



conexión
a amé r i c a s



Annual Report 2017





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Conexión Américas
2195 Nolensville Pike
Nashville, TN 37211
conexionamericas.org
615-320-5152



Building a **welcoming community** and **creating opportunities** where **Latino families can belong, contribute and succeed.**

Dear Friend,

As I write this letter I am returning from a milestone trip to Washington D.C. This year, I completed my three-year term—and the privilege of a lifetime—as Board Chair of UnidosUS, the nation’s largest Latino civil rights and advocacy organization. At the dinner to mark this occasion, and then over the weekend, I was joined by Berenice Oliva-Alfaro, one of the first graduates of our Escalera college access program and a current Trevecca University student. Berenice interned this summer with the office of Congressman Jim Cooper and was able to learn firsthand about the government of her adopted country. Seeing our nation’s capital through Berenice’s eyes was a powerful testament to the welcoming community that has supported and rallied around her along the way to get to where she is today. And you are an important part of that community.

This annual report shares highlights of Conexión Américas’ accomplishments in 2017. And just like in Berenice’s case, we hope you are proud of what you have contributed to make possible.

As we celebrate, we know you share, too, the outrage for the unfulfilled promise of the American Dream for young people like Berenice. Like many other young immigrants, she is studying, working and contributing to our community yet living in limbo given the uncertainty of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. And the outrage for children and families being used as political hostages at the US-Mexico border. And the outrage for the Muslim ban and its assault on fundamental American values.

As we look to the work ahead, Berenice and her family teach us a lot about resilience in the face of adversity. She inspires us to imagine and fight for the kind of future we envision and deserve for our communities and for our entire nation. She teaches us about the profound force for change that lies within her, within immigrant communities, within each of us.

We count on you to keep raising your voice and your heart and joining us in building a welcoming community where Berenice—and all—can fully belong, contribute and succeed.

Renata Soto
Co-Founder & Executive Director



Berenice Oliva-Alfaro and Janet Murguía,
President and CEO of UnidosUS

SOCIAL INTEGRATION

NEW Migrant Education Program

In 2016, the Tennessee Department of Education contracted Conexión Américas to manage the state’s Migrant Education Program. The Migrant Education Program team—spread across the entire state—identifies and recruits migratory students in the state (including pre-school, in-school and out-of-school youth) and helps students succeed in school and graduate from high school. We work directly with schools, school districts and communities to gather data and deliver services to **migratory students.**

A child who has moved school districts in the last 36 months because of their family’s temporary or seasonal employment in agricultural or fishing work.

Services include:

- In-home tutoring
- School supplies
- English as a second language classes
- Parent engagement support
- College application and FAFSA assistance
- Counseling referrals

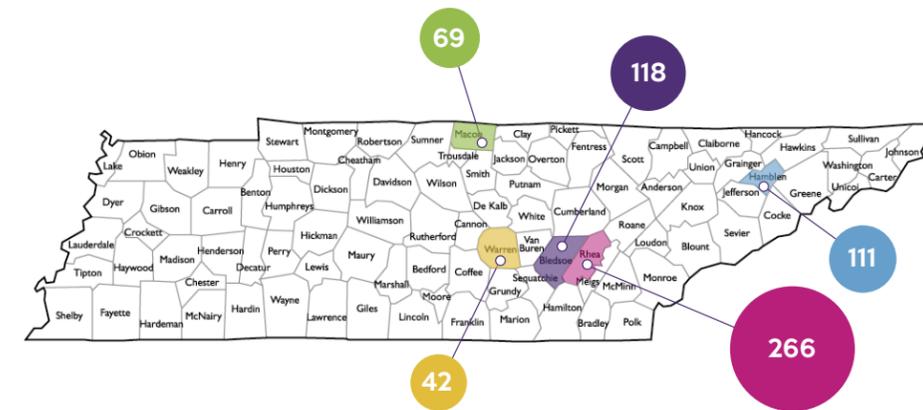
Main Crops and Industries in areas served

- Tobacco
- Strawberries
- Tomatoes
- Bell Peppers
- Green Beans
- Cotton
- Nurseries and Trees
- Poultry



Summer camp in Rhea County

Counties with the Most Migrant Students



1,022 Migrant students identified

Migrant Education Program staff determined the presence of 1,022 migrant students in Tennessee.

