



Coming Together to Strengthen Democracy in Our Region

Most residents would agree that voting is a quintessential aspect of our democracy. But did you know that recent social science research indicates increases in voting and other civic engagement activities are correlated with [increases in personal physical and mental health?](#)¹ Getting involved is good for us and the country!

With that in mind, Fairfield County's Community Foundation is inviting donors and partners to join us in a collective effort to strengthen democratic ideals and civic activity in our region.

We believe our county is stronger when more residents of our community are engaged in activities like voting, attending public meetings, volunteering, or speaking out.

You can get involved in several ways.

John Warburg, a trustee of the Apple Pickers Foundation, is one of a growing number of donors who are supporting civic engagement efforts like [Your Vote = Your Power](#) — our 2022 public awareness campaign aimed at inspiring more Fairfield County residents to vote.

"I'm a strong believer in getting more people engaged in our elections — not just showing up at the polls, but also becoming better informed about their voting choices," Warburg said. "I support the foundation's Get Out the Vote efforts because when we collectively do a better job of voting, we will make more progress on the broader issues we face."

This spring, we invite you to experience [The Practice of Democracy: A View from Connecticut](#), a traveling exhibit made possible by FCCF and community partners. The exhibit, which you can visit at Norwalk Community College through June 2nd, is a great opportunity to learn more about our history and ways to get more engaged locally. Our partnership in this work underscores our expanding commitment to civic engagement.

In the months ahead, you'll receive more details about upcoming civic engagement initiatives, including our **2023 Get Out the Vote** campaign and our new **Community Incubator**, which will deliver financial resources and leadership support to local people and organizations pursuing solutions to community challenges.

And that's just the start! Join us in working to preserve and nurture our regional democracy — and help us create a stronger, more vibrant Fairfield County.

Take Action

Through June 2nd, you can visit the interactive exhibit [The Practice of Democracy: A View from Connecticut](#) at the Art Gallery at Norwalk Community College's East Campus at 188 Richards Avenue. Explore how — and for whom — Connecticut's communities were designed, and how our built environment supports or hinders our collective pursuit of democracy.

Want to engage further with FCCF's advocacy and community engagement work? Contact Elaine Mintz, VP of Strategy & External Relations, at EMintz@FCCFoundation.org.

1. Nelson, Christopher, Jennifer Sloan, and Anita Chandra, Examining Civic Engagement Links to Health: Findings from the Literature and Implications for a Culture of Health, RAND Corporation, RR-3163-RWJ, 2019. As of May 7, 2023: https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR3163.html



FCCF Board Member Dr. Maya Reddi (left) with keynote guest Misty Copeland at the Fund for Women & Girls 2023 Luncheon. Through a legacy gift to FCCF, Dr. Reddi is continuing a lifelong commitment to empowering women and girls to thrive.

Dr. Maya Reddi: Creating a Legacy for Empowering Women

Growing up within a conservative society with set norms and gender roles, Dr. Maya Reddi wasn't afraid to break away from traditions and take a stand.

Influenced by her parents, she was aware from a young age of the injustices in society and committed to fighting on behalf of women and girls.

As a volunteer (during graduate studies) she helped young girls who were forced into prostitution in Mumbai's Red Light District.

"These girls were as young as 13 and were duped into believing that they would become stars and earn lots of money," Dr. Reddi said. "We would rescue them and provide support to them."

Such experiences planted the seed for a lifelong commitment to helping others — a commitment that has followed her to the U.S. and through a successful career that has included roles at Novartis and Hewlett Packard.

She was also one of the founding faculty members of Berkeley College's School of Graduate Studies.

During a sabbatical semester of her teaching career, she spent four months training women entrepreneurs to set up their small businesses in remote villages in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda.

By joining Fairfield County's Community Foundation's [Future Society](#) through her pledge of a legacy gift, Dr. Reddi's commitment to supporting generations of women and girls will carry on well into the future.

