

Kentuckians For The Commonwealth

Climate Deep Canvassing Report





Kentuckians For The Commonwealth (KFTC) is a statewide membership organization working to dismantle racism, build a robust democracy, and transform the future of Kentucky. Since our establishment in 1981, we've organized across lines of race, class, geography, and often political ideologies to oppose harmful practices and systems within our communities. Advancing a shared vision towards policy agenda changes necessary for our communities not only to survive, but thrive.

For over a century, the coal industry has shaped Kentucky's landscape; razing hills and filling in valleys, poisoning waterways, corrupting politics, eroding the economy, and shaping culture and identity for many. And so for more than forty years, KFTC members have engaged in the essential work of bringing people together to demand justice and shape a Just Transition to healthy, sustainable, and equitable local communities. In the early decades, we fought to end large-scale stripmining and ensure that basic reclamation and water protection laws are enforced. For the past two decades, KFTC members have been some of the leading voices connecting the dots between the impacts of coal dependence on human health, the environment, and the global climate crisis. As the local saying goes, "What we do to the land, we do to the people."

Together with our allies in the Climate Justice Alliance and other organizations on the frontlines of our climate crisis, KFTC members have long insisted that meaningful solutions to the climate crisis must come from listening to communities, solutions must directly benefit the health and well-being of people and places hardest hit by pollution, climate disasters, structural racism, and poverty. These ideas have gradually moved beyond our own reports and agendas. They were advanced by larger coalitions like the Green New Deal Network and eventually shaped significant elements of President Biden's Build Back Better agenda.

Here at home in Kentucky talking about climate change, clean energy, and coal can still be challenging. Public debate about the climate crisis and Green New Deal has been weaponized. Political leaders compete to be seen as the bigger friend of the dying and deadly coal industry. Organizations like KFTC and our coalition partners have a long-term challenge to change public narratives and build broad public support for Just Transition solutions to benefit communities, workers, and the climate.





Contents

5 *Introduction*

8 *Main parts of
the script*

9 *How Kentuckians
See Climate Change*

13 *In Hazard*

15 *In Louisville*

17 *In Bowling
Green*

19 *Statewide*

21 *What We Learned
About Deep Canvassing*

25 *Acknowledgements*



Introduction

In 2021, KFTC and our

partners in the Kentucky Just Transition Coalition set out to talk with Kentuckians, across the diverse populations within our state, about the climate crisis. We went out into the streets, hollers, and sideroads of our great state using a relatively new and interesting approach known as Deep Canvassing.

Using radical empathy and non-judgmental curiosity, we knocked on thousands of doors and had meaningful conversations with over 600 people. We sent out paid canvassers three days a week in Bowling Green, Hazard, and Louisville with volunteer groups going out three times in these cities and others across the state.

“Deep Canvassing is about going back to the principles of good organizing, to meet people where they are and listen well, to agitate folks and get folks thinking critically about the issues they’re facing and what they can do about it with their neighbors.”

**-Jacob Mackboll
KFTC Organizer**

The main difference between Deep Canvassing and traditional canvassing is the approach to the conversation. Traditional canvassing can feel very transactional and sticks directly to the script, while Deep Canvassing is about creating a connection with people we meet at the doors by exchanging emotionally significant stories. Deep Canvassing does follow a script, but it is designed to encourage story telling and meaning making.

“Deep canvassing is a really powerful strategy because it’s building community and building relationships with our neighbors in a way that helps us build our power together. It’s really about connecting around the issues that are impacting all of us and finding the ways in which we share a lot of the same goals for our world and for Kentucky. It’s about uncovering that together and finding ways that we can work together to create change,” said KFTC Organizer, Laura Harper-Knight.

As we learned from other groups around the country using this approach, one of the main strategies is to show up with radical empathy. Radical

empathy requires being able to listen to a person’s story and really try to understand where they are coming from, even if one disagrees. In many situations in our daily lives, we are conditioned to stand our ground and not back down when it comes to our opinions. In this approach folks are encouraged to use non-judgmental curiosity and really try to see where the other person is coming from.

The belief is, if the canvasser can listen in a non-judgmental way then we have created a safe space for understanding. When we listen to another person’s story, they are more likely to listen to ours and understand where we are coming from. Once folks start to see that we are more alike than we are different, we have created the possibility of moving through contradictions and building new understanding. When we do this, we can create relationships, community power, and durable change.

“Having these constructive conversations are so important. And being able to come to somebody and wanting to understand their story in a curious way, in a nonjudgmental way, in a loving way, is so important because then they feel safe to share what they believe and they feel safe to maybe change their perspective,” said KFTC canvasser Tanya Smith.

In early 2021, KFTC and partners in the Kentucky Just Transition Coalition received funds from the Green New Deal Network and started preparing for this project by learning about Deep Canvassing. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic and subsequent shutdowns across the country and around the world in 2021, it had been quite some time since many people had engaged with folks outside of their immediate bubble. We initially hoped that by August 2021 we would be able to kick off the project with a series of regional in-person volunteer deep-canvassing training, but a COVID surge meant the original scope of this project had to be scaled back. We shifted to virtual training for volunteers and implemented safety and health restrictions for all door to door teams.

As part of the planning process, Jacob Mack-Boll, KFTC Organizer for Perry County, facilitated five sessions for KFTC staff, volunteers and allies, with organizers from across the country who had been using Deep Canvassing within their communities. Folks from organizations like West Virginia Can’t Wait, Southerners on New

Ground, and People's Action led these learning sessions. Some of these organizations used the deep canvassing model originally created by The Leadership Lab of the Los Angeles LGBT Center to canvas for trans rights. Some used a modified version.

