

# AURORA

Women and Girls Foundation

*You...*



**ARE THE LUMINARIES**



**OF OUR COMMUNITY.**

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## **YOUR IMPACT REPORT 2020**

*Together we are a catalyst for positive change in the lives of women and girls in Greater Hartford.*

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**EMPOWER • EDUCATE • ENGAGE**



## MISSION AND GOALS

The Aurora Foundation is a catalyst for positive change in the lives of women and girls in Greater Hartford.

- We conduct research and convene the community around gender issues to promote understanding, collaboration and effective solutions.
- We educate and engage women and men in the power of philanthropy to improve social and economic outcomes for women and girls, their families and communities.
- We implement strategies, including targeted grantmaking, to address key issues and significantly impact women and girls in Greater Hartford.

## AURORA'S IMPACT

Over  
**\$1 Million**  
invested in women  
and girls awarded  
since 2000

Over **65**  
Organizations  
supported  
since 2000

Over **5,700**  
Women & girls  
reached in  
Greater Hartford  
since 2000

Aurora is the only women and girls fund exclusively focused on the needs of women and girls in Greater Hartford, and it is the only free-standing foundation in Connecticut focused solely on supporting groups that serve women and girls.

# AURORA

## Women and Girls Foundation

Dear Luminaries,

Looking back on a year when YOU met the extraordinary challenge of 2020, it seems inevitable that Aurora's amazing community would come together. When it became clear that those first few weeks of working from home would turn into something much longer, and that the needs of women and girls were going to surpass anything we'd known before, we did not falter. By May, we had reimagined our Women's Giving Circle as a Covid-19 Rapid Response Fund. At our first of what would be many virtual events, Teesia Williams shared how the Giving Circle made her feel connected to a community and able to do something that would make a difference in the suffering that she was seeing everywhere. The screen blurred for me, my tears joining Teesia's. It was a moment that stayed with me all year. A moment I could look back on and reflect that the community Aurora has built is powerful enough to share sorrow and hope and love even through a screen. The faces in the squares were women who answered suffering with generosity, hopelessness with compassion. I have never felt more honored to be a part of Aurora. I cannot thank each of you enough.



*Jennifer Streadman*

But that was just the beginning. We made sure programs supporting women and girls impacted by Covid-19 got dollars they needed to combat hunger, homelessness, learning loss, unemployment, lack of sanitary supplies, domestic violence and illness. The students in our Aurora-funded College Success programs got the resources they needed to stay in school during the pandemic, so that they could be tracked into careers that would provide them economic security. We started an ambitious research project to document the harm we knew the pandemic was doing to women and their families—and fast tracked it so the information would be available for legislators and policy makers to center women and girls in relief and recovery efforts. Aurora and all of you rose to the challenge. We stood up for women and girls when they needed us most.

That was only possible because of our amazing supporters, volunteers and staff. In 2020, Aurora's board members provided guidance and got things done even in a virtual environment thanks to the dedicated leadership of Chair Evelyn Johnson. Working with our board and the fabulous volunteers that help with everything from securing Luncheon sponsors to taping their own iPhone videos, I am truly inspired by the light they bring to our community. Bookkeeper Joanne Vitarelli kept us organized and on budget, even from a distance. Social Media Intern Trinitee Williams helped us stay in touch and make new connections. New Program Coordinator Marie McNamara supported all our efforts from grantmaking to fundraising and communications—and learned the ropes from home. Her willingness to master the demands of producing virtual events kept our community connected throughout the pandemic—thank you, Marie!

The pages of our Annual Report are filled with inspiring accounts of the impact you have had on women and girls who need you. You are lighting the way for them to realize their potential and thrive.

Thank you!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jenny".

**Jennifer Streadman**  
Executive Director

# AURORA EMPOWERS AND EDUCATES

## Aurora's Women's Leadership Forum The Work Must Be Done: Women of Color and Right to Vote



On September 23, 2020, the Aurora Foundation and the Connecticut Historical Society partnered to present **"The Work Must Be Done,"** highlighting the activism of women of color in Connecticut in the early 20th century. Using the exciting new research by Goodwin College Assistant Professor Brittney Yancy and CHS Research Historian Karen Li Miller, they showed the many ways that women of color were active leaders who developed their own associations, both nationwide and state-based, to achieve social and political reforms. This included working for woman suffrage. Jenny Steadman, Executive Director of the Aurora Women and Girls Foundation, offered the current data on women's civic participation in Greater Hartford to complement the historical perspective on diverse women's leadership with the present day evidence of the impact women leaders have on our community.

