

Connecticut Community
Foundation managed
510 funds
and stewarded more than
\$100 million

in charitable dollars to help make donors' philanthropic dreams a reality.

165 nonprofit leaders

learned best practices and important skills to strengthen their organizations at trainings hosted by Connecticut Community Foundation.

Through the new

Women's Giving Circle,

68 women committed their shared resources to help women and girls thrive in Greater Waterbury and the Litchfield Hills.

Give Local Greater Waterbury and Litchfield Hills raised \$1,307,615



Connecticut Community Foundation

awarded 537 grants totaling \$2.95 million

to 310 nonprofit organizations that are addressing the most pressing challenges and opportunities in our region.

In these pages, you will read about bridges and the people who build them. People—concerned neighbors, leaders in local organizations, generous donors—who have the vision to see past challenges and who possess the energy and determination to strengthen communities in Greater Waterbury and the Litchfield Hills.

Bridges also offer a path to explore the road ahead.

2018 is a year of transition at the Foundation. We are both new to our roles, and are honored to stand with a talented, engaged and dedicated team of trustees, staff, advisors, donors, volunteers and community partners.

Together, we will continue Connecticut Community Foundation's efforts to support thriving communities throughout Greater Waterbury and the Litchfield Hills, honoring the visions of those who have built the Foundation over the past 94 years, and pursuing innovative and effective ways to meet today's serious challenges.

We are inspired by you and by all who work to create thriving communities throughout Greater Waterbury and the Litchfield Hills. We look forward to building bridges alongside you, and to crossing those bridges toward an ever brighter future.





Doug Johnson

Chair, Board of Trustees

Julie Loughran

President and CEO



The grant request raised eyebrows and spoke volumes: community college students in Waterbury needed a food pantry.

Sarah Gager, dean of student services at Naugatuck Valley Community College (NVCC), explained, "When we had a downturn in the economy, that was a significant impact on families...And it's become very, very difficult for a lot of students not only with food insecurity, but now homelessness. Sometimes they'll stay on a friend's couch, a relative's couch, a shelter...there are students sometimes in tents."

"But you know what impresses me?" she added. "They're still here."

Connecticut Community Foundation's expanded and flexible support in 2017 gave NVCC students an "extra hand to move forward successfully," said Gager.

It took many forms, starting with an oversized, commercial refrigerator and nutritious food to fill it for a new, on-campus food pantry.

Offering privacy, the pantry allows students to "grab and go" healthy meals or groceries.

Said Gager, "When you see a student trying to decide: do they use their financial aid money to buy a textbook or do they use it to buy food or pay rent so they have a place to stay...That's not a choice that anybody in this day and age should have to make."

Malcolm Baldrige, through a fund he established over three decades ago at Connecticut Community Foundation, is also helping to reduce the academic barriers for NVCC students.

Baldrige headed Waterbury-based Scovill Manufacturing Company in the 1960s and later served as the United States Secretary of Commerce. His legacy lives on through the Malcolm Baldrige Scholarship Fund, enabling the Foundation to provide grants for students pursuing advanced manufacturing technology certificates at NVCC. These dollars help students pay for courses not covered by federal financial aid.

The yearlong certificate training is highly computer-based and teaches programmable logic—while building toward well-paying careers for male and female students, in what had been traditionally a male-dominated field. And, graduates are meeting an unmet need for skilled workers in Connecticut.

"They can't hire people quickly enough who have the right skill set," Gager said of Connecticut manufacturers.

Additional grant funding from the Foundation enables NVCC to hire more students to work on campus for learning and mentoring in their career fields of choice. Because of the convenience and flexibility of jobs on campus, students are more likely to finish their degrees.

Gager concluded, "If you give students enough of a boost so they get over that tipping point, they'll think, 'I can see the end in sight. I can make it.'"

Yes they can.

"They know this is the opportunity to break that cycle and to turn it around."



January 1, 1984.

That's when Mary-Kate Gill, director of elder services, and Lisa Labonte, director of senior nutrition services, began working together at New Opportunities, a social service agency headquartered in Waterbury that serves 27 Connecticut towns.

They share an easy laugh, a natural warmth and sage reflectiveness born of years sustaining people in the later chapters of their lives.

They ticked off the changes and challenges: Medical advances mean more people are living longer, but many are living with dementia. It's not uncommon to see two generations or even three—all in the same family—that are eligible for services.

