



# STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2026





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## LETTER FROM FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Founded in 2011, Growing Together was born out of and built on top of a long legacy of activism and placemaking by a diverse set of residents crossing a broad span of cultural and economic lines. It came from asking a simple, but complex question, "what do we need to ensure all our children have what they need to succeed?"

We got to work identifying key strategic partnerships necessary to achieve our community's dream and created Tulsa's first collective impact collaborative. Since then, the acceleration of progress has been profound. In 2020, through the supportive efforts of the National Association of Latino Community Asset Builders (NALCAB) we discovered that, through our collective efforts, we had facilitated the creation of Tulsa's only inclusively grown neighborhood in the past decade.

All-in-all, the neighborhood experienced a 53% increase in the number of Latinos who are High School graduates and a 209% increase in Latinos with a Bachelor's degree. For the first time in four decades, household income increased at the same rate as the city, and the first time in five decades that homes appreciated in value at greater than the city average.

The future is bright, and in 2020, we began to expand our work to include services of our own. Whether it be operating for the first local affiliate of the national evidence-based organization to advance child wellness, Communities In Schools; the creation of a mixed-income neighborhood trust to ensure long-term affordability and inclusive growth for our community; the launch of the Community Leadership Institute that is developing dozens of community leaders to take a clear seat at decision-making tables across our

community and city; or Avanzando Juntos, a new sister organization, solely dedicated to the advancement of Latino excellence and, soon-to-be, Tulsa's second Community Development Finance Institution - ensuring access to capital and supports for Latino-owned businesses in the neighborhood.

Overall, we, alongside our community, are on a path for equity, inclusion and justice. We are advancing successfully toward their vision of having a neighborhood where any child can succeed and prosper. But more importantly, we are eliminating the conditions that cause impediments to financial success and to the social determinants of health.

At Growing Together, we have always been driven by the desire to solve problems. To go far enough upstream to not merely address the challenges and toxic stressors that concentrated poverty piles on our children, but to eliminate the causes of these stressors to ultimately do something that seems profound, but is quite simple - to create the conditions that we all want for our own kids: great schools; quality, affordable housing; safe and amenity-rich public spaces and the ability to be invested in the development and vibrancy of the community. This is what equity looks like.

As you read through these pages showcasing our collective vision, ask yourself the question:

**What would happen if every child in Tulsa had the opportunity to grow up in such conditions, regardless of their families' financial circumstances? It's a vision that we are determined to discover alongside our city's most vulnerable. Will you join us?**

Juntos Podemos,

**KIRK R. WESTER-RIVERA**  
Executive Director

# KENDALL-WHITTIER TIMELINE >○

1960s

Redlining, shotgun apartments, student housing, lack of investment = decline in neighborhood

1980s

New immigrants, largely from Mexico, moved to the Kendall-Whittier neighborhood creating stability and slowing decline

## "What do we want for our neighborhood?"

1990s

Tulsa's first small area plan, creating a school, post office, library and other community developments.

2010

Neighborhood Revitalization Department established providing infrastructure to advance the vision of high-quality, mixed-income housing, neighborhood-serving school that prioritized dual language immersion, and have representation at decision-making tables that impacted community

**Growing Together was founded by a movement of Kendall-Whittier families to create a thriving neighborhood. These families, were then supported by a collaboration between CAP Tulsa and the George Kaiser Family Foundation to advance their vision of the future for their kids.**



For the first decade, Growing Together served exclusively as the “community quarterback”, working closely with neighbors and families to ensure that the critical needs and resources were identified and a host of high-quality partners were brought to the community to act upon their vision for their children. Growing Together created Tulsa’s only inclusively grown neighborhood in the past decade.



## < GROWING TOGETHER TIMELINE

**2011**

The “Growing Together” collaborative was formed and the name created by neighborhood residents.

Remodeled Archer Park

**2012**

Supported school district as they restarted and redesigned all 3 neighborhood schools

**2013**

Identified and brought partnerships with City Year, Reading Partners, Communities in Schools, and others to Tulsa

First phase of market-rate homes complete by Capital Homes

**2014**

Growing Together became its own, independent entity solely focused on creating a vibrant and prosperous neighborhood for its families

**2015**

Increased students from neighborhood enrolled at Rogers Junior High by 60%

Created a longitudinal data system to track student progress both in school and connected to Extended Learning Time activities

**2016**

Recruited focused partnership of Tulsa Habitat for Humanity

**2022**

Raised \$1.5m loan fund for Latino-owned businesses

Acquired and remodeled 20 units of affordable housing

**2021**

Launched the Mixed-Income Neighborhood Trust

With the support of Tulsa's Latino business community, launched Avanzando Juntos

**2020**

Provided close to \$1m in COVID assistance for families

Became a leader in the support of Tulsa's Latino community

Took on operations of the local Communities In Schools affiliate, operating at 7 schools

**2018**

Launched Coffee with Parents

Rogers demonstrates 2nd highest graduation rate in Tulsa Public Schools

**2017**

Created a comprehensive housing improvement plan

Assisted Tulsa Habitat for Humanity in obtaining a \$7m commitment for affordable housing



## PLACEKEEPING VS PLACEMAKING

To date, the Kendall-Whittier neighborhood has demonstrated that inclusive growth can and is happening. Through the groundswell of support and drive from long-time community members and families, our long-time Latino neighbors appear to be the primary beneficiaries of this growth while simultaneously growing in number, projecting to soon become the majority adult population in the neighborhood (they have been the majority child population for almost two decades). However, their continued inclusion in the growth of the neighborhood is continually at threat as an increasing amount of interest and investment comes from outside our community and is centered on a more white-centric development, retail and ownership. A core part of this risk comes in the form of both how the progress is grounded in its historical roots and in how the progress over time is communicated.

