



THE HIGHLAND PROJECT

# 2023 Year in Review

Building a Legacy of Community Care, Joy, and  
Possibility



[THEHIGHLANDPROJECT.ORG](https://THEHIGHLANDPROJECT.ORG)

# OUR VISION

The Highland Project envisions a world where Black women imagine, design, build, and sustain structural change to create an equitable society where Black communities thrive.

# OUR MISSION

The Highland Project is building and sustaining a coalition of Black women leading communities, systems, and institutions creating multi-generational wealth and change in the communities where they live and serve.

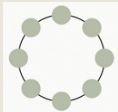


# Building a Legacy

## BY THE NUMBERS

We invest in Black women innovators from across the nation, sectors, and generations who are driving bold solutions focused on creating multi-generational wealth and opportunity for Black communities where they live and serve.

### Our five-year goals:



Transform how we invest in the power of Black women



Spark a movement to redefine multi-generational wealth



Catalyze strategic action and learnings

### Since 2020, we have:

**45** Expanded our community to 45 Highland Leaders who span the nation, generations, and sectors

**\$10M** Raised of the initial \$15M seed fund to center Black women in redefining wealth

**190+** National and local media features secured highlighting the importance of Black women leading the redefinition of wealth

**\$4.5M** Unrestricted capital committed to 45 Highland Leaders to pilot, ideate, and scale their visions

**2100+** Listened to this many Black women across the country in groundbreaking non-partisan poll research



# A YEAR IN HIGHLIGHTS

## **Quarter One:** We Expanded Our Circle

We welcomed our next chapter: closing our inaugural Highland Leader Experience and beginning Cohort Two **(Pages 5 – 8)**

## **Quarter Two:** We Sparked New Definitions of Wealth

Wealth is much more than dollars in pockets. We began April grounding ourselves in Highland Leaders' (re)definition of wealth **(Pages 9 – 11)**

## **Quarter Three:** We Catalyzed Action

We celebrated our anniversary and the first round of investments designed by Highland Leaders **(Pages 12 – 16)**

## **Quarter Four:** We Prepared for New Suns

We prepared for our next phase of transformation by centering community, sustainability, and possibility **(Pages 17 – 19)**



# Quarter 1: We Expanded Our Circle

We welcomed our next chapter: closing our inaugural Highland Leader Experience and beginning Cohort Two.

**In the spring, our inaugural cohort met for the final time in Baltimore, MD.** This gathering marked the completion of their Highland Leaders Experience, a full year of coming together to re-imagine wealth for the Black communities where they live and serve.



*"I love the community we are building, and our shift from a individual lens to a lasting collective... We have the power to create our legacies our way, and we have the ability to build in rest and sustainability as we do so."*

- Monique Wilson, Cohort One



# What Cohort One Leaders Are Saying



“Because of THP, I have...”

**93%** Increased commitment to practicing **personal sustainability**

**100%** Clarity on how to close the gap between where I am – **personally and professionally** – and where I want to be 1 and 5 years from now

**96%** **Intentionally advanced my** personal and professional goals because of THP

**91%** More clear visions of my **personal and collective definitions** of multi-generational wealth

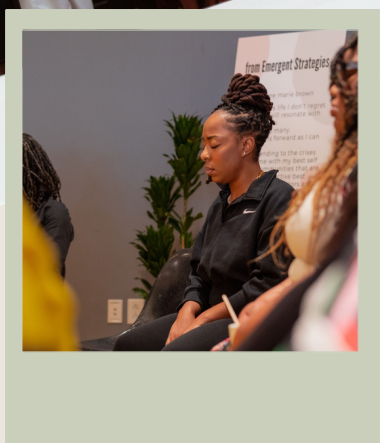
**98%** **Nurtured intergenerational connections** that are meaningful and feel part of THP's community

**81%** Increased commitment to **engaging in structural change** to advance a new definition of wealth



# Expanding Our Circle

We celebrated the start of Cohort Two, welcoming 15 more innovators from across the nation, sectors, and generations to the Highland Leaders Experience. With a focus on early community building, they were ready to take a leap of faith together when they gathered in Durham, NC and Detroit, MI.



