

PURPOSE



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NEW HAMPSHIRE CHARITABLE FOUNDATION
SPRING/SUMMER 2023

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Cover: Conservation Law Foundation Environmental Justice Advocate Arnold Mikolo at the Arlington Street Community Center in Nashua, NH

THE NEW HAMPSHIRE CHARITABLE FOUNDATION is dedicated to making New Hampshire a more just, sustainable and vibrant community where everyone can thrive. As New Hampshire's statewide community foundation, we are the place where generosity meets the dedication and ingenuity of nonprofits and the potential of New Hampshire students. Since 1962, thousands of people have entrusted their charitable resources to the Foundation, creating a perpetual source of philanthropic capital. That generosity makes it possible for the Foundation to award more than \$60 million in grants and scholarships every year and collaborate and lead on high-impact initiatives.

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TOGETHER WE THRIVE, OUTSIDE

By Richard Ober, president and CEO



Environmental degradation and the climate crisis are not equal opportunity problems.

When my nonprofit career evolved from the environment to community philanthropy in 2008, it felt seamless. The two fields share a lot of DNA — New Hampshire people caring for the places they call home through generosity, direct action and sensible public policy. Just as our Foundation is increasingly focused on addressing inequities that undermine shared prosperity, so too is the state's environmental community.

Environmental degradation and the climate crisis are not equal opportunity problems: 90% of New Hampshire residents of color live in areas that are "nature deprived," compared to 17% of white residents. Extreme heat sickens and kills more people than all other natural disasters, and disproportionately affects people who are older with lower incomes and those with impaired health. Poor communities are more likely to be near landfills and industrial sites than affluent ones. Richer people can migrate more easily from flood-prone areas.

That's why it is heartening to hear my conservation friends define success in different ways than we

did in the 1990s and 2000s. As Lois Shea writes in this issue of Purpose, the Monadnock Conservancy put as much effort into conserving three acres of accessible and safe open space next to the Winchester Learning Center as we once did saving 300. In Manchester, The Nature Conservancy invited the entire community to design the All Persons Trail. And in Nashua, Conservation Law Foundation is convening largely black and brown residents whose neighborhood is threatened by an asphalt plant.

Rosalind Erwin, our lead environmental senior program officer, set out to learn how these and other groups are incorporating diversity, equity, inclusion and justice into their work. We listened carefully, and the input will shape our environmental grantmaking going forward.

Our purpose as a Foundation is to help make New Hampshire a more just, sustainable and vibrant community where everyone can thrive. That means being clear about who faces barriers to thriving, honest about why that is, and bold about what it will take to remove those barriers. The state's remarkable conservation community is doing just that. ■



Ebony Martin, a peer-to-peer support worker at the Greater Manchester Community Mental Health Center in Manchester, heads to a client meeting

Photo by David Lane, Union Leader

SUPPORTING BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Ten nonprofit community mental health centers from Colebrook to Salem that provide ongoing and emergency behavioral health services to New Hampshire residents are receiving \$500,000 in grants over two years to help children, youth and families who are struggling in the wake of the pandemic.

“New Hampshire’s children and families were dealing with significant behavioral health issues prior to COVID-19, and the pandemic has only exacerbated those,” said Traci Fowler, director of behavioral health at the Charitable Foundation.

“We believe that now, more than ever, our community mental health centers need flexible philanthropic funds to be able to respond to community needs in real time. The Foundation’s investment complements significant federal and state dollars that are also working to support and enhance New Hampshire’s critical community mental health infrastructure.”

Combined, the 10 centers assisted about 60,000 people in 2022, most of whom are insured by Medicaid. ■

SCHOLARSHIP HONORS A NEW HAMPSHIRE LEGEND

John Harrigan was an avid newsman, a passionate outdoorsman, a generous spirit, a valued community member and a keeper of North Country knowledge and lore. As editor of the Colebrook News & Sentinel, he was a Pulitzer Prize finalist for breaking news in 1998. Harrigan died in December 2022.

