



NATIONAL  
COMMUNICATION  
ASSOCIATION



UNC  
GREENSBORO

# Cultivate Resilient Communities

Renewing Commitments to Democracy in  
Campus-Community Partnerships for Social Justice

[cccc.uncg.edu](http://cccc.uncg.edu)





**NCA Center for Communication, Community Collaboration, and Change**

[cccc.uncg.edu](http://cccc.uncg.edu)

Facebook: [NCA Center for Communication, Community Collaboration, and Change](#)

**UNC Greensboro Department of Communication Studies**

Inaugural NCA-CCCC Host Institution 2019-2022

[cst.uncg.edu](http://cst.uncg.edu)

Facebook: [UNCG Communication Studies Department](#)

**Physical Address:**

102 Ferguson Building  
Greensboro, NC 27412

**Mailing Address:**

P.O. Box 26170  
Greensboro, NC 27402

The NCA-CCCC seeks to facilitate partnerships with community-based organizations that create sustainable change for underrepresented and/or vulnerable communities through the production and application of communication-related scholarship. Learn more about the NCA-CCCC's work through its inaugural host institution, UNC Greensboro, and find project videos, interviews with principal investigators, student stories, and more at [cccc.uncg.edu](http://cccc.uncg.edu).



**To Cite This Report**

---

Jovanovic, S., Schwartzman, R., LeGreco, M., Damasceno, C. S., Kinefuchi, E., Poulos, C.N. & Simon, J. (2022). *Cultivate resilient communities: Report of UNC Greensboro's campus-community partnerships*. National Communication Association Center for Communication, Community Collaboration, and Change. <https://cccc.uncg.edu/>



# Contents

Acknowledgments	2
NCA-CCCC Final Report Table	3
Introduction	4
Greensboro History Museum’s Democracy Tables: An Experiment in Community Connection	6
Growing Green For Greens with Neighborhood Markets, Inc.	13
Greensboro Learning Circles	19
The Guilford Urban Farming Initiative: The St Phillip Garden of Peace and The Grove Market	26
Beloved Community Center	32
Curricular Stories	38
Publications, Presentations, and Publicity	40

## Acknowledgments

### NCA Center for Communication, Community Collaboration, and Change

#### UNC Greensboro Department of Communication Studies

#### Host Institution and Department

**Principal Investigator:** Roy Schwartzman

**Program Director:** Spoma Jovanovic

**Grant Faculty Researchers:** Cristiane Damasceno, Spoma Jovanovic, Etsuko Kinefuchi, Marianne LeGreco, Christopher Poulos, and Jenni Simon

**Graduate Student Project Coordinators:** Dan Bayer and Jessica Clifford

We thank the National Communication Association for entrusting us in the Department of Communication Studies at UNC Greensboro as the inaugural host of the NCA Center for Communication, Community Collaboration, and Change. Our scholarship and the communication discipline more broadly benefit from collaborations like these that connect people, create change, and work toward a just world.

Our work was enriched from 2019 to 2022, in the midst of a global pandemic, from the contributions of community members, faculty from UNCG and surrounding colleges, undergraduate and graduate students, and staff who supported our vibrant, sustainable, campus-community partnerships. We point with pride to the efforts that created pathways for critical resources—food, education, community organizing, and opportunities for dialogue—to reach people in Greensboro, North Carolina and the surrounding communities including the most vulnerable and historically under-represented residents among us.

### Community Partners

#### Democracy Tables

#### Greensboro History Museum

Glenn Perkins, Jessica Clifford, Laura Allen, Shari Merten, Elizabeth Konopka, and Christina Tejada.

#### Growing Green for Greens

#### Neighborhood Markets, Inc.: Corner Market and People's Market

Kathy Newsom, Liz Seymour, Shante Woody, Stephen Johnson, and Lucy Newsom.

#### Greensboro Learning Circles

#### Greensboro Public Library and Peer 2 Peer University

Amy Bacon, Beth Bowles, Valerie Coll, Courtney Duvall, Qumisha Goss, Antuan Hawkins, Bebe Jallah, Nico Koenig, Becky Margraf, Grif Peterson, Morgan Ritchie-Baum, Beth Sheffield, Dirk Uys, and Samantha Way.

#### GUFI

#### Greensboro Urban Farm Initiative and St Phillip AME Zion Church

Paula Seiber, Rev. Lisa Caldwell, Nathan Lewis, Brandon King, Lisa Knight, and Louise LeGrande.

#### Community Activism

#### Beloved Community Center

Joyce Johnson, Rev. Nelson Johnson, Brigitte Rasberry, Abigail Mosley, and Andrea Metcalfe.

### Contributors

#### UNCG Department of Communication Studies Faculty

David Carlone, Kristen Christman, Kimberly Cuny, Gabriel Cruz, Cristiane Damasceno, Erin Ellis Harrison, Spoma Jovanovic, Pete Kellett, Etsuko Kinefuchi, Marianne LeGreco, Katie Lind, Cerise Glenn Manigault, Jessica McCall, Elizabeth Natalle, Zitty Nxumalo, Loreen Olson, Christopher N. Poulos, Patrick Sawyer, Roy Schwartzman, Jenni Simon, Jenny Southard, Jessica Sullivan, and April Wright.

#### Students, Community Members, Staff, and Other Faculty

Dr. Amy Adamson, Alex Alverson, Skye Bailey, Olivia Biro, Alexis Brown, Haiasi Chinfloo, Michael Coleman, Dr. Kathleen Edwards, Bri Ferraro, Jeremi Fulmore, Steven Garfunkel, Dr. Cathy Hamilton, Alice Hill, Eliza Lathery, Marianna Levithan, Dr. Dan Malotky, Keviele McBride, Dianna Mock, Dr. David Olson, Jasmine Palmer, Gabriel Parks, Kellar Poteat, Abby Salah, Shelley Sizemore, Abigail Thomas, Casey Thomas, Molly Turk, Mary Villano, Doris Wesley, and Jordan Wright.

#### UNCG Communication Studies Classes

CST 200, *Communication and Community*; CST 210, *Communicating Ethically*; CST 342, *Communication and Public Relations*; CST 390, *Studies in Communication Across the Curriculum*; CST 412, *Communication Internship*; CST 460, *Communicating Leadership*; CST 605, *Communicating for Social Change*; and CST 632, *Communication Ethics and Social Justice*.

#### UNCG Grant Support

Provost's Office; College of Arts and Sciences; Office of Research and Engagement; University Speaking Center; University Communications; Tigermoth Creative, LLC.

	Democracy Tables  Greensboro History Museum	Growing Green for Greens  The Neighborhood Markets	Greensboro Learning Circles  Greensboro Public Library	St Phillip Garden of Peace  Guilford Urban Farming Initiative	Public Narratives of Community Organizing  Beloved Community Center
PROJECT'S AIM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Convene and facilitate community conversations about matters of shared concern among citizens of Greensboro and UNCG Students.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a sustainable, community-driven funding system to support a SNAP doubling program at two neighborhood farmers markets.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offer an adult's lifelong learning program targeting under resourced patrons of the library.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create an urban garden to provide neighbors with fresh produce, offer educational and professional opportunities, and build a community around food justice.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop best practices and discourse models for community organizing and advocacy.</li> </ul>
RESEARCHER'S ROLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitator-observer</li> <li>Participant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observer-participant</li> <li>Consultant</li> <li>Content Producer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observer-participant</li> <li>Consultant</li> <li>Creator of training materials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participant</li> <li>Facilitator</li> <li>Learner</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participant-observer</li> <li>Produced community organizing materials</li> </ul>
RESEARCH METHODS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ethnographic participant-observation and philosophical autoethnography</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multi-method, ethnographic approach rooted in culture-centered approach to communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ethnographic participant-observation; interviews; open-ended surveys; grounded theory</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ethnographic participant-observation; interviews; surveys</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communication activism rooted in social justice; ethnography; storytelling drawing from critical race theory; interviews; surveys</li> </ul>
PROJECT OUTCOMES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hosted 9 community conversations and 3 "talk-back" sessions with community leaders.</li> <li>Engaged in conversations with 350 participants.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hosted 2 pre-COVID listening sessions with customers &amp; vendors.</li> <li>Collected 55 surveys from market shoppers.</li> <li>Interviewed 25 customers &amp; vendors.</li> <li>Tracked 9 months of usage data for a new drive-thru system.</li> <li>Tested a fundraising model that generated \$32,000 in funds for the Green for Greens SNAP-doubling program.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hosted 15 learning circles.</li> <li>Observed 45 hours of learning circles and 8 hours of meetings.</li> <li>Interviewed/surveyed 19 students, 18 facilitators, 4 P2PU members.</li> <li>Created open educational resources (training guide and online course on storytelling).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Created a garden (in-ground beds, 20+ raised beds, an herb garden, children's area, compost bins, a greenhouse, &amp; planted pollinator bushes).</li> <li>Hosted 3 community-building events (unlawned, open house, taste of the garden).</li> <li>Conducted surveys to assess health/illness and food needs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participated in 25 community meetings and protests.</li> <li>Developed a graphic novel to boost community organizing for police accountability.</li> <li>Created a storytelling collection process for use in the roll-out of the state-wide NC Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission program.</li> </ul>
LESSONS LEARNED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students and community members are hungry for/willing to engage in respectful conversations of mutual concern.</li> <li>Continuing such conversations is vital for building trust and connection.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poverty is an ongoing barrier to food security, whose effects were only heightened during the COVID-19 pandemic.</li> <li>Mutual aid networks and community-driven organizing can create necessary infrastructure to support those who have the highest risks for food insecurity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is crucial to address barriers to learning when implementing educational programs.</li> <li>Connections within and across communities can increase resilience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An urban farm provides nutrition and garden education.</li> <li>Farm sustainability requires dedicated long-term volunteers. Community involvement in an urban farm requires respect and continuing engagement. A community farm is an excellent way to build social capital.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investing time and resources in community education, storytelling, and dialogue is the bedrock for successful advocacy and collective action.</li> </ul>

# Introduction

**In the summer of 2019**, the Department of Communication Studies at UNCG was selected to become the inaugural host of the National Communication Association Center for Communication, Community Collaboration, and Change (the NCA-CCCC Center). In this role, and with its substantial accompanying grant, the department embarked on the core objective that bears what now seems a remarkably prescient name amid the global COVID-19 pandemic: *Cultivate Resilient Communities*.

Greensboro furnishes fertile ground for cultivating resilience, defined as building a community's capacity for adapting to and emerging stronger from adversity. Why Greensboro? North Carolina has enacted some of the nation's most aggressive voter suppression laws, which according to a federal judge "target African-Americans with almost surgical precision" (Jacobs, 2018). As the site of the famous Woolworth's lunch counter sit-ins, Greensboro played a pivotal role in the Civil Rights movement. But the city also experienced the 1979 Greensboro Massacre that involved the deaths of 5 people through Nazi- and KKK-instigated violence. An all-white jury let 5 Klansmen defendants go free, and to this day no one was ever found guilty of the murders. Large income disparities align with racial classifications. In the early 2000s, the poverty rate in the county and its environs grew more rapidly than almost anywhere in the U.S., and in 2015 the Greensboro-High Point metropolitan area ranked *first in the nation* for food hardship. As in many cities, incidents of unredressed police violence further erode confidence in social institutions. Across many dimensions, our community's resilience begs for bolstering.

As the NCA-CCCC Center, we award grants totaling \$100,000 to five community partners who team with our department to implement projects that center the roles communication can play in promoting equity, social justice, and participatory democracy. After soliciting proposals from local organizations, teams of undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, and community activists selected the projects that would receive funding. These efforts focus on several areas: democratizing community decision-making

practices, extending access to essential resources and to structures of power, reducing food insecurity, developing sustainable food acquisition and production, and addressing racial inequities.

Even with the infusion of funds provided by a grant, however, a community organization must be ready to realize its goal of implementing its planned project. The work invested by organizations advancing social justice to combat racism is time-consuming and no matter how strong its members are, the fatigue can take its toll. This strain became particularly acute when the COVID-19 pandemic struck, as one of our community partners discovered.

