



RALPH C. WILSON, JR.  
FOUNDATION

# CON-

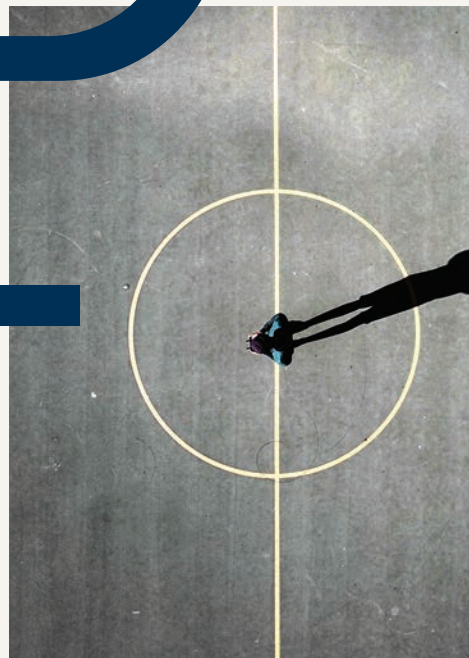


# TEN- TS

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# BE- YOND MIS- SION



This annual report shares our work in 2020 – a year that brought intense and collective challenges for all of us. The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation was inspired to see how our grantee and community partners responded with creativity, resilience, and persistence. Many of them went above and beyond their missions to serve community.



Since our founding in 2015, the Foundation has supported organizations large and small. We've intentionally promoted strong community institutions in our two regions of Western New York and Southeast Michigan by investing in collaborations, partnerships, intermediaries, and anchor organizations, like community foundations and United Ways. These institutions moved quickly to meet community needs in a comprehensive way when the global pandemic upended life as we knew it. We are grateful for the work of these knowledgeable and connected local partners and hope that the Foundation's support provided meaningful assistance at this stressful time.

How we responded to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic illustrates how we aspire to operate as a foundation. We believe our actions demonstrated our founder Ralph Wilson's intention of creating a nimble and responsive foundation. Our team swiftly pivoted and adapted, adjusting our game plan to rapidly meet community and grantee needs during this extraordinary time. We amended more than 80 grants for more than 50 organizations. We extended budget and program flexibility to our grantees. We accelerated and intensified our internal processes. For the first half of 2020 we held weekly board meetings to facilitate rapid and thoughtful response, resulting in over \$12 million in pandemic-specific grants across both our regions.

As we proudly watched our grantees show up daily for the individuals, families, children, caregivers, and small businesses, deeply impacted by the pandemic, our staff and trustees sought to match that urgency through the Foundation's response. (You'll read about the amazing work of these grantees in the following pages.)

Last year also offered us opportunities to understand how far we as a society still need to come to address the disparities created by historical and continuing racism and injustice. Following Ralph Wilson's vision, which is often and aptly described in football metaphors, our Life Trustees established the Foundation to act like a linebacker – watching the play unfold and then filling gaps. The events of 2020 more clearly exposed the widening societal gaps that exist in our communities. Within our areas of interest, the Foundation is committed to working with our partners to better address those disparities that have a debilitating effect on the quality of life in our communities.

As we leave 2020 behind, we recognize that the healing of our communities will likely occur through the thoughtful and caring efforts of organizations that serve and are of the community. Groups that the Foundation is privileged to support. And as we all navigate the challenges ahead, our trustees and staff remain committed to Ralph Wilson's vision of being responsive to changing community needs by embracing innovation, collaboration, and striving toward better outcomes for all.

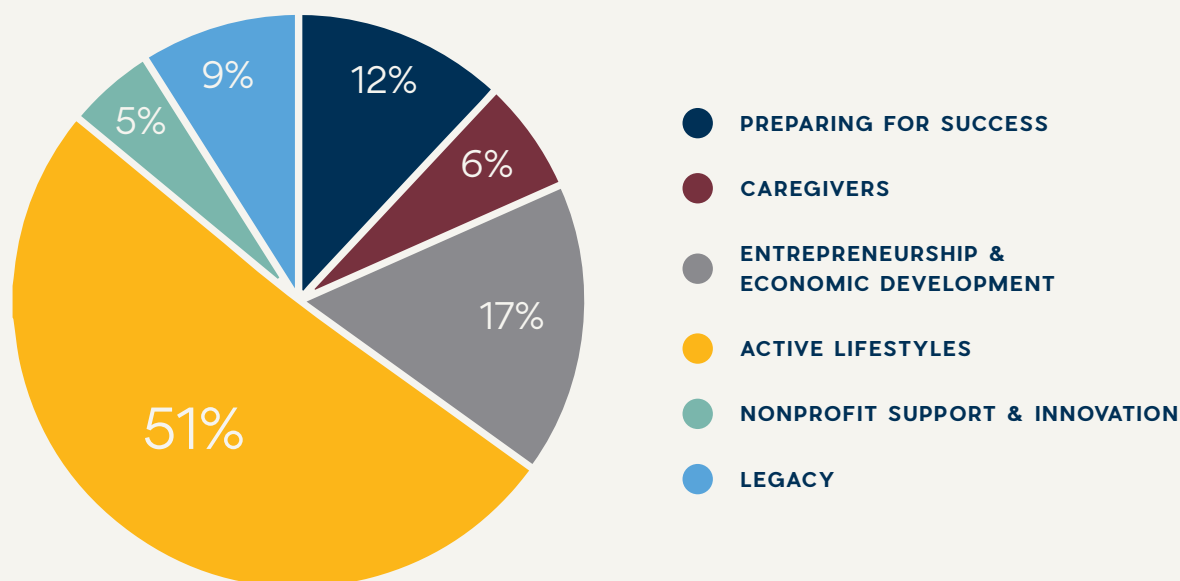
In partnership,

  
MARY WILSON  
Board Chair & Life Trustee

  
DAVID O. EGNÉR  
President & CEO

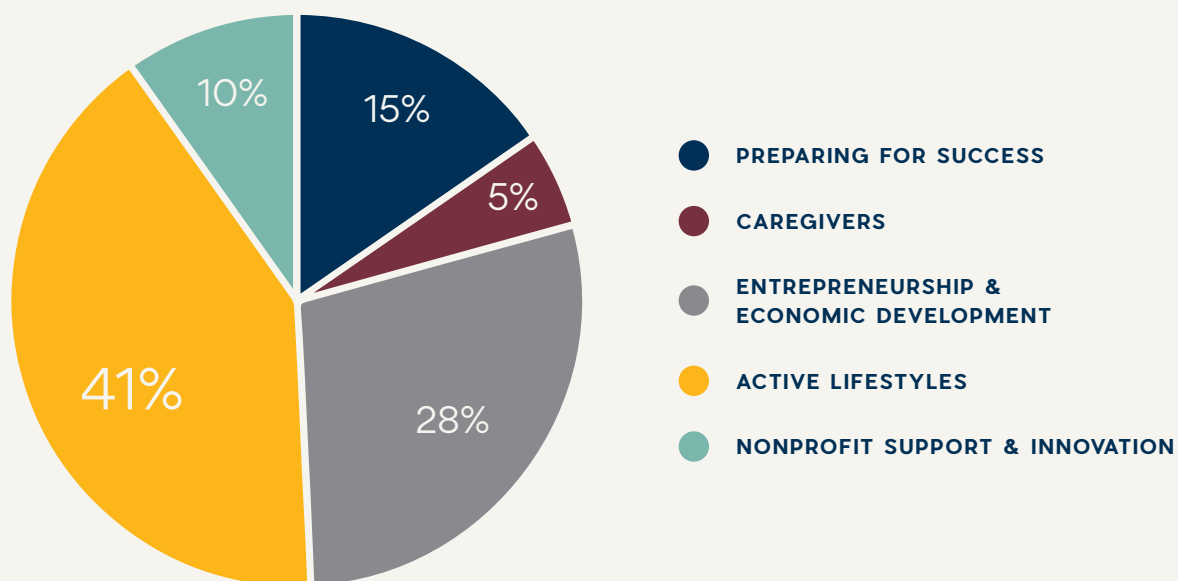
# Commitments: Inception to 12/31/2020

| FOCUS AREAS                             | TOTAL \$ COMMITTED      | # OF GRANTS |
|---|-------------------------|-------------|
| Preparing for Success                   | \$78,834,260.25         | 221         |
| Caregivers                              | \$42,121,075.95         | 89          |
| Entrepreneurship & Economic Development | \$109,034,808.62        | 120         |
| Active Lifestyles                       | \$356,513,061.81        | 172         |
| Nonprofit Support & Innovation          | \$33,014,831.60         | 116         |
| Legacy                                  | \$59,220,373.00         | 86          |
| <b>Grand Total</b>                      | <b>\$658,738,411.23</b> | <b>804</b>  |