Now retired and living in Greenwich, Dr. Reddi also supports Fairfield County through volunteer activities — including serving on the Foundation's board, and Steering Committee for the [Fund for Women & Girls](#).

"I love what they are doing here," said Dr. Reddi. "The committee members and staff are all very professional, knowledgeable, and highly dedicated to helping women and girls throughout Fairfield County and supporting me in fulfilling my philanthropic goals."

Philanthropy, Your Way

We will work one-on-one to help you meet your philanthropic goals, enjoy tax benefits, and maximize your impact. Contact us today, and start exploring options for charitable giving in Fairfield County and beyond. To set up an initial call or meeting, contact VP of Philanthropy Joseph Collin at JCollin@FCCFoundation.org.



Invest in the Future You Want to See

You can be part of a community of visionary philanthropists who are making a difference for Fairfield County's coming generations. Join our Future Society by making a donation through your will, gifting life insurance or retirement assets, or exploring another planned gift. It's easy, and your impact can be far greater than you think.

JOIN THE
FUTURE
SOCIETY
TODAY



"The Community Foundation has been a resource for helping me decide where to give. The knowledge it has accumulated regarding the needs of the community in Fairfield County is impressive. FCCF will continue my giving after I am no longer here – and I know it will do it well."

Jeremy Main | Future Society Member

Learn more & get started. Contact Joe Collin,
VP of Philanthropy, at (203) 750-3211 or
JCollin@FCCFoundation.org

FCCFoundation.org/Future

Empowering Leaders of Color to Advance **Equity in Connecticut**

Leading a nonprofit is difficult work.

For many nonprofit leaders of color, the degree of difficulty is uniquely high. A [2022 survey](#) by the Building Movement Project found that nonprofit executives of color were less likely than white leaders to receive support from peers or affinity groups and were more likely to receive inadequate compensation.

As part of its mission to create a region where every person has an equitable opportunity to thrive, FCCF's [Center for Nonprofit Excellence](#) is partnering with equity-focused nonprofits to create peer networks, training programs, and other targeted resources for nonprofit leaders of color.

One example is **Leading for Change**, which brings together leaders of color to promote and leverage collaboration, collective work and shared practice.

Leading for Change — delivered through a partnership with Five Frogs Inc. — brings together 10-12 participants for an eight-month program that aims to expand their awareness and

knowledge of self, language, skills, and capabilities to better respond to social injustices.

“As a leader of color, I sometimes face challenges,” said Carolyn Vermont, CEO of Habitat for Humanity of Coastal Fairfield County and a Leading for Change participant. “It is helpful to have the opportunity to network with others who are facing similar challenges so that we can offer support and advice to each other.”

Leading for Change is part of a larger initiative to empower leaders of color. Wells Fargo is the lead funder of FCCF's **Leaders of Color Capacity Building Program**, which offers an expanding menu of capacity-building workshops and networking events.

The end goal: to effectively leverage their knowledge of community and lived experience as leaders to create the change they one day hope to see.

Invest in Leadership

Learn more about the trainings, resources and support available to local organizations through FCCF's Center for Nonprofit Excellence. Questions? Contact CNE Manager Rebecca Cordero at RCordero@FCCFoundation.org. FCCFoundation.org/CNE

The number of leaders rating themselves “effective or highly effective” at mobilizing people to achieve shared goals increased



FROM 56% TO 91%

AFTER PARTICIPATION IN 2022 LEADING FOR CHANGE PROGRAM.



“I gained a family, community and cheerleaders. It’s larger than a professional network...we’re on the path to creating healthy and equitable spaces.”

Leading for Change participant



FCCF's Leading for Change cohort program, delivered by Five Frogs, Inc., brings together leaders of color to build social capital through group coaching, networking and peer-to-peer learning.



Sarah (left) and Alexandra Hall, co-founders of the branding company Harley & Co., have built on a family tradition of community-focused philanthropy by establishing a fund at FCCF and engaging staff in a corporate culture of giving.

