

Announcing the 2024 Knight Emerging City Champions



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COMMUNITY NEWS

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Dear Friends,

I'm pleased to share with you the 2024 Knight Emerging City Champions fellows with you.

Please join me in congratulating these talented Champions, from Akron, OH; Charlotte, NC; Detroit, MI; Macon, GA; Miami, FL; Philadelphia, PA; San Jose, CA and St. Paul, MN.

Since its inception in 2015, the Knight Emerging City Champions program has empowered civic innovators in Knight cities to create more engaged, inclusive, and equitable communities. This year's cohort continues this legacy with ideas that showcase the power of grassroots placemaking and community-driven solutions.

I invite you to learn more about these young leaders and follow along with their projects by visiting www.emergingcitychampions.org.

Kelly Jin

Vice President, Community & National Initiatives
John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

Meet the Champions

AKRON

- **Erica Banks**, Safe Space
- **Rachel Whinnery**, Food for Thought: Exploring Akron Restaurants

CHARLOTTE

- **Cheryse Fulton**, Preserving Legacy
- **Jordan Braswell**, Shop with Us
- **Marlin Wilson**, West End Connect: Resource Guide and Community Fair

DETROIT

- **Ayanna-Grace King**, City Sprouts: A Youth Run Urban Farm
- **David Silver**, Urban Equestrian Education Center
- **Shamere Duncan**, The Black Initiative 313 and She SO Detroit

MACON

- **Laura Gómez**, Macon for everyone, Macon para todos!
- **Jonathan Weatherbee**, Macon's Most Inclusive Playground

MIAMI

- **Vicky Nelson**, Building Champions
- **Dries Darrow**, Connect Miami Beach
- **Omqlará Williams McCallister**, Miami Is My Backyard

PHILADELPHIA

- **Chloe Mshana**, The Connected Community Initiative
- **Hayley Oleksiak**, Open Space Sandbox
- **Taylor Nickens**, Alignment Community Wellness Festival

SAN JOSE

- **Anthony Tordillos**, Community Quick-Build Safe Streets
- **Carman Gaines**, Creative Liberties

ST. PAUL

- **Liban Kano**, Strangers Meeting Strangers (SMS)
- **Jenessa Carlisle**, Mush St. Paul

[Explore their projects ↗](#)

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 the success of American cities and towns where the Knight brothers once published newspapers. Learn more at [KF.org](https://kf.org).





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