The New Hampshire Wildlife Coalition, which Harrigan co-founded with Chris Schadler, has created a scholarship

at the Charitable Foundation in his honor. The John Harrigan Memorial Scholarship Fund will help New Hampshire students who are studying journalism and/or environmental science or policy. The fund will disburse annual awards to students studying toward an undergraduate or graduate degree or at a certificate-generating school of continuing education.

To contribute to the John Harrigan Memorial Scholarship Fund, visit give.nhcf.org/JohnHarriganScholarship. ■



GEOLOGY 101

The 2023 Christa McAuliffe Sabbatical has been awarded to 8th-grade science teacher Greg Stott of Hanover. Stott plans to produce a documentary showing how the Ice Age affected the Connecticut River Valley and develop a curriculum to help students all over the state notice and better understand the geology of their own backyards. The sabbatical, created in 1986 in honor of the Concord High School teacher and astronaut, gives an exemplary New Hampshire teacher a year off with pay and a materials budget to bring a great educational idea to fruition. ■

MELINDA MOSIER NAMED VP OF DONOR ENGAGEMENT AND PHILANTHROPY SERVICES



Melinda Mosier of Keene has been named vice president of the Donor Engagement and Philanthropy Services Department at the Charitable Foundation. Melinda has been with the Foundation since 2009, first serving as a senior program officer in the Foundation’s Community Impact Department and as director of donor services since 2016.

“Melinda is uniquely qualified for this role,” said Foundation President and CEO Richard Ober. “She is a strategic and thoughtful leader who will help the Foundation deepen our engagement with generous donors and advance the priorities of our strategic plan, Together We Thrive.”

Melinda takes over from Rick Peck, who served as vice president of development and philanthropy services since 2017. ■

KUDOS



Photo by Luke Tracy

Franklin Pierce University awarded Foundation Board Member **JerriAnne Boggis** with the Honorable Walter R. Peterson Citizen Leader Award at its commencement ceremony in May.



The **NH Center for Nonprofits** announced the recipients of its 2023 Nonprofit Impact Awards: **NFI North** and **Belknap House** received Nonprofit Impact Awards. Kerry Norton, executive director of **Hope On Haven Hill**, received the New Hampshire Impact Award; and Douglas Hall and Kate Griffiths Harrison received Board Impact Awards.



HAVEN, the state’s largest violence prevention and support services agency, was named Nonprofit of the Year by Business NH Magazine. The Foundation sponsors this award and presents the recipient with a \$5,000 grant in honor of Walter J. Dunfey, New Hampshire entrepreneur and philanthropist.



WHERE EQUITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT CONVERGE

The Foundation is committed to incorporating equity and racial justice across its work — including in its environmental grantmaking

Conservation Law Foundation and Granite State Organizing Project staff working with residents in Nashua

On a midwinter night, more than a dozen people assemble in the sanctuary of the Iglesia Pentecostal in Nashua for an urgent conversation about the environment. They have come to talk about how a proposed asphalt plant might affect the environment of this majority Latino and Black neighborhood — and to organize against it.

A woman named Lucia raises her hand. “I am worried about the long-term effects of this,” she says, about the plant proposed in an industrial zone that sits just 800 feet from a residential area. “We don’t want our people to get sick. We want to have a safe neighborhood.”

Arnold Mikolo, an environmental justice advocate for Conservation Law Foundation, stands at the front of the sanctuary speaking through a Spanish language interpreter.

“We have the power,” he says to the assembly, “...the power to decide what our neighborhood will look like. Your voice really matters.”

Every person in the group pledges to spread the word, to distribute flyers and to attend an upcoming planning board meeting to show opposition to the plant.

Mikolo’s organizing and advocacy work is part of a growing environmental justice movement, which makes clear that “the environment” is not just the beckoning woods and streams and mountains of New Hampshire. It is also the neighborhoods with unsafe streets, disproportionately high rates of asthma, apartments with lead paint and where people have little or no access to green space or fresh-grown food.

