



PLYWOOD



THE FUTURE

The background is an abstract composition of fluid, organic shapes in three primary colors: a vibrant yellow, a deep red, and a muted teal. These colors swirl and blend together, creating a sense of movement and depth. The yellow forms the base of many of the shapes, while the red and teal provide contrasting accents and highlights.

IS GOOD.

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**A huge thank you to the team that brought this
Impact Report to life!**

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Buchanan, Jeff Shinabarger, and the Plywood Community.

A Letter from our Executive Director.

“WE BELIEVE
MORE THAN
EVER THAT
A PLACE
IS ALWAYS
DEFINED BY
THE PEOPLE



BEGIN AGAIN

I remember walking through our new building that opening week in March of 2020. The renderings that our architect had crafted were on my phone, and I was looking at the space that had come to life. The vision that was painted, presented, and shared was now built. I didn't fully grasp in that moment the vision for Plywood Place fully experiencing life had much more to do with people than structures. This was only the beginning.

Two weeks later, the COVID-19 closure was upon us. Everything canceled. At that moment, the next version of our community began. An ethos where empathy meets action. This was not the completion of a project, it was our moment to begin again.

Maybe you can relate with our experience? As our doors have slowly opened and masked heroes are stepping foot into our spaces - our community will never be the same. We all took a more intentional step into the importance of community.

We believe more than ever that a place is always defined by the people. We want you to know our new friends. We want to introduce you to the stories that are impacting our mission and shaping a better future.

Welcome to our story of New Beginnings.

Plywood is a no Atlanta leading of startups doi

In 2010, Jeff Shinabarger (Founder and Executive Director) was inspired by the doers, changemakers, nonprofit leaders, and social entrepreneurs of the city. Atlanta comes from true greatness, the home of Martin Luther King Jr. and the headquarters for Coca-Cola. There's challenging yet beautiful history that pushed Jeff to start this innovative community.

Everyone asks, "What does Plywood do?" So over the years, we have developed our visual business model. Everything we do seems to come back around. Someone might attend an event, and become a donor or advisor to our community. Another person, might read a book, and decide to quit their day job to bring their dream to reality, so they sign up for Path and move through the Process. Many of our Process graduates then become advisors. It's a beautiful ecosystem that gives back in time, finances, and meaningful connections.

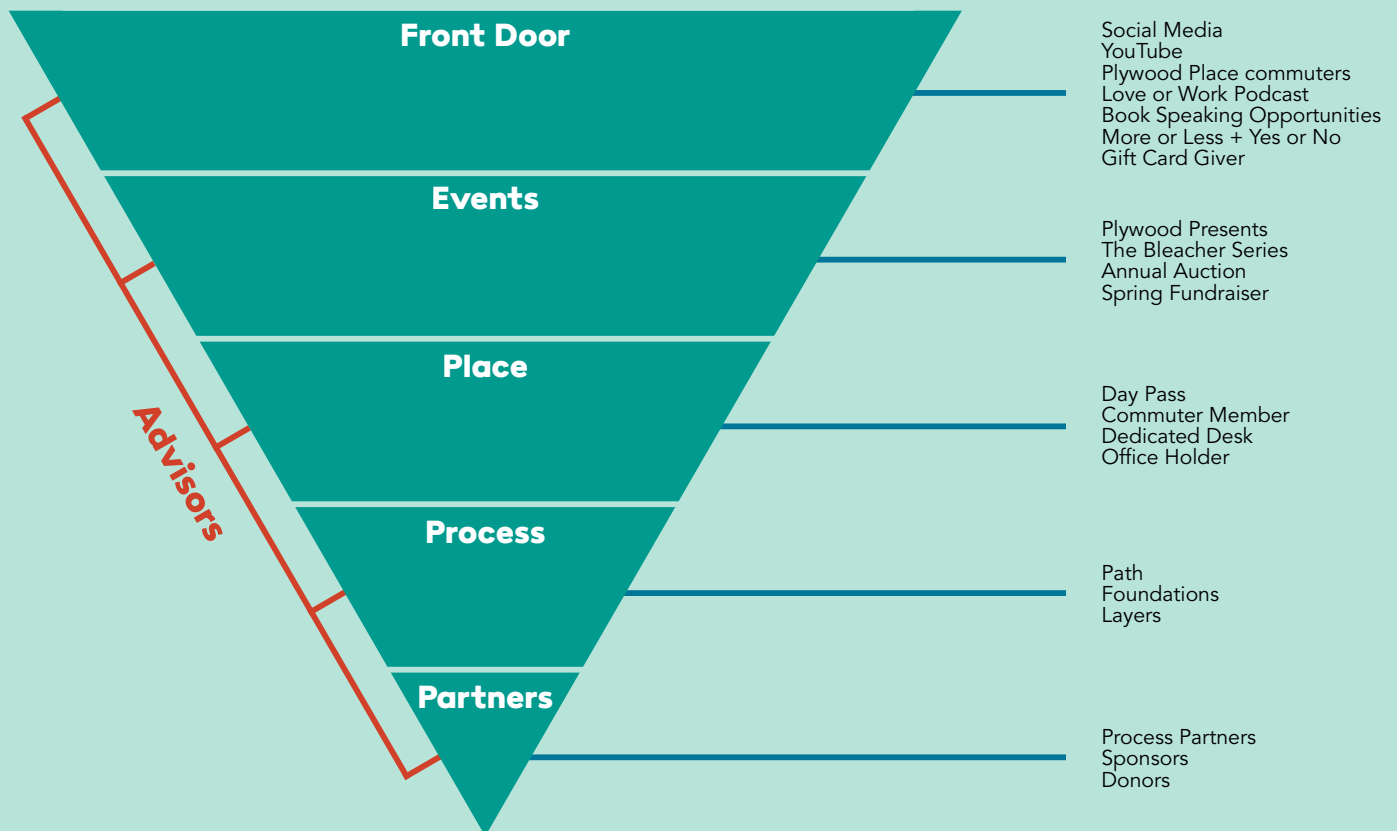
HOW WE BEHAVE

- 1 Earn the right to be heard.
- 2 We will be known by the problems we solve.
- 3 Choose a lifestyle of excessive generosity.
- 4 Make every space better.
- 5 Promote rhythms for sustainable lives.
- 6 Commit to being anti-racist, as a team, as an organization, and as individuals.

MISSION

We exist to help our community make problems go away that impact our culture, the hurting, poor, oppressed, and under-resourced people.

onprofit in g a community ing good.



Plywood Investing.

Refuge Coffee Co.
Mission Mighty Me
Kid President
Love Beyond Walls
So Worth Loving
Good Good Good Co.
ATL Collective
Love Not Lost
Fleecher Designs
Teach For America
Southwest Michigan
First
The Jewish Federation of
Greater Atlanta
The Sketch Effect
Atlanta Leadership Club
Kula Project
Lamon Luther
Abbey Glass Designs
Campfire Social
Thrive Neuro Health
J Rich Atlanta
See Spark Go
Purposity
Fit Wit
Rivet Events
Divine Chef
Oh Happy Dani
Rachel Eleanor Art

The Real Movement
Wear Brims
Haley Jo Photo
Hope Soap
Third Lens
Sustainable Home Goods
Known Project
Beya Made
Art in the Paint
Stellow
FOSTER Life
Mother's Advocacy
Project
Fate Sent Lemons
Good Grit
Make + Do
Special Needs Siblings
The Ballog
Edison Bikes
Magic City Woodworks
Rabbit Raccoon
Big Fake Wedding
Museum of Design
Atlanta
See Beautiful
Homespun ATL
Prevail Coffee
The Root Collective
The Write Practice

Whiteboard
3d Girls, Inc
unCURATED
Restore More
Ali Makes Things
East Taylor Creative
Up & Up Films
Catapult Acting
Junction 32
Rickman Architecture &
Design
Dwell
& hundreds more.



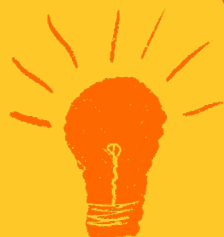
890

Startups doing good served.
We ask the hard questions
and empower people to build
organizations that create
spaces they long to see in
the world.



3

nationally released
books, *Love or Work*,
More or Less, and *Yes
or No*.

