

CONNECTIONS

The quarterly newsletter of




The **COMMUNITY** Foundation for Greater New Haven

O P P O R T U N I T Y + E Q U I T Y

Basic Needs Fund Helps Fill the Gap of Life's Essentials

In 2020, philanthropist Karen Pritzker, President of the Seedlings Foundation, established the Basic Needs Fund and was joined by other funders who shared her commitment to helping families thrive by providing the essentials. Among other challenges, about one in six people in New Haven — and one in 10 in Connecticut — do not reliably have access to nutritious food, according to an analysis of U.S. census data by DataHaven. First grants from the Fund totaling \$160,000 were made this year to 11 organizations. Donors, along with others providing services, advise about the Fund. In addition to making grant recommendations and collaborating on learning, the Fund's Advisory Committee has committed to doubling the Fund to \$6M. To find out more about the Basic Needs Fund and how you can help, please visit cfgnh.org/BasicNeedsFund.

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A portrait of Michael James, a man with a beard and glasses, wearing a light blue shirt, with his hand resting on his chin in a thoughtful pose.

Entrepreneur Michael James, founder of Frederick Benjamin Grooming LLC.

Local Company Fills Void for Men of Color

Grows Grooming Products Brand With TCF-MIC Investments

Working in the cosmetics industry, Michael James saw firsthand the lack of personal grooming products for men of color, and was inspired to do something about it. He started Frederick Benjamin, named in honor of his grandfather, a self-made man who ran a successful lumber company. The brand is now poised for rapid growth powered by digital marketing and planned national retail distribution in 2022. The growth is being funded in part by two rounds of equity investments by The Community Foundation Mission Investments Company (TCF-MIC). James is launching Frederick Benjamin in New Haven at the business incubator NXTHVN Ventures, the entrepreneurship support arm of NXTHVN, which has a mission to accelerate the careers of artists, entrepreneurs and curators. NXTHVN is also part of TCF-MIC's investment portfolio, which is prioritizing investments in Black, Brown, women, immigrant and formerly incarcerated entrepreneurs in Greater New Haven.

Programs Support Nonprofit Racial Equity Work

The Foundation recently completed a year-long series of educational workshops and other opportunities for local nonprofits working on diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives. More than 90 organizations participated in the programs, ranging from presentations on the history and current state of racism in the U.S. to one-on-one coaching sessions and trainings on unconscious bias, creating and nurturing diverse boards and more. Nonprofits were also offered up to \$2,000 of free DEI consulting through TCF's Consultant Support Program, which connects organizations with a diverse list of consultants. Stay tuned for another full slate of DEI programming in 2022.

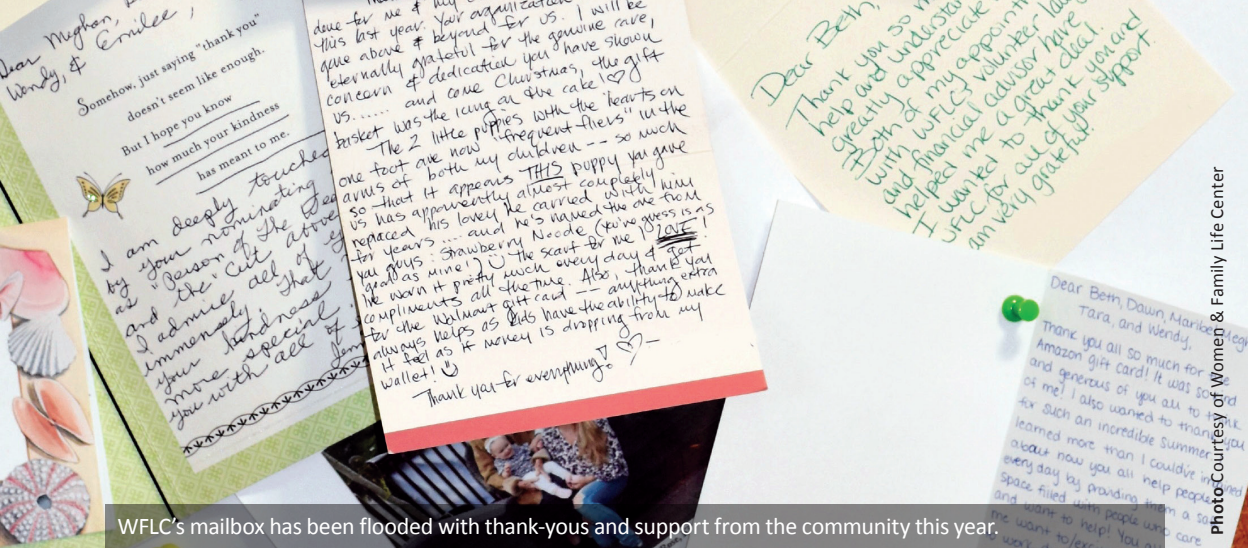


Photo Courtesy of Women & Family Life Center

WFLC's mailbox has been flooded with thank-yous and support from the community this year.