*This program was supported in part with funding from the Richard P. Garmany Fund at Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, in memory of Lydia Garmany.*

## Women Leaders of the World Fellowship

On October 19, just 2 days after Aurora's Luminary Luncheon, Executive Director Jenny Steadman began her one-year fellowship in the Women Leaders of the World (WLW) program. An extraordinary opportunity, "WLW is a transformational leadership training, coaching, and advising fellowship for women leaders solving some of the world's most intractable problems in nonprofits, social entrepreneurship, media, politics/government, and business," according to the WLW website.



After an intense one-month deep dive into leadership strategies, the program pairs fellows with global advisors and an executive coach for a year-long opportunity to develop and implement strategies to create impact and change. With over 200 graduates from 40 countries, Jenny joins a network of women leaders around the globe, increasing Aurora's standing and bringing new connections and resources for growth.

"I was deeply honored when Julie Castro Abrams, founder of How Women Lead (parent organization of WLW) nominated me and offered me a scholarship to participate," said Jenny. "Thanks to the support of Aurora's board, I've been able to develop new skills and connect with an amazing cohort of women leaders. They not only inspire me, they support me and offer practical advice, connections, and expertise. I am excited to use these new resources to bring funding and attention to the women and girls we serve." Jenny plans to put her new insights and the expert advice of her mentors, coach, and peers to work on the roll out of the forthcoming report on the impact of Covid-19 on women and girls.

# LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND BEYOND

## RECOGNIZING AURORA'S 2020 GRANT-FUNDED PROGRAMS

### YWCA Hartford Region YW Career Women

This tuition-free program provides comprehensive support services to women seeking Associate Degrees at Capital Community College and Manchester Community College. A dedicated program Navigator provides individualized coaching services and connections to campus and community resources that help alleviate barriers to college students, especially for students who have proven themselves academically but who are "at risk" of not continuing with their studies due to economic or family circumstances. The goal of the program is for students to complete degree programs that equip them for careers with family-sustaining wages, increasing the economic mobility of themselves, their families, and their communities. **Funding for this program includes a generous matching grant from the Farmington Bank Community Foundation.**



### Charter Oak State College Women in Transition Program

This tuition-free program provides low-income single mothers with tuition and fees, textbooks, internet access, career workshops, networking programs, and individualized academic coaching to assist them with completing an online Associates and/or Bachelor's degree. The goal of the WIT program is to provide access to education services that will enable single mothers with low incomes and low paying jobs to build a foundation for upward economic mobility. The WIT program has been operating for 20 years and has always been fully online because transportation and childcare are significant barriers these students face as they pursue their education.



### Asnuntuck/Tunxis Community Colleges Launch Your Leadership Journey

This tuition-free, 6-month leadership development program guides women students as they build skills needed for classroom and job success. Students increase their campus engagement, and the program has a track record of increasing student retention and graduation rates. Program session topics focus on improving communication, problem solving, neutralizing gender bias, networking, self-advocacy, and leading teams. The program includes a social action project. Aurora funding allowed the LYLJ program to move to a second campus, and current funding supports the program at both campuses and funded the virtual version of the program implemented in 2020.



### University of Hartford Women's Advancement Initiative LEAD Program

This tuition-free program provides resilience and opportunity coaching, leadership and professional development training and structured life skills curriculum for undergraduate women students. The program includes 100+ women and builds student success through peer mentoring, weekly programming, career exploration, individual coaching. Students become campus leaders, successful scholars, and active volunteers in the surrounding community.



# WOMEN'S GIVING CIRCLE: C

**Hope. Equity. Empowerment. Compassion.  
Focus. Listen. Solidarity. Educate.  
Black Lives Matter. Action. Access.**

These were just a few of the terms participants used to describe what they hoped to achieve by playing a role in our 2020 Women's Giving Circle: COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund. After the smart, thoughtful and passionate dialog we heard between members, we can say, "Mission Accomplished!"