As you look around the neighborhood now, there is no doubt that there has been tremendous growth and advancement. Our partners, Kendall Whittier Main Street (KWMS), supported by Growing Together's advancements in mixed-income housing and education quality, have transformed our historic

business district from large vacancies and adult-oriented businesses, to a true center of activity and arts. Conversely, as the opportunities for activity and commerce come, it becomes easier for Growing Together to make the case for market rate housing development and for families of means to choose Kendall-Whittier as a place to raise their family.

**However, we, collectively, are learning a lot about what it takes to truly create an inclusive community as we shift our sights from having a “placemaking” to a “placekeeping” strategy.**

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It is clear that in a white-dominated city, in order for a diverse neighborhood like Kendall-Whittier, a heavier emphasis needs to be placed on ensuring that our Latino community sees themselves in the identity and developments of the neighborhood. It is way too easy (as an example from Growing Together's history) to replace over a hundred units of deteriorating and low-quality housing that was overwhelmingly occupied by our Latino families with a new mixed-income development that is no doubt superior in form and function from its predecessor but, upon further review, did not successfully serve the Latino families that were there previously. Seeing this, we went to the community and learned of the barriers that stood in the way for them to access the new housing and used that learning to ensure that subsequent phases of housing did not repeat the same barriers.

Similarly, as we see the success in the economic development of our community it is clear that we could do so much more to be more inclusive and ensure that not only is everyone actually included in the growth but also see themselves in the progress and growth forward. **Looking back, it is clear that from our collective work, we should have focused much more on placekeeping, not merely placemaking.**

**In placekeeping**, there is an understanding of the sense of place established by Latinos in the eighties and nineties that literally stalled the decline of our neighborhood and created, despite little resources, a sense of belonging, culture and place.

**In placemaking**, there is the driving idea that we need to create a draw for private investment and a sense of community that is organic in nature. You can see successful placemaking in the work that KWMS has performed in drawing an audience from the outside into our community, creating a path for economic vitality. It can also be seen in the placekeeping that Growing Together and GKFF performed when creating culturally-oriented, amenity-rich parks that have become the center of community for our neighborhood.

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It is easy for place and progress to be defined by those who have the resources. As we see massive, high-end developments happening on the south side of our community and as we see large numbers of customers from outside the neighborhood coming in, with that success it is easy to gravitate toward building more and more for those with those resources instead of trying to use that as an opportunity to elevate and keeping the sense of place for those without the same means.

**A truly inclusive neighborhood only happens when we understand that it takes being intentional.**

It takes being driven by a progress not merely defined by economics, but of inclusion and the beauty in that inclusion.

It takes communicating consistently and regularly about the diversity in our history and about how though things have clearly become more vibrant and healthy for all, that doesn't mean that it should come at the exclusion of the foundation that was laid that made this neighborhood one in which people wanted to invest. There was beauty despite the challenges. There was community and belonging amidst the degradation. No one is saying that things aren't better, but that, with progress, we need to be more intentional about being more thorough and inclusive in our telling of what has and is happening here and how to take responsibility for ensuring that what makes Kendall-Whittier so unique and attractive is its diversity and cultural heritage. **Those of us that are charged to help maintain that beauty and character need to collectively work alongside the community members to ensure that our Latino neighbors can continue to see themselves in what is happening here and their role in it. We, collectively, need to work diligently and intentionally to ensure we are placekeeping while we go about the work of making new places for everyone. That is real progress.**



# GENTRIFICATION, EQUITY, AND WHO WE SERVE IN KENDALL-WHITTIER

We believe that in order to have inclusive growth we have to ensure that families from all backgrounds are a part of the solution. However, though we believe that a vibrant, healthy, growing neighborhood is critical to the success of our most disadvantaged, it is with full awareness that, with growth comes the increasing risk of displacement and a loss of place. This risk, however, should not detour the vision that our most vulnerable have, which is to be afforded the opportunity to raise their children in the same healthy and vibrant communities that those of us with means all want and provide for our own children. For this to happen it is necessary to influence the decision-making players in our city - from city government, to philanthropy and our public school leadership - to enact policies and practices that advance the protections for places to always allow for place-keeping, but to not settle for mediocrity over broad scale disinvestment and decline. **“Good enough” is the greatest risk to inclusive growth.**

Growing Together is explicitly and whole-heartedly committed and focused on the advancement of all economically vulnerable children and their families in the community. Within this economically vulnerable group of children and families, we work to ensure the recognition and advancement of efforts and initiatives that take into account the specific cultural, historical and linguistic needs of our Latino children and their families, who make up the largest group of the disadvantaged in the Kendall-Whittier neighborhood. The families are not only most at risk of having their sense of place being taken from them, but are significantly and tragically underrepresented at the positions of power and decision-making throughout our city, public systems, neighborhoods and schools.

## The standard should be clear:

- We do not stop until our most economically vulnerable families have the same access to thriving, economically growing communities that all of us want for our own kids.
- That their ability to always have access is protected - at scale.
- That our schools are honoring the cultural legacy that their families bring and are schools that anyone would want to invest their children.

