



FAIRFIELD COUNTY


FORWARD

2022 YEAR IN REVIEW

Standing together for a stronger community

We are partnering with the community to create a Fairfield County where every person has an equitable opportunity to thrive. To do that, we are working closely with community organizations, nonprofits, businesses and philanthropists to advance racial equity and increase opportunity and resiliency in our region. Informed by three decades of collaborating with and serving our community, we have awarded more than \$390 million in grants to nonprofits in Fairfield County and beyond.

OUR VALUES

 EQUITY We commit to fairness and justice in our work and are accountable to the highest standards.	 INCLUSIVITY We work to share power and amplify systematically excluded voices to advance equity.	 COLLABORATION We create solutions through transparency and authentic relationships, harness Fairfield County's diversity, and partner with our community to accelerate change.	 HUMILITY We practice humility by listening first, respecting different voices, and searching for ways to continually learn.	 RESPECT We honor every person's basic human rights and treat each person with dignity.	 COURAGE We seek the bravery and conviction to live our organizational values, confront wrong, take strategic risks, and pursue solutions that advance positive social change.
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OUR IMPACT OVER THE PAST YEAR



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Juanita James: A Transformative Leader

Juanita James' 11-year tenure as chief executive transformed our organization and set the stage for the exciting launch of Fairfield County Forward.

Juanita, who retired in September 2022, led the Foundation through a period of exceptional growth — nearly doubling our assets, overseeing more than \$200 million in grantmaking, and building a long list of important partnerships and collaborations throughout Fairfield County.

She also challenged our board and team — and our community — to focus on how to make Fairfield County more equitable and to increase access in housing, education and employment, so that we all have a greater opportunity to thrive.

The stories in this report are reflective of Juanita's one-of-a-kind leadership, which has influenced our future vision and will continue to impact our work for years to come.



EDWIN L. FORD
Board Chair,
Fairfield County's
Community Foundation

Dear Friends,

Briggs Tobin was an incredible friend and partner to so many in Fairfield County.

His influence on the Community Foundation, where he served as Chair from 2020 until his unexpected passing on April 7, 2022, cannot be overstated.

It was my honor to work alongside Briggs as our Board and Staff developed the framework for the Fairfield County Forward initiative — our commitment to partnering with our community to ensure that every person in Fairfield County has an equitable opportunity to thrive.

Briggs believed firmly in the idea that our community is stronger when we ensure that more of us have a pathway to a quality education, safe and affordable housing, and top-notch healthcare. Now, as we begin an exciting new chapter, the Community Foundation is poised to carry forward Briggs' legacy by doubling down on our commitment to achieving this vision.

Before we look ahead, let's also look back at what we have accomplished together this past year.

The top-line numbers show that we granted more than \$22.2 million to 1,400 nonprofits, awarded more than \$1.2 million in scholarships, and partnered with our community to raise \$2.2 million on Fairfield County's Giving Day. These efforts continue to make Fairfield County a more inclusive and equitable community. All of this is positively impacting lives throughout our community — and it would not be possible without the generosity of our donors and the dedication of our partners.

Together, we've also laid the groundwork for an impactful future by promoting Mendi Blue Paca to serve as our new President and CEO and launching Fairfield County Forward.

Fairfield County Forward signifies an evolving approach, one that is centered on partnering with the community in new ways and is grounded in the values of equity, inclusivity, humility, collaboration, respect and courage. It challenges us to listen deeply, build trust, and forge stronger relationships.

Our board is energized by this new endeavor and is excited to confront the challenges and grasp the opportunities that lie ahead.

We are grateful for your support and interest in working to create a stronger, more equitable Fairfield County.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Edwin Ford". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Edwin L. Ford,
Board Chair

Dear Friends,

This has been a year of building bridges — bridges that connect today's Fairfield County to a future where everyone has an equitable opportunity to thrive.

At the Community Foundation, we've constructed a bridge that links the impactful work of my predecessor, Juanita James, to a new initiative called Fairfield County Forward, which deepens our commitment to closing our region's wide opportunity gaps by addressing the root causes of inequity. To realize this ambition, we are taking on the challenge of dismantling the systems and structures that limit opportunities. We're partnering with our community to understand and address the foundation of our county's disparities, which are undeniably race-based. And we're rethinking the ways we invest in education, housing, health and workforce development to achieve greater racial equity.

We've added to our talented team, gathered input from every corner of our community, and strengthened relationships with community organizations, nonprofits, government and business. We're engaging our donors in new ways — and bringing new investments to the table to double down on our commitments.

You'll see our evolving approach throughout this report as you explore how we're amplifying the impact of groundbreaking programs delivered by Bridgeport's PT Partners; investing in the holistic health of women and girls through the emme coalition; and advocating for change through our partnership with Fairfield County's Center for Housing Opportunity.

