



Responding and Rebuilding Together



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VISION

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

MISSION

Collaborating 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

cfect.org



UCP of Eastern Connecticut's Assistive Technology Center, supported by the Community Foundation, provides tools and devices to people of all ages and all disabilities. The goal: to break down barriers to independence in school, at work, and at home. [Photo provided by UCP of Eastern Connecticut]

Shining Light at a Time of Crisis

*"Ring the bells that still can ring
Forget your perfect offering
There is a crack, a crack in everything
That's how the light gets in."*

In 2020, Leonard Cohen's timeless lyrics from the song, *Anthem*, rang true. The twin devastations of the coronavirus and systemic racism tore across Eastern Connecticut and beyond. Yet, while the cracks in our communities were deep and painful, your light streamed through them. Together—our grantees, donors, partner institutions, teachers, mentors, essential workers, volunteers, and supportive businesses—you gave us hope.

Nursing home workers cared at the bedsides of sick elderly. Donors sent their stimulus checks to organizations in need. Churches and youth groups delivered food to homebound people. Town residents showed up and spoke out for more equitable public policies. Teachers and therapists delivered learning and comfort through computer screens. Employees and volunteers refused to close shelters for those most vulnerable.

With your help, we convened, advocated, and worked with community partners to address emergency needs. We planned for the future supports necessary in the recovery effort, and we worked with state, local and municipal partners to weave a wide safety net for stronger communities across our region. And while our focus was on needs created by the pandemic, our grantmaking and scholarship programs continued with an eye toward greater equity.

We have never been prouder to be *your* community foundation, and to partner with hundreds of determined nonprofit organizations that serve our region. They turned your donations to the Neighbors for Neighbors Fund into critical on-the-ground programs and services when local communities were in crisis.

We know the fractures in our communities have yet to fully heal, and we remain committed to working with you towards investing in an equitable recovery. Our journey to advance racial justice in Eastern Connecticut came into sharper focus over the past year. It is clear: when we work together to address inequities, particularly in health, education and housing, communities can thrive.

Thank you for your generosity, caring, and partnership. *Thank you for your light.*



Maryam Elahi
President & CEO



Lynn Malerba
Chair, Board of Trustees

YOU RESPONDED: THE NEIGHBORS FOR NEIGHBORS FUND

Awe-inspiring. That's the only way to describe your contributions to deliver emergency relief for your neighbors during the COVID-19 crisis.

Your gifts to the **Neighbors for Neighbors Fund**, launched in March 2020 in response to the pandemic, were turned into dozens of flexible grants to nonprofits serving Eastern Connecticut communities, especially those agencies on the front lines and those disproportionately impacted.

Thanks to you and many others like you who joined our “Circle of Kindness,” thousands of area residents received emergency relief to survive, stave off homelessness, learn, manage mental health challenges, care for children, battle food insecurity, protect themselves from illness, and so much more. Together, you contributed \$1,481,982 (and counting!) to the Neighbors for Neighbors Fund.