The thread that tied it all together was the thought that listening to people's stories and sharing our own is a powerful tool in creating change in the minds and hearts of our communities. The KFTC organizers who participated in these training then took what they had learned to make a climate deep script and form a plan to move forward.

In August of 2021 KFTC hired a total of 9 part-time canvassers to work in three teams based in Bowling Green, Hazard and Louisville. All of our crew had their vaccinations and leadership at KFTC felt that as long as we were masked and outside it was reasonable to get out in our communities. It wasn't without complications and setbacks caused by the coronavirus, but it was time to get our boots on the ground. We used a blend of in person and online training to get the project roll-

ing. Once our canvassers were comfortable with the script we started knocking doors.

Lisa Abbott was among the first staff members to be trained on Deep Canvassing (and now serves as Co-Director of KFTC.) She facilitated training and weekly virtual meetings with the paid canvassing team. In addition to documenting the findings of our canvassers, Lisa worked closely with those canvassers to mold this project. As the canvassers who were out in their communities came back and debriefed, the team made fluid changes to the script and procedures.

Throughout this project we learned almost as much about the process of Deep Canvassing as we did our neighbors, who met us at the doors. We even changed the way we talked about certain issues as we went on to make the conversations less polarizing. Our strategies, practices, and concepts around Deep Canvassing were ever evolving just like the world we live in. Since then, our organizers and canvassers have gone on to lead their own training sessions teaching other groups about Deep Canvassing.



Eight Main Parts of The Script

1 Introduction

Tell who we are, who we are with, and build rapport..

First rating

"On a scale of 1 to 10, How concerned are you about climate change?"

3 Explore their story

Have you or people you care about been affected by extreme weather (including heat, storms, floods, or drought) or by air pollution affecting your health?"

Share your story

The canvasser's own story is an important part of the script. It needs to make the person feel something and relate. Canvassers spent time together developing their own stories, and often had several stories they alternated among.

5 Make meaning together

- > Ask more questions to help open them up if they didn't offer much of a story.
- > Ask questions to push the conversation towards meaning-making. (Who or what do you think is to blame? What solutions would you like to see?)

Make the Case

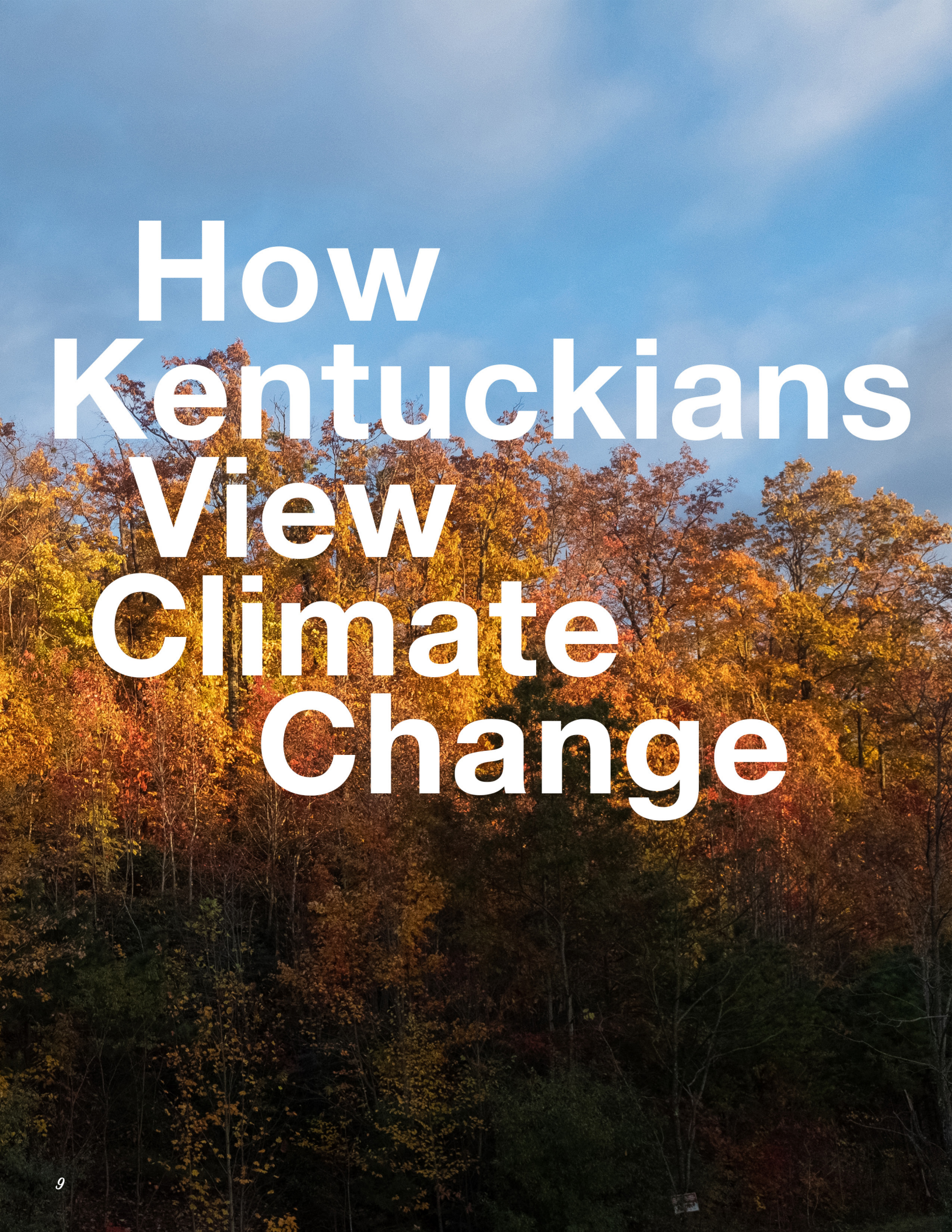
The canvasser starts to close out by making a case about why folks should care and describes the opportunity to pass transformative climate policies.