These programs offer glimpses of what we can accomplish for our community when we collectively confront challenges and think differently about what's possible.

But our most important work lies ahead. We cannot truly deliver on our mission unless we support and encourage efforts to bring our community together in innovative ways. That means working across sectors and town and city borders in pursuit of a shared, aspirational vision for Fairfield County. It means understanding that the barriers to opportunity across housing, health, education and employment are intrinsically linked. It means pursuing systemic ways to remove those barriers in alignment and collaboration.

Because of your generosity, your imagination, and your partnership, we've made great progress in positioning the Community Foundation to support our community — building a bridge between our history and our future.

Thank you for your support and I look forward to working together to propel Fairfield County forward.



Mendi Blue Paca,
President & CEO



MENDI BLUE PACA
President & CEO,
Fairfield County's
Community Foundation

High Costs of the Housing Crisis

Fairfield County's Center for Housing Opportunity Engages Community for Equitable Housing Access

The high cost of housing in Fairfield County is commonly accepted as a tradeoff for living in a community known for terrific schools, abundant open spaces and beautiful waterfronts.

But this narrative hides the fact that Fairfield County is facing a housing crisis that threatens our community's short- and long-term economic health.

Simply put, our community does not have a large enough supply of affordable housing to accommodate those who live and work here.

"Communities need a range of housing options that are available to them," said Sharon Calitro, Planning Director for the City of Danbury's Department of Planning and Zoning. "There is a clear need for both homeownership and rental housing, and we need to

ensure we are trying to address that gap and are providing units to those who need them the most."

When those who live and work in a community have access to affordable rental housing and have a clear path to homeownership, they have a better opportunity to thrive and build family assets.

That's why we joined forces with the Housing Collective, Regional Plan Association and the Partnership for Strong Communities to launch Fairfield County's Center for Housing Opportunity (FCCHO).

FCCHO works with residents, government, community organizations, nonprofits and business leaders to identify and implement equitable solutions to Fairfield County's affordable housing challenge.





“There is a clear need for both homeownership and rental housing, and we need to ensure we are trying to address that gap and are providing units to those who need them the most.”

SHARON CALITRO
Planning Director for the City of Danbury's
Department of Planning and Zoning

To date, 125 local organizations are leveraging FCCHO data to inform their affordable housing planning strategies; 2,200 local residents have engaged with the program; and 269 residents have participated in Fairfield County Talks Housing, a program that organizes community-led meetings to connect residents with experts and local officials about housing in their towns.

“You can’t just create a plan in a vacuum,” Sharon said. “You need to first get all of the resources and people involved who hold this issue close to their heart. You need to connect with advocates to engage the community, and I believe that’s what we’re achieving here.”

For more information on Fairfield County’s Center for Housing Opportunity, please contact Julian Pierce, Director of Economic Opportunity, at JPierce@FCCFoundation.org.

[Learn more at FCCFoundation.org/Housing](https://www.fccfoundation.org/Housing)



125 LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

are leveraging FCCHO data to inform their affordable housing planning strategies.



269 RESIDENTS

have participated in Fairfield County Talks Housing.

THE FUND FOR WOMEN & GIRLS

The Game Changer

When we work together, we can achieve a better future for all women and girls in Fairfield County.



“emme is a way out for the women in our community who never even thought about imagining their dreams coming true. emme lets them realize their full potential.”

MONICA JACKSON

Optimus Health Care, Community Health Worker



As a community health worker with Optimus Health Care, Monica Jackson advocates for women and girls in the emme coalition program so they can follow their dreams and realize their full potential.

Monica Jackson's grit and determination have taken her a long way.

But she wonders what she would have achieved if she had come of age in a different environment.

"Growing up, I could sing and dance and had so many other talents," Jackson said, recalling her childhood in east Bridgeport. "But I never had anyone who believed in me."

Today, she is helping a new generation of girls growing up in Bridgeport as one of the first community health workers hired for the emme coalition, the newest signature program of the Community Foundation's Fund for Women & Girls.

Working at the intersection of physical wellness, behavioral health and social services, the emme coalition is a research-driven program that takes a holistic approach to addressing the barriers that prevent women and girls from receiving quality healthcare and reaching their full potential.

Designed with a trauma-informed lens, the emme coalition's mission is to put women back in the driver's seat of their lives. To date, the program has provided direct services to 100 women and indirect services to 1,000 more.

"emme is a support system," Jackson said. "emme is a way out for the women in our community who never even thought about imagining their dreams coming true. emme lets them realize their full potential."

As a community health worker, Jackson's role is to be an active listener, a trusted confidant and on-call support system for the women and girls enrolled in emme.