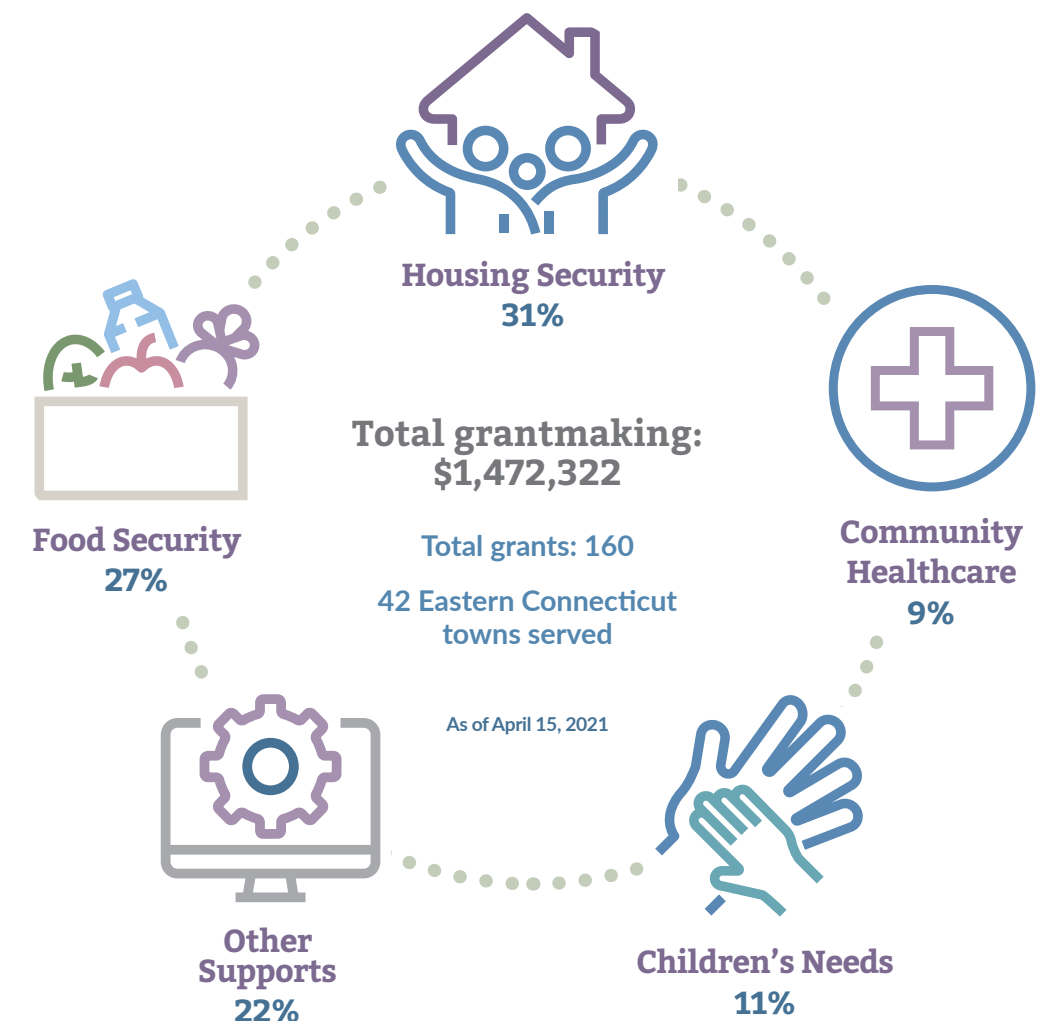


The COVID-19 pandemic illuminated the critical need for high-quality child care, particularly for essential workers who couldn't work from home. With grant support from the Community Foundation, Groton-based Riverfront Children's Center delivered excellent, reliable care and supports such as food pantry items and diapers to hardworking families with children. [Photo provided by Riverfront Children's Center]

INVESTING IN AN EQUITABLE RECOVERY

As the pandemic worsened inequities and threatened already-vulnerable populations, grants from the Neighbors for Neighbors Fund at the Community Foundation supported nonprofits serving residents across the Community Foundation's 42-town region. We collaborated with the United Way of Southeastern Connecticut and the United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut to deploy grants where needs were greatest.

NEIGHBORS FOR NEIGHBORS FUND: COVID-19 RELIEF



“Our goal from the beginning of the pandemic was to get as much money as we could to as many people and organizations in need as possible. The Neighbors for Neighbors Fund was a key part of our strategy to accomplish this.”

— Michael Rauh, President & CEO of Chelsea Groton Bank
Chelsea Groton Foundation is a funding partner of the Neighbors for Neighbors Fund

ANSWERING THE CALL OF YOUR NEIGHBORS—TOGETHER

*Grants from the Neighbors for Neighbors Fund made many lives better.
Here are some of their stories.*



Bridges to Independence Were Paved with Technology

UCP of Eastern Connecticut expertly responds to more than 470 calls yearly from people with a wide range of disabilities who seek access to health care, schooling, transportation, and socialization. When COVID-19 triggered a flood of new calls, the agency was ready.

Shannon Taber, UCP's director of inclusion and accessibility services, said of the crisis, "Now a person is stuck in their home because it's not safe for them to go out. How do they check with their family? How do they go to a doctor's appointment or grocery shop? Through technology."

With a Neighbors for Neighbors Fund grant, UCP ramped up its wide-ranging assistive technology program—with impressive results. Using Echo Smartpens, students with learning disabilities created entire audio files of their classes. Older people used GrandPad devices to take part in telemedicine appointments or check-ins with family members. People with vision impairments used iPads with voiceover apps to read. Closed captioning for Zoom videos helped those with hearing impairments to do their jobs.

