

"What's your most memorable contribution to Louisville?"



Words by me, Josh Moss, editor of Louisville Magazine

IMAGINE IT'S YOUR JOB TO GIVE LOUISVILLE A PERFORMANCE REVIEW.

IN A WORD, WHAT DO YOU WRITE ON THE LINE FOR "NEEDS IMPROVEMENT"?

I asked that question about a year ago to a group of us in Louisville — actually, more like a group of groups (based on our locations, vocations and avocations) — that we've been assembling at the magazine.

Folks tended to respond one of six ways, and the (uncomprehensive) list looks like this:

-Affordable housing/homelessness

- -Downtown
- -Education
- -Gun violence
- -The Ninth Street Divide between the East and West ends

-Policing

I always give people space to share a bit more whenever I ask a question that needs a one-word answer, and for that one about "Needs Improvement," when they opened up, I noticed the same word again and again...

SOLVE.

"A new police chief will not **SOLVE** the problems within LMPD."

"How can the community **SOLVE** this problem of gun violence?"

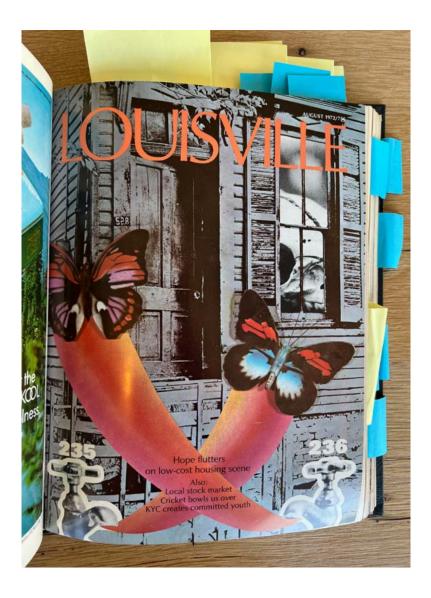
"Criminalizing homelessness won't **SOLVE** the problem."

"We have to **SOLVE** the problem of safety and security in the downtown business district, particularly the Broadway area."

"...seems like such a complicated problem to **SOLVE**."

Two of those words — *complicated problem* — had me revisiting some past covers in the *Louisville Magazine* archive. Didn't take long to find a history of "Needs Improvement."

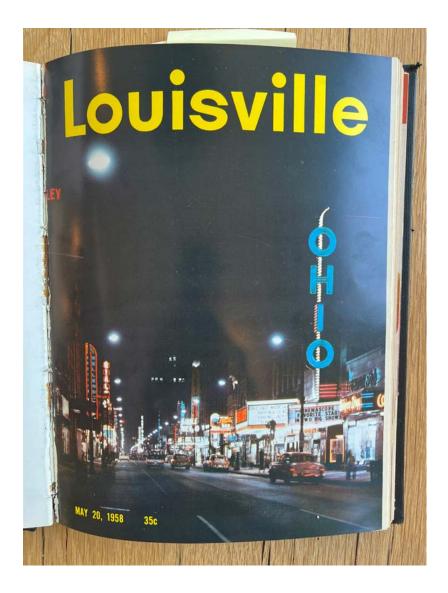
AFFORDABLE HOUSING/HOMELESSNESS



August 1972

"Hope flutters on low-cost housing scene."

DOWNTOWN



May 1958

"Fourth Street, the heart of Louisville, has its problems, along with the downtown streets of all major cities."

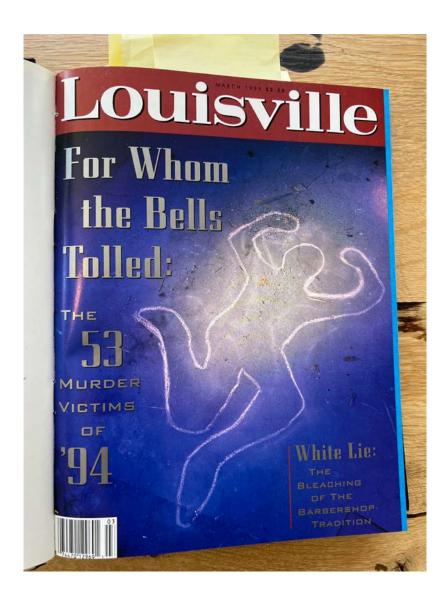
EDUCATION



August 1980

"Public education: passing or failing?"