We are proud to share that throughout 2020, our Women's Giving Circle saw the need for responsive

and streamlined philanthropy to meet the needs of the women and girls who were disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. 100% of donations went directly to community partners who were mitigating challenges for women and girls in: food insecurity, healthcare, shelter, childcare, safety and educational loss caused by COVID-19. By the end of the year the Giving Circle was able to grant over \$ 20,000 to the following community partners.

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## 2020 GIVING CIRCLE RECIPIENTS



# COVID-19 RAPID RESPONSE

## Members of the Giving Circle

Janet Bailey Faude	Kathleen Francalancia
Sharon Barrett	Elizabeth Hucker
Sara Batchelder	Donna Jolly
Emily Bernard	Lauren Jones
MelodyBernhardt	Elizabeth Kendall
Karen Binkhorst	Elaine Leshem
Karen Brand	Suzanne Levere
Cyndi Brown	Linda McDowell
Noora Brown	Kathi Meding
Carlene Bush	Carle Mowell
Shari Cantor	Leah Murchie
Mary Carangelo	Molly Newberry
Chloe Carlson	Ann Newbury
Anne Carroll	Sharon Pope
Susan Clemow	Alison Scherer
Heather Clifford	Chirstina Smith
Jeanne Conrad	Donna Stout
Ann D'Auria	Michelle Strawder
Erin Devine	Gayle Temkin
Karen Diaz-Meaike	Ann Thomas
Kyra Dorsey	Chris Traczyk
Julie Dubois	Maggie Willard
Jill Dulitsky	Teesia Williams
Kate Eikel	Ilicia Winokur
Susan Ely	Nancy Woodward
Gretchen Fountain	

## Past Giving Circle Recipients:

2017 – Family Life Education

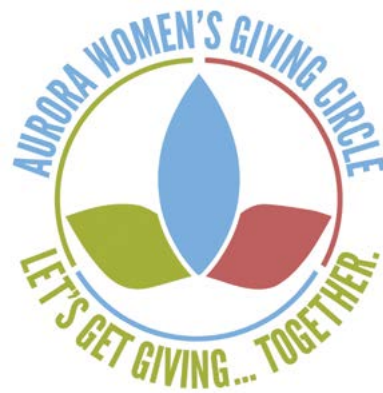
2018 – Girls for Technology

2019 – Strong Girls Camp –  
Hartford Public Library

## We would love to have YOU join us!

The 2021 Aurora Women's Giving Circle is now accepting members.

Visit [www.aurorafoundation.org/giving-circle](http://www.aurorafoundation.org/giving-circle) for more information. Those interested in joining or learning more can contact Marie McNamara at [marie@aurorafoundation.org](mailto:marie@aurorafoundation.org)



## 2020 GENEROSITY BREAKS RECORDS

**51**  
Giving Circle  
Members

**\$20k**  
Raised

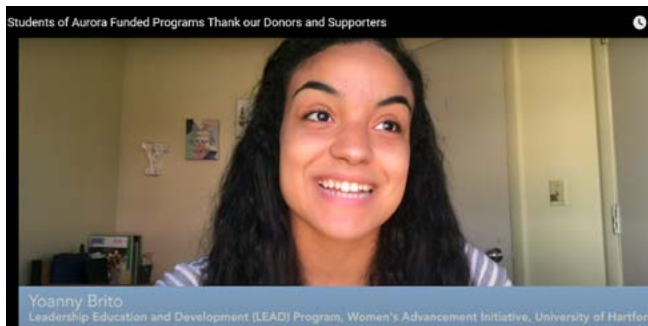
**100%**  
Directly to  
Community  
Organizations

# AURORA'S LUMINARY LUNCHEON

On October 16th, 2020 we hosted our first Virtual Luminary Luncheon. With over 300 people registering and the hard work of our Luncheon Committee we were able to surpass our goals by raising over \$120,000. In a combination of live Zoom and recorded messaging, Aurora was able to focus on our mission and hear from students in our grant-funded programs, as well as donors and leaders in our community. Our supporters inspired us with their generosity and dedication by shining a light for women and girls.

We were mesmerized while listening to the voices of students and their stories. We heard virtual cheers from the audience via zoom chat, with shout outs including:

- ***"These grantees are our future, and it's looking brighter"*** –Meghan S.
- ***"You are all amazing and powerful women!! Shine On!!!"*** –Chloe C.
- ***"We are sure to see these women in important leadership roles in years to come!"*** –Ellen B.



