

April 2011 NEWSLETTER

Most of the grants described in our newsletter are made possible through the generosity of past donors who established permanent, charitable funds with us during their lifetimes or through their wills. To learn more about how to set up a fund, please contact our general counsel, Jane Wilton, at 212.686.2563.

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The Best Lunch *on the* Upper East Side

The **Carter Burden Center for the Aging** Luncheon Club has always been about more than chicken Tuesdays, although the chicken is *very* popular. For some of the 3,000 elders served by the center, it is the most important meal of the day, but for others it's more about the company. It is a club, after all.

Six years ago, a group of teen volunteers came to the Center to help serve lunch and pack boxed meals for elders unable to leave their homes. At first, some of the elders

Krystal, who has developmental disabilities, helps serve lunch at the Carter Burden Center for the Aging, learning job skills and making new friends.

“We are very excited that this grant is helping us start a relationship with Burden Center.

Getting our students out in to the community and helping them transition to life after school is a big priority.” — Dr. Nancy Needle, a trustee of New York Center for Autism Charter School

were skeptical, as these were young people with developmental disabilities and limited social skills. But today, the “kids,” as they are affectionately known, are welcomed by their Luncheon Club friends who make them Christmas cookies, give gifts, and share stories with them.

“At first they were very shy, but then we just started talking to them, and the next thing you know we’re all very friendly,” says Art LeMoine, a frequent luncher. “We help them break down barriers...and now they know our names and let us know when they’ve missed us.”

Most young people with autism, mental retardation, and other developmental disabilities go to special education schools. While a safe space, these schools isolate students from mainstream society. “Young adults with these disabilities are often regarded as too needy in their own right,” says Irfan Hasan, program officer at The Trust. “Because of this, there were no programs in the City where they were paired with elders.”

“The real joy of this program is that it helps build self-esteem. They are doing real work that provides valuable job experience while helping them to develop social skills,” says Bill Dionne, executive director of the Burden Center. He tells the story of when Dominic Chianese, who played Uncle Junior on the *Sopranos*, sang and played guitar for lunching seniors and volunteers. “Danny, who had come to the center a timid teen afraid to make eye contact, had become so comfortable and social that he started dancing and got some seniors to join him. He told us that this was the best day of his life. Dominic Chianese then turned to me and said it was the best day of his life, too.”

With a **\$65,000** grant, the Center will expand the program to bring disabled people from the Young Adult Institute and New York Center for Autism Charter School. “We are very excited that this grant is helping us start a relationship with Burden Center,” says Dr. Nancy Needle, a trustee of the charter school. “Getting our

students out in to the community and helping them transition to life after school is a big priority.”

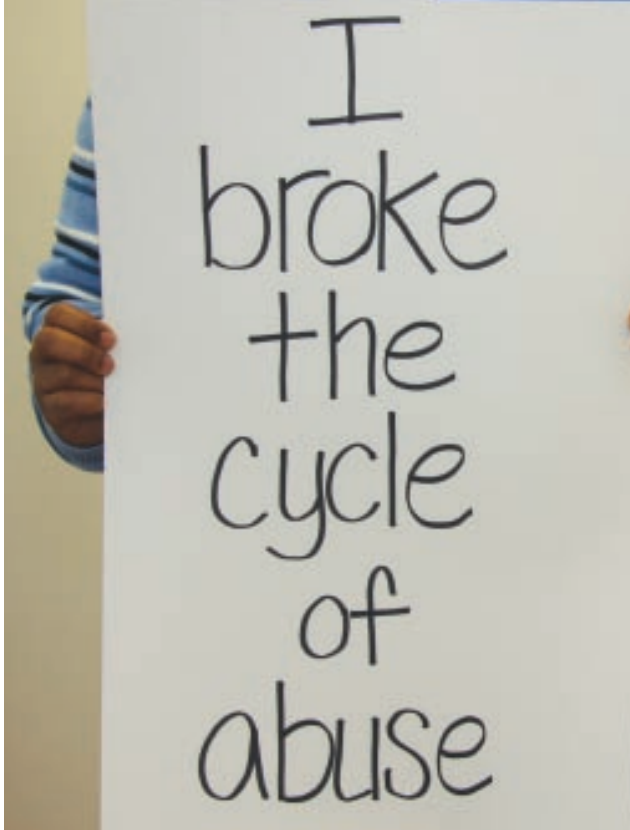
“We didn’t know how it would go at first, but this has turned out to be a remarkable program where everyone has truly benefited.” Bill Dionne continues: “Our volunteers are getting every bit as much as the people they are serving.”

