



Photos by Judie Holcomb-Pack

Victor Isler, director of Forsyth County Department of Social Services, facilitates a panel discussion during The State of Collective Impact meeting.

Change

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and mobility, support network, and empowerment and engagement. Covington reported on the process Senior Services used to gather data about the needs of seniors in Forsyth County. They began with a telephone survey of over 1,000 senior adults, and then conducted World Café events where seniors and those who served seniors had conversations to identify seniors' needs and the status of age-friendly Forsyth. He noted that the initiative is self-funded, meaning that member organizations contribute to have "more skin in the game" beyond membership.

Isley facilitated a panel discussion about what the initiative needed to do in the future. Aft noted, "It's working for some, but not for all. We need to make sure it's working for most, if not all."

After the panel discussions, facilitators at each table conducted conversations around two questions: How can we value community voice in a concrete, equitable way? As a community, what are our biggest obstacles and assets in approaching this work? Comments included the challenge of engaging the Hispanic community and not being inclusive, and the difficulty of reaching out to all the communities in Forsyth County as the ones outside of Winston-Salem are isolated. A common communication vehicle was also mentioned as a problem in reaching seniors in particular.

The report that Forbes magazine recently rated Winston-Salem as one of the 14 best places to travel in the U.S. in 2019 prompted the comment, "It's a good time to be aging in Forsyth County."

Don Martin, county commissioner, briefly attended the meeting, but no other elected officials were in attendance.



Theresa Hoffman-Makar of Forsyth Futures facilitates a table conversation.



Photo by Tevin Stinson

Last week Shalisha Morgan, founder and owner of The Geek In Heels LLC, opened a kiosk in Hanes Mall. Morgan received a small business loan from the Winston-Salem Urban League to open the business.

Geek

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After getting adjusted to her new life in the City of Arts and Innovation, Morgan relaunched the brand by spreading the word through local organizations like the Winston-Salem Urban League, the Black Business Chamber, Venture Cafe, and the Small Business Center. Morgan said attending events led her to meet individuals like James Perry, CEO of the Urban League, and Allan Younger, director of the Forsyth Tech Small

Business Center, who have served as her mentors. And shortly thereafter the word of the IT geek who always wears heels started to spread like wildfire, so much so that just one year after, she decided to relaunch. Morgan made the decision to follow her passion full time and last week she opened a Kiosk in Hanes Mall.

"When I relaunched Geek in Heels, I networked. One of the first things I went to was an Urban League event and then I went to a Black Chamber meeting, then a Winston-Salem Chamber

meeting, and it just grew from there," continued Morgan. "And now because of the Urban League, that's why I'm here. They gave me a small business loan."

"I can honestly say if it was not for those different relationships with Venture Cafe, the Urban League, the Black Chamber, the Winston-Salem Chamber, I probably wouldn't be here."

Located on the second floor outside the Food Court, Morgan said Geek in Heels is a personal help desk for all your tech needs. Along with cell

phone screen repair that can be done in an hour, Morgan also does device upgrades, battery and motherboard replacement, anti-virus, device optimization, data backup and much more.

In just her first week at Hanes Mall, Morgan used her networking skills once again to form a partnership with the AT&T store. When discussing the power of networking, Morgan said she encourages young people all the time to market themselves.

"Regardless whether you're a janitor or a CEO, it's important to network

because you never know who you may meet. I might meet my next potential investor or client, or I may meet someone who can put me with the investor," she said. "Moving here with two kids, it could have been easy for me to say, I can't, but that's just not who I am. I tell these young people all the time: Go to network. Go to events, and never let the excuse be that you're by yourself or that you don't know anyone. If I can do it with two kids, anyone can do it."

Five years from now,

Morgan said she hopes to franchise her business and have several locations. She said her goal is to have a majority of women working for her. Morgan mentioned she wants to introduce more women to the opportunities available in a career in IT.

The Geek in Heels, LLC, is open Monday-Saturday 9 a.m. until 9 p.m. and Sunday, noon until 6 p.m.

For more information, go to www.thegeekinheels.com or call (336) 794-6762.

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