



SLINGSHOT MEMPHIS
INVESTOR LETTER
Q2 - 2020

There is a gap in the way we have traditionally fought poverty. On one side are poverty-fighting nonprofits who seek to maximize their impact without an effective way to measure it. On the other side are funders who seek to alleviate poverty without an effective way to understand the benefits generated from their charitable investments. This gap inhibits the optimal allocation of resources to the most effective poverty-fighting interventions.

Four years ago, Slingshot Memphis was formed to bridge this divide by creating an evidence-based feedback loop to measure poverty-fighting capabilities and impact. Ever since, **Slingshot has been helping nonprofits and funders reach the same goal: a results-driven approach to fighting poverty that enables the most people to transition and stay out of poverty.**

At a [cityCURRENT](#) event in March, Slingshot's team, partner organizations, and key supporters had the privilege of engaging Father Gregory Boyle, the founder of [Homeboy Industries](#). Located in Los Angeles, Homeboy Industries is the largest gang intervention, rehabilitation, and re-entry program in the world. Father G, as he is affectionately called, reminded us that, **"The measure of our compassion lies not in our service of those on the margins but only in our willingness to see ourselves in kinship with them."**

This kinship is inclusive, unconditional, and compassionate. It requires us to learn how to empathize with people who have different life experiences and to recognize we can be taught by those on the margin.

Slingshot is inspired by daily examples of kinship in Memphis. Poverty-fighting nonprofits in our city, including many of Slingshot's partners, demonstrate kinship by listening to the people they work with, learning from the insights they share, and placing their needs first. This kinship motivates nonprofits to maximize their impact by adopting the most effective practices and monitoring their efforts to find opportunities to improve.

Kinship is also demonstrated by our city's generous funding community. **As seen below, a growing list of these funders are seeking to strengthen the impact of their contributions by supporting Slingshot's evidence-based approach in 2020.** Funders display kinship by investing in nonprofits that can demonstrate transparent evidence of poverty-fighting benefits or are on a trajectory to create even greater benefits in the future. Kinship requires going

against the status quo to accelerate the pace and amount of investments in high-impact interventions so more people benefit sooner.

There is a growing movement of people and organizations in Memphis that recognize we still have much to do to develop the level of kinship required to alleviate poverty in our community. To facilitate this, we need greater transparency and a more pervasive evidence-based understanding of the most effective interventions. Slingshot is excited to improve its capabilities and scale its efforts to meet these needs.

Improve: In early 2020 Slingshot entered into a partnership with [MDRC](#), a world-class research organization committed to finding solutions to some of the most difficult problems facing the nation — from reducing poverty and bolstering economic self-sufficiency to improving public education and college graduation rates. Through this partnership, MDRC is helping Slingshot enhance its methodology and tools to better measure poverty-fighting impact. In addition, MDRC and Slingshot are collaborating on approaches to better align the work of Memphis' poverty-fighting stakeholders. This partnership furthers Slingshot's mission of promoting a results-driven poverty-fighting ecosystem in Memphis.

Scale: Throughout 2020, Slingshot has further refined and standardized its impact assessment process — most notably by developing a suite of more than 50 assessment tools to help consistently measure the poverty-fighting capabilities and impact of nonprofits. Slingshot is leveraging several technology platforms to automate efforts, improve efficiencies, and enhance the interoperability of our assessment data and analyses. These efforts will enable rapid expansion of Slingshot's nonprofit partner portfolio over the next several years.

In June, the Rev. Ollie Rencher, a well-respected leader of an established faith-based community in Memphis, joined Slingshot's mission. He states, "I am proud to be a new supporter of Slingshot Memphis due to the alignment of its mission and values with my faith. Its brilliant approach and partnerships are responding in creative ways to the poverty experienced by our community neighbors." In the second half of 2020, Slingshot will invite other faith-based communities and leaders to join with us in creating a demonstrable reduction in poverty by supporting evidence-based interventions.

In 2019, Slingshot piloted a corporate partnership with Armstrong Relocation. The benefits of this partnership exceeded both parties' expectations and has continued in 2020. Armstrong Relocation, alongside 63 of its employees, invested in Slingshot's IMPACT Fund. Additionally, their employees engaged in high-impact volunteer opportunities. These include volunteering with MIFA to deliver more than 260 meals to homebound seniors, assembling personalized care packages for all of the nurses at Nurse-Family Partnership, as well as providing and sharing lunch with participants in Advance Memphis life-skills class. Matt Evans, president of Armstrong Relocation, shares, "All companies are challenged to bring their employees together


around a common cause that goes beyond the bottom line. Slingshot can help solidify a company’s purpose and assure that its people’s volunteer time and money are making an impact.” In the second half of 2020, Slingshot will invite other local businesses to join with us in creating a demonstrable reduction in poverty by supporting evidence-based interventions.

The kinship required to dramatically reduce poverty in our community requires proximity to those experiencing poverty and an evidence-based feedback loop that allows us to understand the most effective interventions. As nonprofits are empowered to measure and identify what works best, and as funders understand the benefits generated by their investments, we can bridge the gap that impedes the allocation of resources to the highest-impact solutions.

Slingshot is committed to bridging this gap.

Team Slingshot

2020 Measurement Funders

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Linda and Frank Smith 

Marsha and Bill Thompson 

Crews Family Foundation

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Cait and Josh Shores

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 Principal Measurement Funder

2020 Investors

(as of 7.30.20)

*Investors Since Inception (2017)

Monthly Investors

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Ben Alumbaugh	Lauren Boots	William Cherry
AmazonSmile Foundation	Denise Boyd	Herbert Cochrane
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Thomas Halfacre

Donna Hall

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Steven Hall

Sue Hall

Charles Hamlett

Chuck Hamlett

Eddie Hankins

Katie and Stuart Harris

Thomas Harrison

Bryan Harvey

Sam Hasty

Susan Hawkins

Kelley Henderson

Evan Herrera

Brooks Herring

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The Ichthys Foundation Fund

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Caroline Kaiser

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