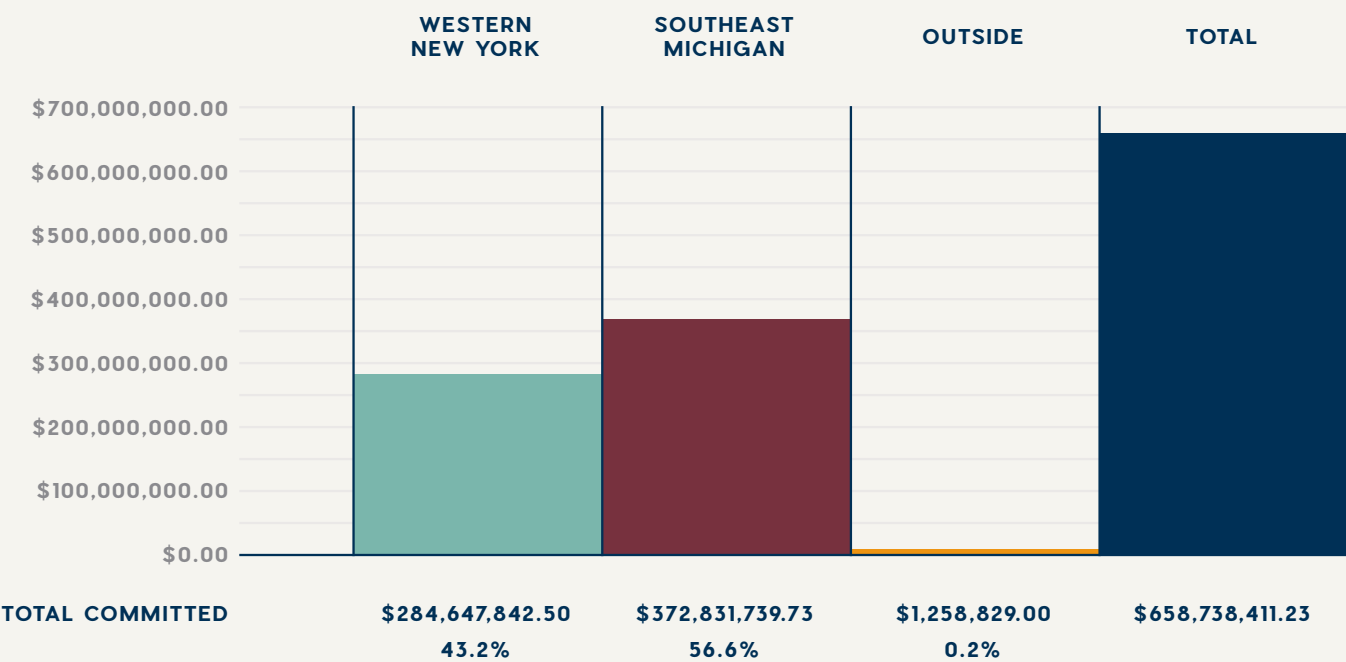


# Commitments: For the year 2020

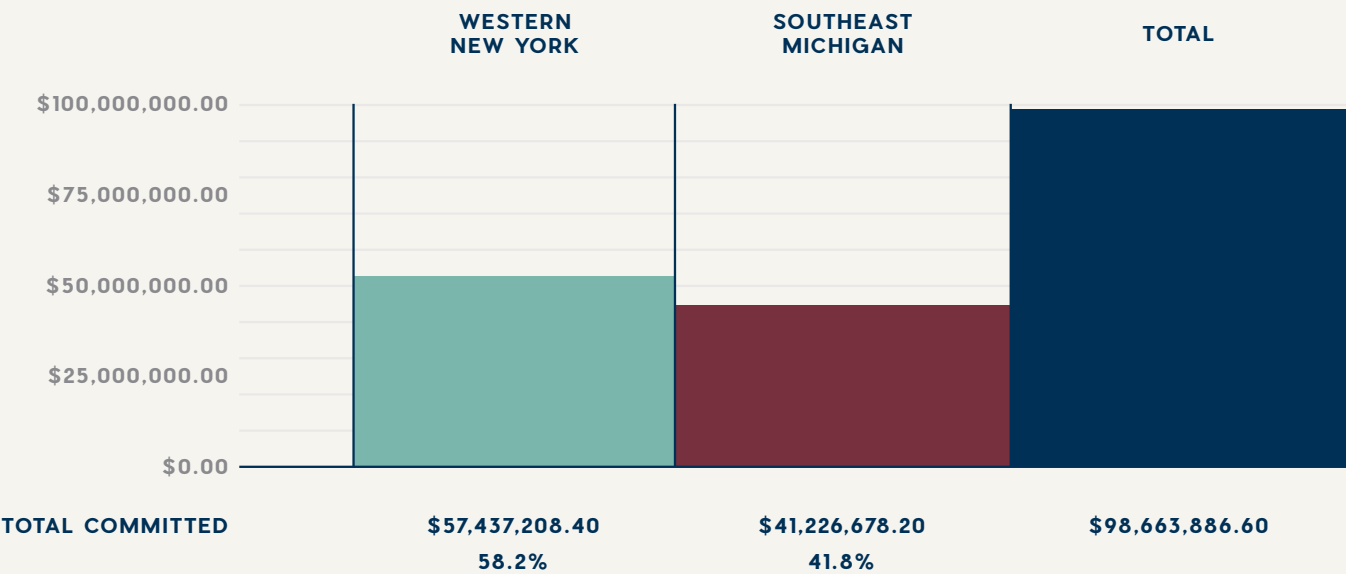
| FOCUS AREAS                             | TOTAL \$ COMMITTED     | # OF GRANTS |
|---|------------------------|-------------|
| Preparing for Success                   | \$15,165,750.00        | 47          |
| Caregivers                              | \$5,289,120.00         | 41          |
| Entrepreneurship & Economic Development | \$28,117,050.00        | 42          |
| Active Lifestyles                       | \$40,391,585.00        | 38          |
| Nonprofit Support & Innovation          | \$9,700,381.60         | 48          |
| <b>Grand Total</b>                      | <b>\$98,663,886.60</b> | <b>216</b>  |



# Commitments: Inception to 12/31/2020



# Commitments: For the year 2020





# Statement of income, expenses, & changes in net assets

| INCOME                                     | DEC 31, 2020           | DEC 31, 2019           |
|--|------------------------|------------------------|
| Contributions                              | \$34,769,380           | \$76,000,065           |
| Net realized gains (losses) on investments | \$28,724,879           | \$11,085,411           |
| Interest and dividend income               | \$16,545,608           | \$21,690,595           |
| Net unrealized gains on investments        | \$80,133,186           | \$152,458,128          |
| <b>Total income</b>                        | <b>\$160,173,053</b>   | <b>\$261,234,199</b>   |
| <b>EXPENSES</b>                            | <b>DEC 31, 2020</b>    | <b>DEC 31, 2019</b>    |
| <b>Program services:</b>                   |                        |                        |
| Grants                                     | \$115,345,944          | \$118,829,576          |
| Program support costs                      | \$10,193,922           | \$10,109,247           |
| <b>Total program services</b>              | <b>\$125,539,866</b>   | <b>\$128,938,823</b>   |
| <b>Supporting services:</b>                |                        |                        |
| General and administration                 | \$1,571,708            | \$1,427,288            |
| Federal excise and other taxes             | \$544,150              | \$1,246,041            |
| <b>Total supporting services</b>           | <b>\$2,115,858</b>     | <b>\$2,673,329</b>     |
| <b>Total expenses</b>                      | <b>\$127,655,724</b>   | <b>\$131,612,152</b>   |
| <b>UNRESTRICTED NET ASSET INCREASE</b>     | <b>\$32,517,329</b>    | <b>\$129,622,047</b>   |
| <b>NET ASSETS</b> - Beginning of year      | <b>\$1,267,518,713</b> | <b>\$1,137,896,666</b> |
| <b>NET ASSETS</b> - End of year            | <b>\$1,300,036,042</b> | <b>\$1,267,518,713</b> |

## Balance sheet

| ASSETS   | DEC 31, 2020           | DEC 31, 2019           |
|--|------------------------|------------------------|
| Cash and cash equivalents                      | \$22,668,937           | \$31,777,609           |
| Investments at fair value                      | \$1,274,127,533        | \$1,233,122,369        |
| Leasehold improvements and equipment           | \$3,239,572            | \$2,618,735            |
| <b>Total assets</b>                            | <b>\$1,300,036,042</b> | <b>\$1,267,518,713</b> |
| <b>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>              |                        |                        |
| <b>Liabilities</b>                             | <b>—</b>               | <b>—</b>               |
| <b>Net Assets</b> - Without donor restrictions | <b>\$1,300,036,042</b> | <b>\$1,267,518,713</b> |
| <b>Total liabilities and net assets</b>        | <b>\$1,300,036,042</b> | <b>\$1,267,518,713</b> |



AC-  
TIVE  
LIFE-

# Inspiring physical activity in our communities.

We believe people of all ages need access to public spaces in their community that encourage and welcome active lifestyles. Whether it's building trails or parks, or thinking creatively about how to get children active and moving, especially when everything is closed, our grantees figured it out in 2020. Despite the global pandemic, we saw both regions develop more ways for residents to connect more to each other through common places, spaces, and programs. And all that happened in 2020 laid the groundwork for huge progress in 2021.



## PARKS AND TRAILS

### Creating a path to respite in challenging times.

COVID-19 and the accompanying social distancing needs throughout 2020 underscored the role parks play in a community's quality of life. During this crisis, people have relied upon outdoor public spaces for fresh air, exercise, meditation, solace, and a much-needed break from the stress of uncertain times.

Our grantee partners, Detroit Riverfront Conservancy and Huron-Clinton Metroparks, both noticed a significant increase in usage in 2020 as people sought relief from the monotony of being at home.

The Conservancy, which develops, operates, and maintains green spaces along the city's riverfront, used creative signage to communicate safe distancing and practices while visiting the parks. Another grantee, Detroit's Parks and Recreation Department, developed a COVID-safe playbook and permitting process to ensure those managing the city's public spaces had the resources and tools they needed to operate safely.

The Conservancy also continued to make progress toward completing the 22-acre Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park, scheduled to break ground in the spring of 2022. Part of the Foundation's \$200 million investment in parks and trails in Southeast Michigan and Western New York, the space is poised to become a centerpiece of the Conservancy's 5.5-mile Detroit Riverwalk project. In 2018, the Foundation made \$100 million commitments in each region to develop signature legacy parks, advance the vision of completed regional trail systems, and support the sustainability of public spaces.



Similar progress occurred in Western New York in 2020; planning and design efforts continued, with the Imagine LaSalle partners and stakeholders for the future Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park in Buffalo and New York Governor Andrew Cuomo announcing the completion of the 750-mile Empire State Trail on the last day of 2020. Now the nation's longest multi-use state trail, the Foundation provided \$2.6 million to the Empire State Trail project to develop four trail gateways, which offer a welcoming connection for trail visitors at key access points in Buffalo, Lockport, and Rochester, and at the western entrance to the Erie Canal. The gateways feature kiosks with local and statewide trail information, bicycle racks, and seating. Like in Southeast Michigan, New York State trails officials noted record usage of the public spaces during the pandemic year.

"The increase in visitors to the Canalway Trail system in 2020 is a testament to the critical importance of the trail as public health infrastructure," said Robin Dropkin, executive director, Parks & Trails New York.



## PROJECT PLAY

# Finding innovative ways to keep kids playing through the pandemic.

Since our Project Play initiatives launched in Western New York and Southeast Michigan in 2017, the focus has been on reimagining a youth sports environment that ensures that all children – regardless of location, income, or ability – have the opportunity to be active through sports. In 2020, when nearly all youth sport activities were paused or canceled due to COVID-19, our Project Play partners at the Community

Foundation for Southeast Michigan and the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo creatively and effectively mobilized, tapping into community and corporate partners to deliver innovative solutions and opportunities for children to play and be active safely in their own homes. And across both regions, many youth sport providers found ways to individually or collectively band together to support basic needs for families during the crisis – providing meals, academic resources, and more.

**Project Play:** Southeast Michigan collaborated with various partners, including companies, sports teams, and other nonprofits, to create a program that sparked free play. Working together with these partners, Project Play delivered 20,400 Play Kits over six weeks to kids throughout the region.

"The pandemic deeply disrupted the lives of children and families across Southeast Michigan," says Alana Glass, Project Play director for Southeast Michigan. "The Project Play Kits distribution helped kids stay active when sports and recreation programs were canceled. Generous support from community partners both encouraged kids to sample sports they may not have otherwise tried and also provided youth with opportunities to play during a crisis that intensified inequities."

Southeast Michigan's Play Kits included a soccer ball and cones (donated by Detroit City Football Club), a playground ball and free play cards (donated by Playworks), jump rope and stretch bands (donated by Downtown Boxing Gym), and basketballs and cones (donated by the Detroit Pistons). Each partner also donated sidewalk chalk.

In Western New York, Project Play developed Play Packs that included playground and tennis balls, jump ropes, frisbees, sidewalk chalk, bubbles and "free play" activity deck of cards. Partnering with community organizations such as the YMCA, Victory Sports, and libraries, Project Play disseminated the joy of play through two counties in Western New York. The Play Packs were a hit with the communities and the kids.

