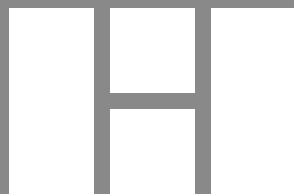


# 2016 Strategic Philanthropy Project Highlights



HECKSCHER  
FOUNDATION  
*for* CHILDREN



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# About Us

# Chairman's Message

In 2016, the Heckscher Foundation for Children celebrated over ninety-five years of support to underserved children and youth in the tradition of its founders and early leaders: August Heckscher, Arthur Smadbeck, and Ruth Smadbeck.

The foundation serves the needs of youth in New York City and nationally through impact-driven programs in education, college access and persistence, workforce training and jobs access, health, recreation, social services, juvenile justice, and the arts. Our grants promote programs, partnerships, and innovative projects consistent with our mission to level the playing field for young people. Our goal is to foster venture philanthropy using three principal funding strategies: catalytic giving,

strategic partnerships, and targeted problem solving.

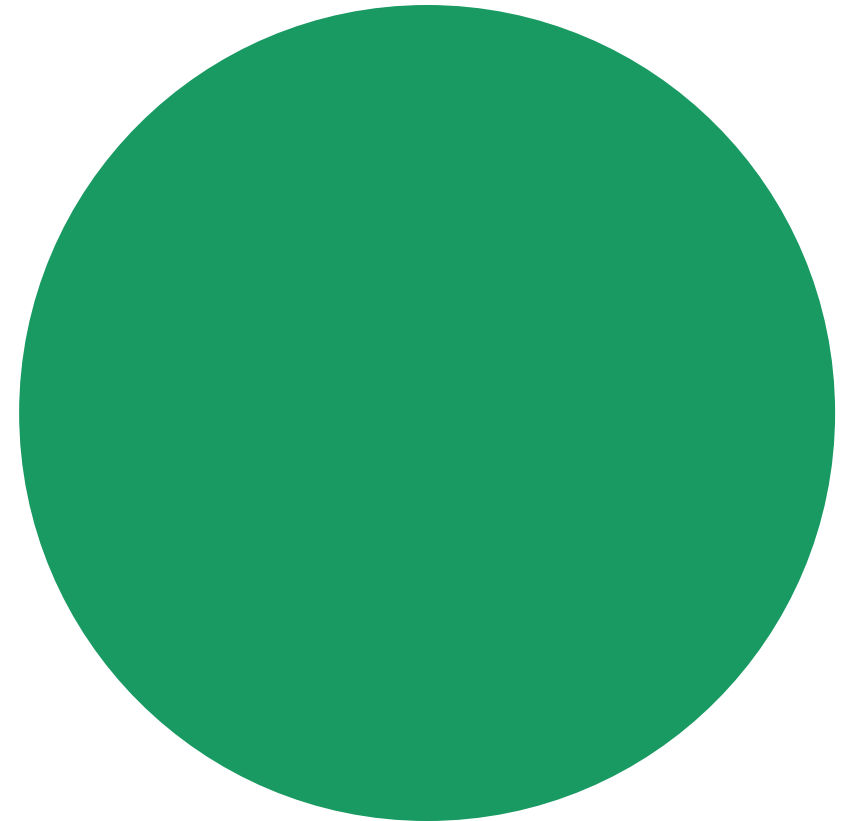
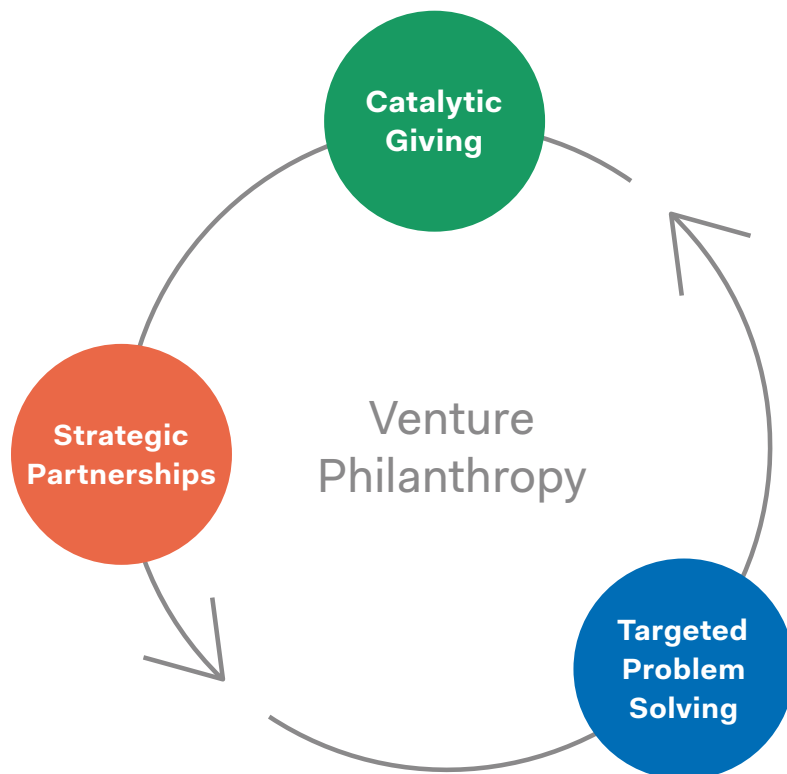
Using an outcomes-based logic model to inform our grantmaking, we seek to evaluate organizations that demonstrate measurable results in our priority areas. We operate in partnership with other funders in both the public and private sector and look for opportunities to provide catalytic support in areas of fundamental concern for underserved youth. Representative initiatives funded in 2016 are featured in our Highlighted Projects.

In all of our giving, we honor the generosity of spirit and dedication of our leaders through the years; their commitment and foresight make it possible for us to continue making a difference for youth in New York City.

**Peter Sloane**  
Chairman and CEO  
January, 2017

# Venture Philanthropy

We have defined our mission as “leveling the playing field for underserved youth.” Our goal is to foster venture philanthropy using three principal funding strategies.

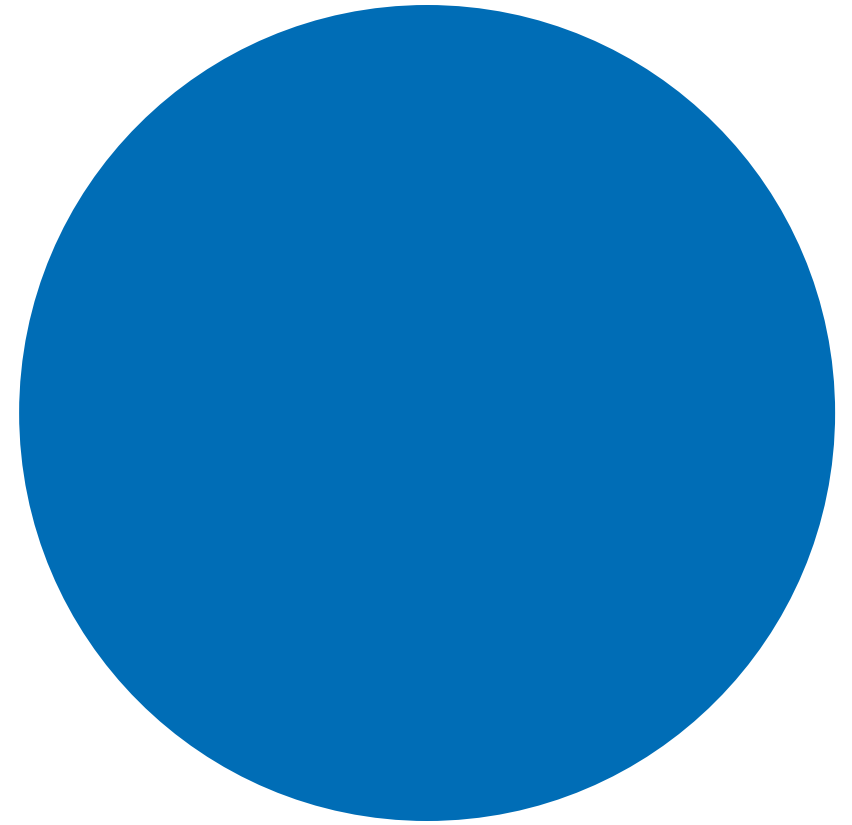


## Catalytic Giving

The foundation seeks to fund approaches that have the potential for wide application but have not reached a scale broad enough to attract investment by larger private foundations or government. We view funding as catalytic when our dollars can have an impact exponentially greater than the projected results of any one or more years of funding.

## Strategic Partnerships

The foundation seeks to promote collaborations between not-for-profits, for-profits, and the public sector toward a common goal. The organizations we bring together may have overlapping approaches, motives, or skill sets.



## Targeted Problem Solving

The foundation defines specific challenges that have practical solutions which are attainable within a reasonable time and budget, and encourages creative problem solvers to test those solutions. These challenges often address barriers to equal opportunity that have been overlooked or underappreciated.



# Our History

The history of the Heckscher Foundation for Children is a multifaceted story with three principal participants.



**Charles August Heckscher**  
1848–1941

Charles August Heckscher, a visionary who achieved great financial success, believed that wealth should be shared with others less fortunate. He started the foundation as one of his many benefactions. Arthur Smadbeck, a friend of August Heckscher and fellow philanthropist, reluctantly took over



**Ruth Smadbeck**  
1900–1986

a shattered financial and management structure and made possible the survival and emergence of the Heckscher Foundation for Children as a major benefactor. Ruth Smadbeck,



**Arthur Smadbeck**  
1887–1977

who ran the foundation for more than 50 years, brought to its philanthropic activities a lifelong dedication to and love for children.

## Foundation Building Opens 1922

The Heckscher Foundation was founded in 1921. The assets consisted of land at Fifth Avenue between 104th and 105th Streets in New York City and securities intended to provide funds for the construction of a building on the site and for its operations. The



original foundation building opened in 1922 but was far exceeding its operating costs. As the Depression deepened, the foundation assets were in default, and the foundation itself was on the verge of collapse.

## Ruth & Arthur Smadbeck Revitalize the Foundation and Its Programs 1930's

August Heckscher turned to Arthur and Ruth Smadbeck, financial equals who shared his deep dedication to public service. Arthur Smadbeck was one of the first and most prolific suburban real estate developers of the era. Until his death in 1977, Arthur Smadbeck donated his time and efforts to building an endowment and creating a profitable platform on which he positioned the foundation to support major outside charitable efforts, while at the same time running his own successful businesses and extensive philanthropic endeavors. Ruth Smadbeck began as a volunteer



several years after the foundation's building opened and ran the foundation for over 50 years, including its multi-faceted programs in dance, orchestra, exercise, swimming, the purchase and distribution of necessities for indigent children, a kindergarten, a theater, a craft room, a senior lounge, a photography group, a library, and a thrift shop, while at the same time broadcasting two radio programs each week offering advice and guidance on childcare.

## The Modern Day Foundation Evolves 1980's

At Ruth Smadbeck's death in 1986, distributions to charity had grown to over \$1 million and assets exceeded \$22 million. Louis Smadbeck, a renowned real estate entrepreneur and civic leader in his own right, became Chairman of the Heckscher Foundation in 1986 and continued in this capacity until his death in 1992. Virginia Sloane was elected President in 1986 and President Emeritus in 2012.





## A New Generation Assumes Leadership 1990's

A new generation assumed leadership in 1997. Howard G. (Peter) Sloane became Chairman and CEO and continues to preside over the foundation's many philanthropic projects. Today, the foundation's assets have grown to well over \$300 million and distributions to charity have dramatically increased.

# Signature Initiatives



Here we feature our Strategic Initiatives, projects that we have supported in prior years that demonstrate our catalytic vision.

### Charter Schools

The foundation has been a leader in funding alternative education initiatives, including charter schools. Independently, Heckscher CEO Peter Sloane was a founding trustee of the first charter school in New York State, Sisulu Victory Academy. The foundation has supported charter networks including Democracy Prep,



Success Academy, KIPP, Summit Public Schools and the Basecamp Program, as well as individual charter schools.

### New York City Public Parks

The foundation is increasingly invested in creating and maintaining livable public parks and public gardens in New York City. In 2014, the foundation opened the Ruth and Arthur Smadbeck Heckscher East Playground, one of the most heavily used and distinctive features of Central Park. The playground's focal

point is the sculpture titled Group of Bears, by renowned artist Paulanship. Often called “Three Bears,” the sculpture sits on a stepped platform, surrounded by a large circular seating area at the entrance to the playground. The entire playground, rebuilt through Heckscher funding, reopened in the fall of 2014.

The renovation of the Ruth and Arthur Smadbeck Heckscher East Playground gives the foundation the distinction of having underwritten playgrounds at the most eastern, western, northern, and southern reaches of the Central Park Conservancy’s Stewardship. The 1926 Heckscher Ball Fields and the Heckscher Playground anchor the southernmost part of Central Park. The foundation also underwrote the completion of the northernmost playground in Central Park at 109th Street, which serves the upper Manhattan community, and, in addition to other West Side playgrounds in the park, has underwritten the far West Side 70th Street

Ball Field, located under the Westside Highway next to the Hudson River.

### New York Summer Meals Program

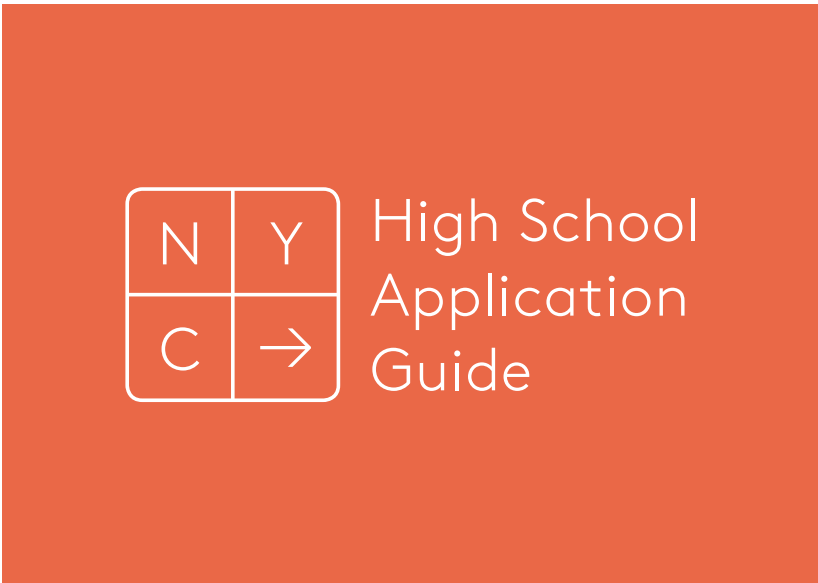
The New York Summer Meals Program, which provides free breakfast and lunch to qualified public school students, historically served hundreds of thousands fewer children over the summer than during the regular school year, despite high need. To increase awareness of, and participation in, this essential program, the foundation initiated and for three years supported a program that distributed refrigeration units, flyers, and posters and conducted outreach about Summer Meals. This produced a 31 percent increase in participation in the program in the first year, and continued significant increases in the second and third years of funding, resulting in hundreds of thousands of additional healthy meals reaching children each summer.

This catalytic program has led to key partnerships with the New York

City Housing Authority, the Parks Department, and both soup kitchens and public libraries in Brooklyn and Queens. The program later added a mobile app called SchoolFood, which allows users to view daily menus and find the nearest Summer Meal sites. Meals were served at over 1,100 locations including parks, schools, libraries, and food trucks.

