

# Grants

JUNE 2016 NEWSLETTER

THE NEW YORK  
COMMUNITY TRUST



## A Cure for an Eyesore

Transforming an intrusive expressway  
in the South Bronx | **PAGE 3**



The New York  
Community  
Trust helps  
generous New  
Yorkers support  
the nonprofits  
that make the  
City and its  
suburbs great  
places to live,  
work, and play.

**Join us.**

**WHAT'S NEW:**

This newsletter highlights some of the 45 grants, totaling \$5.4 million, approved at our April board meeting.

These grants are possible because of our donors' generosity.

**Grants Newsletter**

WRITING AND EDITING  
David L. Marcus  
Amy L. Wolf

DESIGN  
Sean Kelly  
Daniella Van Gennep

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



**GUEST COLUMN** | Anne Moore, M.D.

# Our Own “Moonshot” at Cancer

*Investing in research in New York*

**I**f you know about The New York Community Trust, you probably are aware of our work in areas such as education, the arts, and job training. You might not know we also invest more than \$1 million a year in medical research.

The money is targeted to research done in New York, and to early-career researchers. Why support those in the formative stages of their careers? Because they might come up with out-of-the-box ideas. And, unfortunately, first-time applicants have only an 8 percent chance of getting federal funding.

Of course, compared to the federal government, we spend a tiny amount on research. For example, this year the National Institutes of Health expects to direct \$680 million to innovative cancer research as part of what President Obama calls “America’s new moonshot.”

So what can a community foundation accomplish with a relatively small amount? To answer that, consider a fund set up in 1974 by businessman Francis Florio to “support research in the field of blood diseases.”

Thanks to him, The Trust made one of the first private grants for AIDS research—back in the early 1980s, when most funders would barely mention the disease.

Later, a grant bearing the Florio name funded efforts of an epidemiologist who became one of the world’s leading vaccine advocates. And an oncologist supported by the Florio Fund wrote a Pulitzer Prize-winning book exploring the origins of cancer. Another scientist contributed to Nobel Prize-winning work studying dendritic cells, the sentinels of the body’s immune system.

We’re constantly searching for ways to make our research money have the greatest impact (*see below*). And whether you care about treating cancer, or helping the homeless, or educating preschoolers, or making a difference in another area, we hope you’ll join us.

*Dr. Anne Moore, a member of The Trust’s board, is the medical director of the Weill Cornell Breast Center and a professor of clinical medicine at the Weill Medical College of Cornell University. ■*



**CANCER RESEARCH:** Samuel Sidi works in his lab at Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. The Trust is funding his work.

## Seeking Cancer Cures

How can scientists find effective anti-cancer drugs? If tumors resist radiation therapy, what can work?

The Trust supports research to help find answers. We’re giving \$600,000 over the next three years to the **Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai** to support cancer research done by Samuel Sidi, an assistant professor of medicine, hematology, and medical oncology.

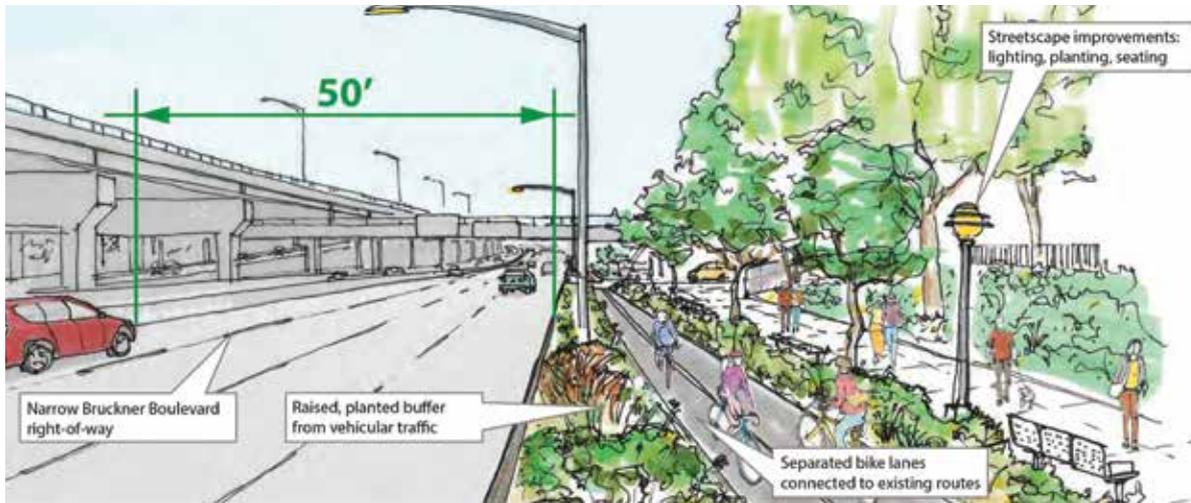
Our grant is funding Sidi to be a recipient of a Pershing Square Sohn Prize for Young Investigators, considered one of most competitive and prestigious awards in the field of cancer research. We made this grant by combining money left to us by four donors interested in medical research, Carol and Charles Spaeth and Helen and Harry O’Connor. ■