Catch a special glimpse of their transformational journey in our three-part video series: [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#).



THE HIGHLAND PROJECT PRESENTS

## From Seed to Dream: Building Sustainable Ecosystems for Black Women

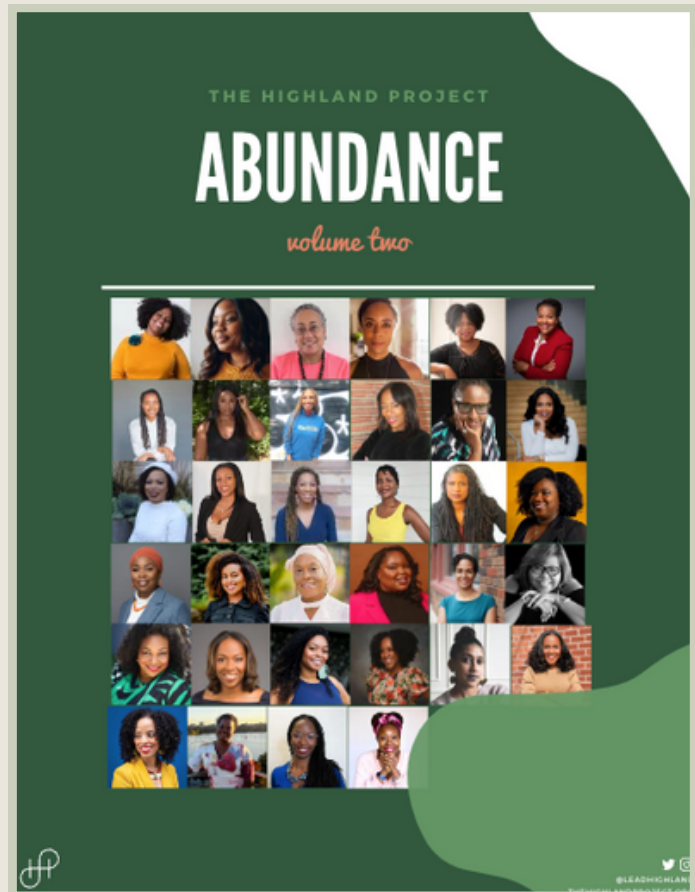


## From Seed to Dream

We gathered the Highland Community for Highland Hour: From Seed to Dream, a discussion on building sustainable ecosystems with Highland Leader Katara McCarty; author, educator, and influencer Blair Imani; and Highland Leader Rhonda Broussard.

## Abundance Vol. II

During Black History Month, we released [Abundance Magazine Volume II](#), our second digital magazine celebrating the legacy visions of women in the Highland Community. Together they are building upon a shared history as a Black community and the visions inherited from their ancestors.





# Quarter 2: We Sparked New Definitions of Wealth

Wealth is much more than dollars in pockets. We began April grounding ourselves in Highland Leaders' (re)definition of wealth.

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**"Wealth is the holistic set of resources that enable one and their community to exercise agency, achieve their potential, and conduct a fulfilling life."**

**"Wealth is peace of mind, health, and certainty.** Our Black communities, through generations of trauma and abuse, have been denied these basic realities. From weathering to the chronic racial stress that causes hyper-vigilance and early aging. Wealth is freedom... Wealth is also about investing in what brings us joy, peace, and abundance now."

**"General well-being in all areas of modern American life... Wealth is much more than monetary accumulation, it includes all of the amenities and opportunities that traditionally-defined financial wealth affords a person."**



# Moving from Intention to Action

Highland Leaders shared a few examples of how investors, policymakers, and more can support these expanded definitions of wealth deeply rooted in the power of Black women leadership.

“Elevating and supporting the leadership of Black women **benefits not only Black communities but all of America.** Black women are leading work to challenge systemic and structural inequity across many issue areas, including democracy, but remain highly undercapitalized and undersupported.”

**“Move the money. You have more than enough data and understanding** to know what Black women do to sustain democracy, create well-being, and advance justice. Just move the money.”

“Funding Black women is not a band-aid. The ‘moment’ is not over. **Start planning now for generational investments in Black women-led organizations.** Prepare your Board to continue this work throughout their leadership transitions as well as grantee leadership transitions. We have a long way to go.”



