

“The Work of Community in a Time of Disconnection”

Remarks of William W. Ginsberg
President of The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven
at

The Foundation’s 2016 Annual Meeting

College Street Music Hall
New Haven, Connecticut
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Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. I extend a heartfelt and sincere welcome to you all – it is great to see everyone and we are so appreciative of your being here. And how great to be gathering tonight in the refurbished and re-opened College Street Music Hall – yet another addition to the vibrant cultural hub that is downtown New Haven.

Speaking of cultural vibrancy, how about a warm thank-you to the St. Luke’s Steel Band?! Thank you so much for gracing our gathering tonight, and for the uplift of your bright vibrant music. For almost 20 years, our good friends at St. Luke’s Episcopal Church on Whalley Avenue have made this beautiful music together, and their Caribbean-inspired music is another reminder of all the traditions from all around the world – musical and otherwise - that comprise our community of Greater New Haven.

And a special thanks to Trish Caldwell and Kathleen Cei [che] of our staff for putting together all those beautiful photos that you saw as you came in. What a great portrait of this great community.

Happily and appropriately, our gathering tonight comes on Giving Tuesday, the global day of giving. The spirit of philanthropy is all around us, and so notwithstanding the deluge it’s a perfect evening to celebrate that spirit. Judging by the email traffic, many of our local nonprofits are doing their best to urge you to celebrate with a gift to them, and I join them in so urging. You can take out your phones and do so right now, or maybe even better during the reception following our program. You can also purchase giving cards here this evening – I give them to my children as holiday gifts.

Above all tonight, we come together to celebrate our community of Greater New Haven. We are drawn together here by our feelings of connection – to this place, to one another, and to the work of building a stronger community. Community is all about connection, and the strength of any community is measured by the strength of the

connections that its people feel to its past, its present and its future. By that measure, as I have said many times over many years, our community is strong indeed. That remains as true as ever as we approach the end of another year.

At The Community Foundation, we are privileged to work these vineyards of community connection every day. We spend our days working with nonprofit organizations that are doing the hard work of meeting community needs and strengthening community bonds. We spend our days working with generous and committed donors who choose to make this place their philanthropic priority. Each day, we see what all of these people – people associated with nonprofits and donors alike – have in common: a deeply felt commitment to help make the future of our community as bright as it can be.

You all are the nonprofit leaders, the philanthropists, the community leaders and the residents I am talking about. As I look around this hall, I feel deeply privileged to know so many of you, to work with so many of you, and to have done so for many years. I thank you again, and I salute you for all you do for our community.

You are the heirs and heiresses to a proud tradition, this long tradition of community connection and commitment. This is the tradition that built and that sustains so much of what we cherish here that makes this place something greater - much greater - than the sum of its many parts. It is the tradition that created the New Haven Foundation almost 89 years ago, itself a bold statement of confidence in the future. In Greater New Haven, it has been and remains today a “can-do” tradition, a tradition of dreamers and do-ers, of utopians and realists. It is part of who we are and it is central to what has made us equal to our challenges time and time again.

It is important to remind ourselves of this, for we gather tonight not only to celebrate that tradition, but to renew our connections in the face of new, unforeseen and unknowable challenges. If as I said before our strength is in our connections, we need to confront the reality that a profound sense of division and disconnection is now casting its dark shadow over our country. Here in Greater New Haven, many of us feel the deep chill cast by that shadow. Doing the work of community in our time of profound disconnection – this is the challenge before our community.

I see these divisions as deeper today than at any time in at least the last half-century. The 2016 Presidential campaign certainly laid bare these fault lines and exacerbated them – these stark and deep divisions of socio-economic class, of geography, or race, of ethnicity, of education level, of gender. I see the election result as signaling a belief among the American people – a belief more widespread than I ever would have thought possible - that our path to future prosperity and security – to greatness, if you will - is not one of connection and inclusion, but one of division and resentment of others, one of looking backward rather than forward, one of surrendering to fear rather than embracing hope. Our President-elect campaigned by painting a dark picture of America’s future – a future in which the opportunity for a good full life will by-pass many Americans.

So we must acknowledge that the spirit of disconnection has carried the day - disconnection borne of a sense that the opportunities of tomorrow in America are not widely shared. The world in which we are now doing the work of community feels very different than it did just a few short weeks ago.

So I say to you tonight that there is an urgent need for all us to recommit ourselves to the work of community - the work of creating and strengthening connections, of reaching out to and welcoming those among us who need our support, and of envisioning a future where the many and not just the few can share in the opportunities that are being created. It has never been more important to stay together and act together as a community.

