

YOUR COMMUNITY. YOUR IMPACT.

Spring 2021



Because partnership is a pillar of Fairfield County's Community Foundation's work, we are proud of the tremendous strides we have made together to close the opportunity gap in Fairfield County, even as new challenges emerged over the last year. Your generous support helped us deepen existing collaborations and launch exciting new ones, some of which are summarized here.

COVID Resiliency Fund and Grant Analysis

We are inspired by the hundreds of donors (including two discrete matching donors awarding \$600,000) who partnered with FCCF to help Fairfield County frontline nonprofits alleviate the consequences of the pandemic. Our survey of Fund grantees identified the evolving impact of COVID-19 on their organizations and the changing needs of our most vulnerable populations.

emme coalition

Thanks to your donations, the emme coalition, our Fund for Women & Girls' new signature investment – in partnership with OPTIMUS Health Care – has launched in Bridgeport. This innovative program provides women

and girls with the tools they need to make informed choices about their own health and wellness and reach their full potential.

Center for Nonprofit Excellence (CNE)

As a result of our partnership with Catch a Fire, a digital skills-based volunteer platform, 74 local nonprofits obtained pro bono capacity building services in recent months. Near & Far Aid Association helped make this offering possible.

Community Engagement

FCCF has partnered with community groups to engage residents in important discussions about key issues:

- The Darien Library and League of Women Voters-Darien/Norwalk for the series "The Future of Fairfield County"
- The Bridgeport Regional Business Council for a series of workforce development conversations funded by Bank of America
- The Universal Health Foundation of CT for "Listen, Learn & Engage: Expanding Access to Health Care in Connecticut"

Fairfield County's Giving Day

Thank you for making February 25 a record-breaking day! 14,828 donors (30% first-time donors) made 21,187 gifts in support of 394 local nonprofits totaling \$2,250,154. Special prize opportunities for arts and environment nonprofits were offered this year, as well as a new family philanthropy component. We are grateful for Bank of America's longstanding support of this day.

Board and Staff Partnership

Our work is made stronger by our new Board members – Steve Edwards, Jonathan Fraade, Carolyn Gonzalez, Mindy Houck, Joette Katz, and Max Medina.

Fairfield County Business Collaborative for Education Equity

In September 2020, seven local businesses announced a partnership with FCCF to establish a multi-year local impact and funding collective. Founding members — Bank of America, First County Bank, Lapine Associates, Pitney Bowes, Synchrony, Tudor Foundation, and Xerox — created a Field of Interest Fund administered by FCCF to provide funding for measurable education-related initiatives in the Bridgeport, Danbury, Norwalk, and Stamford regions with an initial focus on early childhood education, high school students, and hunger relief for all students.

We appreciate your generosity and commitment to partnering with us to create lasting change in Fairfield County. Thank you!

RECORD BREAKING RESULTS THANKS TO YOUR GENEROSITY



\$2,250,154
TOTAL DOLLARS
RAISED



394
NONPROFITS
RAISED FUNDING



14,828
UNIQUE DONORS

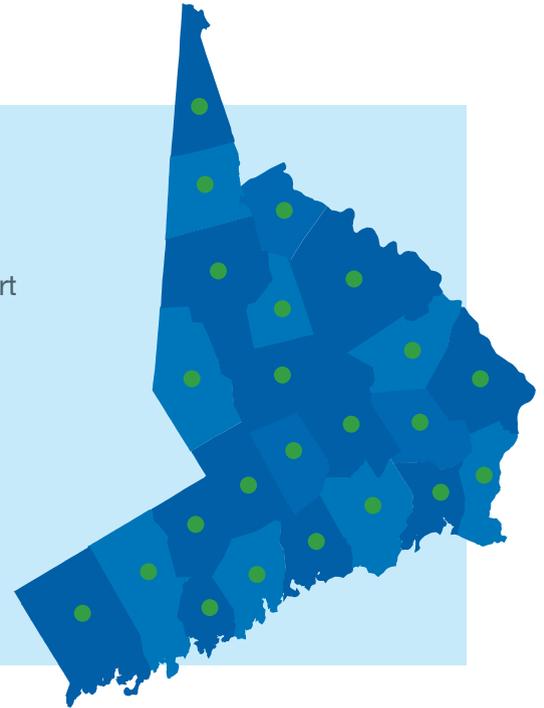


21,187
TOTAL GIFTS

Support our shared mission at:
[FCCFoundation.org/Donate](https://www.fccfoundation.org/Donate)

