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*Future engineers? Justin Beaudin with his three children.*

## Justin Beaudin Pays it Forward at New London High School

### Justin P. Beaudin '01 Science and Creativity Scholarship Fund

While growing up, Justin Beaudin's family lived for periods of time in France, Italy, and Egypt. But, says Beaudin, New London High School was where he felt most at home.

There, he teamed with classmates for robotics competitions, played in the band, and acted in school plays. And with the enthusiastic support of his teachers, Beaudin and his friends launched the New London Night Show, which aired on public access TV. With a bedsheet as a backdrop on which they painted the

New London skyline, Beaudin bantered with guests and his friends struck up some tunes with drums and trumpets. They even offered cooking tips.

Aided by scholarships, including one from the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut, Beaudin studied engineering at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. He has since enjoyed successes in jobs blending engineering, technology, and media. Now based in Colorado, he works with the industry's largest media companies to ensure hits like Star Wars and Wonder Woman make it to the big screen.

"The reality is, in the business world and especially if you are an entrepreneur who wants to do your own thing, a mix of creativity and science drives success. The two overlap all the time."

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From  
**Maryam Elahi**  
President & CEO



## We've Got What it Takes

It is a mid-March morning, a year since our world was turned upside down by COVID, and I am listening to colleagues discussing unmet regional needs on our Zoom call. We have been meeting regularly for the past eleven months through our Councils of Government, the Connecticut Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security and our local Human Services offices. There are so many partners at the table—each of whom brings ideas, deep commitment, collaborations and helping hands. At this particular meeting, we are discussing ways to address the inevitability of upcoming evictions. We want to ensure that our low-income neighbors don't lose their homes. We are discussing the mental health needs of students struggling to stay connected despite school closures and lack of access to Wi-Fi. Colleagues from Access Community Action Agency, New London Homeless Hospitality Center, TVCCA, CT Fair Housing Center, TEEG, United Services, Congressman Courtney's Office, Senator Murphy's Office, Generations Family Health Center and many others weigh in with ideas and offers to help out. We all recognize the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity of the American Rescue Plan

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► // Maryam Elahi continued from page 1 //

to protect our most vulnerable residents. We all care. We are in this for the long haul. It is clear to me that this is what community looks like. This is what building better looks like.

This year of COVID has demonstrated that the strength of Eastern Connecticut is in the people who live and lead here. No challenge is too large. We convened and established partnerships from the outset of the pandemic. Our goal is to make sure that no one falls through the cracks. And now, the nonprofit leaders who are solution makers on the ground are using their voices to impact policies and practices that will benefit our most vulnerable residents—and policymakers are hearing them.

This is what democracy looks like.

Thank you all for trusting in us and partnering with us to do what it takes.



► // Beaudin continued from page 1 //

"That was the inspiration for me to form the scholarship fund at the Community Foundation. If students can find that mix of science and creativity, I wanted to reward that."

Beaudin credits New London High School with fostering those very skills in him. That's why he was all in when his mother suggested the Foundation as a way to make college more affordable for young people at his alma mater.

In less than a week, he created the Justin P. Beaudin '01 Science and Creativity Scholarship Fund. The fund will provide a four-year award for a New London High School student this year, with more scholarships to come as his fund grows.

"The Foundation had a sense of the need, and I trust the counselors and administration at the high school to select students who will benefit," Beaudin says.

"I'd love to be one of those people that's out there saying, 'Good job. Good for you. Keep that up. Keep taking those positive risks in life.'"

– Justin P. Beaudin,  
New London High School '01

Asked about the kind of student he aims to help, Beaudin reflected, "They're trying hard in math and science but they're also into drama, or they're a great artist, or maybe they launched their own website. There's a creative spark in them that pushed them to do something after hours."

"I'd love to be one of those people that's out there saying, 'Good job. Good for you. Keep that up. Keep taking those positive risks in life.'"

## Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut Board of Trustees

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### OUR VISION FOR OUR REGION

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

### OUR MISSION

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

### OUR VALUES

- Integrity
- Equity
- Respect
- Courage
- Empathy

### OUR 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.





Streetscape of Stonington's commercial village where multi-family housing is close to the borough center.  
(Photo credit: Sandra Alexander, Dessa Lea Productions)

## New Zoning Atlas Aims to Help Desegregate Connecticut

### Opening doors for inclusive housing in the state

Did you know that 90.5% of Connecticut is zoned for single family homes?

Owning a home in suburbia may sound idyllic for some people. But, for others, our state's restrictive zoning codes limit where residents can live.

Many older people or empty nesters, for example, no longer want to mow lawns, plow snow, or otherwise maintain their own home. What about the twenty-something who loves apartment living with friends? And what do local businesses do when their lower-wage employees can't afford nearby homes?

According to DesegregateCT, a nonprofit organization founded in 2020, the problem dates back to land use laws created in the early 20th century—which were often motivated by racism. Now, each of Connecticut's 169 towns regulate their own zoning rules.

Backed by more than 60 organizations, DesegregateCT aims to reform zoning laws

so abundant, diverse housing is available in all communities across Connecticut.

Yale University undergraduate Robby Hill, DesegregateCT's partnerships coordinator, is one of many young people galvanizing the movement for land use changes. He says, "This is about having our communities reflect what people want them to be, and disproportionate single-family zoning prevents us from achieving that."



Robby Hill, Yale University '24, is the partnerships coordinator at DesegregateCT.

Hill notes that 90.5% of land in Connecticut permits single-family housing as-of-right (without a public hearing or special permit), but only 2.2% of land permits four or more family housing units as-of-right.

"The Zoning Atlas and the pending legislation on zoning provides us with valuable tools to educate and change hearts and minds in our communities towards greater inclusivity without compromising green space and a close knit community."

— Steve Jungkeit, Minister,  
First Congregational Church of Old Lyme

Reverend Dr. Jungkeit is active in the "March for Justice," a grassroots group of Southeast Connecticut residents voicing support for land use changes in their towns.

Reforming zoning laws, he says, will create more housing choices, more prosperous communities, and more equity for people currently lacking access to neighborhoods or towns they wish to live in. Reducing sprawl will result in a cleaner environment, too, Hill says.

With funding from the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut, DesegregateCT took a huge step towards more inclusive communities: they released a comprehensive "Zoning Atlas"—the first of its kind in the nation, they say. The interactive data map shows how each of Connecticut's 2,620 zoning districts and two subdivision districts regulate their land.

The publicly-available atlas is a powerful new tool for town planners and policymakers as they make decisions on revising zoning laws to meet the current needs of Connecticut residents. And laypeople can use the atlas to understand how those policies affect their communities, says Hill.

DesegregateCT is spearheading reforms at the state level, too. Says Hill, "Our goal is to establish a baseline set of zoning standards for all of Connecticut to create more inclusive zoning and to help desegregate our communities."

See the current zoning regulations in your town. View the Zoning Atlas at [www.desegregateCT.org/atlas](http://www.desegregateCT.org/atlas).

# Valuing Each and Every Child

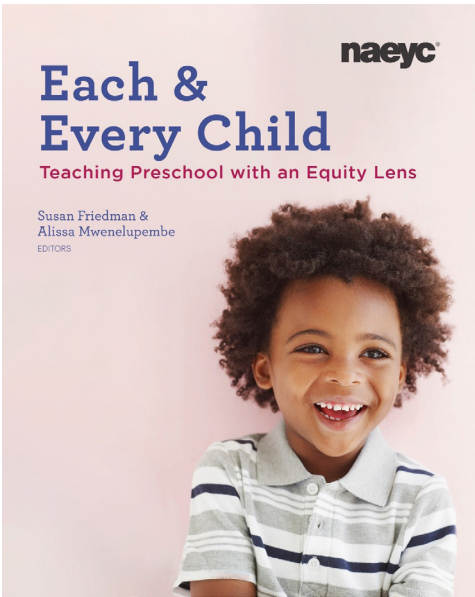
## Early education with an equity lens

Preschoolers may not notice the differences around them.

