

# Legacy *Matters*



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## Sponsored Events:

**October 12, 2023:**

**TEAM, Inc. Annual Meeting**

(8am-10am) Race Brook

Country Club, Orange.

For information contact

TEAM at: 203-736-5420.

**October 12, 2023:**

**Getting from Good to Great  
Health: Our Valley's Health and  
Wellness Now and Beyond.**

(5pm-7pm) Griffin Hospital, 130

Division St., Derby. To RSVP, go

to [www.valleyfoundation.org](http://www.valleyfoundation.org) or

call: 203-751-9162.

**October 13, 2023:**

**Dancing with the Stars to  
benefit Adam's House.**

**Birchwood's at Oak Lane.**

To purchase tickets, go to

[www.adamshousect.org](http://www.adamshousect.org).

**November 23, 2023:**

Commodore Hull Thanksgiving

Day 5K Road Race

For more information go to:

[bgc-Inv.org/events/](http://bgc-Inv.org/events/)

[commodore-hull-5k/](http://commodore-hull-5k/)

## About the Valley Community Foundation

Established in 2004, the Valley Community Foundation (VCF) distributes approximately \$2 million in grants annually that support local nonprofits, programs, and students. Along with discretionary grant-making, VCF manages more than 275 charitable funds to support Valley causes and organizations.

VCF also works in close partnership with The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven and receives funding from the Gates Fund and other preference funds that benefit the Valley. For more information about VCF, or if you would like to donate or create a fund, call 203-751-9162, or visit: [www.valleyfoundation.org](http://www.valleyfoundation.org).

## Smart Investment

### Valley Community Foundation and NHE3 Team Up to Boost Local Economy through Empowering Entrepreneurs



*Joe Williams, Director of NHE3 Operations; Alisha Crutchfield, owner of the Westville-based BLOOM and NHE3 grant recipient; Paul Robertson, Deputy Director of the State's DECD; William Ginsberg, TCF's President and CEO; and Mayor Justin Elicker gather in New Haven in July for the formal NHE3 kickoff.*

The Valley Community Foundation (VCF) is proud to announce its partnership with the New Haven Equitable Entrepreneurial Ecosystem (NHE3), a pioneering initiative by The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven (TCF). This collaboration underscores a unified goal of stimulating the local economy and expanding avenues for underserved entrepreneurs.

"By combining VCF's dedication to the community with NHE3's innovative entrepreneurial vision, we are ensuring that aspiring business owners are supported with what they need to be successful," said Sharon Closius, VCF's President and CEO. "Our partnership with NHE3 is more than just a strategy, it's a commitment to prosperity and forward momentum."

One outcome from the recent COVID-19 Pandemic was that small businesses, especially those owned by women and people of color, suffered the most. It was abundantly clear there was an urgent need to revitalize and strengthen the local economy by helping small business owners and entrepreneurs.

Joseph Williams, NHE3's Director of Operations, said the collaboration with VCF is a monumental stride towards constructing an inclusive entrepreneurial framework.

"United by our shared vision, we are charting new courses for those who have been consistently overlooked," Williams said. "We're committed to pioneering pathways for those who've historically been sidelined."

The Valley has always been a beacon for business creation and innovators. From Ansonia's William Wallace, inventor of the arc-light, a rival of Thomas Edison, to the once globally known manufacturers that dotted its landscape, like BF Goodrich, American Brass and even Wiffleball, the Valley's legacy of fostering business ingenuity is self-evident.

Even area high schools, like Ansonia's Emmett O'Brien Technical High School, Ansonia High and Derby High School have entrepreneurial curriculums and programs encouraging students to learn how to create and maintain a business.



## Smart Investment

### Valley Community Foundation and NHE3 Team Up to Boost Local Economy through Empowering Entrepreneurs

“The Valley, with its rich history of championing entrepreneurship, stands as a testament to what can be achieved with the right support,” Closius said. “Every entrepreneur deserves an opportunity to flourish and our alliance with NHE3 aims to amplify the dreams of many. In our Valley, ambition has always been invaluable and warrants unwavering support.”

NHE3 offers a comprehensive range of services, including mentorship, access to a diverse network of business experts, and tailored workshops to address unique challenges faced by underserved entrepreneurs. NHE3 also provides practical tools such as financial literacy programs, market access strategies, and innovation-driven resources.

“NHE3 endeavors to close the opportunity gaps for entrepreneurs and some of the most underserved, under resourced and under connected communities,” said Arthur Thomas, TCF’s Director of Mission Investing and Entrepreneurial Ecosystems. “It is a structural innovation that intends to produce benefits for entrepreneurs by removing the barriers to access to capital and technical assistance needed to increase business success and income that leads to financial well-being.”

The VCF-NHE3 alliance will also complement other programs and initiatives in the Valley aimed at boosting the local economy, like the Greater Valley Chamber of Commerce’s Women In Networking Entrepreneurial Grant Program, known as WIN.