“We’re working on high risk/reward projects that are hard to fund through the usual government grants.”

—Samuel Sidi, cancer researcher

# A Win for the Urban Environment

*NY promises \$97 million to “fix” the Sheridan Expressway*



**A BRONX TRAIL:** An illustration of how the Sheridan Expressway could be transformed with State funding to provide access to the Bronx River. Art courtesy of NYC Department of City Planning

**R**obert Moses loved roads. As New York’s master builder, he oversaw construction of 416 miles of highways, freeways, expressways, and parkways. Many carved up poor neighborhoods, especially in the South Bronx.

Moses even planned to have the Sheridan Expressway cut through the Bronx Zoo. It remains an unfinished, unnecessary eyesore that blocks access to the Bronx River and brings extra traffic and pollution to a community with high rates of asthma and other chronic health problems.

Since 2007, The Trust has given the **Southern Bronx River Watershed Alliance** a total of \$270,000 to advocate tearing down this ill-conceived highway spur. The Alliance’s plan inspired the City to recommend putting in a narrower boulevard with pedestrian crosswalks flanked by affordable housing, stores, trees, and a bike path.

In a significant victory, this spring the State announced \$97 million in its 2017 budget to transform the Sheridan and breathe new life into the South Bronx.

“New York City is setting an important precedent—bad urban planning can be fixed,” says Patricia Jenny, our vice president overseeing grants.

To build on this momentum and to support this trend statewide, now we’re giving \$100,000 to the **Tri-State Transportation Campaign** to work with Albany, Buffalo, Poughkeepsie, and other cities interested in converting outdated highways into boulevards that emphasize people, not cars and trucks. ■



**TO THE RIVER:** Crosswalks would provide access to the Bronx River, where New Yorkers can exercise and enjoy new parks. Photo and map courtesy of NYC Department of City Planning



## Is The Trust in your will?

The projects in these pages are possible because people left bequests. You can set up a permanent fund. We’ll make grants supporting the causes you care about. Forever.

Call Jane Wilton at (212) 686-2563

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“It is not good for a person to sit all day.”

—Luis Cajigas, 86

## SENIOR VOICES

# Stories Worth Sharing

*In-depth profiles of lives well lived*

**D**ependent. Disabled. Depressed. That’s how older Americans often are portrayed in the media. But the facts contradict the clichés: Three-quarters of the city’s 1 million elders are independent, active, and giving back.

At The Trust, we want to share the real picture. We’re backing a project that uses journalists’ profiles and photos to counter stereotypes while influencing policies that affect elderly New Yorkers. Directed by the **Robert N. Butler Columbia Aging Center**, the Exceeding Expectations project distributes the stories in print and online and shares them at events.

We’ve invested \$225,000 since 2014, and The Trust is the project’s sole funder. Here are glimpses of three New Yorkers the Columbia team has profiled. For more, visit [ExceedingExpectations.nyc](http://ExceedingExpectations.nyc). ■

**JOY ON WHEELS:** Luis Cajigas, 86, and his Schwinn decorated with roosters have been a familiar sight in East Harlem for 20 years. After retiring, Cajigas took to his bike and mounted a rooster (symbolizing both Puerto Rico and his nickname, *El Gallo*). Bringing joy became his hobby. Since then, the roosters have multiplied, while his ride has required some alterations. Cajigas switched to a three-wheeler when a hernia made it painful to ride a traditional bike. He installed a motor because of heart disease. Through it all, his social calendar has become busier: He rides in dozens of celebrations. On June 12, look for him in the Puerto Rican Day Parade. Photo by Floor Flurij