833 Migrant students enrolled

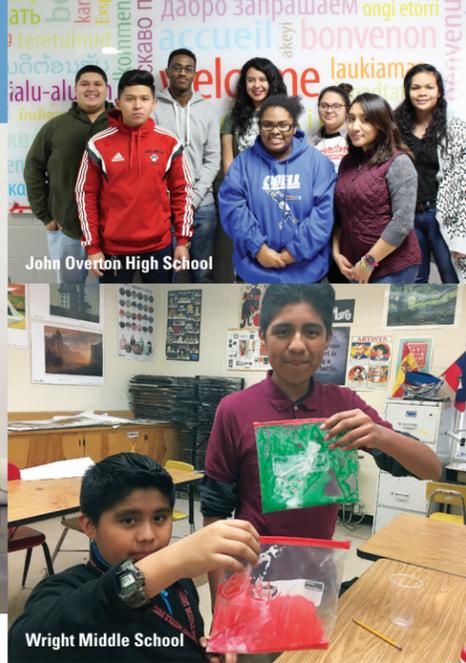
After identifying the 1,022 migrant students, Migrant Education Program staff enrolled 833 migrant students to receive tutoring and other health, social or legal services.

216 Students attended summer camps across TN

Our team hosted three summer camps in Rhea County, Hamblen County, and Macon County for migrant students from Pre-K to twelfth grade. The week-long camps focused on science, technology, math, literacy and arts enrichment. Rising high school students attended college immersion programs at Tennessee Tech University and East Tennessee State University. These week-long camps included digital storytelling activities and college readiness workshops.



SOCIAL INTEGRATION



Youth Development

70 Middle School Students

Throughout the entire school year students at Wright and Madison Middle Schools received tutoring, homework assistance and fun hands-on activities to explore the rich history of the Latino culture in our Nashville After Zone Alliance (NAZA) program.

368 High School Students

Students at Glencliff, John Overton and Cane Ridge High Schools began pursuing their dreams by participating in college and job preparation workshops, visiting college campuses, preparing for ACT testing, exploring careers and completing summer internships through Escalera, an UnidosUS program that promotes economic mobility for youth.

16 College-Bound Students

In May 2017, 16 Escalera college access participants graduated from Glencliff and Overton High Schools to begin the next step in their journey as the first in their families to go to college.

63 Escalera College Students

There are now 63 Escalera alumni currently in college and working with our College Success Coach who provides individualized counseling, peer support opportunities, mentorship and assistance with other college necessities such as financial aid applications, resume building and internship opportunities.

Meet Jennifer

Born in Mexico and raised in Nashville, Jennifer will soon embark on the journey many immigrant students like her take on—that of a first generation college student. Jennifer will follow her sister to become the second in her family to go to college, and she's more than ready. As an Escalera student, Jennifer successfully completed a summer internship at the American Red Cross Middle Tennessee chapter, and was selected by Saint Thomas Health as a Health Scholar, a program available only to the top 100 students in the Academy of Medical Research and Science in Metro Nashville. As Jennifer prepares to graduate at the top of her class, she has already been accepted to three local universities to pursue a degree in biology.



Family School Engagement

15 Parent Facilitators

Parent facilitators volunteered 595 hours mentoring other parents, facilitating workshops and serving as role models to other immigrant parents through Padres Comprometidos (Parents as Partners), an UnidosUS program teaching parents to support their children's success in school. Our parent facilitators are leaders in the field and have traveled across the country to teach others parent engagement best practices.

234 Parents

Latino and other parents participated in our 10-week Parents as Partners program to learn about the U.S. school system, child development and how to be partners and advocates for their child's long term success in school and path to higher education.