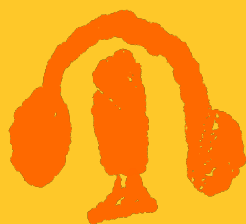


6,400+

innovators have been
inspired through
Plywood Presents

300+

organizations
annually invested
in through
mentoring, training
and meaningful
connections



200k

podcast downloads
helping improve
marriages

2.2



million

minutes of social
entrepreneurship
training watched free
online

\$160k

financially invested in
other organizations



8

National Campaigns
on Marriage,
Generosity, Decision
Making, Refugees,
Job Training,
Diversity, Social
Entrepreneurship, and
Nonprofit leadership.

269

thought leaders
platformed through
events



**G O O D
I D E A S
H A P P E N
H E R E**

[PLYWOODPEOPLE.COM/GIVE](https://plywoodpeople.com/give)



01 Place.

Open for Business.

YEAR ONE RESULTS

**100+
members**

Home Offices To Nine Organizations: Love Beyond Walls, So Worth Loving, Divine Chef, Rivet Events, 3d Girls, Wear Brims, Whiteboard, MadeATL, Oh Happy Dani, and Plywood People

\$1.6M

of in-kind donations to Plywood Place

10+ Events

hosted for Future City Now, Hillsong Atlanta, Growing Leaders, Love Not Lost, Impulse Group, 3d Girls Inc, Rivet Events, Imagine Media, and more

**7000+
people**

viewed virtual events hosted at Plywood Place
Host site for coat drive, toy drive, and essential need packages for covid relief.

10,000+

temperature checks

50+

bottles of hand sanitizer

500+

gallons of coffee

6 Podcasts

recorded in our Sound Good Studio reaching 500,000+ people worldwide.

Awards Won

International Best of Year Finalist
Social Good, Interior Design Magazine &
Best on a Budget Winner, International
Interior Design Associate - Georgia

100%

Offices Renewed Leases

Take a virtual tour
of Plywood Place.





PLYWOOD

PLYWOOD
Place



**Right Place,
Right Time.**



Of course, just two weeks after we opened Plywood Place, a space specifically designed to help start-ups solve problems and do good, we faced one of the biggest problems we've ever had to tackle.

For over two years, we'd been dreaming, working, vision casting, fundraising, and building towards creating a space that would radically inspire others to do good in the world. We were able to rent all of our private offices to amazing organizations like Love Beyond Walls, So Worth Loving, 3D Girls, Made ATL, Whiteboard, and more. We even hosted an Open House with over 400 people in attendance, followed by The Diversity Gap event welcoming 175 leaders into our space.

Then, 14 days after opening to the public, COVID-19 brought the world (and our plans for Plywood Place) to a halt. A new challenge had emerged—one that

none of us saw coming—and it was about to change everything. We closed the space, and we waited.

Initially, we hoped the hiatus would only last for a few weeks. But once the reality of the pandemic set in, we had to pivot. Immediately, we cut our budget by 30% without losing any team members. Then we adjusted all of our programming to be virtual, and we did our best to remain connected as a team and community.

Plywood Place sat empty until it was safe to gather again. First, our team began meeting there. We wore masks, bought hand sanitizer from local distilleries, and rearranged the furniture to be six feet apart. We made signs reminding people to wash their hands, clean surfaces, and we learned how to do temperature checks when people entered the building.

Eventually, we opened our doors to the office holders, and then our dedicated and commuter desk members. We took it slow, so we could learn along the way.

When someone entered our space, there was always an adjustment period. Many people were leaving their homes for the first time, so we tried to be incredibly welcoming and patient. In that season we learned how to listen to others better—their fears, their hopes, and their struggles.

In response to what we (and many others) were experiencing, we created a new curriculum called Pivot by Plywood to help organizations in times of crisis. We did a social-distanced video shoot with interviews, and we learned how to do things in a new way.

For us, facing the challenges of 2020 required a whole new level of creativity, thinking, and problem-solving. It required grit. And above all, it required a community.

In the small story of the opening of Plywood Place, we see the larger story of the Plywood community on display. All of the people we serve have a problem they want to solve, a dream for how they want to make the world a better place. But starting something is hard. Unforeseen challenges always arise. Things rarely work out the way we plan. That's why Plywood Place exists—to be a launchpad for a new generation of startups doing good. Our goal is to provide resources, mentorship, training, inspiration, and community to those crazy enough to think better is possible.

Despite the obstacles, we're delighted to share that Plywood Place is now fully reopened and has over 100 paying members.

Additionally, we've been able to host a variety of events and programs, including Virtual Plywood Presents 2020, a Virtual Love or Work Date Night, monthly Foundations and Layers group meetings, and hosted Virtual Events for Southwest Michigan First, Evolving Faith and more.

Although this first year looked vastly different than what we imagined, we've been blown away by the impact Plywood Place has had on our community. Here's a taste of what this new space has meant to others:

"I love Plywood Place because the culture and environment is ripe for success. The vision that was in my heart now has a heartbeat of its own," said Michael Oteka, founder of it's good, a line of healthy



beverages that are good for the body and do good for the community.

"During a year of great loneliness and despair, at Plywood Place I found myself meeting lots of amazing new people," said Natalie Cataldo, Student Success Manager at DigitalCrafts. "To me, being a part of a community doesn't just mean caring for the people closest to me. It also means welcoming the new people I come across. I'm so grateful to be a member of Plywood Place for this reason."

"To me, Plywood is a place to refuel, connect, and grow," said Raioni Madison, founder of 3D Girls, a nonprofit designed to educate and empower young women through mentorship.

"Plywood is not only the place where your ideas come to life and your imagination is encouraged, but it's also a place where you can legitimately be seen, known, loved, and belong," said Dr. Jerome Lubbe, founder



of ThriveNeuro, a functional neurology clinic. When asked what the new space means to him, here's what our Founder and Executive Director Jeff Shinabarger had to say:

"Plywood Place pushes me to keep dreaming because it's filled with dreaming souls. Their courage pushes me past my fears. It's filled with friends from all different spectrums of culture, stories, economics, and ethnicities. And nearly every person I meet in this space is giving their lives to purpose and love. It's something special and hard to explain in words. It started as a building, and it's turned into a beautiful culture of purpose."

Like any good story, the first chapter of Plywood Place was filled with twists, turns, obstacles, and victories. And we firmly believe that for this space—and for everyone in the Plywood community—the future is good.







ARCHIE CLAY



WEAR BRIMS

Archie Clay III is the Co-Founder of Wear Brims, a luxury apparel brand based out of Atlanta.

Wear Brims was founded on basic principles that are at the core of every decision and every design: Faith, Family, and Confidence. Wear Brims understands the importance of being your best self internally, and how that translates into how you express yourself fashionably.

Archie and the Wear Brims team have an office at Plywood Place. They bring light and joy into this space everyday. Additionally, their team invests into other businesses into the Plywood community providing expertise around Marketing and Storytelling.

As you read Archie's words, take a moment to hear the hard parts and celebrate the wins.

What is the problem you are solving?

Wear Brims is in the business of helping people find confidence in themselves as individuals. We hope to bring a sense of embodiment and confidence through our products. As a brand, we want people to feel special. We want people to feel like they can accomplish anything and everything.

Talk about the moment you knew your work and your purpose was aligned?

I think it was multiple moments. For us as a brand, once we got into Nordstrom, we realized that was the foundation of something new and something special, and someone of a brand of their caliber recognizing us as a luxury. That was something special.

Another moment was when we were selected to be a part of Beyonce's Black Parade, an exclusive directory of Black Owned Businesses. That was another stamp because it just showed that we were moving in the right direction.

It felt like we were being given our roses. We don't ask for that, but it's always good to have that confirmation, that second person or third person to say, 'Hey guys, you are moving in the right direction,' especially as a business that is still building.

What is something you are most proud of in relation to your work?

I'm proud of my team. I'm proud of my business partner. I'm proud of my family. They've all played a major role in the success of the brand

and where it's going. I'm most proud of my team for seeing the vision pushing the brand to the next level, having the confidence to stay with us.

What has been the hardest part of bringing your idea into existence?