NYC High School Application Guide

Each year, all eighth-grade students planning to attend a New York City public high school must create and



submit a list of their “schools of choice” to the New York City Department of Education. Students rank 12 choices from nearly 700 programs at more than 400 high schools city-wide. A complex algorithm then pairs students with schools, taking into account the students’ preferences, available space, and the schools’ own rankings and priorities. While nearly 80,000 students submit their selections, their choices are too often uninformed, particularly among underserved students who may not have enough assistance from parents or guidance counselors.

To help students find their best-fit high school programs, the foundation developed the NYC High School Application Guide, a free tool to use on iPhone or the web. Middle school students, parents, and guidance counselors can use this simple tool to filter high school programs by interests and location, generating a personalized list of 20 high school programs to consider.

This tool was developed in collaboration with a software company that specializes in education technology solutions, with guidance from New York City's former Director of High School Admissions Operations and education choice experts at N.Y.U. It has been extensively tested in partnership with select schools, external evaluators, and experts in the field. The guide became available in the Fall of 2016 for use in the Department of Education Round 1 high school application process.

In late 2016, the foundation celebrated the guide's success by spinning it off to an independent team of prominent educators with an agreement to fund the continued improvement and full rollout of the guide for one year to all 603 eighth-grade serving schools in New York City. The team will take over full management of the Guide in 2017.

## Take the Field

The foundation initiated Take the Field after a quarter-century of budget cuts had resulted in the acute deterioration of physical education and sports facilities at New York City public high schools across the five boroughs. This initiative to rebuild public school athletic facilities was envisioned by and launched with initial grants from the foundation, the Greve Foundation, and Robert Tisch.

The resulting public-private partnership achieved the unimaginable, developing the concept of providing naming rights to the fields and securing a 1:3 match from New York City for every private donation.

The foundation's initial grant led other funders to support the concept and eventually raised \$36 million in private sector funding and \$97 million in matched public sector funds to rebuild 43 state-of-the-art outdoor athletic facilities. These included the facilities at John Dewey High School, which are named for the foundation.



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## Program Replications to New York

### Bottom Line

Bottom Line provides low-income and first-generation college students with one-on-one guidance throughout the college application process, as well as during and after college. The foundation supported Bottom Line to replicate their successful Boston-based model to New York City.

### CollegeSpring

CollegeSpring is a California-based college counseling and SAT prep program customized to meet the needs of low-income students. Through its partnership model, CollegeSpring provides grade-wide intervention during the academic year for 11th-grade students and serves a portion of 11th- and 12th-grade students during a summer session.

### Global Glimpse

The foundation supported Global Glimpse, an education program

founded in the San Francisco Bay area that targets high-potential high school students from disadvantaged neighborhoods and focuses on leadership development, community service, and globalization education.

### OneGoal

In collaboration with the Edwin Gould Foundation and Arbor Brothers, who are providing a combination of technical assistance, incubation office space, and other capacity-building services, the foundation provided support for OneGoal to replicate its program to New York City.



## QuestBridge

The foundation seeks strategic opportunities to support the expansion of promising out-of-state programs to New York City, and has funded the replication of the Los Angeles-based QuestBridge Scholars program to New York City. The program is designed to recruit, develop, and support motivated low-income high school students with the potential to attend the most selective colleges. This initiative works to solve the “under-matching” crisis, which remains prevalent, with less than five percent of students at the nation’s most selective schools representing the nation’s lowest economic quarter, while the vast majority of talented low-income students do not apply to schools that match their abilities.

Among QuestBridge Scholars, 72 percent are first-generation college-bound, 95 percent matriculate at college, and degree attainment among participants at top tier colleges ranges from 90 to 100 percent.

## Reading Partners

The foundation supported Reading Partners (RPNY), a program that helps children become lifelong readers through individualized instruction that demands measurable results.



## Single Stop: Community College Initiative

More than half of low-income students begin their postsecondary education at a community college, and these institutions serve more than 12 million students each year. However, six years



after starting at a two-year institution, nearly half of all students nationwide (46 percent) drop out without attaining a degree. Only 31 percent of community college students who set out to earn a degree ever complete it. These low retention and completion rates are not surprising given the many obstacles community college students confront.

Since access to basic resources increases the likelihood that a young person will be able to stay in college and obtain a degree that leads to higher earning potential, the founda-

tion instigated and funded the first-of-its-kind Single Stop Community College Initiative to expand opportunities for low-income, high-need community college students. The initiative connects students to the government funds and services for which they are eligible, including food stamps, health care, child care, and tax credits. Participants also receive free tax preparation services, comprehensive legal services, and financial counseling. The initiative was piloted through a model program at Kingsborough Community College, which reduced dropout rates among participants by 50 percent.

As a result of our founding support and these strong outcomes, other foundations and the City adopted the program, and it is now available to eligible students across the City University of New York (CUNY) system. Single Stop also built system-wide collaborations with other community colleges and networks including the Association

of Community College Trustees, the City College of San Francisco, and Miami Dade College.

### uAspire

Through a collaborative funding initiative with the Edwin Gould Foundation, the foundation provided a first-time grant to Boston-based uAspire (formerly known as ACCESS), which has 30 years of experience demonstrating that providing financial information and guidance lowers financial barriers to higher education.

# 2016 Strategic Philanthropy Project Highlights

## Education and Academic Support



We fund programs in superior public, private, parochial, and alternative schools, as well as those that prepare students for success as they transition from one school or level to another. We do not endorse a particular educational model, but rather support organizations that insist on student achievement using tools such as extended time schooling and enrichment activities tied to curriculum.

When assessing academic programs other than schools, we look for curricula correlated to the New York City/New York State academic standards that extend in-school learning, activities that make meaningful connections between school and the “real world,” and those that achieve outcomes that compare favorably to average results. When a program is housed in a school, we also consider its relationship with the host institution.

In deciding whether to fund a program or school, we give substantial weight to those that critically assess their own performance using objective criteria. We are particularly interested in programs that plan to demonstrate concrete behavioral outcomes such as:



- Improved grades
- Significant measured gains in grade-level literacy and avoidance of “summer melt”
- Improved SAT or other standardized test scores
- High school graduation
- Admission to college
- Graduation from college

Those applying for funding should offer evidence that the particular educational interventions they propose employ, or at least do not conflict with, recognized best practices and research-based interventions shown to be effective. The foundation funds programs that address the opportunity gap through rigorous academic preparation, college admissions guidance, “summer melt” prevention, and ongoing support to manifest not only a degree but post-graduate success. When assessing college access and success programs, we look for programs that use a comprehensive approach and strive to incorporate the following attributes.

### **College Readiness and Retention Program Attribute Guidelines**

1. Target high-potential students who are committed to academic and emotional perseverance and goal-setting
2. Provide supplemental academic support (may include curriculum-aligned tutoring and/or SAT preparation)
3. If offering college guidance or mentoring:
  - a. Advisors/mentors should be professionally trained by a recognized training entity;
  - b. The college “under matching” issue and understanding of debt-load upon graduation should be intentionally addressed
4. Track college matriculation, persistence and graduation



### **College Readiness and Retention**

Access to post-secondary education has a lifelong impact. For example, students who attend top-tier colleges earn substantially more than those who attend less selective colleges. Yet at high schools serving predominately low-income populations, students have limited resources to help them navigate complex application processes and matriculate at the college or university best suited to their qualifications. Tens of thousands of high-achieving, low-income students do not apply to an appropriately matched college or university and attend nonselective two- or four-year colleges where graduation rates are distressingly low and debt loads are high. Many more do not attend college at all.

Melissa Roderick and her colleagues at the Consortium on Chicago School Research examined this phenomenon of “under-matching” and confirmed in “Crossing the Finish Line,” a study by researchers Bowen, Chingos, and McPherson, that students are more likely to graduate from college when they attend the most academically demanding institution that will admit them. In 2013, a study by Hoxby and Turner gained popular attention for demonstrating that it is possible to increase the rate at which very high-achieving, low-income students enroll in the most selective colleges and universities by providing them with tailored information about opportunities. In 2014, the College Board announced a plan to act on this

research by sending information packets and application vouchers to college-ready students.

These important findings about college access and success informed the foundation's 2016 grantmaking to programs in this area, which included:

### America Achieves

The foundation has increasingly invested in incubator, accelerator, and other capacity-building and technical assistance models over the last five years, supporting youth-focused organizations early on in their work through outfits including SeaChange Capital Partners, Philliber Research, Arbor Brothers, the Edwin Gould Foundation's EGF Accelerator, and the former Blue Ridge Foundation.

In 2015 and 2016, the foundation provided funding for America Achieves to launch a new organizational incubation and accelerator model. America Achieves is one of the only large-scale national institutions focused on creating evidence-based practices and new pathways for underserved youth to enroll in and graduate from appropriately matched four-year colleges.

Through this initiative, America Achieves has supported and accelerated selected start-ups, providing personalized strategic advising and mentorship to develop their impact and business models. Organizations, ideas, and entrepreneurs are considered using the following selection criteria: leadership by an outstanding social entrepreneur; alignment with one of America Achieves' focus areas; engagement in/aspiration to system change (beyond the potential for program scale); demonstrated value; and the potential for America Achieves to add value through guidance, operational support, and strategic fundraising.

In 2016, America Achieves supported its portfolio of seven current initiatives (CollegePoint, Braven, GripTape, the Educator Voice Fellowship, the Global Learning Net-

work, National Endowment for Educational Opportunities, and Education for Employment) and several other initiatives that advance organizations through the vetting and planning phases to accelerate their plans and progress in driving outcomes that support the success of young people.

The foundation also provided a \$1 million matching grant to the Bloomberg Foundation's multi-million dollar investment in the America Achieves CollegePoint initiative.

### America Needs You

The foundation has been a major funder of the growth of America Needs You (ANY), an organization that has achieved success in responding to the needs of first-generation college students. The ANY Fellows Program provides life planning, career development, and community leadership projects. Mentor coaches, primarily from highly engaged corporate volunteer initiatives, help participants articulate a clear path to their personal and professional goals. During the intensive two-year program, participants receive training in public speaking, personal finance, written communication, relationship management, and interviewing; attend 28 full-Saturday career workshops; complete two summer internships; and receive more than 1,000 hours of individualized support.

In 2016, ANY further refined its target population and now exclusively serves City University of New York (CUNY) students, one third of whom start out at a two-year CUNY community college, because they have been identified as having the highest need for intervention. To ensure year-over-year persistence and bachelor's degree completion, the program supports students as they transition from two-year to four-year colleges and throughout their postsecondary education. ANY has achieved results that position it as the most effective model for college completion programs for CUNY students.

Among ANY alumni:

- 96 percent have stayed in school and graduated
- 90 percent have secured jobs or enrolled in graduate school
- 92 percent of those working have secured jobs in areas of their professional interest at an average salary of \$53,000

Among ANY's 2016 class of Fellows:

- 91 percent are on track to complete the program
- 96 percent have completed internships
- 91 percent are persisting in college

Furthermore, 100 percent of ANY Fellows in community colleges have successfully transferred to four-year institutions.

The foundation has also supported the development of a new College Connections pilot to expand the ANY model to high school seniors, creating a direct pipeline to postsecondary education. Students in College Connections receive weekly support from a “near-peer” mentor; five in-person training sessions on financial aid, college success, and career exploration; job shadowing; and industry networking sessions.

## Beyond 12

In 2015 and 2016, the foundation supported a portfolio of college readiness grantee organizations by offering them the opportunity to partner with Beyond 12 to overcome the data gap between the high school and higher education systems and track and support students after their transition to post-secondary school, which increases the college completion rates for underserved students.

Beyond 12 is a technology-based service organiza-

tion that provides technology support that allows high schools, colleges, and college access organizations to track alumni progress and capture the longitudinal information they need to assess and improve their programs. Beyond 12 uses a longitudinal student tracking platform and a personalized student coaching service to increase the number of low-income, first-generation, and historically underrepresented students who graduate from college.

Through a funding collaboration between the foundation and the Charles Hayden Foundation, Beyond 12 is partnering with a collective of both foundations' grantees, including NYC SALT, Harlem RBI, Bishop Kearney High School, College Match, Henry Street Settlement, East Harlem Tutorial Program, and Global Glimpse, to implement its customized Alumni Tracker tool to track and support nearly 3,000 college students in their transition to college.

The Alumni Tracker is a web-based tool that enables college access organizations to track and analyze their alumni's quantitative and qualitative college data, such as course enrollment, grades, and student engagement and employment patterns. Additionally, Beyond 12 is providing these organizations with its MyCoach mobile app, an on-demand guide to help students keep track of key deadlines, resources, and opportunities through an interactive, campus-specific checklist augmented by automated, evidence-based “nudges.”

## Blue Engine

In 2015 and 2016, the foundation provided capacity-building support for Blue Engine's targeted growth within New York City and its expansion to an additional city in 2016. Blue Engine partners with underserved public high schools in New York City to increase academic rigor and prepare greater numbers of students for post-secondary success. To achieve its mission, Blue Engine delivers daily, small-group instruction in three gateway skills: math,



literacy, and social cognition. Partner schools are selected based on criteria that determine a high level of need: they must serve a population in which a critical mass of students has not historically performed at college-ready levels on standardized tests, the minority student population is high, the majority of students receive free or reduced-price lunch, and the percentage of special education students and English Language Learners exceeds city averages.

Blue Engine recruits and trains recent college graduates to serve as Blue Engine Teaching Assistants (BETAs) for one year. BETAs and students work in small groups to accelerate academic achievement. Three to four BETAs partner with each classroom teacher to customize math and literacy instruction, dramatically reducing the instructor-to-student ratios from 1:6 to 1:3 on average and providing an additional 150 hours of instruction in Math and English outside of regular class time through extended-day learning and flexible class periods.

The model has been effectively scaled since the program's founding in 2009. During the 2015 to 2016 academic year, 87 BETAs collaborated with more than 40 teachers serving over 1,400 students in seven schools in the South Bronx and Washington Heights. Students served by Blue Engine are 3.7 times more likely to pass the Integrated Algebra exam and 7.6 times more likely to score college ready than their peers district-wide. Achieving competency in Integrated Algebra is one of the highest predictors of college success.

With the foundation's support, Blue Engine is partnering with two other organizations to increase the scope and efficacy of their BETA program: Relay Graduate School of Education and the College Advising Corps (CAC). Relay will offer a teacher certification program for second-year BETAs. CAC will help to formalize a college readiness curriculum for 11th- and 12th-grade students.

In 2017, Blue Engine will build a new program coaching and support model that is optimized for team teaching, incorporates the mentor teacher, and helps all instructors

become more effective in teaching rigorous college and career-ready standards. The organization will develop and enhance support structures that are designed to facilitate the most dramatic student academic growth in a given school year and to facilitate development and continuous improvement for both teachers-in-training/BETAs and the mentor teachers who oversee them.

### Bottom Line

Bottom Line provides low-income and first-generation college students, most of whom have GPA's of 2.5 or higher, with one-on-one guidance through the college application process, college, and beyond. The foundation supported the replication of Bottom Line's successful Boston-based model to New York City and renewed funding for the organization in 2015 and 2016. Bottom Line is distinguished by its two-fold focus on successful completion of college in addition to college access support. Its goals are therefore to provide a college access program for high school seniors through mandatory one-on-one meetings with a Bottom Line counselor and to provide a college success program that serves college students at 20 private and public colleges in New York City and New York State.

Bottom Line targets mid-achieving students. Its college access counselors meet individually with students to create a list of potential schools, complete applications, apply for financial aid, and select a college that meets their academic, financial, and personal needs. Once they matriculate, students join the college success program.