Serving Kids Instead of Kids Serving Time

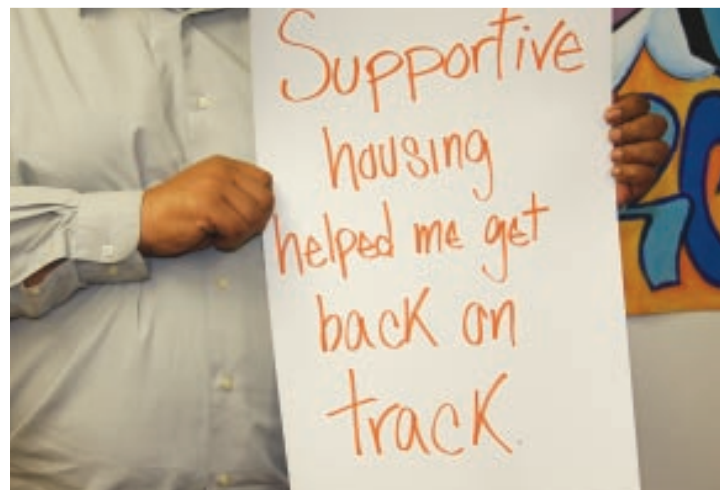
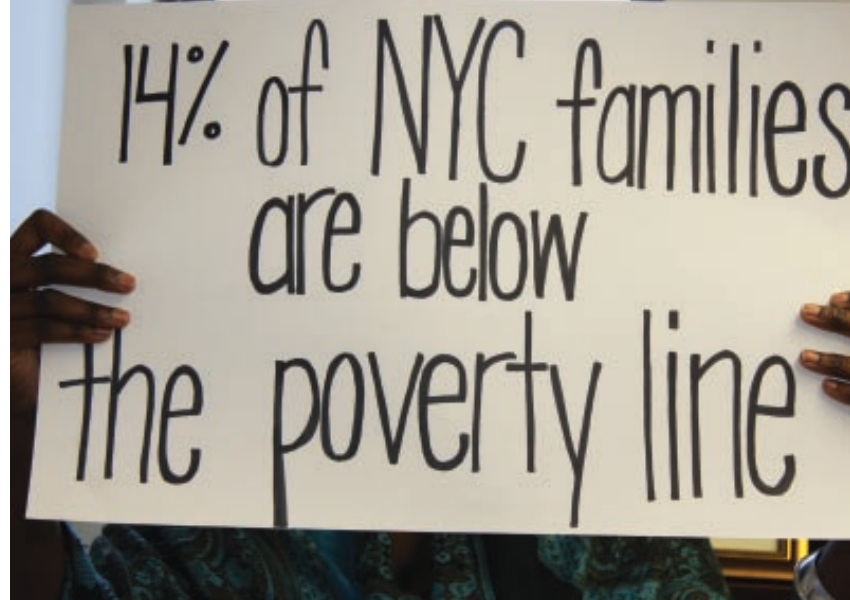
Although improvements are being made, New York State’s juvenile justice system still needs work. Kids are sent to juvenile prisons upstate at taxpayer expense and all too often wind up back in jail. Last year, the City spent \$80 million to send 400 youth ages 12 to 15 to detention facilities. With a serious fiscal crisis forcing deep cuts in City and State budgets, nothing short of dramatic change is necessary.

