

Remarks of William W. Ginsberg
 President of The Community Foundation *for* Greater New Haven
 at
 The Community Foundation's 2014 Annual Meeting

Long Wharf Theatre
 New Haven, Connecticut
 November 5, 2014

Good evening, and thank you all for being with us tonight for The Community Foundation's 2014 Annual Meeting. I extend particular thanks to Mayor Toni Harp – we are honored, Mayor, to have you here with us this evening.

This is fantastic full house. Your presence here this evening and your work with us throughout the year reaffirm yet again the great tradition of community philanthropy in Greater New Haven - a tradition now eighty-six years and three generations old, a tradition that you all are carrying forward into its fourth generation by your commitment to our community and to The Foundation. We are grateful beyond telling.

“Nice town, y’know what I mean?”

This question, posed by the *Our Town* stage manager as she introduces us to Thornton Wilder's fictional New Hampshire community of Grover's Corners, is perhaps not as simple and straightforward as it might seem at first blush. What does she *really* mean? Certainly, the stage manager is referring to the churches, neighborhoods, streets, stores, schools and homes of Grover's Corners. But if you know *Our Town* – and I hope you've had the chance to see it this past month here at Long Wharf - you know that the stage manager is referring to something else as well; she is talking about how the characters in *Our Town* are connected to their place and to one another. After all, what hymn is the Grover's Corner church choir singing at the end of Act I? “Blessed be the Tie that Binds.” Yes, indeed, *Our Town* is about the enduring truth of how in Grover's Corners a century ago – just as in Greater New Haven today – our lives are shaped by our connections to our hometowns, to our families and neighbors, and to the generations that have come before.

These community connections are the work of The Community Foundation. And this is why The Foundation has been so pleased and so honored to support Long Wharf Theatre's wonderful new production of *Our Town* in our role as Community Sponsor of Long Wharf's fiftieth anniversary season. Thank you, Long Wharf Theatre, for being such a vital and important part of life in Greater New Haven. Thank you yet again for showing us ourselves, and for showing us *Our Town*. And Happy 50th Birthday!!

Exactly a century ago, at the very time described by Thornton Wilder in *Our Town*, the community foundation movement was born. It grew out of a foresighted recognition that unlike in small-town America, the needs and opportunities of our major cities would always be changing rapidly and philanthropy would need new structures in order to keep pace. Two weeks ago, several of my Foundation colleagues and I attended the centennial national conference of community foundations in Cleveland, the birthplace of community foundations.

The keynote address at that conference was delivered by James Joseph, today an emeritus professor at Duke University who was formerly CEO of the Council on Foundations and U.S. Ambassador to South Africa in the Clinton years. Ambassador Joseph knows the field, and understands as well as anyone the work of community philanthropy in its broader national and global context. His challenge to our field for its second century – and by extension to everyone in this room tonight – bears repeating.

Jim Joseph told our field on October 20 that in the last generation, the cultivation of community has receded in America. He called upon community foundations and the local networks we represent “to take the leadership in reaffirming the centrality of community in the American civic narrative...to help bring back into balance the romance of rugged individualism with the enduring effort to form a community where individuals embrace, reaffirm and take responsibility for supporting and promoting the common good.”

Tonight, in my fifteenth annual report to our community, I come before you to say that your Community Foundation is endeavoring to do the work of community very much in the spirit of Thornton Wilder, knowing that community is all about hundreds and thousands of individual connections of the people of Greater New Haven to one another, to local nonprofit organizations, and to this place. We work at these connections every day. And I say that we are doing the work of community in the spirit of Jim Joseph, that even as we foster those individual connections we proclaim that the common good is and must be seen as something bigger than the sum total of individual well-being, that we must all take responsibility for the welfare of others among us in this place for surely no one else can be counted upon to do so, and that we the people of Greater New Haven - blessed as we are to live in this place of powerful community feeling – are as well situated as anyone could be to – as Jim Joseph says - reaffirm the centrality of community in the American civic narrative.

A century ago, small-town life in New Hampshire as rendered by Thornton Wilder was much more about constancy than change. As the stage manager says at the start of Act III reflecting on the passage of a decade, “...on the whole, things don’t change much around here.” And life in Grover’s Corners was more inward-looking than outward-looking. As George says to Emily in the touching scene you’ll see in a few moments, “I guess new people aren’t any better than old ones....I don’t need to go and meet the people in other towns.”

Nothing could be further from our reality today than these quaint reminders of a long-ago and very different world.