As Barb Sweitzer, CEO of the YMCA of the Twin Tiers, shared, "The Play Packs are so simple, but can't come at a more critical time for our kids. While so many of their summer activities have been canceled, in this small way, we bring that activity back into their life." Altogether, Project Play WNY disseminated 19,000 Play Packs to support access to physical education amid the COVID-19 pandemic.



## BUILT TO PLAY

# Breaking down barriers by building up play.

Since launching our Built to Play initiative in 2018, our team has been working with KABOOM! and The Skatepark Project (TSP) to invest more than \$10 million to build and create safe, fun places to play, leveling the proverbial playing field in disadvantaged communities in Western New York and Southeast Michigan. Last year's pandemic heightened the need for this work, exacerbating disparities that already existed in access to safe, quality play spaces. While TSP continued to engage with communities across our two regions to advance the creation of Built to Play-supported skateparks in 2020, we once again partnered with KABOOM! to launch a third installment of the Play Everywhere Design Challenge, investing an additional \$1 million to bring even more creative, free play spaces where kids can be more active. After an inspiring idea generation and application process, 19 community groups and public agencies were selected to receive grant funding and design support through KABOOM! to bring these ideas to life.

Creative, thoughtful examples of this work showcase impromptu play-along-the-way spaces in neighborhoods. These are places where families heading to a destination are intercepted by opportunities to climb, swing, play, touch, and pretend, incorporating physical activity into their normal routines.

Consider Howell Summit Gardens, a 2019 grantee that completed its play space installation in 2020 in Howell, Michigan. It features areas to relax, socialize, and run around. Two slides, a stage and amphitheater, table

tennis, chess/checkers tables, whimsical landscaping, and a labyrinth are part of the mix. It's basically a life-sized fairy garden full of beautiful colors and lots to do.

In Randolph, New York, the Mammoth Natural Play area, now under construction, will transform aging, neglected tennis courts into archeological excavation sites so would-be archaeologists can uncover fossils. Randolph's history includes the discovery of mammoth bones, so the dig sites both spark kids' imaginations and also share in the history of the town.

A busy bus stop in Detroit's NW Goldberg neighborhood is being adjoined by a playful oasis with lots of bright colors, interactivity, and playful options, so that while they're waiting for the bus, families and kids can climb or swing.

These KABOOM! projects—and 16 others that we funded last year—provide access to safe, quality play spaces for all. That active, outdoor free play helps develop “physical literacy,” a needed segue for young people to become interested in sports, to love the outdoors, or to just enjoy being active.

Our grant partners agree that today, more than ever, that is needed. “The Play Everywhere Design Challenge, in particular, is such a critical means to getting kids back out and active and safely interacting in their communities, across these two regions,” says Leah Fox, KABOOM! associate director of foundations and initiatives.

Since children were removed from their schedules and routines and may have experienced reduced activity and socialization – all important aspects of childhood – a sense of urgency remains to make up for the losses. “Now that we've kind of returned to normalcy, the kids need to have the play spaces because they're processing, in some cases, the trauma of the pandemic,” says Fox.



## Active Lifestyles– Parks, Trails & Green Design

**Buffalo Urban Development Corp. →**  
**\$1,000,000**

[Western New York](#)

To support the construction of the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park entry garden and dog park in memory of Ralph Wilson's late daughters Edith Wilson and Linda Bogdan from gifts made by their trusts.

**Buffalo Urban Development Corp. →**  
**\$5,975,150**

[Western New York](#)

To support the design and construction of a signature pedestrian bridge that will connect Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park to the Lakeview neighborhood and other adjacent neighborhoods on the east side of the NYS Thruway (I-190).

**Buffalo Urban Development Corp. →**  
**\$4,662,000**

[Western New York](#)

To support the final design and development of construction drawings for Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park in Buffalo, NY.

**Buffalo and Erie County  
Botanical Gardens Society, Inc. →**  
**\$1,000,000**

[Western New York](#)

To support the capital campaign for the expansion of the Buffalo Botanical Gardens.

**Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper, Inc. →**  
**\$250,000**

[Western New York](#)

To support and strengthen Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper's organizational capacity.

**Community Foundation for  
Greater Buffalo → \$10,000,000**

[Western New York](#)

To establish the Ralph Wilson Park Endowment Fund to support the long-term sustainability of Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park in Buffalo, NY.



**Community Foundation for  
Greater Buffalo → \$1,087,100**

[Western New York](#)

To support improvements to the Shoreline Trail and Isle View Park in Erie County.

**Community Foundation for  
Greater Buffalo → \$95,750**

[Western New York](#)

To support the planning and implementation of the Collaboration of Regional Trails Initiatives (CRTI) III convening in Buffalo and Niagara Falls.

**Community Foundation for  
Southeast Michigan → \$40,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support the HR&A Study for regional park sustainability in the City of Detroit.

**Community Foundation for  
St. Clair County → \$1,558,600**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support the elimination of 22 gaps in the Bridge to Bay Trail system totaling approximately 18 miles of trail route in St. Clair County.

**Community Foundation for St. Clair  
County → \$275,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support the restoration and renovation of Lighthouse Park on the shores of Lake Huron in St. Clair County.

**Friends of the Rouge → \$275,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support the design and engineering of the Dearborn Connector (Rouge River Gateway) and three trailheads along the Rouge River Trail in Wayne County.

**Detroit Riverfront Conservancy →**  
**\$500,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park entry garden in memory of Ralph Wilson's late daughters Edith Wilson and Linda Bogdan from gifts made from their trusts.

**Huron-Clinton Metroparks  
Foundation → \$1,782,750**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support the completion of two multi-use trail connections near Island Lake State Park and Lower Huron Metropark.

**Huron-Clinton Metroparks  
Foundation → \$900,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support the Huron-Clinton Metroparks in providing sustainable public recreation opportunities in the City of Detroit and Wayne County.

**Michigan Trails and Greenways  
Alliance → \$250,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support the development of a Southeast Michigan regional trails brand, marketing campaign, and website.

# Active Lifestyles– Youth Sports & Recreation

## Buffalo & Erie County Public Library → \$331,900

[Western New York](#)

To support the expansion of an equipment sharing program.

## Buffalo Sabres Foundation → \$486,000

[Western New York](#)

To support staffing and capital improvements at a community center on the East Side of Buffalo.

## Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo → \$2,320,418

[Western New York](#)

To support the next phase of Project Play Western New York.

## Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo → \$50,000

[Western New York](#)

To provide 12,100 PlayPacks for 4th–8th graders in the Buffalo Public Schools to support access to physical education during online schooling amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo → \$225,000

[Western New York](#)

To support alternative and safe youth sports and free play programming during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan → \$627,066

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support capacity building and programmatic activities at Project Play: Southeast Michigan.

## Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan → \$96,051

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support the pilot and distribution of SportPort play kits amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Daemen College → \$102,300

[Western New York](#)

To support the expansion of a youth sports capacity-building program.

## Downtown Boxing Gym Youth Program → \$600,000

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support the strengthening and growth of an afterschool sports program that provides students with mentoring, academic supports, and sports sampling.

## Greater Buffalo Sports Hall of Fame → \$50,000

[Western New York](#)

To support the Amateur Sports Development Fund.

## IFF → \$379,000

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support a planning phase for investment into community facilities.

## Natural Heritage Trust → \$862,100

[Western New York](#)

To support the expansion of a program that provides accessible recreation opportunities in state parks.

## Racquet Up Detroit → \$350,000

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support capacity building and program development at a sports-based afterschool program.

## The Aspen Institute Sports & Society Program → \$401,200

[Southeast Michigan/](#)

[Western New York](#)

To support the Project Play 2020 partnership and connection between national and regional partners.

## The Michigan Women's Foundation/DBA Michigan Women Forward → \$75,000

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support a statewide task force focused on the advancement of women in youth, high school, collegiate, and professional sports.

## The Rural Outreach Center → \$395,400

[Western New York](#)

To support play-based programs serving rural communities.

## The Youth Life Skills Foundation, Inc./DBA The First Tee of Western New York → \$319,500

[Western New York](#)

To support the expansion of the First Tee WNY programming to underserved youth and increase its sustainability through investments in its fundraising capacity.

## Victory Sports Global Outreach, Inc. → \$316,200

[Western New York](#)

To support the expansion of a ball bin pilot and provide strategic planning and capacity-building support.

## West Side Rowing Club → \$370,000

[Western New York](#)

To support a youth sports programs that provides access for kids to sample rowing.



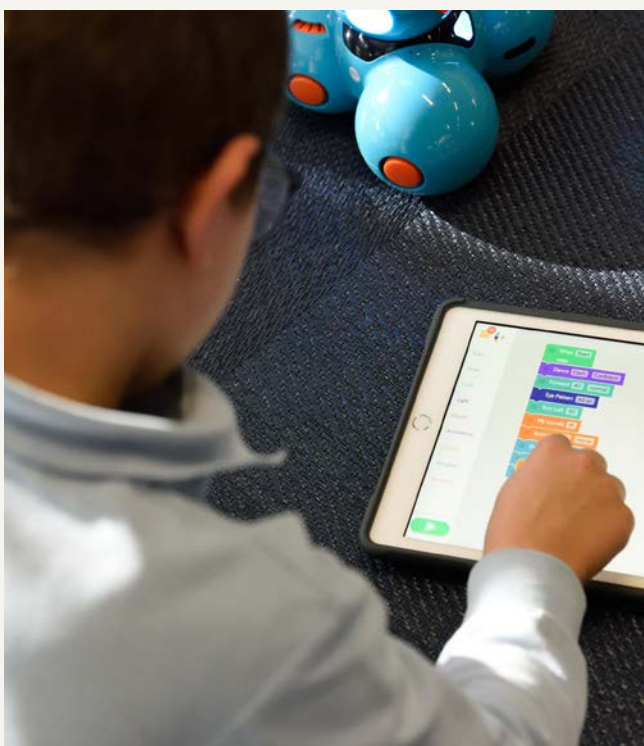
# PREP- PARING FOR SUCCESS





# Opportunity for all.

We look to our founder as an example of what Preparing for Success means: possessing a strong work ethic, embodying confidence, and a fueled desire to learn. We want to ensure that whether or not someone is born with opportunities that enable them to have a leg up in life, there is opportunity for all. We are here for each other. The attributes necessary for lifelong success can be instilled at a young age and carried through adulthood. In 2020, our support in this area was centered on people working with youth and the youth themselves. Whether it was ensuring childcare providers could stay open and in business in rural Western New York or asking teens to reimagine afterschool opportunities for other teens, we knew that our community and grantees had the solutions...and the inspiration.



## SMALL GRANTS FOR SMALL CHILDREN

### Helping childcare providers push through.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, home-based childcare providers were experiencing severe economic distress. These small businesses are the lifeblood of a community, allowing parents and caregivers with young children to work and earn much-needed funds to support their families. Whether located in a city or a rural community, we saw these entrepreneurs, and their communities, in need of support and found inspiration by a program developed by the Adirondack Foundation in New York State called Small Grants for Small Children.