Both Mayor Bloomberg and Governor Cuomo have made fixing the system a priority, though they have disagreed on how to proceed. Both are focused on reducing deficits, which means closing some of the most expensive, dysfunctional, and unsafe upstate detention centers. But advocacy is needed to ensure that jails are replaced with effective alternatives, such as the Trust-funded QUEST ATD program at the Center for Court Innovation—a program that works with parents, teachers, and therapists—and allows non-violent delinquent youth to stay at home and in school. Programs such as this cost less per youth, but getting them started across the State will take investment.

“We have worked to reform juvenile justice in the City on a number of fronts,” says Roderick Jenkins, program officer at The Trust. “We’ve assembled alliances that can reach across the partisan divide. We helped develop a fiscal plan to support alternatives to incarceration. Now,



Photos and stories from www.whocares-ido.org include testimonials from New Yorkers who have been helped by social service agencies.



a **\$125,000** grant to the **Juvenile Justice Advocacy and Action Project** and a **\$100,000** grant to **Public Interest Projects** are funding advocacy and organizing to get the best reforms passed by the City and State.”

The Juvenile Justice Advocacy and Action Project (an alliance that includes the Correctional Association of New York, the Children’s Defense Fund-New York, and Fight Crime: Invest in Kids) is designing and advocating a reform agenda, testifying at legislative and budget hearings, and attending community meetings to ensure that reform proposals are discussed. The groups will also marshal their constituencies and members of the 400-agency Juvenile Justice Coalition to make their voices heard. Public Interest Projects will work with M+R Strategic Services and the Citizen’s Committee for Children to provide advocacy and media and communications support.

“We know that youth do not receive the type of support and treatment they need at these big detention facilities, and fair better when they have more individualized help closer to home. We will urge State leaders to right-size

the system, improve care for incarcerated youth and invest in alternatives,” says Susan Stamler, senior vice president at M+R. “It’s not just about closing unsafe facilities; it’s about what programs we put in their place.”

Helping the State Spend Smarter on Human Services

There is scarcely a service that won’t feel the State budget axe, but some hurt can be avoided by helping the State spend its money smarter. “Budget advocacy on behalf of human service providers must be framed as less of a confrontation and more of a dialogue on smart spending,” says Pat Swann, senior program officer. A **\$100,000** grant to **Human Services Council of New York City**, an umbrella group advocating on behalf of hundreds of nonprofits, is helping it re-frame the budget debate to

“There is a need for honest, sober, and respectful discussion about the reforms needed to keep our retirement systems and City strong. As these costs grow, there is less money to spend on everything else the City pays for.” — Bill de Blasio, Public Advocate for New York City

convey the message that nonprofits can play an important role in helping government spend tax money smarter.

One of the Council’s cost-saving proposals would shift operation of mental health clinics from State to nonprofit management, which could save \$80 million in Medicaid spending. Another would modernize the antiquated and maligned contracting system by standardizing contracts, centralizing auditing, and making contract terms longer. These improvements could eliminate much duplicative work and save \$100 million. Swann continues: “A big part of keeping services running is finding and implementing systematic ways to get the most bang out of State bucks.”

As part of the Council’s conversations with members of the Cuomo administration and elected officials, the agency is highlighting stories of how human services make a difference in the lives of New Yorkers. “People don’t necessarily know that their kid’s after-school program, or their mom’s senior center operates with government funding,” says Allison Sesso, deputy executive director of the council. “We are helping New Yorkers understand the importance of this funding, so that they can tell their elected officials they care.”

Wrestling Retirement Costs

Doing nothing about escalating pension and health care costs for public workers is not an option. These crushing obligations are making headlines around the country and New York is no exception. Last year, they cost the state \$6.6 billion, up 445 percent from 10 years ago, and accounting for a whopping tenth of the City budget. If nothing is done to control the growth of these costs, they could gobble up money the City needs for other vital

programs. “There is a need for honest, sober, and respectful discussion about the reforms needed to keep our retirement systems and city strong,” says Bill de Blasio, Public Advocate for New York City. “As these costs grow, there is less money to spend on everything else the City pays for.”