A family that has two moms or just a grandma. A child who uses a different way to put on a coat. Children who celebrate some holidays but not others. A boy with long hair.

Educators, propelled by standards created by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, strive to teach children to notice, value and be at ease with human diversity, to develop a sense of fairness and justice, to develop empathy for others, and to grow the confidence to stand up for themselves and others.

These skills form the core of respectful, caring human relationships. That's why teaching young children these skills is a high priority for the LEARN Regional Educational Service based in Old Lyme, which trains school professionals throughout southeast Connecticut.



Backed by funding from the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut, LEARN is hosting a weekly six-part professional learning series, titled "Equity in Early Childhood Education." Topics explore issues of race, bias, and equity in early childhood programs.

The virtual trainings feature early childhood experts who give teachers, learning specialists, and childcare providers a safe space to discuss ways to create a culture

of valuing and celebrating differences in preschool classrooms. Each participant receives the book, *Each and Every Child*, which helps providers make the transition from research to classroom practices using real-world scenarios.

Meg Formica, education coordinator at the LEARN Regional Educational Service Center, points to Connecticut College's Child Development Lab School as an example. They ask parents and guardians, "What are your hopes and dreams for your child?"

It's a simple way for educators to begin to understand the differences among the children they serve, Formica notes. Some families may be new immigrants to the area, may be struggling to overcome poverty or to access health care, or may have life experiences—including more vulnerability to COVID-19—that shape parents' involvement in their child's education.

According to Formica, "Nobody has it all figured out, but the learning series highlights best practices from New London school readiness providers who are building in ways to equitably address educational barriers."

# Committed to a healthy, thriving, sustainable Eastern CT for all? Let us help you plan for the future.

Making a legacy gift through your will or a beneficiary designation can be one of the most meaningful and personal ways to give. Your legacy can support specific causes, organizations or areas of interest such as education, arts and culture, the environment or animal welfare—or simply provide for the needs of our community at large.

More and more people are creating funds now that they will contribute to later through their estate plans. This "future fund" gives you the opportunity to provide for your community, after first providing for your loved ones, and creates a lasting testament to your values and charitable passions.

There are many easy giving options from which you can choose, from a simple bequest, IRA beneficiary designation, or charitable gift annuity to a more complex trust arrangement. Working together with your professional advisor, we can assist in helping

you find the planned gift that works best for you. A simple act can create joy and peace of mind for you while increasing opportunities and equity for Eastern Connecticut's future generations.

We recognize that each donor has unique philanthropic goals and objectives. Drawing on experience, creativity, sensitivity, and confidentiality, we can help you design a planned giving solution that addresses your vision.

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Learn more about how we can work together to create a plan for your legacy by contacting our gift planning team: Alison Woods, Vice President & Chief Development Officer (New London County) at [alison@cfect.org](mailto:alison@cfect.org) or Lauren Parda, Senior Development Officer (Windham/Tolland Counties), [lauren@cfect.org](mailto:lauren@cfect.org), or call 860.442.3572.

## Norwich Residents Break Through Online Barriers to Education

### Bridging the digital divide

You may see them parked in cars—with cell phones, laptops, and flashlights—outside restaurants, hotels, or coffee shops around Norwich.

They're young people with schoolwork spread across back seats. They're parents desperate to renew food assistance benefits online. They're people setting up appointments on COVID vaccine websites. Others are purchasing household essentials online, their health too vulnerable to risk in-person shopping.

These Norwich residents, on the other side of the "digital divide," can't afford the internet. Forced to learn, shop, and maintain their health through free Wi-Fi hotspots around the city, they tenaciously toil in cars at all hours.