We made several grants to community foundations in the Western New York region to work directly with local childcare resource and referral agencies to coordinate the distribution of operating grants to home-based childcare providers. The pandemic dramatically changed families' needs and to ensure safe operations, childcare providers were forced to balance staying open with minimizing exposure to COVID-19. Many essential workers struggled to find care for their children in order to serve their communities and report to work. Those providers receiving grants from Small Grants for Small Children had flexibility to use the funds as they saw best to help their enterprises reopen or remain open to continue to provide high-quality care to children during COVID-19.

The Foundation's grants of more than \$1 million to Cattaraugus Region Community Foundation, Chautauqua Region Community Foundation, Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo, and Rochester Area Community Foundation, four Western New York-based community foundations, covered nine counties across the region and reached 495 home-based childcare businesses. "Access to high quality, affordable child care was a challenge for families long

before COVID," said Tory Irgang, executive director of the Chautauqua Region Community Foundation. "The pandemic, and subsequent stay-at-home order, revealed the critical impact child care has on workforce participating in our community, particularly for women." Thanks to the collaboration between the foundations and Childcare Resource Networks through the Small Grants for Small Children program, critical dollars were able to be put directly in the hands of home-based childcare providers, helping many of them keep their home-based businesses open. People used the funds to keep up with utilities, mortgage and insurance, while they were slowly able to recoup some of their lost revenue during the shutdown. We also learned of some providers who put the funds they received into outdoor play equipment or made outdoor spaces in their yards safer for more children to play at one time. These dollars were able to make an immediate and substantial impact.

We hope that our support during this time highlights and elevates the essential role that childcare providers play within our communities. We would ultimately like to see policy makers continue to move expeditiously to support them as we collectively move to rebuild our economy.







## GENERATOR Z

# Handing teens the mic to shape afterschool programs.

Young people often lack the opportunity to hold voice and power over their own lives. “Generator Z” was conceived to address and shift this power imbalance. At the close of 2020, we invited teens to reimagine the future of afterschool in our two regions.

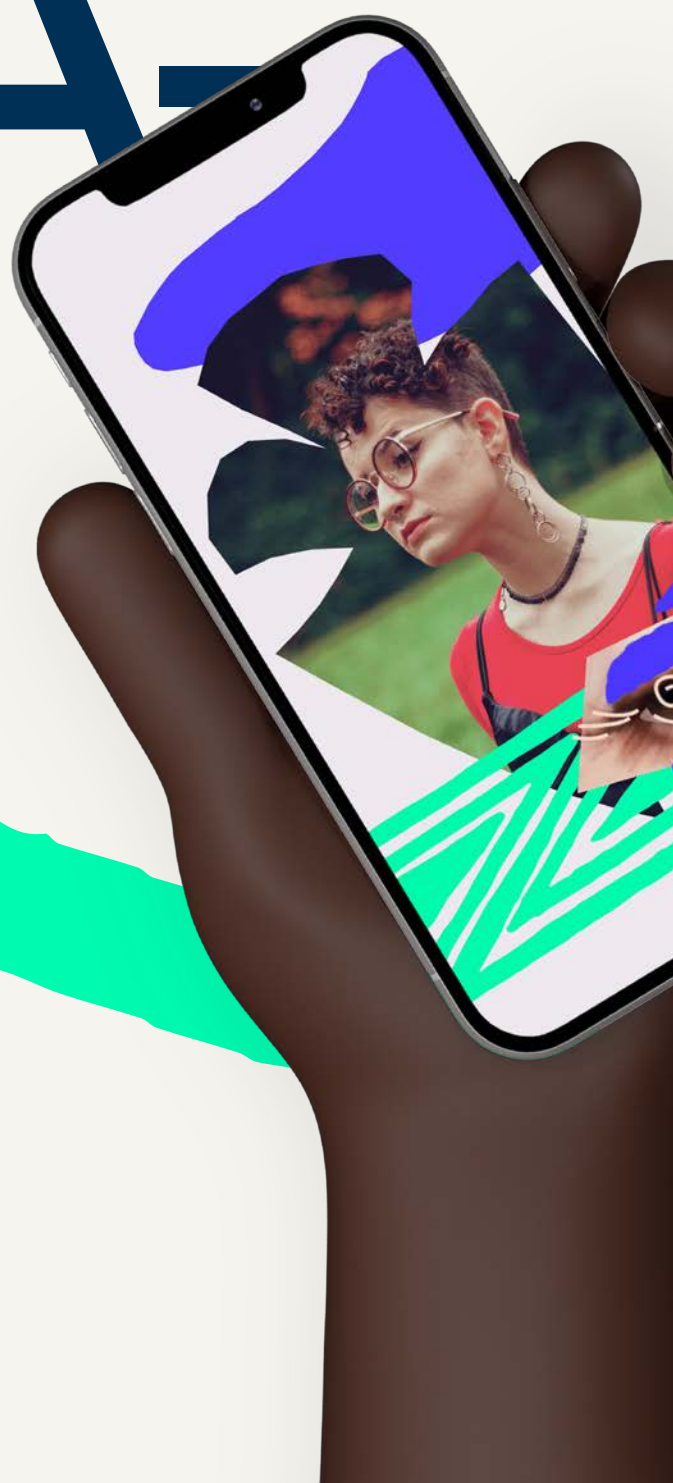
A multigenerational team was assembled to shift this generational power imbalance. Thought partners and allies from Gen Z, millennial, Gen X, baby boomer, and the silent generation organized around their shared experience of being a teen now and in the past to advocate for youth voice today. Together, they created and continue to run Generator Z, a philanthropic community initiative that makes space for 1,000 teens – or generators – ages 13–18, across both regions to drive change.

The goal of Generator Z is to offer teens a public platform and podium to voice their stories and drive decisions for afterschool during a time when their everyday lives are so disrupted and affected by a global pandemic, racial injustice, and political tension. Young people, with their experience and insight, are the catalyst for nonprofit afterschool providers to apply for a grant with the most relevant afterschool ideas to best serve teens.

This teen-centered and transparent approach is rare in the philanthropic world, as is the dedicated direct investment in teens themselves. Through the Generator Z initiative and our partners at Lakeshore Connections, we committed \$1 million to 1,000 selected Generators. Over three phases of engagement, teens collect a total of \$1,000 for their participation, valuing them as the ultimate experts of their own lives.

*The teen Generators submitted their stories at the close of 2020, and in early 2021 they were published publicly on the [www.Generator-Z.org](http://www.Generator-Z.org) platform. The following pages are just a sample of those stories. We invite you to read through here and on the website to better understand the lives and afterschool dreams of these amazing youth in our communities.*

# GEN- ERA- TOR





# Antwoni

Age 16



"Some say having a big heart could be a curse but I think it's a blessing."

GENERATOR

Z

## Lauren C.

Age 17



"Creating equilibrium between academics, social life, yourself takes practice. With only 24 hours in a day, you must use them wisely."

GENERATOR

Z

@generatorzfuture

"I am 16 years old and many adults would say that 'you have seen nothing' but I would argue that living in a time when everyone and everything is connected, you can see a lot."

—Humayra N., Age 16

@generatorzfuture

"I have such a passion for creating the sets and then moving them into place in less than twenty seconds and watching the entire production come together."

—Victoria G., Age 16

## Sydney Segaula B.

Age 18

"I've begun to view my life as though I was a weed. No matter how rough the terrain or how many times I am uprooted I find a way to come back stronger before."



GENERATOR

Z

## Brianna G.

Age 15



"My dream would be a space where kids are comfortable to be themselves with no judgement. A place where they can be weird and have fun, all while learning about accepting themselves."

@generatorzfuture

## Preparing for Success-Afterschool

**Bing Youth Institute, Inc. → \$250,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support program improvements and succession planning at the Bing Youth Institute.

**Community Music School of Buffalo → \$50,000**

[Western New York](#)

To support the relocation of an afterschool music program.

**Detroit Public Schools Foundation → \$2,000,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support the Connected Futures program, which will ensure that all 51,000 students in Detroit Public Schools Community District have access to devices, internet connection, and technical support to enable online learning outside of school hours.

**Lakeshore Connections, Inc. → \$1,175,000**

[Southeast Michigan/](#)  
[Western New York](#)

To support the launch of the Generator Z grant initiative, which distributes \$1,000,000 to 1,000 teens for participation in reimagining afterschool.

**MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership → \$10,000**

[Southeast Michigan/](#)  
[Western New York](#)

To support MENTOR: The National Partnership as they advance mentoring for young people nationally and locally in Southeast Michigan and Western New York.

**Mentoring Partnership of New York/ DBA Mentor New York → \$10,000**

[Western New York](#)

To provide operating support to advance Mentor New York's work and mission.

**Neutral Zone → \$28,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support professional development focused on youth leadership for youth-serving organizations.

**New York State Network for Youth Success, Inc. → \$10,000**

[Western New York](#)

To support the New York State Network for Youth Success' mission to advance access to quality youth development programs for young people in NY, including Western New York.

**Rochester Area Community Foundation → \$15,000**

[Western New York](#)

To support a scan of the current afterschool and summer landscape in Monroe County, NY and develop actionable recommendations for improvements in local system models, data systems, coordination, staffing structures, current governance structure, and communication vehicles.

**The Forum for Youth Investment → \$10,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support The Youth Development Resource Center's mission to advance access to quality youth development programs for young people in Southeast Michigan.

**WNED | WBFO → \$12,500**

[Western New York](#)

To support at-home learning with a daily broadcast schedule of educational programming on WNED PBS KIDS.

## Preparing for Success-Early Childhood

**Ardent Solutions, Inc. → \$215,000**

[Western New York](#)

To support the new Allegany County Early Childhood Learning and Development Coalition's development, implementation, and monitoring of school readiness for young children ages 0-5.

**Cattaraugus Region Community Foundation → \$50,000**

[Western New York](#)

To provide emergency financial support to home-based childcare providers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Community Connections of NY, Inc. → \$400,000**

[Western New York](#)

To provide continued support for the PEDALS early childhood Social Emotional Learning (SEL) program.

**Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo → \$516,000**

[Western New York](#)

To support home-based childcare providers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan → \$900,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To provide continued support for the PEDALS early childhood Social Emotional Learning (SEL) program.

**Council of Michigan Foundations → \$70,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support a full-time manager for the Southeast Michigan Early Childhood Funders Collaborative.

**Early Childhood Investment Corporation → \$150,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To provide emergency financial support to home-based childcare providers in Livingston, Monroe, and St. Clair counties during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Early Childhood Investment Corporation → \$50,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To provide general support for ECIC to continue to strengthen the early childhood system in Southeast Michigan.

**Every Person Influences Children → \$122,000**

[Western New York](#)

To support relocation to a new facility in the City of Buffalo.

**Generations United → \$5,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support a comprehensive update of resources for grandparents and other relatives raising children.

**Michigan's Children → \$50,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support the general operations of Michigan's Children in moving an integrated policy agenda for children, youth, and families by strengthening research and outreach efforts.



**Monroe County Intermediate School District → \$310,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support a pilot program that engages and supports families with young children before they enter kindergarten.

**Oakland Schools → \$265,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support a new statewide coordinator for Help Me Grow Michigan.