When people needed it most, UCP opened doors—to self-reliance, human connection, and dignity.

Emergency Relief = Compassionate Attorneys

Emergency relief comes in many forms, like the dozens of warmhearted and wise attorneys from **Connecticut Legal Services (CLS)**.

They stepped in when the COVID-19 pandemic pushed many people with fragile finances into desperate situations. Pay the rent or pay for food. Risk a harsh court judgment because a virtual hearing was inaccessible. Lose medical care because agencies were closed. Get discharged from a nursing home to a homeless shelter due to insurance gaps.

The Neighbors for Neighbors Fund fueled CLS at a time of crisis. Thanks, in part, to the grant support, CLS attorneys unraveled a range of legal roadblocks. People with lower incomes got the technology necessary to participate remotely in

court proceedings. Older people stayed in warm beds with needed nursing care. Children got special education assistance.

And the attorneys persuasively advocated for policy changes that affected thousands of vulnerable people. They prevented evictions and the loss of vital food and health benefits—potentially catastrophic situations for people working to overcome poverty.

One client, Martha, lost her job when her workplace closed during the pandemic. She received \$11,000 in retroactive unemployment benefits when CLS untangled the legal knot: an old \$160 penalty fee. Best of all: Martha could stay in her home.

They prevented evictions and the loss of vital food and health benefits—potentially catastrophic situations for people working to overcome poverty.



In Windham, Homeward Bound

The **Windham Region No Freeze Project**, an emergency shelter for people experiencing homelessness, knows what it takes to adapt on the fly.

When COVID-19 descended on Connecticut, the shelter moved its 30 guests to a hotel to socially distance safely. But Executive Director Avery Lenhart and her tiny staff kept their eyes on the ball: stable housing for each person they served.

“We started talking with guests right away to create plans so they could exit from the hotel into longer-term housing,” Lenhart said. While the shelter had always assisted guests with housing options, a Neighbors for Neighbors Fund grant provided more flexible ways to achieve that goal.

When shelter guests had family members in other states who could welcome them in, the No Freeze paid for transportation to get them there. Security deposits, often a barrier to stable housing, were paid. Said Lenhart, “It’s great to be able to call the landlord and say, ‘I can write a check right now if you will take this client.’ A lot of times, the landlords say, ‘Yeah, absolutely!’”

“We had people who couldn’t afford their own apartments,” Lenhart continued. “We said, ‘What if you could share an apartment with someone in the same situation?’ To help make it work, we connected them to heating assistance providers.”

The No Freeze eventually closed its doors at the hotel (“Nobody got COVID while we were there!”). And while there’s fear of another crisis when Connecticut ends its pause on evictions, Lenhart finds inspiration from the determination of people like Mia.*



With support from the shelter and a local church, Mia found a job, carefully saved her earnings, and moved into her own apartment with her son.

“She got that job, and everything changed for her. She was beside herself with joy to move forward with her life.”

**Name changed*

“She was beside herself with joy to move forward with her life.”

Where There’s Help for Coping with COVID-19

Behind the doors of the major employers in northeastern Connecticut—the hospitals, prison, and universities—are essential employees battling the effects of a lethal virus for the people they serve. At the same time, they are fending off mental health challenges of their own. Other local residents wrestle with similar torments: stress, anxiety, trauma, and lack of childcare or transportation.

Just ask Diane Manning, president/CEO of **United Services**. The 220-person strong mental and behavioral health center serves the region. Its mobile crisis responses shot up 250% during the pandemic. Substance abuse spiked. Medical care was delayed.

With listening ears and compassion, the staff counseled and cared for the community,

sometimes in languages other than English. And as emergency needs mounted, they stepped in with money for groceries, utilities, rent, prescriptions, and transportation—made possible, in part, by a Neighbors for Neighbors Fund grant.

What does a bus pass mean to someone in rural northeastern Connecticut who needs groceries, has no car, and is facing down fears of a crushing virus? “To relieve that stress is a huge help, since some people have used every bit of savings they had,” said Manning.

Looking to the future, she added, “We’ll be picking up the pieces for a long time. Many things have changed, and Latinx people and women are disproportionately impacted. We’ll be there to help.”



