Dear Friends,

In 2020, when faced with hardship, Rhode Islanders responded with an outpouring of strength and generosity. The impact of the pandemic on our great state has been extraordinary, but the Rhode Island Foundation, alongside generous donors and committed local nonprofits, found the collective courage to rise to the occasion and meet this hardship head-on. We saw people and nonprofit organizations continue to show up for one another, demonstrating admirable acts of philanthropy across the full spectrum. And, we’re excited to share the Foundation’s 2020 Annual Report with you—full of stories, and statistics, that make clear how much we were able to accomplish together.

Over the course of our 105-year history as the state’s community foundation we’ve weathered world wars, economic downturns, and other events that have greatly impacted Rhode Island. So when COVID-19 hit, we were able to quickly pivot and address the needs at hand. We moved fast to raise additional funds to provide aid across the state, and quickly distributed those funds to nonprofit organizations providing support on-the-ground. At the same time, our ongoing statewide grantmaking, fundraising, and leadership activities continued at a high level. And, we expanded our focus on diversity, equity, inclusion, and access with new investments and leadership activities—announcing an $8.5 million, three-year commitment to the work.

Through it all, we were able to leverage our strengths and size. As the largest and most comprehensive funder of nonprofit organizations in our state, we worked tirelessly to fulfill our mission to meet the needs of the people of Rhode Island, and to do so quickly and consistently. That work resulted in a record $87 million in grant distributions for the year. This could only be accomplished due to the immense generosity we saw throughout our fundraising efforts. The number of donors and range of donations expanded markedly as Rhode Islanders spontaneously contributed to helping each other—and that philanthropy, in all forms, affirmed our mission. During 2020 we raised over $20 million in COVID-19 aid and immediately used those funds to support Rhode Islanders in need. Total fundraising for the year, from generous donors who trusted the Foundation with their philanthropy, was over $68 million. By year end the Foundation’s total assets stood at their highest amount to date—$1.2 billion, and our total investment return was 12 percent.

Before the pandemic hit the Foundation was focused on educational success, healthy lives, and economic security for all Rhode Islanders—with acute attention to equity. COVID-19 has confirmed that those three priorities are more important than ever. Looking forward, and over the long term, we will remain focused and invested in eliminating inequity, closing education achievement gaps, improving health outcomes by attacking the root causes of health disparities, and ensuring that economic security is reality for more Rhode Islanders.

We must remain optimistic, have hope, give help, and work toward a better future for all Rhode Islanders—all while continuing to lead, transform, and inspire.

We’re grateful to partner with you to do so.

With warm regards and deep gratitude,

Polly and Neil

Mary Brooks (Polly) Wall,  
Chair of the Board of Directors

Neil D. Steinberg,  
President & CEO
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Mission

The Rhode Island Foundation is a proactive community and philanthropic leader dedicated to meeting the needs of the people of Rhode Island.

Vision

Lead.
We have earned the trust of our donors, community leaders, and Rhode Islanders through a century of effective investments, strategic grants, and responsible decisions.

Transform.
We align our fundraising, grantmaking, and leadership to inspire and engage Rhode Islanders to address today's challenges and create lasting improvements in our community.

Inspire.
We challenge and encourage Rhode Islanders to become active and involved in the community, to form meaningful partnerships, and to work together for the good of Rhode Island.
Big goals for our small state

All Rhode Island households should be financially stable.
All students should graduate from high school career or college ready.
All Rhode Islanders should have access to better health care at lower costs.

No one imagines meeting these goals will be easy. But it will be downright impossible if we don’t first address the deeper systemic issues that are at the root of existing inequities. That begins with confronting racism and bias — both conscious and unconscious. So, we are working with our grantee partners to fund efforts in economic security, education, and health that are aimed at eliminating inequality and racial disparities. Through these efforts — big and small — we will promote inclusion and access for Rhode Islanders who have historically been marginalized.

As a complement to our strategic initiatives, the long-term planning initiatives in education and health that the Foundation has led and convened over the last two years have established a vision and strategies that are focused on similar goals. If met, we will bring equity closer to reality.

Here’s how three Foundation grantees are using our funding and support to work toward these shared goals.

Fighting for jobs and justice
Empowering workers through a tough year
By Claudia Cornejo, strategic initiative officer for economic security

Fuerza Laboral had big plans. They were poised to strengthen and expand their work to educate and organize workers to challenge social injustice and to control their economic futures. They had launched two worker co-ops: the Healthy Planet Cleaning Co-op and a printing co-op. These efforts were doing well and additional co-ops were planned, along with other programs to support Fuerza’s membership which is comprised largely of very low income, often undocumented, and primarily Latino workers. Fuerza had received third-year funding through the Foundation’s Strategic Grants program to support its co-op program, known formally as the POWER Co-operative Business Incubation Program. But 2020 had other plans, and with the onset of COVID-19, the nonprofit workers’ rights
Turning language barriers into opportunities

More teachers for multilingual learners

By Lisa DiMartino, strategic initiative officer for educational success

Much of the news about public education this past year has focused on the impact of COVID on schools and learning. One group of students who face additional challenges, whether they’re in school or learning remotely, are multilingual learners/English learners (MLL/EL).

In its 2020 Factbook, Rhode Island Kids Count indicated that for the 2018-19 academic year, Rhode Island Kids Count defined MLL/EL as “the percentage of all public school children (preschool through grade 12) who are receiving English Learner services in Rhode Island public schools” and notes that these students nationally, and in Rhode Island, have lower rates of math and reading achievement than non-MLL/EL students.

organization had to dramatically re-imagine their year. “Many of our members lost their jobs or had their hours cut. There were a lot of concerns. People with jobs had to choose—work to earn money for their families and be exposed to the virus or not work and not have money for food and rent,” says Heiny Maldonado, Fuerza’s executive director.

“We had to respond to immediate needs of families, to help them get access to food. It definitely took a toll on our work. The conversations we had with families were so painful to hear,” continues Raul Figueroa, community organizer.

Adjusting to this painful new reality on the fly, Fuerza applied for, and received, support through the Foundation-administered COVID-19 Response Fund. This enabled Fuerza to distribute cash assistance for the immediate needs of 200 of the most vulnerable families in Central Falls.

A later grant from the Rhode Island Nonprofit Support Fund (a joint program of the Foundation and the Rhode Island Executive Office of Commerce leveraging CARES Act dollars) allowed Fuerza to further support its workers’ essential needs.

Despite these difficult times, Raul points out that they were able to adapt to take advantage of one positive: because of COVID, there was an increased demand for cleaning services. As a result, their cleaning co-op saw its business grow significantly: hours quadrupled, and additional workers were hired.

The organization, like so many others, converted its in-person training and education to online classes available in both English and Spanish.

This too revealed unexpected benefits and costs. Raul explains, “This made it easier for some people to attend classes, but people who did not have access to computers were not able to do it.”

Despite the disruption, Fuerza is moving forward with its goal to establish three additional co-ops: one focusing on catering, another on construction, and the third providing childcare.

Another unusual element of 2020 was the push for communities to complete the census in the midst of the pandemic. With the support of a grant from the Foundation’s Rhode Island Census 2020 Fund, Fuerza helped in some of Central Falls’ “hard to count” census tracts. Raul explains, “We already have trust with the community and know people in the hard to reach areas. We went knocking on doors. People are more likely to open the door if they see a familiar face.”

And indeed Fuerza’s staff and members, starting with Heiny and Raul, have become familiar faces throughout Central Falls. That is the result of 15 years of hard work bettering the lives of the workers they serve. But not one of those years has been anything like 2020. And we’re all hoping none of the next 15 are either.

“We had to respond to immediate needs of families, to help them get access to food. It definitely took a toll on our work. The conversations we had with families were so painful to hear.”

-Raul Figueroa, community organizer

29% of the Providence School District’s students were MLL/EL students*. To help these students reach their full potential, the Rhode Island Department of Education, Providence Public School Department, and local colleges and universities—with funding support from the Rhode Island Foundation—have partnered to provide MLL/EL certification for up to 125 Providence teachers. This effort aligns well with both our Educational Success strategic initiative and recent long-term planning efforts that focus on educational equity.

Several of the teachers in the program shared their insights on the impact the program is having on them, on their teaching, and—most importantly—on their students.

Multilingual Learners in Providence Public Schools: Growth Rate Over Past Decade

In its 2020 Factbook, Rhode Island Kids Count indicated that for the 2018-19 academic year,

* Rhode Island Kids Count defines MLL/EL as “the percentage of all public school children (preschool through grade 12) who are receiving English Learner services in Rhode Island public schools.”
Lynn Tramonti has taught in the Providence Public Schools since 2001 and is currently a fourth grade teacher at the Providence Virtual Learning Academy. Fourteen of her 36 students (39%) are MLLs. She explains, “I am learning a great deal and feel that I am becoming a better teacher. I make a conscious effort to know as much as I can about my students’ cultures and backgrounds. It has impacted my students in a positive way because I am employing strategies in the classroom that I have learned. I must meet my students where they currently are and build up from there.”

Carol Pagan, currently in her twenty-first year of teaching in Providence, is a second grade teacher at Alfred Lima Elementary School. As a dual language teacher, all her students are MLLs. She shares, “The certification program has strengthened me both as a teacher and advocate of MLL students. I have learned and been empowered as a result of my participation in the ESL certification program. What I am able to offer my students are objectives and lessons that are specifically created with their language needs in mind.”

Leonard J. Ellis has taught in the Providence Public Schools for 15 years and is a fourth grade teacher at Young Woods Elementary School. Forty-five percent of his students are MLLs. He says, “This program has opened my eyes to the struggles that emergent bilingual students face on a daily basis. This program has helped change who I am not only as an educator, but as a person. Emergent bilinguals need to be taught with empathy and compassion in a nurturing learning environment. I have taken on a more ‘open-minded’ approach and allow the flexibility to use language to maximize the learning experience.”

Many victims of the pandemic never got COVID

Respecting the mental health crisis

By Zachary Nieder, strategic initiative officer for healthy lives

The impact of COVID-19 on Rhode Islanders has been front page news for a year. The numbers are carefully tabulated and regularly published: how many have tested positive, are in the hospital, in intensive care, and how many — most tragically — have died.

The serious behavioral health impacts of the pandemic have received less attention. Rhode Islanders most in need have faced a disproportionate behavioral health burden, reinforcing existing inequities. Our focus in addressing these inequities is reflected in our Healthy Lives strategic initiative, as well as our long-term health planning efforts.

One organization addressing behavioral health concerns, with a keen eye on addressing disparities, is Newport Mental Health (NMH). “We’re trying to address all the needs that are increasing due to COVID,” states Jamie Lehane, president & CEO.

The Foundation is proud to have supported these efforts. Grants from the COVID-19 Response Fund helped the organization implement telehealth solutions for clients and provide emergency personal protective equipment (PPE) for clinicians who work face-to-face with community members. Funds also assisted with efforts to house Newport County’s homeless individuals.

“COVID required us to put telehealth at the top of our priorities, and it’s allowed us to regularly check in with each and every one of our 1,100 clients. Face-to-face interactions are critical with our more acute and seriously ill population, and we’ve gotten PPE and are rotating staff days for social distancing to accommodate those clients. The chronically homeless have tremendous social and behavioral needs. Working with a collaboration of partners, we’ve been able to get them into safe shelter settings and are working toward permanent apartments,” Jamie states.

With many children and parents unable to access services in schools and other community members struggling with isolation and/or joblessness, grants from the Foundation’s COVID-19 Behavioral Health Fund helped fund the hiring of a licensed clinician to address these pressing needs.

Cindy Gordon, chief clinical officer and director of community services, shares, “COVID has impacted our ability to socialize. We’re seeing increased stress among children and families as a result of remote learning. We’re providing training for teachers and support for both children and parents, but we won’t know the full impact until we’re on the other side of this.”

Given its overall focus on helping meet the need of its clients, NMH also assisted its partners in the community in ensuring they could meet increased demand for services. NMH supported the Newport Housing Hotline, which provides emergency housing for people in Newport County, in accessing additional funding from the Rhode Island Nonprofit Support Fund (a joint program of the Foundation and the Rhode Island Executive Office of Commerce leveraging CARES Act dollars).