As both the watchdog of City services, and a board member of New York City Employees’ Retirement System, which manages over \$40 billion in retirement assets for City workers, de Blasio has made controlling these costs a top priority. A grant of **\$100,000** to the **Fund for Public Advocacy** will help the office research and advocate solutions in the best interests of New Yorkers. Leaders from government agencies, other cities, organized labor, business, and academia will assemble for a series of roundtable discussions focused on improving investment strategies, managing demands and expectations for pension increases, and reining in runaway health care costs. “The goal,” says de Blasio, “is to get the best ideas on the table, develop a menu of options, and create a road map for future actions.”

What can create jobs, lower energy bills, and curb emissions?

Polluter-funded investments in the clean energy economy, that’s what.

The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), a binding agreement between ten Northeastern states including New York, has generated more than \$777 million from auctioning emission allowances to polluters. The money has been used to support large and small job-generating and energy-saving weatherization, retrofitting, and other programs.



True Energy Solutions in Rochester, New York checks for drafts with an infrared camera as part of a free energy audit it provides to qualifying households. The company is reimbursed with funds from polluter-purchased emissions credits through the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.

“This program works because the sale of emission credits generates millions to improve energy efficiency and accelerate the deployment of renewable energy technologies. When people and businesses then use less energy, power plants don’t have to produce as much of it, and consequently they emit fewer harmful greenhouse gases,” says Daniel Sosland, executive director of Environment Northeast (ENE). But in order to keep the program functioning properly, “you need to put the cap in the right place to continue generating funding for programs to decrease the demand for dirty fossil fuels.”

“Because there is no federal climate change policy, action by states and regions to limit our contribution to global warming is even more essential,” says Pat Jenny, program director for the environment at The Trust. “That’s why we supported the creation of RGGI in 2007—the only cap-and-trade program operating in North America. So far it’s been a big success that we would like to see strengthened and replicated.”

The RGGI accord is scheduled to be updated in 2012. Grants of **\$100,000** each to **Environment Northeast** and the **Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)**

will be used to strengthen the accord. In addition to pressing for tighter emission caps, the organizations will try to broaden the plan to include industrial facilities, as well as homes, businesses, and vehicles.

NRDC is also running a media campaign to get out the good news about RGGI and publicize stories about how retrofitting, weatherization, and energy audits have translated into jobs, cleaner air, and a boon for local economies. “We need to get the stories out there about the real benefits that people see when their states adopt policies like RGGI,” says Dale Byrk, director of the air and energy program at NRDC. “Our media team will work to place stories in regional media markets, and make sure elected officials are armed with stories of real impact.”

“RGGI is a model for other regions considering similar multi-state accords,” Pat Jenny continues. “Plans are underway to expand the agreement among the Northeastern and Mid-Atlantic states to include other sources of greenhouse gases. As the first program to limit greenhouse gases, it is the foundation on which other accords can be built.”



Tenants protest evictions and poor living conditions at unsafe and overcrowded boarding houses as part of a Trust-funded campaign led by MFY Legal Services.

Other Grants

HUMAN JUSTICE

Fordham University School of Law, \$96,000 to train retired lawyers to represent poor people in civil cases through the Chief Judge's Attorney Emeritus Program.

Legal Services NYC, \$700,000 to continue a partnership with the Legal Aid Society that provides legal services for poor New Yorkers facing destitution.

MFY Legal Services, \$65,000 to improve conditions for poor, mentally ill people living in some of the City's 300 unsafe and overcrowded boarding houses.

EDUCATION

Advocates for Children of New York, \$80,000 for the Action for Reform in Special Education Coalition (ARISE) to monitor how disabled children are faring in public schools. It will help parents and educators understand how to better educate disabled children.

