



RHODE ISLAND  
FOUNDATION

# Giving Changes Everything

Winter, 2020

“I would not be where  
I am today and doing  
what I love most”

PAGE 12

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



Happy 2020! I'm excited for the start of a new year, a new decade, and hope that you are too. With the new year, the Foundation looks forward to building new relationships and strengthening existing ones with our generous donors and partners.

My name is Jim Sanzi, and my role at the Foundation is to lead our fundraising and donor stewardship efforts. I joined the Foundation in 2008, and am grateful to have the opportunity to work with Rhode Islanders across our state to ensure their charitable legacies and make Rhode Island a better place for all.

In this edition of *Giving Changes Everything*, you'll read about an impact investment made by the Foundation that is turning houses into homes, an important collaboration between Boys & Girls Clubs throughout Rhode Island, the impact of a legacy left with us more than 35 years ago, the inspiring stories of a donor-family and a local professional advisor, and an update on our Census 2020-related activities.

We hope you enjoy, and are inspired by, what you read here.

Best,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "James S. Sanzi".

James S. Sanzi, JD

Senior Vice President of Development

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# Rebuilding homes, rebuilding hope

*By Jessica David, Executive Vice President of Strategy & Community Investments*

“Oh, this is my lucky day,” thought Ana Jimenez. Ana, her husband Freddy, and their three children were living in a small two-bedroom apartment when she saw men rehabbing a two-family home in her Olneyville neighborhood in early 2018.

“I asked the guy who was fixing the house if they were going to rent it,” Ana recalls.

He directed her to ONE Neighborhood Builders (ONE|NB), a nonprofit community development organization that works to revitalize Providence neighborhoods. Ana followed up with them and learned about their P3 (Protecting Providence Properties) program. It was through this program that ONE|NB had purchased six units of housing, rehabbed them, and leased them to moderate income families like Ana’s.

ONE|NB’s P3 program is an example of the kind of impact investments the Foundation makes in Rhode Island – loans and equity investments that generate measurable social impact and a financial return. In this case, the Foundation made a \$806,000, 7-year loan to ONE|NB to allow them to create the P3 program.

**“We asked ourselves, ‘How do we protect naturally occurring affordable housing units?’,” says Jennifer Hawkins, ONE|NB executive director.**

This led them to purchase, rehab, and lease the homes to those she refers to as “the missing middle” — families who earn too much to qualify for income-restricted housing, but who cannot afford to rent a typical market-rate apartment. Jennifer points out, too, that “protecting affordable homes is crucial” because of the substantially lower cost to purchase and rehab an existing unit vs. building a new one.

ONE|NB’s goal is for families who lease the units to save money and improve their credit, then ultimately purchase this (or another) home.

## Impact Investments

Since launching this effort in 2017, the Foundation has invested \$9.3 million in projects with the following 10 organizations:

- Community Care Alliance
- Farm Fresh RI
- Horizon Healthcare Partners
- Horizon Pharmacy
- NeighborWorks Blackstone River Valley
- ONE Neighborhood Builders
- Providence Revolving Fund
- The Public's Radio
- UCAP
- Urban Greens



That is exactly what Ana and her family hope to do. “We’re talking about buying the house we’re in now. It has two apartments and, with the rental income, we could pay the mortgage. I don’t want to be moving any more. Since I moved here, I’ve lived in a lot of places,” Ana says. She came to Rhode Island when she was 12 from her native Guatemala and is a graduate of Central Falls High School. Both she and her husband work full-time jobs.

