

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

Dear Friends,

In my 30+ years in public service in Greater New Haven, I have felt a deep appreciation for our community and its commitment to improving this place we call home. I've seen this spirit and love for our region on vivid display during my first months at The Foundation as I've met many different groups and individuals engaged with our work. Listening to donors, board members, young nonprofit professionals in our emerging leaders program, aspiring entrepreneurs supported by our mission investments, Community Fund for Women & Girls volunteers and many others, I've been inspired by the dedication to building a community that has both opportunity and equity. In the coming year, I plan to continue listening and learning as we chart the next chapter of The Foundation. I am eager to hear from as many voices and perspectives as I can, so please reach out to me personally. I look forward to seeing what we can do together.

— **Karen DuBois-Walton, President and CEO** cfgnh.org/contactkaren

Karen DuBois-Walton, The Community Foundation President and CEO.



Photo Rodney Dabiley

L-R: Progreso Latino Fund co-chair Tara Davila with moderator Diane Campoamor and fund founders Anaika and William Ocasio (Entrepreneurs); Cynthia Rojas (Rojas Blakely & Associates) and Jacob Padrón (Long Wharf Theatre).

Building Trust, Creating Impact

Progreso Latino Fund a Trailblazer in Latine Philanthropy

A beloved father. A cherished pair of mentors who died too young. The hometown neighborhood. Each served as inspirations for permanent charitable funds established by Latine donors who shared their stories at Building Trust, Creating Impact: The Latine Philanthropy Forum, hosted by The Foundation's Progreso Latino Fund in September. The personal tributes were part of an evening of lifting up the generosity of the Latine community and changing the narrative of what it means to be Latine in America. Moderated by editor Diane Campoamor, the discussion with fund founders Anaika and William Ocasio, Jacob Padrón and Dr. Cynthia Rojas highlighted the resiliency and generosity of the Latine community, which has not only outpaced every other population group in starting small businesses in the past decade, but also contributes a greater portion of its wealth to charities than other groups. The Progreso Latino Fund has been a trailblazer in inspiring Latine philanthropy in Greater New Haven. Learn more at cfgnh.org/plf.

Workshops, Trainings and Networking Events Strengthen Local Nonprofits

In 2024, The Foundation's capacity building program offered 65 different workshops and trainings to nonprofit leaders, staff, board members and volunteers, welcoming more than 1,200 attendees representing 292 organizations. Topics included finances, grant writing, artificial intelligence, board development and communications. Representatives from 11 organizations joined a year-long diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging learning cohort that resulted in building community, sharing and customized projects to advance equity within each organization. More than 50 organizations received support to work with a consultant on specific projects to build capacity for long-term stability and growth.



Left: Alberta "Bert" Teague Williams. Right: Ina "Granny" Flanagan Miller with Robin Miller-Godwin.

Photos Courtesy of Robin Miller-Godwin

Bert and Ina's Girls' Fund

Fund Honors Grandmothers, Great Women of Strength

Bert and Ina were two of the most powerfully important influences in Robin Miller-Godwin's life. Born in 1902, Alberta "Bert" Teague Williams, Miller-Godwin's maternal grandmother, was a hard-working, stern, yet very loving woman. Born 18 years after Bert, Miller-Godwin's paternal grandmother, Ina "Granny" Flanagan Miller sought an education and worked as a psychiatric nurse's aide. For years, both women were rooted in the Dixwell and Newhallville neighborhoods of New Haven. In their honor, Miller-Godwin established the Bert and Ina's Girls' Fund at The Community Foundation. Miller-Godwin has long been connected to The Foundation as a member of the Delta Foundation, where she created a fund in memory of her mother. She is also an inaugural member of The Foundation's Vineyard Project which recognizes and amplifies the vibrant Black history and culture of our local community. Her hope is that the Fund helps the Newhallville and Dixwell communities thrive.

The Community Fund for Women & Girls Celebrates 30 Years in 2025

This is an exciting time for the Community Fund for Women & Girls, as Greater New Haven's only endowment promoting the social and economic advancement of women and girls marks its 30th anniversary in 2025. One of the biggest evolutions for the Fund has been its focus on listening to a wide range of voices and perspectives from our community. This anniversary year, the Fund is planning a series of events where we will come together to learn from each other as we celebrate the past and chart a bold new future. We look forward to seeing you and hearing your voices. Learn more at fundforwomenandgirls.org.



Photo Judy Sirota Rosenthal

The Foundation hosted a guided viewing of the exhibit *Shining Light on Truth: New Haven, Yale and Slavery* with co-curator and Foundation board member Michael Morand (right).

Event Shines Light on Local Ties to Slavery

Special Viewing Confronts the Truths of the Past, Present

In November, The Foundation welcomed guests to the New Haven Museum for a special donor briefing and tour of the exhibit, *Shining Light on Truth: New Haven, Yale and Slavery*. The guided viewing was led by New Haven City Historian Michael Morand, co-curator of the exhibit and a board member of The Foundation. Morand's tour of the archival materials illuminated the essential role of enslaved and free Black people in the history of Yale, New Haven and Connecticut. Morand detailed how New Haven leaders gathered in 1831 to block a proposed all-Black college that could have been the first HBCU in the United States. Newspaper advertisements and other records showed that slavery was commonplace in colonial Connecticut and foundational to the development of New Haven and Yale. *Shining Light on Truth* will be on exhibit at the New Haven Museum through March 1, 2025. Admission is free during the exhibit's run, made possible by Yale University.