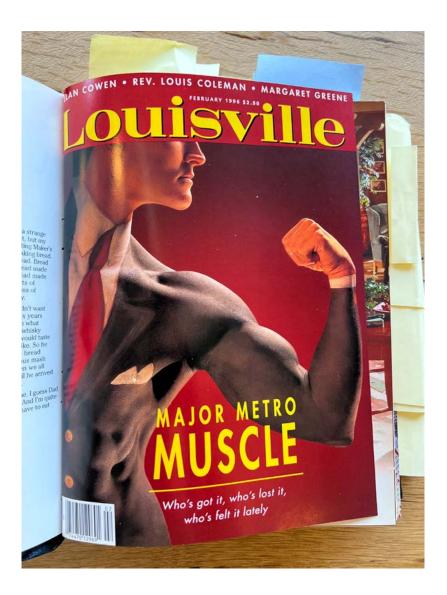
GUN VIOLENCE



March 1995

"Fifty-three people were murdered [34 of them shot] in the city of Louisville in 1994. That is to say: 53 human beings ranging in age from two months to 86 years, people who might have been our neighbors today, are in their graves instead."

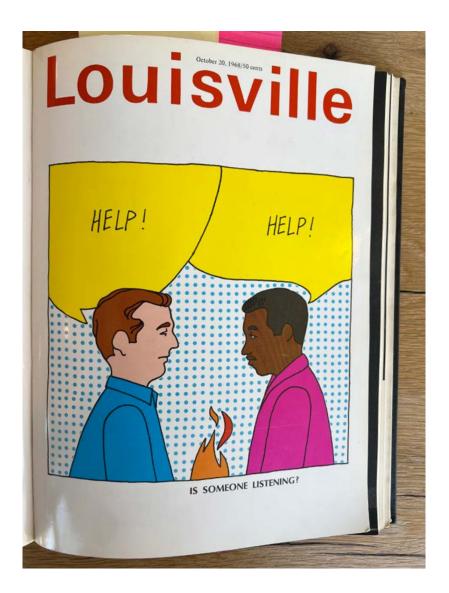
POLICING



February 1996

The cover theme (complete with, for some reason, a body-painted model) about power in our city — "Who's got it, who's lost it, who's felt it lately" included a piece about the Rev. Louis Coleman, the activist who demanded "that the Louisville police department fire all officers involved in the recent stakeout and near-shootout at the home of a black police captain who reportedly had been mistaken for a drug dealer."

WEST END-EAST END



October 1968

"Is someone listening?"

Depending on the decade, year, month, day — with all of these complicated problems — sometimes our city takes steps forward, other times steps back. But we haven't done much *solving* in the time since we've published those covers. This magazine has been around for 75 years, since March 1950, and if I had to make a prediction, I'd guess that Louisville will still be dealing with these complicated problems for days, months, years, decades to come — for the next 75 years and beyond.

Has me wondering: What if we stopped emphasizing the all-or-nothing *solve*? What if, as a city, we instead acknowledged that these are difficulties we always have been, are and will be dealing with?

INSTEAD OF *Solving,* what if we approached the questions of progress by asking:

HOW CAN WE GET A LITTLE BIT BETTER THIS YEAR?

One group I talked with recently, Impact100 Louisville, is doing work to make our city a bit better.

Here are just some of the members who answered our questions about giving.



Abramson



Boland



Achland



Brehm



Barker



Bridgewater



Bensinger



Champagne



Davidson



Donahue



Dryden



Duncan



Durham



Gentry



Freibert



Gianelloni



Friedman



Goldstein



Gallagher



Greenwell



Youngblood

11

Impact100 began in Cincinnati in 2001 and now has more than 60 chapters throughout America, plus in London, New Zealand and Australia. The idea is that at least 100 women each give \$1,000 annually, pooled together for a \$100,000 grant.

The local chapter's quick backstory: Six years ago, Dani Kannapell was in her late 70s, wintering in Florida, when she received an invitation to an Impact100 event there. She declined. The next winter, she got two more invites. This time, she decided to check it out. When she got back to Louisville, she began reaching out to some friends about a possible Impact100 chapter in our city, and that fall, 13 women attended the first meeting at her home, followed by more open houses. Seven months later, they had 206 members. Kannapell who worked as a high school teacher, in marketing at Humana and as the executive director of the Main Street Association, and who founded a Spanish school for adults — has said, "I thought I was retired until I learned of Impact100."

