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LAUNCH OF GRASSROOTS, ANTI-POVERTY ORGANIZATION WITH AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH

***Community Spring**, a new grassroots organization in Gainesville, FL, challenges the way we address poverty in this country. This month they launched a pilot fellowship program that employs people who are experiencing poverty to organize around the issues that they experience in their communities. This **direct job-creation model** spurs economic mobility by giving people access to income while cultivating power to reshape the systems that keep them down.*

Gainesville, FL -- On January 6th, Community Spring launched their pilot fellowship program that seeks to dismantle structural poverty and spur economic mobility in and around Gainesville, FL.

Community Spring hires people who are experiencing poverty and pays them a fair wage to organize around a systemic issue that they experience in their communities. Systemic issues could include unaffordable housing, barriers caused by criminal records, or lack of employment opportunities - just to name a few. This innovative model not only provides income directly to people who need it, but also dramatically increases fellows' power to make positive changes in their lives and their communities. Through a series of storytelling and consensus building exercises, the fellows will choose the issue area to focus on and build a five-month campaign to address that issue. "Drawing from personal experiences and the experiences of the people around us is how we define grassroots. When Community Spring fellows tell their stories and talk about their communities, I feel their power in my bones. This group is fierce," says Community Spring Executive Director, Lindsay Kallman.

These five fellows bring a wealth of experiences, skills, and visions for their community to this work. **Nadine "Hope" Johnson** is the product of intergenerational poverty resulting in homelessness throughout her childhood and into her adult life. Now that she has found power in her voice, she is fired up to speak out about the injustices she has experienced and witnessed. **Tequila Mcknight**, a third-generation Gainesville native, is a mother, grandmother, and small business owner. She is dedicated to seeing the end of mass incarceration that perpetuates the cycle of poverty for so many in her family and community. **Kevin Scott** is a seasoned advocate who is fueled by his involvement with the justice system. He channels his experience to fight for criminal justice reform and prisoner rights. **Latashia Mayze-Brimm** is also passionate about justice-related issues and currently serves as the Executive Director of the Florida Council for Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Women and Girls. As a mother and grandmother, Latashia is looking to heal communities through bridge building and service. **Charles Cromwell Jr.** is a Gainesville native and small business owner. As a witness to the trauma, mass incarceration, and unemployment that has fractured his community in East Gainesville, Charles is committed to facilitating meaningful connection between people that builds resilience and strength.

Community Spring is led by Executive Director, Lindsay Kallman and Policy Director, Max Tipping. Lindsay is a third-generation Gainesville native and social justice organizer around issues related to health and reproductive justice. Max is an attorney and policy expert on housing and homelessness. Currently,

Community Spring operates out of office space at Open Door Ministries in the Duval Neighborhood in East Gainesville.



Left to right: Lindsay Kallman (Executive Director), Kevin Scott (Fellow), Nadine Johnson (Fellow), Tequila Mcknight (Fellow), Charles Cromwell, Jr. (Fellow), Latashia Mayze-Brimm (Fellow), and Max Tipping (Policy Director). Photo courtesy of T. Mushell Media

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