



LEVERAGING PHILANTHROPIC VOICE AND POWER:

A Collection of Public Statements from The Perrin Family Foundation



Title: We Stand With You

Authored By: PFF Board Chair, Sheila Perrin and PFF President, Laura McCargar

Release Date: February 2017

Dear Friends and Partners,

Today marks a month since the inauguration. Over the past four weeks our team at PFF has spent much of our time on the ground, calling, visiting, checking in with, and listening to our grantee partners and their youth leaders.

Youth that identify as black, brown, queer, immigrant and undocumented tell us that they are experiencing an uptick in targeting by emboldened peers and others in their schools. They tell us that the harassment they are experiencing often goes unnoticed, unchecked or is altogether dismissed by adults in position of authority. They tell us that they are frustrated that so many in this country are only now seeing the depth of the racism and bias they so frequently encounter; they tell us that the outcome of our presidential election has left them sad, hurt, scared, and anxious. They also tell us they are undeterred, hopeful, motivated and inspired to act. ***We must meet them there.***

Our work at the Perrin Family Foundation work is premised upon the belief that young people have the right to live in communities that are safe, healthy and just. We believe that society's ability to cultivate and sustain a just and robust democracy is rooted in our willingness to hear – and heed – the inherent wisdom of young people and invest in their capacity to think critically, challenge the status quo, draw strength from their identities, dismantle oppressive systems, and exert leadership in the civic sphere.

We know that this work is ongoing, and that building power and solidarity with young people and across communities is long, deep, hard work that requires thoughtful and sustained support. We also know this moment requires foundations to respond with courage, creativity and urgency.

As such, PFF has allocated resources for a [We Stand With You rapid response small grant program](#) to support groups planning special gatherings, community meetings, non-violent direct actions, crisis response, specialized trainings, community healing or other activities intended to support and strengthen the resilience of youth leaders and their adult partners as they respond to emerging or heightened threats, harassment and trauma resulting from

current events.

In addition, PFF is partnering with the Grove to make space available to community groups and organizations focused on social change that need access to safe, secure space for meetings and gatherings. For more information on availability and how to access this opportunity, [contact our staff here](#).

We know we still have much to learn about how to be an effective philanthropic partner in the face of the challenges that lie ahead. We, like you, are in it for the long haul.



Title: Response to Charlottesville

Authored By: PFF President, Laura McCargar

Release Date: August 2017

To our friends in the philanthropic world -

For some, the events that transpired in Charlottesville more than a week ago may already be fading from memory; for others the courageous action undertaken by communities of color in the days since (and decades before) are invisible. We cannot let it be so.

The sheer violence, terror and racial hatred advanced at the hands of white nationalists, white supremacists, and neo-Nazis in Charlottesville this past weekend exposes precisely how deep, wide, and present white supremacy remains in our country.

Our work at the Perrin Family Foundation supports young people to resist, challenge, and change those things that stand in the way of their ability and opportunity to survive and thrive in this world. One of the most pernicious threats facing our country, our state, and our communities is the dismissive denial by many in Connecticut that what happened in Charlottesville could not and does not happen here. At PFF, we see it as part of our philanthropic responsibility to disrupt that misplaced, and inaccurate narrative.

Here are just a few of the ways overt racism has shown up in Connecticut in 2017:

In the days following Trump's election, many young people across Connecticut stepped into school [buildings vandalized with swastikas](#) and [facing racial slurs](#).

Just a month ago, there was a [white nationalist rally on the New Haven green](#). While the white nationalists were escorted to safety by police officers, counter protestors - including several people of color - were brutally arrested.

Waterbury's town center is home to a whipping post - a relic and reminder of the North's direct involvement in slavery and the slave trade - which for years has been casually used as a "bulletin board" [until the protest art of a Waterbury resident sparked](#)

[public outrage and debate](#).

There have been three teenagers of color killed or seriously wounded at the hands of police officers over the past four months, including [15-year old Jayson Negron](#), who lay dead, handcuffed, on the street of Bridgeport for [nearly six hours](#).

Last week, dozens of immigrant and undocumented youth from [Connecticut headed to Washington D.C. to fight](#) for the right to continue living here as federal actions threaten to revoke protections afforded by DACA.