Connecting Community Giving to Corporate Culture

Sarah and Alexandra Hall — the cofounders of the bustling New York City branding company Harley & Co. — learned the value of community-focused giving during dinner table conversations with their father, Christopher Hall.

As Vice President of Grantmaking at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, Christopher made a point of emphasizing the importance of local giving to his young daughters.

As adults, Sarah and Alexandra are now carrying forward those values at Harley & Co. by embedding giving into their corporate culture through a [Corporate Advised Fund](#) at Fairfield County's Community Foundation.

The sisters have used the fund to support causes they are passionate about where they have established connections. For instance, because they had previously done some work in Jackson, Miss., they have made donations from the fund to support Jackson nonprofits helping residents navigate a water crisis.

As mothers raising young children in Fairfield County, the Halls focus on supporting local efforts to create more equitable schools.

The fund has also helped foster engagement with their Harley & Co. staff.

"It's been a great tool to engage with our employees because there's so much that's happening in the world right now, and it's a lot for folks to process," Sarah said. "I think when you can put action to that processing through giving, it helps people feel like they can be a part of something."

And they are also helping spread the word about the value of community foundations to other businesses that want to make an impact.

"We emphasize the tremendous impact you can have by locally distributing resources back into the communities where you live," said Alexandra. "It's about urging people with power, privilege, and influence to think about how, with relatively little effort, they can have such a tremendous impact on their local community."

Become a Corporate Partner

To learn how Fairfield County's Community Foundation can help your business increase your impact in the community through a Corporate Advised Fund, contact Rebecca Mandell, Donor Engagement Officer, Partnerships and Learning, at RMandell@FCCFoundation.org.

Do you know?

Fast facts from the Fairfield County Community Wellbeing Index 2023

The Community Wellbeing Index 2023 (CWI) offers county and town-level data on key wellbeing, economic opportunity, and quality-of-life indicators. It is produced every three years and supported, in part, by funding from Fairfield County's Community Foundation. The CWI is invaluable for residents, organizations, and philanthropists seeking to identify pressing challenges and opportunities to affect positive social change.

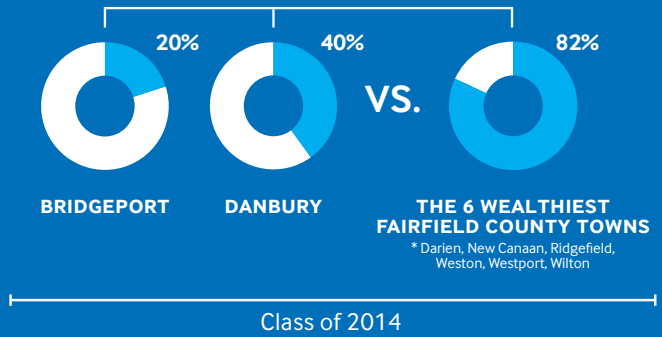
\$ Income

Fairfield County has the second highest income inequality in the United States.



🎓 Education

Graduating high school students that earned a college degree within six years



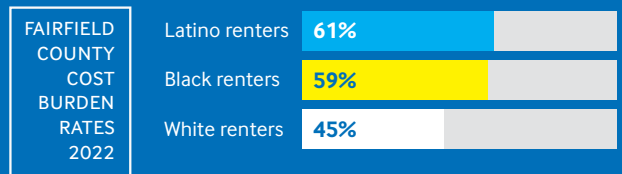
+ Health

Infant mortality rate, 2022



🏠 Housing

Individuals who spend more than 30% of their monthly income towards housing costs are considered cost-burdened.



Explore more facts from the Community Wellbeing Index 2023: FCCFoundation.org/CWI23



Together We Thrive.

Fairfield County's Community Foundation is partnering with our community to create a county where every person has an equitable opportunity to thrive. We work closely with community organizations, nonprofits, businesses and philanthropists to address challenges and identify opportunities to create a stronger, more vibrant community.

 Fairfield County's Community Foundation
40 Richards Avenue | Norwalk, CT 06854
203.750.3200
FCCFoundation.org