



# POWER OF PERMANENCE

**An Analysis of the Giving Habits of Donors at  
New York's Community Foundation**

2019 PHILANTHROPIC TRENDS REPORT

**NY  
CT** THE NEW YORK  
COMMUNITY  
TRUST

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For 95 years, The New York Community Trust has served as New York's community foundation—managing charitable funds on behalf of donors and granting more than **\$4.6 billion** to support nonprofits.

But where, exactly, does that money go? Which causes do philanthropically minded New Yorkers care most about? And how has their giving changed over the years?

To answer these questions, we mined The Trust's data and interviewed and surveyed scores of living donors to create this 2019 Philanthropic Trends Report, a first-ever portrait of giving in America's largest city, including its Long Island and Westchester suburbs.

Since much of that activity has occurred during the past two decades, we've paid special attention to the past 20 years of data. Among the key findings:

- Donors have contributed **\$2.4 billion** to The Trust since 1998—an average of nearly **\$113.6 million** annually.
- During this same time period, The Trust and its donors have granted nearly **\$157.2 million** annually.
- The Trust's donors are more likely than those in other parts of the U.S. to support human services, the environment, arts and culture, and education.
- The Trust's donors and their professional advisers say they expect to give at a similar rate in 2019 as they did in 2018.

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## METHODOLOGY AND KEY TERMS

This report is based on an analysis of The Trust's internal grantmaking data—including from its divisions, the Long Island Community Foundation and the Westchester Community Foundation—from 1924 to June 30, 2019. It incorporates the results of an online survey of The Trust's donors conducted in August - September 2019, a similar survey of professional advisers conducted in June - September 2019, and interviews with current donors conducted in September 2019.

The following are definitions for some key terms used in this analysis:

**Endowed funds**—Funds established by donors at The Trust with the goal of providing sustained, long-term annual grants to support nonprofit organizations or awards. The investment income from these funds is generally used to support grantmaking.

**Donor-advised funds (DAFs)**—A form of charitable fund invented by The Trust in 1931 whereby donors make a charitable contribution, receive an immediate tax deduction, and then recommend grants to

nonprofits over a period of time. The Trust's donor-advised funds are a mix of endowed funds and funds that are intended to be granted over a shorter time period.

**Unrestricted funds**—Gifts to The Trust that can be used for any purpose. Unrestricted funds are vital to helping The Trust adjust its grantmaking strategies to address the critical needs of the day.

**Field-of-interest funds**—Funds established by donors that are designed to support a specific cause, such as preserving the environment or advancing racial equity.



**\$2.8B**  
NET ASSETS

(as of June 30, 2019)

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**11,180**

AVERAGE NUMBER OF GRANTS TO NONPROFITS ANNUALLY SINCE 1998



**2,243** NUMBER OF ACTIVE FUNDS IN THE TRUST

**\$4,615,493,751**

TOTAL AMOUNT GRANTED BY THE TRUST AND ITS DONORS IN ITS HISTORY



# THE POWER OF PERMANENCE AT WORK

How we give offers a window into what we value.

**Rockwell Chin** supports organizations that help New York's growing Asian-American community and the city's immigrant population.

**Suzanne Thompson-Turner** invests her time to serve on boards and her money to support neighborhood development and early-childhood education in New York and international development efforts.

**"I've been taught to believe that philanthropy is an important obligation for people who can."**

**Luther Ragin, Jr.**

**Luther Ragin, Jr.**—who dissolved his family's small private foundation and rolled its assets into a donor-advised fund at The Trust 17 years ago—gives to groups that combat poverty and work to improve social justice and education.

"I've been taught to believe that philanthropy is an important obligation for people who can," Ragin said. "I've always been impressed by how people with even limited resources have managed to be charitable. So those who have been blessed with more should do more."

Ragin holds one of the 2,243 active funds at The New York Community Trust. Some donors left legacy gifts to The Trust decades ago. Many others are still living and actively making grants through donor-advised or field-of-interest funds.

Because of the size and scope of this giving, The Trust's grantmaking activities provide a fascinating portrait of what New York's donors care about, how they compare to those in other parts of the country, and how their interests have changed over time.

The following analysis pays particular attention to giving and grantmaking since 1998. This time period includes some significant events, notably the 2001 terrorist attacks on New York and the Great Recession of 2008, which impacted both The Trust's endowment and donors' ability to make new contributions.

**4,961**

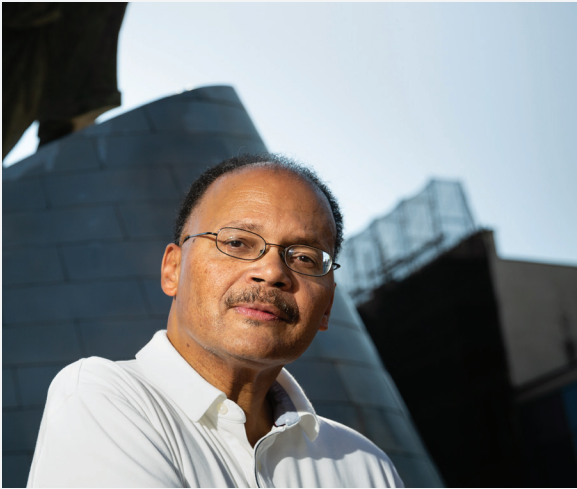
Number of nonprofits supported by The Trust's grantmaking in 2018

As a community foundation, The New York Community Trust is different from other foundations. The Trust has a permanent endowment that helps nonprofits working to improve the lives of New Yorkers. These endowed funds, which account for about three-fourths of The Trust's assets, are supplemented by ongoing contributions from living donors.