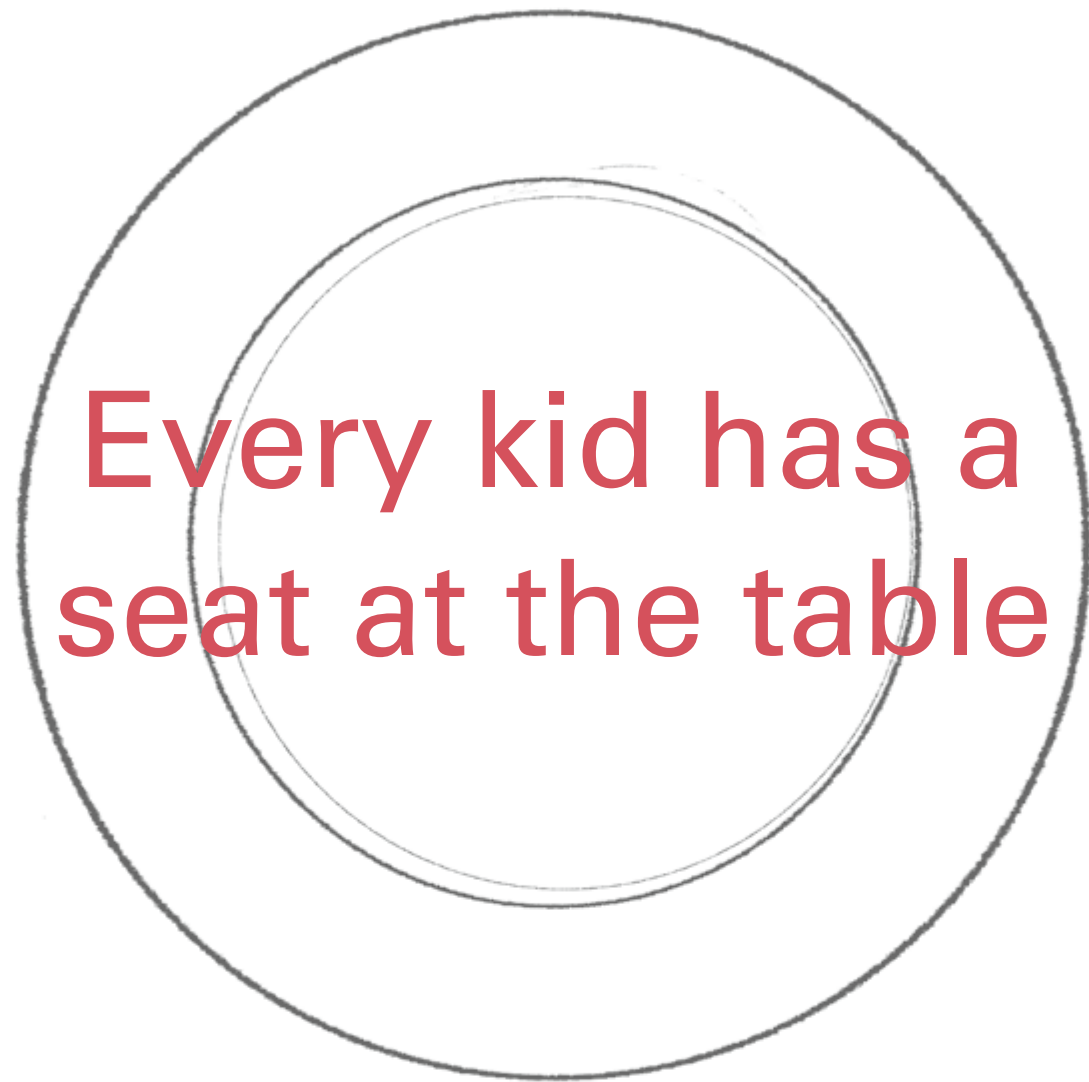
When asked about ONE|NB, Ana raves, “There’s not another place that can get you such a good apartment. I love them and dealing with them.”

Jennifer shares, “The investment from the Foundation has been incredibly impactful and we are eager to expand this program to communities outside Providence.”

And there are, undoubtedly, other families like the Jimenez family, who—if they could find a home through ONE|NB’s P3 program—would consider it their lucky day too.







by Inés Merchán, Grant Programs Officer

293,875 meals.

That's how many meals the Boys & Girls Clubs in Rhode Island Meal Program served in 2018.

"With 56% of our 14,000+ Club members living in poverty, having access to a nutritious meal at the Club is more than a nice convenience. For some, it is the best and most complete meal they will have in a given day," points out Erin Gilliatt, executive director of the Boys & Girls Club of East Providence. "The food program is reflective of our understanding that kids learn and grow best when they are 'properly fueled' physically, emotionally, and socially."

That just six Clubs – East Providence, Newport County, Northern Rhode Island, Pawtucket, Providence, and Warwick – could deliver nearly 300,000 meals to Rhode Island children and teens reveals the Club's collaborative impact.