"When we go through hard things in life, we forget who we are as women, as individuals," she said. "We find ourselves being a mom, a sister, a daughter or maybe even a friend, but we forget who we are as women. We forget to follow our dreams and to set goals for ourselves and to challenge ourselves. And it gets sad and depressing, and you find yourself trapped to the point that you can't think beyond that."

Jackson's powerful personal story, combined with her education and training as a community health worker, allow her to build an authentic connection and establish a depth of understanding and compassion that's proven immeasurable in the program's success.

"If emme wasn't here, these women still wouldn't have the services they need to survive and thrive," she said. "For me, emme is a game changer that truly changes lives. It gives women back their confidence and their joy for life."

Learn more at FCCFoundation.org/emme



direct services to
100 WOMEN

indirect services to

1,000 MORE



The Power of Prevention

Sexual Violence Prevention Collaborative Engages Youth through Sports

Many sexual violence programs focus on helping those who experience sexual violence trauma.

But imagine if instead of intervening to provide support after a person experiences sexual violence, we could prevent these horrific events from ever happening.

That's the mission behind the Sexual Violence Prevention Collaborative (SVPC) — a powerful partnership between the Community Foundation, The Rowan Center, The Greenwich YWCA, The Center for Family Justice and The Triangle Community Center that is working to eliminate sexual violence in Fairfield County.

The Collaborative was organized by FCCF's Fund for Women & Girls in 2018 and has provided ongoing support for the participating nonprofits.

"The only way we can lessen sexual violence is if we teach healthy boundaries in the first place," said Sarah Malhotra, director of education and training of The Rowan Center in Stamford. "If we can teach people how not to do sexual violence, we'll have a much healthier and happier community."

To date, its work has centered on teaching prevention to young people in Fairfield County by partnering with important and trusted messengers: athletic coaches.



"If we can provide coaches with the resources and education on the important role they can play in preventing sexual violence and creating safe and inclusive spaces, it benefits every single person in that environment."

CADENCE PENTHENY

Triangle Community Center, Coordinator of Community & Corporate Learning



Pictured, left to right: Sarah Malhotra, Education Program Manager for The Rowan Center; Rosie Enyart, Youth Engagement & Community Educator for YWCA Greenwich; Katelyn Owens, Violence Prevention Specialist at the Center for Family Justice; and Cadence Pentheny, Coordinator of Community & Corporate Learning for Triangle Community Center.

“Sports teams are powerful places for building community and connection with each other,” said Cadence Pentheny, coordinator of community and corporate learning of The Triangle Community Center. “Coaches are viewed as very influential mentors by both athletes and parents. If we can provide coaches with the resources and education on the important role they can play in preventing sexual violence and creating safe and inclusive spaces, it benefits every single person in that environment.”

SVPC’s Coaches as Partners program has trained more than 260 Fairfield County coaches, players, parent volunteers and athletic directors on prevention of sexual violence and bystander intervention.

It uses an educational curriculum designed to engage and provide resources to local athletic directors, coaches and school administrators to support the significant role they can play in preventing sexual violence. The program focuses on character building and leadership, as well as teaching bystander intervention skills.

“Everyone knows someone who’s experienced sexual violence, even if no one has shared that with you,” said Rosie Enyart, violence prevention coordinator for YWCA

Greenwich. “The issue is so important as it affects all of us. The SVPC has been and continues to be committed to creating a safe, healthy, pro-social and anti-violent community in Fairfield County.”

Explore more FWG Programs
FCCFoundation.org/FWG

SVPC’s Coaches as Partners program has trained

MORE THAN
260

Fairfield County coaches, players, parent volunteers and athletic directors on prevention of sexual violence and bystander intervention.

Leveling the Playing Field for Nonprofits

Resilia Partnership Brings Comprehensive
Support to BIPOC-led and Serving Grantees



Leaders of smaller nonprofits face constant tension when they make decisions about how to allocate their resources.

Every dollar and hour spent on marketing, fundraising and consulting takes resources away from delivering on their mission. But they need to market, fundraise and invest in support services in order to have resources and meet their organizational goals in the first place.

The nonprofit platform Resilia is designed to help nonprofit leaders navigate this tension.

From providing a hub of online resources, including strategic planning and storytelling templates, to offering peer learning and coaching services, Resilia helps level the playing field for small nonprofits by tailoring its services and tools based on the individual needs of the organization.

FCCF's Center for Nonprofit Excellence began a partnership with Resilia in 2022 to provide the platform to BIPOC-led and serving nonprofits in Fairfield County.

The partnership supports 25 nonprofits enrolled in the program, with peer-to-peer coaching sessions serving as one of the platform's most valuable resources. This comprehensive one-on-one coaching promotes equity among nonprofits by helping leaders – from executive directors to boards of directors – create personalized pathways tailored to the specific mission and unique goals for each organization.