In research, policy and advocacy circles, the statistical reality of "the two Connecticuts" is commonly invoked and referenced. A plethora of studies, reports, and research have consistently found Connecticut at the [leading edge of income and wealth inequality](#) and the site of some of our nation's most racially segregated [communities and schools](#). Yet, the [role of racism](#) in shaping the racially disparate landscape, conditions, and opportunities across our state is seldom explicitly named.

The torches, flags, and hoods on display in Charlottesville were horrific and terrorizing symbols of white supremacy that are easy to criticize and reject. The harder work is to name and challenge the legacy of white supremacy that shows up daily, in covert and surreptitious ways. As the [poet Guante explains](#), "white supremacy is not the shark, it's the water". We must acknowledge that the legacy of white supremacy lives in the racial disparities that exist in educational opportunities for young people across Connecticut, in our state's criminal justice system, in [racial income and wealth gaps](#), in health access and outcomes, and in the laws and policies that govern our state.

Institutional and structural racism are also baked into nonprofit and philanthropic culture. 60% of nonprofit organizations in this country serve communities of color, but only 18% of nonprofit staff are people of color; only 7% of those in CEO or Executive Director positions are people of color; only 8% of board members are people of color and nearly a third of nonprofit boards [don't have a single board member of color](#). Philanthropic organizations, as a subset of the broader nonprofit sector, have even larger racial gaps. A recent national study of thousands across the nonprofit sector found that the gaps aren't for want of talent, capacity, or the desire to lead, but the [result of structural barriers and implicit bias](#) in the governance and management of nonprofit organizations.

No doubt there is a long road ahead. We believe one of the most promising and powerful paths forward is to listen to, learn from, and invest in the leadership of young people and communities of color. If you are unsure of where to start, here are some places to begin:

Connect with, support, and give to the important work of our grantee partners who are working to advance social and racial justice across this state. [Telling Our Story](#) is launching a campaign to make race and ethnic studies a graduation requirement in New Haven. [Save Girls on FYER](#) is working with community partners to challenge the disproportionate discipline of girls of color in Waterbury. [Make the Road CT](#) and [CT](#)

[Students for a Dream](#) are on the frontline protecting the rights of undocumented youth and families. [CT-CORE/Organize Now!](#) is developing a multi-issue racial justice platform and holding a [Racial Justice Conference](#) in October.

Attend an Undoing Racism training. Our grantee partners and their community allies are involved in planning local offerings in New London and New Haven areas this fall. [Citywide Youth Coalition](#) is planning a New Haven-based training this fall, and [Step Up New London](#), in partnership with [FRESH New London](#) and [Hearing Youth Voices](#) is hosting one in October.

Think critically and consciously about the media you are consuming and commit yourself to seeking out news coverage, reports, editorials and opinion pieces that are authored by people of color. The [Color of Change](#), [the Root](#) and [Colorlines](#) are good places to begin.

Educate yourself and others, and support the creation of spaces for young people to share, learn, reflect, and build with and from each other. Follow [#CharlottesvilleCurriculum on Twitter](#) for tools, ideas, and resources that you can use in workshops, classes, and programs, conversations with young people and at your dinner table.

Check out [this post from our grantee partner the Katal Center for Health, Equity and Justice](#) that lists 10 action steps you can take, and check out [this crowd-sourced resource list](#) for ways to take action.

Our board and staff are committed to continuing to amplify young people's voices and take up the challenge of naming racism as it shows up in our work, our sector, and in the communities within which we work.

Will you join us?



Title: Response to DACA Repeal

Authored By: PFF President, Laura McCargar

Release Date: September 2017

In the face of the Trump administration's decision to rescind DACA, we are humbled and moved by the tremendous courage, leadership, and resilience demonstrated by DACA recipients and undocumented and immigrant youth leaders who are putting it all on the line working to protect and advance their rights, keep families whole, and make our communities strong and vibrant. Tens of thousands of young people and families across Connecticut are impacted by this decision. We stand beside them, and we encourage you to listen to their voices, invest in their leadership, and heed their calls for support and action during this difficult and uncertain time.

Please take a moment to follow, connect with, donate to, and learn from and about the work of local organizations like our grantee partners [CT Students for a Dream](#) and [Make the Road CT](#) as well as other statewide coalitions like the [CT Immigrant Rights Alliance](#).

For grantmakers wondering how this might impact your work, we encourage you to share this ["Things to Know" fact sheet](#) from United We Dream with your grantees and tap into the resources available through [Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees](#) to better understand how this decision impacts the communities you support. Regardless of your funding focus – whether in education, housing, health care, community economic development, social services – the work you support is impacting and being impacted by the experiences of undocumented youth and families, and you can play an important and informed role in supporting their strength and resilience.