**"We have a long history of working together. Our shared mission and vision to improve the lives of Rhode Island children brings us together for statewide initiatives," Erin says.**

"Our families more and more are in distress, and we're seeing more kids come through our doors. Families know we provide quality, safe, fun programs," Jim Hoyt, CEO of the Boys & Girls Club of Pawtucket, adds.

Joe Pratt, executive director and CEO of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Newport County, recalls a family who came to enroll their child. The family was living out of their car, so Club staff connected them to community resources. "Our meal program is instrumental to ensuring that children's basic needs are being met, but it also is part of a bigger effort to ensure that children and families have access to the resources they need to live happy and healthy lives. Today, the mom is employed and the family has stable housing."

To support programs like this, consider a gift to the Fund for Rhode Island. Any amount will support innovative and effective grants to forever meet the needs of all Rhode Islanders.

To give, go to [www.rifoundation.org/SupportRI](http://www.rifoundation.org/SupportRI)



“Family income doesn’t matter. Any kid can have a meal. You talk about families sitting down for dinner. For our kids, this is their family meal; we’re their family. That’s the part that’s magical to me,” shares Lara D’Antuono, executive director of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Warwick.

The meal program also offers a workforce development component, as teen Club members are employed to serve the dinners. “And in Woonsocket, we have evening, healthy cooking classes for parents. They earn ServSafe certification that they can take to a prospective employer,” Gary Rebelo, CEO of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Northern Rhode Island, says.

The average annual dues for a child to participate in a Club’s programs is just \$25. So additional support is vital to each Club’s operations and comes from many funders and other partners. “Much of the cost of the food for the meal program is reimbursable to our organizations. The Rhode Island Foundation funding provides money for other program costs – from paper goods, to teens who serve the meals, to trash removal,” Erin explains.

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Providence serves the largest number of children and teens at its seven sites. “And we’re seeing a lot of homeless kids,” says Nicole Dufresne, the Club’s CEO.

“We have kids from really wealthy families sitting next to kids who have nothing,” Lara states.

“That really is a cool thing. At a Club, they’re all the same,” Gary concludes.





# Turning a passion into a profession

By Kelly Riley, Donor Services Administrator

The daughter of a ballet dancer, Angelica Cardente-Vessella says she started dancing “as soon as I could walk.” Now a professor in the Department of Music, Theater, and Dance at Rhode Island College (RIC), walking among the students – encouraging, gently correcting, and joining in the dance – it’s easy to think that Antonio Cirino had Angelica in mind when he wrote his will.

Antonio, who died in 1983 at age 95, left nearly \$800,000 to the Rhode Island Foundation for Rhode Island residents “who desire to acquire postgraduate education toward a master or doctorate degree in art education.” Through careful stewardship, that initial \$800,000 has resulted in more than \$2 million awarded to over 200 Rhode Islanders like Angelica who have earned advanced degrees with

support from the Antonio Cirino Memorial Fund.

Angelica’s passion led her to dance as a student at the Community College of Rhode Island, through a summer program at Harvard University, and

eventually opening her own studio. She later continued her education at RIC, earning both a bachelor’s degree in health education and a master of fine arts (MFA) in theater/performance.

She has taught dance at Providence College and the University of Rhode Island, as well

as RIC, the latter where she has served as director of dance, as well as artistic director and producer of the Rhode Island College Dance Company since 2008. At RIC, she teaches jazz, tap, modern, dance for musical theater, and choreography.

“I earned my MFA in theater, became the director of dance at Rhode Island College, gained tenure, and am now a full professor. I have dedicated my work to social themes. Were it not for Antonio Cirino’s generosity and the Foundation, I would not be where I am today and doing what I love most,” Angelica shares.



Is it time  
to look  
ahead to  
what you'll  
leave  
behind?

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One of life's great  
achievements is  
the ability to leave  
a lasting legacy.  
We can help.

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[rifoundation.org/legacy](https://rifoundation.org/legacy)  
or call (401) 274-4564





# A legacy of caring the most about those with the least

By Carol Golden, Senior Philanthropic Advisor

“There were things that my parents were doing throughout my life that were guideposts for me. They made sure my brothers’ and my philosophical compasses were always pointed in the right direction. It was how they led their lives, believing that we’re not put on this earth to help ourselves, but to help others,” states Richard Staples, Jr.

