

2023 marked the Greenville Homeless Alliance's 5th birthday and to celebrate, we decided to give a gift back to the community that created us. In May, GHA announced the commission of a mural honoring those experiencing homelessness in our community and the organizations that offer solutions and hope.

The mural announcement featured remarks from some of the 18 original tent city partners who crafted the [2015 Homelessness White Paper](#) that helped create GHA. The crowd was also introduced to the artist and some of the [eight men and women](#) whose faces and stories of hope would be featured in the mural. Watch a [highlight video](#) or the [entire event](#).

MURAL QUICK FACTS

- **THE ARTIST** - Greenville native [Nick Burns aka Ninja Picasso](#). Original photography by Kevin Mihaly.
- **THE CANVAS** - The outside wall of the Triune Mercy Center's sanctuary.
- **THE GOAL** - For those experiencing homelessness to be seen, heard, and valued in a way that brings us together as a community, committed to finding solutions to end homelessness.

47 feet

Height of Mural

14,000

Average Number of Vehicles Passing the Mural Each Day

5 Million+

Possible Views A Year



Pictures from mural announcement: 1. Representatives of the original tent city partners, 2. Triune Mercy Center Pastor and Director Jennifer Fouse Sheorn, 3. Kevin Mihaly and Nick Burn aka Ninja Picasso

Special Thanks to These Mural Partners

- Premiere Arts Collective
- Triune Mercy Center
- Bennett Equipment and Supply
- City of Greenville Arts in Public Places Commission
- Duke Energy
- Kevin Mihaly (photographer)
- Nick Burns aka Ninja Picasso (artist)

Individuals and Organizations in the Mural

- Christopher – Greater Greenville Mental Health
- Dan – Miracle Hill Rescue Mission
- Don – Triune Mercy Center
- Dwayne – New Horizons Family Health Services, Inc
- Jessica and children – United Ministries
- LeTonya – Jasmine Road
- Robert – Buncombe Street Methodist Church
- Vernell – The Salvation Army of Greenville

THE MURAL BLOCK PARTY

GHA Partners and Stakeholders hosted a block party on a hot Saturday in July in the parking lot of Triune Mercy Center. Our mural artist brought assorted cans of spray paint in bright colors, music was playing over a speaker, homemade cookies were served by a local electrical company, shaved ice was available from Greenville High students, corn hole, giant Jenga, giant Connect Four, sidewalk chalk, coloring pages, bubbles, and chairs under tents were set for people of all ages and all walks of life to enjoy – together.

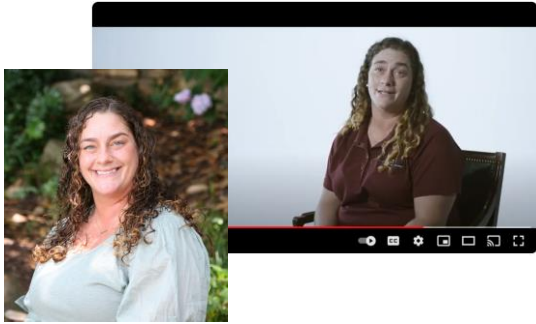
One man sat in a chair watching the festivities, taking it in with his friends who had come for the services available at Triune Mercy Center. He was encouraged to help paint the mural, but he said, **“No. I will mess it up.”** He was assured that his efforts could not mess it up but would add to the layer that Ninja Picasso would build upon. Eventually, he got up, went over to try the spray paint and a big smile erupted across his face as he said, **“This is amazing. I feel free!”** These words echo the core purpose of GHA's work and the mural...to create a community where we all feel the freedom of being seen, heard, and valued.



SEEN | HEARD | VALUED MURAL HIGHLIGHTS

AUG 2022

The process began with GHA partner organizations identifying individuals who had Stories of Hope to share. Kevin Mihaly then photographed them, and their stories were recorded as mini-documentaries.



MAY 2023

Eight photos were used by Nick Burns, aka Ninja Picasso to create a rendering of the mural entitled [Seen | Heard | Valued](#) commissioned by GHA to celebrate its 5th birthday.



JULY 2023

GHA hosted a block party to give the community an opportunity to help paint the mural.



NOV 2022 & 2023

Banners created to share the Stories of Hope debuted at iGNITE event. A QR code connects to each person's mini-documentary on GHA's website.



NOV 2023

Images from the mural and examples of Ninja Picasso's artistic process go on display in Premiere Arts Collective and Elliott Davis exhibit space in the lobby of Camperdown Falls Tower, 355 S. Main Street in Greenville. The exhibit is open to the public for 6 months.



DEC 2023

The rendering comes to life as GHA's 5th birthday gift to the community. **Seen | Heard | Valued** now covers the back wall of Triune Mercy Center's sanctuary and reminds all who pass that homelessness is solvable. Watch the story of how the **Seen | Heard | Valued** mural was created [HERE](#).

GHA IGNITE EVENTS

GHA's iGNITE events this year reached more than 375 in person and online attendees. The luncheon, held at First Baptist Church Greenville, included speakers sharing what it means to be seen, heard, and valued and how those words drive the work of GHA. We heard stories from men and women who have faced homelessness and the organizations that helped them find hope. And we learned how to get engaged with innovative solutions in Greenville County.