**Anything less is and should be unacceptable. It is this perspective that guides our work.**



# VALUES



## mission >

Eliminate inequalities that stand in the way for families in vulnerable neighborhoods to succeed



## method >

Working alongside community members in Tulsa to create the conditions that we all want for our own kids: great schools; quality, affordable housing; safe and amenity-rich public spaces and are invested in the economic development and vibrancy of the community



### WE BELIEVE IN

developing strong, trusting relationships to create impactful neighborhood change.



### WE BELIEVE IN

empowering people by investing in our community members and facilitating transformation.



### WE BELIEVE IN

the power of proximity to understand our neighbors, develop trust and impact our community.

Avanzando  
Juntos: Mi Gente  
Loan Fund (CDFI)  
(e, f, i, j)

Kendall-Whittier  
Neighborhood  
Trust  
(a, b, e, f, i)

Communities  
In Schools  
(c, i, j)

Kendall-Whittier  
Community  
Quarterback  
(a, b, d, e, h, i, j)

Community  
Leadership  
Institute  
(g, h, i, j)

## THEORY OF CHANGE

**Growing Together**  
offers these programs

**&**

employs these  
proven strategies

- a. Mixed-income array of housing from rental to ownership, multifamily to single-family
- b. Preservation and production of affordable residential real estate
- c. Integrated student supports and holistic services
- d. Community Quarterback through leading collective impact with multiple partners in Kendall-Whittier
- e. Infusion of equitable, anti-displacement capital for business and real estate
- f. Mitigation of gentrifying businesses and support for Latino-serving businesses
- g. Civic leadership development of residents, parents and students
- h. Policy advocacy; Community leadership development and mobilization
- i. Strong referral networks and coalition-building at neighborhood and city level
- j. Restructuring of services to meet families' urgent needs during the COVID-19 pandemic

# To achieve these five results:

and create the change we want to see in the neighborhood and city

## assumptions

Growing Together's comprehensive, place-based framework is a strong basis to build a path for children to achieve economic success as adults

Growing Together's programs effectively remove and/or eliminate toxic stressors for our students and families

Growing Together's track record of success enables growth

Growing Together has the infrastructure and capacity to advance the work at scale

1  
Children and Youth Succeed in School

2  
Families have affordable and stable housing

3  
Kendall-Whittier is a strong and supportive community that includes its Latino residents, businesses and institutions in its growth

4  
Kendall-Whittier's Latino and other disenfranchised residents are decision-makers in the institutions & political systems that affect their lives

5  
Citywide, neighborhoods rooted in historically underserved communities are equipped to ensure that children, families and small businesses thrive

**Strong infrastructure to support program strategies, advance community goals and sustain the organization**

## risks

Lack of public and private will to advance truly just outcomes

Lack of resources to bring solutions to scale

Lack of public and private acknowledgement of the need to disrupt concentrations of poverty in order to resolve the outcomes of poverty

Multiple efforts advance, but are not highly coordinated, risking failure

# INTRODUCTION TO RESULTS

Growing Together's Strategic Plan 2023-26 was centered in a set of results that describes the future state of what we are trying to achieve alongside our community and represent ideal conditions. Each of our five results comprise part of our overarching vision and each of our programs help to advance each result. Our strategic plan is a part of a broader array of initiatives and services and attempts to describe that collective vision but, more specifically, Growing Together's role(s) in advancing these results. Within each of the results are described three ways in which Growing Together goes about the work. Results 1-4 describe what we aspire to achieve in the Kendall-Whittier neighborhood specifically and Result 5 expands this vision into a broader vision within Tulsa.

## result 1

Children and youth succeed in school

## result 2

Families have affordable and stable housing

## result 3

Kendall-Whittier is a strong and supportive community that includes its families, businesses and institutions in its growth

## result 4

Kendall-Whittier's economically vulnerable families are decision-makers in the institutions & political systems that affect their lives

## result 5

Citywide, neighborhoods rooted in historically underserved communities are equipped to ensure that children, families and small businesses thrive



## result 1

## CHILDREN AND YOUTH SUCCEED IN SCHOOL

### GROWING TOGETHER'S ROLE

We approach this work from five core beliefs:

1. Education is a civil right.
2. The families in Kendall-Whittier deserve what every family deserves - access to great schools.
3. Families should find that great education within their neighborhood.
4. The condition and financial stability of the neighborhood play a critical role in the school's overall success.
5. Families can be a powerful force of change and should be at the leadership table.



We address this result through a three-pronged approach:

#### Quarterbacking |

We provide regular assessment of our target families' hopes and needs and the congruence with the pipeline of schools' plans and actions. We engage local, district and organizational leadership to advance towards excellence and alignment of their plans and actions with their families' hopes and needs. We also work with a comprehensive set of strategic partners through a holistic model to remove toxic stressors that impact student growth and well-being.

#### Mobilization |

We engage, train and equip parents to be at the leadership table and to be change-makers in their neighborhood schools. We work to create ownership of our neighborhood schools by its parents and to be a critical part of the change we envision both by activating civic power and by creating unique, family-led solutions.

#### Implementation |

We provide comprehensive holistic services through the Communities In Schools model. We position our collective work to be primarily accessed by our most vulnerable students.

We advocate for culturally affirmative policies and practices for all students, but particularly for its global population that makes up the majority in our schools - in Kendall-Whittier, this means its Latino students.

