Delivering Help Through the Pandemic
When Our City Needs Us, We’re Here

One of the lessons of the COVID-19 pandemic has been to remind ourselves about all that we have, even in the face of such loss.

Because of the unique nexus at which The Trust operates, I see so much to be thankful for: the heroic nonprofits that create a safety net for our most vulnerable; our service workers, who keep the city functioning; and indefatigable New Yorkers, who have demonstrated the resolve, ingenuity, and spirit to keep moving through this extraordinarily difficult time.

This is not the first crisis our city has weathered, and The Trust is once again fortunate enough to be in a position to help. Our nearly 100 years of experience have helped shape how we take action today. As the city began to shut down to slow the pandemic, it was clear the repercussions on human life and the economy were going to be profound. It was all-hands-on-deck, and we joined our colleagues in philanthropy just as we did after superstorm Sandy and September 11th.

The day the Governor announced a plan to put the state on “pause,” we announced the launch of the NYC COVID-19 Response & Impact Fund with an initial $75 million raised from 18 partners, including Bloomberg Philanthropies, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, and the Ford Foundation. The fund includes a grants program managed by The Trust and a loan program at Nonprofit Finance Fund. A few days later, we made our first grants and were being joined by others. By mid-May, we and our partners raised more than $105 million for grants and loans and had helped 533 nonprofits on the front lines.

From past experience, we know that the effects of a crisis ripple out over time. When superstorm Sandy hit the region in 2012, efforts to clean up and feed stranded communities eventually gave way to efforts to rebuild, and then to prepare for the inevitable next hurricane. Today, we continue to make our five hundred miles of coastline more resilient to extreme weather.

So, even as we launched the NYC COVID-19 Response & Impact Fund, The Trust created another fund to address the repercussions over the weeks and months to come. You can learn about our Emergency Fund on page 8 of this newsletter. And our Long Island and Westchester divisions created funds to rally support for COVID-19 recovery in their areas.

We have been encouraged and thankful to see The Trust’s long-standing community of donors join with those new to The Trust and step forward to generously help our region heal. When things are at their worst, many New Yorkers are at their best. Together we will get through this, restore the city we love, and be stronger into the future.
While New York City is known for its tall, glittering skyscrapers, it is its green, peaceful parks that are most beloved by New Yorkers.

At one and a half times the size of Central Park, Van Cortlandt Park in the Bronx is the playground, oasis, and backyard for a diverse, densely populated section of the city.

With a recent grant of $60,000 from The Trust, the Van Cortlandt Park Alliance is making physical improvements and giving residents opportunities to care for the park, which has 650 acres of forest, a lake, eight cricket fields, two golf courses, and is home to more than 100 species of birds.

The Alliance brings together the Parks Department, the private sector, community groups, and residents. This public-private partnership will create a wetlands wildflower garden, repair nature trails, organize community programming, and survey residents to see how the park can best serve them.

The group also will recruit and train more volunteers and interns to restore habitat and clean litter.

“Over 2.5 million people a year play, hike, swim, and enjoy nature in Van Cortlandt Park, the crown jewel of the Bronx,” said Van Cortlandt Park Alliance co-chair Nina Habib Spencer. “Our diverse community is the Alliance’s reason for being—to raise private and foundational support for free programming in the park, and to restore and maintain our vast natural areas for everyone to enjoy. In a city of small apartments and limited space, partnerships like the Alliance make it possible for all New Yorkers to connect with nature when they need to.”

“Groups like the Van Cortlandt Park Alliance are critical to the quality of life we enjoy in an urban setting,” said Eric Soto, Con Edison’s director for Bronx regional and community affairs. “We are so deeply proud of our partnership that enables the Alliance to maintain the park, develops the virtues of stewardship in young adults, and enhances the park’s many features for the enjoyment of the city’s residents.”

The Alliance is one year old and is the result of a Trust-supported merger of two long-standing stewardship groups that advocated for different stretches of Van Cortlandt Park.
The COVID-19 crisis has upended life in the city in unprecedented ways, but decades of Trust grantmaking have helped strengthen the city’s safety net. The grants described below, submitted in the months prior to the crisis, show how targeted support can help New York face this unexpected catastrophe.

