

PHILANTHROPY IMPACTS CONNECTICUT COMMUNITIES

Funders and state and local governments have a long history of working together and share a common goal of supporting the quality of life in Connecticut. The snapshots below highlight just a few of the ways philanthropy is working on issues of concern to all of us.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Fueled by research that shows the importance of a child's early years to their health and success in later life, early childhood education has been a focus of attention for funders in Connecticut for many years. A group of funders from around the state meet regularly to exchange information about what they are doing in early childhood education. From leveraging private dollars to funding creative and innovative programs that work, philanthropy is a willing and eager partner when it comes to improving outcomes for Connecticut's youngest children.

HARTFORD FOUNDATION FOR PUBLIC GIVING

Thanks to an \$844,000 three-year grant from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving through its Brighter Futures Initiative, the Hartford Public Schools significantly improved the reading skills of kindergarten, and first and second grade students as a result of the Hartford Haskins Literacy Initiative. Through this pilot literacy project, teachers and other professional staff in five Hartford elementary schools received specialized training to teach reading. As a result, in year two, kindergarten students improved at a significantly faster rate from fall to spring than the average kindergarten student across the United States (including urban and suburban schools). More than 75 percent of the second-grade students scored as proficient or above proficient on the state reading test. This proficiency level was 33 percent higher than students who did not participate in the Hartford Haskins Literacy Initiative.

THE WILLIAM CASPAR GRAUSTEIN MEMORIAL FUND

Guided by the belief that the best practices in education and child development result from encouraging and listening to all voices of the community, the Memorial Fund embarked on the Discovery Initiative in 2001. Essentially this work helps communities establish a collaborative structure for inclusive local decision making in which parents are engaged as full partners. The initiative, which has grown to 54 communities, is supported by leveraging public and other private investment, partnering with statewide advocates, and offering an array of capacity building opportunities including parent leadership, facilitative leadership, results-based accountability, and community decision making. Twenty-three Discovery communities recently completed comprehensive birth to age eight community plans. Thanks to this work, communities are focused and able to measure their progress toward school success for every child. One community attributed a dramatic rise in the number of students who attend preschool – from 55.6% in 2006 to 93.1% in 2009 – to their involvement with Discovery.

EDUCATION

Issues affecting education in grades K – 12 have been a consistent and continuing priority for Connecticut funders statewide. Many grantmakers are investing in new and emerging ideas that could lead to education reforms, are making grants to incubate and scale new approaches to improve student outcomes or teacher effectiveness, and are working to develop and adopt new approaches in their own communities or throughout the state. Funders interested in the area of K – 12 education convene regularly as a group to share information, exchange updates and to hear presentations from experts in the field.

THE LONE PINE FOUNDATION

Seeking to break the cycle of poverty through education, the Lone Pine Foundation®, Inc. introduced the Fairfield County Academic Gain Award in 2007. This innovative award is designed to acknowledge the public elementary schools in Fairfield County that have made the greatest academic gain in student achievement, create incentive for other schools to work towards significant academic gains, and share effective practices. The Foundation engages Cambridge Education, LLC to evaluate a range of factors promoting high quality sustainable improvement. As 2009 winners, selected from 151 schools, every full-time employee at Jefferson Science Magnet School during the 2008-09 academic year received \$500. Every full-time employee of the 2nd place winning school, Silvermine Elementary School, received \$350. The Lone Pine Foundation is committed to this Award program and a quality education for all children.

FAIRFIELD COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

In 2008, The Fairfield County Community Foundation uncovered that half of the principals leading 92 public schools in Bridgeport, Danbury, Norwalk and Stamford will retire by 2014, and there are few qualified candidates to replace them. At stake: the education of 60,000 children. To turn this crisis into an opportunity, the Foundation convened the four urban school districts, the Connecticut Center for School Change and the University of Connecticut's Neag School of Education to design a program that trains a new generation of urban school principals. The result is the Urban School Leaders Fellowship. The goal is to train 60 qualified and committed future principals to lead public schools in Bridgeport, Danbury, Norwalk and Stamford. This one-year Fellowship begins where academic preparation ends. The first class of 29 fellows graduated in June 2009. The second class of 38 fellows will graduate in June 2010. To date, six of the Fellows have been promoted to positions of school principal, assistant principal and other leadership roles.