I would just say financing, I think that's the biggest thing within the Black and African American community. We don't get the same respect or opportunities when it comes to financing within the banks. So I definitely think that's one of the biggest challenges when it comes to building a brand.

How does community play a role in your work?

Community plays a major role in our work. I think that our family is our community, and our customers are our community. So when we curate our product, we align to who our community is as a company. We want to make sure that reflects back to the company and to our customers. Community plays a major role. Without the community, we wouldn't be where we are right now.

Share about one turning point in your project?

I will say a big turning point in our brand was back in 2019, when we had an Instagram post go viral. And I think that really transitioned the brand to the next level of people actually seeing who we are and what we represent.

How has Plywood played a role in your story?

Plywood has played a major role in our story. Plywood is just special. There is amazing energy in this building that feeds into the other businesses. It definitely speaks to us, and the support is overwhelming. We just appreciate your team for that in so many ways. Plywood is beautiful, magnificent, amazing. Great energy, great spirits, and just lovely. Plywood has done a lot for the community and will continue to do a lot for the community.



A portrait of a woman with long, wavy brown hair, smiling and looking slightly to her right. She is wearing a blue dress with a white floral pattern. The background is a dark, solid color.

**NATALIE
CATALDO**

“ Plywood is a destination for intentional conversations on the ups-and-downs of being a human in this messy world. It’s a destination for connecting with admirable people who are willing to show the ways they’ve made big mistakes in the past. It’s a place where shy folks are given a platform to speak about their great ideas and met with loud applause. Plywood is a powerful community of people expanding the heartbeat of meaningful ideas and conversations.

Natalie, Student Success Manager at DigitalCrafts, is leading an initiative with City of Refuge to train 140 Black Atlanta residents with the DigitalCrafts Curriculum, for training as an entryway to Software Engineering.

What Plywood Place Means to Our Team.

“Plywood Place is way more than a co-working space; it is a place where creativity is heightened, community is built, and dreams become reality. When you join Plywood Place, you join a family.

CAROLINE
WHITE



KEYAROW
Mosley

“Plywood Place is the bridge in building community. We get to learn and help people reach their goals in making our community better together.

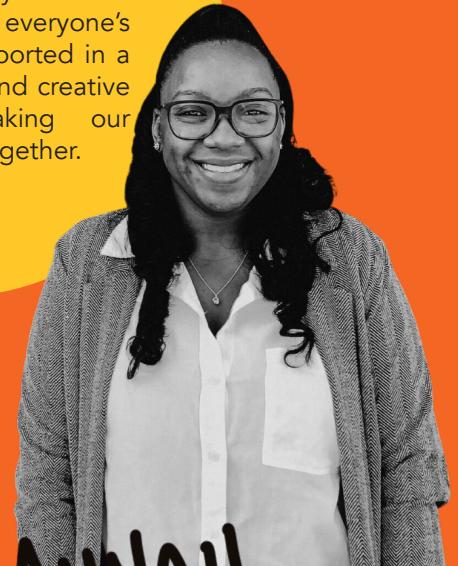


“I am motivated daily to step into my dreams, to value my neighbor, and to live generously because of what this space inspires. Plywood Place is special.



ANNA
ARMSTRONG

“Plywood Place is a hub connecting people from all walks of life. It is a place where everyone can be oneself, where everyone's good ideas are supported in a warm, welcoming, and creative environment. in making our community better together.




IANNAH
JAMES-SMITH

TUERE
BUTLER

“Plywood Place offers refuge to those needing community and support in a vibrant and creative atmosphere. Strangers have the potential of fostering friendships & business collaborations. Plywood Place is a network built off of possibility!





**“Plywood Place is a
community center
that connects people,
refuels them and gives
them a safe place to
work and grow.”**

What Plywood Place Means to Me.

WRITTEN BY KAYLA STAGNARO

It's been a few years now since I first heard the vision for Plywood Place. And I have to admit, I was skeptical. You see, I am a doer. I support the visionaries of the world. I like to believe that I can make just about anything happen IF I have a clear picture and vision of what it is I am working towards.

I heard the vision, and I had a really hard time seeing it, visualizing it, believing it could happen. But let me tell you, it did happen. We found incredible partners in Gensler, Monday Night Brewing, and so many more from donors, to artists, to our Found Members.

Plywood Place is more than a coworking space. It's more than we all dreamed it would be. This place is like no other. It's full of beautiful people: nonprofit leaders, social entrepreneurs, artists, marketing execs, tech recruiters, graphic designers, the list goes on.

In 2020, my world, our worlds, were turned upside down due to COVID-19. The way we did life and work completely changed.

For me personally, it was really difficult. I had a hard time accepting that this whole thing was going to linger beyond two weeks. I was full of anxiety and fear. Anxiety that kept me up at night and woke me up early. There was so much unknown, and if you know me at all, the unknown is my kryptonite. I feared getting sick. I was anxious about groceries and childcare. I feared that this thing [Plywood

Place] I spent a year and half building alongside others might not make it. The list goes on. I'm sure you can relate in one way or another.

It took some time, but our team made a plan for getting back to work in-person at Plywood. Again, this idea of leaving my house brought so much anxiety, we took small steps forward, and I can honestly say that Plywood Place was a safe space for me.

Looking back, I now know that I needed this building. This building and the people in it brought light back into my life when I needed it most. I know that sounds a little dramatic, but there were some dark days. We all experienced moments of extreme loneliness, a brain fog that is hard to describe, and anxiety of the unknown. Plywood Place gave me space to breathe (with a mask on), to interact with people, and find a renewed pace for work.

When we started fundraising for this project in 2018, Jeff always said, "We have no idea who will walk through the doors," and my thought was always "Is anyone going to show up?" I'm slightly embarrassed to admit that now, because this place is vibrant. It's lifegiving not only because of the environment but because of the people. Plywood Place is a community center that connects people, refuels them and gives them a safe place to work and grow.

Plywood Place is like no other.

AFTER ALL WE'RE JUST WALKING EACH OTHER HOME

RAM DASS

[PLYWOODPEOPLE.COM/GIVE](https://plywoodpeople.com/give)



02 Process.

Path.

Path is an interactive six-week online course designed to help problem solvers decide which direction to take their idea. This course gives insight on the “who, why and how” upon building organizations. Participants are asked the hard questions and introduced to a community of support.

540

Total participants

165

participants from 5 Partner Organizations including Teach for America, Chick-fil-A, The Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta, South-west Michigan First and Do GoodX.

“A huge turning point in it's good came from joining the Plywood community. As I went through the course Path by Plywood, there was a unique pivot that happened within me, not to the products or services we offer, but more so to the realization of where my time needs to be invested, in order to give this project and vision the best chance of succeeding.


As I was exposed to the raw and very transparent guidance in Path, I quickly realized what I needed to place more importance. More than anything, I needed to consistently reinforce our story in a way that becomes simple and easy for people to understand.

Michael Oteka, Founder of it's good, providing resources and opportunities for those in a food desert.

MICHAEL OTEKA

“Plywood has played a role in my story for over a decade. I wouldn’t have my clinic, my book, my content, my ideas, my framework of what it looks like to be an entrepreneur, a content creator, a husband, a family member without Plywood. Over the past 10 years from when I was still getting my doctorate and attending a Plywood Retreat (now Plywood Foundations) to printing my first book, Plywood has been a resource for community and for practical ways to actually flesh out my idea through a variety of different ways. I think more than anything having a community of makers, doers, entrepreneurs, and people who believe that they can actually do this crazy thing, like change the world and change themselves has impacted me.

Jerome Lubbe, Founder of Thrive Neuro Health. Jerome is a Functional Neurologist and Author of The Brain-Based Enneagram: You are not A number.

A portrait of Dr. Jerome Lubbe, a man with a beard and glasses, wearing a light blue button-down shirt. The background is dark and out of focus.

DR. JEROME LUBBE

Foundations.

a training experience for new entrepreneurs and nonprofit leaders. With over 20 hours of world class training, participants receive 1-on-1 mentoring, a peer-resource group, a physical guidebook to capture learnings, as well as a plan to create and refine a business plan.

ALL TIME
327

participants

“Plywood is a place to develop and sharpen a skill set for social innovators and entrepreneurs. There’s so much positivity and generosity that you can’t help but win in that place.”