**Rochester Area Community Foundation → \$384,000**

[Western New York](#)

To provide emergency financial support to home-based childcare providers in Monroe, Genesee, and Orleans counties during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Say Yes Buffalo Scholarship, Inc. → \$23,000**

[Western New York](#)

To support the integration of the Help Me Grow model in the Buffalo Public Schools Early Childhood Initiative.

**Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy → \$50,000**

[Western New York](#)

To support the Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy to analyze and advance policies to improve health (including mental and dental), development, and overall well-being of young children and families, with a special focus on those most in need.

## Preparing for Success—Young Adults & Working Families

**Detroit Employment Solutions Corporation → \$100,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support the effort to inform, prepare, and hire Detroit residents for middle-skill, middle wage jobs at the new Fiat Chrysler Automobiles automotive assembly plant in Detroit.

**Downtown Detroit Partnership → \$200,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support the development of industry-led workforce collaboratives.

**DRIVE One → \$60,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support the automotive technology program at DRIVE One in Roseville, MI.

**Economic Development Group/ DBA Northland Workforce Training Center → \$100,000**

[Western New York](#)

To support a new summer program at the Northland Workforce Training Center focusing on exposure to careers in the advanced manufacturing and energy sectors for youth ages 16–21.

**Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity → \$200,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support the development of a data and reporting infrastructure that provides education and workforce training providers with data to better assess labor market outcomes for program participants.

**Michigan Future, Inc. → \$300,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support Michigan Future's research on the state's economy and the economic well-being of Michigan households.

**Michigan Future, Inc. → \$50,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support Michigan Future's research on the state's economy and the economic well-being of Michigan households.

**National Skills Coalition → \$50,000**

[Southeast Michigan/](#)

[Western New York](#)

To support the National Skills Coalition's work to advance skills, equity, industry engagement, public accountability and high-quality job driven investments in the workforce development sector.

**New America Foundation → \$375,000**

[Western New York](#)

To support the continued development and design of a youth apprenticeship program in Western New York.

**NY Association of Training & Employment Professionals → \$50,000**

[Western New York](#)

To support workforce development sector activities and issues in Western New York.

**Rochester Careers in Construction, Inc. → \$250,000**

[Western New York](#)

To support Project Phoenix and the Multi-Craft Apprenticeship Preparation Program.

**Say Yes Buffalo Scholarship, Inc. → \$2,213,500**

[Western New York](#)

To support operations and programs at Say Yes Buffalo.

**TechBuffalo → \$2,000,000**

[Western New York](#)

To support a comprehensive IT talent development sector strategy in Western New York and community-based IT training programs at the Tech Academy.

**The Aspen Institute Economic Opportunities Program → \$53,000**

[Southeast Michigan/](#)

[Western New York](#)

To engage The Aspen Institute Economic Opportunities Program to identify key features of effective workforce intermediaries.

**WNY Women's Foundation → \$5,000**

[Western New York](#)

To support the WNY Women's Foundation "What She's Made Of" 2020 virtual event.



# CARE



*The Buffalo News | Harry Scull*



# GIVERS



# Standing behind the true heroes of 2020: Caregivers.

Caregivers of all kinds were elevated to the national spotlight in 2020 and celebrated as heroes for navigating the unthinkable due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Springing forth from this crisis is now a sharper focus and attention on the critical role caregivers, in particular of older adults, play in our society and the need for broader communities of support and advocacy.

The Foundation's work last year elevated and directly supported frontline workers, meeting both their urgent needs, while also laying the groundwork for long-term change in how caregivers are valued. We also continued to build awareness around family caregivers through Tight Knit™, a new Foundation-driven storytelling series.

## CAREGIVER CHALLENGES

- An environmental services professional contracted COVID-19 and was off work for 17 days; his wife had to stay home to care for him, also losing wages.
- A medical assistant, a housekeeper, and a nurse—all furloughed—quickly fell behind on their bills while waiting for unemployment.
- A patient transporter, who typically relied on overtime to meet his household budget, dealt with significantly trimmed hours while his pregnant wife was laid off from her position at another nearby hospital.

During the worst of the pandemic, there were many stories of healthcare workers falling on hard times. “As COVID-19 raged, Henry Ford Health System’s team members were thrown into the extraordinary position of caring for our patients and community, even as the crisis personally impacted many,” said Mary Jane Vogt, the hospital’s executive vice president and chief development officer. Despite falling outside the Foundation’s grantmaking strategy to support paid caregivers, Foundation staff and trustees wanted to help direct care workers after learning about the struggles of these valued hospital employees while they were selflessly caring for others.

We committed \$1.35 million in April of 2020 to address front line caregivers’ extraordinary financial and stress relief needs. These included nurse aides, environmental and food services staff members, and others active in acute care settings impacted by the COVID-19 crisis in Southeast Michigan and Western New York. Henry Ford Health System in Detroit was one of 17 hospitals to receive funding. (See page 28 for a full list of hospitals)

The mobilized support helped more than 130 Henry Ford team members and their families look after their physical, emotional, and financial well-being, so they could keep afloat while serving people who were hospitalized. Many who received support were employees without access to economic and social support – caregivers living paycheck to paycheck during normal times – but who play critical roles in the healthcare system every day.

A Henry Ford employee who works in environmental services received relief funds to get by during a rough financial stretch – resources which helped her find a sense of peace, knowing her community and employer supported her. As a single mom of two school-aged children, she had to take time off from work to address her own medical needs when she contracted COVID. “I would never have imagined that a COVID diagnosis would have caused two hospitalizations and severe medical problems that I am still dealing with,” she said. She received \$2,500 from the fund the Foundation supported in November 2020 to defray household costs, like rent, utilities, and food. “The financial assistance helped keep my family on track with our expenses. I appreciate all the support... I am forever grateful.”



TIGHT KNIT

## Shedding light on the crucial role of family caregivers.

The challenges and joys of a family caregiver often go unseen or unspoken, and it’s a journey that is becoming more and more common to millions of men and women. An estimated 117 million older Americans needed care of some kind at the end of 2020, and yet as the need for caregiving continues to increase, our broader society hasn’t nearly recognized this role in a way that normalizes the experience.

In 2020, the Foundation’s communications team launched Tight Knit, a series that highlights the many ways that people work together to build stronger relationships and communities. In its first season, Tight Knit focused on opening the door into the day-to-day lives of families caring for older adults in Southeast Michigan and Western New York through eight podcast episodes and two short documentaries. The stories raise awareness of and recognize the family caregiver as a vital and selfless part of every community, deserving of support, attention, and advocacy.

Through the Foundation’s own learnings and research, we realized that there was an awareness gap around family caregivers and their everyday efforts. The Tight Knit caregiver series was developed as a strategic decision to begin to bridge that gap and spotlight the joys and struggles of this often overlooked community.



Tight Knit's stories of caregivers attracted regional and national audiences and recognition, and importantly it bridged the way for continued conversation and increased partnerships with local and national organizations, such as AARP, the Family Caregiver Alliance, Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregivers, and others, who are using these stories to help facilitate important dialogue and discussion about how communities can better support the needs of family caregivers.

Several comments shared during these film screenings and through social media have reinforced the importance:

—  
**IN RESPONSE TO WATCHING "ENID & MAMA"**

*Thank you both for this beautiful story of love and family. Your words resonate with me on every level and this video is a gift to all of us. Thank you so much.*

—  
**IN RESPONSE TO "TODAY WAS A GOOD DAY"**

*I found this (film) because it was shared within my organization, thank you for making it. I will continue to share it with all my fellow caregivers!!!*



**FROM LISTENERS OF THE 8-PART PODCAST**

*This is such an interesting, empathetic, and important series of stories about the caregiving experience.*

—

*This series explores all sorts of caregiving in and outside of families. It covers a wide range of possibilities that I otherwise would not have known about. I thoroughly enjoyed every episode.*



Complementing these direct storytelling efforts, the Foundation also provided a grant to the Solutions Journalism Network in 2020 to develop and launch the New York and Michigan Solutions Journalism Collaborative, which includes 26 news organizations and six community partners from across both regions. The new media initiative, "Caregivers on the Front Lines," is aimed at shedding light on caregivers for older adults and investigating potential solutions to their challenges.

As one of very few foundations in the country focused specifically on supporting caregivers of older adults, we had found that news coverage around the topic of caregiving was largely problem-focused, if it existed at all, with most stories focusing solely on the crisis narrative. By engaging the Solutions Journalism Network around this collaborative effort, we're hopeful that these investigative and solutions-focused stories can begin to inspire action and rally our communities in ways that will support positive leverage and policy impacts moving forward.

## Caregivers

### AARP Foundation → \$50,000

[Southeast Michigan/](#)  
[Western New York](#)

To support AARP's work on behalf of caregivers, including educational materials, publications, and learning collaboratives, among other activities.

### Center for Elder Law & Justice → \$218,000

[Western New York](#)

To support the launch of a new initiative to boost quality and frequency of support to legally appointed caregivers in Western New York.

### Coalition to Transform Advanced Care → \$75,000

[Southeast Michigan/](#)  
[Western New York](#)

To be a sponsor of C-TAC's 2020 Virtual Summit.

### COVID Frontline Workers Relief Grants → \$1,300,000

[Southeast Michigan/](#)  
[Western New York](#)

To support the extraordinary financial and stress relief needs of caregivers, including nurse aides, environmental and food services staff, serving in acute care settings impacted by the COVID-19 crisis in Southeast Michigan and Western New York.

### Ascension St. John Foundation → \$200,000

[Southeast Michigan](#)

### Beaumont Health Foundation → \$200,000

[Southeast Michigan](#)

### Brooks-TLC Hospital System → \$15,000

[Western New York](#)

### Buffalo Renaissance Foundation, Inc. → \$15,000

[Western New York](#)

### Community Foundation of St. Clair County → \$15,000

[Southeast Michigan](#)

### Eastern Niagara Health System → \$10,000

[Western New York](#)

### Henry Ford Health Foundation → \$200,000

[Southeast Michigan](#)

### Kaleida Health Foundation → \$150,000

[Western New York](#)

### Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center → \$15,000

[Western New York](#)

### Rochester Regional Health Foundation → \$60,000

[Western New York](#)

### Sisters Hospital Foundation → \$150,000

[Western New York](#)

### Trinity Health Michigan → \$125,000

[Southeast Michigan](#)

### University of Michigan Health System → \$60,000

[Southeast Michigan](#)

### University of Rochester Medical Center → \$60,000

[Western New York](#)

### WCA Foundation → \$15,000

[Western New York](#)

### Wyoming Community Hospital Foundation → \$10,000

[Western New York](#)

### Foodlink WNY → \$15,000

[Western New York](#)

To support the general operating expenses associated with the ongoing COVID-19 response to the public health crisis in Western New York.

### Foodlink WNY → \$150,000

[Western New York](#)

To support emergency food distribution to seniors during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### FeedMore WNY → \$15,000

[Western New York](#)

To support the general operating expenses associated with the ongoing COVID-19 response to the public health crisis in Western New York.

### FeedMore WNY → \$150,000

[Western New York](#)

To support emergency food distribution to seniors during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Field & Fork Network Inc. → \$270,000

[Western New York](#)

To support the expansion of the Double Up Food Bucks program in Western New York.