698 Children Pre-K to High School

Parents completing the program have 698 children at Paragon Mills Elementary, Glencliff Elementary, Davis Early Learning Center, Casa Azafrán Early Learning Center, Southeast Library, Norman Binkley Elementary, Glenview Elementary, Antioch Middle, Goodlettsville Middle, Wright Middle, Taylor Stratton Elementary, Cole Elementary, Whitsitt Elementary, Maxwell Elementary, and Schwab Elementary.

Language Skills

413 Adult Learners

Adult learners, including Spanish, Kurdish and Arabic speakers, improved their English language skills through our weekly classroom instruction.



ECONOMIC INTEGRATION



Meet **Elvira**

Hailing from Cali, Colombia, Elvira has called Nashville home for 18 years. A master empanada maker, Elvira first began selling the small stuffed pastries out of her house. A member of Mesa Komal since its inception, Elvira has transformed her at-home empanada making into a catering company with a full menu. Whether it's her famous empanadas, fresh fruit juices, or arroz con leche (rice pudding), Elvira's catering company, Que Delicias, is a must-try for corporate and community events.

Meet **Aldo**

Aldo has been making custom interiors and repairs for cars for over 12 years. After coming to Conexión Américas to pay his taxes one year, he learned about the Negocio Próspero (Prosperous Business) classes for aspiring entrepreneurs and signed up. For two years now, Aldo has been running his own successful car upholstery business in Nashville. Owning your own business is no easy feat, but with the skills he learned in class, Aldo's enterprise continues to grow. In the coming months he hopes to hire more young people to show them the art of sewing a car interior from the bottom to the top.

CENTER FOR MICROENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

Mesa Komal Culinary Incubator

One of the greatest barriers for entrepreneurs starting a food business is access to an affordable licensed kitchen. Conexión Américas' Mesa Komal Culinary Incubator provides that much needed space for chefs to launch, develop and grow their food businesses.

27 Food Entrepreneurs

27 Food Entrepreneurs launched or grew their food truck, catering or wholesale business in our culinary incubator.



Negocio Próspero (Prosperous Business)

Our nine-week Spanish-language introductory business course that offers basic administrative knowledge for starting a new business or growing an existing enterprise. Classes are taught by volunteer experts focusing on topics such as accounting, taxes, licensing permits, insurance and contracts.

73 Entrepreneurs

Latino small business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs completed our Negocio Próspero program and learned useful tools and skills to launch, or improve, the management and profitability of their businesses.

36 Jobs Created

New jobs created by business owners who completed our Negocio Próspero program.

Digital Literacy

52 Adult Learners

Adult learners completed courses in computer literacy, Microsoft Word, Excel and Quickbooks.

TAX PAYING

430 Individuals filed their taxes
210 Filed or Renewed a W-7

A W-7 provides an individual taxpayer identification number for those who need to pay taxes and do not have a social security number.

\$489,052 in Tax Returns to Taxpayers

Through the Internal Revenue Service sponsored United Way VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) Program we offer free basic tax return preparation to eligible low- to moderate-income workers in Middle Tennessee.

HOMEOWNERSHIP

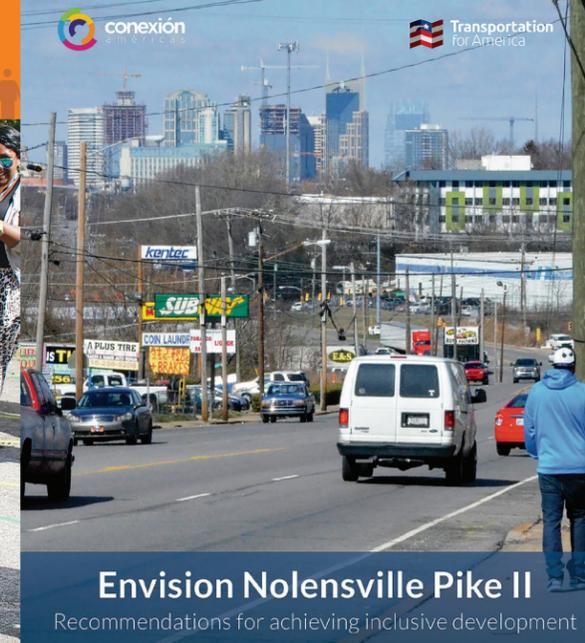
86 participants learned the basics of homebuying in Puertas Abiertas info sessions

