



Honoring

Our Staff Heroes

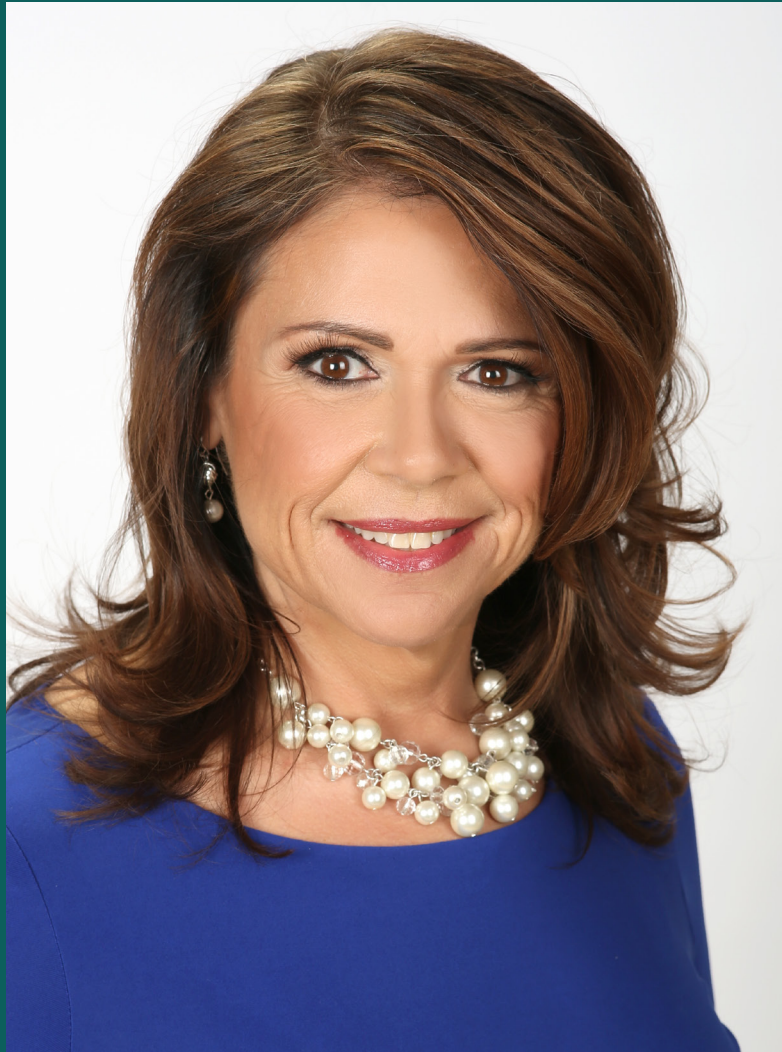
2021 ANNUAL REPORT

THE CONNECTION



HONORING OUR HEROES

A Message from Lisa DeMatteis-Lepore, Our President and CEO

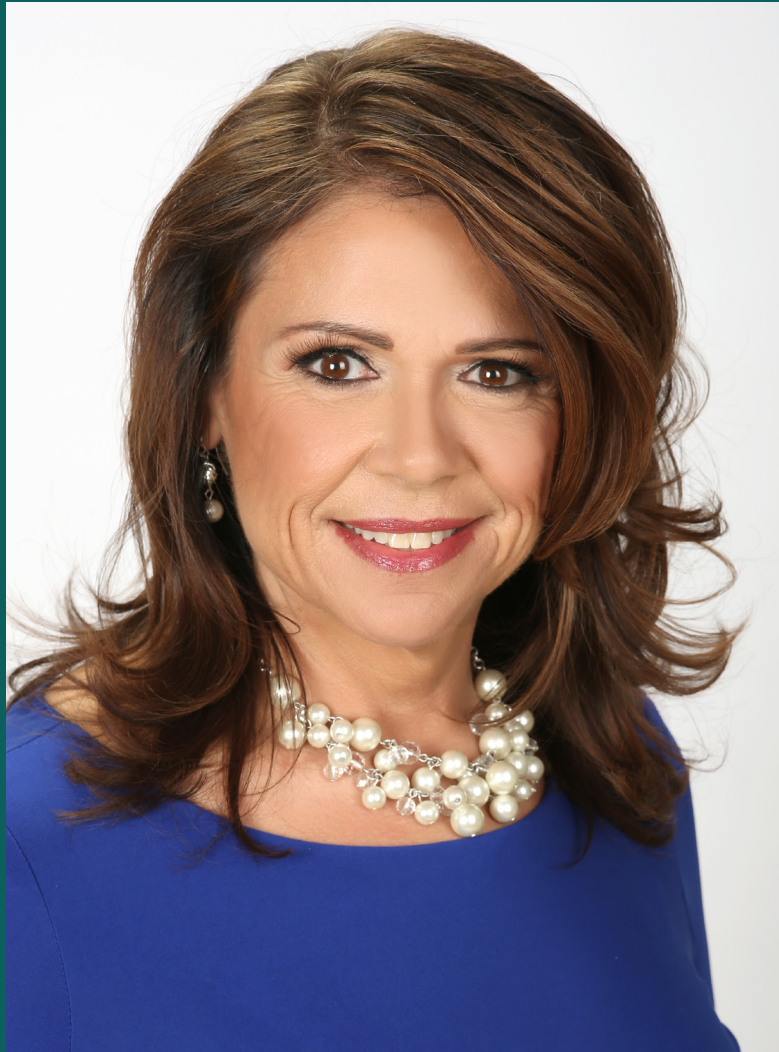


Our staff at The Connection are **our greatest resource**, and I am so grateful for their passion towards our mission. They are a **team of dedicated, caring individuals** show up each day for those in need.