“Our staff is rising to the challenges admirably. We’re all looking at equity and have pivoted strongly to connect with folks who are lower income and have greater vulnerability. And the community has come together, with people working together the way we should, especially around the area of homelessness,” Jamie says positively. “That’s one good thing that’s happened during the pandemic.”
We’ve been preparing for COVID for 105 years

The speed at which the pandemic shut the country and the world down was breathtaking. And even the most far-sighted among us didn’t immediately appreciate just how consequential the ripple effects of this would be.

But our team has been built for literally decades to respond to need efficiently and effectively.

When we reached out to donors and stakeholders, the response was overwhelming. Thousands of donors—some we have worked with for years, some brand new to us—gave millions to our COVID response funds. We, in turn, got those funds out the door in record time to help the most vulnerable in every corner of the state, addressing every kind of need.

Some of the highlights follow, but they only scratch the surface of the effort and generosity that have gone into this response. We will be forever grateful to those who stepped up to help as we continue to work our way to the other side of this crisis.

$21 Million

raised by the Foundation in 2020 for COVID-19 related response and relief

Including

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<th>COVID-19 Response Fund</th>
<th>COVID-19 Behavioral Health Fund</th>
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<td>$5.3M</td>
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CARES Act funding through our partnership with the state of Rhode Island

$5M

1,400 donors

contributed to the COVID-19 response related funds

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<th>Rhode Island Public Education Fund Virtual Learning Challenge</th>
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140 current donor advisors contributed

$5M

1,000 new donors contributed to COVID-19 related funds
March 2020: COVID-19 Response Fund

Rhode Island Foundation and Fund for Rhode Island announced the COVID-19 Response Fund, a collaborative effort supported by many generous donors to support local nonprofit organizations as they work to address the needs of Rhode Islanders during this unprecedented time. The fund was established with $1 million in grants it received.

April 2020

Rhode Island Foundation Public Information (Providence, RI): Since March 18, the Foundation has distributed nearly $26 million to 3,000 organizations across the state. The $2 million Community Grants program was closed on May 1.

June 2020

With Rhode Island Fund

Rhode Island Foundation, with its partners, the Dorcas International Institute and the Governor’s Office of Economic Development, established the weR1 Rhode Island Fund with $1 million in grants distributed to 19 organizations in support of community groups during the state’s shut down.

Black Philanthropy Bannister Fund

The Rhode Island Foundation supported the Black Philanthropy Bannister Fund, a collaborative effort aimed at creating a Black Philanthropy Bannister Fund, which directed $500,000 to support community-based Black-led groups and projects, including the Rhode Island Black Economic Development Council and the Black Business Development Corporation.

Rhode Island Islanders continue to amaze us, the biggest hearts are in the smallest state.

Robert Schaeffer, associate Prov & Food Director, Rhode Island Foundation.

July 2020

COVID-19 Behavioral Health Fund

Rhode Island Foundation led launch of the $100,000 grant-making program to the Capital Good Fund. The Providence appliance company, Providence appliance, and nine additional Rhode Island foundations, partnered to support organizations that focus on behavioral health.

It is well documented that our Black community has been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and the actions supporting our community are an urgent need for financial relief. Through the Foundation’s Black Philanthropy Bannister Fund, we are proud to have the resources to support the pressing needs of the Black community during this difficult time.

Linda Newton, Chair of the Foundation’s grants advisory committee.

September 2020

COVID-19 Business Interruption Fund

The Rhode Island Foundation announced a $500,000 grant to the Capital Good Fund to support Rhode Island small businesses impacted by COVID-19. The Foundation also announced a multi-year, $8.5 million commitment to strengthen June 23, 2020, through the Foundation’s Black Philanthropy Bannister Fund. It will support the Black Philanthropy Bannister Fund to support small businesses impacted by COVID-19.

November 2020

Trinity Roy and the Food Bank

Rhode Island Foundation has made a $250,000 grant to the Capital Good Fund to support small businesses impacted by COVID-19.

December 2020

CARES Act Grants

Rhode Island Foundation has made $3,750,000 to the Capital Good Fund to support small businesses impacted by COVID-19.

No one could have predicted how dramatically demand for our assistance has increased amid the pandemic. It has exceeded what we budgeted for at the beginning of the year. Individuals as well as agencies that we don’t usually work with are calling us looking for help. This grant gives us the resources to respond quickly, with more flexibility.

Richard Fleischer, President of the Board of Directors for Project Undercover.
Grantee Spotlights

Access To Recovery – COVID-19 Behavioral Health Fund Grant Awardee

Access To Recovery received funding from the COVID-19 Behavioral Health Fund and was able to assist 73 people to access and sustain recovery from substance and/or alcohol misuse. For those individuals, funds were used to support 1,015 nights in safe, sober housing, small medical needs, personal protective equipment, food, transportation such as the cost of bus passes, clothing and work boots, and driver’s license reinstatement costs. All of the people who received assistance were also confirmed to have been working with a case manager or peer recovery coach in order to ensure wrap-around services were provided, in an effort to increase success for each person.

Access To Recovery is entirely volunteer-run. Administrative costs are donated by board members, and the organization is otherwise funded by community donations.

Project Undercover – CARES Act-funded Nonprofit Support Grant Awardee

The Warwick nonprofit purchased winter clothing for thousands of infants and toddlers from families with economic disadvantages. The gloves, knit hats, and hand-warmer were distributed through a network of 26 community action programs and social service agencies across Rhode Island. In addition to the clothing, Project Undercover distributed 1,300 packages of diapers. “Diapers can be costly and out of reach financially for some families. The number of households that Project Undercover will be able to assist with this funding will vary depending on the number of children in a household. All the items will go to families that are experiencing hardship that puts them at risk for poor health outcomes. Thanks to our partners, we will be able to quickly get these items to children who need them,” said Richard Fleischer, president of the board of directors.

2020 results

- Total Foundation assets: $1.2B
- Total funds raised: $68M
- Scholarships awarded: $2.6M
- Raised for Civic Leadership: $610K+
- Total grantmaking: $87M
- Nonprofit organizations: 2,200+
It was the event of the year in Westerly: the opening night gala of the United Theatre on January 18, 1926. It featured five acts of Paramount Vaudeville, including the Seven Rainbow Girls, Eddie Cooke and the Shaw Sisters, Bernard and Ferris, Exposition Jubilee, and the Jean Jackson Troupe.

It was a glamorous launch for what would become the region’s go-to theater for vaudeville. Through the years they moved on to silent films and, in 1929, the United was the first theater in the region to showcase the talkies. Eventually, it shifted into a full-time movie theater showcasing the biggest and best first-run features. When Star Wars was released in 1977, the film was such a hit that it played at the United for an entire year. But by 1986, the theater had faded into disuse.

Fortunately, an ambitious revival of the United Theatre has been in the works for years. The Westerly Land Trust purchased the building in 2006 as part of its Urban Initiative focusing on the redevelopment of commercial properties in areas of historic significance to the Town. The State Cultural Bond Initiative, approved in 2014, helped to secure funds towards its restoration, with the United Theatre establishing itself as a nonprofit the following year.

Today, the United building and the adjacent connected former Montgomery Ward building are being totally renovated to create a multi-use arts complex thanks to a $12-million capital campaign to convert the old theater into a “mini-Lincoln Center” where everything from opera to dance to film, theater, and music can be taught, showcased, and performed.

Initial efforts raised $6 million, which included community pledges, historical state tax credits, cultural bond funds, challenge grants from The Champlin Foundation and the Royce Family Fund, and support from board members. Board vice chair, philanthropist, and longtime Watch Hill resident Chuck Royce tapped into Westerly’s summer community, raising another $3.6 million.

By May of 2019, when the project broke ground, it became apparent that the board could no longer operate as a solely volunteer-run organization. The Rhode Island Foundation stepped up with a grant that provided additional resources, making it possible for them to hire an executive director. Following a national search, the board selected someone from its own backyard to fill the role—Lisa Utman Randall. A poet, writer, teacher, and passionate supporter of the arts, Randall has more than 25 years of experience growing arts organizations in the state, including transforming the Jamestown Arts Center into a bustling cultural hub.

The Ocean Community United Theatre — the official name — will provide Westerly with its first year-round venue for jazz, opera, ballet, modern dance and popular music; a gallery for visual artists; its first multi-screen art house cinema; education space; and the town’s first comprehensive community music school.

A black-box theatre will accommodate up to 650 people, a 90-seat cinema will feature first-run and revival films, and a 30-seat flexible theatre will be used as a micro-cinema or exhibit space. An 11,000 square-foot education center will host classes, workshops, and studios in music, film, visual and performing arts. The education center...
The Foundation has a history of supporting arts projects of this scale. We were there when the Rhode Island Philharmonic Orchestra renovated a 31,000 square-foot wing in the former Meeting Street School to house the new Carter Center for Music Education and Performance — named for benefactors John and Letitia Carter — the only facility of its kind in Rhode Island.

And just this year, we have committed to Community Music Works (CMW) through our Impact Investing program as they embark on a project to build a new 15,000 square-foot facility serving students in the under-resourced South Side/West End Providence neighborhoods. For more than two decades, CMW has been in this neighborhood providing free instruments, music lessons and workshops, and community performances.

The complex will also house the Washington County news bureau of The Public’s Radio, which means live-streaming, co-programming, and podcast workshops. When asked “why Westerly?”, Torey Malatia, president, CEO and general manager of The Public’s Radio, points to Westerly’s rootedness in the history of New England — including immigrant New England, its dense multicultural layers, and its central pivot-position between multiple states and the rest of Rhode Island. “Westerly has a vast and rich artist community, a long performing arts history that is still very vibrant, and a spirit of rebuilding that is very positive.”

“We have such an incredibly tight-knit arts ecosystem here in Rhode Island,” says Lisa Utman Randall. “Artists who are generous with their time, their knowledge, and who want to collaborate — and that is amazing. Our state arts council and the Rhode Island Foundation have brought together so many cohorts — creating lifelines that make resources available to arts organizations.”

Support for the Arts across Rhode Island

The Foundation has long-supported arts organizations of all sizes, from Westerly to Woonsocket.

Arts organizations stimulate creative thinking among community members, encouraging people to see things in new ways, to connect more deeply, and to address challenges and opportunities with creativity.

The following is a selection of the arts organizations that we invested in, via discretionary grantmaking programs, in 2020.

- Alliance of Artists Communities in Providence, for the Artists Relief Fund
- AS220 in Providence, for operating support
- Island Moving Company in Newport, for operating support and arts integrated learning
- Mixed Magic Theatre and Cultural Events in Pawtucket, for operating and capacity support
- New Urban Arts in Providence, for youth membership in the arts
- RiverzEdge Arts Project in Woonsocket, for the arts education and training program
- Sandra Feinstein-Gamm Theatre in Warwick, for operating support
- Teatro ECAS in Providence, for improving young lives through the arts in Providence and Pawtucket

“I love the mission of bringing the arts to community. It’s literally what I have dedicated my life to for more than three decades. It’s transformational — the performing arts, visual arts, arts education touch people and open people in ways that nothing else does.”
Anne Sage vividly remembers her entrée into philanthropy: trick-or-treating for UNICEF when she was seven years old. It was her idea—nobody told her to do it.

“My parents were amazing people,” says Anne. “They had a thoughtful way of understanding that we share the planet with everyone else, that there is something larger than oneself.” In the 70s, her father was chairman of the United Way, so it was always clear to the family that giving and volunteerism has a tremendous impact on the community. When she was three, they took in an entire neighbor family when their house burned down. “It’s just what you did—we all knew there is a very thin line between security and insecurity.”

When Anne’s father died suddenly in 2006, the family discovered that he had left some $10 million in gifts to the community—Rhode Island Foundation was the recipient of $2 million, placed in a donor advised fund that Anne and her brother were to manage. “I had no idea what I was doing. We assumed that he wanted to give to Rhode Island organizations even though he left no specific instructions.” Anne credits Neil Steinberg, Carol Golden, and Adrian Bonéy with helping her over the years to gain a deeper understanding of the philanthropic process.

