

SUBMITTED BY

## **HEART OF BREVARD**



www.brevardnc.org



Dear Mayor Harris and Brevard City Council Members,

We would like to thank you once again for your continued support for Heart of Brevard and for your leadership of our community over the past year. Heart of Brevard (HOB) is requesting grant funding from the City of Brevard in the amount of \$30,000. We have enjoyed a positive and long-standing relationship with the City of Brevard and this support has been vital to the success of our organization and our downtown business community in the face of many unprecedented challenges.

Last year we shifted our priorities to supporting the evolving needs of businesses. Our strategic and comprehensive approach to problem solving allowed us to respond effectively to the needs of our small businesses, maintaining quality of life and ultimately supporting the vitality of the Heart of Brevard district. While we haven't completely cleared the hurdle that COVID-19 has presented, we look back on the past year's efforts with a great deal of pride.

Our belief in our community and shared strength of response create a model of resilience. Notably, we have supported 46 businesses in the Heart of Brevard district with \$103,750 of grant funding through the Transylvania Tomorrow Grant Program. We have over 85 business ambassadors proudly asking the community to "Think Local" through our support local program. We adapted our event lineup to provide safe, festive community celebrations and introduced new holiday events and lighting that had an overwhelmingly positive response from the community. We will continue to be a resource for businesses downtown and encourage business investment and redevelopment through our grant programs, historic preservation, advocacy and promotion.

This report details our actions, strategies, upcoming events and ongoing projects through the end of the calendar year. We look forward to 2021 knowing that we have weathered the storm and remain a strong advocate for our vibrant downtown. I would be happy to schedule follow-up meetings with members of council to provide in-depth review of these programs or to answer any specific questions.

On behalf of the Heart of Brevard and the businesses that constitute our iconic and vital downtown, thank you for your continued support of our organization and community.

Sincerely,

of Mill Bury

J. Nicole Bentley Executive Director



# **GET TO KNOW US**



## **Nicole Bentley**

**Executive Director** 

Originally from Abingdon, VA, Nicole fell in love with western North Carolina while attending Rockbrook Camp. After graduating from Hollins University, she moved back to the area. Nicole offers over a decade of experience in nonprofit leadership and downtown development. When not seen somewhere on Main Street, Nicole can be found cooking, backpacking or practicing yoga.



### Sara Jerome

Community Engagement Manager

Born and raised in Brevard, Sara always knew she'd make her way back to the mountains of her hometown. Her love for the area and her career in development and special events led her to her current role at the Heart of Brevard. When she isn't at the Heart, she's running in the forest or spending time with her partner and two dogs.

### **Board of Directors**

Billy Parrish President, Resident
Keavy McAbee Vice President, WOLFBREW Bottle Shop
Jimmy Perkins Past President, D.D. Bullwinkle's and Rocky's Grill & Soda Shop
Sarah Hysong Secretary/Treasurer, Connestee Falls Realty

Mark Burrows Blue Zones Project Lucy Clark Lucy Clark Studio & Gallery John Felty Mountain Song Productions Curtis Greenwood PLATT Jimmy Harris Mayor, Harris Ace Hardware Clark Lovelace Brevard/Transylvania Chamber of Commerce, Transylvania County Tourism Brittany Marcum Cohn United Community Bank John Nichols Nichols Company Ryan Olson Muddy Sneakers Paul Ray City of Brevard Brian Stretcher, Ph.D., Attorney and Counselor at Law

## GET TO KNOW US

### **Organization Committees**

#### Executive

The executive committee ensures a focus on the organizational vision, actively manages the organization with the Executive Director, ensures a focus on the economic strategies outlined in the organizational work plans and ensures the organizational pillars and values inform the work planning and outcomes.

#### **Marketing, Events & Promotions**

Guided by the organizational pillars the marketing, events and promotions committee oversees organizational branding, promotions, events, marketing and the outdoor crossroads brand.

#### **Built Environment**

The built environment committee manages the organization's programs for downtown urban design, walkability, connectivity, historic preservation and building design enhancements.

#### Hub for the Arts

Hub for the Arts works to establish downtown Brevard as a vibrant hub for the art community. We strive to increase visibility for downtown artists and retail businesses that showcase local artists through a unique marketing plan, promotions and signature events.

#### Organizational Pillars and the Main Street America Four Point Approach

Heart of Brevard is responsible for fulfilling core North Carolina Main Street mandates that allow Brevard to be recognized as a North Carolina Main Street town and a Nationally Accredited Main Street town. The Main Street Four Point Approach® is a unique preservation-based economic development tool that enables communities to revitalize downtown and neighborhood business districts by leveraging local assets from cultural, historic, and architectural resources to local enterprises and community pride.

