact and key components of the process, crafting a vivid portrait of what it takes to initiate and successfully engage in this work.

We must invest in effective evaluations to transform racially unjust, inequitable systems in evaluation science, philanthropy, healthcare, workforce development, and more. That way we can determine the most effective processes and implement them so others can learn from our efforts. The thorough documentation of this community-centered intervention will validate this approach for other issues.

## Primary goals of this evaluation:

-  Build the capacity of workgroup partners to think about and conduct evaluation in an equitable, culturally responsive way.
-  Document the impact of this framework as an actual intervention. Workgroup partners and the communities they serve are benefiting in multiple ways by participating in this process. We do not want to lose that impact. It is part of the value of investing in individuals and community-centered work.
-  Position the process to be shared with others in philanthropy and the nonprofit sector who want their work to be transformative and need a blueprint for doing it.

Further, we will add a professional evaluator to develop a mechanism for assessing the success of the overall initiative, each of our interventions, and the community-participation strategy utilized in development and implementation.

# Call to Action

In our work as Black Women Thriving East of the River, we responded to the needs of our community by identifying issues that dramatically lower the quality of life for our Black women. We have painstakingly plotted a course for corrective actions and interventions that will help us and our neighbors enjoy better health and careers with family-sustaining wages.

Now is the time for action!

The Foundation is reaching out to private, public, and non-profit sectors to collaborate on bringing to life the strategies and interventions that we, the women of Wards 7 & 8, co-created through our work. We are so proud that these are our interventions, our solutions, our remedies, not directives from outside the community. But now is time for others to contribute. Support our solutions. Help us turn them into reality. Racism and misogynoir can be defeated. But it will take all of us, collaborating and working together. Our Call to Action is to begin this critical stage of the work — turning Road Maps into successes. Those east and west of the River must collaborate and be active. Together, we will help Black Women East of the River THRIVE.

# Acknowledgements

## Our Participants and Partners

Black women living east of the Anacostia River in Wards 7 & 8 built this process.

With the support of generous organizational partners and funders, we reclaimed our narrative and reimagined solutions to barriers across institutions, taking important steps toward creating a just and equitable community.

Thank you to all who believe in the values we embrace, the power of lived experience, the abundance of knowledge rooted in Black communities, and the importance of disrupting the sexism and anti-Black racism known as misogynoir.

Most importantly, thank you to the women who led and participated in this initiative through a challenging time in history of social distancing, health fears, and community turmoil brought about by the dual pandemics of COVID-19 and systemic racism. Communities East of the River are taking charge of our wellbeing and creating pathways that foster prosperity for Black women. A new light shines because of the perseverance of the 28 women who endeavored to save Black lives and Black communities in our nation's capital, while charting a sustainable model for realizing equity in society.

Thank you to our allies for your support during this process. Especially, members of both workgroups.

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### **Venues**

Anacostia Community Museum  
Building Bridges Across the River  
Martha's Table  
R.I.S.E. Demonstration Center  
Marshall Heights Community Development Organization