Anne’s philanthropic interests are diverse. Many of her decisions are circumstantial—who is losing federal funds, who is currently underserved? Often, they are related to climate and the environment, healthcare, and veterans’ affairs. “But Newport County Fund and Rhode Island Food Bank are always included.” She also looks at organizations that sustain our state’s institutions—the Philharmonic, the arts, the Zoo, Roger Williams Park. “The things that make Rhode Island the special place that it is.”

Carla Ricci discovered relatively late in life that she wanted to find a way to make philanthropy a central part of her life—as a result, there is now a Women’s Philanthropy Group at the Rhode Island Foundation.

Carla Ricci came to Rhode Island 12 years ago. Her husband, Russ, had grown up here but when they married some 40 years ago, unable to find jobs in Rhode Island, they settled in Boston. However, they were drawn to Rhode Island, where Russ still has family. They bought an old farm in Charlestown, making Rhode Island their home away from home. “People underestimate just how personable this state is,” she says. “By word of mouth, we heard of Carol Golden and, because of her personal touch, we moved our philanthropic money from the Boston Foundation to Rhode Island Foundation.”
Carla is particularly drawn to education, historic preservation, and a pet project, WaterFire. “We need to find ways for the community to come together, to make eye contact and smile, and WaterFire makes that happen.”

When Linda Newton was a teenager, she recruited her father to drive her around to nursing homes to deliver handmade decorations so that the patients could decorate their rooms or stick them on the roll-up blinds.

Linda grew up in a very segregated Washington, DC during Jim Crow, and when it ended there was great hope for the promise of integration. But that dream of full integration and equality for all dissipated, and Linda started focusing on the needs of the Black community. “It informed my thoughts about where I needed to put my efforts.”

As the head of charitable giving for Blue Cross Blue Shield Rhode Island, Linda became involved with the Rhode Island Foundation, starting the company’s Blue Angel Fund in 2003. She has been involved with the Black Philanthropy Bannister Fund—supporting organizations that serve the Black community—since its initial fundraising efforts (as the Black Philanthropy Fund) and now serves as its chair.

“I am a realist,” says Linda, “and the racial dynamic that killed George Floyd and a long list of young Black males killed without consequences is not something women are immune to—these are our sons, brothers, and husbands.

My great-grandfather was a slave. Promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion is more than just a job. It is my responsibility.”

Simone Joyaux founded the Women’s Fund 20 years ago with the intent of leveling the gender playing field. The Fund was established to make grants to organizations that promoted systemic change that empowered women and girls.

“I did not come to philanthropy naturally,” says Simone. “It wasn’t because of parents or religion.” At age nine, she had made her career decision—she wanted to teach French. But when she ultimately graduated from Michigan State University with a degree in 20th century French comparative literature, she could not find a job at a public school. Instead, she ended up at the Lansing Center for the Arts. “With no experience in fundraising, I found myself managing a nonprofit.” An avid learner, Simone grew the organization and, to her surprise, found that “this philanthropy stuff is pretty cool!” She moved to Rhode Island in 1981 to become the chief development officer at Trinity Rep until, in 1988, she left to start a consulting business, catering to nonprofits and non-governmental organizations.

Simone points out that the women’s funding movement started in 1972 when four visionary women established the Ms. Foundation for Women. They supported women and girls’ issues, which traditional established foundations were not doing. It was about social justice.

Women are engaged in philanthropy from many perspectives: as donors, professionals, fundraisers, nonprofit leaders, and volunteers. “The genesis of the Women’s Philanthropy Group was my desire to be with a group of like-minded women,” says Carla. “I feel isolated when I just write out checks.” Initially 23 women signed on, women who wanted to talk about giving. “How do we share our interests with our spouses and children—how do we draw them into the process? How do we make sound decisions about which organizations to support—are they well-run, am I helping them fulfill their mission? This group has become a place to talk about this.”

“Ego is often involved in philanthropy, but there is no ego in the Rhode Island Foundation’s Women’s Philanthropy Group,” says Anne, who is also a member. “And some of the brightest and wealthiest women in Rhode Island are in it.”

As women continue to make inroads in business, government, and the nonprofit sector, they also create opportunities to be involved with philanthropy—giving their time, talent, and treasure for the benefit of the community, be it local or global.
Women’s Philanthropy Institute (WPI), the research arm of the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy at Indiana University, explores the role of gender in philanthropic giving through regular research. For example:

Women control more of the financial pie than ever before.

The IRS reports that 43 percent of the nation’s top wealth holders are women, with assets valued in total at $4.6 trillion. As a whole, women control more than half of private wealth in the U.S.

The percentage of women wielding wealth is only going to rise.

Many women will inherit twice—from their parents and from their spouses or partners. Women will inherit 70 percent of the $41 trillion in intergenerational wealth that is expected to change hands over the next 40 years [Forbes].

Women give 2x more money and are 9% more likely to give at all.

Women are seeking more input in a vital sector of society—philanthropy—which has historically been dominated by men. The emergence of a new wave of female philanthropic leaders suggests the re-balancing act is already underway.

“Women have been involved in institution building for a long time, but often did not get recognized for it,” says Carla. “Jesse Metcalf’s wife, Louisa Sharpe Metcalf, was actually the philanthropist, but her husband gets all the credit!”

“Philanthropy is part of my self-definition,” says Simone. “I teach philanthropy—that’s what my consulting is: teaching social justice, building stronger nonprofits. It is the primary focus of my work, and of all of my giving.”

“Women are more hands-on, more directly engaged with our giving,” observes Linda. “We’re not transactional—giving involves a personal connection. I like to give new organizations with good ideas a chance, to help them grow, which means investing a significant amount of time in site visits. I always associated philanthropy with people of ‘abundant means.’ Now, I see that philanthropy involves not just money but time and talent as well.”

The challenges we face, both large and small, call for more strategic philanthropy. Women may well lead the charge, drawing upon their growing resources and clout to create a more just, egalitarian, and healthy society.

“Not everyone I’m around is philanthropic or in a position to be—though you don’t need to have lots of money,” Anne concludes. “You simply need the heart and the intellect to change your community in a positive way.”
**Rhode Island Foundation**

**In the News**

**RISCA launches fund to support artists impacted by pandemic**

Providence Business News
April 7, 2020

**R.I. Foundation program to guide people of color into leadership positions**

The Providence Journal
October 19, 2020

**$8M initiative seeks to create better opportunities for Central Providence residents**

WPRI
December 2, 2020

**Rhode Island Foundation and Ocean State Job Lot Team up to Match Trinity Rep Donations**

Rhode Island Monthly
December 10, 2020

**Rhode Island Foundation Awards $3.7 Million for Behavioral Health**

Philanthropy News Digest
May 23, 2020

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**Cómo rellenar el formulario del Censo 2020 en Internet**

Providence en Español
March 14, 2020

**Rhode Island changes state name to remove ‘Providence Plantations’**

The Brown Daily Herald
November 5, 2020

**COVID-19 Response Fund announces first grant recipients**

Warwick Beacon
April 2, 2020

**Raimondo signs order endorsing statewide plan to improve access to healthcare**

The Providence Journal
June 5, 2020

**RI Foundation launches $8.5M Equity Leadership Initiative to tackle racial disparities**

ConvergenceRI
October 19, 2020
See the need, meet the need

Civic leadership in difficult times
By Neil D. Steinberg, president & CEO

Our civic leadership work — supported by 172 generous donors in 2020 — is part of our strategy, and allows us to be unusually nimble and proactive for a local philanthropic organization. We are able to see or learn of a need, a disconnect between systems or sectors, or a leadership void and quickly jump in to offer resources and solutions, connect dots, and use our voice to benefit the community. We do not do any of this work alone and are honored to work with fellow Rhode Islanders who bring the needed knowledge and expertise to the table.

Here are a few highlights of our civic leadership work in 2020.

Equity Leadership Initiative
In December, we announced the Equity Leadership Initiative, one aspect of our broad, 3-year, $8.5 million plan to eliminate inequality and racial disparities and promote inclusion and diversity. Angela Bannerman Ankoma, who brings nearly 25 years of public and health policy experience, joined the staff as vice president and executive director to lead the Initiative.

One effort of the Equity Leadership Initiative will be to identify, cultivate, mentor, and seek access and opportunity for individuals who identify as Black, Hispanic or Latino, Indigenous and Asian, from across sectors, to help build a pipeline of future leaders in established positions of influence throughout the state.

Central Providence Opportunities Initiative
Rhode Island has been awarded a grant to implement Central Providence Opportunities — a place-based initiative to increase social and economic mobility for residents of the 02908 and 02909 zip codes, and then scale these strategies statewide.

The investment will be managed by the Rhode Island Foundation, and leveraged by tapping into new and existing state-level resources. ONE Neighborhood Builders has been chosen to lead this $8 million, two-year initiative funded by Blue Meridian Partners.

The pandemic has laid bare the degree to which a resident’s zip code determines economic, health, and education outcomes. The Central Providence area — including the Olneyville, Hartford, Manton, Silver Lake, Valley, Federal Hill, Smith Hill, Elmhurst, and Mount Pleasant neighborhoods — has been one of the areas hardest hit.

The Foundation will serve as the fiscal sponsor, supporting ONE Neighborhood Builders, the Governor’s office and state agencies, and working in partnership with both to invest the funds with a focus on transforming lifetime trajectories for children and families in Central Providence.

CARES Act
In late-December, the Rhode Island Foundation dispersed $5 million in federal CARES Act funding to more than 120 local nonprofits across the state.

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was designed by Congress to provide fast and direct economic assistance for American workers, families, and small businesses. “Federal CARES Act funding delivered by way of Rhode Island’s dedicated nonprofits has helped many families through this pandemic,” said U.S.
Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse, “and the Rhode Island Foundation has once again played an important role helping nonprofits meet new challenges and reach more Rhode Islanders.”

The Foundation administered the pool of CARES Act funding in three ways—through the Nonprofit Support Fund and the Nonprofit Support for Domestic Violence Victims Fund, and to support outreach for CARES Act-funded rent relief programs—on behalf of the state.

Project Undercover is one of dozens of nonprofits that received grants through the Nonprofit Support Fund. The Warwick nonprofit purchased winter clothing for thousands of infants and toddlers from families with economic disadvantages, which was distributed through a network of 26 community action programs and social service agencies across the state.

We also awarded $1 million to eight organizations to address COVID-19 impacts on domestic violence survivors. The Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence is using its grant to respond to the increase in demand for shelters and COVID-compliant housing and services for victims of domestic violence.

Vote Yes on Question 1
Ahead of the November 2020 election, we supported the effort to remove “Providence Plantations” from our State’s name by providing start-up funding to the Vote Yes on Question 1 campaign. Why? To truly address racial injustice and move toward equity, we have to confront our history, and that includes reckoning with the words we use that cause pain to members of our community. Former Governor Raimondo said it well, “The pain that this association (with American slavery) causes some of our residents should be of concern to all Rhode Islanders, and we should do everything in our power to ensure that all communities can take pride in our state.” Rhode Island voters agreed, Question 1 passed with 53% of the vote. And now, we officially operate in a more united State of Rhode Island.
2020 Civic Leadership Fund Donors

We thank those who supported our civic leadership efforts in 2020. This work creates a stronger, more vibrant community, encourages collaboration to solve important issues, seizes emerging opportunities, and funds valuable research.