One loss we suffered was when we made a joint decision with one of our original grantees not to fund their project. The innovative Black youth-led effort drew from the talents and expertise of recent college graduates who planned to convene a series of conversations leading to the production of a city-wide youth assembly. Their focus was to be on deconstructing the various features of liberation as a means to envision new social networks and business opportunities, putting Black fellowship at the center. Regrettably, the group found itself after several months without the sufficient capacity to carry out its plans, due in part to restrictive health and safety measures associated with COVID-19, time constraints, and difficulty securing a fiscal sponsor to receive grant funds.

Still, in what can best be described as an admirable display of resilience, supporters of the youth-led effort suggested grant funding could be better managed by the Beloved Community Center (BCC). The BCC did not originally submit a proposal for consideration. However, the UNCG Department of Communication Studies had a long history of partnership with the BCC and thus with the Black community's support and the BCC's 30-year history as a principal leader and supporter of social justice efforts in Greensboro, we were delighted to make a needed adjustment. Even with the change of grantees, we continued to respond to the needs of the youth group (the initial grantees) by pulling together resources to produce a podcast on "How to Make a

Podcast” for them and others interested in using that mode of communication in education and outreach efforts.

Beyond the core projects funded directly by the grant, the NCA-CCCC Center further energizes curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular community engagement that deeply infuses the department’s culture. The ongoing ways that our University Speaking Center cultivates resilient communities focus on lifting marginalized voices through oral communication skill-building. This programming serves as important professional development for the students employed at the center. Empathy is an important resiliency skill that the students gain from this type of work (Schwartzman et al., 2020).

The NCA-CCCC Center provides ongoing opportunities for students to incorporate more vigorous community-engaged activities into their course work. For example, groups of students in the Communicating Leadership course reviewed and finalized transcripts from interviews with community leaders and recommended content for the development of future videos. Working closely with the UNCG Office of Leadership and Civic Engagement, groups of students researched, designed, and implemented eight workshops for the Spring 2021 Leading for an Inclusive Campus Conference. These workshops were designed for UNCG students and focused on promoting diversity and inclusion in both campus and community leadership positions. Such activities will continue and expand as the NCA-CCCC Center matures further.

The work of the NCA-CCCC Center has spanned the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic, so the entire process of progressing toward the fruition of our community partners’ projects has required constant adaptation to unforeseen disruptions. Fittingly, the activities of the NCA-CCCC Center demonstrate precisely the theme of our original proposal to NCA: cultivating the capacity to withstand adversity and find renewed strength from coping with challenges. Amid the upheavals of the pandemic, the community partners and the NCA-CCCC Center have adopted an “opportunity frame” (Schwartzman, 2020) by exploring new and

underutilized ways to promote inclusivity and social justice while practicing proper public health protocols (Schmidt, 2021). The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has starkly revealed deep disparities in access, equity, and inclusion that cast the public health emergency also as a social justice crisis (Schwartzman, 2021). The layering of the pandemic on top of existing systemic power imbalances adds urgency to the work the NCA-CCCC Center and its community partners are doing to build resiliency.

---

## References

- Jacobs, J. (2018, Dec. 13). In North Carolina, voting controversies are common. *New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/13/us/politics/north-carolina-voting-rights.html>
- Schmidt, M. E. (2021). Embracing e-service learning in the age of COVID and beyond. *Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Psychology*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1037/stl0000283>
- Schwartzman, R. (2021). Unpacking privilege in pandemic pedagogy: Social media debates on power dynamics of online education. *Journal of Communication Pedagogy*, 5, 17-24. <https://doi.org/10.31446/JCP.2021.2.04>
- Schwartzman, R. (2020). Performing pandemic pedagogy. *Communication Education*, 69(4), 502-517. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03634523.2020.1804602>
- Schwartzman, R., Forslund, E., Bolin, C., Thomas, A., Pettigrew, E., & Ray, R. (2020). Communication centers as wellsprings of community engagement and collaborative research. *College Student Journal*, 54(2), 187-198.

# Greensboro History Museum's Democracy Tables: An Experiment in Community Connection

[greensborohistory.org/democracyttables](https://greensborohistory.org/democracyttables)

## The Project

Democracy Tables reach into different parts of the city to invite residents—especially those from traditionally underrepresented communities—to share experiences and concerns through creative dialogue. The purpose of this project is to cultivate resilient communities through opportunities for enhanced community engagement and community leadership development. Participants share their knowledge surrounding community concerns and ask questions of one another. Not surprisingly, participants become information resources for others to deepen understanding of community issues and influence social change. Features of Democracy Tables include:

Inviting community dialogue from residents across the city.

Collecting questions about areas of concern.

Sharing resources and expertise for answering those questions.

Connecting participants with tools to influence decision making and policy.

Providing information and resources about community issues (available online and interpreted in a community display at the museum).

Developing a conversation model for city concerns that can be adapted and expanded.

Democracy Tables encourage and enable participation in local democratic processes and culture. The hosting Greensboro History Museum is a trusted institution informed by facts and historical evidence and is part of the city library system. Collaborating with a local university enabled the Democracy Tables programming to reach a diverse group of participants and spark meaningful dialogue. The result was being able to share an archive of useful resources by developing an innovative model of civic engagement designed to introduce meaningful shifts in the democratic culture of the city.

## The Context

Democracy Tables were proposed by Glenn Perkins, Curator of Museum History as part of the Greensboro History Museum's Project Democracy 20/20 initiative. Project Democracy launched in December 2019 with the opening of the Smithsonian traveling exhibition *American Democracy: A Great Leap of Faith* and continued with the rapid response exhibition *Pieces of Now: Murals, Masks, Community Stories and Conversations* (2020-21). The Project Democracy initiative grew out of a desire to explore historical developments and contemporary challenges for democracy in the city of Greensboro and the state of North Carolina. Alongside exhibitions and public programs, Democracy Tables hosted in collaboration with UNCG's Communication Studies Department offered interactive opportunities for people from across the city to share experiences and questions about civic issues important to them.

Democracy Table conversations, originally intended to be in person, were adapted online as guided, facilitated dialogues around topics suggested by Greensboro residents. Three topic areas – Voting; Police, Community & Justice; and Housing & Equity – generated conversation opportunities among neighbors across the city. After the first topic, Voting, a museum intern developed resource guides to share with participants so they could be more informed prior to entering the discussions. Each topic ended with an additional Democracy Tables: You Asked! program featuring community experts who addressed questions raised during the earlier conversation sessions. The community experts included staff members from the nonprofit You Can Vote, a volunteer with the League of Women Voters of the Piedmont Triad, the governmental librarian at the Greensboro Public Library, officers with the Greensboro Police Department, chair of the Greensboro Criminal Justice Advisory Committee, a criminal and constitutional law expert, a Guilford College criminal justice professor, head of a housing research unit at UNCG, and a housing expert from the city's Neighborhood Development Department.



**Volunteer facilitators guide Greensboro residents and UNC Greensboro students through the first online Democracy Tables discussion on voting, one of three topic areas for the program, over video conferencing platform Zoom on Sept. 26, 2020.**

In post-event surveys, Democracy Tables participants expressed enthusiasm for the conversations. “I learned a lot about what I will be voting for in the 2020 election and in general how elections work, and I got to hear different perspectives,” wrote one of the Voting session attendees. “I enjoyed everyone being able to share their beliefs and values in an inclusive space,” shared another. Responses from the conversations and surveys were collated into infographics to be shared with decision-makers in Greensboro and included in a museum Community Voices display.

## Education and Learning

The Democracy Tables project brought together the Greensboro History Museum, members of the community, and UNC Greensboro students from two undergraduate courses, *Communication and Community* and *Communicating Ethically*. They joined some advanced undergraduate and graduate student facilitators who convened Democracy Tables events throughout the 2020–2021 Academic Year. Given the COVID-19 pandemic, events that were intended to be in-person conversations spread throughout the community quickly pivoted to online encounters via the Zoom videoconferencing platform. Student facilitators were trained in a model for dialogue adapted

from the Living Room Conversations Project (<https://livingroomconversations.org/>), which offers helpful guidelines and structure for engaging in deep and active listening for sustained and focused dialogue.

During the Democracy Tables dialogues, students and community members were placed into small breakout groups of 5–6 people with a volunteer facilitator where they learned about both content (the topic of the conversation) and process (the practices of effective dialogue). Of note is that Democracy Tables were built into the curricula of select communication courses. As a result, immediately following the immersive experience of community dialogue, students engaged in reflective online discussions and writing to process what they had learned, and the lessons they hoped to hold onto for future participation in democratic dialogue.

The project supported two internships at the Greensboro History Museum. Laura Allen, a Guilford College history education major, developed resource materials and assisted with programs during spring 2021 and worked to develop content for the Democracy Tables Manual. In summer and fall 2021, Liz Konopka, a UNCG Museum Studies master’s student, developed a museum display about Democracy Tables.



Liz Konopka, a UNCG Museum Studies graduate student, welcomes community members to Greensboro History Museum interactive displays and Democracy Tables conversations at LeBauer Park in downtown Greensboro.

## Resilience

One important way to approach the overarching theme of cultivating resilience in the community involves encouraging communication across differences and boundaries. The grant-supported community dialogues thus relied on theories of dialogue from the disciplines of communication studies and philosophy. In reflecting on what it means to spark and continue dialogue on community matters that are controversial, painful, or not easily resolved, *dialogic perseverance enacted through collaborative resilience* is regarded as critical to vibrant, ongoing community participation (Dollar, 2021; Schwartzman, 2020).

While the notion of humans coming together in genuine dialogue is sometimes theorized as a rare and eventful moment in which people somehow manage to share a special connection—a deeper moment where meaning and relation merge into some new form of engagement—an I–Thou relation (Buber, 1970) or a moment of meeting (Cissna & Anderson, 2002), more everyday dialogic encounters emerge when people consciously follow the basic principles and practices emerging from the theory (Poulos, 2008). Much has been written about attempts to set the stage or to orchestrate such moments of connection (Bohm, 1996; Isaacs, 1999; Senge, 1994), and there are vigorous theoretical underpinnings to our current understanding of dialogue as *praxis* (e.g., Anderson, Baxter, & Cissna, 2004; Arnett & Arneson, 1999; Dollar, 2021; Schrag, 1986; Stewart, 1996; Stewart & Zediker, 2000).

This literature points to the notion that a special kind of resilience—social and communal in nature—may be cultivated by simply building opportunities for members of a community to come together and communicate about matters of community interest and concern. This project used basic practices of dialogue to guide conversations about democratic participation (voting, housing, policing). The Democracy Tables project leverages faculty expertise in the practice of dialogue, with its emphasis on deep listening and respectful sharing of varying viewpoints, mindfulness, storytelling/sharing experiences, respect for

differences, and mutual positive regard (Rogers, 1980) to help our community wrestle with difficult (and potentially contentious) topics of conversation. Faculty researchers Dr. Christopher Poulos, Dr. Jenni Simon, and Dr. Spoma Jovanovic offered an invitational approach to convene dialogues centering on topics of concern in our democracy, with the hope of building a sustainable method of engaging the community in dynamic, meaningful, and continuing conversations relevant to the virtues and practices of our democratic system, local/national/global threats to and supports of democracy, and historical moments that play a prominent role in the ongoing evolution of our democracy. The hope is to engage citizens in civic conversations that will help spark the energy and momentum needed to make substantive change, and to deeply engage and enact the participatory nature of a vibrant democratic system.

## Sustainability

Students embraced the idea that communities could benefit from the form of talk that emerged in Democracy Tables, and thus they urged continuation of the program. Similar remarks were collected from participating community members.

In response to the positive feedback, conversations and collaborations were initiated with local organizations to host additional Democracy Tables. Thus, in fall 2021, Democracy Tables on the topics of Voting and Gerrymandering & Representation were integrated into a Spokes & Votes event celebrating the revolutionary power of the bicycle. That program was coordinated by the Greensboro History Museum, Bicycling in Greensboro, the Greensboro Department of Transportation, and UNCG Libraries as part of UNCG's She Can, We Can campus collaborative. Another Democracy Table that focused on Pride & Equality debuted at another museum, Elsewhere Living Museum, in their QueerLab series.

Still other Democracy Table conversations are being coordinated through and integrated as part of the Greensboro History Museum's NC Democracy exhibition opening in March 2022. To assist others in hosting their own Democracy

## Greensboro History Museum's Democracy Tables: An Experiment in Community Connection

[greensborohistory.org/democracyttables](https://greensborohistory.org/democracyttables)

Tables conversations, a Democracy Tables Manual is being prepared to include advice for organizing and hosting conversations, sample conversation guides for seven topic areas, and ideas for adapting Democracy Tables for different needs. The goal is to develop other opportunities for collaboration that can extend Democracy Tables to new audiences.