**IMPROVING NURSING HOME CONDITIONS**

Although the New York State Department of Health inspects nursing homes, its reports often do not reliably find all the dangerous conditions that need to be mitigated. In fact, federal inspectors do a small number of checks and often find as many as twice the number of infractions.

For that reason, The Trust gave the Long Term Care Community Coalition $75,000 to show the state how to improve its inspection system. The advocacy organization will review federal regulations and state and regional practices. Then it will present its findings to government officials and reach out to advocates and families with loved ones in nursing homes so they can report dangerous situations.

"New York State has the largest number of elders in nursing homes in the country. Improving our system can have an outsized impact across the nation.” - Rachel Pardoe, Trust program officer

**NEW GRANTS**

**A Safety Net Tested**

Recent grants take on heightened relevance during the COVID-19 pandemic
PROTECTING THE HEALTH OF PRISONERS

In 1846, the New York State Legislature had the foresight to create an independent nonprofit organization, the Correctional Association of New York, to inspect prisons and make recommendations for improving conditions. With a $200,000 grant from The Trust, the Association will investigate one of the most-cited complaints from inmates about prisons: the health care system.

Because prison health care personnel are not overseen by the Department of Health, the Association is the sole body that can provide independent evaluations, but it has not had sufficient resources. Over the next two years, the Association will evaluate prisoners’ well-being and care, as well as file Freedom of Information requests to get important data that has been withheld by the state.

In addition, the Association will work with the governor and legislature to draft a bill that would provide access to information it needs to monitor the prison health system. The Association will work with the Prisoners’ Legal Services, which also received a $200,000 grant to assist those being released and returning to the community.

INCREASING ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH CARE

About three-quarters of working New Yorkers rely on employer-sponsored health insurance, and they are often faced with a tough challenge if they need mental health or substance abuse care. Although the law says there should be parity with physical health care, the reality is that there are not many in-network behavioral health providers, and the out-of-network providers have co-pays that can be 11 times higher than those for physical health.

The Northeast Business Group on Health includes corporations, unions, and health systems, which collectively cover 4.5 million New Yorkers. With $150,000 from The Trust, the coalition will work with a national effort, called Path Forward, to leverage their members’ purchasing power to improve the behavioral health system for people with employer-sponsored insurance.

The coalition will gather data on New York, develop a strategic plan, and provide information to help members negotiate for better coverage.

For the past ten years, Good Shepherd Services has used “trauma-informed practice” to help clients process the effects of trauma. The practice helps people manage emotions, build healthy relationships, and reverse the negative psychological effects of trauma.

With a $150,000 grant, Good Shepherd will expand its use of this practice by starting a training program for its social work staff who deal with children and families at high risk of experiencing trauma.

Other ways we’re aiding New Yorkers

Queens Community House is using $80,000 to deepen the role of its community center in the Pomonok public housing development so it can better address the employment, education, elder care, food access, benefits, and health care needs of entire households.

Association of Community Employment Programs for the Homeless (ACE) is using $100,000 to expand a program to help people improve professional skills and build social support systems to stay employed and advance their careers.

Opportunity America Educational Fund is using $100,000 to research and make recommendations to improve workforce education and development at the City University of New York’s seven community colleges.

New York City Homeless Youth and Families Fund, a new funder collaborative in The Trust, is using $250,000 to advance long-term solutions that prevent homelessness, upgrade existing shelters and improve the services they provide, and expand the amount of permanent affordable housing with support services.
AN ARTIST’S PATH:
A recent Trust grant of $100,000 to Pentacle supports the development of a free online administration platform for dance and theater artists. The platform will include templates for budgets and grant applications, articles on topics such as tour management, and a live chat function.