Rapid demographic change in our community today is re-shaping not only how we live, but who we are. In 2014, The Foundation made the decision to devote particular effort and resources going forward to the challenges and potentials of immigration, and in particular to how we can promote and assist efforts to integrate our new arrivals – including undocumented immigrants - as fully as possible into the mainstream of life in our community. Our own history tells us unequivocally that successfully integrating immigrants into our community life will enrich our culture, reinvigorate our economy, rebuild our neighborhoods and redefine our sense of ourselves for the better. The Foundation’s new Immigrant Integration strategy is broadly summarized in your materials.

In the same spirit of being a “welcoming community,” a place that opens its doors and extends its embrace to those that otherwise might be left out of the mainstream of our community life, The Foundation this year also embarked upon on a new strategy to help integrate ex-offenders more fully into the economic and social mainstream. This is a formidable challenge, particularly in New Haven, and yet it is a compelling one that tests the depth of our community’s commitment to assist those among us facing very steep challenges. Your materials also include a high-level summary of the challenges that we see and the goals we have set as related to ensuring successful community re-entry.

The third new Foundation strategy summarized in your materials deals with the challenges faced by our region’s arts institutions. The Foundation’s long proud history of support for the arts is grounded in our belief that the arts enrich our lives in so many ways. The arts illuminate local themes and issues of central importance. And, as we in this community are privileged to know well, the arts can at their best be a uniquely powerful cohesive force, bringing diverse elements of the community together.

To successfully accomplish The Foundation’s newly-set strategic goals that I have just described will all certainly require funding good grants, building strong partnerships and educating the public. But moving the needle on issues like immigrant integration and ex-offender re-entry will require more than that too; it requires seeing and understanding our community from the very different perspectives of these populations. It requires understanding the obstacles they face and the entrenched structures that exclude them, and challenging ourselves and others to see things that we may have long taken for granted through wholly different lenses.

Increasingly, The Community Foundation is viewing all of our work this way. As a staff, and as a Board and staff together, The Foundation embraces the idea that we can only fully live up to our mission to serve our entire diverse community if we enhance our understanding of the full breadth of perspectives that are found in this place we call Greater New Haven. Our diversity work is focused initially on building an even more inclusive staff culture, one where openness to diverse perspectives is second-nature. As part of this work, we are exploring how other community foundations elsewhere have addressed themselves to these issues within their own institutions and in their own communities. We look forward to sharing more about our work in this area in the months to come.

Serving our entire community in all its diversity also means recognizing that as much as we are one community in Greater New Haven, we are also many different communities. Indeed, we all know that each of us has several, or maybe many, community identifications – we identify ourselves by where we live, certainly, but also by our ethnicity, or race, or religion, or town, or area of greatest interest. These are often our strongest connections. It is for that reason that our work promoting connections to the Greater New Haven community is so often undertaken in partnership with those promoting complementary community philanthropy in the Jewish community, or the Valley community, or the Black community, or the Guilford community or the arts community, just to name several current examples.

It is in that spirit that The Community Foundation stands strongly behind the development of The Prosperity Foundation as a statewide African American community foundation. This effort grows out of the passion of two of our Board members, Howard K. Hill and Rolan Joni Young Smith, and it has benefitted from the labors and input of many. Most importantly, its circles are continuing to

expand. We were very pleased earlier this year to receive a two-year \$300,000 grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to support this effort.

It is in that same spirit that The Foundation has partnered for over a decade with Valley community leaderships to create, sustain and grow the Valley Community Foundation. VCF celebrated its tenth anniversary this year in grand style, and we are deeply proud of all that it has accomplished and all that it promises for the future of the Valley.

2014 has been a testing year for The Foundation's long-standing leadership role on our community's persistent maternal and child health challenges. Happily, we have passed those tests with flying colors, securing a new five-year Federal grant in August that will carry forward and expand New Haven Healthy Start between now and 2019. In a year in which national healthy start funding dropped by approximately one-third, our new grant represents an increase in funding of about 25%, to approximately \$1.1 million annually. This new funding provides us with the opportunity to connect this work ever more closely to our other priorities – our work with non-custodial fathers through New Haven Healthy Start, for example, will be connected to our work with the ex-offender population. More broadly, in a rapidly changing and totally re-shaped local healthcare landscape, this new funding for New Haven Healthy Start creates the opportunity to strengthen the institutional partnerships that can bring the health of our most vulnerable babies ever closer to the center of health care priorities in our community.

Since 2011, and continuing to this day, The Foundation's largest single commitment in our community is to New Haven Promise, our partnership with Yale University and New Haven Public Schools to build a college-going culture in New Haven and to support our most promising young people to attend and succeed in college. From its launch four years ago this week, New Haven Promise has made remarkable progress, funding more than 550 scholarships for outstanding New Haven young people. Anyone here who attended the send-off in August for this year's college freshman knows not only of their enthusiasm for higher education, but also of their enthusiasm for the prospect of returning to this community to build successful lives of contribution and connection. This is what New Haven Promise is ultimately all about. Later this month, New Haven Promise will host the 2014 national conference of Promise-like programs here in New Haven; I urge you to attend if you can.