Finally, the success of the Democracy Tables is being included in other Greensboro History Museum grant requests. One example is a proposal to the Smithsonian Affiliations / International Coalition of Sites of Conscience initiative Fostering Critical Conversations with Our Communities. There is also a Democracy Tables proposal under evaluation for the International Committee for the Collections and Activities of Museums of Cities (ICOM-CAMOC) Annual Conference.

### Contributions and Lessons Learned

A simple, but profound, conclusion from the Democracy Tables project is this: The human need for contact, connection, collaboration, and dialogue is a primary animating and energizing force that allows people to build and engage resilient communities. People crave dialogue with fellow citizens, and when given the opportunity and the structure to connect in this way, they embrace it. The experience of the Democracy Tables Project revealed that students and community members are passionate, caring, and deeply concerned about the communities they inhabit, and the (often) confounding issues that confront us. The simple *pedagogical innovation* here comes in the form of a plea to all learning communities: Do everything in your power to build opportunities for dialogue on matters of mutual concern (Conti, 2021). Connecting students with community members as a course project that is integrated into the course objectives builds capacity for such dialogues to become meaningful (Arnett, 2020).

Twelve Democracy Tables and events were hosted during the 2020–21 Academic Year, devoted to programs around three separate topics (Voting, Housing Equity, and Policing) and reaching 350 participants, including community members and UNC Greensboro students.

Among the lessons learned from this project are:

#### ***A graduate student (or other) liaison is critical for success:***

One of the most important positions with our project was a graduate student project coordinator who managed many of the logistics, kept track of survey data, created infographics, coordinated management of the online Zoom platform, and participated as a facilitator in the Democracy Table events.

#### ***Opportunities for undergraduate student research assistants require faculty oversight:***

Three undergraduate research assistants contributed to the project. The performance and impact of these students was uneven, in part because of the COVID-19 pandemic. In any case, students selected to serve this way should be vetted carefully, fully trained, and supervised actively. Additionally, the students will benefit from enrolling in courses with faculty researcher(s) so that weekly contact is maintained. Securing stipends for the students is a helpful incentive.

#### ***Making curricular connections makes sense in communication classes.***

Projects such as the Democracy Tables are relatively easy to integrate into coursework, especially if a department offers service-learning opportunities and courses in communication ethics, interpersonal communication and leadership studies. Participation, followed by active reflection exercises and writing projects encourage students to integrate lessons into lifelong learning.

---

**Faculty Researchers: Christopher Poulos, Jenni Simon, Spoma Jovanovic**

For more information on this research project, contact: [cnpoulos@uncg.edu](mailto:cnpoulos@uncg.edu) or [jmsimon@uncg.edu](mailto:jmsimon@uncg.edu)



## Participation Details

FALL 2020	DATES	ATTENDEES	
Democracy Tables: Voting conversation	9/26/2020	15	
Democracy Tables: Voting conversation	9/29/2020	49	
Democracy Tables: Voting conversation	10/1/2020	37	
Democracy Tables: Voting, You Asked!	10/4/2020	21	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>122</b>	
SPRING 2021			
Democracy Tables: Police, Community, Justice conversation	2/24/2021	40	
Democracy Tables: Police, Community, Justice conversation	3/1/2021	32	
Democracy Tables: Police, Community, Justice conversation	3/4/2021	27	
Democracy Tables: Police, Community, Justice You Asked!	3/10/2021	42	
Democracy Tables: Housing conversation	3/27/2021	24	
Democracy Tables: Housing conversation	3/31/2021	17	
Democracy Tables: Housing conversation	4/5/2021	19	
Democracy Tables: Housing You Asked!	4/10/2021	27	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>228</b>	
YOU ASKED! VIDEO STATS AS OF 8/18/21		VIEWS	MINUTES WATCHED
Democracy Tables: You Asked!	10/4/2020	306	1499
Democracy Tables: Police, Community, Justice You Asked!	3/10/2021	257	1537
Democracy Tables: Housing You Asked!	4/10/2021	296	973

## Greensboro History Museum's Democracy Tables: An Experiment in Community Connection

[greensborohistory.org/democracyttables](https://greensborohistory.org/democracyttables)

Photos ©2021 UNCG by Martin W. Kane.



**Greensboro residents talk with Democracy Tables student interns at a local farmers market.**

Photos ©2021 UNCG by Jiyoung Park.



**Downtown runners finish a fun run in LeBauer Park, taking time to join a Democracy Tables discussion on police, community, and justice.**

## References

- Anderson, R., Baxter, L. A., & Cissna, K. N. (Eds.). (2004). *Dialogue: Theorizing difference in communication studies*. Sage.
- Arnett, R. (2020). Communication pedagogy: The coronavirus pandemic. *Journal of Communication Pedagogy*, 3, 5-10.
- Arnett, R., & Arneson, P. (1999). *Dialogic civility in a cynical age: Community, hope, and interpersonal relationships*. State University of New York Press.
- Bohm, D. (1996). *On dialogue*. Routledge.
- Buber, M. (1970). *I and thou* (W. Kaufmann, Trans.). Touchstone/Simon and Schuster.
- Cissna, K. N., & Anderson, R. (2002). *Moments of meeting: Buber, Rogers, and the potential for public dialogue*. State University of New York Press.
- Dollar, N. (2021). Engaging contested community issues: Community dialogue in one US American Community. *Language and dialogue*, 11(1), 125-150.
- Poulos, C. N. (2008). Accidental dialogue: The search for dialogic moments in everyday life. *Communication Theory*, 18(1), 117-138.
- Rogers, C. R. (1980). *A way of being*. Houghton Mifflin.
- Schrag, C. (1986). *Communicative praxis and the space of subjectivity*. Indiana University Press.
- Schwartzman, R. (2020). Performing pandemic pedagogy. *Communication Education* 69(4), 502-517. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03634523.2020.1804602>
- Senge, P. (1994). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization*. Currency Books.
- Stewart, J. (Ed.). (1996). *Beyond the symbol model: Reflections on the representational nature of language*. State University of New York Press.
- Stewart, J., & Zediker, K. (2000). Dialogue as tensional, ethical practice. *Southern Communication Journal*, 65(2-3), 224-242.

# Growing Green for Greens with Neighborhood Markets, Inc.

[green4greens.org](http://green4greens.org)

## The Project

Growing Green for Greens is a project initiated by Neighborhood Markets, Inc., a non-profit organization that operates two neighborhood-based farmers markets in Greensboro, NC. The purpose of the project is to establish a sustainable source of funding for the SNAP-doubling program that serves the Corner Farmers Market and the People's Market.

Green for Greens is designed to serve under-resourced individuals and families by increasing their buying power for local foods – including fruits, vegetables, proteins, and grains – at Neighborhood Market locations. By doubling the benefits that eligible shoppers receive through their SNAP/EBT cards, Green for Greens not only promotes food access for low-income customers, but it also brings more dollars to the farmers and local vendors who service the market.

The partnership with UNCG's Department of Communication Studies has regularly and routinely engaged both customers and vendors in listening sessions, community-based research, and other communication practices to ensure their participation in organizing and operating the market. For example, in March 2020, as COVID-19 cases started to rise both globally and, in the U.S., members of the research team organized listening sessions for both customers and vendors at the Corner Farmers Market. The customer listening session was organized during a Saturday market, when Dr. Marianne LeGreco, from UNCG's research team, and Liz Seymour, a market manager for the People's Market, popped up a couple of chairs with a sign that read "Times are Weird, Let's Chat." During those sessions, we learned how important it was for customers to keep the market open, particularly because it allowed for outdoor shopping and reduced the distance between the people who produce the food and the people who eat it. We also gained support for a growing idea to develop an advanced ordering and drive-thru pickup system to help with social distancing and promote convenience. The ideas and concerns raised by the customers

were explored further in a listening session immediately following the market – this time with the farmers and vendors. At this session, we heard similar interests to remain open, especially because of the farmers' and vendors' reliance on the market for their own livelihood. These listening sessions illustrate how we infused communication at the core of the community organizing at the markets (see more in story written by UNCG MA student Dan Bayer at <https://cccc.uncg.edu/projects/growing-green-for-greens/peoples-market-delivers-healthy-food-and-community-when-its-needed/>).

In the two years since its initial proposal, Growing Green for Greens has produced two primary outcomes – a pilot test of a SNAP-doubling fundraising strategy and market reorganization in response to COVID-19. The project as proposed focused on SNAP-doubling, and despite the necessary distractions that arose during COVID-19 stay-at-home orders, the research team and market partners were able to return to the central goals outlined in the original proposal. In 2020, the Neighborhood Markets saw a 400% increase in the SNAP/EBT demand at their markets. Market partners doubled \$24,000 for a total buying power of \$48,000 coming into the Corner Market and the People's Market. In 2021, they doubled \$38,000 for a total buying power of \$76,000 at the two markets. Although a significant portion of those funds came through external sources and grant funding, the research team and market partners pilot tested a program to raise \$6,200 through internal support from the market customers and vendors. After receiving a \$5000 pledge from Greensboro's Weaver Foundation, the Neighborhood Markets launched a matching funds challenge at their Corner and People's Markets – asking customers and vendors to match what Weaver had pledged. The challenge was successful, and the market partners repeated the strategy in the weeks leading up to Thanksgiving 2021.

The project in practice encompassed not only the work proposed, but also responses and adaptations because of

## Growing Green for Greens with Neighborhood Markets, Inc.

[green4greens.org](http://green4greens.org)

COVID-19 stay-at-home orders and continued social distancing practices. The research team and market partners Kathy Newsom, Liz Seymour, and Shante Woody worked with state legislators to ensure that farmers markets would be considered essential services. Mask and social distancing policies were developed in cooperation with farmers and vendors. Perhaps most significant was the design and implementation of the advanced ordering and drive-thru pickup system. Customers could contact farmers and vendors before the Saturday market to place and process their order, then pick up their order at a drive-thru tent in a nearby parking lot. The success of the drive-thru led market partners to upgrade their system, and they now use an online program called “What’s Good” to streamline the transaction process. Moreover, they can process SNAP/EBT at the drive-thru through on-site transactions.

From a communication perspective, the work of this partnership is anchored in Communication Infrastructure Theory (Kim & Ball-Rokeach, 2006), the Culture-Centered Approach to organizing for health advocacy and activism (Dutta, 2012), and communication approaches to building secure and just food systems (LeGreco & Douglas, 2021; Schraedley et al., 2020). More specifically, the project is rooted in the importance of existing relationships and local ownership of resources – like the mutual aid networks that the Neighborhood Markets are appearing to build. The partnership also committed to engage numerous communities, mobilize a variety of resources, document their process, and sustain conversations around food security and food justice in ways that helped them remain resilient amidst both financial uncertainties and COVID-19.

### The Context

Greensboro, NC’s history of food insecurity and food hardship have been well documented. In 2015, Greensboro/High Point ranked #1 in food hardship – which is an indicator of food access in combination with poverty – on the Food Research and Action Center’s list of major municipalities struggling with food. Although Greensboro’s food hardship

numbers have improved – we now rank #14 and our hardship rate has dropped from 28.2% to 19.2% – food insecurity and food justice have remained a central part of conversations in our community.

A focus on food access – namely through community gardens, urban farms, and farmers markets – has emerged as a routine strategy in Greensboro’s efforts to promote food security. Many of these efforts have emerged through neighborhood-based interventions, like the two markets organized by the Neighborhood Markets. These markets operate in two neighborhoods that the US Department of Agriculture has identified as low-income and low access. To create economic opportunities for local farmers and vendors, as well as increased financial supports for SNAP/EBT customers, the Neighborhood Markets also attempt to address poverty alongside food access in their approach to food security and food justice.

### Education and Learning

The partnership between UNCG’s Department of Communication Studies and the Neighborhood Markets came about through a commitment to education and learning that involved numerous stakeholders, university-level courses, student research projects, and resource development. Of note are two connections to UNCG coursework and student research.