### steps to equity

- % of students that meet their annual growth goals in literacy and math
- % of students and families/caregivers report safe and welcoming school environments
- # of parents/families who are in leadership roles and are volunteering in critical interventions
- % 5-year-olds who are academically ready for kindergarten
- Four-year-graduation rate for Rogers High School students

## **COLLECTIVE IMPACT PARTNER NETWORK**

Growing Together collaborates with neighborhood schools and educators to address the needs of children in the Kendall-Whittier neighborhood, as well as their family members. Growing Together's collective impact model draws the entire network around a shared set of goals to achieve aligned community outcomes.

## **COMPREHENSIVE WRAPAROUND SUPPORTS**

Growing Together delivers services to Kendall-Whittier schools through the national Communities In Schools (CIS) program model. CIS provides both whole-school supports to families and students as well as individualized wraparound supports to those students who have either fallen or are at risk of falling off track in attendance, behavior and/or academic performance. We work with our coordinators to ensure priority access to our holistic set of opportunities for our most vulnerable students and families.

## **POLICY ADVOCACY, COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND MOBILIZATION**

Our Community Leadership Institute, led by our Community Leadership Team and in concert with the CIS Site Coordinators, tackle issues such as school navigation, voting for local School Board elections and equitable and culturally-relevant programs and outcomes for Kendall-Whittier students. We advocate for policies to ensure quality, neighborhood-centered, birth-to-post-secondary school pipelines.

## result 2

## FAMILIES HAVE AFFORDABLE AND STABLE HOUSING

### GROWING TOGETHER'S ROLE

Our collective work in housing operates on four primary values:

1. Create new and rehabilitated housing products that maintain the aesthetic of the neighborhood while disrupting concentrations of poverty in order to reduce or eliminate the toxic stressors that impact students as a result
2. Thoughtfully plan the development of housing products that spur private investment while protecting for affordability
3. Reduce or avoid the possibility of forced displacement as a result of development
4. Produce housing with the most vulnerable in mind, ensuring a continuum of housing options across a spectrum of financial capacity and need



We address this result through a three-pronged approach:

#### Quarterbacking |

Growing Together created a plan for growth alongside the neighborhood and then identified the key partner developers to bring the vision of a mixed-income community to a reality. Throughout that development, Growing Together has played a key role in the design, placement and scale of this development, as well as continually working to ensure that Kendall-Whittier's most vulnerable members are the primary beneficiaries of the work.

#### Mobilization |

Through our high-level of engagement with the families in Kendall-Whittier through our Communities In Schools Site Coordinators, our housing efforts seek to ensure that every child has access to high-quality, affordable housing. Growing up in a stable, quality built environment serves to reduce and even eliminate numerous potential toxic stressors that serve to negatively impact a child's path toward success.

We do this through three major actions:

- by educating our community about the options available to them
- working with our housing partners to ensure priority access, when possible, for families with students
- by mobilizing our community to advocate for inclusive and protective policies and developments to ensure our most vulnerable families always have a place in the neighborhood and can inform Growing Together and our partners of the housing needs as it evolves

#### Implementation |

Through our Kendall-Whittier Neighborhood Trust, Growing Together has served to fill a community-identified gap in housing, ensuring sustainable, affordable rental housing managed at a high-quality standard. As an advocacy organization, we engage local and state decision-makers to enact equitable development policies. All roles are essential to realize our vision for equitable growth.

### steps to equity

- # housing units produced and preserved
- # housing units protected to be affordable
- # of families in the units produced or preserved who have children in the neighborhood schools

### **PRODUCTION OF QUALITY MARKET-RATE AND AFFORDABLE RESIDENTIAL REAL ESTATE AT-SCALE**

#### **INFUSION OF EQUITABLE, ANTI-DISPLACEMENT CAPITAL FOR REAL ESTATE**

Our Kendall-Whittier Neighborhood Trust:

- Develops new affordable housing sites for families, prioritizing vulnerable students at our neighborhood schools
- Works to preserve the neighborhood's current housing stock
- Targets problematic landlords for acquisition

#### **ACCESS AND NAVIGATIONAL SUPPORT OF FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN IN NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS**

Our Community Mobilization and Communities In Schools teams work closely with our partner housing developers to create policies that prioritize current Kendall-Whittier residents, particularly those with children, in addition to direct supports to help families access affordable housing options.

#### **INCLUSIVE GROWTH THROUGH HOUSING POLICY ADVOCACY**

Our policy and advocacy work focuses on informing, designing, supporting and implementing policies that produce and preserve affordable housing, dedicate land use for this purpose and protect tenants and prioritize families with students.

## result 3

# KENDALL-WHITTIER IS A STRONG & SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY THAT INCLUDES ITS FAMILIES, BUSINESSES & INSTITUTIONS IN ITS GROWTH

### GROWING TOGETHER'S ROLE

Our primary principles for inclusive economic growth are as follows:

1. Kendall-Whittier's economically vulnerable families must see themselves in the commercial spaces of the neighborhood in order for long-term ownership of the community to be held. This is especially true with regards to place-keeping for its historical Latino community.
2. We must ensure inclusion in the systems that provide the necessary tools for small business success, such as technical knowledge, access to capital and availability of real estate.
3. Availability of protected commercial spaces with reasonable costs of entry is vital to continued inclusion.
4. We must intentionally create spaces and opportunities for investment into our Latino business owners and entrepreneurs in order for them to receive the equitable supports needed to increase their odds of success.