Title: “A Story of Irrefutable Intersectionality: The US Mainland, La Isla de Encanto, and Connecticut”

Authored By: PFF Program Officer, Amarilis Pullen

Release Date: November 2017

In spite of fleeting media attention, we must not forget about the people of Puerto Rico during this time of crisis. [With more 300,000 Puerto Rican residents, Connecticut has the sixth largest Puerto Rican population of any state in the U.S.](#) According to the [CT Mirror](#), Hartford is the U.S. city with the fifth largest Puerto Rican population in the United States — about 42,000 — and Bridgeport is seventh with 32,000. Puerto Ricans are our neighbors, colleagues, elders and youth. They are our community. They are Americans currently experiencing a humanitarian crisis. One month since Hurricane Maria, [1 million Americans on the island are without running water and 3 million without power](#). The aid is not coming fast enough or strong enough.

Under such dire and forced circumstances, many Puerto Ricans are leaving the island to seek refuge. The population on the U.S. mainland is growing fast, and the devastation on the island is speeding up the relocation process exponentially. *How is Connecticut prepared to support the potential population increase and needs? How are we unprepared to support and advocate on behalf of the imminent population influx and provide necessary resources? How are we creatively thinking of strategies to support Puerto Ricans, now composing 8.4% of the total state population and rising?*

The current state of Puerto Rico is not solely a consequence of a natural disaster such as Hurricane Maria, but a long history of colonialism and marginalization, unveiling itself under the distress of the Hurricane Maria aftermath. Natural disasters may not discriminate towards where they are heading, yet the consequences of these catastrophes, expose the underlying power structures, unacknowledged inequality and injustices. The history of Puerto Rico and its relationship with the United States does not function in a vacuum free of historical, political, and economic implications. According

to the [New York Times](#), a recent national poll found that more than half of Americans do not know that Puerto Ricans are US citizens. In fact, "[Puerto Ricans became U.S. citizens under the Jones-Shafroth act—this way the U.S. could deploy them as troops during World War I \(similar to how the Emancipation Proclamation legalized the Union's use of black troops\).](#)" Although now U.S. citizens, Puerto Ricans cannot vote for president or elect voting senators or representatives to the U.S. Congress.

At the Perrin Family Foundation, we envision a Connecticut where young people are vital leaders in creating safe, healthy and just communities. The challenges arising in the Puerto Rican community, will no doubt, directly impact the lives of our youth via catalyzed changes in their lives, including but not limited to the need to provide food and shelter for newly arrived family members, accessing new housing for relocated families, increased enrollment in schools that are already under-resourced, increased needs for Spanish speaking resources in schools, hospitals and government institutions to name a few. The future of our Puerto Rican youth will be heavily impacted by the decisions we make to today. In philanthropy, we have a responsibility to listen to youth and community leaders and partner with them to address real time and long-term community needs outside of the isolated bubbles of our offices and boardrooms. We must also ensure that responses take into account deeply rooted historical and political inequities and ensure that support extends to intentional and thoughtful efforts for long-term change, not just immediate relief efforts providing a band-aid solution.

In the face of great adversity, the people of Puerto Rico possess immense power, strength, resistance and resilience. It is urgent that we the people of Connecticut, and especially those in philanthropy, meet our fellow Americans, with fierce conviction and tenacity to support them in this long road ahead to recovery and a more just future. The Perrin Family Foundation extends our heartfelt sympathy to all those who have been affected by Hurricane Maria on the U.S. mainland and the island, and we remain committed to supporting communities in Connecticut impacted by these challenges.

We stand as allies with the people of Puerto Rico, and want to share some ongoing and upcoming opportunities to take action whether you work in philanthropy or on the ground:

[We Stand With You Rapid Response Mini-Grant:](#) The Perrin Family Foundation created this rapid response mini-grant program to respond to urgent and emerging needs as defined by our most vulnerable Connecticut communities. Groups supported by this mini-grant must be seeking to implement or already implementing youth led social change. The purpose of this mini-grant is to be an ally, support, and empower those responding to current and emerging threats, harassment and trauma related to manifestations of oppression in a specific community. The mini-grant provides urgent

support to groups planning special gatherings, community meetings, non-violent direct actions, crisis response or community healing to address the physical, social, emotional wellbeing and safety being threatened in targeted communities. Funds from this mini-grant may cover the cost of food, venue, materials, permits and other key costs related to success of the project. Rapid Response mini-grant awards are up to \$5,000.

