

YOUR COMMUNITY UPDATE

We envision a vital and inclusive community where every individual has the opportunity to thrive.

Our mission is to promote philanthropy as a means to create change in Fairfield County, focusing on innovative and collaborative solutions to critical issues impacting the community.

Thanks to you, Giving Day broke records to make a lasting impact here in Fairfield County.



2016 highlights and fun facts:

\$1,246,964 RAISED

17% increase in giving from 2015; 65% increase in giving



410 Nonprofits
Raised Funding



15,311 Total Gifts
Donated



Donations from 48 States & 11 Countries



25% First-Time Donors



Youth performers from Creative Youth Productions in Bridgeport performed at our Launch Party on Fairfield County's Giving Day.

You and 11,000+ others joined together to break records in giving on March 10th

THANK YOU for demonstrating the power of community!

March 10th was a landslide day of giving. Fairfield County's Giving Day's third year uplifted our region's givers and nonprofits, uniting our communities to create a stronger Fairfield County.

Giving Day is unlike any other campaign.

Individuals were empowered to be philanthropists with as little as \$10

Nearly 12,000 people learned about work impacting their own neighborhoods and helped their favorite nonprofits raise funding and compete for cash prizes.

"Giving Day is a fabulous way to motivate community members for an annual day of giving. It puts the 'fun' in fundraising and allows us to involve a broad group of supporters, who can each make a difference with only a \$10 donation," said Laurie Bradbury, The Ridgefield Chorale.

Nonprofits got a boost in mission awareness and donations

Four hundred and ten (410) organizations leveraged Giving Day as a fun and exciting way to not only raise new funding totaling \$1.25 million collectively, but also to magnify their important work

to as many households, business and all potential partners as possible.

"We raised ten times the amount that we did last year, and 5 times as many donors. By far the best part was...creating a lot more exposure about our organization and the work that we do," said Eileen Brennan, LifeBridge Community Services.

A ripple effect of generosity was seen throughout the region

Family, friends, neighbors and colleagues influence giving. This positive behavior resulted in over 15,000 donations made in 24 hours; 25% of these donors were new to the nonprofit they supported.

It is in everyone's best interest that our community becomes one where each and every resident is either "giving back," or accessing a service to meet his/her needs. At the Community Foundation, this is our goal and Giving Day moves us one step closer to creating a true culture of philanthropy in our region. Thank you for supporting our Community Leadership Fund which fuels Giving Day.

Together we thrive!



Youth driving change and creating new opportunities to succeed

Empowering young adults to Thrive by 25 at our Youth Summit

The halls at Sacred Heart University on January 9th were packed with 200 teens and young adults. They chose to give up a Saturday afternoon to be a part of an experience that could influence their future.

What made this day of learning at our Thrive by 25 Youth Summit stand out from any other?

First, it was driven by young people. Shaped by a panel of youth ambassadors, the summit offered workshops and presentations designed to offer youth between the ages of 16 and 24 practical strategies for achieving self-sufficiency. From interview preparation to building a personal brand, the summit's content was designed "by youth, for youth."

Second, this event brought Fairfield County one step closer to a bold goal we've embraced: to offer all youth an opportunity to thrive by age 25, regardless of family income, school district or zip code.

As donors, professionals and community leaders, we all have an opportunity to lift up our community by supporting young adults at the



Young adults stop to snap a photo at our Youth Summit hosted at Sacred Heart University in January.

intersection of jobs and education. This is the focus of Thrive by 25.

What's ahead for Thrive by 25?

» This summer, a new cohort of Youth Ambassadors will begin meeting to engage and recruit other young people, and participate on a new community advisory group to influence future programming.

» This fall, a new Youth Force Series will bring together young people, educators, employers and legislatures to connect and dialogue about challenges and opportunities to obtain a higher education and a living wage employment in Fairfield County.

Thank you for supporting Thrive by 25. Learn more at FCCFoundation.org or contact Alexis Bivens, director of the program, at ABivens@FCCFoundation.org.

Where organizations go to grow

How the Center for Nonprofit Excellence impacted one nonprofit

To SoundWaters President Leigh Shemitz, the work being done through the Center for Nonprofit Excellence (CNE) is absolutely essential to the health and growth of the nonprofit sector in Fairfield County.

"We've all set a goal," says Shemitz. "What the CNE offers are tools to achieve that goal. Our organization runs better because of the skills and training

we get, and it definitely supports our mission dramatically."

SoundWaters, a nonprofit that works to protect Long Island Sound through education, has benefited from a wide menu of CNE services. While nonprofits are pressured to put dollars towards their direct mission and reduce administration costs, organizations also need to develop infrastructure, leadership and internal processes to deliver their mission.

"We wouldn't do it otherwise," says Shemitz bluntly. "We just don't have a massive budget for training, and there are so many pressing concerns to address with the resources we do have. The CNE makes it affordable, and it's the best."

CNE's Executive Leadership Program, a model that brings nonprofit

executives together for peer-to-peer learning and collaboration, has been "a huge growth point" for Shemitz. "The quality of the people around the table and the level of facilitation make it an engaging, challenging space...but also a safe space. I think I'm a more intentional leader because of the Executive Leadership Program."

Like all nonprofits, Shemitz knows SoundWaters must look ahead and be ready to adapt to change as it comes. She fully expects that the Center for Nonprofit Excellence will grow alongside her organization and help lead the way into the future.

Your support makes the work of CNE possible. Thank you! Please learn more and get involved. Visit FCCFoundation.org or call Elaine Mintz, Director of CNE at 203.750.3209.



