



*“Living here has given us the desire to make the community better for everybody, not just those fortunate enough to get good jobs. So when the Community Foundation identifies special needs, we’ve been more than happy to pitch in.”*

– John LaMattina

**“We feel it’s our responsibility to help when we can.”**

### JOHN AND MARY LAMATTINA

Brooklyn, New York natives Mary and John LaMattina made southeastern Connecticut their home more than 45 years ago. But lessons from their humble upbringings guide their philanthropy in the community today.

John’s dad scooped ice cream for a living. Money was tight, especially during winters. “I remember some pretty sparse dinners growing up,” John recalled.

Mary’s dad drove New York City subway trains. Her close-knit, extended family lived all around her neighborhood. Relatives pitched in to support each other, especially when Mary and her brother contracted polio as children. Yet, she said, “there was some food insecurity in our family.”

“We were able to go to college thanks to scholarships, so one of the primary things we’ve tried to do in this community now is to support education,” John said. Giving to alleviate food insecurity and health issues is also their way to “pay it forward,” he added.

Mary made education her life’s work. She retired after two decades as a professor at Three Rivers Community College.

John capped a distinguished career as a research scientist when he retired as president of Pfizer Global Research and Development.

“Living here has given us the desire to make the community better for everybody, not just those fortunate enough to get good jobs. So when the Community Foundation identifies special needs, we’re more than happy to pitch in. We feel it’s our responsibility to help when we can,” John said.

Together they’ve answered the call from the Foundation on many fronts. John served on the Board of Trustees and Mary has volunteered on committees tasked with distributing funds for reading programs and reviewing college scholarship applications.

They established the LaMattina Family Fund at the Community Foundation to support opportunities for underserved boys and young men to lead more fulfilling, productive and healthy lives. In addition, Mary has given to the Southeast Women & Girls Fund.

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## Investing in Our Community

We have all learned a lot from the challenges of the last year and a half. We have a much more acute sense of what we and our neighbors need for wellbeing in terms of housing, food security, physical and mental health care, childcare, access to technology and education.

Throughout the pandemic, people like John and Mary LaMattina and many others have stepped up and asked, “How can we help?” Although Mary Lou DeVivo and Albert Glassenberg are not here with us, their families established funds at the Community Foundation to honor Mary Lou’s and Albert’s legacies of compassion and community commitment in answer to that same question.

For 38 years, the Community Foundation has been part of the answer for the hundreds of caring residents who have asked, in good times and bad, “How can I help?” Increasing amounts in grants and scholarships being made through the four Women & Girls Funds, 123 scholarship funds and hundreds of charitable funds and other philanthropic tools are testament to how the Community Foundation helps people answer that question.

Now, with over \$240 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds coming to Eastern Connecticut, our 42 towns have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to reinvest in our communities



with a common goal: For *all* of us, regardless of zip code, race or background, to securely live, grow, work, learn and play in the towns we call home. Experts point to early childhood care and education, mental health, and affordable and safe housing as our biggest levers in equitable, transformative change.

So we ask again, how can we help? Join the Community Foundation in calling on your municipal leaders and superintendents to invest “30% plus” of your town’s ARPA funds into early childhood, housing and mental health.

In the last year, we proved that we could face any challenge by joining hands and stepping up to help. When we stand strong together, we are resilient and can create a healthy, thriving community for all of Eastern Connecticut.

Warmest,

Maryam Elahi  
President & CEO

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## A Step Toward Building a More Just Region

It’s an awesome responsibility. You entrust us to grant millions of dollars from charitable funds each year to nonprofits serving Eastern Connecticut communities. Invested wisely, the funds will forever benefit local residents.

Fund for  
**RACIAL**  
**JUSTICE**

The many donors who helped create the Community Foundation loved where they lived and wanted their neighbors and community to thrive. The problem is, not everyone has thrived—because of painful systems of injustice affecting people of color for generations. Too often, they have faced insurmountable barriers to success.

These uncomfortable truths, brought more to light by the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and many others, have underscored the seriousness of our grantmaking responsibilities.

- How do we deploy grants so *every local resident*—regardless of their zip code or skin color—has the same opportunity to thrive?