We heard from the Chair of our Board, Evelyn Johnson, about Aurora's history and how in 2000 a dynamic group of leaders came together to address the needs of women and girls through focused philanthropy. Founders Leah Bailey Moon, Felice Grey-Kemp, Eileen Kraus, Paddi LeShane and Marie O'Brien came together with others to establish the Aurora Women and Girls Foundation. By the end of 2020 Aurora invested \$1 Million into our community, serving more than 5,500 women and girls in the Greater Hartford region!! Now, that was something to celebrate at our Annual Luminary Luncheon.



We listened intently to Dr. Elsa Nunez, our Keynote Speaker and long-time supporter of Aurora as she spoke of her own experience being born a farm girl in Puerto Rico before moving with her family to the housing projects of NJ where they were the only Latinos in the community. Dr. Nuñez showed us the transformative power of a college education and the importance of providing a helping hand, which will ultimately lead to a success story.



**STAY TUNED FOR**  
*Luminary Luncheon 2021*  
Details coming soon

# LUNCHEON GOES VIRTUAL

## Luminary Luncheon Committee

Meghan Sweeney Burns – *Co-Chair*  
Karen Diaz Meaike – *Co-Chair*  
Karen Binkhorst  
Kathy Binder  
Kyra Dorsey  
Kate Eikel  
Kate Farrar  
Tenniel Hacker  
Mickey Mattei  
Amy Miller  
Micheala DeVoe Rinaldo  
Stacy Silk Rome

## Luminary Luncheon Table Hosts

Lindsay Baghramyan  
Melody Bernhardt  
Kathleen Binder  
Karen Binkhorst  
Ellen Brown  
Meghan Sweeney-Burns  
Shari Cantor  
Isabel Ceballos  
Susan Clemow  
Maureen Cooper  
Kyra Dorsey  
Kate Eikel  
Kate Farrar  
Janet Bailey Faude  
Carolyn Gitlin  
Laurie Goldsmith  
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Carolyn Hoffman  
Evelyn Johnson  
Martha Kalen  
Dana Keller  
Elaine Leshem  
Mickey Mattei  
Michele Maresca  
Marie McNamara  
Karen Diaz-Meaike  
Amy Miller  
Marissa Mounds  
Leah Murchie  
Jennifer Pennoyer  
Gilda Roncari  
Christina Smith  
Jennifer Steadman  
Ann Thomas

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## THANK YOU TO OUR 2020 LUMINARY LUNCHEON SPONSORS

### CHAMPION SPONSOR



### PILLAR SPONSORS

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### CHANGE AGENT SPONSORS

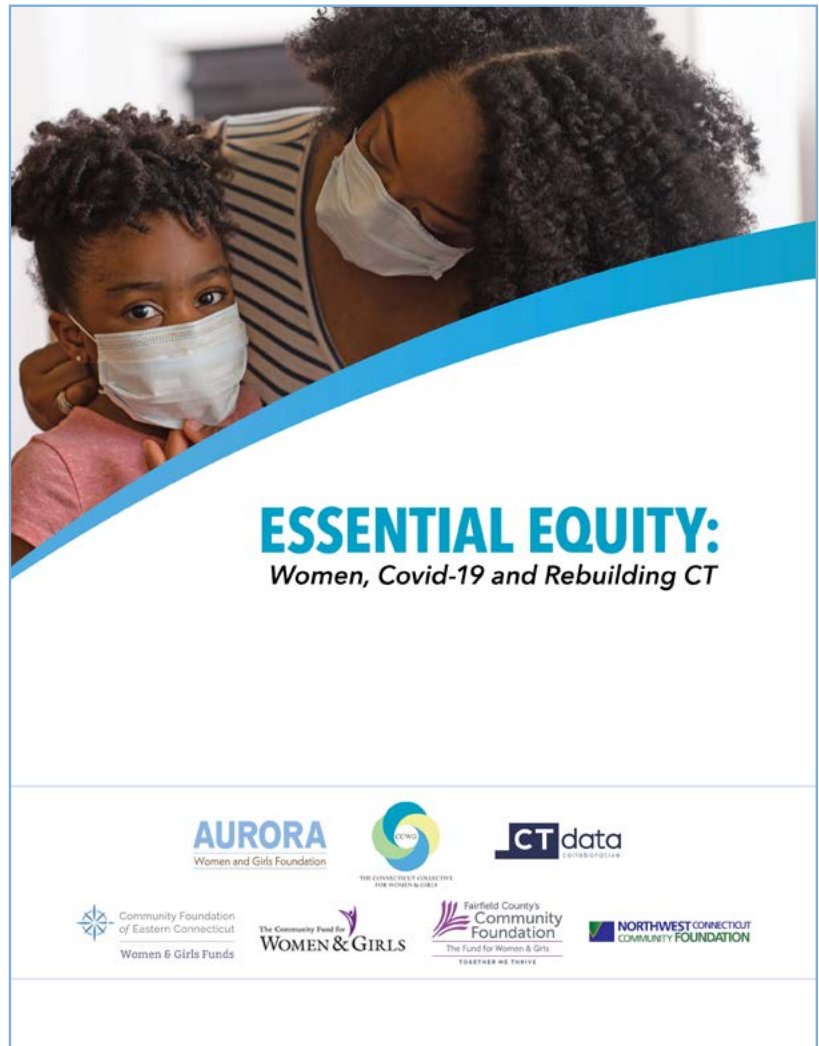
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Nassau

