

AURORA

Women and Girls Foundation



EDUCATE



EMPOWER



ENGAGE

YOUR IMPACT REPORT 2023:

We envision strong, equitable communities in which all women and girls realize their potential and are full, valued, and sought-after participants — economically, politically, and socially.



MISSION AND GOALS

MISSION:

The Aurora Women and Girls Foundation galvanizes resources to increase economic security, educational attainment, and leadership for women and girls in the Greater Hartford region.

VISION:

We envision strong, equitable communities in which all women and girls realize their potential and are full, valued, and sought-after participants -- economically, politically, and socially.

STRATEGIES:

Aurora uses a focused gender and racial equity lens to:

- Engage individuals and institutions in philanthropy
- Develop and share cutting-edge research
- Direct grant-making and capacity-building resources to nonprofits
- Convene and mobilize community partners for action

Our mission, vision, values, and strategies support all women and girls inclusive of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.

Over
\$1.685 Million
invested in women
and girls awarded
since 2000

Over **90**
Organizations
supported
since 2000

Over **8,500**
Women & girls
reached in
Greater Hartford
since 2000

AURORA

Women and Girls Foundation

Dear Luminaries,

2023 brought incredible growth and impact for women and girls. Our grant dollars invested in our community TRIPLED! Your long-time support of Aurora made this possible — Aurora’s track record of strategic investment in economic and educational opportunities attracted a new partner willing to fund solutions to ensure that single mothers can continue their educations. We are proud to have completed our first year partnering with the Charlotte and Hy Goode Family Fund Supporting Women’s Potential to address needs for housing, childcare, tuition, technology, and, most importantly, for mentoring and case management provided by our amazing community partners for this vulnerable student population. The results are already remarkable for the women and their children.



Jennifer Steadman

Thanks to your support of our Luminary Fundraiser and 100 Men Campaign, over 350 women are closer to graduation after participating in an Aurora-funded College Success program — YOU are making a difference!

Aurora remained focused on a research agenda that centered equity and opportunity. *“Elusive Equity: Continuing Effects of the Pandemic on Women’s Economic Security”* documented the ongoing impact of the pandemic on women’s economic security. We are grateful to Disrupted, the NPR/CT Public podcast, for sharing the insights of the report with a state and even nationwide audience — be sure to tune in!

Recognizing the continuing economic challenges women face as they recover from the pandemic, Aurora’s Women’s Giving Circle built opportunities for innovative childcare solutions, entrepreneurship, menstrual equity, and employment readiness. It is inspiring to watch our Giving Circle community come together!

Our shared vision for a better future for women and girls is only possible with the help of YOU, our amazing supporters, volunteers, and staff. In 2023, Aurora’s board members led the organization and were careful stewards under the leadership of Chair Meghan Burns. Special thanks to the amazing “Home Office” — Program Manager Marie McNamara, who brings creativity to showcasing our impact and thoughtfulness to implementing our grantmaking and Giving Circle; Development Manager Amber Anthony never tired of helping our corporate partners engage their employees and clients with philanthropy that truly makes a difference — we wish her a wonderful retirement and she will be missed; Social Media Coordinator Trinitee Williams, who makes our updates shine online; and a warm welcome to Office Manager Sadejah Blake, who keeps us organized and inspires us with her passion for Aurora’s mission. What a joy to work with this dedicated team!

Thank you for reflecting on all the 2023 “wins” for women and girls we’ve accomplished together. We look forward to 2024 and new opportunities to build the world of abundance all women and girls deserve.

Thank you!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jenny".

Jennifer Steadman, Ph.D.
Executive Director

AURORA BUILDS EDUCA

RECOGNIZING AURORA'S 2023 COLLEGE

Hartford Public Library - Barriers Can't Stop Us: Building Immigrant Women's Success: \$19,000

Year 2 of this program builds upon the solid foundation of success from last year. Its initiative specifically focuses on the college retention of female graduates of the English Learner Success program at Hartford Public Library. Last fall, HPL's College Access and Retention specialist, Michele Brophy, met with each student to ensure that their financial aid was in place, tuition bill had been paid, course schedule was set, and textbooks were purchased. She also ensured that each student had access to a laptop to complete school assignments. All new students who had been accepted to college successfully enrolled in the fall 2023 semester, as did returning students.



