



CULTIVATE.

INSPIRE.

CREATE.

2 0 1 7  
IMPACT REPORT

MIDDLE BORDER  
FORWARD



[www.middleborderforward.org](http://www.middleborderforward.org)

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# Mission

## Statement

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TO INSPIRE MEANINGFUL  
**community**  
**engagement**  
& C U L T I V A T E  
**EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP**  
t o c r e a t e a  
**STRONGER FUTURE**  
for the Middle Border region.

MIDDLE BORDER  
**F:WARD**

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# VISION GOALS



NEW DESIGN IDEAS

WORLD

75%

CREATIVE

WHAT OUR UNIV...  
FRESH AND FUN

THE 100 MOST  
INNOVATIVE  
UNIVERSITIES  
IN THE  
U.S.

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

# VISION 2035:

## Powered by Middle Border Forward & YOU

In the summer of 2016, Middle Border Forward started a movement to engage the people of Danville, Pittsylvania County & Caswell County in an open dialogue about our shared vision for the future of our region. After a series of six well-attended roundtable discussions centered around MBF's six focus areas (arts & culture, business, education, environment, health & wellness and infrastructure), it became clear that **the answers to any challenge facing the Middle Border region could be found within the people living here and that our best chance at a strong & viable future was in working together.**

Armed with the invaluable feedback of those early community discussions and supported by key stakeholders across the region, MBF embarked upon a mission to facilitate the creation of a community-driven vision for future of the Middle Border – an initiative that came to be known as VISION 2035.

Over a period of six months in 2017, MBF and its team of volunteers launched a whirlwind tour of the region. All told, **we hosted or participated in nearly 30 events and engaged over 1,200 people** through a series of community cafes, pop-up events and online surveys. Our questions were very simple:

- What's good about life in the Middle Border?
- What's not so good?
- What can we, the community, do to make it better?
- What is your vision for our region in the year 2035?



The responses were as diverse as the people we engaged, but one common theme clearly emerged – the people of this region believe in its potential and are willing to work together to make it the best it can be. **Together, we created a shared vision for our future. Together, we can make that vision a reality.**

**A full copy of VISION 2035, including its goals and strategies, can be found on our website: [www.middleborderforward.org](http://www.middleborderforward.org).**

We encourage you to check it out and let us know which parts speak to you, because the best version of our future is the one we create TOGETHER!

# Middle Border Forward Fellowship

The MBF Fellowship is **designed to provide an immersive leadership development experience for people who are passionate about creating positive change in the region.** Over a series of twelve monthly, day-long sessions, emerging leaders are exposed to both the challenges and opportunities facing our community, while also working to build their capacity to effectively engage and impact the world around them. Topics range from agriculture to arts & culture to public speaking. Each class of Fellows is challenged to design and implement a community impact project as a capstone to the experience.

In 2017, the newly redesigned MBF Fellowship model graduated its first class of 16 Fellows. Upon completion of the program:



82% strongly agree the Fellowship experience impacted their view of themselves as a leader



73% strongly agree the Fellowship experience increased their awareness of opportunities & challenges within the region



91% strongly agree they are better prepared to impact their community as a result of participation in the Fellowship



80% feel moderately to extremely more comfortable interacting with people different from themselves



60% started a new job, enrolled in school or joined boards of community organizations

# STORIES

## of the Middle Border

For their capstone project, the 2017 Fellows endeavored to share the stories of 25 people from across the region through public art displays and an online video series. The project celebrated the diversity of our community and highlighted the common threads of humanity that bind us together.

**Visit [www.middleborderforward.com](http://www.middleborderforward.com) to hear their stories.**





# Fellows 500

Designed as a means to support and encourage continued community engagement of MBF Fellows beyond their time in the program, the Fellows 500 initiative provides up to \$500 in financial support for Fellows-designed or Fellows-led community impact projects. In 2017, nine Fellows 500 sponsorships were awarded.

- **International Education Week (Tia Yancey)**

A celebration of international education & student exchange opportunities at Averett University.

- **Carry You (Maggy Gregory)**

Duffle bags & care packages for children entering into the foster care system.

- **Xanadu the Musical (Autumn Hargrove)**

A showcase of 30+ youth performers from across the region.

- **Parents Meet & Greet (Crystal Cobbs)**

An event to foster open & ongoing communication between families & educators at GLH Johnson Elementary School.

- **Special Olympics Fun Day (Philip Wilson)**

An event designed to provide local Special Olympics athletes the opportunity to participate in sports & entertainment activities with support from Averett University student athletes.

- **River Ride (Brandon Atkins)**

A competitive cycling event designed to promote physical activity & encourage support for Habitat for Humanity.

- **If I Knew I Couldn't Fail Wall (Alexis Ehrhardt)**

An interactive public art display on the campus of Averett University.