New Haven Promise is an integral part of the larger effort to enhance academic outcomes in our public schools in New Haven, known as New Haven School Change. From its beginnings in 2009, it was understood that in order to be successful, in order to give our young people the educational preparation that they will need and that they truly deserve, New Haven School Change would require the commitment of many in the community. And many came to the table: our elected leadership, our schools leadership, our institutional leaders, and our teachers. I said at our annual meeting two years ago that New Haven School Change represented an unprecedented unity of purpose in our community. Today, having seen an extraordinary transition in leadership in our community over these last two years, with Mayor Toni Harp, Yale President Peter Salovey and New Haven Public Schools Superintendent Garth Harries each succeeding their respective long-term predecessors, that unity of purpose remains fully intact. That is hugely important.

Yet unity of purpose at the community level requires even more than an embrace of shared goals by top civic leaders. It requires a broad-based acceptance of the reality that if we are to achieve to achieve different results, different dynamics must take hold over the long term. It means that if

initial results show how tough the challenges are, efforts need to be redoubled. Unity of purpose means little without persistence. The Foundation remains of the view that educational enhancement remains the base on which we can build all of the other social progress we aspire to in our community, and we look forward to continuing both our work with our current partners and our efforts to enlist other partners in support of New Haven School Change.

For all I have said about big new goals for long-term change, big Federal grants and big institutional partnerships, the work of The Foundation happens through the day-to-day connections with donors, with professional advisors, and with nonprofit organizations. The Foundation's time-honored role is to be the interface between our donors and the community's nonprofits, to work with donors to understand their aspirations for our community, to act as steward for the funds they create and to make grants to nonprofits from those funds in ways that will honor the donors' intentions and move the community forward. This work retains its central place.

Two weeks ago, The Foundation completed its primary competitive grantmaking round for 2014, awarding more than \$2.4 million in grants to 43 organizations, as well as an additional \$420,000 in 12 grants in the Lower Naugatuck Valley in partnership with our affiliate the Valley Community Foundation. This total did not include The Foundation's new three-year \$700,000 grant to ConnCAT, the Connecticut Center for Arts and Technology, which was voted earlier this year and which I will talk about tomorrow evening at ConnCAT. For the first time, our grantmaking this year included resources from our new 44-62 Fund, established by an extraordinary gift from the Seedlings Foundation to support unrestricted grantmaking in New Haven and in the shoreline communities to the east. When fully funded at \$6 million two years from now, the 44-62 Fund will represent the largest gift ever received by The Foundation for discretionary grantmaking.

Overall, total Foundation grantmaking through competitive and non-competitive processes will exceed \$20 million in 2014.

The Foundation's efforts to support local nonprofits even beyond grantmaking continue to expand. Our capacity building learning opportunities are growing and we are providing planned giving support to more and more organizations as well. giveGreater.org[®] is growing continually as well and continues to be an important resource for nonprofit organizations to learn from one another, to connect with donors and others in the community, and to keep the community informed. In 2014, we moved The Great Give[®] to the spring for the first time, and more than 5,000 gifts were received and over \$750,000 was contributed to local nonprofits in a thirty-six hour period, May 6-7.

Over the last year, The Foundation has moved aggressively down the path of serving local nonprofits by providing investment management services as this country's first community foundation to register as an investment advisor. We continue to believe that offering local organizations the opportunity to invest their endowment-like resources as part of our commingled pool will over time create very substantial benefit for this community's charitable capital. This strategy is working because The Foundation's investment performance continues to be outstanding; we are deeply proud of how as an investor we deliver on our commitment to this community's donors and institutions.

And in 2014, The Community Foundation took concrete steps to become a more impactful mission-related investor. With the support of our trustee banks, Bank of America and Wells Fargo, The

Foundation made a \$2.5 million special appropriation to create a pool to invest in local transactions that strengthen our community. We are looking forward to tapping that pool beginning in 2015. On top of that, working with the RISC Foundation, the Greater New Haven Community Loan Fund and Webster Bank, The Foundation has created a mortgage subsidy program for New Haven teachers, known as. I am delighted to be able to say this evening that the first loan under the New Haven Teachers Fund closed just yesterday, enabling a middle school teacher at King Robinson School in Newhallville to purchase a new home in Westville.

