



Building Opportunity, Community and Faith

2022 YEAR IN REVIEW



Vision

To assist in empowering Christian oriented organizations to impact the lives of youth and others through Christ, while maintaining financial growth on principal assets to ensure sustainability.

Mission

To utilize God's blessings to Watkins by wisely giving to Christian based organizations that are advancing His Kingdom in varying ways.

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Letter from Leadership

Through operating our companies, we have learned that we must make thoughtful investments in people and infrastructure to be successful. We applied this knowledge to the Watkins Christian Foundation, focusing strategically on building the capacity of nonprofits that align with our mission to expand God's Kingdom.

Our capacity building investments have increased the number of children and youth who participate in summer camp, experience fellowship through online church service, gather with friends in the dining hall, and learn new skills. Beyond benefiting people, these investments have also supported the construction of safe, efficient, well-designed buildings, enabling grantees to scale their programs exponentially.

In this 2022 Year in Review, we highlight 10 grantees to showcase how targeted investment increases access to programs, improves program quality, and leverages additional funding. We find that investing in people ensures that qualified staff members are available to comfort those in need and to encourage them to press forward and move beyond the barriers they face. We hope you are as inspired as we are by these fine organizations and how they are building opportunity, community, and faith.



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WATKINS**
Board Chair



**MICHAEL
WATKINS**
President



ROZITA
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Executive
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Introduction: Building Capacity to Accelerate and Sustain Communities

This 2022 Year in Review demonstrates how the Watkins Christian Foundation (WCF) supports excellent nonprofits by helping them build capacity and increase organizational effectiveness. In keeping with the entrepreneurial spirit of our founder, Bill Watkins, the Foundation approaches our capacity building support as a “launch investor.” Instead of following the “last dollars in” approach, WCF provides seed funding that builds a solid foundation that other funders are then willing to support.

The Foundation's approach to capacity building comprises three strategies for nonprofit grantees:

- 1 PROGRAM ENHANCEMENTS** to improve the quality and delivery of their programs and services.
- 2 CAPITAL INVESTMENTS** to build their operational capacity by investing in large and small construction projects as well as physical plant improvements.
- 3 MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE** to build their internal organizational capacity to expand or meet the changing demands of the communities they seek to serve.

In 2022, the Foundation provided \$3,908,155 in grants. The Foundation strategically selected every grant, whether small or large, whether for one year or multiple years, to bolster the recipient nonprofit's capacity to deliver its programming efficiently and effectively. In the pages that follow, we share the stories of 10 of our grantees to illustrate our strategic approach to investment.

Just as a pebble tossed into a pond creates a ripple on the surface, the Foundation's capacity building investments have the potential to accelerate and sustain community transformation.





STRATEGY 1

Program Enhancements

Improving Program Quality and Effectiveness

The Foundation funds Program Enhancements that build nonprofits' capacity to improve the quality and delivery of their programming, thereby increasing overall organizational effectiveness. These investments strengthen and have an outsized impact on program beneficiaries, enabling them to include more people in their work, deliver fun and engaging programs, and turn ideas into realities.

This chapter describes how the Foundation's Program Enhancement grants to three organizations accelerated evangelism and discipleship and transformed learning for children.



International Leadership Institute (ILI)

Expanding leadership training

Since 2004, the Watkins Christian Foundation has provided **\$695,000** in support of ILI's vision to change history by accelerating the spread of the Gospel through leaders of leaders empowered by the Holy Spirit. ILI has applied these funds to its five-year Bold Obedience campaign, which focuses on developing strong teams in 100 nations to reach more individuals worldwide and teach them to know God.

In 2022, the Foundation continued our support of this vital initiative with an equipment grant. Using this grant, ILI has trained leaders through in-person, online, hybrid, and on-demand learning. Additionally, ILI leveraged WCF's investment to establish a production studio infrastructure. Thanks to this investment, in 2022, a total of 25,253 adults participated in 722 training events that impacted people living in more than 110 nations. WCF's investment in building ILI's digital capacity helped support ILI's digital transformation, scale its programming to meet its strategic goals, and strengthen the global ILI network to spread the Gospel.