- **Virginia Organizing (Nik Belanger)**

Support for the Danville chapter's annual meeting & activities to promote civic engagement.

- **Women, Wine & Whispers (Trina McLaughlin)**

An event to encourage & empower women through open dialogue about sensitive topics in a safe space.



# COMMUNITY 500

Because MBF believes everyone has the capacity to create positive change in their community, we designed the Community 500 initiative. By providing technical and financial support (up to \$500) to individuals and small organizations, Community 500 allows people an opportunity to prove that it does not take a title or position or a whole lot of money to be a leader. In 2017, MBF awarded 14 Community 500 sponsorships across the region, impacting dozens of communities and hundreds of people.

- **From These Pages (Danville By Choice)**

A grassroots spoken word & live music event to showcase regional creatives at Fowlkes Gallery in Yanceyville.

- **Exotic Animals of Caswell County (EPIC Caswell)**

A field trip for low-income youth to the Conservators Center in Caswell County, with tours tailored to NC Standard Course of Study for 3rd & 4th grade.

- **Take My Picture (Corey Williams)**

Professionally produced family portraits for low-income families living in public housing in Danville.

- **Tiger Bookstore (Sonta Reid)**

A student-run bookstore at Westwood Middle School.

- **Ringgold Rail Trail Improvements (Christopher Stafford)**

Part of a project to remove & recycle old benches & tables along the trail.

- **Growing Reader Library (Neal Meyer)**

Little Free Libraries designed, built & maintained by students at Carlisle School.



- **D.U.D.E. (Maureen Belko)**

A workshop on the rules & techniques of ultimate frisbee.

- **Breaking the Ice (Brenda Day)**

A series of affirming & interactive events designed to promote social integration for individuals with disabilities in Caswell County.

- **Read to Me (Wonda Graves)**

A program to bring together parents & children for supported reading activities in the Seeland Crossing community.

- **Guys in Ties (Barry Martin)**

An event to teach young men proper etiquette (and how to tie a necktie), followed by a formal dinner.

- **Community Clean-Up (Ruby Mease)**

A project designed to bring people together to beautify their community by picking up trash & cleaning up public spaces.

- **SPROUTS (Kelsey Robertson)**

Construction of a greenhouse at Kentuck Elementary School to teach students self-reliance, provide access to healthy food & promote environmental awareness.

- **Holiday Community Crafting (Celia Spillmann)**

A series of community-wide crafting events to make holiday decorations to be hung in Yanceyville's town square.

- **I Am Enough (Angela Williams)**

An event for young ladies to teach effective self-care through creative activities, including making blankets that can be used for comfort during times of distress.

# JUNIOR LEADERSHIP

## Southside

14

**Kaitlyn Austin**  
**Grey Capozzoli**  
**Jessica Durand**  
**Sydney Edwards**  
**Baylee French**  
**Shamaurie Henderson**  
**Caroline Hughes**  
**Cue'BION Jones**  
**Victoria Lovern**  
**Taylor Mangus**  
**Kacey Martin**  
**Victoria Puryear**  
**Isaac Shifflett**  
**Dylan Sparks**  
**Rae'Viona Stephens**  
**Alexis Toufas**  
**Ampazzeona Warren**  
**Madison Webb**

In Summer 2017, MBF partnered with Averett University's Center for Community Engagement & Career Competitiveness to host Junior Leadership Southside – a week-long leadership development program for high school juniors and seniors. Over the course of six days, 19 area students engaged in interactive sessions designed to help them find their passion, define their values and identify their leadership style. JLS participants also drafted spoken word pieces and prepared short speeches outlining their visions for the future. As an added bonus to the experience, students completing the program were awarded a generous \$20,000 scholarship from Averett University.



# MBF LEADERSHIP

15

## 2017-18 BOARD MEMBERS

**Brandon Atkins**, Board President  
**Bryan Price**, Vice President  
**Alexis Ehrhardt**, Treasurer  
**Faith Stamps**, Secretary  
**Jameel Austin**, Fellowship Alumni Rep.  
**Lynette Anderson**  
**Catesby Denison**  
**Maggy Gregory**  
**Daniel Hale**  
**Cassie Jones**  
**Jessica Jones**

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**Dr. Karl Stauber**  
**Bill Woods**

## 2017 STAFF

**Jennifer Gregory**  
Executive Director  
**Kendall Ratliffe**  
Program Coordinator  
**Christy Harper**  
Office Manager

## 2017 FELLOWS

**Sherill Anderson**  
**Jameel Austin**  
**Sheila Baynes**  
**Pleshette Bowens**  
**Crystal Cobbs**  
**Rachel Covington**  
**Darrin Edwards**  
**Autumn Hargrove**  
**Cassie Jones**  
**Karice Luck**  
**Chad Martin**  
**Trina McLaughlin**  
**Charmaine Redd**  
**Jackie Wells**  
**Philip Wilson**  
**Tia Yancey**



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