Local Chefs Stepped In for a Hungry Community

During the pandemic, you'd find Chef Tomm Johnson on Zoom teaching techniques for making dishes like jerk chicken with rice and beans. He runs New London High School's culinary arts program.

Early in the pandemic, something gave him pause. "The students were saying, 'Chef, my mom was laid off. The casinos are all closed. We don't have any money. We're hungry.'"

Johnson had the skills, networks, and heart to jump into action. ("I'm a Dad," he explained.)

Within two hours, he raised \$1,000 by crowdfunding online. Johnson (at right) and his chef friends prepared 250 meals their first Saturday using the kitchen at the New London Elks Lodge. The city's Department of Human Services connected people to Johnson's meals.

Word got out. Every week, volunteers showed up—including alumni of Johnson's high school culinary classes.

Led by Johnson, the new nonprofit, **Whalers Helping Whalers**, soon was churning out 1,000 prepared meals every weekend. They opened three food pantries and began delivering food to homebound people. Local restaurants joined in. With Johnson's recipe items, "their chefs would put their own spin on it, and off they went," he said. Support from the Neighbors for Neighbors Fund paid for food and supplies.

"We're a tight-knit community," Johnson said. "People work together, and when you help them, they want to turn around and help you back. People are grateful. This is a safe place. It doesn't matter who you are—if you're hungry, come to us. We're going to take care of you and continue to do this until we don't think there's a need."



Immigrants Lost Jobs, But Not Their Dreams

Attorney Joseph Marino, executive director of the **Immigration Advocacy & Support Center**, saw the pandemic layer new challenges on the determined population he serves. Yet, amidst the crisis, hope emerged. He reflected:

"People come to New London County from all over the world, willing to sacrifice for the prospects of a better life for their family and children. They become the backbone of our communities, doing the kinds of low-wage jobs others aren't willing to take.

We provide low-cost legal services to this traditionally underserved population. We help them get their applications and petitions successfully completed for immigration and naturalization so

they can go on with their lives. Even in the best of times, our clients have difficulty paying the expensive U.S. immigration fees.

The timing of the Neighbors for Neighbors Fund grant was astonishingly good. The casinos, restaurants, gyms, and cleaning firms were shut down due to COVID-19. These are where our clients worked.

When I told them about the grant opportunity, I saw them exhale with relief. I saw them smile. I saw it open the possibility of overcoming the hurdle of application fees so they could reunite with their families or obtain citizenship. So, this grant was a great help in making dreams come true for people."

"The timing of the Neighbors for Neighbors Fund grant was astonishingly good."

Youth Leaders Successfully Led Change

Hearing Youth Voices has seen countless young people transformed by community organizing since the New London-based nonprofit was founded in 2012. Through the process, young people developed skills not always taught in school—public speaking, researching, and strategizing—while pursuing meaningful change where they lived.

In 2020, with campaign training from Hearing Youth Voices and a boost from a grant from the Community Foundation, young people tackled systems of oppression in their schools and communities. Channeling anger and frustration into positive, focused effort required courage and conviction, and the young people did just that. They led some of the largest protests (pictured) our communities had seen in decades, resulting in law enforcement policy changes.



2020 HIGHLIGHTS

In addition to COVID-19-related grantmaking, the Community Foundation awarded hundreds of grants and college scholarships to address equity and anti-racism in strategic areas from animal welfare to education. For a complete list of 2020 grants and scholarships, visit cfct.org.

Veterinary Care Gave Furry Friends a Bounce in Their Steps

Trixie, Butch, Tucker, Zadie and Mylo (pictured) were among the pets lined up at the pop-up veterinary clinics in Mansfield organized by **Our Companions Animal Rescue**. The animals' veterinary costs were out of reach

for their concerned owners—many hit hard by the pandemic. A Community Foundation grant provided the vet care for free, part of \$89,000 in 2020 funding for the region's animal welfare initiatives.

Each pet at the clinic got a “nose to tail” veterinary exam, vaccinations, and needed treatments or tests. Tucker's owner had this to say as the dog recovered from a repaired hernia: “If it were up to Tucker, he would be bouncing on the furniture like normal. We can't stress enough how much we appreciate the help so Tucker can live a healthy, long life. He is a happy puppy and brings a lot of joy to our family.”