- How do we nourish our hungry neighbors, house those without an affordable place to live, educate all children well—and work to reduce the conditions that create hunger, homelessness, and educational disparities in the first place?
- In other words, how can your gifts be used to address not only the symptoms—but also the *root causes*—of systemic racism?

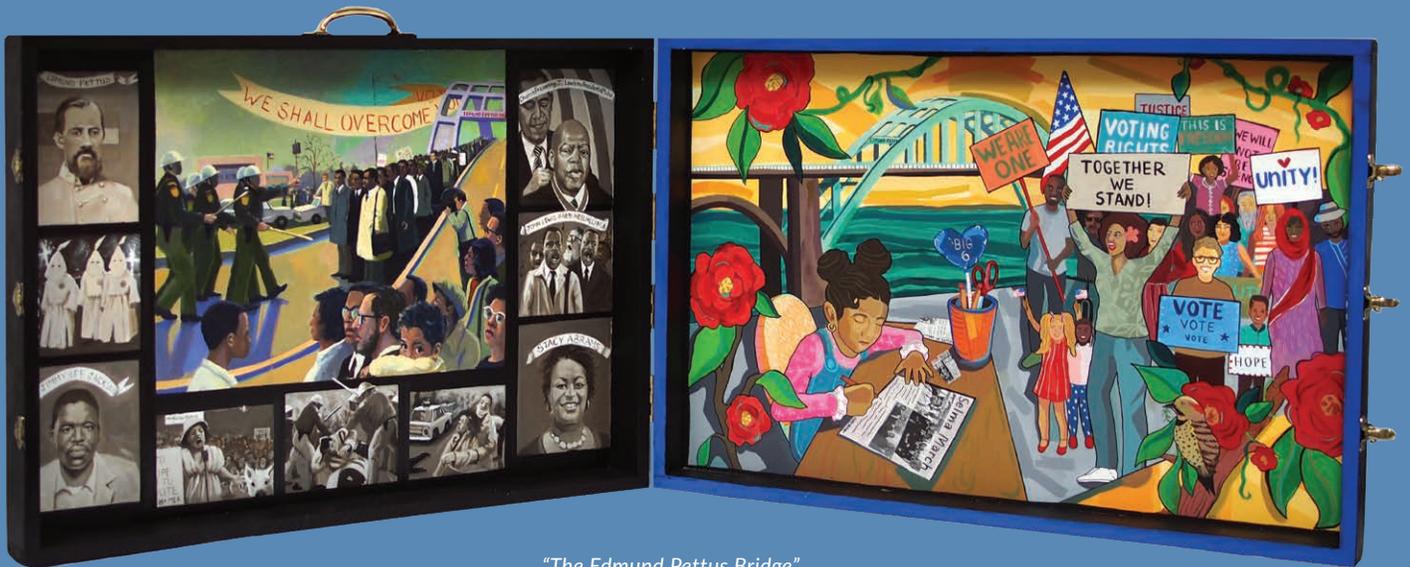
There are no easy answers, but we must try to answer them.

This past June we launched the Fund for Racial Justice. The fund will make grants in Eastern Connecticut communities to advance racial equity, support racial justice grassroots organizing and advocacy, and provide flexible resources to organizations and movements led by people of color.

We believe the Fund is a step in the direction of creating a more just region. We invite you to join us in giving and working together to build it.

*To make a gift to the Fund for Racial Justice, visit [cfect.org/donate](https://cfect.org/donate).*

# Norwich Youth Lead the Way on Multicultural Understanding



"The Edmund Pettus Bridge"

When the Norwich Race Equity Collaborative sought to build on the movement for racial justice that bubbled up in the wake of George Floyd's murder, they turned to the city's youth. Now, with grants in hand from the Community Foundation and other funders, they are growing outward.

The Collaborative, a partnership of local leaders, had met for years to discuss challenges and solutions around race.

But 2020 was very different. Shiela Hayes, president of the NAACP branch in Norwich and Collaborative member, observed, "We saw young people rise up in the city and really take on the advocacy role of addressing racial injustices."