YWCA Hartford Region - YW Career Women \$23,000

In May 2023, YWCW student Anarelis earned her associate degree from Manchester Community College and began working toward her Organizational Leadership degree from Charter Oak State College in the fall. As she embarks on the next phase of her education, YWCW will remain a critical asset in Anarelis' progress toward professional and economic achievement. With YWCW's help, she has positioned herself for greater financial independence and is grateful for the incredible support and amazing work Aurora does for the Greater Hartford community. Anarelis has become a dedicated volunteer, including at Aurora's Luminary Event!



Make a difference, support women & girls in Greater Hartford

Mail your donation to:

Aurora Women & Girls Foundation

PO Box 370537, West Hartford, CT 06137

— OR —

Make your gift online at Aurorafoundation.org/donate

TIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

SUCCESS PROGRAMS: STORIES OF IMPACT

Charter Oak State College - Women in Transition \$23,000

"I am a single mother of twin eighteen-year-old boys. I had many nights doing homework with them at the kitchen table. I am a first-generation student and grew up in Hartford's north end. I am proud to say that I graduated with my bachelor's in healthcare administration in May 2022.

This journey has been amazing. The Program Director Wanda has been able to guide me through and has been a great support. I can count on her to answer the phone even for the simplest things that I may need or a hurdle that I encounter. The Women in Transition Program has helped me to become a better me.

Recently, I was promoted to a manager level position. I know that one of the reasons that I was given this opportunity is because I am currently in the process of getting my degree. My boys both graduated high school this past June and will be entering Capital Community College in the next couple of weeks!"

— Student in the Women in Transition program at Charter Oak State College



University of Hartford - The Women's Advancement Initiative LEAD Program \$15,000

"My favorite LEAD session was when we participated in mock

job interviews. It helped me realize the importance of preparation and practice since this was my first time doing an interview. I also enjoyed the session on success not being linear. I have had my fair share of things not working out, and though it has been a long journey, I would say that those experiences have led me to where I am today. I see LEAD as a community of women who are understanding and supportive of each other.

Since we all are college students, we all share similar experiences, and it is great to know that you are not alone on the journey. I have been able to meet high-achieving women through LEAD, and it has given me the motivation to work hard and set new goals for myself."

— Minu M. '25, Major: Accounting



STUDENT UPDATE:

In addition to LEAD, Minu also recently received a 2023 Melvin Goldstein Writing Award for papers on film/art using interdisciplinary approaches. In the future, Minu plans to graduate and hopes to earn her master's degree and become a Certified Public Accountant.

AURORA EDUCATES

ELUSIVE EQUITY: CONTINUING EFFECTS OF THE PANDEMIC ON WOMEN'S ECONOMIC SECURITY



From left to right: Dr. Khalilah L. Brown-Dean, Emily Byrne, Karen Dubois-Walton, Michelle Riordan-Nold, Jenny Steadman, Karen Lott

On November 14, 2023, CT Public hosted a live panel at Quinnipiac University to discuss women's issues in our state and nationwide with NPR 'Disrupted' podcast host, Dr. Khalilah Brown-Dean. This event coincided with the release of a new data report titled "Elusive Equity: Continuing Effects of the Pandemic on Women's Economic Security," funded by the Aurora Women and Girls Foundation and The Community Fund for Women and Girls of the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven and created by CT Data Collaborative.

During the event, Dr. Brown-Dean engaged in a conversation with Jenny Steadman and Michelle Riordan-Nold, Executive Director of CT Data Collaborative, about the latest data report. The report highlights persistent gaps and inequities, such as housing instability disproportionately affecting female households and high poverty rates. Despite women's contributions to the state's economy, including women of color, and their pursuit of educational and entrepreneurial opportunities, many support systems, such as childcare, have not evolved to facilitate greater participation.

11% of women in Connecticut live in poverty, remaining steady for over the past decade. Women in towns such as Bridgeport, New Haven, Hartford, and Waterbury experience poverty rates of over **20%**.

Between 2020 and 2022, rents for some towns have risen **16-30%**. Evictions have passed pre-pandemic levels, and from 2019 through 2022, nearly **50,000** eviction filings were estimated to be against female householders.

The total number of spaces in child daycare centers across the state decreased **8%**, from **4,387** in 2019 to **4,052** in 2022.

From 2020 through 2023, **22%** of new businesses in Connecticut were woman-owned.

THROUGH OUR RESEARCH

HOW WILL YOU DISRUPT INJUSTICE?

After discussing the Data Report, the Disrupted podcast hosted a panel featuring Jenny and Aurora Board Member, Karen Lott, who addressed economic inequities faced by women, particularly women of color, since the pandemic's onset. They focused on childcare, housing, and economic mobility, examining the data and proposing actionable solutions. Join us in amplifying their voices and exploring solutions by listening to the podcast now for an insightful journey into these pressing issues that sparked a meaningful conversation.