Children participating in a program by SoundWaters, a nonprofit that protects the Long Island Sound.

This is an excerpt from an article that appeared in April 8, 2016 issue of The Hour written by Chris Bosak, Co-Managing Editor.

Annual luncheon rallies over 600 around the theme: Women and Girls = Strength, Resilience and Power

"As I look around I cannot imagine a more appropriate theme," Juanita James, president and CEO of FCCF, said. "What makes this all so powerful is that we are doing it together. One of the things I've learned is that the generosity of so many people here, in dollars and time, is truly remarkable."

Abby Wambach, U.S. Women's National Soccer Team phenom and passionate leader and advocate for gender equality, was the featured speaker at the Fund for Women & Girls' Annual Luncheon held April 7 at the Hyatt Regency in Greenwich. About 600 people attended the event, which serves as the Fund's major fundraiser.

Wambach had plenty of advice directed at budding soccer stars, but certainly applicable to the general audience. "No matter what you dream of ... you have to endure the process to get the outcome. It's about the sacrifices you make," she said. "My philosophy on life is to dream big. Some chase their dreams and some chase the path of least resistance. I'm not that way. I like the resistance."

Proceeds from the Annual Luncheon support the Fund's Family Economic Security Program (FESP) at Housatonic



Students Regina Scates (left) and Heather Harrick, participants in the Family Economic Security Program, shared their stories of struggles and success at the Fund for Women & Girls Annual Luncheon.

Community College. To put a face to the program, two FESP students spoke to the crowd. Heather Harrick is a single mother who is also working full time as an orthodontic assistant and taking dental hygienist classes.

She is able to handle being a mother, worker and student "all with the help of FESP."

Regina Scates is a mother of three, full time firefighter and student working toward getting a degree in emergency management. "I'm confident I will get there, but it hasn't been an easy road for me," she said. "Now, thanks to FESP, I have a strong support group. FESP coaches

push and encourage me."

Suzanne Peters, VP of the Fund for Women and Girls thanked guests and said, "We see a bright future ... with so many ways for girls to distinguish themselves. We thank you, our donors, for making this possible. Together we thrive!"

The Fund for Women & Girls has invested more than \$5 million in initiatives and grants to 50 nonprofit partners and helped more than 9,000 women and girls. To view Luncheon photos, read the rest of this article and to learn more about FESP, visit FCCFoundation.org.

Many thanks to [The Hour](http://TheHour.com) for granting us permission to reprint this article.



U.S. Women's National Soccer Team Champion and advocate for gender equality Abby Wambach pictured with young fans from the Girl Scouts of America at the Annual Luncheon to benefit the Community Foundation's Fund for Women & Girls.

Giving back in the community can be a family affair - starting now.

Creating Impact Through a Donor Advised Fund

As college students, Joseph and Tichianaa Armah often spent weekends driving throughout the city of Philadelphia providing meals for homeless adults. Fast forward 20 years, and the Armahs are complementing their direct community service engagement with setting up a Donor-Advised Fund. Their goal is to turn the fund into a family affair.

Both Joseph and Tichianaa have rewarding careers, in energy finance and psychiatry respectively. As working parents with a toddler and a baby on the way, they felt moved to make a first step toward their vision of engaging their children in community service and giving back at an early age.

"We did not want to wait," says Tichianaa, recognizing the demands of life would only increase as their children grew. "As new parents, we wanted to invest in the health

and welfare of the community where we will be raising our children."

Setting up a Donor-Advised Fund with the Community Foundation allows the family to stay flexible and hands-on. As the girls grow older, the Armahs plan to involve them in directing the funds through activities such as student developed mental health awareness campaigns in schools.

"Our hope is that the fund will grow, and the children can take over," says Joseph.

For now, the couple is planting the seeds of empathy and generosity by talking with Natalie and Charlotte, their daughters now ages four and one, about being mindful of those who are most in need, and how they can make a difference.



Donor Advised Fundholders Joseph and Tichianaa Armah with their children Natalie and Charlotte.

"It is never too early to think about giving back to your community in whatever way you can," says Tichianaa.

To learn more about creating a Donor Advised Fund, contact Kristy Jelenik, development manager at kjelenik@FCCFoundation.org or 203.750.3211.

One father's charitable path inspires his children

A Legacy Story

Eric Ferguson cared deeply about his community. A successful businessman, Eric placed great value on giving back and investing in causes close to his heart. He was passionate about helping disadvantaged children, and found great enjoyment visiting programs he supported and interacting with children and families.

For nearly 20 years, Eric and his wife Anne considered Fairfield County's Community Foundation as a trusted and cherished philanthropic partner. He passed away in 2015, and left a bequest to the Ferguson Fund at the Community Foundation in his will to continue his passion for uplifting vulnerable youngsters.

It thrilled him to follow his dreams to give back and this has inspired me to continue his legacy," said Eric's daughter Barbara St. John.

Have you considered a charitable legacy to continue your philanthropy beyond your lifetime, to have your family name remembered and your philanthropy woven into the lives of others?

With a bit of planning today, you can ensure that the charitable causes that have grown important to you over the years continue to be supported, long after you're gone.

Fiona Hodgson, Vice President of Development, welcomes the opportunity to speak with you. Fiona can be reached at FHodgson@FCCFoundation.org and 203.750.3202.



Eric Ferguson, sitting, surrounded by his children Neil, Elizabeth and Barbara

Eric's children, inspired by his generosity and life-long commitment to giving back, are now establishing their own philanthropic path, strongly influenced by their beloved father.

"I am proud of what he did through his philanthropy.