



Community Foundation
of Eastern Connecticut

2022 Report to Our Community

Toward Justice For All



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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

Cover photos (top to bottom)
Community Foundation grantees:
Southeastern CT Robotics
Horizon Wings
Discovering Amistad



We honored two former trustees of the Community Foundation at our 2022 annual celebration: Mildred Devine (second from right) and Robert Marrion (right). Millie and Bob, pictured with members of Bob's family, were presented with Honorary Congressional Citations for their decades-long commitment to our community.

What does a more just Eastern Connecticut look like?

One of our Legacy Society members, Mary Waldron, told us:

'Justice' is a complex concept and a difficult word to define because it means different things to different people.

Mary was right. Justice *does* carry many meanings — anti-racism, fairness, equity, accommodation, truth-telling, inclusivity. Each word, it seems, summons our better selves to act for residents of our region who've been pushed to the margins for far too long.

*In 2022, while acts of justice took different forms across Eastern Connecticut, the result was the same: **hope**.*

You'd see it...

- at gatherings of the new Nonprofit Advocacy Council — when our region's leaders convened to build the political will to address the root causes of injustices;
- at public hearings, when nonprofit leaders offered legislative testimony — with a unified voice — on solutions for affordable housing, access to quality early childhood care, and the mental health care of the region's residents;
- in the work of the newly formed Center for Housing Equity and Opportunity, as it began to tackle the housing affordability crisis;
- through the generosity of donors to our Fund for Racial Justice and to other Community Foundation funds that helped our region thrive.

And you'll see hope through the stories in these pages.

Indeed, beacons of justice were lit often across Eastern Connecticut — ignited by our grantees, donors, volunteers, scholars, and community partners. Perhaps you are one.

Because of these efforts, a better tomorrow — and a more just region — are possible.

We are forever grateful.

Maryam Elahi
President & CEO

Margaret M. O'Shea
Chair, Board of Trustees

CASTLE CHURCH
Norwich Jubilee Project
Grantee

Creating Spaces that Celebrate Resilience

Praise for the stunning 50-foot tall mural in downtown Norwich has overwhelmed Castle Church's pastor, Adam Bowles. One response stands out.

Driving through Norwich, members of a Black youth dance organization came upon the mural. One girl was overcome with emotion. She had never seen a Black person honored so beautifully, and so *large*, in a public space.

Since its unveiling in June 2022, the mural — part of the Norwich Jubilee Project led by Castle Church — has moved many to reflect on today's wider struggles for racial justice. Church members believe that increasing the visibility of the city's racial and ethnic groups is vital to inspire collective action on justice issues.

Painted by Ben Keller, the mural depicts two local historical figures: James Lindsey Smith, who escaped slavery and found freedom in Norwich, and Sarah Harris Fayerweather, the first Black student at Prudence Crandall's boarding school for women in Canterbury. She later became a conductor of the Underground Railroad.

The artwork was the first of Castle Church's three extraordinary Jubilee Project creations. The second, a stirring documentary released in May 2023, brought to light the moving yet sobering history of racism through the stories of current and former local residents. Lastly, project partners intend to beautify the area surrounding the mural to create a park "that celebrates resilience." Bowles envisions a safe space that enlivens the city center — and where people can engage socially through music, art, and events.

Through each piece of the Jubilee Project, Castle Church intends to create opportunities for people to listen to each other's stories and fuel ongoing racial justice work.

Before entering church ministry, Bowles was a reporter for the *Norwich Bulletin*. In that role, he fell in love with the city's downtown, diversity, and immigrant community. "We've built walls that we need to be intentional about taking down."

To watch the Jubilee Project documentary, scan code.



The mural unveiling was the centerpiece of the 2022 Juneteenth celebration in Norwich. A grant from the Fund for Racial Justice at the Community Foundation partially funded the Jubilee Project. Many other community groups provided wisdom and funding to make it possible.



Southeastern Connecticut Community Land Trust executive director Mirna Martinez with Salem Land Trust founder David Bingham and his wife, Annie.



CONNECTICUT LAND CONSERVATION COUNCIL Grantee

Opening the Great Outdoors

How do Connecticut land trusts — those conservation organizations that protect the magnificent acres of open spaces, habitats, and natural resources — broaden their welcome to include people from diverse backgrounds?

That was the question compelling the Connecticut Land Conservation Council (CLCC) to bring land trusts together for training, introspection, and conversations with local community groups.

According to CLCC's Executive Director Amy Blaymore Paterson, land trusts — and the astounding array of outdoor recreational opportunities they offer — don't typically attract diverse people.