When combined, these two forms of giving support an ever-evolving tapestry of causes and nonprofits. Endowed funds combine with new contributions to support nonprofits during good times and bad.

The result? During the past two decades, The Trust has been able to grant out more money than it has taken in—all while maintaining an asset balance that ensures New York's nonprofits will continue to receive support in the future.

## DONOR PROFILE



### LUTHER RAGIN, JR.

For Luther Ragin, Jr., fighting poverty and advancing social justice are a professional and personal passion.

He tackled these issues in his work at organizations such as the FB Heron Foundation and as founding CEO of the Global Impact Investing Network.

They have also been central to his philanthropy. In 2002, Ragin moved the assets of his family's foundation into a donor-advised fund at The Trust. Since then, the fund has supported organizations such as the Community

Reinvestment Fund, Teach for America, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, and the Innocence Project.

**“Having now recently retired, I find I have more time to focus on targeting and increasing my scope in philanthropy,”** he says.

That includes working with both The Trust and the Central Carolina Community Foundation to help erect a statue of the Rev. Joseph DeLaine, a civil rights leader who challenged segregation in South Carolina.

## FUND PROFILE

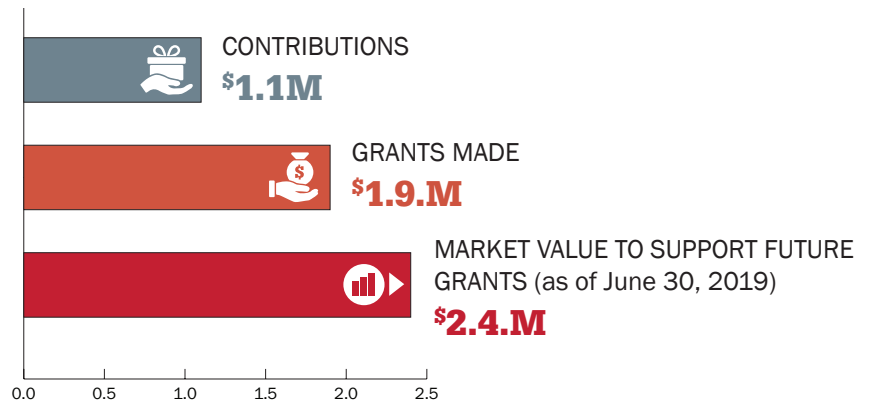
**FUND:** JULIUS AND MARGARETE EDELSTEIN FUND

**FOCUS:** Human services

**ESTABLISHED:** 1991

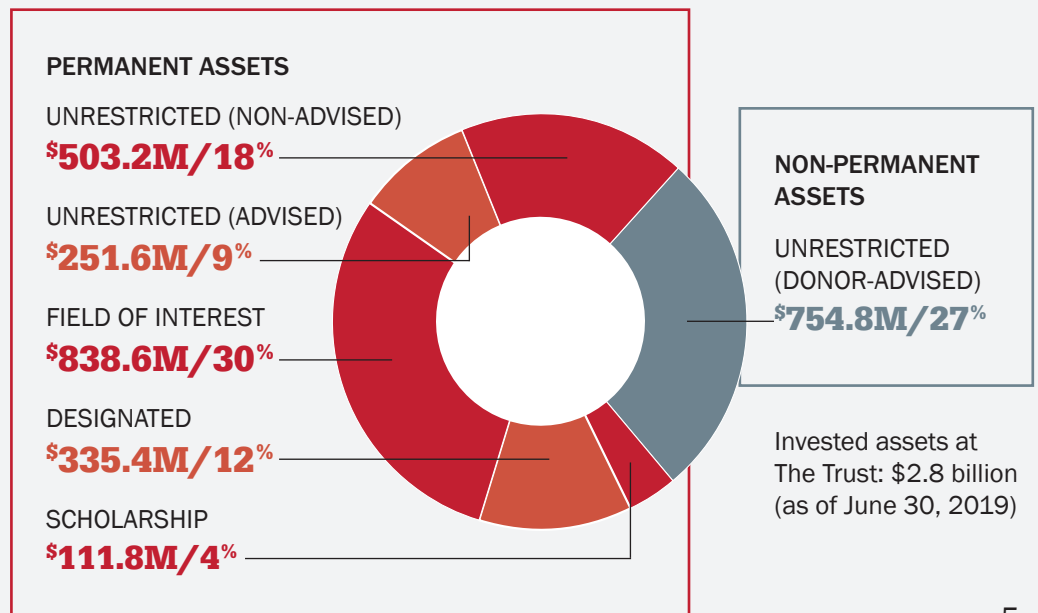
**PURPOSE:** To provide for the welfare of the elderly poor, homeless, needy, hungry, and blind

**NOTABLE GRANTEES:** Lantern Community Services, Public Health Solutions, HeartShare St. Vincent's Services



## UNDERSTANDING THE TRUST'S ASSETS

Permanent assets at The Trust include a mix of unrestricted, field-of-interest, designated for use by a specific charity, and scholarship funds.



# THE POWER OF ANNUAL GIVING

Unlike most private and family foundations, community foundations like The Trust aren't wholly reliant on existing funds to support their grantmaking.

