Local News, Real News

We’re helping nonprofit media uncover stories

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The last few months have been different for us here at The Trust. My colleagues and I are looking at some aspects of our work through a somewhat distorted lens. This City that proudly embraces and celebrates diversity is facing some new challenges. Rather than embracing immigrants, for example, we are looking at rising hate crimes and the prospect of undocumented parents separated from their U.S.-citizen children.

In response, we created a rapid-response fund to meet these new and urgent needs. We committed $700,000 and raised an additional $300,000 from two other foundations as well as donors like Bob Kaufman (page 8). We received proposals from 230 nonprofits, then selected 21 to keep access to health care open, fight hate crimes, and make sure immigrants are treated fairly (pages 4-5).

At The Trust, our work crosses the boundaries of ideology and politics; our mission has been to keep New York dynamic, open, and just. That mission continues: We’ll soon share announcements about projects to keep our air clean, protect access to health care for the more than 1 million newly-insured New Yorkers, and defend the rights of the LGBTQ community.

We are inspired, and we’re pleased that generations of donors make all this possible.

For updates on this work, see nycommunitytrust.org.

New Yorkers aren’t known for patience—and when it comes to climate change, that’s good. States and cities don’t need the federal government to set goals to cut greenhouse gas emissions and use more renewable resources. In New York, we’re already on it.

With past support from The Trust totaling $225,000, Environmental Advocates of New York’s efforts paid off: The State agreed to get half of its electricity from renewable sources by 2030. But we need to do more to meet New York’s goal for an economy powered by 100 percent clean, renewable energy by 2050. With a new, $150,000 grant from The Trust, the environmental group will continue advocating for climate policy to improve air quality, lower household energy costs, and create jobs.

Reasons for Optimism
New York responds to changes in Washington

Local Leadership on a Global Threat
With extra effort, New York can still meet climate goals

Pollution Solution: Reducing greenhouse gasses will also improve local air quality.
Local News Vs. “Alternative Facts”
Backing nonprofit journalism as for-profit media shrinks

These days, some of the most pressing news is about the news business itself. The New York Times has drastically cut its daily metropolitan coverage. Last year, the Wall Street Journal folded its Greater New York Section. And the tabloids recently closed bureaus in the Bronx, Queens, and Brooklyn.

All this comes at a time when the City is struggling with record numbers of homeless families, when Albany is beset by political scandals, and the country is reeling from “alternative facts.”

A foundation like The New York Community Trust can make a difference by funding the kind of in-depth civic affairs journalism that costs money and brings in little or no advertising revenue.

In the past five years, we have spent more than $1 million supporting nonprofit media ventures that investigate important, but not sexy, subjects—such as the effects of rezoning on neighborhood life (see inset right).

Now we’re giving $100,000 to New York Public Radio to bolster reporting on local issues through WNYC/93.5 FM, which attracts 2.4 million listeners each week in the metropolitan area, not counting the millions who listen on-line or via podcasts all over the world. Our newsroom provides information that engaged citizens need,” says Jim Schachter, vice president for news at WNYC and a former Times editor. “Support from The Trust helps us pursue crucial reporting on issues like race relations, access to political power, and the many changes in daily life with the advent of the Trump Administration.”

This follows Trust support of other WNYC projects, including a popular podcast, “There Goes the Neighborhood,” which chronicled the effects of gentrification in Brooklyn.

Local coverage is especially important with municipal elections in 2017 and statewide and Congressional elections in 2018, as the City and State brace for likely federal cutbacks in social services and tougher immigration rules.

In helping defend local news at a time when the marketplace is eviscerating for-profit media, The Trust is part of a national trend, says Alberto Ibargüen, former executive vice president of Newsday and former board member of The Trust.

“Accurate news and information are basic needs in a democracy,” says Ibargüen, now president of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. “Community foundations are uniquely positioned to support these news and information projects.”

Amplifying Voices Across New York

The Trust is committed to increasing coverage of issues that affect New York neighborhoods, from housing to elections. Some examples:

**Brooklyn Movement Center** used $180,000 from us over three years to expand its online coverage of gentrification and other topics affecting people of color. Its media production project, Brooklyn Deep, trained primarily African-American residents to produce blogs, podcasts, and other programs.

**City Limits** used $180,000 over four years for investigative coverage of the City’s affordable housing crisis and civic issues in the Bronx.

**The New School’s Feet in Two Worlds** used $185,000 over two years to help immigrant journalists cover elections, housing, education, and other issues affecting immigrant communities. The program submits articles to local and global publications. Participants have produced stories for The New York Times, National Public Radio, and other media.

**CUNY Graduate School of Journalism** used $70,000 over two years to report on fraudulent financial and legal services targeting immigrant communities, including those promising paths to citizenship. The Trust also funded the school’s Urban Investigative Reporting Grants for journalists covering civic and social issues.
Responding to Political Turmoil

Trust supports local groups fighting for rights

Where do you go if you fear being deported? If you’ve been a victim of a hate crime? Or if you just want to stand up for what’s right? Often, the answer is a community group.

As the federal government threatens mass deportation or incarceration and hate crimes rise, grassroots groups need resources—quickly. These organizations are seeing a huge bump in demand.

“The draconian actions of the new administration have transformed the demands and scope of our work,” says Alisa Wellek, executive director of the Immigrant Defense Project, which helps those seeking refuge. She said the number of people seeking information has tripled in the past months.

In December 2016, as the federal government hinted at stepped-up deportations, The Trust created the Liberty Fund, bringing together donors who wanted to help provide support to immigrants and others.

Together with the New York Foundation, the Jerome L. Greene Foundation, and some of our donor advisors, we quickly raised $1 million for this time-limited effort. We then solicited proposals for rapid response projects, and, within three weeks, made grants to 21 of New York City’s grassroots groups.