## Root to Rise

On Juneteenth, we hosted Highland Hour: Root to Rise, with special guests Steward of The Mae House LaTonya Yvette and Highland Leader and Co-Founder of GirlTrek Vanessa Garrison. Together they discussed how we build sustainable ecosystems for Black women and reimagining the tools needed for Black women leaders to thrive.



“When the dust settles, and we are writing the eulogies and producing the documentaries. If we are left with the words ‘I have suffered’ as the final words of Black women geniuses, then we have failed... It’s time to rewrite the narrative of suffering, martyred women, **it is time to center liberation work around wholeness** and leave behind the narrative of sacrificing ourselves to a liberation that does not love us back.”

-Unknown quote [read by](#) Vanessa Garrison



# Quarter 3: We Catalyzed Action

We celebrated our anniversary and the first round of investments designed by Highland Leaders.

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Together with our community, we reflected on:

- What defines "The Highland Way"
- Celebrated what \$1.5M in capital shaped and designed by inaugural Highland Leaders looks like
- Re-grounded in why we must continue to invest in the driving force of change – Black women.



# Cohort One Leaders Designed and Mobilized \$1.5M To...

- 75%+** Center personal and organizational **wellness and well-being** as keys to sustaining change
- 40%** Deepen support, community, and sustainability of **Black leadership across generations**
- 40%** Focus on **narrative change** to help drive bold solutions for change
- 70%** Seed **new strategies** and ideas
- 20%** Deepen the scale of strategies and organizations creating new futures in which all can thrive



# Legacy Highlight: Rhonda Broussard



“Generation Hope could not come to New Orleans at a more critical time... **Their model will increase educational attainment and economic mobility for young parents and their children for years to come.** I’m encouraged to see how this will improve outcomes for our entire city.”

– Rhonda Broussard in [Ebony Magazine](#)

**Legacy Vision:** A world where caregivers who are single parents can achieve their educational goals as key to how wealth is built in their households and communities.

**Investment:** Expansion of Generation Hope’s Scholars Program to New Orleans to bring wrap-around services to young parents to help them earn their college degrees and secure jobs to support their families.

**Early Impact:** Scholars Program launched with 26 teen parent scholars and recruitment for the second class is underway. Rhonda is in process of building local and national funding support to sustain this work for the long-term.



# Legacy Highlight: Mary-Pat Hector



“I see that young people will realize they aren’t the future but the now. **That for generations it was young people at the forefront of movements** that influenced change not only in our own country but the world. What inspires me the most is 9 year old Mary-Pat, as I am living her dreams.”

– Mary-Pat Hector on [Medium](#)

**Legacy Vision:** A world where youth, regardless of class, race, or other identities can exercise their political agency and have voice in the democratic arena.

**Investment:** Building and launching [Equity for All](#) – a robust and active non-partisan ecosystem for Gen-Z organizers seeking political change around environmental injustice, economic injustice, and social injustice issues at the ballot and beyond.

**Early Impact:** Across over 10 counties across Georgia, Mary-Pat and her team have:

- Engaged 60,000 Gen-Z voters in the State of Georgia
- Mobilized 5,000 young voters for local elections
- Trained their first cohort of 10 young people seeking political office in addition to 35 young people to be volunteers/movement builders for on-the-ground efforts.

# Legacy Highlight: Katara McCarty



“As Black Women, we’re surrounded with messages telling us we’re strong and resilient enough to manage stress. But this survey proves that we are negatively impacted by a lack of necessary support... **We need culturally appropriate resources and tools that address the effects of racial trauma** on mental, emotional, and physical health.”

– Katara McCarty in [Business Wire](#)

**Legacy Vision:** A world where Black women, regardless of background or income, have access to affordable, high-quality well-being resources.

**Investment:** Expand development of well-being tech solutions and create/launch of strategic plan for Katecha Cares Foundation, including research on barriers to Black women’s wellbeing.