### FrameWorks Institute → \$75,000

[Southeast Michigan/](#)  
[Western New York](#)

To support qualitative and quantitative research to understand the ways in which public thinking about caregivers and direct care is changing as a result of COVID-19.





**Gleaners Community Food Bank of Southeastern Michigan → \$300,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support the distribution of quarantine boxes to seniors in Southeast Michigan.

**Grantmakers in Aging → \$30,000**

[Southeast Michigan/](#)  
[Western New York](#)

To support the Grantmakers in Aging (GIA) Fund the Future Campaign.

**Grantmakers in Aging → \$50,000**

[Southeast Michigan/](#)  
[Western New York](#)

To be a sponsor of the 2020 Grantmakers in Aging (GIA) annual conference.

**Healthcare Industry Grant Corporation → \$100,000**

[Western New York](#)

To support Healthcare Workers Rising to provide training, education, and peer to peer support to homecare workers in the Western New York region.

**National Academy for State Health Policy → \$50,000**

[Southeast Michigan/](#)  
[Western New York](#)

To support the RAISE Family Caregiver Resource and Dissemination Center, including further engagement and outreach to stakeholders in Michigan and New York.

**National Domestic Workers Alliance → \$50,000**

[Western New York](#)

To support the efforts of Caring Across Generations to assist family caregivers and improve job quality for direct care workers.

**PHI (Paraprofessional Healthcare Institute, Inc.) → \$100,000**

[Southeast Michigan/](#)  
[Western New York](#)

To support a national study to assess how a variety of new COVID-specific policy responses have impacted the economic stability and well-being of direct care workers, including in-depth analysis of policies in New York and Michigan.

**PHI (Paraprofessional Healthcare Institute, Inc.) → \$50,000**

[Southeast Michigan/](#)  
[Western New York](#)

To support PHI's work to create quality jobs for direct care workers.



**RAND Corporation → \$275,000**

[Southeast Michigan/](#)  
[Western New York](#)

To support a study to document the lived experiences of paid caregivers in Southeast Michigan and Western New York during the COVID-19 crisis, with a focus on understanding barriers and challenges faced by home health aides.

**Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregivers → \$59,000**

[Southeast Michigan/](#)  
[Western New York](#)

To support the Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregivers to provide virtual training and support to organizations in Southeast Michigan and Western New York serving family caregivers.

**Southern Tier Health Care System, Inc. → \$132,000**

[Western New York](#)

To support the expansion of the Caregiver Navigation Project to improve quality of life for caregivers of older adults and people with disabilities in three Western New York counties: Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua.

**St. Ann's Community → \$195,000**

[Western New York](#)

To support professional development and advanced training in the Eden Alternative model for caregivers at St. Ann's Irondequoit in Rochester, NY.

**St. Joseph's Neighborhood Center, Inc. → \$100,000**

[Western New York](#)

To support COVID-19 response efforts at a critical health care safety-net organization.

**TimeSlips Creative Storytelling, Inc. → \$772,000**

[Southeast Michigan/](#)  
[Western New York](#)

To support the expansion of TimeSlips programming for caregivers of people with dementia through the arts and storytelling.

**Wayne State University → \$275,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support the expansion of Wayne State University's mobile COVID-19 "drive to" testing capacity to reach older adults, formal and informal caregivers, and long-term care facility residents and staff in Southeast Michigan.

A photograph of two people sitting on a light-colored sofa. The person on the left is wearing a tan ribbed cardigan and white pants, holding a white mug of coffee. The person on the right is wearing a tan cable-knit sweater and is holding a silver laptop. The laptop screen is open, showing a keyboard with Cyrillic characters. The background is a wooden floor and a potted plant.

# E&ED



# Positioning support so small businesses survive.

Small businesses drive local economies, and efforts to support entrepreneurship ensure that Main Street stays vital. In 2020, small businesses needed capital. This meant financing, rent relief, loan repayment, and access to financial advisers to consult on how to tap into federal dollars. We learned from our grantees what neighborhood businesses really needed; and then we put the resources in their hands so they could make it happen. We believe in strengthening inclusive and equitable entrepreneurial support systems. Support takes many forms and last year, our grantees helped keep small businesses open so they could continue to be the backbone of our local economies.

## Open4: Activating a solid business support system in a crucial moment.

When COVID-19 hit, many small business owners across the country were struggling to survive, especially those who, under normal circumstances, had difficulty accessing the capital and resources needed to maintain and grow.

Brenda Calhoun, principal of Onyx Global Group in Buffalo, New York, was affected. Onyx is a very small general construction company primarily engaged in residential and commercial interior and exterior carpentry. When the pandemic emerged, projects in motion slowed down significantly or came to a complete stop in the case of residential work where the home was occupied.

“On one commercial project, we could not have more than one person in the building at a time,” says Calhoun. “The pandemic really hampered the ability to complete projects on schedule.”

Added to that difficulty were challenges around material acquisition and price increases. Further, workers laid off with the initial construction slow down weren’t interested or able to rejoin the workforce when stay-home orders were lifted for a variety of reasons.

Calhoun received a COVID relief grant from PathStone Enterprise Center, which offers financing and resources to small businesses. The organization also restructured a previous loan, giving her the ability to keep cash flowing.

Calhoun first connected with PathStone in 2017, striving to grow from a residential subcontractor to a general contractor. PathStone, which she considers a vital partner, assisted with start-up capital, gap funding for commercial jobs, and technical assistance around bookkeeping, website development, and networking.



“They were extremely helpful,” said Calhoun. “Without them, I would not have been able to grow in the five years preceding the pandemic.” She says PathStone kept her informed about other resources. “The educational and technical assistance that they provided over the past year have been essential, and they still are. It was a tough year, and it’s still tough.”

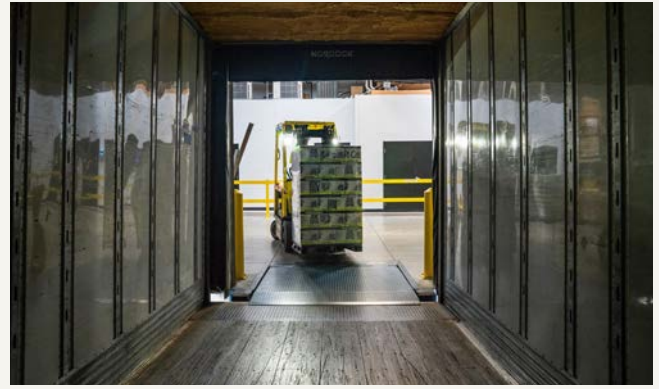
PathStone is an organization supported by Open4, a partnership of community-based organizations and funders, including the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation, who work together to connect entrepreneurs and small businesses in underserved, low- and moderate-income neighborhoods with the resources, support and guidance they need to prosper.

While the Open4 initiative was in development prior to 2020, its launch as a collaborative of funders with a common mission and vision coincided with the economic fallout caused by the pandemic. Because of this, the initiative was able to help entrepreneurs and small business owners, particularly women and people of color, in Western New York and Rochester during a critical time. Open4 does not directly support small businesses; instead, it makes grants to those that do.

Open4 funds Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) so that they, in turn, can address one of the most prominent and systemic barriers to underserved small business sustenance and growth: lack of access to resources such as business loans and lines of credits as well as financial advice. This became particularly urgent at the onset of COVID-19, and small businesses like Onyx found themselves financially challenged.

Last year, we funded Open4, through the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo, to help CDFIs and other business support organizations expand their reach and impact through 1) direct funding so they could offer additional business/financial services, 2) technical assistance to build their internal capacity to help more small businesses, and 3) marketing support.

As one of five initial investors, we made a \$3.5 million grant in 2020 and are confident that the Open4 partnership will lift Western New York communities by providing a solid business support system during these times of economic duress.



## NEI: Mobilizing Relief for 2,000 Small Businesses During COVID-19

When COVID-19 wracked the southeast Michigan economy as it did similarly across the U.S., it was not surprising that small businesses were scrambling to figure out how to remain viable and survive. We were proud to be able to contribute funding that allowed the New Economy Initiative (NEI) to mobilize funds for loan relief and technical assistance for 2,000 small businesses impacted by the pandemic.

Launched in 2007 and based in Detroit, NEI focuses primarily on assisting existing small business as well as the smallest of small businesses – commonly referred to as microbusinesses – in some of the city’s most underserved neighborhoods. These tiny establishments face systemic barriers to growth yet make up 70 percent of the small business operating in the city of Detroit. NEI builds and maintains networks for them, especially those owned and started by women and people of color. It does so by stewarding a robust network of business support organizations so they, in turn, can address the varied needs of small businesses.

Shoring up these companies during the pandemic was not simply about deploying dollars; it involved quickly rallying a community of support, so business owners knew where to go for help, whether it be finding rent assistance, filling out PPP applications, or transitioning to online platforms.

Pam Lewis, NEI's executive director, says this was not hard to achieve because of the foundational work that has occurred over the last 14 years: "We were able to get the resources to businesses in need because we had relationships already. It's easier to innovate and respond with solutions when the network is in place."

Our funding took the pressure off the business support organizations in Detroit, Ypsilanti, and Ann Arbor so they could provide direct grants to businesses in underserved areas to cover operations and practical assistance for reopening, stabilizing, and sustaining small and microbusinesses.

## Ecosystem Scan Reveals Gaps in COVID Support for BIPOC- and Women- owned Businesses

When the New Economy Initiative (NEI) launched in 2007, it was banking on high-growth businesses and entrepreneurship to uplift the region's economy. Over time, the focus shifted.

According to Pam Lewis, NEI executive director, "As our work evolved, we determined that the best opportunity for economic growth for individuals, neighborhoods and the city was to focus on historically underserved microbusinesses."

Our work and partnership with NEI over the years informed our next move: support for an assessment of how the organization could best support the economic needs of small and microbusinesses in the next five years. Along with the Kresge Foundation, we invested in an ecosystem scan in Wayne County to inform a new strategy for NEI.

The scan of 760 businesses found that during COVID, those owned by Black, Hispanic, Middle Eastern, North African, Native, and Asian people were two to four times as likely to have revenue drops of more than 60 percent versus their white-owned counterparts. The scan also found that smaller businesses were two times more likely to have revenue decreases of 80 percent or more.

Findings also revealed that businesses of color applied and were approved for Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans at lower rates than white-owned businesses. Female-owned companies were also less likely to apply and be approved.

These findings will help shape how NEI addresses the needs of underserved microbusinesses in the years to come.



# Entrepreneurship & Economic Development

## 43North Bpc, Inc. → \$90,000

[Western New York](#)

To support the Buffalo Homecoming initiative that brings together a network of successful Buffalo expatriates to re-engage with the community and encourage them to consider investments in the Buffalo Niagara region.

## Ann Arbor SPARK → \$50,000

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support the Washtenaw Small Business Resiliency Fund, a COVID-19 rapid response fund administered by Ann Arbor SPARK, that provides working capital grants of up to \$2,500 to qualifying businesses.

