

# Reporter's Notebook: Homeless support sleep-out raises \$1 million-plus



Maggie Lee • November 25, 2020 2:53 pm

## Covenant's "Sleep Out" passes \$1 million goal

Despite the coronavirus pandemic, the [Covenant House](#) decided to hold its 9<sup>th</sup> annual "Executive Sleep Out for the Homeless" in person this year.

On the night of Nov. 19, more than 70 executives attended the "Sleep Out," which was held at the Home Depot Backyard next to the Mercedes-Benz Stadium this year to provide for greater social distancing.

The "Sleep Out" ended up raising \$1.04 million – surpassing its \$1 million goal. By comparison, the event raised \$970,000 in 2019 with 232 executives participating.

The funds go towards supporting the Covenant House's mission of providing shelter and support services to homeless youth in metro Atlanta.

"We were blown away by the results," said Ben Deutsch, board chair of the Covenant House and a retired Coca-Cola executive. "There was lots of consternation about even doing it during COVID, but we put the right safety protocols in place with the help of Leadership Atlanta alums; and the fact that it is was an outside event helped. It was pretty cool doing it outside the stadium, but it sure lost its intimacy with our social distanced spacing. I'm so glad we forged ahead with it."



Husband and wife team – David Lewis and Danica Kombol – co-chaired the 2020 "Sleep Out" standing next to Ben Deutsch, board chair of the Covenant House (Special: the Covenant House)

The corporate sponsors for the "Sleep Out" were: Global Payments, Wells Fargo, Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation, Jack and Anne Glenn Foundation, BBDO, Envistacom and Green for Life Environmental. There also were several "Sleep Out" teams, including Accenture, BlackRock, CBRE and the Misfits, who raised \$210,141.

The co-chairs of the 2020 "Sleep Out" were husband and wife team – David Lewis and Danica Kombol along with David Lanier of CBRE.

The executives braved near freezing temperatures during the "Sleep Out," giving them one night to experience the discomforts that homeless youth face day in and day out – estimated to be more than 3,300 in metro Atlanta on any given night. The Covenant House served more than 1,800 youth last year through outreach, residential and supportive services.

-By Maria Saporta

## “Rising Up: A Westside Story” documentary premieres

By the way, it was quite a week for David Lewis. In addition to co-chairing the 2020 “Sleep Out,” David Lewis Productions premiered its Mercedes-Benz Stadium documentary: “Rising Up: A Westside Story” on Georgia Public Broadcasting on Nov. 23.



Mercedes-Benz Stadium | HOK | Atlanta GA

The documentary was commissioned by Arthur Blank, chairman of the Blank Family of Businesses, to cover the building of the stadium and its impact on the adjacent communities, including Vine City and English Avenue.

In 2014, Blank said he had a dual goal of building an iconic home for the Atlanta Falcons and helping renovate the surrounding neighborhoods. The documentary highlights the fiscal and construction challenges during the build, as

well as the challenges and opposition the organization faced by some in the surrounding Atlanta communities.

“David and his team have done a wonderful job capturing the entire journey in this film, including the inevitable challenges you face on a project like this,” Blank said in a statement. “More importantly, I think the film shines needed light on how partnerships between business, government, community and ordinary citizens can make tangible, positive impacts on generational problems. It also clearly illustrates that there is still much more to do, and the stadium and our organization will play a role in that for years to come.”