We address this result through a three-pronged approach:

#### Quarterbacking |

Growing Together works alongside the community, its business owners and partners to create a common vision for inclusive economic growth. This vision begets a set of actions from all that drives toward initiatives, policies and resources that ensures inclusion and protections.

#### Mobilization |

Through our Community Mobilization team and the incubation of Avanzando Juntos, Growing Together develops deep relationships with our Latino business community, community stakeholders and public leaders to ensure deep engagement and understanding of the threats, challenges and opportunities that lie ahead of ensuring growth in the community is inclusive. Through Avanzando Juntos, Latino business owners and entrepreneurs are provided the skills, connections and resources necessary to create sustainable and culturally-inclusive retail and economic development.

#### Implementation |

In recognition of the lack of support and technical expertise in our community to support Latino business-owners and entrepreneurs, Growing Together created a sister non-profit, Avanzando Juntos, to become Tulsa's first and only Latino-centric Community Development Finance Institution (CDFI). Avanzando Juntos provides access to needed capital alongside a set of robust supports and educational opportunities to provide the tools and knowledge necessary to be prepared for success.

### steps to equity

- # of protected commercial spaces to ensure an affordable cost of entry
- # small businesses created
- # of local businesses that have access to rfp opportunities for development within Growing Together's developments as well as that of our partners
- # of businesses that are Latino-owned/serving

## **INFUSION OF EQUITABLE, ANTI-DISPLACEMENT CAPITAL FOR BUSINESSES AND REAL ESTATE**

By creating and incubating Avanzando Juntos, we will develop financial capital resources to invest in small businesses and real estate in the neighborhood, helping to build community ownership, create jobs and stabilize small businesses.

## **MITIGATION OF GENTRIFYING BUSINESSES AND SUPPORT FOR LATINO-SERVING BUSINESSES**

We will support our local small businesses through intensive technical assistance, access to capital and affordable commercial spaces for existing businesses and aspiring entrepreneurs. A focus on the Lewis and 11th Street commercial corridors helps ensure that we stabilize it as a family-friendly zone.

## **ACQUISITION, PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY COMMERCIAL SPACES THAT ENSURE A REDUCED COST OF ENTRY AND THAT SERVE TO ENSURE A PLACE FOR LATINO-OWNED BUSINESSES TO BE A CRITICAL PART OF THE GROWING LOCAL ECONOMY**

We will develop a mechanism for securing and managing key commercial real estate that is complemented by the provision of capital and business supports to ensure a thriving and stable Latino and inclusive commercial sector within the high growth areas of our neighborhood.

## **POLICY ANALYSIS AND ADVOCACY; COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND ACTIVATION**

We take an active role in neighborhood planning and policymaking efforts, and advocate for policies that support inclusive growth, Latino place-keeping, small businesses and community institutions to remain in the neighborhood and lay the structural groundwork for them to thrive in the future. In addition, we equip community members to lead through the Community Leadership Institute, a community-centric leadership development program that works to help community leaders find their voice, understand the tools available to them and to provoke change.

## result 4

# KENDALL-WHITTIER'S ECONOMICALLY VULNERABLE FAMILIES ARE DECISION-MAKERS IN THE INSTITUTIONS & POLITICAL SYSTEMS THAT AFFECT THEIR LIVES



## GROWING TOGETHER'S ROLE

We have adopted a three-pronged approach to advancing our families as decision-makers in Kendall-Whittier and in the institutions that impact them:

### Quarterbacking |

We push for equitable policies at the city and state level, working with public entities, school sites and local organizations to include representation for our community in their decision-making work. We work with these organizations to ensure their spaces honor the value of our community members' lived perspectives and adjust the dynamics in the room to ensure the full participation of the community member.

### Mobilization |

We empower and help mobilize Latino and other economically vulnerable parents and small business owners to engage their own community, become decision-makers in their schools, share resources and mobilize around systemic change.

### Implementation |

Through our Community Leadership Institute and its offshoot, Fuerza KW, we work with community members to identify up and coming leaders, provide training, support and practice for these leaders to find their own voice, and support them while at the decision-making table to ensure their voice is fully presented.

## steps to equity

- residents engaged in: civic participation activities, community leadership efforts
- policy advocacy initiatives led/co-led by Growing Together
- # of parent leaders as part of the leadership and decision-making table at our school sites
- equitable land use and zoning policies enacted in Kendall-Whittier
- # of family-led initiatives

## **STRONG REFERRAL NETWORKS AND COALITION-BUILDING AT THE NEIGHBORHOOD AND CITY LEVELS**

Our alliances with Latino-serving and Latino-led organizations are a key part of our work to build Latino leadership and advocacy at all levels of policy making, from local to statewide to national.

## **POLICY ANALYSIS AND ADVOCACY**

### **COMMUNITY AND CIVIC LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND ACTIVATION THROUGH OUT COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE**

Growing Together's Community Leadership Institute and Fuerza KW works with community members and youth to develop their leadership capacity, develop knowledge and understanding of key issues confronting their community and show paths to influence and civic engagement.

### **GRASSROOTS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND MOBILIZATION AT OUR NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS THROUGH OUR COMMUNITY ORGANIZERS AND PARENT CAPTAINS**

Growing Together's Community Organizers and Parent Captains are all members of the Kendall-Whittier neighborhood. They help to empower local parents as leaders to help bring about the change and outcomes they want to see for their students and neighborhood-serving schools. The Parent Captains help to organize parents, help them find their voice, navigate the education systems, and have a seat at the decision-making table.

