REFLECTIONS
From Our Co-Founder and Executive Director

Love God, love your neighbor (from Mark 12:30)—five words that changed our lives in 1990 when my husband Tim and I moved into the Phillips neighborhood, an impoverished neighborhood with high crime and low educational outcomes. Living out this calling continues to be the opportunity of our lives, as neighbors and co-founders of Banyan Community, a Christian community development organization.

Over time, I have learned that through our history of struggle, labor, doubt, success, and growth we are emerging as a strong community that demonstrates endurance, strength, problem solving, stability, and responsiveness. What started as neighbors continues as neighbors, plus staff, board, partners, and committed supporters in order to reach our goal of effective connectedness and development within our community that leads to transformational change.

BANYAN IS ROOTED in upholding the dignity of each person in tangible ways. Human dignity necessitates, among other things, excellent education, affirmation from and celebration of community, desirable employment opportunities, stable housing and supportive family life. At Banyan, we focus on developing youth by supporting youth with resources, access to high performing schools, and pathways of success that lead to graduation from high school, college, and beginning careers. Strengthening families levels the playing field by bringing resource connections and nurturing an empowering voice in our parents. Creating community forms a wholesome, thriving community that builds the well-being of all.

BANYAN IS RISING. This year we celebrate: our parents. Creating community forms a wholesome, thriving community that builds the well-being of all.

BANYAN IS RISING. This year we celebrate:

Youth, kinder to college, making strides in our after school and summer programs and celebrating graduations (both high school and college). Now young adults are beginning their careers! A new segment of our community is growing and thriving.

Families and adults joining in over 65 connection events/classes and home visits with staff providing connections to stimulate stability and support. Our Community Council formed and lived out a mission statement demonstrating growth in leadership development.

Community thriving with 34 block clubs led by neighborhood leaders. Leaders are connecting, problem solving, and training. Several block club leaders are rising up to connect with city officials to galvanize voice and solutions for our community.

BANYAN IS REACHING new levels of support to accomplish our work together. Thank you for your critical role in our work!

Love God, love your neighbor—five words that challenge us all. Here’s to another great year of community building together!

Blessed,

Neighborhood stats

- There are 1,782 families in Midtown and East Phillips, 80% are people of color.
- The family poverty rate is 24%, 95% are of color.
- The median family income is $48,000.
- In our neighborhood, 40% of all children live in poverty.
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Let’s applaud the 2019 high school graduates!

Our 2019 High School Graduates

Banyan youth and families start creating a pathway to graduation beginning in kindergarten, and now preschool. Banyan walks alongside to foster curiosity and a love for learning, create educational maps, and explore career options. Participating in Banyan programs ensures kids get their homework done while they grow socially and emotionally. Add in your support and we get to graduation! Banyan youth are not only graduating from a high performing, college preparatory high school, but their hearts, as well as their minds, are ready for college.

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BANYAN IS RISING. This year we celebrate:

Preschool power, magnificent three and four year olds learning and growing in our midst. A wonderful partnership with St. David’s Child Development Center made this program possible. Together we bring a holistic child and parent education grounded in the community, which positions our preschoolers and parents for a better future.

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Youth

Banyan inspires young people to invest themselves in education and community. Youth are prepared to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood through programs that cultivate social, emotional and educational growth. Our youth have fun while they develop into Committed Learners and Reconciled People.

**YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS:**
- Preschool: St. David’s Center Early Childhood Education Program at Banyan Community
- Elementary: After School, Kids Club and Cool Off Days Summer Program
- Middle School: SOAR (Southside Adolescents Rising), Learning Circles and Cool Off Days Summer Program
- High School: ASPIRE! Tutoring, Higher Ground Scholarship and High School Employment
- College: Banyan Scholars and College Employment

“**I like science here, like when we do the experiments.”**

—Ce’Alja, 5th grade

Families

Banyan brings hope to families by strengthening relationships between parents and children. Our families have close bonds that enable us to work together toward a brighter future. Banyan helps parents become advocates for their children in all arenas of life, while children become an inspiration to their parents. Banyan families are Future Oriented, because they see that their future is bright.

**FAMILY STRENGTHENING PROGRAMS:**
- Family Support
- Goal-Setting Conferences
- Home Visits
- Parent Classes

Community

Banyan connects members of the neighborhood with each other, creating bonds that encourage communication and belonging. Building trust between residents, and training leaders on every block, brings hope and safety to every home. Banyan acts as a “resource hub,” connecting residents with supportive systems and equipping them as Leading Citizens.