7 Second Rating

Repeat the same question: On a scale of 1 to 10, how concerned are you about the climate crisis?

Closing

- > Share some action items.
- > Invite them to get involved in KFTC and this work.



How Kentuckians View Climate Change

Key Outcomes, Insights, and Lessons

Overall, our canvassers found that diverse people in communities across Kentucky want a happy, healthy life for their family, friends, and neighbors. This was consistently observed across party lines, race, geography, and economics. Some people may have different ways of getting there and some a less advantaged starting place, but that desire for a decent, secure life is one thing we all have in common.

“I thought it was going to be a lot more persuasion... I thought a lot more people would be like, I don’t believe in it at all. But we’re finding a lot of people already do believe in it and they care about it. They just don’t know what to do. And they feel disenfranchised,” said KFTC Canvasser, Jason Lowe.

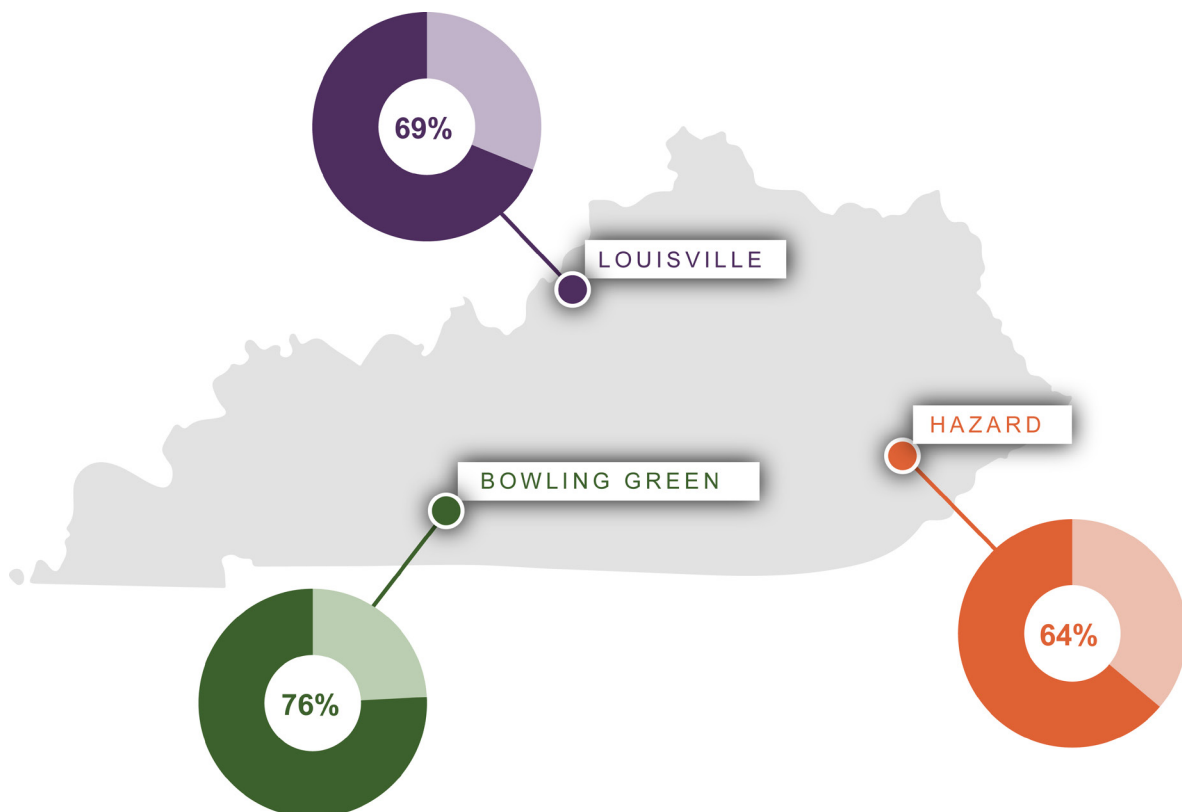
After having thousands of conversations at front doors, over 600 of them rated by canvassers as meaningful, we learned a lot about the diverse communities of Kentucky and their views on Climate Change. Overall 68% of Kentuckians who were asked to rate their concern for climate change 1 being unconcerned and 10 being extremely concerned ranked themselves a 6

or above. The breakdown by city of people who ranked as a 6 or above marking themselves as aware and concerned about Climate Change is as follows:

- 69% Louisville
- 64% Hazard
- 76% Bowling Green

We were meant to have this conversation..

A common sentiment that kept popping up at the doors were people who felt like we were meant to have these conversations. Many people who worry about these issues don’t talk about them enough. Some people don’t feel like they have anyone to talk to about these issues. With the added isolation brought on by the coronavirus, by the time we made it to the doors, numbers of people said it just felt right to talk. Many people we engaged at the doors were ready to do more than talk about climate change. They just didn’t know how to go about it.



Problems and Solutions...

The issues caused by Climate Change become more apparent every day as temperatures and water levels fluctuate and natural disasters seem to come harder and more frequently. In these conversations there were many common themes creating these threads that connect us all. Some of the most common ways people described being personally impacted by the climate crisis included:

- Pollution from negligent industries
- Loss of Coal Jobs
- Flooding
- Asthma
- Corruption

Although the problems identified most often by each community were different, the people we spoke with often named a similar set of solutions, regardless of where they lived. The solutions mentioned most often included:

- Diversify the economy
- Fix up leaky houses to help people save money and energy
- Reclaim abandoned mine lands
- Improve infrastructure
- Take collective action

Most Common Problems



Pollution from negligent industries



Loss of coal jobs



Flooding



Asthma



Corruption

Most Suggested Solutions



Diversify the local economy



Help people fix up leaky houses



Reclaim mine lands



Improve infrastructure



Take collective action

Connecting the dots...