In all these ways, and in numerous others that I have not had the opportunity to mention, your Community Foundation today is growing and changing. As of September 30, Foundation assets totaled just under \$460 million, a very substantial increase from a year earlier. And as we are now preparing our 2015 budgets and plans, I am anticipating that for the first time the total amount of resources flowing through The Foundation in a year will exceed \$50 million – that represents distributions off our current endowments as well as new monies coming in, and will fund not only our grantmaking and our operating costs but also contributions to new and existing endowed funds to further deepen this community's investment in its own future. More fundamentally, those numbers represent connections – connections between individuals, connections between people and local institutions and causes, connections across differences – connections getting stronger and more numerous. I submit to you that this is truly a sign of a healthy community – that even beyond the objective indicators of population growth or economic growth or rates of crime, or poverty or educational achievement, the strength of our connections is a very telling indicator too. From where I sit, the web of connections – personal connections, institutional connections, and philanthropic connections - gets bigger and tighter each year.

The work of connections is – well, work. And lots and lots of connections of many different kinds means, you guessed it, lots and lots of work. At The Foundation, of course, the work of connection is done by the supremely talented and dedicated group of staff that I have the privilege of spending every day with. It is truly a privilege. And all kidding aside, this isn't about volume at all. Each year, the quality of the work gets even better, the spirit of the team gets even stronger, and the connections to nonprofits, residents, donors, professional advisors and partners grow even tighter. And each year, the pride I feel in my staff colleagues grows ever greater as well. Thank you so much to all of them.

None of our connections would be possible – indeed, none of what we do would be possible – without the leadership, support, credibility, passion and input of ideas and perspectives of our eleven Board members, each a true community leader in her or his own right. Thank you to each of our Board members: David Newton, Will Colwell, Emily Byrne, Alicia Caraballo, Kellyann Day, Howard K. Hill, Chip Long, Kica Matos, Jimmy Ryan, Shelly Saczynski and Rolan Young Smith. For all their different life experiences and different roles in this community, our directors come to our Board table united – united in their willingness to make an extraordinary commitment of time and energy, in their willingness to forge new directions (and in their insistence on analytical rigor in doing so), in their understanding of the trust that has been placed in their hands by three generations of donors, in their openness to others' perspectives, and above all united in their love for and commitment to this community.

Over the last four years, these qualities have been brought out abundantly under the inspired leadership of Rolan Young Smith, Chair of our Board from 2010-12, and David Newton, Board Chair from 2013 through the end of this year. Regretfully, both for me and for The Foundation,

both Rolan's and David's terms expire at the end of this year, so tonight's annual meeting represents a public farewell to each of them.

Rolan: thank you for all the ways that you have brought your community development expertise, your history in this community, your legal acumen, and your leadership skills to benefit every aspect of our work, including service on just about every Board committee. Thank you for your leadership of the Community Strategies and Knowledge Committee during the period of the creation of our new immigration and re-entry strategies. Thank you for pushing all of us to broaden the perspectives through which we see the people and the issues, opportunities and challenges of our community. So many things to be thankful for - thank you for all of that and more, Rolan.

Of all the great leaders in our community, none have contributed more in more diverse and important ways than David Newton, and David has been a great leader for The Foundation. No one is a more experienced or expert board leader than David Newton, and no one is better and taking the measure of where his colleagues are, placing that alongside the staff perspective, and leading the institution to the right place. No one is more deeply steeped in or committed to this community – its nonprofits, its institutions, its history – or better able to bring all of that to bear to make the right decisions. No one works harder for his causes. And no one provides wiser counsel on an ongoing basis to his CEO. I am deeply grateful to David for all that he has meant to the Foundation and to me. Thank you, David, for all that and more.

Very sadly, The Foundation lost another Board member earlier this year. Our friend Jim Perillo, who passed away in August after a long and courageous battle with cancer, embodied commitment to this community as much as any Board member I have served under in my many years at The Foundation. Jim was a retired teacher who devoted himself above all to education issues in his work at The Foundation. A former Alderman and City official, Jim brought much wisdom as to the interaction of the public and philanthropic sectors. He was the quintessential neighbor – the heart and soul of his Westville community but always the proud son of the Hill, where he had grown up – and just the kind of friend you'd want to have next door – fun, funny, and loyal. He and I had been friends for thirty years. I know I speak for everyone associated with The Foundation, and for so many others in our community, when I say that Jim Perillo is very much missed, each and every day.

The only consolation for The Foundation in these departures is that Jim, Rolan and David either have been or soon will be succeeded by equally committed and inspiring leaders who are being added to our Board. I will leave it to David Newton to announce those new appointments in a few moments.

Well...enough said about The Foundation and Greater New Haven in 2014. Let us return to Grovers Corners, New Hampshire, about a century ago, where the townspeople have much to teach us about community connection.