

**YOUR COMMUNITY UPDATE**



Nearly 200 community members, nonprofit staff members, business, town and city leaders gathered at the Fairfield Theatre Company to celebrate the launch of the 4th annual Fairfield County's Giving Day.

**Giving Day 2017 Breaks Records & Raises Nearly \$1.5 Million in 24 Hours**

Thank you for being part of our region's biggest philanthropic day of the year!

It's not often that in a single day over 13,000 people come together to take action and do good for the local community. But that's just what happened on March 9th, when record-breaking funding was raised in support of the nonprofits of Fairfield County.

Donations poured in from 48 states and 12 countries at a rate of \$1,017 per minute. And 35% of donors made gifts to organizations for the first time.

In a remarkable outpouring, donors with all kinds of interests participated in Giving Day, powered by Fairfield County's Community Foundation. Stamford-based Future 5 reported that its first gift of the day was from a former youth participant. Meals on Wheels of Ridgefield, reached its goal to raise funds to provide a year's worth of bread for its families. And 10-year-old Aiden from Fairfield made a \$10 donation to Fairfield County Children's Choir because he loves music.

"This incredible day is not just about raising money," said Juanita James, President & CEO of Fairfield County's Community Foundation.

"So many lives are touched and places strengthened as a result of Giving Day. People all over the region are learning about programs in their own hometowns. And nonprofits are leveraging the Giving Day campaign to build communication, fundraising and tech skills that will help them beyond Giving Day." James continued, "Increasing local philanthropy is our business, daily focus and passion. It's been a joy for all of us at the Community Foundation to organize this momentous effort for the past four years with champion sponsor Bank of America. Together we thrive!"

*Thank you for supporting our Community Impact Fund which fuels Giving Day. A report on Giving Day key findings, statistics and stories can be found at [FCCFoundation.org/research-publications/all-research-publications/](http://FCCFoundation.org/research-publications/all-research-publications/)*



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

**2017 GIVING DAY  
IMPACT**

**\$1,465,246  
RAISED**

**13,718  
DONORS**

**410  
NONPROFITS**

**Fairfield County's Community Foundation**

**VISION**

To foster a vital and inclusive community where every individual has the opportunity to thrive.

**MISSION**

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

# With your help, the Center for Nonprofit Excellence continues to be the place where organizations “go to grow”

When Reverend Cass Shaw became President & CEO of the Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport, she knew she would be taking on a challenge.

In a city where poverty and trauma touch many lives, the council brings together a wide network of community partners to feed the hungry, support youth in crisis and much more.



Reverend Cass Shaw, President & CEO, Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport

To be effective, Shaw recognized that she would need to develop new skills as a nonprofit leader and help her board and staff grow to ensure greater impact. **She had a strong resource to turn to for support: the Center for Nonprofit Excellence.**

Shaw believes the power of the Center for Nonprofit Excellence is twofold: it provides resources and fosters relationships. It's a combination that can be vitally important for nonprofits that are working with limited resources to make an impact where it's needed most.

Shaw has encouraged her Board of Directors to attend workshops on governance and several of her staff have participated in essential skills building trainings.

"It's basically my go-to place," says Shaw. "I know that I am a better leader,



Thanks to the skills training and capacity building provided by the Center for Nonprofit Excellence, the Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport is providing stronger programming for youth and families.

making smarter decisions and moving this organization forward because of the resources I'm receiving."

*Thank you for supporting the Center for Nonprofit Excellence. Your gifts make this work possible. Learn more at [FCCFoundation.org/CNE](http://FCCFoundation.org/CNE)*

## Thriving as a Young Adult

by Surline Jolicoeur, former Thrive by 25 Youth Ambassador

I've learned that there are two defining attributes in life that help determine your trajectory: patience when you have nothing and attitude when you have everything. And seizing an opportunity to learn and advance can mean all the difference. For me, one of these defining moments occurred when I became a member of Fairfield County's Community Foundation's Thrive by 25 Youth Ambassador Program.