The foundation funded Bottom Line's Success Direct program, which provides a direct pipeline program for college persistence support. It is customized for students who attend New York City high schools that partner with Student Sponsor Partners, a mentorship and sponsorship organization. Bottom Line continues building upon this program through partnerships with 20 New York State

colleges, 12 of which are located in New York City. These “Higher Education Opportunity Programs” are part of a New York State-wide college access program that includes New York University, Barnard College, Syracuse University, Ithaca College, Hamilton College, Skidmore College, Union College, and Colgate University.

Since Success Direct’s launch in New York City in 2011, 88 percent of all participants have graduated from college or are on track to graduate within six years. Of the Class of 2015, 92 percent have persisted into their third semester of college. Of the 1,247 Success students Bottom Line is currently serving, 97 percent remain engaged in the program.

A 2016 randomized control trial evaluation by University of Virginia Professors Ben Castleman and Andrew Barr found that graduates from the high school class of 2015 who were offered Bottom Line advising were 14 percent more likely to enroll at a four-year institution and attend institutions with higher mean graduation rates and lower cohort default rates.

Over the last four years, 99 percent of Bottom Line’s New York cohort was accepted to college, with 33 percent of this group enrolling at a Higher Education Opportunity school. Bottom Line’s success is due in substantial part to its built-in framework for collaboration with colleges, other community-based organizations, and district and charter schools. In 2015, Bottom Line increased its post-college workforce entry services through individualized support and career counseling. The organization also replicated its model to Chicago.

During the 2016 to 2017 academic year, Bottom Line will grow to serve 1,735 low-income, first-generation college students in the Success Direct program, in part as a result of increasing partnerships with college access non-profits and local high schools that are unable to effectively support students during college. As part of the organization’s strategic growth plan, this academic year Bottom Line developed a pipeline for students transferring from

two-year CUNY colleges to one of the program’s target senior colleges, through a partnership with Graduate NYC, ASAP, and LaGuardia Community College. Over 50 percent of the students at CUNY’s four-year colleges enter as transfer students, so Bottom Line sees this program as a significant new pipeline of students that can benefit from the organization’s support to earn their bachelor’s degree.

### Breakthrough New York and Miami

Breakthrough New York (BTNY) is a six-year college access program committed to placing high-potential, low-income middle school students in four-year colleges. BTNY targets sixth-graders and works with them through high school, providing tutoring and SAT prep, college visits, and interview coaching. BTNY also provides after-school tutoring and summer enrichment programs to a cohort of high-achieving middle school students from New York public schools. BTNY’s teachers are themselves high-performing high school and college students who are interested in pursuing careers in education.

Since 2005, 100 percent of BTNY’s eighth-graders have gained admission into selective college-preparatory high schools located throughout the United States. Independent evaluations of BTNY students over the course of its summer program indicate that they made gains of up to two and a half grade levels. BTNY operates in 25 regional sites, providing hundreds of under-resourced students with a tuition-free academic enrichment program at the middle and high school levels.

The foundation also supports Breakthrough Miami (BTM), a tuition-free, eight-year program for motivated fifth- through 12th-grade students. A 2016 Heckscher grant supported BTM’s middle school to high school year-round programming as well as the Pathways to College 3.0 initiative. The Pathways project aims to develop a more effective college persistence tracking plan and more robust alumni support.

Among BTM’s middle school students, 98 percent enter “college-bound” high schools. In the class of 2016, 100 percent of BTM seniors graduated on time, compared with a 68.9 percent graduation rate for surrounding Miami-Dade County public school students. BTM’s five-year average of immediate four-year college enrollment is 76 percent, according to the National Student Clearinghouse.

### Bronx Center for Science and Mathematics

In 2016, the foundation provided a third strategic grant to Bronx Center for Science and Mathematics (BCSM), a public high school located in the poorest congressional district of the United States. BCSM is an unscreened high school in which 83 percent of students qualify for free or reduced lunch and 78 percent are first-generation to college. Through a funding partnership between the foundation and the Charles Hayden Foundation, BCSM has established itself as a college preparatory high school, offering rigorous courses, preparing students for the SAT exam, exposing students to a wide variety of colleges, and offering summer bridge programs and extracurricular activities.

In 2016, Newsweek named BCSM the highest-ranked unscreened high school in New York City, the seventh-ranked high school in New York State for “beating the odds,” and the 54th best high school in the U.S. With previous foundation support, BCSM deepened its services by adding out-of-school and summer programming for its students, including a literacy bridge for rising 10th-graders, experiential summer programming for rising 11th-graders, and a pre-college bridge for rising 12th-graders.

BCSM is also a peer mentoring partner school in the 2016 ELITE (Executive Leadership Institute for Transformational Educators) high school principal leadership coaching and mentoring initiative, a partnership among the foundation, Reach Educational Solutions, and the Columbia University Coaching Certification Program.

### Citizen Schools New York

Citizen Schools partners with 25 public middle schools nationally to expand the learning day for children in low-income communities. Citizen Schools New York (CSNY) is modeling a new effort to collaborate with other education reform organizations in New York City to form a “transition coalition,” an association of middle schools and nonprofit school intervention providers that share the goal of smoothly transitioning eighth-grade students into and through high school.

Building on the college-access achievements of the Opportunity Network (OppNet), the foundation supported an expanded partnership between foundation grantees OppNet, Citizen Schools, and Breakthrough New York to create a roadmap to the core competencies that students need to develop between sixth and ninth grades in order to successfully progress towards college. Through this innovative partnership, CSNY endeavors to change the life trajectories of New York City students by moving them onto “success tracks” toward high school graduation, college graduation, and positions of leadership in their careers and communities.

Citizen Schools has also been a key partner in the beta-testing phase of the NYC High School Application Guide, a free Heckscher-developed app that middle school students, parents, and guidance counselors can use to filter high school programs by interests and location and generate personalized lists of 20 best-fit high school programs.

### College Admissions Cognitive Advisor

The foundation is a founding partner supporting the development of the College Admissions Cognitive Advisor, an innovative, web-based tool that will transform college advising by providing relevant guidance and information

for the tens of thousands of high-achieving, low-income, college-qualified students in need of assistance. The tool will address aspects of the college process, including: advising, application support, college research, financial aid/scholarships, and test preparation. While existing tools address certain aspects of applying to and paying for college, they tend not to be interactive, simple, and comprehensive.

Conceived in 2016, the project brings together a prominent technology partner, the leading provider of information to college bound students (College Board), and a small group of foundations (Heckscher Foundation, Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, ECMC Foundation, Carnegie Foundation, and Marie-Josée and Henry R. Kravis Foundation). This unique partnership will address the fact that high-achieving, low-income students do not have adequate tools and advisement to guide them through the daunting college admissions process. The Jack Kent Cooke Foundation is developing content for and will curate the web-based College Admissions Cognitive Advisor, while the College Board has committed to providing data for and hosting this new technology. This collaborative approach is intended to make the Advisor the “go-to” website for college research, application, funding, and preparation. It is designed specifically to attract low-income, high-performing students.

#### CollegePoint: A Bloomberg Philanthropies/Heckscher Foundation Partnership

In 2016, the foundation continued its collaboration with Bloomberg Philanthropies to design and launch a virtual college advising program, CollegePoint, which promotes college access and completion for high-achieving, low- and moderate-income students. It provides support and guidance on the college application and financial aid process to directly help as many as 75,000 students apply to, enroll in, and ultimately graduate from top schools. In order to be eligible for CollegePoint, students must have

standardized test scores in the 90th percentile or higher, a grade point average of 3.5 or higher, and family income of \$80,000 or less.

The initiative also engages college and university presidents and leading experts, in partnership with the Aspen Institute and ITHAKA S+R, spurring changes in higher education policies and practices to enable more students to enroll and graduate. The overarching goal is for half of high-achieving, low- and moderate-income students — up from one-third today — to enroll in the nation’s top 265 colleges and universities, prioritizing schools with high graduation rates and low student debt.

The model is intended to achieve broad impact through collaboration. Leading program partners include: College Advising Corps, College Possible, ScholarMatch, and Matriculate (each of which will contribute to a squad of well-trained college access advisors), as well as the College Board, the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, New Profit Inc., America Achieves, the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, Khan Academy, and the Aspen Institute. The virtual college advising partners have recruited, selected, and trained more than 30 full-time advisors and 400 college students as part-time advisors. These advisors served 8,300 students in the Class of 2016, and are on track to serve more than 12,150 in the Class of 2017.

Two leading professors in the college success field, Dr. Ben Castleman (University of Virginia) and Dr. Eric Bettinger (Stanford University), are researching the impact of interventions to measure “virtual advising outcomes” and enable sharing of successful strategies among school systems, counselors, other nonprofit organizations, and education leaders across the country.

Following year one of the initiative, preliminary results demonstrate that the coalition of partners has positively impacted college application behavior and college admission outcomes for the intended population of students; notably, over 80 percent of students in the Class of 2015 cohort were accepted to at least one school

in the top 120 (as ranked by Barron's) and 67 percent were accepted to at least one school in the top 80, compared to 52 percent of control group students.

### CollegeSpring

CollegeSpring is a California-based college counseling and SAT prep program customized to meet the needs of low-income students. Through its partnership model, CollegeSpring provides grade-wide intervention during the academic year for 11th-grade students and serves a portion of 11th- and 12th-grade students during a summer session.

The organization has operated programs in Los Angeles and San Francisco in partnership with local high schools and community-based organizations. Students receive 80 hours of SAT instruction, college readiness counseling, and diagnostic testing through a mix of classroom instruction led by professional teachers and small group tutoring sessions led by undergraduates who serve as near-peer mentors.

CollegeSpring students are 1.5 times more likely to attend four-year colleges than their peers. On average, 50 percent of CollegeSpring students who complete all four diagnostic SAT tests enroll in a four-year college within two years of high school graduation, compared to the national average of 30 percent for similar students.

The foundation provided start-up funding to bring CollegeSpring to New York City and, in 2016, continued its support of a collaborative initiative between Heckscher grantees CollegeSpring, Henry Street Settlement, and Posse Foundation.

### Eagle Academy

In 2016, the foundation continued support for the Eagle Academy Foundation (EAF). EAF develops and supports

a network of all-male, college-preparatory, extended-day public schools serving grades six through 12. Eagle launched its first school (Eagle Academy-Bronx) in 2004 and has expanded to a network of seven schools. Of EAF's students, 91 percent are low income, with 50 percent entering the Academy reading below grade level. 100 percent of students identified as students of color and 80 percent will be first-generation college students. Despite these risk factors, 83 percent of Eagle Scholars graduate from high school, 98 percent of graduates are accepted to college, 72 percent matriculate at college immediately following high school, and 87 percent remain enrolled in college two years later.

To support Eagle Scholars in their transition to and persistence in college, the foundation provided funding in 2015 for EAF to collaborate with Bottom Line and Summer Search, both nonprofit organizations (and Heckscher grantees) that offer outcome-driven college readiness and college retention programs for low-income, at-risk students. Bottom Line maintains 92 percent college persistence for all students in its New York program. This collaboration provides direct service and support to help a group of Eagle Scholars prepare for and navigate the college experience.

In 2016, the foundation underwrote a partnership with CollegeSpring, a college counseling and SAT prep program that is customized to meet the needs of low-income students, to complement the work that Eagle is leading with its college guidance program by improving admissions and enrollment outcomes at four-year institutions.

### The First Tee of Metropolitan New York

In 2016, the foundation provided its third grant to The First Tee of Metropolitan New York, an academic program that uses golf as a motivator to improve student academic outcomes and college readiness. First Tee uses a structured



curriculum of mentoring, skill development, academic support, and golf to build character and foster development among participating youth. First Tee provides support aimed at high school graduation and college access and offers tutoring, workshops, SAT preparation, family engagement counseling, and visits to local college campuses.

The foundation supports the Ace Scholars program, a new partnership between Breakthrough New York (BTNY) and First Tee, with BTNY advising on the build-out of a college readiness framework for middle school students, with the goal of launching a structured tutoring and college prep model in-house at First Tee's location in the Mosholu section of the Bronx. First Tee is piloting this focused, academic-based program for a group of youth in its golf program, adapting BTNY's successful approach to a cohort of Bronx-based middle school students. These youth will comprise the core of First Tee's program moving forward, serving as peer leaders for incoming students while receiving a full-service program in preparation for high school and college.

Another group of 20 students will receive weekly individualized tutoring with the expectation that as the more intensive Ace Scholars program expands, many of these youth will enroll in it. Another group of roughly 100 students will receive scholarships for First Tee's expanded STEM summer camp model.

### Global Glimpse

The foundation supported Global Glimpse, an education program founded in the San Francisco Bay area that targets high-potential high school students from disadvantaged neighborhoods and focuses on leadership development, community service, and globalization education. Global Glimpse works with public high schools and college preparatory organizations, including Summer Search, to provide year-round programming that centers

around a three-week summer experience in a developing country (including Nicaragua, Ecuador, and the Dominican Republic), with an extensive curriculum covering history, politics, culture, poverty, business, education, and development.

The program targets high-potential, low-income 11th-grade students who demonstrate leadership qualities and have a minimum GPA of 3.0. Prior to their summer travel, students perform 40 hours of community service and engage in project-based learning, leadership training, and after-school workshops focused on civic engagement and global education. Participants remain engaged in the program as 12th-grade students, providing one-on-one mentoring to the incoming cohort of 11th-graders and participating in community service projects and supplementary academic workshops that include college essay support.

Though not a traditional college preparation program, Global Glimpse's experiential learning program yields academic gains: 80 percent of participants write their college essay on the experience; 100 percent graduate from high school; 80 percent matriculate to four-year colleges, with an additional 15 percent at two-year community colleges; and 97 percent are persisting in college.

In 2017, Global Glimpse will continue developing an Alumni Ambassador Program to provide leadership development and support for alumni during their senior year of high school. To optimize alumni engagement, a new national Alumni Council will manage the alumni database and support data collection, serve as a resource to connect alumni with shared academic or career interests, maintain an alumni opportunity board, organize informal alumni events, and strengthen the alumni community's online presence. Also in 2017, Global Glimpse will transition a portion of its curriculum online to strengthen the preparatory materials students receive, help students from partner programs receive comprehensive preparation before they travel, and create opportunities for the program to expand beyond U.S. regional hub markets.

## Goddard Riverside's Options Center

The foundation's 2016 grant to the Options Center addresses the need to increase the number of trained college counselors in New York City public high schools. Of the approximately 400 master's degree programs in school counseling nationwide, only about 10 percent offer coursework in college advisement. None focus on underrepresented populations and college training is not a requirement for school counselor licensure in New York City.

The Options Institute, the training arm of the Options Center, provides in-depth professional development for college counselors. The Options Center, which also operates a direct service student program, was formed specifically to serve students who are underrepresented in college and whose strong need for support in the college application, transition, and degree completion process is not met through high school counselors or family members.

Current funding from the foundation supports capacity building for the Options Institute. Funding also supports expanded outreach to high school college guidance counselors citywide to inform them about the "Ask an Advisor" service. This virtual advising service has the potential to scale to serve substantially greater numbers of college counseling staff who are working with large caseloads of 11th- and 12th-grade students.

## Harvard Business School Summer Venture in Management Program

In 2016, the foundation renewed support for the Summer Venture in Management Program (SVMP), a training program for rising college seniors designed to increase diversity and opportunity in business education. A program of Harvard Business School, it supports students who are

typically underrepresented in the business school classroom so they can gain admission to top business schools and develop a broader understanding of the challenges business leaders face, the many dimensions of the business world, and the impact they can have on their community and the world through business leadership.