## result 5

# CITYWIDE, NEIGHBORHOODS ROOTED IN HISTORICALLY UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES ARE EQUIPPED TO ENSURE THAT CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND SMALL BUSINESSES THRIVE

### GROWING TOGETHER'S ROLE

In collaboration with Purpose Built Communities, we seek to replicate this work throughout other neighborhoods that desperately need and want to have access to an environment for their kids that is void of the toxic stressors that come with concentrations of poverty. We will do this by sharing our learnings with interested neighborhoods and community leaders, lifting up locally-connected community quarterbacks and/or creating a community quarterback where one does not currently exist, based upon an assessment of neighborhoods most suitable for this comprehensive model.

Growing Together will leverage its assets, knowledge and services such as the Communities In Schools program, Kendall-Whittier Neighborhood Trust (KWNT), Avanzando Juntos (future CDFI) and Community Leadership Institute in the future target neighborhoods.



### IDENTIFY ALL TULSA NEIGHBORHOODS THAT COULD BENEFIT FROM A HOLISTIC REVITALIZATION MODEL THAT ENDEAVORS TO IMPACT THE EFFECTS OF TOXIC STRESSORS BROUGHT ON BY HIGH-CONCENTRATIONS OF POVERTY

Within the greater city's neighborhoods, identify and focus on at least two neighborhoods over the next 3-5 years in which Growing Together will work toward establishing a community quarterback.

### LEVERAGING OF OUR ACCESS TO NATIONAL RESOURCES AND EXPERTISE WITH PURPOSE BUILT COMMUNITIES, LIIF, TRUST NEIGHBORHOODS, NALCAB AND NEIGHBORWORKS

### RELATIONSHIP, NETWORK AND COALITION-BUILDING IN TARGETED NEIGHBORHOODS

#### steps to equity

- # of neighborhoods identified as appropriate for a comprehensive improvement model
- # of neighborhoods that have one of our key programs
- # of local Community Quarterbacks stood up
- # of neighborhood visions created and being implemented

# INTRODUCTION TO OPERATIONAL FUNCTIONS

## What are Growing Together's operational functions?



### COMMUNICATIONS



### EVALUATION



### FINANCE



### FUND DEVELOPMENT



### HUMAN RESOURCES AND OPERATIONS

To have strong programs that advance our communities toward our five Results, Growing Together needs an equally sturdy organizational infrastructure to sustain and grow our public-facing work. If our programs and services are the branches and leaves of the tree, our administrative functions are the roots: They provide the necessary structural support and vital resources so our work in the community can flourish, our community members can thrive and our organization can persist. While largely working behind the scenes, **operations staff also serve as thought partners**, drawing from myriad areas of experience to enhance our programs, deepen our ties to our networks and pursue innovative, proactive solutions to community challenges.



# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

For the 2023-26 planning cycle, Communications has prioritized efforts to:

- Adopt a “by community, for community” approach, inviting community members to share their success stories as messaging to existing and prospective clients. This includes an emphasis on Spanish-language communications across all of Growing Together.
- Leverage Growing Together as a thought leader by creating and sharing op-eds, articles and narratives authored by staff members.
- Enhance the illustration of what Growing Together does and the goal it has to creating actual solutions to problems.

## COMMUNICATIONS



# KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

## TELLING THE STORY OF GROWING TOGETHER, KENDALL-WHITTIER AND OUR COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Communications compiles narratives that illustrate the challenges our community faces, our client families' strengths and successes, the work that Growing Together does and the impacts of our programs.

## SHARING OUR SUCCESS STORIES WITH STAKEHOLDERS, POLICYMAKERS AND RESIDENTS

Communications amplifies our community's experiences to invite investment in Growing Together, advocate for equitable policy change and recruit new clients.

## ENGAGING CLIENTS AND STAKEHOLDERS THROUGH A VARIETY OF PLATFORMS

Communications coordinates Growing Together's messaging to clients and other partners across multiple channels, from earned media and newsletters to social media and culturally relevant content.

## DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING GROWING TOGETHER'S BRAND IDENTITY

Communications ensures that Growing Together's products are cohesive in messaging, accurately represent Growing Together's work and goals, and are stylistically consistent.



# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

For the 2023-26 planning cycle, Evaluation has prioritized efforts to:

- Create a solid, robust Evaluation Team that ensures community voices and perspectives are at the center of Growing Together's evaluation activities, processes and products so they reflect the people we serve.
- Fully leverage Growing Together's technology, using a human-centered design approach to align data platforms with staff needs and strengths, as well as facilitate service delivery.
- Establish a regular cycle of process evaluations, with the goal of driving program improvement through staff collaboration over internal assessments of our programs.

## KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

### ESTABLISHING AND MANAGING GROWING TOGETHER'S DATA SYSTEMS

The Evaluation team that collaborates with staff to ensure adequate and consistent collection of relevant data to analyze our impact in the community. This creates greater alignment with and refinement of our service model and innovates new methods of tracking, measuring and reporting our work.

### DEMONSTRATING THE IMPACT OF OUR WORK

Using data from our tracking systems and program assessments, Evaluation develops narratives and analyses that illuminate the effects of our programs on our clients and their families' well-being.

### ADVANCING PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT

Growing Together's Evaluation team will serve as internal trainers and facilitators, collaborating with program staff to enhance usage of our data systems, resolve challenges with service delivery and plan for program growth.

