

# WOMEN + GIRLS RESEARCH ALLIANCE

## W+GRA IMPACT REPORT

JUNE 2022

PREPARED BY  
DR. MICHELLE MEGGS



UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
**CHARLOTTE**

*Women + Girls Research Alliance*

[womengirlsalliance.charlotte.edu](http://womengirlsalliance.charlotte.edu)

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## A Message from the Executive Director Dr. Michelle Meggs

Over the past two years, COVID-19 has dramatically shifted the landscape on how we engage the community. Despite the pandemic, the Women + Girls Research Alliance (W+GRA) was successful in bringing people together when we had to be apart.

We made new connections, hosted virtual events, and supported successful research initiatives during the height of the pandemic. Social distancing did not prevent our social interactions nor break the bonds with our community. From our Research and Practice Discussion Series, to the Women's Summit, to the I Am the Daughter Of Project, the W+GRA remained engaged with and responsive to the needs of women and girls in the greater Charlotte Metro area.

It's been a long two years, but we're not finished. The next step of our work calls for the W+GRA to move from connection to mobilization. We are going to mobilize our connections into research, advocacy, and action.

We will sponsor programs like our upcoming Taking Space Without Apology Leadership Café, continue competitive Seed Grant programs, and seek out opportunities to help non-profits increase their capacity. We will continue to convene tough, necessary and empowering community conversations. And no matter what other curveballs we get thrown, W+GRA will keep working to make the Greater Charlotte Metro area a better place for women and girls.



*The Women + Girls Research Alliance (W+GRA) is committed to improving the lives of women and girls in the greater Charlotte metropolitan area by facilitating partnerships among researchers, community leaders and civic investors that produce transformative outcomes.*

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*As an affiliate of UNC Charlotte's urbanCORE, W+GRA leverages its unique connection to the University and the community to implement three strategies that produce innovative solutions to systemic challenges that impede the well-being of women and girls.*

First, we **mobilize**.

W+GRA encourages engaged research focused on issues related to the economic, social and physical well-being of women and girls. We encourage co-production among researchers, community residents, and practitioners. Our competitive Seed Grant program supports emerging scholarship from UNC Charlotte faculty that expands and elevates the voices of all women and girls in academic research.

Second, we **equip**.

W+GRA champions partnerships with a growing network of grassroots and established organizations devoted to issues related to women and girls to build their knowledge and organizational capacity. One example is our work with a local organization to provide an evaluation plan focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Third, we **convene**.

Since 2008, the W+GRA has hosted gatherings and conversations with experts and scholars. We encourage active, data-driven partnerships that lead to improved outcomes for women and girls. Our most recent biennial Women's Summit in 2021, entitled "Recovery and Discovery: Women & Girls in a Dual Pandemic," focused on the economic, social, physical, and mental health impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and racial unrest on our community.

# W+GRA Advisory Board



Angela Woods, JD,  
COO, Crossnore  
Communities for Children



April Whitlock,  
Head of Corporate  
Citizenship and  
Executive Director of the  
LendingTree Foundation



Carlenia Ivory,  
Community Engagement  
Specialist,  
Charlotte Mecklenburg  
Schools



Deborah Majewski,  
Senior Program Officer  
The Leon Levine  
Foundation



Elizabeth Trotman,  
Senior Vice President of  
Civic Leadership  
Programs and Initiatives  
Foundation For The  
Carolinas



Dr. Janaka Bowman-  
Lewis  
Associate Professor of  
English and Director of  
the Center for the Study  
of the New South at  
UNC-Charlotte

# W+GRA Advisory Board



Karen Gipson,  
Chief Mission  
Advancement Officer,  
Aldersgate



Kelly Finley,  
Senior Lecturer and  
Undergraduate Advisor  
Women's & Gender  
Studies Program  
UNC-Charlotte



Dr. Monica Allen,  
Director of Strategic  
Planning and Evaluation  
Mecklenburg County