"And 60 today is not the same as it was 35-40 years ago," Labonte mused. "Younger seniors are staying more active than they used to. Or they're working. Or they're taking care of grandchildren."

"And yet," Gill added, "state and federal funds have declined over the last 10-15 years. People are staying at home longer and community agencies like ours are expected to help them remain at home."

New Opportunities has creatively risen to the challenges facing older people, led by this dauntless duo.

They started a housekeeping program so frail older people could stay at home, another program that assists older people in applying for benefits and services, and another that provides pet food for their clients' pets—which they began when they realized that nutritionally at-risk people were sharing their own meals with their hungry pets.

Their innovative restaurant program provides more than 1,500 older people with a debit card that can be used at participating local restaurants to obtain low-cost meals developed in consultation with the New Opportunities dietitian. During the recession, the program may even have helped some restaurants stay in business.

Over the years, Connecticut Community Foundation—through its East Hill Woods Fund—has extended a helping hand to older people through New Opportunities, and 2017 was no different.

With a grant from the Foundation to configure and equip a food truck, New Opportunities will make it easier for older people with transportation challenges to get affordable meals at their doorsteps. The truck will travel among senior housing complexes in Waterbury, serving nearly 60 people per day. In an emergency such as a power failure at a senior housing building, the truck could also be deployed.

And, at senior centers in Woodbury and Southbury, mealtime attendance has jumped ever since New Opportunities enlisted chefs to prepare creative meals onsite. Now, smells of fresh baked bread waft through the dining rooms, and older people are guaranteed nutritious meals, subsidized by Foundation grant funds, that taste great—with the ambiance of home.

"A lot of older people are isolated," said Labonte. "But [with chefs on-site], they started sitting down much earlier to meals—just to sit and talk."

The meals are healthier, too, not "frozen meals loaded with sodium" that Gill said are too often the norm.

All this is in addition to a range of programs funded by Connecticut Community Foundation and coordinated by New Opportunities to promote fitness, social connection, education and nutrition for 1,200 Waterbury older adults at community and senior centers throughout the city. From guitar lessons to Zumba to memoir writing to classes on using Uber, Skype and online banking, barriers to independence and social connectedness are falling away.

Thirty-four years of working together has gotten Labonte and Gill—and older people throughout Greater Waterbury—very far indeed.



An art show would seem to be the last thing on someone's mind when departing the confines of a mental health treatment center after weeks or months.

Leaving inpatient treatment can open doors to challenges bred by prolonged battles with addiction, bipolar disorder, depression or schizophrenia: wounded self-esteem, finances and relationships and a tenuous grip on a place to live or work.

The next stop for many people is often Mental Health Connecticut's (MHC) Independence Center in Waterbury, where encouragement and wisdom are woven into housing and assistance programs that promote four pillars of recovery—home, health, purpose and community.

The Center compassionately offers all those things, plus one more lifeline—the Mending Art program—made possible by Connecticut Community Foundation donors. It's a safe space to creatively express the tangle of emotions or traumatic experiences that frequently impede recovery.

Coordinator Amy Smith, an accomplished artist in her own right, is the gentle and trusted coach for Mending Art. She often begins by simply extending an invitation for new attendees of the Center to enter a studio stocked cheerfully with paints, canvases and art supplies.

What happens after that has been nothing short of astounding.

Says Smith, "A lot of our artists are really hard on themselves. But when they start drawing or creating and hearing the positive words, they start seeing themselves a bit differently."

In the artists' words:

"The painting helps me let go. It brings out the inner beauty in me and I see the beauty of others when I look at their art." (Jeannette S.)

"Art helps me acknowledge that I am somebody." (David G.)

"Drawing has helped me through some of the darkest and happiest times of my life..." (Jennifer F.)

In 2017, Mending Art went on the road. Over 60 artists exhibited their work at ArtSpace Hartford. Other works were displayed at area libraries, senior centers, the Mattatuck Museum, Waterbury City Hall, the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Waterbury, and Western Connecticut Mental Health Network's Create Art Show and Sale.

One artist, Robin Laganza Lindstrom, even published her own children's book, *Lucy and Ben,* about two children who live with a mom who has bipolar disorder.

Through community exhibits, Smith said, artists "feel like they are being seen for themselves, not their illnesses...and it gives them so much confidence."

In 2017, more than 120 people used Mending Art to heal from illness or trauma and to build social connections.