“Resilia gives us access to tools that other nonprofits are already using as a best practice and allows our small staff and board to utilize our time and resources most effectively.”

LANA GIFAS

Executive Director of the Women's Mentoring Network

“Before Resilia, we didn't have access to a lot of the information provided on the platform. The resources on the site and having direct access to their staff who guide us and answer our questions help us perform better, so that we can become more effective in expanding our community impact,” said Lana Gifas, Executive Director of the Women's Mentoring Network, one of the Fairfield County nonprofits that is using Resilia. “It gives us access to tools that other nonprofits are already using as a best practice and allows our small staff and Board to utilize our time and resources most effectively.”

BIPOC-led and serving nonprofits interested in learning more about Resilia can contact Rebecca Cordero, CNE Manager, at RCordero@FCCFoundation.org.

[Learn more at FCCFoundation.org/ELEVATEpr](https://www.FCCFoundation.org/ELEVATEpr)



Lana Gifas, Executive Director of Women's Mentoring Network, says online resources and coaching from Resilia have helped her nonprofit increase its impact.

Driving Community Change Through Shared Power

PT Partners Empowers Residents to Advocate for Change

More than 9 in 10 of the households in Bridgeport's PT Barnum Apartments are home to single mothers with young children. And in a system that deliberately places hurdles in the path of single parents, the odds are often stacked against them.

PT Partners, a community-based initiative started in collaboration with Fairfield County's Community Foundation in 2014, works with residents in the 360-unit public housing community to remove these hurdles by working together.

It starts with the way the organization is structured. At PT Partners, there is no one leader or supervisor. Instead, it adopts what it calls a "leader-full" model in which resident leaders have the power to make decisions that best benefit their community.

The structure empowers residents to advocate collectively and to have a stronger presence in discussions that address structural inequities.

"The structure of the organization is based on Black feminism," said Vanessa Liles, Co-Project Director of PT Partners. "That is important because it teaches everyone to support one another, so that if one person leaves, for example, the organization could still go on successfully."

The approach provides strength in numbers and creates opportunities for residents to work together and develop skills that can transform their lives.

With that in mind, PT Partners leveraged a \$30,000 capacity-building grant from the Community Foundation to deliver training programs to help the 20 residents on its staff learn how to perform administrative work and manage the organization's daily operations.

The grant also helped to create a new position – Systems Change fellow. The resident leader who serves as Systems Change fellow actively participates in discussions and has a stronger presence in spaces where decisions are being made about the issues that affect the community they live in.

Moving forward, the organization will encourage more residents to get involved with taking action around community safety, getting the fire department involved to create safety plans for evacuation, and receiving hands-on CPR training through the American Heart Association.

"The residents already have the knowledge because of what many of them experience on a daily basis," Liles added. "Because of their experiences, they know exactly what the community needs and therefore it is up to us as a professional organization to help expand their skills and ability to change the systems."

Help people to power solutions:
FCCFoundation.org/PTP



PT Partners participants work as co-leaders to bring about positive change in their own community. Top left: Vanessa Liles; Top Right: Shaurice Bacon; Center: Randy Agosto; Bottom Left: Evelyn Medina; Bottom Right: Dione Dwyer.



“The structure of the organization is based on Black feminism – that is important because it teaches everyone to support one another, so that if one person leaves, for example, the organization could still go on successfully.”

VANESSA LILES
PT Partners, Co-Project Director

A Note About Our Financials

During the Fiscal Year 2022, markets and investors — including the Community Foundation — faced strong headwinds as global markets were negatively impacted by three main themes: rising interest rates, supply chain shortages, and a normalization of markets post COVID-19.

The majority of Fairfield County's Community Foundation's assets are held in our long-term investment portfolio. This pool of investments is a globally diversified portfolio across stocks, bonds and alternative investments such as hedge funds, private equity and private real assets. The long-term pool was down 7.5%; however, the portfolio did well compared to peers. And while our investments declined overall by \$18.1 million during the fiscal year, FCCF's Investment and Finance committees will continue to manage our accounts with a long-range view that will ensure that we can continue to serve our community for generations to come.

**\$247 MILLION
IN NET ASSETS**

DOWN 1.6%



**\$42.2 MILLION
IN CONTRIBUTIONS**

UP 46.9%



Investment Options

Fairfield County's Community Foundation offers a variety of investment options designed to meet your philanthropic goals and objectives.

Long-Term Investment Portfolio: The investment objective is long-term capital appreciation. The portfolio is actively managed and invested in a diversified portfolio of Global Equity, Fixed Income and Alternative Investment Strategies. The asset allocation is 53% Equity, 32% Alternative Investments and 15% Fixed Income.