Natalie Brown,  
Director of Corporate  
Citizenship, Ally  
Financial,



Patricia Massey Hoke,  
Executive Director of  
Women's Impact Fund



Ralphine Caldwell,  
Executive Director,  
LISC Charlotte



Joy Paige Springs,  
Ex-Officio  
UNC-Charlotte, Senior  
Director of Strategic  
Community Partnership





# MOBILIZE

## W+GRA Seed Grants

Six Seed Grants were awarded to researchers in the amount of \$5,000 each during the 2021-2022 academic year. These projects aligned with the Alliance's priorities that emerged from the 2021 Women's Summit – Recovery and Discovery: Women + Girls in a Dual Pandemic, March 10, 2021

### 2020 SEED GRANT RECIPIENTS

- + Keepin' It REEL: Black Girls Film Camp
- + Pulling Others in to Push the Word Out: Developing the Paper Chase Virtual Training Model for Research Dissemination
- + Pandemic & Peripartum: Understanding the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Wellbeing of First-time Moms in North Carolina
- + Reducing Hypertension and Hypertension Risk in Black women using a Simple Handgrip Exercise Training Program

### 2021 SEED GRANT RECIPIENTS

- + Healing and Housing During Covid: Formerly Incarcerated Women Share their Stories
- + Fostering Early STEM Exploration with Gifted/High Ability Black Girls and their Elementary Teachers
- + Identifying Mechanisms of Employment Socialization in Mother-Child Dyads
- + Exploring the Impact of COVID-19 on the Economic Growth and Mobility among Women in the Charlotte Metropolitan Area
- + Keepin' it REEL: Black Girls Film Camp – Phase II
- + "We All We Got": Supporting Home Insecure Black Mothers Summit

# EQUIP

Building Organizational Capacity and partnerships with growing and established grassroots organizations

## BUILDING ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

- + Completed Phase I Girl Scouts Hornets' Nest Logic Model and Evaluation Plan (2020)
- + W+GRA secured \$30,000 to continue with Phase II of Girl Scouts Hornets' Nest Logic Model and Evaluation Plan to develop the Evaluation Plan with the Urban Institute (2020-2021)
- + The W+GRA secured a \$15,000 grant from EmpowHERment to redesign their educational curriculum that aligns with a social justice model. (2022)