Connecticut Community Foundation's funding over the past two years has been critical, particularly as MHC labors to help growing numbers of young people and older adults who seek their services.

Still, they point to success stories like Cynthia W.'s.

Cynthia began with tentative drawings in a sketchbook, but was soon painting "constantly" in the Mending Art studio. She has since moved to New Jersey, in part because she was offered an opportunity there to lead an art program.

"I'm stepping into my place and art is it," she said. "It doesn't have to look like anyone else's because it's mine."



Could they program their robot to flush a toilet?

It was a wintry Saturday morning in February, and dozens of middle school boys and girls, their parents and siblings were breathlessly gathered in the West Side Middle School cafeteria in Waterbury for the FIRST® LEGO® League team competition.

Teams of students, intently willing their robots to control toilets, turn on water treatment plants, or remove barriers to waterfalls on a pre-designed course, had been preparing since October for the water-themed robotics competition.

During twice weekly after-school sessions organized by Waterbury Public School's Supervisor of Science and Technology Education John Reed, teams of students at three Waterbury middle schools (North End, Wallace and West Side) and one alternative school (Enlightenment) had learned computer coding and logic in order to program robots.

They were also preparing for a future in which skilled workers in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) will be in high demand.

Nationally, disparities exist with access to and success in STEM subjects along racial, socioeconomic, gender, and geographic lines, as well as among students with disabilities. The United States Department of Education, National Science Foundation and many others are urging educators to close the gaps.

Waterbury Public Schools are taking many steps to educate their diverse student body in STEM skills, including the revival of their robotics program.

Enter Connecticut Community Foundation and a committed group of Waterbury educators led by Reed and administrator Louise Brown, a sawy group of teacher-coaches, and robotics teams from Kennedy and Crosby High Schools in Waterbury.

With salaries for teacher-coaches and registration fees funded by the Foundation, the robotics program has taken off—fed by the energies of 60 middle schoolers.

"We're trying to give the kids as many opportunities as possible to experience hands-on, cool stuff so they say 'wow, I can do this.' A lot of them had never programmed, had never done anything like that. So robotics has given them the confidence, exposure and fun. They see that it's a blast to do this," said Reed.

The February robotics face-off was lively and competitive, and the teams often applauded each other's efforts.

According to Reed, "Sportsmanship is as important as having a successful robot. Are you helping other schools? Are you open to sharing parts if something breaks?"

"It's so much more than robotics," he said. "It also really helps build the soft skills that they say kids are lacking for jobs, where they have to work and problem-solve together. [During the competition], if something went wrong, they would put their heads together. And that's a huge step forward for middle school kids to be able to do that."

In Reed's experience with robotics teams, the experiences stick.

"When you follow these kids up through the high school level, you'd be amazed that almost all at that point want to be engineers....They expressed some kind of interest in a STEM career, and many said they wouldn't have chosen that if they hadn't had the chance to build and code robots and compete against other teams."

(At left) The FIRST® LEGO® League team competition at West Side Middle School in Waterbury.



As Hurricanes Irma and Maria ravaged Puerto Rico in September 2017, profound fear and anguish reverberated all the way to Greater Waterbury and the Litchfield Hills.

The roots that join the people of the island and Connecticut residents are deep, built on generations of Puerto Ricans migrating to work at the farms of Litchfield to the factories of Waterbury after World War II. Now, Connecticut has the highest percentage of Puerto Rican residents of any other state, and nearly one quarter of Waterbury's population is Puerto Rican.

Over the years, Puerto Ricans have enriched our region with their skills, passions and talents in countless ways, and their spirit and culture invigorate many of our local neighborhoods.

So, after the hurricanes, when Puerto Rico's electricity was completely knocked out, when over 400,000 people were left homeless, when running water was scarce and when hundreds of families relocated to Connecticut, people in Greater Waterbury and the Litchfield Hills mobilized.

Among the area residents who responded generously to the Foundation's appeal for financial assistance to aid Puerto Ricans was Abby Wells of Woodbury.

Wells, founder of the Abby N. Wells Fund at Connecticut Community Foundation, was appalled by the plight of Puerto Ricans and the slowness of the government response to the hurricanes. She said she was compelled to act by the incredible need.

"It's outrageous that all these people had to be relocated," said Wells. "It's unconscionable. How could you not project yourself into a situation like that? To think of Puerto Rican people living without electricity...you can't pump gas to fill a car, you can't get water from a well...All the things we take for granted..."

