

# The Community Fund for WOMEN & GIRLS

Winter 2025

a component fund of  The **COMMUNITY** Foundation for Greater New Haven

[fundforwomenandgirls.org](http://fundforwomenandgirls.org)



A diverse crowd of longtime friends and first-time attendees came together to celebrate the Fund's 30th anniversary at a November luncheon. Guests received copies of "Unrig the Game," by keynote speaker Vanessa Priya Daniel.

## Vision in Action

### Community Fund for Women & Girls Celebrates 30th Anniversary

More than 300 supporters and partners of the Fund filled the New Haven Omni's ballroom on November 13, 2025 for the 30th anniversary Vision in Action celebration luncheon. The diverse crowd of longtime friends and first-time attendees connected with each other while celebrating the Fund's achievements at a program that featured author and movement builder Vanessa Priya Daniel.

Since its founding in 1995, the Fund has served as a hub for those in Greater New Haven who share a commitment to advancing women and girls. The Community Foundation President & CEO Karen DuBois-Walton highlighted the Fund's achievements and the women behind its creation.

"The women who founded the Fund saw beyond the moment they were in. They had vision. They were bold enough to demand change, and they were generous enough to make it real," said DuBois-Walton.

An electrifying keynote from Daniel, author of "Unrig the Game: What Women of Color Can Teach Everyone About Winning," emphasized the importance of working in solidarity across differences and offered suggestions on being better, more effective organizers, fundraisers,



Keynote Vanessa Priya Daniel with Foundation President & CEO Karen DuBois-Walton.

community members and people.

"Good organizers look for points of commonality and work from there," Daniel said.

Daniel's message inspired and resonated with Andreina Barajas Novoa, a local environmental organizer and Southern Connecticut State University alum, who was new to the Fund and had come to draw inspiration from other women, entrepreneurs and young people.

"She encouraged me to continue pursuing a justice-oriented path," Barajas Novoa said.

# Signature Grant Awarded to She Leads Justice

## \$100,000 to Support Legal Advocacy for Women and Systems Change



She Leads Justice Executive Director Janée Woods Weber (fourth from right) at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford just after the Paid Sick Leave bill passed in May 2024.

The Fund was thrilled to announce on November 13 She Leads Justice (SLJ) as the 30th Anniversary Signature Grant recipient. Established with the goal of advancing systems change for the social and economic advancement of women and girls in Greater New Haven, the \$100,000 award is supporting an organization that has been steeped in this work for a half century.

Formerly known as Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF), the nonprofit's work began in the early 1970s.

It received one of its earliest grants from The Community Foundation and has been a longtime partner of the Fund for Women & Girls as a grantee and coalition builder. The organization has expanded access to civil legal services for women in Connecticut. SLJ has also been a driving force for legislative change, leading such advocacy efforts as pushing for the passage of the Connecticut Family and Medical Leave Act.

The two-year signature grant will expand SLJ's Pathways to Economic Autonomy programming

### 1995

Greater New Haven leaders, advocates and philanthropists came together to create the Community Fund for Women & Girls with the original goal of raising \$10,000 to match the initial gift from Fund Founder Pam Rendeiro. They were astounded when **92 donors** signed on with commitments of \$1,000 or more.

### 1996

The Fund issued its first grants to bolster wraparound services like bus passes, phone cards and **job training** to help women access and remain in good jobs.

### 2008

The Fund issued its first policy research grant of \$10,000 to 'r kids Family Center. In addition to driving dialogue and civic engagement, the Fund has continued to support strategic grants for **research and advocacy**.



in Greater New Haven. The program connects women in poverty with legal education and referral services.

The grant also funds SLJ's advocacy efforts for policy reform and their related efforts to support women leaders in local communities. Additionally, the organization will create a "Women's Economic Justice Plan," a social media campaign for educating the public about policies affecting women of color and women in poverty.

"We were built for this moment," said SLJ Executive Director Janée Woods Weber. "Every generation, especially women, has been called upon before to help move communities forward, help move our state forward, help move our society forward." Woods Weber continued, "The data clearly shows that investing in women, especially investing in girls, is one of the best ways to not only uplift individuals in their families, but also whole communities."

On November 13, the Fund also announced the Community Vision Award winners. Throughout 2025, the public was asked to vote for their favorite community nonprofit serving women and girls. After more than 1,800 votes were counted, there were three winners: Elena's Light, the Spanish Community of Wallingford and the Iota Chi Chapter of the Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. Each was awarded a \$2,000 grant.

## LET'S FORGE AHEAD!

### Help the Fund continue to make change and donate today!

Your tax-deductible gift opens doors for women to lead, learn and thrive as advocates and catalysts for our community — and brings people together to make change around the issues that matter most to women and girls.

Gifts for **2026 current-use grantmaking** will be spent to address today's most pressing needs. **Endowment gifts** grow the permanent fund, which supports annual grantmaking forever and will sustain the work for the next 30 years and beyond.

Scan the QR code or visit [fundforwomenandgirls.org](https://fundforwomenandgirls.org) to make a credit card donation. Checks are gratefully accepted using the enclosed envelope. Please specify whether your gift is for **current use**, **the permanent fund**, or a **combination** of both.