Criteria for admission include academic achievement, demonstrated leadership, and personal characteristics, with special consideration for students of color who are first-generation to college, whose families have little business education or experience, and/or who are from a school whose graduates are sometimes underrepresented, such as a community college or a predominately minority college. Participants live on campus, spending evenings analyzing real business cases and mornings in study groups and classes examining and debating their ideas with peers and faculty. The academic program is supplemented by presentations from Harvard Business School administrators and alumni who provide information about the impact of a business degree. Measures of success for this program are its effectiveness in helping these "nontraditional" students enroll in one of the nation's top 20 business schools (as ranked by U.S. News and World Report). Longer-term measures of program success include highly competitive internships and employment and salary offers from top firms.

## ideas42: "A Practitioner's Guide to Important Proven Behavioral Interventions in Post-Secondary Education"

ideas42 teaches leaders, policy makers, and practitioners about using behavioral science to help increase college matriculation and persistence among underserved youth. After working on 16 projects with 13 schools and post-secondary partners, ideas42 published a 2016 report that

uncovered numerous subtle, often invisible, barriers that hinder students' progress at each step of their journey to a degree. ideas42 then set about designing solutions to improve student outcomes from pre-admission to post-graduation.

In 2016, the foundation conceived of and funded a project to develop and widely disseminate a report that will present to practitioners:

- A comprehensive synthesis of the important proven behavioral interventions in postsecondary education, with analyses of specific strategies that appear most successful overall and within certain populations
- A guide to supporting innovative practitioners in implementing effective behavioral nudge approaches in their settings

The project will be run and the report developed by Dr. Ben Castleman and a team at ideas42. They will recruit practitioners from colleges, nonprofits, high schools, and state agencies interested in collaborating with the project leads and ideas42 associates on each chapter of the practitioner's guide. The goal is to ground each chapter's recommendations and guidance in a particular context—in essence, to work with practitioners to identify how they would implement the recommendation in their setting, and to translate their design and implementation considerations to the guide's readers.

### iMentor

iMentor is a national mentoring organization that partners with high schools in low-income communities, serving mostly prospective first-generation college students. The organization pairs students with a college-educated, trained mentor who commits to a single student for a

minimum of three years, with the option to extend their match through college completion. In New York City alone, iMentor is operating in 15 schools, reaching about 4,000 students during the 2016 to 2017 academic year.

From 2013 through 2015, the foundation supported iMentor in implementing the Texts for College Success Campaign, a text message campaign to counteract the phenomenon of “summer melt,” in which students change their college plans over the summer due to logistical, financial, or personal issues. “Summer melt” affects up to 40 percent of low-income and first-generation college-bound students.

In 2016, the foundation funded two key initiatives: the continued refinement of the 12th-grade curriculum, with an emphasis on clarifying and strengthening the role of the mentor in the college process and laying a strong foundation for when mentees matriculate at college; and the development of new technology platform tools and features to better support pairs in the transition to college and improve how the organization administers, tracks, and manages program outcomes related to college success.

In the summer of 2016, iMentor was awarded a three-year, \$1.1 million grant from the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation, which will support the national relaunch of the college years program, including program model redesign and scale-up of college years staffing. The foundation's 2016 grant complements this work, creating a stronger and more deliberate bridge between 12th grade and the college program, and supporting technological platform enhancements that will better engage students throughout the college application/matriculation process.

New integrated technology solutions will support the college application process, while enhanced communications and consolidated college-enrollment resources will offer pairs an improved experience and greater accountability for meeting college application milestones. Through these enhancements, iMentor program managers will also have a better understanding of pairs' progress through the



college application and matriculation process so they will be positioned to provide timely, proactive support.

### Kingsborough Community College SPARK Program

In 2016, the foundation provided multi-year support to Kingsborough Community College (KCC), one of the seven CUNY two-year colleges with open enrollment, to launch a new program called Strategic Partnerships for Achievement and Retention at Kingsborough (SPARK). SPARK is intended as a cost-effective approach to develop and expand on Kingsborough's Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) model to improve graduation rates.

The ASAP model was launched in 2007 in all six CUNY community colleges. A recent MDRC study compared ASAP with regular services and classes at the colleges and several key findings demonstrated its impact, particularly for first-generation college students: 1) an increase in semester-to-semester college retention of 8-10 percent, 2) a 25 percent increase in credits earned toward a degree, and 3) a 15 percent increase in associate's degree completion. These positive effects are among the largest in a community college setting. While the program yields unparalleled student success, the cost per student has prevented scaling of the program.

Based on the success of ASAP, Kingsborough Community College, under President Farley Herzek's leadership, designed SPARK as an effective, lower-cost, more scalable, ASAP-like solution. SPARK is designed to close the educational and employment gap of KCC students in need of developmental education so that students complete their education at KCC ready to transfer to a four-year CUNY institution or prepared for job entry.

The SPARK model provides at-risk students with a range of financial, academic, and personal support and comprehensive case management, including SingleStop

services. The program serves both incoming and continuing students with customized resources. Incoming students receive support through innovative Learning Communities, work with an assigned, dedicated, on-campus case manager throughout their college experience at KCC, and have intensive resources in place to address Math, Reading, and Writing remediation requirements. Continuing students have access to assigned case managers who can holistically address financial, academic, and personal challenges to college retention and they receive placement in new Learning Communities designed exclusively for continuing students' career readiness and exploration.

In the first year of SPARK, the cost per student was \$1,346. In Year 2, with 300 incoming freshmen and 6,000 continuing students, the cost decreased to \$556 per incoming freshman and \$62 per continuing student.

Outcomes are projected to include:

- Fall-to-Spring semester persistence rate for incoming freshmen: increase from 83 to 90 percent
- Fall-to-Fall semester persistence rate for incoming freshmen: increase from 65 to 77 percent
- Fall-to-Fall semester persistence rate for Black and Hispanic students in Year 2: increase of 10 percent
- Graduation rate of students at the lowest level of developmental English and Mathematics: longer-term, two-fold increase from 16.6 to 34 percent

The SPARK initiative aligns with the foundation's previous support of KCC, which made it the first SingleStop center within any CUNY institution. SingleStop was found to have halved the dropout rate of low-income students and was replicated to all two-year CUNY schools with similar success.

## Nudge4 Solutions Lab

Studies and pilot projects funded by the foundation have demonstrated that research-based interventions that address college access and success, such as text-messaging and other campaigns (Hoxby and Turner, 2013), can generate substantial improvements in college outcomes for underserved youth and veterans.

In 2016, building on the continued success of low-cost, high-impact behavioral solutions to address pressing social programs, the foundation provided the first grant to spearhead the launch of the Nudge4 Solutions Lab, conceived and led by leading researcher in this field, Dr. Ben Castleman. The lab will develop scalable solutions in education and public policy by leveraging behavioral insights, data science, interactive technologies, and deep practitioner partnerships. The solutions target four priority areas: 1) reducing educational inequality, 2) improving educational outcomes for veterans and their dependents, 3) reducing chronic unemployment, and 4) improving re-entry outcomes for incarcerated youth and adults. The projects are designed to be scalable to hundreds of thousands or millions of people across the country.

Nudge4 is unique in its approach to connecting people to beneficial resources and opportunities at critical junctures in their lives, whether the focal population is community college students figuring out which courses to take to complete their degree or recently incarcerated individuals navigating the transition back into society. Nudge4's work is distinguished by four core pillars:

1. Behavioral insights: the projects leverage behavioral insights to design interventions that encourage people to make informed decisions and follow through on their own intentions
2. Data science: the lab will harness rich data and sophisticated analytic techniques to provide

people with information that is highly personalized, salient, and actionable

3. Interactive technologies: Nudge4 projects leverage mobile technologies to effectively reach people, convey timely information, and connect them to individualized assistance
4. Deep practitioner partnerships: the lab will build collaborative, sustained partnerships with schools, agencies, and organizations to develop effective, scalable policy interventions

In Phase 1, Nudge4 will launch four major new projects — at least one in each of the four priority areas. In Phase 2, Nudge4 will launch at least six additional major projects in each priority area.

## OneGoal

In 2015 and 2016, the foundation provided support for OneGoal to replicate its program to New York City, in collaboration with the Edwin Gould Foundation and Arbor Brothers, which are together providing a combination of technical assistance, incubation office space, and other capacity-building services. Formally launched as an intensive, in-school college persistence program in 2013, OneGoal now works with 4,000 high-need students in non-selective, low-income partner high schools in Chicago and Houston. OneGoal identifies, trains, and supports high-performing champion teachers to implement a three-year college readiness and success curriculum into classroom-based learning. Program Directors work intensively with underperforming students from 11th grade through the first year of college to not only support students to and through college but to increase their college selectivity tier by at least one level. OneGoal's program specifically focuses on addressing college under-matching challenges by targeting mid-range achievers, providing

comprehensive services geared towards improved GPA's and standardized test scores, and helping students to identify more selective and supportive best-fit colleges.

According to a recent external evaluation conducted by the University of Chicago, OneGoal demonstrated an increase in college enrollment and persistence by 10 to 20 percentage points compared to a control group, with a particularly strong effect in increasing four-year college enrollment and persistence. Through this low-cost and scalable model, which relies on existing resources, OneGoal is able to make district-wide improvements in college success. To date, 87 percent of graduates have enrolled in college and 83 percent are persisting in college or have graduated with a college degree.

In the 2016 to 2017 year, OneGoal is adding 10 new high school partners, serving a total of 965 students. In addition to deepening relationships with high schools in New York City, OneGoal is also focused on identifying local institutions of higher education and establishing official partnerships to create easier pathways for students to gain acceptance to college and support networks for them while they're there.

### The Opportunity Network (OppNet)

The Opportunity Network (OppNet) has helped high-performing students complete college and launch careers by providing career preparation and networking opportunities within a college access and success framework.

In 2016, the foundation provided capacity-building support to OppNet's college-access program, which offers high-achieving, underserved students a clear path to career opportunities, professional networks, and colleges. Specifically, the foundation supported the development of OppNet's Career Fluency Portal, an engaging, new interactive web-based platform, which will enable OppNet to maximize its partnership model with community-based organizations and schools by delivering content, resources,

and training in a more accessible and efficient way while maintaining fidelity to its model. The portal will function as a teaching aid in the classroom and as a tool for educators and youth development professionals, providing college and career readiness content to underserved young people.

Emphasizing personal and professional networks and social capital, OppNet's "Career Fluency" curriculum is defined by extensive and intensive intervention over six years with a holistic focus on college and careers. From sophomore summer through senior year of high school, OppNet Fellows participate in weekly after-school sessions focused on career exploration, networking, and professional etiquette. They receive intensive college advising on how to supplement in-school guidance and hold paid summer internships. Once in college, Fellows receive more than 300 mentoring and counseling sessions. Last year, 100 percent graduated from high school on time and 97 percent matriculated at selective four-year colleges. 100 percent of Fellows have graduated or are on track to graduate from college within six years. Among those who graduated, 90 percent secured full-time employment within six months of completing college.

To further expand its reach, OppNet launched OppNet Prep to serve a younger population starting at the end of eighth grade through ninth grade. These students receive a curriculum adapted from Career Fluency in a year-long classroom series that culminates in a college access program fair. At last year's fair, 89 percent of students applied to high school enrichment and college prep programs, with most receiving acceptances.

### Posse Foundation/Posse Consulting

In 2016, the foundation provided support to Posse Foundation, a national college access and leadership development program that recruits underserved urban public high school students with leadership and academic potential,

providing them with the opportunity to attend competitive four-year colleges tuition-free.

To date, 100 percent of Posse Scholars have graduated from high school and matriculated at college, and the program maintains a 90 percent college graduation rate. Posse's success hinges on its cohort model, in which participants are placed in supportive, multicultural teams of 10 students, called "posses." Posse Scholars attend one of 51 partner colleges and universities, where they meet with a mentor and campus liaison weekly to ensure retention and facilitate leadership and engagement in campus opportunities. Posse plays an integral role in career development and internship placement through employer partnerships, career workshops, and alumni networking; 70 percent of Posse alumni have obtained an internship or job through Posse and 92 percent of alumni are employed or in graduate school.

Through an underwriting grant from the foundation, Posse established a new initiative, Posse Consulting. Posse Consulting formalizes the organization's expertise in the field of leadership development and diversity training and supports this work among external organizations to build and scale their college access and leadership development programming. Posse Consulting offers other organizations mentorship, targeted diversity training for their employees through workshops and daylong events, and training on how to reproduce these training programs. This initiative has enabled Posse to expand its impact in higher education as well as increase its influence over how college access programs and corporate diversity initiatives approach and address challenges related to promoting equity in their institutions. Posse Consulting has worked with other Heckscher grantees, including Henry Street Settlement and CollegeSpring.

### Row New York

In 2016, the foundation continued its support for Row New York, an outcomes-driven sports and college prep

program. Row New York serves sixth- through 12th-grade students from under-resourced high schools with year-round programming through a blend of competitive rowing and individualized academic support. Youth participate in Regents test prep, a seven-week SAT prep course during the summer, career development activities, and college visits. They receive one-on-one assistance with the college and financial aid application process and assistance with recruitment to college rowing teams. The organization does not screen based on academic performance; however, once admitted to the program, students with a GPA below 80 percent focus exclusively on grade improvement by engaging in tutoring and small-group academic instruction. Among the high school classes from 2011 through 2014, 94 percent of participants are persisting in college.

In addition to supporting Row New York's college readiness programming, the foundation has partnered with SeaChange Capital Partners to assist in assessing options for increasing Row New York's capacity through a new boathouse. The new space, which will house the organization's headquarters, will better position Row New York to achieve its ultimate goal of providing comprehensive on-site programming that will reach more youth.

### The TEAK Fellowship

In 2016, the foundation continued its support for the Teak Fellowship, which focuses on generating access to high quality educational opportunities for motivated New York City youth. Established in 1998, TEAK is an academic and personal enrichment program for youth starting in sixth grade and extending beyond college graduation. Acceptance is based on financial need, academic motivation, and talent. TEAK begins preparing youth in the spring of sixth grade to gain admission to top public, independent, and parochial high schools, and to succeed once enrolled.

TEAK students embark on a 16-month cycle of programs to prepare for the competitive admissions process to selective high schools. Preparatory programs include the Spring Intensive, a six-week after-school academic program; two Summer Institutes, six-week intensive programs in English, Math, Latin, Science, Research, and Arts; a test preparation course; and comprehensive high school placement guidance to help navigate the admissions and financial aid application processes. Among TEAK Fellows, 100 percent graduated from high school and were accepted to four-year colleges and universities, with over 96 percent admitted to selective schools.



### Heckscher Prize for Outstanding Service to Children and Youth

In 2016, the foundation joined the Charles H. Revson Foundation's and Stavros Niarchos Foundation's NYC Neighborhood Library Awards initiative to award the first ever Heckscher Prize for Outstanding Service to Children and Youth to the Jerome Park Library in the Bronx. The prize recognizes the important role of branch libraries in the education and development of children and teens in New York City, particularly those in our most underserved communities.

Known as the "Oscars of Libraries," the Revson/Stavros Niarchos NYC Neighborhood Library Awards

generated approximately 19,000 nominations from library users in 2016 (up more than 40 percent from 2015). Jerome Park nominators, 20 percent of whom were 12 and under, described their branch as a fun, safe, and "cool" community hub—a place to get help and a place where beloved librarians treat them "like family." The library plays an integral role in the community, providing safe, reliable after-school supervision, academic support, and fun enrichment programs for children and youth.



