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Westside Future Fund Launches Westside Neighborhoods Beautification Project

*Pilot Job Training and Placement Program
Helps Westside Residents Carve Out Career Paths While Cleaning up Community*

ATLANTA - February 9, 2017 – Over the next three months, a cohort of community residents will be cleaning, weeding and greening their neighborhoods while taking their first steps towards sustainable career paths as part of the [Westside Future Fund's](#) (WFF) newly-launched **Westside Neighborhoods Beautification Project**.

Made possible by a grant from the [PwC Charitable Foundation, Inc.](#), the pilot program is illustrative of WFF's commitment to "Cradle to Career" education as part of its community revitalization strategy, which includes building up the local workforce by supporting and empowering current residents through services such as skills assessments, vocational training and job readiness preparation.

The inaugural project cycle kicked off on January 30 with 13 participants employed to help clean and beautify areas in and around the WFF's four target neighborhoods: Ashview Heights, Atlanta University Center (AUC), English Avenue and Vine City.

"In addition to supporting community revitalization and providing opportunities for employment to residents in their own neighborhood, this project connects entry level jobs to sustainable careers. It also helps the participants acquire life skills while fostering a sense of pride and leadership in their community," said **John Ahmann, executive director of the Westside Future Fund**.

To help develop and operate the program, WFF engaged [Integrity Transformation Community Development Corporation](#), a community-based nonprofit with more than 20 years' experience getting the long-term, chronically unemployed into full time employment. Integrity is also the managing partner of the Westside's job training center, Westside Works.

The 13 participants – who were selected from a competitive pool of more than 30 applicants - were required to complete 3 weeks of job-readiness training through Integrity's Westside NET (Networking, Employment and Training) program.

Training included:

- personal development, including financial literacy and money management skills
- soft skills training, such as conflict resolution, time management, and customer service
- and digital literacy, which includes the development of basic computer skills.

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At the end of the three-month period, the participants will then be provided with permanent job placement assistance and/or given the support to launch their own businesses.

“Through this project, we will enhance our efforts to provide job readiness services and employment opportunities to those Westside residents who face the greatest barriers to employment while simultaneously beautifying our community,” said **Rev. Howard Beckham, Integrity’s CEO**.

Integrity is supported in its operation of the program by [Valkill Industries](#), the job training and employment organization originally started by Eleanor Roosevelt to provide opportunities for disadvantaged workers. Valkill manages the hands-on work experience component of the program that includes activities such as clearing trash from dumping sites and beautifying seniors’ homes to the deconstruction of small dilapidated properties.

Furthering the reach and impact of the program, compostable material from the clean-ups will be delivered to [Truly Living Well](#), a Westside urban farming project. All other recyclable materials will be catalogued and reused or donated to other organizations.

The long-range vision is to make the Beautification Project a year-round program.

“Helping provide individuals with a stepladder to socioeconomic opportunities they need to succeed is central to so much of the work we do in our communities, and who we are as a firm,” said **Shelley Giberson, Managing Partner of PwC’s Greater Atlanta market**. “We’re proud to support the Westside Future Fund, and look forward to celebrating its success.”

For additional information on the Westside Future Fund and the Westside Neighborhoods Beautification Project, visit www.westsidefuturefund.org. Project updates will also be featured on the WFF’s social media channels: Facebook ([@WestsideFutureFund](#)); Twitter ([@WFFAtlanta](#)).

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About The Westside Future Fund

The Westside Future Fund is a not-for-profit organization of Atlanta community leaders who believe in the future of the Westside and are committed to helping the area revitalize and grow. We do this by connecting resources with needs; convening the right people around the table; collaborating on strategies; and coordinating all of these efforts, which are vital to the Westside’s long-term success.

The WFF was established in December 2014 by the Atlanta Committee for Progress (ACP), a coalition of top CEOs and leaders from Atlanta’s private sector, universities and nonprofits in partnership with Mayor Kasim Reed, as part of the ACP’s economic development mission.

About Integrity Transformation Community Development Corporation

Founded in 1995, ITCDC is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization that is committed to transforming the communities of the English Avenue, Vine City and other contiguous Westside communities. ITCDC is building strong and healthy neighborhoods through advocacy, leveraging of resources, community organizing and direct services that will stimulate holistic community development. Through empowerment mechanisms we promote positive change and self-sufficiency to enhance the quality of life for the benefit of those we serve.

About Valkill Industries

Valkill Industries is a socially-motivated for-profit company that produces period furniture and whose mission is to leverage its product and sales base to provide opportunities for workers of all backgrounds to succeed and prosper. They are currently reviving a property at 787 Windsor St into an arts and community center with the help of the Mechanicsville neighborhood where they are located.

About The PwC Charitable Foundation, Inc.

The PwC Charitable Foundation, Inc., is a section 501(c)(3) organization that makes contributions to the people of PwC in times of financial hardship, and to nonprofit organizations that support and promote education and humanitarianism.

Photo Credits and Captions:

1. File Name: Westside Beautification Project - Inaugural Class 2017 - Photo Courtesy of Integrity – 0023
 - a. Caption: The 13 members of the inaugural Westside Neighborhoods Beautification Project class pictured following their graduation from the prerequisite Westside NET training program.
 - b. Pictured:

Front row left to right:

 - Chiquita Reese
 - Christle Currence
 - Clifford Clark
 - Sandra Blackwell
 - DeMario Bronner
 - John Bates
 - Gary Freeman
 - Marie Gibson
 - Tony Dunlap

Back row left to right:

 - Duro Adebayo
 - Elita Causby
 - Deontavious Wilder
 - Kenyatta Williams
 - Ayor Otegbeye
 - Jimmy Bradley
2. File Name: Westside Beautification Project 074. Photo by Chris Mitchell. Westside Future Fund.
 - Caption: Members of the Westside Neighborhoods Beautification program with Integrity CEO Rev. Howard Beckham (far left) and Valkill Industries' Ric Geyer (far right). Photo by Chris Mitchell, Courtesy of the Westside Future Fund.