Thank you in advance for your continued commitment to the women and girls in our community.

## 2015

The Community Fund for Women & Girls celebrated its 20th Anniversary with **Gloria Steinem** and **Teresa Younger**.



## 2022

The **Girls of Color Mentoring Network** was established to increase the number and capacity of grassroots mentoring organizations led by women of color in Greater New Haven, addressing limitations illuminated over the Fund's decades of targeted support to this often under-resourced sector.



## 2025

Since the trailblazing group of women who founded the Fund in 1995 — and thanks to prudent investment and gifts from activists and community members like you — it has grown to more than **\$4.9 million**, distributing more than \$200,000 annually to support women and girls in Greater New Haven.



# A Year in Review: Many Voices, One Vision

## Celebration, Reflection and Renewal

The November celebration at the Omni was one of the final events to close out a momentous milestone year. Christine Kim, fund chair and the event’s emcee, took the podium to reflect on that momentum, and the many other events that took place earlier this year under the guiding theme of “Many Voices, One Vision.”

“Today’s event is the culmination of bold and beautiful hopes, generous and full hearts, and the work of many, many hands,” said Kim. “In fact, this whole year, we have been bearing witness to the power of the Fund, and its increasingly important purpose.”

It began in April with the launch of the 30th anniversary campaign. Similarly to November’s event, many of the Fund’s earliest founders met with current advisors and changemakers from across Greater New Haven.

That same month, the Fund joined the Aurora Women and Girls Foundation and other partners for the release of Toward Equity, a report chronicling the status of Connecticut’s women and girls over the past 25 years. The report’s findings stressed the importance of deeper investment in equity-driven solutions and challenged

philanthropy and policymakers to center racial and gender equity, creating a stronger, more inclusive Connecticut where everyone can thrive.

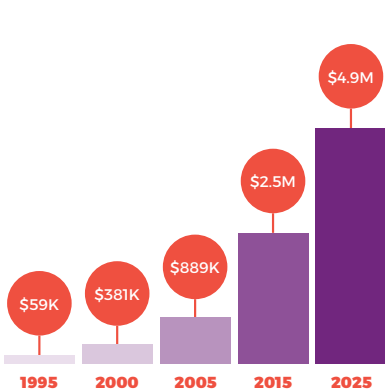
In May, more than 50 mentees and mentors with the Girls of Color Mentoring Network gathered at Albertus Magnus for the inaugural Girls R.I.S.E. Symposium. The event featured engaging workshops, meaningful connections and deep-diving conversations centered on self-esteem.

Attendees heard directly from participants like Dream, who said, “It helped me a little with talking and learning how to speak up.” Isabelle said, “I liked how safe and comfortable they made the space.” Jordyn shared, “This experience is an amazing opportunity to focus on ourselves and is great preparation for the future.”

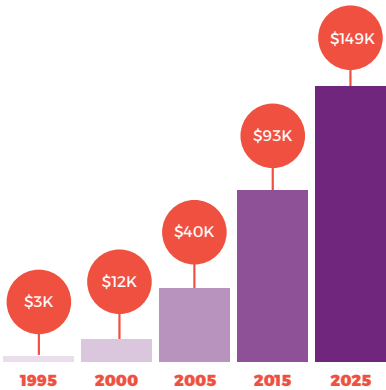
Later in May, the Fund’s annual Pathways to Economic Security grants program awarded \$130,000 in funding to 12 organizations serving women and girls across Greater New Haven. You can read stories of impact from this year’s grantees including Anchor Health, the Spanish Community of Wallingford and Christian Community Action, Inc. at [ManyVoicesOneVision.org](https://www.manyvoicesonevision.org).

## 30 YEARS OF INVESTING LOCALLY IN WOMEN & GIRLS

FUND GROWTH  
1995 - 2025



ANNUAL GRANTS AWARDED  
1995-2025







Judy Sirota Rosenthal

In May, more than 50 mentees and mentors with the Girls of Color Mentoring Network made meaningful connections at the inaugural Girls R.I.S.E. Symposium.

In June, the Fund hosted an inspiring conversation on philanthropy by women for women, exploring practical strategies and impactful gender-focused initiatives.

In another workshop in October, the Fund traced the history of women's philanthropy, from the first laws allowing women to own property through the growing power of women philanthropists today. Panelists and attendees explored how estate planning is, in its own way, a modern expression of this hard-won independence.

Each event helped illuminate how the Fund, and women's philanthropy generally, have grown together. The year has been one of celebration,

reflection, and now — with Karen DuBois-Walton at the helm of The Community Foundation — renewal around our shared purpose.

As DuBois-Walton said at the start of November's luncheon, "The spirit of shared purpose, of collective generosity, and the belief that when women come together, transformation follows, has defined the Fund" from the very start.