“God has connected incredible leaders to ILI through online training, community, and leadership content, [and] new leaders are encouraged and equipped to multiply their training.”

– ILI STAFF





Palma Ceia Presbyterian Church

Spreading God's teachings beyond church walls

Since 2001, the Watkins Christian Foundation has provided **\$3,790,000** in support of Palma Ceia's mission. In 2020, the Foundation awarded Palma Ceia a grant to improve its technology infrastructure by supporting two specific programs: the Bethlehem Inclusive Congregation Expansion and the Digital Worship and Faith Outreach. An assistant pastor who recently joined church leadership and whose passion in seminary was serving communities of adults with developmental disabilities and autism established the Bethlehem Inclusive Congregation Expansion to welcome these adults to join the larger Palma Ceia community of worshipers to share life's events.

During the global COVID-19 pandemic, Palma Ceia needed to pivot to video conferencing as the lifeline between worship services and Christian community building. The equipment grant enabled Palma Ceia to purchase high-quality video production equipment to livestream and record church services and other celebrations. Palma Ceia Pastor John DeBevoise sees this use of technology as an enormous leap forward, giving the church the ability to reach homebound individuals, individuals in nursing homes, church members who cannot attend in person, and church members who have moved away. Since it began livestreaming and recording events, Palma Ceia has found that online participants make up, on average, one-third of all participants in church events.

Pastor DeBevoise did not intend to be at the cutting edge of inclusive worship, but he has found that he can use technologies such as video conferencing to create authentic Christian relationships, thereby eliminating geography as a barrier to participation in worship and fellowship.

“Our newly established online presence nurtures an authentic Christian faith community in this digital world.”

- PASTOR DEBEVOISE

St. John's Episcopal Parish Day School

Using modular furniture to transform learning environments

Since 2014, the Watkins Christian Foundation has provided **\$467,500** to support St. John's. In 2022, the Foundation awarded the day school an equipment grant to enhance the learning environment for 275 students in grades 1-4.

Research shows school furniture is much more than just utilitarian seats, surfaces, and storage. According to leading school architects, students interact with furniture more than they do any other classroom design element: They see it and touch it. They work, learn, eat, relax, socialize, and think on it. Quality classroom furniture is a fundamental learning tool.

St. John's purchased modular furniture for its classrooms to benefit teachers and students alike. The new furniture creates learning environments that, depending on the need, bring students together or intuitively and quietly delineate separate areas. It provokes conversations, personalizes spaces, offers choices, creates zones, and helps students relax so they can focus. The furniture's multiple configurations facilitate collaboration, resulting in more meaningful partner-based learning. Importantly, the furniture makes it possible for students with physical disabilities or mobility issues to access all learning tools in the classroom.

In today's technology-obsessed world, desks and chairs might sound insignificant compared to the latest tech innovations. But when the most basic components of classrooms and other learning environments are designed thoughtfully, they facilitate student-centered learning, leading to improved student health, focus, and interaction.





STRATEGY 2

Capital Investments

2

Building for the Future

Financing Capital Investments lays the foundation for a nonprofit's future success. Through our Capital Investments strategy, the Foundation supports large and small construction projects as well as physical plant improvements to build operational capacity.

This chapter highlights five organizations that are maximizing how they use their facilities. Some programs have such large demand for services that they need new buildings, whereas others just need more beds for campers. Occasionally, a space can be repurposed and renovated, and in other situations, upgraded building systems can make all the difference. In ways both large and small, Watkins Christian Foundation funding has helped many nonprofits improve their physical spaces.



Atlanta Youth Academy (AYA)

Expanding its footprint to serve more students

Since 2002, the Watkins Christian Foundation has provided **\$940,000** in support of AYA's vision to serve the spiritual, intellectual, and social needs of youth from single-parent households with annual family incomes of \$18,000 or less in Atlanta's southeast. AYA has relied on significant financial support from private foundations and individual donors to ensure adequate funding for its campus transformation and ongoing operations. The school sets high expectations for all students, and it reports a 100% high school graduation rate, compared with a 40% high school graduation rate for the surrounding public schools.