You can find a link to the full report and listen to the podcast on Aurora's website: <https://www.aurorafoundation.org/elusive-equity-report>

Special thanks to: The Richard P. Garmany Fund at Hartford Foundation for Public Giving in honor of Lydia Garmany and The William and Alice Mortensen Foundation for support of Aurora's research on women and girls.

AURORA SPOTLIGHTS LOCAL ORGANIZA

WOMEN'S GIVING CIRCLE

The 2023 Women's Giving Circle successfully achieved our \$20,000 goal to support four community organizations aiding women in the Greater Hartford workforce as they navigate post-pandemic challenges.



A few of our 49 Giving Circle members



How can we help women in the workforce coming out of the pandemic?

Data indicates that women, particularly women of color, are disproportionately concentrated in low-wage service roles, making it challenging to sustain their families amid rising living costs and scarce childcare options. The pandemic prompted a significant exodus of women from the workforce, jeopardizing hard-won progress in corporate America and potentially deepening workplace inequality.

During our final meeting, impassioned members deliberated on each organization's merits, grappling with the difficulty of allocating funds among worthy causes. Despite the wish for greater resources, members recognized the collective impact of their contributions far outweighs individual giving efforts. By coming together, gifts have a much greater impact than giving alone.

2023 Giving Circle Recipients

YWCA of New Britain:

Family Childcare Incubator \$6,000

To support training local women of color to run their own childcare businesses and provide desperately needed care in New Britain, which is recognized as a "childcare desert."

Girls for Technology:

Building for Equity Program \$6,000

To support intensive business training for women of color entrepreneurs and provide \$20,000 in capital support to help with business development.

Dress for Success:

Employment Readiness Program \$4,000

To support coaching and mentoring for women navigating job markets, upskilling, and advancing their careers.

Dignity Grows:

Addressing Period Poverty \$4,000

To support women's participation in school and work by supplying menstrual and hygiene needs.

49
MEMBERS

\$20,000
RAISED

DONATIONS RANGED FROM
\$25-\$2,500

TIONS AND ENGAGES THE COMMUNITY

100 MEN CAMPAIGN TAKES THE FIELD!

The 100 Men Campaign Event had over 150 guests gather at Trinity Health Stadium thanks to our partners the Hartford Athletic Green and Blue Foundation.



Whether you watched from the sidelines, donated to a Team, or followed us on social media we want to say Thank You! Because of YOU the 100 Men Host Committee and Co-Chairs scored the winning GOAL for women and girls in Greater Hartford bringing in over \$44,000!



Thank you to 100 Men Sponsors:

Access Health
Maureen Cooper
Todd Dzen
CWCSEO
Fox Farm Brewery

Lodestar Energy
Jennifer Pennoyer, MD
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100 Men Host Committee

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Bill Pennoyer, MD
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Robert Eikel
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Lee Hoffman
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Brittainy Spencer
Tim Steadman
Pete Towey
Dave Waisel

We heard from Andrea Calderon, a graduate of the UConn Hartford Latinas in Leadership Institute, who shared how the support she received helped her to succeed as a first-generation college student.



Andrea and her parents

"I graduated this past May with my Bachelor of Arts in Human Development and Family Sciences, and I am a proud First-Generation Latina student. My family immigrated from El Salvador so that I could have the opportunity to pursue a higher education and have other opportunities that they did not have. They have sacrificed so much and provided a lot of support for me to be able to be where I am today.

Starting in the fall, I will begin my journey in pursuing my master's in social work at UConn. I am entirely grateful for the support of resources like Latinas in Leadership, Aurora, and of the community at UConn and hope that one day I can provide the same for others."

— Andrea Calderon

AURORA WOMEN'S

We were thrilled to bring back the Women's Leadership Forum to CT State Community College - Capital this year! Over 125 students and community volunteers gathered for an opportunity to hear from an outstanding professional panel offering career and life advice, as well as a panel of students sharing their strategies for success. The event also featured a networking lunch, connecting students directly with board members and volunteers.



We recognize the trailblazing women on our Expert Panel: Dinora Lopez, SVP, Associate General Counsel, Liberty Bank, Caprice Taylor Mendez, President of Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut, Ayesha Clarke, Executive Director of Health Equity Solutions. These strong women shared tales of triumph and resilience. Your success stories serve as guiding lights, illuminating the path for aspiring students. Thank you for inspiring the next generation of leaders!

