

# CONNECTIONS



The quarterly newsletter of

The **COMMUNITY** Foundation for Greater New Haven

## OPPORTUNITY + EQUITY

### Foundation Gives \$32.7M, Receives \$41.9M in 2023

#### Support Advances Opportunity and Equity

Total grants and distributions from The Foundation topped \$32.7 million in 2023, supporting hundreds of organizations serving local residents. The grantmaking advanced The Foundation's strategic commitment to creating greater opportunity and equity throughout the region, providing support for affordable housing, food, job skills, healthcare, the arts, entrepreneurship, youth enrichment and other vital community services. "The breadth of our grantmaking reflects a new level of engagement and partnership with donors, private institutional funders and federal, state and local governments. We are seeing a consensus around the imperative to grow inclusively with equity and are excited by the work at all levels to achieve this goal," said President & CEO Will Ginsberg. The Foundation also received \$41.9 million in gifts, transfers and government grants in 2023, and its total assets grew to approximately \$750 million.



Swords to Plowshares Northeast, among the hundreds of local nonprofits that received support from The Foundation in 2023, uses blacksmithing techniques to transform guns into garden tools.



Left to right: Brenda Oneal, LightSpeedEdu; Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT); Arthur Thomas, The Community Foundation; Todd Howell, Mobile Media Marketing; Marie Rocha, Realist Labs; Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-CT); and Joe Williams, The Community Foundation, at the press conference at ClimateHaven.

## \$2M Federal Grant for BIPOC Tech Entrepreneurs

### New Haven Equitable Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Leads Effort

In December 2023, The Foundation received a \$2 million federal grant to create a business support ecosystem for tech entrepreneurs. Awarded through the U.S. Dept. of Commerce, the funding will help BIPOC-led science and technology firms with growth potential expand through business accelerator programs and access to equity capital. Aspiring entrepreneurs and early-stage founders will also be connected to successful technology firms. The Community Foundation Mission Investments Company's New Haven Equitable Entrepreneurial Ecosystem (NHE3) will lead the effort with partners ClimateHaven, Realist Lab, Connecticut Small Business Development Center and Yale University. "We are making it possible for New Haven's backyards and garages to spur technological innovation just in the way that Silicon Valley did," said Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT). "This \$2 million federal grant will unlock additional economic forces and talent."

### Foundation's Investment Returns Gain in 2023

The Community Foundation's Corporation, which manages endowed assets of The Foundation and local nonprofit external organizations, posted a gain of 12.7% in 2023. While lagging its market benchmark of 13.8%, The Foundation fared well in a global equity environment that was driven by the seven largest technology companies. The Foundation's global equity assets were up 21.6% and its hedge strategies increased by 13.2%, while private equity was down 7.5% and private real assets lost 4%. The Foundation remained well positioned and diversified; its performance placed in the top fifth against the endowment and foundation national peer group over the past 10 years.





The Labor Market Study of Greater New Haven and the Valley explores opportunities for middle-skill jobs that do not require college degrees and pay living wages.

## Bridging the Labor Gap

### Employer-Workforce Connection Explored During Convening

More than 60,000 jobs are currently unfilled in Connecticut according to state figures, yet many potential workers remain on the sidelines.

A January virtual convening and panel discussion took an in-depth look at how to bridge this gap in response to a newly released labor market study funded by The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven and the Valley Community Foundation. Panelists Dorinda Manner (Yale New Haven Health), Marcia LaFemina (Penn Globe and MATCH), Orlando Yarborough III (ConnCAT) and moderator Garrett Sheehan (Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce) dug into the report's key findings, including the observation that many quality jobs require skills training but not a college degree. As a result, the panel agreed that employers and public school programs need better alignment to create opportunities for students who are not college bound. Young people also need exposure to biotech and other growth industries in order to be aware of opportunities.

### Estate of City Native Creates Scholarship for New Haven YMCA Youth Center

If you were looking for Thomas Smolack when he was a kid, he'd have been at the New Haven YMCA, working out and spending time with his buddies. Working out at the gym remained a central part of Smolack's life throughout adulthood, and he never forgot the place where he first learned about fitness and met his first close friends. A new generation of local kids will have a similar opportunity, thanks to the Thomas Smolack Scholarship Foundation Fund, established at The Foundation by Smolack's estate. The fund will pay for financial assistance, including free memberships to the New Haven YMCA Youth Center.



Photo Courtesy of Sunrise Cafe

The team at New Haven's Sunrise Cafe, among the organizations supported by The Foundation's Basic Needs Fund, welcomes visitors on weekday mornings with a warm breakfast, free of charge.

## Basic Needs Fund Raises Resources, Awareness

### Match Campaign Tops \$1 Million in 2023

The Community Foundation's Basic Needs Fund raised significant resources in 2023 to help ensure that all Greater New Haven residents have the basic material needs of daily life. The Fund's match campaign raised more than \$1,060,484 in 2023 for both current-use grantmaking and to grow its endowment. In December, the Fund distributed \$305,000 in grants. Since its founding in April 2020, the Fund has granted \$1,059,800 to local organizations providing food, shelter, personal hygiene products, non-prescription drugs, other essential health care not covered by insurance, home utilities, physical safety, transportation and communication tools. The Fund was created by local philanthropists committed to raising awareness about the need for resources and advocacy to support basic needs. Gifts to the Basic Needs Fund will continue to be doubled during 2024, through the match campaign. Learn more at [cfgnh.org/BasicNeedsFund](https://cfgnh.org/BasicNeedsFund).

