

A Message from the Executive Director  
A Letter to Edgehill Icons: Addressing Economic Inequality in  
Communities of Color

October 24, 2020

Dear Icons,

We are writing to you on this chilly October morning from the Edgehill community park in Nashville, a park you know well. COVID-19 is paramount in our minds, thereby, the reason we're gathered outside.

However, we're here to let you know what's happening to a segment of the community you lead "back in the day."

In this mural, you, pastors Curtis Goodwin, James Turner, and Albert Jones; reparations advocate, Callie House; sculptor, William Edmondson; and, Grand Ole Opry star, Country Music Hall of Famer, harmonicist, DeFord Bailey, Sr., are passing the baton of JUSTICE, PEACE, UNITY, AND DIVERSITY to the younger generation, words you touted that cemented the community following the Civil War and throughout the Jim Crow and Civil Rights eras.

The residents, who live in the 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue South and Edgehill area of Nashville, in the Metropolitan Development Housing Agency's apartments, are still, primarily, people of color who continue to live at or below the poverty level. They appear to live on an island that is surrounded by a sea of affluence, and the island is, seemingly, poking its head through South Nashville's gentrification.

As you know, many of the residents' educational goals have been thwarted, and personal or business financial interests have been stifled

due to societal ills; thereby, residents' potentials have not surfaced to a degree that is beneficial for them.

However, we are pleased to let you know that your "back in the day" messages of JUSTICE, PEACE, UNITY, AND DIVERSITY are resonating within the organization, NeighborH.O.O.D., an organization created to help people who live at or below the poverty level start COOPERATIVE BUSINESSES (employee-owned businesses) to lift themselves out of poverty.

The organization has garnered support from partners (individuals, churches, organizations, and universities).

Icons, we do not use the word, PARTNERING, lightly. These PARTNERS are not just spouting words of reconciliation. They are PARTNERING to make impactful corrective measures due to decades of UNFETTERED ECONOMIC INEQUITIES in these communities; they are parlaying their verbiage of reconciliation into a more impactful connotation of the word, repair and restore, and they are in it for the long haul, the ups, the downs. They realize it takes time to correct societal issues.

1. Nashville's Institute for Faith and Works - Gotham, in association with Christ Presbyterian Church, awarded the organization \$5,000.
2. Ms. Anna Thornton of Christ Presbyterian Church donated four Brother sewing machines to the organization.
3. Mr. Tom Morales, owner of Acme Feed & Seed, contracted with the organization to design and produce aprons for one of his restaurants.

4. Lipscomb University's Serving and Learning Together Program collaborated with the organization to hold Eliminating Racism seminars.
5. The organization's mural rendering of Edgehill icons, passing the baton of justice, peace, unity, and diversity to the younger generation, was possible due to a \$9500 Metro Arts THRIVE micro-funding award. Significant partners in this endeavor were the Metropolitan Department and Housing Agency and Walk-Bike Nashville.
6. Salama Urban Ministries provided space for the organization to present its homespun theatrical presentation, *THE COMING*, that revealed how, using a "Synergistic Communal Approach," the community can be made whole for all of its residents.
7. Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency provided temporary space for the organization's fashion, design, and merchandising class.

Oh yes, another church partner with whom the Edgehill community has had a 30-plus year relationship has plans to join NeighborH.O.O.D. In their more than 30 years in the community, they have brought educational support, food, and provided holiday blessings. And get this, an HBCU has also expressed interest. I'll let you know as soon as everything is confirmed, the name of the church and the name of the HBCU.

Now that a foundation has been laid, thanks to our partners, right, now, the organization's immediate efforts are to strengthen its existing foundation. The new discussion will ask for support to design, produce, and merchandise apparel for the late, great, Grand Ole Opry, Country

Music Hall of Famer, harmonicist, DeFord Bailey, Sr, with the goal to FUND the organization's mission.

We will ask for more partners to help the organization (fashion, design, and merchandising instructors, legal and financial expertise). We'll need office and classroom space, volunteers, monetary donations, students who want to own businesses.

We're closing for now; we've got to get to work; this COVID-19 pandemic will pass; so, we've got to be ready. We'll keep in touch to let you know how we, the organization and its PARTNERS, are doing.

Sincerely yours,

Agnes L. Scott,  
Executive Director, NeighborH.O.O.D.

P.S. Our website at [neighborhoodnashville.com](http://neighborhoodnashville.com). will be rehailed over the next four weeks.