Surline Jolicoeur, a member of the first cohort of FCCF's Thrive by 25 Youth Ambassadors, is following her passion to work with youth as a Coordinator of the Youth Volunteer Corps Department at United Way of Western Connecticut.

While I recently received my Bachelor's Degree from Central Connecticut State University, I couldn't find a meaningful job and needed guidance, as well as employment experience in order to attract employers.

Through the Youth Ambassador Program, I played a key role in organizing our Youth Summit at Sacred Heart University, gaining valuable skills and experience in social media marketing, communications and strategic event planning. A few months later, I jumped on an opportunity to represent the Youth Ambassador Program at a United Way event for youth and young adults. The event was an enthralling experience that further cemented my conviction that I wanted to work with the youth and nonprofit programs.

I soon learned of a job opening at the United Way and quickly submitted my resume — complete with all the skills I developed during my time as Youth Ambassador.

And now I am the Coordinator of the Youth Volunteer Corps Department at United Way of Western Connecticut. I get to not only work side by side with youth to elevate their minds, their spirit and cultivate their appetite for servicing their community, but I also get to bring forth inventive ideas and strategies to the United Way brand. Life tends to come full circle when you seize the opportunities presented to you and broaden your horizons.

"I encourage young people to explore opportunities, like the one I had with the Community Foundation, to serve as a blueprint to defining your interests, gaining skills and learning from valuable experiences."

*Your gifts to Thrive by 25 enable young adults like Surline to enter a meaningful career path. Learn more at [FCCFoundation.org/Thriveby25](http://FCCFoundation.org/Thriveby25)*

# Nurturing Seeds of Opportunity at the Annual Fund for Women & Girls Luncheon

Year after year the Fund for Women & Girl's Luncheon draws hundreds of passionate supporters to share an afternoon of inspiration, celebration and joy. On April 20th at the Hyatt Regency Greenwich, 500+ attendees celebrated the ways the fund has helped women and girls reach their full potential and become powerful changemakers in our communities over the last 19 years.



Keynote speaker Andrea Jung, President & CEO of Grameen America and lifelong advocate for women, applauded Fairfield County's Community Foundation and everyone in the room sharing, "As we consider today's theme of *Nurturing Seeds of Opportunity*, I'd like to recognize all of you as nurturers. What you do in the community is extraordinary. In essence, I'm the child of a microloan, given to my immigrant grandmother. And my story is proof positive that from poverty, all the way up, it's about giving women a chance and empowering them."

The outpouring of generosity from the luncheon benefits the Family Economic Security Program (FESP) at Housatonic Community College (HCC) in Bridgeport, CT. This model initiative provides women the tools they need to persist through college, become self-sufficient, have marketable careers and provide sustainable support for their families.

Director of the Fund for Women & Girls Tricia Hyacinth said, "We know from our own research that graduation rates in low-income communities depend on access to education, availability to financial resources and life skills training."

Tricia continued, "The FESP model encompasses components beyond scholarships and financial aid. We work with women to develop strong social skills and a solid understanding of finances. We guide them through educational decisions that will lead to meaningful and marketable careers."

FESP students, Marie Bedoya and Naomi Gomez, bravely shared their stories as well. Marie is a single mother who was raised in a family with low expectations for higher education or a meaningful career. She faced incredible financial challenges, yet found hope and help through FESP. "My FESP scholarship wasn't just a check in the mail. It was a program of encouragement, assistance and real-life education."

At 16 years old, Naomi along with five of her brothers and sisters, were

forced to raise themselves after their father was deported back to the Dominican Republic and their mother chose to join him. Naomi attempted to succeed in college, but failed classes while contributing to her household responsibilities. Her determination to live a better life led her back to HCC, where she was introduced to the FESP program.

Naomi said, "FESP has helped me and my peers with so much. I feel confident enough now to be able to take the tools I've learned, and apply them to the rest of my education journey and professional life."

Marie and Naomi graduate from HCC this spring with plans to pursue higher education degrees. They credit FESP, and especially the program donors, for helping them achieve their dreams.



