

## Board News

With grateful thanks to those completing their terms on our board: **Rev. Mary Lou Gilbert**, a retired United Methodist minister, has served on Intown's board since 2011 and was chair of the board 2012–2013. **Susan Kennicott** is an attorney who advised the board on legal matters and who has served as board treasurer and as chair of both the Finance and Personnel committees since 2011. **Deborah Richardson** has served on the board since 2011. Deborah is executive vice president at the Center for Civil and Human Rights, which celebrated its grand opening in June in downtown Atlanta.

**Welcome, new members!** **Al Adams, Esq.** is the executive partner at Holland & Knight law firm. He has chaired and served on several nonprofit boards in Atlanta over the past two decades. **Anthony Owens** is a graduate of Intown's Heading Home program and a member of Morningside Presbyterian Church. Anthony works for Atlanta City Councilwoman Clela Wilson on community improvement. **Shelby Roberts** received her master's degree in public health, with a concentration in health policy, from Columbia University. She is a member of Glenn Memorial United Methodist Church and works in health promotion at the American Cancer Society in Atlanta. **Rev. Drew Stockstill** is Minister to Young Adults & Adult Education at Morningside Presbyterian Church. A graduate of Columbia Theological Seminary, Drew has been active in peace and justice work in Georgia and abroad for a decade.

The Porch Light is a publication of Intown Collaborative Ministries, a 501(c)3 nonprofit serving the 30306 and 30307 zip codes. We seek to build relationships and find permanent solutions to homelessness and hunger in the neighborhoods we serve.



1026 Ponce de Leon Ave, Atlanta, GA 30306

**SUMMER 2014**  
www.intowncm.org



Cindy Brown Photography  
Intown board member  
Rabbi Hillel Norry and his wife, Johanna

## Arts & Eats

On May 4, we held our 2nd annual Arts & Eats fundraiser to benefit the work of both Intown and the Snack in a Backpack program. Over 230 people had a marvelous time at the Hellenic Center on Clairmont Road, enjoying food, drink, music, auctions, and circus entertainment—all while we raised over \$85,000 for our work.

**Intown**  
Collaborative Ministries  
1026 Ponce de Leon Ave  
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# the Porch Light



## Congregation Highlight

Morningside Presbyterian Church started in 1925 in a member's home on N. Highland Ave. near Morningside Dr. The present church building at 1411 N. Morningside Dr. was completed in 1949. The church facility was

renovated in 2006, creating a new Welcome Center, expanded offices, and an elevator that provides handicapped access to all floors. Morningside Presbyterian has been an active supporter of the community, starting our Meals on Wheels program in 1979 and providing services for the homeless since the early 1980s.

Morningside Presbyterian adults and youth support Intown in its various initiatives, including the Food Pantry at Druid Hills United Methodist; the Briarcliff Summit Food Co-op; and Journey, the men's shelter at Druid Hills Presbyterian. Morningside Presbyterian's relationship with Intown goes back to its founding, and numerous staff and members have served as board members and volunteers, including present board members Shelley Senterfitt, Heather Regnault, Al Adams, Rev. Drew Stockstill, and board chair, Dr. Baron Mullis.

## Sponsoring Congregations

Atlanta Primitive Baptist Church  
Church of Our Saviour  
Congregation Shearith Israel  
Druid Hills Baptist  
Druid Hills Presbyterian  
Druid Hills United Methodist  
Epworth United Methodist at Candler Park  
Glenn Memorial United Methodist  
Grace Lutheran  
Greater Smith Chapel AME  
Haygood Memorial United Methodist  
Inman Park United Methodist  
Mercy Community Church  
Morningside Presbyterian  
St. John's Lutheran  
Virginia-Highland Church

## "Nimble" New Programs

Intown takes pride in our ability to meet the needs of our community. As a neighborhood-based organization, we can shift resources quickly to areas of emerging need. Our new Outreach program is one example of this ability to respond quickly.

Intown started our first homeless program, the Heading Home program, in 2011 to help homeless people transition into stable, permanent housing. It's been a very successful program: 92% of people moving into housing stay at least six months. However, we saw that there were many homeless people who weren't ready for this excellent but intensive program. So in 2012 we began a street outreach initiative to build rapport with people who are chronically homeless. Our efforts have been fruitful, but we still saw a gap between those ready to take those first steps toward getting help and those fully ready to move into housing.

In response to this gap, Intown just launched our Outreach program, headed by Maria Carr. Maria led the Heading Home program for the past three years before shifting to Outreach, and she is already working with people in this gap between services, connecting men and women with disability and mental health services, housing, and other resources.

We have also made some changes to our hunger work in the community. Our new Director of Food Ministries, Rachael Kane, directs our Food Pantry and Food Co-ops. She brings a passion for local and sustainable food and will help our members and guests gain access to healthy food. Rachael will also help Intown educate our community about the prevalence of childhood and older-adult hunger in Atlanta, even in our relatively affluent neighborhoods.

Read more about Maria and Rachael on page 3 and greet them soon!