# AURORA'S RESEARCH

**Aurora was able to build on the research infrastructure we built with the Women and Girls Data Platform in 2019 to quickly respond to the urgent need for data about the impact of Covid-19 on women and girls across Connecticut.**

As advocates for women and girls, we knew that systems of sexism and racism already disadvantaged women and girls and we braced ourselves for how the Covid-19 economic and health crisis would further harm them. This report documents that harm. We have measured the negative impact so that we can begin to address it with significant investments in caregiving, healthcare, housing, and education and job training to provide relief and recovery that meets the need. This data also makes clear that women are a driving force in Connecticut's economy, and any effective plan to recover and rebuild needs to center women workers. Aurora led a statewide collaborative team of funders and nonprofits to produce this report during the pandemic. Thanks also to our partners at CT Data Collaborative, we led the nation in gathering and analyzing this crucial information.

**To read Essential Equity visit [womenandgirls.ctdata.org](https://womenandgirls.ctdata.org)**



*Offering data across 17 geographic areas in Connecticut, the WGDP can be accessed by visiting [womenandgirls.ctdata.org](https://womenandgirls.ctdata.org)*

# H SHOWS THE NEED

The Women and Girls Data Platform launched in 2019 continues to be updated and to add new data sources. Visit [womenandgirls.ctdata.org](https://womenandgirls.ctdata.org) to find new categories including Mental Health, Substance Abuse, Justice, and Housing. Investing in the WGDP meant that we knew that economic conditions for women were already terrible before the pandemic. We were poised to gather new data quickly and share it widely, leading the nation in producing real time information on Covid-19's impact on women and girls.

Visit [womenandgirls.ctdata.org](https://womenandgirls.ctdata.org) to learn more.

## Connecticut Women & Girls



### Geographies

Connecticut Fairfield County Hartford County Litchfield County Middlesex County  
New Haven County New London County Tolland County Windham County Hartford  
New Haven Bridgeport Stamford Danbury Waterbury New Britain Norwalk

### Charts

Health & Safety Education  
Economic Security  
Civic Participation/Leadership

## HOUSING

- **\$985** is the median gross rent in Hartford
- Before Covid-19, **80% of Female-Headed Households** in Hartford were unable to afford basic expenses, including rent

## HUNGER

- **60% of Single Female Headed Households** with children in Hartford received SNAP (Food Assistance) before Covid-19
- **300% increase** in applications for SNAP occurred in Connecticut during the first 6 months of the pandemic

## MENTAL HEALTH

- Before Covid-19, **Black and Hispanic respondents** reported suffering from poor mental health at a **higher rate** than white respondents
- **75% of Hispanic females** reported experiencing mental health concerns in the first 6 months of the pandemic

## ECONOMIC SECURITY

- **48% of CT's female labor force** are essential workers (food service, healthcare, education)
- **52% of CT continuing unemployment claims** in 2020 were filed by women, passing men for the first time in the state's history
- **75% of women filing unemployment claims** did not have a college degree