Arelious Cooper, Co-founder of Art in the Paint, empowering young people to develop healthier lifestyles – physically, mentally, and financially.



**ARELIOUS
COOPER**



RAIONI MADISON-JONES

3D GIRLS

Raioni Madison-Jones is the Founder and Executive Director of 3D Girls, Inc., a 501(c)(3) organization with a mission of empowering young ladies through effective mentoring. As a youth development professional, she has been a pillar in the community for over five years, serving at-risk populations. After becoming a young mother, Raioni had the vision of giving back and mentoring youth as so many people did for her.

Raioni was first introduced to Plywood from the Partnership with Teach For America, which sent a cohort of entrepreneurs through Path and then Foundations. Since then, she won the Plywood Presents Idea Competition as a non-profit in 2019. She is also a tenant of Plywood Place. Raioni and her team bring so much joy and compassion to the Plywood Community and beyond.

What is the problem you are solving?

3D Girls works to address the critical disparities that limit young women the access to educational tools, financial empowerment, and health resources that are needed to thrive.

Talk about the moment that you knew your work and your purpose was aligned?

I was accepted to the Teach for America Social Innovation experience hosted by Plywood at a time where my employment status became unstable. I knew in that moment it was time to fully work towards my dream.

What is something you are most proud of in relation to your work?

I'm proud of myself for not giving up! I'm seeing my dreams come true because I believed in myself when no one else understood the vision I was given.

What has been the hardest part of bringing your idea into existence?

The most difficult part of my journey has been finding and qualifying for funding.

How does community play a role in your work?

Our organization would not exist without community. We work to train and coach our community on making healthy lifestyle choices

in the areas of nutrition, mental health, and financial sustainability. Community is necessary for growth.

Share about one turning point in your project.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the state of civil unrest impacted our work in so many ways. For 3D Girls, Inc. the doors of opportunity began to open as we began to receive the recognition and some of the funding needed to fuel our work.

Share about your experience of feeling like you're not doing enough while managing your capacity.

There's always work to be done. Some days I feel like we haven't served enough people, like what I'm doing is not enough. I get in my feelings, and oftentimes I feel under looked and under served as an organization. As a result, I

tend to put more effort, more work and even overwork myself just to fight those feelings of defeat.

How has Plywood played a role in your story?

Plywood has been a part of our story since we took the chance on ourselves. We've been able to rebrand and restart fresh to build our organization to where it is today. I found my tribe of "Business Besties" in Plywood Foundations on a Retreat! I'm grateful for the opportunity to be connected to such amazing and talented people. The mentorship and guidance has helped me to not feel alone. I'm empowered to work with people with amazing ideas and creative talents geared towards doing good.

Plywood is a place to refuel, connect and grow!



Layers.

exists to provide monthly coaching and resources for individuals and their business. Through group advice, built-in accountability and access to a strong network of mentors, this is Plywood People's way of doing a consistent deep dive into each other's work, offering the very best of who we are to what's being built.

10 nonprofit leaders

focused on impact growth

12 business leaders

focused on exponential growth

Building a growth mindset.

Plywood Layers



COMMUNITY FEEDS THE HEART



6 Reasons to Join a Peer Community.

**BY WILLIAM WARREN, FOUNDER OF @THECONQUERINGCREATIVE
THERE ARE AT LEAST TWO TIMES THAT MY PEER COMMUNITY
SAVED MY BUSINESS.**

In 2013, after leaving my job to start my creative business, I found myself hopelessly alone. After years of working with a team, under a boss, and for a company, I was suddenly working all by myself.

Although the freedom was thrilling at first, soon the loneliness became crippling. My business began to stagnate, because I was stagnant. I remember some days where I would sit in front of my computer and watch stupid YouTube videos for hours and hours, wasting time, neglecting my work, and feeling miserable.

Then, I joined a peer community group. I had heard about Atlanta's Plywood People before...they're a local organization that supports start-ups with resources, events, mentorship and...community groups. I was told about a new group called "Layers" and decided to give it a shot.

Around the table were 5 to 7 folks who ran small but growing businesses (some creative, some not). We met monthly at Plywood Place. We ate chicken biscuits, drank coffee, and discussed our businesses. We worked on our business plans and we worked on ourselves. We grew, and our businesses grew. To be honest, I probably would have given up on being an entrepreneur if it hadn't been for Layers.

That was the first time this community saved my business.

Now, the second time my peer community group saved my business was far more tactical.

After years of doing my business relatively the same way, they suggested I try something different. "Have you ever thought about doing your sketching remotely, like through a computer screen?"

For context, my business The Sketch Effect draws at corporate events and meetings. Up until this point, we sketched on foam core or paper using markers while physically on-site at an event.

My group's suggestion was to consider doing this sketching...virtually. Perhaps the day might come when people are meeting less together physically, and meeting together more virtually, over a platform like zoom.

What a great idea! I took this seed of an idea and ran with it.

Soon the term "RemoteNotes" was conjured up. My team and I began to innovate around this potential new product idea. We made investments...

we bought our team iPads and Apple Pencils, we developed training around digital drawing, we began to play with live streaming our sketching, and we got familiar with Zoom and other virtual meeting software.

This was all in 2019. For more context, in 2019 we sketched for over 200 in-person client events, meetings and conferences...and perhaps only 2 "virtual" meetings.

Then, 2020 happened. And the rest is history.

COVID hit, the world went virtual overnight, in-person meetings and events ceased entirely...but our team was ready! The groundwork had already been laid. We had the team equipped with the tools and training and the subject-matter knowledge to go to market with our "brand new" virtual event sketching service.

"RemoteNotes" went from this novel, perhaps silly idea to being our biggest source of revenue in 2020, and the reason our business was able to survive such a disruptive and disastrous year.

In short, these are two times where my membership in my peer community group saved my business (although I'm sure there are many more).

To summarize, any creative who is doing their own thing—whether as a freelancer, solopreneur or entrepreneur—MUST get into some kind of peer community.

My financial investment in my Plywood Layers group wasn't much, but the value was tremendous. Like I said, it saved my business.



When you join a peer community or community group, there are six huge payoffs:

1 Relationships

Working for yourself can be incredibly lonely. Even if you're an introvert, you still need relationships. You can only "go it alone" for so long.

2 Connections

When you're in a group, you get connected not only to the immediate group, but to others the group members are connected to. This is called networking. I'm talking about real, authentic networks that will open doors to new clients, partners and collaborators. Networking is critical to growing a successful small business.

3 Encouragement

Working for yourself can also be incredibly discouraging at times. Unpleasant news becomes the worst news. You need a team around you to encourage you and keep you grounded when things get hard. You also need a team around you to celebrate with you when things are awesome.

4 Accountability

When you're in a group, the group will want to know if you've followed through on your commitments. They'll make sure you're keeping your word. They'll push you and challenge you.

5 New Ideas

Similar to my "RemoteNotes" story above, being in a peer community will force you to consider new ideas and fresh perspectives. It's easy to get stuck doing things the same way and thinking the same thoughts about your work.

6 Mentorship

Finally, depending on the group, you will be exposed to amazing mentorship and coaching.. Everyone needs a coach to help them grow and reach their full potential.

“I couldn't recommend peer community groups more. If you're in the Atlanta area and beyond, definitely check out Plywood People and learn about their Plywood Process (in-person and virtual options).

Do the research, make the investment, and join a group. Future you and your business will thank you.





LAURA

BALFOUR

“If I didn’t intentionally put myself in community with other business owners through Layers, my businesses wouldn’t survive. Intentional community sustains and energizes my work. Our business thrives on personal referrals, so Plywood has given me that network to plug into. Plywood also saw the business owner in me before I saw it in myself...and for that, I’m so very thankful.

Laura Balfour, Founder of Fleecher Designs, helping small businesses make big impacts through strong branding at affordable pricing.

A photograph of a person wearing a red shirt, seen from the chest down, handing a white disposable cup to another person whose hand is visible on the right. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a window or a door frame.

"PROGRESS IS
SIMPLY THE
DAILY DECISION
TO MAKE
THINGS BETTER
IN A BROKEN
WORLD."



03 Events.

pl yw oo dp *the* resents

BLEACHER SERIES

HEAR
ASK
MEET

SEE
GOOD
WORK

& UP CLOSE
& PERSONAL

Going into 2020, we knew we needed to add a learning opportunity for our community.