AAA Northeast Charitable Fund
Michael and Kirstin Allio
Robert J. Allio
Edward F. Almon Fund
Grace K. and Wesley S. Alpert Charitable Foundation
Angela Banerman Ankoma
Applegate Fund
Peri Ann Aptaker and Robert Lieberman
Gottlieb Armbrust Family Fund
Bank of America
BankNewport
Chris and Susanna Barnett
Barton Gilman, LLP
John P. Barrylick
Victor and Gussie Baxt Fund
Thomas L. and Kathryn D. Bendheim Family Fund
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Rhode Island Community Health Fund
Raymond and Brenda Bolster
Adrian Bonney and Martha Fish
Porter Braden Fund
Marjorie W. and George B. Bullock, Jr. Fund
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Fred and Joyce Butler
Carter Fund
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NetCenergy
Paula and Robert O'Brien
Ali Dunn Packer Memorial Fund
Lauren Paola
The Papitto Foundation in memory of Ralph R. Papitto
Liz Manchester and Partridge Snow & Hahn, LLP
Pawtucket Credit Union
Rhode Island PBS WGBH-TV
Pearlman Charitable Fund
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Shivan and Jyothi Suhramanian
Suglia Family Fund
Jeffrey Sullivan
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Kathleen and Carlton Tucker
Constance Kane Tucker Fund
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Verrecchia Family Foundation
Tony Mendez
Ashbel T. Wall and Maria DeCarvalho in honor of Polly Wall
Robert W. Daly and Mary (Polly) B. Wall Fund
Warren Alpert Foundation
Washington Trust Charitable Foundation
The Weatherlow Foundation
Mr. David S. Wendell and Ms. Patricia M. Bowler
Matt West

Grafton H. Willey IV, CPA
Robert Wilson
Laura H. Yalanis
Coleman B. Zimmerman Memorial Fund
Legacy donor stories

We honor members of the 1916 Society who recently passed away. Following are some of their stories.

Through her will, Elizabeth Clifford, who died in 1994 at age 88, set up a pooled income fund at the Foundation. The income from the fund benefitted her, then her son during his lifetime.

Her son, Sidney Clifford, Jr., was a graduate of Phillips Exeter Academy, Marlboro College, and the University of Virginia Law School. He maintained a private law practice in Providence, served as a probate judge for Newport County in Little Compton, and was an attorney for the Rhode Island Department of Transportation. With his death in June 2020, this fund was established and will support the eight organizations Elizabeth named.

An article about her planned gift in the Foundation’s fall 1995 newsletter cites Elizabeth’s “powerful impact on her community and family” and her “long list of accomplishments.” The article states, “She was a past president of the Junior League of Rhode Island, the Legal Aid Society of Rhode Island, the Little Compton Garden Club, and the National Society of Colonial Dames in Rhode Island. She served on the boards of the Providence Athenaeum, Visiting Nurses Association of Rhode Island, the Players, and the Roger Williams Hospital Aid Association.”

It continues, “She was also secretary of the Shakespeare Society, chairman of the ladies board of the Providence Art Club, treasurer of the Children’s Civic Theater, vice president of the Providence Symphony Orchestra, and secretary of the Shakespeare’s Head Association...and a member of Grace Church, Providence, and of St. Andrew’s by the Sea Church in Little Compton.”

The article further notes that she was the glue that kept a large, extended family together, and son Sidney shared, “She prided herself on her community activities and has ensured that they will continue to benefit.”

Those organizations, all of which she reportedly knew personally through her efforts, are the following Providence-based organizations: Grace Church, Wheeler School, Central Baptist Church, National Society of Colonial Dames in the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, Legal Aid Society, Greater Providence YMCA, and visiting nurses; as well as St. Andrews by the Sea Church in Little Compton.
Bruce Fogel Charitable Fund

**He** was a very unassuming person, very humble, and always played down everything he did,” Judy Fogel says of her late brother-in-law, Bruce Fogel, who died last May at age 86. And so it was with the Rhode Island Foundation where Bruce was an anonymous member of the 1916 Society. Raised in East Greenwich, he graduated from East Greenwich High School before pursuing studies at the University of Miami’s School of Hospitality. His degree prepared him for a career in hotel management, initially in Miami followed by 25 years in New York City. “He liked to refer to himself as a hotel executive...as an innkeeper,” Judy recalls, noting that although the hotel where he worked was bought out several times, he remained at the same facility in New York throughout his years there.

Following an early retirement, Bruce traveled extensively and for 30 years wintered in Thailand, while maintaining his New York City residence. “He referred to himself as a world traveler, and he really was. He loved Thailand, especially its culture,” Judy explains.

She continues, “We always referred to him as a one’er because he always did his own thing, but he was close to the family as well...a very special person to the family.”

Although Bruce had not lived in Rhode Island for many years, it is local organizations that were important to him in his childhood that he chose to support through this permanent fund. Judy shares that as a child Bruce spent a great deal of time at the East Greenwich Public Library, walking or riding his bike there from the family home. His support of the library is designated for capital projects or educational materials.

Bruce also was active in Boy Scouts, attaining the rank of Eagle Scout, and was proud when his nephew Jared attained the Scout’s highest rank. Bruce also worked summers at Camp Yawgoog. The second designation for this fund is for the Narragansett Council Boy Scouts for the Camp Yawgoog Staff Scholarship.

“Those were his two loves, and he appreciated what each of them individually did for him,” Judy concludes.

John J. O’Connor Jr. Memorial Nursing Scholarship Fund

Joan M. O’Connor, who died in 2013, created this fund through a charitable remainder annuity trust she established in 1990, with the distribution for the fund coming to the Foundation after her death and that of one other beneficiary.

Her Letter of Instruction to the Foundation notes, “Mrs. O’Connor wishes to memorialize her beloved husband, John J. O’Connor Jr. who died at the young age of 58. Mr. O’Connor was the Administrator of St. Elizabeth Home for ten years, and held the nursing profession in high regard. He recognized the importance of a strong working relationship between nursing home administration and the nursing staff. In addition, his sister was a nurse.”

In a 2005 interview with the Foundation, Joan related that she met her future husband when she was working as a secretary at Edwards & Angell. John, a graduate of Classical High School, had served as an Army combat engineer during World War II and was a student at Brown University when the couple was introduced in 1947.

John graduated from Brown in 1950, the couple married, and he took a job as a salesman with a jewelry company. But the required travel was not to the newlyweds’ liking, and he entered the insurance business, working at Travelers, followed by Starkweather & Shepley, and finally at Amica.

After 23 years in the insurance industry, he left to serve as administrator of St. Elizabeth Home, for which he already served on the board of directors. “He really loved that home,” Joan stated during the 2005 interview. “The honeymoon was never over. It was a love affair. They loved him and he loved them. He knew the name of every patient and believed administration and nursing should be a completely cooperative effort with one purpose. The bottom line is patient care.”

The O’Connor Fund is the fifth nursing fund to be administered by the Foundation. It will be awarded annually to Rhode Islanders who are pursuing a certified nursing assistant license or an associate or bachelor’s degree in nursing at a Rhode Island school.
1916 Society Members

We thank and recognize the members of our 1916 Society, individuals who have informed us of their plans to leave a legacy through a bequest or other future gift to the Foundation. Members listed as of 12/31/2020. Members who wish to remain anonymous are not listed. New members are in red.

Anonymous (56)
Michael and Roberta Haaren Aaronson
Noreen Ackerman
Candy Adriance
Ross and Renate Aker
William and Amabel Allen
William R. and Marlies H. Allen
Patty and Melvin Alperin
Berndt W. Anderson
Judith L. Anderson and Marcia Blair
Benzel Ankrah
Peri Ann Aptaker and Robert A. Lieberman
Jason E. Archambault
Stephen P. Archambault
Barbara and Doug Ashby
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Marilyn Baker
Michael and Wendy Baker
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Sandra C. Bristol-Irvine
Lee and Christine Brooks
Gian Brosco
Jane Ann Brown
Jeffrey A. Brown and Barbara Horovitz Brown
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Paul C. and Patricia B. Carlson
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Paul and Elizabeth Choquette
Howard P. and Nancy Fisher Chudacoff
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Mary H. Clark
Mary L. Clark
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Joel Cohen and Andrea Toom
Richard A. and Lois H. Cole
Reverend and Mrs. Thomas Conboy, Jr.
Robert B. and Ann F. Conner
Gab and Diane Conover
Sheila Cooley, Esq. and Mark J. Fagan, MD
Timothy Corr
Michael Costello
Marianna L. Crawford
Michael and Kelly Cummings
Anthony and Christine DiAcchioli
Christine E. Dahlin
Joanne M. Daly
Peter S. and Anne Damon
Bill and Tracy Daugherty
Karen A. Davie and Garrison A. Hull
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Yanny and Dianna DiFebbo
Giampiero and Leslie P. DiManna
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Maura A. Dowling
David A. Duffy
John R. Duhaanial
Neil G. Danay and R. Darrell McIntire
Wayne K. and Bernice C. Durfee
John L. Dyer
Marilyn G. Eanet
Violet and Frank Ellof
Catherine English
Linda Fain
Donald and Maia Farish
Stephen Feinstein
Steven R. Fera and Kathie A. Jaret
Sanford M. and Beverly A. Fern
Elizabeth and Paul Fitzgerald
Heather and Ronald Florence
Diane Fogarty
Sarah F. Fogarty
Dennis W. Forget
James A. and Beverly A. Forte
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Thomas and Leslie Gardner
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Vera I. Gierke
Gayle L. Gifford and Jonathan W. Howard
Arlene Golden Gilbert
Richard M.C. Glenn III and Mary Goodyear Glenn
Carol Golden and Stuart Einhorn
Lillian Golden
Eleanor J. Goldstein
Susan F. Gonsabes
Donna Marie Goodrich
Geoffrey Gordon
Robert J. Gormley
Gary and Charlene Gosselin
Richard and Ellen Gower
Meghan Grady and Eric PW. Hall
Joya Wild Granbery-Hoyt
Mary Grinavic
Suzanne Oringel Goldman Grossman
Hope R. Gustafson
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Ann-Marie Harrington
Janet Hartman
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Larry J. and Kay P. Hirsch
Barry and Kathleen Hittner
Justin and Linda Holden
Elizabeth Holochwost
Lynne E. Hoppin-Fazzi
Jonathan and Pamela Houston
Pamela Tesler Howitt and The Honorable Steven S. Howitt
Kinnaird Howland
Meghan Hughes and Kimball Mayer
Phyllis M. Huston
Lise Iwon
Linda Jacobson and James Myers
Mickey Palmieri is an official greeter at Twin River in Lincoln. It’s not the first job you might expect someone to have who was born with cerebral palsy, uses a wheelchair for mobility and doesn’t hear or speak. Yet Mickey successfully - and with great delight - carries out his duties with the aid of a computerized communication system. He is looking forward to resuming his duties as COVID subsides.

“This has had a profound effect on Mickey’s life. He has a tremendous sense of pride and just beams at his success,” states Thomas Kane, president & CEO of AccessPoint RI, where Mickey is a participant. Mickey is just one of more than 800 individuals with differing abilities who receives supportive services from AccessPoint.

Tom continues, “We ask ourselves, ‘How can we support people to become part of the community, and to have a good life, as they define it?’ He notes that for many participants, customized employment, which matches the individual’s skills and desires with an employer who will provide mutually beneficial, meaningful work, is an important aspect. “We want it to be as good for the employer as it is for the person employed,” Tom stresses.

In addition to employment, AccessPoint provides residential, recreational, and day services for adults, as well as vocational training. It serves children and their families through the Cornerstone School and through home-based clinical services.

Tom says AccessPoint has wanted to create an endowment for several years, but it only became financially possible when “a wonderful man, a really fantastic guy” made a generous contribution to the nonprofit organization. He explains that a gift from Sanford “Sandy” Fern, a board member for more than 25 years whose daughter is a participant at AccessPoint, is allowing them “to really invest in the future of the organization.”

Sanford “Sandy” Fern, a board member for more than 25 years whose daughter is a participant at AccessPoint, is allowing them “to really invest in the future of the organization.”

In researching where to establish the endowment, Tom says, “We looked at what value we would get beyond the money that comes back to us. Everything Rhode Island Foundation offers makes this really attractive for us. The reputation of the Foundation is impeccable, and its name recognition throughout the state made partnering with the Foundation a pretty easy decision for us.”
When Jenna Wims Hashway was a senior in high school, an anonymous individual opened a bank account in her name and deposited $500. "It helped me go to college, and I remember my parents telling me, 'You're going to have to pay that forward,'" Jenna shares.