Each year, donors create new funds or make new contributions to existing funds. This philanthropy combines with investments made by their predecessors to fund a diverse array of organizations and causes.

While not all of these contributions come in the form of donor-advised funds, an analysis of grantmaking from The Trust's donor-advised funds offers a window into the attitudes and priorities of current donors.

Since 1998, The Trust's donor advisors have shown a particular interest in

supporting education and the arts—recommending **\$33 million** in annual grants to education nonprofits and another **\$18 million** for the arts.

**\$2,000**

Median grant size from The Trust, 2018.  
Grants range from \$250 to \$3.6M

WNET (New York Public Media) has been a regular beneficiary of their philanthropy—routinely showing up at or near the top of the list of most frequently supported organizations annually.

Living donors also consistently support causes that combat poverty

and work to improve our health and environment. Organizations like Meals on Wheels, Coalition for the Homeless, and City Harvest are particularly popular among living donors.

Memorial Sloan Kettering, New York-Presbyterian, and Planned Parenthood are among the health organizations that receive consistent support from The Trust's living donors.

The Central Park Conservancy, Natural Resources Defense Council, Scenic Hudson, National Audubon Society, and Environmental Defense Fund were all among the environmental groups that received the most grants from living donors in 2018.

## DONOR PROFILE



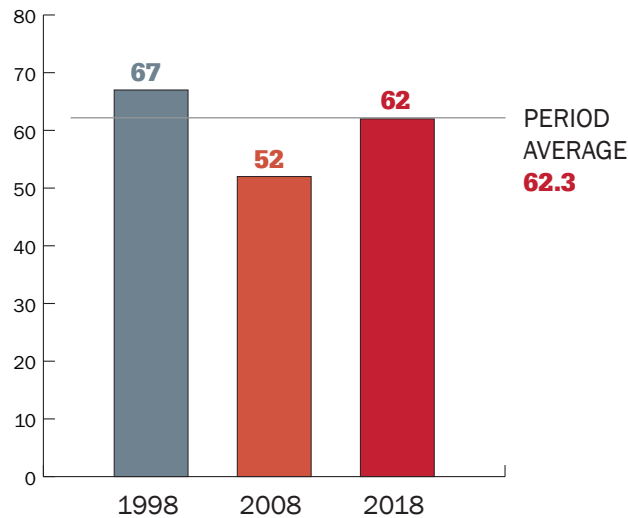
### JANE SAFER

Jane Fearer Safer and her husband, the late broadcast journalist Morley Safer, set up a fund at The Trust in the 1990s on the advice of their attorney, Barbara Paul Robinson, who also had a fund in The Trust. Safer says she immediately saw the value of creating a fund they could use to better manage their giving—which focused on museums and other cultural institutions as well as environmental and social justice causes. **“It wasn't about tax savings, it was about having more money to give,”** says Safer,

who worked for the NYC Office of Cultural Affairs, the New York Hall of Science, and sits on the board of the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian New York (photo left). Since 2016, Jane says she has increased her giving for organizations such as Earthjustice, the Southern Poverty Law Center, and the Committee to Protect Journalists. **“We've always supported these organizations, but I have substantially upped that part of my giving,”** she says.

## ACTIVE FUNDS ESTABLISHED, BY YEAR

When donor-advised funds became a more popular form of giving in the 1980s, the number of donors establishing funds at The Trust exploded relative to historic averages. The recession of 2008 impacted the number of new funds established—but that figure has since rebounded as the economy has improved.

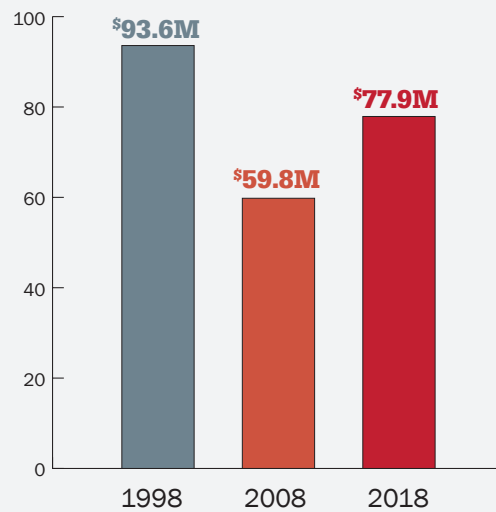


## \$169.5M

Total grantmaking from The Trust in 2018.

## GIFTS RECEIVED, BY YEAR

A number of factors—including investment performance, tax-law changes, the emergence of new giving options, and the timing of bequests—influence the amount of money received through new gifts each year.



## \$78.4M

Total granted in 2018 through The Trust's competitive grantmaking program.