It was astonishingly effective leadership from the young people, some as young as ten years old. They led rallies and protests, organized town hall meetings and created videos to shine a light on injustices, testified in favor of police accountability legislation at the Capitol (the bill passed!), and met together regularly to plan community events.

Hayes was impressed, and she could tell you a lot about organizing in diverse communities. She's been involved in the NAACP for more than 30 years. (And she's quick to clarify that the organization, since its beginnings 112 years ago, has always been a multicultural organization.)

As co-advisor to the NAACP Robertsine Duncan Youth Council, she and other community partners helped the youth talk through the issues that needed the most attention among their peers. Then, the Collaborative shaped an action plan into a funding proposal.

With a Community Foundation grant to help fund these projects, the group is full steam ahead with plans to engage young people to educate about different cultures, give youth of color a space to discuss mental health issues, celebrate the achievements of Black people through public art, and provide guidance for students of color to learn about careers they may not have considered before.

Their plans include:

- Creating a public mural depicting how enslaved people gained their freedom through the Underground Railroad
- Offering classes for creative expression of different cultural heritages through a summer arts program for school-age youth
- Career exploration activities for high school students interested in health, education, or entrepreneurial careers
- Connecting teens and pre-K children to create media celebrating Norwich's various cultures and ethnicities
- Hosting forums for high school students of color to learn and connect about reducing and preventing anxiety, depression, and suicide—issues that intensified during the pandemic

*Above: A partner in the Norwich Race Equity Collaborative, the Public Art for Racial Justice Education (PARJE) Sister Mural Project commissioned two artists, Nancy Gladwell and Jas Oyola, to create a diptych (a two-paneled painting connected by a hinge). Titled "The Edmund Pettus Bridge," it shows a vision of change from 1965 to the future. It is traveling between schools, libraries, and faith communities to invite conversation among young people about what is necessary to "cross that bridge" toward a more equitable future. Photo by Jac Lahav.*



## Look What We Found in Our Mailbox!

### SHIRLEY BRADWAY SERAFIN SCHOLARSHIP

My name is Sarah Uwazany and I was the 2017 recipient of the Shirley Bradway Serafin Scholarship from the Community Foundation. I am writing to you today to again thank you for your extremely generous grant and to offer some insight as to how this scholarship has made a direct impact on the success of my future.

Without this scholarship, my family and I would not have been able to finance such a premier program as the nursing program at Fairfield University. I was able to experience every aspect of being a full-time, on-campus student because of your scholarship. Multiple times, my mom and I discussed how much the Community Foundation helped us to afford my schooling and maximize my success during my undergraduate years.

*"It is organizations like yours that make life-changing differences for students like me."*

— Sarah Uwazany

As of today, I have graduated Summa Cum Laude from Fairfield, achieving Dean's List for the Egan School of Nursing for every semester I was in the program. Additionally, I recently passed the nursing board examinations and received my RN license. I will begin working at Hartford Hospital in the Emergency Department later this summer!

I am truly so grateful for all of your help and support throughout my four years at Fairfield University. It is organizations like yours that make life-changing differences for students like me.

All my best and warm regards,

Sarah Uwazany  
Woodstock, Connecticut

### 2021 COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS

**\$963,649**  
A 27% INCREASE OVER 2020

**307**  
RECIPIENTS

FROM **32** OF THE 42 TOWNS  
IN EASTERN CONNECTICUT

## FUNDS FOCUSED ON SUPPORTING YOUTH

### Mary Lou DeVivo Fund for Windham Literacy

The late Mary Lou DeVivo was a strong advocate for Windham Public Schools and started *Windham Reads* at Willimantic Public Library. The program aims to open doors for more local kids and families to experience the joy and power of reading. She believed literacy was a path toward greater life opportunities and self-sufficiency, particularly for people working to overcome poverty.

In memory of Mary Lou's advocacy and passion, her children established the Mary Lou DeVivo Fund for Windham Literacy in 2021, to reflect the passion she had for both literacy and her community. Annual grants from the fund will support the Willimantic Public Library's *Windham Reads* initiatives for children and their families.