4 new homeowners

Puertas Abiertas (Open Doors) assists Latino families in achieving the dream of homeownership by offering financial education, counseling and access to financing. The program also provides information to help homeowners avoid a foreclosure in difficult economic times.



Learn more about the people who make South Nashville home. Watch our short documentary "Transformation," A video that introduces us to three families and how despite their different paths to Nashville, community spaces bring them, and all of us, together. conexionamericas.org/transformation



Envision Nolensville Pike II
Recommendations for achieving inclusive development

Envision Nolensville Pike II Inclusive Development

In 2016, Envision Nolensville Pike mapped out—literally and figuratively—the aspirations and dreams for the Nolensville Pike corridor as expressed by residents and business owners during community gatherings. Building upon the initial Envision Nolensville Pike project report of 2016, we partnered with Transportation for America to commission a study with recommendations to ensure residents and businesses along the Nolensville Pike Corridor have the capacity to remain, thrive and enjoy the advancements that come with development. Through our report: Envision Nolensville Pike II Recommendations for Inclusive Development, we created a roadmap for policymakers, business owners and residents to make sure the corridor continues to thrive and grow.

Azafrán Park Opening August 11, 2018

Slowly but surely, like the snail sculptures that will call Azafrán Park home, progress continues through our public-private partnership with Metro Parks. By creating Azafrán Park, we are tackling the scarcity of open community spaces in South Nashville, the area of Davidson County that has experienced the fastest population growth during the last 15 years and is home to the largest concentration of immigrant families. It is also the area with fewest open green spaces and parks. With Azafrán Park, we continue our journey to spark inclusive development on the Nolensville Pike corridor that meets urgent needs, creates community and celebrates the roots and possibilities of all people.

Opportunity Now Public Art Apprenticeship

Through the Mayor's Opportunity Now initiative to give youth access to employment, we partnered with the Prado Studio to provide eight high school students and one college student a public art apprenticeship over the summer. Students worked on the Roots & Routes International Coin Mural (to be featured in Azafrán Park), which includes approximately 3,600 international coins representing 99 countries where Nashvillians come from or have visited. While the students engaged in practical work such as tile cutting, they walked away with so much more: essential workplace skills to take with them to their future jobs and endeavors.

Creative Community Engagement Subgrants

As part of the Envision Nolensville Pike project, Conexión Américas invested in nine arts focused community engagement projects, including:

- Creative writing workshop series about pedestrian safety
- Documentary and theater night for policymakers and community members
- Oral history project
- Creative crosswalk design
- Community quilt



"Flight" Pavilion and Mural: Inspired by the notions of movement and journeys represented in Prado's "Migration" mural that graces the facade of Casa Azafrán, architects at Hastings Architecture designed the pavilion for Azafrán Park with a roofline that alludes to the wings of a bird in full flight. Valentina Ramos Harper built upon that vision for her mural for the long wall behind the pavilion. Under her guidance, community members are participating in painting the mural.

ADVOCACY



Dr. Martin Luther King Jr Day

After a divisive election year, we mobilized Nashvillians of all political stripes to rally behind the ideal of an indivisible nation and created a space to come together and advocate for a welcoming community. Whether it was “Churros & Chocolate” on Inauguration Day or “Biscuits & Tacos” to celebrate the 4th of July, Tennesseans united to write over 2,000 postcards and make hundreds of phone calls to our legislators advocating for an inclusive community where everyone belongs.