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**From the Director**

*Cindy Brown Photography*

It's been four years since we opened our doors at Intown Collaborative Ministries. We are always guided by our mission to prevent and reverse homelessness and hunger in Intown Atlanta. As we enter our fifth year, our mission has not changed, but the needs of the community have. In this issue, you'll read about our new Outreach program aimed at

helping our neighbors who are chronically homeless find stable housing. Let me tell you about two other ways Intown has shifted to meet the needs of those we serve.

Our Food Pantry has been operating since day-one of Intown. When we began, the intention was to serve as an emergency grocery source for neighbors experiencing *periodic* hunger. What we noticed, though, was that many of our guests were from two low-income high-rises down the block. These neighbors had *chronic* hunger and came in at the end of every month because their fixed income was very low (under \$800 per month) and their food stamps always ran out before the month did. So we opened two low-income Food Co-ops in those buildings. Food Co-ops are great long-term solutions to hunger. They build community and empower members to take control of their food choices.

It is well-documented that people living in poverty have less access to fresh produce. Whether because it is more expensive or less available than processed food, poor people miss out on the health benefits of fresh produce. So Intown has partnered with the Atlanta Community Food Bank, the Paideia School gardens, and local farmers to make fresh produce available to our Food Pantry guests and Food Co-op members each month. Co-op members, for instance, receive an average of 12 pounds of produce per month.

Thank you for your support of your neighbors in need. We strive to work hard. Please join us in our work.

Brad Schweers – Executive Director  
404-590-6956  
brad@intowncm.org

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# Dine Out For Intown!

**Tuesday, July 29, 2014**

**10% of proceeds between 6–10 PM supports Intown!**



**Sweet Auburn BBQ  
656 N. Highland**

**Tuesday, August 19, 2014**

**10% of proceeds between 6–10 PM supports Intown!**



**Yeah!Burger  
1017 N. Highland**

**Perla Robles  
Partner Profile**



*Cindy Brown Photography*

October 25 of last year, my journey began as my feet touched down, hungry to taste the sweetness of America's Peach State, yet bitter as the reality of having nowhere to lay my head consumed all senses. On that frigid first evening, I mustered the strength, both physically and emotionally, to uphold my dignity as I carried the hundred pounds of luggage that summarized 25 years of life in

California. This weight was a small fraction of that laid on my heart as it sank in anxiety on my walk to my first stay in a downtown homeless shelter, being too proud and rightfully skeptical to accept assistance from the bystanders witnessing the struggle of this small frame of mine. I walked in a bit reserved, wiping off my signature lipstick, but my relentless zeal for life survived that sleepless night.

My move was scheduled in anticipation of my first day at work in November. Unfortunately, the start date was pushed back, leaving me stranded without income, but my company temporarily assigned me to one of its other restaurants.

Despite months of relocating from shelter to shelter, never did my coworkers suspect my reality, as I emerged with charismatic assertiveness driven by resolute commitment to my art. Dressed in whites with a knotted apron, it is my privilege to labor in a field that nourishes customs, community, and culture.

Seven years in the culinary industry could not teach me what I learned in the months spent among the homeless population. Home is not where you sleep; home is where you live! Grateful for my education, always may it be that I remain in the kitchen, where its address is universal, where I am "home."

I promised myself never to speak of all I overcame as a homeless individual since it hurt to relive certain memories. However, my overwhelming sense of accomplishment overrode all shame as I was invited to address you, my new neighbors, giving me an opportunity to express my earnest and eternal gratitude to the ministry that believed in my future. In February, with my faithful supporter, Mrs. Maria Carr, by my side, I officially signed my lease on my personal home in Midtown.

Today, I stand seasoned on Southern ground, and a battle that once seemed to be of decay is one of endurance, humility, and peace.

*—Excerpted from a speech by Perla Robles, graduate of the Heading Home program and featured speaker at Arts & Eats 2014. Perla, a professional pastry chef, made cupcakes for everyone at the event.*



*Karen Varsha Photography*

## Meet Maria and Rachael Staff Profiles

**Maria Carr** (left) has been working in social services for nine years, including four years with chronically homeless and disabled individuals in Los Angeles. A graduate of Asbury University in Kentucky, Maria studied social work and Christian ministries. Maria is passionate about advocating for and empowering people who are homeless while encouraging others in the community to be involved in this effort as well. A three-year veteran of Intown, she has been privileged to share the struggles and triumphs of many of our clients.

**Rachael Kane** (right) received her undergraduate degree from Penn State University and holds a master's in public health from Emory University's Rollins School of Public Health. She is committed to creating stable community food systems, working with such agencies as Atlanta Food & Farm, the Clarkston Community Center, Georgia Organics, Global Growers Network, and the Atlanta Local Food Initiative. She comes to Intown with experience in farming and gardening, food procurement, volunteer management, and policy and advocacy.

## Support Our Programs

Intown is a lifeline for over 700 families in our intown Atlanta neighborhoods. Last month alone, our Food Pantry and Co-ops delivered over 9,500 pounds of food to 590 hungry guests. Our Street Outreach and Heading Home programs served 60 people, and our Clothes Closet is bustling. All of the work we do is because of supporters like you. Will you donate to Intown this summer? Return your gift in the enclosed envelope or click on [intowncm.org](http://intowncm.org). All donations of cash, stocks, and in-kind are tax deductible as allowed by law.

**Donate**

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