Connecting to Careers | PAGE 3

The Importance of Internships

CUNY information technology students work closely with their internship supervisor in Brooklyn.

Our Donors Help Fund a Breakthrough in Parkinson’s Research | PAGE 7
Improving Education, One Idea at a Time
Leading the way in changing City schools

Every so often, foundations come together for what I call “risk-taking philanthropy.” In 1995, for instance, The New York Community Trust, Ford Foundation, and others agreed that too many of the City’s public schools were mediocre—or worse. At the time, our friends at The Trust were revamping their strategy for education grantmaking. After years of funding model programs and targeting specific groups of students, they’d had some successes but wanted to achieve more. The Trust decided to focus on changing the entire education system.

So, 17 foundations formed the Donors’ Education Collaborative in The Trust. Recently, as we celebrated the 20th anniversary of our joint effort, we looked back at how we’ve had an effect on public education.

Three examples: Parents have organized neighborhood groups to push for better schools for their children. We’ve worked in Albany to make sure City schools’ funding is fair. And we’re working to keep more students in school through less punitive discipline policies. Our collaborative shows that foundations, parents, and principals can make a difference for kids whose best hope is education.

On a personal note, I’m a devoted New Yorker now, and head of a $12 billion foundation here. But growing up in Goose Creek, Texas, I was in Head Start’s inaugural class in 1965. Later, Pell Grants and scholarships helped finance my college and law school studies. I can attest that education powers our social mobility escalator.

I’m radically optimistic. I look forward to many more years of working with The Trust on job training, the environment, and other pressing issues. I salute you—the current and future donors to The Trust. You, too, are our partners in creating opportunities for the next generation of New Yorkers.

Darren Walker is president of the Ford Foundation. This column is adapted from his remarks at an event celebrating the Donors’ Education Collaborative in The Trust.

We’re always making improvements based on data, and that starts with a survey of the people we serve. Thanks to the findings, we now distribute food on Saturdays to serve the increasing number of working families who need groceries and hot meals, but can’t get here on weekdays.”

—Stephen Grimaldi, executive director, New York Common Pantry
The Importance of Internships
Building confidence, connections, and careers

So, your daughter wants an internship at one of the tech companies everyone’s talking about. You call a friend from the club or a colleague from the firm. More calls, emails, texts, and voilà! Your daughter is headed for her internship. With any luck, she’ll make great contacts, sharpen her skills, and have a job when she graduates college.

That luck is elusive for families who lack powerful connections. Long hours of studying are fine, but many New Yorkers can’t ascend the career ladder because they lack valuable contacts and invaluable experience.

Nationally, African-Americans and Hispanics comprise just nine percent of the tech workforce; on average, women make up only 30 percent of employees of the world’s largest tech firms.

How do we improve this situation? One answer: internships.

To make this possible, The Trust has given $715,000 to the City University of New York (CUNY) to connect students to paid internships. Our most recent grant focuses on placing students in private and public sector technology internships.

With our support, CUNY has forged relationships with more than a dozen employers and placed 439 students, many of whom have received full-time job offers.

CUNY students preparing to graduate and enter the job market are learning to create portfolios; the school also created a “Tech Meetup,” which allows students to network with professionals.

“Internships are the new interview,” says Roderick Jenkins, a Trust senior program officer. “Today’s employers want to see you in action before they hire you.”

In a related project, we’re looking for ways to get more students into college and make sure they finish.

More than half the City’s high school graduates enter CUNY, but only half of those get an associate’s or bachelor’s degree.

While scores of groups offer services for these students, there’s little coordination or analysis of their efforts.

That’s why we’ve given $140,000 to Graduate NYC!, a joint project of CUNY and the New York City Department of Education, to collect and analyze data to help these groups better serve young people.

ON THE ISLAND:
Our Long Island Community Foundation gave $20,000 to the Viscardi Center in Albertson to introduce students to careers. At left, they visit Covanta Energy’s waste-to-energy plant in Hempstead. On the cover: Supervisor Brian Graham-Jones (below in bow tie) with his CUNY interns: Amrita Pawar, Uzair Sarwar, and Ankan Giri, at a Human Resources Administration office in Brooklyn. Photo by Ari Mintz for The Trust

COVER STORY

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Building confidence, connections, and careers

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Something magical happens almost every day in a brick building on East 11th Street. Cellos and violins reverberate, singers’ voices fill the halls, and kids tap their feet to jazz, rock, and chamber music.