Kannapell, who co-founded the chapter with her daughter, Carey Goldstein, has also said that Impact100's national founder, a woman named Wendy Steele, "believed THERE HAD TO BE A BETTER WAY FOR WOMEN TO BE PHILANTHROPIC OTHER THAN AGREEING WITH THEIR SPOUSE'S CHOICES. WOMEN THINK DIFFERENTLY, CARE DIFFERENTLY AND, SHE THOUGHT, WOULD GIVE DIFFERENTLY."

AND THEY HAVE...

The Louisville collective has given 30 grants totaling \$2,058,000. That first year, 206 women donated \$206,000. Last year, 529 members gave away \$529,000 — so five \$100,000 grants, plus the residual \$29,000 distributed as a series of smaller "merit grants." (I like how some of the women have attributed Impact100's local growth to connections, to "great friends reaching out to their great friends reaching out to their great friends.")

Many of the grant recipients are doing work, directly or indirectly, related to those difficulties we have been, are and will be dealing with as a city. Uniting Partners for Women and Children related to homelessness. YouthBuild for community work in Smoketown. The Louisville Urban League for programming for kids at its track-and-field complex. The Parks Alliance of Louisville for JCPS outdoor spaces. Educational Justice, Smoketown Family Wellness Center, West End School, Developing Educated Leaders Through Athletics, Backside Learning Center at Churchill Downs, and many others.

I wanted to know what this work has taught members about how Louisville can improve.

And to get at some of that, Louisville Magazine, in collaboration with Impact100, asked members a series of questions:

WHAT'S THE BIGGEST MISUNDERSTANDING ABOUT THE WORLD OF PHILANTHROPY IN LOUISVILLE?

WHAT'S ONE THING YOU'D RECOMMEND TO IMPROVE THAT WORLD?

AND WHAT'S ONE THING YOU'D DEFINITELY WARN AGAINST?

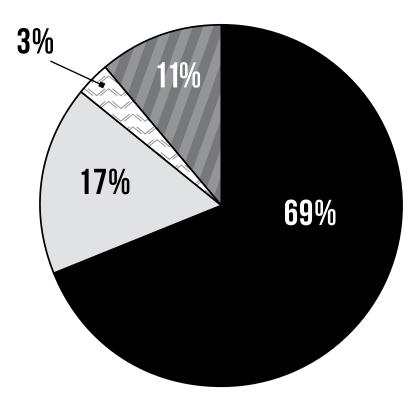
WHAT'S ONE IDEA THAT'S PROBABLY RIDICULOUS BUT YOU WONDER IF IT JUST MIGHT WORK?

And to start, a multiple-choice question...

ON A SCALE OF 1 (AS UNGENEROUS AS CAN BE) TO 5 (AS GENEROUS AS CAN BE), HOW GENEROUS ARE LOUISVILLIANS WHEN IT COMES TO GIVING?

Here's how they answered:

ON A SCALE OF 1 (AS UNGENEROUS AS CAN BE) TO 5 (AS GENEROUS AS CAN BE), HOW GENEROUS ARE LOUISVILLIANS WHEN IT COMES TO GIVING?



69% ANSWERED 4 OR 5.

17% ANSWERED 3 (SOMEWHERE IN THE MIDDLE).

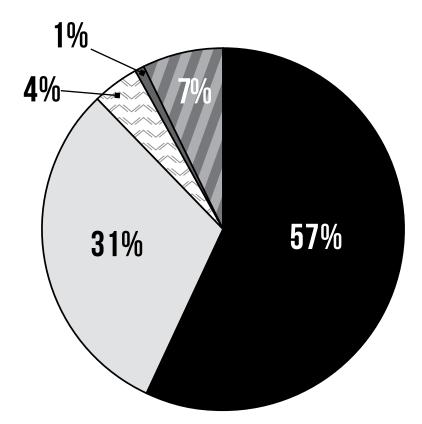
3% ANSWERED 2, AND NOBODY ANSWERED 1.

11% WEREN'T SURE.

ALMOST 70% ANSWERING 4 OR FIVE MIGHT BE EXPECTED FROM Women Who've each committed to giving away \$1,000 Every year.

So, for comparison, I asked that same multiple-choice question to that citywide group of groups that we've been building.

ON A SCALE OF 1 (AS UNGENEROUS AS CAN BE) TO 5 (AS GENEROUS AS CAN BE), HOW GENEROUS ARE LOUISVILLIANS WHEN IT COMES TO GIVING?