Join us in making New York a better place to grow old. Help us fu

# Medicare to Home Care

## Keeping older New Yorkers healthy

**T**hese days, Medicare offers dozens of options that include a variety of provider networks, benefits, and premiums.

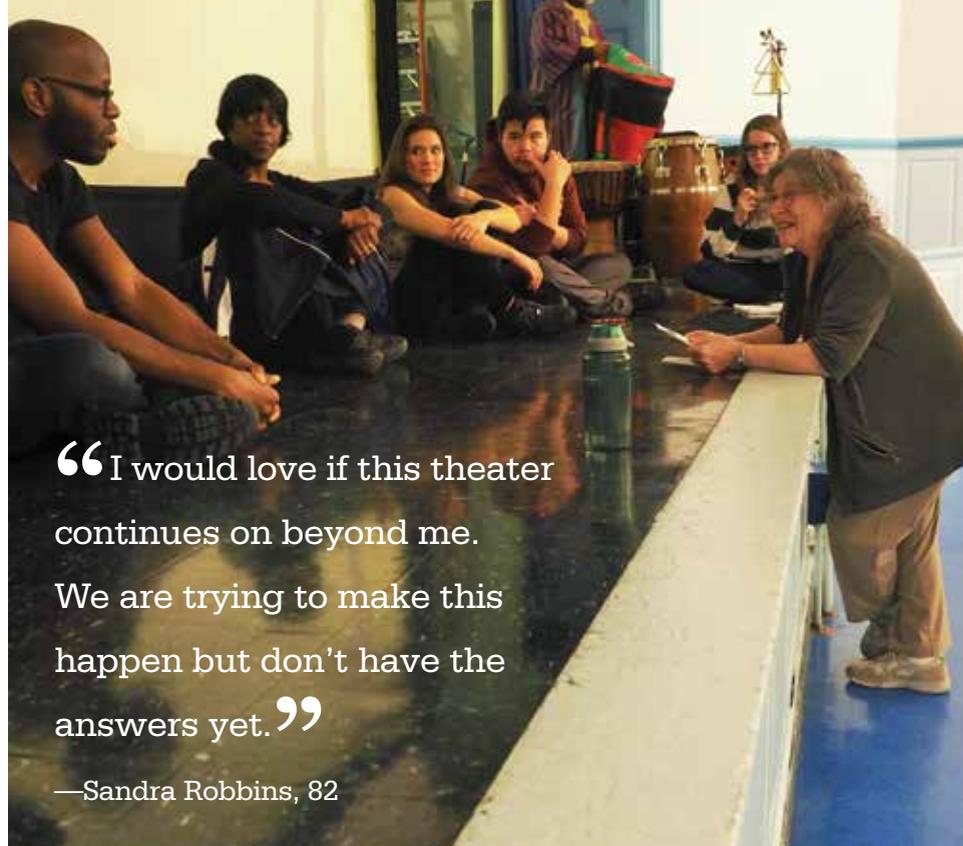
Low-income seniors have the added task of figuring out eligibility for savings programs and other financial assistance.

Three new grants from The Trust will help older New Yorkers navigate this Medicare maze, improve the quality of home care, and get care for LGBT seniors with mental health issues.

- With \$100,000, **Medicare Rights Center** will help elders navigate Medicare choices without leaving home, through a popular hotline. The Center also will get training materials into the hands of thousands of health providers to equip them to answer questions about Medicare.
- The **Paraprofessional Healthcare Institute** will use \$150,000 to improve the quality of home care for the elderly and disabled—by supporting higher pay and better training for caregivers.
- **Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders (SAGE)**, a citywide group, is putting \$100,000 to work training staff to screen, refer, and provide help for mentally ill clients during crises. ■