According to Lee-Ann Gomes, director of Norwich Human Services (NHS), 47% of city residents can't afford to pay for rent, food, and utilities all in the same month. COVID made it worse as joblessness spiked.

With schools shuttered and classes held online during the pandemic, Gomes knew that Norwich's young people without internet access would fall even further behind.

"Lots of research suggests that kids separated from their education via the internet—who can't do their homework, who lack immediate internet access to find answers for their studies—do very poorly down the road in terms of educational attainment," said NHS program assistant Sydney Phelps. Lower grades, poor attendance, and higher dropout rates are common, she adds.

"Timely intervention by a strategic municipal leader and supported by donors who recognize that education is a gamechanger made all the difference in addressing the digital divide for our Norwich youth."

— Maryam Elahi, President and CEO at the Community Foundation

The Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut and the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund stepped up with grants to NHS, earmarked for students and families without internet access or computers.

Gomes and Phelps coordinated with school administrators at Norwich Free Academy. Soon, 30 students at the Academy had new laptops and 72 Norwich families received \$50 per month toward their internet bills for a half year.



Norwich Free Academy student receives a new laptop.

Grant funds also assisted parents struggling to help their kids learn and do homework online. NHS teamed up with Norwich Regional Adult Education to launch classes for parents, focused on how to use Zoom, Google Meet, and various devices for online learning. Many parents took on even more classes, sharpening skills to make themselves more employable.

"I think of all these kids, strapped by not having technology. It's wasting their many talents," Gomes said. She envisions a city where resources, distributed equitably, allow all families to access the internet—and thrive.

"Education," said Gomes, "is the way out of poverty."

## A Circle of Kindness at Work

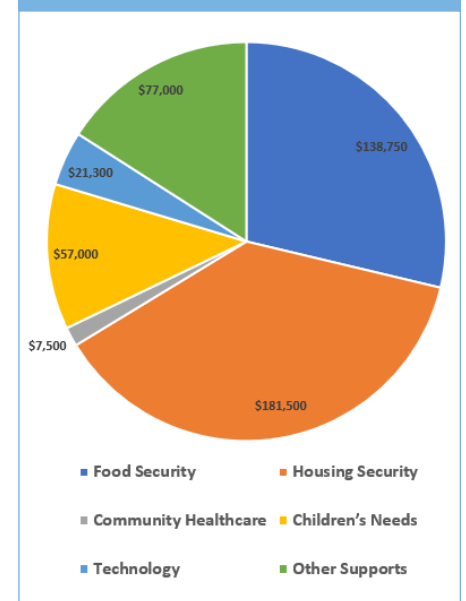
### Round Three Grantmaking

In mid-March of last year, we established the Neighbors for Neighbors Fund at the Community Foundation to deploy resources to those most deeply impacted by the pandemic. We partnered with the United Way of Southeastern Connecticut and the United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut to assess grant applications from across the 42 towns of Eastern Connecticut.

Thanks to the generosity of hundreds of individuals and organizations in our community who gave to the Neighbors for Neighbors Fund, we proudly announce our third round of grants of \$483,050 to 51 organizations. This brings our total grantmaking to date for the Fund to just under \$1.5 million, funding over 150 programs.

These grants help people access the most basic human rights—food, housing, healthcare and education—no matter their race, ethnicity, gender or zipcode.

### Round Three Grants by Service Area



For a full list of these grants, visit [cfect.org/NFNFundGrants](https://cfect.org/NFNFundGrants)



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## Your gifts make this work possible.

We hope you are inspired by the stories in this newsletter... Thank you for partnering with us to make it all happen!

### 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:

- **Neighbors for Neighbors Fund** supports short- and long-term COVID-19 relief and recovery.
- **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.

### 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.

In addition to making a straight tax-deductible donation, there may be other tax-advantaged ways for you to make a difference:

- Transfer appreciated securities.
- Roll over up to \$100,000 of your IRA assets if you are age 70 ½ 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.

### Build a Fund

*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.

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