“The Chamber applauds this exciting partnership between VCF and NHE3 to provide women and minority-owned Valley businesses with access to a myriad of support services to fuel their growth,” said Bill Purcell, the Chamber’s President. “Economic development is not just about numbers it’s about lifting

the entire community. The VCF-NHE3 alliance underscores this principle by focusing on historically underserved entrepreneurs to allow them to reach their full potential. We look forward to supporting this initiative in the months and years to come.”

Launched in July by TCF, the NHE3 initiative will provide an \$8.7 million grant program, geared at awarding grants to approximately 750 local businesses in the Greater New Haven and Valley region during the next five years. In the Valley, NHE3 will coordinate with VCF teaming up to tap into a vibrant network of resources and support.

The program is funded by \$7.2 million from the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development and \$1.5 million from the City of New Haven. Also, the Fund for Women and Girls, a TCF-managed fund, has granted \$190,000 to initiatives that offer job training, entrepreneurial guidance, and

services aimed at enhancing economic stability for local women.

William Ginsberg, The Community Foundation’s President and CEO, said that the NHE3 is creating opportunity and advancing equity throughout the region, which is at the core of TCF’s strategic plan.

“We need economic growth that creates opportunity for everyone in this community,” Ginsberg said. “In supporting these small businesses, the NHE3 is creating opportunity not only for the owners, but also for their families and neighborhoods. The ripple effects grow exponentially from these investments.”

To date, more than 175 Greater New Haven entrepreneurs have received NHE3 grants totaling a combined \$1 million.



*Lovell Hunter, owner of Love Hunter Watches, is surrounded by his family and his horology students during the summer ribbon-cutting ceremony for his new Derby-based watch-making business that received an NHE3 grant.*

# Featured Fund

## A Legacy of Generosity: The Innovative Approach of Tom and Alyce Wells



In the picturesque Valley community, giving back isn't just a tradition, it's a way of life. Tom and Alyce Wells, and the entire Wells Family, have long been known for their generosity. Their latest philanthropic endeavor, the establishment of the Thomas H. and Alyce S. Wells Family Fund at the Valley Community Foundation (VCF), has caught the community's attention not just for its generosity.

Their fund was established in 2022 to support four treasured Valley institutions -- BHcare, the Great Hill Hose Company, the Housatonic Council Boy Scouts of America, and the Recreation Camp, Inc. These specific organizations, dear to them and integral to the Valley's community fabric, will benefit from their fund for years to come.

When it came to setting up their fund, Tom and Alyce employed a relatively new approach the IRS now allows. They decided to use the Required Minimum Distribution, or RMD, from their IRA. They directed their RMD straight to their fund at VCF, sidestepping taxable income and maximizing their annual giving. "With our Donor Designated Fund, the IRS allows the RMD to go directly to VCF making it an appealing choice for us," said Tom Wells. "This fund is perfect for us as VCF can handle the annual grants on our behalf and it lets us have peace of mind knowing our favorite nonprofits will always have our support."

*"Tom and Alyce have shown us how sound financial planning can amplify the impact of giving"*

This strategy is a good example of how philanthropy and keen financial skills can walk hand-in-hand, said Sharon Closius, VCF's President and CEO.

"The Wells family action exemplifies strategic philanthropy," Closius said. "Their decision to use the RMD is a testament to how donors can merge financial knowledge with generosity. At VCF, we are equipped to assist potential donors in exploring many

ways to build funds or support their causes."

Such planned giving strategies aren't limited to the Wells family. VCF offers a myriad of avenues for potential donors. From bequeathing gifts through wills or trusts, to naming nonprofits as beneficiaries of IRAs or other financial accounts, the options are diverse. Donors can also use unneeded life insurance, contribute appreciated stock for tax savings, or even consider donating real estate. The Wells Family have long had an affinity for the Valley and its charitable organizations. Back in 2017, Tom, along with his siblings, established a VCF fund to honor their parents -- Henry Shelton Wells and Edith Birdseye Wells -- emphasizing the Wells family's lasting connection to the community.

"Tom and Alyce have shown us how sound financial planning can amplify the impact of giving," Closius said. "Their innovative use of the RMD provides a pathway for others to explore similar opportunities at VCF." Through the Thomas H. and Alyce S. Wells Family Fund, a legacy of love, care, and strategic giving endures. It is an inspiration for others to follow, emphasizing that when it comes to charity, both the heart and the mind can play a part.