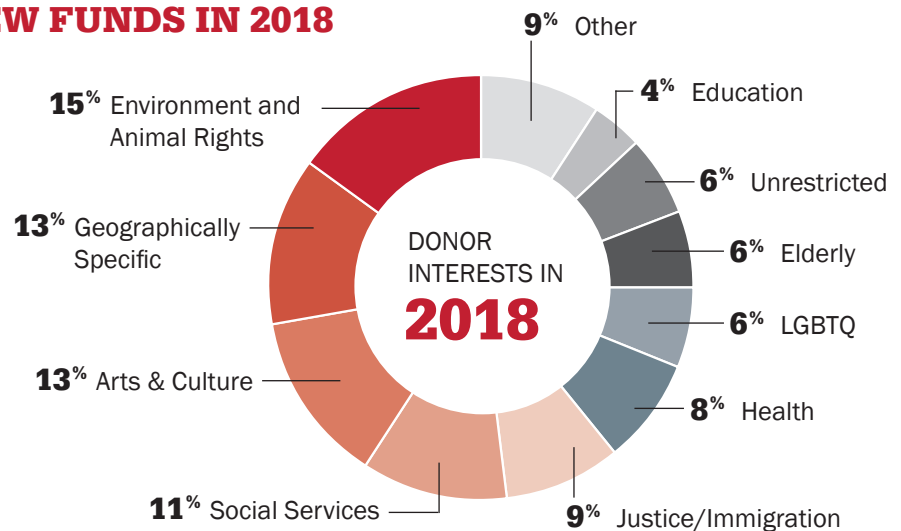
## \$91.1M

Total granted through donor-advised funds at The Trust in 2018.

## DIVERSE INTERESTS: NEW FUNDS IN 2018

The Trust's donors have been supporting an increasingly diverse array of programs during the past two decades. In 2018, donors who set up funds at The Trust chose to support the following issues (excludes donor-advised funds).

*Note: "Other" includes women and girls and community development.*



# THE POWER OF ENDOWED PHILANTHROPY

The Trust's competitive grantmaking program is primarily supported by a mix of unrestricted endowed funds and field of interest funds, many created by bequest. It reflects the values of both current and legacy donors. An analysis of The Trust's competitive grants shows support for a broad selection of issues.

Among the issues supported through The Trust's competitive grantmaking, two stand out: poverty and health. Competitive grantmaking to support anti-poverty programs has averaged **\$6.4 million**

annually since 1998. Health projects, meanwhile, have received an average of **\$6.1 million** annually during this same period.

Endowed gifts make it possible for The Trust to make competitive grants to groups like Teaching Matters, which received the largest award in 2018. Make the Road New York received grants in 2018 to support projects that educate immigrants about immigration policy.

Endowed funds help support the here and now while also ensuring that New York's nonprofits will

receive resources in the future. As a result, donors who create endowed funds are ultimately able to provide more funding to nonprofits than if they had given the money immediately.

That impact multiplies the longer each fund exists. The Katherine A. Park Funds for the Elderly have made **\$17.2 million** in grants since 1982—four times the value of the **\$4.3 million** contributed to the funds. That number will continue to grow, since the funds now have a market value of **\$18.2 million**.



**FUND:** HENRY PHILLIP KRAFT FAMILY MEMORIAL FUND

**ESTABLISHED:** 1996

**NOTABLE GRANTEES:**

Clean Energy Group, Waterfront Alliance, Sustainable States Network, Union of Concerned Scientists

## ENDOWED FUNDS: INSIDE THE NUMBERS

Endowed funds, such as the Kraft Family Memorial Fund, take an initial contribution and use investments to multiply its long-term value.

Here's how the Fund has made improvements to our environment—and how it is positioned to provide even more support now and in the future.



**\$54.3M**  
TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE FUND



**\$102.8M**  
CURRENT MARKET VALUE TO SUPPORT FUTURE GRANTS (as of June 30, 2019)

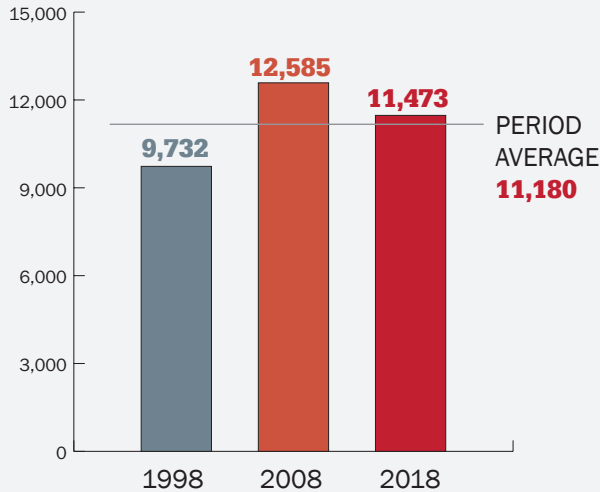


**\$70.6M**  
GRANTS MADE TO DATE  
**\$3.2M**  
AVERAGE AMOUNT OF ANNUAL GRANTS



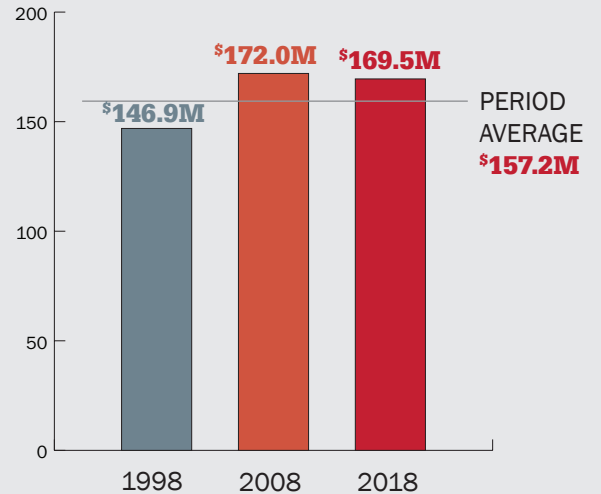
## TOTAL NUMBER OF GRANTS APPROVED, BY YEAR

As the economy fluctuates, The Trust's competitive grants program helps even the flow of grants to support nonprofits and the people they help.