31% (COMPARED WITH 17%) ANSWERED 3.

4% ANSWERED 2.

1% ANSWERED 1.

7% WEREN'T SURE.

SO A SMALLER PERCENTAGE PICKED A NUMBER ON THE "As generous as can be" end of the spectrum, and a larger percentage, almost double, picked 3 (somewhere in the Middle).

People shared...

...SOME OPTIMISM...

"I see a lot of folks who wouldn't be considered traditional philanthropists or donors whose names pop up on every crowdfunding campaign. When someone's dog needs surgery or someone's house burns down, these folks, who don't have a ton to give, give what they can."

"As the principal of a private high school that relies heavily on the spirit of giving, I have found Louisvillians to consistently come through for us, in every way. They show up, they work, they write us those checks."

"I'll go with 4," one person said. "That's my TWAG — tactical, wild-ass guess. With lots of observations of Louisvillians giving in many ways."

...and shared more in the spirit of ...

..."IT'S COMPLICATED"...

"One problem is the number of big donors is small, so every organization barks up the same trees."

"Large corporate partners don't seem to give and invest in the community like they used to. For example, the former Humana Festival of New American Plays at Actors Theatre. That puts more responsibility on individual giving."

"Louisville has people who seem to give it ALL, and people who give nothing. The two groups almost cancel each other out, making it hard to take steps forward." Steps back. Steps forward. Steps back. Steps forward.

One way I've been trying to better understand Louisville's complicated problems is by asking the same multiple-choice question every so often — because the responses are interesting on their own but also over time and in comparison with past answers.

In February, I asked the citywide group:

COMPARED WITH THE END OF LAST YEAR, HOW DO YOU THINK OUR CITY IS DOING SO FAR THIS YEAR?

-WE'VE TAKEN TWO STEPS FORWARD

-ONE STEP FORWARD

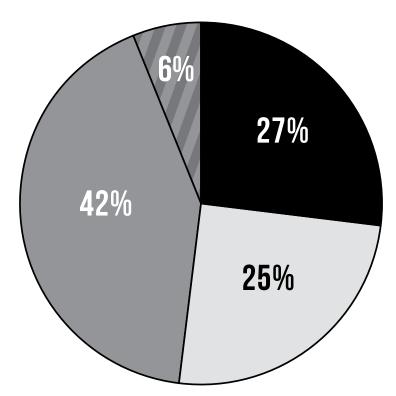
-MORE OR LESS STAYED IN PLACE

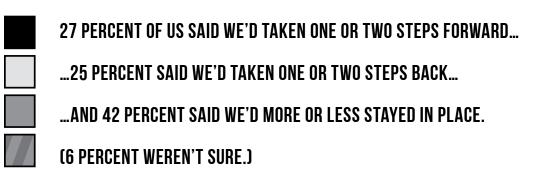
-ONE STEP BACK

-TWO STEPS BACK

-NOT SURE

Sometimes the percentages fluctuate, but the answers this time more or less resembled what I've gathered in the past: Roughly the same percentage of people tend to think we're taking steps forward vs. taking steps back.





The reasons people say we've taken steps back almost always have to do with those difficulties we face. JCPS and busing. Another new LMPD chief. Homeless camps cleared in time for Derby. The mass shooting at Old National Bank. Humana leaving its downtown tower.

But in February, when I asked the multiple-choice question, I noticed a theme in the answers...

Now, people were worrying about how national change will play out locally — especially among our city's nonprofits.

"With so much upheaval at the national level, it's a challenge to focus on local issues," one nonprofit executive director shared.

"Louisville is welcoming to refugees and immigrants and remains so despite the current political climate. I hope that continues to be the case."

"Any pause or change to federal funding will have dire consequences for the nonprofit community."

"Some of our nonprofits won't survive this."

"I have many colleagues and friends whose livelihoods are at stake as their positions are grant-funded and they won't be paid." Jefferson County has 1,159 nonprofits, 873 of them of the charitable variety (so excluding, for example, chambers of commerce), per the Kentucky Nonprofit Network. They do lots of complicated-problems work.

And as they deal with seemingly inevitable and accelerated change, particularly if that change is related to funding, I wondered: In what specific ways will Louisville need to do better? How does Louisville make up for a potential (almost certain?) reduction in federal funding? Or maybe not "how does." Just — "does."