The attainment of environmental justice in New Hampshire, Mikolo said, would mean “equal participation of

everyone, regardless of race, income, religion — but also fair treatment in distributing environmental benefits and alleviating the environmental burden that marginalized communities have been carrying for years.”

Mikolo’s work has been focused primarily on Manchester. A three-year grant from the Foundation supported the hiring of a second advocate, Jordan Thompson, to expand CLF’s environmental justice work to Nashua.

Together we thrive

The Foundation’s new strategic plan, Together We Thrive, represents a commitment to incorporating equity, racial justice and economic security across its work — including in its environmental grantmaking. Many voices are informing the Foundation’s new environmental strategy, including

those who responded to surveys of the environmental and social services fields, interviews with grantees, and community members who gave input about environmental grantmaking and the Foundation’s strategic plan.

While many organizations that provided input are already incorporating diversity, equity and inclusion in their work, they reported that the field needs more time and funding to do so; increased funding to grassroots organizations; funding to promote resiliency in the face of climate change; and time and resources for learning, community outreach and partnership-building.

Based on that input, the Foundation is considering ways to focus its environmental grantmaking on increased environmental justice efforts; promoting increased access to the outdoors; helping conservation nonprofits to

deepen community engagement and partnerships and support learning communities to incorporate equity more fully; and protecting people and ecosystems from the worsening effects of the climate crisis. In just the past 10 years, the Charitable Foundation has made nearly \$70 million in grants to help protect the environment.

“Open space and natural resources are among New Hampshire’s most treasured assets,” said Rosalind Erwin, who manages environmental grantmaking at the Foundation. “But access to those resources and their benefits is inherently unequal, and has been for centuries — starting with the dispossession of Native Americans from their land. Today, many barriers exist that come between communities of color, people with disabilities and people with low incomes and the enjoyment of and benefit from the outdoors. The Foundation wants to do its part — alongside many others — to remove those barriers and inequities.”

Nature deprived

“The Nature Gap,” a study by the Center for American Progress, found that 90% of people of color in New Hampshire live in a census tract considered “nature deprived” compared with just 17% of white people. Low-income communities and communities of color are more likely to face the negative impacts of an unsafe environment, with greater proximity to landfills, industrial plants and unsafe streets and housing. These communities are also poised to suffer the greatest impacts of the climate crisis, in part due to their distance from natural areas that buffer against extreme heat, poor air quality and floods.

Tension and complexity are inherent in this work. The environmental and

philanthropic fields have long lacked diversity in staffing. And the land that is now New Hampshire is the unceded homeland of the Abenaki people. Foundation staff are in conversation with Native people, building relationships, nurturing partnerships and learning.

“We are learning about the complexities, the needs and opportunities, and are grateful for the input of indigenous communities who have always been present in this region,” said Sandeep Bikram Shah, Foundation senior program officer and racial justice advisor.

By and for community

Existing efforts by New Hampshire nonprofits highlight the possibilities and promise of incorporating equity in environmental work.

At the All Persons Trail at the Manchester Cedar Swamp Preserve, people who use wheelchairs are on the wide, hard-packed trail almost every day that there is not snow on the ground. The trail, a project of The Nature Conservancy, incorporates Abenaki teachings about natural history on artfully designed signposts. Critical information and an audio tour are provided in both English and Spanish, benches provide resting spots and destinations along the 1.2-mile loop, bathrooms are handicapped accessible and gender-neutral. TNC worked with the Manchester Transit Authority to add a city bus stop at the parking lot. The trail is 10 minutes from downtown Manchester — the state’s largest and most diverse population center.