The mother of five and grandmother of fourteen, Mary Lou was a former preschool and kindergarten teacher and later served as the director of religious studies at St. Joseph's Parish in Windham. When she passed away in 2015, she was president and owner of Willimantic Waste Paper Company.

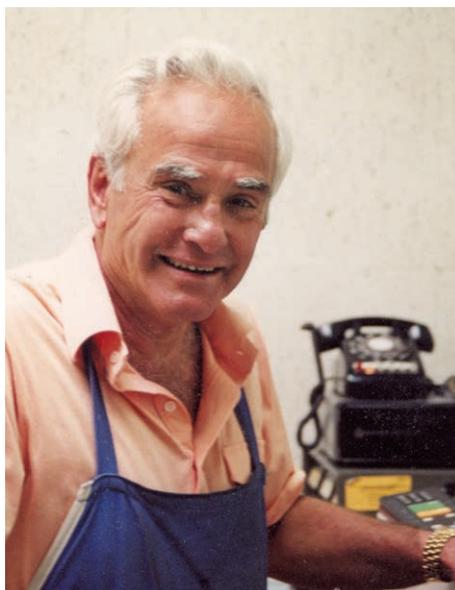
One of Mary Lou's daughters, Gina DeVivo Brassaw said, "To continue my mother's commitment to our community through this fund is so meaningful to our family. With the Community Foundation and the Willimantic Public Library as our partners, we know we can continue to make the kind of difference she made during her lifetime."

### Albert B. Glassenberg Fund

When Albert B. Glassenberg passed away in 2017 at the age of 89, his family celebrated him as "a loyal son of New London... known and loved for his generosity to causes and people, work ethic, loyalty, bartending skills and lively sense of humor." To memorialize that generous spirit, his children, Charlie Glassenberg and Jacquie Hemmerdinger, established a charitable fund at the Community Foundation, just as their family had done before by creating funds in their grandparents' and mother's names.

The Albert B. Glassenberg Fund will forever support causes closest to Albert's heart. Along with the arts, his interest was in giving young people with fewer opportunities a better shot at success. That's why annual grants from the fund support lower income students who are first in their families to attend college. Grant dollars help them meet expenses

beyond tuition, such as books, computers, travel, clothing, and educational experiences related to study abroad, service-learning, field study, and internships.



Albert was an early supporter and former trustee of the Community Foundation. Through his fund, we know that he remains with us on the journey to create opportunities for all young people.

"Our dad was in the first generation of his family to go to college," according to Charlie and Jacquie. "He was the son and grandson of immigrants who fled poverty, violence and hatred to build better lives. We are honored to help the next generation of young people from Eastern Connecticut to study and travel, and perhaps someday give back to the community the way that Albert did."



Participants from the Hispanic Alliance's 2021 BRILLA program with co-leaders Maria Cruz-Saco (front center) and Mirna Martinez (back right).

## Young Latinas Shine Through BRILLA

Thanks to a recent grant from the Southeast Women & Girls Fund, the eight high school students who participated in the Hispanic Alliance La Latina Network's BRILLA summer leadership program shined in every way.

These exceptional young women were selected to take part in workshops led by women scientists, economists, artists, professors, activists, business leaders, and technology professionals.

With an emphasis on identity, self-reflection, higher education and interpersonal skills, the young people heard personal stories and lessons from these positive role models. They learned

how women overcame challenges and achieved academic and professional success.

Maria Cruz-Saco, co-leader with Mirna Martinez of the BRILLA program, said, "The girls truly shine brightly through all the BRILLA activities. They believe more deeply in themselves and really tap into their own strengths and dreams. They come to realize that they will have peers and mentors to support them long after the week-long program ends. It's these relationships that are so powerful."

*For information on how our Women & Girls Funds are making a difference, visit [cfect.org/WGgrants](https://cfect.org/WGgrants).*

*With hundreds of founding members and supporters behind them, the Community Foundation's four Women & Girls Funds support programs like BRILLA that create opportunities and advance equity for women and girls across our region. This fall, grants totaling more than \$200,000 will be awarded to nonprofits in the Southeast, Norwich, Windham and Northeast areas. Visit [cfect.org/WGfunds](https://cfect.org/WGfunds) to learn more about how you can support the Women & Girls Fund in your area!*

>>> Mary and John LaMattina continued from page 1

“You can be involved with the Community Foundation in different ways, and that has appealed to me,” Mary said. As a self-described “worker bee,” she’s comfortable volunteering by selling tickets, setting up chairs, or filling bags with potatoes and food pantry staples at the local food bank.