## APPROVED TOTAL GRANTMAKING, BY YEAR

During the past two decades, The Trust has annually granted an average of \$157.2 million through its endowed and non-endowed funds.



## COMPETITIVE GRANTMAKING: A SAMPLING

Donors have empowered The Trust to address some of New York's most pressing issues. Below are just some of the nonprofits who received support through its competitive grantmaking program in 2018.



### GRAHAM WINDHAM

#### CAUSE: Youth

The Trust's Foster Care Excellence Fund—a collaborative of individual donors and foundations—provided grants to several nonprofits, including Graham Windham, to increase the proportion of foster children living with relatives, establish new high-quality homes to help young people successfully transition out of foster care, and track results.



### SAGE: ADVOCACY & SERVICES FOR LGBT ELDERS

#### CAUSE: LGBTQ Community

SAGE used grant funding from The Trust to help develop a residential program for LGBTQ formerly homeless older adults that includes housing and support service. The grant helped SAGE identify and interview potential tenants and develop policies that help keep tenants in their homes.



### WATERFRONT ALLIANCE

#### CAUSE: Environment

The Trust provided grants to the Waterfront Alliance to develop standards for resilient waterfront design, and generate revenue through a training and certification program for developers and other real estate professionals interested in applying them.

# WHAT DO NEW YORKERS CARE ABOUT?

When it comes to philanthropy, New Yorkers are different. This is especially true for donors at The New York Community Trust, who support different causes than their counterparts in other parts of the country.

The most notable difference is related to the most popular form of giving in the United States: giving to religious causes. Religious giving accounted for \$3 out of every \$10 given to charity in 2018, according to Giving USA. Donors at The New York Community Trust, meanwhile, only give a small fraction to religious causes, 3¢ out of every dollar.

This doesn't necessarily mean that The Trust's donors eschew religious giving,

**\$15,355**

Size of the average grant award from The Trust in 2018

since many donors choose to give to their places of worship outside of The Trust. But it does reflect the findings of studies by Giving USA and other organizations that track religious giving. These studies consistently find that New Yorkers tend to support religious causes at a lower rate than their fellow donors in other parts of the U.S.

The Trust's donors choose to give a much higher share of their

charitable dollars to education (28 percent vs. 14 percent nationally), arts and culture (12.2 percent vs. 5 percent), and the environment (9.4 percent vs. 3 percent).

But the interests of New York donors are changing. The Trust, for example, now has 23 active funds devoted to the environment, nearly twice as many as it had at the beginning of the decade. The Trust had no such funds before 1981. Similarly, interest in giving to support the elderly has also increased considerably during the past decade. Today, there are 13 active funds to support the elderly, versus just three at the beginning of the decade.

## NONPROFITS WITH THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF 2018 TRUST GRANTS



GRANTEE: DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS

**89**  
GRANTS



GRANTEE: WNET

**74**  
GRANTS

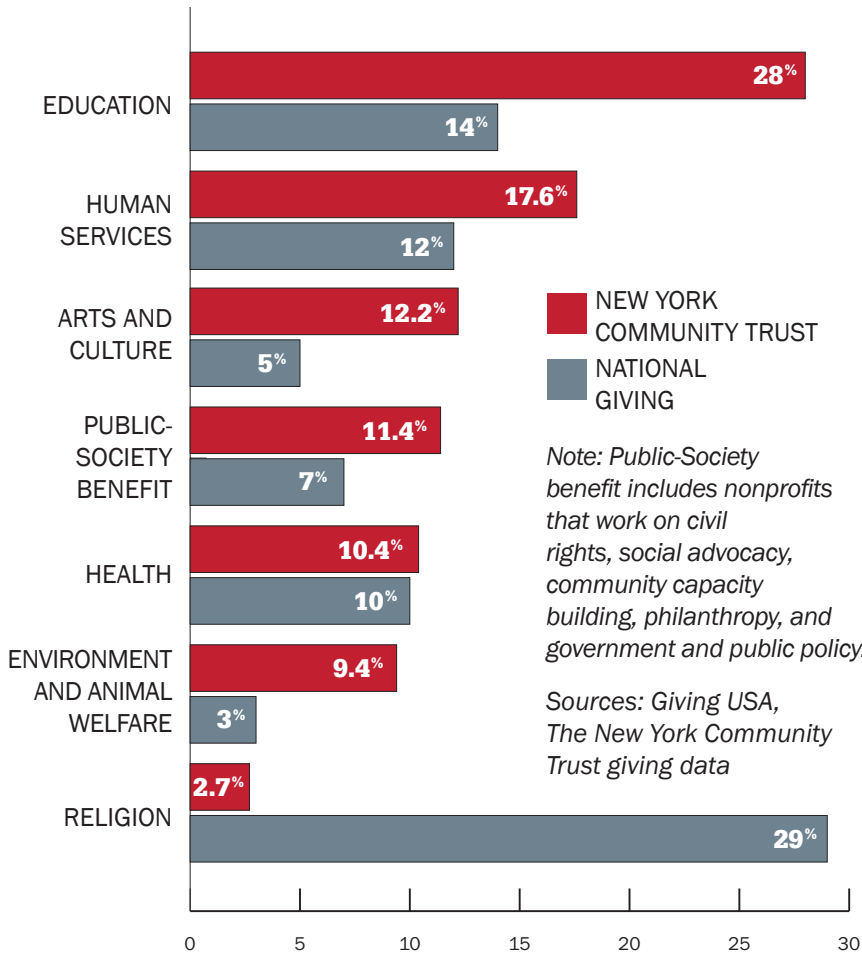


GRANTEE: ACLU

**65**  
GRANTS

## HOW NEW YORKERS GIVE

How The New York Community Trust's grantmaking compared with national trends in key issue areas in 2018.