This is the work of The Foundation. This is our work with you - our collaborators, our partners, our fellow travelers. Whatever the future brings, our commitment to this work is unwavering.

Let me speak to our commitments, for this is a moment to reiterate them.

The mission of The Community Foundation speaks to increasing the amount and enhancing the impact of philanthropy here in our community of Greater New Haven. Our clearest elaboration on what we mean by "community" is set forth in our Statement of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, which was adopted a bit over a year ago by the Board of The Community Foundation. Our DEI Statement illuminates our path forward in this time of disconnection, so portions of it bear reading tonight:

"Greater New Haven is a highly diverse community with a population representing many racial and ethnic groups, many religions, many different perspectives, and all ages, life circumstances, sexual orientations and life styles. The Community Foundation believes that the diversity of our community is a defining element of the identity of our community and one of our greatest and most important strengths.

The people of Greater New Haven will only feel and act as members of one community than is something greater than the sum of its diverse parts to the extent they feel connected to one another. This sense of connection can only exist in an environment where all feel that they are respected, are accepted, are treated with dignity, have opportunities to build successful lives and are supported by others in meeting their challenges. This sense of connection requires that the people of our community understand and empathize with one another.

Inequities persist in our community, as they do in the broader society. Too often, people in our community are judged by their race, ethnicity, gender, religion, life circumstance, sexual orientation or lifestyle, without regard to their character or their contribution.

In order to fully serve our community and to promote the sense of connection to one another that is the hallmark of a truly cohesive community, The

Community Foundation is committed to acting in ways that respect and advance our diversity and that reduce inequities. The Foundation recognizes that in order to do so The Foundation must act in a manner that is inclusive of our community's different peoples, perspectives, beliefs, sexual orientations, life circumstances and life-styles.

It is for all these reasons that diversity, equity and inclusion are core values of The Community Foundation."

One area in which these values may soon be tested is in our work on immigration.

Several years ago, The Foundation made a decision to focus on immigration and on re-entry of the formerly incarcerated, two issues of critical importance that define Greater New Haven as a welcoming place. Under Christina Ciociola's leadership, we adopted strategies in each of these areas, set aside dedicated grantmaking resources, published reports, and held convenings. Since 2014, The Foundation has committed over \$800,000 of grant support to local service providers and advocacy organizations doing immigration work. In addition, we have brought together a collaborative of immigration funders from around the State of Connecticut and spearheaded the efforts of the collaborative to successfully raise funds nationally from the Open Society Foundations. The work of the collaborative continues to get stronger and to branch out in new directions.

The stated and Board-adopted goal of our immigration work is that "Immigrants in Greater New Haven, including undocumented immigrants, will achieve greater civic and economic participation and success...."

The oft-stated intentions of the President-elect to enforce our immigration laws more aggressively may well present direct conflicts with The Foundation's immigration work. We do not yet know how these issues will play out. But what we believe is that the immigrant story is the story of our past and of our future. The hard work and the cultural contributions of previous generations of immigrants built our community in the 19th and 20th centuries and are building it anew today for our century. Let me be clear: The Foundation will remain committed to doing what we can to advance the integration of our immigrants - including our undocumented residents - into the life of our community and to provide them with the opportunities, notwithstanding whatever changes to Federal immigration laws, policies and enforcement may be coming.

I would like to speak more broadly to this theme of opportunity.

This fall, with The Community Foundation as a lead supporter, Datahaven published its second Greater New Haven Community Index, a comprehensive far-reaching statistical portrait of our community as of 2016. You can find it on our website. And you will receive this evening a copy of our summary Community Progress Report focusing on our twenty-town region.

Overall, our community emerges from this portrait as a relatively prosperous place, strong and getting stronger in important ways. Yet just beneath the overall data we find a reality that we know all too well; we find disparities, deep persistent disparities, yawning gaps in so many areas that define our community as one where the opportunity to live a successful, healthy, satisfying life vary dramatically depending on one's race, ethnicity, income level and town or neighborhood of residence.

Our Progress Report tells us that in our community economic opportunity is limited; that while unemployment is down, underemployment is a huge challenge, especially but by no means exclusively in low-income neighborhoods in New Haven. The Report shows us that education – and specifically post-secondary education – is the entry point for a life of opportunity, but that the racial and ethnic achievement gap remains a terrible reality. The Report tells us that we are more and more physically divided, with a growing population residing in wealthy neighborhoods and in poor neighborhoods while the population residing in middle-income neighborhoods declines. And our Community Progress Report shows us that even as our region grows more diverse and more urban, we are also growing older and are losing too many of our young people to areas that offer greater opportunity.