When the Neighborhood Market partners began considering various strategies for building a sustainable fundraising mechanism to support their Green for Greens program, several options were on the table. Possible approaches included ongoing grant funding, aligning with other local fundraising and charitable giving efforts, or simply asking market supporters for money. The research team and market partners enlisted the help of Dr. LeGreco’s graduate-level seminar in Organizational Communication to vet some of the proposed ideas. Specifically, students researched a strategy that would have the Neighborhood Markets align with local fundraising and charitable giving



Photo © 2021 UNCC by Martin W. Kane.

**Vendors at the Corner Farmers Market connect with customers at their weekly Saturday market.**

efforts, primarily through the local chapter of Greensboro's United Way or through UNCC's employee-based charitable giving. The research ultimately concluded that these programs were not a good match for the Neighborhood Markets, and they provided insight that saved partners time and resources.

The second connection involves graduate-student support for summer research. The NCA-CCCC grant made it possible to hire graduate students to assist with research during the summer months, which is when both markets were most active, and COVID-19 was moderately-less risky. A challenge for university-community partnerships that operate around local food is maintaining that partnership during the summer months, especially when the university partners are off-contract during the summer and fewer students are enrolled in classes. Support from the NCA-CCCC enabled Dr. LeGreco to hire two graduate students to help with data collection and tracking and monitoring protocols for the Neighborhood Markets. The students' contributions led to a 2021 publication in *Frontiers in Health Communication* where the work done during COVID-19 stay-at-home order showed how the local food system could meet the needs of the community.

## Resilience

Growing Green for Greens focuses on Cultivating Resilient Communities by considering resilience as reimagining. People will always have to eat, and individuals and communities must consistently reimagine how to use the food and related resources available. Framing resilience as reimagining considers how communities reorganize existing partnerships and relationships to respond to community needs and times of crisis or uncertainty.

The core partners who worked together on Growing Green for Greens have a history of working together, which made their ability to shift focus when COVID-19 concerns arose more feasible. At the same time, partners must make sure not to become over-reliant on past networks in ways that exclude new voices, especially when those voices come from the individuals and communities who are most affected by disparities. Farmers markets and community markets are spaces where this reimagining of relationships and resources plays out in intriguing ways. At the Neighborhood Markets, many of the vendors are also community members and customers, and customers frequently build relationships with vendors to start new relationships and partnerships. As these stakeholders continue to blur



Market partners at the Corner Farmers Market and People’s Market and the research team responded to the pandemic with mask and social distancing policies, drive-thru ordering systems, and listening sessions with shoppers, farmers, and vendors in order to remain open and best serve the community.

Photos ©2021 UNCG by Martin W. Kane, Marianne LeGreco, and Elizabeth Perrill.

lines between customers and vendors, they can enact their resilience by reimagining the ways they can work together. In doing so, communities can also frame resilience as the process of building mutual aid networks and expanding a community or neighborhood's capacity to respond collectively to periods of uncertainty and need.

## Sustainability

The partnership between UNCG's Department of Communication Studies and the Neighborhood Markets was established specifically to address long-term sustainability of their SNAP-doubling program. This definition of sustainability speaks not only to the financial and economic sustainability of the markets themselves, but also to the capacity of the markets' respective neighborhoods to build infrastructure and create wealth, share narratives of food security and insecurity, and build mutual support networks to ensure their ability to remain nimble during periods of uncertainty.

As part of Growing Green for Greens, the research team collected data to get at this question of sustainability and its connection to resilience. The project included 25 individual interviews that were conducted through face-to-face, online, and phone conversations, as well as 55 online surveys. Both the survey and the interviews included questions to assess how/if participants' eating and shopping habits changed, as well as how the market responded to customer and vendor needs to access food.

SNAP/EBT users noted in personal interviews that the doubling program at the Corner Market helped sustain their food practices and meet their health needs during COVID-19 uncertainties. As one mom of a special needs child noted, "the program has been a gamechanger, because I'm able to get access to many of the gluten-free foods I need for my daughter." She spoke about noticing an immediate change in the supply chain when it came to gluten-free products, with some grocery stores having limited or no access when products sold out. The benefits provided to SNAP/EBT customers at the Corner Market were also illustrated in the survey data. Although only five of the 55 survey participants reported using SNAP/EBT, four of the five reported facing barriers to finding food. Their responses included "shortages

of stable items at grocery stores" from one SNAP/EBT customer, "general access to food I know I can pay with SNAP," from another, and even "using food stamps" from a survey participant who had recently become SNAP-eligible after losing employment due to COVID-19.

## Contributions and Lessons Learned

Perhaps the most important contribution from the Growing Green for Greens project is its illustration of the need to expand capacity through networking groups and organizations, particularly from community-based and more specifically neighborhood-based interventions.

By networking groups and organizations to generate neighborhood-based resources and relationships, communities can remain nimble when responding to needs or during periods of uncertainty. This notion of remaining nimble highlights how individuals and communities must reimagine relationships and reorganize resources to enact resilience. A final example comes from the recent need to relocate the Corner Farmers Market to a new "corner." Space limitations at their initial, and very popular, location created a need to move the market. Because of the strength of the neighborhood ties and support of the vendors, the market was able to move to a new location in a much larger space. The expansion allowed for an increase in the number of vendors, while still maintaining the social-distancing and safety practices in place for public safety from COVID-19.

Growing Green for Greens demonstrates the need for communication, dialogue, and capacity building around food security to begin now – or more to the point, several years ago. The value of existing relationships, ongoing infrastructure, and capacity building cannot be overstated, and that value was highlighted during COVID-19 and efforts to grow the Green for Greens support mechanisms.

---

**Faculty Researcher: Marianne LeGreco**

**For more information on this research project, contact:  
[melegrec@uncg.edu](mailto:melegrec@uncg.edu)**

## Growing Green for Greens with Neighborhood Markets, Inc.

[green4greens.org](http://green4greens.org)

### References

- Dutta, M.J. (2012). Hunger as health: Culture-centered interrogations of alternative rationalities of health. *Communication Monographs*, 79(3), 366–384. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03637751.2012.697632>
- Kim, Y.-C., and Ball-Rokeach, S.J. (2006). Civic engagement from a communication infrastructure perspective. *Communication Theory*, 16(2), 173–197. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2885.2006.00267.x>
- LeGreco, M., and Douglas, N. (2021). *Everybody eats: Communication and the paths to food justice*. University of California Press.
- LeGreco, M., Palmer, J., & Levithan, M. (2021). We still have to eat: Communication infrastructure and public health responses to COVID-19. *Frontiers in Health Communication*, 6, 185. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2021.707144>.
- Schraedley, M. K., Bean, H., Dempsey, S. E., Dutta, M. J., Hunt, K. P., Ivancic, S. R., LeGreco, M., Okomoto, K., & Sellnow, T. (2020). Food (in)security communication: A *Journal of Applied Communication Research* forum addressing current challenges and future possibilities. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 48(2), 166–185. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00909882.2020.1735648>



Photos ©2021 UNCCO by Martin W. Kane.



Photos ©2021 UNCCO by Marianne LeGreco

Vendors and customers share food at the People’s Market, while Corner Farmers Market Manager Kathy Newsom models a vendor-made mask.

# Greensboro Learning Circles

[library.greensboro-nc.gov/services/programs/learning-circles](https://library.greensboro-nc.gov/services/programs/learning-circles)

## The Project

Learning circles (LC) are free and open study groups for adults taking online courses together in-person or virtually. A facilitator, who does not need to be a content expert, coordinates conversations and logistics in these groups. The Greensboro Public Library (GPL) decided to bring this cooperative learning program to our city to expand educational opportunities to under-resourced patrons. Beth Sheffield, Adult Programming and Book Club Coordinator, led the initiative with five community members and eight librarians (Amy Bacon, Antuan Hawkins, Bebe Jallah, Beth Bowles, Courtney Duvall, Morgan Ritchie-Baum, Samantha Way, and Valerie Coll). These 14 individuals were involved in different capacities choosing the topics for their circles, promoting, and facilitating the groups.

The library worked alongside Peer 2 Peer University (P2PU), a non-profit organization committed to "creating and sustaining learning communities in public spaces" (Peer 2 Peer University, n.d.). Since 2015, P2PU has helped local organizations run learning circles in more than 20 countries. With resources from the NCA-CCCC grant, P2PU staff members supported GPL via virtual meetings and training sessions tailored to Greensboro's needs. The role of P2PU was most evident when the COVID-19 pandemic forced libraries to close their buildings and migrate their activities to virtual spaces. In response, the non-profit organization held working group sessions for six weeks for facilitators located in North America, Europe, and Africa. They created a handbook<sup>1</sup> freely available on the internet with ideas and best practices for hosting virtual learning circles. The working groups were just one piece in GPL's adaptation plan because they also had to coordinate actions at a local level. Yet, the P2PU community provided the knowledge that leveraged this transition.

In June of 2020, the Greensboro librarians ran a learning circle pilot via Zoom to test the model before launching it to the public. This experience was later included as a case study in P2PU's platform<sup>2</sup>. Next, they focused on recruiting racial minorities and under-resourced patrons who are statistically less likely to benefit from lifelong learning opportunities (Horrigan, 2016). The program was promoted through a brochure designed by UNCG Communication Studies students, email lists, social media<sup>3</sup>, ads in local newspapers, and P2PU's website<sup>4</sup>. In 2020, the library offered eight learning circles targeting adults<sup>5</sup> on racial justice, design thinking, creative writing, technical skills, and job development. In this first round, racially and culturally diverse individuals joined the study groups; however, at first, economically disadvantaged patrons did not enroll in the program because of pandemic-related challenges.

To expand the program's reach, Beth Sheffield actively worked with under-resourced patrons during 2021. She addressed barriers to their participation in the learning circles program, including lack of meeting spaces with an Internet connection, lack of childcare, and financial strain. To ease these issues, Beth collaborated with Partnership Village, which provides a transitional living community for homeless individuals and their families. Most of the meetings took place in a room within the non-profit's office area and followed CDC's COVID-19 protocols. The study groups covered topics related to wellness/self-care, and parents were able to bring their children to the meetings, given the nature of the discussions. Participants chose their learning circles topics using the Q Method<sup>6</sup>, a system developed by a P2PU staff member. Beth received support from P2PU through monthly virtual calls throughout the Fall semester of 2021. She also gave away grocery gift cards to ease participants' financial struggles. In addition to the groups at Partnership Village, the library offered a face-to-face

<sup>1</sup> The handbook is available at <https://www.p2pu.org/virtual-handbook>

<sup>2</sup> The Greensboro Public Library's case study is available at [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ycgBICOjVc1dWj3yktvOo\\_NjSDejN\\_J4-y-wLc1DpmE/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ycgBICOjVc1dWj3yktvOo_NjSDejN_J4-y-wLc1DpmE/edit)

<sup>3</sup> GPL's learning circles promotional video is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rj3GQg9X71U>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.p2pu.org/gpl/>

<sup>5</sup> The NCA grant focused on adult learners, but the library also ran a learning circle on computer coding that targeted children.

<sup>6</sup> More information on the Q Method can be found at <https://community.p2pu.org/t/q-method-for-documenting-community-interests/2699>



Photo ©2021 UNCG by Martin W. Kane.

**Participants in the Reading and Wellness learning circle meet to learn about topics related to wellness and self-care at Partnership Village, a transitional living community for homeless individuals and their families.**

learning circle on computer skills and four online ones on topics related to racial justice, American Sign Language, storytelling, and resilience.

The National Communication Association (NCA) sponsorship has enabled GPL to develop this project with the support of UNCG faculty and research assistants. In 2020 and 2021, they observed eight hours of virtual meetings and 45 hours of learning circle sessions. In addition, they surveyed or interviewed 19 learners and talked to 18 facilitators located in Greensboro (NC) and other cities as well as four P2PU staff members. This work resulted in two written reports with 27 recommendation points that informed the co-creation of a guide with facilitation strategies<sup>7</sup> in collaboration with P2PU. The reports also assisted with the development of P2PU's new website<sup>8</sup> and canonical documentation, the Knowledge Base, which consolidates all their previous informational resources and new content regarding online learning circles.

In the two years of the grant, the Greensboro Public Library laid the foundations of a new lifelong learning initiative that involved promoting the program, training facilitators, and cultivating relationships with other organizations, including UNCG, P2PU, and Partnership Village. The two primary outcomes of this work relate to increased access to lifelong learning opportunities among diverse and disadvantaged patrons in addition to forged connections beyond the geographical boundaries of Greensboro.