**COMMUNITY CONNECTING PROGRAMS:**
- Lighthouse Network (LHN)
- Gathering Events
- Community Council
- Leadership Development

**BANYAN PROGRAMS OUTCOMES**

- Community
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- **90%** of families believe they can have an impact on making their neighborhood a better place to live
- **94%** of YOUTH say they have support from adults other than their parents
- **34** LHN Block Clubs and **68** LHN Block Club Leaders
- **22 blocks** participated in National Night Out
- **84%** of college students are actively engaged in a volunteer organization
- **97%** family retention rate
- **100%** of youth report feeling safe at Banyan

**Families**

- **90%** of families believe they can have an impact on making their neighborhood a better place to live
- **70%** of families believe they can have an impact on making their neighborhood a better place to live
- **100%** of youth report they can say “no” to wrong or dangerous behaviors
- **6** COLLEGE GRADUATES in 2019
- **94%** of YOUTH say they have support from adults other than their parents
- **84%** of college students are actively engaged in a volunteer organization
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**Youth**

- **6 COLLEGE GRADUATES in 2019**
- **90%** of families believe they can have an impact on making their neighborhood a better place to live
- **70%** of adults report positive changes in their lives from participating in CLEC events
- **100%** of parents commit to supporting their child’s POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT
- **100% OF SENIORS graduated from high school**
- **93% OF YOUTH report being socially engaged with their peers**
- **100% of graduating seniors plan to attend a college of their choice**
- **90% of LHN blocks take action in the community to bring POSITIVE CHANGE**
- **97% family retention rate**
The one-year anniversary of our partnership with St. David’s Center culminated with a preschool graduation ceremony. The occasion was infused with hopes and dreams for those he works with.

“I always encourage the kids to stay positive, to keep an open mind, and to live in the here and now,” says Hakeem.

When asked about the greatest gift he received from Banyan, Hakeem says that Banyan helped him find himself. “I know it sounds trite, but it’s true. My happiness used to be tied to other people’s happiness. Now I know that I can be happy regardless of what other people think; regardless of how others think I should feel.”

“I want the kids to know that there is always another way to achieve anything; that they can determine for themselves how to define success.”

The next generation of leaders are growing up Banyan!

May is an exciting month for many Banyan youth who are celebrating graduation from preschool, elementary, middle, and high school. But none are quite as excited as our college graduates. This list of Scholars brings the total to 20 college graduates! Let’s give a special shout out to the Banyan Scholars who have completed their college journey!

CONGRATULATIONS TO:

Diamond
Bethel University
BA Psychology
Isaiah
Bethel University
BS Economics & Finance
Jason
University of St. Thomas
BA Creative Multimedia
Keyvee
Old Dominion University
BS Information Technology
Manuel
Dunwoody College
AAS Automotive Technician
Sia
Augsburg University
BS Finance

“I cannot thank Banyan enough for all of the resources and opportunities this organization has provided to my kids. I am so proud to say that I will have two kids in college this fall with amazing financial aid awards.”

—Banyan parent of high school senior

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A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF BANYAN COMMUNITY
A Visual of Banyan Happenings

Banyan has worked to develop a new “normal” for the neighborhood, providing the impetus for a community to develop—in the truest, most authentic sense of the word.

Our goals—to develop youth, strengthen families and create community—are deeply intertwined. Far more than a youth development program, Banyan is a community development organization that provides a nucleus where families in the Phillips neighborhood connect with and support each other, and where parents are empowered to be deeply involved in their children’s education. Families develop authentic relationships and partnerships with staff, with the outcome of helping youth succeed. Neighbors get to know each other building trust and connections leading to a stronger community.

Each one of our areas of focus—youth, family, and community—is nurtured to grow and thrive in order for people to more fully participate in all aspects of life.
Banyan Community is blessed with many donors who support our mission year after year. Partners to Pathways celebrates this tradition of consistent giving. Every gift makes a difference and allows us to build pathways for the development of youth, the strengthening of families, and the creation of community. Thank you for your tremendous loyalty and support to Banyan Community.

PARTNERS TO PATHWAYS

Kathleen O’Pharr and Craig Shuler
James and Cynthia Smith
Richard and Nancy Peacha
Laura and Stan Tippett
Clement and Joann VanDenburg
Stephen and Deb Klem
Shirley Kern
Alison Johnson
Paul and Terilyn Huntington
Brian and Ann Holland
Julie and Jason Hetland
Bud Helmen
Kathleen Grendahl
Greg and Kathleen Good
Janet Frey
Frey Foundation
Tim and Sarah Welch
Barbara Tennessen
James and Cynthia Smith
John and Ann Ryan
Brian and Lisa Provost
LuAnn and David Prin
Daniel and Kathleen O’Neill
Dennis and Paula Olander
Ronald Hopfensperger and Bonnie
Northern Con-Agg, LLP
Daniel and Bridget Nassif
Mary Mulhern
Minnesota Office of Higher Education
James and Julie McEliece
Marbrook Foundation
Louis and Mary Kay Smith Family
Foundation
Barry and Barb Lieske
Peter Berrie and Robin Langevin
Dan and Kara Steakley
Vicki Shipley
Dale and Jennifer Shaltz
Robert and Jill Schulz
Brad and Kathy Salman
Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation
The Patch Foundation
Microsoft Corporation
John and Ann McGuire
Lisa and Dan Mauer
Craig and Barbara Mauer
Susan Keiser
Rachel Kaul and William Palmquist
Kent Howe
Kate Herdina
Susan Haffield
H.E. and Helen Warren Foundation
Crystal said that “seeing it come full circle makes me appreciate Banyan more than ever. When they say they transform lives, they really do. My life has changed. I see it with my kid. He is so happy here, he is learning, he is excited to come to preschool. It reminds me when I was younger and so excited to be at Banyan.”
Now that we’ve invested 20 years, what’s next?
Growing up our youth and families.
Reaching more youth, families, and community members.
Phillis, enlarging our circle and stabilizing our community.
Studying what parts of our model might work for other neighborhoods.

