

Grants

AUGUST 2016 NEWSLETTER

THE NEW YORK
COMMUNITY TRUST



Clearing
a path for
the next
generation
of skilled
workers

PAGE 3

Learning a Trade

JOBS SOLID AS STONE: An apprentice, in a program funded by The Trust, prepares a mausoleum for masonry work in a historic cemetery in the Bronx.



The New York
Community
Trust helps
New Yorkers
support the
nonprofits that
make the City
and its suburbs
great places to
live, work,
and play.
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VIEW FROM NEW YORK | Shawn Morehead

Let Muslim Voices Be Heard

New initiative supports scapegoated groups

New York’s racial, ethnic, and religious mix makes this an exhilarating place. Yet throughout our history, one group after another—from the Irish to the Jews to Latinos—has been scapegoated. These days, anti-Muslim sentiment targets Arab, Middle Eastern, and South Asian communities.

The New York Community Trust supports programs that guide recent immigrants on the path to residency or citizenship. We’ve done this for decades. We believe philanthropy needs to overcome its aversion to projects that seem controversial. This year, we joined the Ford Foundation and the New York Foundation to search for solutions to anti-Muslim rhetoric and hate crimes.

We heard from Muslim Americans who don’t want to be stereotyped. They’re eager to be recognized for who they are—doctors, teachers, shopkeepers. New Yorkers who want to make New York great.

A few weeks ago, we committed more than half a million dollars to support these New Yorkers and spread the word: A workshop will develop the voices of Muslim, Arab, and South Asian writers; a production company will create a video series, “The Secret Lives of Muslims,” spotlighting their accomplishments; a nonprofit group will train women leaders from these communities; and more (*see page 7*). We thank donors such as LuEsther Mertz, who cared about human rights.

This work grows more urgent as violence and hateful speech splinter the country and the world. Most New Yorkers understand that Muslims are like everyone else—trying to support their families and pursue their dreams. Amid a presidential election that’s stirred talk of patrolling neighborhoods and banning Muslims’ travel to the U.S., we all need to speak up for our neighbors when they are wrongly vilified. ■

Shawn Morehead, a lawyer and former teacher, is a program director at The Trust, specializing in human justice and education.

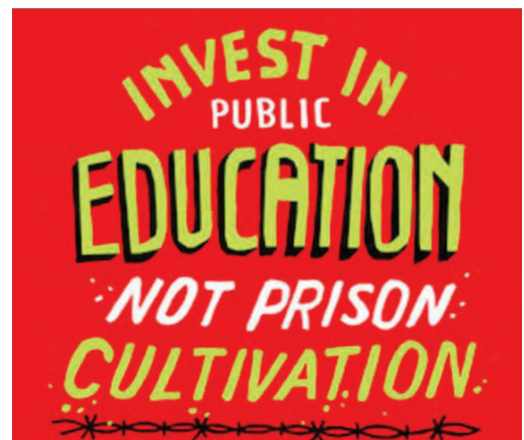
Alternatives to School Suspensions

Two grants help change how students are disciplined

For decades, the response to students’ misconduct in schools seemed simple: Send them home and don’t allow them to attend classes for days, sometimes weeks. But research shows such punishment only makes matters worse. Not only do students lose class time, but they fall further behind in their studies, and are much more likely to drop out.

With The Trust’s support, **Advocates for Children of New York** and the **National Economic and Social Rights Initiative** have pressed for alternatives to suspension, such as counseling, mediation, student-led conflict resolution sessions and anger-management classes, in-school detention, and community service. In 2015, the Mayor’s Leadership Team for School Climate followed their suggestions, and suspensions dropped 23 percent this past school year.

Now The Trust is giving the groups an additional \$155,000 to focus on the racial disparity in suspension rates, and to ensure disabled students are treated fairly. Studies show



SIGN OF CHANGE: Our grants have supported a campaign to transform school discipline policies.

