

**Community Foundation**  
CENTRAL BLUE RIDGE

We are a 501(c)(3) regional funder investing in the quality of life in Staunton, Waynesboro, and the counties of Augusta, Highland, and Nelson. These are rural communities and micropolitan cities where housing insecurity can be difficult to see.



**OPPORTUNITY**

The challenge of addressing our housing crisis is exacerbated by the **myths and misperceptions** about its victims—who they are and how they came to be without this most basic need.

**STRATEGY**

In the beginning of 2022, we dedicated a full time position to **Community Engagement**. That work brought to our attention a collection of stories about our community's battle with housing insecurity. Since the problem seemed to be invisible to so many, we chose to team up with photographer Kate Simon to share those stories through an art exhibit.

**This is Home** had its debut on the stage of The Wayne Theatre during our 30th anniversary celebration on November 9. At the same time, we launched a website to house the photos, stories, accompanying podcasts, and select statistics. Since then, we have been securing public venues to host the exhibit and initiating public conversations about housing insecurity.

Community partners for this project include: the Valley Community Services Board, the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission, local Housing Authorities, local school districts, shelters, and other nonprofit organizations addressing our residents' housing needs.

**OUTCOMES**

cfcbr.org/thisishome has welcomed **1,100** unique visitors during its first four months. The project has been covered by local media and shared extensively on social media. Blue Ridge Community College installed the exhibit for two months in their student center, culminating in a campus-wide conversation about resilience. The exhibit has also inspired local public officials to come to the table to participate in the discussions about solutions to housing insecurity.

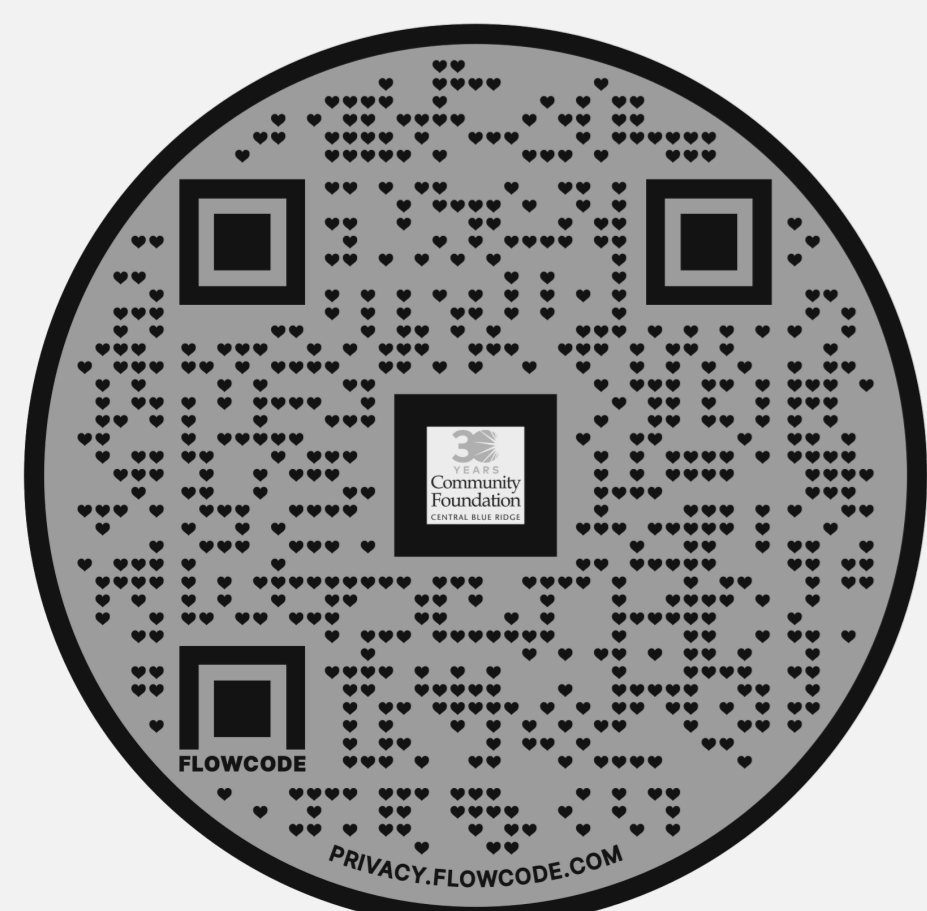
**LESSONS LEARNED**

Community engagement requires time, deep community connections, the willingness to **listen to residents**, and the ability to tell stories. It is **storytelling** and not statistics that became our best means of engaging community leaders and securing partners for the critical next steps towards developing and investing in the solutions to this problem.

**NEXT STEPS**

**This is Home** will be shared with area public schools and universities, coffee shops, libraries, and galleries so that we may engage residents in thinking about housing. This will set the stage for our regional Housing Summit to take place later in 2023.

**We believe if we can lower the barriers to compassion, we might create a foundation ready for solutions.**



Community Foundation  
Central Blue Ridge  
PO Box 815  
Staunton, VA 24402  
540-213-2150  
www.cfcbr.org

# THIS IS HOME

A photography exhibit that asks you to think about housing

Presented by Chris Lassiter, Director of Community Engagement; Miriam Burrows, Director of Educational Programs; and Kate Simon, Photographer. This is an initiative of the Community Foundation of the Central Blue Ridge.



YOU'D NEVER KNOW IT  
FORT DEFIANCE, VA



BREAKING THE CYCLE  
WAYNESBORO, VA



ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS  
FISHERSVILLE, VA



GESTURES OF COMPASSION  
STAUNTON, VA



OVERCOMING STIGMAS  
STAUNTON, VA

THE SHORTEST DISTANCE BETWEEN  
TWO PEOPLE IS A STORY.  
— Patty Digh



THE SAFETY NET  
STAUNTON, VA



MOVE OUT DAY  
VERONA, VA