

# Legacy *Matters*



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# Why it matters.

Regulated childcare is approved by the Office of Early Childhood and provides care for infants, toddlers, or preschool-aged children (ages 0-4). Regulated providers include family child cares, programs in centers, public schools, nursery schools, Early Head Start, or Head Start.



**1 IN 3**  
**HOUSEHOLDS**  
**IN THE VALLEY**  
**EARN LESS THAN NEEDED**  
**TO COVER LIVING COSTS**

**45% OF VALLEY WORKERS**  
**EARN LESS THAN**  
**LIVING WAGE**

**Living wage** is the income needed to cover the costs of living in the region. **In the Valley**, living wage is \$40,000 per year.

\*Data in sidebar referenced from Shining a Spotlight on the Valley Region available at [www.valleyfoundation.org](http://www.valleyfoundation.org)



Children participating in a MIECHV playgroup to build developmental skills.

## Smart Investment *Early Childhood Development*

For David Morgan, president and CEO of TEAM Inc., not only is the research clear but the results are undeniable—focusing community support through the lens of early childhood development means children are primed for successful futures.

“We know that third grade reading performance is one of the primary factors determining whether a child graduates from high school and that not graduating is the fastest route to poverty,” Morgan says. “That’s why we say ready by five and fine by nine.”

Individuals, families, and the community benefit from programs such as the Nurturing Families Network from the VNA of South Central Connecticut (VNASCC) and the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visitation (MIECHV), which use research and a holistic approach to address the barriers that impact early childhood development.

Each program relies on regular home visits to assess individual families and provide practical support to help parents and guardians. A two-generational approach engages families to put them on a path to self-sufficiency and stability.

Parents are taught more than just what their children need in terms of stimulation and socialization. The Nurturing Families Network provides answers to questions such as how to utilize benefits including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) food assistance program, or that public libraries offer play groups, workshops, and even job search tools, computers and Internet access.

MIECHV’s home visitors educate parents so they understand the rapid growth taking place in their young children. Interactions are dynamic. When home visitors step back from

demonstrating simple, nurturing activities, mom and child are able to perform the activity together, building gross and fine motor skills while promoting brain development in the child.

These resources are vital because, as the 2016 Valley Community Index reports, a living wage needed to cover basic costs, including childcare, is \$40,000 per year but 45% of Valley workers earn less than a living wage salary.

Morgan comments, “I’m a father with three kids. I’m still learning and navigating how I can be the best parent I can be and one of the best things that any parent can learn is how every experience cultivates a child’s chance for success.”

He points to income disparity as a barrier to positive early childhood development. “The vast majority of low income parents have been faced with incredible disadvantages or lack of choices. These are people trying to move forward in a positive way and want the best for their children. Our work is all about the child and supporting his or her success.”

According to the 2016 United Way report describing the challenges facing the Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed demographic (ALICE), child care is the single largest expense for an ALICE family of four at 28 percent of the household survival budget.

It is common for one or both Valley low-income parents to work multiple jobs, which can affect their schedules and ability to perform such fundamental chores as transporting their children. Those tasks can quickly snowball into bigger issues, such as when reliance on public transportation in the Valley or a bus system limits daycare options when the bus route does not reach all centers. Or, parents who work nights have fewer regulated



# Smart Investment

## *Early Childhood Development*

care options. Only two home-based providers offer services between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m.

Pamela Lorenzo, program manager for the Nurturing Families Network at VNASCC and chair of the Valley Early Childhood Regional Council (VECRC), explains that lack of affordable childcare is another significant risk factor. “It is very, very expensive to run a facility or home-based daycare. We’re seeing centers closing in the Valley because parents cannot afford to send their children to daycare, and keep their children home as a result.”

The federal government recommends that families spend seven percent of household income on childcare. In the Valley, the average cost of one regulated childcare slot, or space for one child at one center, is between 11 and 15 percent of median income and up to 40 percent of an annual budget for a low-income household.

Valley childcare providers can meet 40 percent of the need for regulated care and education; in 2014, there were 2,968 regulated slots for 7,361 children ages 0-4.

