



Africatown 2020: A year in review

Posted by [Africatown](#) | 01 - Jan - 2021

As the year 2020 comes to a close, many reflect with heavy hearts on challenges faced both personally and collectively. Just a year ago, most would never have anticipated the upheaval that would meet our communities and which continues to impact us all.

The Africatown community offers its deepest condolences to all those who have been impacted by tragedy and loss this year.

In this spirit, it is also important to give thanks for opportunities for joy and accomplishment in the midst of world-wide upheaval.

All of the successes of the year can be attributed to an unwavering commitment to community and the hard work it takes to sustain it.

At the onset of the first COVID-19 lockdown, Africatown Community Landtrust supported 55 businesses and organizations with \$90,000 in direct cash assistance while sponsoring food aid, rental assistance, and community education initiatives.

2020 saw community members like Chef Kristi Brown take the spirit of outreach to heart. While facing the bold entrepreneurial task of preparing to open her first restaurant in the midst of the pandemic, she played a direct role in providing free, high-quality meals to those in need through the Kitchen Collective in partnership with The Def Chef Jimaine Miller of Soulful Dishes restaurant and Chef Tarik Abdullah of Feed the People.

On December 5th, Africatown came together to celebrate Chef Kristi and son Damon Bomar as they opened Communion R&B on 24th and Union, the cornerstone business of the Liberty Bank Building.

On a block infused with the entrepreneurial legacy of the first black owned bank West of the Mississippi and the culinary heritage of Ms. Helens Soul Food Restaurant and Thompsons Point of View the community showed up and showed out for the opening, Chef Kristi reflected in a live Facebook post. We dont even know how many people came through Im speechless!

Meanwhile, the tireless efforts of Africatown Community Landtrust throughout 2020 have brought numerous investments into the neighborhood, sowing the seeds that will grown into space for more individual visions to become celebrated realities.

After finalizing the design for Africatown Plaza at Midtown Center on 24th and Spring, the project received a \$640,000 award from the City of Seattles Equitable

Development Initiative in November.

In the same month, Mayor Jenny Durkin and the City Council approved a 99 year lease of former Fire Station 6 to the Landtrust, giving the go-ahead to repurpose the site as the William Gross Center for Cultural Innovation on 23rd and Yesler.

Planning is underway for the Keiro Building site on 16th and Yesler, which has received \$250,000 from the city to support predevelopment efforts.

In addition to city support, Africatown Community Landtrust has received financial contributions from Seattle Foundation, Group Health Foundation, Communities of Opportunity, Enterprise Community Partners, Satterberg Foundation, KeyBank Foundation, BECU, Front & Centered, and many individual donors.

As Africatown continues to expand and thrive, you are encouraged to stay tapped in to hear more details at the Virtual State of Africatown 2021 in January, where the community will present its vision for the year to come.

For now, as many take time to reflect, there is an opportunity to embrace the lessons of 2020 and look towards the future with renewed humility, acknowledging the unknown challenges that may come.

The Africatown community also remains inspired by the accomplishments of the year and stays committed to laying the foundation for the new successes that are sure to come.

Thank you for your support of Africatown. Onward and upward!