Hundreds of people gave input into the design and features of the trail. “We wanted to build this with the

[\[Continued, p. 8\]](#)



Visitors check out the new Cedar Swamp All Persons Trail map on opening day, Earth Day 2022

Photo by Rooted in Light Media

community, not for the community,” said Sheila Vargas Torres, community partnerships manager at TNC.

In 2021, about 450 people a month visited the 640-acre preserve. In 2022, after the All Persons Trail opened, monthly visitation to the preserve almost tripled.

Other nonprofits around the state have opened or are working on accessible trails, and TNC published an extensive report on the All Persons Trail to assist other organizations in similar efforts.

TNC has also piloted a program with the Manchester Transit Authority to run buses from the city to other outdoor recreation spots, including state parks.

“Being outdoors is really good for people’s physical and mental health,” Vargas said. “Why should that opportunity be blocked for some people?”

And nonprofits are teaming up to bring environmental benefits to more people. At the Winchester Learning Center, an early-childhood education center, 85% of children who attend come from families with financial need. The Monadnock Conservancy helped the center negotiate, fund and buy a connecting

parcel of land and create a community nature trail and outdoor learning space. The trail includes stretches that are accessible to strollers and wheelchairs, and kids who attend the center now spend part of almost every day in nature.

“The number of children who don’t have access to playgrounds, or who live in apartments between the river and the road — they have nowhere to play outside,” said center Executive Director Roberta Royce. The trail is open to the public and also provides a throughway for children who live in nearby apartments to get to the downtown area without having to walk or ride bikes on the heavily traveled Route 10.

Other partnerships are active across the state: Land trusts have created community gardens; the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests has worked with the Black Heritage Trail of New Hampshire to document and mark the Black history of land under its stewardship — and build a sense of belonging in the outdoors. And more.

Addressing climate change

Nonprofits are also working to

promote renewable energy, energy efficiency and other climate mitigation strategies — all areas in which New Hampshire lags behind its neighboring states, which have more robust public policy and leadership on climate issues. Climate change affects everyone, but low-income communities and communities of color are affected most.

Mikolo points to a simple example of that in New Hampshire. Just walk or bike south on one of Manchester’s “tree streets” on a hot summer day, he says. When you cross Bridge Street and leave the wealthier, whiter part of town, the tree canopy disappears, traffic is more congested and the temperature rises perceptibly.

The protection of natural resources in New Hampshire should benefit every person who calls New Hampshire home. That means hearing from many voices and considering many perspectives.

“You want to empower community members who are impacted to be the leading voices,” Mikolo said. “You want to have them engaged and activated and at the forefront. We have a long way to go, but we have started the journey.” ■

DATA TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Gene Martin recently joined the New Hampshire Fiscal Policy Institute as executive director. NHFPI is an independent, nonpartisan source of research and data that is relied upon by lawmakers, journalists, community leaders and the public. Its mission is to explore, develop and promote public policies that foster economic opportunity and prosperity for all New Hampshire residents.

Why was this the right next chapter in your life’s work?

I have two daughters. Having children helps you think about how you can make a difference. NHFPI is an independent nonpartisan policy entity that is here to be a resource to policymakers, community leaders and the press to help make our state a better place. It was a perfect fit to make a difference for communities.

Why is data such an important part of making a difference?

If you want to have policy solutions to our state’s challenges, you have to look to the data to inform those decisions. And I think it is important for us to be grounded in facts and to provide analysis so policymakers are able to make informed decisions.

You study a huge array of issues — from the budget to revenue and taxes, the economy, health and education, income and poverty. How do you decide where to focus?

For NHFPI, we ask: “Can we have an impact, who’s doing the work, and do we have the capacity to be able to do it

and do it well?” When we think about the state budget and revenue policy, we are seen as the leading nonprofit in the state doing this kind of analysis. It’s also important to remember the state budget is more than just numbers on a page. We are talking about people’s lives, and looking at how the state budget affects everyday Granite Staters.

In a time of such polarization in civic life, the need for nonpartisan, independent data collection and analysis may be more important than ever.

