

CONNECTIONS

The quarterly newsletter



The **COMMUNITY** Foundation for Greater New Haven

OPPORTUNITY + EQUITY

Community Raises \$4.82M in The Great Give 2026

Thousands Rally to Support Hundreds of Local Nonprofits

Greater New Haven demonstrated its generosity during The Great Give on May 6-7, raising \$4,821,549 for 546 local nonprofit organizations. Now in its 17th year, the online giving event organized by The Foundation mobilizes a community-wide celebration of Greater New Haven nonprofits. This year, \$218K in matching pools and random prize draws were sponsored by businesses and organizations including The Community Foundation and the Valley Community Foundation. “Every gift represents someone choosing to invest in our community,” says President and CEO Karen DuBois-Walton. “At a time when many nonprofits — and the people who rely on them — are navigating uncertainty, this sends a powerful message that we show up for one another in Greater New Haven.”




THE great Give
 MAY 6-7, 2026
 A 36-hour, online-giving event
 to support local nonprofits



The **COMMUNITY** Foundation for Greater New Haven





Photos Courtesy of Judith Corprew and John Parese

Left to right: Judith Corprew, John A. Parese.

Foundation Welcomes New Board Members

Bank President, Attorney Bring Decades of Leadership

Judith Corprew, president and chief executive officer of New Haven Bank, and John Parese, a longtime local attorney, were appointed to the Board of Directors on January 1. Corprew, appointed by the Trustee Banks, lives in Oxford and has more than 40 years of community banking experience, with a special focus on supporting underbanked families and women-owned businesses. She also serves on many civic and volunteer boards including the Housatonic Community College Foundation and the Valley Community Foundation. Parese, appointed by New Haven County Bar Association, is a lifelong North Haven resident. He has practiced law in the New Haven area since 1973, focusing on real estate law, land use and related fields of practice. “The Foundation is fortunate that Judith and John have agreed to bring their talents to our board. They are community leaders with decades of work in our region. We look forward to their contributions,” says Karen DuBois-Walton, The Foundation’s president and CEO.

The Foundation Receives \$45.1M, Makes \$63M in Grants and Distributions in 2025

Each gift, no matter its size, strengthens our community. In 2025, new gifts and fund transfers totaled \$45.1 million, bringing The Foundation’s combined assets to \$709 million as of Dec. 31. Donors contributed \$24.2 million to donor advised funds, enabling flexible, donor-directed giving. Gifts to designated and preference funds totaled \$10.5 million and transfers to organization funds totaled \$5.9 million. Grants and distributions totaled \$63 million, made to hundreds of nonprofit organizations and community programs. The total included \$1.1 million in grants to small businesses from The Community Foundation Mission Investments Company.



Photo: Gio Roper

New Haven Poet Laureate Yexandra Diaz opened the event with a recitation of her poem, *The Protocol*.

Healing Forward: From Truth to Collective Action

Day of Racial Healing Unifies Through the Arts, Conversation

On January 20, The Community Foundation participated in the National Day of Racial Healing with an evening of storytelling, poetry, music and meaningful conversations. Together, attendees explored how truth-telling and shared reflection lead to collective action. “To try to do this work by ourselves as individuals is really missing the mark. We have to do our own work, but we also have to be willing to come together in community,” says Foundation President & CEO Karen DuBois-Walton. The Day of Racial Healing is held annually on the Tuesday following Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and affirms that racial healing is essential to advancing racial equity. The Community Foundation’s Vineyard Project in New Haven hosted the event in partnership with the Arts Council of Greater New Haven and The Foundation’s Progreso Latino Fund.

The State of Civic Health Explored in Community Briefing

On March 26, a panel of thought leaders at the local and national levels joined The Community Foundation for an online discussion about civic health — why it matters, and its current state in Greater New Haven and beyond. Foundation President & CEO Karen DuBois-Walton moderated a wide-ranging and forward-looking conversation that explored the elements of strong community engagement and social cohesion. Panelists agreed that despite a decline in public trust at the national level, trends about local civic health are more positive and suggest the potential for a civic renaissance led by community organizing.



Nonprofit executives from Greater New Haven sharpened their leadership skills over four days in January.

Nonprofit Executives Network Grows

Local Leaders Build Skills, Expand Support

In January, 20 nonprofit leaders from across Greater New Haven stepped away from their day-to-day demands and came together for four days of learning, reflection and connection. At the Nonprofit Executive Leaders Institute (NELI) retreat, the directors shared challenges, tested ideas and built relationships with peers who understand the unique pressures of leading mission-driven organizations. NELI equips new leaders with practical tools while fostering a network they can rely on long after the sessions end. For the first time, alumni from the previous two cohorts joined the newest group. The result is a growing network of leaders who are not only strengthening their own organizations, but also reinforcing the nonprofit sector across Greater New Haven. “Beyond the wealth of knowledge our presenters provided, connections with other nonprofit leaders will be everlasting,” says Ryan Paxton, director of the Eli Whitney Museum.

Pitch Night Champions Women Founders

In celebration of Women’s History Month this March, The Community Foundation Mission Investments Company showcased local women entrepreneurs and business founders with a pitch night competition. More than 75 partners, investors, community leaders and entrepreneurs gathered at The Lab at ConnCORP to watch women founders pitch their businesses to a panel of judges. Jeanine DeFalco of Mixta AI won the first-place prize of \$4,000, pitching her business of developing training programs and materials for organizations. “To see ... so many great ideas, it’s really inspiring,” said Secretary of the State of Connecticut Stephanie Thomas, who gave the welcome address.