### THANKS TO AN UPPER EAST SIDE RESIDENT:

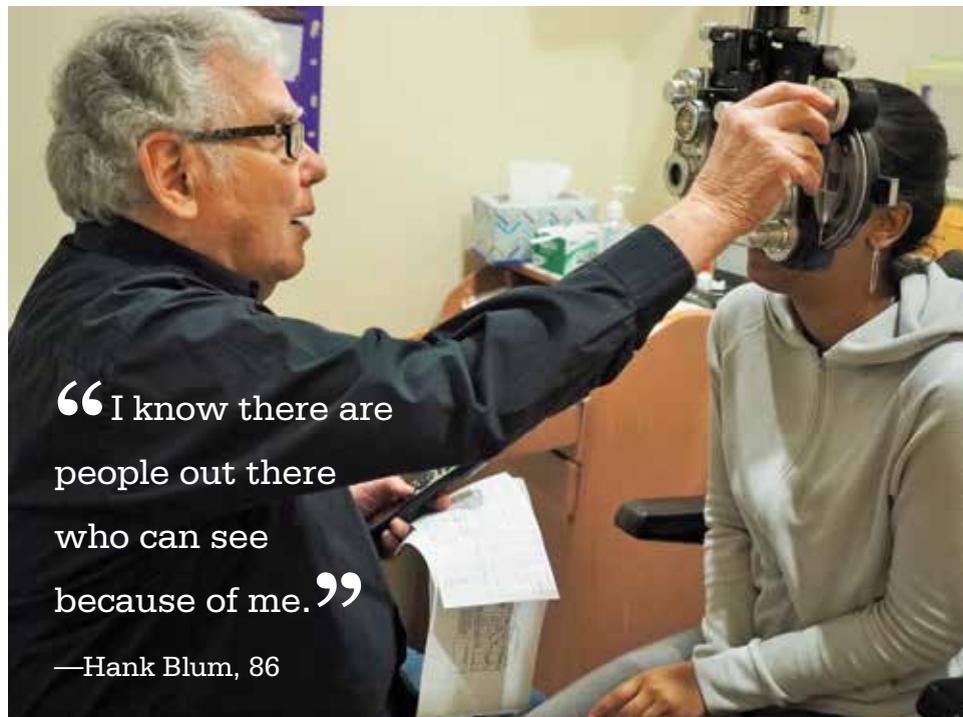
After her husband died, Katherine Park learned the meaning of isolation. She stopped going out, and confessed to a friend she felt “all alone in the world.” When she died five years later, in 1981, her will established the Katherine A. Park Fund for the Elderly in The Trust to help seniors with mobility, health care and financial problems, and depression. We used her fund to support the Columbia University project at left.



“I would love if this theater continues on beyond me. We are trying to make this happen but don’t have the answers yet.”

—Sandra Robbins, 82

**LABOR OF LOVE:** Trained as a dancer and a teacher, Sandra Robbins, 82, now uses puppets and performers to spread a message: “People are the same at their core, and we need to respect other humans as well as nature.” She founded and directs the Shadow Box Theatre, a Brooklyn nonprofit serving 300,000 City schoolchildren a year. She has written hundreds of songs, leads puppet-making workshops, and more. All for free. But running the theater while caring for herself and her ailing husband has become a challenge. Now, she’s figuring out what’s next. Above: Sandra Robbins reviews notes with her cast. Photo by Heather Clayton Colangelo



“I know there are people out there who can see because of me.”

—Hank Blum, 86

**SEEING CLEARLY:** Although he spent six decades as an optometrist, Hank Blum, 86, says he never worked a day in his life. He tried to retire—and failed three times—because he loved his job so much. Pulmonary problems have forced him to focus on his own health and what comes next, now that he is finally retiring. Here, he sees a patient at Metro Optics in the Bronx a year ago. Photo by Heather Clayton Colangelo

# BOOSTING CITY PROGRAMS | From Schools to Health

*Generous New Yorkers make it possible for us to fund the training of 2,000 preschool educators in the arts while aiding the City's new effort to provide mental health care to more New Yorkers.*



Photo courtesy of the Fund for Public Schools

## The Art of Teaching Art

*Educating young thinkers*

**M**any teachers and principals grew up in a public school system lacking dance, music, theater, and visual arts. Budget cuts of the 1970s eviscerated arts education, and it never fully recovered.

The City's expansion of free pre-kindergarten programs is a great opportunity to train thousands of new teachers in the art of teaching art.

Working with the **Fund for Public Schools**, The Trust has invested \$500,000 to send 2,000 educators to workshops at the 92<sup>nd</sup> Street Y, New Victory Theater, Third Street Music Settlement, and Studio in a School.

They are learning to tap the power of art to encourage children to develop curiosity, confidence, and creativity—skills that will help them in all subjects.

“We’re making sure thousands of educators have the skills to help four-year-olds use all their senses, think critically, and express ideas,” says Kerry McCarthy, a Trust senior program officer.

She adds, “These students will be better prepared to succeed in elementary school.”

Above: Dramatic play with costumes builds story-telling skills and young imaginations. ■

## Mental Health Care for All

**M**ental health problems—from depression to schizophrenia to substance use disorder—affect one in five adult New Yorkers and can take a devastating toll if untreated. Social workers who help people get housing, jobs, and benefits often don't have the skills to work with clients with mental illness. So, what can New York do?

A lot, as it turns out. In 2015, the City produced the nation's first strategic mental health plan. A part of this plan, called Connections to Care (known as C2C), addresses how to improve nonprofit delivery of mental health care to clients who need it.