## Buffalo Heritage Carousel, Inc. → \$250,000

[Western New York](#)

To support the capital construction of the Buffalo Heritage Carousel attraction at Canalside in Buffalo, New York.

## Canisius College → \$47,000

[Western New York](#)

To support the administration of specialized technical assistance to small businesses in Western New York affected by COVID-19.

## Community Development Properties, Buffalo, Inc. → \$50,000

[Western New York](#)

To support the administration of specialized technical assistance to small businesses in Western New York affected by COVID-19.

## Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo → \$144,000

[Western New York](#)

To support consulting services in the second year of the pilot phase of the Buffalo Purchasing Initiative (BPI).

## Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo → \$3,500,000

[Western New York](#)

To support the Open4 Fund – a multi-funder collaborative to support inclusive small business recovery and growth in Western New York.

## Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan → \$50,000

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support a small business ecosystem scan in Wayne County to inform a new five-year strategy for the New Economy Initiative (NEI).

## Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan → \$5,000,000

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support the new five-year strategy of the New Economy Initiative (NEI) to strengthen the inclusive network of capital, technical assistance, and other resources for underserved small businesses in Wayne County.

## Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan → \$500,000

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support the New Economy Initiative (NEI) to offer a loan relief and technical fund for small businesses in SEMI affected by business disruption related to COVID-19.

## Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan → \$48,000

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support CFSEM's continued engagement of a national expert to assist in the growth of real estate development nonprofit organizations in Detroit and Southeast Michigan from March–June 2020.

## Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan → \$48,000

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support CFSEM's continued engagement of a national expert to assist in the growth of real estate development nonprofit organizations in Southeast Michigan from July–December 2020.

## Community Foundation of St. Clair County → \$32,750

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support the distribution of small grants, technical advice, and business supports to assist minority- and women-owned businesses in St. Clair County with COVID-19 recovery.

## Detroit Future City → \$150,000

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support funding for the Center for Equity, Engagement, and Research, which is working to increase economic equity in Detroit.

## Downtown Detroit Partnership → \$25,000

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support the 2020 Detroit Homecoming initiative that brings together a network of successful Detroit expatriates for a hybrid event of virtual and in-person programming to re-engage with the community and encourage them to consider investments in Detroit and the region.

## Eastern Market Corporation → \$900,000

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support Eastern Market Corporation to retool market operations to respond to COVID-19 and to continue its work over the next two years to support equitable economic development in the Food Innovation Zone.

## Edison Welding Institute, Inc./DBA Buffalo Manufacturing Works → \$340,000

[Western New York](#)

To support Buffalo Manufacturing Works' Shift Program with a planning grant to identify and develop new technical assistance services to improve the competitiveness of small and medium-sized manufacturers in Western New York.

## Enterprise Community Partners → \$2,000,000

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support a multi-funders collaborative grant program for community development organizations in Detroit.

## Fair Food Network → \$500,000

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support the Fair Food Network to provide specialized technical assistance for food businesses and to launch the Fair Food Fund in Southeast Michigan.

## Fair Food Network → \$300,000

[Southeast Michigan/](#)

[Western New York](#)

To support the development of a mobile phone application to enable online enrollment in the Double Up Food Bucks (DUF) program and to significantly increase DUF marketing and advertising in Southeast Michigan and Western New York in response to COVID-19.



**Gleaners Community Food Bank of Southeastern Michigan → \$1,250,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support the launch of a new food distribution site and model designed to serve the community's increased need for fresh produce and dairy.

**Growing Hope → \$78,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support the expansion of the Incubator Kitchen at the Ypsilanti Farmers MarketPlace.

**Jamestown Community College Foundation → \$27,000**

[Western New York](#)

To support the administration of specialized technical assistance to small businesses in Western New York affected by COVID-19.

**Life Remodeled → \$500,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support capital improvements at the Durfee Innovation Society (DIS) neighborhood and community hub on Detroit's West Side.

**Local Initiatives Support Corporation → \$1,500,000**

[Western New York](#)

To support the NY State Forward fund to make COVID-19 related relief and recovery loans to eligible small businesses and non-profits in a nine-county region of Western New York (Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Monroe, Niagara, Orleans, and Wyoming).

**Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) → \$326,000**

[Western New York](#)

To support increased staff capacity at the LISC's Western New York local office, focused on inclusive economic development programs.

**Michigan Israel Business Accelerator Foundation → \$500,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support commerce between Michigan and the State of Israel, with a focus on advancing innovation in the mobility, cybersecurity, and defense sectors through the exchange of knowledge, technology, and other business resources.

**Midtown Detroit, Inc. → \$400,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support the Cultural Center Planning Initiative and shared services platform.

**Midtown Detroit, Inc. → \$1,200,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support core operations, specifically the public space maintenance program.

**National Comedy Center, Inc. → \$100,000**

[Western New York](#)

To provide short-term operating funds to support the National Comedy Center's marketing and fundraising capacity through the COVID-19 pandemic.

**NCCC Foundation → \$36,300**

[Western New York](#)

To support the Small Business Development Center at NCCC to provide specialized technical assistance in sales, marketing, e-commerce and other relevant topics to small businesses affected by COVID-19.

**NYBDC Local Development Corporation/DBA Pursuit Community Finance → \$150,000**

[Western New York](#)

To support a loan relief and technical assistance fund to support small business borrowers in Western NY impacted by the COVID-19 crisis.

**PathStone Enterprise Center → \$170,000**

[Western New York](#)

To support a loan relief and technical assistance fund to support PathStone's small business borrowers in Buffalo and Rochester impacted by the COVID-19 crisis.

**Pro Se Bankruptcy Assistance/ DBA Access Bankruptcy Court → \$100,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support Access to Bankruptcy Court in providing pro bono bankruptcy representation to low-income individuals in the Eastern Michigan District court.

**Regents of the University of Michigan → \$80,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support the Detroit Neighborhood Entrepreneurs Project to run a special summer session to support underserved entrepreneurs and small business with COVID-19 recovery.

**Southern Tier West Development Foundation → \$250,000**

[Western New York](#)

To support a new multi-funder collaborative project in WNY to map and analyze the regional food economy with the goal of emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic with a regional food system that is more equitable, effective, efficient, and resilient.

**TechTown Detroit → \$75,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support the TechTown Detroit Small Business Stabilization Fund, a COVID-19 rapid response fund, to provide working capital grants of up to \$5,000 to qualifying businesses.

**The Brookings Institution → \$250,000**

[Southeast Michigan/](#)

[Western New York](#)

To support data collection and analysis on the economic impact of the pandemic, including on the Western New York and Southeast Michigan regional economies.

**The Nature Conservancy → \$875,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support the implementation of large-scale green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) along a network of planned greenways in the Eastern Market District, in alignment with The Eastern Market Neighborhood Framework and Stormwater Management Network Plan.

**Western New York Law Center Inc. → \$200,000**

[Western New York](#)

To support its Small Business Law Clinic at the Western NY Law Center, which provides legal services to low-income entrepreneurs and small business owners.

**Westminster Economic Development Initiative, Inc. → \$100,000**

[Western New York](#)

To support a small business relief and technical assistance fund to assist WEDI's microloan borrowers and business owners at its West Side Bazaar impacted by COVID-19.

NON-  
PRO-

FIT



# Strengthening nonprofits at a pivotal time.

To say 2020 was tough on nonprofits would be an understatement. Grueling was the word we heard more frequently. Nonprofit organizations, just like small businesses, had to navigate dramatic shifts thanks to COVID-19. We know that in the best of times no one can do it alone. When the unthinkable happened, as it did last year, we focused on further strengthening and supporting intermediary organizations and encouraging collaborations. But the real work happened in the Zoom rooms, as grantees and community partners came together to navigate change and identify where the greatest needs were. We supported several innovative collective efforts in both regions. What emerged made us optimistic about the future of the nonprofit sector. A group of intermediary organizations in Michigan leading with racial equity at the center showed up on national platforms to describe how they are transforming nonprofit dynamics. In both regions, intermediaries banded together to tackle COVID relief.

## Mobilizing trust. Collaborating to bring relief.

We entrust grantee partners to put our resources into their communities. Our partners work together to solve challenges, recognizing that at the heart of what all we do is in service to communities. As the ongoing impact of COVID-19 on public life dawned on us as a nation, large nonprofit organizations like community

foundations and United Ways began receiving requests for help, resources and information.

To support these essential partners, we made grants to the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo, the Community Foundation of Southeast Michigan, the Rochester Area Community Foundation, the United Way of Southern Chautauqua County and the United Way for Southeastern Michigan. These grants supported a collaborative response for flexible resources to nonprofits in the two regions impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. Our partners leveraged our funds with others' and created more help.



“When COVID-19 hit Michigan in March of 2020, United Way for Southeastern Michigan immediately sprang into action,” said Dr. Darienne Hudson, CEO of United Way for Southeastern Michigan. “With the support of incredible partners, we rapidly put more than \$35 million of emergency relief and support services into our community.”

Together, we were able to keep families in their homes, help children access educational support and healthy food, keep students and seniors digitally connected, and equip food pantry, childcare and shelter workers with personal protective equipment they needed to safely keep their doors open for those in need.

In Western New York, the philanthropic community also mobilized quickly last year to support nonprofits serving on the front lines to help meet the emergency needs of residents. By March 24, the WNY COVID-19 Community Response Fund was up and running, conducting a needs survey with over 1,000 nonprofits, and beginning to fundraise. Administered by the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo, the Fund announced its first round of grants two weeks later. To date, the Fund has been supported by nearly 120 foundations, corporations, and community leaders, as well as 2,000 individual donors. It has provided more than \$13 million in grants for more than 400 nonprofit organizations during this crisis.



## TRANSFORMING SOLIDARITY COLLECTIVE

### Joining forces to fight for nonprofits.

At the onset of the pandemic, anxiety surged for nonprofit leaders. No one knew how long the pandemic would last. Many wondered about their long-term survival. Others, especially BIPOC leaders, weren't being served well by their financial institutions and couldn't get their questions answered. Hundreds needed assistance with applying for the Paycheck Protection Program and other government-funded programs, but there was little support. They needed access to guidance and resources and they needed it fast.

In response, a group of five nonprofit intermediary organizations – Co.act, NEW, Michigan Nonprofit Association, Community Development Advocates of Detroit, and Michigan Community Resources – came

together to provide a broad spectrum of support for nonprofits.

The leaders of these organizations had worked together in the past. At their core was a belief in the resilience and indispensability of nonprofits during the pandemic and beyond.

By working together, this group, dubbed the Transforming Solidarity Collective, reached out to understand what nonprofits needed, and translated those insights into real and practical resources and assistance, serving thousands of people.

We invested in the collective, recognizing that in their hands, help and resources could spread across the region's nonprofit ecosystem. They were able to:

- Provide specific technical assistance for PPP loan applications, preparing documents for the Employee Retention Credit and extending ongoing support and updates around government-funded programs for 542 nonprofits.

- Offer direct legal pro bono referrals and counseling for longer term nonprofit legal challenges exacerbated by issues arising from COVID-19 for 77 nonprofits.
- Support 200 nonprofit board members with training and consulting.
- Host a virtual engagement series and toolkit for reimagining the nonprofit workplace and reentering safely for 826 organizations.
- Launch a COVID-19 microsite with resources for nonprofits, with content that addresses the greatest needs identified by a COVID impact study (more than 10,000 visits have been made).