The number of participants fluctuated throughout the weeks in each learning circle, and approximately 65 individuals attended more than half of their study groups sessions. In 2020, half of the ten participants interviewed by UNCG researchers were African Americans or South Asian. In 2021, more than half of the nine surveyed participants were African Americans or Hispanic. In addition, two out of seven study groups in 2021 targeted explicitly under-resourced patrons. When looking at national statistics on lifelong learning (Horriggan, 2016), it is possible to notice that the Greensboro learning circles attracted a less likely

<sup>7</sup> The guide for facilitating peer learning is available at <https://docs.p2pu.org/facilitation/facilitation-basics>

<sup>8</sup> The changes on P2PU's website are outlined in this post <https://community.p2pu.org/t/welcome-to-the-new-p2pu/5464>

## Project at a glance

---

### An overview of outcomes 2020-2021

STUDY GROUPS	FACILITATORS	LEARNERS	OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
Online: <b>12</b> Face-to-face: <b>3</b> Duration: <b>4 to 6 weeks</b>	Librarians: <b>8</b> Community volunteer: <b>1</b>	Individuals who joined at least half of the study sessions: <b>65</b>	Online course: <b>1</b> (Art of Storytelling) Facilitation training guide: <b>1</b>

### An overview of research 2020-2021

OBSERVATIONS	INTERVIEWS	SURVEYS	RECOMMENDATIONS
Learning circle sessions: <b>45 hours</b> Project meetings: <b>8 hours</b>	P2PU community members: <b>18</b> Learners: <b>10</b> P2PU staff members: <b>4</b>	Learners: <b>9</b>	Progress reports: <b>2</b> Recommendation points: <b>27</b>



Photo ©2021 UNCG by Martin W. Kane



**A participant chooses topics for future learning circles.**

population to partake in these types of programs. Granted, most learners had at least a bachelor’s degree; however, the groups were still racially and intellectually diverse. Also, the library has been actively working on expanding the initiative among under-resourced populations in Greensboro.

Dr. Cris Damasceno and Olivia Biro identified the learning circles’ types of outcomes offered to GPL’s patrons. The findings of their evaluation highlighted that people could gain a basic grasp of the topics explored in their groups. Additionally, they could nurture skills to become self-directed learners, such as setting their own goals, finding relevant information, engaging in self-reflection, and adapting their learning strategies (Kirby et al., 2010). Their research showed that participants could nurture these skills because learning circle interactions prompted them to negotiate the

logistical aspects of their study groups, discuss concepts and apply course content. Self-direction is crucial in some types of educational settings, such as online courses, a trend that gained more relevance with the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings also revealed that learners shared personal stories, which strengthened intellectual diversity in the groups. In the interviews, most learners described racial, ethnic, age, cultural, and socioeconomic diversity as one of the main assets in their study groups. In fact, a local TV channel in Greensboro broadcasted a news story<sup>9</sup> on how learning circles were used to promote dialogue across differences.

In addition to outcomes for individual patrons, the learning circles project expanded GPL’s connections beyond the city’s geographical boundaries. P2PU cultivates an international community of facilitators that exchanges ideas and experiences through virtual calls, online forums, and in-person meetings. During the last two years, Greensboro’s public librarians shared their knowledge with other LC facilitators and learned from them as well. Moving forward, GPL can use P2PU as an innovation hub as the non-profit energizes their activities and vice-versa.

## Context

The Greensboro Public Library was founded in 1902 and has been serving its community for more than one hundred years. Currently, librarians in its seven branches work to fulfill the organization’s mission of providing “free and equal access to information, foster lifelong learning, and inspire the joys of reading” (Greensboro Public Library, n.d.). In Guilford County, only 36% of adults have a bachelor’s degree; therefore, the low level of access to higher education in the area highlights the relevance of informal educational opportunities for this community (United States Census Bureau, 2019). An annual report for 2019–2020 points out that GPL offered over 800 programs that attracted more than ten thousand attendees (Greensboro Public Library, 2020). Starting in 2020, Learning Circles became part of this portfolio of programs targeting adults, consequently helping to advance the library’s mission. In addition to responding to Greensboro’s local demands, the learning

<sup>9</sup> The Fox 8 news story is available at <https://myfox8.com/video/greensboro-public-library-holds-racial-equity-and-social-justice-challenge-learning-circle/6049733/>

circle model intersects with three trends in adult education for the 21st century. First, technologically driven and fast-paced socioeconomic changes have increased the need for lifelong learning. A Pew Research Center survey indicates that 73% of American adults identified themselves as lifelong learners (Horrigan, 2016). Second, the internet has allowed the proliferation of a commons-based peer production model in which people rely on loosely hierarchical structures to collaborate (Benkler, 2002). Third, since the mid-2000s, educators, non-profit organizations, private enterprises, policymakers, and governments worldwide have been involved in creating open educational resources, also known as OER (van Mourik Broekman et al., 2014). Taken together, these three trends inform the core characteristics of LC, a peer-based and OER-fueled lifelong learning project.

In synthesis, this contextual overview highlights that learning circles strengthen the Greensboro Public Library's role as a center for learning and responds to the needs of its patrons while also being relevant to international debates about the future of education.

### Education and Learning

The partnership between GPL, P2PU, and UNCG resulted in creating training materials for learning circle facilitators. After studying the project in Greensboro, the researchers were able to identify specific communication strategies to maximize interactions conducive to self-directed and lifelong learning. Thus, a UNCG faculty member, Dr. Cris Damasceno, and two research assistants, Olivia Biro and Doris Wesley, updated P2PU's facilitation guide with the creation of five new strategies, the renaming of existing strategies, and their categorization under overarching themes.

This university-community collaboration also resulted in a classroom assignment in an upper-division course in the Communication Studies Department, *Communication and Public Relations*. During the Spring semester of 2020,

Dr. Patrick Sawyer's students created a brochure to advertise the learning circles project to the public. The library's adult programming coordinator, Beth Sheffield, chose her preferred design and used it for marketing purposes. Furthermore, two GPL librarians developed resources for the project. Courtney Duvall created a course on the Art of Storytelling<sup>10</sup> on P2PU's platform, which is now free for anyone to use. Additionally, Amy Bacon created additional learning materials to complement the American Sign Language course used in her learning circle.

### Resilience as Learning Adaptability

Resilient individuals can adapt in the face of challenges (Houston, 2018), so we argue that lifelong learning competencies can contribute to adaptability in different educational settings. In other words, the ability to set goals, apply knowledge, engage in self-evaluation, locate pertinent information, and adapt learning strategies (Kirby et al., 2010) can prepare a person to adjust to different circumstances. These types of competencies can be developed through communication amongst members of a community of practice (Damasceno, 2018; Edwards et al., 2020). Our grant-related research activities revealed that learning circles opened possibilities for promoting resilience at the individual, group, and community levels:

#### Individual and group levels:

**Participants were able to negotiate logistics in their groups; describe, explain, and clarify course concepts; share resources with each other; apply course content through different types of activities. These interactions allowed them to nurture lifelong learning competencies in their learning circles. Our research suggests that while the learning circles model favors these interactions, facilitators can use specific communication strategies to energize conversations and maximize self-directed and lifelong learning.**

<sup>10</sup> The online course on the art of storytelling is available at <https://learningcircles.p2pu.org/en/signup/online-1744/>

## Greensboro Learning Circles

[library.greensboro-nc.gov/services/programs/learning-circles](http://library.greensboro-nc.gov/services/programs/learning-circles)

Photos ©2021 UNCC by Martin W. Kane.



### Community-level:

As the project evolves, GPL needs to train new librarians and community members who join the program because a vibrant network of facilitators constitutes the foundation of resilience for the library's community. Thus, it is crucial to offer professional development opportunities so new facilitators can properly apply P2PU's peer-based model and enact its core values.

### Sustainability

The learning circles project was designed with sustainability as paramount. The research team gave the library two written reports with recommendations and a training guide available through P2PU's platform. Additionally, all P2PU's resources, such as handbooks and promotional materials, are freely available on their website. P2PU also sustains a community of practice through online discussion forums and monthly calls that GPL can continue attending even after the grant period is over. Consequently, the library can efficiently train new facilitators as volunteers become involved with the project. Starting in 2022, all GPL librarians can submit a proposal to run a learning circle, which will allow them to run the program according to their availability and interests.

Running a project aligned with P2PU's peer-based philosophy is just one step towards sustainability. As Beth Sheffield noticed, it is crucial to remove barriers when working with under-resourced learners. During the grant period, she encountered challenges that ranged from lack of access to technology to financial struggles. Given the program's benefits to the Greensboro community, the library should further invest in technological access and other resources that librarians might need to reach their most vulnerable patrons.

**Beth Sheffield (top) leads a learning circle at Partnership Village. Throughout 2021, she actively addressed barriers to under-resourced patrons' participation in the program. Dr. Cristiane Damasceno (bottom) supported the project with evidence-based recommendations and materials.**

## Contributions and Lessons Learned

The research on the Greensboro learning circles initiative offers theoretical contributions to the field of communication and practical lessons to campus–community partnerships. The evaluation of the project suggests that there is an intersection between communication, lifelong learning, communities of practice, and resilience. In other words, the ability to be a lifelong learner is not innate but rather a set of competencies that can be nurtured through communication within communities of practice. These interactions can help individuals become more resilient learners who can establish their goals, locate pertinent information to solve problems and adapt to different situations. Future studies can further explore how individuals transfer these competencies amidst disruptive circumstances.

This project highlights the need to remove barriers to lifelong learning opportunities from a practical standpoint. Thus, when implementing educational initiatives, campus–community partners need to focus on the quality of their programs and enabling learning in the first place. For instance, the COVID-19 pandemic imposed significant challenges to the vulnerable populations that the library was trying to reach. Originally designed as a face-to-face program, learning circles were supposed to provide digital access and a network of support to GPL's under-resourced patrons. However, social distancing mandates forced the library to find new ways to reach these individuals when their buildings were closed. The main lesson learned from this experience was the value of connections that mutually provided the library and its partners with access to new ideas, resources, and support. This lesson highlights that collaborating with individuals *within* and *across* communities can strengthen resilience and that communication plays a central role in forging these connections.

---

Faculty Researcher: **Cristiane Damasceno**

For more information on this research project, contact:  
[csdamasc@uncg.edu](mailto:csdamasc@uncg.edu)

## References

- Bankler, Y. (2002). Coase's penguin, or, Linux and "the nature of the firm." *Yale Law Journal*, 112(3), 369–446. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1562247>
- Damasceno, C. S. (2018). New pathways: Affective labor and distributed expertise in peer-supported Learning Circles. *Communication Education*, 67(3), 330–347. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03634523.2018.1467026>
- Edwards, A. L., Sellnow, D. D., Sellnow, T. L., Iverson, J., Parrish, A., & Dritz, S. (2020). Communities of practice as purveyors of instructional communication during crises. *Communication Education*, 70(1), 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03634523.2020.1802053>
- Greensboro Public Library. (n.d.). *About us*. <https://library.greensboro-nc.gov/about-us/>
- Greensboro Public Library. (2020). *Annual report 2019–2020*. <https://library.greensboro-nc.gov/Home/ShowDocument?id=47320>
- Horrigan, J. B. (2016). *Lifelong learning and technology*. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewinternet.org/2016/03/22/lifelong-learning-and-technology/>
- Houston, J. B. (2018). Community resilience and communication: Dynamic interconnections between and among individuals, families, and organizations. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 46(1), 19–22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00909882.2018.1426704>
- Kirby, J. R., Knapper, C., Lamon, P., & Egnatoff, W. J. (2010). Development of a scale to measure lifelong learning. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 29(3), 291–302. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02601371003700584>
- Peer 2 Peer University. (n.d.). *About P2PU*. <https://www.p2pu.org/en/about/>
- van Mourik Broekman, P., Hall, G., Byfield, T., Hides, S., & Worthington, S. (2014). *Open education: A study in disruption*. Rowman & Littlefield International.
- United States Census Bureau (2019). *Quick facts Guilford County, North Carolina*. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/guilfordcountynorthcarolina>

# The Guilford Urban Farming Initiative: The St Phillip Garden of Peace and The Grove Market

[letsbegufi.org](https://letsbegufi.org)

## The Project

The Guilford Urban Farming Initiative (GUFi) is a new non-profit organization established by Paula Sieber in response to the food insecurity and food injustice that continue to affect low income and people of color communities in Greensboro, NC. GUFi's mission is to grow local and urban agriculture to improve community health and wealth and promote food justice and environmental justice.