## FUND PROFILE

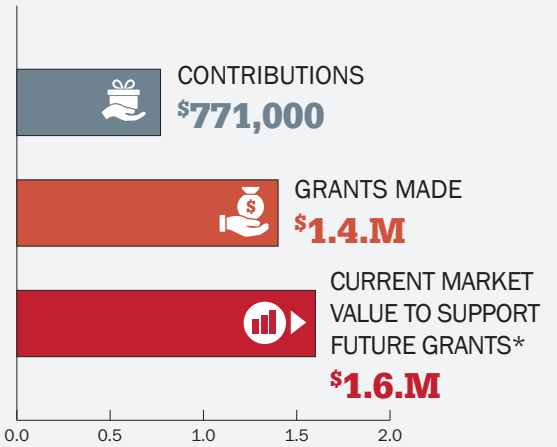
**FUND:** WILLIAM H. AND GEORGE R. BRUNJES MEMORIAL FUND

**FOCUS:** Geographic

**ESTABLISHED:** 1988

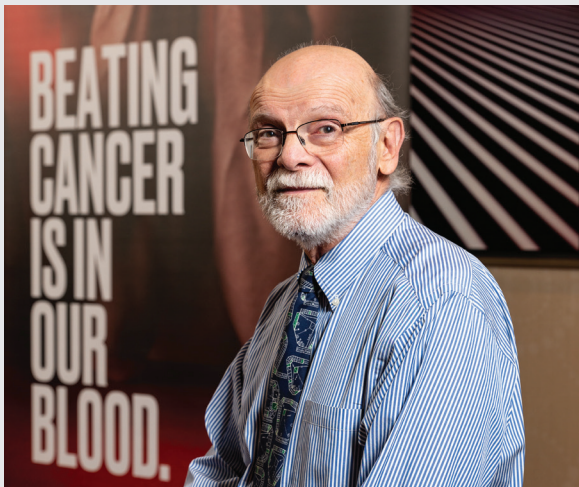
**PURPOSE:** For the welfare of children in Queens County

**NOTABLE GRANTEES:** Queen's Legal Services, Rockaway Youth Task Force, Queens Connect



\*(as of June 30, 2019)

## DONOR PROFILE



### DENNIS PAOLI

After his wife, Heidi, lost her life to cancer in 1987, Dennis Paoli decided he wanted to honor her memory by helping others who are fighting the disease.

"I took the insurance money and wanted to do something with it in her memory rather than spend it," he says.

The result was the Heidi Paoli Fund, which provides annual grants to help lessen the suffering and social hardships cancer patients face during their treatments.

Working with program officers at The Trust, Paoli has learned about the need for improved cancer

care at New York State's prisons, support for caregivers, and care for adolescent cancer patients.

"I'm reaching an age now where I need to start thinking about the transition of the fund once I'm too old to run it or I'm not here," he says. "I'm hoping we can continue to expand the fund and what it accomplishes."

He values the knowledge and expertise of The Trust's professional philanthropic experts. **"I have felt supported and respected. They cared for what I cared for and made my giving possible and productive."**

# WHAT DO NEW YORKERS CARE ABOUT? *continued*

A closer look at how The Trust's donor-advised fund (DAF) holders have supported seven key issue areas.



## CULTURAL HERITAGE

Donors have been consistent in their support of arts and culture organizations. But how they direct their grantmaking has changed significantly over the past two decades.

The number of grants for public television declined from 107 in 1998 to 87 in 2018, while the number of grants for radio doubled from 43 to 86 during the same time period.



## EDUCATION

Education has long been the favorite cause of The Trust's donors—but interest among new donors appears to be waning. The Trust made 1,698 grants to education in 2018, down more than 15 percent from 2008.

The number of new funds created to support education has also declined. Thirty-six new funds to support education have been established so far this decade. From 2001-2010, 70 such funds were created.

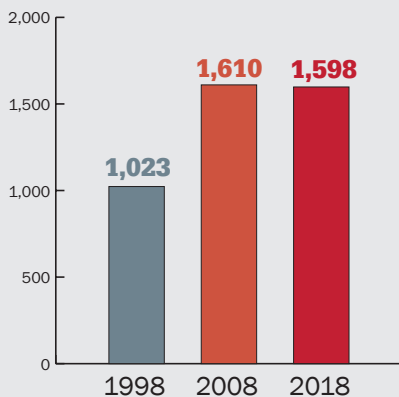


## ELDERLY

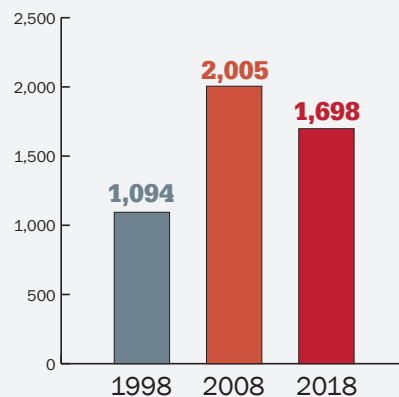
As New York's elderly population swells, the number of new funds created this decade to address issues related to the elderly exceeds the number of funds established during the 1990s and 2000s combined.