Social Impact Fund: This Fund invests in several mutual funds that focus on socially responsible investing activities over a medium-term horizon. The target asset allocation is 65% Equity and 35% Fixed Income.

Vanguard Balanced Index Fund Admiral Shares (VBIAX): VBIAX invests in a diversified portfolio of passive U.S. Index Funds with a target asset allocation of 60% Equity and 40% Fixed Income. VBIAX is designed for investors seeking a balance between income and capital growth with a medium-term investment horizon.

Money Market: This investment option provides donors with liquidity and principal protection.

Custom Option

Your Investment Advisor: For charitable funds of \$250,000 or more, the Community Foundation can work with your trusted financial advisor to manage your fund. If this option is right for you, simply put us in touch with your financial advisor and our team will take care of the rest.

JULY 1, 2021 - JUNE 30, 2022

Financial Statement*

	FY2022	FY2021
Revenues		
Contributions and Other Revenue	\$ 42,196,280	\$ 28,718,841
Investment Income, Net of Expenses	(18,093,044)	53,121,029
Total Revenues	\$ 24,103,236	\$ 81,839,870
Expenses		
Grants	\$ 22,392,653	\$ 28,795,581
Other Expenses	5,615,392	5,257,593
Total Expenses	\$ 28,008,045	\$ 34,053,174
Change in Net Assets	\$ (3,904,809)	\$ 47,786,696
Assets		
Cash and Other Assets	\$ 7,578,479	\$ 1,561,141
Investments	250,860,697	262,603,565
Total Assets	\$ 258,439,176	\$ 264,164,706
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Grants Payable & Accounts Payable	\$ 1,541,821	\$ 1,043,338
Loan Payable	-	529,352
Agency Funds & Other Liabilities	9,891,066	11,680,918
Total Liabilities	11,432,887	13,253,608
Net Assets	247,006,289	250,911,098
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$ 258,439,176	\$ 264,164,706

*Audited; does not include nonprofit endowment funds.

For a complete copy of Fairfield County's Community Foundation's audited financial statements and tax returns (IRS Form 990), please visit FCCFoundation.org/Financial or contact our Finance Department at 203.750.3200.

GRANTS BY FUND TYPE

Donor Advised	\$16,184,647
Discretionary	\$4,034,560
Designated	\$1,043,516
Scholarship	\$1,291,298
Agency	\$921,748

TOTAL: \$23,475,769*

*Includes nonprofit endowment funds



Let us help you make your charitable giving even more meaningful and effective.

Contact us at
(203) 750-3200.

“To change the world in some way, in one way or another”

Julia Ghahramani was an advocate and a leader who combined a sharp intellect with a deep reservoir of empathy and compassion.

These traits led her to earn a degree from Columbia Law School and launch her career as an attorney who had a passion for immigration cases.

“If she knew something was wrong, she would take matters into her own hands,” recalls Julia’s mother, Lily Ann Marden.

Julia was just starting her adult life when she died unexpectedly at the age of 26.

For Lily Ann and her husband, Sassan Ghahramani, the sudden loss of their talented daughter has brought unspeakable grief. But in the face of their indescribable pain, Lily Ann and Sassan have vowed to make sure her memory lives on in others who share Julia’s spirit.

“We lost our daughter, and the world lost all of the hopes and dreams that Julia could have achieved for the remainder of her life,” said Sassan of his family’s decision to create the The Julia Ghahramani Foundation. “It’s important to us to have a legacy for Julia to try and make some positive change in the world.”



Julia, center, celebrates her graduation from Columbia Law School in 2020 with her beloved siblings Kim and Greg.

The Julia Ghahramani Foundation, a donor-advised fund at FCCF, supports nonprofits, students and student-led organizations dedicated to social justice issues including gun control, hunger, homelessness, women's rights, immigrant and refugee rights and criminal justice.

“‘To change the world in some way, in one way or another,’ was her high school yearbook quote,” said Lily Ann. “We want to help other young people who are trying to change the world and instill these ideals that a younger generation can help change the world for the better.”

For anyone who would like to learn more about supporting The Julia Ghahramani Foundation, please visit TheJuliaGhahramaniFoundation.org.

To learn more about how FCCF can support your giving, please contact Joseph Collin, Vice President of Philanthropy, at JCollin@FCCFoundation.org.

Set up your own fund:
FCCFoundation.org/CreateFund

New Funds

Philanthropic giving can have an impact for generations to come when you establish a fund with Fairfield County's Community Foundation. We gratefully acknowledge the following charitable funds established over the past year.

Gifts noted were made from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022.

📷 Below: Sassan Ghahramani and Lily Ann Marden founded The Julia Ghahramani Foundation at FCCF to carry on the legacy of their daughter, a social justice champion who dreamed of making a difference as an immigration attorney.