If we’re going to have a policy conversation, we all should have the same set of facts. One benefit of the NHFPI is that we are respected on both sides of the aisle. We are happy to work with legislators from any party who are interested in having data to help inform their decisions.

What are three data points about New Hampshire that you wish everyone knew?

We have the second-highest median age — we’re actually tied for second place with Vermont and West Virginia; 58% of students leave the state to go to college; and multichild households often exceed

their monthly mortgage or rent payment on childcare costs. We are going to be in an even more challenging workforce position in 20 years if we do not start to face these headwinds.

You are sort of “Mr. New Hampshire.” You graduated from Manchester public schools, worked at Plymouth State and in the State House, you’re working on a doctorate at UNH, serve on the boards of Leadership NH and the Manchester Historic Association, plus the finance committee of the Black Heritage Trail of New Hampshire, and are president of your local Lions Club. Why are those volunteer efforts important to you?

I feel like I have a moral obligation to pay it forward to the community. I lived in a homeless shelter as a kid. I was the first person to go to college in my family. I always felt that it was my obligation because folks helped me along the way. It is why I come to this work and why I am involved with organizations to help make New Hampshire a better place. I think it’s important to leave the woodpile higher than you found it. ■

IN OUR COMMUNITIES

Nonprofits are improving the quality of life in every corner of New Hampshire



Photo by TARA Photography

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF LEARNING AND FUN

The Children's Museum of New Hampshire is celebrating its 40th anniversary in 2023. Beloved among three generations, the Dover museum has events, exhibits and activities scheduled throughout the year to mark the occasion. More than 110,000 people visit the museum annually. A recent grant supported the museum's Reach All Initiative, which offers free and reduced-price admission for families in need.

CHANGING LIVES THROUGH MUSIC

Upbeat New Hampshire in Nashua provides string instrument instruction and performance opportunities for more than 160 students from grades three to 12 at no cost to the school district. Upbeat helps build musical talent and self-worth, while joining students with different backgrounds in a common goal. In the fall, it will be part of afterschool programs at the Nashua Police Athletic League. A Foundation multiyear operating grant is supporting its work.



Courtesy Photo



Courtesy Photo

A LIFE-SAVING VAN

The New Hampshire Harm Reduction Coalition's Overdose Prevention Van has hit the road with help from Foundation funding. The van — the first of its kind in the state — is equipped with vital overdose prevention supplies, including fentanyl test strips and naloxone, wound-care kits, Covid tests and more. The van also serves as a drop-off and disposal point for used syringes. The services are free. For more information or to request the van, visit www.nhhrc.org/mobileservices.

CAREER PATHWAYS FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION

Foundation funding helped to launch a program to train students in Conway for careers in the North Country's growing outdoor tourism industry. Students at the Mount Washington Valley Career and Technical Center at Kennett High School can now learn wilderness first aid, bicycle repair and swift water rescue. The school is working with researchers from the University of New Hampshire and another regional learning sciences organization to link the courses with STEM skills.



Photo by Joseph Viger



ALL TEENS WELCOME

The Avenue A Teen + Community Center in Antrim is a place for young people to learn about being part of a community and how to build belonging, while knowing they are in a place created for them by a community that supports them. A program of The Grapevine Family and Community Resource Center, Avenue A is the only teen center in the Monadnock Region. Foundation funding supports the teen center and Grapevine.

BUILDING PROJECTS AND COMMUNITY

The Makers Mill in Wolfeboro is up and running, and offering workshops and classes in everything from welding, laser cutting and metal fabricating to jewelry and furniture making and web design. It also offers a tool lending library, fix-it clinics, training on how to use tools and more. The nonprofit is building on and complementing existing efforts to support career pathways, workforce development and the arts. An operating grant from the Foundation is supporting its work.