She and her husband, John Barylick, are doing just that. "In the past, our giving has been inconsistent, often just responding to appeals we received. This fund will allow us to be more intentional with our giving," John states, with Jenna adding, "It will be fun to think this out and focus on what can be accomplished through the fund."

Jenna, a native Rhode Islander, earned an undergraduate degree at Hofstra University and her juris doctor at Roger Williams University School of Law. She served several judicial law clerkships before joining the faculty of RWU Law in 2015 as a professor of legal practice.

John, born and raised in New Jersey, came to Rhode Island to attend Brown University where he earned a bachelor's degree before attending Boston University School of Law. He currently is of counsel with Foley/Cerilli, P.C. and a visiting professor at RWU Law. Earlier, he was a founding partner and litigation attorney at Wistow & Barylick, Incorporated, where his work included serving as one of the lead attorneys representing victims of the Station Nightclub fire.

“We’re both appreciative of the educational institutions that prepared us for our careers,” John says, noting that their past giving has focused on education, as well as basic needs, including housing, food insecurity, and energy relief.

The Blackstone Valley, which extends from Pawtucket to Worcester, MA, played a lead role in the American Industrial Revolution, beginning with the establishment of Slater Mill in 1793. The area prospered during this period.

Fast forward to modern times. "Central Falls, Pawtucket, and Woonsocket (three of the 25 Rhode Island and Massachusetts cities and towns that comprise the Blackstone Valley) are among the poorest in Rhode Island," says Dr. Robert "Bob" Billington, president of the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council.

Since the mid-1980s, he and his staff and Board have worked to promote the area as a cultural visitor destination. "We started with the notion that we could promote the rich aspects and resources of the Blackstone Valley. It was really an unknown to visitors and Rhode Islanders. We did and do, a lot of community building...to invite people to be believers that the Blackstone Valley is worthy to be a cultural destination," Bob explains.

Much of the Council’s work centers on events, including the Polar Express Train Ride that has transported people to the “North Pole” for more than 20 years. "The Polar Express is a visitor success, and became a fund generator, bringing 23,000 people to the Blackstone Valley each year. It allowed us to grow. We re-invested in our work by hiring staff and operating visitor centers in Pawtucket and Lincoln and the Blackstone Valley Explorer riverboat," Bob notes.

The Council has offered Explorer river tours since 1993. "It's important to get people on the river to see the natural, cultural, and historic aspects of the Valley. It also helps build credibility for our work. The Explorer requires quite a bit to keep it afloat. The tours alone do not generate a profit. We need to purchase more scientific equipment that will allow us to better combine technology and nature," Bob states.

This organization endowment will help fund the Council’s education programs. “The RI Foundation has been tremendously supportive of us, but we were never an investor with them. This Fund allows us to be part of something amazing, gives people another way to support our work, and will help ensure our future,” Bob concludes.
Eclectic.

It’s the word that Bruce Carlsten aptly uses to describe his life and that of his wife, Dorothy (Dede), as they’ve pursued their educations, careers, and varied interests.

Bruce graduated from Cranston High School and the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in Kings Point, NY. His career took many twists and turns: he sailed on merchant vessels around the world, worked for Moran Towing and Transportation in New York City, ran a charter fishing boat, studied for an MBA from Baruch College of CUNY, earned a master’s degree in physics and completed course study for an ocean engineering PhD at URI. The couple moved to New York where Bruce taught physics for 30+ years, while also earning Certified Financial Manager (CFM) and Certified Financial Planner (CFP®) designations. He later established Carlsten Financial Services, a business he continues today.

Dede’s life also followed many paths. As a “Navy Junior,” she grew up in various East Coast cities, the Midwest, and Turkey. She graduated from Duke University, studied physical therapy at Northwestern University, and worked as a physical therapist for 14 years. She later earned certificates in landscape design and botanical illustration from the New York Botanical Gardens, then completed the course work and research for a doctorate in plant science focused on intertidal macroalgae at Lehman College of CUNY. Also, she volunteered with the Alternatives to Violence Project at Sing Sing and Tappan prisons and in the Westchester communities.

Retirement has allowed Bruce to play his violin and join two nonprofit boards and Dede to earn certificates in illustration from RISD and to volunteer with the Rhode Island Coalition Against Gun Violence and the Rhode Island Natural History Survey.

Bruce became aware of the Rhode Island Foundation as a board member of the Community String Project which offers young students, especially the underserved, the opportunity to learn to play a string instrument.

Of this donor advised fund, Dede says, “I like that the Foundation manages the funds, and that we can direct our donations. It’s the best of both worlds.” The couple has two sons, Curtis and James, and six grandchildren.

Janet Barber Clark Fund

In the mid 1950’s, Dr. Samuel D. Clark, then a prominent physician in Bristol, established a children’s book fund at Rogers Free Library in memory of his wife, Janet Barber Clark, who died unexpectedly in 1954 at age 43.

Three years following Janet’s death, a massive fire gutted the library and destroyed its contents, including records of the fund. All that remained was a framed bookplate in Samuel’s possession. The bookplate now is cherished and prominently displayed in the home of his son, Geoffrey E. Clark, MD. “When you keep looking at something, it gives you ideas,” Geoff explains.

The idea was for Janet’s descendants to re-activate the fund to carry on Samuel’s legacy, to honor Janet’s devotion to education, particularly the education of children, and to re-establish a family connection to Bristol. Thus, the Janet Barber Clark Fund was established at the Foundation, designated for the Friends of Rogers Free Library to forever support the purchase of children’s materials for the Library.

Janet Barber Clark was born in Berkeley, CA, and raised largely in the Washington, DC area. She was educated at the Madeira School in DC, earned an undergraduate degree at Bryn Mawr (PA) College, and attended graduate school at Radcliffe College in Cambridge, MA.

It was while Janet was at Radcliffe that she met her future husband, who was pursuing his medical education. The couple moved to Hartford for Samuel’s internship, followed by Providence for his post-internship training. He then had the opportunity to take over a practice in Bristol, home of his mother Hannah Drury and his grandfather Samuel Smith Drury, M.D. He also served as a physician in the army during World War II.

Janet taught philosophy at Wheaton College before she became the mother of five. “She was an avid reader and very active in Bristol’s cultural and civic affairs. She also was a very good mom, taking us on expeditions to museums, other cultural places, or just outside to explore nature,” Geoff recalls. “Because of the Rhode Island Foundation’s fine reputation, it made sense for us to use it to manage this fund going forward.”
Education is very important to our family. It’s the key to getting ahead and is the difference between struggling and having a comfortable life,” believes Mary Ann (Costello) Faria.

Her daughter, Mariana (Faria) Ormonde, continues, “My grandparents (James and Helen Costello) were huge proponents of secondary education. They did not have the opportunity to go to college themselves but were insistent that their grandchildren go. To them, it was fulfillment of the American dream.”

These two funds will help “fulfill the American dream” by providing scholarships to Lincoln High School graduating seniors with financial need.

James and Helen Costello both were first generation Italian Americans. “My father was very energetic and ran several businesses. He was a master mechanic, owned Warwick Ford from 1958 to 1978, promoted stock car racing, and had a number of associated businesses,” Mary Ann says.

James served on the Lincoln Town Council from 1955 to 1963, followed by the Rhode Island State Senate from 1963 until his retirement in 1981. He further served the community as a member of numerous organizations including the Fraternal Order of Police, Blackstone Valley Historical Society, Lincoln Civil Defense, Pawtucket and Central Falls YMCA, Knights of Columbus, and Warwick Lions Club. James died in 2011.

“My grandfather was out there working in the community. My grandmother helped on a more personal level. She was incredibly charitable,” Mariana recalls of Helen, a stay at home mother for daughters Mary Ann and Deborah. When the girls were older, Helen worked with her husband at Warwick Ford. The couple had been married for 62 years when Helen died in 2004.

Mary Ann, who grew up in Lincoln, and her husband, Mario, an immigrant from the Azores, own and operate Limerock Plant Farm in Lincoln. Their three children, James, Mariana, and Michael, all are graduates of Lincoln High School.

These scholarship funds join two others – both which also support education - established at the Foundation by the Costello family.

Rob DeBlois Professional
Development Fund

The idea for this fund came from Rob himself,” explains Gib Conover, chair of the board of trustees of the Fund for UCAP. “Rob (DeBlois) knew that money for professional development is difficult to come by. This fund – comprised largely of gifts given in honor of Rob’s retirement and later gifts given following his death in 2020 – provides UCAP with a dedicated funding source to make professional development happen.”

Rob founded The UCAP School (formerly known as the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program) in 1989 “to balance the scale for students at risk of dropping out” and served as its innovative leader until his retirement 30 years later. The UCAP School seeks to intervene in the lives of middle school students who are at risk of not graduating from high school. The school provides relevant curriculum and enrichment opportunities to support the academic, social, and emotional development of students to ensure a successful transition to high school.

Rob DeBlois Professional Development Fund

“Rob dedicated himself to helping kids who were struggling. He expanded the idea of SPIRIT into a year round program...UCAP, UCAP utilizes his unique idea of accelerating and advancing kids at their own pace, with individualized instruction. Knowing they can catch up with their peers to graduate from high school is a huge incentive for the kids. And he always encouraged professional development and for teachers to take their ideas and run with them,” Rob’s wife, Bonnie DeBlois, shares.

About the Board’s decision to create the endowment at the Rhode Island Foundation, Gib says, “They have done so much for UCAP through the years. It’s been a wonderful partnership. With its professional management, it just makes sense for us to have this fund at the Foundation.”
“Talia would want to continue to have an impact on the students who loved her so much and whom she cared for so deeply... This scholarship will continue her legacy of enriching the lives of others.”

— Nicolette Matthews
Talia Delmonico Memorial Scholarship Fund

Talia Delmonico Memorial Scholarship Fund

“Your presence made us smile. Your mind encouraged ours. Your legacy lives on in us. Thank you for being an amazing teacher and friend.”

“The stories and memories we have will be in my head and in my heart forever...I loved your wittiness and your humor, your incredible laugh, and beautiful personality. We all miss you so much.”

“Your presence made us smile. Your mind encouraged ours. Your legacy lives on in us. Thank you for being an amazing teacher and friend.”

“She was always there for those kids,” Nicolette Matthews, Talia’s mother, says of her daughter’s dedication to her students. “She went above and beyond. Many of the kids lacked the necessities of life. They’d come to school hungry, and Talia would have something for them to eat. She’d also provide them with school supplies and sponsor coat drives for them.”

A graduate of Johnston High School, Talia earned a bachelor’s degree in social services at the University of Rhode Island before deciding she’d prefer to teach. She returned to URI and earned degrees in secondary education and biology before beginning her teaching career at Shea.

“She was always there for those kids,” Nicolette Matthews, Talia’s mother, says of her daughter’s dedication to her students. “She went above and beyond. Many of the kids lacked the necessities of life. They’d come to school hungry, and Talia would have something for them to eat. She’d also provide them with school supplies and sponsor coat drives for them.”

“Talia loved teaching and helping others reach their full potential. She always made time for her students to talk and share the lessons of life and family. They bonded with her; her door was always open,” Nicolette shares of Talia’s eight years on the Shea faculty.

Through this fund, scholarships will be awarded annually to a graduating senior at Shea High School who is pursuing further education in science.

Nicolette explains, “Talia would want to continue to have an impact on the students who loved her so much and whom she cared for so deeply. Talia was always looking for a way to make it easier for them to learn, to lessen their burdens so they could open their minds. This scholarship will continue her legacy of enriching the lives of others.”

These are just a few of the many sentiments shared by students of Talia Delmonico, a science teacher at Charles E. Shea High School in Pawtucket, following her sudden death in February 2020 at age 36.
When John Dyer established the Norman S. Dyer Memorial Fund in 2019 to honor his late uncle, he stated, “My greatest dream has been to make a full time living giving money to worthy needs. Assuming I never win the lottery I will never reach that lofty goal, but the Rhode Island Foundation has made a small portion of that dream a reality.”

