THE FOUNTAIN FUND

Fall 2026 Newsletter

BOSTON



NICK EVANS

Client Partner Spotlight: Arlis "Nick" Evans

Throughout 24 years of incarceration, **Arlis "Nick" Evans** never stopped planning for his future. He conceptualized the vision for his business, In A Nick of Time Landscaping, long before he returned home. When his case was overturned and he was released, the Fountain Fund helped make that vision a reality.

Starting with small loans of $1,300 and $1,500 to buy essential tools and equipment, Nick built his company from the ground up. Most recently, the Fountain Fund approved a $5,400 business loan, giving him a reliable truck and allowing him to expand his reach to new clients.

Today, In A Nick of Time Landscaping is growing beyond a solo operation. Nick now secures larger contracts and has brought on additional crew members, offering employment opportunities to others in his community. The success of his business has also become a point of pride at home: **his daughter likes to join him on job sites, learning valuable entrepreneurial skills as she watches her father build his legacy**.

"The Fountain Fund is definitely a great organization. It's about redemption. It's about giving you a chance to help yourself and give you a sense of responsibility and accountability." — Nick Evans



ABOVE: *Site Director Ace Morin (third from right) and friends at Prom.*

PARTNER ORG PROFILE: TRANSFORMATIONAL PRISON PROJECT

Reentry isn't only about navigating financial systems and rebuilding careers. It's also about healing, connection, and experiencing unbridled joy.

This year, the Boston Fountain Fund team had the honor of celebrating at the **Transformational Prison Project Prom**, a special evening designed to give returning citizens a night of freedom and a celebratory experience many never had the chance to enjoy growing up.

Boston Site Director Ace Morin and many of our Client Partners dressed up and hit the dance floor together. As one attendee said, "Joy is something worth celebrating, no matter how long it takes."



AARON MORIN

LEADERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

Aaron "Ace" Morin, Site Director

The GreenLight Fund recently highlighted the tremendous momentum in Boston as **Ace Morin** takes the helm as Site Director. Ace brings a **powerful blend of lived experience, restorative practices, and passion for economic mobility** to his role. On his very first days closing loans, Ace was already working with individuals he had served time alongside, embodying what true peer-led support looks like. Driven by the core value to "check on, love on," Ace views the Fountain Fund not as a one-time resource, but as a lifelong community partnership.

Ace is also representing the Fountain Fund in Mass Law Reform Institute's statewide Reentry Health Community Cohort, a year-long collaboration of directly impacted leaders shaping practical reentry tools. In addition to contributing to a step-by-step navigation handbook for individuals walking out of incarceration, Ace contributed a custom, interactive resource map highlighting local housing, healthcare, and employment support, complete with QR-code cards and printed guides for those without phone access.

Dunkin' order: Iced Dunka Latte with mocha swirls

Recent read: *First Pitch* by Debi Kleiman

"We traded in our shanks for laptops, and we are changing the culture of what re-entry looks like."

BOSTON AT A GLANCE:

Our Boston site is growing!

115 LOANS	**100+** CLIENT PARTNERS
$335K+ TOTAL LENDING	**$115K+** RECYCLED

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"None of where my life is today literally would be possible without the Fountain Fund. It put me in a position where the opportunities are endless. I know for a 100% fact, if it wasn't for the Fountain Fund, I wouldn't be where I'm at." — Client Partner

NEWS FROM HEADQUARTERS

OUR MISSION: *The Fountain Fund increases economic opportunities for formerly incarcerated people to improve their lives and remain in their communities.*

LENDING HOPE

Sharing Our Model Nationwide

Across the country, The Fountain Fund is stepping onto regional and national stages to **change the narrative around reentry and fair lending**. In October, Executive Director Erika Viccellio and National Director of Client and Community Engagement Tez Tolbert presented about the Fountain Fund's leadership development program at Stand Together Foundation's national Catalyst convening. Erika also joined site directors Aaron Morin (Boston) and Mike Butler (Philadelphia) at the GreenLight Fund Summit in Oakland to collaborate on community-driven solutions with other grantees from around the country. Building on his work at Prosperity Now's lending forum, Mike Butler was invited to deliver a plenary address at their Atlanta Regional Summit this November. From Richmond Site Director Tom Mundy testifying before the Virginia House of Delegates to staff delivering national summit keynotes, our team is demonstrating that **when you extend resources and opportunity to returning citizens, entire communities prosper**.

That national influence extends directly to media platforms, where our leaders share lived experience to reframe the reentry conversation. On *A Life, Unedited*, host Marc Hunt sat down with Tez Tolbert and Loan Operations Specialist Sankofa Alkebu-Lan to discuss the hidden barriers after incarceration and how the Fountain Fund extends trust and capital. On Charlottesville's Envision Radio, Director of Lending Shantel Hopkins reflected on his personal transformation and how his grandmother's advice to "be his own man" inspires him to **lead with grace** when coaching Client Partners.

Grounded in this deep field experience, our team continues to invest in internal excellence. This summer, Shantel Hopkins and Sankofa Alkebu-Lan attended Credit Builders Alliance's intensive training in Miami on competitive scholarships, earning prestigious **Master Trainer certifications**. Using a **train-the-trainer model**, Shantel and Sankofa are sharing their knowledge with our team and Client Partners to deliver even more powerful financial coaching.



From left, podcast host Marc Hunt, Sankofa Alkebu-Lan, and Tez Tolbert.

"Good people, good organizations do exist. Because all I ever wanted was an opportunity." — Sankofa Alkebu-Lan



Sankofa Alkebu-Lan and Shantel Hopkins in Miami.

"We attended the CBA conference as participants and presenters, and then in the same year became Master Trainers. And now the world is just open." — Shantel Hopkins

WE ARE GROWING!



Brooks Wellmon
NATIONAL DIRECTOR OF PHILANTHROPY

We are thrilled to welcome two new additions to the Fountain Fund team. **Brooks Wellmon** joins as National Director of Philanthropy, building creative funding pipelines that secure sustainable resources for Client Partners nationwide. **Sherman Collins** steps into his role as Loan Specialist after a decade as an East Coast commercial driver, bringing a deep heart for ministry and community service to our lending team. As Sherman shares, "What stands out to me is that the Fountain Fund is mission-driven. They care more about helping people than just a loan." Please join us in giving both Brooks and Sherman a warm welcome!



Sherman Collins
LOAN SPECIALIST

NEW ORLEANS UPDATE

In March 2022, the Fountain Fund launched a partnership with First 72+ in New Orleans, combining holistic reentry services provided by First 72+ with micro-lending to support Client Partners on their financial journeys. Since the partnership began we have provided **more than 100 low-interest loans totaling more than $250,000**. Because of changes in leadership and staffing, we are winding down operations in New Orleans and will not be extending new loans there. We remain deeply committed to supporting our existing New Orleans Client Partners through the remainder of their loan terms, celebrating their ongoing achievements and honoring the lasting impact of our work together.

NATIONWIDE LENDING IMPACT

Since our founding in 2017

$6.5M+ IN LOANS	**1,327** LOANS
1,113 CLIENT PARTNERS	**$3.2M+** RECYCLED INTO THE FUND