### Heckscher Scholars Program

Since 2009, The Heckscher Scholars Program has provided college access and career readiness programming for students from New York City public high schools while building the capacity of city nonprofits. To prepare for admission to competitive residential four-year colleges, scholars work with specialized tutors and guidance counselors at the foundation's offices. They receive academic support and college preparation, including tutoring in English, Math, and Latin; SAT preparation; college visits; individual counseling; and family assistance.

Through paid summer internship placements, Heckscher Scholars also contribute meaningfully to nonprofit organizations throughout the city while gaining first-time work experiences in research, community projects,



and family social services. Over 95 percent of Heckscher Scholars have been accepted to and continue to attend or have graduated from a four-year school, including Smith College, Bryn Mawr College, and other highly competitive institutions, and all have received substantial financial aid awards and scholarship grants.



### Leadership and Mentorship

#### East Harlem Pride School Collaboration

In 2016, the foundation supported three schools in East Harlem that have historically pooled their athletic resources into one, common sports team that competes against other schools under the name “East Harlem Pride.” The schools, Park East, Central Park East, and Heritage, are close to each other and serve predominantly low-income youth. The foundation’s funding supports each school in meeting its own identified needs while also investing in shared professional development and teaching techniques so the strengths of each school can be leveraged by the other two.

Park East has a successful Math program while Heritage has an arts focus and Central Park East has an outstanding college guidance program. Each school is taking the lead on one component of the collaborative:

- Park East is focusing on cross-school teacher and academic programming development, especially in algebra instruction
- Central Park East is partnering with College Access: Research and Action to develop a working group to share best practices from its college access program, and will organize two shared college trips for students across all three high schools
- Heritage supports building arts-based learning opportunities in the other schools similar to its own arts integration model

Throughout this three-pronged approach to school improvement and college readiness, the three East Harlem Pride high schools are tracking improvements in academic performance (using pre- and post-test scores and Regents exam performance), grade promotion, attendance and in-school engagement, college applications, FAFSA completion, and college matriculation.

#### Faith-Based Mentorship: African Methodist Episcopal Church, 2nd Episcopal District

In early 2016, the foundation conceived of a unique faith-based mentorship concept in which it would partner with the African Methodist Episcopal Church to create a faith-based link between home and school by connecting local African-American churches with churches in minority students’ college towns. The first African-American denomination organized and incorporated in the United States, the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church has a unique history as the first major religious denomination in the western world born in protest against racial discrimination and slavery.

Designed as a home away from home, “Helping College Students Finish Strong” is a mentoring, nurturing, and retention program for African-American college

students to help them graduate from college or university. The comprehensive approach targets three groups: 1) entering college freshmen who will allow AME to track their academic progress and provide necessary ongoing interventions to support their academic progress from beginning to end, 2) African-American male students, and 3) any minority college student committed to academic success and future career opportunities who is attending a historically black college/university. Additionally, any college students needing support services to assist them in completing their degree program are welcome to enroll.

This program is designed to build a sense of community and a nurturing environment by providing academic support (tutoring, supplemental instruction, and financial resources) and career and general guidance within a student's traditional faith setting. These amenities will assist students in navigating through college and provide them with the necessary support to complete their degree program.

The program is intended to ease the anxieties of parents and guardians and reduce the loneliness and fear of being away from home for students. An emergency fund will be available for students who need assistance to return home for emergency reasons. The program will serve college students in a loving and caring environment, where families and individuals in the local AME church community will receive training to "adopt" a student for the school year, offering them a safe space to relax and providing a home away from home. Host families will provide hot meals at least once a week.

The program will track students in the local congregations and/or communities who have been accepted by or are currently attending a college or university that is in the Second Episcopal District. The Second District comprises Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, and the District of Columbia. Students will be matched to mentoring sites where a college retention plan will be developed. Benchmarks will be set to track college matriculation, persistence,

and graduation and evaluated four times each semester to ensure that students are on track for graduation.

### Online Leadership and Management Program for K-12 School Leaders

The foundation has increasingly focused on school principal leadership development through a variety of mentoring, coaching, and other principal preparation models. In 2016, the foundation provided start-up funding to the Harvard Business School (HBS), the Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE), and HBX to collaborate in designing, developing, and delivering an Online Leadership and Management Program for K-12 School Leaders. It addresses a school leadership deficit that can be mitigated by bringing a high-quality, scalable professional development experience to the market. This program is catalytic for the field in that it aims to serve as the foundation for the development of future online leadership and management programs. The new program will integrate the research and teaching of the HBS, HGSE, and other Harvard faculty and will be delivered on the innovative HBX online platform. The platform, with initial offerings including the "Credential of Readiness (CORe)," enables the proven-effective inductive teaching method and supports a highly-engaged learner experience that includes guided peer interaction.

Peer learning will be an integral element of the program. As demonstrated on the HBX platform through CORe, the program will cultivate a learning community that will be particularly valuable for principals, who generally work in isolation. Unlike the communications tools in many online programs, which often resemble traditional bulletin boards with jumbled questions and answers, the HBX platform enables student interaction in the context of a particular module. For example, a participant will be able to click on a "peer help" feature that will display only

the questions and answers related to where he/she is in the course. Since new content is revealed to participants only as prior content has been completed, participants cannot see the peer help discussions for content they have yet to reach, preserving the impact of inductive learning.

### REACH/ELITE High School Principal Initiative

A lengthy body of education research identifies principals as second only to effective teachers as the most important in-school factor influencing student achievement. In any school, the principal is a pivotal figure, the person not only responsible for management of the school building and supervision of students and staff, but also the school's instructional leader.

In 2016, the foundation initiated a pilot program with Edward Tom, principal of Heckscher grantee Bronx Center for Science and Mathematics, and the nonprofit-serving REACH Educational Solutions. The pilot is called ELITE (“Executive Leadership Institute for Transformation Educators”), and it is a unique collaborative leadership model for enhancing middle school and high school programming to achieve greater student achievement gains and college readiness. Tom and two other veteran principals, Ramon Gonzalez and Reginald Landeau, will each mentor three other principals, in partnership with REACH coaching experts, and with support from the Columbia University Coaching Certificate Program.

In total, 11 high schools will be served through this initiative (three led by mentor principals and eight led by mentee principals). Each principal established goals for his or her school within a framework developed in collaboration with REACH. After a needs assessment, the foundation provides supplemental funds to the nine schools led by mentee principals to help them better meet student needs. Through the program, the three mentor principals will become certified leadership coaches in partnership with

Columbia University’s Teachers College and Columbia Business School Executive Education.

The 2016 ELITE Schools are:

- Academy for Careers in Television & Film
- Bronx Center for Science and Math
- Bronx High School for Law and Community Service
- George J. Ryan Middle School 216
- Institute for Health Professions at Cambria Heights
- In-Tech Academy
- Knowledge and Power Preparatory Academy International High School
- Marble Hill High School for International Studies
- The Laboratory School of Finance and Technology
- Theatre Arts Production Company School
- Washington Heights Expeditionary Learning School



### Literacy Programs

#### READ Alliance

In 2016, the foundation provided continued support to READ Alliance, formerly the Reading Excellence and Discovery Foundation (READ), which was established to address the high proportion of New York City students



demonstrating below grade-level reading skills. READ has established a research-based educational approach that yields measurable results while offering growth opportunities for economically disadvantaged New York City teens. The program model positions academically successful seventh- through 12th-grade students who are trained as tutors to work with at-risk kindergarten through second-grade students.

In 2015 and 2016, READ's Summer Reading Program targeted children at nine New York City partner sites with critical reading intervention services delivered in a one-to-one instructional model by teen tutors. Children attend the Summer Reading Program four to five days each week, for a total of approximately 45 tutoring sessions, and participate in additional one-on-one tutoring sessions with literacy activities that support their reading. In 2016, 73 percent of the children who completed the Summer Reading Program improved their reading skills by at least one full grade level and an additional 20 percent of the children improved their reading skills by at least .5 grade level. The average reading gain achieved by the children who completed the program was 1.17 grade levels and 51 percent of students who completed the 2016 Summer Reading Program are now reading on grade level.

### Reading Partners

In 2016, the foundation continued to support Reading Partners (RPNY), a program that helps children become lifelong readers through individualized instruction that demands measurable results. A 2015 MDRC study of 1,200 students across three states found that after one year RPNY had significantly increased reading comprehension, fluency, and sight-word reading among diverse groups of students.

The foundation initially funded the program's replication from the San Francisco Bay Area to New York City

and has since funded expansion of the program. During the 2015 to 2016 school year, RPNY provided one-on-one literacy support to 920 struggling readers across 17 sites in New York City. Students worked with volunteer tutors, receiving individualized 45-minute tutoring sessions twice a week in reading centers throughout the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Queens. Among kindergarten through second-grade students served, 92 percent mastered grade-appropriate foundational literacy skills and among third- and fourth-grade students served, 82 percent accelerated their rate of learning when compared to prior to enrolling in the program.

At each school, RPNY creates a reading center and recruits a corps of up to 100 community volunteers to work one-on-one with students who have fallen at least six months behind in reading. Volunteers pull students out of class twice weekly for 45-minute tutoring sessions, utilizing a research-validated curriculum developed in partnership with the Stanford University School of Education. Students are evaluated throughout the year to guide instruction and monitor progress. A trained AmeriCorps member provides daily on-site program coordination with close oversight and assistance from senior RPNY staff. Periodic events engage parents. RPNY's Take Reading Home program complements tutoring by distributing over 20,000 free books across its programs so students can start home libraries.

### The Reading Team

In 2016, the foundation provided first-time support to the Reading Team, a Harlem-based literacy program that provides supplemental reading instruction to 250 students in Pre-K through fifth grade at P.S. 36 and after-school programming to 175 students at 18 local elementary schools. In 2015, 80 percent of Reading Team children passed the New York State ELA exam, compared to 30 percent of New York City public school students and 16 percent of Harlem

students. The Reading Team has encouraged students, especially those in the after-school program, to continue on this positive educational trajectory by enrolling in academic enrichment opportunities once they “graduate” from the program in fifth grade.

Current funding from the foundation supports a partnership with the Harlem Educational Activities Fund (HEAF) to create a Bridge to Success pilot program for middle school students who have graduated from the Reading Team’s after-school program and are interested in joining HEAF in high school. Through this program, the Reading Team and HEAF provide a co-delivered, project-based learning program for students in sixth through eighth grade. Engaging these students in structured academic programming during the middle school gap years will prevent digression from recent academic achievement.

In addition to maintaining gains in literacy and reading, the Reading Team is projecting that at least 70 percent of fifth graders from the after-school program will enroll in the Bridge to Success Program and at least 80 percent of Bridge to Success participants will enroll in HEAF by ninth grade. HEAF’s results speak to the anticipated success of the partnership: 100 percent of HEAF students graduate from high school on time, 100 percent matriculate at college (97 percent at a four-year college), and 92 percent persist in college and earn a bachelor’s degree on time.

### The Writing Revolution

The Writing Revolution (TWR) trains teachers and school leaders in expository writing instruction, introducing proven strategies that enable students to improve their writing skills, become better readers, speak more coherently, and elevate the complexity of their critical thinking. The training is based on the Hochman Writing Method, an evidence-based model developed by Dr. Judith C.

Hochman, former Superintendent of the Greenburgh Graham Union Free School District and former head of The Windward School, an independent school focused on students with learning disabilities. Results at Windward showed dramatic improvement in exit exams, with scores between 96 percent and 98 percent in reading, writing, and vocabulary.

In 2014, the foundation provided an initial grant to The Writing Revolution through a funding partnership with the Edwin Gould Foundation to train 126 educators, reaching 7,000 students from seven partnership schools in New York City.

In 2016, the foundation partnered with the Charles Hayden Foundation to fund an expansion, supporting TWR to train 75 teachers from 13 New York City public schools in evidence-based writing instruction, and provide teachers with new strategies for supporting their students in developing critical college preparatory writing skills.



### Math Programs

In 2016, the foundation sought to identify key stumbling blocks to successful college access and success. One area of focus was on Algebra. Achieving mastery of Integrated Algebra by eighth or ninth grade significantly improves student outcomes for high school graduation, college

entrance, and college graduation. We have looked to further engage in effective Math interventions in kindergarten through 12th grade to lay a foundation for educational success, preparing students for the academic rigor of high school and college. Programs supported include JUMP Math and Zearn. Supporting these pilot programs gives Heckscher the opportunity to test two different Math-focused models in both district and charter school settings.

### JUMP Math

JUMP Math (Junior Undiscovered Math Prodigy) begins with the premise that all children can learn Math, all teachers can teach Math, and both can and should enjoy it. This Common Core-aligned Math program for kindergarten through eighth grade provides educators with curriculum materials, assessment tools, training, and ongoing support. Originally launched in Canada, JUMP's Math curriculum draws on cognitive science research, combining guided exercises with independent work that breaks down difficult concepts into simple, logical steps. This methodology allows students to experience the positive reinforcement they need to encourage further learning, while giving teachers the tools they need to accomplish the nearly impossible task of teaching to the entire class while tailoring lessons to individual students' needs.

In a randomized-controlled trial in Canada, students using JUMP Math demonstrated gains in Math skills at twice the rate of students using the incumbent Math program. Manhattan Charter School, an elementary school on the Lower East Side of Manhattan where 83 percent of students qualify for free lunch, was one of the first schools in New York City to adopt the program, and preliminary outcomes are positive. Early results show a significant increase in students scoring at the 3 or 4 level of the statewide Math exam: third-grade students' improvement

was from 13 to 16 percent, fourth-grade students' improvement was from 16 to 33 percent, and fifth-grade students' improvement was from 22 to 28 percent.

In 2016, the foundation underwrote the first rollout and test of JUMP's program in New York City to serve 750 students at two elementary schools and one middle school in Brooklyn (P.S. 21, P.S. 9, and I.S. 285) that have underperformed in the state Math exams. Leveraging the experience of the Manhattan Charter School, this pilot will provide curricula, start-up assistance, professional development, ongoing support, and student achievement data collection and analyses (including classroom observations and collaborative feedback sessions with teachers, school coaches, and leaders). Collaborative professional development sessions for the principals of the three Brooklyn schools will support sharing of best practices.

### Zearn

Zearn is an education technology nonprofit organization that seeks to create rigorous and motivational dynamic digital content for students, teachers, and parents. The Zearn blended learning Math program combines digital lessons for independent student work with paper material to support small group instruction led by teachers. The digital content, based on Eureka Math and EngageNY (both Common Core-aligned Math curricula), is web-based and free for teachers and students to use.

Zearn has disseminated its second- through fourth-grade curriculum nationally over the past two years and will offer kindergarten through fifth-grade curricula for the 2016 to 2017 academic year. The program replaces regular classroom instruction with a 30- to 45-minute Math block, divided between independent learning and practice on a digital device and differentiated, teacher-led small group instruction. With over 100 online lessons available per grade level, teachers can curate content to students' needs.

A third-party evaluation in Zearn's beta year (2014 to 2015) showed that third- and fourth-grade students who averaged 30-plus minutes per day on Zearn demonstrated significant gains in Math achievement, not only relative to their own baseline but also relative to that of their grade peers nationally (according to performance on the STAR Math Assessment, a national standard). In the 2015 to 2016 pilot sites, Zearn students were on pace to gain 1.2 years of Math growth in one academic year.

Two of Zearn's pilot sites during the 2015 to 2016 academic year were KIPP elementary schools in Harlem and the South Bronx. Each school tested the model with first- and second-grade students. Both schools reported increased student engagement in the classroom and improved student Math performance.

In 2016, the foundation supported the model at these two KIPP schools and at two additional KIPP elementary schools. Through this initiative, Zearn will work with KIPP to implement the model grade-wide in first through fourth grades, reaching a total of 1,140 students.