Under this mission, GUFi has taken on two projects that the NCA-CCCC grant and faculty researcher Dr. Etsuko Kinefuchi supported. One was the establishment of a Saturday market (later named the Grove Market) on city-owned property in a predominantly Black community that is densely residential but lacks stores that carry fresh produce. This market was launched in June 2020 during COVID-19 when many businesses shut down or drastically reduced their operations. Despite (or perhaps because of) the shutdown, the market attracted steady traffic weekly. It ran through mid-December and returned in March 2021. GUFi's goal is to organize the market as long as the needs exist.

The other project, an urban farm, was launched in February 2021. This project was delayed for a year and a half due to the challenge of finding a suitable site. The originally secured site was too polluted to grow food without expensive and extensive remediation, a legacy of industrial facilities that used to exist in southeast Greensboro. This is the environmental racism history that deserves its own attention elsewhere. As GUFi was looking for a suitable site, the pastor of a small church, St Philip AME Zion, contacted Paula to ask if GUFi could help turn their unused half-acre lawn into an urban garden. GUFi mobilized over 500 volunteers since February and built a greenhouse, two dozen ADA appropriate raised beds, and composting bins, created an in-ground garden, and planted fruit and flower bushes for pollinators. Now named the Garden of Peace, this half-acre urban farm produced many vegetables in summer, including cucumbers, eggplants, tomatoes, melons, okras, beans, peas, herbs, radishes, corn, peppers, and more for the community members who need fresh produce. On August 21, 2021, GUFi and the

church held a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the establishment of the Garden of Peace. Greensboro's mayor and the City Council member who represents the district joined the church pastor and the leadership of the local AME Zion churches in cutting the ribbon.

## The Context

Food insecurity perpetually affects a large portion of U.S. Americans. In 2020, about 40 million Americans (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2021) experienced food insecurity, and it is more prevalent among people of color due to the combination of racial and socioeconomic injustice (Feeding America, n.d.). The latest study by the Food Research & Action Center (2018) ranks Greensboro as 14th in the country for food hardship. Following the national trend, this hardship is particularly pronounced in southeast Greensboro where the residents are predominantly Black and Brown and the household income is notably lower than the rest of the city. To address food hardship, the concept we hear often is "food desert," and much funding and effort across the country have gone into increasing access to affordable grocery stores. However, a recent study (Allcott et al., 2019) suggests that policy makers need to address nutrition inequality rather than simply geographical access to stores. What this further suggests is a more holistic approach to food justice. Karen Washington (food justice activist) states that, rather than "food desert," a more accurate and helpful concept is "food apartheid" because it directs attention to the whole food system, along with race, geography, faith, and economics (Lakhani, 2021).

Both of GUFi's projects were launched to help address the challenge of food injustice in southeast Greensboro. With the Garden of Peace, GUFi and the church aim to not only provide healthy food to the neighbors but also provide a space for educational opportunities (e.g., nutrition education, family/inter-generational cooking, urban farming professional development) and community building. With the Grove Market, GUFi intentionally recruited Black farmers and food entrepreneurs as vendors. This was important because, as in all other sectors, Black farmers were



Photo ©2021 UNCC by Martin W. Kane.

**The Guilford Urban Farming Initiative and St Phillip AME Zion Church are joined by the Greensboro mayor and the district's city council member for a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the establishment of the Garden of Peace on Aug. 21, 2021.**

systematically excluded from the federal programs, which reduced the number of Black farmers from one million in 1920 to 50,000 today (Lakhani, 2021). Thus, the market aimed to not only bring the market to the predominantly Black community but also support Black farmers. It is also significant that the land on which the market stands is the site of the 1979 Greensboro Massacre where five people marching for economic and racial justice were murdered by KKK and American Nazi Party members who came to disrupt the march. The weekly presence of the market draws attention to the history of systemic racism *and* presents the community as a vibrant site.

## Education and Learning

After much delay due to several social and environmental challenges, the urban farm project started with the MLK Day of Service. Volunteers gathered at a greenhouse of the Guilford County Farm to plant about 8,000 seeds. Then, the "un-lawning" (ground-breaking) ceremony occurred at St Phillip on February 28 to mark the beginning of an urban farm. The next couple of months, the preparation of the ground, building of the greenhouse and raised beds, and planting/transferring of the sprouts occurred at St Phillip. Through the spring and summer, volunteers gathered on Wednesdays and Saturday to take care of the garden, thinning, weeding, watering, harvesting, building more beds, and composting. The volunteers included UNCC and

other college students, as well as community members. For students, these activities have presented opportunities to increase literacy about vegetables, gardening, nutrition, the role community members play in each other's well-being and community-building, food and environmental justice, and more. The learning was sometimes embedded in the instructions volunteers received (e.g., how to tell if a melon is ready to be harvested; what weeds can go into the compost), and sometimes occurred while chatting and working (e.g., why the soil is not the best). Some of the regular volunteers were then able to share the learning with others when they served as the guides to take visitors around the garden on the day of the ribbon-cutting on August 21. Each activity and each interaction, no matter how small, served as a bifurcation point toward building a dialogic relationship and a better, more just social world (Pearce, 2007).

## Resilience

Research shows that a number of elements contribute to community resilience including "social connectedness and social capital; information and communication; and the ability to learn, solve problems, take collective action, and transform" (Pfefferbaum, Van Horn, & Pfefferbaum, 2017, p. 105). These elements are present in the project: in dealing with the challenges and in cultivating the partnership with the church; being reliably present in the community to build



**Volunteers (top and bottom) celebrate the establishment of the Garden of Peace. Both the Garden of Peace (middle left) and Grove Market (middle right) aim to address food injustice in Greensboro. The Grove Market features Black farmers and food entrepreneurs as vendors.**

trust and relationships; being open to learn and listen; and sharing information and exercising transparency. Resilience is thus not an end state but is a continuous practice.

Additionally, and importantly, hope has been an element of resilience. The idea of hope here is not the same as a wish or longing. It is action-oriented in the sense of *active hope* discussed by Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone (2012). Active hope is a practice that involves articulating the kind of world that we want to see and taking steps to move ourselves in that direction. With GUFi, active hope is what started the organization and is also an unstated value that undergirds its everyday work in the form of embodied ownership of the community. Community is a structure of belonging; it belongs to you and you belong to it, and this belonging comes with accountability (Block, 2018). Hundreds of volunteers have devoted over 1,000 hours of time to the garden alone. That also poses a continuing challenge to community-based projects like the ones GUFi has undertaken. It requires community members showing up, however they can, to work toward the common vision, and it takes ongoing coordination, collaboration, and an expanded sense of community that not only refers to the people who live in the neighborhood but also is inclusive of a network of diverse people and organizations.

## Sustainability

Sustainability typically addresses the balance and interconnectedness between the environment, social equity, and economics. UNCG's definition of sustainability adds another dimension, aesthetics, to stress the importance of ethics, values, and worldviews to the creation of a sustainable world. GUFi's projects have encompassed all four dimensions. Social equity is the driving force of its projects to address food insecurity and food justice. However, these problems are a manifestation of systemic economic injustice and insecurity as discussed earlier. Environmental wellbeing and environmental justice are also underlying concerns that the projects have indirectly addressed. Urban farms require healthy soil and water, which are not always easily found in southeast Greensboro due to the history of industrial

pollution – an environmental justice problem that needs to be addressed by the local and state governments as the needs for local production of food grow. Finally, engaging in community-based urban farming and the market transforms our aesthetics from those based on separation and individualism to those based on mutually enhancing relationships both between humans and between human communities and the natural world (soil, water, plants, etc.). The volunteers from all walks of life – different in racial and ethnic background, age, experience and skills – have come together at the garden and the market. They have engaged in conversations. These seemingly insignificant moments help to build social capital and a sustainable community.

## Contributions and Lessons Learned

Beyond the abundant possibilities and benefits that the community-based projects like the Grove Market and the Garden of Peace can bring, GUFi's work sheds light on several key principles for community-building. First, partnership is critical. GUFi cultivated the relationship with the City of Greensboro and other organizations through various previous events, meetings, and approaching them by articulating the shared vision of addressing food insecurity through localization of the food systems. These prior interactions helped to build a trusting relationship that GUFi was able to capitalize on for its growth. For example, the city allowed GUFi to use the city-owned property for the market for no cost. The Guilford County Farm allowed GUFi to use their greenhouse and resources to start the garden at St Phillip. These partnerships were fundamental to the launch of GUFi's projects.

Second, involving community members in planning and delivering the projects is essential. Community members must be part of the decision-making process if a community is to be just and sustainable (Agyeman, Bullard, & Evans, 2002). At the Grove Market, for example, the community participated in shaping the market in a variety of ways, including encouraging customers who live in the neighborhood to participate in the name-the-market competition, approaching an art class at the nearby high school to design the market

## The Guilford Urban Farming Initiative: The St Phillip Garden of Peace and The Grove Market

[letsbegufi.org](http://letsbegufi.org)

Photos ©2021 UNCG by Martin W. Kane.



**On a cold February 2021 day, volunteers “un-lawned” the yard of St Phillip AME Zion Church to prepare the ground for construction of a greenhouse (top). Youth volunteers create a spiral herb garden (bottom).**

logo, and nurturing multiple roles that residents could play in relation to the market (e.g., customers, vendors, volunteers). The impact of the market can be discussed in a few different ways. There are now dedicated volunteers who volunteer weekly. Encouraged by the regular presence of the market, the City of Greensboro hosted an event in August 2021 across from the market. The market has also put GUFi’s name on the map as an organization to go to for

food access programs. For example, by request, GUFi ran produce distribution programs during 2020 so people who were financially affected by the pandemic could have free access to fresh produce. This included a state-wide program (in partnership with the General Baptist State Convention of NC) that provided families 52,000 boxes of fresh produce purchased with the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) grant.

Third, community engagement is hard and never-ending. While it is relatively easy to solicit volunteers to help start a garden or market, engaging the community itself can be challenging. For example, the Garden of Peace had a steady supply of volunteers who were interested in farming, but connecting with the neighbors and the church members was a different story. In addition to press releases and social media feeds, flyers and door hangers were distributed around the neighborhood to encourage the residents to visit the farm for the ribbon-cutting event. The church leaders invited the congregation to the garden and encouraged them to volunteer. These efforts need to be continuously made without an expectation of prompt outcomes. The idea of providing free, organic fresh vegetables to community and church members in exchange for their volunteer or some other form of involvement sounds great. However, the community may not respond in ways hoped. People have different reasons for non-participation in a project like the garden; some may be too busy working and do not have time, some may not be interested in a garden at all, and others may not know how to be part of it because it is on someone else’s (church) property. These reasons need to be understood and respected, while at the same time pursuing creative ways to cultivate partnership opportunities with the community.

---

**Faculty Researcher: Etsuko Kinefuchi**

**For more information on this research project, contact:  
[e\\_kinefu@uncg.edu](mailto:e_kinefu@uncg.edu)**

## References

- Agyeman, J., Bullard, R. D., & Evans, B. (2002). Conclusion: Towards just sustainabilities: Perspectives and possibilities. In R. D. Bullard, J. Agyeman, & B. Evans (Eds.), *Just sustainabilities: Development in an unequal world* (pp. 323–333). Taylor & Francis Group.
- Allcott, H., Diamond, R., Dubé, J.-P., Handbury, J., Rahkovsky, I., & Schnell, M. (2019). Food deserts and the causes of nutritional inequality. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 134(4), 1793–1844. <https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qjz015>
- Block, P. (2018). *Community: The structure of belonging* (2nd ed.). Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Coleman-Jensen, A., Rabbitt, M. P., Gregory, C. A., & Singh, A. (2020). *Household food security in the United States in 2020* (Economic Research Report Number 298; p. 55). U.S. Department of Agriculture. <https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/102076/err-298.pdf?v=203.4>
- Feeding America. (n.d.). *Hunger in America*. Retrieved September 24, 2021, from <https://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america>
- Food Research & Action Center. (2018). *How hungry is America?* <https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/food-hardship-july-2018.pdf>
- Lakhani, N. (2021, May 25). 'The food system is racist': An activist used a garden to tackle inequities. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/may/25/karen-washington-garden-of-happiness-us-food-system>
- Macy, J., & Johnstone, C. (2012). *Active hope: How to face the mess we're in without going crazy*. New World Library.
- Pearce, W. B. (2007). *Making social worlds: A communication perspective*. Blackwell Publication.
- Pfefferbaum, B., Van Horn, R. L., & Pfefferbaum, R. L. (2017). Involving adolescents in building community resilience for disasters. *Adolescent Psychiatry*, 7(4), 253–265. <https://doi.org/10.2174/2210676608666180112123628>



# Beloved Community Center

[belovedcommunitycenter.org](http://belovedcommunitycenter.org)

## The Project

Organizing for truth and justice has guided the work of the Beloved Community Center (BCC) since its founding more than 30 years ago. The BCC's partnership with UNC Greensboro's Department of Communication Studies, funded by the NCA Center for Communication, Community and Collaboration, and Change (NCA-CCCC) brought university students, faculty, and community organizers together to both resist the structural inequalities that persist in our society and to work collaboratively to advance social change. We highlighted stories of injustice, and participated in community dialogues and protest actions in projects that express the community's desire for goodwill, fairness, peace, and dignity.