Does Louisville — as a city, as foundations, as groups, as individuals — step up?

IMPACT100 SHARED SOME WISDOM ABOUT THE WORLD of Philanthropy in Louisville, shedding light on some "It's-complicated" tensions and themes.

FIVE THINGS THAT KEPT COMING UP:

-GET YOUNG PEOPLE GIVING

-ADDRESSING SYMPTOMS VS. SYSTEMS

-SUPPORTING ESTABLISHED NONPROFITS VS. Grassroots

-DONORS BEING TOO MEDDLESOME VS. TOO TRUSTING

-ENCOURAGE NONPROFITS WITH SIMILAR MISSIONS TO COLLABORATE (OR EVEN CONSOLIDATE)

GET YOUNG PEOPLE GIVING.

"We should work to create more opportunities for young people to serve on boards, making it the norm rather than the exception. Starting board service early helps dismantle the traditional notion that board members must only be experienced professionals or people of significant status. Opens the door for fresh perspectives and diverse leadership."

"Love the idea of Junior Impact."

"In elementary, middle and high school — public and private, each and every year — have a six-week course on philanthropy."

SYMPTOMS VS. SYSTEMS

Folks tended to answer one of two ways, either like this...

"Sometimes all we can do is address the crisis, the immediate need."

...or this...

"I'd definitely warn against Band-Aid help. Let's get to root causes."

ESTABLISHED VS. GRASSROOTS

Answers like this...

"Give to those with a proven record over a long period of time."

...or this...

"Don't just give money to the 'big' organizations, to those with the high admin costs. There are so many small but mighty orgs that are doing great work. Just think: All of those big organizations started small too."

TOO MEDDLESOME VS. TOO TRUSTING

Like this...

"A lot of people here think that for a very small donation they get to tell an organization what to do. We must trust that they know how best to spend donations. Enough already with the intrusive oversight."

...or this...

"Nonprofits need a clear, sustainable vision and measurable outcomes. Report on how they use the money."

COLLABORATION (OR EVEN CONSOLIDATION)

"Too many organizations doing the same thing. Might some mergers make sense?"

"We see a lot of overlap in the work nonprofits are doing. I would love to see more collaboration between them, but, unfortunately, most organizations don't have the time, money or staff to create those connections."

"One central body — such as the Center for Nonprofit Excellence or the Community Foundation of Louisville — should take a 10,000-foot view of all Louisville nonprofits and connect those that are similar. There seem to be hundreds of small nonprofits that are so closely aligned in their goals that they could be combined into one organization and eliminate the competition for the same limited dollars."

"Shared financial- and people-resource pools that service across small organizations. This could be an accounting nightmare, but wouldn't it be great if, when a group has a crisis or staffing challenge, they have other nonprofits with bandwidth to step up and help?"

"Not all organizations and programs should or will survive."



Thinking about these themes and tensions, I reached out for some perspective from Ann Coffey, who stepped down as CEO of the Center for Nonprofit Excellence in 2023 — a role that had her between the worlds of nonprofits and donors.

Over Zoom, she finished my first question for me.

I had a meeting the other day with somebody from Louisville's nonprofit world, and a theme that came up was not necessarily that we have too many nonprofits, but it was this idea of...

Ann Coffey: "Duplication."

Yeah, and a potential merging of nonprofits with overlapping missions.

AC: "Yeah. I don't feel that way. That's always driven me nuts. And I think it's donor insecurity that does that. Maybe I'm wrong. It's hard work to pick one nonprofit over another one; donors have a difficult job. This may be where the idea of too much duplication comes from.

"Why would you ever stifle the human spirit that wants to help their community? Nonprofits, they're popping up because something is not being addressed. Blaming it on the people trying to create a solution is not helpful. We don't say: *There are too many businesses*."

Have you had any sort of clarity, any "aha" moments, about the Louisville nonprofit world in the time since you left your role at CNPE?

AC: "When I walked out of there, I thought: In a few months, I'm sure I'm going to feel rested and find some peace and some clarity, and be ready to jump back in and coach nonprofit leaders or play a role. And the longer that time span started to grow, the less and less interested I became."

Can you talk about that?

AC: "I just really didn't want to step back into that system. There's something about it that is, for people like me — people who just get in there and give everything they've got because they believe so deeply in the mission — there's something about it that is deeply exhausting. There are many beautiful things about that world, but that system, there's something broken about it, and I can't put my finger on it."