A heartfelt thanks goes out to Dr. Althea Bates for moderating our incredible Student Panel (R to L): Samantha Fonseca – University of Connecticut Storrs Campus – Barriers Can't Stop Us Program at Hartford Public Library, Clarice Jayawickrema – University of Hartford – LEAD Program and Natasha Newman-Adeleke – Connecticut State Community College Capital – YW Career Women Program.



These students and experts fearlessly unveiled their journeys – Your stories inspire, empower, and ignite change. Here's to the bold voices shaping our future!



LEADERSHIP FORUM



“

“What advice would you give your younger self?”

I have learned to be more forgiving of myself and to grant myself more grace. Despite having support when I was younger, I often felt that seizing these opportunities would inconvenience others. At 18, minor setbacks felt insurmountable, as if it was the end of the world. I felt like I didn't have anything beyond those moments. Now, I realize that “This too shall pass,” a realization that didn't come easily.

I believe many young people struggle with this, and now I understand the importance of allowing space for myself space to feel failure. There is a heavy pressure, especially on women, to view failure as unacceptable and to avoid it at all costs. However, I've come to realize that failure takes many forms and varies across personal, professional, and academic experiences. Every person feels it differently. I wish I had this perspective at 17.

— Student Panel

This program was also made possible with support from the Richard P. Garmany Fund at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving.

A special thank you to Community Partner Symetra, which awarded Aurora the Symetra Empowers Women grant that helped to fund this program.

2023 LUMINARY EVENT

BASKING IN THE GLOW OF OUR LUMINARIES

For the second consecutive year, you helped us illuminate Dunkin' Park Stadium in Hartford for women and girls at our incredible Luminary Event in October! The joy was palpable, and alongside the smiles, there were moments of heartfelt emotion as we heard inspiring tales of strength and resilience, driving us to continue spotlighting women and girls in our community.

We are consistently awed by the unwavering support from our donors, volunteers, and community partners, who have truly made a significant impact on the lives of women and girls. It's a privilege to be part of such an extraordinary community—a community that deeply cares, is committed to change, and embraces a future where every girl has the resources to thrive.

We couldn't have achieved this ambitious fundraising goal without the steadfast support of our Corporate Community Partners, Luminary Committee, and Board of Directors.

And to all the Students – **WE SEE YOU AND HEAR YOU!**



We are motivated by the visible joy shared in these photos captured by Defining Studios.



\$175,000 RAISED

**RECORD
BREAKING
DAY OF
DONATIONS
TOTALING
\$26,000**

**OVER
350
REGISTERED
GUESTS**



THANK YOU TO OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS:

PRESENTING



FAMILY FIRST LIFE
THE ROGUE IMO



RETIREMENT | BENEFITS | LIFE



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STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: ANGÉLICA SOTO

From Student to Board Member

Many of us first met Angélica Soto when she was a featured speaker at Aurora's Luminary Luncheon in 2019. She shared the story of growing up amid gun violence in Bridgeport and her determination to build a better life for herself and her family. She dedicated herself to her academic success with the help of the Launch Your Leadership Journey program at Tunxis Community College, a program funded in part by Aurora. Angélica graduated and went on to complete her bachelor's degree at the University of Hartford, while participating in the Women's Advancement Initiative's LEAD program, also supported in part by Aurora. Joining Aurora's Grants Committee, Angélica could share her insight into what supports had made a difference for her and how programs could best serve their students. We were thrilled when she joined the Board of Directors last March to give even more of her time and talent to Aurora.



"WHERE ARE THEY NOW?"

Angélica joined fellow College Success program graduates Samia Aneur, Isabella Boisvert, and Brianna Fraser at the Luminary event, where they all shared incredible updates on their lives since graduation!