## Arts Education



The Heckscher Foundation believes that the primary arena for excellent arts education is the classroom, and that arts organizations should work consistently and strategically in schools and with teachers, understanding the demands of existing curricula and official standards. Acknowledging the connection between long-term arts programming and improved achievement in the classroom and on standardized tests, the foundation seeks to fund programs in which arts education is aligned with the academic curriculum and fosters academic performance. High-quality out-of-school arts education programming will use art to engage students in supplemental academic work such as college access programming.

Programs should be able to demonstrate how participation helps to further the foundation's mission to "level the playing field" by providing exposure to and experience in the arts for children who otherwise might not have such opportunities. The foundation is particularly interested in programs that lead to increased knowledge about the arts including theatre, visual arts, digital media, dance, and music, while simultaneously achieving positive

behavioral outcomes such as:

- Increased school subject performance as a result of integrated arts education
- Increased SAT scores on both verbal and math examinations
- Improved scores on state-mandated exams such as the New York State Regents Examinations
- Demonstrated literacy skill-building including reading comprehension and writing skills
- Avoidance of at-risk behaviors
- Demonstrated increased school engagement
- Acquisition of arts skills in theatre, visual arts, digital media, dance, or music



Center for Arts Education

The foundation seeks to support programming in the arts that incorporates an “arts-plus” component: typically, arts plus outcome-driven academics. The Center for Arts Education (CAE) works to ensure that every school child receives a well-rounded education that includes the arts. Aligned with Common Core Standards, CAE’s Arts Engage Initiative is intended to produce a sustainable, replicable, and fully accountable model that prepares middle school students in underserved urban communities for success in school and in life. The model provides robust, high-quality arts plus arts-integrated education and it addresses experience, achievement, and research gaps. In 2016, the foundation continued support for the implementation of a multi-year control group study for this initiative to test the projection that this pilot will yield higher levels of reading comprehension and writing skills in sixth- to eighth-grade students.





Epic Theatre Ensemble

In 2016, the foundation provided support to Epic Theatre Ensemble, which uses an arts integration model that builds language and literacy skills to improve students' academic performance. The Epic model successfully accomplishes this integration of arts into academia by connecting professional artists to students in underserved communities in New York City. Epic operates three in-school, school-wide educational arts programs at underserved partner schools and provides supplemental programs to additional schools.

Epic reaches 2,000 students each year by providing the opportunity for teaching artists to partner with classroom teachers in English, History, and Economics classes. Students write and perform theater productions that incorporate academic lessons, and youth interested in participating in after-school theater programming can become a part of the Shakespeare Remix or Epic NEXT programs, which provide more intensive arts-plus-education interventions.

In 2016, the foundation's support enabled Epic to further develop college access and persistence strategies to support high school students in its Shakespeare Remix program, including a full, grade-wide model at Bronx High School for Writing and Communication Arts (BHSWCA), one of Epic's flagship partner schools. Epic serves Remix students during its 20-week after-school

program with daily lessons and this year is providing college planning and support to each junior and senior.

During the 2015 to 2016 school year, 92 percent of Remix seniors applied to at least eight colleges and received acceptances to at least four. In the coming year, through its new, grade-wide pilot at BHSWCA, Epic projects an 85 percent college acceptance rate for all seniors at the school, a 90 percent college matriculation rate for those students, and similar retention from freshman to sophomore year of college for REMIX students.



NYC SALT

The foundation provided support in 2015 and 2016 to NYC SALT, an "arts-hook" program that offers high-end photography instruction plus college preparation and mentoring. NYC SALT's four-year studio program exposes students to high levels of the photography industry while building college readiness skills through an intensive studio program. The program has three components: weekly classes in digital photography offered at advanced levels and taught by industry professionals; intensive college preparation instruction and long-term college success and career mentoring; and career exposure, readiness, and connection to internships and employment. Since its first graduating class in 2011, 100 percent of studio program



high school seniors have graduated college-ready and enrolled in college, 100 percent of the first cohort of college seniors graduated from college on time in four years, and 84 percent of current college students are on track to graduate on time.

The foundation's 2016 grant enabled NYC SALT to continue strengthening its college preparation programming and to serve more students by creating a college curriculum for each high school grade, including a set of milestones to map a pathway to college readiness, a week-long summer college preparation workshop for rising seniors, a formal SAT prep provider partnership, and increased school and community-based organization partnerships to grow the pipeline for the intensive studio program.

## Capacity Building and Technical Assistance



The Heckscher Foundation provides support for organizations to meet challenges of infrastructure, board issues, and strategic direction through partnerships with expert consultants specializing in helping high-potential organizations improve the services they provide to children in need. Capacity building and technical assistance includes hands-on support where needed, working with a variety of stakeholders for collaboration and exploring the complex needs of organizations seeking to move beyond the seed phase to fully scaled programming and infrastructure.

Indicators of an organization's increased impact, effectiveness, efficiency, or stability may include:

- Growth and leadership strategies
- Establishment of coalitions or alliances
- Creation of evaluation strategies and outcome tracking
- Improved fiscal management and financial analysis

## Board Building Initiatives

To address a need for younger, next-generation board members among its grantees and other nonprofits that serve youth, the foundation began seeking models for sustainable, high-impact fellowship programs with the potential to increase in scale over time. VCG-Governance Matters, the Taproot Foundation, and the Tipping Point Foundation were selected to undertake these projects, serving New York City and San Francisco Bay Area youth-focused nonprofits. VCG, Taproot, and Tipping Point implemented programs to identify, train, and place qualified and engaged younger professionals on nonprofit boards. The foundation provided these organizations with the following support in 2016:

## Cause Strategy Partners

Following initial 2015 funding that helped launch Cause Strategy Partners (CSP), the foundation provided a second round of funding in 2016 to build on CSP's success at placing younger, next-generation members on the boards of New York City nonprofits, including Heckscher grantees.

Funding supported a new cohort of BoardLead, a program focused solely on next-generation board development, with the goal of diversifying and strengthening nonprofit boards by offering an on-ramp for earlier-career professionals to connect to board service. Through the 2015 and 2016 investments, 36 board members were elected to serve on the boards of 16 nonprofits serving children and youth in New York City, adding diversity to these boards in terms of age, race, ethnic background, and skill sets.

Those elected to serve as board members received training through a unique 12-month CSP course and are supported to help troubleshoot early challenges that develop in their tenure as new board members. Measures of success for this initiative center on full board engage-

ment and include length of service, contributions, and leadership positions.

In its initial year, BoardLead engaged eight corporate partners, two foundations, 40 nonprofits, and 150-plus board candidates, demonstrating early success in cultivating a growing interest by young professionals in joining nonprofit boards. In 2016, CSP expanded BoardLead from New York City to Chicago and plans to add one additional city in the next year.



## SeaChange Partners

The foundation is helping its grantees meet the challenges of infrastructure, board development, financing, and strategic direction through its partnership with SeaChange Capital Partners. SeaChange is a nonprofit investment bank with a mission to enable transactions that increase the impact of nonprofits while offering donors leveraged funding opportunities. SeaChange engages with nonprofits that are at an inflection point in their leadership, strategy, or growth, and that seek the benefit of an independent, third-party review of their organizations, with a particular focus on finance, impact, and scalability.

The foundation has provided important support allowing SeaChange to launch the New York Merger, Acquisition, and Collaboration Fund in 2012 and the

New York Pooled PRI Fund in 2014, and to build its advisory business.

### The New York Merger, Acquisition, and Collaboration Fund

The foundation invested with SeaChange in its New York Merger, Acquisition, and Collaboration Fund (NYMAC) to support organizations that meet the foundation's youth-focused mission. NYMAC makes grants to encourage and support mergers, acquisitions, joint ventures, and other types of formal, long-term collaborations between non-profit organizations working in New York City.

Nonprofits often struggle with issues related to insufficient scale, duplicative efforts, leadership succession, limited funds, and high fundraising costs, which reduce the resources devoted to achieving their missions. To counter these challenges, SeaChange promotes collaboration through mergers and acquisitions, back office consolidations, or programmatic alliances. These powerful, underutilized tools enable nonprofits to increase their impact and sustain their missions by becoming more effective, efficient, and stable. Combinations are particularly critical in a funding environment in which public/private funding matches have become more difficult to secure.

### The New York Pooled PRI Fund

In late 2014, SeaChange launched the New York Pooled PRI Fund (NYPRI) with funding from the foundation and three other funders. NYPRI seeks to make flexible, high impact investment capital available to organizations working with and on behalf of underserved youth and families in New York City. These investments primarily focus on nonprofits, though for-profits doing similar work with an explicit social purpose are also considered.

The foundation helped launch NYPRI to fund investments that, despite offering an attractive balance of social-return and financial-risk, are poorly suited to grant funding and in many cases require more flexibility and/or risk-tolerance than traditional commercial lenders will undertake. SeaChange is working with the foundation to meet this funding gap by collectivizing the sourcing, evaluation, structuring, and management of investments made by NYPRI, while the foundation retains the flexibility to choose individual investments based on their potential social impact and associated financial risk.

### Advisory Services: Row New York

The foundation engaged SeaChange to help foundation grantee Row New York explore the feasibility of constructing its own boathouse and educational facility along the Harlem River. SeaChange supported Row New York in assembling a qualified consultant team to evaluate crucial issues regarding design, permitting, and construction of a new boathouse. Once complete, this flagship facility will enable the organization to serve significantly more youth through comprehensive onsite programming.



## Taproot Foundation

The Taproot Foundation is a nonprofit consulting organization that mobilizes and engages business professionals in pro bono service. The foundation has supported Taproot's Service Grant program, which provides nonprofit organizations with access to capacity-building tools and services.

In 2016, the foundation supported Taproot to build out a proprietary platform for launching a Virtual Office Hours (VOH) program. The pilot phase includes building the platform and pilot testing the program in New York City with youth-serving nonprofits. Through VOH, a nonprofit staff member or leader will be able to connect to a functional area expert for a one-on-one consultation about a specific challenge or idea. One or two consulting sessions can quickly help an organization create solutions to a challenge and identify next steps, including a longer engagement of pro bono services or the establishment of internal project management systems in consultation with a Certified Project Manager in the corporate sector.

In its pilot year, Taproot will target 100 youth-serving organizations in New York City. Each will receive a tailored needs assessment, training about VOH, and pro bono service. Taproot will also train skilled pro bono partners and deliver at least two VOH consulting sessions to at least 50 youth-serving organizations over the next year.

## Health, Recreation, and Social Services



The Heckscher Foundation's mission to "level the playing field" for needy youth is based on the premise that many young people lack the fundamental resources that more fortunate youth take for granted. The programs we support combine an emphasis on soft skills (resilience, independence, and problem-solving) with hard skills acquisition. We look for our grantees to assess their outcomes in both areas, with a relentless focus on demonstrable outcomes toward a better life.

The foundation is particularly interested in funding social services projects that impact or correlate with positive behavioral outcomes in academic improvement and toward economic stability. Examples include interventions for children with special needs and health challenges, supports for youth navigating court involvement, and recreational initiatives using sports or other physical activities as a "hook" to initiate interest in academics, college, or careers.

The foundation seeks to identify projects and programs in social services that demonstrate positive



outcomes in alignment with particular special populations of children and youth served, such as:

- Improved academic performance and achievement
- Reduced rates of recidivism
- Improved nutrition and increased exercise
- Measured improvements in children with social-emotional delays in early childhood
- School progress and improved grades, SAT, or other standardized test scores
- Decreased or eliminated need for the support service or system
- Economic self-sufficiency



### [KickinNutrition.TV](http://KickinNutrition.TV)

The foundation provided the largest early funding to Kick-inNutrition.TV (KNTV), an interactive, digital educational program on nutrition and wellness that operates in select Title 1 elementary and middle schools in New York City and Massachusetts. The program is led by Natasha Rogoff, CEO and Founder of KidsCOOK Productions and President of Ingredients for Education, and former Executive Producer of Sesame Street International.

To address rising childhood obesity rates, the KNTV team and advisory board, which includes media, health, and gaming experts, are tapping new technologies and using a quantitative evaluation process that promotes healthy eating and measures changes in nutrition behaviors among youth. Their innovative approach to nutrition education centers on peer-taught video lessons and includes in-class physical activity that gets kids out of their seats, as well as an incentivizing badge system that rewards participation on the digital platform. In 2016, the foundation funded the program's expansion based on its early success in a USDA-funded pilot in Massachusetts.

The foundation's funding to Ingredients for Education (IFE), the nonprofit arm that provides KNTV for free, brought the program to Harlem Village Academies in New York City, as well as to several New York City Title 1 schools in underserved communities. The foundation's funding

also supported IFE's national replication goals through an expansion to Florida and another to Title 1 schools in California, in collaboration with the Partnership to Uplift Communities Schools, a charter school organization.

## Workforce Development



We have one primary requirement for assessing initiatives in the career and employment readiness area: proposed interventions must demonstrate concrete outcomes of improved readiness for, and performance in, the world of work such as:

- Securing a job
- Maintaining a job at 3 months, 6 months, and 1 year
- Advancement in a job

The foundation does not consider internships or other programs without employer guarantees of job hiring upon completion of training milestones. When assessing workforce development programs, we look for programs that use a comprehensive approach and strive to incorporate many or all of the following attributes:



## Job Access and Persistence Support Program Attribute Guidelines

1. Jobs that lead to economic self-sufficiency
  - Programs guide participants toward jobs that meet standards of self-sufficiency to avoid reliance on other subsidies or charities
  - Jobs targeted offer opportunity for advancement, job security, and benefits
2. Industry-specific training to facilitate full-time employment
  - Programs offer industry sector-based or job-specific training for targeted certifications and occupations
  - Sectors and certifications/trainings are focused in areas of labor market demand directly informed by employers, employer networks, and/or workforce intermediaries
3. Aligning size of job training with local employer need
  - Job training programs that serve at least 100 youth, in partnership with employers to address local hiring needs, are most effective for employer alignment and scaling
  - Programs serving fewer than 100 youth may be effective for small pilots but have limited capacity to scale without being driven by employer-specific hiring demand
4. Transitional employment, or on-the-job training
  - Transitional employment programs should present a clearly defined job pathway with projected advancement outcomes articulated in terms of wage increases, title changes, and increase in employee benefits over a specific period of time post-placement



### CO\*OP

In 2016, the foundation provided support to CO\*OP, a new apprenticeship and job placement program based in New York City that targets high-potential, underserved, and underemployed students and recent graduates of five CUNY colleges (Baruch College, Brooklyn College, City College of New York, Lehman College, and Guttman Community College) who lack direction for full-time employment opportunities and upward mobility with a clear career path in the digital media industry. Since the program launched in 2014, CO\*OP has run six cohorts, serving a total of 70 participants, of whom 96 percent are minority and 54 percent are first-generation-to-college students.

As a result, 85 percent of youth and young adults served have launched full-time careers in tech, design, and media. Graduates of the program are experiencing an average \$27,000 income swing in the first year of employment (average incoming salary is \$15,000 while the average post-program salary is \$42,000, excluding benefits).

The foundation's support will enable CO\*OP's capacity building, including expansion to recruit and train 30 Cohort Captains to serve as mentor-coaches to 100 to 140 motivated and underemployed CUNY graduates in 2016. CO\*OP projects an 85 percent job placement rate in full-time salaried positions that require a college degree within one year of completing the program.