This is Third Street Music School Settlement, the country’s oldest community school of the arts. Since 1894, it’s been a refuge and an inspiration for kids who have had family setbacks. Back then, settlement houses provided English lessons and other services for poor, immigrant children; the kids at Third Street got baths from social workers as well as high-quality music lessons.

Among Third Street’s accomplished graduates is Irving Caesar, who wrote more than 200 songs, including “Swanee” and “Tea for Two.”

We don’t know if Charlotte Daniels Harris ever heard of Third Street, but we do know she was a Queens kindergarten teacher who wanted her life savings to make a difference in kids’ lives. Before she died, she started a fund in The Trust to help City students who show promise in their studies, demonstrate financial need, have good character, and study music.

This past year, we used $171,000 from that fund to help...
Two” and "Sy for Everyone

Students is in tune at Side school

“We’re confident this grant does just what our donor wanted.”
— Kerry McCarthy, senior arts program officer

five Third Street students go to college. While they will continue to study music, they’re interested in robotics and other careers.

In recent years, students who benefited from her generosity went on to Oberlin and Baruch colleges, as well as Northeastern and New York universities.

MUSIC TO OUR EARS: Thanks to a generous teacher from Queens, we support young musicians at Third Street Music School. Siena Sherer (above), now a high school senior, has been studying art and music at the Lower East Side nonprofit since age three. She recently played guitar and sang at a concert open to the public.

FAMILY FIELD TRIP: A family uses a free Cool Culture pass to the Brooklyn Museum and participates in art-making workshops.

You’re Helping to Open Museum Doors

When we announced our Annual Fund a little more than a year ago, we said it would give New Yorkers a chance to make New York a better place for everyone. It didn’t take long.

Here’s one example: Thanks to our Annual Fund donors, as well as those who left permanent funds to The Trust, 14,000 kids and adults are being introduced to museums. We support Cool Culture, which offers free passes, group outings, and workshops to City families on tight budgets.

“Many of these families live within walking distance of museums but had never entered before,” says Bob Edgar, The Trust’s vice president for donor relations.

This year, you can help improve life in New York, create and protect affordable housing, train job seekers, improve the criminal justice system, or respond to the City’s urgent problems.

You can give to the Annual Fund, even if you don’t have a fund in The Trust.

THREE EASY WAYS TO GIVE:
• Send a check to Community Funds, Inc. Our address is on the back cover. Please note on the check it’s for the Annual Fund. (You can specify if you’d like to support housing, jobs, justice, or critical needs.)
• Give through your donor-advised fund. Look for the Annual Fund tab on MyNYCT. Or call us, and we’ll transfer your gift.
• Contact Bob Edgar, (212) 686-2564, or Gay Young, (212) 686-2234. They can tell you about other options, including giving gifts of stock.
FOCUS ON EDUCATION | From Preschool to Technical School

Thanks to our donors’ bequests, foster care children are catching up to classmates and New York is discussing reforms for vocational and technical education.

Keeping the Faith, Helping Kids

Donors of all religions turn to The Trust to address problems and honor their faiths. In their wills, Helen and Alfred Meyer mentioned Jewish groups caring for orphans. Mabel Weir wanted to help Protestant agencies serving infants. New York’s nonprofits assist people from all backgrounds, and we think these donors would feel proud of their legacies.

Kids in foster care often change schools and miss class time; they lag behind peers and are more likely to drop out. Jewish Child Care Association of New York (now known as JCCA) will use our $93,000 grant from the Meyer Fund to help these children with reading, writing, and self-discipline. At the same time, the agency will teach caregivers how to encourage these skills at home. We’re also giving $100,000, partly from the Weir Fund, to Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies to gather data in a way that helps policymakers and community groups improve well-being in several areas, including health, housing, social welfare, education, and transportation.

Building on the data collected by City agencies, the Federation will work with nonprofits, and community, business, and labor leaders to create “social indicators”—figures useful for showing needs, setting goals, then measuring progress.

