

# Legacy *Matters*



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FOR GOOD FOR EVER FOR THE VALLEY



# Smart Investment: Early Education



States and communities that invest in early education see a big return: For every \$1 invested in model preschool programs there was an \$8 return, according to a report from Nobel Prize winning economist, James Heckman.

"It's more cost effective than reactionary spending on special education, grade retention, incarceration or other social services people need," says David Morgan, TEAM's Vice President for Early Education.

Studies show that early childhood program attendees are more likely to graduate from high school, get a job and earn more money. They're less likely to be held back a grade, less likely to need special education or rely on welfare.

Students learn social, emotional and academic skills at preschool. Students who miss out start their education on unequal footing with little hope of catching up. The cost of remediation only grows with time, and the disparity contributes to Connecticut's achievement gap, the largest in the country.

The achievement gap is the difference in educational measures between students of different races, ethnicities and socio-economic status. The largest and most persistent gap is between students of different socio-economic statuses.

Closing the achievement gap is a policy priority for educators and lawmakers because it could boost high school graduation rates and prepare graduates for college and career success.

Unfortunately, in many Valley towns and across the state there aren't enough preschool programs. When they are available, they are prohibitively expensive. In the Valley, preschool can cost \$175-\$300 a week, per child.

In 2011, 6,400 Connecticut students showed up to kindergarten without any preschool experience, the state reports. Half were from the state's poorest school districts.

"All children need access to this, not just those who can afford it," says Morgan. "That's the tragedy of it all."

Shelton farmer Terry Jones is trying to equalize the playing field: He recently created the Connecticut Businesses Enriching Scholars Together Fund, at the Valley Community Foundation, to provide low-income children with scholarships for preschool.

"At the farm, we grow trees from seeds," says Jones. "The most critical time in that growth cycle is when we are nurturing the seedlings. There are unquestionable comparisons between

seedlings and young children—the greatest return on investments for both to succeed happens early on."

Preschool has long-term benefits for students and society but also provides an immediate economic benefit to families by helping parents avoid the tough decision between working or staying home to take care of their child.

"We help the working poor," says Gladys Lazurek, who runs Derby Day Care, which serves 50 3-to-5 year olds, 45 of whom pay with a state subsidy. "Without a safe place to put their kids, many families would be forced to quit their jobs and go back on welfare," says Lazurek.

Last year's state education reform bill provided subsidies for 1,000 more preschool seats, but there is no real gain because federal budget cuts took seats from Head Start, the federally funded preschool program.

There isn't enough money to provide equal access to preschool for all students, so area organizations are preparing children through other methods.

TEAM Inc., is running a federal pilot program to support low-income families with infants through parenting skills and socialization opportunities for children.

School Readiness Councils—which oversee early education in school districts that receive School Readiness funding—have also found creative work arounds.

Councils in Ansonia, Derby and Shelton earned grants from The William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund to create local plans to meet the fund's goal that all children are ready for school by age 5 and successful learners by age 9.

"We need renewed focus on early education and an awareness that this is its own form of economic development," says the fund's executive director, David Nee. "If we're talking about kids being prepared to function in a democracy and global environment, early education is key."

## What you can do:

- Volunteer with or donate to area nonprofits that support early education.
- Ask your state legislators or local school board to fund universal preschool.
- Call us to learn more about how to use your philanthropy to support early education efforts in the Valley.



*"Preschool is so much more than cookies and milk and naptime. Low-income families need this help so that their children are prepared for school. Kindergarten teachers see so many kids start off behind, and it's so hard to catch up."*  
— Gladys Lazurek



*"We need renewed focus on early education,"*  
— David Nee



# Donor Spotlight: Frey-Hershey Fund



## The Valley was good to Paul Hershey and he wanted to be good to the Valley.

Hershey started and ran the Hershey Metal Products company in Ansonia. Hershey Metal Products (now known as HMP Industries) eventually employed several hundred people, including Mildred and John Frey who now advise on the Frey-Hershey Fund held at the Valley Community Foundation.

"He was a very generous man," says John, Hershey's nephew. "He believed in giving back to the Valley because this is where he earned his money."

In the 1920s, Paul Hershey moved from Pennsylvania to Connecticut and saw an opportunity to start a business. Like his uncle, John Frey grew up in Pennsylvania; he moved to Connecticut shortly after graduating from high school to work for his uncle. He left briefly when he was drafted into the service and spent World War II in Germany. After the war he went to college at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in New York and returned to Connecticut and his uncle's company.