Scholars' Ambitions Were Music to Our Ears

In high school, Caroline Duers performed at choral festivals and concerts near and far (including Carnegie Hall!). The talented soprano from Mansfield Center was one of the Community Foundation's 309 scholarship recipients in 2020. Now, she attends the Eastman School of Music at the University of Rochester. The **Take Note! Antonia Brancia Memorial Scholarship Fund**, established by a Windham-area nonprofit group of community singers, is making college more affordable for Caroline. Watch out for her: She's set her sights on a classical performance career, but you may catch her at jazz and musical theaters, too!

College and vocational scholarship awards from the Community Foundation totaled \$753,000 in 2020. With a lift from the scholarships, promising students like Caroline have a better shot at realizing their career goals. It's all thanks to the remarkable generosity of scholarship fund donors through the years.



Nonprofit Leaders Forged Paths to Anti-Racist Communities

“I participated in trainings hosted by the Community Foundation which encouraged nonprofit leaders to use our work to cultivate anti-racist communities. Our group delved into difficult questions, starting with ‘what does it mean to be anti-racist?’ What I've learned is that being anti-racist is a way of life—an active way of seeing and being in the world in order to transform it. The conversations have not been easy or comfortable.

I have much to learn to ensure our organization and the land trusts we serve do more to create welcoming, inclusive, and anti-racist communities. The experience has already helped me better evaluate three of our new regional land trust advancement initiatives, which aim to ready land trusts to address these issues. We must recognize that like land conservation, creating and sustaining anti-racist societies is a long-term commitment.”

— Amy Blaymore Paterson, Executive Director
Connecticut Land Conservation Council



NEIGHBORS WHO CARED

In 2020, over 1,800 individuals and organizations gave more than \$10 million in support of causes that matter to them and to the well-being of Eastern Connecticut residents. We are very grateful to these extraordinarily generous people.

\$1,000,000 and above

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GROW Windham is supported by our Windham Women & Girls Fund and Neighbors for Neighbors Fund. The program cultivates relationships and creates space for youth, community members, and food system partners to work together to bolster food security networks. [Photo provided by GROW Windham]

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High Hopes Therapeutic Riding in Old Lyme builds physical, cognitive, and social skills for people challenged by a range of health conditions. Grants from the Community Foundation, made possible by generous donors, support this innovative organization. [Photo provided by High Hopes]

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*Deceased
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Professional advisors often recognize when the Community Foundation is the right partner for clients with charitable visions. Historically, over half of the gifts to the Community Foundation have come as bequests or other planned gifts made with the guidance and expertise of professional advisors. Special thanks to the following professional advisors for their advice and community service:

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Deborah & Robert Burnside	Abigail & Charles Glassenberg	Terri & James Muren	June D. and Alan W. Strunk
Joan Butler	Nancy & Andrew Grant	Nelly & Bernard Murstein	Mr. & Mrs. Martin Sullivan
Laurel Butler & Christopher Daniels	Janet & James F. Grant	Arthur Nagel	Lee Ellen & Tom Terry
Beth & Garon Camassar	Lorraine Grey	Heidi & John Niblack	Ruth Tombari
Maura Casey	Roger Gross	Patricia & Paul Nunes	Barbara Tuneski
Charles T. Clark	Deborah & Robert Hendel	Julie Olson & Neil Orkney	Susan & Humphrey Tyler
Anne & Carl Clement	Kathleen & Kerry Hertenstein	Donna & William Pedace	Alix & Cornelius Van Rees
Nancy Costa	Nancy Hileman	Evelyn Peyton	Sidney & Sandy Van Zandt
Kathleen & Richard Daniele	Muriel Hinkle	Joann Szytyga Pillar	Mary Waldron
Sally D'Aquila	Gerald Holland	Mary & Richard Place	Caroline & Milton Walters
Anne B. Davis	Judith Hyde	Barbara & David Preston	Walter C. Watson & Charles Sotir
Mildred Devine	Nancy J. Johnson	Lee & John Pritchard	Nancy & G. W. Blunt White II
Mary Doherty	Karin Whittemore & Peter Kepple	Dyanne & John Rafal	Cynthia & George Willauer
David Dresback	Carolyn & James Kilroy	Elizabeth Anne & Lawrence Reiter	Carol Williams & Robert Asher
Caroline Driscoll	Amy Willcox & Del Knight	Betty Richards	Nissa Simon & J. Melvin Woody
	Mary & John LaMattina	Barbara Sahagan	Cathy Zall
	Jean & John Lenard	Carol & Edward Sauers	



Through a Bequest, She Fulfills a Dream

Diana Atwood Johnson of Old Lyme wanted to create lasting opportunities after her lifetime for young people and women and girls of color in Eastern Connecticut. She did—by creating a charitable fund through a bequest to the Community Foundation.