In celebration of GHA's 5th birthday, a special evening event was added. iGNITE the Night VIP event debuted an art exhibit featuring the faces and stories from the **Seen | Heard | Valued** mural and glimpses at Nick Burns aka Ninja Picasso's process in creating the 47-foot-high work of art. The exhibit is open to the public in the lobby of the Camperdown Falls Tower building for the next 6 months. This collaboration with Premiere Arts Collective, Elliott Davis, and TealHaus Strategies offers continued community engagement opportunities into 2024.

Thank you to everyone who made our iGNITE events possible. The **Greenville Homeless Alliance** includes individuals and 500+ partner organizations committed to finding solutions to end homelessness. We saw the power of that partnership in our **sponsors**, **volunteers**, **attendees**, and most of all, our **speakers** sharing stories and strategies that remind us that homelessness is solvable in Greenville County when we come together as a connected community.

If you weren't able to join us, visit our website at www.gvlhomes4all.org to:

- [Watch a recording of the event.](#)
- Check out the [Stories of Hope](#) and banners you can display.
- Order [mural notecards](#) or [apparel](#).
- Watch the [Seen | Heard | Valued Mural short documentary](#).

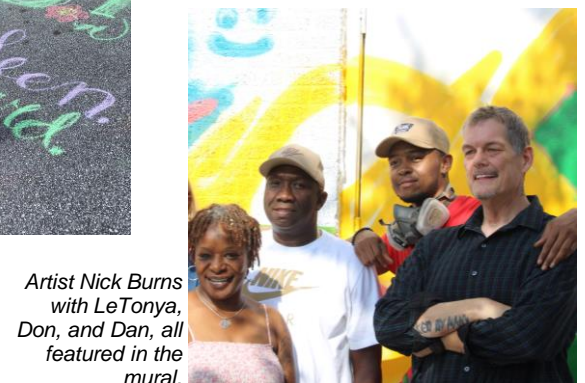


Pictures by Jack Roberts Photography: 1. Don Austin and 2. Dan Weathers (both featured in Seen | Heard | Valued mural), 3. Nick Burns aka Ninja Picasso addressing the crowd, 4. Practice pieces for mural, 5. Rose and mural photographer Kevin Mihaly viewing exhibit at iGNITE the Night event, 6. iGNITE the Night guests.

BLOCK PARTY HIGHLIGHTS



7th grader Molly Grace Daniel creating sidewalk art.



Artist Nick Burns with LeTonya, Don, and Dan, all featured in the mural.

WORKING GROUP HIGHLIGHTS

In 2023, more than **60 Stakeholders from 50 different organizations participated in Working Groups**. These groups implement GHA's [strategic plan](#) and align with the [graph](#) below which shows the conditions that hold a problem like homelessness in place. Working group members and other **volunteers invested more than 880 hours in 2023** to change systems and advance equity by shifting conditions. Here are a few highlights that demonstrate which levels of the graph were impacted.

ADVOCATE WORKING GROUP

- Refined the **Advocacy Training Academy** curriculum. Conducted **5 sessions** with more than **125 participants** including academies for the Southernside neighborhood association and LGBTQ+ community.
- Updated [GHA Policy Agenda](#) and engaged in advocacy for issues including the City of Greenville's Development Code, Homeless Court, and affordable housing and transportation funding in Greenville County's budget.

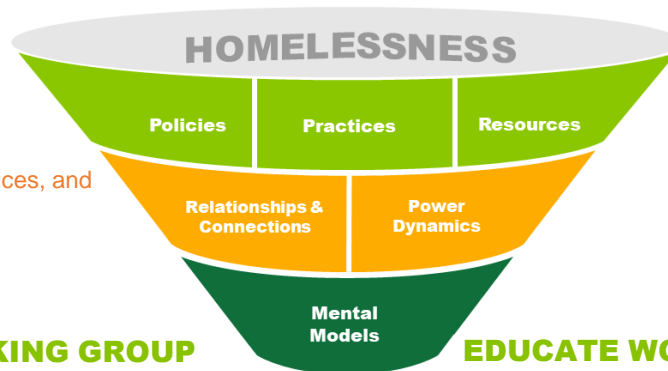
IMPACTING: Policies, Practices, and Resources

INNOVATE WORKING GROUP

- Began developing a **universal exit from homelessness strategy** with two dozen different nonprofits (known as [Coffee Club](#)) that utilize a variety of data platforms.
- Convened a **mock "Housing Determination Committee" meeting** in collaboration with the Upstate Continuum of Care (CoC) to enhance understanding of the challenges and opportunities of CoC serving 13 counties in the Upstate.

- Developed **criteria to evaluate GHA initiatives**.

IMPACTING: Resources, Power Dynamics, and Mental Models (connects all three levels)



COLLABORATE WORKING GROUP

- Developed and released the **online Homelessness Resource Guide** in July to simplify the process of getting to the right resources for those experiencing homelessness. Since its release, the guide has been visited more than **2600** times.