She ticked off the barriers they experience, described at the trainings: Lack of transportation from urban areas to land preserves. No multilingual signage. Even parking can be an issue. "If a parking area isn't well marked," Paterson reported, "a person of color may feel uneasy and perhaps fearful of being singled out for parking in the wrong place."

For land trust leaders, the discussions were eye-opening. Now, Paterson is eager for them to plan future programs through more inclusive, collaborative, and "out of the box" thinking.

Since taking part in CLCC's workshops, the Salem Land Trust, led by David Bingham, has done just that. The Land Trust invited members of Outdoor Afro — an organization connecting Black people to nature and outdoor recreation — for an outing on one of its preserves.

Further, through a unique collaboration, the Salem Land Trust aims to conserve a 200-acre farm by preserving the forested part of the land forever. And, by working with the Southeastern Connecticut Community Land Trust, the land's current farm site — a farmhouse, outbuildings, and pastures — can provide housing for farmers at an affordable cost. The project will also ease food insecurity.

The marriage of conservation and affordable housing is precisely the kind of inspiring, fearless thinking CLCC had hoped to compel.

"It's a long game," Paterson said, "but these exciting projects are incubators. They show what's possible."

LAURA AND SCOTT MOOREHEAD

Make Your Mark Scholarship Fund Founders

The Mooreheads Make Their Mark

When Laura and Scott Moorehead made their home “in the middle of the woods” in Putnam eight years ago, the retired couple embraced rural tranquility. But community service still fills their calendars — and they wouldn’t have it any other way.

“You dive in with both feet and hands and make it happen,” Scott said of his volunteer involvement with a local social service agency.

From empowering women to promoting the arts to protecting open space, the Mooreheads are a dynamic duo in their community. They even co-chair the big “Tastes of the Valley” fundraiser. (“We’re foodies,” Laura explained, laughing. “And it benefits the environment!”)

For years, both Laura and Scott enjoyed fundraising for the Community Foundation’s Northeast Women & Girls Fund. In 2021, they took another step.

Upon establishing the Make Your Mark Scholarship Fund at the Community Foundation, they encouraged young people “from artists to engineers and everyone in between, to go out and grab the world.” And they directed fund scholarships to be awarded to female and non-binary/third gender residents who reside in any of 11 northeast Connecticut towns.

“We wanted to make a statement,” Laura said, “or maybe just normalize the fact that roles are changing and we need to think differently about them.”

Laura and Scott’s life experiences shaped the scholarship’s purpose. While in the Navy, Laura witnessed “a lot of discrimination and problems that women face all the time.” Later, as an artist, she saw firsthand how difficult it was for artists to get scholarships.

Scott, a civil engineer who built affordable housing for nonprofits, is deeply troubled by injustice of any kind. For him, creating the scholarship was a way to counteract that.

“If you’re a white male, opportunities for scholarships are easier. But for women, not as much. And, certainly, ‘non-traditional’ gendered people have difficulty. So, we thought, ‘Let’s help them out.’”

For the Mooreheads, extending a helping hand has its rewards. Laura said, “Working in the community — that’s what brings happiness.”



Photo by Sara Gustavsen

ASTRA FINCH

Make Your Mark Scholarship Recipient

A Scholar Reaches for the Moon

When talking about her aspirations, University of Connecticut first-year student Astra Finch draws on stories from *The Magic Treehouse* and the dramatic *Apollo 11* film.

Science, fantasy, science-fiction — and their capacity to transport us to space, to alternate realities, and to futuristic advances — are sources of awe and amazement for Finch, an avid tabletop gamer with seemingly endless curiosity.

“It’s a driving force in me,” she says, “to see what the earth looks like from the moon.”

Finch, among the first to receive the Make Your Mark Scholarship, might just get there. The Woodstock resident describes herself as someone who “likes to build, create, and find the workings of systems.” With a natural aptitude for machines, she’s leaning toward majoring in computer science.

Finch is buoyed by the confidence her peers have shown in her ability to succeed and make change. For Finch, that means addressing some of the urgent issues the world is facing now: an imperiled climate, the necessity to deepen understanding of different cultures, and the duty to educate people about gender differences.

As a transgender woman, the latter has special meaning for Finch. “My gender is the way I experience life — the way I want to experience it,” she says. “Every human being experiences the world in a separate way.”

While she’s found wonderful support in the university community, Finch acknowledges that “person by person” education is the route to changing more hearts and minds about transgender people.

Fortunately for us all, Finch is willing to have these conversations.



Photo submitted by Astra Finch



MARY WALDRON
Legacy Society Member

“It’s always necessary to tend to justice.”

Listening to Mary Waldron reflect on her life of 80-plus years, it’s easy to see why she established the Justice Fund at the Community Foundation to confront discrimination endured by marginalized people.