The City won a \$6 million federal grant to support C2C, and through the **Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City**, we're dedicating \$400,000 to train and educate social service agency staff about mental health issues. The program will focus first on organizations that work with high-need groups: expectant mothers and parents of small children, young people not in school and not working, and underemployed adults. ■

**WORKING TOGETHER:** Program officers Irfan Hasan and Rachel Pardoe meet with First Lady Chirlane McCray (right) at The Trust. Photo by David L. Marcus/The Trust



**8** percent of public high school students have attempted suicide... **1/3** of people in homeless shelters have a serious mental illness... Depression and substance abuse are tied to **\$14 billion** in annual productivity losses in NYC.

# Building Careers, Connecting with Jobs

*Six ways The Trust is putting people back to work*



**FAMILY BUSINESS:** Hot Bread Kitchen's culinary business incubator program, supported by The Trust, helps Beatrice Stegaru, who owns a jam-making company, Maya's Jams, with her daughter and granddaughter. Photo by Christine Han Photography

**B**efore being diagnosed as HIV-positive, Luis De La Cruz was a self-taught interior designer who was unemployed. Ms. T. had a law degree from the Dominican Republic, but without English skills, she had trouble finding work after immigrating to the Bronx.

And John Gomez of Queens, who loved science and math, dropped out of college and worked two jobs to support his family.

Fortunately, they learned crucial skills and got support from organizations that help build careers. Now The Trust is investing \$500,000 in six career-training nonprofits (including those that helped these three).

**1.** When his health provider recommended a free program that trains decorative artists with HIV, Luis De La Cruz found a welcoming, creative community at **Alpha Workshops**. The group just got \$100,000 from The Trust to expand the program that helped De La Cruz get a new job. In the past, the program served only HIV-positive people, but The Trust is helping it expand to assist those with a range of disabilities.

**2.** Ms. T. (who doesn't want her full name used) enrolled in a program of **Women's Housing and Economic Development Corporation** that trains home-based child care providers to run safe, successful businesses. Taught in Spanish, Ms. T. excelled and now has a business. A \$50,000 grant from The Trust expands help for home-based providers.

**3.** After a night shift cleaning offices, John Gomez saw an ad for a free programming class taught at **Coalition for Queens** (known as C4Q). He graduated, and is now interviewing at several firms. C4Q excels in finding jobs for its graduates, thanks in part to our funding. With grants totaling \$157,000, we're making sure Queens technology employers connect with job seekers.

A new grant of \$80,000 will fund job fairs and networking events, recruit industry pros to provide career guidance, and work with tech companies on apprenticeship programs.



**WORK AND COMMUNITY:** Henry Peralta, who is HIV-positive, has learned new job skills at Alpha Workshops in Chelsea. Photo by Amy Wolf/The Trust

**4.** With \$100,000, we're helping **Hot Bread Kitchen** expand a Harlem business incubator for caterers and other food entrepreneurs, many of whom are women.

**5.** Two new laws make it easier for job seekers to be judged on qualifications, not on criminal records or credit history. But not everyone knows about the laws, and some employers ignore them. Enter **Manhattan Legal Services**. With \$90,000, the group will inform Manhattan residents of their rights under the City's Fair Chance Act and the Stop Credit Discrimination in Employment Act at workshops and through an ad campaign.

**6.** The **Fortune Society** is using \$80,000 to train and place former inmates in jobs in the culinary arts, maintenance, commercial driving, and woodworking. This builds on a \$100,000 grant we made in 2015. ■

People shouldn't be put behind bars for being poor—but sometimes bail means jail.

In New York City, those arrested for misdemeanors, such as subway turnstile jumping, have to post up to \$1,000 bail to avoid going to jail.

That seemingly small amount is insurmountable for low-income New Yorkers. So, every year, thousands spend days on Rikers Island—losing jobs, missing rent or child support payments, and becoming more destitute. Some plead guilty, even if they are innocent, to get home. They end up with a lifelong criminal record.

That's why The New York Community Trust just gave \$90,000 to the newly created **Brooklyn Community Bail Fund** to find ways to overhaul an outdated and unjust justice system.

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To make our grant, we combined money from our Annual Fund and several donors, including Golda and Mollie Fine, sisters who left their estate to us in their wills. The Fine sisters asked The Trust to use the money in part to solve problems in law enforcement.

**Your bequest can improve the lives of others.**

# Where There's a Will, There's a Way Out

A bequest from two sisters restores justice to the justice system



**Make a difference—with The New York Community Trust. Call Jane Wilton (212) 686-2563**