“It’s been cool to kind of connect the dots with them because I think a lot of people didn’t really see this as a climate crisis issue, but the more we were able to talk to them, the more they could kind of have that aha moment (when they say) ‘This will have long term effects on my health and I don’t deserve that. This is where I live. I shouldn’t have to move just to have a healthier life,’” said Savannah Trebuna.

Even when some folks didn’t make the connection to climate change, many talked about experiencing floods, asthma, COPD, job losses, or other struggles. One person said he’d never experienced a climate disaster, but later explained that he had moved to Kentucky after losing his job in New Orleans due to Hurricane Katrina.

We found that if we just switched up our language a little, like just talking about extreme weather instead of saying the words Climate Change, people connected to our message more, and were often willing to stay in the conversation long enough to make some direct connections to climate change.

“I’ve learned a lot of patience. I’ve learned that we all have similar backgrounds and beliefs. I don’t think people are really aware of that because they just don’t communicate with one another, they’re surprised to know that there are others out there that are struggling like they are and that people care about these issues just as much as they do. It’s just really wholesome to watch the little light bulb that goes off in people’s heads.”

**-De’Inara Carter
KFTC Canvasser**

We found that even people who aren’t politically aligned with the usual crowd that is concerned with Climate Change often do care about these issues. We also saw many people connect the dots between what is happening in our communities and around the world to Climate Change. In our conversations at the doors, canvassers frequently found that folks would share a common analysis of what is going on, but then snap back

to polarized narratives when the conversation shifted to who the good guys and bad guys are.

“We are brainwashed to believe that we have opposing opinions. I think that we are so similar and the two party system is what divides us, but really these issue are affecting us all. People around here understand these issues. They just feel like we don’t have much control and that the people in power don’t care about us.”

**-Oliva Harp
KFTC Canvasser**

Many people who did care deeply about Climate Change felt isolated and like no one else cared, even in cases where multiple people in a neighborhood all ranked 10 on the scale.

Fatalism was a another common theme...

An overbearing feeling of powerlessness to address the crisis was another common thread. Many people felt like there was nothing that they could do to make the situation better. Folks also felt exhausted by the state of things in this world. Many just felt like they had to carry so much weight already without having to think about the climate.

We saw a significant degree of fatalism in many demographics, especially in many Christian folks who felt like it was in God’s hands and there is nothing we can do. Some people believe that it’s God’s will and nothing can change that. One approach used by our canvassing team to combat this fatalism is bringing up that in the bible it states that God made us stewards of the Earth. We also spoke with plenty of people who agreed that though God may have the final say, it is our responsibility to take care of our planet.

Many of our conversations focused on how people’s sense of security and well-being is threatened by Climate Change. Many of these conversations centered on ways that we could improve the situation by investing in infrastructure, mass transit, affordable housing, clean energy and other solutions.



In Hazard

In Hazard it is no secret that the main industry is coal. Coal and other fossil fuels have long been at the center of the Climate Change debate. Coal provides a way for folks to provide a better life for their family financially while it is booming. The industry has always experienced ups and downs leaving the miners down and out during the downs.

It is a complicated relationship between the miner and the land. We talked to many miners who felt very conflicted about what they had to do to provide for their family. At the end of the day wanting a happy, healthy life is what drives them. While some folks went straight to defending the mines and seeing the phrase Climate Change as a threat, no one is lost on the facts.

Many people believed that if clean energy jobs were brought into the area to replace the lost mining jobs that folks would be less bitter. People just want to provide for their family. If they had an option of a job that paid as well that made clean energy a lot of them would take it.

Flooding is also a major issue in the Appalachian hills of Eastern Kentucky. Many people had sto-

ries about being flooded or family that has been flooded. In Hazard one place stood out to us at the time. Every door we knocked at Cherokee Hills Apartments had a story about being stranded by flood water.

Every time water gets up in Perry County the people who live in these apartments are stuck and have no way out. The river flows over their road every time. There is a small access road, but it is on private land. Our Canvassers and KFTC organizer Jacob Mack-Boll who regularly went out and canvassed with our team helped the residents organize.

The residents of Cherokee Hills came together and got a meeting with County Judge Executive Scott Alexander. He heard them out and said he would try to get something done, but warned it could be a long process. The county did make some repairs to their road, but by the time the most recent flood filled the valleys and floodplains of Perry County and surrounding counties the residents of Cherokee Hills were stranded for days once again.



**“ It needs to be done now.
We need to start in that direction
and we dont need to let up.
We need to keep it up until the next
generation has good clean energy
and a good clean world to live in.
Its up to us right now.
What we do now is going to effect
generations on down
the line.”**

Sue

Hazard Resident



**“ A lot of the older people who
have always known coal
they don't wanna go get trained
in anything else they feel like
they are too old, but in
reality you are never too old
to learn anything new.”**

Dee

Hazard Resident



In Louisville we saw common threads that connect back to Hazard even though there are great differences in terrain and demographics. In many of the lower income neighborhoods there were a lot of complaints about the quality of the air. Air quality is a common concern in all major cities.

Many people want to blame it on the large amount of cars in the area, but in Louisville it is clearly worse in certain neighborhoods. A lot of these neighborhoods like the Louisville suburb Shively are predominantly populated by people of color. Some folks pointed out that there is a clear difference in the air around the Highlands or now gentrified Old Town and the air in Shively or the South End of Louisville.