Enter: The Bleacher Series: Where you hear, ask, and meet problem solvers.

The cheap seats used to mean that you may be in the building, but you could barely see what was happening. The Bleacher Series are monthly talks where you see good work close up and personal. We learn from the people that understand the resistance we all must overcome to make our dreams see the light of day. If you are like us, then you don't need to hear perfect stories, rather you want to hear what it really means to grow into an entrepreneur

and leader. It's one hour. 20 minute talk. 10 minute Q and A. 15 minute connection time with the community.

In lieu of COVID-19, we launched the Bleacher Series virtually, but as the threat has lessened, we have hosted the Bleacher Series in-person in our event space, with everyone spaced 6 ft apart. It's a beautiful site!



**Community
gives the
opportunity
to lend belief
in someone
who needs it.**

**Eryn Eddy of
So Worth Loving**

Plywood Presents.

11 YEARS AND COUNTING

For the past 11 years, we have been gathering people together for Plywood Presents. It started small, and over the years it has evolved into something much more. With each new year, we touch on the tensions of the time and bring in speakers to challenge our thinking, encourage us where we are at, and inspire us to think beyond our world.

We've heard from some amazing people like Dr. Beverly Tatum, Bestselling Author of *Why are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria*, Jamie Tworkowski, Founder of To Write Love on Her Arms, Neil Blumenthal, Founder of Warby Parker, Austin Channing Brown, Author of *Black*

Dignity in a World Made for Whiteness, Lecrae, Hip Hop Artist, the late Congressman John Lewis, and so many more.

One of the unique things about Plywood Presents is that in the very same room and sometimes the very same row, there are countless new ideas stirring, solutions to social issues arising, AND there are experts, donors, and investors who can help make those ideas come to life. The connections made at Plywood are limitless.



Watch & subscribe to the best of Plywood Presents on Youtube.





Supporting Startups.

Every year at Plywood Presents, we use the stage to platform new projects to the greater Plywood community through our annual Idea Competition. We've given away over \$50,000 worth of services and prizes to nonprofit and social enterprise leaders!

What People are Saying.

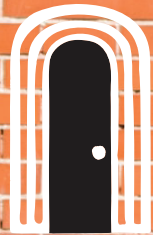
“ Plywood Presents is both inspirational and validating. There have been many years where an idea that is shared has caused me to pause, pivot, or launch something entirely brand new.

“ I love getting to meet like-minded people and learn about new thought-leaders and organizations.

“ Plywood Presents is an inspiring time to think about all the good that is possible!

“ It's an adrenaline shot to my creative process

“ The presenters are always awesome and the networking opportunities are unmatched!



**NEW
BEGINNINGS**

NEW

B

**Join us for Plywood
Presents. August 12.**
PLYWOODPRESENTS.COM

V

BEGINNINGS

**IF WE
CHANGE
THE
WORLD**

&

**LOSE OUR FAMILY
WE LOSE**



04

Love or Work.

New Study: Can Working Couples Have It All?

By André & Jeff
Shinabarger

We have been on a three-year journey asking the question: Is it possible to change the world, stay in love and raise a healthy family? We were curious and wanted to ask other dual-career families if it was at all possible. When we researched historical heroes who are shining examples of creating societal change, we noticed that the mission was the primary focus, even at the cost of the family unit. Could purposeful work be done in a different way?

Weekend by weekend, we interviewed couples. Another story, another interview, another point of view. The stories added up, and we saw common threads in the responses to our questions. Similar concepts bubbled to the surface, about how to build a healthy life where love and work were possible. There was a story that needed to be shared.

We conducted 100 interviews. As we rambled along from interview to interview, in the back of our scientific brains, we kept thinking, "This is not enough information to make an accurate assessment." (One of us is a closet nerd!) Humor us, and our geekiness: 100 subjective stories are helpful, but what if we surveyed a much larger group of people to understand more deeply this navigation of love and work? Enter: Barna Group.

We instantly connected with Brooke Hempell, senior vice president of research at Barna and a working mom



with two young children. "I want to do this," she said. "This is exactly the tension I feel on a daily basis, and I am so interested in the data we could uncover."

Together, we surveyed 1,501 committed couples. So, what did the research reveal?

83%

of couples say that work has made them better parents.

Record scratch. Wait. What?

That was the last thing we expected to uncover with this survey. We imagined that working made everything more difficult in the home. That working plus managing kids' schedules, practices, activities, homework and general chaos made parents crazier, not better. Yet, when reflecting on our own lives, we see that work has given us purpose, a place (away from home) to use our gifts to contribute to a community beyond our bubble. Work tethers us back to our true selves, the individual person who was there even before kids and the unique identity we always will be. Work is a part of us, but not all of us. Mothering and fathering is a part of us, but not all of us. They both have their significance in different ways, and they both matter.

Another interesting statistic uncovered:

Only 3/10 people feel encouraged by their partner to pursue their work and dreams.

This statistic hurts our hearts, as a couple on the same team. Only about 30 percent feel encouraged by their partner to go after their dreams! This number needs to be higher. We believe that learning to love



the purpose of your partner is one of the greatest gifts you can ever give. But this is a learning process. As individuals, we may be drawn to very different work (in our case, a first responder and a non-profit founder), but we can still be drawn toward each other. It is in loving each other, loving what we do and loving each other's purpose that a lifetime of true partnership is created. A lifetime of partnership means that as you progress together—through highs and lows, paychecks and gaps, moments of courage and moments of fear, changing seasons of opportunities and losses—you will support, celebrate and fight for your partner in their journey of finding their purpose.

25% of men say their spouse has sacrificed their work / interests for their job, compared to 13% of women who say their spouse has sacrificed for them.

This statistic stirred up a lot of questions in our partnership. Why are women perceived as sacrificing their work more than are men? Are marriages still following gender norms in regard to work, even though the workplace itself has changed? Whether we're looking at the 25 percent or 13 percent ... are these low percentages for what should be a shared endeavor? Something has to give, but who is actually giving?

During this COVID-19 season, there has been a lot of talk about how this pandemic may force working moms out of the workforce. Couples need to pause and take inventory. Are you stopping and listening to your partner and helping them pursue their dreams as much as your own? Are you encouraging each other to dream and pursue passions? How are you deciding who should sacrifice? How do you learn to make tradeoffs without forfeiting the health of your family or home life?