2,000+

postcards and hundreds of phone calls to our legislators advocating for a **WELCOMING COMMUNITY**



immigrant students meet with Senator Corker in Chattanooga



Dreamers meet with Representative Cooper at Casa Azafrán



Photo by Keith Miles

Supper United

Our friends from the food story group Dirty Pages came to us with a brilliant idea: Bring together Nashvillians from different backgrounds, with different stories—and ask them to cook for each other, potluck-style—sharing different dishes and tastes, and forging new connections and friendships. We called it Supper United. We’ve hosted several potlucks and have even garnered national attention, as Supper United has been used as model for Recipe for Unity, a nation-wide effort to build community around potluck dinners spearheaded by UnidosUS, the largest Hispanic advocacy and civil rights organization in the country. Recipe for Unity is part of UnidosUS’ Rise Above initiative, a campaign that encourages us to rise above racial, political and ideological differences.



Holiday Bazar and Day of Action

"I'm Not Giving Up"

Meet **Arturo y Berenice**



At our annual Hispanic Heritage Awards ceremony we honored Berenice Oliva and Arturo Prieto for their courageous advocacy efforts for DACA recipients like themselves and the immigrant community as a whole. Both participated in our college access program (Escalera) as high school students at Glencliff, and now study at Trevecca Nazarene University. They have shared their stories fearlessly both here and in Washington, D.C., where they have met with the offices of Senators Corker and Alexander, as well as Representative Cooper. Berenice, who won our high school essay contest as a student, once wrote, “I am not going to give up. Nowhere in my American Dream have I listed giving up as an option.”

Protecting Our Families

In light of the current administration’s increased enforcement and detention policies that threaten families, we launched the Protecting Our Families program to help families know their rights and prepare for an emergency situation such as immigration detention or deportation, fighting fear with information and preparedness.

- 165** Families had individualized appointments to know their rights and prepare for care of their children
- 333** Powers of attorney for care of children and property completed with volunteer attorneys
- 200** Parents attended school information sessions to learn their rights and the importance of a family plan
- 150** Families came to Casa Azafrán to obtain US Passports for their citizen children in partnership with the Davidson County Clerk
- 42,000** Families reached through information sessions, events and radio segments on El Jefe and Radio Luz



Claudia Caballero
Knoxville



Cassandra "KC" Alvarado
Morristown



Quineka Moten
Knoxville



Gladys Pineda-Loher
Chattanooga



Diarese George
Nashville



Alicia Hunker
Nashville



Martel Graham
Nashville



Vanessa Lázón
Nashville



Jon Robertson
Nashville



Peter Tang
Nashville



Keji Kujjo
Memphis



Natalie McKinney
Memphis



Cardell Orrin
Memphis



Bobby White
Memphis



Marcos Villa
Memphis

Leading the Change

Convened by Conexión Américas, the Tennessee Educational Equity Coalition is a group of diverse civil rights and education advocacy organizations who have built a shared policy agenda to address chronic disparities in achievement and opportunities for students of color in the state of Tennessee.

Policy Goals

1. Excellent teachers and leaders for every child
2. Strong accountability systems
3. Appropriate and equitable resources
4. Successful Outcomes in Postsecondary Access and Completion

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is the new law governing public education. Beginning in December 2018, ESSA requires states to rate schools. In Tennessee, schools will receive a letter (A-F) grade. The Tennessee Educational Equity Coalition is committed to helping Tennesseans understand what the grades mean and what they can do to get involved in the accountability process.

1515 Participants Reached

Participants from 446 unique organizations attended workshops on the **Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)**, ESSA webinar series, a Lead the Change Summit, and a two-day Education Summit.

6 Statewide Subgrantees

Conexión Américas funded six statewide initiatives to ensure all children in Tennessee are afforded a world-class education.