One of the sources difference of the air quality according to residents solid waste plant that is situated directly beside of public park. There is also a Dow Chemical plant that is believed to be a source of poor air quality. Another is a Brown-Forman bourbon distillery where you can see a black soot of sorts covering everything in a miles radius. In Shively, folks are required to clean the “black soot” from their own homes or face fines from the city. The soot is in fact a kind of mold known as

baudouinia compniacensis ; it is a sac fungus that is commonly found near distilleries. The fungus is a habitat colonist with a preference for airborne alcohol, earning it the nickname whiskey fungus.

Many people feel like this is just a part of life that they have to live with considering the prestige and power of the bourbon industry. At the same time not everyone even knows that it is a type of mold referring to it as “soot.” There have been articles in major news outlets about the issue and lawsuits, but nothing has been done.

While many people who work in these factories feel conflicted about the air quality issue much like the miners in Hazard, they feel it’s necessary to have a good job and provide for their family. Similarly we met people who didn’t want to talk about the issue for fear of losing their jobs.

Still yet, many people did want to speak out. Canvassers in Louisville took it upon themselves to direct residents to call their local Council Member Keisha Dorsey and encourage her to take action on the air quality issue. Co-Director Lisa Abbott later led a training in Louisville teaching Deep Canvassing to a group lead by Keisha Dorsey and Eboni Cochran with REACT with the intention of canvassing related to air quality.



“ When it comes to air quality, I just feel like everyone is wanting to take flight from an area like this. I think it’s important that the people who do love to stay here should be able to stay here and live here and have great air quality and to have a great community.”

Steven

Louisville Resident



“ If you give up hope you lose everything. That’s one thing we have to hold on to is hope and our faith because we came a mighty long way already.”

Ethel

Louisville Resident



In Bowling Green

In Bowling Green we experienced the highest level of concern when it comes to climate change. Many of the neighborhoods in Bowling Green are populated by college students who care deeply about these issues and make direct associations with what they are seeing in the world to climate change. Many of the blue collar and lower income neighborhoods also expressed concern. The community's awareness of climate change was not limited to campus.

It was actually the lower income neighborhoods that expressed feeling more deeply impacted by climate change at the time. There were major concerns of quality housing and affordable housing.

Another demographic that exists less in other areas is the refugee population in Bowling Green. The International Center for Kentucky is based there. While refugee populations are not limited to climate refugees there are people from around the world who have been affected by climate disaster that have found a home in Bowling

Green. We met folks from all over, luckily we had Fransisco Serrano who is bilingual on our canvassing team making it possible to communicate with the Spanish speaking population.

"I started learning a lot more about how people's stories related to my story and how many people in my community have been through similar but different things. Just being able to put faces to the stories opened my eyes and widened my perspective on how many people have been affected by Climate Change," said KFTC canvasser, Fransisco Serrano.

Shortly after this project was completed Bowling Green was subject to a major climate disaster of its own in the form of a tornado. It is something that the community never expected to see. Most of our canvassers there were also organizers of separate projects such as the BG Micro Pantry and Rise & Shine BG who did great work on the ground after the tornado hit.



“ The Earth is very forgiving, but we’ve got to act now and we’ve all got to do our part. I’m hopeful that we will do that because I see it in my community. I see more folks caring about the way they eat and the way that they treat other people. That makes me more hopeful.”

Max

Bowling Green Resident



“They try to put so much on us, the individual, to make changes when one person can only do so much. You’re not going to have as big of an impact as a corporation making large scale changes to how it operates.”

Bennett

Bowling Green Resident

Statewide

Statewide we talked to folks who wanted to build people power in their communities.

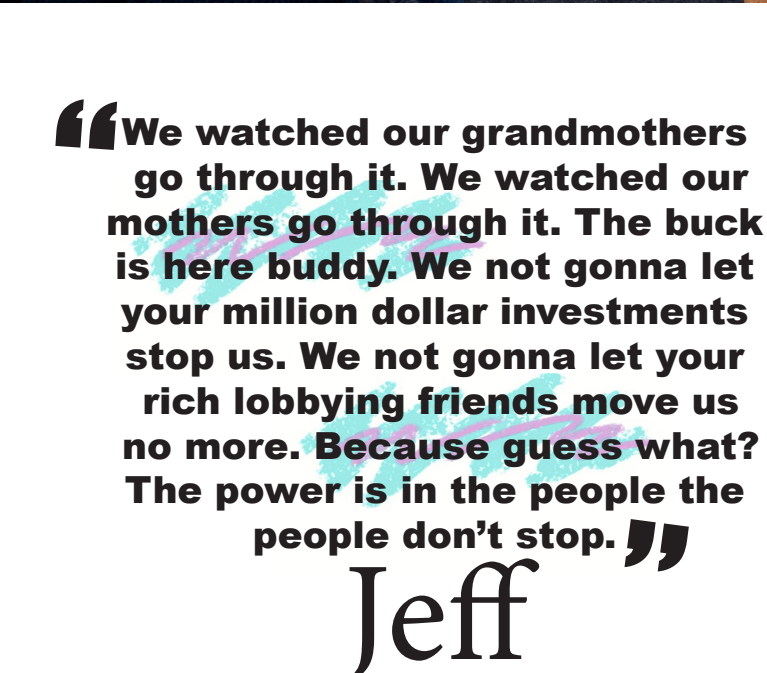
Many feel that the government hasn't done enough and isn't going to. People are increasingly feeling the need to come together and build this community power. We have seen it in action in times of disaster. Our communities band together. We take care of each other. We will make it together. We will grow together. We will survive together. Projects like that help connect the dots and bring people together. We got many new KFTC members from this project. We also found out that we all have more in common than we are different. Even if it looks very different we all face similar struggles. These are the common threads that bind us all. At the end of the day we are all we have. We have to stick together.



