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THE NEW YORK COMMUNITY TRUST
Supporting Artists is Essential Work

Through our Philanthropic Advising program, The Trust helped the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation identify and distribute grants to artists struggling to support themselves during the pandemic. Below, Maurine Knighton, the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation program director for the arts, writes about the crisis for artists and her foundation’s work with The Trust.

“T
here is no question that the pandemic created moments of pain and loss, and also resilience and innovation. This is especially true for artists, who help us make sense of the world and imagine a better way forward. In this turbulent time, we need art more than ever, and the creators of that art need us.

For many years, the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation has provided unrestricted funding to theater, contemporary dance, and jazz artists so they can continue to inspire and connect us. As the initial shock of the pandemic transformed into profound economic harm for performing artists, we knew it was a time for unprecedented action, and we had to do more.

...brilliant artists were struggling to avoid eviction, maintain their health, care for their children and loved ones, and even get dental work...

Having worked closely with The New York Community Trust in a number of its funder collaborations addressing the arts and foster care, our foundation knew The Trust had the expertise to help us quickly disseminate application information and distribute grants nationwide.

The Trust set up an online intake system for applications and facilitated national panels of experts to evaluate the needs of artists in contemporary dance, theater, and jazz. We moved ahead with assurance and speed, but we weren’t ready for the heart-rending stories we heard: brilliant artists were struggling to avoid eviction, maintain their health, care for their children and loved ones, and even get dental work so they could play their instruments.

At the end of the process, we distributed $3 million to 300 artists. This program offers a critical lifeline to these artists—providing them with unrestricted funding to help them pay their bills, get back on their feet, and continue to create. It helps them reestablish the conditions they need to thrive, so that they can add to the vibrancy of, and future possibilities for, our society through their imaginative work.

While we are proud to have provided assistance, we are keenly aware that more needs to be done to assure that the performing arts—and those who create them—continue to thrive. I hope everyone who has ever been moved by an artist will see these creative professionals as workers who merit our support. I know for me, they will always be essential workers.

As venues slowly reopen, yes, put your hands together and applaud loud and long, but let’s also dig deep into our generosity and ensure these artists can return for encores for years to come.”

From the Desk of Maurine Knighton, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation

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 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) 504-2215 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 http://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) 830-4889 (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.sos.wa.gov/charities. From the State Solicitation Licensing Branch at (800) 332-4483 or www.sos.wa.gov/charities. 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.
Born and raised in Queens, Brian and Florence (Flo) Mahony built a successful personnel group with locations throughout Manhattan. In retirement, they split their time between New York, Connecticut, and Florida, but their commitment to New York City is unwavering. Since 1997, they have been enthusiastic supporters of groups that make life better for all New Yorkers. Making roughly 100 grants a year, they support public media, recreation centers, theater and ballet, workforce development, animal welfare, and other causes through their donor-advised fund in The Trust.

“We’ve come to appreciate the thoughtfulness of The Trust’s grantmaking staff, and their ability to use money strategically to make big things happen,” said Flo Mahony.

After conversations with Trust staff, Brian and Flo created a field-of-interest fund that helps emergency medical technicians, paramedics, nurses, and other frontline workers. The Trust combined the Mahonys’ generosity with other funds, responding to proposals from effective nonprofits.

Recently, the Mahony Emergency Worker Training Fund supported LaGuardia Community College’s efforts to prepare Queens residents for jobs as emergency medical technicians and paramedics. Another grant to the Regional Emergency Medical Services Council of NYC provides mental health care to emergency medical service workers.

“When you are helping sick people, be it COVID or a stroke, these professions can be wearing on the individual. Training for higher level certifications can also be very expensive,” said Irfan Hasan, The New York Community Trust deputy vice president for grants. “The Mahonys are allowing us to help more great programs that support these brave workers.”

The Mahonys are fueling their fund primarily through IRA distributions, allowing them to exclude these distributions from the income they would otherwise claim.

To take advantage of our philanthropic advisory services, or get more information about using your IRA distribution to help New Yorkers, please contact us at giving@nyct-cfi.org or (212) 686-0010 x363.

“Saving Lives:” Students at LaGuardia Community College train to become EMTs thanks, in part, to the Mahonys’ field-of-interest fund.
As rents across the city climb back toward pre-pandemic levels, low-income New Yorkers run the risk of being forced out of their homes and communities. In addition, some homeowners are struggling with the prospect of increased flooding brought on by climate change. The Trust is supporting a range of nonprofits working to preserve and create more housing, and help New Yorkers stay in their homes.

