



February 2020,

I want to share a report that updates you on the local nonprofits that we support and that demonstrates the impact of The Community Fund grants awarded in July 2019. Thanks to our ongoing due diligence, which begins with the comprehensive grant review performed by our volunteer panelists, we are confident that our grants are truly making a difference in our local community. We view our grantee agencies as partners with whom we have long-standing relationships. Our learning and assessment continues year round with management visits, collaboration on collective impact groups and the receipt of progress reports every six months. The data below is based on the interim reports submitted in January.



Our \$17,000 grant to **Abilis** helped the organization hire a new staff position, Job Developer, who works to educate employers and find job opportunities for Abilis' clients. Since implementing this new position in September, Abilis added 5 new jobs and 4 new job sites in 4Q19. Abilis' Employment Program currently serves 102 individuals; 62 of whom are employed in competitive jobs with 51 employers.



TCF's \$29,000 grant to **Americares** resulted in the delivery of medical services valued at more than \$133,000. Low-income families and individuals are much more likely to pay first for immediate necessities such as housing, food and transportation and forgo preventive care or even treatment for chronic or acute health problems, and, as a result, are more likely to suffer from, and be hospitalized for chronic diseases. Medical debt contributes to two-thirds of bankruptcies.



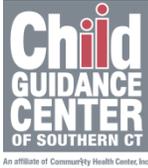
Our 2019 grant to **Building One Community** was directed to their workforce development program which layers vocational English (VE) with targeted job skills training to prepare immigrants for higher paying jobs that are critical to immigrant integration. In 2019, 819 adult immigrant participants obtained jobs and/or received support by participating in job skills training classes, a 40% increase over 587 participants in 2018. 109 workers were placed with 149 employers overall by the hiring site in 2019.



**Carver** now operates 36 programs at 16 Norwalk Public Schools and several additional charter and magnet schools, and is on track to serve more than 2,500 students this school year. This past fall, Carver took over the After the Bell program, a K-5 before-and-after school program that had been administered by NPS at nine elementary schools. The program currently serves 800 students with 96 staff members. Carver is working to remove barriers to participation such as providing busing and financial assistance.



In 2H19, **Child Guidance Center of Mid Fairfield County** treated 460 children and adolescents (and their families) by providing mental health services. CGC continues to expand its bilingual capacity. While its bilingual/bicultural team is the largest it's ever been with four full-time clinicians, one part-time supervisor, one psychiatrist, and one bilingual family advocate, the needs of the Latino community continue to exceed capacity.



**Child Guidance Center of Southern CT** has recently entered into an alliance with Community Health Center, a large nonprofit CT healthcare provider that offers primary care services in medicine, dentistry, and behavioral health to more than 145,000 people. Through this affiliation, CGC SCT will have considerably higher Medicaid reimbursement rates and more access to state, foundation and corporate support. As a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC), rates are nearly double the rate CGC has previously received and could add \$1 million in additional fee revenue for CGC's operations. These rates, however, do not apply to their Mobile Crisis program, the program funded by The Community Fund of Darien. In 2019, CGC SCT's Mobile Crisis responded to 246 crisis episodes, providing 438 face-to-face hours of care.



**Domus** has experienced many significant changes with the closing of Trailblazers, its charter middle school, and the pending closure of Stamford Academy, its charter high school. These closures were quite surprising to us and were results of a local negative sentiment towards charter schools, reduced funding from Stamford Public Schools, lower enrollment, and ongoing issues with performance and absenteeism. Domus has also closed its residential program, Domus House, and will soon no longer run the Chester Addison after-school program. Domus is now focusing its efforts on a disengaged young adult (16-24) population which it will support with their Juvenile Justice Reform and re-entry program (Invictus), Work & Learn employment program and Family Advocacy program. Last July, The Community Fund had given a reduced grant towards Domus' Work & Learn program, but had concerns about the outcome measurements reported by Domus. Entering into FY20, TCF has elected not to fund Domus until 2021 when they have completed their new strategic plan and identified new signature programs.



In July, TCF awarded the **Domestic Violence Crisis Center (DVCC)** a grant for \$22,000 toward SustainAbilityCT, an economic advocacy program that coaches clients to overcome hardships from financial abuses. In the six months since receipt of the grant, DVCC served 83 clients and reported that 100% of the participants demonstrated an increased understanding of financial abuse and had established a financial safety plan. 53 clients improved credit health, 20 clients obtained new employment, 20 increased wages, and 7 enrolled in a job skills training program



TCF funds the Project REWARD program at **Family & Children's Agency (FCA)** to provide addiction treatment to women. Project REWARD offers transportation and on-site babysitting to reduce barriers to treatment and provides safe, on-site medication management. In the last six months of 2019, Project REWARD served 50 participants, with 63% of women being abstinent at discharge from their highest level of care, compared to a state average of 39%.



In 2019, TCF awarded **Family Centers** one of its largest grants (\$40,000) to help support Family Centers' School Based Health Clinics (SBHC) located at six Stamford public schools. The clinics served 1,973 students across its service areas (medical, dental, psychiatry, social work, and nutrition). Services target students who do not have access to a family doctor or whose families have little to no health insurance. In FY19, student mental health visits increased by 1,021 (44%) from the previous year, and medical visits increased by 985 (36%). 94% of students reported they changed their behaviors or learned healthy habits as a result of participating in SBHC. 20% of students reported missing less school or class time since coming to SBHC.