“ This isn’t just something little like a pothole in the road that you can just drive around. This is the whole planet. It’s the animals, the plants, the kids, and the adults. It’s everything and everybody. ”

Cynthia

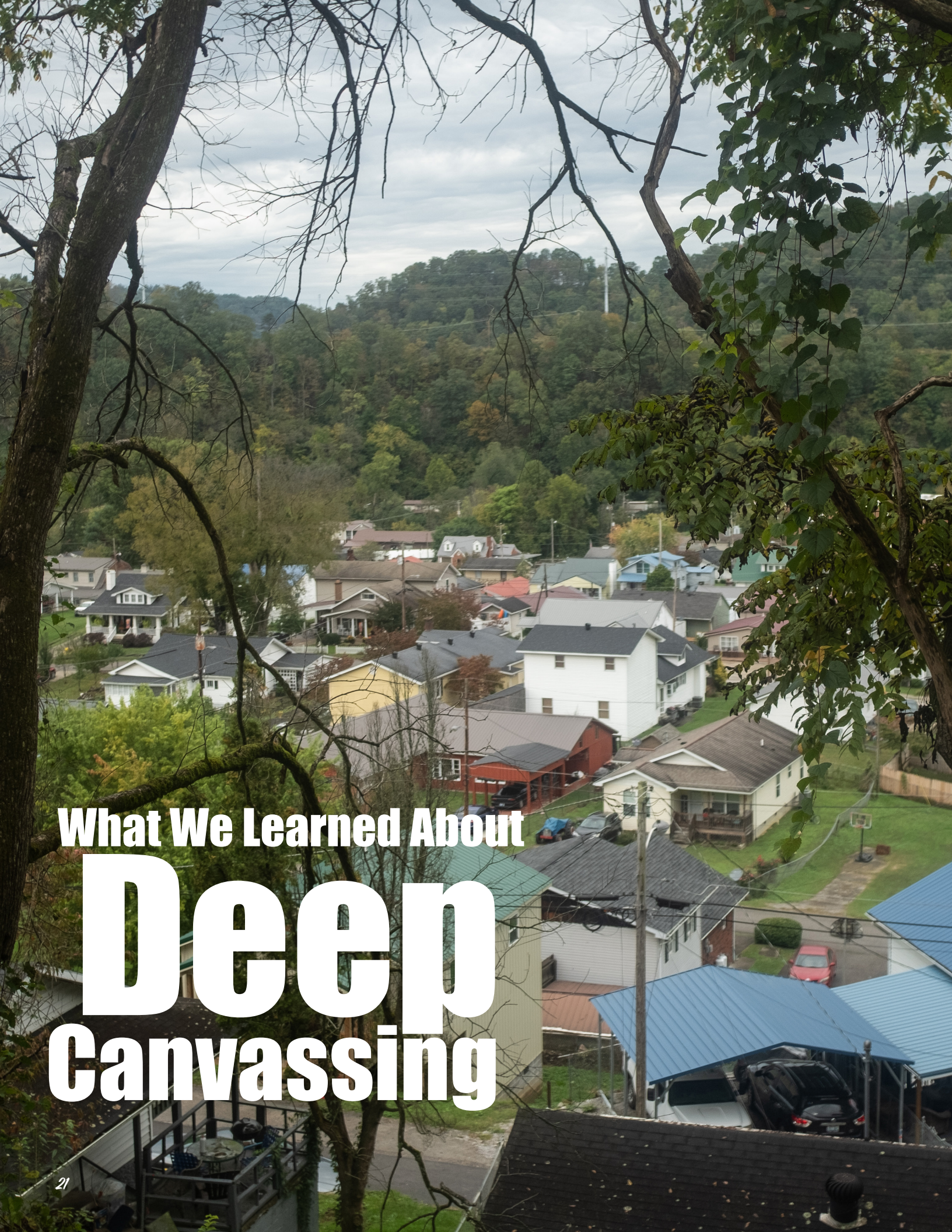
Bowling Green Resident



“ We watched our grandmothers go through it. We watched our mothers go through it. The buck is here buddy. We not gonna let your million dollar investments stop us. We not gonna let your rich lobbying friends move us no more. Because guess what? The power is in the people the people don’t stop. ”

Jeff

Louisville Resident



What We Learned About
Deep
Canvassing

Insights and Lessons From The Doors

In many ways this project was an experiment for us. A handful of our organizers and partners started preparing for this project and learning about Deep Canvassing in early 2021. Despite years of experience in traditional canvassing when we put boots on the ground in late August most of us had never practiced Deep Canvassing in person.

Over the course of the next few months we learned many lessons about Deep Canvassing as a practice and how to best use it in the vastly different physical and political landscapes of Bowling Green, Hazard, and Louisville. On weekly video calls facilitated by Lisa Abbott we discussed what was working and what fell short. We adjusted the script as we incorporated input from our paid canvassers. We figured out which strategies worked best in urban areas, hollers, and the rural outskirts of small towns.

“It takes a very intersectional framework to understand Climate Change and how it disproportionately affects Kentuckians. Having people share their stories informs our understanding of the approaches it takes to combat Climate Change. It helps KFTC as an organization to better understand the best ways to work against Climate Change,” said KFTC Canvasser, Brooklyn Lile.

Listening and sharing stories works...

The main thing we learned is that listening and sharing stories does work. We saw many people connecting dots right before our eyes. When we approach a situation with an open heart and an open mind we can really start to understand each other. Using radical empathy and non-judgemental curiosity as our tools, people truly opened up at their doors. When you truly listen to someone’s story and they can see that you care, it creates a level of trust and intimacy that is unattainable in traditional canvassing.