## Planned Giving

*The Valley Community Foundation welcomes Kathie Vrlík to The Gates Society, VCF's planned giving community.*

Your planned gift will impact the charities you're passionate about forever, regardless of the amount. Call us at 203-751-9162 or learn more at [valleyfoundation.org](http://valleyfoundation.org)



# Community Investment

## VCF Grants Boost Area Nonprofits Once Again For The Valley



*Volunteer fire and rescue personnel with Derby's Storm Engine Co. demonstrate an extrication using the Jaws of Life during a recent school assembly. A VCF grant will help the volunteer company replace and upgrade the life-saving equipment.*

**T**he Valley Community Foundation (VCF) and its Board of Directors recently allocated more than \$297,000 in grants to 25 area nonprofits, including a multiyear grant to help local first responders purchase life-saving equipment.

The grants will fund organizations that serve the Valley in various vital sectors including food assistance, youth services/sports, education, healthcare, sexual assault services, arts and culture, public safety, and more.

The only multiyear grant this year, a \$60,000 two-year grant to Storm Engine Company Ambulance & Rescue Corps in Derby, will help purchase new "Jaws of Life." The Jaws of Life is a life-saving hydraulic rescue tool used to extract car-crash victims from vehicles.

It will be a vital addition to the Storm Engine Company's emergency response capabilities, said Assistant Chief Brendan Canty.

"Receiving the only multiyear grant from VCF is both an honor and a responsibility and this significant grant from VCF will be a game-changer for

our rescue operations," Canty said. "The modernization of this equipment is not just an upgrade, it's a lifesaving transformation that will enable us to respond to emergencies more efficiently."

Every year, from January to March, nonprofits and programs from Ansonia, Derby, Oxford, Seymour, and Shelton have the opportunity to apply to VCF for Responsive and Community grants. These grants are designed to support activities or projects that contribute to the Valley's improvement or assist residents in tangible ways.

"These grants are not only a reflection of VCF's commitment to the community but a testament to the hard work and dedication of our Valley nonprofits," said Sharon Closius, VCF's President and CEO. "We're immensely proud of the impact these grants will have on the region and everyone who lives here."

The Responsive Grants application process is rigorous, with VCF staff and board members evaluating each application to determine if the organization qualifies for a grant and the appropriate amount it should receive.

"The nonprofits in our region are the heart and soul of our community," Closius said. "Through our grants, we are joining in their mission and investing in the future of the Valley."

*"We're immensely proud of the impact these grants will have on the region and everyone who lives here."*

### 2023 VCF Responsive Grant Recipients:

- Boys & Girls Club of the Lower Naugatuck Valley – \$35,000.
- cARTie – \$15,000.
- Center Stage Theatre – \$25,000.
- Central Connecticut Coast YMCA Valley Branch – \$20,000.
- Housatonic Council, Boy Scouts of America – \$30,000.
- Life Health and Wellness Center – \$30,000.
- Massaro Community Farm – \$10,000.
- Rape Crisis Center of Milford, Inc. – \$6,000.
- Shelton Historical Society – \$23,000.
- St. Vincent de Paul of the Valley – \$32,000.
- Storm Engine Company Ambulance & Rescue Corps – \$60,000.
- Traveler on a Mission – \$10,000.

### 2023 VCF Community Grants:

- Afrique Prospere Education – \$500.
- All-American Valley Basketball Club – \$2,500.
- Annual Thanksgiving Basket Committee – \$2,500.
- Derby Boy Scouts Troop 3 – \$2,500.
- Boy Scouts Troop 25 – \$2,500.
- Boy Scouts Troop 51 – \$2,500.
- Cub Scout Pack 51 – \$2,500.
- Heaven's Harvest – \$2,500.
- Oxford High School Make a Difference Club – \$2,500.
- Shelton History Center – \$2,000.
- Southford Falls Quilting Club – \$2,000.
- Traveler on a Mission – \$2,500.
- Valley Refugee Resettlement Project – \$2,500.





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## Good News About the Valley

### Second Valley Community Index Learning Session to Focus on Health and Wellness

***On October 12, 2023 -- from 5pm-7pm -- the Valley Community Foundation, Griffin Health Services and the Naugatuck Valley Health District will hold "Getting from Good to Great Health: Our Valley's Health and Wellness Now and Beyond."***

It is the second VCF Learning Session geared at delving into the data released last year from the 2022 Valley Community Index.

In June, more than 50 people attended the first learning session, *Getting from Here to There: The Future of Transportation in the Naugatuck Valley*, a presentation that focused on all-things transportation in the region.

Local and state officials, as well as dozens of members of the public from throughout the Naugatuck Valley, came to the first learning session at Plumb Memorial Library to see the detailed presentation by the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments.

"We were very pleased by the well-attended first event, and it has since been shared on the internet



and broadcast several times on local cable access," said Sharon Closius, VCF's President and CEO. "The October 12 presentation will be just as interesting and informative."

The October 12 health and wellness forum will be held in the hospital's Med Learning Center, 130 Division Street, Derby. Food and refreshments will be served but pre-registration is required. To RSVP, register online at [www.valleyfoundation.org](http://www.valleyfoundation.org) or call VCF at: 203-751-9162.

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