CONVERTING HOTELS TO HOMES
Tourism is starting to tick back up, but experts predict it will take several years before travel returns to pre-pandemic levels. The drop has led to significantly lower hotel occupancy rates. At the same time, the chronic housing shortage has worsened as people who fled the pandemic return to the city. With a grant of $60,000, New York University’s Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy will analyze various measures to convert low-occupancy hotels into housing. It will brief the new city administration about the best available policy tools to incorporate hotel conversions in an overall housing strategy.

SAFEGUARDING HOUSING
Buildings that provide support services for the city’s homeless individuals—many of whom are single adults with mental-health problems—are at risk of closing due to the costs of repairs combined with higher real-estate pricing, which make selling an attractive alternative. A Trust grant of $50,000 to Supportive Housing Network of New York will preserve facilities in need of renovations so that they can continue to provide assistance and shelter. The Network will provide technical assistance to bring several buildings closer to securing funding, create a guide to city and state preservation programs for supportive housing facilities, and ensure more units enter into these programs.

As the climate crisis creates more frequent extreme weather events, vulnerable communities with fewer resources will suffer disproportionately. In 2019, The Trust gave $130,000 to Neighborhood Housing Services of Brooklyn to aid low-income homeowners in flood-prone areas of southern Brooklyn. It provided counseling on flood resiliency measures, grants and loans for renovations to mitigate future flood damage, and connected them with prescreened contractors. It also conducted...
educational workshops on flood insurance policies and arranged home audits for low-income homeowners to assess risks and provide recommendations.

The nonprofit’s resiliency and insurance program manager, Elizabeth Malone, said, “because of continuing support from funders like The Trust, we were able to keep this program alive and staffed between emergencies. When Hurricane Ida hit in September, we could immediately respond and deploy resources because of the network we created—we had an ongoing connection with partners like New York City Emergency Management, volunteer agencies, mental-health providers, and others—we already had everyone in place, they knew whom to call, who we were, and what to ask.”

SECURING ACCESS TO HOUSING
A $30,000 grant from our Westchester Community Foundation to Community Voices Heard will help ensure local policies prioritize low-income and working families for affordable housing. It will assess the number and types of units needed to meet local housing needs and engage low-income residents in advocacy for improved housing conditions. In addition, a resident-led team will hold elected officials accountable for preserving and increasing the number of affordable units.

On Long Island, even as many aspects of the economy return to normal, people who are homeless, living with mental illness, or experiencing poverty continue to struggle. To help these individuals and their families, The Trust’s Long Island Community Foundation gave $30,000 to Mercy Haven to provide both temporary and permanent housing and to expand support services. These services include personal development, job readiness, and mentoring programs for those who are currently homeless or at risk of homelessness.

PROTECTING TENANTS’ RIGHTS
In 2014, just one percent of tenants in Housing Court had legal representation, compared to 95 percent of landlords. The city subsequently became the first in the country to establish a right to counsel for tenants in Housing Court, leading to a significant decline in eviction rates among those with representation. But full-time workers earning the city’s minimum wage of $15 an hour still do not qualify for free representation due to income requirements. Additionally, many people who are qualified are unaware that they can get a free attorney and simply leave their housing rather than go to court alone. The Trust recently gave $75,000 to the Right to Counsel NYC Coalition to support a state bill that would require courts to notify tenants in eviction proceedings of their right to an attorney, freeze proceedings until tenants retain one, and extend this right to everyone, regardless of income. The Coalition will meet with city officials and arrange testimony, build a larger statewide coalition of at least 65 organizations, and run a media campaign to advocate for the bill’s passage.

Before

After

PRESERVING HOMES:
Gouverneur Court in the Lower East Side was built at the turn of the 20th century and is listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. It was refurbished by a member agency of the Supportive Housing Network of New York. Today it provides 123 units of housing for people in need of shelter and care.
Supporting Black Communities

The Trust recently gave more than $2.2 million in two-year grants—$1 million of which was provided by the Facebook company—to 15 Black-led nonprofits that are working on projects to mitigate the generational effects of racial injustice and support the city’s Black communities.

LEADERSHIP TRAINING FOR TEENS
Formed in 1965 as a recreation program for Black young people in the Queens neighborhoods of East Elmhurst and Corona, Elmcor today is a multi-service organization serving more than 7,000 adults and children. With a Trust grant of $200,000, Elmcor will create a new leadership training program for Black teenagers. Mentors will help participants learn about community organizing and work on social change projects.