#### I. Downtown is an Outdoor Crossroads

Brevard is surrounded by incredible outdoor assets, including national and state forests, trails, parks and rivers. These assets are drivers for growth, tourism and industry. Heart of Brevard is positioned to play a primary role in this outdoor economy.

#### II. Downtown is a Hub for the Arts

Brevard is home to a thriving visual and performing arts and music scene. Heart of Brevard is adjacent to renowned performing arts venues that host artists from around the world. These venues attract visitors and support a vibrant arts-based economy. Heart of Brevard connects the community through arts initiatives and events, and is an advocate for its artists, galleries and venues.





## **GET TO KNOW US**

#### Organizational Pillars and the Main Street America Four Pillar Approach

#### III. Downtown is Local-Centric

With a small town vibe anchored by local, independent businesses, Heart of Brevard will support local-centric efforts and preserve our small town experience through retention, expansion and recruitment of local, independent businesses. Heart of Brevard is dedicated to welcoming diverse business owners and fostering connections within the business community.

#### IV. Downtown is a Place for Community

For generations Brevard has been a highly desirable place to live and recreate because of its commitment to supporting quality of life, prioritizing wellness and outdoor amenities. Brevard is home to diverse groups of full-time and part-time residents, including multigenerational natives, long-time transplants, new residents, young families and retirees. Heart of Brevard supports optimizing the built environment to ensure downtown is a desirable place to live and work. With annual events and festivals, Heart of Brevard showcases downtown as a family-friendly destination year round. Brevard's restaurants, shops, and galleries are enjoyed by locals and visitors alike, as well as those who work downtown.

#### V. Authenticity Guides the Work of HOB

From our natural outdoor assets to our locally owned businesses to our historic downtown, our community is unique and authentic. As Brevard's downtown development organization, Heart of Brevard actively encourages business support activities, new business development and building and infrastructure improvements that fit the character and context of the Brevard community. Our future directions will be forward-thinking, community-driven and inclusive, grounded in our commitment to the preservation of our historic and natural resources and anchored by our small town, small business character.





## **EVENTS & PROGRAMMING UPDATE**



## **Third Annual Arts in March**

After a hiatus in 2020 due to COVID-19, the annual event returns March 27-28 for its third year. This year's Arts in March event will feature a self-guided art walk, artist demonstrations, specials at downtown businesses, live music, the unveiling of a new crosswalk mural at West Jordan and Broad streets, and the first-ever Sidewalk Chalk Youth Showcase.



## The HeART of the Season

A new event in 2020, the HeART of the Season is a self-guided art walk held in downtown Brevard. This event is a wonderful opportunity to experience the local creative scene, explore downtown and connect with other art lovers to kick-off the holiday shopping season. Heart of Brevard will hold this event November 20-21, 2021.



## **Artist Spotlight Series**

The Artist Spotlight Series is a collection of articles and videos that offers visitors a virtual meet and greet with downtown artists. Spotlights share a local artist's story and provide a closer look into the vibrant arts community present in downtown Brevard.

## **EVENTS & PROGRAMMING UPDATE**



## **Inaugural En Plein Air Festival**

Heart of Brevard's Hub for the Arts Committee is working on a new event for 2021: an En Plein Air Arts Festival that will bring artists to paint on location throughout downtown. The Saturday of the festival will include an artist showcase and wet paint sale. Details and dates coming soon!



#### Halloweenfest

Halloweenfest, the popular fall festival held in downtown Brevard, went virtual in 2020, with a creative spin. The event offered a week of online activities including a virtual halloween costume contest, halloween craft tutorials and collaborations with the Transylvania Times, which included a series of interviews with Dracula, a witchy flash mob and the annual pumpkin carving competition.



#### **Holiday Events**

Heart of Brevard presented a variety of virtual holiday activities in 2020, including the inaugural Holiday Windows Competition & Walking Tour and the first-ever Brevard Variety Show. Holiday Windows highlighted over 30 downtown businesses and encouraged visitors to discover downtown. The Brevard Variety Show featured several downtown businesses in a series of videos, including a reading of Night Before Christmas by Mayor Jimmy Harris and holiday performances by several local musicians.

## **DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT UPDATE**

#### Walkability Assessment & Survey

Heart of Brevard's Built Environment Committee organized and conducted a Walkability Assessment & Survey of Downtown Brevard in early February. With support from Blue Zones Project and the City of Brevard, the committee walked downtown and used the following criteria to assess its walkability: safety, visual interest and appeal, usefulness, comfort and maintenance. A survey was also sent to downtown businesses and residents to collect stakeholder feedback. The information from both the assessment and the survey will be used to prioritize needs and advocate for improvements for downtown.

### **Downtown Holiday Decoration Refresh**

Last year, Heart of Brevard collaborated with Transylvania County Tourism and the City of Brevard to install brand new holiday lights on trees throughout the district. Heart of Brevard allocated \$9,000 from our 2021 operations budget to purchase new holiday decorations to replace the outdated wreaths.