The BCC is recognized nationally as a leader in community-based, grassroots organizing. Their mission is rooted in Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s advocacy and struggle for racial and economic justice. The nonprofit develops and advances programs that empower people, especially minorities, by cultivating the skills, knowledge, and spirit that contribute to an inclusive community. At the core of this work is a recognition of the inherent worth and potential of all people. The BCC's programs through the years have included community organizing and coalition building for: Black and Brown Unity; Grassroots History; Voting Rights; Police Accountability; and Truth and Reconciliation.

This social justice approach to driving community change relies on collective action and community conversations that reveal how cultural, social, racial, gender, economic and political conditions are not pre-ordained but instead have been born of the choices and products of power relations. Thus, the research and programming with the BCC reflect commitments to critical reflection and authentic dialogue as part of the larger agenda to deepen the participation of ordinary people in our democracy.

Communication activism research (CAR) and pedagogy (CAP) are the academic anchors of this longtime campus-community partnership (Carragee & Frey, 2016).

Nearly 20 years ago, faculty researcher Dr. Spoma Jovanovic began offering courses and conducting research in support of the BCC's programs for racial and economic justice. Regular and continuing conversations since that time led to the most recent research activity that was a response to COVID-19 and historic race-based protests, as well as high-profile criminal justice episodes of concern. Of note is that during the grant period, the BCC secured substantial financial support from New Profit, a venture philanthropy organization, that compelled a slight shift in research to support an expansion of the BCC's local work into statewide programming for truth, healing, justice, and reconciliation.

The NCA-CCCC funding supported three initiatives at the BCC under the directorship of Joyce Hobson Johnson and Reverend Nelson Johnson. The first project was to improve and document the organization's communication outreach processes. To do that, grant funds were used to hire a recent college graduate as a paid intern for nine months, 2020-2021 (see story by UNCG MA student Jessica Clifford at <https://cccc.uncg.edu/2021/05/03/finding-her-role-in-the-community-bcc-intern-experiences-growth-in-her-position/>). The second project sought to answer the research question, what are the BCC's best practices and discourse features that lead to successful community organizing efforts. Dr. Spoma Jovanovic and UNC Greensboro graduate students collected field notes, stories, and data from a variety of community meetings and protests hosted over a period of two years. For the third project, faculty and students joined a community advocacy effort to develop public narratives surrounding the call for police accountability. The research also documented the media reports and community responses to the Greensboro Police Department's 2018 hogtying death of Marcus Deon Smith for inclusion in a federal police misconduct lawsuit. A student-produced graphic novel was written and illustrated to further expand community education efforts. The communication pieces are slated for continued use in the BCC's advocacy and community organizing programming.

## Research Process at a Glance

An overview of research 2020–2021



30	Hours of participant-observations at Community Tables
400	Community Table participants
30	Hours of participant-observations at protest events
200	Protesters
21	Hours of participant-observations at planning and community meetings
75	Community members

## The Context

The BCC believes that in our democracy the people have a right and the duty to freely express their views as civic agents (Jovanovic, 2021). In Greensboro, North Carolina, we have seen people do just that in nonviolent protest action that launched the Sit-In Movement in 1960 to integrate lunch counters. The Civil Rights and Black Power movements continued to activate direct, collective action in the city through the remainder of the 20th century (Jovanovic, 2012). Yet, questions of police (mis)conduct remained unsettled, most notably on November 3, 1979, when five protest marchers were shot and killed on a Saturday afternoon in a Black neighborhood by members of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) and American Nazi Party. The lack of police presence at what became known as the Greensboro Massacre, troubled the community, as did the fact that the police paid an informant to operate covertly within the local, white supremacist KKK group. Two criminal trials failed to secure justice, despite the visual evidence of wrongdoing captured by multiple television crews on the scene that day. None of the killers served time for their crimes (Jovanovic, 2012).

The Greensboro Massacre haunted the city. Even after 25 years, relations between Black and white people remained tense; trust in policing, local governance, and even interpersonal relationships plummeted, with ripple effects on social capital and the economy according to two comprehensive citywide reports by McKinsey and Company and Harvard University (Catanoso, 2001). In 2004, the BCC was a catalyst for the country's first truth and reconciliation commission that examined the causes, sequence of events, and consequences of the 1979 Greensboro Massacre. UNCG faculty and students documented the historic two-year effort involving an estimated 10,000 people. A 512-page Final Report prompted more than a decade of further dialogue, cooperative action, and recommendations for change in city priorities (Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2006).



**Dr. Spoma Jovanovic joins Joyce Hobson Johnson and Rev. Nelson Johnson to discuss what communication messages and strategies are needed to introduce a statewide truth, justice, and reconciliation process.**

In 2020 following the police killing of George Floyd that drew international attention, interest grew as well in Greensboro's crusade to bring justice to 38-year-old Marcus Deon Smith, a Black homeless man "who was suffering from a mental health crisis and was pleading to be taken to the hospital but was instead fatally hogtied by eight white Greensboro police officers" (Community Call for Truth and Justice letter, personal communication, September 2, 2021). The BCC continues as a lead convener in the collective action involving more than a half dozen other grass-roots groups, local churches, and human rights supporters.

These events in Greensboro's history showcase the relevance of the BCC's approach that democratizes activism by putting everyday people at the center of decision-making and relying on communicative practices that contribute to relationship building surrounding contested political matters (Bloch-Schulman & Jovanovic, 2010). At the same time, the BCC consistently stresses the value of including diverse stakeholders in all that they do, and thus invites elected leaders, government staff members, and nonprofit leaders to participate side-by-side with local activists and community organizers.

## Education and Learning

To advance the grant theme, Cultivate Resilient Communities, UNC Greensboro graduate students engaged with faculty in community-based research with the BCC. For the projects detailed here, students learned to, "focus on, stand against, and do something about social injustices that people experience" (Frey, Russell & German, 2020, p. 739).

*Wednesday Community Tables:* These weekly dialogues shifted in response to COVID-19 from face-to-face interactions with pot-luck lunches to Zoom sessions at noon. The long-standing Wednesday meetings maintained a focus on bringing together members of the local community—local activists, students, civic leaders, and people experiencing homelessness of all races and gender identities—and soon attracted attendees beyond the borders of the city. Members of social justice groups in other NC cities, and even those in other states were able to attend the BCC's gatherings in the newer, virtual format. These attendees hoped to learn from the BCC how to host similar events in their cities. Based on the BCC's use of nominal facilitation coupled with robust encouragement for everyone to speak openly, candidly, and with respect, discussion topics ranged from race relations and educational disparities

and accomplishments, to public safety concerns, current events, and voting. The research included analysis of field notes from participant-observations in the spring semester of 2021 to detail how the conversations unfolded, on what topics, and with attention to what values. Surveying of participants in 2022 considered how face-to-face and virtual Community Tables met participant needs for understanding pressing concerns, building trust among participants, and advancing collective, community action.

*Development of Public Narratives:* Stories of local community members were written based on interviews and participation at protests and community meetings in the fall semester of 2021. The stories were designed to showcase the voices of people standing against domination and oppression, a “form of engaged research that connects the communication discipline to significant social justice issues, to produce research that matters for the political moment in which we live” (Carragee & Frey, 2016, p. 3990). The stories documented incidents of police harassment and illuminated the grassroots organizing efforts to bring about policing changes, organized at the behest of the BCC in collaboration with the Greensboro Justice Coalition, the Greensboro Chapter of the NAACP, and the Greensboro Pulpit Forum representing Black churches. The narratives, along with the story collection process itself, yielded products to use locally and to be included in a training package for BCC’s statewide initiative on truth, healing, justice and reconciliation.

## Resilience

Acting to redress racism, as the BCC does, requires supporting resilience in the face of difficult political mobilization activity. Dismantling racism is complicated by the myriad ways in which it is normalized in our society. To be Black in America today is to be subject to voter suppression, jury rigging, mass incarceration, redlining, over-policing, employment discrimination, and health disparities. The list of injustices hardly stops there and the problems, where they exist, are hardly amenable to quick fixes as the BCC has witnessed through the years. Critical Race Theory (CRT) thus offers a useful lens by



Photo ©2021 UNCG by Marlin W. Kane.



**Joyce Hobson Johnson (above) explains that despite the impact of COVID-19, the BCC’s Wednesday Community Tables continued to bring residents together through Zoom to discuss current social and political issues. Rev. Nelson Johnson (bottom) welcomes community members to a Fall 2021 evening, “Storytelling for Movement Building” to witness and record stories of policing as told by community members hurt by law enforcement actions.**

## Beloved Community Center

[belovedcommunitycenter.org](http://belovedcommunitycenter.org)

which to view resiliency at the BCC where social justice is centered and the strengths of marginalized and vulnerable communities are amplified (De La Garza & Ono, 2016). CRT situates the Black experiences of resilience within a framework of cultural capital that is not deficient, but instead wealthy in six domains: aspirational capital, linguistic capital, familial capital, social capital, navigational capital, and resistant capital (Yosso, 2005). We find, for instance, that aspirational capital or the ability to maintain hope even in the face of recurring obstacles, is an essential feature of the activism and community organizing efforts promoted through the BCC. Even as the BCC pushes for change in city and policing policies, their linguistic capital includes critique to resist injustice at the same time it communicates optimism that Greensboro could be a model for the nation by nurturing people to walk together toward justice. Aspirational capital recognizes the faith in community members to build social capital and pursue social change as a bold and worthy effort. Navigational capital, the understanding of how to maneuver through social institutions permeated by racism, and resistant capital, the knowledge and skills needed to challenge inequality, are also core educational features of the BCC's activities.

### Sustainability

The BCC promotes intergenerational, interactional dialogues and actions, reflecting an understanding that social change arises and is sustained when people broaden their focus from specific problems to a greater concern for the well-being of the community. The BCC is actively building a broader base of what Amy Sanford (2020) calls a social justice consciousness by offering consistent, trusted spaces for communication and continuing opportunities for dialogue. The BCC's investment of time in the education and support for people who want to learn and grow, is steeped in history and stories that illuminate just and unjust practices.

Communication and sustainability are thus vital to the BCC's agenda. The BCC encourages messages that tap into the language of the heart to offer comfort to those in need and challenge to those in power. This sustainable design targets two goals simultaneously: to keep the conversation going and to hold accountable those who can make change happen. The BCC pursues truth and justice by using communication that is life-affirming, ethical, responsible, and authentic.

### Contributions and Lesson Learned

The Beloved Community Center presents activism as a hopeful demonstration that connects to the long history of social change efforts in this nation. Though success is not easily, swiftly, or even always achieved, the BCC has exercised persistence, patience, and knowledge combined with sustained collective action in securing important worker rights, the lessening of overt racial discrimination, stronger environmental protections, the celebration of sexual identities, increased focus on gender equity, and more accommodations for people with disabilities. In each of these cases, there has been progress despite lingering, persistent injustices. It is thus for each generation to continue the struggle that defines our democracy.

The BCC's work reflects a commitment to questioning injustices that are normalized in systemic structures and practices. Through education, dialogue, advocacy, and collective action, the BCC acts in ways to change the consciousness of the larger community. The BCC advocates respect for differing cultures and perspectives to build a broad-based citizen movement where empathy, fellowship, abundance, and love lead to a sustainable society for all (Hessel & Morin, 2011).