These data define many of The Community Foundation's priorities.

More fundamentally, in my view these data also help to explain our community's pervasive sense that for all our progress, we can do better in Greater New Haven. If there is unease in our community at this moment in our history, I would submit that it is about more than a new direction for our Federal government; it is about a longstanding sense that the next generation in Greater New Haven won't have the opportunities we wish for them if they choose to live their lives here. For too many, especially too many of our young people, Greater New Haven is not the place of growing opportunity that it needs to be. And as we grapple with what to do about that reality, we confront the stubborn persistence of our disparities despite all our efforts over many years.

If, as I said a few moments ago, the work that is before us is that of creating a future where the many and not just the few can share in the opportunities that are being created here, we need to take up the challenge of growing our economy and educating our young people to find a place in it.

In 2016, The Foundation approved a new three-year grant to New Haven Promise, our largest single financial commitment, continuing our leadership support for this ambitious and important initiative. We are deeply proud of how this partnership with Yale and the New Haven Public Schools has provided opportunity for more than 1100 Promise Scholars and their families since 2011. And we are deeply excited that now, six years on, we have reached the moment when our community can and should begin to realize its investment in our most promising young people. In ever larger numbers, Promise Scholars are now college graduates, and the work of New Haven Promise now extends to bringing these young people back to our community to build successful lives of community connection here.

As a community, we need to do more in this regard. The public/private economic development infrastructure that our community built in recent decades no longer has the support it needs to lead on these issues. The powerful sense of hopefulness about public education in New Haven that emerged in 2010 when New Haven School Change was launched has also been lost.

Our community needs a compelling new leadership vision for economic growth and education. We need to build on our economic strengths - particularly in the biomedical sector - to grow our economy for the future, and we need a compelling new educational vision for how our schools and colleges can prepare our students for post-secondary success as full participants in the new economy of Greater New Haven. We need to help our community see and understand that economic transition can result in social progress and broad-based opportunity. Such vision of shared and inclusive growth could itself be a powerful cohesive force to bring us together in this time of disconnection.

The Community Foundation will make this issue a priority in 2017, and we hope to draw in partners in doing so.

I am proud to report to you all tonight that The Community Foundation is well-positioned to meet the challenges of doing the work of community in this time of disconnection.

As we see year-after-year, our community's spirit of generosity and belief in itself is reflected in giving to The Foundation. As we head into the heart of the giving season between now and the end of the year, The Foundation has already recorded more than \$19 million in new gifts and transfers of charitable assets this year. While bequests are down as compared to our annual average, giving from living donors and transfers from nonprofit organizations remain strong.

The 2016 Great Give was our largest ever, with more than 11,600 gifts from 8,130 donors totaling almost \$1.4 million – all in two days this past May. The Great Give remains the one moment of the year when our community's attention is fully focused on the great work of our non-profits and on the challenges they face; in that sense, we believe it has become an indispensable part of how our community does its philanthropy. This year's Great Give saw dramatically increased numbers of visitors to our giveGreater.org site from social media platforms, and a continuing increase in the number of younger Great Give donors as well. And, as we see each year, smaller organizations were the big winners in the Great Give.

You may recall that the 2016 Great Give was disrupted by the near-catastrophic failure of our national technology platform, which was servicing more than 50 community foundations as part of its Give Local America day. The Foundation, along with many in our field, has worked closely with the vendor to understand what happened and to prevent a recurrence, and The Foundation is moving forward with plans for a 2017 Great Give.

This year has also seen the continuing influx of funds transferred to The Foundation for investment management. Our work managing endowment-like assets for other local nonprofit institutions has clearly demonstrated its value in the almost three years since The Foundation registered as an investment advisor in 2014.

Overall, as of the end of September, The Foundation's total assets stood at approximately \$510 million, an all-time high. This figure stands as a tribute to you all – to our donors and to the nonprofits whose work has inspired them, not only in our time but over almost 90 years.

Of course, this endowment allows The Foundation to support our community in many many different ways. Taking all of our grantmaking and other philanthropic distributions together, The Foundation will provide approximately \$25 million in support for our community in 2016.

The Foundation's 2016 grantmaking has reflected the pressures being felt by our nonprofits. Reductions in State support together with the prospect of continuing State budget woes have led us to prioritize general operating support grants, with special focus on organizations impacted by these budget cuts. The Foundation 2016 responsive grants included major multi-year general operating grants for organizations providing basic needs, mental health services, education, youth services, services for those returning from incarceration, and for arts and culture organizations as well. This was also a year in which The Foundation was faced with many difficult decisions and we denied many worthy applications as well.