BUILDING CAREERS IN FINANCE
Wall Street Bound will use $170,000 to prepare young Black men and women for careers in finance. It will give an introductory finance course and enroll trainees in a 10-week program to help them attain basic credentials to enter the finance industry, which is heavily concentrated in New York. It also will offer career counseling and an opportunity for trainees to network through the nonprofit’s online portal.

MEDIATING CONFLICT IN QUEENS
To cultivate the use of conflict mediation, Community Mediation Services will use a $200,000 grant to recruit and train potential mediators from predominantly Black communities in Queens. Mediation can be valuable in several areas—from strengthening families to reducing litigation—so the nonprofit aims to make the field more representative of the diverse population of Queens, where currently less than a quarter of conflict mediators are Black.

PRESERVING BROOKLYN HISTORY
Using a $164,000 Trust grant, BlackSpace will further develop the Brownsville Heritage House into a vital hub for preserving the history of the neighborhood. It will help residents archive physical and digital artifacts, and stage several events to encourage participation and kindle interest in Brownsville’s rich cultural heritage.

OTHER GRANTEES INCLUDE:
- African Communities Together
- Angela’s Pulse
- Black Feminist Project
- Black Institute
- Bridge Street Development Corporation
- Eastern Queens Alliance
- Far Rockaway/Arverne Nonprofit Coalition
- Freedom Agenda
- Getting Out and Staying Out
- JMacForFamilies
- Project EATS
“W hen I was growing up in Chicago, I knew I wanted to save the world, but I just didn’t know how.

Although my dad and grandmother taught in public schools, I didn’t do well as a student. I felt like the curriculum was very Eurocentric and my teachers really struggled with how to respond to the kind of questions I would ask.

When I got to college, I took different classes that interested me and I started noticing it was all about youth development, education, urban studies. I decided to become an educator, and my own school experiences helped me understand what wouldn’t work with young people. I took a job at an arts education nonprofit that had a strong social conscience and I realized how important it was for me to be engaged in community issues.

Another turning point for me came after an incident where two Chicago police officers accused me of stealing a car... with the organization, which works with court-involved youth. I started as a teacher and have been there seven years. At Exalt, we try to be a bridge—working with young people, police officers, district attorneys, and judges—to make the justice system truly just.

In 2015, Gisele Castro, the executive director of Exalt, recommended me for The New York Community Trust Leadership Fellows Program. It had all the skill-building and smart people that I expected, but what I wasn’t expecting was the warmth, the vibrancy, and the community. The fellows from all the cohorts stay in contact, and we convene several times a year for events, such as talks with nonprofit leaders.

I learned a lot in academia, but the Fellows Program’s focus was on practitionership, how you apply the book knowledge. It was workplace-based learning, and that’s so valuable.

Earlier this year, I had the honor to be selected as deputy director of the Program, so I have been able to give back to an organization that gave me so much. I am helping strengthen the program and finding promising candidates for fellowships.

I can see now that what we are doing at the Leadership Fellows Program is transformational for the field. A lot of nonprofit leaders are aging out and there’s a lack of diverse candidates with a deep understanding of racial justice issues who can enter into those roles. We’re finding those individuals and training them so that they can succeed and make their organizations better and more effective.”

**RECENTLY RELEASED:**

*Leadership Standpoints: A Practical Framework for the Next Generation of Nonprofit Leaders* was published by Cambridge University Press in 2021 and is based on five years of data collected from the New York Community Trust Leadership Fellows Program—designed to address leadership development gaps in the nonprofit sector.
For some New Yorkers, parks and green spaces are more precious than gold, and The Trust and its donors have always been stewards of these public treasures. The Trust is home to four permanent funds that were created to help these beautiful, oxygenating, heat-reducing spaces thrive. Using these funds, we made a recent $75,000 grant to the Bronx is Blooming, an organization that mobilizes thousands of local student and resident volunteers to beautify their borough. “We are tapping into the love and care that people want to give to their neighborhoods,” says Jennifer Beaugrand, the president and founder of the group. “We are using their work to inspire other people who have lost that hope. Our goal is to change someone’s ‘why are you bothering?’ to a ‘how can I help?’”

The group trains residents on how to care for the borough’s street trees, parks, and green spaces—work that is badly needed in the Bronx, where it can improve the poor air quality that has led to some of the highest asthma rates in the country.

Legacy Gifts
Green the Bronx

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