THE FOUNTAIN FUND

CVILLE

SPRING 2025 NEWSLETTER

CLIENT PARTNER SPOTLIGHT – EDWIN MELTON

*Edwin makes home projects easy through his business **Melton Husband for Hire**.*

Sitting down with Edwin Melton for a cup of coffee and a conversation is like walking into a novel. He starts out at the beginning, and before you know it, you've journeyed a lifetime.

Edwin was raised in a hardworking, middle-class family with a workaholic dad who devoted his career to the union and a mom who made her way up through the ranks into finance at the Franklin Mint. During his life, Edwin has served as a young journalist for the union, mastered the art of drywall finishing (where he became a union journeyman), and so much more. He also spent time in prison. While there, he found a love of the law, completed a paralegal degree, and began serving as a jailhouse lawyer — supporting other inmates as they prepared for trial.

The intense work ethic that Edwin witnessed in childhood became a guiding force that propels him to this day. So, when Edwin approached the Fountain Fund for a $9,200 loan to help him launch his home repair business, we knew he would succeed.

A summary of NextDoor reviews: "Mr. Melton comes highly recommended for his reliable, professional, and affordable services. He is praised for his versatility and ability to handle a wide range of tasks from drywall repair and painting to deck restoration. Clients appreciate his punctuality, fair pricing, and excellent communication." Edwin's services are, "considered a 'find' by many, and he is often sought after for various home projects."

Now that Edwin is creating a new life, he believes, "It's up to me to give something back." Serving others through his business is one step in that direction. As an ex-offender, he also believes, "You owe the community for all you have taken in the days of doing wrong. And if you fully change, then you can rest and enjoy."

And how does Edwin spend his leisure time when he isn't working on home improvement projects around town? He's writing several books! Shares Edwin, "If you wanna be a rapper, you got to move to Atlanta. You wanna be a movie star? You got to go to California. You wanna be an author? To be able to tell your own truth?" He pauses for effect, "You got to live in Charlottesville." So that's exactly where he is. Building his dream.

NEWS FROM HEADQUARTERS – SHARING THE STAGE WITH BRYAN STEVENSON

Martize Tolbert, Bryan Stevenson and Erika Viccellio

On Friday, April 11, our agency was honored to share the stage at Monticello with criminal justice icon **Bryan Stevenson**. Guests gathered on the West Lawn to celebrate Founder's Day and award Stevenson with the **2025 Thomas Jefferson Foundation Medal in Citizen Leadership**. The ceremony also included the presentation of the **2025 Citizen Service Award** to **Martize Tolbert** on behalf of The Fountain Fund.

Stevenson is a widely acclaimed public interest lawyer who has dedicated his career to helping the poor, the incarcerated and the condemned. Through a powerful keynote address, he reminded listeners of Jefferson's deeply held belief that honesty is the first chapter in the book of wisdom. He eloquently shared, "We deny ourselves the beauty of justice when we refuse to tell the truth." And he thoughtfully encouraged, "We can all be citizen leaders by committing to being truthtellers, even when it's inconvenient, even when it's uncomfortable." He continued, "I believe there is something better waiting for us. Something that feels more like freedom."

For Stevenson, receiving the award, at this particular moment in time, is a call to action. "A challenge not to sit down, but to stand up. A challenge not to be quiet, but to keep speaking. A challenge to be a truthteller for the kind of just world that we all so desperately need."

AN UNFORGETTABLE SCREENING OF "DAUGHTERS"

Photo Credit: Alicia B Studios

Moderator Sarad Davenport (far left) led a robust conversation with: Angela Patton, Eddie Harris, Martize Tolbert, Dr. Cathy Ames Turner, and Earl Gladden. In addition to filming "Daughters," Ms. Patton is also CEO of ***Girls For A Change****, a national nonprofit with a bold mission: to prepare Black girls for the world—and the world for Black girls.*

In late March, the Fountain Fund co- hosted over 75 guests for an unforgettable screening of *Daughters*. This award-winning documentary follows the journey of four young girls preparing for a special Daddy-Daughter Dance with their incarcerated fathers. The movie's potent arc highlights the power of love, resilience, and second chances. Critics rave:
"This film will crack your heart wide open." ~ Collider
"It's rare to see a documentary so unafraid." ~ IndieWire

This community event also included an inside look at filming with Angela Patton, Co-Director and Executive Producer, and an engaging Q&A with local reentry leaders. If you haven't seen the movie, be sure to check it out! This is more than just a film — it's a movement. A conversation. A chance to uplift voices and advocate for families impacted by the criminal justice system.

PROGRAM PARTNER SPOTLIGHT – UHURU FOUNDATION'S KEYS TO LOVE

Thank you, Uhuru Foundation, for making our community stronger through **Keys to Love**! As shared on their website, "Keys to Love is a supportive program for men who are returning citizens in recovery from substance use disorders. The program addresses the needs of men with safe and substance-free housing, wrap-around support, life coaching, peer support, and links to education, employment, healthcare, and other services. The program is recovery-oriented and focuses on homelessness prevention, reentry, and hard-to-reach adults. Keys to Love is part of Uhuru's family-centered approach to keeping families connected and supporting the broader community."

CHARLOTTESVILLE FACTS

MAKING A DIFFERENCE
99% "Felt empowered to overcome barriers in life."
96% "Transformed their lives for the better."

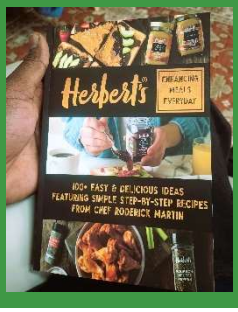
IN THEIR OWN WORDS
"Getting the loan wasn't easy, but everyone, especially Paul, made sure I had a strong business plan and that everything was in order. He was a guiding hand. He made it hard on me, but it paid off."

ACTIVE LOAN PORTFOLIO
As of February 28, 2025, Charlottesville's active loan portfolio included 162 loans valued at $658,968!

CLIENT PARTNER SUCCESS

Congratulations, ***Chef Roderick Martin****, for being featured in a Herbert's cookbook!*

Herbert's is dedicated to making a difference in the world of second chances.



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EXAMPLES OF LOANS
- Business Equipment
- Secure Housing
- Obtain a Driver's License
- Auto Loans & Vehicle Repair
- Court Costs & Fees
- DMV Fines & Fees

Scan to learn more!

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