We at Dairy Products Inc. were looking for a grassroots organization results of Banyan’s efforts in each individual child.
We have followed the progress of the Banyan children from grade school, high school, college and have seen them enter the professional workforce as well-rounded young men and women who take back into the community.
It has been an amazing thing to watch. The Banyan Community family will always have our support.
Mark Welch
CEO Dairy Products Inc

To be included on this listing, donors must have provided financial support for each of the last five/ten years (ending December 31, 2018). We have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of this publication, but if we have omitted, misspelled or misspelled your name, please accept our apologies and contact us at (612) 722-8532 or mail@banyancommunity.org. Your gifts truly make a difference.

“I realize that sometimes I don’t always think about how blessed we are at Banyan but I am so happy that we are connected not only for family but also community.” —Banyan parent

We asked, You Answered: Words or Phrases of Banyan

Guests at the Annual Dinner had a chance to share the words and phrases that come to mind when thinking of Banyan. We agree and thank you for sharing your insight.

We can see firsthand the amazing impact Banyan has on young people’s lives and support that keeps them on track.
We appreciate the way Banyan has expanded its reach in recent years. The organization has become a leader in the community.
Banyan is committed to helping young people succeed and we appreciate the impact they have had on our community. We look forward to continuing our support in the future.

Crystal said that “seeing it come full circle makes me appreciate Banyan more than ever. When they say they transform lives, they really do. My life has changed. I see it with my kid. He is so happy here, he is learning, he is excited to come to preschool. It reminds me when I was younger and so excited to be at Banyan.”
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Phillis, enlarging our circle and stabilizing our community.
Studying what parts of our model might work for other neighborhoods.
We are grateful for all gifts received in support of our mission!

Thank you to our annual supporters!

This list recognizes gifts that were received between 1 September 1, 2020 - 30 September 1, 2021. We have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of our publication. If you have omitted, misprinted or misspelled your name, please accept our apologies and contact us at (651) 722-8552 or mail@banyancommunity.org. Your gifts truly make a difference.

Francoise and Louis Keeler
Michael and Summer Keeler
Dr. Benjamin and Nancy Kepler
Robert A. and Patricia Keppler
Pamela and Tom Kepley
Robert and Susan Kepley
Mark and Barbara Keppler
Robert and Amy Keplinger
Erica and Brian Kerro
Sue and Dan Kerr
Tim and Nicole Kershman
David and Susan Kirsch
Charlie and Laura Kessler
Alice and Matthew Keesee
Jessica and Ryan Keesee
Ben and Laura Keesler
Robert and Sarah Keesler
Tim and Jennifer Keesler
Patricia Keesler
Mike and Lynne Keesler
Tim and Cindy Keesler
John and Dan Keesler
Richard and Susan Keesler

Thank you to your support of Banyan Community Foundation!
The theme for the Art Workshop and Kids Club was “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.” Mark 12:30-31 (NIV)

Loving God is a big commitment that takes all of who we are… our heart, our soul, our mind, and our strength. Why? Because by loving God we develop the ability and habits to love others. Whom do we love? Our neighbor… those close to us who we see each day - people in our neighborhood, friends at school, colleagues at work. This verse reaches further to people who we do not know and have yet to know, stretching us to reach across barriers and divides. How do we love our neighbor? We love our neighbor as highly as we regard our own needs. Loving our neighbor could be as simple as shoveling a neighbor’s sidewalk in the winter or extending kindness to a classmate. It can also mean learning about and engaging with those from other cultures. With people surrounding us, there are many tangible ways to demonstrate God’s love and kindness to others.
I am grateful for the opportunity to serve Banyan Community as the Chair of the Board of Directors. The entire Board is incredibly proud of Banyan’s work and impact.

Banyan experienced the theme ‘Love God, Love your Neighbor’ every day working together. The 18 new youth (and their families) who joined this year felt it as they were welcomed into the Banyan family. Banyan parents felt it as they worked to learn about each other and create harmony. We felt it in the support from you—our donors and partners.

For that we are grateful.

Banyan Community is a unique model of community development. We are holistic in working with youth and families, as well as the neighborhood surrounding and supporting both. We are committed to including more youth and families and building deeper relationships in the East and Midtown Phillips neighborhoods. You are an important part of that future.

The outcomes are truly amazing and a wonderful return on your investment. Every $1 given to Banyan in support of our work (achieving a 98% high school graduation rate) returns $8 to society*. It is an honor to build connections with youth and families and walk together on the journey from preschool all the way through college and into a career. We are seeing the fruits of this labor with 20 college graduates from the Banyan ranks and 30 youth currently in college. Banyan families now travel on pathways that were not originally there.

Thank you for continuing to support this important work—we couldn’t do it without you!

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*Societal return on investment study conducted by Wilder Research