

# ANDP NEIGHBORS TOGETHER

Strengthening communities, from the inside out.



"A small group of thoughtful people could change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."  
— Margaret Mead



ATLANTA  
NEIGHBORHOOD  
DEVELOPMENT  
PARTNERSHIP, INC.  
Building the region's future,  
neighborhood by neighborhood

# Neighbors Together

Families thrive in safe and healthy neighborhoods. But communities rarely achieve such desired conditions without informed and engaged residents. As the region comes to grips with an historic shortage of affordable housing, long-term residents and neighborhood leaders are contending with a host of issues - gentrification and displacement, threat of eviction, rising rents and diminishing homeownership opportunities.

In these impacted neighborhoods, residents are coming together in Neighborhood Watch meetings, homeowners' associations, and small groups of concerned citizens to strengthen their neighborhoods. To support residents engaged in the work of neighborhood stabilization, ANDP created Neighbors Together.

First launched at the annual NeighborWorks Week in 2015, Neighbors Together was designed to be a training and leadership development event with the goal of arming residents with the information and tools needed to strengthen communities from the inside out. The event was well-received by neighborhood leaders and ANDP was asked to continue to offer the free training event.

Now in its sixteenth year, Neighbors Together convenes both formal and informal neighborhood leaders for an annual half-day of training with an emphasis on neighborhood stabilization efforts. Training topics include:

- Public Safety,
- Neighborhood Branding and Marketing,
- Property Law & Code Enforcement,
- Strengthening Relationships with Law Enforcement,
- Connecting School and Community,
- Neighborhood Advocacy with Elected Officials, and
- Foreclosure Mitigation Programs.

Neighbors Together is executed in three distinct phases:

**Community Leadership Institute** - Neighborhood residents and leaders who demonstrate an uncommon commitment to their communities are selected on an annual basis for a six-person team to attend NeighborWorks® America's Community Leadership Institute (CLI). As described by NeighborWorks America, "CLI is an invitation-only, three-day training event that aims to strengthen the voices and skills of community, resident and volunteer leaders. Participants from around the country attend in small teams from communities served by NeighborWorks Network organizations and their partners. They attend a full range of courses and each participating team creates an action plan for making positive change in their community."

Dating back to its creation in 2008, CLI events have been held in New Orleans, LA; San Jose and Sacramento CA;

Milwaukee, WI; Kansas City, MO; Orlando, FL; Cincinnati, OH; Louisville, KY, Chicago, IL, and San Francisco, CA.

**Local Solutions** - After attending the national CLI event, Neighbors Together Team members meet with ANDP staff for support as they undertake necessary research to identify their specific neighborhood issues and underlying causes. Over the next several months, the team and ANDP staff collaborate to create a half-day training event designed to address the specific concerns identified. Simultaneously, team members begin developing a plan of action and identifying community stakeholders to engage. The annual training event also serves as a sounding board and an opportunity for further development of team member plans.

**Creating Change** - After participating in Neighbors Together for nearly a year, team members move forward with the information and resources they've gained in the process to address their neighborhood concerns. Most team members return to attend the annual training events to further their understanding of issues and skill development.

## NEIGHBORS TOGETHER IMPACT

- 50 metro residents have been selected to attend NeighborWorks America's National Community Leadership Institute.
- Team members planned and executed eight annual Neighbors Together training events, engaging 1,100+ active, committed neighborhood leaders.
- Several team members have taken their engagement to the next level by running for elected office or participating in additional leadership training programs.
- Several program participants have successfully applied for and received funding to support their neighborhood-based programs and initiatives.
- Metro Atlanta has had TWO recipients of NeighborWorks America's national **Dorothy Richardson Award for Resident Leadership**. Carol Yancy received the award in 2019 for her outstanding leadership in her Clayton County community. In 2023, G. Naeema Gilyard of the City of South Fulton became the second ANDP CLI team member to be honored with the award for her environmental activism and community stewardship.



## MEET ANDP'S 2025 COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE (CLI) TEAM



**Ms. Nadine Ali** is a resident of the Belvedere neighborhood in South DeKalb. A former officer of the Belvedere Civic Association, Nadine is passionate about health and wellness and works professionally as a wellness coach. She founded the South Candler Neighborhood Advocates, which pursues a mission to reduce health disparities associated with chronic illness through healthier eating, active living, and mental health resources. Nadine grew up in the Summerhill neighborhood in Atlanta.

**Ms. Cassandra Brown** is a resident of Mableton. She is an active community member and serves on the Mableton Improvement Coalition Board of Directors, Cobb County School Board Facilities & Technology Citizens Oversight Committee, and Brookmere Homeowners Association. Cassandra recently retired from a 30+ year career as an IT Sales executive.



**Ms. Wilita Frehiwet** is a resident leader in the Spring Valley neighborhood of South DeKalb where she was instrumental in establishing CASNI, a neighborhood initiative representing the Columbia High School neighborhood cluster. She also served as recording secretary for the Spring Valley Civic Association. Wilita is an 8th grade social studies teacher at Cedar Grove Middle School in South DeKalb. She is sponsor of the Beta Club and serves as the school's gifted program liaison. She has been a teacher for more than 20 years. Wilita is originally from Ethiopia.

**Ms. DeBorah Hargrove** has lived in East Point for more than three decades as a legacy homeowner. She has served in a variety of leadership roles including as president of the Arrowood Neighborhood Association. DeBorah formed "Presidents Partner for Progress" a collaboration of all East Point neighborhood association presidents working together to solve community-wide challenges. She currently serves on the Board of Directors for Market 166 Grocery and Kitchen Cooperative as the Ownership and Outreach Committee Chair, a "people first grocery store that is of, by and for" the community of East Point. Motto: Connecting Community Through Good Food



**Ms. Niya Randall** is a dedicated advocate for social justice and a resident of Atlanta's historic Ash-view Heights neighborhood. She serves as an Advisory Board member for Out of Hand Theatre and Lead Facilitator for Thriving Together Atlanta, where she fosters courageous conversations through art, addressing issues like food insecurity, racial discrimination, and environmental disparities. Niya is deeply engaged in environmental justice, working with the Atlanta Watershed Learning Network, West Atlanta Watershed Alliance, Eco-Action and REACH-ATL to empower Georgia's low-income communities and communities of color to eliminate air, land, and water pollution and promote sustainability.



### **About Atlanta Neighborhood Development Partnership**

ANDP is a private, non-profit organization created in 1991 to develop, finance, and advocate for affordable housing at scale that promotes racial equity and healthy communities where families thrive. ANDP is a chartered member of NeighborWorks. More online at [www.andpi.org](http://www.andpi.org).

### **About NeighborWorks America**

For more than 40 years, Neighborhood Reinvestment Corp., a national, nonpartisan nonprofit known as NeighborWorks America, has strived to make every community a place of opportunity. Our network of excellence includes nearly 250 members in every state, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. NeighborWorks America offers grant funding, peer exchange, technical assistance, evaluation tools, and access to training as the nation's leading trainer of housing and community development professionals. NeighborWorks network organizations provide residents in their communities with affordable homes, owned and rented; financial counseling and coaching; community building through resident engagement; and collaboration in the areas of health, employment and education.

## **ANDP**

233 Peachtree St NE Ste 800  
Atlanta, GA 30303-1509  
[comments@andpi.org](mailto:comments@andpi.org)  
[www.andpi.org/nt](http://www.andpi.org/nt)