📷 Below right: After the Marjory Stoneman Douglas school shootings in 2018, Julia helped organize and lead the New York March for Our Lives demonstrations, speaking on the steps of City Hall as the movement's deputy director and press liaison.



BUCHANAN'S 200% FUTURO FUND

The mission of this corporate donor-advised fund is to support charitable organizations aligned with the focus areas of Diageo North America, Inc. to celebrate and support today's multi-faceted Hispanic Americans by elevating their voices and supporting those inspiring their local communities through their passions and crafts while embracing their Hispanic roots.

CARTER MORSE & GOODRICH FOUNDATION

The purpose of the Fund is to support public charitable organizations which are classified under Section 501(c)(3) of Internal Revenue Code that are aligned with the interest of the donors, with a focus on entrepreneurship, innovation and professional advancement.

HARLEY & CO. FUND

The purpose of the Fund is to support public charitable organizations that are classified under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and are aligned with the interests of the donors.

KORRY/PANOVKA CHARITABLE FUND

The purpose of the Fund is to support The Norwalk Art Space Inc and other 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations in Fairfield County and other areas of the United States.

DUDLEY N. WILLIAMS, JR. MEMORIAL FUND

This Memorial Fund was established to honor the remarkable life of Dudley N. Williams, Jr, a pillar of the Stamford community. As a tireless advocate for a quality education for all, Dudley left an indelible mark on public education in our region. To honor his legacy, the Fund seeks to support the causes closest to Dudley by investing in organizations and programs that support Stamford youth and enable them to reach their full potential.

THE JULIA GHAHRAMANI FOUNDATION

The mission of the Foundation is to support charitable organizations, students and student-led organizations dedicated to social justice issues including human rights, gun control, hunger, homelessness, women's rights, immigrant and refugee rights, criminal justice, legal representation and access to education and economic opportunity for disadvantaged youth.

The Foundation honors Julia by upholding her beliefs in democracy, equality, fair treatment and opportunity for all people. It seeks to carry on Julia's dedication throughout her beautiful 26 years, as a child, student and young attorney, to help her fellow humans, to empower youth, to build



community and to ensure all people have access to justice. It also continues Julia's work by supporting leadership development in young adults who are actively striving, as she did, to make the world a better place for all.

A Grandmother's Gift of Generational Giving

Ida Fisher Davidoff may not have seen herself as a visionary philanthropist.

But when she decided to make a planned gift and join FCCF's Future Society more than two decades ago, Davidoff guaranteed that her generosity would improve the lives of Fairfield County women for generations to come.

"Paying it forward was very much a part of our grandmother's legacy," said Ida's grandson, David Houts. "She was the daughter of immigrants, and my grandfather immigrated to America when he was a child. They both had the good fortune of receiving charitable support during extraordinary challenges, and together, they were able to create a wonderful life and become an example of wanting to pass that good fortune on to others."

Davidoff established The Banyan Tree Fund through her will in 1999. The Fund — a donor-advised fund at the Community Foundation — supports the education and economic advancement of women and children. Its most recent grant supported Mercy Learning Center, a Bridgeport nonprofit that provides literacy and life skills training to help women achieve their dreams.



Through a grant from The Banyan Tree Fund, mothers can attend Mercy Learning Center's literacy and life skills classes while their children participate in early-childhood learning.

"Grandma felt strongly about supporting women and furthering their lives in a way that if they're struggling to get started in life, to make sure that we're giving those women a hand-up," said Nina Bixler, granddaughter of Davidoff.

Davidoff's passion for advancing and elevating women is also wrapped in another layer of her legacy: To give her family a reason to stay actively in touch.

She designated the youngest grandchild of each of her children to serve as the Fund's advisers, creating both a reason and a common purpose for her extended family to keep in touch and stay connected.

"There's the impact you're having on society, and on a familial level, you can also have a positive impact on your own family members by involving your future generations," Bixler said. "We want people to know that the spirit of somebody can live on through their donations and to encourage others to offer a legacy of this type to keep generations both in touch with each other and continue family philanthropy."

For more information on becoming a member of FCCF's Future Society, please contact Joseph Collin, Vice President of Philanthropy, at JCollin@FCCFoundation.org.

Join a group of visionary philanthropists:
[FCCFoundation.org/Future](https://www.fccfoundation.org/future)



Dr. Ida Davidoff, pictured with her husband Leo, continues to make an impact for Fairfield County women through her legacy of planned giving.

The Future Society honors visionary members who have made a commitment through bequests and other planned gifts to make an impact for generations to come.