Decades ago, Waldron labored to crack the glass ceiling in premier New York City-based investment firms dominated by men. Meanwhile, she served 15 years on a nonprofit board, assisting formerly imprisoned people striving to re-establish their lives. On another board, she advocated for women impacted by the criminal legal system.

“I wanted to do nonprofit volunteer work most people wouldn’t think of doing,” she recalled.

“Justice has followed me all my life as a source of inspiration,” Waldron said. Compassion was instilled in her at an early age by family members, especially her grandfather. Disturbed by the injustices Indigenous people endured, he once refused a military assignment to “corral” Native Americans in Kansas.

In many ways, it was a revelation to Waldron. “I landed on the thought that the color of one’s skin was critical to whether you got justice or not.”

The notion has guided Waldron’s tenacious volunteerism — and her philanthropy — for decades. In fact, the Urban League of Southern Connecticut, which supports African Americans and other minority groups in achieving economic self-reliance, honored Waldron as their 2011 “Woman of the Year” in recognition of her service.

Through her will, Waldron has entrusted the Community Foundation to allocate grants from the Justice Fund now and after her lifetime to local nonprofits fighting discrimination. Women’s rights, immigration advocacy, racial justice, and defending unjustly incarcerated people are just a few of the causes benefiting from her fund thus far.

“It’s always necessary to tend to justice,” Waldron said. “It doesn’t happen automatically. It needs human help.”

THE LEGACY SOCIETY

Sustaining Generations to Come

The Legacy Society honors people who have included the Community Foundation in their estate plans. Through bequests, charitable trusts, gift annuities, retirement plans, or life insurance, they plan to make gifts to causes important to them after their lifetimes. We are deeply grateful to every member of the Legacy Society for the care and compassion they put into action through their future gift.

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- Pam Akins & Barry Levinson
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- Carol Williams & Robert Asher
- Cathy Zall

**Deceased*



Donors Creating Better Futures

In 2022, the Community Foundation received nearly 1,200 donations from individuals and organizations who gave more than \$8.8 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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\$500,000-\$999,999

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*Deceased
We are deeply grateful for all gifts! Due to space constraints, you can find 2022 gifts under \$500 at cfct.org/CurrentDonors

The Fund for Racial Justice

In June 2023, the Community Foundation announced that it will endow the Fund for Racial Justice to make it a permanent Field of Interest fund. The purpose of the fund is to advance racial equity, support organizing and advocacy, and allocate flexible resources to organizations and movements in Eastern Connecticut, especially those led by people of color.

We hope you will join us in growing this fund and supporting our nonprofit partners in the critical work they are doing to promote racial justice in our region. Visit cfct.org/donate





Traveling Toys lending library established at the Public Library of New London.

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 minimize 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 cfct.org/About/Publications.

Brown Brothers Harriman Portfolio Investment Performance (net of fees)