# AURORA FINANCIAL REPORT FY 2020

## Income

Capacity Donor Gifts . . . . .	\$127,838
2019 Luminary Luncheon . . . . .	\$121,269
Other Contributions . . . . .	\$48,256
Women’s Giving Circle . . . . .	\$19,002
Women’s Funding Network: Response, Recovery & Resilience Collaborative Fund . . . . .	\$30,000
SBA Paycheck Protection Program . . . . .	\$29,617
Investment Income . . . . .	\$14,822
<b>Total Revenue . . . . .</b>	<b>\$390,804</b>

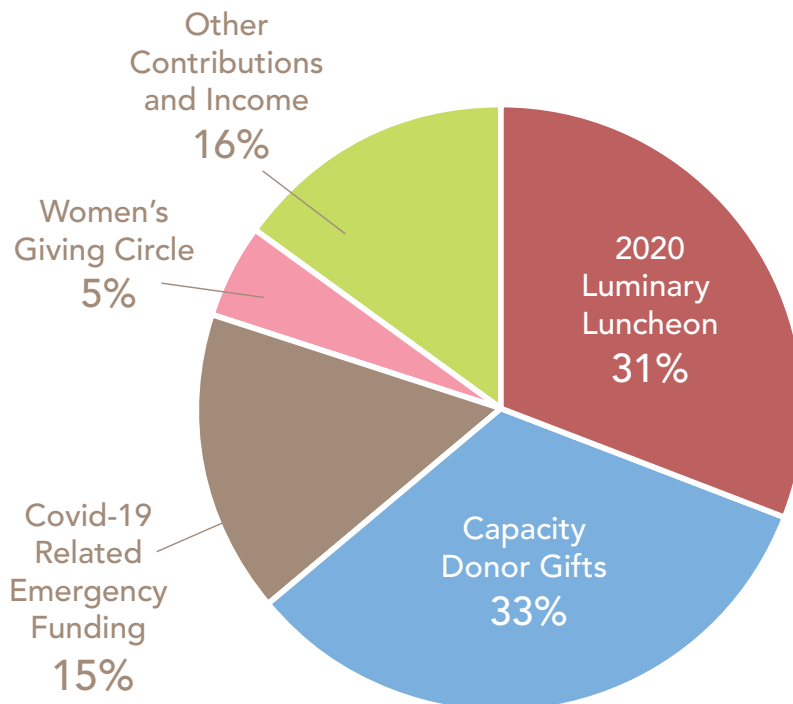
## Expenses

Grant Disbursements . . . . .	\$75,500
Research & Women and Girls Data Platform . . . . .	\$22,000
Operating Expenses . . . . .	\$216,176
<b>Total Expenses . . . . .</b>	<b>\$313,676</b>

## Assets

Designated Endowment . . . . .	\$523,004
Cash and Operating Reserves . . . . .	\$293,243
<b>Total Assets . . . . .</b>	<b>\$816,247</b>

## 2020 Income



## 2020 BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND STAFF

**Evelyn Johnson, Chair**

Senior Counsel  
Hartford Insurance Company

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Attorney  
Ruel Ruel Goings & Britt

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Community Volunteer

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**Karen Binkhorst**

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Capital Community College

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Founding Executive Director  
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Non-profit Consultant

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Executive Director

**Joanne Vitarelli**

Bookkeeper

**Marie McNamara**

Program Coordinator

**Trintee Williams**

Social Media Intern

# YOUR GENEROSITY LIGHTS THE

## 2020 CAPACITY DONORS

*Special thanks to those who gave unrestricted gifts of \$1,000 or more in 2020.*

### **\$20,000+**

Recovery, and Resilience Collaborative Fund  
Women's Funding Network  
William O. & Carole P. Bailey Family Foundation

### **\$10,000-\$19,999**

William and Alice Mortensen Foundation  
Richard P. Garmany Fund at Hartford Foundation  
for Public Giving in memory of Lydia Garmany  
Carleton N. Mowell  
Ann E. Thomas

### **\$5,000-\$9,999**

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### **\$2,500-\$4,999**

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Marge Morrissey  
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# THE WAY FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

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### \$500-\$999

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