Both programs can help parents identify viable childcare options and facilitate the child’s transition from preschool to kindergarten with meaningful collaborations with the school districts. Assessments are comprehensive, evaluating family dynamics and needs because a child’s outcome is directly and indirectly impacted by the adults around him or her.

The various forms of support from MIECHV build a level of trust that is expanded through twice monthly gatherings of parents and caregivers, where speakers elevate everyone’s ability to live a



Children in a Pre-K class at Susanna Wesley School

better life. The Connecticut Food Bank’s mobile pantry and grow truck teaches new and creative ways to prepare low-cost, health meals and hygienists emphasize what preventative oral health means for young children.

Morgan says one of the benefits of these meetings is organic. “Parents create a network that reduces their sense of isolation. They may not have extended family during this time of need so connecting with other parents gives them a sense of belonging and really good things come out of that.”

Nurturing Families Network’s home-based services are provided from pre-natal to six years. Lorenzo says, “Children prepare for school through parent education, mental health screenings, developmental screenings, and case management.”

As a result of these efforts, children are entering kindergarten not only ready to learn but equipped to handle almost

anything. Morgan notes, “The home visits are a great way to engage and partner with hard to reach families. By reducing their stresses and providing screening, we can minimize or avoid the issues that would have been present if the child appeared in kindergarten without any support up to that point.”

While not a single solution, these programs play a critical role as one service element in a system of early childhood development opportunities.

Lorenzo believes the work done so far has made a real difference, “We have 23 years of data showing that children are better off thanks to the information their parents get from the home visits. Families would have fallen through the cracks because of many barriers, including language. The Valley is a wonderful melting pot and perfectly illustrates that as diverse as our culture is, we all want the same thing for our children. We want them to be smart, healthy, and successful.”

## Featured Fund

### *The Kaplan Family Fund*

Seven years after establishing the Kaplan Family Fund in memory of her parents, Faye and Harry, and the giving spirit they exuded, Heidi Kaplan is continuing her family's legacy of providing resources that enrich the lives of those in the Valley community.

Her parents called Derby home for more than 50 years and this fund, created with Valley Community Foundation (VCF), will impact local organizations' serving the region for generations to come.

"A retired teacher, Heidi has a special appreciation for children and desire to develop their love of learning. The programs she supports through the fund include the Boys & Girls Club of the Lower Naugatuck Valley, TEAM, Inc.'s Diaper Bank, and the Derby Public Library.

"I have very fond childhood memories of bringing home books to read from the Derby Public Library and I still love walking through those doors today," says Heidi. "I was a reading consultant and developing a love of reading is still very important to me. I hope every child has the opportunity to read a good book."

In addition to finding ways to support educational needs, Heidi wants to provide basic needs through effective programs such as the Diaper Bank at TEAM, Inc. She explains, "When I heard



Faye and Harry Kaplan

David Morgan, TEAM's CEO, speak at VCF's 2015 Annual Reception about the many families in the Valley that struggle to afford diapers for their children, he impressed me with how the program can positively impact and contribute to the overall well-being of those in need. In addition, Diaper Bank recipients can access

a range of comprehensive services that support other challenges the family may be experiencing."

Over time, Heidi intends to continue support the areas she's funded, and is open to other efforts to involve children and early experiences that disenfranchised youth would otherwise not receive.



### Planned Giving

*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

## *A Renewed Valley-New Haven Affiliation Agreement*

At its 14th Annual Reception on May 22, The Valley Community Foundation (VCF) announced its 2017 accomplishments in a room filled with donors, grantees, public officials and community-minded citizens.

After celebrating highlights from the previous year, VCF president and CEO Sharon Closius spoke of the unreliability of state and federal funding, and an ever-growing need for services in the Valley as a motivating factor to help nonprofits build other revenue sources. That is why VCF made the largest multi-year commitment in its history by awarding \$856,000 in general operating support to Valley organizations during 2017.

"It has never been more important for VCF to support organizations committed to the Valley," she explained. "We are living in a time when the quality of life for our most needy Valley residents is more and more dependent on the generosity of others to build, protect, and enhance the vibrancy of our community through our nonprofits."