## 2025 Pathways to Economic Security for Women Grant Awards

- Anchor Health - \$10,000
- Christian Community Action, Inc. - \$10,000
- CMWP Foundation, Inc. - \$10,000
- Community Action Agency of New Haven - \$10,000
- Dress for Success Mid-Fairfield County - \$10,000
- Higher Heights Youth Empowerment Programs, Inc. - \$10,000
- IRIS - Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services - \$10,000
- New Haven HomeOwnership Center - \$15,000
- New Haven Promise - \$15,000
- Spanish Community of Wallingford - \$10,000
- Trachouse Cares Foundation - \$10,000
- Winning Ways, Inc. - \$10,000

## TOTAL GRANTMAKING 1995-2025



# Advisory Board Spotlight: Maggie Moffett

## Incoming Board Chair to Model Joyful Leadership

Maggie Moffett had encountered the Community Fund for Women & Girls before, but it wasn't until she attended the Fund's 20th anniversary celebration featuring keynote speaker Gloria Steinem that she grasped its full potential.

"It was just this really powerful event and message, and it was a launching pad for me to say, 'I want to do more and be more in this space,'" she says. "It's rare to find an organization whose mission so clearly reflects your own values and lived experiences. The Fund's model of connection and community mirrors the way women actually support each other in real life: through relationships, trust and generosity."

Having joined the advisory committee in January 2025, Moffett was elected as its next chair. She brings experience in development as chief advancement officer of Fair Haven Community Health Care and serves on The Guilford Foundation and Lost in New Haven boards.

"There's a tremendous opportunity for the Fund to bring people together — to collaborate, to

share wisdom and to invest not just in programs, but in the full arc of a woman's life. That's what excites me most about stepping into this role."

Looking ahead to her term as advisory board chair, which begins January 1, 2026, Moffett says she hopes to strengthen storytelling and elevate the Fund's visibility. "And to champion equity, to make certain our grantmaking reaches the women and girls who face the greatest barriers, and that our decisions reflect the realities of their lives."

Moffett stresses that the Fund should continue to support systems change and policy reform. "We can't do this work only through grants; policy advocacy has to be part of our toolkit. We saw this on full display with the 30th Anniversary Signature Grantee, She Leads Justice — and we felt the demand for this kind of work throughout this anniversary year."

Most of all, Moffett says, "it's very important to me to model joyful leadership; that we center on gratitude and on connection, and a sense of shared purpose."



## Christine Kim: "Keep in Community"



The 30th anniversary of the Fund also marks the close of Christine Kim's term as Fund Chair. "It's been the honor of my lifetime bearing a witness to the power of the Fund and its increasingly important purpose," she said, while being presented with a bouquet and thanks at November's luncheon. "I've learned so much, and there is so much more we can do."

"I can't wait to see what the Fund does, and what all these amazing advisors do, and what all of you do. Let's keep in community. Let's keep fighting. Let's just keep going."





Advocacy efforts by CERCLE have resulted in the recent passage of bills expanding access to early childhood education for thousands of children in the state.

## Promoting Peace of Mind

“Ripple Effect” of Support Offers Flexibility, Increased Economic Security, Educational Opportunities

Dellon Singh, an early childhood educator and the owner of Occupational Fun Edu-Daycare, sees paper plates, cups and utensils as more than just vehicles for her students’ snacks. They are learning tools, “encouraging them to be able to set tables” and pour liquids with ease.

At her “children’s wonderland” in West Haven, she combines occupational therapy with early education “so the kids can get the best of both worlds, with physical and cognitive developmental domain skills.” Singh explained, “We are teaching them how to be little independents.”

These snack time supplies — along with other educational materials, like books and Lakeshore Learning Materials, “which is very expensive” — were covered through support from a 2024 Pathways to Economic Security grant from the Community Fund for Women & Girls. As a member of Creating Equity and Resilience for Childcare Leaders and Educators (CERCLE),

an early education collaborative improving outcomes for underserved communities, Singh’s business received bimonthly classroom supplies.

These supplies are “essential,” said CERCLE Executive Director Tammy Robinson, allowing Singh to “maintain a welcoming environment for the children in her care without passing additional costs onto the families she serves.” Instead, the support offered peace of mind for all parties, and gave Singh the flexibility to explore professional development opportunities.

“Dellon’s story is just one example of the ripple effect created by the grant,” said Robinson. “It not only supported providers’ businesses, but also directly supported the economic security and educational opportunities of the women and children they serve.”

## Meeting the Moment

The early childhood education system in Connecticut has been in a deepening state of crisis, with structural barriers cited by experts and stakeholders around wages, pricing and profitability, staff retention and continued losses in the family childcare center sector. Governor Ned Lamont recently formed a Blue Ribbon Panel on Child Care to address these challenges. CERCLE has helped drive advocacy efforts, resulting in the recent passage of a “suite of bills” expanding access to early childhood education for thousands of children in the state. It is considered “the largest expansion of access to early childhood education in Connecticut history.”



Becoming “little independents” at CERCLE.



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## Inside ...

Vision in Action: Fund Celebrates 30th Anniversary; Supporting Systems Change and Advocacy; Many Voices, One Vision; Promoting Peace of Mind; Advisory Spotlight: Maggie Moffett + more ...



Interested in starting your own charitable fund to support women and girls?  
Contact Erica G. Bradley at [eradley@cfgnh.org](mailto:eradley@cfgnh.org) or 203-974-1647.



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