John is continuing to fulfill his dream of supporting “worthy needs” through the establishment of this fund which forever will benefit Preserve Rhode Island.

He explains, “My family has been working with wood for generations. When my great grandfather came to this country he arrived with a sizable woodworking tool chest, now prized by the family. He, his son, and grandson had a natural talent for building.”

He continues, “I have an early memory of a grade school teacher asking me to draw a picture of a house. I drew a simple house in perspective or three dimension. She was so thrilled that I may have confirmed my future at the moment. I’ve been drawing ever since.”

Graduating from college with a bachelor of science degree in architectural engineering, John pursued structural and architectural building projects and eventually project management. “Not available to me at that time, I may have pursued a degree in historic preservation to link with my strong appreciation for ‘all things old,’” he shares.

A chance to move in that direction came when his brother, owner of a design-build firm, made him an offer to design heavy timbered residences for clients who appreciate the beauty and warmth of a traditional, heirloom quality, post and beam frame. He is a member of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and Preserve Rhode Island. “In thinking of a legacy close to home and in restoration and preservation efforts, Preserve Rhode Island is a perfect fit. By every measure I am impressed with the organization and consider their work to be important,” he states, continuing, “The same is true with the Rhode Island Foundation. In my heart Rhode Island will always be home and this fund forever confirms that sentiment.”

For more than 30 years, Emile Ferrara taught art at Bristol’s Mount Hope High School. “He was an inspirational teacher to multiple generations of art students,” shares his daughter, Jessica Srinivas. Through this fund, made possible with memorial gifts from family and friends, Emile’s legacy of dedicating himself to his students will continue in perpetuity through scholarships to graduating seniors at Mount Hope who have financial need and are pursuing art through higher education.

Born and raised in Bristol, Emile earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts from what now is UMass Dartmouth, followed by a Master of Arts in Teaching from the Rhode Island School of Design. Following his more than 30-year career at Mount Hope, Emile taught at Moses Brown School in Providence.

“Teaching is not a nine to five job. Emile was generous with his time - he made himself available to his students and was able to have a great impact. He opened a world of creativity and imagination for countless students and provided encouragement and mentoring to many who went on to study and pursue art careers,” Jessica says of her father who died in December 2020 at age 77. She adds that her father helped students assemble portfolios and navigate the process of applying to art school and that she knows of at least four former students who went on to become art teachers.

Emile was a prolific artist. “He was an avid outdoorsman and drew much of his inspiration from nature,” Jessica continues, explaining that he painted with oils in his home studio in the winter and sculpted in both stone and wood in a makeshift backyard studio during the summer.

“His art room was a safe haven where students could express themselves freely, would be listened to, and would receive encouragement and validation. Students found great comfort in his demeanor – he was approachable, dependable, gentle, and had a quirky sense of humor. It was important to our family to find a way to memorialize my father and to continue his work. We need more artists - they help us see the beauty in the world around us,” Jessica concludes.
This fund will support a large part of our programming and will make it affordable for our clients to attend English classes,” Kathleen Cloutier, executive director of Dorcas International Institute of Rhode Island (DIIRI), explains of this organization endowment which was made possible by the family of Pauline and Samuel Friedman.

“We have a very large adult education program, with between 90% and 92% of our clients learning English as a second language,” Kathleen continues, noting the program serves approximately 1,400 adults each year.

Like DIIRI, the late Pauline and Samuel Friedman were committed to assisting immigrants. “My parents were very giving people and were involved in educational endeavors their entire lives. They were committed to helping others to pursue and achieve their dreams, as they had,” their daughter, Linda Miller, explains.

Born in Russia in 1898, Samuel came to America with his mother and younger siblings when he was 13 years old to join his father and older brother who had emigrated two years earlier and settled in New York City. After attending high school and one year of college, Sam ventured into business and started a watch band company. Of her father, Linda notes, “Once he learned the language, he was off and running. He spoke English like he had been doing it all his life.”

Sam and Pauline moved from New York to Providence in the 1950s, when Sam decided to move his business, Brite Manufacturing, to Providence’s Olneyville neighborhood. The company prospered, and they shared their good fortune by investing in their community. Samuel became involved with the International Institute of Rhode Island (now DIIRI following its 2013 merger with Dorcas Adult and Family Literacy Center), serving on its board of directors, and referring new immigrants to the Institute, including those he sponsored to come to this country.

“The Institute was such a good fit with his history and his success. My parents cared about people and passed their values on to me and their grandchildren. This fund continues their legacy of generosity and helping immigrants,” Linda shares.

I wanted to start a scholarship fund in Mary’s name, and the Rhode Island Foundation provided the opportunity to do that,” says Kurt Lenzen of this fund, designated for Westerly High School for graduating students pursuing medical fields, with a preference for females.

Noting his wife was a 1973 graduate of Westerly High School, he explains, “I called the high school and asked, ‘How do I start a fund?’ and they suggested the Foundation.” This fund joins more than a dozen scholarships administered by the Foundation that are designated for students at Westerly High School.

After high school, Mary continued her education at the University of Rhode Island where she received a Bachelor of Arts with high distinction, followed by Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute where she earned a Masters of Science in Computer Science. She then began a long career with Pfizer Inc., beginning as a chemist and continuing into clinical research as head of database administration and clinical data standards. She was a leader in establishing clinical data standards throughout the pharmaceutical industry as well as a charter member of CDISC (Clinical Data Interchange Standards Consortium). After retiring from Pfizer, Mary worked for Octagon Research Solutions where she led CDISC training initiatives worldwide.

“Mary was interested in the sciences at a young age and was dedicated to her profession. She was a consistent mentor to co-workers, especially those who were just beginning their respective careers, and she assisted others who were less skilled in solving computer programming issues. Mary was constantly learning and educating herself, personally and professionally,” recalls Mary’s sister, Claudia Peduzzi.

In 2011, the Lenzens retired to New Hampshire where Mary was active in many community organizations, especially those concerning the care of animals and education of the watershed ecology. “Volunteering was part of her success and she was an example to others, often encouraging participation in her fundraising efforts,” Claudia says of her sister who died in 2019.

“Mary was always trying to help women, especially in the sciences,” Kurt relates. Now, through this scholarship fund, that support will continue in perpetuity.
“Manny was an entrepreneur from the start, a real go-getter. He was always looking for a way to make things better,” Judy Amaral says of her brother, Manuel Martins Jr.

At the time of his death in May 2020 at age 46, Manny was vice president of Martins Maintenance, a janitorial service started in 1976 by Manny’s father. Noting that their parents both are immigrants from the Azores, Judy credits them for being “amazing role models” to all three of their children. “The family has an entrepreneurial spirit and drive to succeed. Our parents instilled a strong work ethic in us.”

The younger Martins started working at the family business when he was in his teens and took over the operations of the business at age 26 when his father suffered serious health problems. “He took the business to a whole different level. We had been operating in Rhode Island and nearby Massachusetts, but Manny brought in large national accounts. He was a great salesman. He was so personable and would win people over with his commitment to provide great service. We went from being a small business to a very large one in a matter of a couple of years. Manny was the driving force,” Judy states.

She continues, “My brother also mentored many people operating small businesses. He believed being a mentor provided encouragement to those wanting to try new things. He’d tell people, ‘Don’t be afraid to reach for your dreams.’

Judy explains, “Education is really important to our family, and we want to encourage others to pursue their education in business. This would be a good tribute to Manny and allow his name and spirit to live on.”

This scholarship fund, designated for a senior at Cranston West High School who is pursuing the study of entrepreneurship at a two- or four-year post-secondary institution, will help others reach for their dreams.

Matthews-Kennedy Family Fund

“[2020] seemed like an important year to be generous,” Susan Matthews explains, noting particularly the impact COVID-19 has had on the state, its nonprofits, and the people here. “This past summer, COVID brought the Foundation into the forefront of my thinking,” she continues.

Susie and her husband, James Kennedy, acted on that thinking, contributing first to the Foundation’s COVID-19 Response Fund, followed by support of the Civic Leadership Fund, and finally the establishment of this donor advised fund.

Susie, who grew up in Stonington, CT and New York City, came to Rhode Island as a student at Brown University. She earned an undergraduate degree there in visual arts, followed by two master’s degrees at Rhode Island School of Design, one in the art of teaching and the other in ceramics.

Today, she works primarily in ceramics and textiles, saying simply, “I make things that I want to exist in the world and that I want to share with other people.” She has exhibited in galleries across Rhode Island, as well as in Massachusetts and New York.

James, a native Rhode Islander, graduated from Cumberland High School before studying boatbuilding in Maine. It is a craft he continues today, along with carpentry.

The couple’s two children, Jane and Peter, are, Susie shares, one of the reasons they decided to establish this fund. “We want to start them on the path of giving back to the community,” she explains. The family gives back now through involvement with numerous nonprofit organizations near their home in Jamestown. In addition to supporting the Martin Luther King Center, the Rhode Island Community Food Bank, and Save The Bay, among others, Susie has served on the boards of the Conanicut Island Sailing Foundation, the Jamestown Education Foundation, and the Jamestown Arts Center.

“Rhode Island Foundation has been omnipresent ever since I got involved with nonprofits in Rhode Island. I was impressed with how the Foundation stepped up toward the beginning of the pandemic and was able to do something quickly. That really appealed to me, and led me to take action in a way I hadn’t previously,” Susan concludes.
“It (2020) seemed like an important year to be generous. This past summer, COVID brought the Foundation into the forefront of my thinking. I was impressed with how the Foundation stepped up toward the beginning of the pandemic and was able to do something quickly.”

—Susan Matthews
Matthews-Kennedy Family Fund

Robert and Beverly Mello and Marino Charitable Fund

Shortly after Bob and Bev (Carnevale) Mello married, he opened a bank account—unbeknownst to his wife—that he made deposits to through the years, occasionally making contributions to nonprofit organizations. On their 50th anniversary, Bob shared the news of the account with Bev: “I wanted this to be part of the celebration,” Bob explains of the account the couple used to establish this donor advised fund.

“We’ve always given through the years. I was writing out 10 to 20 checks each year, and we thought there must be a better way to do this,” Bob shares. It was through their good friend, the late Doctor Domenic Vavala, who established a fund at the Foundation in 2006, that the Mellos became familiar with the Foundation. “He and I became good friends through the bank,” Bob notes, referring to his 46-year career that began with what at the time was Rhode Island Trust. Bob worked his way up from teller to vice president and area manager and retired in 2012 from what then was Sovereign/Santander.

To prepare for and later advance his career, Bob earned a degree in business administration, with a minor in finance, at Roger Williams University and attended both the Commercial Lending School at the University of Oklahoma and the New England School of Banking at Williams College. He also served four years in the Rhode Island National Guard. Bev worked at the Rhode Island Credit Bureau, Blue Cross Blue Shield, and in the office of a North Providence jewelry company. She and Bob both are active in the community including at St. Robert Bellamine Parish in Johnston where she volunteers with the Parish Food Shelf and he is a Eucharistic Minister at a nursing home.

The Mellos have one daughter, Stephanie Marino. She and her husband Peter both are elementary school teachers, Stephanie in Providence and Peter in Smithfield. They are successor advisors to the fund.

“It makes us feel good that we’re able to give back to the community and that the Foundation provides that ‘better way’ to do it,” Bob concludes.

Robert and Beverly Mello and Marino Charitable Fund
Arthur C. Milot Fund

A native Rhode Islander, Arthur Milot graduated from Moses Brown School in 1951 and Harvard College in 1955. He worked at the brokerage firm Kidder Peabody before entering the family business, Paragon Worsted Company. In 1968, he purchased Brewster Lumber Company and oversaw its expansion until 1986 when he sold the company and retired.

Arthur’s extensive philanthropy spanned his many areas of interest, although he never sought recognition. Son Charlie explains, “Land conservation and animal welfare were very important to him. He was a longtime fundraiser for The Nature Conservancy and had a huge impact on the Conanicut Island Land Trust, particularly on preserving farmland on the island.”