*Housatonic Community College students Marie and Naomi sharing their stories of challenges and finding academic success through FESP.*

The Community Foundation's President & CEO Juanita James closed the program with much gratitude by saying, "Most of us have not had to face the challenges that Marie and Naomi have. However, all of us can make a difference for women like them with our support through FESP. Thank you — our supporters — for being here today and for all you do to create a better future for women and girls in Fairfield County."



*FCCF President & CEO Juanita T. James and Fund for Women & Girls Director Tricia Hyacinth (in middle) with long-time supporters and committee members of the Fund for Women & Girls.*

*Your generosity helps young women like Marie and Naomi thrive. Thank you! Learn more at [FCCFoundation.org/community-impact/fund-women-girls-new/](https://www.FCCFoundation.org/community-impact/fund-women-girls-new/)*

# Engaging millennials in philanthropy through our NEW Rising Professional Advisors Council

It's no secret that millennials, considered the largest generation since Baby Boomers, are gaining leadership positions and will be strong influences on all sectors of society including philanthropy.

For these reasons and more, the Community Foundation was thrilled to establish the Rising Professional Advisors Council (RPAC), a group of enthusiastic, career-focused young adults who share an interest in learning about local philanthropy to enrich their own lives, as well as add value to their professional services with clients.

Victoria McGruder, financial advisor, was first introduced to Fairfield County's Community Foundation at a law firm's Women in Philanthropy event. And the timing was perfect since she was moving to Fairfield County and seeking opportunities for community involvement.

Victoria was immediately impressed by FCCF's Fund for Women & Girls' programs. She then learned about FCCF's new Rising Professional Advisors Council, which she saw as a perfect opportunity to weave together her personal and professional philanthropic interests.

"It's been amazing for us to discover how many of these young people are already involved with local nonprofits, either sitting on boards or volunteering in other ways," shares Nancy Tartaglia, FCCF's Planned Giving & Donor Stewardship Manager and liaison for RPAC. "As professional advisors, they have opportunities to discuss philanthropy with their clients, and we want to make sure they have the knowledge and tools to effectively have those conversations."



*Victoria McGruder, a financial advisor for The Erdmann Group, says "Being a part of RPAC certainly sets you apart from other professionals. It gives you the tools, resources and network to be an advocate for your community and to best serve your clients."*

*To learn more about Fairfield County's Community Foundation's Professional Advisors Councils, visit [FCCFoundation.org](http://FCCFoundation.org)*

## The Planet Fuel Charitable Fund

Using a Donor Advised Fund to empower a new generation of environmental stewards

When Fairfield resident Amy Barnouw launched Planet Fuel, a line of organic juices for teens and tweens, she knew she wanted to do more than create a healthy product.



*FCCF fundholder Amy Barnouw (left) with members of the Planet Fuel Charitable Fund's Student Advisory Council Carter George and Anna Schlachtenhaufen at the Chasing Ice film feature which was a part of the Fund's environmental film series at Fairfield Theatre Company.*

She also wanted to empower young people to create positive social change. She's doing just that through the Planet Fuel Charitable Fund, a Donor Advised Fund established with Fairfield County's Community Foundation.

"It's a seamless way to be philanthropic," says Barnouw. "You can literally write a check and hit the ground running the next day." Through her fund, Barnouw believes this is an ideal way to make an impact without having to manage investments, or file for tax status and other back-office work.

The Planet Fuel Charitable Fund has already started awarding environmental conservation grants. It's also tapped into the passion of young people, forming a Student Advisory Council. The council engages teens to become environmental leaders. The teens guide local and national

grantmaking and are organizing a film series to raise community awareness for environmental issues.

According to Barnouw, her fund is already making an impact "because Fairfield County's Community Foundation is more than just an investment vehicle. It's a philanthropic partner, connecting funders to a wealth of knowledge and relationships."

*"The Community Foundation is a place where you can come in with a dream, and expand it in ways you didn't even know were possible," says Barnouw. "You're part of a team."*

*To learn more about establishing a Donor Advised Fund, contact Development Director Kristy Jelenik at 203.750.3211 or [KJelenik@FCCFoundation.org](mailto:KJelenik@FCCFoundation.org)*