A WARM MEAL AND MUCH MORE

For more than 6,000 seniors or adults with disabilities in and around Grafton County, the Grafton County Senior Citizens Council, its eight senior centers and its community partnerships offer transportation, meals, activities, health and financial guidance and companionship. New Hampshire has the second-oldest median age in the country, behind Maine. The Foundation supports the Council's work, most recently with a multiyear grant for operating support.

Laura Milliken (right) speaks with colleagues at the Legislative Office Building in Concord

TO MAKE NH HUNGER FREE

NH Hunger Solutions focuses on the policies and systems that need to change to help families avoid food insecurity

Tens of thousands of people in New Hampshire cannot say with any degree of confidence that their families will have enough to eat tonight — or tomorrow, or next week. Maybe dinner will just be instant noodles for a while, and maybe adults will skip meals during school vacations so that their kids have enough.

“Food insecurity” is a U.S. Department of Agriculture term to describe that reality.

According to a February survey by the U.S. Census Bureau, 75,000 adults in New Hampshire reported that there had not been enough food to eat in their households in the past week. That is more people than live in Concord and Portsmouth combined. Feeding America estimates that

one in 11 children in New Hampshire faces hunger.

As pandemic-era relief aid has wound down, the number of people experiencing food insecurity has risen. Direct-service organizations — including the New Hampshire Food Bank and hundreds of food pantries, soup kitchens and other nonprofits — are working diligently to get food to people who need it.

One nonprofit is boosting that critical work by focusing on the policies and systems that need to change to help families avoid food insecurity in the first place.

NH Hunger Solutions advocates to end food insecurity, improve access to nutritious food, and address hunger’s root causes. The organization has

been key in building momentum and awareness to improve systems so more people have consistent access to nutritious food.

“We’re trying to look upstream and make sure that people aren’t hungry in the first place,” said NH Hunger Solutions Executive Director Laura Milliken, “so pantries and food banks only have to meet emergency needs — which is what they are meant for.”

One “upstream” area that is a focus for NH Hunger Solutions is the state’s low rates of participation in federal nutrition assistance programs — including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and free and reduced-price school

meals. Far fewer people participate in those programs than are eligible for them — which means that grocery money is being left unspent while people go hungry. There are many reasons why: People might not realize they are eligible or that help is available, they might face barriers in the application process — and they may feel deep shame about asking for help.

Milliken said those barriers are “largely surmountable” — and NH Hunger Solutions is working on surmounting them.

NH Hunger Solutions hires community consultants who have experienced food insecurity to advise its work to address nutrition equity — and to participate in the regional food-access councils and coalitions that the organization supports, participates in and provides technical assistance to around the state. NH Hunger Solutions is also at the hub of a wide-ranging partnership working to create a nutrition equity plan for the state.

Tricia Wilcox of Portsmouth works as a “lunch lady” at her son’s elementary school — and advises NH Hunger Solutions. She sees families who are ashamed to apply for help, and families who need the help but just miss the eligibility cutoff.

One family, she said, always qualified for free and reduced-price school meals — and their three kids ate breakfast and lunch at school. Then mom switched to a night shift to better accommodate her kids’ schedules. The shift differential she earned meant the family no longer qualified for the program — but it was also not enough to cover the cost of buying breakfast and lunch at school. (For three kids, at Tricia’s school, weekday breakfast and lunch would cost about \$300 a month.) She

“We’re trying to look upstream and make sure that people aren’t hungry in the first place so pantries and food banks only have to meet emergency needs — which is what they are meant for.”

—Laura Milliken, NH Hunger Solutions Executive Director

sees families who are waiting for their tax refunds to come in so they can pay off their lunch debt.

Wilcox herself was once hesitant to apply for reduced-price breakfast and lunch for her child — even though her family qualified at the time. The process felt daunting, and she was worried her family would be judged. She struggled to feel like she “belonged” amidst the affluence of the Seacoast. She did finally apply, and recalls the relief of “not having to worry about ‘where am I going to get that money from?’”