CURRENT

Charlotte and John Suhler, Chairs
Millette Alexander
Molly Alger and Jay Dirnberger
Anonymous
Jeannette Archer-Simons and Robert E. Simons
James R. and Kaye E. Barker
Nancy Bassett
Barbara Louise Blauvelt
Gene Celentano
Sharon Danosky
Daryl Duarte and David M. Schiffer
Bari S. Dworken
W. Michael and Ellen Funck

Brian Goldstein
Mike and Sally Harris
Lori Hashizume and Douglas Fried
Fiona Hodgson
Bruce Hubler
Juanita T. James
Charles W. and Rachel Jensen, Jr.
William R. Knobloch
Helen L. and Richard Koven
John Marshall Lee, CLU, RHU
Barbara Littlefield
Ronald J. Lowe and Nancy A. Tartaglia
Charles MacCormack

Jeremy Main
Ann S. Mandel
Brian and Cindy Meehl
Jacqueline and Doug Millan
Jonathan and Elena Moffly
Linda M. Molnar
Liz Morten
Steven A. Mueller
John E. Nelson, II
Gregory and Sue Neumann
Jane Norgren
James M. Photis
Marianne Pollak
Thomas Purcell, M.D.

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“FCCF and nonprofits in Bridgeport welcomed me and offered more support than I ever expected, from mentoring to scholarship and more. I created the Daniel Trust Foundation out of my desire to give back and pay it forward.”

DANIEL TRUST
Daniel Trust Foundation,
Executive Director & Founder

Giving Full Circle

Former Scholarship Recipient Creates Foundation Focused on Student Support

Daniel Trust came to Bridgeport from Rwanda when he was only 15 years old.

While the transition as a refugee was a challenging experience, he was immediately welcomed and supported by many nonprofit organizations in Fairfield County. And he credits the Community Foundation's scholarship program as a springboard for his current success.

"I think it's our duty to make sure that we pay it forward and as we climb up, that we help uplift and bring other people who haven't received the same opportunities along with us," Daniel said. "FCCF and nonprofits in Bridgeport welcomed me and offered more support than I ever expected, from mentoring to scholarship and more. I created the Daniel Trust Foundation out of my desire to give back and pay it forward."

The Community Foundation awards more than \$1 million annually to local students through 150 scholarship funds that make the path to college more affordable for students like Daniel.

Daniel was so inspired by his own experience that he vowed to help others achieve their college dreams, and in 2009, he established his foundation while studying business at Southern Connecticut State University.

And in a nod to his own experience, Daniel's foundation also focuses on providing student scholarships, mentorship and grants to young people in both the U.S. and Rwanda.

"The Daniel Trust Foundation Mentoring Program is a college and career success program that focuses on supporting first-generation and low-income students in three areas: college preparation, career development and



The Community Foundation awards more than
\$1M ANNUALLY
 to local students through 150 scholarship funds



financial literacy," Daniel said. "The mentorship program has a 100 percent success rate of high school students graduating on-time and 93 percent of participants graduate from college within four to five years."

Daniel hopes his fellow community members will also find their own ways to give back and support their neighbors.

"I am so very grateful and thankful for Fairfield County's Community Foundation because they are just great partners and what they are doing to help others in the community is just absolutely amazing," he said.

For more information on student scholarships, please contact Joseph Collin, Vice President of Philanthropy, at JCollin@FCCFoundation.org.

Learn more:
FCCFoundation.org/Scholarships

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Women & Girls \$890,118 (cont.)

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BOARD PROFILE

Giving Voice

Board Member Advocates for Fairfield County's Latino Community



For Carolyn Gonzalez, advocating for Fairfield County's Latino community is personal.

"I was born and raised and still live in Bridgeport which continues to be one of the poorest areas in our region," said Gonzalez, a member

of the Community Foundation's Board of Directors. "Too often, people like me grow up with and internalize the stigma of being from a poor community, especially one in a very wealthy county."

That personal experience is what drives her to serve on the board and has guided her career.

As Community Development Officer at Capital for Change, Connecticut's largest full-service Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI), Gonzalez works to ensure grassroots nonprofits, small businesses and other under-resourced organizations and communities have access to much-needed capital.

In this role, she's building on her diverse experience, which includes over 20 years in the community and



"I got involved with FCCF because I became aware of how impactful a role foundations can have on large scale issues by investing in the innovation that is taking place to address inequity at the very grassroots, community level."

CAROLYN GONZALEZ

Fairfield County's Community Foundation Board Member

economic development field having worked for ASPIRA of Connecticut; Bridgeport Economic Development Corporation; State of Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development; and Community Capital Fund.

She was a founding member of Groundwork Bridgeport and a former board member of Bridgeport Neighborhood Fund. She's proudest of her involvement as a founding member and board member (since 2003) of the Greater Bridgeport Latino Network, where she served as president from 2015 - 2019. GBLN became a resource and voice for the Latino community.

