

# ACCELERATING CHANGE

## THE IMPACT OF PRO BONO ON THE FIGHT TO END HUNGER

### Patachou Foundation

**In the aftermath of the Great Recession, Indianapolis saw a stark uptick in concentrated poverty.** Downtown Indianapolis—with coffee shops and farm-to-table restaurants—continues to enjoy a developing cultural scene, but other regions of the city face a mounting crisis. Indianapolis was recently ranked worst in the country for food access<sup>1</sup>, and a study by Feeding America reported that 19.4 percent of Marion County (primarily Indianapolis) faces food insecurity, compared to the national average of 15.4 percent<sup>2</sup>. Many residents have to walk over one mile to reach their nearest grocery store, pushing them to rely on snacks from gas stations instead of fresh, healthy produce.

#### ABOUT PATACHOU

The **Patachou Foundation** is a mainstay of the Indianapolis community, working to undo the effects of food insecurity and inaccessibility in the city. Using the Patachou, Inc. restaurant's production kitchen, the Patachou Foundation prepares and serves high-quality meals, while volunteer educators and chefs teach kids about both nutrition and food preparation. Patachou maintains this labor-intensive operation with a roster of skilled volunteers—many of whom are professional restaurant workers—who prepare and serve around 350 meals per week.

#### PRO BONO AT ALL LEVELS

The Patachou Foundation has used high-impact pro bono in many ways at their organization. Hunger nonprofits often tackle several deep-seated issues at once, from poverty to food access to nutrition. Patachou wanted to tell this story succinctly but was struggling to tie together all the pieces that comprise hunger issues. To do this, they connected with Eli Lilly and Company's Elanco branch for a communications project. Giving back to the community, Eli Lilly conducted a training for Patachou's executive team and board of directors, which involved a one-day seminar and 'Think on Your Feet' coaching on communication. Patachou now has crisp and succinct messaging which has resulted in clearer communications across the organization.

Skilled volunteers can also be used for short-term projects, which bring additional skills to the organization that aren't available in house. For example, Patachou needed a video for an upcoming annual fundraiser but didn't have the internal expertise to produce one quickly. On **Taproot+**, an online platform for matching nonprofits with skilled volunteers, Patachou was connected with a professional videographer for an eight-hour project. The videographer spent one day conducting interviews and gathering

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**Hunger  
Volunteer  
Connection**



*Image courtesy of Patachou Foundation*

social media collateral, ultimately producing a 90-second video. Media clips that may have ended up on the cutting room floor were put to further use on the Patachou website, extending the project's impact beyond the fundraiser.

The Patachou Foundation maintained its relationship with Eli Lilly by connecting with an executive taking a sabbatical. She was looking to make her time on leave impactful, and Patachou was in dire need of a strategic plan. The volunteer took a highly-collaborative approach to the strategic planning process, first meeting with Patachou's executive director for a 10 hours to understand the organization's vision of its future. With a clear picture, the volunteer arranged focus groups with the board of directors and key stakeholders and helped to draft the final plan. One of the best outcomes of engaging skilled volunteers is the lasting connection the volunteer makes with both the organization and the mission. Strategic plan in place, the Eli Lilly volunteer was elected to the Patachou Foundation board of directors.

#### THE RESULT

The Patachou Foundation maintains its high service standards by remaining flexible in the face of a rapidly changing landscape. Similarly, their experience with skilled volunteers has been successful because of their ability to adapt the expertise to meet a variety of organizational needs. With a savvy approach to the potential in skilled volunteerism, the Patachou Foundation has been able to grow into its own as a vibrant nonprofit, prepared for the future.

*You can find other case studies in this series [here](#) and learn more about Taproot's commitment to using pro bono in the fight to end hunger [here](#).*

<sup>1</sup>RedFin.com, "Do You Live in a Food Desert?" 2014.

<sup>2</sup>NextCity.org, "Indianapolis Mayor Focuses on Food Deserts," 2016.