

Letter from the Managing Editor

In full bloom

I did not inherit my mother's green thumb. Her home garden in South Charlotte is a lush jungle of English laurels, azaleas and cherry trees looped with a mossy cobbled path and dappled with glass orbs and stone angels. I'm just getting really good at killing orchids and succulents.

But I get to watch another garden grow: Charlotte, where the nonprofit sector is in full bloom. There are 2,212 nonprofits with a 501(c)(3) designation in the Charlotte region, according to nnonprofits.org. They flower with diverse missions and each has been planted and cultivated by founding members and supporters. These people behind the nonprofits are the types of gardeners we all have the potential to become, sans green thumb.

There is the hopeful gardener: Jane McIntyre, who stepped up to revive a wilting **United Way of Central Carolinas** in 2009 as executive director. She was praised for reinvigorating community support of the organization through "her leadership of optimism" (page 51). **Her focus for growth: fundraising.** Across the six annual fundraising campaigns McIntyre led, United Way has given nearly \$100 million to local agencies.

There is the advocating gardener: 2014 Charlottean of the Year James Ford uprooted from his teaching position at Garinger High School to spend this academic year traveling as an ambassador for 95,000 North Carolina teachers and serving as a voice for public schools. **His focus for growth: student potential.** One of his primary concerns is at-risk students and he recently spoke at a **Council for Children's Rights** event about cultivating equitable education (page 22).

There is the artistic gardener: **Clayworks** Executive Director Adrienne Dellinger has turned her personal passion for ceramic arts into a teaching opportunity. She and other



Clayworks instructors engaged with about 12,500 program participants last year alone through classes, workshops and outreach. **Her focus for growth: support for the arts.** Not only does Dellinger view her work as facilitating the creation of tangible art, but as "developing the next generation of art supporters and appreciators" (page 9).

Then there is the potential gardener: What type of gardener will you be and how will you choose your focus for growth? Start by getting outside and getting inspired. Spend more time in gardens—take time to wander through the gates of **Wing Haven**. We did. And we uncovered a bounty of history and programming that we were inspired to share as part of our special **Home & Garden** section (pages 27-35).

Notice what's around you. Notice the philanthropic gardeners who roll up the sleeves of their business attire each day and dig their hands into the community's areas of need to make something better grow here. Pick your cause—pick a patch of this city that deserves your tender loving care and plant your own seeds of support. Spring is here—and it's time to grow.

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