HEALTH

Funders support innovative grantmaking, public health policy research, technical assistance, academic medical research and convenings - all with the goal of improving the health of the people of Connecticut. Funding initiatives include a broad section of issues including health care education, access to quality, affordable and coordinated health services, racial equity and disparities in health care, obesity (children and adults), and mental and oral health in children.

CONNECTICUT HEALTH FOUNDATION

Tooth decay is the most common chronic disease among U.S. children and among the most preventable. Yet, dental care is less accessible to those eligible for HUSKY, Connecticut's Medicaid program for low-income children, than other medical care. To combat this trend, Connecticut Health Foundation launched an initiative to improve the oral health of children covered by Medicaid. By encouraging a coordinated delivery system at the state and local level in the eight largest urban areas, the foundation hopes to increase use of dental health services among HUSKY children by 100 percent over the next five years. A report by the Pew Center on the States gave Connecticut an "A" for improving children's dental health over the last 10 years and ranks fourth nationwide for its Medicaid reimbursement rate to dentists. Stakeholders, a lawsuit, and the Foundation's investment, policy research and analysis helped Connecticut meet the criteria for the grade.

DONAGHUE FOUNDATION

The SisterTalk Hartford Resource Center, supported by the collaborative efforts of The Ethel Donaghue TRIPP Center at the University of Connecticut, the Donaghue Foundation, Connecticut Department of Public Health, the Aetna Foundation, and the Robert and Margaret Patricelli Family Foundation is tackling the obesity issue in exciting ways. The program provides an evidence- and faith-based weight loss and weight control program designed by and for African-American and Black women in Connecticut. By using faith, community and sisterhood, SisterTalk Hartford establishes positive eating habits and lifestyle changes. It also motivates participants to be knowledgeable and confident as they work together to achieve weight loss and long-term weight control. The SisterTalk Hartford program, conducted in churches by lay leaders with support from the Resource Center and its approach to diet and healthy living, is now attracting interest from organizations across the state.



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, JUVENILE JUSTICE, ENVIRONMENT

Funders in the state represent a diverse range of givers and their support impacts lives and the greater community through the organizations and programs they support. Through their expertise and experience in areas such as the environment, workforce development, youth, juvenile justice, and the arts, grantmakers have provided independent and objective review of issues, implemented research, supported actions for systemic change and endorsed new policy initiatives.

THE MELVILLE FOUNDATION

When the Melville Charitable Trust first invested in the Firebox Restaurant in Hartford's Frog Hollow neighborhood, its goal was to provide one more source of employment, income, stability, and pride to the struggling community. Working with Billings Forge Community Works (BFCW), a nonprofit responsible for the development and management of the Trust's projects and programs in Frog Hollow, it achieved its goal and more. The Trust's investment of \$1 million - through a combination of loans (Program Related Investments) and grants - has enabled Firebox and the related farm-to-table programs at BFCW to create over 40 positions, 18 of which are full-time. These jobs include executive chef, station chef, sous chef, waiters, hosts, bartenders and dishwashers. In total, Firebox has employed nearly 50 Frog Hollow residents, many of whom have gone on to other jobs and training in the culinary field. It has served over 35,000 lunches and 85,000 dinners and hosted numerous local special events and fundraisers for local businesses and groups. No wonder, Firebox has had rave reviews, two of them from Gourmet Magazine and The New York Times.