It was while working at his uncle's company that John met Mildred, who was Hershey Metal Product's paymaster. The two married and Mildred left the company to start a family. The couple has a daughter, Jane, whose husband now runs the family company.

While Paul Hershey was still president of the company, he created a private charitable foundation to support the Valley organizations that supported his employees. In 1970 John became president of the company and

eventually took over the foundation. In 2006, the Freys decided to transfer their private foundation's assets to the Valley Community Foundation.

"We wanted to travel more and setting up the fund [at VCF] took a lot of work off our hands," says Mildred who had been verifying the status of the nonprofits for grants, writing checks, balancing the account and preparing paperwork for attorneys and accountants. Setting up the fund with the Valley Community Foundation eliminated their burden of attorneys' fees, accounting fees and tax paperwork. The Valley Community Foundation handles all the due diligence for grants.

*"He was a very generous man," says John, Hershey's nephew. "He believed in giving back to the Valley because the Valley is where he earned his money."*

Fund were chosen by Mr. Hershey, and a few were added on by John and Mildred. Their grant recipients are mostly social service agencies local to the Valley.

"We want to help those in need," says John "and it was important to my uncle that the money stay in the Valley."

The couple plans to keep their philanthropy in the family—their daughter Jane will eventually take over their role as fund advisor.

"We were both raised by middle class families," says Mildred. "We have been so blessed in marriage and in life. We feel that we should give back to the community and be thankful for our blessings."

The Frey-Hershey Fund continues to help more than 30 charitable organizations that the private foundation supported for years. Many of the organizations that receive annual operating support from the Frey-Hershey

## Ready? Set. Give!

The Valley Community Foundation is hosting another fun and exciting online giving challenge this year, the Great Give of 2013. This 36-hour event is designed to raise money for local nonprofits on Oct. 2 and 3.

Valley donors will see their money—and their impact—doubled since the Valley Community Foundation will match Valley donors' gifts, up to \$125. VCF has \$20,000 to give away in matching grants and \$5,000 to give away in prizes, including "Most New Donors" and "Most Donors."

Nonprofits will use your donations to compete for these prizes and matching grants, making this a highly impactful 36 hours. You can watch the fun and fast action live online as deadlines approach and organizations edge out competitors.

In 2012, Center Stage doubled their earnings by taking advantage of these prizes. Center Stage brought in \$9,891 through donors, earned a \$5,000 prize for the Most Donors and received \$6,330 in matching dollars, bringing their total to a whopping \$21,221 in just 36 hours.

Many Valley-area nonprofits are competing in the challenge, co-hosted by VCF's affiliate, The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven.

All organizations participating in the Great Give have been vetted, making it easy for donors to know their money is going to a high-quality nonprofit. You can search the website—[www.GiveGreater.org](http://www.GiveGreater.org)—by issue area, geographic area or for a specific nonprofit.

The online challenge is designed to help residents learn more about the nonprofits and issues they care about. Each organization on the Give Greater website includes important information such as their mission, CEO biography, board information, financial statements and more.

Visit [www.GiveGreater.org](http://www.GiveGreater.org) to learn more, give effectively and monitor your favorite nonprofits' success through the competition.





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# Good News About the Valley



## Oxford Land Trust

Oxford Land Trust board member Jim Severson hiking a trail being improved with help from a VCF grant. The Land Trust is widening the trail and adding drainage to prevent trail erosion at the Rocky Hill House Sanctuary. The trail is open to the public and is used by the Oxford High School cross country team for practice runs and competitions. The trail may be accessed from a parking lot next to the high school. The grant was made possible by VCF's unrestricted funds, the Bassett Family Fund and the Paul and Gloria Konwerski Family Fund.



## Valley Shakespeare

The first-ever free outdoor Shakespeare production in the Valley, aptly titled Valley Shakespeare Festival, had a successful showing during a weekend in July at Shelton's Veterans Memorial Park. The first production was made possible with a grant from the Shelton Congregational Church Fund and VCF's unrestricted funds. For the inaugural show, Valley Shakespeare presented "A Comedy of Errors" to more than 400 audience members. Valley Shakespeare Festival was founded by New York actor and Shelton native, Tom Simonetti.



## Derby Neck Library

The teen center at the Derby Neck Library got a makeover with funding from VCF. Library Director Ian Parsells was able to bring in new booth seating, new chairs, a game table, a brightly colored rug and teen-friendly movie posters to create a welcoming and comfortable hang-out area for local teens to do homework, read and relax. The library has seen more teens using the area since the remodeling. The grant was made possible by the Frey-Hershey Fund and the Paul and Gloria Konwerski Family Fund.