The **Diana Atwood Johnson Fund** reflects Diana’s love of nature and her advocacy for open space, arts education, and racial equity. Her fund will provide annual scholarships to students with financial need in New London County pursuing arts-related or environmental studies.

Grants from her fund will also be awarded annually through the Community Foundation’s Southeast and Norwich Women & Girls Funds.

Diana directed all scholarships and grants from her fund prioritize Black, Indigenous, and people of color.

Attorney Jeanette Dostie of Suisman Shapiro in New London assisted Diana with estate planning. She observed, “I was impressed by the effort and energy Diana put into trying to make sure her community had what it needed. She was pretty clear what her priorities were, and I think she had thought about these issues for a long time.”

“Diana wanted to make her mark by establishing community between diverse cultures. That was her dream.”

— Pastor Jack Madry of Madry Temple Church, New London

NEW FUNDS

Thank you to the caring and generous donors who created these funds in 2020.

DESIGNATED

Butler Daniels Fund
Mary Lou DeVivo Fund for Windham Literacy

DONOR-ADVISED

Apple Tree Fund
Chimalis Fund
Culture SECT Economic Recovery Fund
DePratti Meaningful Initiatives Fund
Dogrock Fund
Rita and Myron Hendel Fund
Mary Lenzini Community Health Fund
Moon Stone Fund
Rafal Family Fund
William A. Stanley Community Leadership Fund
Terra Fund
Thames Valley Sustainable Connections Fund
Catherine Zall Fund

FIELD OF INTEREST

Diana Atwood Johnson Fund
Dissenter's Hope Fund for Northeast Women & Girls
Wayne Boettner Housing Fund
Nancy J. Johnson Fund
Esther Sloan Mitchell Fund for Windham Women & Girls
Neighbors for Neighbors Fund
New London Learning Pods/ Hubs Collaborative Fund
Anne and Tony Rash Fund for Windham Women & Girls
Dorothy L. Snell and Ilda L. Colburn Fund for Windham Women & Girls
Mary Ginn Weinland Fund for Windham Women & Girls
Carol J. Williams Fund for Windham Women & Girls

SCHOLARSHIP

Justin P. Beaudin '01 Science and Creativity Scholarship Fund
Laura Fish-Kelly Scholarship Fund
New London County STEM Equity Scholarship Fund
Armelde Pitre STEM Leadership Scholarship Fund
Aubrey Ashleigh Premo Scholarship Fund
Jake T. Watson Memorial Scholarship Fund

For a conversation on how you can start a fund to reflect your giving goals, contact Alison Woods, vice president & chief development officer, at alison@cfect.org or Lauren C. Parda, senior development officer, at lauren@cfect.org or 860-442-3572.

"We created a scholarship fund because of the growing conversations about equity in the U.S., which challenged us to consider how we can be part of a movement for change. Sponsoring a recurring scholarship for underrepresented students is one small way we can help young people in our community pursue their own higher education."

— The Johnson Family of Quaker Hill



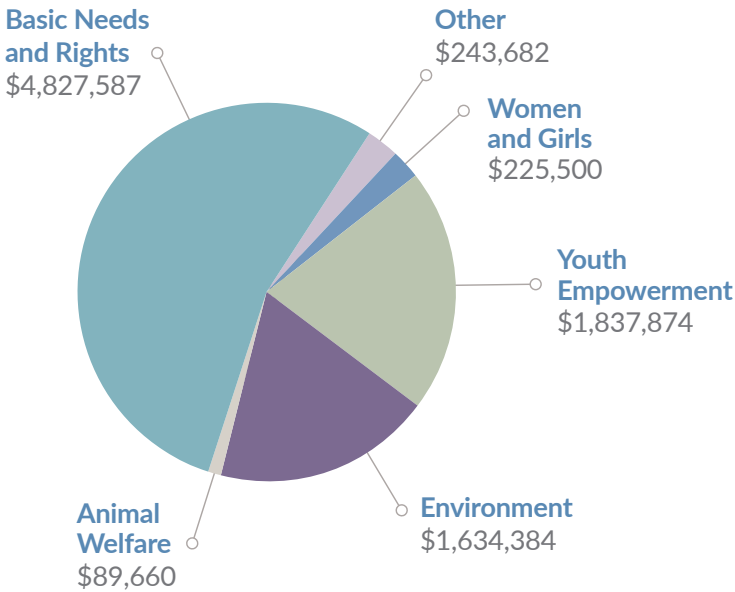
Girl Scouts of Connecticut's 2020 Campership Program at Camp Laurel [Photo provided by Girl Scouts of CT]

