

Knight Foundation President Visits Charlotte



From Charles Thomas, Knight Foundation <web@knightfoundation.org>
To Stephen <sjohnston@tuesdayforumcharlotte.org>
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Dear Stephen,

We welcomed Knight's President and CEO, Maribel Pérez Wadsworth, to Charlotte last week for her first visit since joining Knight in January. Wadsworth toured the Historic West End and witnessed the great work led by Knight partners to support affordable housing, economic development and small businesses. She also met with key community leaders advancing neighborhood revitalization efforts, the arts and local journalism.

"Anyone who's visited Charlotte has experienced its downtown's vibrancy, where major financial institutions, world class arts venues and professional sports abound," Wadsworth wrote. You can find her reflections [here](#).

Knight Emerging Cities Champions program is accepting applications for this year's cohort. More on how to apply for this exciting opportunity below.

Sincerely,
Charles Thomas
Director/Charlotte



Maribel Pérez Wadsworth Gets a Charlotte Welcome





Front row from left: J'Tanya Adams (Historic West End Partners), Ralphine Caldwell (LISC Charlotte), T  r  se Coudreaux Curiel (KF), Maribel P  rez Wadsworth (KF), Victoria Rogers (KF), Charise Blackmon, (West Side Community Land Trust), Alisa Evans (KF). Back row from left: Charles Thomas (KF), Jim Brady (KF), Kelly Jin (KF), Marc Laval  e (KF), Koven Smith (KF).

While here, Wadsworth met community leaders and Knight partners like J'Tanya Adams of Historic West End Partners, Charis Blackmon of the West Side Community Land Trust, Alesha S. Brown, founder of For The Struggle, Dr. Valerie Kinloch, the new president of Johnson C. Smith University, and chef-owner of Leah & Louise, Gregory Collier.

Wadsworth praised Charlotte's strong public-private partnerships, highlighting the new Main Library, a project due to open in 2026, as one example. The library will be a beacon for informing and engaging residents, intentionally increasing access to digital technologies. Knight contributed \$10M to the effort.

She and the Knight team joined a celebration at Bank of America to introduce the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra's new music director, Kwam   Ryan. Wadsworth announced a new \$5M investment in support of the CSO's [\\$50 million fundraising campaign](#), a special moment to celebrate the power of the arts to connect and forge strong bonds among neighbors.



Maribel P  rez Wadsworth announces Knight's new \$5 million investment into Charlotte Symphony Orchestra and its efforts to use technology to deepen experiences and reach new audiences.

Knight Emerging Cities Champions Program is Back

We are excited to bring back the Knight Emerging Cities Champions fellowship and micro-grant program for young civic innovators. Participants will receive \$5,000 in seed funding to implement one community project in one year as well as a \$500 tech bundle to support their project activities.

So, if you or someone you know between the ages of 18 and 35 has an innovative idea around engaging residents in the Historic West End, please apply.

Applications for the 2024-2025 program are now open until May, 27th. Learn more from Knight's VP of Communities and National Initiatives, Kelly Jin [here](#),

HOW WOULD YOU TRANSFORM YOUR CITY?

KECC is back and better than ever! KECC is a fellowship and micro-grant program for young civic innovators in the U.S. with bold ideas for transforming their cities. We're looking for future city leaders with creative solutions to promote more engaged communities.

20 selected champions
3-DAY immersive workshop in Toronto
\$5,000 in seed funding
\$500 tech bundle

For more info or to apply visit:
emergingcitychampions.org
Applications close May 27th, 2024

880 cities **KF** KNIGHT FOUNDATION

and visit: emergingcitychampions.org.

Want Do You Want From Your Library?



branch. More information [here](#).

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Library wants to know how they can best serve you. As they craft a new strategic plan, they're asking the community to share their needs. Get involved by taking their online survey (available in [English](#) or [Spanish](#)), or by attending a focus group at your

Get Involved in the Future of the West End

The Historic West End Partners are hosting a community planning meeting later this month to provide updates on the Historic West End Main Street Transformative Plan of 2020, share the vision for the Five Points and Oaklawn Business Districts, and present a community-owned grocery store and mixed-use complex that is opening soon. They are seeking input from residents and business owners on **Saturday, April 27, at the Arts Factory (1545 W Trade Street) from 9 AM to 11 AM.**



Knight Partners in the News

Pauline's Tea Bar: My favorite tea bar has opened a new location at 1017 Beatties Ford Road thanks to the work of Knight partners Historic West End Partners who enticed Sherry Waters to open a second store in the West End. LISC Charlotte provided technical assistance and funding in partnership with a grant from Fifth Third Bank. [Read more.](#)

Charlotte Latino Film Festival presented by Cine Casual: With funding from Knight Foundation, Cine Casual founders Giovanna Torres and Alex Piñeres have expanded their festival (happening now through April 14th), solidifying it as a premiere event in Charlotte. Hear from them in this [video interview](#) and get tickets to the festival [here](#).

The Role of Philanthropy in Building Stronger Towns



Knight's VP of Community and National Initiatives, Kelly Jin, joined Stephen Goldsmith, the Derek Bok Professor of the Practice of Urban Policy and the Director of the Data-Smart City Solutions program



at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government for a discussion about philanthropic investments in communities and how to access federal resources. Listen [here](#).

On the Path to a More Sustainable and Equitable Charlotte

Bloomberg Philanthropies selected Charlotte as part of a 25-city cohort for [Bloomberg American Sustainable Cities](#). Charlotte will receive up to three staff members and access to a learning network focused on the intersection of climate change and the racial wealth gap. It's great to see more investment in Charlotte's future. I'm proud that we were chosen to be part of this national cohort!

What I'm Thinking About...

The Observer reported that the Charlotte area [maintains pace as one of the fastest growing metro areas in the U.S.](#) The area added some 135,000 people from 2020 to 2023, with the region's least populated counties seeing the biggest growth. That's the equivalent of **136 people a day** moving into the Charlotte region.

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ABOUT KNIGHT FOUNDATION

We are social investors who support a more effective democracy by funding free expression and journalism, arts and culture in community, research in areas of media and democracy, and in the success of American cities and towns where the Knight brothers once published newspapers. Learn more at [kf.org](#).

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John S. and James L. Knight Foundation
2850 Tigertail Avenue, Suite 600
Miami, FL 33133