COVID-19 IMPACT: YOUR SUPPORT HELPS LOCAL NONPROFITS MEET CHALLENGES AND ADDRESS ONGOING COMMUNITY NEEDS

Bethel	Easton	New Fairfield	Shelton	Weston
Bridgeport	Fairfield	Newtown	Sherman	Westport
Brookfield	Greenwich	Norwalk	Stamford	Wilton
Danbury	Monroe	Redding	Stratford	
Darien	New Canaan	Ridgefield	Trumbull	



All 23 towns and cities across Fairfield County were served.

It has been more than a year since the coronavirus forced us to change the way we live, work, and socialize. We have kept each other safe by washing our hands, wearing our masks, keeping our distance, and receiving our vaccines. But health precautions alone are not enough to assuage the pandemic's impact on our community. A wave of housing, food security, employment, education and health challenges has emerged, and the racial and socioeconomic disparities that already existed therein have been amplified in its wake.

Through the generous support of donors like you, Fairfield County's Community Foundation launched the *Fairfield County COVID-19 Resiliency Fund* in March 2020, beginning an ongoing effort to help those in our community most dramatically impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Since then, your donations of approximately \$2.75 million have helped keep families in their homes, bring food to the table, support at-home learning, provide childcare, offer physical and mental health services, and meet a wide range of other pressing needs that our region's most vulnerable populations face.

In April, your donations supported the Fund's fifth round of grants to area nonprofits, bringing the total distributed amount to over \$2.6 million, which was awarded to more than 200 organizations serving residents in all 23 of Fairfield County's cities and towns. Also in April, the Community Foundation released the results of the *COVID-19 Resiliency Fund Grant Analysis*, which evaluated how grant recipients utilized the funds received, the populations served, and the ongoing challenges that local nonprofits anticipate as they meet the community's needs.

An overwhelming number of grantees surveyed (94%) reported that their organization had been negatively impacted by COVID-19, most often due to new expenses, the need to provide more frequent or new services, and technology challenges. The top organizational challenges reported were financial sustainability, reaching clients while adhering to social distancing, and maintaining service quality.

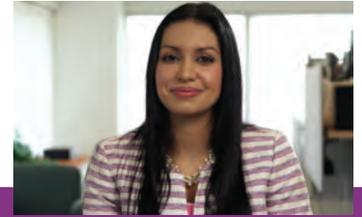
The analysis also revealed that 89% of the organizations surveyed would seek additional support to address COVID-related issues. Survey responders identified many ongoing needs in the community, the most critical including food and other basic needs,

direct financial assistance and income replacement, and mental health and social isolation.

We are grateful for the generosity of our donors, whose support ensures that the Community Foundation's nonprofit partners can focus on their work to close the opportunity gap in Fairfield County. Today, as that gap is magnified and expands as a result of the pandemic, it is crucial to continue that work. While we have yet to fully grasp the long-lasting and far-reaching implications of COVID-19 on our local, national and global community, we know with certainty that current needs will evolve, and new needs will surface.

"We honor all of our neighbors who have and who will continue to help meet the needs of so many people in the community we call home," said Juanita James, President and CEO of Fairfield County's Community Foundation.

Your generosity is helping frontline Fairfield County nonprofits meet the critical and evolving needs caused by COVID-19. Learn more at: FCCFoundation.org/ResiliencyGrants



Featured speakers inspired guests at FWG's 2021 Virtual Celebration. Clockwise from top right: Keynote speaker & award-winning author Margaret Atwood; Dr. Paula Garay, Women's Health Initiative Director at OPTIMUS Health Care; and FWG program beneficiary Geraldine Bryant and family.