In 2018, the Foundation committed \$400,000 payable over four years to support the construction of two permanent buildings, which now provide an ample number of classrooms, a science lab, an art room, a performing arts room, a spacious library, a dining hall with a full kitchen, and a chapel. AYA also expanded its capacity and now can serve 150 children from the immediate neighborhood, College Park, East Point, Kirkwood, Decatur, Ellenwood, Conley, Lithonia, West End, and the Cascade area.

The Foundation's multiyear Capital Investment not only enabled AYA to start its project but also served as leverage to raise the additional funding needed during the final stages of the campaign from other donors, including foundations and corporations.





Cornerstone Christian School

Replacing the HVAC system to provide a comfortable environment

Since 2017, the Watkins Christian Foundation (WCF) has provided **\$155,000** in small capacity building grants in support of Cornerstone. Most of these grants have supported general operations and the purchase of classroom equipment, including smart boards. In 2022, the Foundation awarded Cornerstone a \$50,000 grant to support the full replacement of its HVAC system. The school leveraged the Foundation's initial grant to raise the balance needed – \$206,000 – from other donors.

“**A new HVAC system is not exactly life-changing, but it certainly makes the classroom a better place for teachers and students.**”

– HEAD OF SCHOOL COLIN CREEL

Creel recognizes that spending precious funds on behind-the-walls infrastructure leaves less available for educational materials and teacher salaries, but the WCF grant enabled him to reallocate other funds to ensure long-term teacher retention and sustain a high-quality learning environment for students.

Cornerstone parents give what they can but often do not have the means to give much. Creel knows that he will always have to seek sustainable ways to improve his students' learning. Part of his educational philosophy is to support the school's greatest operational asset – its teachers – by providing them competitive salaries and good working conditions. Creel, the son of two educators, notes that taking care of teachers and setting them up for success are essential components to retention. By using the grant to support the purchase and installation of an HVAC system, Cornerstone demonstrated how important it is to the school to provide a comfortable place for its 56 teachers to teach (and its 454 students to learn).



Shepherd's Hill Academy

Transforming a campus

Since 2021, the Watkins Christian Foundation (WCF) has provided **\$180,000** in support of Shepherd's Hill Academy's vision to bring hope, healing, and restoration to teens and families in crisis. Nature surrounds the students at Shepherd's Hill Academy, a boarding school in rural Lithonia, Georgia, as they heal in a therapeutic community that shows them God's love.

Shepherd's Hill is investing in its future by building a new 17,000-square-foot structure to expand programming and dining spaces. Currently, due to lack of space, the staff and students eat in shifts of about 40 people at a time. The new building will accommodate family gatherings, learning events, and church conferences, and will more than triple the commercial kitchen and dining space. New spaces for podcasting will allow students to keep in touch with their families, and outdoor programming and dining spaces will enable the school community to engage with nature. New mini kitchens will host garden-to-table sustainability lessons in how to use the school farm's produce in meal preparation and food preservation.

Shepherd Hill's founding family talks about the many miracles that have happened at the school and how the Foundation's funds serve as leverage to raise additional contributions. As the school community steps out in its faith and builds this new space, it is securing its future in touching the lives of children and families in need with faith.





Vision Atlanta

Building for the future

In 2022, the Watkins Christian Foundation provided a **\$500,000** capacity building grant in support of Vision Atlanta. Dave Pridemore, the energetic founder and executive director of Camp Grace, a branch of Vision Atlanta, has a theory that young people are inspired by what he calls life's "electives." He says these are the hook that draws teenagers into attending Camp Grace in the summer. Vision Atlanta will use this grant to build The Barn at Camp Grace, which will provide space and equipment for youth to pursue their passions in electives such as music, dance, drama, and robotics and coding.