“He was an incredible person, very intelligent, and a friend to all, both two-legged and four-legged,” says Martha Milot of her husband, Arthur, who died in 2019 at age 86. In a 2015 interview, when the Milots were establishing one of four earlier funds with the Foundation, Arthur said, “There is no other organization in Rhode Island that has the reach of the Foundation.”

Son Charlie continues, “He also was very humble and comfortable in his own skin. He could be seen almost every day walking into Jamestown, and he was not above ducking into the bramble to pick up trash along the way.”

“Martha Kirby Murphy was an exceptional woman, but this gift really is the story of a son’s love and respect for his mother,” states Pamelee Murphy of this scholarship fund her late husband, Raymond F. Murphy, Jr., a highly respected CPA in Rhode Island, created in 2007. The fund was transferred to the Foundation in 2020.

Pamelee continues, “From all accounts, Martha was an intellectual with compassion for human frailty and a never failing desire to do the right thing. She passed on her intellectual curiosity and generosity of spirit to her son Ray who spent his life providing for his family, contributing to the community, and always doing the right thing.”

Martha Kirby Murphy was born in Woonsocket in 1901, one of eight children and the first woman in her family to attend college. She graduated from Rhode Island College, then called the Normal School, in 1923. She became an elementary school teacher at the Harris School in Woonsocket where her three young sons eventually enrolled.

Martha taught for seven years, with Pamelee noting, “But taught by example her entire life.” It was many years later, after the death of her husband, Raymond F. Murphy, founder of Murphy and Co., Certified Public Accountants, that Martha returned to work as a receptionist in the firm that was then managed by her son Ray. Martha died in 1988.

“Ray described her as an amazing and deeply thoughtful woman, who never said a bad word about anybody. She also was dedicated to her family and to her faith,” Pamelee shares. Martha was a communicant of St. Joseph’s Church, Providence.

Martha Kirby Murphy ’23 Scholarship Fund

Martha Kirby Murphy was a student of the Normal School, now known as Rhode Island College, and taught there for many years. She was known for her dedication to education and her commitment to community service.

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“Ray described her as an amazing and deeply thoughtful woman, who never said a bad word about anybody. She also was dedicated to her family and to her faith,” Pamelee shares. Martha was a communicant of St. Joseph’s Church, Providence.

Pamelee explains that her late husband created an endowment both to honor his mother and to support students at her alma mater. The Martha Kirby Murphy ’23 Scholarship will be awarded annually to Rhode Island College student(s) who have demonstrated a commitment to excellence in the teaching profession.

“She would be pleased to know that her legacy continues with the availability of scholarships to assist students at Rhode Island College who share her commitment to expanding the minds of the future,” Pamelee concludes.
Bob and Shirley Pompei are committed to supporting the institution they credit for their success in business, while also actively supporting programs for children. Both born in Providence and raised in Cranston, they were high school sweethearts at Cranston High School (East) and have been married for 51 years. The couple now has two grown daughters and seven grandchildren.

Bob attended Roger Williams Junior College (now Roger Williams University), earning an associate degree in engineering and, through a co-op program, was introduced to an industry on which the couple later built their own business. He gained experience at Lincoln Controls while attending night classes at his alma mater and earned his bachelor's degree in engineering in 1975. In 1984, Bob ventured out on his own, founding Action Automation in North Attleboro. "Since that time, Shirley and I have worked together, but with different responsibilities. We complemented each other," Bob says, noting that Shirley worked in the company’s human relations department while he was in technical sales and marketing.

"The things I was exposed to at Roger Williams led to our success, and we really support the university today," Bob states, noting the couple’s support for programs for children. Today, their support of programs for children is focused largely on the Kids Love Opera! program of Salt Marsh Opera, of which Bob is president of the board of trustees. The program introduces fifth and sixth grade students in southern Rhode Island and southeastern Connecticut to opera through in-school programs and performances. Prior to COVID-19, the program served 8,000 students annually. Bob shares, "Opera exposes children to a completely different art form of music."

Of this donor advised fund, he states, "We thought this was a way for us to continue our legacy, both with our children and then everlasting through the Foundation."

Cass and Sam Shoppell, Jr. Memorial Scholarship

Throughout his 24-year career with the United States Navy, Sam Shoppell, Jr. was stationed with his family at bases up and down the East coast. Sam and his wife, Cass, raised their nine children along the way. They bought a house in Middletown in 1974 with the intentions of settling there upon Sam’s retirement from the Navy. Their son Stuart shares, "After living in the Newport/Middletown area, they said that of all the places they'd lived, that was the nicest and they liked the weather!"

Cass and Sam were born and raised in Philadelphia and met at the YMCA, both being avid swimmers. Sam joined the Navy in 1953 and they married in 1954. He served as a rescue diver and patternmaker, crafting the molds necessary for the manufacture of replacement parts on ships and submarines. He retired from the Navy as a Master Chief and continued to work on Aquidneck Island at J.T. O’Connell’s, Quaker Manor, and Newport Toyota. He fully retired in 2011.

Throughout their moves, juggling motherhood and home life, Cass worked part-time. Upon their return to Middletown, she worked at the Newport Naval Station, retiring as Traffic Manager of the Supply Department in 1999 after 22 years of service. She also volunteered at several nonprofit organizations, including Dollars for Scholars and Lucy’s Hearth.

Their children believe a scholarship fund is a good way to honor their parents and continue their legacy of service (Cass passed in 2015 and Sam in 2020). Stuart explains, "Education was important to both of them. My dad always encouraged additional learning and stressed the importance of the trades and apprenticeships. My mom volunteered with Dollars for Scholars from the late 70s into the 90s, helping students achieve their academic dreams."

He learned of the Foundation from his sister, San, a Rhode Island resident. “She suggested the Rhode Island Foundation to me. It was a great discovery that she made,” he remarks.

That ‘great discovery’ resulted in this fund that will forever provide scholarships to graduating seniors in the Middletown Public Schools who are pursuing post-secondary education or an accredited apprenticeship program with preference for those attending trade or vocational schools.
To honor her late brother, Holly Snyder established this fund, designated for Foster Forward, “to help kids otherwise without support make their dreams come true.”

Born in Massachusetts and raised there and in New Hampshire, Andrew Snyder entered the Navy after graduating from high school. He received communications training at Great Lakes Naval Station. Communications was a field he pursued after leaving the Navy, earning an associate degree in audio engineering at Mount Wachusett Community College.

In later years, Andrew began doing carpentry work, eventually moving to Maine where he worked with a childhood friend. “He enjoyed practical things, and was good at woodwork,” Holly says, describing a bookcase he built that she treasures to this day. “We had a very typical New England childhood. Our father had been an officer in the Navy, and loved sailing. Our family spent a lot of time along the seacoast in Massachusetts and Maine,” Holly says.

She continues, “Andy was a very kind person, a wonderful friend. He really stood by people. You never needed to ask him for help, he would just show up. He was a real people person, especially good with older people and young children. But he had something of a troubled life, because he was bullied from first grade through high school. This was just devastating for his self-esteem, and as an adult he was convinced he couldn’t be successful in life. I think he would be proud to know there’s something that will help other people in his name,” Holly says of her brother who died in 1999 at age 37.

This fund will award grants in Andrew’s name to East Providence-based Foster Forward for scholarships toward post-secondary education for those in foster care who are graduating high school seniors and/or have attained GED equivalency.

Holly, who has lived in Rhode Island since 2003, explains, “I have great respect for the work the Rhode Island Foundation does for people in our little corner of the universe. The fact that the fund will receive proper oversight and accountability, while forever honoring Andy, is very important to me.”

Andrew H. Snyder Dream Fund

Jeff Sullivan became a donor to the Foundation through our COVID-19 Response Fund, established in early March to meet emerging needs in Rhode Island communities due to the pandemic, and through our weR1 Rhode Island Fund, established to provide direct assistance to Rhode Islanders who did not qualify for emergency support due to their immigration status.

He explains, “We can and will get through this (the pandemic), but to do so will take a lot of resources. My philosophy in giving was to help build a sense of resiliency. Hope has been my motto since I’ve been in Rhode Island.” It’s also why he included the word hope in the name of this donor advised fund he created to allow him to further support nonprofits he cares about.

Jeff, who has lived in New England all his life, earned an undergraduate degree in math at the University of New Hampshire. Noting there was no degree in computer science at the time, he took as many courses as possible. “In those days you programmed on punch cards. We’ve come a long way,” he says.

While working as a computer programmer, he earned a master’s degree in computer science at Rivier College (now University) in Nashua, NH. This led to a career with Digital Equipment Corporation, which was acquired by Compaq, which in turn was taken over by Intel. “I worked with the same people in three different companies,” Jeff states. He retired from Intel in 2015 as a senior software engineer.

Of his move to Rhode Island, Jeff says, “I fell in love with Providence and with the state, and got involved with a number of nonprofits by volunteering.” His many interests include the arts, tree planting, preserving open space, farm to table initiatives, and gleaning.

“T he Foundation funds most of the things I care about. I like that it funds interesting, unique projects and smaller, local organizations. There are a lot of people who have great ideas, but do not have the means to carry them out. I want to be able to help,” Jeff acknowledges.

Jeff Sullivan Hope Fund
There is a shortage of RNs and especially of minority RNs. We do not have nurses with the cultural backgrounds and languages of the populations we serve. There is not enough diversity," states Ghulam-Mustafa Surti, MD, interim chief medical officer at Butler Hospital. He and his wife, Ruksana, established this fund - designated for minority nursing students working in Rhode Island as certified nursing assistants (CNAs) to further their educations - to help. "The CNAs at Butler are mostly in their mid-20s to early 30s and many are single parents. To continue their educations they have to cut their hours, which many cannot afford to do. I know that with a little financial help, they can do it," Ghulam-Mustafa says.

A native of Pakistan, Ghulam-Mustafa graduated from the Dow Medical College in Karachi, Pakistan, before coming to the United States where his future wife was living. A native of India, Ruksana had moved with her family to California when she was 11 years old. She attended college there and worked as a secretary at Honeywell. The Surtis moved to Illinois where Ghulam-Mustafa completed his psychiatry residency at the University of Illinois in Chicago, after which they moved to Rhode Island where he completed training in geriatric psychiatry through the Brown University Geriatric Psychiatry Fellowship Training Program at Butler Hospital. Ruksana is a stay-at-home mother to the couple’s sons, Sameer and Sahil. She is active with Americans Helping Others ProspEr (AHOPE), a nonprofit organization that provides individuals and families with essential supports that help them transition to permanent housing, with a focus on assisting new refugees coming to Rhode Island.

As a clinical associate professor in the Department of Psychiatry & Human Behavior at the Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University, Ghulam-Mustafa teaches in all levels in the medical school and graduate programs. He was involved with the CNA Training Program at Crossroads Rhode Island and has worked in the past as a volunteer physician at the Rhode Island Free Clinic. "I want to give back to this country and help minorities move up economically," he concludes.

Karen Swanson died suddenly in 1996 at the age of 44, her sister Carol Bergantini recalls the support the family received from the Exeter-West Greenwich community. "The whole town, especially members of the Exeter-West Greenwich Fire and Rescue, were there for us and really helped us get through a difficult time. All the firefighters and EMTs were part of our family," Carol explains.

The community continued its support through donations to a scholarship fund the family, led by Carol’s husband Jack, established shortly after Karen’s death. "We held golf tournaments, turkey dinners...things we knew how to do," Carol says of their fundraising.

The family transferred the fund to the Foundation in 2020, ensuring that scholarships forever will be awarded to Exeter-West Greenwich Regional High School graduating seniors, with a preference for students pursuing fire science and/or emergency medical services.

Raised in North Providence, Karen moved to Exeter in the mid-70s with her husband and sons. "She got into fire and rescue there. She always liked medical work and throve on it," Carol says, noting Karen was the first dispatcher hired in Exeter, eventually training others and running that department. She also trained and became an emergency medical technician (EMT), rising to the rank of commander. Additionally, Karen was president of the department’s ladies auxiliary and when the auxiliary ended, she joined the fire department.