---

Faculty Researcher: **Spoma Jovanovic**

For more information on this research project, contact:  
**[s\\_jovano@uncg.edu](mailto:s_jovano@uncg.edu)**

## References

- Carragee, K.M., & Frey, L.R. (2016). Communication activism research: Engaged communication scholarship for social justice. *International Journal of Communication, 10*, 3975-3999.
- Catanoso, J. (2001, March 5). A shortage of trust means no vitality. *Triad Business Journal*. <https://www.bizjournals.com/triad/stories/2001/03/05/tidbits.html>
- De La Garza, A.T., & Ono, K. A. (2016). Critical Race Theory. *The International Encyclopedia of Communication Theory and Philosophy*, 391-399.
- Frey, L.R., Russell, V., & German, J. (2020). Communication activism for social justice research. In H.D. O'Hair & M.J. O'Hair (Eds.), *The handbook of applied communication research, vol. 2*, (pp. 731-746). John Wiley & Sons.
- Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2006). *Final report*. Available at <https://lib.digitalnc.org/record/26070?ln=en>.
- Hessel, S., & Morin, E. (2011). *The path to hope*. Other Press.
- Jovanovic, S. (2021). *Expression in contested public spaces: Free speech and civic engagement*. Lexington Books.
- Jovanovic, S. (2012). *Democracy, dialogue, and community action: Truth and reconciliation in Greensboro*. University of Arkansas.
- Sanford, A.A. (2020). *From thought to action: Developing a social justice orientation*. Cognella.
- Yosso, T.J. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race Ethnicity and Education, 8*(1), 69-91.



# Curricular Stories

Scaffolding classroom learning with the NCA-CCCC grantees exposed students to urgent, current community issues and events.

Students in our core, required classes attended and participated in many of the public events organized by, with, and for our community, including Democracy Tables, film screenings, special guest presentations, and workshops. The events provided students with the opportunity to connect their course concepts such as community, dialogue, and ethics through a variety of writing assignments to pressing community issues. Theory and practice were brought together in tangible ways!

For upper-level undergraduate courses, students deepened their understanding and practice of communication in ways useful to the community. Many had the unique opportunity, for instance, to put newly learned facilitation skills to work in guiding community conversations and presentations at academic conferences. Students also reviewed and edited transcripts of video interviews filmed of our community partner-research teams, and they wrote stories about our community partners suitable for use on digital media platforms.

Kudos were offered by our community partners to students

who prepared promotional materials for grant-sponsored, city-wide events. Similarly, the community offered much positive response to students who created and delivered innovative instructional modules on speaking and listening to support advocacy efforts by people who have historically been marginalized. As an example, students were particularly attentive to celebrating differences in their work with people with disabilities who have faced obstacles in efforts to secure positive social change.

All course assignments across more than a dozen different classes were supported with faculty instruction to meet the goals of community partners, while also connecting to course student learning outcomes and advancing the Communication Studies Department's mission, values, and commitments (see <https://cst.uncg.edu/about/mission-statement/>).

---

For more information on curricular and co-curricular connections and student projects, contact:  
**Roy Schwartzman, doc\_roy@uncg.edu**



Photos by Taylor Williams.

**UNC Greensboro students in the Department of Communication Studies participate alongside community members in the University Speaking Center's Let's Communicate program.**



Peacehaven Community Farm residents work with the UNCG University Speaking Center's students.

Photos by Taylor Williams.

# Publications, Presentations, and Publicity

## Publications

### Research Articles

Jovanovic, S., & Kinefuchi, E. (2021, October). Change comes from the margins: Sustainability efforts in community-campus partnerships. *AASHE's No Sustainability without Justice. 2021 Racial Equity and Social Justice Anthology*, 4-11. <https://www.aashe.org/racial-equity-social-justice/anthology/>.

LeGreco, M., Palmer, J., & Levithan, M. (2021, August). We still have to eat: Communication infrastructure and public health responses to COVID-19. *Frontiers in Health Communication*, 6, 185. doi: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2021.707144>.

### Evaluation Reports

Damasceno, C. S., & Biro, O. (2021). *Greensboro Public Library's learning circles: Evaluation report*. University of North Carolina at Greensboro. <https://go.uncg.edu/ncagrants.gpl>

Damasceno, C. S. (2020). *P2PU's COVID-19 pandemic working groups: Evaluation report*. University of North Carolina at Greensboro. <https://go.uncg.edu/ncagrants.p2pu>

## Presentations

### Regional and State Presentations

Bayer, D., Clifford, J., Cuny K.M., Damasceno, C., Jovanovic, S., Kinefuchi, E., LeGreco, M., Levithan, M., McCall, J.D., Palmer, J., Poulos, C.N., Sawyer, P., Schwartzman, R., & Simon, J. (2021, September). *Negotiating contested spaces amid COVID-19: Pathways for speaking out and civic engagement*. Two panels. Carolinas Communication Association conference. Virtual Conference.

Jovanovic, S., Schwartzman, R., Poulos, C. N., Simon, J. M., Kinefuchi, E., Damasceno, C. S., LeGreco, M. E., Clifford, J., Biro, O., Newsom, K., Sieber, P., Perkins, G., Johnson, J. H., & Sheffield, B. (2021, April). *Harboring hope: Communities, collaboration, and change*. Southern States Communication Association convention. Virtual Conference.

Perkins, G., Clifford, J., Jovanovic, S., & Poulos, C.N. (2021, October). *Democracy Tables: An Overview and Demonstration*. Smithsonian Affiliates Conference. Virtual Conference.

Schwartzman, R., Jovanovic, S., Poulos, C. N., Simon, J. M., Kinefuchi, E., Damasceno, C. S., & LeGreco, M. E. (2021, March). *Cultivating resilience and social change in Greensboro, North Carolina*. Eastern Communication Association convention. Virtual Conference.

### University and Local Presentations

Jovanovic, S., Johnson, J., & Pitts, L. (2019, October). History and reconciliation: A community symposium. Greensboro History Museum.

Kinefuchi, E. (2021, September). Sustainability at the Garden of Peace. Humanities Network and Consortium. UNCG.

LeGreco, M., Harmon, J., Southard, J., Nxumalo, Z., Richardson, H., & Bryant, M. (2021, April). You should do a podcast. Podcasting webinar. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hBJFDok7OSY>

Newsom, L. (2021, September). Responding to COVID-19 at the Corner Farmers Market: Creating an advanced ordering and drive-thru pickup program. Humanities Network and Consortium. UNCG.

## Publicity

### Web Presence

UNCG NCA-CCCC Website: <https://cccc.uncg.edu/>

UNCG NCA-CCCC Facebook Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/NCA-Center-for-Communication-Community-Collaboration-and-Change-112213753649129/>

### Podcasts

NCA Communication Matters Podcast: <https://natcompodcast.podbean.com/e/nca-center-for-communication-community-collaboration-and-change/>

### Media Coverage

UNCG Stories:

<https://news.uncg.edu/five-greensboro-based-community-organizations-receive-first-ever-uncg-funding/>

<https://news.uncg.edu/community-and-communication-projects-underway-with-superlative-grant/>

Forthcoming UNCG Research Magazine cover story. Available 2022.

Democracy Tables:

<https://news.uncg.edu/greensboro-history-museum-democracy-tables/>

<https://www.greensboro-nc.gov/Home/Components/News/News/15657/>

[https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch\\_permalink&v=610940720304541](https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&v=610940720304541)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_wnx-rxPfpG](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_wnx-rxPfpG)

#### Learning Circles:

<https://www.greensboro-nc.gov/Home/Components/News/News/15647/36>

[https://www.yesweekly.com/education/library-offers-learning-circle-on-social-justice-and-racial-equity/article\\_e78cad1e-1883-11eb-b782-e7410f9f4ad2.html](https://www.yesweekly.com/education/library-offers-learning-circle-on-social-justice-and-racial-equity/article_e78cad1e-1883-11eb-b782-e7410f9f4ad2.html)

#### Green for Greens:

[https://greensboro.com/gallery/featured/photos-grove-street-peoples-market/collection\\_8c5d1c89-55ea-532f-8276-95ac702ad788.html#1](https://greensboro.com/gallery/featured/photos-grove-street-peoples-market/collection_8c5d1c89-55ea-532f-8276-95ac702ad788.html#1)

[https://greensboro.com/news/local/the-corner-farmers-market-in-lindley-park-moves-to-a-new-bigger-home-this-weekend/article\\_524a7d00-ebd0-11eb-9299-6be3903f8743.html](https://greensboro.com/news/local/the-corner-farmers-market-in-lindley-park-moves-to-a-new-bigger-home-this-weekend/article_524a7d00-ebd0-11eb-9299-6be3903f8743.html)

#### GUFU Garden of Peace:

<https://www.rhinotimes.com/news/greensboro-getting-a-new-garden-of-peace/>

<https://www.peacemakeronline.com/the-garden-of-peace-and-community-farm-opens/>

#### Beloved Community Center:

<https://www.greensboro-nc.gov/Home/Components/News/News/14171/>

[https://www.yesweekly.com/education/greensboro-history-museum-event-history-reconciliation-a-community-symposium-oct-26/article\\_70214ea2-becd-5dec-aad4-4a2c9389d969.html](https://www.yesweekly.com/education/greensboro-history-museum-event-history-reconciliation-a-community-symposium-oct-26/article_70214ea2-becd-5dec-aad4-4a2c9389d969.html)

#### Videos

Jovanovic, S., Frierson, M. (2021). Cultivating resilient communities. Twelve videos featuring UNCG faculty researchers, Greensboro community partners, and a UNCG graduate program coordinator. <https://cccc.uncg.edu/>

UNCG Speaking Center (2020). *Let's Communicate*. Season 1, Episodes 1-5 and Season 2, Episode 1. <https://speakingcenter.uncg.edu/services/lets-communicate>

## Related Works

### Publications

Salah, A. (2021). Speaking center consultants' potentiality as community job coaches for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. *Communication Center Journal*, 7(1), 124-126. <http://libjournal.uncg.edu/ccj/article/view/2205>

Schwartzman, R., Forslund, E., Bolin, C., Thomas, A., Pettigrew, E., & Ray, R. (2020). Communication centers as wellsprings of community engagement and collaborative research. *College Student Journal*, 54(2), 187-198.

Thomas, A. (2020). The impact of community involvement on student development in the center. *Communication Center Journal*, 6(1), 116-118. <http://libjournal.uncg.edu/ccj/article/view/2078>

### Presentations

Communicating Leadership Class (2021). 8 Workshops Designed and Facilitated by 26 undergraduate students. 4th Annual UNCG LINC Conference. <https://sites.google.com/uncg.edu/linc/live-conference-workshops>. Virtual.

Thomas, A. (2021). Coaching Adults with Developmental and/or Intellectual Disabilities: A Contemporary Communication Center Practice. Excellence at the Center Conference. National Association of Communication Centers. Virtual.

Thomas, A., Lipscomb, A., Villano, M., Niclos, S., Ferraro, B., & Ypema, S. (2020). Let's Communicate, *Excellence at the Center Conference*. National Association of Communication Centers. Virtual.

### Publicity

Communicating Leadership Class (2021). *NCA-CCCC Community partner and research faculty profiles*. Eight stories co-authored by 26 undergraduate students. <https://cccc.uncg.edu/>

Woods, C. (Host). (2021, November). *The big rhetorical podcast*. Episode 83. <https://anchor.fm/the-big-rhetorical/episodes/Episode-83-Dr--Roy-Schwartzman-e19uo34?fbclid=IwAR2Wnncsn9xpl0ZETS8NqaT2kYCVbnES7GdwOIDx9I7pVc2Kvb5pAYk7lps> (22:44 timestamp)

<https://uc.uncg.edu/magazine/newsfront/fridays-at-the-farm-with-speaking-center/>



**From left to right:** UNCG Communication Studies Professors Dr. Marianne LeGreco, Dr. Cristiane Damasceno, Dr. Christopher Poulos, Dr. Spoma Jovanovic, Dr. Jenni Simon, Dr. Etsuko Kinefuchi, and Dr. Roy Schwartzman

**UNC Greensboro Department of Communication Studies**

Inaugural NCA-CCCC Host Institution, 2019-2022

[cst.uncg.edu](http://cst.uncg.edu)