Three examples: African Communities Together is using $50,000 to
train and engage 100 community leaders in advocacy related to immigration policy and enforcement, provide know-your-rights workshops, and connect immigrants to legal services.

**Desis Rising Up & Moving**, which builds leadership in the South Asian community, is using $100,000 to establish Hate-Free Zones in four neighborhoods. It will organize businesses and other neighborhood institutions to combat hate crimes and hold self-defense, bystander intervention, and know-your-rights workshops.

**Justice Committee** will use $28,000 to help New Yorkers recognize, monitor, document, and de-escalate hate and community violence.

**Preserving New York’s Vaunted Values**

*Support for human and health rights*

In addition to the rapid Liberty Fund grants, we made four grants to help local nonprofits reeling from federal policy changes: **Human Rights First** is putting $261,000 to work providing legal help to immigrants in deportation proceedings, and **Planned Parenthood of NYC** is using $185,000 to push for continued funding and access to reproductive health services.

When policy changes are on the horizon in Washington, it’s crucial to follow the money. Which programs will be cut? How will New Yorkers be affected? The Trust and the region’s nonprofits need answers. We’re funding two organizations that monitor the effects of federal policy changes: We’re giving $60,000 to the **New York Housing Conference** to track housing policy, while the **Center on Budget and Policy Priorities** will use $300,000 to analyze implications for the City.

You’ll join us. Contact Bob Edgar at (212) 686-2564 to find out how.
School Hazards Removed
Trust grants got City to take action

For decades, light fixtures in New York’s public schools leaked polychlorinated biphenyl—
even after PCBs were banned because of direct links
to cancer and immune and
cognitive problems.

In 2011, The City agreed
to replace the fixtures over
a 10-year period. The slow
remediation endangered
schoolchildren, so we gave New York Lawyers in the Public Interests $160,000 to push the
City to speed up the process. The group sued the City, then helped negotiate an agreement to finish
removal by the end of 2016. That goal was met. Now, more than 880 schools are healthier places.
The new lights are more energy
efficient, as well.

New Research Ties Arts to Well-Being
Culture linked to healthier, secure neighborhoods

New research by the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy & Practice (SP2) documents the positive effects
of New York’s lively networks of cultural organizations, creative enterprises, and resident artists. The findings: These “cultural ecosystems”
improve quality of life for ordinary New Yorkers.

The two-year study, by the Social Impact of the Arts Project at Penn SP2, was funded with $250,000 from the NYC Cultural Agenda Fund in
The New York Community Trust.

Other studies look at the economic impact
of the arts. But this research found that in
lower-income neighborhoods, cultural resources
“significantly” correlate to improved health,
schooling, and security.

Specifically, in neighborhoods such as Harlem
and Corona, cultural resources are linked to a
14 percent decrease in cases of child abuse and
neglect, a 5 percent decrease in obesity, and an 18
percent decline in the serious crime rate.

“Our grantmaking boosts the arts in
neighborhoods that need it most, so we are thrilled
to use these findings to hone our strategy,” says
Kerry McCarthy, Trust program director for arts
and historic preservation.
For too many kids, a visit to the doctor’s office is the start and the end of a journey to staying healthy. Nonmedical factors—like food, housing, and parental stress—can affect a child’s long-term physical, social and emotional well-being just as much as health care, or even more.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that health care providers screen children for nonmedical problems and, if necessary, connect families to local social services.

That’s why The Trust is working with United Hospital Fund and the Altman Foundation to support partnerships between medical centers and social service agencies. The Trust is giving $20,000 to each of these six nonprofits:

- **Bronx-Lebanon Hospital Center** is strengthening the Department of Family Medicine’s partnerships with two social service agencies.
- **Mount Sinai Hospital** is boosting the partnership between the Pediatrics Associates at Mount Sinai with three social service agencies.
- **NYC Health + Hospitals** is supporting Gouverneur Hospital’s partnership with four social service agencies.
- **NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital** is strengthening the Charles B. Rangel Community Health Center’s relationships with the Northern Manhattan Perinatal Partnership.
- **NewYork-Presbyterian/Queens** is bolstering the Theresa Lang Children’s Ambulatory Center and the Jackson Heights Family Health Center’s work with Public Health Solutions.
- **Northwell Health** is supporting the Cohen Children’s Medical Center in Queens as it works with the Child Center of NY.

And a $20,000 grant to the **United Hospital Fund of New York** is bringing together the partners listed above to learn from experts and each other.

“We believe coordinated care is a win-win-win for New York’s children, community organizations, and hospitals.”

—Irfan Hasan, Trust program director

**HEALTHY LIVES**

**Care for Children, From Hospital to Home**

Connecting health providers with community groups

**HELP FROM HOSPITALS:**
A reading program run by Health + Hospitals helps young children develop cognitive skills needed in school.

**SMART PHILANTHROPY:**
Get our free Guide to Giving, and share with friends and family. Send us your address at info@nyct-cfi.org, and we’ll mail as many as you need.
He cares about immigrants. So he gives.

By Robert Kaufman, Trust donor and vice chairman emeritus

Our country is undergoing painful changes that may hurt the most vulnerable New Yorkers—immigrants and the poor. I was a child refugee from the Holocaust and I built a life here from scratch, so I feel particular empathy for those who are targeted.

I know what threats I care about, but I don’t have the time or expertise to judge who can best make a difference. That’s why I gave to The New York Community Trust. The Trust quickly raised more than $1 million and distributed it to twenty-one small but trusted community groups countering hate and helping neighbors in need.

Read more about this work on pages 4-5.

What do you care about?
Set up a fund to keep your passions alive—forever.
Call Jane Wilton at (212) 686-2563