Over many years, nonprofits in Connecticut – particularly in the human services sphere and the arts world – grew too reliant on State funding, and there is a price being paid for that now as State support declines rapidly. It is hard not to think that this situation won't continue to get worse unless and until Connecticut's economy begins to grow more rapidly. In the meantime, new solutions are needed – be they dedicated sources of public revenue separate and apart from the annual budget, or pay-for-success financings of the kind that are just starting to gain traction. And of course more philanthropy – although private giving will never be of a magnitude to even begin to replace public support.

Already, there is talk in our field about how a Trump Presidency will result in major increases in giving for various so-called “progressive” causes, be they advocacy or services. Is this merely wishful thinking? We shall see.

My confidence that The Community Foundation is well-positioned to meet the challenges of this time of disconnection is a reflection of how I feel about our outstanding staff. I am so proud of them. Our staff is more productive and working more effectively together than ever before. They could not be more committed. To a person, our staff has responded to the challenges of The Foundation taking on new and bigger roles in the community. That is why I can say with confidence that our staff is up to the challenges that lie ahead.

I will again this year resist the temptation to call out each member of the staff by name, although they certainly deserve that recognition. Instead, let me ask each member of our staff to stand. And let me recognize by name the senior leaders of the organization – Angela Powers in development, donor services, stewardship and communications, Christina Ciociola in grantmaking, strategy and initiatives, Leon Bailey in human resources and organizational culture, and Drew Alden in finance and investments. There are interim changes to some of these responsibilities being put in place now, as I will mention in a moment.

Perhaps the best testament to the commitment and capabilities of our staff is that we feel ready to push ourselves in new directions. With that thought in mind, throughout 2016 The Foundation has been assessing the changes we need to make over the next three years to position ourselves to continue to play our central role in this community's philanthropy in the future. The result of this work is a plan we call "TCF 20/20."

TCF 20/20 defines three priorities for us for the next three years: building a culture of excellence in the staff, broadening our reach in the community, and doing business in new ways.

We are already deeply engaged in pursuing these goals. I will mention only a few of the ways in which we are doing so.

Led by Leon Bailey, The Foundation is devoting more concerted attention to organizational culture. We believe this will result in continuing improvement in how we work with external constituents and with one another. Leigh Higgins will play an important role in this too in her new role as senior director for staff professional development even as she continues her work with me and with Board members.

Excellence is about people, and it's about systems and processes too. Throughout this past year, and continuing into next, The Foundation is systematically reviewing all of our core processes and systems, including our technology platforms. This work has been a major management priority, and it is being driven and overseen by Angela Powers. As an indication of the priority we are giving to this, Angela has now assumed the position of Interim Senior Vice-President for Planning and Operations, with Dotty Weston-Murphy stepping up to serve as Interim Senior Vice-President for Development and Donor Service.

One of the areas that is changing is donor advised funds. Donor advised funds have for many years now been the fastest growing segment of the philanthropic marketplace in this country, especially among community foundations. The wider world saw this several weeks ago when the *Chronicle of Philanthropy* reported that for the first time the fastest-growing charity in this country over the last year was not any of the traditional leaders - not the Red Cross, not the Salvation Army, not United Way of America - but was instead the Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund, a national donor advised fund run by Fidelity Investments. At The Community Foundation, donor advised funds are an important part of how we serve our marketplace, but have not grown as rapidly as at a number of our peer institutions. By working more closely to put our knowledge of this community before our donors, and by offering new investment options to our donor

advisors, we hope to see accelerating growth in donor advised funds for the benefit of our community.

We are proud that The Community Foundation reaches deeply into the life of our community and its many different and varied peoples, places, causes, and organizations. At the same time, we are committed to broadening our reach as one of our central priorities over the coming years. We are committed to finding new avenues for engaging our community at every level and for receiving feedback from it. Community engagement has of course long been central to the day-to-day work of many of our staff, and now we have gone a step further by creating a new position to lead our efforts to broaden our programmatic reach. Continuing his work with Christina Ciociola, Kenn Harris, our long-time Director of New Haven Healthy Start, is now our Vice-President for Community Engagement.