Karen came naturally to service. "My whole family is into it," Carol explains, noting that their father "started the trend" as a firefighter with the Marieville Fire Department in North Providence. Three of Karen and Carol’s brothers also worked in fire departments around the state. Now Karen’s son is carrying on the family’s service to community as a firefighter.

"Karen was a wonderful person, very helping and generous. She would give you the shirt off her back. She got close to a lot of people in her work, so when she went on rescue runs, she knew at least a third of the people she was helping," Carol shares.

And through this fund, Karen’s legacy of helping others will continue forever.
The Touro Synagogue Foundation has a two-part mission – ...maintaining and preserving Touro Synagogue, the Colonial Jewish Cemetery, and Patriots Park, and promoting and teaching religious diversity.” It has established separate endowments dedicated to each aspect of its mission.

“Having separate funds will resonate with our donors. We’ve found that people often have an interest either in ensuring the maintenance of the Synagogue or in educational programs that focus on the importance of religious diversity,” explains Bea Ross, immediate past president of the Touro Synagogue Foundation.

The Foundation was established in 1948 following the designation of Touro Synagogue as a National Historic Site. As such, it operates public programs in partnership with the National Park Service, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and is a project of Save America’s Treasures.

“Each year, Touro Synagogue greets thousands of visitors who come from all over the world to see the magnificent interior and to hear its remarkable story. The oldest synagogue in the United States, Touro stands as a symbol of religious freedom for all Americans and is still the home of an active congregation,” Bea notes.

The Touro Synagogue Foundation has been instrumental in restoration projects of the Synagogue and in the creation of Patriots Park, which honors colonial Jewish leaders. Its programs include the George Washington Letter Reading, an annual event at which the famous 1790 letter from President Washington, stating his commitment to our nation’s religious freedom, is read. United States Supreme Court Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Elena Kagen have delivered keynote addresses at the event.

Currently, the Foundation is developing an on-site signature program for middle school students that, Bea notes, “give them a grown-up experience and teach them the value and importance of religious diversity and civil discourse.”

Of these endowments, Bea states, “These funds will help to advance the mission of the Touro Synagogue Foundation and ensure its financial security. We hope to add to these funds and think the Rhode Island Foundation is the perfect partner to help us achieve our goals.”

“Ours families both have long histories of charitable giving. Giving – through time and resources – is a reflection of your priorities,” explains James Wright. His wife Kate elaborates, “We saw our families involved in the community, and developed our own values of civic engagement and giving back.”

It’s a family practice they plan to carry on with their children – twin sons in high school and a daughter in middle school – through this donor advised fund. “Creating a fund like this provides the flexibility to build up for larger gifts while level-setting our annual giving. The Foundation is an exceptional steward of our investment and their operational expertise makes it worry free and convenient,” James states.

Raised outside Philadelphia, James’ summers were spent in Jamestown where his family’s roots go back to the late 1800s. “My grandmother was well-known for her generosity and made a big impression on me,” he shares.

James earned degrees at Vassar College and San Francisco State University, after which he spent 13 years working in Silicon Valley. He moved to Rhode Island in 2002 and co-founded Bridge Technical Talent, a North Kingstown-based IT staffing firm. In Rhode Island, he met Kate, who earlier had earned degrees in education at Boston College and Loyola College. At the time, she was teaching at the Montessori School in Newport, which she had founded in 1999. “It was a different education than I had trained in, and I was so enchanted. I knew that was my calling,” she says. She sold the school to St. Michael’s Country Day School in 2014 and since has spent more time with family and in the community, the latter including serving on the boards of the Newport Art Museum and the Jamestown Education Foundation.

James’ board service has included BankNewport and the Jamestown Historical Society. He became familiar with the Rhode Island Foundation when he was asked to serve on the board of the Newport County Fund, which he later chaired. He has been a member of the Foundation’s board of directors since 2018 and currently chairs the finance committee.

James and Kate Wright Family Fund

Touro Synagogue Foundation Educational Initiatives Fund

Touro Synagogue Foundation Campus Improvements & Preservation Fund
Our volunteer board of directors is responsible for overseeing the Foundation’s mission and strategic direction, safeguarding our financial health and sustainability, and setting organizational policies. Directors are chosen for their community leadership and knowledge.
The following is a list of the component funds of the Rhode Island Foundation.
To learn about creating your own charitable fund, contact the development department at (401) 274-4564.

### Funds established in 2020 are in red. Donors who wish to remain anonymous are not listed. Those with a • have a story in this book.

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Make Someone Smile Fund (2016)
Michael M. Makaiian Fund (2017)
Mancini Family Fund (2018)
Bhakti Manekji Fund (2013)
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Mauraria/Rainbow Fund (2013)
Edmund and Janet Mauro Button Hole Scholarship Fund (2004)
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Liz and Jack McDonald Fund (2010)
Thomas P. and Katherine A. McHale Fund (1990)
Anna Louise McNerney Fund (1982)
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Madeline Reynolds Memorial Fund (1969)

Barbara Reynolds Memorial Scholarship Fund (2001)

Alice M. Remington Scholarship Fund (1984)

Lindsay T. Reed Fund for the East Side/Mt. Hope YMCA (2009)

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Mary C. and Joseph E. Pucci Fund (1999)


Helen Walker Raleigh Tree Care Trust Fund (1995)

Helen Walker Raleigh Vision Fund (2016)

Helen Walker Raleigh Youth Fund (2006)


Raleigh-Providence Tree Care Trust Fund (1998)

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Raponi Funds
Includes: Eleuterio, Anna, and Mary Raponi Memorial Fund (2009); Ralph and Letty Raponi Fund (2013); Frank A. Spino Memorial Fund (2016); Letty A. (Spino) Raponi Memorial Fund (2017); Ralph and Letty Raponi Charitable Fund (2017); Ralph and Letty Raponi Tribute Fund (2017), and Ralph and Letty Raponi Legacy Fund (2018)

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Edith Reall Memorial Scholarship Fund (1992)

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Redgate Camp Davis Fund (1995)


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South County Art Association
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South County Garden Club of Rhode Island
Supported by: South County Garden Club of RI/Margaret Dunbar Fund (2004) and South County Garden Club of RI/Susan B. Wilson Fund (2010)
South County Habitat for Humanity
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Geraldine Tower Education Fund (2002)
Town Dock Charitable Fund (2017)
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and The Project Discovery Endowment Fund (2017)
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Universal Homes, Inc. Fund (1978)
Urban League of Rhode Island Endowment Fund (2014)
supported by: United Way of Rhode Island Scholarship Fund (2015)
Andrew Bell Scholarship Fund (2004)
Anne Utter Fund for the Performing Arts (2006)
Jessie G. Vailt Fund (1967)
Valley Breeze Scholarship Fund (2017)
Valley Resources Fund in honor of Charles Goss, Eleanor McMahon, & Melvin A. A. (1993)
Willard Boulette Van Houten and Margaret Lippitt Van Houten Fund (1991)
Louis J. Van Orden Fund (1990)
Margaret Hanley Van Orden Fund (2007)
Margaret Hanley Van Orden Scholarship Fund (2007)
Dr. Stanley Wagner Memorial Scholarship Fund (1987)
Richard Vangermeersch Fund (2013)
Dominique Velociter Founder’s Endowment Fund (2014)
Vincent Fund (1988)
Veterans Memorial Auditorium Endowment Fund (2014)
William A. Vial Fund (1939)
Scott F. Viera Memorial Fund (2017)
Vinny Animal Welfare Fund (2009)
Alice Viola Fund (1998)
Financials

To better our communities and our state requires more than good intentions. It requires good vision, strategy, and discipline. The Foundation deploys prudent, long-term financial strategies to have the most impact today while preserving and growing our endowment for the future.

Investments

The Foundation’s investments are managed by a committee of directors and community members with expertise in the field, along with the support of an investment consultant and the Foundation’s chief financial officer. The Investment Committee establishes the investment policy, selects investment managers, and monitors performance.

For long-term growth and to help minimize volatility, the funds are broadly diversified across asset classes, investment styles, and economies.

As a reflection of the Foundation’s commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, and access, the Investment Committee recently amended its policies to make the following clear: We believe that effectively accessing and managing diverse talent – inclusive of varied backgrounds, age, experience, race, sexual orientation, gender, ethnicity, and culture — leads to improved outcomes. The Foundation expects investment managers and other third party providers to respect and reflect the priority we place on equity, diversity, inclusion, and access.

Investment performance net of fees*:  
1 year 12.3%  
5 years 10.2%  
10 years 8.2%  
20 years 7.0%  
*As of 12/31/2020

Spending Policy

Our spending policy ensures that our endowment continues to grow even as we continue to meet the needs of the day for the people Rhode Island. The spending policy of 5.5% and 5.75% (including our support fee) calculated over a sixteen-quarter trailing average, allows us to provide a predictable stream of grants to organizations that serve our community, while maintaining a prudent rate of endowment growth. The spending policy is reviewed annually by the Foundation’s board of directors.

Our scale allows us access to some of the top-performing investment managers in the country, and we set high performance standards for those managers. Our long-term endowment returns consistently rank us in the top quartile compared to our community foundation peers.

Selected Financial Information

Years ended December 31, 2020 and 2019. Full financial statements are available upon request. Form 990s are available at www.rifoundation.org.

Financial Statements

A summary of the financial statements is shown below. The financial information contained in this report is unaudited and summarized. Audited financial statements, once issued, are available on our website at www.rifoundation.org.

Consolidated Statements of Financial Position  
Unaudited 2020  2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSETS:</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash</td>
<td>$1,160,387</td>
<td>$1,020,155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investments, at fair value</td>
<td>1,181,378,485</td>
<td>1,093,155,789</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other assets</td>
<td>18,691,672</td>
<td>18,709,392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other receivables</td>
<td>5,133,543</td>
<td>5,647,851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fixed assets, net</td>
<td>3,691,648</td>
<td>3,737,878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes receivable</td>
<td>5,887,000</td>
<td>5,982,362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Assets</td>
<td>1,215,942,735</td>
<td>1,128,253,427</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS:</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Liabilities</td>
<td>118,041,244</td>
<td>116,891,644</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</td>
<td>1,097,901,491</td>
<td>1,011,361,783</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</td>
<td>1,215,942,735</td>
<td>1,128,253,427</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Consolidated Statements of Activities  
Unaudited 2020  2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REVENUE:</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contributions</td>
<td>63,975,068</td>
<td>43,393,217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net investment return</td>
<td>103,251,216</td>
<td>163,777,815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royalties and other income</td>
<td>1,632,582</td>
<td>1,923,545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Revenue</td>
<td>168,858,866</td>
<td>209,094,577</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRANTS AND EXPENSES:</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Net grants appropriated</td>
<td>71,451,554</td>
<td>51,107,560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative expenses</td>
<td>11,691,379</td>
<td>11,971,523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Grants and Expenses</td>
<td>83,142,933</td>
<td>63,079,083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in value of investments held in trust</td>
<td>5,887,000</td>
<td>5,982,362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in Net Assets</td>
<td>86,539,708</td>
<td>146,887,066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Assets, Beginning of Year</td>
<td>1,097,901,491</td>
<td>1,011,361,783</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Assets, End of Year</td>
<td>1,097,901,491</td>
<td>1,011,361,783</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Financials

Generous Rhode Islanders have entrusted their philanthropy to the Rhode Island Foundation for more than a century.

Our community foundation peers consistently rank us in the top quartile compared to investment managers. Our long-term endowment returns and we set high performance standards for those managers. Our scale allows us access to some of the top-performing investment styles, and economies.

For long-term growth and to help minimize volatility, the funds are broadly diversified across asset classes, investment styles, and economies.

Alternative Investments 40%  
- Flexible Capital 15%  
- Private Capital 15%  
- Real Assets 10%  
- Fixed Income 5%

Equity 55%  
- Domestic Equity 30%  
- International Equity 20%

Our scale allows us access to some of the top-performing investment managers in the country, and we set high performance standards for those managers. Our long-term endowment returns consistently rank us in the top quartile compared to our community foundation peers.