### Progreso Latino Fund Carries Momentum Into 2024

The Progreso Latino Fund is following up its highly successful 20th anniversary year in 2023 by continuing to amplify Latine philanthropy. The Fund will be in its second year of issuing \$100,000 in grants to support the Greater New Haven Latine community. The Fund continues its campaign for more Latine funds at The Community Foundation and for more donations to build up its endowment. A webinar series on education through the lifespan is planned for this year, as is the return of the in-person annual fall forum in September — the first since 2019. Look for details and upcoming dates at [cfgnh.org/plf](https://cfgnh.org/plf).



“I always tell my kids, ‘we’re blessed with what we need. We have the tools and the ability to help others. As part of our appreciation for what we have, we need to be generous with other people who need our support.’”

— Amee J. Lunn  
Law Office of Amee J. Lunn, LLC

## Partnering for Impact

### Advising and Setting an Example for Giving Back

Nearly 13 years ago, attorney Amee J. Lunn was practicing law, litigating cases, and felt uncertain that she was truly finding fulfillment in her work. After speaking with a local probate judge, she was put on a probate court case, and quickly saw that estate planning, probate and elder law were “the perfect fit,” she says. The work gets down to life’s essentials: How can I make sure my child is provided for when I’m gone? How can I create a plan that includes charitable giving? “You become part of their support system,” Lunn says. “I absolutely love, love, love what I do.” Some clients arrive with specific ideas about philanthropy and others just have a general sense about a cause they care about. Lunn refers them to The Foundation, where a staff member “helps them identify – without pressuring them – ideas or ways to structure what it is they want to accomplish,” she says. Lunn is among The Foundation’s network of trusted professional advisor partners. Since its beginning, The Foundation has worked with estate planning, wealth advising, accounting, financial planning and insurance experts who advise clients about charitable giving. Working closely with Foundation staff, advisors provide clients with individualized giving plans to meet their unique charitable goals while maximizing tax advantages. As part of the partnership, seminars are offered for advisors, giving up-to-date information on important issues. Last year, The Foundation launched a special “Partnering for Impact” showcase page on LinkedIn to share news and resources among advisors. To learn more about charitable giving, contact Sharon Cappetta, CAP®, director of development, at 203-777-7071.





Left to right: CT Public host Khalilah Brown-Dean with panelists Karen DuBois-Walton, Elm City Communities; Emily Byrne, CT Voices for Children; Michelle Riordan-Nold, CTData Collaborative; Jenny Steadman, Aurora Women and Girls Foundation; and Karen Lott, Women's League Child Development Center, at the November event.

Photo: Tony Spinelli for CT Public

## Disrupting Gender Inequity

### Panel Unpacks CTData Collaborative's "Elusive Equity" Report

Eleven percent of women live in poverty in Connecticut. Eviction levels, which disproportionately affect women, are higher than they were pre-pandemic. Local advocates and experts in early childcare education say funding and staffing shortfalls only deepened during the pandemic. In November 2023, The Foundation's Community Fund for Women & Girls co-hosted a panel discussion on the economic inequities faced by women, especially women of color, since the start of the pandemic. The discussion focused on childcare, housing and economic mobility and what can be done to make a change. The panel coincided with the release of "Elusive Equity: Continuing Effects of the Pandemic on Women's Economic Security," a report created by CTData Collaborative, funded by Aurora Women and Girls Foundation and the Fund for Women & Girls. The live event was recorded for later broadcast on the CT Public podcast *Disrupted*, hosted by Dr. Khalilah Brown-Dean. Listen to the recording, read the report and find more resources at [cfgnh.org/Disrupting](https://cfgnh.org/Disrupting).

### Nonprofit Leaders Learn, Strengthen Connections

At the Nonprofit Executive Leaders' Institute (NELI) retreat in January, 19 local nonprofit leaders came together at Madison's Mercy by the Sea over four days of presentations, panel discussions and networking. "Since that program, we have partnered," says Paula Mann-Agnew, member of the inaugural 2023 NELI cohort and executive director of Discovering Amistad, which hosts educational tours on a replica of the historic schooner. "We had an event on the ship, and these organizations came together with the community ... it was beautiful." NELI offers leadership training and connects executive directors, building a supportive network among Greater New Haven nonprofits.



Left to right: Michael Morand, Emily Wang.

Photos Courtesy of Yale University

## Foundation Welcomes New Board Members

### Board Re-Elects Nunez-Smith as Chair, Muñiz as Vice Chair

The Foundation welcomed two new members to its board of directors effective January 1: Michael Morand, cultural heritage professional at Yale and director of community engagement for Yale's Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, appointed by Yale University President Peter Salovey; and Emily Wang, professor in the Yale School of Medicine and director of SEICHE Center for Health and Justice at Yale, appointed by New Haven Mayor Justin Elicker. "Michael Morand and Emily Wang are both great community leaders and they will bring so much to the work of The Foundation," says Will Ginsberg, The Foundation's president & CEO. "The depth and breadth of their knowledge and experience are truly extraordinary. We thank them for their willingness to serve." Morand and Wang succeed Joseph Gordon and Maysa Akbar, respectively, whose terms ended in 2023. In addition to the new appointments, the board has re-elected Marcella Nunez-Smith to serve as chair and Fernando Muñiz to serve as vice chair for 2024.

### The Valley Community Foundation Turns 20

The Valley Community Foundation (VCF) marked its 20th anniversary in February. For two decades, VCF has worked in strong partnership with The Foundation to promote philanthropy in Ansonia, Derby, Oxford, Seymour and Shelton. Since 2004, VCF has distributed more than \$24.3 million in grants, directly benefiting numerous nonprofits and community initiatives. "For 20 years, we've been privileged to serve the Valley community, and we remain steadfast in our commitment to making the Valley a better place for all," says Sharon Closius, VCF's president and CEO. "We are committed to continuing our work to create positive change for years to come."



The **COMMUNITY** Foundation *for* Greater New Haven

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