I do want to mention one more new way that we are doing our business at The Foundation. After several years of planning and preparation, The Foundation has significantly ramped-up our mission-related investments in 2016. Having set aside a small amount of our discretionary trust resources for MRI investment purposes, we have this year under Drew Alden's leadership made two equity investments in early-stage, high-potential local for-profit companies, and we expect to close shortly on two additional investments – a loan guarantee for the benefit of an important arts organization and an investment in a pay-for-success financing to support expansion of an innovative local program in partnership with Yale School of Medicine and the State of Connecticut. I am particularly pleased and grateful that we have been joined in our MRI work by several generous donor co-investors.

I said before that I am confident that The Foundation is well-positioned to meet the challenges of this new day. That confidence – like everything at The Foundation – starts with our Board of Directors. It is such a privilege to work for this extraordinary group of eleven individuals. Each one is a true community leader in her or his own right. Each one brings their own unique leadership perspective to the Board table and to the work of The Foundation. Each one is an outstanding listener who works hard to find the common ground with her or his Board colleagues so as to make the Board a cohesive and collegial whole. And each one is deeply and unalterably committed to the best interests of this community. If that sounds like the recipe for a truly great board, it is. This is a truly great Board.

The annual meeting provides me with the opportunity to say a well-deserved and public “thank you” to each of our Board members, and I ask them to each stand as I do so: Khalilah Brown-Dean, Emily Byrne, Alicia Caraballo, Roxanne Coady, Will Colwell, Kellyann Day, Carlton Highsmith, Chip Long, Kica Matos, Flemming (Nick) Norcott, and Jimmy Ryan. I am deeply grateful to each of you.

I want to say a particular thank you to our Board leadership team for the last two years: our Chair Will Colwell and our Vice-Chair Kica Matos. Will and Kica each have one year remaining in their respective seven-year terms, but their current leadership roles end next month. As Chair and Vice-Chair, Will and Kica have taken on the additional

burden of working closely with me to think through what needs to come to the Board and to plan our Board agendas. The advice they give me each month has been invaluable. Again, I am deeply grateful.

Finally, I have the sad duty, which is also a privilege, of paying a farewell tribute to our departing Board member, Charles "Chip" Long. In my sixteen years at The Foundation I have worked with and for 37 board members, and I can truthfully say that none has served The Foundation better, no one has had more respect from Board colleagues and members of the staff, and no one has had more impact on how we do our work and on how we think about our work. Chip led the way in fashioning our early community knowledge work and our diversity and inclusion work; Chip served on our Community Strategies and Knowledge Committee, our Investment Committee; and Chip has chaired our Finance Committee. Chip has been a trusted advisor, a friend and a true mentor for me. Even as we plan to keep him involved in some capacity, I need to say that he will be greatly missed by all of us at The Foundation. Thank you so much, Chip, for everything.

And this year, as is so each year, an irreplaceable Foundation board member will be replaced. We are grateful to Yale President Peter Salovey for his appointment of Joseph W. Gordon to succeed Chip in the "Yale seat." Joe retired in 2016 after serving in the English Department at Yale for forty years and serving in the Yale College Dean's Office for almost thirty, including the last 18 years as Deputy Dean. Joe is a beloved figure at Yale who played countless important roles at Yale College. If anyone can be called a worthy successor to Chip Long as Yale's appointee, it is Joe, and we very much look forward to welcoming him in January.

And so we go forward from tonight to do the work of community in this time of disconnection.

We do so not under no illusion that here in Greater New Haven we can somehow separate ourselves from what is happening nationally. As David Brooks wrote in a New York Times column earlier this year entitled *The Fragmented Society*, "local community won't survive if the national project disintegrates."

We do so with a resolve not to let our connections to one another, to this place of ours, and to our shared future - all that we have painstakingly built over many years in the name of community - be blown apart by this ill wind of disconnection.

We do so with a deep commitment to the idea that our diversity is our strength and that it will continue to be as long as we work to enhance our understanding of one another and to deepen our empathy for one another.

We do so with both a recognition that our commitment to our core values may soon be more severely put to the test than at any time in our memory, and with a determination to adhere to those values whatever test may be coming.

We do so prepared to support those in our community who are standing up to the forces of disconnection.

We do so envisioning a future of shared and inclusive opportunity in Greater New Haven that can itself be a powerful cohesive force.

We do so believing that community philanthropy has never been more important than it is in this time of disconnection, for philanthropy is grounded in an appeal to our better instincts of generosity and caring, and community is all about coming together.

And finally we do so with immense gratitude to all of you for being leaders in the work of community and for being our partners, our supporters, and our fellow travelers in our shared enterprise.

Thank you again for being with us tonight.

And now it is my pleasure to call to the stage our Chair Will Colwell, himself an outstanding Chair and an outstanding community leader, for some closing remarks. Will...