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AURORA FINANCIAL REPORT FY 2023

Income

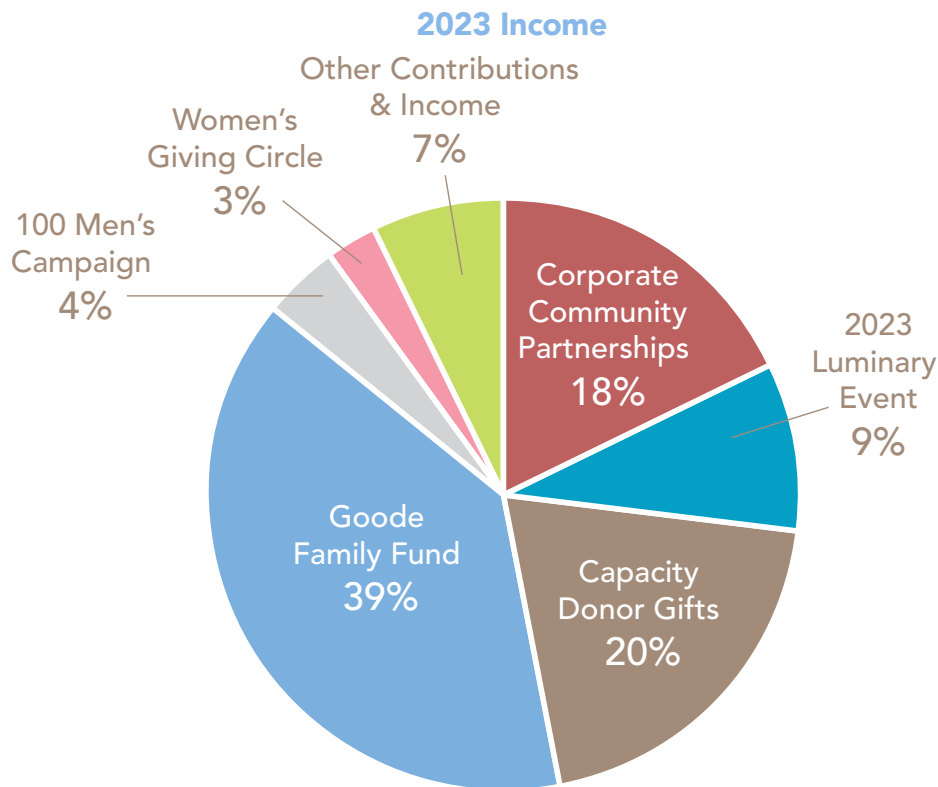
Capacity Donor Gifts	\$148,621
Charlotte & Hy Goode Family Fund Supporting Women's Potential	\$283,000
Corporate Community Partnerships.....	\$126,000
2021 Luminary Cocktails for Community	\$66,551
Other Contributions	\$28,990
Women's Giving Circle	\$20,000
100 Men Campaign	\$29,995
Symetra Empowers Women Grant.....	\$25,000
Total Revenue	\$728,157

Expenses

Community Investments Grantmaking.....	\$342,948
Research and Women and Girls Data Platform	\$15,000
Operating Expenses	\$324,678
Total Expenses.....	\$768,811

Assets

Designated Endowment.....	\$681,752
Cash and Operating Reserves	\$491,942,
Other Assets	\$14,697
Total Assets	\$1,188,391



YOUR GENEROSITY LIGHTS THE WAY FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

2023 CAPACITY DONORS

Special thanks to those who gave unrestricted gifts of \$1,000 or more in 2023.

\$283,000

Charlotte and Hy Goode Family Fund
Supporting Women's Potential at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving

\$20,000 – \$50,000

Richard P. Garmany Fund at Hartford Foundation for Public Giving in memory of Lydia Garmany
Symetra Women's Empowerment Grant
The William O. & Carole P. Bailey Family Foundation

\$10,000 – \$15,000

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\$5,000 – \$9,999

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Michelle Sullivan
Caitlin Sweeney
Kathleen Sweeney
Vince Tully
Maggie Willard
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Up to \$199

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Larlie Alvaranga
Samia Ameer
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Gifts were made in honor of the following individuals:

Karen Binkhorst
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We have worked hard to acknowledge the generosity of all our donors. If by some chance you see an error or omission, please contact our office at (860) 969-3435 to help us correct our mistake. Donors listed made gifts as of 12/31/23.

JENNY ON THE HILL



In September, Jenny traveled to Washington, D.C., for the Women's Funding Network Feminist Funded Conference. During the Feminist Philanthropy Hill Day, they attended a Senate briefing on policy solutions for key women's issues, including pay equity, childcare, maternal and child health, reproductive rights, and other critical matters.

Jenny then met with staff from the offices of Senator Richard Blumenthal, Senator Chris Murphy, Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro, and Congresswoman Jahana Hayes. It was gratifying to share research resources on women and girls in Connecticut and offer Aurora as a resource for data-informed policies to enhance the lives of women and girls.

Additionally, she joined her colleagues for a reception at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to discuss how feminist philanthropy can drive meaningful change, sparking creative ideas for collaboration.

ON THE MOVE....

