

# Letter from our Chief Sustainability Officer



*“Our dedicated Smart Cities business unit looks at ways connectivity can help the environment and society through carbon emissions reduction, improved public safety, efficient transportation and more.”*

We are living in a time of extraordinary global change. Amidst the ongoing digital revolution, rapid urbanization and the impacts of climate change, our world is a different place than it was even a year ago. That’s why we focus on one central question: “How can we harness connectivity and the power of our network to create meaningful, lasting benefits in a world that’s evolving so quickly?”

We see great opportunity for connectivity to affect positive change for individuals, communities and environments that need it most. And we are working to realize this opportunity through a variety of initiatives.

For example, through [AT&T Aspire](#), we connect students to resources that help them stay on track to graduate and succeed. In this report, we’ll tell you about Fidel, a high school senior who made great strides through our virtual mentoring program. Stories like his, and data collected from Aspire-funded programs, show that we’re making progress in addressing the high school drop-out crisis. In fact, third-party research of 30 evidence-based programs funded through Aspire finds that the life-long return on investment for participating

students moving or staying on track to graduate is between \$268 and \$857 million higher than for those who did not graduate high school. This is important work.

Since 2008, we have committed \$400 million to AT&T’s Aspire programs. And it’s not just about funding. We get deeply involved and work closely with other organizations to help prepare the future talent of our country, as well as our own employees, with the skills they need for years to come. For instance, we’ve teamed up with education institutions to develop new pathways to learning. And with technology leader Udacity, we developed a [nanodegree program](#) being used by employees and thousands of other people around the world. To build upon the opportunity of learning,

we’re committed to providing 1,200 Nanodegree credential scholarships to underserved students through our non-profit partners and to hiring 100 Nanodegree graduates as interns in our workforce.

We’re also developing solutions to improve the way cities use resources and take care of their citizens. Our dedicated [Smart Cities](#) business unit looks at ways connectivity can help the environment and society — through carbon emissions reduction, improved public safety, efficient transportation and more. In 2016, we began deploying technological solutions in 8 pilot cities and communities, and launched a Smart Cities framework to support municipalities in their efforts to be cleaner, safer and stronger.





## *Letter from our CSO (continued)*

As a leader in this technological revolution, our company is passionate about keeping people safe through the responsible use of new access and devices.

We've long advocated against distracted driving and are adding resources to address our concern about the growing reality of online hate. In 2016, we launched [#LaterHaters](#), a campaign aimed at empowering young people to stand up to online abuse, and I'm encouraged by the campaign's progress so far.

These are just a few of the ways in which AT&T technology and the dedication of our employees is helping connect people to new solutions and opportunities. I hope you'll follow along on [our website](#) and [@ConnectToGood](#) as we embrace the opportunities ahead. In the meantime, please enjoy this annual update and take a look at the strides we've made so far.

---

### **Charlene Lake**

*SVP, Corporate Social Responsibility and  
Chief Sustainability Officer*