IMPACTING: Relationships & Connections and Power Dynamics

EDUCATE WORKING GROUP

- Released the [Unsheltered Homelessness Brief](#) to offer insight into unsheltered homelessness, its causes, and the current local solutions. The brief was developed by Educate Working Group Members in collaboration with members of Coffee Club.

IMPACTING: Mental Models (what people know and believe about an issue)

Collaborate and Educate Working Groups joined forces in March to create and implement a Community Engagement Plan. Using GHA's 5th birthday and the **Seen | Heard | Valued** mural as a catalyst, the plan included community outreach, social media efforts, targeted education, and hosting several key community events including the Mural Block Party and the iGNITE Luncheon and VIP Reception.

Community Engagement Plan Goals:

1. Increase community awareness and understanding of what homelessness really looks like in Greenville County.
2. Increase community understanding of who GHA is and our role in connecting the community to solutions for homelessness.
3. Increase the number of community members engaging with GHA.

Community Engagement Plan Highlights May - November 2023

- 2,500** in person connections through outreach and events
- 973** new followers across all social media platforms
- 247** requests to engage with GHA via website
- 14** different print and broadcast media stories quoted or featured GHA
- 5** Instagram takeovers by GHA partner organizations

MORE 2023 HIGHLIGHTS

- Engaged in **advocacy issues** addressing affordable housing, mental health, eviction, fair lending, and Homeless Court alongside community partners including Greenville Affordable Housing Coalition, Fair Lending Alliance, Impact Greenville, Greater Good Greenville, GOAL Justice, and Village Engage. These efforts included sending out **9 Call to Action** emails encouraging stakeholders to get involved.
- Partnered with GOAL Justice** to provide data, solutions, media contacts, engagement with policymakers, and connection to people willing to share their stories of homelessness and attend events organized by GOAL Justice.
- Continued collaboration with BJU Cinematic Arts students and LEAP Communications to create 60-second **Stories of Hope documentaries**. Twenty-three are now available for viewing [HERE](#) on GHA's website. Banners featuring links to the stories are available for use by businesses, faith communities, and other organizations.
- Led more than 40 educational field trips and presentations** for faith communities, schools, social workers, hospitals, universities, businesses, and elected officials.



- Continued **convening partnerships to create a demonstration site of a tiny home** at Roper Mountain Science Center. Three homes were designed by [Greenville County Schools Fine Arts Center Architecture students and Craig Gaulden Davis](#) in the fall of 2023.



Dr. Catherine Smith-Gates and team discussing tiny home construction.

- Convened an online training with Community First! Village** in Austin, TX in April 2023 titled, "Building Your Team."
- Partnered with TealHaus Strategies to create **the iGNITE the Night event and the six-month exhibit in the Camperdown Falls Tower art gallery** depicting the creation of the **Seen | Heard | Valued** mural and Stories of Hope. This collaboration was provided pro bono with an estimated value of \$36,000.
- Published a research study with BJU Health Sciences Department and GHA staff** titled, "An Aging in Place Approach to Barriers and Facilitators of Shelter Utilization by Older Adults Experiencing Homelessness in Upstate South Carolina". Read the full study [HERE](#).
- Held four quarterly [Stakeholder Meetings](#) in collaboration with the Upstate Continuum of Care.

PARTNERSHIP CREATES HOUSING NAVIGATOR

In September, DeAndra "DJ" Wilson Hillman joined GHA as Housing Navigator. This position, developed in partnership with the [Piedmont Health Foundation](#), serves as a bridge between frontline service providers and housing providers so people experiencing chronic homelessness who are ready for housing can be connected to available housing options. This pilot initiative creates new opportunities to increase access to stable housing, improve health outcomes, and reduce disparities for our most vulnerable neighbors.

In addition to developing connections, DeAndra is overseeing a centralized housing list. She is identifying challenges and risks experienced by both sets of providers. This collaboration will create a universal database that tracks exits from homelessness for pilot participants.

To learn more or to get involved as a housing provider, contact [DeAndra](#).

**Frontline Service Providers are professionals who work directly with clients. Organizations involved in this effort include: Miracle Hill Ministries, The Salvation Army, Triune Mercy Center, United Ministries, United Housing Connections, Greater Greenville Mental Health, Pendleton Place, New Horizon Family Health Services, St. Anthony Padua Catholic Church, Mother Theresa House, and Greenville Police Department.*



THANK YOU SUPPORTING PARTNERS

Thank you to these organizations and individuals that are financially supporting the creation of the mural, the iGNITE events, and the overall work of GHA at the level of \$500 or more annually. For more information about becoming a Supporting Partner, contact Susan McLarty or donate online at www.gvlhomes4all.org/donate.

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This list reflects contributions made from 12/12/22 to 12/12/23.

Special thanks to GHA's Host Organization and Fiscal Sponsor.



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Steering Committee Members completing terms in June 2023: Lauren Stephens- The Salvation Army of Greenville, Ryan Durek - Miracle Hill Ministries, and Jennifer Fouse Sheorn - Triune Mercy Center

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DeAndra "DJ" Hillman, Housing Navigator

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