HONORING OUR HEROES

A Message from Lisa DeMatteis-Lepore, Our President and CEO

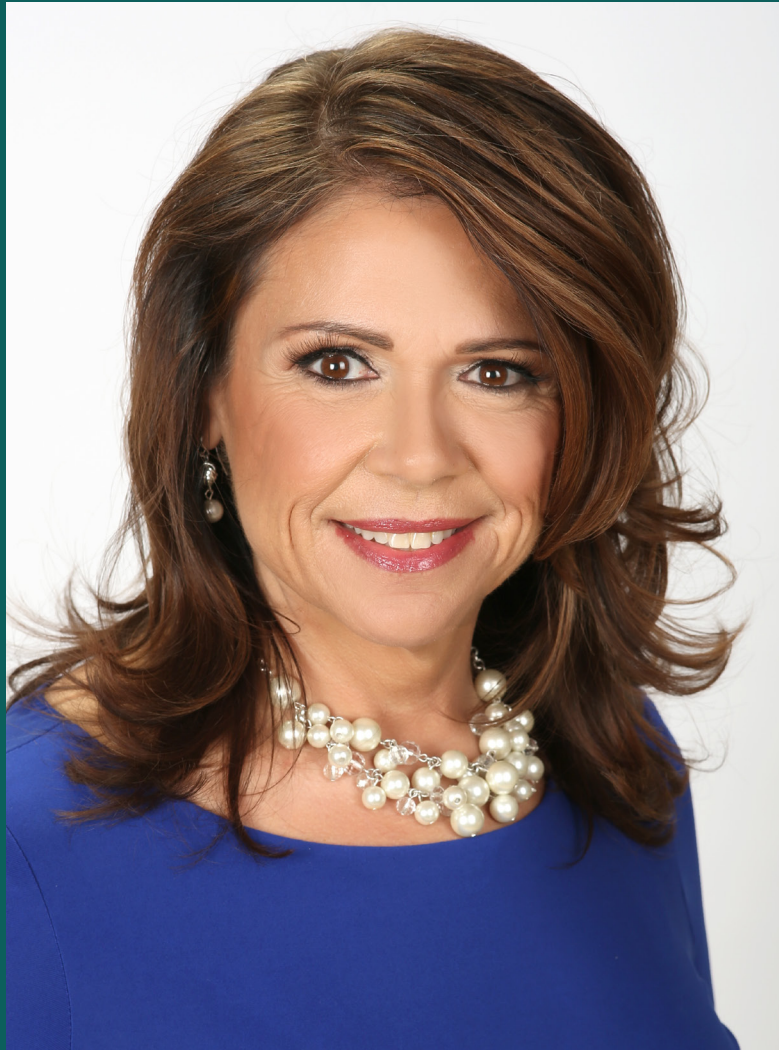


It's hard to reflect on a year like 2021 without recognizing the work during this unprecedented period of our history. The pandemic introduced new challenges for our clients and staff alike. It has been a time of loss, anxiety, uncertainty, causing a profound impact on people lives. But it has also been a time where we saw people at their very best, a time in which our community, our partners, and our workforce rose to meet these challenges in ways that were nothing short of heroic; showing incredible resiliency, giving hope, and beginning to build new paths toward a better future:



HONORING OUR HEROES

A Message from Lisa DeMatteis-Lepore, Our President and CEO

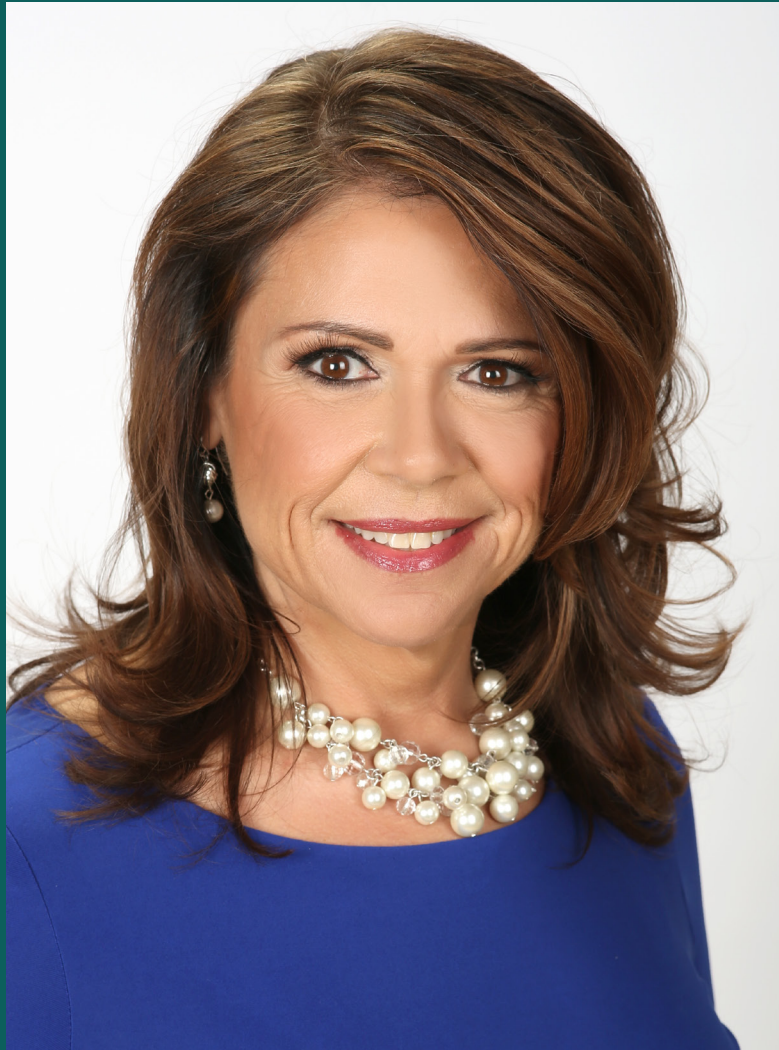


- Funders joined forces to help direct resources to the most critical needs with great speed, efficiency, and generosity. We thank them.
- Organizations came together across all sectors, forging new partnerships, and working to ensure access to critical services and supports for those most in need. We are grateful for these partnerships.
- People mastered new tools and technologies to keep services intact, while juggling demanding and complex caretaking responsibilities. We continue to be in awe of what has been accomplished.
- Despite the physical separation, there have been opportunities to connect on a very human level. We Zoomed into each other's homes and met family and pets, deepening the ways we understand each other. We are grateful for the new connections.