To the LaMattinas, their neighbors’ needs are deeply personal. Mary said, “When I moved here I didn’t have any family so I had to create one. Our community here has become our family. And we grew up in families where you helped each other out.”

John and Mary intend to lean on the Foundation to keep them abreast of the region’s evolving, most pressing challenges. Mary wonders how the lack of in-person instruction during the pandemic will affect children in the long term.

John added, “I think the problems caused by poverty need to be addressed, and three ways to do it are through education, access to food, and support for social justice. The Community Foundation is moving toward social justice issues more than ever. We’ve supported some of those initiatives financially, and we hope to see them continue.”



John and Mary LaMattina joined other donors through a Community Foundation grant to Connecticut Legal Services (CLS) to fund a housing staff attorney for its Willimantic region. This is one of the many strategic initiatives that the Foundation is supporting to bring housing equity to communities throughout Eastern Connecticut and provide all residents the opportunity for affordable, inclusive and safe housing. At a press briefing in July, CLS Housing Attorney Ashley Daley (right) is welcomed and introduced to the community. Also pictured is CFECT President & CEO Maryam Elahi and CLS Attorney Nilda Havrilla.

## The Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut

### VISION

A healthy, thriving, sustainable Eastern Connecticut with greater equity for all.

### MISSION

Collaborate with partners to put philanthropy into action to address the needs, rights and interests of our community in Eastern Connecticut.

### VALUES

Integrity, Equity, Respect, Courage, Empathy

### WORK

- Convene and serve as a thought partner with like-minded donors, nonprofits and other leaders to ensure collective impact, especially around four priority focus areas:
  - > Empower youth
  - > Promote basic needs and rights
  - > Preserve the environment
  - > Advance animal welfare
- Bring resources and knowledge to nonprofit organizations in Eastern Connecticut so that they may effectively and strategically carry out their missions to meet the needs of our community.
- Advise and support our donors to fulfill their philanthropic interests.

### Board of Trustees

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Your community.  
Your legacy.  
Your power to do good.

Visit us at [cfect.org](http://cfect.org)

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## START A CONVERSATION TODAY

Whether you are new to philanthropy or looking to do more through your giving, we can help you have a meaningful impact on the issues and communities that you care about. Contact Alison Woods at [alison@cfect.org](mailto:alison@cfect.org) or Lauren Parda at [lauren@cfect.org](mailto:lauren@cfect.org) for a confidential conversation. Or call them at 860.442.3572.

### Build a Fund at the Community Foundation

Did you know that you can create a permanently endowed fund and build it up over time? You can start a fund and add to it over 3-5 years to reach the \$10,000 minimum (\$25,000 for scholarships). You can then add more as circumstances allow. A long-term plan might include a legacy provision in your estate plan or naming your fund as a beneficiary of a retirement plan or life insurance policy.

## CONNECT YOUR PASSION TO A PURPOSE

Contribute to your own or an existing fund and/or promote your Community Foundation's work through these funds:

- **Fund for Racial Justice** advances racial equity, supports racial justice organizing and advocacy and allocates flexible resources to organizations and movements led by people of color.
- **Community Leadership Fund** helps us to build powerful partnerships that strengthen our region's nonprofits in their work within our four priority areas.
- **President's Discretionary Fund** enables us to provide leadership when needed and to back innovative projects as they emerge.

*In addition to making a cash tax-deductible donation, this might be a great time to make a difference using these other tax-advantaged ways:*

- Transfer appreciated securities.
- Roll over up to \$100,000 of your IRA assets if you are age 70½ or older (donor advised funds excluded).
- Make gifts that produce life income, such as Charitable Remainder Trusts, Charitable Lead Trusts, and Charitable Gift Annuities.
- Donate gifts of real estate.