Are there specific things about the system you've identified as broken?

AC: "I think there is a general disconnect and mutual misunderstanding of the needs of our communities and how those needs need to be addressed. Some of the things that concern me are the frameworks, the mental models that we use to think about our responsibility as philanthropists and donors.

"Oftentimes, the funders, they're business-oriented, they're data-driven. Now, some people that I absolutely love and respect and adore think data is everything, and that data should drive all our decisions. And I say: Use it, look at it. But it is one piece. Unless you're in that field, nobody knows how that organization ought to spend those funds better than the people within the organization." A tension that came up among the Impact100 members was this idea of supporting larger, established nonprofits versus smaller, grassroots organizations.

AC: "They both have lots of value in different ways. The large organizations, if done well, have systems and efficiencies and expertise that are needed. Natural disasters, for example. And I think the more local, the better.

"But you need a balance of both, depending on what we're doing. COVID taught us that the local, smaller groups — whether they were nonprofits or just local relationships that have connections — drove the services, delivered the medicines, made sure people had food, rent. In an instance like that, organizational structures help with larger numbers." A quick break from this convo, because something Ann said there — "local relationships that have connections" — reminded me of how members of Impact100 answered this question:

IN A WORD, FILL IN THE BLANK:

IN LOUISVILLE, _____ = POWER.

The word cloud looks like this...

IN LOUISVILLE,

= POWER.



Every single time we've asked this question — to the west Louisville nonprofit Russell: A Place of Promise, to the Urban League, to South Louisville Community Ministries, etc. — *community* and *connections* are always the top answers, with *money* up there too (and a handful of people tending to specify: *old money*). With Impact100, most people used *connection* and *connections* synonymously, but instead of merging them for the word cloud, I wanted to include both — to represent how folks tend to think of *connection* in the coming-together sense, and how some use *connections* in the who-you-know sense.

OK, back to my convo with Ann...

I asked this to the members of Impact100 and wanted to ask you too: What's one idea that's probably ridiculous — but you wonder if it just might work?

AC: "Sixty percent of philanthropic boards,foundation boards, should be nonprofit professionals— leaders who've worked for and run nonprofits."

How drastic of a change would that be?

AC: "It would be a whole different conversation. The majority of philanthropic boards, foundation boards, are businesspeople. Most of them don't understand the dynamics of running a nonprofit."

And why do you think that is?

AC: "It's a different business, with a different mission. Only one of them is founded on serving community. The mentality that works when you're trying to make more money isn't the same as when you're trying to help people." Toward the end of the Zoom call, Ann Coffey said, "The only thing that inspires me about stepping back into this space is somehow being part of building a culture of generosity. How do we change the way people think about giving?"

Back in 2020, in the thick of the pandemic, Ann Coffey co-authored a column in Business First, challenging all of us, citing Louisville's "relatively low giving by individuals."

She wondered:

WHAT COULD OUR CITY LOOK LIKE IF RESIDENTS OF THE 502 PLEDGED TO GIVE AWAY 5.02% OF THEIR INCOME?

Which brings me back to that multiple-choice question I asked earlier:

On a scale of 1 (as ungenerous as can be) to 5 (as generous as can be), how generous are Louisvillians when it comes to giving?

Asking that question prompted one person to reply with one of her own:

"WHAT'S YOUR MOST MEMORABLE CONTRIBUTION To Louisville, Financial or otherwise?"

Plenty of people in our city have a good answer to that. I'm not sure I do.

But what if we all did?

I'd love to know how you'd answer my questions about giving in Louisville. If you'd like to, you can do so here:



Louisville.com/nonprofits

And a huge thank you to the 100 members of Impact100 who answered my questions, and to all of the board. Names (minus the many who preferred to remain anonymous) listed over the next several pages, interspersed with more of their answers.

Thanks to:

Madeline Abramson

Sarah Acland

Allison

Mariam Ballantine

Amy Barker

Molly Boland

Alison Brehm

Tiffany Bridgewater

Kimberlee Gayle Burns

Tiffany Ramos Cardwell

Cheri Casey

Michelle Champagne

Ceci Conway

Chenault Conway

Luckett Davidson

Sandy Diamond

Beth Dlutowski

Lee Donahue

Nancy Dupps

Diana J. Durham

TO IMPROVE THE WORLD OF PHILANTHROPY IN LOUISVILLE, What's one thing, big or small, you'd definitely suggest should be done?