HONORING OUR HEROES

A Message from Lisa DeMatteis-Lepore, Our President and CEO



Together, we've grown stronger and more resilient than we could have imagined. Our entire staff never lost sight of our overarching goals that all people derive to have the opportunity to grow, change and live healthier lives!

Thank you from the bottom of my heart to all who have made this year's many successes possible.

With gratitude,

Lisa DeMatteis-Lepore President and CEO



1 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2 PROGRAM CHALLENGES AND RESILIENCY

3 PROGRAM PROFILES

4 25 YEAR CLUB

5 HEROES

6 FINANCIALS

7 2021 SUPPORTERS

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

1. Board of Directors

LEADING IN A YEAR LIKE NO OTHER

Dear Friends,

For nearly 50 years, The Connection has worked with individuals whose lives have been defined by traumatic life experiences. Mental health challenges, addiction, experiences of poverty, incarceration, and homelessness have resulted in human services support needs for thousands of Connecticut residents. The pandemic has exacerbated these needs. The Connection's statewide residential and community-based services are part of the solution for these issues.

During 2021, The Connection continued to meet the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic while delivering quality services for the thousands of individuals in our care. Our 400 staff members are our heroes, caring for our clients' many needs and anxieties during this particularly difficult time.

We've secured Personal Protective Equipment and created safety protocols to keep staff and clients safe and well. At the request of the Department of Correction, we opened a COVID Respite Center for released offenders with mild COVID symptoms, and we implemented new technological solutions to our work. We've been able to successfully operate programs during a period of history where there was a shortage of front-line workers.

We couldn't have continued to operate without our devoted staff who have risen to the challenges and continue to provide the excellent programs we're known for. We dedicate this Annual Report to you and thank you for your ongoing commitment to the Agency and its clients.

Sincerely,

Raymond H. Bovich, CFA
Chair, The Connection, Inc.

Stephen C. Angle, Ph.D.
Chair, The Connection Fund, Inc.

OUR EXECUTIVE TEAM

Lisa DeMatteis–Lepore
Chief Executive Officer

Stephen K. Abshire, MPA, MBA
Chief Financial Officer

Beth Connor, MBA
Chief Administrative Officer

Kathy Savino, Psy.D.
Chief Program Officer

Jessica Smith, LMFT
Deputy Chief of Business Development

Raquel Lugo, MD
Medical Director

**THE CONNECTION, INC.
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Raymond H. Bovich, CFA
Chair

Margaret Jordan Addo, Esq.
Vice Chair

John Ivimey, Esq.
Treasurer

Karen Buckley
Secretary

Christine Cappiello

John LaRosa

Daryl McGraw

Eileen O’Neil

**THE CONNECTION
FUND, INC.
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Stephen Angle, Ph.D.
Chair

Robert Cohn, Esq.
Vice Chair

Michael Miller
Treasurer

Elizabeth Bobrick
Secretary

Gary Wallace

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

2. Program Challenges and Resiliency



The global pandemic presented unparalleled challenges to human service providers everywhere.

At The Connection, ensuring safe, uninterrupted services for our 6800+ clients and the wellbeing of all employees were our top priorities.

The organization responded swiftly and effectively to rapidly unfolding events in a process which truly highlighted the commitment of our dedicated leadership who provided ongoing guidance and support, and direct care staff who sewed cloth masks in the earliest days of the pandemic and continued to serve clients in times of great hardship and uncertainty.

Successfully navigating the many nuances of the pandemic was an accomplishment made possible through the strength of our organizational operations, and the depth and breadth of our collaborations with valued community partners.

The Connection's statewide footprint demanded a highly coordinated response to the COVID crisis, achieved through the creation of an internal Task Force with representation from key agency functions. This team closely monitored governmental recommendations and developed program-specific and agency-wide notifications, policies, and protocols for COVID protections.





Accomplishments of the Task Force included establishing HIPAA-compliant virtual client services via multiple platforms, creating mechanisms to closely track vaccine and COVID rates, and procuring and distributing PPE and other supplies to programs including HEPA filters for office and residential spaces.

The agency pivoted to virtual work for many staff, and offered hazard pay and other incentives to staff in residential centers in acknowledgment of their important contributions and sacrifices.

The organization's wide diversity of programming necessitated significant service and client-specific adaptations to normal operations.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

During the Covid crisis, staff were challenged with supporting clients under very difficult circumstances including worsening behavioral health symptoms and increased crises including overdose. The Institute remained committed to maintaining an organizational learning environment and continued to offer staff essential training to ensure safety and well-being including Mental Health First Aid, Narcan and CPR, and evidence-based direct practice skills with a special focus on staff self-care.

In addition to our business development team pivoting to offer virtual training to our staff, The Connection's Institute for Innovative Practice launched a social enterprise offering virtual training and consultation to other community and national organizations. During this period, The Institute trained over 1,000 frontline workers and 300+ organizations across the country, and developed specialized wellness training series including Parenting in a Pandemic and The Science of Self-Care.



Help From Our Friends

The Connection partnered with Dr. Marwan Haddad, Medical Director of the Center for Key Populations at the Community Health Center, to provide a COVID education series for Connection employees. These informative webinars provided updated pandemic statistics and recommendations for vaccinated staff, and information on vaccine safety and effectiveness for unvaccinated staff. As a result of this collaborative effort, The Connection's vaccination rate exceeded 90%.

In the midst of a global crisis that has impacted so many on a personal level and posed extraordinary challenges to our organization, The Connection's COVID response demonstrated the power of agile, empathic leadership that brought out the very best in our dedicated staff. The organization has emerged even better equipped to carry out its mission of rebuilding lives, with the strength and resilience to face future challenges and embrace new opportunities.

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

3. Program Profiles



Family & Child

SUPPORTIVE HOUSING FOR FAMILIES: Program leadership worked closely with the funder and partner agencies to ensure that families continued to be housed and supported throughout the pandemic. Housing inspections were conducted virtually, while staff continued to provide in-person support for urgent issues including food delivery and the signing of leases. Other services were provided via phone or video. Staff ensured the safest and most appropriate level and type of contact to meet the needs of each family in the program.