The Barn also will include sleeping bunks for summer camp and church retreats year-round. With these additional beds, Camp Grace will be able to house more campers in the summer and more church retreat participants during the off-season. By increasing revenue from church retreats, Camp Grace seeks to become a financially self-sustaining summer camp.

Young Life

Expanding access, a place for every camper

Since 2016, the Foundation has provided **\$800,000** in capacity building grants in support of Young Life's Southwind Camp campaign, enabling Young Life to improve the camp's services, its inclusiveness, its safety profile, and its ability to implement life-changing programming for youth.

In 2022, Southwind was the Southeast's busiest camp and likely its most crowded. Young Life used its grant to expand the Southwind Camp facilities. Southwind's dining hall was built to seat 220 campers but often had to accommodate 300. Not only was the dining hall too small it also was built before the creation of accessibility regulations for the disabled. The new design makes it possible for campers with physical challenges to navigate and store adaptive equipment in the space. The new dining room also meets the needs of the camp's teen mothers. The teen moms' mentors usually help with the babies during meals, so there needs to be plenty of room at the tables for the moms, babies, and mentors.

The kitchen in the new dining hall will have more food preparation space, a proper loading dock area, and a dedicated, enlarged refrigeration space, making more efficient workflows possible. With a larger kitchen that better meets the camp's needs, the college-age volunteer bakers won't have to wake up before sunrise to bake; there will be enough room for them to be in the kitchen at the same time as the staff making breakfast, meaning breakfast and fresh bread can be made simultaneously.

“**That's a win-win for the volunteer kitchen staff, for sure!**”
- ELIZABETH MCRAE, SE DEVELOPMENT CAMPAIGN DIRECTOR

This Capital Investment will provide tangible improvements that change the trajectory of a generation of individuals, many of whom are on society's margins, and that is an investment worth making. The expansion made it possible for Southwind to increase its capacity from 180 to 450.





STRATEGY 3

Management Assistance

3

Increasing Organizational Effectiveness

The Foundation believes management is an essential component of sustaining nonprofits and helping them thrive. Nonprofits often do not have the funding to cover a new position's salary or the resources to engage in robust strategic or succession planning. Through our investments, the Foundation helps nonprofits build their internal organizational capacity to expand or meet the changing demands of the communities they serve.

This chapter highlights two Management Assistance grantees. Both organizations had an increased need for their services but required supplemental financial resources to support the necessary staff. One program used its grant to add a new position, and the other expanded its reach by opening a new location. Through Management Assistance, the Foundation uses our resources to support organizations' development and put them on a trajectory of continued growth.



The Gathering Place

Expanding youth outreach

Since 2017, the Watkins Christian Foundation has provided **\$325,000** in support of The GP to replicate its programming in Thomasville, Georgia. The GP has used this grant for general operations and staff salaries as well.

How many middle school students are so eager to get to school that they rush their parents out the door at seven minutes after 7 a.m. so they can meet with their friends and a mentor? And without ongoing mentorship and faith formation inspired by The GP in their lives, how would these mentees grow in faith as high schoolers and college students? The GP outreach touches young people's lives over several years, building within them a foundation of spirituality that lasts a lifetime. The GP helps young people become compassionate leaders who confidently navigate their teenage years as they learn to serve Jesus.

As a relatively new location of a teen outreach organization in Thomasville, The GP employed its preferred, familiar strategy of collaboration with other nonprofits to maximize how many lives its programming touched. The GP convenes like-minded people to surround young people with love and leadership programming for their benefit, with a mentorship program to build youth resilience through faith in God and leadership experiences. Participants learn empathy, teach one another in faith, finish school, and become successful citizens.

First as a "launch investor" and more recently as a "growth investor," the Foundation has provided support for The GP in Thomasville to increase staffing so that it can serve more participants and enhance its programming.

“**First, the Foundation fueled the Thomasville site, and now [it] has put some gas in the tank to help the organization touch more lives.**”

LUCAS RAMIREZ, GP CEO

This longer-term Management Assistance has been life-changing for the staff and program participants alike, and it will enable the organization to continue creatively reaching youth and guiding them toward success.