Grantmaking, however, is a different issue. Donor-advised grants to address elderly issues totaled 103 in 2018, a marked decrease from the 140 grants made in 2008.

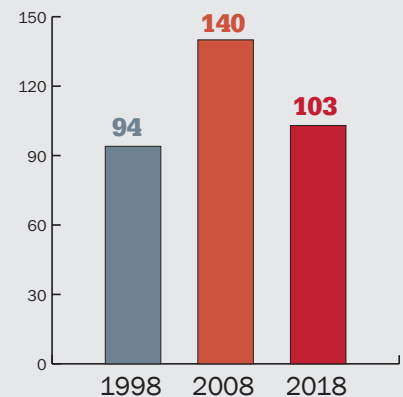
NUMBER OF DAF GRANTS TO CULTURAL HERITAGE



NUMBER OF DAF GRANTS TO EDUCATION



NUMBER OF DAF GRANTS TO ELDERLY CAUSES

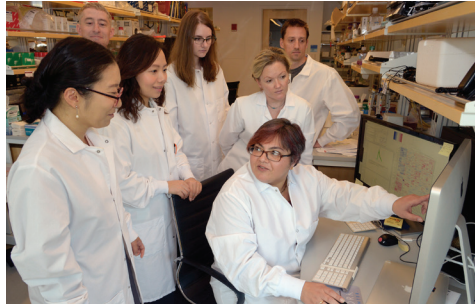




## ENVIRONMENT

As climate change takes center stage nationally, The Trust’s donors have been stepping up their support of nonprofits working to address environmental causes.

The number of funds dedicated to environmental issues, including animal welfare, has nearly tripled since the 1980s. As that interest has grown, so has the amount of grantmaking.



## HEALTH

The Trust’s donors have a long history of supporting health—and have been particularly responsive to addressing timely issues, such as AIDS. In 1998, when AIDS remained a significant threat, funding for AIDS research was the top-supported subcategory.

Today, while the number of health grants has dropped, donors are increasing their focus on support for research and treatment of Alzheimer’s, cancer, and brain disorders.

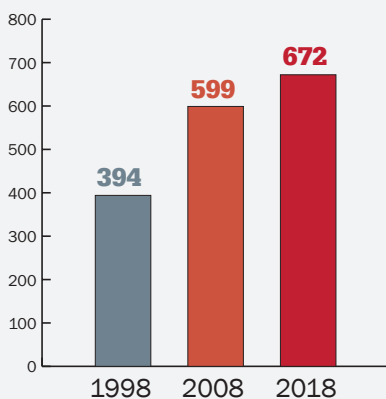


## HUMAN SERVICES

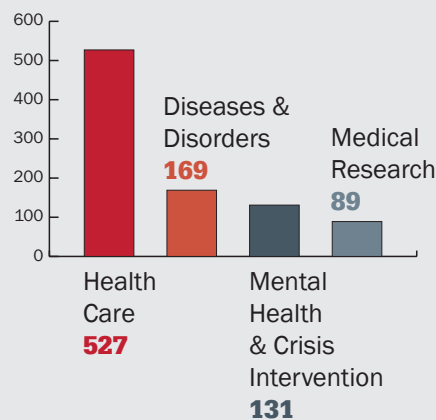
Donors are significantly more interested in supporting human services today than they were two decades ago. A growing share of support has gone to address issues such as human justice, youth development, and food and nutrition.

The Trust’s donors directed the biggest share of their funding for human services to family support, foster care, early childhood services, and homelessness.

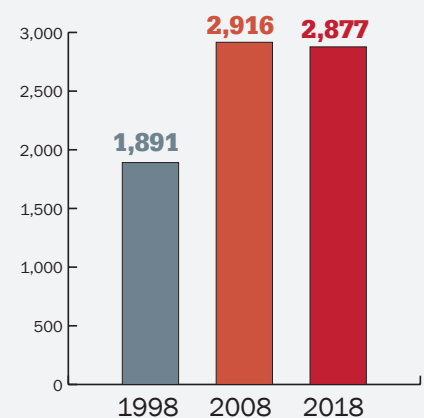
NUMBER OF DAF GRANTS TO ENVIRONMENTAL NONPROFITS



NUMBER OF 2018 DAF GRANTS TO HEALTH-RELATED ISSUES



NUMBER OF DAF GRANTS TO HUMAN SERVICE CAUSES



# TODAY'S PRIORITIES— AND THE FUTURE

While The Trust's donors are consistent in their support of issues like education, the arts, and social services, they are also responsive to the challenges of their times.

This has been especially true in recent years, as The Trust's donors have directed a portion of their philanthropy in response to critical needs, natural disasters, or current events.

In 2017, for example, the New York Immigration Coalition saw an outpouring of support in response to some of the challenges facing New York's immigrants. In 2018, donors supported the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society to help those affected by the shooting at a Pittsburgh-area synagogue.

Donors surveyed listed the following issue areas as

**MOST  
IMPORTANT**

to them:



**ENVIRONMENT**



**EDUCATION**



**JUSTICE**

The Trust's donors have also focused more of their grantmaking on women's reproductive rights, free speech, and combating racism. Annual grants to Planned Parenthood have increased from 27 in 2014 to 74 in 2017, but declined to 57 in 2018. The annual number of grants to the ACLU, meanwhile, have increased fourfold—from 16 in 2015 to 65 in 2018.