- Trailblazer Coalition
- Tennessee Educators of Color Alliance
- Centro Hispano
- Chattanooga State Community College
- Tennessee Urban League
- Oasis Center, MNPS Department of Family and Community Engagement and PASSAGE

54 Coalition Partners

- 6 National
- 3 Statewide
- 8 West TN
- 12 East TN
- 25 Middle TN

Mosaic Fellowship Inaugural Class

The Mosaic Fellowship empowers leaders of color to play an integral role in the K-12 education ecosystem in Tennessee, both to better reflect the communities served by our public schools, but to also bring an essential mix of experience and insights that are required for long-term improvement in student achievement. The year-long fellowship immerses participants in thought-provoking readings and seminars about leadership, diversity and important issues in public education and social change.



Meet a Mosaic Fellow Keji

Keji is from Khartoum, Sudan. She currently serves as a Youth Representative to the United Nations after being appointed by Pan-Pacific South East Asia Women's Association-USA. Passionate about working with immigrant and refugee students to ensure they are receiving an equitable education, Keji is a 2017 Teach for America - Memphis corps member teaching English as a second language with Shelby County Schools.



FAMILIES AT A GLANCE

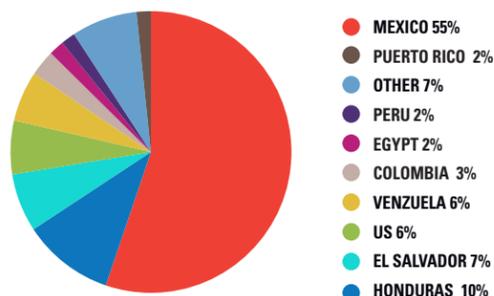
8,000 Families and individuals reached by Conexión Américas programs

10,256 People called or visited Casa Azafrán to connect with services or referrals

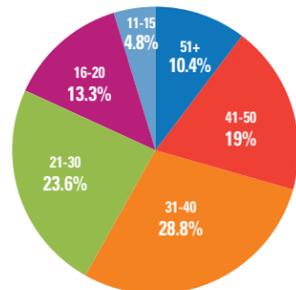


New homeowners Juan Pablo Afonso, Angélica Rosales and family

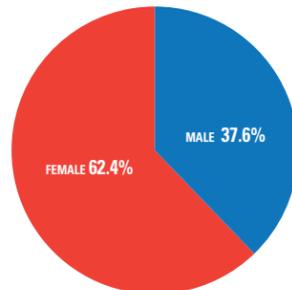
Country of Origin



Age



Gender



GRACIAS



Conexión Next

Conexión Next is a network for Nashville's young professionals committed to the mission of Conexión Américas and provides members with professional development and volunteer opportunities focused on inclusivity, diversity and advocacy.

60 Members

5 Keynote speakers hosted

12 Member meetings

18 Hosted events



Board of Ambassadors

- Pepe Núñez, Chair**
CAT Financial
- Adriana Bialostosky, Vice Chair**
Vanderbilt Children's Hospital
- Ana Escobar**
Nashville District Attorney's Office
- David Esquivel**
Bass, Berry & Sims
- Marcela Gómez**
Culture Shift Team
- Meredith Libbey**
Ford Motor Credit Company
- Dr. Randy Lowry**
Lipscomb University
- J.C. Mendez**
HCA
- Tom Negri**
Community Volunteer
- Lisa Quigley**
Office of Congressman Jim Cooper
- Gregg Ramos**
North, Pursell, Ramos & Jameson PLC
- Maria Salas**
Salas Law Group
- Dr. Michael Spalding**
Equal Chance for Education
- Mark Tobin**
Louisiana Pacific Corporation
- Brenda Wynn**
Davidson County Clerk

Casa Azafrán Resident Partners

Our home, Casa Azafrán, stands at the gateway to Nashville's most international and socially diverse district. Casa Azafrán is home to a collective of non-profits who offer services in education, legal, healthcare and the arts to immigrants, refugees and the community as a whole.

