

# YOUR COMMUNITY. YOUR IMPACT.

Spring 2022



## *Dear Friends,*

The Community Foundation's success has always reflected the community we serve.

We could not support Fairfield County without the generosity of our donors, an exceptional board, a committed group of foundation and nonprofit partners and a community known for its creativity and resolve.

After 11 years at the Community Foundation, this is my last newsletter — and one of my final opportunities to thank you. I'm proud of what we have accomplished together. And I'm equally excited to see what the Community Foundation achieves during its next chapter.

But before looking ahead, let's look back.

Our community has changed significantly during these past 11 years. Over that time, the Foundation has grown from an organization with roughly \$150 million in assets and 20 staff in 2011, to one that now has \$275 million in assets and a diverse team of more than 30.

However, our impact as a Community Foundation is not measured solely by the size of our investment portfolio, the amount we grant each year or the number of people who work in our office. We amplify our financial capital by leveraging our knowledge and relationships to make our community stronger and ensure that every person who lives and works here has an opportunity to thrive.

In this newsletter, you'll learn how we're working with individuals, businesses, philanthropy, nonprofits and government to make progress toward this lofty goal.

You'll see how we're partnering with local businesses through the new Fairfield County Business Collaborative for Education Equity. You'll explore our work with

foundations across Connecticut to focus on economic and social equity, particularly in our urban areas. You'll learn about the emme coalition, which is empowering our next generation of women.

I'm incredibly excited about these emerging efforts, for they light the way for a new era at the Community Foundation — one that builds on the partnerships and progress we've made over the past decade.

That progress has been on full display in recent months.

We saw it on Fairfield County's Giving Day, when nearly 12,800 donors raised \$2.2 million to provide capacity and support to more than 400 local nonprofits.

We saw it at our Fund for Women & Girls Luncheon, where women's rights scholar Anita Hill challenged us to continue the march toward gender and racial equity.

We see it every day through our partnership with Resilia, which is working to strengthen BIPOC-led and serving nonprofits and through the great work of the Center for Nonprofit Excellence, which is strengthening organizations through training and support.

Together, we have come a long way. But our work is just beginning.

Soon, you'll be learning more about the next phase of our work, which will challenge us to ensure everyone in our community has an opportunity to succeed.

I'd like to thank you for being an important partner — and for your continued support on the journey ahead.



**Juanita T. James**  
President &  
Chief Executive  
Officer



## Janice Park: A Legacy of Generosity in Fairfield County

**Future generations of Fairfield County residents will never meet the late Janice Park. But their lives will likely be better because of her generosity and activism.**

After growing up in Bristol, earning her master's degree in social work from Smith College, and starting her career in Manhattan, Jan moved to Fairfield County in 1954.

For the next half century, she became an advocate for children and families in Bridgeport and became deeply entrenched in giving back to the community she called home.

"Helping a handful of people wasn't good enough for Jan Park," said David Vita of Westport's Unitarian Church. "Her plans were much bigger. She was the ultimate organizer, believing that alone we can't do anything, but together, we can."

It's that spirit that sparked Jan's work in helping launch Connecticut's first infant daycare center and the Connecticut Coalition Against Gun Violence.

It also inspired her work with the Community Foundation. Jan's service as a board member with the former

Greater Bridgeport Area Foundation prompted the foundation to award her its Arthur and Gladys Lunin Humanitarian Award in 2006 — and she remained active with the organization following its 2008 merger with Fairfield County's Community Foundation.

When Jan died in 2013, she made the ultimate gift to the community — a bequest to the Janice Park Social Justice Fund at the Community Foundation.

This fund has granted nearly \$2 million to support a range of social justice causes, including voting and civic education, developing youth and grassroots leaders and food justice. We are honored to steward this gift, which serves as a fitting tribute to Jan's generous spirit.



The late Janice Park



## LEAVE YOUR LEGACY

To learn how you can leave your own charitable legacy, contact Karen Brown: [KBrown@fccfoundation.org](mailto:KBrown@fccfoundation.org).



# Joining Forces to Promote Equitable Growth and Opportunity

**Cesar Aleman**  
Director of CT Urban  
Opportunity Collaborative

**If Connecticut can evolve into a place where every person born here has an opportunity to succeed, our entire state will prosper.**

That's the idea behind the Connecticut Urban Opportunity Collaborative (CUOC) — a newly formed partnership between Fairfield County's Community Foundation, Hartford Foundation for Public Giving and The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven.

This first-of-its-kind collaboration by Connecticut's three largest community foundations aims to develop and carry out collective strategies to identify innovative, scalable solutions to eliminate disparities in our urban centers.

To support this ambitious effort, the three foundations hired Cesar Aleman to serve as CUOC's director. In this role, Cesar is coordinating a team that includes the chief executives and senior staff at each foundation to:

- Develop collective strategies to dismantle structural racism and advance social and economic mobility.
- Create an actionable plan that builds on each foundation's individual strengths.
- Build a broad network of relationships with national, regional and local partners.
- Manage collaborative investments and develop and distribute grants.

By working together, the three community foundations have a big goal: to write a new chapter in philanthropy in Connecticut that will expand opportunity to everyone.

Together, we will work to promote greater equity in Connecticut's major cities.

In turn, we envision a future in which every person in our state has the opportunity to thrive.



## FOSTERING COLLECTIVE ACTION

**TOGETHER WITH OUR PARTNERS,  
THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION HAS:**

**Invested \$290,000** to support five nonprofits to develop curriculum and train coaches, players, parent volunteers, and athletic directors to prevent sexual violence. The program has trained **260 people to date**.