African-American students are three to four times more likely to be suspended than white students, and students with disabilities are twice as likely to be sent home for misbehaving. The nonprofits will ensure the Leadership Team’s reforms continue to make a difference. ■

WHAT’S NEW:

This newsletter highlights some of the 80 grants, totaling \$11 million, approved at our June board meeting.

Grants Newsletter

WRITING AND EDITING
David L. Marcus
Amy L. Wolf
Clare V. Church

DESIGN
Sean Kelly
Daniella Van Gennep

Comments?
Contact us:
info@nyct-cfi.org or
@nycommtrust

Training New Tradespeople

Black and Latino students enter specialized fields



STONE AND STAGE: Above, Adrian Green, a former senior at James Madison High School in Brooklyn, learns lighting skills in a Roundabout Theatre workshop. On the cover, Shechem Scatt, a young masonry apprentice, restores a mausoleum at Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx. Cover photo by Amy Wolf/The Trust

If you've seen a Broadway or Off-Broadway show, you've supported good jobs. Theatrical productions are labor intensive, and even carpenters, lighting technicians, and makeup artists just starting in their fields make far more than minimum wage.

Although the number of theater jobs is growing, starting a career in such specialized fields often depends on apprenticeships and personal connections.

Consider masonry. Thousands of stone structures, including Saint Patrick's Cathedral and Central Park's Bethesda Fountain, need regular maintenance, and jobs are opening as a generation of master masons retires.

Through two grants, we are helping disadvantaged young New Yorkers learn several trades.

With \$75,000 from The Trust, **Roundabout Theatre Company** is starting a training program

in technical stagecraft. Young, ethnically diverse people from poor neighborhoods will learn carpentry, lighting and sound operation, as well as costume design and makeup for the stage.

"We've seen tremendous interest in these jobs among high school students in our production workshop," says Jennifer DiBella, the Roundabout's director of education. This new program will include training and year-long paid jobs at major City theaters.

We're also supporting job training at Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx. **Woodlawn Conservancy** is using

our \$75,000 grant to teach students from a Bronx high school and another in Brooklyn to preserve and maintain gravestones and memorials. As they caulk and point, they prepare for future jobs by working with different stone types and honing their masonry skills. ■

"We've seen great interest in these jobs among high school students."

—Jennifer DiBella,
director of education, Roundabout Theatre

JOB CONNECTIONS:

We just made more than \$1 million in new grants to help New Yorkers get jobs. The 10 grants range from \$100,000 to **JobsFirstNYC** (to find jobs for unemployed young people on Staten Island and in Brooklyn) to \$125,000 to the **Center for Employment Opportunities** (to train former inmates for work in plumbing, carpentry, and forklift operation).



OUR VIDEO: See how The Trust helps three New Yorkers. Visit nycommunitytrust.org

[facebook.com/nycommtrust](https://www.facebook.com/nycommtrust)



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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Helping Neighborhoods

New grants protect jobs and keep housing affordable



As housing projects squeeze out manufacturing in places such as the Gowanus neighborhood of Brooklyn and the Jerome Avenue corridor in the Bronx, rents rise and companies that build furniture or make specialty food or clothing are forced to move.

“Even new affordable housing units—not just luxury condominiums—can end up pushing out residents’ jobs,” says Pat Swann, The Trust’s senior program officer for community development.

We’re giving \$130,000 to the **Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development** to preserve light manufacturing jobs in poor neighborhoods. Last year, similar

efforts helped persuade the City to give \$150 million in grants and loans to nonprofits interested in buying or developing industrial real estate.

Our funding also helps the Association work with community development and workforce groups to connect low-income residents to good jobs.