American Muslim Advisory Council
Family and Children's Service
Financial Empowerment Center
Global Education Center

Metro Nashville Public Schools
Neighborhood Health
Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition
Tennessee Justice for Our Neighbors

Nuestro Equipo | Staff Team

Meet our team at conexionamericas.org/staff



FINANCES AT A GLANCE FISCAL YEAR JULY 2016-JUNE 2017

Operating Revenue	\$ 4,178,650.00
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Total Operating Expenses	\$ 2,437,718.00
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*Surplus revenue due to multi-year grants received in this fiscal year, but allocated for work in additional years.

Financial Notes

Debt Reduction on Liabilities	\$ 106,530.00
Property Acquisition (additional parking)	\$ 701,560.00
Conexión Américas Kitchen Expansion	\$ 454,000.00

*Detailed information and IRS Form 990 available at givingmatters.com

Revenue Detail

Fundraising	\$ 238,318.00
Casa Azafrán Rental Income*	\$ 307,199.00
Government Grants	\$ 724,139.00
Grants and Restricted Funding	\$ 2,436,112.00
Individual and Corporate Donations	\$ 128,374.00
Azafrán Park Capital Campaign	\$ 344,508.00

* Supports operating expenses of Casa Azafrán facility.

GRACIAS JULY 2016 - DECEMBER 2017

A sincere thank you to the corporations, foundations and organizations that make our work possible. We are also grateful for the many individuals who generously donate to our mission. You can find them listed on our website at www.conexionamericas.org/individual.

Corporations & Organizations

Actors Bridge
Allard Ward Architects, LLC
AT&T
Bass, Berry and Sims
Belmont University
Bone McAllester Norton
BMI
Bradley Arant Bolt Cummings
Bridgestone Americas Trust Fund
CAT Financial
Clearbrook
Comcast
Cracker Barrel Old Country Store, Inc.
Digitas LBi
Distribuidora Limeña, Inc.
Dollar General
Dowdle Construction Group
Ford
Google
HCA/TriStar
Jackson National Life Insurance Company
JP Morgan Chase & Co.
Lipscomb University College of Business
Literacy Research Association
LiUNA! Southeast Laborers District Council
Louisiana Pacific Corporation (LP)
McNeely Piggot and Fox
MSB Cockayne Fund Inc.
Nissan North America
PepsiCo
Pinnacle Financial Partners, Inc.
R.C. Mathews Contractor, LLC
Regions Bank
Rotary Club of Nashville
Second Presbyterian Church
Skanska
Smart Growth America
Southwest
St. Philips Episcopal Church
State Farm
The Walt Disney Company
UnidosUS
Vanderbilt University
Vanderbilt University Medical Center

Foundations

ArtPlace America
Bank of America Foundation
Berger Family Foundation
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
Bloomberg Philanthropies
Cal Turner Family Foundation
Dollar General Literacy Foundation
Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees
Ingram Charities
Jackson National Community Fund
James Stephen Turner Family Foundation
Joe C. Davis Foundation
Maddox Charitable Fund
Migration Policy Institute
Nashville Predators Foundation
Nashville Public Education Foundation
National Recreation and Park Association
NewSchools Venture Fund
Scarlett Family Foundation
Silicon Valley Community Foundation
Tennessee Titans Foundation
The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee
The Dorothy Cate and Thomas F. Frist Foundation
The Frist Foundation
The HCA Foundation
The Healing Trust
The Memorial Foundation
The Village Real Estate Fund
United Way of Metropolitan Nashville
W.K Kellogg Foundation

Government

Metro Nashville Airport Authority
Metro Nashville Arts Commission
Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County
Metro Nashville Public Schools
State of Tennessee Department of Education
Tennessee Arts Commission
Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development

Save the date

August 11, 2018 Azafrán Park Grand Opening and Festival Familiar

September 22, 2018 The Latin Party at The Cannery Ballroom

October 2, 2018 Hispanic Heritage Month Awards at Casa Azafrán

April 26, 2019 Cafecito, A Cup of Coffee for Conexión Américas at Music City Center

Visit our website conexionamericas.org/events for more information and tickets. Nos vemos!