### The Door: A Center of Alternatives, Inc.

In 2015 and 2016, the foundation, in partnership with the Gap Foundation, funded The Door to support This Way Ahead, a youth workforce initiative that capitalizes on growing employer demand in the retail industry. This Way Ahead provides youth in 12 cities across North America with the opportunity to build workplace skills and practice using them at Gap, Old Navy, and Banana Republic stores while receiving a paycheck. The Gap will focus its funding on support during the internship phase, providing job coaches employed by The Door to encourage persistence and address barriers through weekly support.

The program projects that in 2017, 285 youth (ages 16 to 21) will successfully complete retail skills and customer service training, with 235 of them then placed in paid internships in Gap, Inc. stores in New York City. At least 185 (65 percent) of these interns will be offered full- or part-time jobs. Based on prior results, the majority of these youth are positioned to meet job retention goals of at least two years, which is significant for this target population.

Unlike many employer workforce programs, which provide internships, the GAP has committed to providing extensive job support and true jobs. Few employers have been willing to invest in this way, making the program uniquely promising.

Given The Door's excellent results in 2016, combined with Gap, Inc.'s plans for continued program expansion, the program is expected to grow in New York City in 2017 and place 335 youth in paid internships across New York City's five boroughs between the months of June and October. Goals for this time period are as follows:

- At least 85% of 285 youth complete the internship
- At least 65% of youth who complete the internships are offered a permanent, part-time, or seasonal position (assuming an 85% completion rate, 65% is 185 youth) immediately following the end of the internship

## Board & Staff

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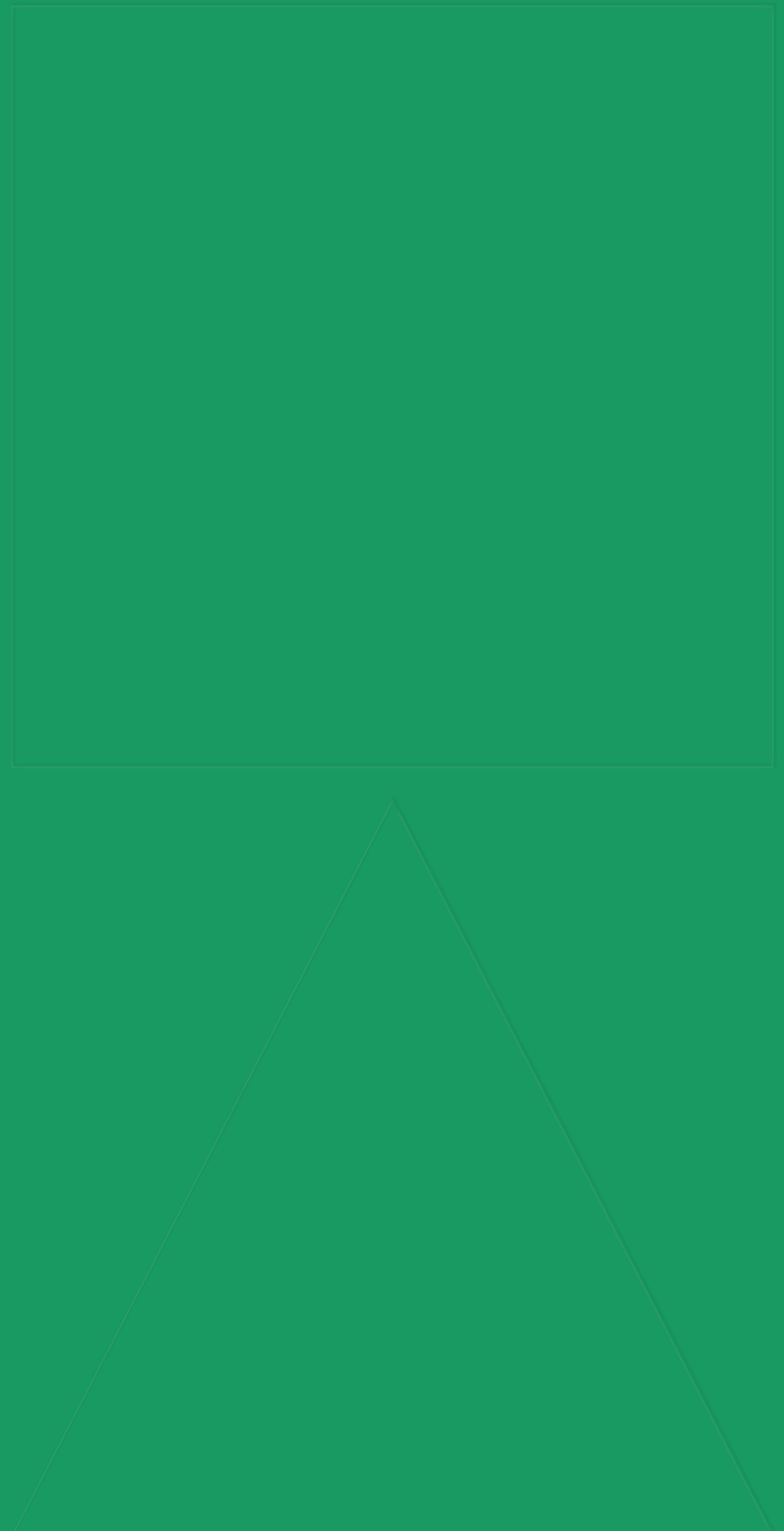
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# Strategic Philanthropy Series

By Peter Sloane  
CEO & Chairman



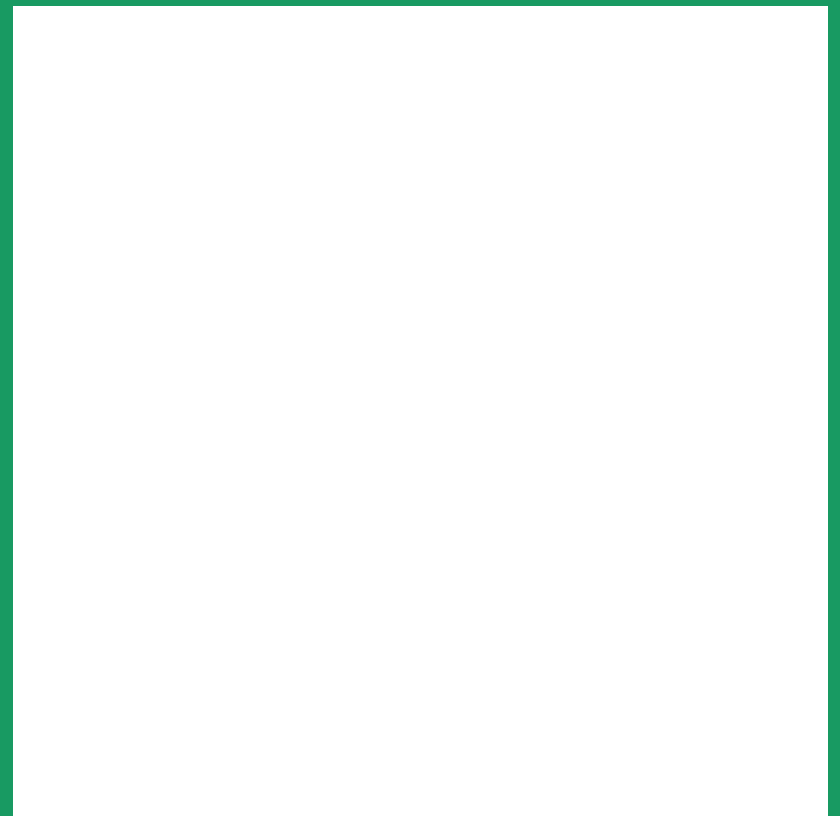
HECKSCHER  
FOUNDATION  
*for* CHILDREN



Howard G (Peter) Sloane is an American philanthropist and the Chairman and CEO of the Heckscher Foundation for Children, a New York based private foundation established in 1921 by German-born industrialist, financier, and philanthropist August Heckscher. In 1997, Sloane took over the affairs of the Heckscher Foundation when its assets consisted largely of encumbered real estate which limited its ability to make meaningful gifts. He restructured and developed the foundation into a significant funder of innovative education, job training, recreation, and arts programs with assets of over \$300 million dollars. Under Sloane's leadership, the modern day foundation underwrites projects with potential for catalytic impact when combined with public funds or other donors, and operates its own strategic philanthropy programs to promote the welfare of children and youth in New York City.

# Scaling Back on Scaling

Assessing whether and how to grow for social profit



*Recently, the Heckscher Foundation approached the founder of one of the most successful college readiness programs in Los Angeles. His record with underserved youth had been phenomenal: 95 percent of youth served have either graduated from college or are on their way to graduation. We asked how we could convince him to expand his program to New York City. His answer? “Find another me in New York and I will train him.” The response may seem glib, but it speaks to a fundamental dilemma that programs must face when considering whether and how to scale their success. —GrantCraft*

Standout programs of any size tend to be led by dynamic people with endless energy and keen instincts (among our grantees, Wendy Kopp of Teach for America, Debbie Bial of Posse Foundation, Dave Levin of the Kipp Foundation, and Jon Schnur of America Achieves come to mind). The solution may seem simple—find and nurture more of these dynamic people. But that overlooks the fact that even if you can, they only have two arms and one head, so there’s a limit to the economies of scale that you can achieve simply by identifying more leaders to serve more people with the same approach.

From my perspective, the key to considering an organization’s or program’s potential to scale lies in asking the right questions. Much of the emphasis on scale comes (I would hazard) from the for-profit world, in which rapid growth—more customers and revenue—equals success. Yet in a corporate environment, successful scaling begins with an analysis of whether the product will sell in another market, how much capital it will take to sell it, and who will lead the entry into the new market. These are questions we can and should be asking in the nonprofit or social profit world as well.

Whether you’re a funder considering the potential of a grantseeker to scale a nonprofit, or you represent a nonprofit seeking funding to scale your work, here are some questions I recommend asking:

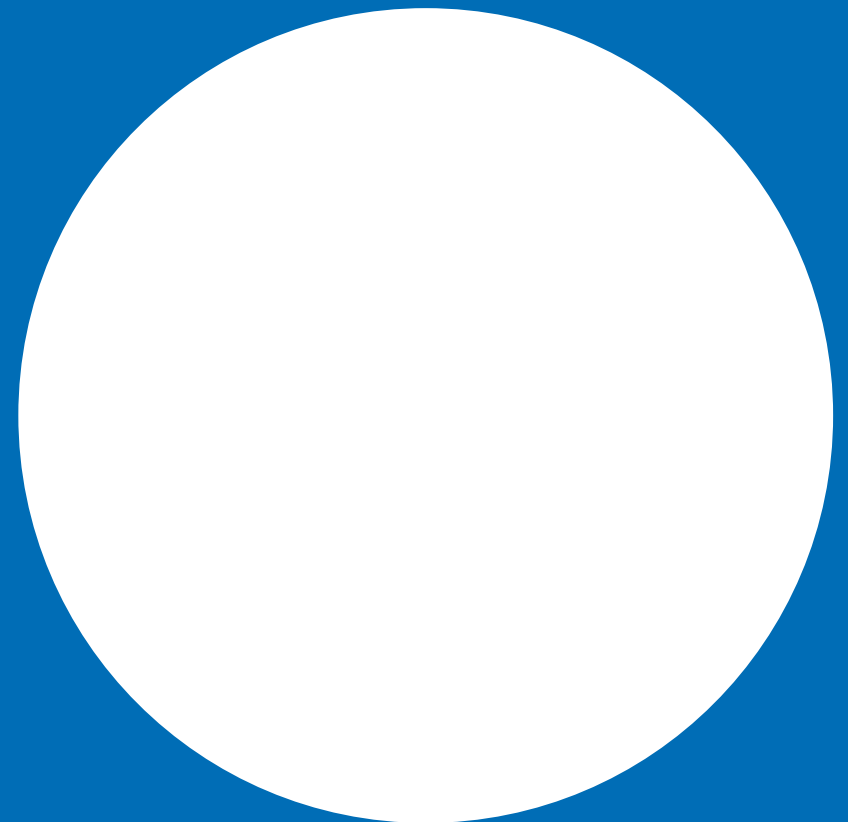
- Why does the organization think this program or idea will actually work on a bigger scale? (Studies have shown that workforce development programs serving fewer than 100 people are more effective than larger ones, for example.) If the proposal is to expand to another city, has the organization so saturated its own market that it has no one else to serve where it is?
- What capital is needed to sustain this expansion for not one or two, but five to ten years? Has funding been secured from other sources? (No fuzzy math here, just the facts.)
- Who are the board members explicitly committed to overseeing the expansion and what time commitments are they signed on for? Does the organization need a new regional board if it is going to a new city? Have these people been identified and have they committed to participating?
- Who on the organization’s staff is going to bring the same level of energy and ingenuity to this expansion? If it’s current staff, do they have the time? If (as is too often the case) the organization plans to hire someone new, who is it? (Too often the answer is “I can do it all,” or, “we will add staff,” without thought to how difficult it is to clone, supervise, and integrate the new staff.)

If these questions have not been answered, our response to grantseekers asking for funds to scale is “come back to us when you think you have those answers.”

It’s time for leaders in the sector—foundations and service providers alike—to ask and answer those same

questions, and more; in short, to apply more critical thinking and discipline to the “scaling” discussion than we have in the past. When we do, we stand to exponentially increase the likelihood of success for those scaling projects that we do take on.

# Funder Collaboration



Private grantmaking foundations don't compete for customers or dollars, so the more we open up about what we learn, the better. In this first issue of a newsletter that we envision as a means to share what we're learning, we highlight some of the partnerships we are currently invested in.

A former city official once told us that trying to get funders to work together was like herding cats. We don't see it that way. There are challenges to overcome, from avoiding lengthy internal debates to overcoming the "we don't need others" hubris. But we have the experience to prove that foundations can play nice in the sandbox. When they do, the rewards are exponential for those we serve.

The following are some of our recent collaborations. Please be in touch to learn more or to tell us about projects for which you seek partners.

### **America Achieves**

In 2014, we joined with Bloomberg Philanthropies, the Thompson Family Foundation, and the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation in an initiative to increase the number of high-achieving, low- and moderate-income students who graduate from top colleges.

### **The College Completion Innovation Fund (through Graduate NYC)**

The first collaborative fund involving CUNY to focus exclusively on college retention and completion in New York City. Collaborators include Heckscher, the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation, Capital One Foundation, Carroll and Milton Petrie Foundation, and Stella and Charles Guttman Foundation.

### **Teach for America (TFA) Veterans Corps Members Initiative**

In 2015, we worked with the Charles Hayden Foundation to support TFA's effort to recruit and train young veterans as a new teacher training cohort.

### **The New York Merger, Acquisition, and Collaboration (NYMAC) Fund**

NYMAC makes grants to encourage and support mergers, acquisitions, joint ventures, and others types of formal, long-term collaborations between nonprofits. Collaborators include the Altman Foundation, the Booth Ferris Foundation, the Clark Foundation, the Lodestar Foundation, the New York Community Trust, and SeaChange.

# Funding Structures for Social Profit



For-profit companies consider an array of financial instruments to provide funds needed to run their plants, pay their employees, and produce their products and services. They analyze the best ways to fulfill their mission—creating shareholder value—by managing their balance sheets through public appeals for cash (offering shares to the public), loans (bond offerings or bank borrowings), and business combinations (mergers and acquisitions).

Those in the nonprofit world seeking money for social purposes rarely think in similar terms, yet they have the same tools at their disposal. According to a recently published guide (Essentials of Impact Investing), fewer than 20 percent of Ohio charities were even aware of available funding mechanisms beyond annual donations.

Foundation leaders can and should help program providers and prospective grantees understand that they can access an array of financial products similar to those used by for-profit companies to help them better serve their target populations. Below are some strategies we are employing at the Heckscher Foundation.