### USING DATA TO STRENGTHEN GROWING TOGETHER'S ADVOCACY EFFORTS

Our program data and research products help Growing Together make our case with key stakeholders, as we push for policy changes, public resources and support from officials to address community needs.

## EVALUATION



# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

For the 2023-26 planning cycle, Finance has prioritized efforts to:

- Increase our financial planning, capacity, and leadership in order to position ourselves for thoughtful growth and sustainability.
- Increase financial reserves as part of Growing Together's broader risk management strategies.
- Utilize financial analyses of each individual program and business line to drive organizational strategies around budgeting, fundraising and sustainability.
- Deepen integration with Development to inform and align fundraising priorities.
- Leads the organization's annual business planning, development of fiscal analyses and projections to support the Leadership and Board through key fiscal decisions.

## FINANCE



# KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

## ADMINISTERING STRONG RISK MANAGEMENT AND COMPLIANCE SYSTEMS

The Finance team manages organizational risk by ensuring that Growing Together's complex financial structure adheres to the laws and regulations governing 501(c)(3) activities. Compliance is foundational to building a financially secure, effective organization.

## MONITORING GROWING TOGETHER'S FINANCIAL HEALTH IN CONSULTATION WITH STAFF AND BOARD

Finance develops and tracks fiscal metrics, which allow the staff and Board to efficiently and regularly monitor our financial systems. Financial monitoring is essential to minimizing risk and generating self-sustaining business lines.

## MAINTAINING FINANCIAL REPORTING AND ACCOUNTING WITH EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

Finance oversees Growing Together's accounting requirements, and reports our financial health to our funders and partners. By informing external stakeholders about our effective use and management of our resources, Finance facilitates strong stakeholder partnerships.

## GUIDING BUSINESS STRATEGIES THROUGH FINANCIAL FORECASTING

Finance leads the organization's annual business planning, developing fiscal analyses and projections to support the Board through key fiscal decisions. Financial planning grows our reserves and builds our capacity, enabling us to innovate programming and expand our work.



# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

For the 2023-26 planning cycle, Fund Development has prioritized efforts to:

- Enhance internal systems and processes for grant and funder prospecting, relationship cultivation, proposal development, contract management and reporting.
- Strengthen alignment with each of Growing Together's programs to ensure that there are ample resources to support existing work and pursue new opportunities.
- Diversify Growing Together's revenue streams to ensure long-term sustainability and growth.
- Cultivate relationships with long-term and/or well-resourced funders, including individual donors, major foundations and companies.

## KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

### SECURING A DIVERSE STREAM OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES FOR GROWING TOGETHER

Development solicits a wide array of funders, from federal, state and local government agencies to philanthropies to corporate and individual donors.

### BUILDING AND STRENGTHENING RELATIONSHIPS WITH FUNDERS

Development cultivates Growing Together's funding networks and partnerships, leveraging Growing Together's public profile and directly building the case for funders to invest in the organization and community we serve.

### FOSTERING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ORGANIZATIONAL INNOVATION AND PROGRAM EXPANSION

By identifying, pursuing and coordinating funding opportunities in new and existing service domains, Development plays a major role in expanding Growing Together's capacity to integrate new programs, serve more clients and occupy additional roles.

### ALIGNING GROWING TOGETHER'S FUNDRAISING PRIORITIES WITH OUR MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

In making sure that our funding opportunities are consistent with our place-based approach to building social equity, Development ensures that we can maximize our impact and advance our service priorities.

## FUND DEVELOPMENT



# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

For the 2023-26 planning cycle, HR has prioritized efforts to:

- Incorporate equity and inclusion principles within Growing Together's internal practices, policies and norms.
- Develop and implement an annual performance appraisal plan.
- Strengthen organizational plans around staff retention, professional development and succession planning, to build talent from within and mitigate challenges posed by staff transitions.
- Implement clear and effective project management processes that support the leadership of Growing Together to be fully effective in their roles and responsibilities.

## HUMAN RESOURCES AND OPERATIONS



# KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

## RECRUITING AND DEVELOPING TALENTED STAFF WHO ARE COMMITTED TO THE COMMUNITY

HR ensures that Growing Together onboards and retains progressive champions who are passionate about building equity for underserved communities, prioritizing those who have lived experience in the communities they serve.

## FOSTERING AN ENVIRONMENT OF ENGAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL ALIGNMENT

HR works to ensure that staff at all levels uphold Growing Together's mission, vision and values, and that our employees have the necessary support and resources to thrive in their role.

## PROMOTING A STRONG, NURTURING ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Through written policies and social practices, HR provides a welcoming, inclusive and mutually supportive workplace environment for staff members.

## CREATING INNOVATIVE, EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE OPERATIONAL SYSTEMS

HR crafts the organizational infrastructure required to operate our programs, serve our clients and create lasting community impact.



# COVID-19 & Growing Together's Response



## Result 1 |

### CHILDREN AND YOUTH SUCCEED IN SCHOOL

Similar to preexisting financial and housing disparities, the pandemic exacerbated the unequal learning environments our financially vulnerable students in Tulsa have long faced. The shift to remote learning challenged many families without home access to computers, high-speed internet, or digital literacy skills, as well as the challenges that non-English speakers face to navigate systems in a normal year. In addition, family members lost income or served as frontline workers preventing them from helping with their children's distance learning. All of these stressors led to mental health challenges for students and families.