UNITE AND RISE: OUR 2021 FUND FOR WOMEN & GIRLS VIRTUAL CELEBRATION HONORS YOUR IMPACT

While the last year may have tested us with unprecedented challenges, it also reminded us that we can elicit powerful change when we work together. *Unite and Rise*, the theme of Fairfield County's Community Foundation's 2021 Fund for Women & Girls Virtual Celebration, epitomizes that concept. And you, our donors, affirmed it! Your generous contributions of more than \$100,000 through our Text to Give Campaign will fuel our continued investment in the health, safety and economic security of women and girls across Fairfield County.

To date, the Fund for Women & Girls has invested more than \$8 million in sustainable solutions that improve the futures of tens of thousands of women and girls throughout Fairfield County.

The Virtual Celebration, held on April 16, highlighted the emme coalition, the Fund for Women & Girls' newly launched signature investment in Bridgeport. Led by Dr. Paula Garay and delivered by OPTIMUS Health Care, emme helps

women and girls aged 12-49 achieve and maintain healthy lifestyles by connecting them with tools for wellbeing that can be passed along to future generations.

"As an immigrant and young woman of color who grew up in Bridgeport, I faced obstacles that derailed my aspirations. I needed a program like emme, one that equips women and girls who face similar barriers with lifelong skills to reach their goals."

Dr. Paula Garay, Director, Women's Health Initiative, OPTIMUS Health Care

The Celebration also highlighted how your contributions have supported the work of our grantee partners, including the Center for Family Justice and All Our Kin, and our programmatic work, such as the Family Economic Security Program at Housatonic Community College.

Jane Carlin, Event Co-Chair, began the Celebration by honoring her friend Patricia Phillips, who passed

away on December 8, 2020. Pat was an early supporter of the Fund and will be remembered for a lifetime of philanthropy and social advocacy.

This year's keynote was author Margaret Atwood, who spoke about how she was inspired to write her 1985 classic, *The Handmaid's Tale*, by the Women's Movement of the 1980s and the fight for women's equality.

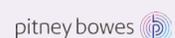
Your unwavering commitment to our shared work of empowering women and girls is just as important today as it was when the Fund for Women & Girls was founded 23 years ago. As Event Co-Chair Rebecca Rooney mentioned in her opening remarks, "only when we unite can we achieve lasting, positive, sustainable change." Thank you!

Learn more about the Fund for Women & Girls: FCCFoundation.org/FWG

Learn more about FWG's new signature investment: FCCFoundation.org/emme

Thank you to the sponsors of our 2021 Fund for Women & Girls Virtual Celebration.

The Celebration would not have been possible without the support of Stamford Health, our VIP Presenting Sponsor and the recipient of the Anne Leonhardt Award, and our generous corporate sponsors.



CONSIDER YOUR CHARITABLE LEGACY

If this past year has taught us anything, it is that planning can be vital whether it involves taking care of your family or your community. Thinking about how you would like to see your legacy positively impact the lives of others is an important step in any philanthropist's journey.

Though it can seem complicated, it is simple to leave a gift in your will. FCCF can help create a plan to balance your family commitments and your philanthropic wishes. After your loved ones are cared for, you can give what is left to support the charities you care about most. Whether through a designated fund, a field of interest

fund, or an unrestricted gift, you can be sure that FCCF will honor your intention to support the causes you championed beyond your lifetime.

Gifts in wills are the most common and easiest to execute, but there are other options to give to charity through a planned gift. For example, you can name a charity, such as FCCF, to be the sole or partial beneficiary of your life insurance policy or retirement account. It is never too early to start thinking about your estate planning—understanding that as you move through life your plans and circumstances may change—you can always make adjustments in the future.

There is a Greek proverb that says: "A society grows great when people begin to plant trees whose shade they will never sit in." With that sentiment, we hope you will join forward-thinking philanthropists, like John and Charlotte Suhler and many others, and consider making a commitment to FCCF's Future Society. Whenever you are ready, please know that FCCF is here to help plan your legacy. Many of you consider Fairfield County your home and your community. We encourage you to consider how you may help your community for the years to come.



John and Charlotte Suhler,
Co-Chairs of the Future Society at
the Community Foundation



To learn more, please contact **Joe Collin**, Director of Development & Philanthropic Services, at: jcollin@fccfoundation.org

As visionary philanthropists, your generous planned gifts make an impact for future generations. Thank you! Learn more at: FCCFoundation.org/Future

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