Beyond this, much more was done to help stabilize nonprofits in the short-term and long-term.

“We heard and understood what nonprofits needed during a time of crisis,” says Allandra Bulger, executive director of Co.act Detroit. “It’s always been important for us to think about how we build a more equitable and sustainable nonprofit system moving forward. COVID exacerbated existing challenges.”

The work of the collective has been centered in racial equity, striving to ensure that regional nonprofits, specifically those that are under-resourced, have what they need to move their missions forward and to affect equitable systems level change in the sector.

Led by five women of color, and during a time of deep racial unrest, the collective was intentional in making racial equity a priority and embedding it in the work.

Donna Murray-Brown, president and CEO of Michigan Nonprofit Association, says, “Not that we didn’t do it before, but really putting a stake in the ground.”

An unexpected result, says Murray-Brown, was how the collective supported them as leaders. “It was a pleasant, unintended consequence,” she says. As they struggled with the impact of COVID for the greater nonprofit community, they also were navigating their own organizations’ existence, which underscored why “we so desperately needed to come together.”

“I could not have done this without these four other women,” says Murray-Brown. “Because of them, I could continue leading with strength.”

## WESTERN NEW YORK NONPROFIT SUPPORT GROUP

# Building up the bonds of trust and collaboration.

The Western New York Nonprofit Support Group (NSG) found that collaboration and relationships created comfort and momentum across a region that spanned Erie, Niagara, Chatauqua, and Monroe Counties. NSG is a collaborative that includes nonprofit support consultants and foundations: *The Western New York Foundation, Cadwallader and Associates Consulting Services, The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation, The John R. Oishei Foundation, The Health Foundation for Western and Central New York, The Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation, ESL Charitable Foundation, Ginny Oehler (Independent Consultant).*

These partners worked together in an unprecedented way to identify what nonprofits needed during a time of great uncertainty and distress. Asking nonprofits what they needed, they found five things mattered most to regional nonprofits:

1. Fundraising
2. Collaboration
3. Shared services
4. Advocacy
5. Technology

The group quickly put into play a diverse and multifaceted approach to meeting these needs, most often through intermediary partners. This included virtual support through Catchafire, a skills-based volunteer matching program for nonprofits building greater competency in racial equity and justice, community conversations and more.

Katie Pieri, NSG’s director shared, “The organizations that we brought together had never worked together like this before. It was inspiring to see the commitment and dedication to serve community by jumping in and getting the work done to get resources out to nonprofits at a time of immense need.”

# Nonprofit Support & Innovation

## Causewave Community Partners → \$75,000

[Western New York](#)

To support increased staffing and capacity for free, COVID-19 related one-on-one consultation and resources to nonprofits in Greater Rochester and Western New York.

## Citizens Research Council of Michigan → \$50,000

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support Citizen Research Council's ongoing research and policy work.

## Community Connections of NY, Inc. → \$25,000

[Western New York](#)

To support the first-ever cohort of the GetREADY capacity-building program.

## Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo → \$700,000

[Western New York](#)

To support a collaborative response for flexible resources to nonprofit organizations in the Western New York region impacted by the COVID-19 crisis.

## Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo → \$1,310,031

[Western New York](#)

To provide additional grantmaking capacity through the 2020 Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Legacy Funds.

## Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo → \$150,000

[Western New York](#)

To provide support to intermediary organizations in Western New York that will establish micro-grant programs in their local areas.

## Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo → \$75,000

[Western New York](#)

To support the development of strategic activities that help build connections within and across the Western New York region.

## Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo → \$500,000

[Western New York](#)

To support emergency response needs and micro-grants in Western New York.

## Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo → \$50,000

[Western New York](#)

To increase the census response rate in Western New York through a targeted communications campaign to generate awareness and drive engagement.

## Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan → \$500,000

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support urgent, emerging needs related to COVID-19.

## Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan → \$75,000

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support local journalism through the Detroit Journalism Engagement Fund at the Community Foundation of Southeast Michigan so local partners and publications can reach community members with important COVID-19 information.

## Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan → \$50,000

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support the City of Detroit's efforts in increasing census self-response rates through extensive communication and community outreach.

## Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan → \$965,200

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To provide "sidecar" funding in support of the large volume of 2020 Legacy Fund applications received by the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan.

## Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan → \$75,000

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support the development of strategic opportunities that will help build connections within and across Southeast Michigan.

## Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan → \$50,000

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support the COVID-19 Relief Fund for Southeast Michigan in memory of philanthropic leader, Joseph Hudson.

## Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan → \$250,000

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan's COVID-19 Flexible Fund, which provides grants to organizations addressing unique needs that are not funded through traditional crisis funding.

## Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan → \$30,000

[Southeast Michigan](#)

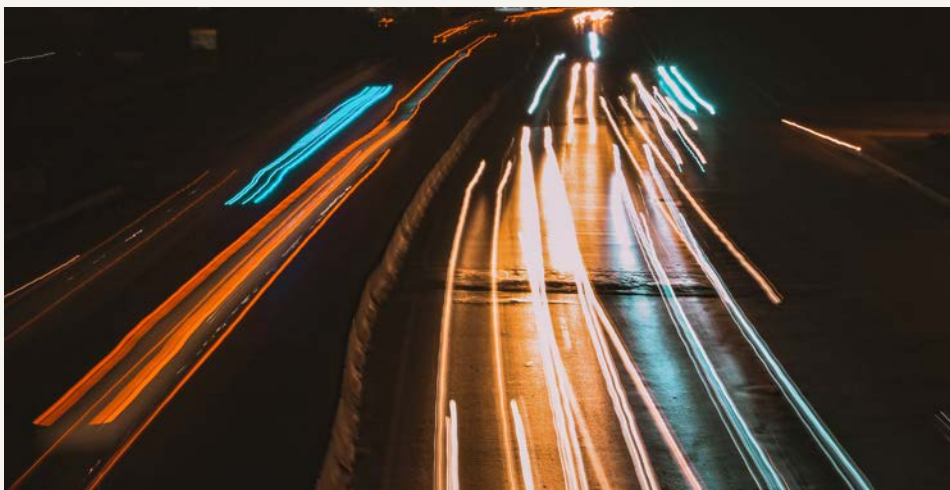
To support the City of Detroit's Everybody VS COVID-19 awareness campaign and digital unity festival, which informed and united a broad audience around how to stay safe and healthy during the COVID-19 crisis, the importance of filling out the census, and how to access city resources.

## Council of Michigan Foundations → \$40,000

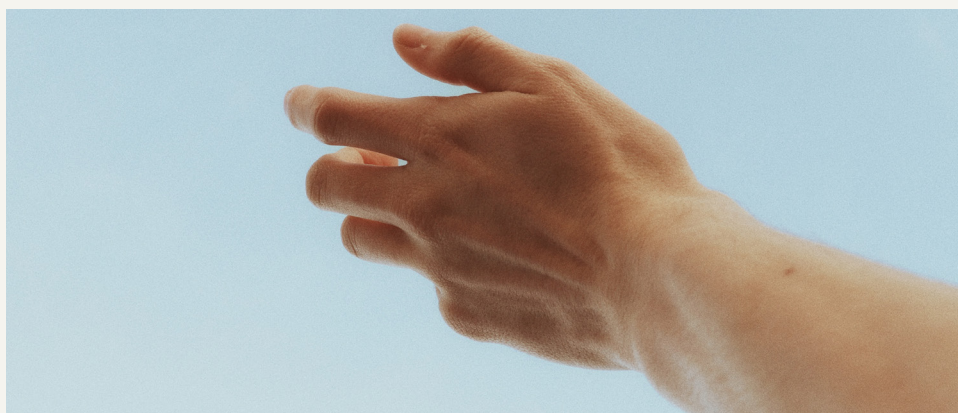
[Southeast Michigan/](#)

[Western New York](#)

To support the CMF philanthropy fellowship cohort.







**Council of Michigan Foundations → \$1,100,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support CMF in their organizational transformation, which includes strategic planning, visioning, and capacity building for diversity, equity, and inclusion.

**Council of Michigan Foundations → \$75,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support the Office of Foundation Liaison.

**Council of Michigan Foundations → \$25,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support the Council of Michigan Foundations' 48th Annual Conference.

**Council of Michigan Foundations → \$50,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support the permanent endowment for the William S. White Fund for Innovation in Community Philanthropy.

**Data Driven Detroit → \$150,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support Data Driven Detroit to meet regional, COVID-related data needs.

**Detroit Riverfront Conservancy → \$10,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support Detroit Riverfront Conservancy's virtual fundraiser #BeingApartTogether to support the Conservancy's stewardship of its public spaces.

**Food Finders → \$7,500**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support an emergency food distribution pilot connecting farmers to end-users during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Michigan Community Resources → \$350,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support the development of a new, shared, searchable directory of capacity-building service providers.

**Michigan League for Public Policy → \$50,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support the Michigan League for Public Policy in their work to enact public policies benefiting Southeast Michigan and the state's most vulnerable residents.

**Michigan Nonprofit Association → \$1,244,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support capacity-building intermediaries in their work helping address the existing and COVID-19 related challenges facing the nonprofit community in southeast Michigan now and into recovery.

**New Detroit Inc. → \$50,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support New Detroit in a capacity-building board development process to create a governance structure capable of supporting and scaling the organization's anti-racism mission.

**Nonprofit Enterprise at Work (NEW) → \$120,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support an evaluation and space planning for the NEW Center in Ann Arbor, rent relief to tenants, and general operating support.

**NY Funders Alliance Initiatives Fund → \$97,000**

[Western New York](#)

To provide nonprofits in Western New York with access to national capacity-building volunteers through an online platform.

**Project Healthy Community → \$25,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support Project Healthy Community in their COVID-19 response efforts and meet the needs of Detroit families in crisis.

**Rochester Area Community Foundation → \$200,000**

[Western New York](#)

To support a community fund that rapidly deploys resources to nonprofits that are providing emergency needs as result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**TechTown Detroit → \$55,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

Quality fundraising training for Southeast Michigan nonprofits.

**The Center for Michigan → \$200,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support statewide public engagement programs and public service journalism through Bridge Magazine, and to support the launch of BridgeDetroit, a new community news organization.

**United Way for Southeastern Michigan → \$500,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support United Way for Southeastern Michigan in the rapid deployment of resources to meet emergency needs through the COVID-19 Community Response Fund.

**United Way for Southeastern Michigan → \$200,000**

[Southeast Michigan](#)

To support general operations of United Way for Southeastern Michigan and to provide emergency mini-grant resources for faith-based groups, block clubs, neighborhood associations, and other small organizations in support of grassroots efforts to distribute quality information and other basic needs resources to community members.

**United Way of Southern Chautauqua County → \$100,000**

[Western New York](#)

To support Chautauqua County nonprofit needs during the economic distress associated with COVID-19.

# OUR



# TEAM

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\*Program and administrative staff list as of Nov. 1, 2020



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