THE TOW FOUNDATION

In 1999, The Tow Foundation saw opportunities to draw attention to the disparity in treatment and outcomes for the juvenile justice population in Connecticut and to advocate for improved services for these youth and their families. Through the foundation's annual investments and partnership with three nonprofit advocacy groups, there has been an overwhelming shift in public policies, practices, and attitudes. In 2001, the partnership founded and continues to sit on the steering committee of the Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance, which has successfully encouraged the state to adopt a comprehensive juvenile justice plan that emphasizes rehabilitation and community-based support services. The Alliance has been instrumental in advocating passage of a law that raised the age of juvenile jurisdiction from 16 to 17 in January 2010 and will raise it again to 18 in 2012, as well as a law to reduce the use of out-of-school suspensions. Its achievements in this and other areas have caught the attention of national and state-based advocates and policymakers, who are using Connecticut as a model for juvenile justice reform work in other states and nationally, and attracted local and national funders to invest in Connecticut.

EMILY HALL TREMAINE FOUNDATION AND FAIRFIELD COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

When One Region Funders' Group, a collective of funders from Connecticut, New Jersey and the New York metropolitan area was established in 2004, they saw investment in transportation as a way to help the Tri-State metropolitan region to achieve a more sustainable transportation system that enhances economic competitiveness, while protecting public health and safety, promoting environmental quality, and supporting social equity. One Region, whose Connecticut members include the Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation and Fairfield County Community Foundation, awarded a \$67,000 grant in 2006 to the Connecticut Fund for the Environment to complete a bus study and create an advocacy coalition, Transit for Connecticut, to promote the report's recommendations and to educate state legislators and Governor M. Jodi Rell's office on Connecticut's transit needs. State legislators approved an increase in bus transit operating funds of \$10 million plus \$20 million in the capital bond package. The result has been an increased bus ridership, in some cases as much as 15 percent, and maintained funding for existing bus service.



THE ARTS, ENVIRONMENT

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LINCOLN FINANCIAL GROUP FOUNDATION

Thanks to a \$500,000 award established by Lincoln Financial in 2005, a little bit of presidential history resides in Connecticut. Given to the Greater Hartford Arts Council in cooperation with Riverfront Recapture, Lincoln's award helped create a Sculpture Walk along the Connecticut River in Hartford and East Hartford capturing the life and values of Abraham Lincoln. The open-air setting of the Riverfront is the perfect venue for truly public art celebrating the legacy of our 16th president. The park's 860,000 annual visitors combine recreation and leisure with appreciation of one or more of the Lincoln Financial Sculpture Walk's 16 notable works, confirming that art not only entertains and enlightens, but also educates. In a wonderful symbiosis of nature, community, and art, these pieces help to draw people to the Connecticut River and inspire curiosity and learning about one of the towering figures in American history.

THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION FOR GREATER NEW HAVEN

By volunteering their time, talent or financial resources, 4,000 citizens of all ages, income levels, genders and backgrounds have planted, restored and reclaimed New Haven's vacant lots, parks, curb strips and some front yards. The generosity of The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven and the City of New Haven's Department of Parks, Recreation and Trees has helped create garden and greenspace projects that have made New Haven's cityscape healthier and more aesthetically pleasing. The Community Gardens and Greenspaces Program is made possible by many other organizations, including The New Haven Land Trust and The Urban Resources Initiative, in collaboration with The Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, Landscape Designers and volunteers. In addition to creating a more beautiful environment, the program has been a stunning example of how residents and organizations have come together to build a stronger community.

Connecticut Council for Philanthropy

The Connecticut Council for Philanthropy is a statewide association of approximately 100 grantmakers, including family, independent and community foundations, corporate foundations and giving programs, and federated funds. It was founded in 1969 as a 501 (c)(3) organization to promote effective philanthropy.

The work of the Council benefits its members as well as the larger grantmaking community, the nonprofit community, and ultimately, the public, which benefits from the services provided by grant-funded nonprofit organizations. The Council is governed by a 24-member board that includes representatives from member organizations and the community at large.

The Council works with 33 regional associations throughout the country through its participation in the Forum of Regional Associations of Grantmakers.

For more information, visit the Council's website at www.CTphilanthropy.org or contact:

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