INVESTING IN YOUR COMMUNITY



2020 GRANTS BY INTEREST AREA

Grand Total
\$8,858,687



Stewarding Your Funds

We are committed to stewarding the charitable funds entrusted to us by our donors to get as many dollars as possible out to the causes, nonprofits and communities they care about.

Our Investment Committee consists of board members and volunteers with extensive institutional investment experience and varied perspectives. With oversight by our board, the committee is responsible for developing and implementing our investment policy, recommending investment managers, and monitoring our investment performance.

The committee works with our investment managers at Brown Brothers Harriman (BBH) and Boston Trust Walden Company (BTW) to preserve and grow the endowment through prudent investment strategies in a well-diversified portfolio. Our three-pronged asset-allocation approach centers on growth, risk reduction and inflation protection.

As we continue to bring an equity lens to our work, we also continue to explore ways to align our investments with positive community impact. Both investment portfolios are designed to reduce exposure to tobacco-related products, fossil fuels, gun manufacturers or distributors and private prisons. BTW is a longtime specialist in actively applying additional Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) screens to that investment portfolio, with special attention to the environment and animal welfare.

CliftonLarsenAllen LLP (CLAconnect.com) conducts our audit. The financial statements are available on our website at cfect.org/about/publications.

Brown Brothers Harriman Portfolio Investment Performance (net of fees)

Year	Performance
2020	17.9%
2019	19.0%
2018	-1.1%

3-yr Annualized Return 11.93%
Return since inception (2009) 9.5%

Boston Trust Walden Company Portfolio Investment Performance (net of fees)

Year	Performance
2020	9.77%
2019	24.6%
2018	-2.5%

3-yr Annualized Return: 10.62%
Return since inception (2016): 11.24%



Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut

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New London, CT 06320

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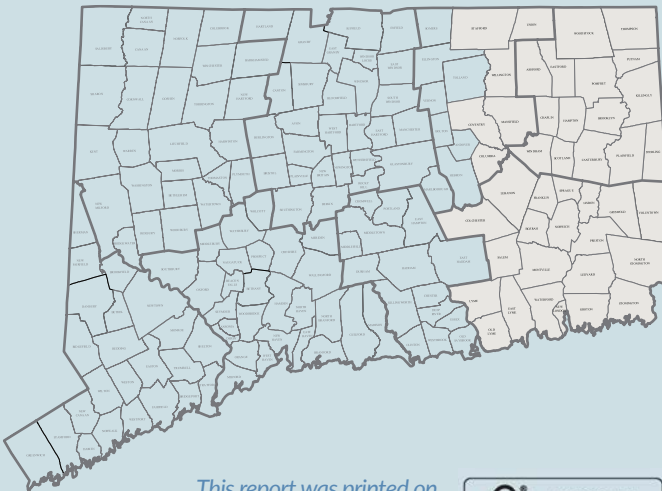
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This report is dedicated to the early
Community Foundation Trustees and
the generous donors who created
charitable funds and a legacy of caring
for their neighbors.

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Serving 42 towns in New London, Windham and Tolland Counties:

Ashford	Griswold	North Stonington	Sterling
Bozrah	Groton	Norwich	Stonington
Brooklyn	Hampton	Old Lyme	Thompson
Canterbury	Killingly	Plainfield	Union
Chaplin	Lebanon	Pomfret	Voluntown
Colchester	Ledyard	Preston	Waterford
Columbia	Lisbon	Putnam	Willington
Coventry	Lyme	Salem	Windham
Eastford	Mansfield	Scotland	Woodstock
East Lyme	Montville	Sprague	
Franklin	New London	Stafford	

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its commitment to legal compliance, philanthropic best practices
and excellence that benefits communities.