“Canvassers can not only just learn but they can be a pivot for hope. Not only does Deep Canvassing collect data but it helps you meet your

neighbors. It also raises awareness on issues. We met real people that shared their real stories, so that we can take that data and make real change,” said KFTC canvasser Jeffery Compton.

The weight of the work...

While Deep Canvassing is a powerful tool this kind of work can exact a heavy toll. Canvassers experienced a lot of emotional labor at the doors. Some of the most productive conversations can weigh heavy on one’s soul. Most of our climate stories carry a heavy degree of sadness and trauma. These stories make an impact, but telling your story over and over can wear on you. We found that it is important to have some lighter stories in your toolkit and other ways to get into a conversation. As canvassers began to gain insights, they understood when their full climate story would have the greatest impact and reserved it for those moments.

“If we’re able to listen to their stories and life experiences, if we’re able to model vulnerability and break down the walls that divide us, the fear that we’re told we should hold against people in our community by whatever news source we happen to choose to listen to. If we can get beyond that, meet each other, know each other, and see each other beyond our perceptions. That from that point, we can have a foundation of trust. A starting point for finding our mutual interests and building that better Kentucky.”
-De’Inara Carter
KFTC Canvasser

While this is powerful work it is important to recognize the wear and tear it puts on one’s mind. When people share their trauma with you it has an effect. Hearing how fatalistic, defeated, and helpless some people felt in the face of climate change was hard, but getting people to make con-



nections felt good. In the moments in which we could truly see the impact we were making, it was uplifting and rewarding.

Selfcare matters in this work...

Self care and mental housekeeping are very important when doing this kind of work. It is important to take time to unpack what we learned and how we felt while canvassing. We found that it was best to just create a time and space to allow canvassers to open up at their own pace. It is best to create an environment where one could share but doesn't feel pressured to do so. It is also crucial to make frequent time to rest.

Sometimes at the doors canvassers just wanted to be able to offer more, to offer solutions. We did make a sheet of action items, but for this project there was no clear campaign or goal other than encouraging fresh thought. The idea was that we would get people to think and offer a space to have these conversations about climate change

that many avoid. Pushing these conversations into the collective hive mind of a community can be powerful.

While it was hard to share and hear these stories without much to offer in the way of solutions, we were stepping out and engaging. We were getting people thinking with the hope that when they hear politicians speak on these topics or see them in the news, folks would have a little more context. It was about pushing the line, connecting the dots, and helping to open minds. It was about affecting the culture around the topic of Climate Change.

Due to the polarizing propaganda that many political entities have created, even saying "Climate Change" can stop a conversation in its tracks. There is a lot of politically charged language around Climate Change. When we eliminated the trigger words we were able to have more genuine conversations with folks. When it was approached as talking about extreme weather or transitioning the local economy more people were likely to continue the conversation.

A listening ear...

Sometimes we had to take a step back and listen first. Human beings have universal needs to cross race, language, finances, geographic location, and political alignment. It is important to connect on these levels and run a thread from there to have a conversation about Climate Change. After a while we started to see what each community cared about the most and were able to use that as a starting point.

“A listening ear is way more valuable than a talking mouth. You will learn more from listening. What I learned was that I’m not the only one. That is: there are other people frustrated with these systems. There are other people tired of breathing in this bad air. There are other people that care too.”

**-Jeff Compton
KFTC Canvasser**

They say patience is a virtue. We can definitely say that patience is a skill that you need in your toolkit to be a Deep Canvasser. It can be hard not to argue with opposing political views. There is so much divisiveness in our society and it can be easy to see someone with a difference in opinion as an opponent. Instead you have to see them as a neighbor and truly listen. We found that even if we couldn’t reach a common ground, we could at least understand where people were coming from.

“We need to hear directly the issues that are impacting our state as Kentuckians for the Commonwealth. We know we need to keep meeting people as a base building and a grassroots membership based organization. We know that we need to grow,” said Jacob Mack-Boll.

Intention and impact...

While this project was intended to push the culture around talking about Climate Change, we did identify plenty of direct needs in our communities. When a community need is identified, it can feel good to answer the call. For example, the Hazard-based canvassing group took initiative to

follow-up with people they met at the doors and organize community meetings to address flooding in Cherokee Hills. Leaders within that community were identified and supported, and community pressure was applied to local officials.