**Inspirica** is using the \$33,000 grant from The Community Fund to support its Two-Generation Programming which includes its Family Housing Program, Jumpstart Career Program, Children's Services Program and Early Childhood & Parenting Program. In FY19, Inspirica moved a total of 165 men, women and children who had been homeless into permanent housing, bringing their 9-year total to 1,477 individuals. 88% of participants placed in permanent housing remain housed after 1 month and 83% after 12 months. At the end of the last school year, 99% of the children at Inspirica graduated to the next grade level with an average grade of B-.



TCF's grant to **Kids In Crisis** supports its TeenTalk programs at Norwalk High School and Brien McMahon High School. Both schools' programs are operating at maximum capacity. In the first part of the school year, September-December 2019, the TeenTalk counselors provided individual counseling to 157 students (BMHS= 113, Norwalk HS=44) over 422 sessions (BMHS= 356, Norwalk HS=66). The TeenTalk counselors made 17 referrals to higher levels of care and coordinated 68 clinical collaborations.



Last year, under the helm of a new executive leadership team, **Liberation Programs** requested funding from TCF to support a new Family Recovery coach model in which Liberation would provide support to family members of individuals suffering from addiction. The Family Recovery coach is a new concept in the recovery field that can help families with treatment options and ultimately lead to better outcomes. Given the newness of this model and lack of data supporting its efficacy, TCF elected to delay funding to Liberations until the Family Recovery Coach position was filled and had established a client base. Following a meeting with Liberations in January, at which time TCF met with the entire leadership team and the newly hired Family Recovery Coach, TCF began funding Liberations with a portion of their previously allotted \$15,000 grant.



**Open Doors** is demonstrating impressive results under new Executive Director, Michele Conderino. In the six months since receiving our grant, Open Doors served 179 individuals and 12 families (including 28 children). 52% of individuals have stayed less than 60 days and 45% of individuals served have exited the shelter for permanent housing. Following some negative publicity last spring, Open Doors has implemented new annual de-escalation training for staff, developed an online training platform for staff and created a Shelter Policy Committee

to review and revise agency policies. Smilow Life Center was recently visited by representatives from U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development who applauded the role Smilow plays in the community.



TCF's \$27,000 grant to **Person-to-Person** helps provide Emergency Assistance to low- and very low-income residents of the Stamford-Norwalk area. Emergency Assistance encompasses Food Pantry, Clothing Center, Casework and Emergency Financial Assistance. In the six-month period 7/1/19 to 12/31/19, P2P served 11,571 unique individuals across all channels, provided groceries to prepare 610,932 meals, conducted 2,729 casework interviews with 392 referrals. In the same six-month period, P2P made 646 financial grants for rent, security deposits and other immediate needs to help individuals and families remain housed or otherwise help maintain family stability, with an average dollar value of \$267. Since Phil (P2P's mobile food pantry) opened in April 2018, P2P has increased the number of meals provided by more than 60% over the average number of meals provided by P2P annually from 2012-2017. This is an indication both of the success of the model and also of the depth of the need in the community.



The Community Fund of Darien's grant helped **Laurel House** expand the outbound reach of its Thinking Well (Cognitive Remediation) program into local communities of Stamford and Norwalk. Thinking Well helps people living with mental health disorders improve the cognitive skills that lead to better functioning and success in the workplace, school, and the community. 50 program participants enrolled in Thinking Well during the 6 month report period (July 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019); 85% had positive functional outcomes.



The Community Fund's grant to **STAR** supports its Birth to Three Early Intervention program that provides evaluations and in-home therapy for infants/toddlers impacted by intellectual/developmental disabilities including autism. The grant pays for professional therapists (additional hours not covered by state funding) to provide the intensity of services needed for children to successfully reach their goals and exceed state averages. The state funds less than 70% of program costs. In 2019, Star provided services to 306 children from Darien and surrounding towns and assisted over 390 families.



**Pacific House** reports that during the first half of FY20 (July 1-December 31, 2019), they served a total of 259 clients through the emergency shelter with the average stay of 49 days, a rather dramatic decline from the 66 day average in FY19.

Although this decline is a positive, Pacific House does expect this average to trend upwards during the colder months. During the report period, the number of "positive exits" from the shelter was 66%, compared to 61% in FY19. With the acquisition of five new properties, Pacific House will add new 33 units of supported housing units over the next year, most of which will target "chronic" and longer-term shelter clients. This strategy essentially changes how the community organizes and provides homeless services and represents the transition from an approach focused on emergency shelter services to a proactive, sustainable strategy that will have a long term community impact.



TCF's grant to the **Rowan Center** helps support their Darien outreach and education efforts. Since our grant was awarded in July, Rowan has given 145 presentations to 2,985 individuals. Specifically in Darien, Rowan has educated 321 eighth graders over 21 sessions at Middlesex Middle School with two programs, Sexual Harassment and Consent (by the end of the school year, Rowan will have presented to all 8th graders and 2 grades at Darien High School). Educators visited 107 teens at Darien Depot twice this year, with Bystander Intervention techniques and conversations about consent, and held several information sessions for 131 Darien parents. 100% of participants reported that Rowan's programming was "very relevant"; 96 % of participants reporting an increased knowledge of consent, 94% of participants reporting feeling capable and empowered to intervene on behalf of a person in a negative or threatening situation (bystander awareness and intervention) and 98% of participants reported understanding where/how to access sexual assault and abuse resources for themselves or someone they know.

As we head into our 2020 grant season, we will again be balancing our limited funding with the high needs of our partner organizations. This year, we will include three new organizations to our funding pool. We continue to aggressively fundraise to meet our goals and hope, if you haven't already, that you can support The Community Fund this year.

Best,

Lisa

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