### Downtown Business Kiosk Update

Last October, Heart of Brevard coordinated a muchneeded update to the Downtown Business Kiosk on Broad Street. In addition to updating this location annually, we are committed to identifying additional locations for kiosks to help make downtown walkable and accessible to visitors and locals.

### West Jordan Street Development

Heart of Brevard continues to work closely with the West Jordan Street stakeholders to create an inviting and pedestrian-friendly street through public art, landscaping, wayfinding and placemaking. We oversee the waste management pilot program organized in collaboration with the City of Brevard with the goal to install subgrade receptacles in early fall.







## **COVID-19 RESPONSE**

#### **Reopening Materials**

Heart of Brevard still makes available the re-opening materials, listed below, that we created in 2020. Materials were co-branded with the Brevard/Transylvania Chamber of Commerce to foster county-wide community.

- Reopening Pamphlet for Retail Businesses
- Reopening Pamphlet for Restaurants
- Reopening Best Practices Poster for Businesses (see Item A)
- Map of Public Outdoor Spaces for Businesses
- A comprehensive social media campaign that included COVID-19 and reopening information for businesses as well as tools businesses could use. (See Item B)

#### **Event Safety**

Heart of Brevard (HOB) hosts events in downtown Brevard that engage visitors and locals alike. HOB is committed to making these events safe, as well as festive. We provide hand sanitizer and face coverings to all participating businesses, and ask that they sanitize their space frequently and practice social distancing at their businesses. Heart of Brevard also created special event signage to promote mask wearing and social distancing to event attendees (see Item C).





#### **TRANSYLVANIA TOMORROW**

#### SMALL BUSINESS EMERGENCY RELIEF GRANT PROGRAM

#### **THE FACTS**

#### What is the Transylvania Tomorrow Small Business Emergency Relief Grant Program?

The Transylvania Tomorrow Small Business Emergency Relief Grant Program is a program initiated by the Heart of Brevard and created by the Transylvania Business Support Task Force\* to support Transylvania County small businesses during the COVID-19 epidemic. The program, which is funded through the Community Focus Foundation 501(c)(3), awards grants up to \$3,000 each round of giving. The first wave of the program ended in the summer of 2020, and the second wave of funding ended February 2021. There are plans for a spring round of funding, dates to be announced. **Heart of Brevard has also applied for a Main Street America Resiliency Grant that would provide \$8,500 to Transylvania Tomorrow for marketing expenses and additional program funding.** 

\*The Transylvania Business Support Task Force is made up of the Heart of Brevard, Brevard/Transylvania Chamber of Commerce, Transylvania County Tourism, Transylvania Economic Alliance, and Blue Ridge Community College Small Business Center.

#### For More Information or to Give to the Fund:

Contact Us: Nicole Bentley transylvaniatomorrow@gmail.com Visit our website: www.brevardnc.org/transylvaniatomorrow











Carole and I really want to thank you for the generosity that the Transylvania Tomorrow relief fund provided for us.

During this rough time in history it's great to have a local organization help little businesses throughout the county.

Such a blessing to live and have a business here.

Thank you so much!.

#### JAMES HARGIS BLIND MULE



# THINK LOCAL TRANSYLVANIA

## What is Think Local Transylvania (TLT)?

Think Local Transylvania is a program initiated by the Heart of Brevard, in partnership with

the Brevard/Transylvania Chamber of Commerce, to promote and unify businesses county-wide through a strong, unique and fresh marketing campaign.

### **Mission Statement**

Support small local businesses and nonprofits, foster county-wide togetherness, celebrate our unique place, and grow a thriving and resilient economy for everyone.

#### Think Local Transylvania Programming



Think Local Transylvania was launched in October 2020. The initial marketing campaign included a Broad/Caldwell street banner, press releases in the Transylvania Times, a participant tool kit, program website, social media tools and posters. The program is working to promote its over 85 TLT Ambassadors and educate locals and visitors alike through the following programming:

- Spring Marketing Campaign: unveiling a new street banner and pole banners to promote the program, throughout downtown.
- Think Local Day: a weekly local promotion where ambassadors offer an incentive or special for locals. The goal is to support our businesses and increase sales on a traditionally slow day of the week.
- TLT Ambassador Highlights: a series of social media posts in which we feature and promote our awesome ambassadors.
- TLT on the Streets: another series of social media posts in which we share photos of TLT materials such as posters and stickers being used by businesses, program supporters, etc.

### **Committee Members**

Nicole Bentley Sara Jerome Nory LeBrun Clark Lovelace Keavy McAbee Angela Owen Billy Parrish Dee Dee Perkins Willow Walker Jessica Whitmire



## **More Information**

Visit www.thinktransylvania.com



in thinklocaltransylvania



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