## PARTNERSHIPS

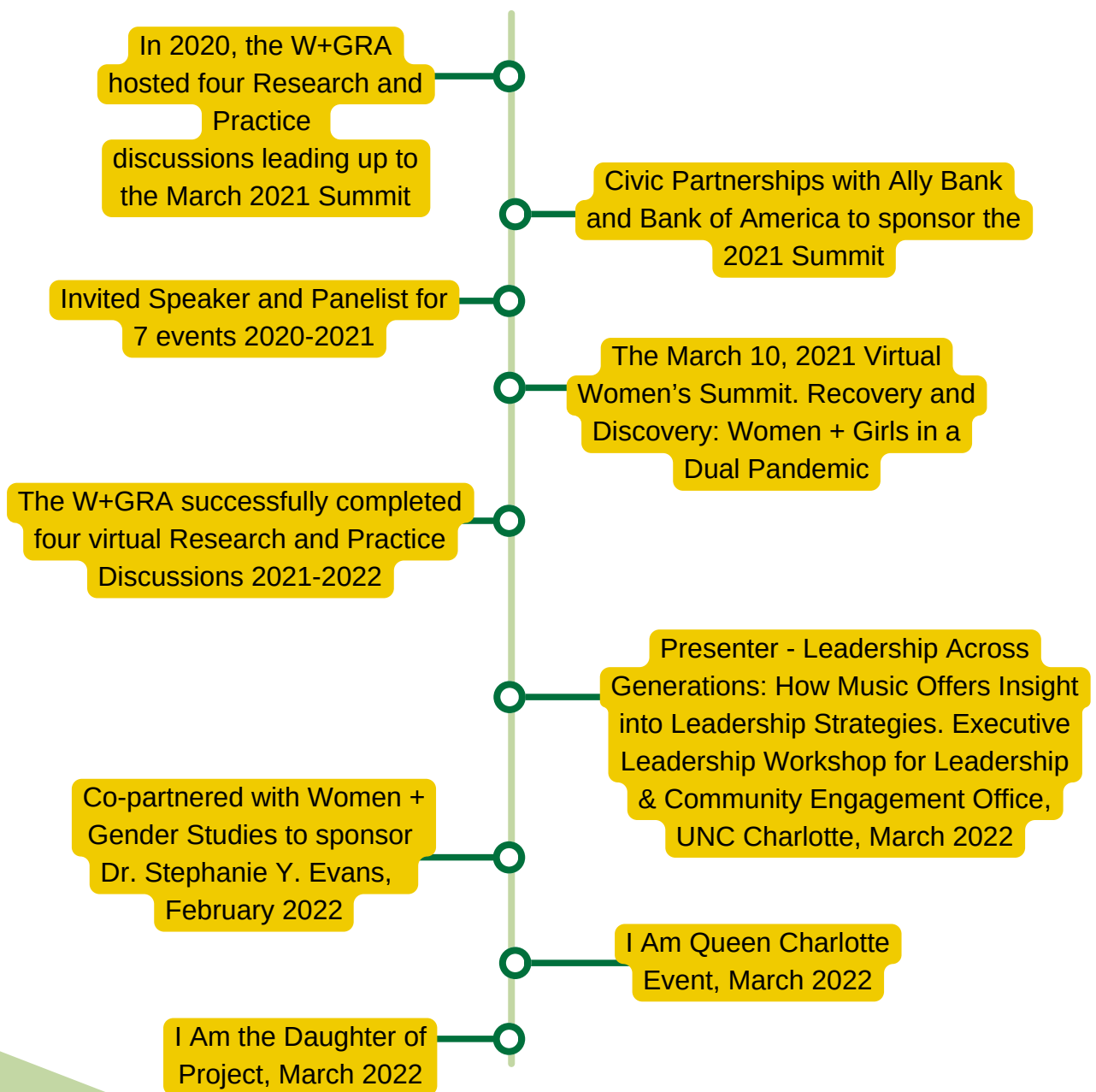
- + Women's Intercultural Exchange
- + Women's Business Center of Charlotte
- + EmpowHERment
- + Girl Scouts Hornets' Nest Council







# CONVENE





# 2021 SUMMIT

## RECOVERY & DISCOVERY: Women and Girls in a Dual Pandemic





# urbanCORE

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**Dr. Byron P. White, Associate Provost**

urbanCORE is the hub of UNC Charlotte's engaged scholarship ecosystem. (CORE is an acronym for Community-Oriented Research and Engagement.) Our unit mobilizes, assesses and advances efforts that connect the University's interdisciplinary, urban research resources to community assets in order to "co-produce transformative solutions to societal issues and challenges."



# UNC CHARLOTTE CONNECTIONS

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+ **Center for Counseling and Psychological Services** - \$1800 HERFF

Grant for workshop, Prioritizing Women's Health During COVID-19

+ **Department of Social Work** - Dr. Shanti Kulkarni, Research & Practice

Session on Domestic Violence

+ **Center for the Study of the New South & Department of Women +**

**Gender Studies** - Co-Sponsored Dr. Stephanie Y. Evans virtual talk on

Yoga and healthy practices for women.

+ **Belk College of Business** - Prof. Cynthia Bush, 2020 Women's

Summit, Economic Equity: Closing the Gender Pay Gap

+ **Department of Language and Culture Studies**, 2020 Women's

Summit, Impact of COVID-19 on the Spanish Speaking Diaspora

+ **College of Computing and Informatics** - Dr. Fatma Milli, Summer

Computer Science Program

thank  
you



CHARLOTTE  
URBANCORE

We thank you for your continued support and we are looking forward to continuing our research.

## Contact

Dr. Michelle Meggs,  
Executive Director

Women + Girls Research Alliance  
[womensgirlsalliance.charlotte.edu](http://womensgirlsalliance.charlotte.edu)

Office Phone: 704-687-1307

Email: [mmeggs@uncc.edu](mailto:mmeggs@uncc.edu)