Considering a Charitable Gift in Your Will? Download Our New Bequest Guide

Relatively few people put charitable gifts in their wills. Not because they don't want to. On the contrary, it's because the thought never occurs to them. Research shows donors are happy to put charitable gifts in their wills if someone brings up the idea. But most donors are never asked. We hope the idea of making a bequest excites you with the possibility of doing good forever. Putting a charitable gift in your will doesn't require much time or money. Even a small bequest can have a major impact, far greater and more lasting than you might suspect. Visit cfgnh.org/bequest to view the guide and learn why a gift in your will is different than any other type of charity – and remarkably, uniquely satisfying.



L-R: Chauncey Fellowship committee member Barry Svigals with Julien Sanchez-Levallois, Anya AitSahlia and Sam Chauncey.

Photo Matt Higbee

Dreams Pursued With Chauncey Fellowship

Awards Fund New Haven Area College Students

Students who would pursue artistic or service work after graduating from college often forego their dreams because of student loan debt or the rush to begin graduate school. The Chauncey Fellowship was created to remove those barriers. Established at The Foundation by the late Edward “Edder” Bennet (Yale University, class of 1984) in honor of his mentor, Henry “Sam” Chauncey, former secretary of Yale, the Fellowship annually awards a one-year stipend to students from a New Haven area college who will work on an artistic or community service project. This year’s winners are Anya AitSahlia (Yale University, class of 2025), and Julien Sanchez-Levallois (Southern Connecticut State University, class of 2025). AitSahlia plans to create a catalog of social and educational enrichment activities for children in pediatric long-term care facilities. Sanchez-Levallois is working on a feature film set in New Haven.

Basic Needs Fund Grants \$350K; Supports Food, Shelter, Essential Services

At least 42% of families in Greater New Haven face heart-wrenching decisions nearly every day when it comes to paying for basic daily needs, according to United Way of Greater New Haven’s recent ALICE Report. The Foundation’s Basic Needs Fund was created to help alleviate this stress for families. The Fund recently approved grants totaling \$351,794 to 44 local nonprofit organizations that provide essentials for daily living to Greater New Haven residents. The Fund saw a 35% increase in applications over last year, showing the rising demand for resources. Since its inception in 2020, the Fund has raised \$5.2 million and distributed grants totaling \$1.34 million. Make a contribution at cfgnh.org/basicneeds.



Student volunteers from Quinnipiac University remove garbage near the banks of the Quinnipiac River as part of this year's annual "Big Event" day of service.

Protecting the Environment, Building Community

Quinnipiac River Fund Uses Grant to Lead Cleanups

As it travels south from Meriden's Hannover Pond to New Haven, the Quinnipiac River flows through one of the most industrialized areas of our region. Quinnipiac University Professor Courtney McGinnis has been testing the water quality along this section for more than a decade, supported by grants from the Quinnipiac River Fund. In 2024, she received additional funding to lead community cleanups of bulk trash illegally dumped near one of her 14 monitoring sites. "We know the impact that tires and plastics can have on our environment, and they are sitting adjacent to the river," McGinnis said. Partnerships with Quinnipiac, Hopkins School and North Haven resulted in three cleanups that removed several dumpsters worth of trash. "What's more community-building than picking up trash in a beautiful, forested area?" she added. The project was one of 10 supported by the Quinnipiac River Fund in 2024. The Fund's 2025 grant application process is open through January 27. Learn more at thequinnipiacriver.com.

Acknowledging the People of the Long Water

The Algonquian word "Quinnipiac" means "people of the long water," and refers to the Indigenous people that lived in this region for centuries before European colonization. The Foundation staff learned about and acknowledged the Quinnipiac and other Algonquian-speaking people during a recent presentation from Jennifer Rawlings, a member of the Seaconke Wampanoag Tribe and co-founder of The Center for Indigenous People's Rights. "'Nipi' is the word for water. We relied on these waterways for travel and to fish," said Rawlings. "It was intuitive to us to care for the waterways as they cared for us."



Photo: Ian Christmann

The Foundation is collaborating with nonprofit immigrant-serving partners such as Connecticut Students for a Dream (pictured) to help develop rapid response strategies for local immigrant communities.

Organizations Prepare for New Policies

Immigrant-Serving Funders and Nonprofits Collaborate

With the incoming presidential administration promising to prioritize deportations in the coming year, local families with mixed immigration statuses are at risk of being separated. In preparation of this policy change, nonprofits and funders across Connecticut, including The Community Foundation, are collaborating to develop rapid response strategies to help keep local immigrant communities stabilized. Funding partners in this collaboration include The Connecticut Project, which has been instrumental in leading this effort, and the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving. Partnering nonprofits include Connecticut Students for a Dream and Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services (IRIS), both longtime grant recipients of The Foundation. Funders are planning to pool and align funding to support efforts including legal services, community organizing, narrative change and policy, and communication infrastructure.

Valley Community Foundation to Launch 25th Anniversary Campaign

The Valley Community Foundation (VCF) is launching a five-year endowment campaign that will culminate with its 25th anniversary in 2029. The campaign will use a revived legacy fund, The Valley Foundation Fund, originally created in 1980 by the Greater Valley Chamber of Commerce and the late Harry Bassett, to serve as the campaign's financial cornerstone. "We owe so much to these visionary leaders, whose foresight in creating the original Valley Foundation Fund reflected their dream of establishing a Foundation that would one day serve the people of this region," said VCF President and CEO Sharon Closius. "We are honored to fulfill that dream."



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

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Photo Kathleen Cei

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