Richard’s parents, Mary and the late Richard Staples, Sr., were community leaders on many levels, giving of their time, talent, and treasure to causes they cared about. Richard, Sr., a partner at Tillinghast, Collins & Graham and later Hinckley Allen & Snyder, served on the Barrington School Committee, Rhode Island Board of Education, and Rhode Island Board of Regents, and was also president of the Rhode Island Historical Society.

In 1986, they established the Staples Family Fund at the Rhode Island Foundation which today provides annual distributions to two venerable

Rhode Island nonprofits, the Rhode Island Community Food Bank and Crossroads Rhode Island.

“We both were interested in the Food Bank,” Mary explains, recalling, “At the time, the Food Bank was in an old building (in West Warwick) and they didn’t have the refrigeration facilities they needed. But we saw how they were handling the distribution of food and the good work they were doing. Dick got very interested and started sending a letter to our friends about the Food Bank. People responded to it, and it got to be an annual thing for him. His letters brought in a lot of donations.”

She continues, “We watched the organization develop and grow through the years. Their Community Kitchen Job Training (for low-income or unemployed adults) is a wonderful program.”

The couple’s interest in Crossroads is a result, Mary says, of her late husband’s “general philosophy of life. He had strong feelings about helping the poor.”

The mission of Crossroads, “to help homeless or at-risk individuals and families secure stable homes,” also aligns with Richard, Jr.’s professional career. He worked for more than 40 years in the financial services and mortgage industries, including several years on the foreclosure prevention outreach team at Fannie Mae. He also served HousingWorks RI both as an interim director and on its advisory board.







“Thanks to my career, I have an appreciation for the need for more housing, of the need to help folks who have come on hard times. And through my local work, I learned who many of the players are in Rhode Island,” Richard shares.

He notes that when he and his wife, Betsy, talked with their lawyer about making charitable gifts through their will, food and housing were needs they wanted to address. “We could have given bequests to the Food Bank and Crossroads, but fortunately there’s a fund at the Foundation – our family fund – that benefits these organizations. The fund gave Betsy and me the opportunity to give to two things that are of interest to us – a perfect match, thanks to Mom and Dad.

“Because the state is so small, when your money goes to the Rhode Island Foundation, you know that neighbors are being helped, that funds are benefitting people down the street, around the corner, or in a nearby town,” Richard says.



Thinking about starting or adding to a fund at the Foundation? Please contact one of our philanthropic advisors:

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# Finding philanthropists

By Neil D. Steinberg, President & CEO

“Philanthropy makes people feel good. You get a real joy from giving,” says James V. Aukerman, an estate planning attorney at Orson & Brusini’s Wakefield office.

It’s a joy Jim knows well. A long-time supporter of the local nonprofit community, he has served on boards, advisory councils, and fundraising committees for a multitude of organizations including the South Kingstown Land Trust, Narragansett Council-Boy Scouts of America, South Country Hospital, and Kingston Congregational Church. He and his wife, Karin, also have a donor advised fund at the Foundation and are members of the legacy society, the 1916 Society. Jim also is a former member of the Professional Advisory Council and recipient of the Foundation’s Harold B. Soloveitzik Professional Leadership Award.

“I always introduce philanthropy to the conversation with my clients. They don’t ordinarily come in with charitable giving in mind when they want to create a will or do other estate planning, but it can get people thinking. That’s where the role of the advisor is so important,” he believes.

A graduate of South Kingstown High School, Dartmouth College, and the Suffolk University Law School, Jim has been a trust and estate attorney in Wakefield for more than four decades. He notes that less than half of Americans have a will and estimates that between one in ten and one in fifteen of those is charitably inclined. He realizes, “You’re drawing from a fairly small pool. But I do come across people – especially people who don’t have children – who are interested, and then we get deeper into a conversation. This gives me the opportunity to mention the Foundation, to talk about what a gift in perpetuity means, and how the Foundation manages the funds. People like the idea of a gift continuing forever and of creating a legacy to honor the memory of a loved one.”