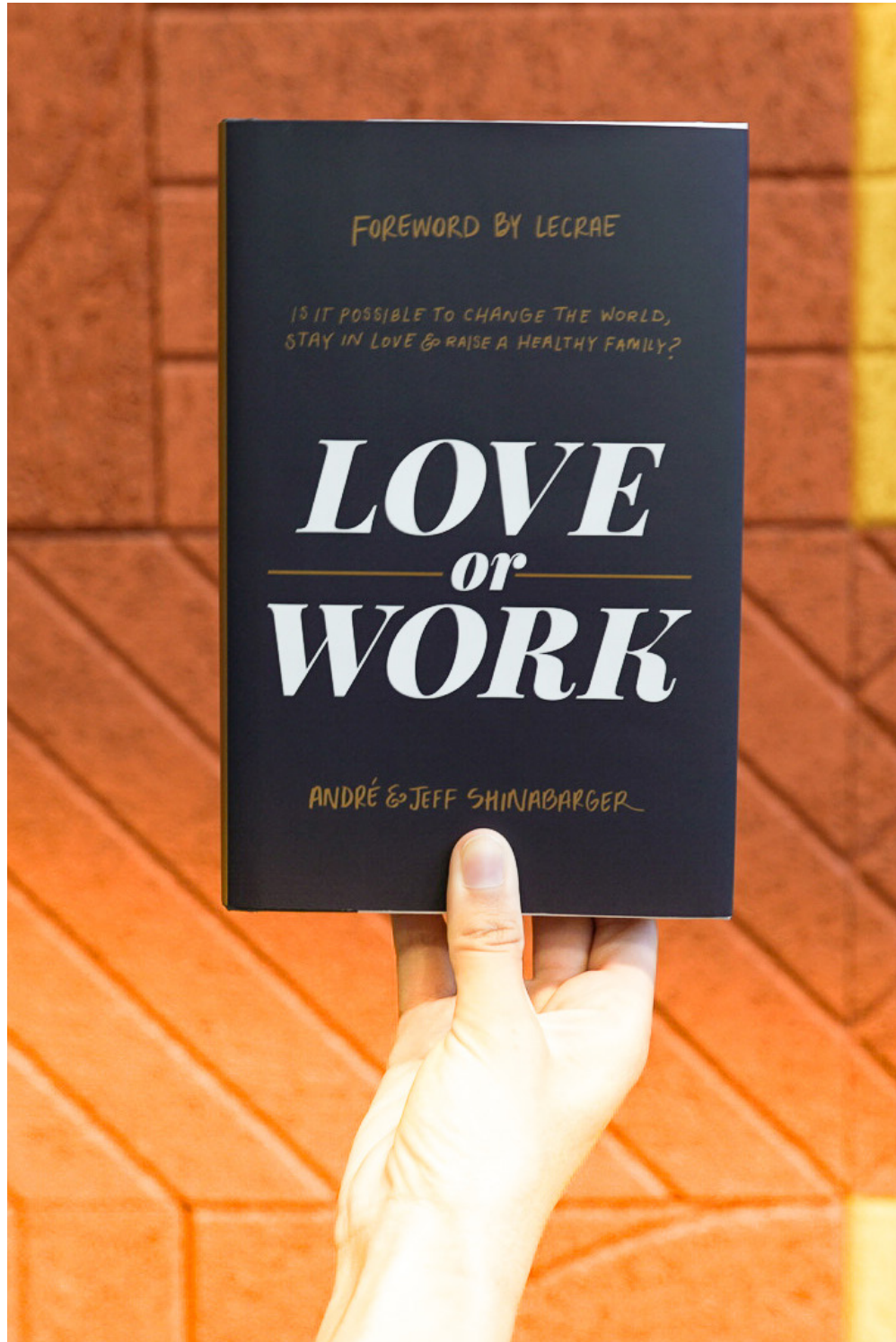
In the time of COVID-19, we are all learning that we need to sacrifice. Many of our kids are home and in virtual school, many of us have virtual jobs now, many of us have lost jobs. There is a lot of sacrifice and strain that is happening within marriages and families right now. May we hold onto the “same team” mentality—that as working couples living out our purpose, we are in this together, as partners that love each other, and we can encourage each other and sacrifice for each other.

Both. And. Together.



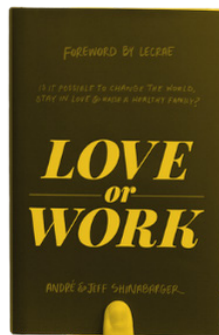
This exclusive national research study is featured in a compelling new book entitled: Love or Work: Is it Possible to Change the World, Stay in Love & Raise a Healthy Family by André and Jeff Shinabarger. Purchase your book today.

To stay up to date on everything Love or Work follow them on instagram or subscribe to their podcast.



Reach to Date.

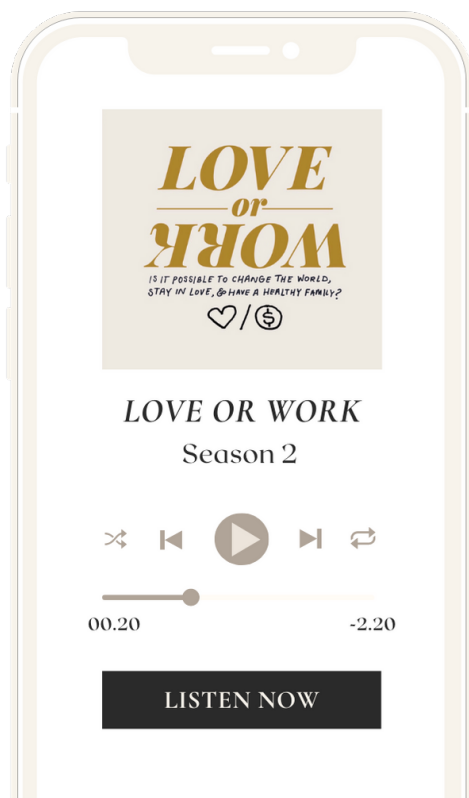
Love or Work Book
release on August
18th, 2020 with
thousands of couples
reading together



Make love
work video
series created
and launched
in November
2020

Hosted the first
Love or Work
Date night
(virtual) for
50+ couples

180k Podcast
Downloads



TOP 5 PODCAST EPISODES



1



Sex and Work | Cristina + Andy Mineo

2



Mental Health and Living without Secrets | Tripp + Hannah Joiner Crosby

3



Sex Therapy with an Expert | Laurie Watson

4



Boundaries | Tori + Dr. Henry Cloud

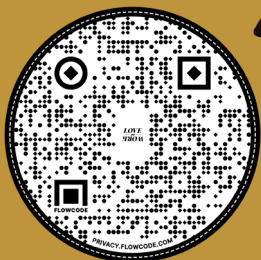
5



Opposites Attract | Shauna + Aaron Niequist



With the release of the Love or Work Book, Jeff and Andre also released the Make Love Work Video series, instigating purpose and partnership through stories, date night ideas, challenges, and conversation questions. We know that everyone learns in different ways; some people are readers, while others prefer to watch or listen. In this video series, Jeff and Andre cover balance, purpose, partnership, family values, family, and rhythms.



Scan to join the Make Love Work video series.



Power is shared.

Planning is collaborative.

Time takes turns.

Purpose is respected.

Decisions are made together.

LOVE
or
WORK



The greatness of
a *community* is
most accurately
measured by the
compassionate
actions of its
members.

Coretta Scott King



05 Advisors.



Share your Expertise.

The Plywood Advisors are a curated group of seasoned entrepreneurs and niche subject experts who wish to steward their expertise by advising the Plywood People community. We rely on our Advisors in a variety of ways: from serving as a coach or mentor to someone in our community who needs one on one mentorship or as a facilitator or content provider to our participants in Plywood's programming i.e. Path, Foundations, and Layers.

Plywood Advisors are a dedicated group whose interest is to support our community of Startups whether with their time, participation and/or monetary gifts. We remain grateful for the servant leadership and generosity of this group.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

1 Coach
Leads discussion around certain areas of content within the Path program. Facilitates the Path group to discussion points and answers questions.

Commitment:
6 weeks 3 hours (prep & facilitation)

2 Consult
Paired with Foundations participant for a dinner/ conversation

Commitment:
1 time meeting, usually 1-2 hours

3 Content Provider
Leads a session about a specific content topic during Foundations retreat

Commitment:
Seasoned presenter: 2 hours during Foundations, prep, presentation, Q&A

Please contact Tuere Butler (tuere@plywoodpeople.com) for a preliminary conversation and questionnaire.

THE COMFY TEAL COUCH

INFLUENCE IN A POST-PANDEMIC WORLD.

JEFF SHINABARGER

I have a comfortable teal couch in my office. People often are surprised I don't have a desk in my space. Then they sit down and start talking. I asked my kids (age 8 and 11) what they think I do for work, and without skipping a beat, they answered, "you just talk to people all day." This is why I have a couch. When people leading projects come to meet with me they are at a crossroads in their work or life and trying to figure out what to do next? I often wrestle with how to respond. There are two ways these conversations tend to go, I am either writing on a whiteboard with strategy or listening as a person is fighting off tears. It's a serious responsibility to know what people that you care about really need in moments of transition. Many people have sat on my couch at a moment where they are really hurting, dealing with failure, and wrestling with how their work has impacted their life. When given the opportunity to influence a person, do I lead with empathy or action?

Leadership today is increasingly personal - we can't separate what is happening within us from what we are working on with others. Our kitchen counters have been integrated as desks for our business zoom calls, and our co-workers have become integrated as some of our essential pods in life. As cultural tensions are constantly changing, it is our responsibility to study our community and know how to relate with their needs. Throughout the Plywood community we have nearly 100 advisors that have volunteered their expertise to give wisdom and counsel to start-up projects in their communities. In preparation for advisors to meet with community members it is important to recognize what is truly needed with the people we are giving advice to and how to best relate with the current tensions.