Enhancing New York’s Hands-On Classrooms

New York State has a career and technical education system that trains a million people a year for jobs in health care, technology, and manufacturing.

But at a time when employers want applicants with the right skills, this system is flawed. For instance, rules bar industry experts from working in the classroom, unless they have certain certifications. Another rule caps the state’s contribution to a teacher’s pay at $30,000 a year, so districts have to figure out how to pay the rest. These schools have trouble hiring skilled teachers with up-to-date training.

At The Trust, we’re working with our Westchester and Long Island divisions to determine how vocational-education programs can better prepare students with disabilities and those learning English for tomorrow’s careers.

These are the students who have difficulty getting in—and staying in—career technical programs, yet they can be a vital part of the future workforce. Good jobs await many graduates.

To help New York State improve this career pipeline, we’ve given $100,000 each to New York City Partnership Foundation and Advocates for Children of New York.

“We need to make sure what students are learning isn’t obsolete by the time they graduate.” — Patricia Jenny, vice president of grants, The Trust
A Breakthrough in Parkinson’s
Research helps find a treatment

John Henry and his sister Emily Henry wanted to help find cures for debilitating diseases, so they set up funds in The New York Community Trust to support research. The Trust has pooled their gift with money from other donors to fund scientists.

Since 2007, we’ve given $831,000 to the New York Stem Cell Foundation to investigate cures and treatments for Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s, and other diseases.

We’re seeing promising results. Researchers studied neurons made from the skin cells of identical twins, only one of whom has Parkinson’s. The scientists determined how the twins’ neurons produced dopamine—the molecule deficient in Parkinson’s disease—and compared the differences. Their discovery was featured as a cover story in Cell Reports journal.

With our latest grant, the New York Stem Cell Foundation will use a new technique to modify the genes associated with Parkinson’s to reverse or stop its progression.

Putting the Brakes on Climate Change
The Trust funds fuel-efficient transportation projects

The Trust is working to transform our transportation systems to cut emissions. In June, we gave $100,000 to Sierra Club to get more electric vehicles on the road in New York. The Club co-released a report with practical recommendations. Next, the Club helped Mayor Bill de Blasio’s administration announce a plan for 2,000 plug-in cars, in an effort to cut municipal vehicle emissions in half by 2025.

Meanwhile, Georgetown University’s Climate Center used $125,000 from The Trust to bring states together to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles through the Transportation and Climate Initiative. In this landmark agreement, D.C., New York, and four other Northeastern states will take measures that may include pollution caps, consumer incentives, and investments in cleaner-running vehicles.

“From investing in freight railways, so we can rely less on trucks, to increasing the number of charging stations for electric cars, states need to cooperate to reduce emissions,” says Trust program officer Arturo Garcia-Costas.

In December, Congress passed a $305 billion bill that mostly disappointed environmentalists and smart-growth advocates. One bright spot: It lasts for five years, making it easier for cities and towns to get federal funds to improve highways, bridges, and public transit. We helped Smart Growth America’s Transportation for America Campaign push for improvements to this legislation.
Sarah and Harry Rogers loved New York’s parks. At the end of her life, Sarah created a charitable remainder trust to take care of Harry. The remainder started a fund in The New York Community Trust to maintain parks.

Philip and Carol Bilotti grew up in the Bronx and loved it. When Philip died eight years ago, Carol honored him by starting a fund in The Trust to support parks and music in the Bronx.

We combined income from the Rogers Fund with the Bilottis’ and others to give $90,000 to New York Restoration Project, which is revitalizing neglected community gardens and parks such as St. Mary’s, a 35-acre rough gem in the South Bronx. This year, the nonprofit Restoration Project will organize volunteer gardening and tree-planting days, as well as outdoor concerts—thanks to our donors.

“I can’t tell you how thrilled I am,” Carol Bilotti wrote. “It does my heart good to find out what the monies are being used for.” She knows that a community foundation like ours combines money from funds with similar purposes; that way, we can do even more to support a donor’s passions.

What do you love?
Set up a fund to keep giving—forever. Call Jane Wilton at (212) 686-2563.

nycommunitytrust.org