Growing Together forged partnerships with other agencies in the Kendall-Whittier network coordinating an emergency response to COVID-19. Growing Together took a lead role in rallying the service providers in the neighborhood and creating a response that included city officials providing in-person technology workshops and support opportunities to help families develop their abilities to support students' distance learning. Also, Growing Together, partnering with the City of Tulsa and Tulsa Public Schools, connected with every Spanish-speaking family in TPS to offer free broadband internet access for their family as well as providing enrollment support as students started the new school year.



## Result 2 |

### FAMILIES HAVE AFFORDABLE AND STABLE HOUSING

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the movement toward exclusive growth and outside investors who are not committed to the health and inclusion of the neighborhood. We saw investors flip properties for their own financial gain. This highlights the ever-growing need for greater protections of real estate by mission-aligned organizations and through covenants and policies that ensure long-term affordability at scale.

We also saw a large increase in the number of families at-risk of losing their housing as a result of loss of income. Observing repeated instances where undocumented families were ineligible for rent resources or had to navigate systems that were not in Spanish and required a tech-savviness that prevented them from utilizing these systems. Growing Together responded by launching the Kendall-Whittier Neighborhood Trust (the second only mixed-income neighborhood trust in the country) to begin to fight against unfettered outside interest. We also utilized our Communities In Schools site coordinators and created a Spanish-language navigation call center for families across our schools and the city to receive support to access rent aid as well as other crisis resources that were being made available.



## Result 3 |

### KENDALL-WHITTIER IS A STRONG & SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY THAT INCLUDES ITS FAMILIES, BUSINESSES & INSTITUTIONS IN ITS GROWTH

The widespread financial shocks of the COVID-19 pandemic threaten to further exacerbate Latino displacement from Kendall-Whittier. Many residents who were already struggling with the elevated costs of living lost their jobs, had their income reduced, and risked eviction or foreclosure. Many small businesses struggled to stay afloat or had to shutter. Without supports and protections to ensure a place of culturally and economically-relevant businesses, an increasing threat is coming of majority-culture oriented businesses and developments catering to higher income earners that could replace the people and retail that have ensured cultural placemaking and ownership.

Growing Together developed a multidimensional response to the pandemic, pivoting to meet community members' urgent needs while mobilizing with other community organizations, administering City-funded social service programs, securing public resources for Latino community members, and disbursing emergency loans to local Latino-owned businesses and private contractors. It will be crucial to continue to pursue opportunities for inclusive community development, as our families rebuild and businesses rebound.

# COVID-19 & Growing Together's Response

## Result 4 |

### **KENDALL-WHITTIER'S ECONOMICALLY VULNERABLE FAMILIES ARE DECISION-MAKERS IN THE INSTITUTIONS & POLITICAL SYSTEMS THAT AFFECT THEIR LIVES**

COVID-19 further exposed the consequences of Latinos' underrepresentation within the public and private institutions that led the pandemic response. Immediately, Growing Together identified the fact that little resources were being made available to Latinos in a culturally or linguistically relevant manner. In some cases, Latinos were excluded from support altogether. It was clear that the language divide in our schools and the lack of culturally responsive pathways further amplified the challenges faced by our Latino families and their students, resulting in Latinos being overly represented in those students who were left behind in the transition to online learning.

As a result, Growing Together used its reputation and knowledge of culturally relevant outreach methods to connect to the Latino community in Tulsa and those in Kendall-Whittier to organize and partner with other Latino-serving organizations to distribute pandemic relief and private supports where government and decision-makers failed.

In addition to the pandemic, the civil unrest brought about an amplified desire to address the racial

disparities in representation that had often been promoted by philanthropy and public entities. As a result, a number of well-intended efforts emerged to address this, but were often disconnected from what it takes to truly change the outcomes.

Growing Together played a critical role in helping reshape access processes and leveraged our strong ties to the Latino community to:

- Assist in advancing free broadband internet access
- Distribute over \$250k in cash payments from the Tulsa Immigrant Relief Fund to those denied stimulus funds
- Navigation support for enrollment in Tulsa Public Schools
- Provide application support to the Restaurant Revitalization Fund
- Raise \$500k and execute business support loans for those who could not access PPP

We will continue to fight for Kendall-Whittier's Latinos and other disenfranchised residents and families to have a seat at the table to ensure an equitable and inclusive financial recovery from the pandemic.

## Result 5 |

### **CITYWIDE, NEIGHBORHOODS ROOTED IN HISTORICALLY UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES ARE EQUIPPED TO ENSURE THAT CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND SMALL BUSINESSES THRIVE**

The tragedy of the pandemic and its disproportionate impact in communities and, specifically, neighborhoods of color caused us to accelerate our vision to replicate this work of creating enduring solutions to poverty at scale. There are growing advocates for this type of work and momentum in vision, collaboration and resources throughout disenfranchised neighborhoods across the city. We have decided to position our work as a ready and willing partner to help these communities advance their visions for success.



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# MANAGEMENT TEAM



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**KAITLIN GARRETT**,  
Deputy Director



**JESSICA NOONAN**,  
Senior Director of Impact and  
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**ONELIA MACCHIA-ANZOLA**,  
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Avanzando Juntos



**EVA PEÑA**,  
Managing Director of the Kendall-Whittier  
Neighborhood Trust (KWNT)



**GROWING TOGETHER**

*Live. Learn. Thrive.*

32 S Lewis Ave, Tulsa, OK 74104

918.671.3046

[gttulsa.org](http://gttulsa.org) | [info@gttulsa.org](mailto:info@gttulsa.org)