Community development groups got their start when residential property was cheap and being abandoned in some neighborhoods. They took over management of these apartment buildings and provided affordable housing. Today, it’s difficult to find bargain-basement properties for renovation. And maintaining good-quality buildings with affordable rents can be difficult. Some buildings are run down,

Join us in making New York a more affordable place to live. Help us

Thrive



AWARD-WINNING REPORTING: Last year, The Trust gave \$50,000 to **City Limits**, a nonprofit news site covering the Bronx. Its stories about housing won a New York Press Club award. This year, we're giving City Limits another \$50,000 to hire a full-time reporter to expand its housing coverage. Above: Flor Sanchez in his East Harlem apartment building, where many residents want to create permanent affordable housing. Photo by Adi Talwar/City Limits

and others may be sold to generate revenue. To make sure these buildings stay affordable and get the repairs they need, community development groups formed **Joint Ownership Entity New York City**. We're giving \$250,000 to the group to pool assets of its community development members, make structural improvements, and even acquire new properties. ■

FIXING A BROKEN LAW: In 2009, Long Island passed a law intended to promote affordable housing, such as the Patchogue development shown below. Instead, the law perpetuates segregation and hurts the people it's supposed to help. So says a report by the **Center for Popular Democracy**, funded by our Long Island Community Foundation. We're now working with the **Institute for Affordable Housing** and other advocates to fix the law. For more information, visit LICF.org



RESULTS

Building Communities with Transit in Mind

A plan to reduce your commute

You wake up, roll out of bed, and zip to work. That's the ideal scenario. Too often, though, the commute is convoluted and stressful.

"A long morning commute is damaging to our physical health and the environment," says Arturo Garcia-Costas, Trust program officer for the environment.

That's why, for years, The Trust has funded **Smart Growth America**, a coalition that presses the government to finance housing and commercial development near transit hubs. Its efforts, funded by two recent Trust grants, have paid off: A federal transportation law passed in 2015 provides funding for development projects, small and large, that surround transportation centers. ■



ON TRACK: Housing developments near transportation centers will be easier to fund, thanks to Trust support. Image courtesy of Our Transit Future

QUICK VIEW | Reaching Out With Technology

Our donors make it possible for us to fund grants that digitize medical and legal services

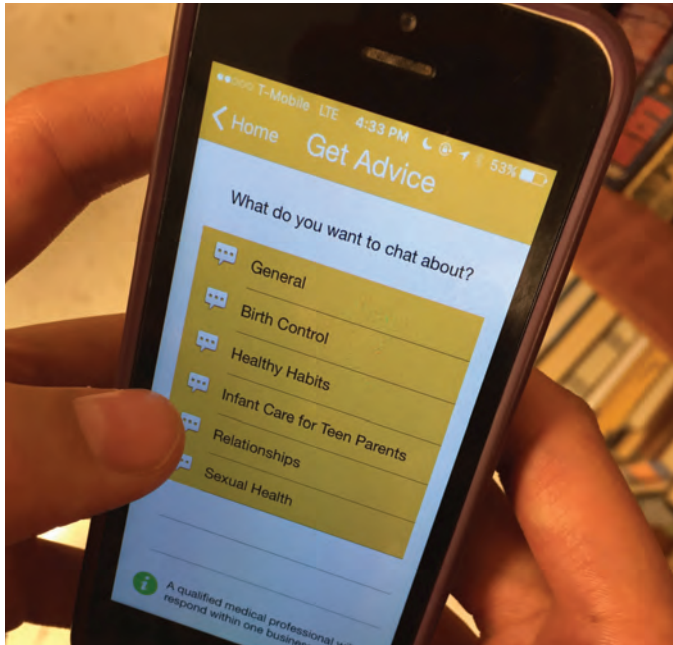


Photo by Amy Wolf/The Trust

Teens Take Charge of Their Health

Now there's an app for that

New York teens can download an app to ask pressing health questions. With a \$100,000 grant from The Trust, **Mount Sinai Adolescent Health Center**, the country's largest, will improve the app, called Health Squad, which already is used by hundreds of teens nationwide. Above: A young woman uses Mount Sinai's app to get confidential answers to health questions. ■