**“For most people, philanthropy is something you have to learn and be taught. It doesn’t always come naturally,” Jim shares.**

He recalls his introduction to philanthropy when, as a young attorney, he felt the deep satisfaction of making his first significant contribution through the Wakefield Rotary Club’s support of a campaign for the local YMCA.

It’s a lesson he’s happy to share with his clients.



# Rhode Island 2020 Census

## Making sure Rhode Island gets counted

By Jessica David, Executive Vice President  
of Strategy & Community Investments

Once every ten years our country does something amazing: it sets out to count every person living in the United States. It's a difficult but important task—and one that is particularly essential here in Rhode Island. This is because the political and economic stakes are huge, yet we have a disproportionate number of “hard to count” populations.

The good news is that our community seems ready to step up to the challenge. This is evident from the sixty applications we received for Rhode Island Census 2020 Outreach Grants totaling nearly \$1.2 million.

The proposals to conduct outreach and education activities, focused specifically on increasing census response rates in communities that have been historically undercounted or are vulnerable to an undercount in 2020, were submitted by Rhode Island-based nonprofit organizations, municipal governments, public agencies like libraries and schools, houses of worship, and community-based groups. We received applications from several groups that had not previously applied to the Foundation for funding.

Twenty-six organizations received a total of \$299,000 (see sidebar) in the first of two rounds of funding after having been selected by a committee of community members. Funded projects support awareness-building, outreach, and engagement activities to make every Rhode Islander aware of the census, understand the importance of being counted, and feel safe, invested, and easily able to participate in the 2020 count. Second round grantees, expected to total at least \$200,000, will be announced in February.

Joining the Foundation to generously fund the census initiative are local philanthropist Bhikhaji Maneckji, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Rhode Island, Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island, the Nellie Mae Foundation, the Service Employees International Union 1199 New England, and United Way of Rhode Island.

### Rhode Island Census 2020 Outreach Grantees

- Alliance of Rhode Island Southeast Asians for Education
- Amos House
- Center for Southeast Asians
- Children's Friend and Service
- City of Newport
- Clinica Esperanza/Hope Clinic
- East Providence Public Library
- Elisha Project
- Fuerza Laboral
- Generation Citizen
- Genesis Center
- House of Manna Ministries
- Meals on Wheels of Rhode Island
- Museum of Work & Culture
- NeighborWorks Blackstone River Valley
- ONE Neighborhood Builders
- Progreso Latino, Inc.
- Providence Community Opportunity Corporation
- Ready to Learn Providence
- Refugee Development Center
- Rhode Island Professional Latino Association
- RI Coalition for the Homeless
- The College Crusade of Rhode Island
- Thundermist Health Center
- Turning Around Ministries, Inc.
- West Elmwood Housing Development Corporation



Census data is vital to ensuring the basic political equality that is central to our democracy, and an undercount could mean reduced funding and unequal representation for Rhode Islanders. The Census protects this equality in three primary ways:

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1. Census data are used to reapportion seats in the House of Representatives and to draw legislative districts for state and local governments, ensuring fair political representation.
2. Census data are used annually to allocate \$3.8 billion for Rhode Island in federal programs and resources, and those numbers are set only once a decade.
3. State leaders, businesses, and other decision-makers use census data to make critical investment and economic decisions, track civil rights disparities and enforcement priorities, and make informed decisions about the needs of residents.







### Rhode Islanders come together in support of education

On a recent Saturday in December, we welcomed more than 350 parents, students, teachers, school and district level administrators, business leaders, community members, and nonprofit sector leaders to MakeItHappenRI. They came to brainstorm, discuss, and develop tactics that have the potential to put our state on the path to a world-class public education system.

Last year at this time, the Foundation identified the need for a long-term plan, so we convened and led a broad group of senior leaders in the education sector with this goal in mind.

“We believe that to truly improve outcomes for all Rhode Islanders, we need to chart a course and stay the course, one that is committed to high achievement and to equity,” said Foundation President and CEO Neil D. Steinberg. “This is our Olympic quest, our moon shot.”

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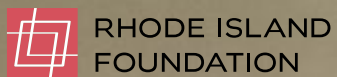
**Lead.** We have earned the trust of our donors, community leaders, and Rhode Islanders through a century of effective investments, strategic grants, and responsible decisions.

**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.

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