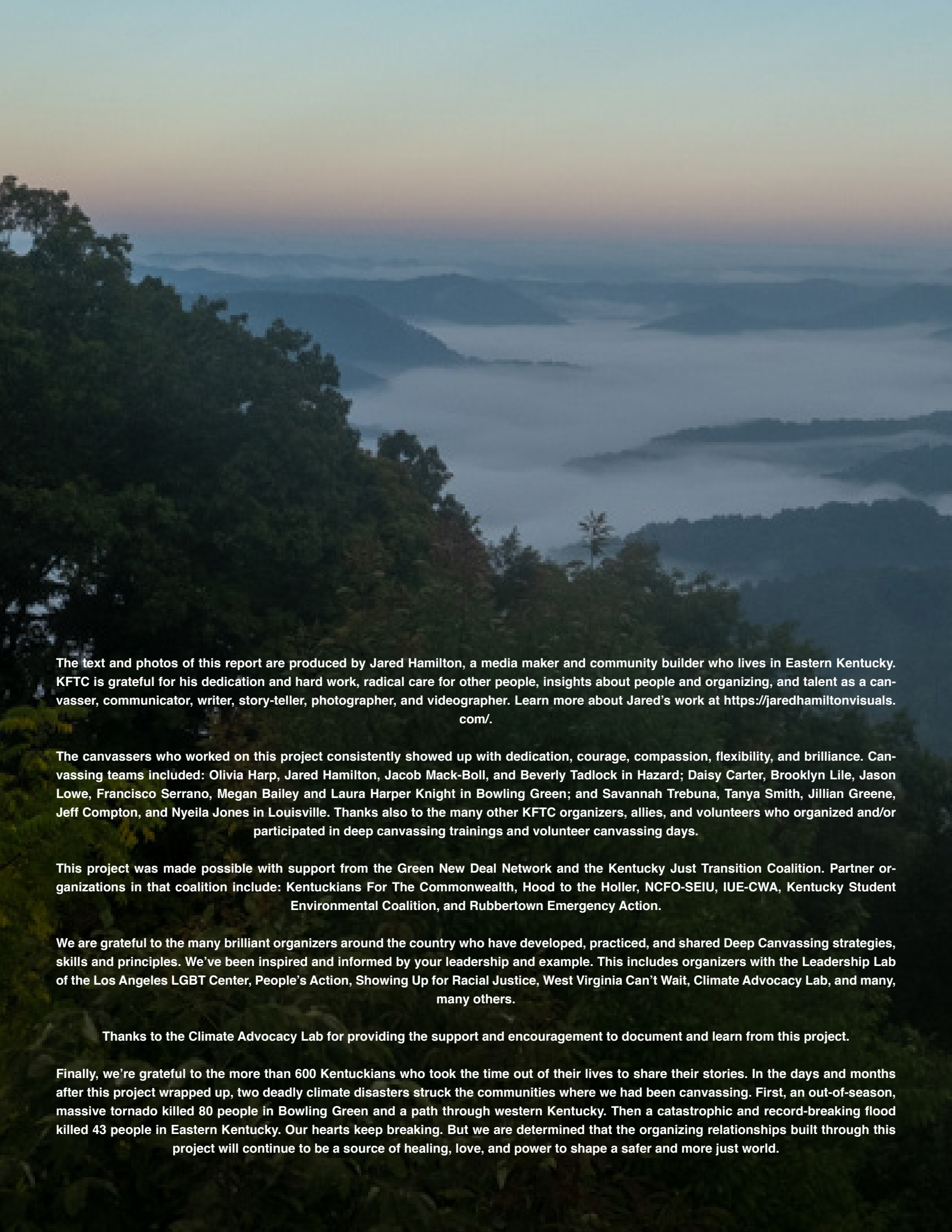
This wouldn’t have been possible without Jacob Mack-Boll’s deep involvement in this project. As a KFTC organizer his duties didn’t allow for him to be at the doors every day, but he would often get out with the canvassing team. When the canvassers wanted to do something about the situation in Cherokee Hills his leadership and organizing skills were integral to the process. For Deep Canvassing to have the greatest impact it is important for local organizers to work closely with their canvassing team and listen to the community’s needs.

We wanted to offer more...

Many of the canvassers felt like we didn’t offer enough on the back end of the conversations. Canvassers wanted more action items or solutions to offer folks at the doors. We had community events virtually at the end to help make connections and talk about what we found with our communities. Still, many felt that we could have had a deeper follow up with the people that we met at the doors so that a deeper community connection could be built.

This project was documented by the detailed notes made by Lisa Abbott during the Monday virtual meetings and a series of videos made by Jared Hamilton. One suggestion to better document the project and improve follow up would be to require better notes on each conversation as part of the script. More notes would only improve and deepen the quality of documentation of this project.

We can never stop learning and improving as human beings. This is no different with Deep Canvassing. It is a powerful and ever-evolving practice. We have seen it change minds. These powerful conversations have had a deep impact on us and the people that we met at the doors. We learned a great deal about both Deep Canvassing and how Kentuckians see Climate Change as an issue. We hope that this information can help us all grow and move forward.



The text and photos of this report are produced by Jared Hamilton, a media maker and community builder who lives in Eastern Kentucky. KFTC is grateful for his dedication and hard work, radical care for other people, insights about people and organizing, and talent as a canvasser, communicator, writer, story-teller, photographer, and videographer. Learn more about Jared's work at <https://jaredhamiltonvisuals.com/>.

The canvassers who worked on this project consistently showed up with dedication, courage, compassion, flexibility, and brilliance. Canvassing teams included: Olivia Harp, Jared Hamilton, Jacob Mack-Boll, and Beverly Tadlock in Hazard; Daisy Carter, Brooklyn Lile, Jason Lowe, Francisco Serrano, Megan Bailey and Laura Harper Knight in Bowling Green; and Savannah Trebuna, Tanya Smith, Jillian Greene, Jeff Compton, and Nyeila Jones in Louisville. Thanks also to the many other KFTC organizers, allies, and volunteers who organized and/or participated in deep canvassing trainings and volunteer canvassing days.

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We are grateful to the many brilliant organizers around the country who have developed, practiced, and shared Deep Canvassing strategies, skills and principles. We've been inspired and informed by your leadership and example. This includes organizers with the Leadership Lab of the Los Angeles LGBT Center, People's Action, Showing Up for Racial Justice, West Virginia Can't Wait, Climate Advocacy Lab, and many, many others.

Thanks to the Climate Advocacy Lab for providing the support and encouragement to document and learn from this project.

Finally, we're grateful to the more than 600 Kentuckians who took the time out of their lives to share their stories. In the days and months after this project wrapped up, two deadly climate disasters struck the communities where we had been canvassing. First, an out-of-season, massive tornado killed 80 people in Bowling Green and a path through western Kentucky. Then a catastrophic and record-breaking flood killed 43 people in Eastern Kentucky. Our hearts keep breaking. But we are determined that the organizing relationships built through this project will continue to be a source of healing, love, and power to shape a safer and more just world.



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