A first wave of contributions from Connecticut Community Foundation donors, \$8,000, was sent to the Puerto Rican Community Foundation so they could respond quickly with aid for the island's immediate needs: "sources of life," including water, food, housing and medicine.

And through the work of Foundation grantees Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness, New Opportunities, and the Hispanic Coalition of Greater Waterbury, an additional \$18,000 from the Foundation will support Puerto Rican families who have relocated to Greater Waterbury and who are in serious danger of becoming homeless.

The grant dollars will also help Puerto Ricans acquire important documents lost in the hurricanes—such as replacement drivers' licenses and social security cards—which are needed to seek employment, housing or benefits here in Connecticut. And, more grant dollars will provide transportation for families who have relocated to Waterbury as they seek vital services and benefits.

Many other community partners are teaming up to support relocated people—including 300 students from Puerto Rico who are newly enrolled in Waterbury schools—and the Foundation's staff is lending their deep knowledge of community services and resources to the effort.

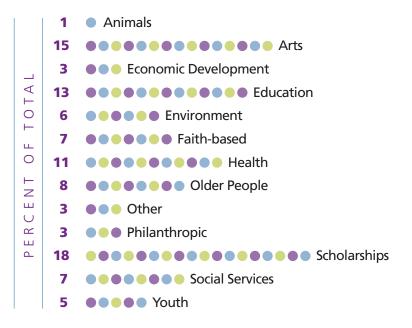
The road ahead for Puerto Ricans is a long one, but paved with the generosity and compassion of people in Greater Waterbury and the Litchfield Hills.

(At left) Connecticut family members look on as a Puerto Rican government representative gives a brief on the relief effort on the island. Photo by Ryan Caron King, Connecticut Public Radio

Community Investments

Connecticut Community Foundation serves donors and nonprofits through sound financial management that aims to build the charitable resources available to the community. In 2017, the Foundation's investments realized a 16.48% net investment return—exceeding the benchmark—and the Foundation's net assets grew to nearly \$106 million.

2017 Grants and Scholarships by Program Area \$5.0 million



		2017
Assets		
Investments	\$105,829,000	
Other Assets	3,642,165	
Total Assets	\$109,471,165	
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Accounts Payable	\$	43,558
Grants Payable		47,515
Liabilities Under Split-interest Agreements		165,164
Funds Held as Agency Endowments		3,296,973
Net Assets	105,917,955	
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	_	
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$109,471,165	
Revenue		
Contributions	\$	2,579,848
Investment Return		14,905,278
Other Revenue		229,728
Total Revenue	\$	17,714,854
Grants and Expenses		
Grants and Scholarships	\$	5,039,239
Program Support		1,157,510
Supporting Services		767,617
Total Grants and Expenses	\$	6,964,366
Net Assets		
Beginning of Year	\$95,167,467	
End of Year	\$105,917,955	
	Φ	103,317,333

2017

For a copy of Connecticut Community Foundation's 2017 audited report and tax return (IRS Form 990) visit our website at www.conncf.org or contact Barbara Ryer, director of finance and administration, at 203.753.1315.

THE GENEROSITY OF MANY

We are profoundly grateful for these "bridge builders," whose giving creates health, open spaces, second chances, educational opportunities, shelter, recovery and so much more in Greater Waterbury and the Litchfield Hills.

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420 students in Greater Waterbury and the Litchfield Hills will find their college educations more affordable, thanks to \$940,000 in scholarships awarded by Connecticut Community Foundation. Aaron Madow of Thomaston (at right) is one of those students! Photo by Dorian Mode Photography



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An event sponsorship grant from Connecticut Community Foundation supported the Litchfield Land Trust's Fall Sunset Party at Arbutus Farm. The land trust has conserved over 3,000 acres of open space for the enjoyment of residents. Photo by Amy Blaymore Paterson, Connecticut Land Conservation Council

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Adena Wright Williams

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1923 SOCIETY

What do you care most about in your community? Would you like to make a difference not just today, but for generations to come?

Members of our 1923 Society have done just that by including Connecticut Community Foundation in their estate plans. From arts to health care to education, they are making the community stronger—now and forever.