Through a \$20,000 investment by CUOC, supported the launch of the **Baby Bonds Parent Advisory Council** to increase awareness about CT's Baby Bonds program.

**Delivered tools and resources** — including a guidebook for towns to create affordable housing plans — through our partnership with the Fairfield County Center for Housing Opportunity.

# Charting Their Own Destiny

**With the right supporters, there is nothing a woman cannot achieve.**

The emme coalition — the signature investment of the Fund for Women & Girls — connects women and girls with tools they can use for their entire lives and pass along to future generations.

Emme was launched in 2020 in response to the tremendous equity gap experienced by women in Fairfield County.

In Bridgeport alone, 56 percent of single female-headed households with children live in poverty. Black mothers die from pregnancy-related causes at three to four times the rate of white mothers. And by mid-adolescence, girls are twice as likely as boys to develop depression or mood disorders.

With emme, women and girls climb into the driver's seat of their lives and have the power to chart a new destiny — with trained supporters riding with them to help navigate the journey.

This innovative, research-driven program — developed in partnership with OPTIMUS Health Care — works at the intersection of physical wellness, behavioral health, and social services to empower women to become their best selves. During its first year, 80 teens and women took part in emme — the vast majority of whom report that they are better prepared to parent and to handle stressful experiences.

Each woman and girl who enrolls in emme sets big goals for themselves; believes in their ability to reach those goals; and then achieves those goals, no matter how great the obstacles are in front of them.

And once they reach these goals, they don't stop. They set another goal. And then another.

Because becoming your best self and being a productive member of your community does not begin and end with one goal in mind; it is a life-long learning process.



## EMPOWERING WOMEN & GIRLS

In its first year, the emme coalition has accepted more than 80 women and teens as full-time participants and reported:

- 100% of expectant mothers had healthy births
- 90% report being better prepared to parent
- 84% report they are equipped to handle stressful, traumatic experiences better



## COMING TOGETHER FOR SUSTAINABLE IMPACT

**Supported seven local organizations with \$300,000** in grants to serve **4,600+ youth** through the Fairfield County Business Collaborative for Educational Equity.

**Equipped 70 nonprofit leaders** with coaching, peer support, tools, and best practices through our partnerships with Five Frogs, Resilia, and the Support Center.

**Activated giving** to our local nonprofits on Fairfield County's Giving Day. **12,000+ donors** raised \$2.2 million to support **400+ nonprofits**.

## Collaborating for Education Equity

During the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, executives at the Stamford technology company Pitney Bowes recognized that many children in its community were struggling.

Rather than making a one-time donation to address the immediate problem, they aimed to do something much bigger.

So they invited other businesses in our community to take action.

The result is the **Fairfield County Business Collaborative for Education Equity**. In addition to Pitney Bowes, this new initiative includes Bank of America, First County Bank, Gallatin Point Capital, Lapine Associates, Synchrony, Tudor Foundation and Xerox, which are working to help eliminate disparities facing Fairfield County's most vulnerable pre-K through 12th grade students, parents, and guardians.

In addition to housing the Collaborative's fund, the Community Foundation provides philanthropic

and strategic advising services and project management support.

Together, Collaborative members have supported nonprofits working on issues such as distance learning, summer learning, kindergarten and college readiness, and food insecurity.

While the work they've done so far is inspiring, we are especially excited about what's to come.

The Collaborative shares our vision of ensuring every child who grows up in Fairfield County has an equal opportunity to thrive. Because of that, its members have committed to making the Collaborative a long-term effort in which businesses will work with the Community Foundation, nonprofits, and our community to foster educational equity in Fairfield County.

**It's a bold commitment – one that has an opportunity to change lives in our community for years to come.**

**To learn more, contact Rebecca Mandell at [rmandell@fccfoundation.org](mailto:rmandell@fccfoundation.org).**

# GET CONNECTED. GET INSPIRED. MAKE AN IMPACT!

Stay connected with Fairfield County's Community Foundation!  
Join our email list to get the latest news and follow us on our social channels. Plus, be sure to read our blog.

---

**Donate to our Community Impact Fund:** [FCCFoundation.org/CIF](https://FCCFoundation.org/CIF)

**Join our email list:** [FCCFoundation.org/Email](https://FCCFoundation.org/Email)

**Read our blog:** [FCCFoundation.org/Blog](https://FCCFoundation.org/Blog)

**Follow us on social:**



FCCFoundation



FCCFoundation



FCCFoundation\_CT



FCCFoundation



Fairfield County's Community Foundation



**Fairfield County's Community Foundation**

40 Richards Avenue | Norwalk, CT 06854

203.750.3200



## IN MEMORIAM **BRIGGS TOBIN**

## Remembering Briggs Tobin: A True Champion for Fairfield County

The board and staff of Fairfield County's Community Foundation are heartbroken over the passing of Briggs Tobin. Briggs, who died April 7 after a short illness, had served on the Foundation's Board since 2015 and had been our Board chair since 2020. He was widely respected throughout our organization as a thoughtful and creative leader and collaborator who was strongly committed to our mission and values. Briggs cared deeply for our community and the Foundation — and that care and sensitivity extended to every person who he connected with in his role.

Johnna Torsone and Ed Ford have been appointed as Interim Co-Chairs through the balance of the Foundation's fiscal year, which ends June 30. Johnna and Ed are both successful, retired corporate executives and experienced members of the Foundation's Board and Executive Committee and have been actively involved in creating our future strategic framework.