"Growing up, I always heard about the families that were local leaders in philanthropy. They set a high bar. I'd love to see some other individuals, other families, take on that role. When we have generous leaders, many of us will join and give to our capacity."

"There are so many generous donors and foundations. I see nonprofits reach out to multiple funders, often for small amounts. What if major and not-so-major funders pulled together based on what causes they support, allowing nonprofits to apply once to get funding?"

"Give to older adults. Not popular, yet they are who raised us."

"A trustworthy local source for locating legitimate nonprofit needs, big or small."

"A searchable, year-round nonprofit database, sort of like the one that exists for Give for Good [the annual, community-wide day of giving, run by the Community Foundation]."

"Sort of like a Zillow for donors."

"For anybody reluctant to give money, do one small thing: drop off dried beans at La Casita, bring school supplies to a day shelter, sign up to pull weeds in a park."

"Many funders don't want to support continuing operations, and that includes salaries. It takes people and rent and electricity and laptops to get things done. We always need to think strategically and include new projects, but orgs need to keep the lights on."

"Complete, unrestricted granting of funds. If nonprofits are given money to do the work, without needing to prove how they spend it, they can be more effective with their time."

"People impacted by Louisville's challenges are crucial voices in seeking meaningful solutions."

Jane Godchaux Emke

Jeanne Freibert

Harriette Friedlander

Brett Friedman

Gail

Jude Gallagher

Ingrid Gentry

Marcelle Gianelloni

Linda Gigante

Carey Goldstein

Pamela Greenwell

Tricia Hafele

Lee Hancock

Judy Hanekamp

Kim Hansford

Robin Harland

Lucy Holzer

Mary Herd Jackson

Carter Jay

Dani Kannapell

WHAT'S ONE THING, BIG OR SMALL, YOU'D DEFINITELY WARN AGAINST?

"White saviors."

"I cringe seeing how stereotypically white our organization tends to fall. The lack of diversity is a difficult and sensitive area to address as well when we are funding organizations that serve more racially diverse groups. It creates a wider divide in our community where this problem already exists. It deeply bothers me, but I do not know the best way to address this."

"Only focusing your philanthropic support on the part of the community you interact with. Giving to your church or kids' school is great, but unless you are willing to reach beyond the small portion of the community that you interact with, we will never be able to move the full community forward to a better place."

"Sponsorship by a single generous person or group."

"Louisville seems overly dependent on a few families with a lot of money to fund the critical work of so many nonprofits. We continue that cycle at our own peril."

"Too many people do not give all year long, instead just when there is a crisis or a special giving day." Margie Kommor

Diane Kyle

Shary Loewy

Kathleen Loomis

Jessica Loving

Cecilia Lynch

Patricia Peet

Deb Peterson

Jane Pfeiffer

Karen Philley

Sandy Richardson

Dot Ridings

Jennifer Ringstaff

Lynn Rippy

Robin

Patricia Rudd

Kara Murphy Schmidt

Judith Schultze

Linda Schuster

Carroll Senior

AND WHAT'S ONE IDEA THAT'S PROBABLY Ridiculous but you wonder if it just might Work?

"A pro bono publicist?"

"Let's focus on one big idea as a city each year, then provide resources — people, money, time for three to five years to make a big impact."

"The Impact100 model of collective giving is not new. Giving circles have served communities of color for generations. In that vein, I would love to see a community-led, community-wide investment campaign in 2025 focused specifically on addressing the public health crisis of gun violence by inviting everyone in Louisville over 25 to give \$25 in 2025 — their small 'piece of the peace.' The millions raised, specifically for nonprofits in the peacekeeper ecosystem, could transform our city."

"Allowing a certain number of people who can't afford the \$1,000 to be a part of our organization."

"For all employers to require paid community service days."

Sharon

Val Shelton

Angela Singla

Susannah Stevenson

Susan B. Stokes

Sheryl Stone

Ann Thompson

Vonnell Tingle

Debbie Tuggle

Sara Tuttle

Ginger Wallace

Edie Wells

Beth Wiseman

Elizabeth Rouse Wong

Judith Youngblood

Jan Yusk

Shelly Zegart

Susan Zepeda

AND WHAT'S ONE IDEA THAT'S PROBABLY RIDICULOUS But you wonder if it just might work?

"WHAT IF THERE WAS AN IMPACT 10,000?"