Shoreline Nonprofit Offers Lifeline

Provides Stability for Women, Families

When a single mother had to temporarily leave her job after coming down with COVID-19, the paychecks stopped. She eventually recovered and returned to work but her hours were cut to the point where she could not make ends meet. She went to Women & Family Life Center (WFLC) in Guilford, that helped her access resources to cover her phone bill, medications and a portion of her rent. The center helped her receive food assistance, and connected her with an attorney to work on recovering child support from her son's father. The mom and her son are among hundreds of families receiving emergency COVID-related financial support and WFLC services. The Community Foundation is supporting WFLC through 2022 with a \$90,000 general operating support grant.

Organizations Unite, Strengthen Support of Young Women of Color

Across our region, community-based groups led by women of color work on behalf of girls and young women and provide mentoring that focuses on college readiness, esteem building, career development and more. Now, with support from the Community Fund for Women & Girls, nine of the groups are forming a collective called the Girls of Color Mentoring Network. The Fund will provide grants of \$3,500 through a one-year pilot program, being planned with a racial equity lens and directed to community-based and grassroots organizations supporting young women of color. Learn more at fundforwomenandgirls.org.



Gaylord Specialty Healthcare is one of the many nonprofits supported by the Wakerleys' donor advised fund.

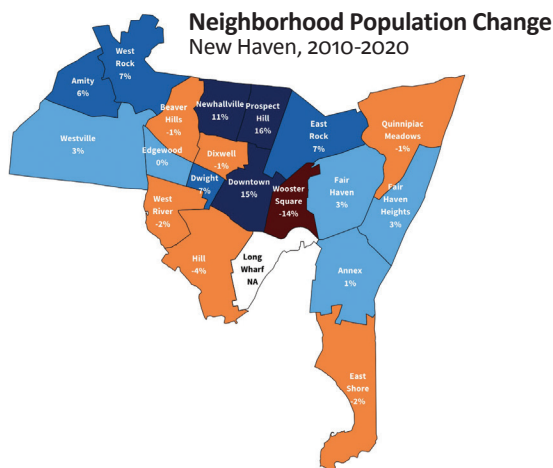
The Many Appeals of Donor Advised Funds

Flexibility, Timing, Partnership and Permanence

Donor advised funds (DAFs) are like a personal giving account, offering the charitably minded an easy way to plan, give and maximize financial and tax advantages. “When it comes down to it, there are really a limited number of ways to gift money,” reflects Diana (Dinny) Wakerley, a retired accountant and DAF co-founder with husband Charles. “Our fund allows us to support our community without having to know and seek out all the individual nonprofits and their initiatives. We either reach out to or hear from The Foundation about potential giving opportunities of which it has become aware through its multiple grant processes. If we are solicited directly, we also know that we can ask The Foundation about what they know about the nonprofit which helps us give with greater confidence.” Learn more at cfnh.org/DAFadvantages.

Advisors Encouraged to Incorporate Racial Justice Into Financial Planning

A presentation co-hosted by The Community Foundation and the Jewish Foundation of Greater New Haven last month prepared professional advisors for helping clients interested in pursuing social and racial justice with their giving. Presenter Elena Pullen-Venma, MBA, CAP®, Director of Gift Planning at the Community Foundation of Snohomish County, Washington, provided a history of the racial wealth gap and her own personal experience growing up as a mixed-race child. Advisors were presented with ways that interested donors could help address ongoing inequities through their charitable funds and estate plans. Learn more at cfnh.org/LegacyWithImpact.



DataHaven Executive Director Mark Abraham shared early findings from the 2021 Community Wellbeing Survey.

Population Change, Equity and Wellbeing

A Look at the 2020 Census and Data on Equity in Connecticut

New Haven and Orange were the only towns in Greater New Haven to add population over the past decade, according to recently released 2020 census data presented at an October online briefing hosted by The Foundation. Researchers from social data research firm DataHaven provided the latest population-level changes along with preliminary findings from the 2021 Community Wellbeing Survey. Nearly one in six adults in Greater New Haven report knowing a close friend or family member who died from COVID-19. The data also shows fewer people are experiencing food insecurity, suggesting that subsidies offered during the pandemic made a difference. Significant disparities by race and income remain, however, and housing affordability is a continuing problem. The briefing series brings local and national perspectives to issues important to the Greater New Haven community. For more information or to receive invitations to future briefings, email Dotty Weston-Murphy at dmurphy@cfgnh.org.