Foster Care

CONNECTING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES: Services moved primarily to virtual client contact, but in-person support continued to be provided for urgent situations including placement disruptions and the need for increased foster family support. The program collaborated closely with DCF to successfully maintain children in their placements.



Young Adult

Most client services were provided via phone or video. Staff continued to provide in-person support for emergent crises and urgent issues including food delivery and the signing of leases.



Adult

CENTER FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH: The clinic pivoted quickly to a Telehealth model, and maintained Intensive Outpatient Services in addition to individual, group, and medication management sessions. The clinic partnered with Quest Laboratories to ensure toxicology screenings for clients during periods of closure.



Community Justice

All work release and residential services continued uninterrupted. The organization responded to funder need by opening a statewide COVID unit for all work release programs, which remains operational. Our women's work release programs successfully supported COVID positive clients and non-infected clients in the same program environment. Both the Michael Perlin Center and the Center for the Treatment of Problem Sexual Behavior moved to virtual services until it was deemed safe to return to in-person client contact. The Center for the Treatment of Problem Sexual Behavior was able to conduct polygraph testing for high-risk clients through the use of new technology, eyeDetect, which allows for contact-free assessments.

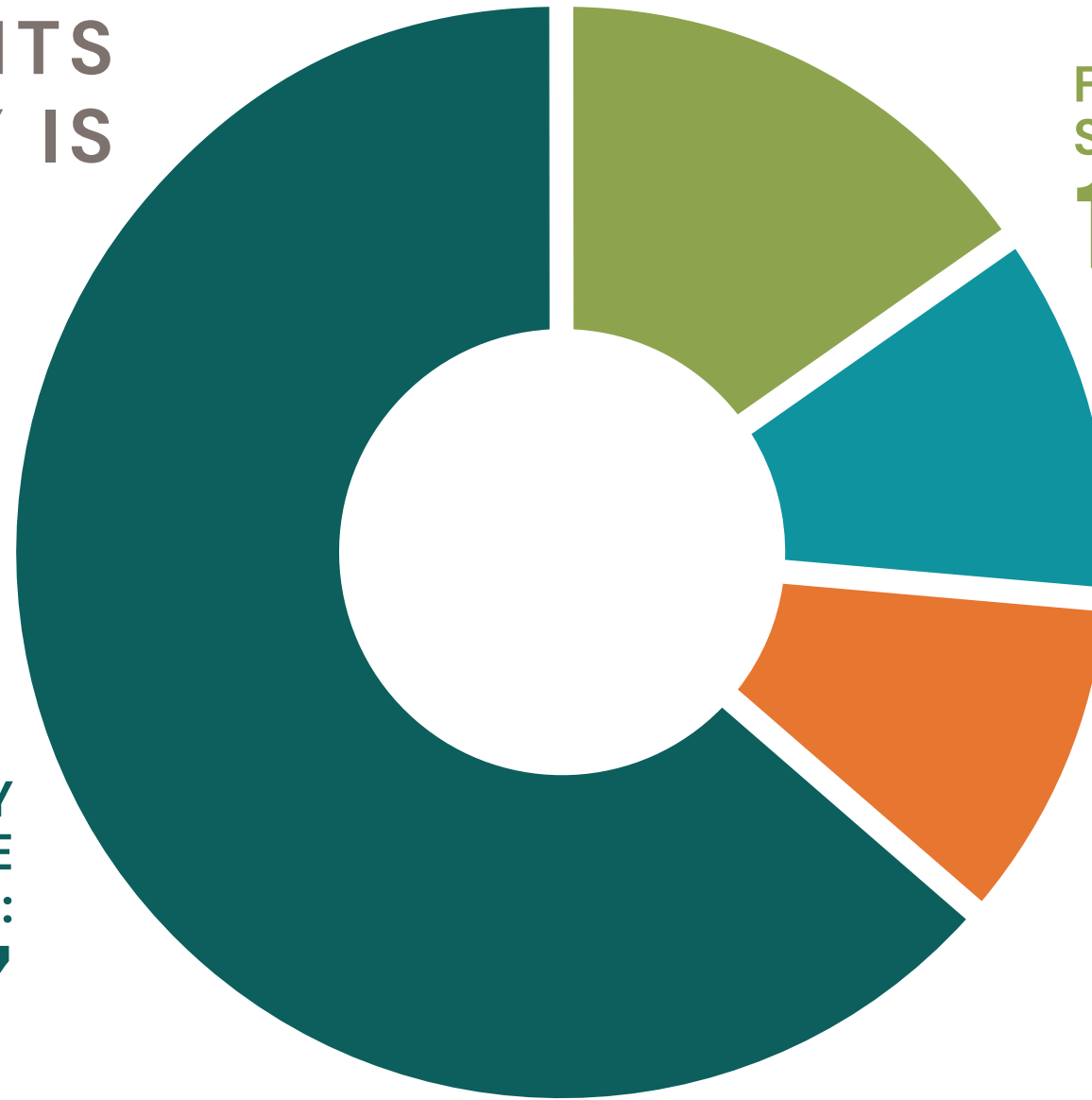


Behavioral Health Residential Programs

All programs remained fully operational, and safely maintained COVID positive and non-infected clients. Hybrid schedules and services were implemented to ensure safety, while still meeting all contractual obligations.

THE TOTAL UNIQUE
COUNT OF CLIENTS
ACROSS AGENCY IS
6,856

COMMUNITY
JUSTICE
PROGRAMS:
4,377



FAMILY SUPPORT
SERVICES:
1,047

BEHAVIORAL
HEALTH PROGRAMS:
763

CENTER FOR
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
OUTPATIENT SERVICES:
669

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

4.25 Year Club

We celebrate the following Connection staff with more than 25 years of service to the agency



LEE ANNE BORKOWSKI, 26 YEARS

Program Director

Lee Anne began her career in 1993 working with individuals who suffer from behavioral health concerns and homelessness, while working on her undergraduate degree in Psychology at The College of Santa Fe, NM. In 1996, after moving to Connecticut, Lee Anne began working at Cornerstone, Inc. as the Assistant Manager, then Manager of the Norton Court program. Her work in behavioral health residential program management continued at Pendleton House, Ruoppolo and Wolfe programs.