A major focus of the evening was the newly-signed Affiliation Agreement between the Valley Community Foundation and The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven (TCF). The signing, which officially happened on May 18, 2018, marked the fourth such formal Agreement between the two permanent community endowments. Unlike previous Agreements, this Agreement will govern the relationship over the next 10 years with annual renewal opportunities.

As with previous Agreements, TCF will continue to provide back-office support to VCF and annually distribute the equivalent of ninety-percent of its Gates Fund value to VCF, historically more than \$1.1 Million, as a way of carrying out TCF's philanthropic objectives in the five Valley towns served by both foundations. The Gates Fund was established by Derby brothers Frank and Ross Gates more than half a

century ago at TCF for the benefit of the Valley.

"The Foundation's work in the Lower Naugatuck Valley has been a major part of what we do for more than six decades, and it will continue to be so in the future as we honor the intent of the Gates brothers in perpetuity," said William W. Ginsberg, president & CEO of The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven.



"The creation of VCF fourteen years ago was a very deliberate step by TCF and Valley community leaders to tap the powerful spirit in the Lower Naugatuck Valley in a new way that could build a permanent philanthropic resource," Ginsberg continued. "From our perspective, VCF is a Valley success story that validates both our original reasons for creating VCF and our generous support for it since 2004. We look forward to a continued partnership of close strategic and operational alignment that can build a stronger community for all."

"This latest Affiliation Agreement underscores the strength and bond of the relationship between VCF and TCF, and has been instrumental in making it possible for us to grow and build community philanthropy for the Valley," said Closius, who thanked The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven, the Boards of both organizations, fundholders and nonprofits for VCF's success. "The journey has not been ours alone."

## Sponsored Events

The following events were supported with unrestricted funds by VCF this season:

### June

#### PCRC

Ride/Walk for Children at Quarry Walk in Oxford

#### Valley YMCA

10th Annual Sunset 5K & 2 Mile Fitness Walk in Ansonia

### July

#### Banko's Music Foundation

For the Rock the Summer music for Music Education concert on July 28 at Nolan Field in Ansonia from 4-10:30 p.m.

#### Derby Neck Library

To support a mini golf event on July 28-29 at the Derby Neck Library.

#### Celebrate Shelton

To support a three-part summer concert series in downtown Shelton on July 20, 27, and August 3 from 5-9 p.m.

## The Great Give® 2018

During the 36-hour online giving event this year, more than 2,100 gifts were made to Valley organizations, which raised over \$350,000 in contributions and prize money for our five-town community! That is \$50,000 more than last year! VCF's Donor Advised fundholders supported their favorite causes by making over \$80,000 in grants that received matching dollars from both VCF and The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven. In total for the Greater New Haven region, more than \$1.7 million was raised thanks to about 11,000 donors and 406 participating nonprofits!

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# Good News About the Valley

## Annual Reception Featured Grantees



### Oxford Land Trust

The Oxford Land Trust received a grant from VCF, among other sources, to support the next major phase for the Rockhouse Hill Sanctuary, including the design and construction of single-track mountain bike trails.

Joe Lanier, youth conservation corps coordinator for the Land

Trust, recruited more than four hundred Oxford High School students to clear and construct this new resource.

"This funding helps us to create greater connectivity between adjacent open space properties in neighboring Seymour," Lanier said. "This particular goal is significant for creating access to over 1,200 acres of forested land."

The Land Trust leveraged this initial investment by building relationships with the town's Conservation Commission, the New England Mountain Bike Association, and local businesses to produce significant dividends within Oxford.

### Ansonia Middle School PASS Program

During 2017, Ansonia Middle School (AMS) teacher, Jessica Bedosky, approached AMS assistant principal, Steven Marchetti, about a potential solution to address increasing suspension rates.

Having already been successful at Ansonia High School, the PASS program (Positive Alternatives to School Suspensions) allows middle school administrators to substitute a boot camp workout as an alternative to in or out of school suspensions.

"The state has very strict guidelines as how many suspensions students are allowed to receive," Marchetti said. "As a result, we have created unique consequences for our students."



The goal of this program is to make the workout so uncomfortable that students will not want to return. Other students who have enjoyed the rigorous activity participate voluntarily and serve as role models for their peers. In just one year, suspensions have already been reduced by half.