2021 Promising Scholars Golf Classic Tees Off for \$1M Endowment Goal

After 34 years of supporting the educational success of local high-achieving Black students, The Edward A. Bouchet scholarship continues to inspire generosity. The success of the Beta Tau Boulé Promising Scholars Golf Classic in September will allow the scholarship to fund the 2021 awards to their full amounts, and has inspired supporters to reach a \$1 million goal for the scholarship's endowment: The Promising Scholars Fund. In addition to financial assistance, the scholarship provides mentorship from a community of Black professionals. One generation mentors the next, helping students succeed in education and life. Learn more at cfgnh.org/PromisingScholars.



Neighborhood Leadership Program grad IfeMichelle Gardin held a second annual literary festival in September.

Neighborhood Leader Ignites LIT Fest

Foundation Program Nurtures Idea to Reality

After years of enjoying the annual Harlem Book Fair and other similar events in New York City, IfeMichelle Gardin decided New Haven needed a literary festival of its own. She brought the idea to The Foundation's Neighborhood Leadership Program, which offers several months of leadership training workshops followed by grants for participants to launch community projects. Gardin first tested her concept through a virtual book club focused on authors of the African diaspora. Joined by friends at the newly opened People Get Ready bookstore, Gardin then created Elm City LIT Fest. The festival was virtual in 2020, but this year Gardin welcomed attendees and a full slate of authors to an outdoor celebration in September. "When I came to the Neighborhood Leadership Program, it was just an idea. Through the program it became reality. The Neighborhood Leadership Program helped me nurture the seed," says Gardin. Learn more at cfgnh.org/neighborhoodleadership.

Latino Leader Sees Stage as a Vehicle to Social Justice, Inclusive Space for All

"New Haven is a glorious city full of different communities, full of different experiences, is incredibly diverse — and I want the stages at Long Wharf Theatre to reflect that diversity," says Artistic Director Jacob Padrón in a recent video interview, as part of the Progreso Latino Fund's "Celebrating Latino Leaders" (CLL) series. Padrón's is among nearly 50 profiles in the CLL series, featuring a diverse group of individuals from many countries, professions and age groups — each united by a commitment to social change through giving back and creating opportunities for others. Learn more and watch all the inspiring CLL videos at progresolatinofund.org.



Artavia Boone accesses postnatal health care during the pandemic via a NHHS-supported mobile clinic.

Photo Leslie Surde, MD and Angel Ojeda

NHHS Partners With Mobile Medical Unit

Ensures Steady Care for Maternal Health Services

The challenges faced by economically disadvantaged expectant and postnatal moms are difficult enough without a pandemic to add to feelings of isolation and anxiety. For moms with younger children, those feelings only grew when childcare responsibilities increased due to closed daycare facilities. Throughout the pandemic, New Haven Healthy Start (NHHS) and its doulas ensured a continuum of care for at-risk expectant mothers by shifting to telehealth check-up visits and virtual breast-feeding education and support groups, which are still offered. NHHS also connected clients with other resources such as transportation and housing assistance. Most notably, it expanded its services by funding and partnering with the Yale School of Medicine's Community Health Care Van, which offers safe and accessible maternity care, pediatric health care and connection to other resources free of charge. Learn more about NHHS at nhhealthystart.org.

Valley Team Tackles Childcare and Resource Needs

In 2016, poverty rates for Valley children ages 17 and younger were 26%; by 2019 that number had grown to 28%. For areas of Ansonia, Derby and Naugatuck, those rates increased to between 68 and 80% (pre-pandemic) for children ages 5 and younger. In early November, the Valley Childhood Poverty Reduction Team gave an update for residents about their work. Working with 30 community stakeholders, the Team shared recommendations on how to increase affordable, accessible childcare and to assemble a community support infrastructure that can provide assistance and awareness of resources. This work is supported by the Valley Community Foundation.



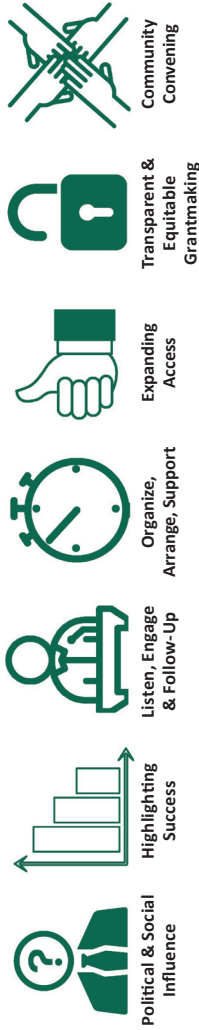
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Thanks to You, We Learned a Lot!

To learn what matters most to you, improve our practices, and engage with members of our community, The Foundation, in partnership with The Narrative Project, held a series of “Listening and Learning” sessions from June through August. Several themes emerged from the conversations, which are depicted above. We thank all those who participated in these valuable sessions. If you are interested in attending a future session, please let us know at cfghn.org/ListeningLearning.

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