

COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION
OF
WESTERN
MASSACHUSETTS



TRUST EQUITY ABUNDANCE

JOIN US TODAY IN SUPPORT OF THE ANNUAL FUND



Dear Friends,

It is an exciting time at the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts! The Foundation is strengthening its work by centering three important concepts – **Trust**, **Equity**, and **Abundance** (T.E.A.).

Can we count on you to make a gift to our Annual Fund this year? A generous donation will sustain our grantmaking and operations, which helps us to #KeepPouringTEA.

As your Community Foundation, we invite you to put your **trust** in our philanthropic services team, as we work to inspire greater charitable giving in our region. We aim to responsibly steward the financial resources we hold, while investing in nonprofit partners and individuals with potential to do the most good. Our neighbors continue to count on us to respond to urgent needs, including large-scale disaster recovery efforts like the Farm Resiliency Fund, providing relief to farmers affected by the devastating floods in July.

With a focus on **equity**, we are committed to achieving lasting community impact. We continue to review all the tools in our toolbox to employ more equitable policies and practices that will advance our strategic priorities. The Foundation's staff reflects the growing diversity in Western Mass and we engage with a broad range of community volunteers to gather valued perspectives on our programs and initiatives. For instance, we are exploring how the Racial Equity and Social Justice Fund can best advance racial justice and encourage movement building.

We believe that there is **abundance** all around. When it is harnessed collectively and effectively, we can create enough opportunity for families, artists, and nonprofits to thrive. There is enough knowledge available to inform effective practice within the organization. And there is enough resilience, agility, and positive energy in our region to drive meaningful, systemic social change.

Let's come together and share what we have!

Your support for the Community Foundation's Annual Fund this year would be greatly appreciated. An unrestricted gift will allow us to invest more in the arts ecosystem and educational pathways, nimbly respond to critical issues as they arise, and activate further giving in our Valley. So please join us for T.E.A. this campaign season. We would love to share with you what we have brewing!

With gratitude,



Megan Burke
President & CEO



Paul Murphy
Trustee Chair



Karin L. George
Trustee Vice Chair

ARTS ANGELS FUND

Amidst persistent challenges posed by an ongoing pandemic, the Art Angels giving circle originally established in 1998 by a group of artists and arts lovers in the Valley, faced an intricate predicament. Although its financial balance remained promising, the fundholders, who posed immense dedication and insight, found themselves “losing steam, not of heart but of energy.”

In the beginning, its anonymous contributors worked through the Gaean Fund, a donor advised fund (DAF), advised by Art Angels member Joan Hastings and her husband, Wil. Guided by the profound trust the Hastings had for the Foundation, its philanthropic expertise, local connection, and increasing network, the Art Angels chose to continue with the Community Foundation by creating a new DAF, The Art Angels Fund, when Joan became sick. Since then, the Fund has distributed close to \$500,000 to nearly 100 individual groups and projects in the Valley, not including 15 years of work through the Gaean Fund.

After a very meaningful year of participatory BIPOC-led grant making, the Art Angels made a poignant and strategic decision to donate the Fund's



remaining balance to ValleyCreates, the Foundation's arts grant program. More than a mere transaction, it symbolizes the Art Angels' trust in the Foundation's ability to carry forward with the Fund's principles of having the voices of lower-income, rural and urban, Black, indigenous, and people of color involved in the grantmaking process, ensuring that the transformative power of art continues to flourish.

In speaking of ValleyCreates' community advisors, long-time Art Angels fund advisor Jenny Ladd shares, “They are thoughtful, considerate people who want equity and justice... they're not part of some monolithic, corporate massiveness. They are much more Us...the arts are fundamental to making sure that our future has a vitality and a life to it...a required toolkit in our culture.”



ALL FARMERS

In the heart of Hampden County, a remarkable community thrives. All Farmers, an organization of over sixty refugee and immigrant farmers from Central Africa, Latin America, and South Asia (now primarily residing in Springfield and West Springfield), devote themselves to cultivating more than just crops.

All Farmers has been envisioning ways to overcome the obstacles presented by site instability and short-term planning, both of which have hindered investments in essential infrastructure. Since the founding of the organization in 2017, its farmers have longed for permanence and a vibrant, community-centered farm space for their families.

With a strong vision and strategic plan, All Farmers pooled resources to purchase sixty acres of prime farmland in Agawam to sustain 300 farms and gardens and a robust, local food network. In tandem with existing farmers' markets, they will also sell their produce at a new farm stand in West Springfield.

Thanks to a collaborative partnership with Kestrel Land Trust, All Farmers was able to identify and permanently safeguard its recently acquired land. "The easement that Kestrel Land Trust will hold on the Agawam farms will ensure that new generations of farmers in the Springfield area will always have a place to put down roots, both in the community and in the land," shared Conservation Director Mark Wamsley.



In a realm where conservation has historically favored affluent communities, this partnership signifies a pivotal shift toward inclusivity and equitable land conservation.

"The communities we serve have already had enough upheaval in their lives and it was important to them to know that they could stay where they were farming and have that consistency," said Executive Director of All Farmers, Hannah Spare. "The community farm is huge and peaceful. It's like a nature preserve near downtown Springfield. The vision is obviously farming, but it is also a community space focused on a supportive social fabric. We'd like to put a meeting pavilion and different play structures in the long-term. We want the kids to be engaged and safe on an active farm sight and playing alongside their parents."

In 2022, All Farmers received a Flexible Funding grant from the Community Foundation, helping farmers and their families step closer to their dreams of prosperity. Providing access to farmland clears the path, and puts trust, equity, and abundance into action so that they may realize their inclusive vision.



Strategic Vision

We are committed to increasing equity and opportunity so that all residents of Franklin, Hampden, and Hampshire counties have access to a satisfying quality of life.



SERVING HAMPDEN, HAMPSHIRE, AND FRANKLIN COUNTIES



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To make a tax-deductable gift, use the enclosed envelop or donate safely and securely online at communityfoundation.org/donatenow. If you would like to contribute appreciated securities, please call us at (413) 417-6384.

"I love being involved in the Community Foundation's Annual Fund as it enables my family and me to support the important work of uplifting all residents of our Valley."



Kari Diamond Kayiatos
Annual Fund Working Group Leader