## LOOKING AHEAD

The Trust's donors remain relatively bullish about their giving—at least for the short term.

More than half of The Trust's donors—57 percent—say that they expect to continue to give roughly the same amount of money to nonprofits in 2019 as they did in 2018. Another 31 in 10 say they anticipate giving more.

By comparison, only about 1 in 10—12 percent—report that they plan to give less.

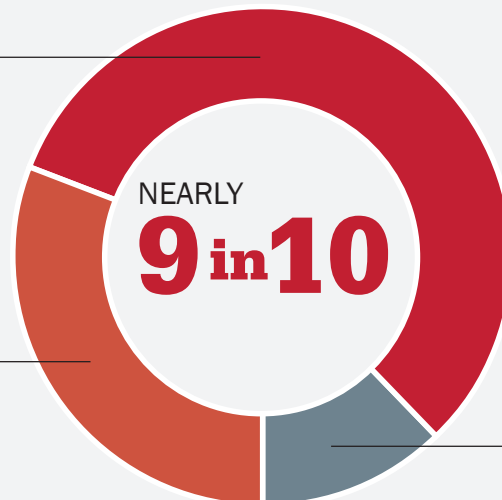
## GIVING IN 2019

NEARLY 9 IN 10 OF THE NEW YORK COMMUNITY TRUST'S DONORS SAY THEY EXPECT TO GIVE AS MUCH OR MORE IN 2019 THAN THEY DID IN 2018

**57%**  
Give the same amount

**31%**  
Give more

**12%**  
Give less



## DONOR PROFILE



### ROCKWELL “ROCKY” CHIN

Rocky Chin has long been an advocate for New York’s Asian-American community.

He created one of the nation’s first Asian-American studies courses, established a bilingual childcare program for immigrants, and coordinated New York’s Asian Pacific American Heritage Festival.

In 2006, Chin was trustee for his aunt’s irrevocable trust—and in 2016 he used the assets to create a fund at The Trust. Since then, his fund has helped nonprofits that are working to support New York’s growing Asian-American community.

“Many of the organizations we’ve supported are not big, mainstream organizations,” he says. “I’m sympathetic to those who have a good track record and have community-based outcomes, but are underfunded.”

He believes support for underrepresented communities is especially important today.

**“I’m very interested in issues of legacy,” he says. “Not my own, but cultural institutions that address history and narrative in this country.”**

That’s clear from the grants his fund has made to Ma-Yi Theater Company, the Asian American Federation, and the Asian American Law Fund of New York.

## DONOR PROFILE



### SUZANNE THOMPSON-TURNER

Suzanne Thompson-Turner takes a strategic approach to her philanthropy.

When times are good, she puts extra money into her donor-advised fund—so she can be sure she is able to support nonprofits such as New York Public Radio, DEMOS, the ACLU, and the theater group, The Civilians, when the economy sours.

**“It makes me comfortable, even in down markets, that I’ll still have the capacity to give funds on a recurring basis. I think that’s very important,”**

Thompson-Turner says. “It helps me—and it helps the nonprofits I support. They know they can expect consistent support.”

In addition to her ongoing support of national and local charities, Thompson-Turner also uses her fund to help organizations where she has a deep personal connection—such as the Future Leaders Institute in Harlem, where she served as founding chair of the board of directors.

## CONCLUSION

Donors who give through The New York Community Trust share many common traits. But there’s one value they share that can’t be found in raw numbers: their desire to improve the city they call home.

“The fact that I’ve lived in New York for a long time gives me a greater understanding of the challenges of our city,” says Rocky Chin. **“I always have a feeling that I can try to do more.”**

For nearly a century, The Trust and its donors have played a critical role in helping New York address its changing needs.

And while new challenges always emerge, The Trust’s donors are optimistic that they can continue to help their neighbors—now and in the future. ■



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**Photos:**

**All photos by Ari Mintz for The New York Community Trust, unless noted otherwise.**

**Cover photos:** (L to R): Former Trust Chair Charlynn Goins; donors Carol Bilotti; Carlos Lu; Doug Jones; Petra Danielsohn and Dr. Ana Salgado | **Page 3:** (Clockwise from top): Board member Jason Wright at Staten Island’s P.S. 31; donors Nicole Francis; Ted Wolf and Frank Decolator; tour of LGBTQ historic sites, The Trust | **Page 5:** Donor Luther Ragin, Jr. in Harlem | **Page 6:** Donor Jane Safer at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian New York | **Page 7:** Grantee Internationals Network, The Trust | **Page 8:** Wind farm, Environment America | **Page 9:** (L to R) Graham Windham, Julie Beers; SAGE, Kamila Harris Photography; boaters, Waterfront Alliance | **Page 10:** Doctors without Borders, Pierre-Yves Bernard/MSF; WNET, iStock; ACLU, Allison Shelley/ACLU | **Page 11:** Donor Dennis Paoli at Hunter College | **Page 12:** (L to R) children drawing, Cool Culture; girl with book, Reading Matters; Myrtle Avenue Revitalization Project | **Page 13:** (L to R) tree, iStock; researchers, New York Genome Center; baby, The Trust | **Page 15:** Donor Rocky Chin in Manhattan’s Chinatown, Donor Suzanne Thompson-Turner at a Harlem school she supports.