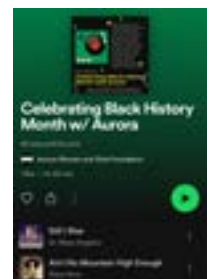


Aurora Women and Girls Foundation found a new home in 2023 and the West Hartford Chamber graciously gave us a HUGE welcome! We hope you will visit us at our bright and joyful offices located at 312 Park Road, West Hartford, CT

HAVE YOU HEARD?

**#Listen With Aurora—
Spotify Playlists brought to you
by Sadejah Blake, Aurora's new
Office Manager!**

We're thrilled to welcome Sadejah to Team Aurora! A graduate of UConn with a major in Women's and Gender Studies, Sadejah has also worked for the Greater Hartford Arts Council and Our Piece of the Pie. She is also a doula and a poet — you may have noticed her influence on our beautiful social media posts and her innovative new Spotify playlists! We love the ways she thinks creatively about building Aurora's community. Be sure and listen along!



Together, we are powerful!

LEARN, BE INSPIRED, CONNECT

The Aurora Society is designed to help our committed donors connect with each other and deepen their engagement with Aurora. Join us for a series of opportunities throughout the year, including an in-depth educational presentation, a social event to gather and network, and an opportunity to interact with and be inspired by the women and girls Aurora serves. To learn more and join these fabulous women, contact Jenny Steadman at jsteadman@aurorafoundation.org.



Aurora Society Member, Jill Dulitsky, here with a few of her guests at the Luminary Event.

Prospective Aurora Society members gathered for a Summer Happy Hour at Jenny's house.



Aurora Society Summer Happy Hour



\$1 MILLION INVESTMENT IN COLLEGE SUCCESS BY THE CHARLOTTE AND HY GOODE FAMILY

Aurora was able to triple our Giving Dollars this year in partnership with an extraordinary woman named Charlotte Goode, her niece Bobbi Schmidt, and her family. Funding from the Charlotte and Hy Goode Family Fund Supporting Women's Potential at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving was directed to the new Enhanced College Success program to address needs for housing, childcare, tuition, technology, and most importantly for mentoring and case management provided by our amazing community partners at YWCA Hartford Region and Charter Oak State College single mothers pursuing their college degrees.

Charlotte lit up the Jumbotron at our Luminary Event saying: "The best gift she could ever get is to see any of these women succeed."

We're thrilled to partner with Charlotte, and we know that her generosity will change lives. We hope that you'll join the Goode Family in supporting the power and potential of women and girls: www.aurorafoundation.org/donate



"What I saw time and again in my career as guardian ad litem is that women were working to better themselves, but without the kind of help this program offers, there were too many barriers. If you give wrap around services and case management and mentors, it makes all the difference in the world. Once they graduate, they can get better jobs and support their families. Their children will watch them succeed and higher education and success becomes something that seems possible for the kids, too."

— Charlotte Goode



Read the full article by visiting: www.aurorafoundation.org/news



Jenny was also a featured guest discussing this thoughtful new program on WTIC News/Talk 1080. "We're going to be able to demonstrate exactly what happens when you remove these kinds of barriers. This is going to be a model for the rest of the country, a really innovative, cutting-edge way to really build that kind of educational success."

— Jenny Steadman, Aurora's Executive Director.

#WITH GRATITUDE!

How incredible to have donors who travel across miles and for years to continue to be champions for women and girls! We want to spotlight Carle Mowell who came all the way from Monterey, California to join us for the 2023 Annual Meeting. Carle is a past Vice Chair of Aurora's Board and continues to support Aurora generously with her donations and with regular check-in calls to share her advice.



Sylvia Bernadini connected with Aurora after following Nelba Márquez-Greene on social media and joining us as Nelba spoke at our virtual Luminary Event in 2021. Since then, Sylvia has become a generous donor and member of Aurora's Grants Committee, as well as volunteering for the Launch Your Leadership Journey program. We were thrilled to have her visit in person for the 2023 Luminary event, pictured here with Nelba and Dr. Tuesday Cooper!

Janet Bailey Faude ended her term as Aurora's Board Chair in 2017, but she's remained a staunch advocate for Aurora and generous donor. Her mentorship of Executive Director Jenny Steadman continues to build Aurora's capacity and scope. There's nothing the two of them can't tackle on a walk around the reservoir!



We enjoyed seeing Janet toast the successes of former program students Isabella, Angelica and Brianna at the Luminary Event.

THANK YOU TO OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS!



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