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Supporting Research, Conservation, Advocacy and Access

The Quinnipiac River as we know it today began forming at the close of the last ice age, about 21,000 years ago. Algonquin tribes were the first inhabitants to live along the river for centuries before European arrival. Europeans first arrived to the area in 1614 and immediately recognized the value of the river’s abundant fish and oysters.

By the 1850s, rapid advancements in hydro-powered manufacturing brought industry to the Quinnipiac’s shores and the river soon became severely polluted with the direct discharge from factories and municipal sewer systems.

The Connecticut Clean Water Act of 1967 and the Water Pollution Control Act of 1972 both led to vast improvements for all water bodies, including the Quinnipiac. In 1990, the Quinnipiac River Fund was established as part of a court settlement of litigation between the Connecticut Fund for the Environment, the Natural Resources Defense Council and the Upjohn Company, concerning wastewater discharges. The Upjohn Company was ordered to pay \$1.2 million over three years, which established a permanent fund at The Community Foundation known as The Quinnipiac River Fund.

Since being established, the Fund has granted more than \$2 million to improve the health of the Quinnipiac River by supporting projects that provide river research, conservation and advocacy. In 2018, The Quinnipiac River Fund awarded \$120,600 to seven organizations including: the New Haven Land Trust for expanding the River trail network; Connecticut Audubon Society for designing and implementing bioswales; and Quinnipiac University for monitoring the ecology of songbirds and assessing the effects of pollutants. The River Advocates of South Central Connecticut also received funding to make improvements to public access to the Little River, a Quinnipiac tributary. Yale University received support to monitor marsh surface elevations and analyze vegetation change, while North Guilford Studios was funded to create panoramic images on its trails. The Canal Dock Boathouse, which opened in the summer, also received general operating support.

The Quinnipiac River Fund is led by an Advisory Committee and facilitated by The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven. The Quinnipiac River Fund advisory committee consists of three members: two appointed by the Natural Resources Defense Council and one by the Connecticut Fund for the Environment.

continued

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Advocating for Juvenile Justice

Black and Latino youth are over represented in the juvenile justice system and disproportionately expelled or suspended from school. Recent work by the Center for Children’s Advocacy (CCA) is tackling these disparities by successfully pushing reforms through the schools and courts.

In New Haven, CCA used a \$25,000 grant from The Community Foundation to work with city and public school officials to standardize a support network for youth discharged from incarceration. Funding was made possible through The Foundation’s reentry strategy to create opportunities for and improve the lives of people released from incarceration.

CCA helped craft a new youth reentry protocol for New Haven Public Schools that establishes a pre-release team that engages youth prior to reentry, beginning 90 days before discharge. The protocol also requires that discharged youth receive an orientation with the pre-release team, a risk assessment with a clinician to determine community services needed, one-on-one engagement with a case manager, and development of a transition plan that addresses educational reentry, housing, safety and basic needs.

CCA’s work on the reentry protocol is part of its Racial and Ethnic Disparities Reduction Project. In other work, the project helped the New Haven Juvenile Probation and the Juvenile Review Board (JRB) collaborate to ensure that New Haven youth who are arrested for minor offenses in neighboring towns are diverted to the JRB as an alternative to court involvement.

In another success, CCA advocated for the passage of Public Act No. 17-25, AN ACT CONCERNING “SEXTING” BY A CHILD, which ensures that all children under 18 years of age are not charged with a felony for sexting behavior and are instead charged with a misdemeanor.

Over the past 15 years, the Center for Children’s Advocacy has received more than \$182,000 in grants from a variety of funds at The Foundation.

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Reducing Economic Barriers to Education

Access to education can mean the difference between individuals succeeding in adulthood or struggling to get by. That’s why Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity, Beta Tau Boule of New Haven, Conn., created the Promising Scholars Fund and the Edward Bouchet scholarship.

The Fund works to reduce economic barriers to college education by providing scholarships to African American students. The aim is to have an impact on improving African American educational attainment, particularly among males, whose graduation rates are typically lower than that of their white counterparts.

Thanks to Fund leadership and donors, five or six scholarships are awarded at \$6,000 each year.

One of the improvements the committee made a few years ago was to encourage recipients to reapply each year that they remain in college. It has become a popular option for the returning students, who may receive priority over new applicants if their grades are high enough. It is also desirable from the perspective of Fund leadership, who wish to follow a student through graduation, but don’t have the immediate funds to guarantee a four-year scholarship up front.

The advisory committee of the Promising Scholars Fund is made up of Beta Tau members who have led successful careers in business, health care administration, banking, education and other disciplines. Unlike most scholarship awards that simply grant out money, an Edward Bouchet scholarship provides students with access to a life-long mentorship with local leaders committed to seeing a student succeed in life.



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Preserving Natural Resources for Future Generations

For 30 years, Elizabeth Hird was a pioneer in the local community for environmental preservation and education. Perhaps no single act demonstrated her commitment to environmental conservation as much as her donation of Outer Island to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1995.

Later, Hird created a donor advised fund at The Community Foundation *for* Greater New Haven to ensure protection of the island’s natural resources and to enable continued access to the island for educational and research activities. Donations made to the fund support the instructional, research and outreach programs about Outer Island which are administered by the Connecticut State University System.

In 2002, Hird bequeathed another piece of real estate — this time her home — with instructions that it be sold, and its proceeds added to the Outer Island Fund. Hird’s Outer Island Education and Research Fund is currently valued at over \$2 million, ensuring that Outer Island will be preserved in its natural state and used for education and research by students, environmental agencies and others for years to come.

Youth enrolled in Solar Youth’s Summer Camp are one of the many groups that benefit from island day trips and exploration.



Gifts to honor family members or friends are made to many established funds, and are a time-honored and meaningful way to pay tribute to or remember someone special.

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Helene A. Augustine	Gilda Outremont and Dave Forman
Alfredo Axtmayer II	Angela G. Powers
Dr. Alfredo Axtmayer	Angela Powers and Mary Beth Congdon
Dr. Leon Bailey	Rani & Stacy
Eliza Barclay	Ashleigh Ann Rector
Mark Bauer and Joseph Gordon	Clare Robert
Mark Bauer	Peter Rogol
Kate Denny Bowyer	Carol F. Ross
Julian Brown	Larry St. John
Sharon Cappetta	Carmen Tirado Rodriguez
Bitsie Clark	Janna Wagner
Carmen Cores	William & Juanita Washington
Jackie Downing	Helen Wasserman
The Fenollosa Family	Jayden Wellman
Amy Fenollosa	Willie Williams
Madaket Fenollosa	Emily Zandy
Laura Freebairn-Smith, MBA, PhD	
Nelson J. & Geraldine W. Gatison	
Paige M. Gentry	
Lindy Lee Gold	
Margaret Gottschalk	
Jonathan Paul Augustus Greco	
Valerie Hansen	
Jeff & Nancy Hower	
Patricia Isbrandtsen	
E. Helen Kauder & Barry Nalebuff	
John Loge	
Dr. Wilson Luna	
Cynthia Mann	
Kiran Menon	