ADRIAN
BURNS
Executive
Director



JASON
BENNETT, MDiv
Director of
Spiritual Care &
Chaplain

Archbold Foundation

Implementing a Code Lavender chaplaincy program

Since 2022, the Watkins Christian Foundation has provided **\$200,000** in support of the Archbold Foundation's launch of a new Code Lavender at the Archbold Medical Center in Thomasville, Georgia. At most hospitals, specialized color codes announced on public address systems call for medical staff to provide the assistance needed to save a life. When Archbold Medical Center calls a Code Lavender, a chaplain responds to provide compassionate spiritual care on-site.

There was no chaplain to provide spiritual care when Archbold Medical Center opened its doors in 1925. Over the ensuing years, the hospital built a chapel, but it was without a chaplain. Only recently, just two years shy of the hospital's centennial celebration, did a group of community members discuss how wonderful it would be to have a chaplain at the hospital to provide this critically missing compassionate spiritual care. The grant enabled the hospital to hire a full-time chaplain to console patients, their families, and hospital staff. In the first six months of the chaplain's work at Archbold, he provided pastoral care to 589 patients and their families, blessed two babies, consoled 136 emergency room visitors, and comforted 41 staff members.

The Archbold Foundation has been pleasantly surprised that the hospital's staff has taken advantage of the chaplain's support. Even a few years into the COVID-19 pandemic, frontline hospital workers bear the brunt of the burden in health care settings, so a chaplain's care and spiritual uplift have proven to be a true blessing to the staff.

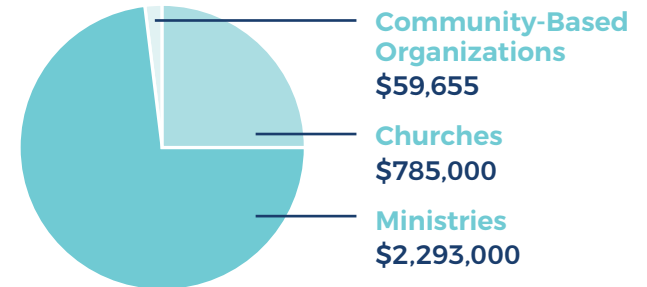


Financial Highlights



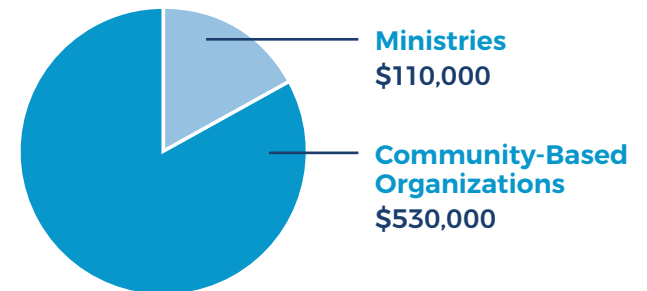
73% Faith & Ministry \$3,137,655

Drawing youth closer to Christ and nurturing their faith through genuine, faithful relationships. Mentoring and training young leaders for the church.



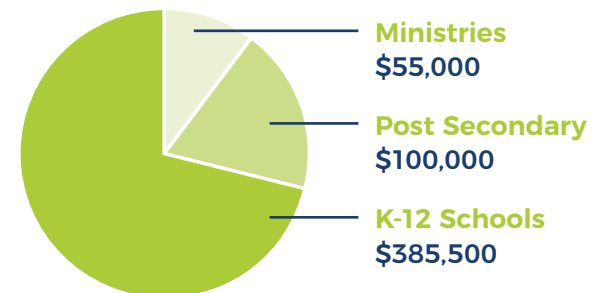
15% Outreach \$640,000

Alleviating poverty and suffering with an emphasis on homelessness, food insecurity, education, health, mental health, and family stability.



12% Education \$540,500

Helping children, youth and young adults grow in their knowledge and become grounded in their faith to love, lead and serve.





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Watkins Christian Foundation

1958 Monroe Drive NE
Atlanta, GA 30324
404-920-5009