Members of the 1923 Society include:



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What values inspire your philanthropy? Attendees at our Women Give! event answered the question, and discussed how to move from inspiration to impact. Photo by Dorian Mode Photography

NEW FUNDS

We are so very grateful to the donors who created new funds through Connecticut Community Foundation in 2017. These extraordinary donors are supporting specific organizations and community needs right now while building charitable assets that will benefit the community for generations.

Richard D. Coe Scholarship

Established by Ion Bank (formerly Naugatuck Savings Bank) in memory of the bank's retired president. The fund awards a scholarship annually to a student from Naugatuck with above-average grades and a record of community service.

Gager Family Scholarship Fund

Established by Sarah Gager to provide financial support for students attending Naugatuck Valley Community College in Waterbury and Northwestern Connecticut Community College in Winsted.

The John and Ingrid Manning Advised Fund Donor-advised fund established by John (Jack) and Ingrid Manning.

Ingrid Martland Fund for Silas Bronson Library

Designated fund established by Theodore Martland in memory of his wife Ingrid for the purchase of books at Silas Bronson Library for children in first grade or younger. Ingrid taught for 22 years at Mitchell Elementary School in Woodbury, where nearly all of her students excelled in math and vocabulary.

The Maurice B. Mosley Fund

To be funded through the estate of Maurice Mosley for the benefit of Grace Baptist Church of Waterbury, Connecticut, for its scholarship program supporting student members of the congregation.

First Congregational Church of New Milford "Raise the Roof" Fund

Established by the church to provide resources to repair and restore the church roof, buildings and related structural and mechanical components.

The RAG Fund

Donor-advised fund established by Ron Garfunkel.

Staywell Health Center Advised and Endowment Funds

Established by Staywell to support its ability to pursue its mission.

(At right) Participants in the Foundation's Western Connecticut Leadership program on human services helped serve hot meals to people in need during a visit to Greater Waterbury Interfaith Ministries in Waterbury.

Paula Van Ness Fund for Stronger Nonprofits

Established to honor Paula Van Ness upon her retirement from Connecticut Community Foundation. The fund supports nonprofits with grants, programs, services and other resources that build capacity, support organizational development, or otherwise strengthen their operations in the Foundation's service area.

Women's Giving Circle

Established to inspire community-minded, participatory philanthropy where learning, connecting and group decision-making improves opportunities for women and girls in Greater Waterbury and the Litchfield Hills.



WHO WE ARE

Established in 1923, Connecticut Community Foundation was created by and for the people of Greater Waterbury and the Litchfield Hills. Serving a 21-town region, the Foundation provides leadership in addressing the community's critical issues, strengthens local nonprofit organizations through grants and technical assistance programs, and works with individuals, families and corporations to steward charitable and scholarship funds.

A Fond Farewell

At the end of 2017, Paula Van Ness retired as president and CEO of Connecticut Community Foundation after six years at the helm.

Communities in Greater Waterbury and the Litchfield Hills reaped the

benefits of her dynamic leadership in many meaningful and tangible ways, particularly through the launch of Give Local Greater Waterbury and Litchfield Hills and the Western Connecticut Leadership program. Paula's extraordinary commitment to the Foundation's mission has allowed us to look to the future with optimism and excitement and build on her many successes.

Our region is better and stronger thanks to Paula!



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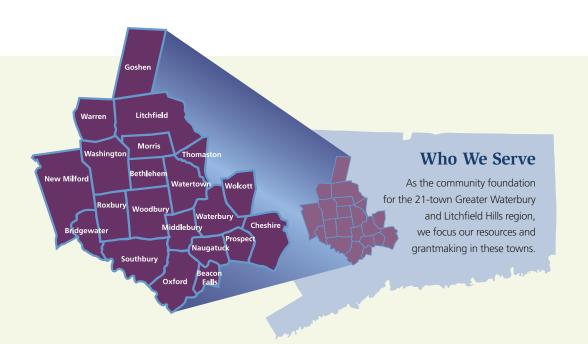
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* As of December 31, 2017



43 Field Street Waterbury, Connecticut 06702



(On the cover) Boardwalk on the property of White Memorial Foundation and Conservation Center in the towns of Litchfield and Morris. Photo by Steve Schaum \mid Schaum Photography

OUR MISSION

Fostering creative partnerships that build rewarding lives and thriving communities.

OUR VISION

Communities alive with partnerships that demonstrate the power of giving.

Connecticut Community Foundation 43 Field Street Waterbury, CT 06702 203.753.1315

www.conncf.org