In writing about leadership, I recognize that my privilege as a white, male, upper-middle class, non-profit executive, social entrepreneur that has unusually highly influential friends and access to communities of wealth may taint my perspective and limit the amount of readers that actually consider what I have to say...but here goes something that I am learning, and I think impacts all the communities that are shaping the future.

Empathy or Action?

Isn't it remarkable that two words have the ability to direct our posture so clearly? Empathy is having greater care and feeling with our people over what needs to get done. Action requires understanding what needs to get done for the sake of the mission. Sometimes we need to lead with empathy and other times we need to lean toward action.

Now, I want to demystify to all readers that I always get this right, but I am becoming more aware of it. All action with no empathy will result in resentment. I have caused this all too often, which led to some



of the most hurtful moments of my leadership for others. All empathy and no action forces a lack of progress. If you don't have a pulse on what needs to get done, it might cause some action oriented people to start doubting their involvement and belief in the mission coming to fruition. I remember sitting down with a teammate one day and noticed they were exhausted and tried to just get them to share some of their feelings and they said to me, "I don't need to or want to talk about feelings, I just need to get this project done!" The truth is at different times, different people need different things.

So here are a few things I have become aware of related to these two tensions.

#1 We all have hurt in our life. Brokenness is just below the surface, and sometimes people want you to know and other times they don't. If you know what is happening or not, we must accept the presence of hurt and how that impacts work. This could be a number of things including financial debt, relationship struggles, loneliness, sickness in their family, addiction, mental health concerns, physical health issues, their dog passing away, systemic racism, or even car problems and on and on and on. Every person that I lead has something just

below the surface that is hard to deal with and impacting their belief in hope. Without the acknowledgement and understanding of this major assumption, you will never be able to relate with people you influence. In addition, if I as a leader have never been true to the hurt in my own life, I will never be able to relate to people I desire to lead.

#2 We all hope to contribute to work that matters. We are in search of purpose for our lives. Meaningful work lifts all of us out of our despair and into a state of hope. When we are stuck and not seeing possibility, our doubt, anxiety, or depression can creep in quickly and paralyze our ability to move. The second observation I often see on my couch is the need to be challenged to keep moving - a direction toward action. There are moments when we are just stuck and need direction. One of the important roles I have learned to accept about myself is the importance of challenging others to do what they are made to do. Progress is the daily decision to make things better in a broken world. Just below the surface we all want to be contributing toward that progress. The greatest advisors inspire others to use their gifts to make a difference toward meaningful progress. We need to be contributing toward action. So, if you are stuck I am constantly considering what can I do to help you get unstuck? How can I ask questions or suggesting options toward positive motion in their work? When we feel actionable movement in some aspect of our lives or in our work it will create positive momentum in other aspects of our lives. Challenging a person at the right moment can be an actionable gift to someone you really care about.

We all need people who can sit with empathy and/or push us toward our actionable purpose. So, join me back in my office and my comfy teal couch. People sit down, and I have to ask myself, what does this person need from me? Do they need a listening ear to their personal tensions in life? Empathy. Do they need a strategy to get their professional work accelerated to a new place? Action. I think about this in my marriage, with friends, advising founders, meeting with board members, having lunch with a donor and even when I am in conversation with my kids. At every moment of every day as a leader, our opportunity is to study the people we influence. Sometimes it's as easy as asking them what they want. Other times it takes a muscle of intuition and questioning to guide them in what they might need. And maybe even greater, many of the people already know what they need and just need someone to affirm their next steps in personal or professional life. Either way, if you want to influence people today, you must take time to understand when to show empathy and/or when to encourage action.

THE STATUS
QUO'S VIEW OF
WHAT'S POSSIBLE
IS TOO
LIMITED.

YANCEY STRICKLAND,
CO-FOUNDER OF KICKSTARTER

PLYWOODPEOPLE.COM/GIVE



06

The Future.

Where Opportunities Meet Impact.



We are wrapping up our strategic plan initiated five years ago, and we are in the beginning phase of dreaming again about how we will disrupt and innovate the nonprofit space next. Plywood has been at the forefront of social change conversations and projects in Atlanta and beyond for over a decade and will continue to lead cultural disruptors (both social entrepreneurs and nonprofit leaders) through significant initiatives. We believe our combination of a local focus that has a global reach informs our direction and helps us drive programming needs. In just one year at Plywood Place, we are already seeing implications for our future. A future that is more diverse, expansive in reach and purposeful in supporting startups doing good. When looking toward the future, it is important to be increasingly selective in our goals to find the unique combination of good opportunities colliding with the greatest return of impact.

As we look ahead, we are asking four big questions:

How do we cross serve people in our training programs with members of Plywood Place?

As our local focus and global reach continues to both grow, we need to find meaningful connection points for both communities to work together. We are working to build community moments for these different groups with similar passions. One of our primary forms to instigate connection will be through online platforms that cause interaction mixed with intentional introductions.

Emerging Strategy: We are working to build out a Customer Relationship Management tool through Salesforce and a connection tool through Slack that will help effectively be a communication hub for all elements of the community and especially our advisors.

How do we multiply our training to serve more people?

We have invested in research, a decade of experience and built incredible training modules that need to be used more broadly. We believe there are many young organizations trying new things, but few organizations that combine our innovative methods with proven models and examples. The opportunity ahead is platforming our social entrepreneurs to share what we have learned with new communities.

Emerging Strategy: Grow our partnerships from 5 to 20, expand our training events and introduce the leading podcast for social entrepreneurship and nonprofit leadership.

How do we build an organization that can sustain for decades?

We have a cultural problem within our organization. We are known for doing the most work with the least cost. We make a significant impact with a very small team. Some people look at this combination as a sign of good stewardship and reason for celebration, but our team can only sustain this way for so long. The next phase of our organization will take significant staff growth to serve more effectively.

Emerging Strategy: We will need to continue to grow our monthly giving network and our membership model through Plywood Place.

How do we find more funding and platforms for people we serve?

In short, the people we serve need funding. In building Plywood over the last decade, we understand that social entrepreneurship is a growing category of strategy and innovation, but community foundations and philanthropists rarely offer this as a category in funding. Our organization is uniquely positioned to engage this space, build the systems, and create opportunities for the people we serve to gain access to communities that can help fund their work.

Emerging Strategy: We are exploring a Giving Circle Model and creating the first Social Entrepreneurship Giving Fund for the Atlanta area and beyond.

In writing these futuristic thoughts, we recognize that some ideas may excite readers and peak their interest. If there is anything that we have learned: Ideas only happen when people join in the vision and conversation. The next phase of Plywood People will need greater support in funding, greater wisdom through advisors, and more connectedness through relationships. Please consider joining our giving community and supporting Plywood People through a recurring monthly donation.

Sustainability Report.

At the start of 2020, we had big dreams, and like many organizations three months into the pandemic year, we were forced to change our expectations. Our focus quickly shifted from expansion toward sustaining the organization, by cutting back budgets and maintaining our entire staff (while adding a new Director of Operations). We finished the year in our strongest financial position.

As we walk into a new year, we expect greater impact and exponential growth. Plywood is in the best financial state to date, and now we start growing again. Our organization is financially healthy and sustaining.