Lee Anne was also a part of the creation of The Family Support Collaborative, a precursor to The Connection's Supportive Housing for Families program. She completed her Master of Human Service Administration with a concentration in organizational management.

When Cornerstone merged with The Connection in 2010, she added Supportive Housing for Families program oversight to her purview. Later, she was given responsibility for the agency's DMHAS-funded Permanent Supportive Housing programs as well as the Eddy Shelter, Labella Place, Jefferson Commons, and St. Mary's programs.

Lee Anne says, "The Connection has been part of my family for over 25 years, and I feel so fortunate to work for an organization that affords me so many opportunities to fulfill my passion for helping people in need."



MICHELE KLIMCZAK, 26 YEARS

Director of Training and Grant Management

Michele began her work at The Connection with our foster care program Connecting Children and Families, first as a Case Manager and Clinician, and then Director. A co-founder of The Connection Institute for Innovative Practice, Michele coordinated original research projects with local universities including Yale and Wesleyan and co-authored papers that were published in leading academic journals.

She was instrumental in bringing Trauma-Informed Care to the organization, and as the current Director of Training and Grant Management, continues to infuse training with the basic principles of providing safety, trust and empowerment for staff and clients.

She is extremely grateful to The Connection for supporting her through the years on both a personal and professional level, and deeply values her wonderful colleagues from whom she learns something new every day.



STACY HOOKER, 27 YEARS

Program Director

Stacy began her career with the former Cornerstone, Inc. agency in 1995 as a Case Manager for the Pendleton House program. She then transferred to the Park Street Residence and Outreach & Engagement programs and was instrumental in launching programs for individuals with severe behavioral health concerns.

Stacy was promoted to Assistant Program Manager at West Village and soon after to Program Manager. When Cornerstone merged with The Connection in 2010, Stacy became the Program Manager of Cohegan House, supervising the work release program of formerly incarcerated men.

In 2017 Stacy became the Program Manager of the Eddy Shelter, the only homeless shelter for adult men and women in Middlesex County, and soon after was promoted to Program Director with oversight of the shelter as well as Labella Place, and the Meriden, Middletown, and Wallingford Young Adult collaborative for homeless youth.

Stacy says that “she loves her dream job of running a homeless shelter.”



CHRISTINA JACKSON, 29 YEARS

Program Director

Christina graduated from the University of Connecticut in 1992, and soon after was hired by Cornerstone, Inc. as a Case Manager at the Pendleton House program. She was one of the first staff members at Park Street Residence and was tasked to develop this new program. Although Christina loved the challenge and inspiration of the day-to-day contact with clients, she had a desire to enhance service delivery.

When The Connection merged with Cornerstone in 2010, she was a Program Manager at the Norton Court and Ruoppolo Manor programs, and successfully oversaw a 5-year SAMHSA demonstration grant that brought housing vouchers and case management services to the West Village Apartments. In 2014, as a Program Director, she spearheaded program development and services at both the Labella Place and Jefferson Commons programs as well as supervising the DHMAS-funded scattered site supportive housing programs of Middlesex County, Norwich, and New London.

Christina's philosophy is to creatively engage her clients in creative ways to assist them on their road to recovery. She has been motivated over the years by her clients' gratitude.



ANDREA HUNTER, 31 YEARS

Program Manager

Andrea Hunter's journey with The Connection began in 1991 as a Case Manager at the Women and Children's Center (renamed Hallie House). Hallie House is a residential substance use treatment center for pregnant and parenting women and their children.

Andrea says, "It was rewarding to watch the women break the cycle of substance use and have a brighter future for themselves and their children."

Several of the Hallie House graduates entered the Supportive Housing for Recovering Families program to secure affordable housing with case management support while they reacclimated to community living. In 2006, Andrea transferred to the Supportive Housing for Families program. Today, Andrea is a Program Manager with Supportive Housing for Families.

She shares, "I have learned a lot from my colleagues and the women and families served. I have grown both professionally and personally meeting special individuals along the way."



LISA DEMATTEIS-LEPORE, 31 YEARS

President and CEO

Lisa DeMatteis-Lepore is the President and CEO of The Connection. She began her work at The Connection starting in 1991, as the Program Director for the first women and children's residential long-term treatment program in Connecticut, Hallie House.

Lisa developed the agency's Family Support Services division from a single \$50,000 per year program to the multi-program \$26 million component of the agency that it is today. Lisa worked in all The Connection service areas over her 31 years, holding several top management roles.

Lisa has spent her career caring for people struggling with substance abuse, homelessness, mental illness, and community justice rehabilitation. In addition, Lisa is strongly dedicated to helping Connecticut's most vulnerable populations by working with public policy makers impacting child abuse, foster care, and family preservation.

Lisa says, "The Connection has granted me this incredible career opportunity to passionately contribute to the healing, growth and development of our society."