"I got involved with FCCF because I became aware of how impactful a role foundations can have on large scale issues by investing in the innovation that is taking place to address inequity at the very grassroots, community level," Gonzalez said. "We are focused on including the voices and ideas of those who are most affected, and I am excited to support that and help it grow."

Explore Our New Strategic Plan

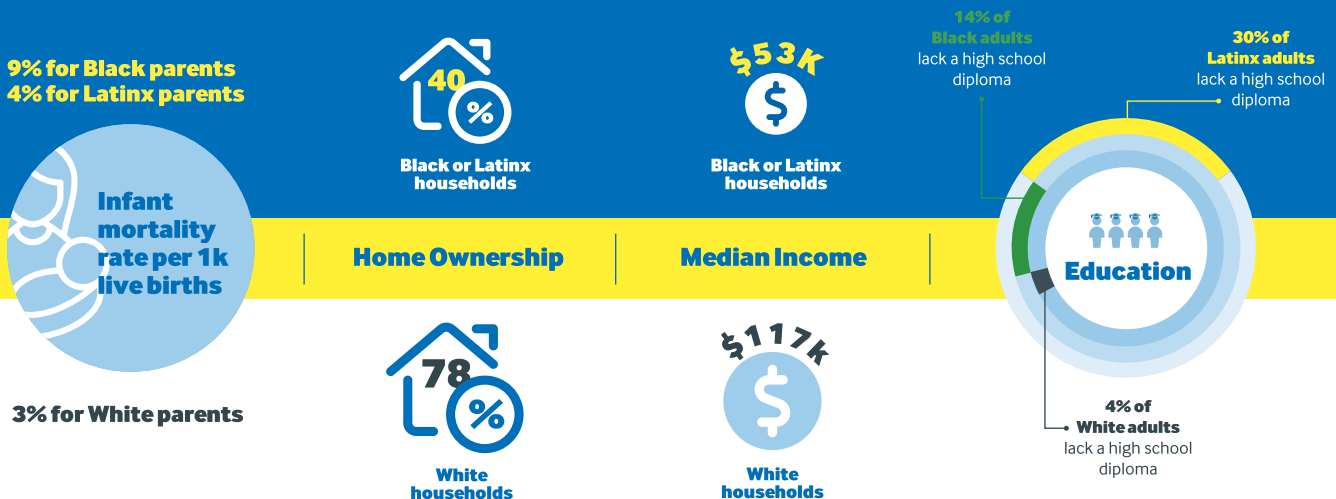
When we create a community where all our neighbors have an opportunity to succeed, we all thrive. But we have work to do to achieve this vision. In Fairfield County, race is highly correlated with outcomes in education, health, housing, income and wealth generation. Together, we have the power to change systems and dismantle the structures that have created

these disparities to create a stronger, more prosperous community. When we do that, we will help our local economy thrive, build a larger skilled workforce, and promote health and safety in Fairfield County.

Fairfield County Forward is the Community Foundation's new strategic plan for achieving this vision — developed in partnership with the Fairfield County community.

Why is This Work Needed in Fairfield County?

Stark racial and ethnic disparities exist in Fairfield County due to systemic and structural barriers like racially discriminatory practices, restricted access to resources and prohibitive public policies. In fact, a 2019 study by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York found that Fairfield County was the most economically unequal metropolitan area in the country.



THE RESULTS WE SEEK

Equitable Opportunities to Thrive

As we partner with our community to close the opportunity gap and advance race equity in education, income & wealth, health, and housing, we aspire to create a community where:

All Fairfield County students graduate with a high school degree and are prepared for post-secondary **education** and/or employment.

All Fairfield County residents have equitable access to **entrepreneurship and employment** skill-building opportunities to achieve financial self-sufficiency and build assets.

All Fairfield County residents have equitable access to high-quality, culturally-competent **physical and mental health services**.

All Fairfield County residents have safe, stable and affordable **housing** in communities of opportunity.

An evolving approach to transformative solutions

Fairfield County Forward has been informed by close collaboration with community partners, and expands on our existing work of closing the opportunity gap. We acknowledge that many of the approaches historically taken by foundations — including our own — have not produced systemically impactful results.

With that in mind, we aim to execute our work differently and partner with and support our community with humility. We are grateful for your partnership, and excited to embark on this important work with you to build a stronger, more vibrant region.

Learn more: FCCFoundation.org/FairfieldCountyForward

Imagine a Fairfield County where everyone has an equitable opportunity to thrive

That's the vision behind Fairfield County Forward — a new strategy centered on changing the systems and dismantling the structures that have created racial disparities in our community to create a stronger, more prosperous Fairfield County. Together, we can ensure that every child born in Fairfield County — regardless of their ZIP code or race — has the tools and support to live their best lives.



Explore our new strategic plan: FCCFoundation.org/FairfieldCountyForward



Fairfield County's Community Foundation

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