Girls in Gaming Technology to the classroom

In one game, players explore global standards of beauty. In another, they push for higher wages for women. This year, The Trust's \$100,000 grant to **Global Kids** is funding afterschool technology classes for high school girls to create social-themed video games and prepare for technology careers. The program embraces interactive learning while encouraging girls to study science, technology, engineering, and math. Below: Global Kids participants display an app they built at Emoti-Con!, an annual education and tech fair. ■



Easy-to-Use Legal Services

Advice about the law is just one click away

Getting help online should be simple, efficient, and free. Yet legal help sites are often overwhelming, confusing, and contain outdated information. With help from The Trust, LawHelpNY.org—New York's leading online resource for people who have legal problems and cannot afford a lawyer—will be getting a redesign. The Trust is giving **Pro Bono Net** \$75,000 to update LawHelpNY.org. "Because legal fees are so expensive, The Trust makes a difference by supporting projects that make legal services easily available for everyone," says Patricia Jenny, The Trust's vice president who oversees competitive grants. She adds: "This site will help New Yorkers understand and advocate for their rights."

With our grant, Pro Bono Net will make the site's content more user-friendly and translate more of the online resources into Spanish. ■

Shedding Light on Muslim Americans

New projects are giving a voice to a marginalized community



COMMUNITY CORNERSTONE: The Arab American Association of New York takes on all sorts of work, from helping immigrants get health care to organizing park clean-ups (above). Now we're supporting the group as it coordinates efforts to counter Islamophobia in the City's Muslim, Arab, and South Asian communities.

Think of your favorite TV shows. Any Muslims in the cast? Are they portrayed in a positive light? Chances are the answers are *No* and *No*.

Public perception of American Muslims is largely shaped by the media, and 80 percent of coverage is negative, according to the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding. Quite a few experts warn that the 2016 presidential election has stoked the flames of anti-Islam prejudice.

In the past year, suspected hate crimes and other forms of racial and religious bigotry increased dramatically. In response, The Trust is funding eight grants that highlight Muslim Americans' contributions.

"Muslim Americans are part of the diversity that we love about New York," says Shawn Morehead, Trust

program director. "The media and public perception should reflect this reality."

The new grants:

- **Arab American Association of New York**, \$90,000, to connect Muslim leaders, organizers and advocacy groups across the City so they can respond to anti-Islamic rhetoric and stereotyping.

- **Asian American Writers' Workshop**, \$75,000, to provide emerging Muslim, Arab, and South Asian writers with workshops, fellowships and mentors to help publish stories that counter Islamophobia.

- **Institute for Social Policy and Understanding**, \$80,000, to research and publish data on the contributions of Muslim New Yorkers.

- **New York University**, \$50,000, to

educate New Yorkers about Islam by hosting cultural events, information sessions, and producing videos and podcasts.

- **Seftel Productions**, \$50,000, to produce a series of short films entitled "The Secret Life of Muslims," highlighting the varying experiences of Muslim Americans.

- **South Asian Youth Action**, \$80,000, to develop leadership skills in South Asian male adolescents and teens.

- **Turning Point for Women and Families**, \$80,000, to develop leadership skills in Muslim girls and young women.

- **WNET**, \$50,000, to create online resources for teachers to educate their students about Islam. ■

Big Boost for Preschoolers

Once in a private foundation, a gift shapes kids' futures

What children experience during their first five years has a lifelong impact on their social, emotional, and intellectual development. Unfortunately, many poor families in the City struggle to find preschools, child care, and medical services for their infants and young children.

We're giving \$50,000 to the **Child Care and Early Education Fund** to help New York City improve and expand free early childhood services for low-income families. The Fund also supports continuing education for teachers, and works to improve policies and funding for these early childhood programs.

Charles Henry Leach II helped make

this possible. An investor and native New Yorker, he created a private foundation devoted to helping needy children, among other causes. He determined that the foundation should be dissolved 21 years after his death. That led to a fund in his name in The New York Community Trust to benefit the causes he cared about now and in the future.

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nycommunitytrust.org

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