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

5. Heroes

We celebrate all our staff heroes



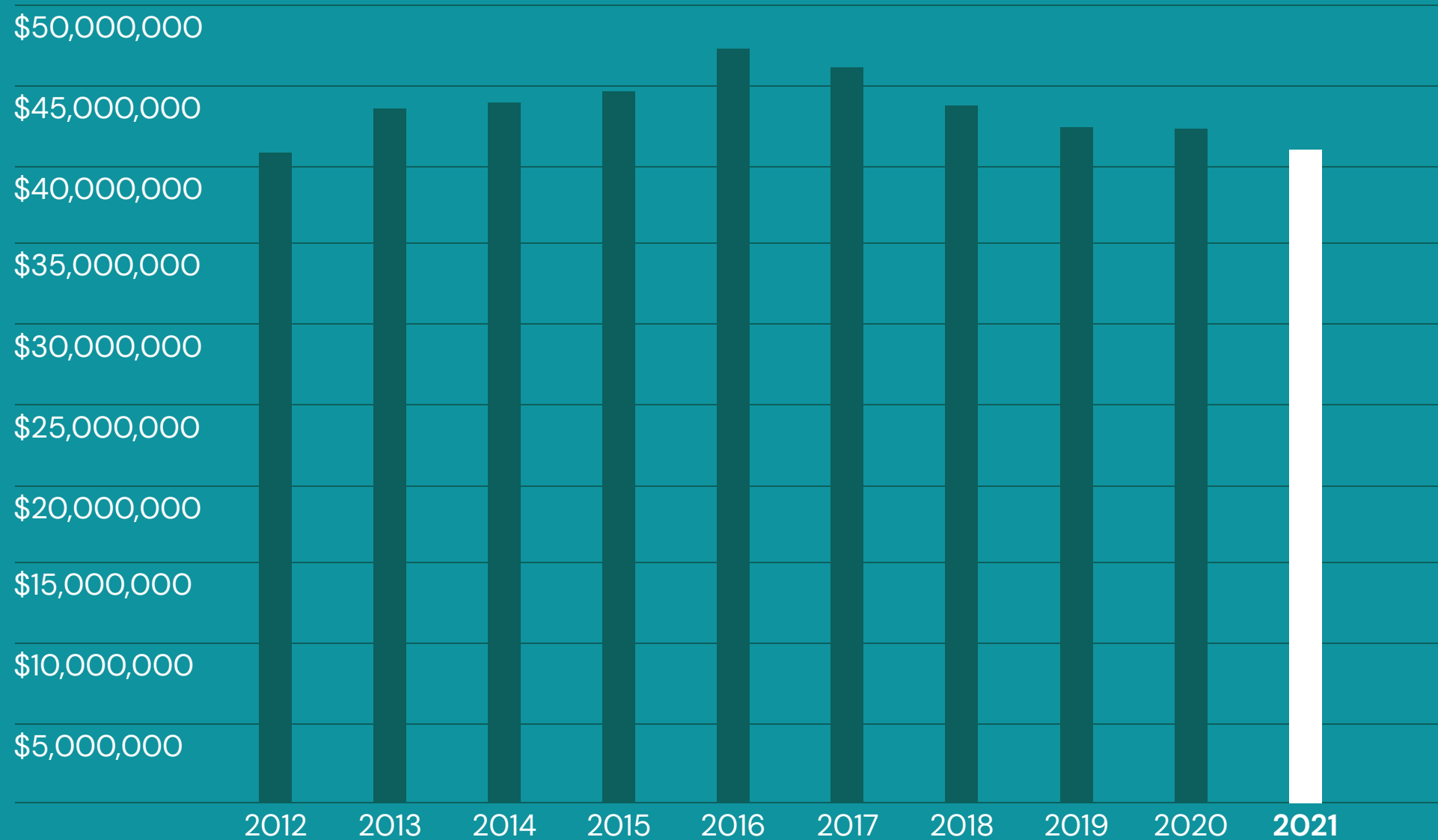


2021 ANNUAL REPORT

6. Financials

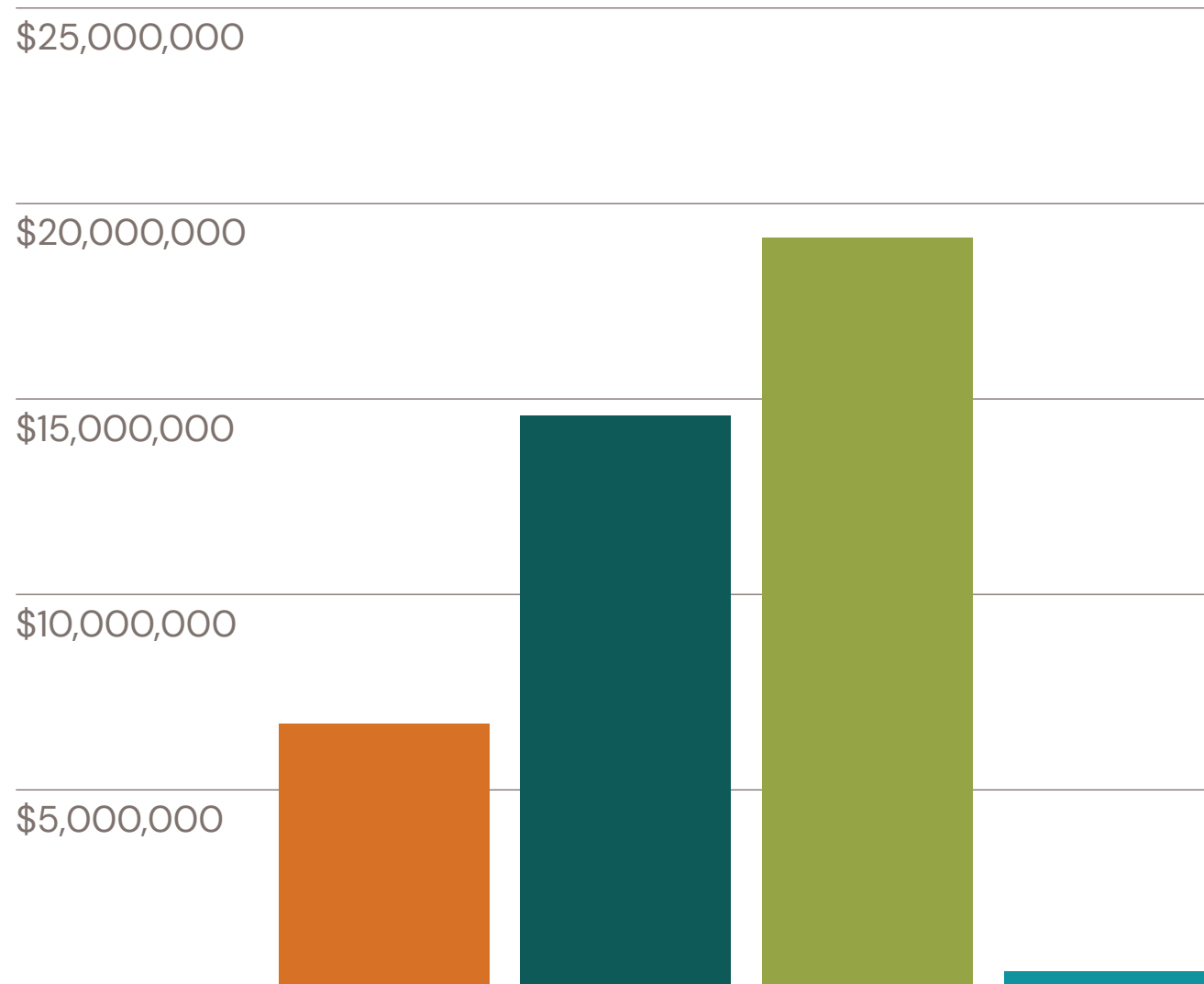
THE CONNECTION, INC. ANNUAL SUPPORT

2021 Data Based Upon Agency Budget, FY 2012 to FY 2021



TOTAL GRANT EXPENDITURES BY PROGRAM AREA

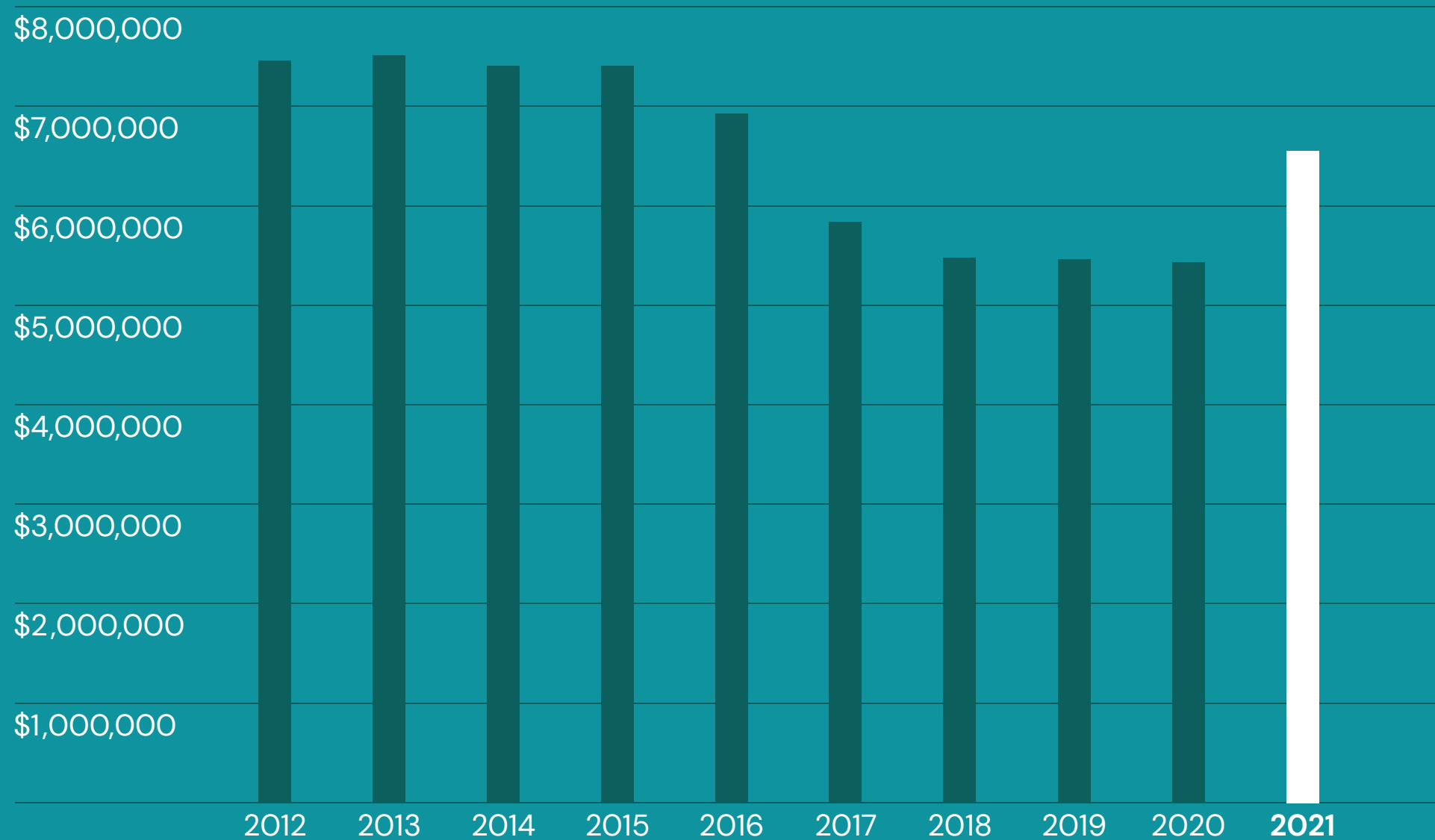
FY 2021



BEHAVIORAL HEALTH	\$	6,748,477
COMMUNITY JUSTICE	\$	14,580,667
FAMILY SUPPORT	\$	19,131,035
OTHER	\$	400,733
TOTAL	\$	40,860,912

THE CONNECTION FUND, INC. NET ASSETS

FY 2012 to FY 2021



2021 ANNUAL REPORT

7. 2021 Supporters

Thank you to our generous donors who supported The Connection's work during the period of 7/1/2020 through 6/30/2021:

Dr. Gloster B. Aaron, Jr.
and Dr. Katherine Allocco

ABC Center

Stephen Abshire

Access Agency

Aetna

Angela Adinolfi

Stephen Anderson

Drew Andrews

Stephen Angle
and Debra Guss

Antiques &
Home Furnishings

Anonymous

Anthem Foundation

Donna Antonini

Artisan Restaurant

Assured Partners

Judy Aumend

Avangrid

Chris Bailey

Ann Baldwin

Jeffrey Baran

Ruthanne Barrett

Brenda Berky

Bigelow Tea Company

Elizabeth Bobrick and
Andrew Szegedy-Maszak

John Boccalatte
and Michele Salonia

James Bologna

Lee Anne Borkowski

Peter Braga

Brookfield Technology
Center, LLC

Karen-Marie Buckley

Robert and
Deborah Burnside

Doug Cahill

Cheryle A. Campbell

Melonie Canarte

Liz Canning

Becky Capazzi

Gayle Capezzone

Capitol Regional
Education Council

Capitol View Apartments

Christine Cappiello

CBS, a Xerox company

CDW Direct, LLC

CFA Society

Carline Charmelus

Church of the Holy
Trinity, Middletown

City of Middletown

City Missionary
Association
of New Haven

City of Norwalk,
Human Services

Judith Coffey

Christopher Colangelo

Comcast

Community Foundation
of Eastern Connecticut

Community Foundation
for Greater New Haven

Community Foundation
of Middlesex County

Community Foundation
of Middlesex County
Mountain Laurel Fund

Margaret M. Condron

Ken Conlon

Connecticut Business
Systems

Connecticut Court
Support Services Division

Connecticut Department
of Children and Families

Connecticut Department
of Correction

Connecticut Department
of Mental Health
and Addiction Services

Connecticut Department
of Social Services

Connecticut Institute for
Refugees and Immigrants

Thank you to our generous donors who supported The Connection's work during the period of 7/1/2020 through 6/30/2021:

Connecticut Waverunners	Edgardo Escribano	James Fortsch	David Hammett	JP Sales, Inc.
Conning	Eversource Energy	Michael Fox	Hartford CFA Society	Rachel Judd
Beth Connor	ESPN	Linda & Ken Frederick	Beth Hogan	Nanci Jutras
Costco	Michael Evans	Fuss & O'Neill, Inc.	William Holder	Danielle Kate
Victoria DaCato Magin	Patrick Fallon	Richard Galecki	Stacy Hooker	Aftab Khan
Celina DaSilva	Grady Faulkner	Gel Designs LLC	Hoopes Morganthaler Rausch & Scaramozza LLC	Patricia Kimball
Allison DeBlasio	Bob Fay	Sheila Giangrande	Andrea Hunter	The Kohler Family
Delamar	Lisa Federowicz	David Gilman	Cortney Hyte	Melinda Kronfeld
Daniel Delia	Tony Felice	GN Construction, LLC	Ink & Pixel Agency	Frederic Kudish
Lisa DeMatteis-Lepore	First Congregational Church, Portland	Marie Gross	Inner Glow Spa	Linda Labbadia
Jill Dern	Elizabeth Fitter	Groton Utilities Grant Program	Insurity Inc.	Lisa Lamstein
Maria Dezi	Maggie Fitter	Sally Haase	Irobot	Peter Landsberger
Joyce M. Dowling	Rae Fitter	Ian Halpin	John and Judith Ivimey	Sara Lane
John P. Duca	Leslie Flott	Susan Halpin	JB Sports, LLC	Amy Lasek
Enfield Builders, Inc.	Eugene E. Flynn	Winifred Hamilton	Nikita Joslyn	Kevin Lawless
Laura Engel				Christopher Ledoux

Thank you to our generous donors who supported The Connection's work during the period of 7/1/2020 through 6/30/2021:

Liberty Bank	Middlesex Health	Kathi Nickerson	Kathy Rehm	Shuster Group, LLC
Liberty Bank Foundation	Middlesex United Way	Gina O'Connell	Rob and Tina Rickenback	Lawrence Silfen
Eliza LoPresti	Michael E. Miller	Vicki O'Leary	Stella Ridge	Norma Silfen
Anne Losty	Missy Miller	Brian and Julie Oliver	Diane Ritucci	Denison Smith
Jacob Lucas	Becky Mongillo	Otis	Robinson & Cole, LLP	Jessica Smith
Douglas MacLeod	Wendy Montanaro	Angela Owens	Virginia Robinson	South Congregational Church, Middletown
Grace MacLeod	Bev Morin	Paycom	Jane Robitaille	Southern Connecticut Gas Company
Anne Marsden	Jane Morrell	Pelo by Edgardo	Lillian Rose	Southeastern Regional Action Council
David Marseli	Samuel Moy	Jerry Perkins	RJ and Virginia R. Rollefson	Richard Sparco
Regina Masterson	Lori-Anne Murgo	Ryan Perry	James Scaramozza	St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Fairfield
MATP LLC	Stacey Mustard	Porter and Chester Institute	Nancy Scheetz	Carla St. Pierre
Margery L. May	Mutual of America	Kevin and Pat Prendergast	Marie Scott	Stanley Black & Decker, Pride & Allies CT Chapter
MDC	Nassau Companies of New York	Jim Procaccini	Deborah Shapiro	Donald Stanners
Nancy Meyers	NBC Universal	Quest Diagnostics	Shelter Rock Winery	
Middlefield Federated Church	Guy Neumann	Reid and Riege, P.C.	Shipman & Goodwin, LLP	

Thank you to our generous donors who supported The Connection's work during the period of 7/1/2020 through 6/30/2021:

Pete Stanners	Ellen Tinson	Dawn Tyson	United Way of Central & Northeast Connecticut	Wattifi Inc.
Rob Stanners	Town of Cromwell	UIL Holdings Corp	United Way of Greater New Haven	Wesleyan Food Rescue Group
William Stanners	Town of Durham	United States Department of Health and Human Services	United Way of Middlesex County	Whalley Computer Associates
Patricia A. Stephenson Gordon	Town of East Haddam	United States Department of Housing and Urban Development	Manny Valdes	Whittlesey
Stop and Shop Community Bag Program	Town of Essex	United States Department of Justice Federal Bureau of Prisons	Kerri Vautour	Linda Worden
Suburban Commercial	Town of Killingworth	United States Department of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration	Teresa Vegliante	Workers' Compensation Trust
Mr. & Mrs. Franklin Sylvester	Town of Middlefield		Jeff Velleca	Nicholas Yanouzas
Chas Termini	Town of Portland		Karen Voelkel Meiman	Joann Zamparo
The Pfizer Foundation	David Truedson		Watkinson Prisoners Aid Society	
Crystal Thomas Vogt	Trumpf Inc.			
	TSG Reporting			



Thank You