## 1 Asking basic questions

One of the first questions we ask ourselves when we consider funding an organization is: How can we best deploy our capital to help the organization meet its mission? The answer might be a one-year grant, a multi-year commitment, a challenge grant, a Program Related Investment (PRI), or a Mission Related Investment (MRI). All too often, prospective grantees are not thinking in these same terms. By asking prospective grantees to consider how they can have greater impact using one or more of these funding tools, we can open their eyes to the possibility of not having to spend most of their time raising annual dollars, planning annual appeals and benefit evenings. Frequently, we direct nonprofits to missioninvestors.org, which published the guide mentioned above; or for a deeper dive, the recent Brookings study, The

Potential and Limitations of Impact Bonds. In some instances we've hired consultants for grantees, such as nonprofit advisors Arbor Brothers and SeaChange Capital Partners, both of which are experienced in advising nonprofit leaders and boards.

## 2 Funding board building

Nonprofit leaders often tell us of their difficulties in recruiting big name hedge fund and private equity board members. Our answer is to look instead for early- and mid-career professionals. These next generation trustees will become major donors and business leaders, who can use their business acumen to help nonprofits better understand their own balance sheets and identify opportunities for alternative sources of funding. So over the past four years, we've focused on the need for next generation board members among youth-serving nonprofits, and we have helped to place qualified, engaged younger professionals with financial skills on nonprofit boards and evaluate their impact. Funded programs took various forms, including:

- A new Taproot project, Connecting Next Gen Board Members to Youth-Serving Nonprofits in NYC, leveraged the largely untapped talent of early- and mid-career professionals for board service at 11 nonprofits.
- To address this issue more broadly, we made a grant to Tipping Point to hone their existing board-building model to target professionals in their 30s to mid-40s. Heckscher covers up to \$10,000 of their board dues.
- We recently underwrote the establishment of a new player in this field, Cause Strategy Partners,

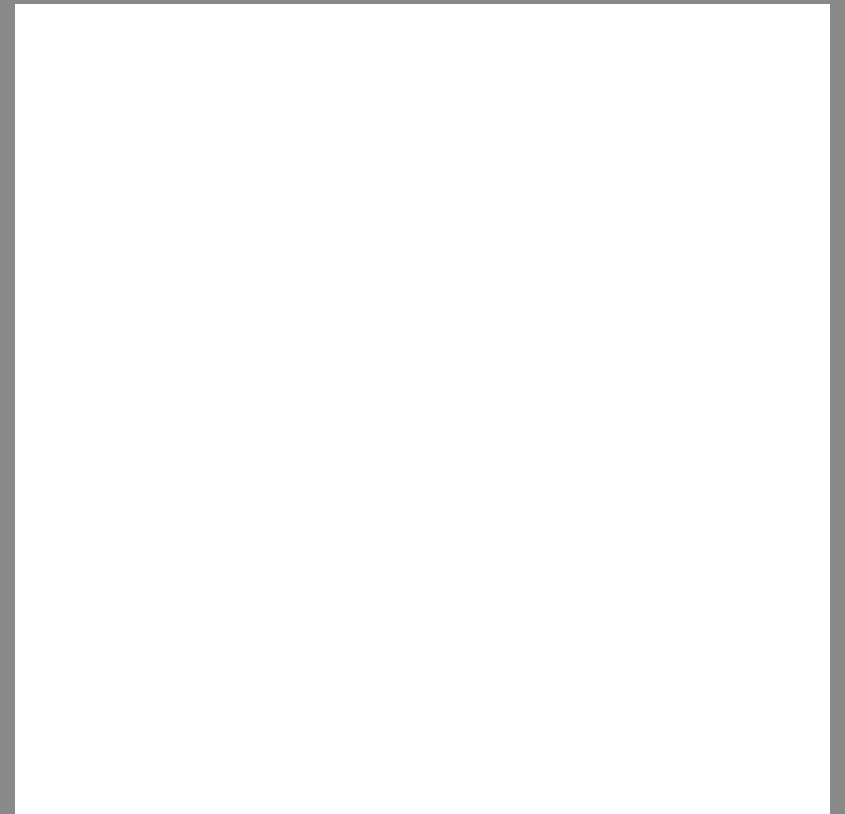


which is developing a pool of next gen board candidates by partnering with Fortune 500 companies.

### 3 Collaborative impact investing

In 2014, we encouraged SeaChange Capital to launch the New York Pooled PRI (NYPRI) Fund to help funders increase their impact through pooled PRIs. Co-funded by the Altman Foundation, the Thompson Family Foundation, and one other private family foundation, NYPRI investments generally range from \$250,000 to \$750,000 and take the form of secured and unsecured loans, loan guarantees, equity, or equity-like securities. Terms are determined case-by-case to achieve the programmatic objectives of NYPRI participants while remaining below market. Through the fund, we're able to make investments that, despite offering an attractive balance of social return and financial risk, are poorly suited to grant funding and in many cases require more flexibility and/or risk-tolerance than commercial lenders will undertake.

# Investing in Leadership & Mentorship



We are asking a lot of questions about leadership and mentorship. Leadership and mentorship are related yet different—so how does this affect our strategies? We define leadership as the capacity to drive an organization forward; and mentorship as that combination of information, support, and inspiration that helps an individual get in touch with his or her own drive to move forward. While optimism and vision enable an effective leader to inspire others, these are not the key traits of a mentor counseling a kid about financial aid. Conversely, a kid from the neighborhood who made good may have the empathy and experience to become an effective mentor—though not necessarily an effective leader. How can we identify and scale investments in each?

We struggled with this in past years, too. We were an early investor in Teach for America. Most recently, we supported a new approach to leadership, recruiting veterans to bring their skills to high-need communities as teachers. And we underwrote a new initiative with the Posse Foundation called Posse Consulting, which aims to replicate the successful Posse mentorship model at other CBOs and colleges, promoting diversity in leadership. We have been a major supporter of numerous programs focused on leadership and mentorship in high-achieving, low-income youth (including Leadership Enterprise for a Diverse America, TEAK, Prep for Prep, Questbridge, SEO, Legal Outreach, Breakthrough, and regional programs like the Los Angeles program, College Match).

Now we're asking how we can apply what we've learned to identify the essential components of programs that develop leadership and mentorship. Some of our current projects are below. We welcome input from those working on related issues.

### **REACH High School Principal Initiative**

One approach to funding leadership was presented to us by a high school principal whom we admire for his work with kids in the South Bronx. We asked him to identify a group of principals who might benefit from working with him and two other veteran principals in a structured leadership development program. Each principal will establish goals for his or her school within a framework developed with an organization called REACH Education Solutions, led by former turnaround principal Monica George-Fields. Each of the three veteran principals will mentor three other principals. We will also provide supplemental funds to the nine schools, following a needs assessment, to help them better meet student needs. While the approach isn't novel, we feel it will yield results for the poorest kids in New York public high schools. If so, the model is scalable and replicable.

### **Harlem Pride School Collaboration**

A similar approach is a school collaboration model involving three schools in East Harlem that have pooled athletic resources in the past to have one common sports team, which competes against other schools under the name "Harlem Pride." The schools, Park East, Central Park East, and Heritage, are close to each other and serve predominantly poor kids, but have very different characteristics. Park East has a successful math program while Heritage has an arts focus and Central Park East has an outstanding college guidance program. We are providing funds to each school to meet its own identified needs and also investing in shared professional development and teaching techniques. Each school will support the other two in its areas of strength. If the model succeeds it will provide a model for meaningful collaboration between schools.

### **Re-examining Mentor Training and Methods**

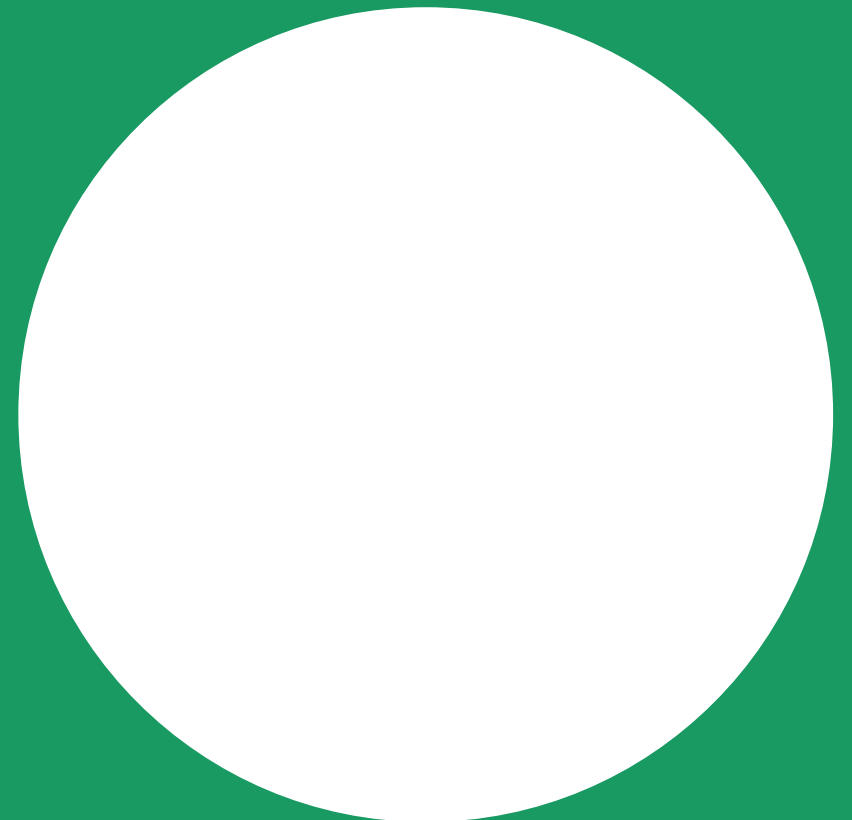
We are also rethinking mentorship models. If a strong personal connection is important to a successful mentor

relationship, can “remote mentoring” by email, Skype, or text work as effectively as in-person models?

There are plenty of remote mentoring models out there, and we are a substantial investor in many of them (for example, we invested in the CollegePoint initiative started by Bloomberg Philanthropies, which has many remote mentoring models). We have found a wide divergence of practice in how mentorship programs select, train, and monitor mentors. While measuring impact in straight numbers and mentee achievements has value, we are taking a harder look to try to identify qualities of successful mentorship and how these are taught and monitored.

# Nurturing Nonprofit Boards

Funders can do more



CEOs from community-based organizations are not demanding enough of their boards. Funders have an important role to play in ratcheting up the level of board commitments.

In 1998, I was honored to join the founding Board of Trustees to help start the first charter school in New York. This turned out to be a valuable lesson about the roles and responsibilities of nonprofit boards. I'd like to share some of those lessons, because it seems to me that among the many nonprofit organizations we get to know each year, not enough is being required of new and currently serving board members. Creating a cohesive and effective board requires nurturing, but it's worth doing. In my many years leading our foundation, I've seen over and over that a passive or poorly aligned board can hinder the growth and resilience of an otherwise outstanding organization. Those of us in the funding community should bear some responsibility.

In 1998, I was a foundation leader and a litigation lawyer at a large law firm. There had been much controversy surrounding the new charter school law and charter selections. The Sisulu Children's Academy (now called Sisulu-Walker, and thanks to those who succeeded me, it ranks among the most successful charters in New York) was to be located in the community house of a large church. I had been involved in some controversial cases involving church-state relations. As I learned, this was not coincidental—the Sisulu board was selected with a keen eye towards the needs of the fledgling school, and no one was left in doubt about their responsibilities. Our foundation was a strong supporter of alternative education initiatives (including Teach for America) and charter schools nationally, and as a litigator, I was to be there to defend the school if someone challenged its association with the church next door.

As funders, we are increasingly focused on the importance of building and maintaining a vibrant board. The bankruptcy of the New York Social Service Agency FEGS, and the ensuing publication of a troubling study by Oliver Wyman and SeaChange Capital Partners about the solvency of many nonprofits has ignited a more general

discussion of risk management among foundation leaders. One of the key questions that arises is what we as funders should expect from the board of our grantees?

Over at Nonprofits with Balls, in a post titled “25 things awesome board members do,” a nonprofit leader writes of one of her board members:

*“When your fundraiser is on the same night as an ice storm, he personally salts the sidewalks and parking lot. Then when all the salt runs out he goes to the gas station down the road and buys more salt to finish the job. He also demands car keys from me and my coworker at the end of the night to defrost and scrape our car windows. And somehow in the midst of all that he also pays several hundreds of dollars on an auction item and poses for tons of pictures with the kids.”*

While no one expects all board members to go that far, as funders, we have a role to play in helping our grantees make tactical selections to build a strong and engaged board. “Engagement” means more than contributing money to the organization—but financial contributions are a good place to start. As a first step, organizations should have (and funders should make sure that they have) a formal policy for board giving at a level appropriate to each board member—a minimum “give or get.” Personally, I don't favor “give/get” as alternative obligations. I prefer give and get. There is no one who cannot give something, regardless of profession. Ideally, the minimum give should be increased over time to reflect the organization's own growth and the board member's growing interest and enthusiasm for the organization.

Although it can be a delicate dance for a nonprofit CEO and his or her board chair, I encourage all parties to think big. In New York, where we live, it's no secret that the more socially prominent charities, such as museums, hospitals, and leading cultural centers, require a substantial tariff from board members. Why shouldn't community-based organizations and education nonprofits do the same?

We suggest that nonprofits adopt a policy that each board member is expected to give to the organization as if it is one of their largest philanthropic donations, along with their alma mater and church or synagogue.

Lately, as we have focused on helping grantees build their boards, we've been having candid conversations about specific levels of support from specific board members. We want to cut through spin like "we have 100% board participation in our gala or annual fund," which can obscure more than it reveals. We've been asking: "What do your board members actually give?" If the board includes people of substantial means, a list of the gifts that each board member has contributed will speak volumes about how they view the effectiveness of the organization. As a funder, I take a cue from prominent board members and wonder, "if you serve on an organization's board yet don't believe in it enough to be a major supporter, why should we?"

We also ask grantees to spell out the other obligations each board member fulfills in addition to giving money. If the board member is a lawyer, is he or she being required to provide pro bono advice to the organization? Is the board member being asked to identify and introduce the CEO to three to five potential new board members and three to five potential funders?

It's important to acknowledge that CEOs can't do this work alone. I can't overstate the crucial role that the board chair plays in board development, engagement, and fundraising. We've learned that effective board chairs can make or break an organization. As funders, we like to meet with both the CEO of an organization and their board chair, to ensure the shared understanding that it's the obligation of the board chair (not the CEO) to hold individual one-on-one meetings with each board member to discuss what is required if he or she is to join or remain on the board of the organization. This takes an enormous weight off the CEO, who is otherwise in the awkward position of having to ask his or her bosses—the board—to give more to the organization. The CEO and the board chair must work together to make

sure that each board member contributes his or her time and money or gets off the board to make way for those who can.

As funders, it's imperative that we support healthy organizations with strong and engaged boards. In the past, we've issued warnings to organizations whose boards have atrophied or who are not supporting an organization as fully as they need to. When assessing the needs of new organizations, we take a close look at the board. If it doesn't appear to be an active board that can offer broad and deep support, we will tell those new organizations that we will not fund now, but if they engage their board, we will reconsider.

We want to invest in organizations that have the capacity to use philanthropic dollars in a way that is wise, efficient, and that positively impacts the lives of vulnerable New Yorkers. A strong board gives us peace of mind that our support is well placed.



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