Francesca Harper is an internationally acclaimed dancer, choreographer, and artist. She was a principal dancer in the Frankfurt Ballet, performed on Broadway, and formed her own dance company, The Francesca Harper Project. She is currently a professor at the Juilliard School, NYU, and Ailey/Fordham. Photo by Richard Termine

FIRST PERSON
On Heartbreak and Gratitude
Dancer Francesca Harper shares her perspective on COVID-19

As a dancer, bearing and managing pain is a constant. I am used to physically and mentally pushing myself.

As an African-American woman, I built an immunity to the invisibility I felt while navigating through the predominantly white worlds of ballet and commercial theater. I have also lived through crises. I was in New York City during 9/11 and lost friends and family members to AIDS, which ravaged the dance world.

So when COVID-19 hit the city, my first response was not to mourn, but to shift. I had to organize new systems of survival for my family, my students, and my company. I was searching for ways to inspire and motivate.

For me, one of the hardest parts of COVID-19 has been the financial stress. Within a few days, my commissioned works for Alvin Ailey, Jacob’s Pillow, and an Austrian ballet company were canceled. I’m resourceful with money, but this sudden stop in income was a new type of blow.

While we sit in this uncomfortable period, I am choosing to live in hope and look toward the future. One way to do this is to practice gratitude.

Pentacle has been a lifeline during COVID-19. It’s an organization that provides pro bono accounting and financial services to arts organizations, and allowed me to make a new plan for the summer and fall.

I have learned new ways to connect with others. I am crowdfunding for my dance company, teaching online, and developing choreography for online media.

As hard as the economic change has been, I am also relishing this break from the hustle. I meditate, cook, and self-reflect. When social distancing restrictions are lifted, I plan to reprioritize my schedule so these habits can continue.

I know through experience that on the other side of any challenge is the opportunity to grow, so while this is a painful time, I am grateful that I have been able to learn from it and strengthen myself for the future."

Financial information about The New York Community Trust can be obtained by contacting us at: 909 Third Avenue, 22nd Floor, New York, New York 10022, (212) 686-0010, at www.nycommunitytrust.org, or as stated below: Florida: SC No. CH9514 A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL-FREE, WITHIN THE STATE, 1-800-HELP-FLA OR AT www.FloridaConsumerHelp.com. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATION. Maryland: For the cost of postage and copying, from the Secretary of State. Michigan: MICS No. 22265. Mississippi: The official registration and financial information of The New York Community Trust may be obtained from the Mississippi Secretary of State’s office by calling 1-888-236-6167. New Jersey: INFORMATION FILED WITH THE ATTORNEY GENERAL CONCERNING THIS CHARITABLE SOLICITATION AND THE PERCENTAGE OF CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED BY THE CHARITY DURING THE LAST REPORTING PERIOD THAT WERE DEDICATED TO THE CHARITABLE PURPOSE MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY BY CALLING (973) 504-6215 AND IS AVAILABLE ON THE INTERNET AT http://www.state.nj.us/lps/ca/charfrm.htm. New York: A copy of our most recent financial report is available from the Charities Registry on the New York State Attorney General’s website at www.charitiesnys.com or, upon request, by contacting the NYS Attorney General, Charities Bureau, at 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271 or at 212-416-8401. North Carolina: Financial information about this organization and a copy of its license are available from the State Solicitation Licensing Branch at (888) 830-4989 (within N.C.) or (919) 814-5400 (outside N.C.). Pennsylvania: The official registration and financial information of The New York Community Trust may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Virginia: From the State Office of Consumer Affairs in the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Affairs, P.O. Box 1163, Richmond, VA 23218. Washington: From the Charities Program at 1-800-332-4483, or www.sccwva.gov/charities. West Virginia: West Virginia residents may obtain a summary of the registration and financial documents from the Secretary of State, State Capitol, Charleston, WV 25305. Wisconsin: A financial statement of the organization disclosing assets, liabilities, fund balances, revenue and expenses for the preceding fiscal year will be provided to any person upon request. CONTRIBUTIONS ARE DEDUCTIBLE FOR FEDERAL INCOME TAX PURPOSES IN ACCORDANCE WITH APPLICABLE LAW. REGISTRATION IN A STATE DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATION OF THE NEW YORK COMMUNITY TRUST BY THE STATE.
Despite our city’s diversity, racial and socio-economic segregation in public schools persist. But educators, parents, students, and nonprofit workers who believe in the value of integration and diversity have made progress. However, just as the student body is unique to every school, the paths to successful integration can look very different in each school district.