2020 Financials

Revenue	\$1,066,216
Expenses	\$796,385
Net Income	\$269,831

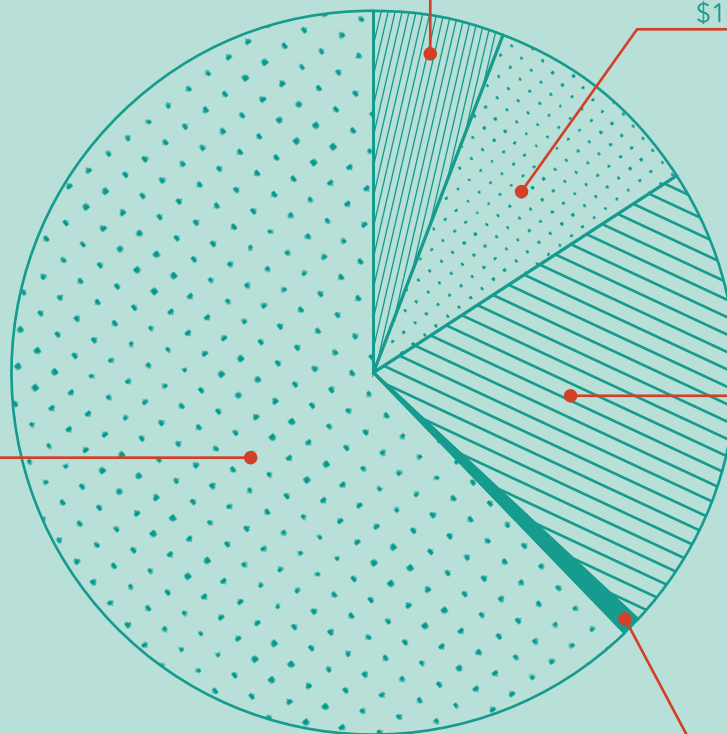
62%
DONATIONS
\$669,314

6%
PLACE
\$64,984

10%
PROCESS
\$107,450

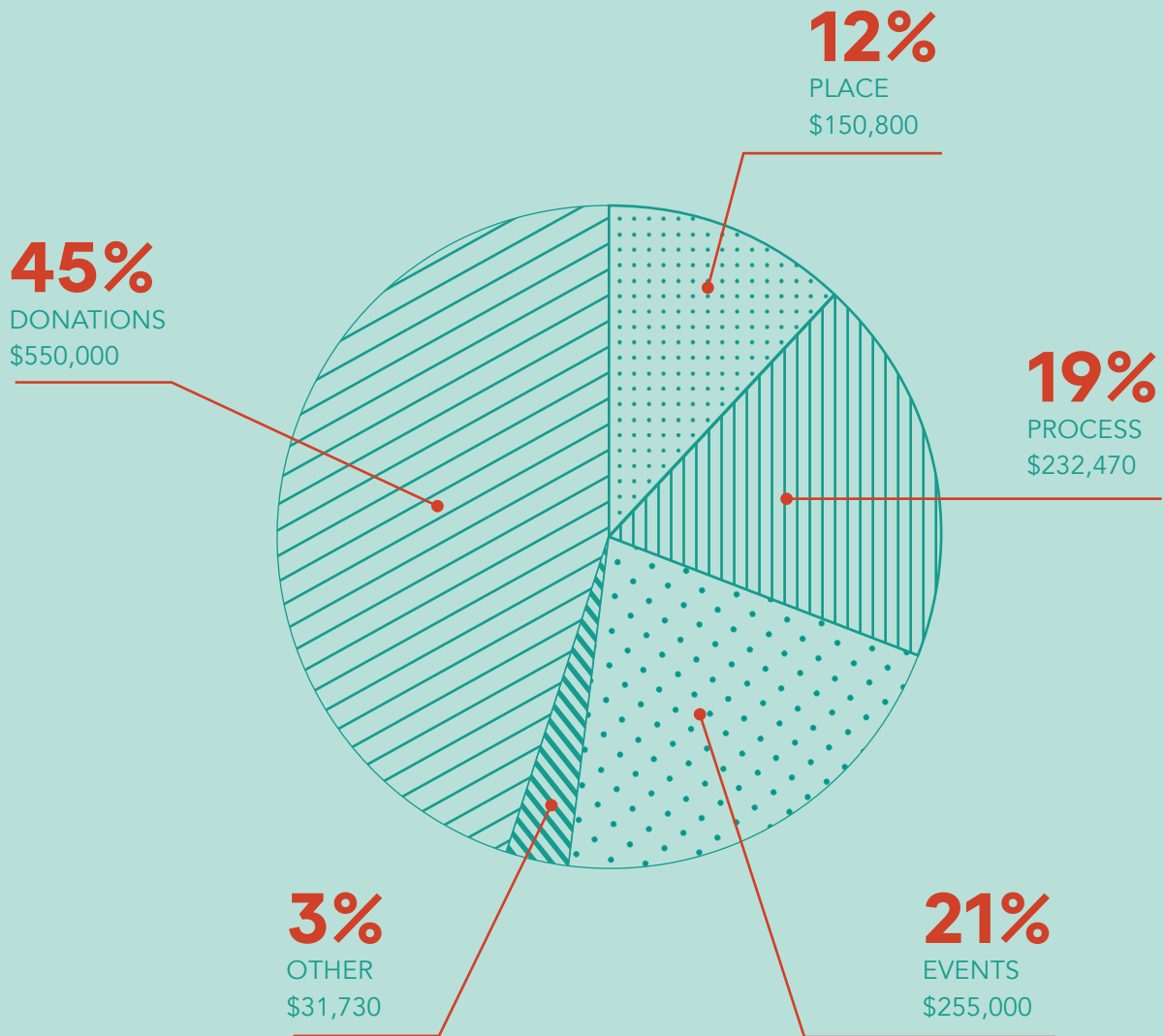
21%
EVENTS
\$215,689

1%
OTHER
\$8,779



2021 Budget

Revenue	\$1,220,000
Expenses	\$1,133,000
Net Income	\$87,000



Plywood Is Moving Campaign

Total Building Budget	\$2,700,000
Given In-kind or Services	\$1,600,000
Committed Financially	\$1,100,000
Donated To Date	\$721,749
Remaining Difference	\$378,251

The Merch.

With each new season, comes new ideas. We hope this line encourages you in a time when we could all use a little more positivity. We're excited to share the newest line of Plywood swag! Think good ideas, believe the future is good, and pick out your favorite way to wear it.

Thinking
CAPS



TEES



KOOZIE



TOTE



MERCH
MERCH
MERCH



**GOOD
IDEAS**
HAPPEN HERE.

PLYWOOD

**T H E
FUTURE
IS
GOOD.**

PLYWOOD

**IF WE
CHANGE
THE
WORLD
&
LOSE OUR FAMILY
WE LOSE**

LOVE
STORM

SUPPORT PLYWOOD

There are few organizations where you can give money and reach many other organizations. Plywood has been explained by some of our funders as a mutual fund donation with exponential impact. Our team does a lot of work with a small budget. The work only continues with your contribution. Please consider giving generously today.

1 Become a Member of Plywood Place.

Our hope everyone in our community is a member of Plywood Place and uses our building as the hub for social innovation and entrepreneurship. Host your team and board meetings, gather for creative sessions or host your next fundraiser in our event space. Membership is just \$50 per month.

2 Become a Monthly Donor. At the heart of every sustaining nonprofit is a core group of monthly donors that consistently invest in the work. Reliable monthly donors help keep our mission inline and our work continuing. Please consider becoming a monthly donor at \$100, \$250 or \$500.

3 Scholarship a Social Entrepreneur.

Every program that we lead has 20% participation through scholarships. So, if there is a program that you want to help scholarship a participant for, just reach out and we will connect you with a funding opportunity ranging from \$150-\$1500.

4 Fund a Project. We have three new projects that will need funding to launch successfully in 2021 including The Plywood Podcast, Love or Work Tour, and Social Entrepreneurship Tour. Each Project will need \$25,000 in funding to launch. Please consider giving a one time gift to help progress our vision.

5 Become a Corporate Sponsor. Our organization needs consistent support from the business community to expand all of our programming and staffing needs. As a corporate sponsor we provide opportunities to share your good work at our events, through our podcast and in daily interactions with our members. Corporate sponsors pay \$5000-\$10,000 annually in support of our work.

[illegible]

1000 by 2021. 1000 by 2021. 1000 by 2021.

We set a goal. In 2021, we will win. Just four years ago, we started putting numbers to our impact. The first goal was to serve 1000 start-ups doing good. By the end of 2021, we will achieve this goal. We believe the more leaders we impact, the better our communities will be impacted.

Second, we hope to contribute to 100 projects annually through financial investment, time meaningful connections, and advisor connections. When we started counting our giving stories, we realized that we give to over 300 projects annually.

In 2021, we have already provided scholarships for 10 scholarships to individuals for Layers, Foundations, and Plywood Place. We've connected nonprofits to grant opportunities resulting in investment into their work. Plywood team members have consulted with community members on building websites, leading their teams, growing their revenue, productivity and more.



**When you give
to Plywood,
you invest in
hundreds of
organizations.**

**Our work is possible because of you.
Thank you.**



[PLYWOODPEOPLE.COM/GIVE](https://plywoodpeople.com/give)