Mission and Beliefs

The Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation assists people in the Southeastern US to build just and caring communities that nurture people, spur enterprise, bridge differences and foster fairness. Our mission is to help people and places to move out of poverty and achieve greater social and economic justice. We support organizations and networks that work across race, ethnic, economic and political differences to make possible a brighter future for all.

We believe in the responsibility and power of individuals — including youth and young adults — to improve their own lives and to act collectively to increase opportunity for themselves and their communities. All human beings have the potential to be productive citizens, yet individual responsibility is not enough. Social and economic transformation in low-wealth communities requires changes in historic disinvestment patterns and removal of structural barriers.

We value democracy and inclusiveness. We believe in working with people in low-wealth communities to shape their own destiny. We believe that working across differences is essential for sustaining our democracy and for expanding economic opportunity.

We hold the following beliefs about how people and places move out of poverty:

People have better chances at escaping poverty when they believe in themselves, make good choices, and have access to fundamental opportunities which include excellent education, social networks that connect them to work and to the larger society, living-wage jobs, and fair financial institutions.

Ownership of assets such as homes, businesses and savings is essential for moving and staying out of poverty.

These basic societal advantages require a solid infrastructure and consistent investment. In order to secure these advantages in low-wealth communities, changes in systems and policies — local, state and/or national — are almost always necessary. Long-term public and private investment is also essential.

Connections are vital. Grassroots, community-led organizations must be connected with key institutions in their states, the Southeast or across the nation in order to achieve large-scale, lasting changes. On a bigger level, local economies must be connected to regional or even global economies.

Young people can take on leadership roles that improve their own lives, make contributions to their communities, and prepare them for lives of active citizenship.

Large-scale, lasting change requires skilled individuals and effective organizations working for social and economic justice and a broad range of allies for these organizations.

Change takes time. Changing the conditions that cause persistent poverty is incremental, non-linear and long-term work that is dependent upon a combination of sound strategy, serendipity and intuition.

The Foundation seeks partners who share our mission and beliefs, and we honor the impact, integrity and creativity of people across our region already engaged in this work.

- See more at: http://mrbf.org/mission#sthash.QPXl3Acc.dpuf