**Early Impact:** With funding from THP she:

- Conducted national research on the state of self-care and Black women and released a [report](#) which has been featured in numerous national publications including [The Root](#) and [Inside Indiana Business](#) among others.
- Launched [Exhale 2.0 app](#) and is currently working on partnerships expand this tech resource to more Black women.





# Quarter 4: We Prepared for New Suns

We prepared for our next phase of transformation by centering community, sustainability, and possibility.

We released our third national non-partisan poll of Black women across America with Cornell Belcher of Brilliant Corners Research & Strategies. Read this year's report "[Black Women Deserve to Thrive](#)" to learn how 700+ Black women across America came together to share their greatest concern: safety—for their communities today and generations ahead.



The poll was [featured in The Hill](#), highlighting the top issues Black women are identifying ahead of the 2024 election cycle.



## Black Women Deserve to Thrive



In October, we hosted **Highland Hour: Black Women Deserve to Thrive** with panel guests Highland Leader Anne Price; Senior Advisor at Bloomberg Philanthropies Brynn Craig; and President of Brilliant Corners Research and Strategies Cornell Belcher.

Together they discussed the findings of our newly released poll, spoke of lived experiences to contextualize the research, and aligned on key calls to action.

## Love Letter Campaign

In November, we organized and released **"A Love Letter to Black Women Leaders"** to honor **Black women leaders** and name the ways we resist, persist, and thrive despite our stories of pain and struggle.

Over 60 Highland Leaders, funders of THP, and champions signed on and shared widely with their networks, organizations, and communities.



View our celebration post on THP's [Instagram](#)



## Cohort Three Announcement

In November, we announced and celebrated **Cohort Three**, 15 new Highland Leaders from across the nation, sectors, and generations who together share a vision for a more just, safe, and equitable world. Our newest leaders introduced themselves and shared a glimpse into their visions and legacies in a special video series featured on THP's [Instagram](#).



## Preparing for Our First Highland Community Retreat

We're looking forward to gathering with Highland Leaders across cohorts and THP's key allies in April 2024 to continue building community and iterating on a collective definition of wealth and priorities.



# Our Stories Shared: THP Top Hits in Print

As part of our efforts to center the voices of Black women in a national narrative about redefining and building generational wealth, **The Highland Project and Founder Gabrielle Wyatt** were featured in numerous national media outlets, including:

## Fast Company

["Black women deserve spaces for and by us"](#) (March 2023)

["This is how to sustain Black female Leaders"](#) (November 2023)

## Forbes

["Social Entrepreneur Spotlight: Gabrielle Wyatt Of The Highland Project"](#) (March 2023)

## Stanford Social Innovation Review

["Investing in Black Women Leaders With the Dream Capital They Need"](#) (August 2023)

## Thrive Global

["It's Time to Plan For Our Legacies"](#) (February 2023)

["Rest Is Our Superpower: How Leaders Can Make Space For Rest"](#) (June 2023)



# The Highland Project

## THANKS YOU

Thank you to our donors for imagining with, centering, and celebrating Black women. We welcomed the following new institutional investors to our portfolio in 2023, joining our many early investors.

### 2023

- Ballmer Group
- Barbara and Amos Hostetter
- CityBridge Foundation
- Libra Foundation Fund
- Margarita Florez Vasconcelos
- Masto Foundation
- Pivotal Philanthropies Foundation
- Powell Foundation
- Rockwell Fund
- Target Enterprise, Inc.
- Tides Network
- Sherman Family Foundation
- United Way of Greater Atlanta

### 2022

- Arrow Impact
- Carson Foundation
- Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation
- Chanel Dennis
- Goldman Sachs Gives
- Lululemon Center for Social Impact
- Nellie Mae Foundation
- New Profit
- Nike Fund
- The Kresge Foundation
- The Community Foundation for Mississippi
- Spring Point Partners
- Susan Chapman Hughes
- W.K. Kellogg Foundation

### 2021

- B is for Black Brilliance
- Chan Zuckerberg Initiative
- Education Leaders of Color – Boulder Fund
- Kendeda Fund
- Margulf Foundation
- Opportunity 180
- The City Fund
- The Mind Trust
- The Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation
- Walton Family Foundation
- Wend Collective
- Women’s Giving Circle of Howard County