2022	-15.6%
2021	7.7%
2020	17.9%

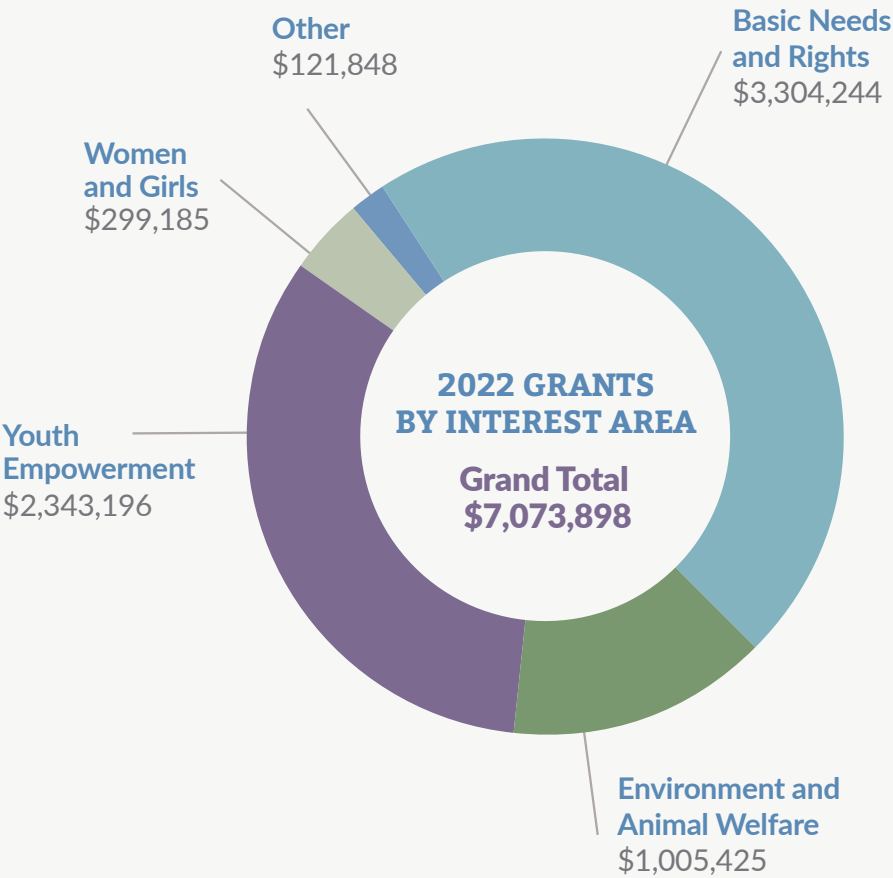
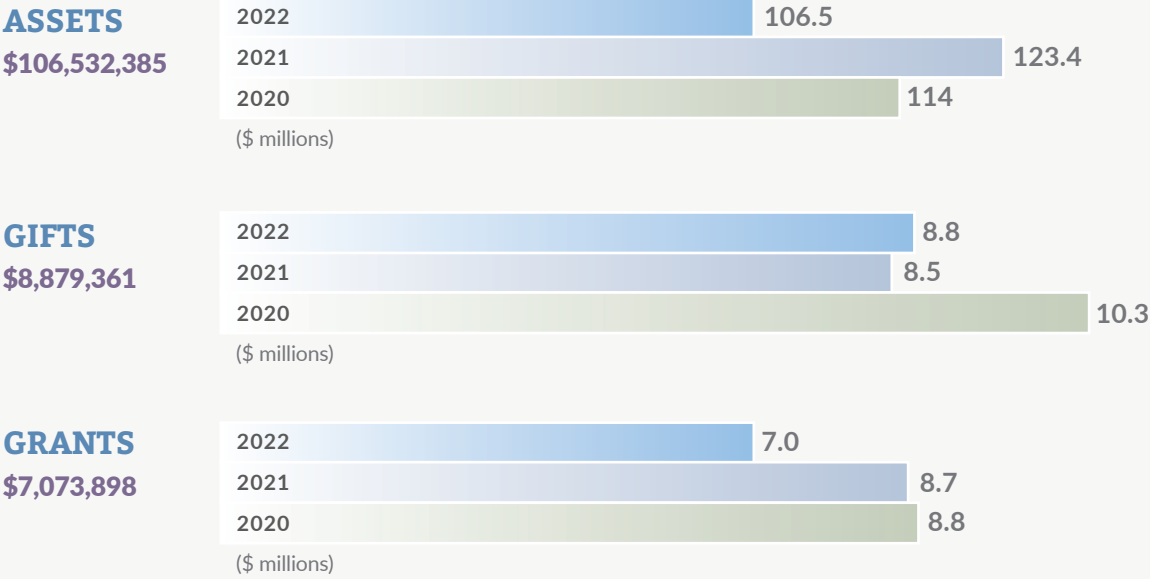
3-yr Annualized Return: 3.3%
Return since inception (2009): 7.0%

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

2022	-14.12%
2021	16.9%
2020	9.77%

3-yr Annualized Return: 4.18%
Return since inception (2016): 7.6%

Investing in Your Community





68 Federal Street
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CONTACT US

For more information, call 860-442-3572 or email admin@cfect.org.

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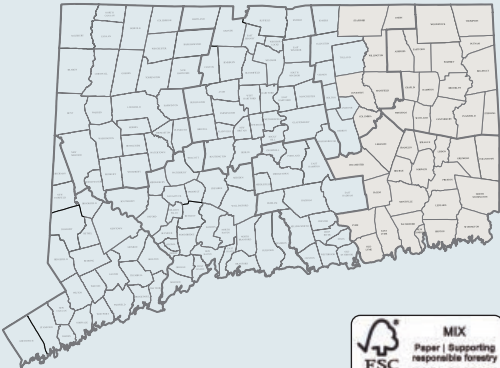
This report is dedicated to the early Community Foundation Trustees and the generous donors who created charitable funds and a legacy of caring for their neighbors.



“Drum Line” performance at the Garde Arts Center supported by the Fund for Racial Justice. Photo by Tom Bombria Photography.

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- | | | | |
|------------|------------|------------------|------------|
| Ashford | Griswold | North Stonington | Sterling |
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| Canterbury | Killingly | Plainfield | Union |
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| Eastford | Mansfield | Scotland | Woodstock |
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