[Palante! The Struggle Continues!](#) On November 10th-11th, PFF grantee partner Citywide Youth Coalition in collaboration with the Yale US Health Justice Collaborative, and Yale Forestry's Environmental Media & Arts Student Interest Group will be hosting a series of events and film screening with Iris Morales, JD, Puerto Rican community activist, attorney, educator, director, and author. As a member of the Young Lords Party in 69', she fought for better social and political conditions for her Puerto Rican neighborhood, including better housing, education and improved health care.

Event for CT Philanthropic Institutions: [Connecticut Responds: Families Arriving in the Aftermath of Hurricanes Maria and Irma 11.2.17](#). The Connecticut Council for Philanthropy and the United Way of Central & Northeastern CT are teaming up for a conversation about what funders are doing in greater Hartford, New Britain, Waterbury, Bridgeport and New Haven, what plans are being made, and what opportunities are there for aligning the work. For more information contact [Dee Goodrich](#), Director of Member Engagement, 860-525-5585.

Ways to support the Puerto Rican Community short-term and long term:

Connecticut 211: The United Way of Connecticut is doing relief work, supporting people via their 211 system and many communities are seeing an influx they expect to grow next month. Attached is the "Information and resources FOR Individuals Arriving in Connecticut from Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands" in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

[Hurricane Maria Community Relief & Recovery Fund—housed at the Center for Popular Democracy \(CPD\)](#). One hundred percent of monies raised will be used to support immediate relief or long-term equitable rebuilding in Puerto Rico for the communities hit hardest by the storm. Grassroots organizations have determined that, aside from initial emergency funding, grants from the María Fund will be decided by a committee made up entirely of Puerto Ricans, 50% from the island and 50% in the diaspora.

[Make the Road CT Puerto Rico Advocacy](#): MRCT has been convening a group of national organizations to fight for the people of Puerto Rico and hold accountable debt holders that helped create a humanitarian crisis on the island. Lead Organizer, Julio López Varona has been able to coordinate national actions on the crisis. In CT, they have been educating Puerto Rican members of the community about the importance of supporting

families back on the island.

[Unity March for Puerto Rico 11.19.17](#) The mission of the Unity March for Puerto Rico on November 19th 2017 in Washington D.C. is to stand in unity against unjust laws that have been systematically oppressive and crippling to the people of Puerto Rico and the socioeconomic growth and sustainability of the island. If folks are interested in traveling by bus from CT, please reach out to the [Puerto Rican Agenda](#). They are looking to fill buses from Hartford, New Haven and New London.

[The Help Center for our Caribbean Friends \(Centro de Ayuda Para Nuestros Amigos Caribeños\)](#) Displaced families and children, who are relocating to the Hartford region from Puerto Rico and the Caribbean islands as the result of recent hurricanes, can now get services and supplies at no charge at a temporary center. The center will open on November 1st 2017 at 15 Van Dyke Avenue, Hartford CT.

[The Progreso Latino Fund \(PLF\)](#) at the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven, in partnership with a Latino-led global fundraising campaign, is sending emergency disaster relief to Puerto Rico and Mexico.

Additional Resources:

This is a constantly evolving and regularly updated list of opportunities to support Puerto Rico. The information is provided by [Cenadores PR](#) a 501c3 non-profit organization that harnesses the cross-sector connections, technical expertise and passion for Puerto Rico in the diaspora to strengthen civil society on the island.



Title: “Walking With Youth: Adult Allyship in This Moment”

Authored By: PFF President, Laura McCargar

Release Date: March 2018

Dear Friends and Partners,

We, like many of you, have been moved by the power and courage of young people across the country that have responded to the tragic mass shooting in Parkland with calls for change and action.

On March 14th, thousands of students across the state of Connecticut participated in the #nationalschoolwalkout and over the weekend hundreds of thousands of young people and adults participated in the March for Our Lives on March 24th in Washington DC and other cities. Young people’s recent actions – in Connecticut and across the country – have generally been met with broad public support and celebration of their leadership. Universities across the state – [from Yale to the University of Connecticut](#) – have promised applicants that disciplinary actions resulting from decisions to participate in walkout protests would not compromise their eligibility for college admission. [Teachers and administrators in many school districts across Connecticut](#) also took advantage of the opportunity to support young people’s desire to participate in the walkouts, seeking to intentionally connect real-life civic action opportunities with classroom learning in a way that too rarely occurs.