Chalkbeat, a nonprofit news source focused on education, is using $130,000 from The Trust to cover the complex and contentious integration efforts as they play out in dozens of neighborhoods, from Forest Hills in Queens to Chinatown in Manhattan.

“We are covering community forums and talking to everyone involved,” says Amy Zimmer, Chalkbeat New York’s bureau chief. “We help people understand what’s happening not just after the fact, but while they still can participate.”

Last year, Chalkbeat reported on many factors that impact school integration, such as admission screening, dual-language and magnet programs, zoning, suspensions, learning disabilities, and curricula.

The nonprofit highlighted how some schools are using New York State grants to train teachers to develop lessons that reflect students’ diverse backgrounds and learning needs. It also examined why concerns about real estate values, commuting obstacles, and ethnic tensions were affecting integration efforts in Queens’ District 28. It will use this year’s grant to continue this coverage and investigate how the COVID-19 pandemic will impact integration efforts.

Chalkbeat readers come away with a more nuanced understanding of what it takes for a district to integrate, and some of the pitfalls to avoid. “No one solution is going to work for every district,” Zimmer continued. “But we have learned that to succeed, families need to identify their common goals, and understand how that translates to changes in their schools.”

Earlier this year, things were looking up for the future of our beleaguered public transit system. Last year, the transit advocacy group Riders Alliance used $80,000 from The Trust to help win a congestion pricing plan and a transfer tax on luxury real estate that would generate revenue for our trains, subways, and Access-A-Ride program. It also helped secure a $51 billion, 10-year capital spending plan that would bring much-needed improvements. Train signals (some of which date back to the 1930s) were slated to get replaced, elevators were scheduled to be built, and new subway cars were promised. But much of this may be derailed by COVID-19.

“The MTA is facing the biggest fiscal crisis in its history, losing about $1 billion a month from expected fare and tax revenue,” says Betsy Plum, the executive director of Riders Alliance. “Our members fought for federal rescue funds and secured $3.8 billion for the MTA. But, the future of our public transportation system hinges on at least $3.9 billion more in additional federal aid.”

With a new grant of $80,000, Riders Alliance will make the case to lawmakers that investing in public transit is essential to our city’s recovery. It will also work to end federal barriers to congestion pricing implementation, win transit service changes to aid essential workers and communities of color hardest hit by COVID-19, and protect riders from long-term service cuts and fare hikes spurred by the coronavirus crisis.
How can you help
New York recover
from the pandemic?

Give to The New York Community Trust Emergency Fund

With your help, we will send needed funds to nonprofits that are helping New Yorkers facing the loss of income, food, shelter, health care, and more due to the detrimental impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Emergency Fund is addressing both the immediate needs of New Yorkers as well as the new challenges that will emerge in the months to come. Recently, it funded the City Parks Foundation to ensure open spaces are maintained through the busy summer. It also funded City Harvest to provide food to New Yorkers in need.

WAYS TO GIVE:

- By credit card on nycommunitytrust.org
- Contact Gay Young at gy@nyct-cfi.org
- If you have a donor-advised fund in The Trust, use MyNYCT to make a contribution to the Emergency Fund, or use the resources already available in your fund
- If you have a donor-advised fund elsewhere, suggest a grant to The New York Community Trust for its Emergency Fund

MAKE A DIFFERENCE, TOGETHER
Join others to help our most vulnerable neighbors. People like you helped us meet a generous challenge from Jane Mead Timken to match all contributions up to $500,000. The need is still great, and we are grateful to all who continue to support our Emergency Fund.

“I wish I could do more to help: to keep people safe, well-fed, and able to be with their families and friends.”

— Donor Jane Mead Timken