“I’ve been involved in boards since I moved here at the age of 24, and I connected with like-minded people. Volunteering on boards gives me a way to channel my interests.”

— Ruth Fortune
Associate Attorney, Wiggin and Dana, LLC

Partnering for Impact

Advising on Estate Plans, Giving Back to Community

Ruth Fortune is a trusts and estates attorney who also enjoys giving back to the community. Working in Wiggin and Dana’s Private Client Services Department, Fortune helps clients with establishing trusts and estate plans. Outside of work, Fortune is a civic-minded volunteer who serves on several boards, including the Betty Knox Foundation, which gives small grants to nonprofits that are working to address pressing social, economic and cultural needs. “I’ve been involved in boards since I moved here at the age of 24, and I connected with like-minded people,” she says. “Volunteering on boards gives me a way to channel my interests.” Fortune is a part of The Community Foundation’s network of trusted professional advisor partners who work together to serve their clients’ giving needs. She was a presenter on The Foundation’s recent virtual panel, *A Legacy of Her Own: How Women Won the Right to Own, Inherit and Bequeath Property*. The Foundation works with advisors like Fortune so they can provide their clients with individualized giving plans that meet their unique charitable goals while maximizing tax and estate planning advantages. Advisor partners also receive invitations to seminars with up-to-date information on tax law changes and policies around charitable giving. To learn more about charitable giving or partnering with The Foundation, contact Sharon Cappetta, CAP,[®] director of development, at 203-777-7071.



Photo Dawn Santiago

Left to right: Moderators Yari and Nnenna Ijeh with panelists and fellow mother-daughter duos Lindsay Fresher and Liana Garcia; Alanna and Magaly Cajigas; and Talia Vazquez and Maribel Martínez.

Mothers and Daughters Share Stories of Legacy

Progreso Latino Fund Forum Celebrates Latine Giving

In December, the Progreso Latino Fund convened an intergenerational forum celebrating philanthropy, family and community impact. “Seeds of Legacy: Latina Philanthropic Leaders and Their Daughters,” was moderated by Advisory Committee Chair Yari Ijeh with enthusiastic support from her young daughter, Nnenna. Mothers and daughters shared stories about their families, giving back and the ways they were planting seeds for the future through charitable funds. A recurring theme was the importance of feeling welcomed. “That’s where it started for me; it was an invitation to an event like this,” said Ijeh. “For the first time, as an adult, I was able to see people who looked like me, people who mattered in the community and who cared.” Making giving a visible part of family life was also highlighted. “Philanthropy is not only about charity,” said attendee and Progreso Latino Fund co-founder Frances Padilla. “It’s about making change — the kind of change that improves the conditions in which our community can thrive.”

Valley Community Foundation Launches Legacy Campaign

In advance of its 25th anniversary in 2029, the Valley Community Foundation (VCF) is championing “25 for the Next 25,” a legacy-giving campaign with the goal of increasing discretionary grant dollars by \$25 million. The effort aims to double membership of the Gates Society, a community of donors who have pledged to include VCF in their estate plans. The society is named in honor of Derby brothers Ross and Frank Gates, whose endowed gift in 1938 continues to benefit the Valley. “Discretionary funds support the Valley not just as it is today, but as it will be for generations to come,” says VCF President & CEO Sharon Closius.



Photo: New Haven Independent/Laura Gesby

The New Haven Pride Center will reopen thanks to a rapid and coordinated community fundraising effort led by local donors and supporters.

New Haven Pride Center Rises

Donor Community Steps Forward to Re-Open Doors

The New Haven Pride Center will reopen thanks to a rapid and coordinated community fundraising effort led by local donors and supporters. “We were able to pull off a seemingly impossible thing that — I want to be clear — stemmed from the community, and was met by the community,” says Hope Chavez, Pride Center board co-chair. Shortly after the center closed in February, it launched a fundraising campaign, “Project Phoenix.” Within 30 days of a kickoff meeting hosted by The Community Foundation, 43 community members contributed \$500,000, enough for the Center to reopen and reimagine its future. A ribbon cutting is planned for June 1. “The community said, ‘Wait, we need this. We need this now more than we’ve ever needed it,’” says Chavez. Read more at CFGNH.org/ProjectPhoenix.

2026 Chauncey Fellows Explore Themes of Art, Time and Healing

For Thara Joseph, a longtime musician, the unique tempo of jazz inspires her to think about time more broadly. She asks, “How do we have a more humane relationship with time?” Avery Maples has blended her own Cherokee traditions with the ritual of incantation, exploring catharsis through art. As 2026 Chauncey Fellows, Joseph and Maples will have the opportunity to explore these ideas and develop their art for a full year after graduating this spring. Now in its third year, the Chauncey Fellowship provides New Haven area college graduates with a stipend to pursue self-directed projects in public service or the arts.



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OPPORTUNITY + EQUITY

Join us Online for Racial Equity Training

As part of its ongoing work to advance racial equity, The Community Foundation is offering free community access to The Groundwater Approach, a virtual racial equity workshop. The session builds an understanding of systemic racism through data and historical analysis of how inequities are embedded in systems over time. Learn more and join us for our next session at cfghn.org/REI.

THE GROUNDWATER APPROACH:

building a practical understanding
of structural racism

written by MARIBO GOMEZ AND DENISE HAYES-GIBBENS OF THE RACIAL EQUITY INSTITUTE

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