As a Foundation dedicated to creating environments that support youth leaders of social change, we are heartened to see adults stepping up to embrace young people’s courageous calls for change. At the same time, we are compelled to highlight two troubling patterns: the historical amnesia that erases the leadership of youth of color who have long been at the helm of movements for social change, and the tendency of adults to champion youth voice only so far as young people’s words and actions stay without the bounds that adults prescribe as appropriate. What does it mean for adults to show up as authentic partners and true allies in this moment? We want to highlight

four key opportunities:

First, examine current events through a racial justice lens. Young people of color have a long – and recent – [history of using walkouts and other forms of protest as organizing tactics](#). In 1968, Chicano student leaders led walkouts that engaged thousands of students across Los Angeles challenging prejudicial treatment from educators and racist school practices. In 2013, after the murder of Trayvon Martin, the Dream Defenders, a student-led group in Florida, held a 31-day sit in at the Florida State Capitol to protest Stand Your Ground laws. Here in Connecticut, over the year and a half, hundreds of young people across the state have led walkouts calling for [more teachers of color](#), school curriculum that incorporates racial and ethnic studies, and demanding protections and [sanctuary for immigrant students](#). Unfortunately, the leadership of these young people has [seldom been met with the type of public and financial support that has accompanied the actions of the Parkland youth](#), who are predominantly white and from an affluent community. In fact, young people’s efforts to call attention to patterns of structural and institutional racism in their schools and communities have often been met with public hostility, school disciplinary action, and punishment. Young leaders of Parkland have been rightly embraced as heroes for advancing policy change in the face of a mass shooting; young activists who have called for policy change in the face of police-perpetrated violence on communities of color resulted in the [FBI releasing a report about “black identity extremists.”](#) Both youth organizers in communities of color and Parkland youth have intentionally highlighted these discrepancies, and adults who wish to support their efforts must do the same.

Second, recognize that young people have a nuanced and sophisticated analysis about what school “safety” means, which includes – and also transcends – the need for stricter gun control. As Hearing Youth Voices, a New London-based youth organizing group noted in [a public statement](#) days before last week’s walkout, feeling “safe” means “more than an absence of guns.” For students of color, who are often criminalized by policies and practices in their schools and communities, being safe means more teachers of color, curriculum that honors the history and stories of Black and Brown students, restorative justice practices, increased mental health and guidance supports, the removal of police from school, and addressing the institutional violence that structural racism and disinvestment enacts on communities. Dozens of [youth organizing groups across the country](#) and national youth organizing coalitions, like the [Alliance for Educational Justice and the Dignity in Schools Campaign](#) have noted that calls to increase school safety too often translate into increased security personnel and police presence in schools, which have the [direct result of increasing the number of young people of color who are already disproportionately pushed into the school to prison pipeline](#) and targeted by law enforcement, thereby inflicting further harm on young people.

Third, know that supporting youth “voice” means standing behind not just their words, but their actions. If you write a script and give it to a young person to read, it’s not “youth voice.” Similarly, when adults over-determine or define the parameters of permissible action, they undermine young people’s leadership. A core premise of PFF’s work is that meaningful, authentic youth adult partnerships can play a critical role in advancing social change. Showing up for young people also means supporting their methods and tactics, even – and especially – if it pushes the boundaries of what adults and others in positions in power and authority sanction as permissible. If adults truly support young people’s vision and leadership, we cannot insist that they only color within the lines of what adults draw.

Finally, commit to long-term investments in young people’s leadership and organizing. Nurturing and sustaining youth action for change requires long-term investment in their leadership development and ongoing organizing efforts – particularly when those efforts aren’t dominating mainstream news cycles or are perceived as controversial or provocative. As the Funders’ Collaborative on Youth Organizing has noted in the [launch of its new Youth for Safety and Justice Fund](#), sustained resources and support for the people, programs, platforms, and communities that bolster the ongoing development of young people’s critical consciousness, analysis, engagement, social-political awareness, and organizing skills, are critical for ensuring that this powerful “moment” of participation translates into the sustained engagement necessary to build safe, just and healthy communities for all.

We must be willing to go the distance that young people are demanding of us.