Alliance for Quality Education, \$100,000 for advocacy to redirect money in the State education budget to high-needs schools.

Children's Aid Society, \$35,000 for mentors and schools working with students who are chronic truants.

New York Academy of Sciences, \$65,000 to expand a program that uses trained graduate students to teach science courses in after-school programs.

CIVIC AFFAIRS

One NYC One Nation Fund, \$100,000 for a new funder group in The Trust established by the One Nation Foundation to increase the participation of immigrants in civic life and promote cooperation across diverse communities.

Sustainable Transit Campaign, \$100,000 to build support for State legislation that promises to reduce traffic congestion and generate permanent revenue for the City's transit system. Current Campaign members





Jazz legend Louis Armstrong in the den of his Corona home with his tape collection. Photo: Louis Armstrong House Museum.

include the Partnership for NYC, the Citizens Budget Commission, the Environmental Defense Fund, and the Working Families Party.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Habitat for Humanity New York City, \$25,000 to involve volunteers in community improvement projects in neighborhoods with public housing projects.

Workshop in Business Opportunities, \$20,000 to train inmates and ex-offenders interested in starting small businesses.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Historic Districts Council, \$30,000 to help preserve the historic character of Gowanus and Bedford-Stuyvesant in Brooklyn; Jackson Heights in Queens; and Inwood, Harlem, and the Bowery in Manhattan.

Louis Armstrong House Museum, \$35,000 to attract visitors to the historic home of the late Jazz musician, located in Corona, Queens.

ARTS

Orchestra of St. Luke's, \$55,000 to promote a new rehearsal center for the City's freelance orchestras.

YOUTH

New York City Department of Youth and Community Development, \$100,000 for a family counseling program for gay and lesbian youth at risk of becoming homeless.

CITY & REGIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Global Green USA, \$75,000 to examine the feasibility of an alternative food waste-recovery and composting system for the City that would provide nutrient-rich soil to local farmers and gardeners.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Clean Energy Group, \$100,000 to help bring emerging clean energy technologies, such as offshore wind and marine tidal energy, to consumer markets.

Climate and Energy Project, \$75,000 for the creation of the Heartland Alliance for Regional Transmission to promote energy efficiency and renewable energy in the southern Midwest.

Environment America Research & Policy Center, \$100,000 to reduce smog, soot, coal ash, and mercury emissions by supporting the EPA's actions to improve emission standards for vehicles and power plants.

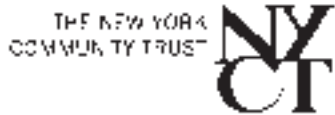
University of California, San Francisco, \$90,000 to educate the medical community about the connections between toxic chemicals and reproductive health.

HEALTH & PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Cancer Care, \$900,000 for financial aid for uninsured and underinsured cancer patients to pay for chemotherapy, radiation treatment, childcare, and transportation.

Citymeals-on-Wheels, \$75,000 to provide poor, homebound elders in the South Bronx with supplemental groceries and emergency food.

United Hospital Fund of New York, \$150,000 to research and develop projects that deliver high-quality, cost-efficient health care to Medicaid patients.



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GRANTS

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INSIDE:

The Best Lunch
on the Upper
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Wrestling
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Costs
and more...



With Trust support, Habitat for Humanity organizes volunteers to give a fresh coat of paint to common areas in Lafayette Gardens, a Bedford-Stuyvesant public housing project.

The grants described in this issue were approved by The New York Community Trust's governing body at its February 2011 meeting. For grantee contact information, or for more information about the grants, please call The Trust's receptionist at 212.686.0010, ext. 0.

This issue and past newsletters can be found at www.nycommunitytrust.org.

If you'd prefer to receive our newsletter by email, write to newsletter@nyct-cfi.org.

Most of the grants in our newsletter are made possible through the generosity of past donors who established permanent, charitable funds with us during their lifetimes or through their wills. To learn more about setting up a fund, please contact our general counsel, Jane Wilton, at 212.686.2563.