“I would like to see the poverty guidelines changed,” Wilcox said. “I don’t think that they are an accurate description of who is actually living in poverty. I want there to be less hungry people and less stigma about it.”

NH Hunger Solutions is supporting schools and communities in expanding participation in breakfast and lunch programs. The state ranks 47th in participation in school breakfast programs among eligible children. When kids eat breakfast at school, their academic performance, behavior and health all improve.

New Hampshire participation also flags in the federal SNAP program. Only about half the people who are eligible for SNAP are enrolled. Participation has been shown to reduce food insecurity and correlate with better health for families.

NH Hunger Solutions was

instrumental in advocating for a new law mandating that the state develop an outreach plan to educate people about SNAP eligibility and help them to apply. The plan is set to launch this year. NH Hunger Solutions successfully advocated for the state to increase eligibility for SNAP to families living at 200 percent of the federal poverty level. (The level was increased in January, from its prior cutoff of 185 percent of the federal poverty level.)

Foundation investment has helped NH Hunger Solutions grow. Milliken came on board in 2020, and the organization hired a full-time deputy director in 2021. NH Hunger Solutions was able to secure significant additional funding as a result of the Foundation’s support.

The organization now also has staff working on community engagement and child nutrition.

New Hampshire has among the highest median household income in the country and a low overall rate of poverty. But averages mask deep pockets of poverty, hunger and hopelessness that are the experience of too many Granite Staters.

“Let’s celebrate the economic advantages that many folks in New Hampshire have,” Milliken said, “but let’s try to make sure people aren’t hungry.” ■

LEARN MORE @ [NHHUNGERSOLUTIONS.ORG](https://www.nhhungersolutions.org)



Tinotenda Duche (left) and Nishimwe Bitimea at the University of New Hampshire in Durham

AN AMERICAN STORY

Elizabeth Bickel's parents were immigrants who found ways to help other immigrants — a scholarship in her name continues that legacy

When Tinotenda Duche was a small child and still a stranger in this country, a third-grade boy sneered at her and told her she would “never succeed because you’re a foreigner.” She knew she would prove him wrong.

Elizabeth Bickel's family had once been strangers in this country as well. They remembered what that felt like, and made it a point to help new immigrants in any way they could.

When Bickel died in 2021, she left a bequest to create a scholarship fund at the Charitable Foundation with a focus on assisting first- and second-generation Americans to get the education they need to thrive.

Bickel's scholarship fund now is helping Tinotenda make her way through the University of New Hampshire, where she is majoring in biochemistry on her way to becoming a medical doctor.

“The scholarship has helped me

tremendously. I am able to focus a lot more on my academics and on being able to excel,” said Tinotenda, who is also working as a resident assistant and is responsible for the cost of her own education. She is now in her third year of study at UNH and has dreams of attending Tufts Medical School.

Elizabeth Bickel had a strong sense of her own good fortune — her own mother, Irene Zalewski-Dobrowolski, was a medical doctor and her father, William Dobrowolski, was a dentist. They supported her throughout her education at Michigan State University. She became a professional landscape designer and ran her own business. Her husband, Thomas Bickel, was a mathematics professor at Dartmouth College. Thomas Bickel died in 2017.

“She felt the right thing to do was to give back,” said Eric Janson, an attorney who helped Elizabeth with her estate. “The most important thing to her was providing scholarships to students who

may not have been as privileged or as lucky as she was.”

The Bickel scholarship is unrestricted and so may be awarded to any student; Elizabeth's preference was to focus on first- and second-generation Americans. Unrestricted scholarships help the Foundation — the largest provider of publicly available student aid in New Hampshire — to distribute scholarship dollars where the need is greatest.

The first awards were made from the Elizabeth I. Bickel Scholarship Fund in 2022. Forty-six students have received awards already, and the fund is positioned to help New Hampshire students in perpetuity.

Nishimwe Bitimea of Manchester became a licensed nursing assistant and started working while she was just a junior in high school. She is now attending UNH with help from an Elizabeth I. Bickel Scholarship. She carries a full load of classes while also working as a program assistant at

“The scholarship has helped me tremendously. I am able to focus a lot more on my academics and on being able to excel.”

—Tinotenda Duche

Lamprey Health Care in Newmarket. She is majoring in healthcare management and policy with a focus on public health. Her dream is to work in healthcare management and help people who face barriers to care to be able to get the care they need. (She also has minors in both international affairs and women's and gender studies.)

The scholarship award helped Nishimwe continue her education uninterrupted. Without the funding, she would have had to take a semester off to work full-time and save, and would not have graduated with her class.

“With the degree, I really hope to make an impact in my community,” Nishimwe said.

Elizabeth was deeply concerned about the ever-widening income inequality in the U.S. She read widely — plants, Eastern religion and politics were three of her favorite topics. She volunteered helping survivors of domestic violence

and was a devoted volunteer at the Canillas Community Garden in Lebanon, which provides people with garden plots for growing fresh vegetables and flowers.

Cherry Angell was a longtime friend of Elizabeth's who volunteered with her at the community garden.

“She was quite a lady, a very, very smart and capable woman,” Angell said. She recalls Elizabeth talking about the scholarship, and her own family's story of immigration. “Her parents had been immigrants, and she wanted to help other people. I think it's wonderful.”

When Elizabeth spoke to Foundation staff about creating her scholarship, she explained how her family had emigrated from Poland, and that her parents always found ways of supporting New Americans — helping to pay for education, offering a place to stay, helping people find work.

The Elizabeth I. Bickel Scholarship is the next chapter of that American story. ■



Elizabeth Bickel (left) and her friend Cherry Angell working in the Canillas Community Garden in Lebanon, NH



Help students get the education they need

Scholarships help New Hampshire students who have limited resources pay for the education they need.

The Foundation administers more than 450 individual scholarship funds, set up by generous families and individuals.

Scholarship funds can be set up to be open to any qualified applicant, or to support students from a particular community, graduates from a specific high school, or those entering certain fields of study. Scholarships can help cover the costs of a two- or four-year degree, or a trade certificate or credential. They can be set up to be renewable, to help students throughout their college careers.

The Foundation's Student Aid team processes all applications, selects recipients with assistance from volunteer scholarship committees and awards scholarships to about 1,800 students every year.

Scholarship funds can be set up to continue in perpetuity — so that your gift continues to help students for generations to come. You may make additional tax-deductible gifts of any amount into your fund at any time, and you can also invite others to contribute to your fund.

Scholarship funds may be established with \$25,000 — or you may make contributions of any amount to an existing scholarship fund.

To learn more about setting up a scholarship fund at the Foundation, please contact Laura Rauscher, director of philanthropy, at 800-464-6641 ext. 274 or Laura.Rauscher@nhcf.org.

ART FOR ALL

Julianne Gadoury grew up in Pittsfield, acutely aware that she and her schoolmates did not get the same educational opportunities as children in wealthy towns — including in the arts.

Now, with art and business degrees, her life's work is to expand access to the arts — and channel the power of the arts to improve the New Hampshire community for everyone.

Julianne became director at Kimball Jenkins, a community cultural center in Concord, just as COVID struck. KJ moved programming online, offered free camp and after-school programs, paid artists to work with kids in state custody and offered KJ's outdoor space to other arts organizations. The KJ team fundraised incessantly to make it all happen.

Since 2020, KJ has expanded its programming and more than doubled its reach.

A paid summer internship program now has 15 kids from struggling communities creating murals that showcase their lives and experience. Exhibitions and artists-in-residence programs feature voices that have been historically excluded. Kids facing barriers attend summer camp for free.

Julianne believes in the power of the arts to address challenging problems.

"I believe every single sector, industry and person has a role to play in lifting up humanity," she said. ■

